Ancient Krynn

The Dragonlance World Before the Cataclysm

By John Grubber

PDF by Tyler "Canlocu" Cone

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All writings and credit goes to John Grubber and all sources can be found on John Grubber’s website:
http://www3.sympatico.ca/john.grubber
This is an Unofficial Dragonlance Document.
I am just a big fan of John’s work with some time on my hands.

You can find me Canlocu at canlocu@yahoo.com
The Glorious Empire

A Travelers Guide to Ancient Istar

By John Grubber

Tucuri Citizens
The text included here is unofficial, and is based on the Dragonlance game and fiction world, wholly owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Its origins lie in an email from Chris Pierson, one of my fellow Dragonlance authors (and fellow Canadian) searching for information about Istar for a trilogy he was writing. This series of books would eventually become 'The Kingpriest Trilogy', published from 2001-2004 (Chosen of the Gods, Divine Hammer and Sacred Fire). For a fiction world nearing 20 years old, there was a great dearth of information about the greatest empire in its history. After speaking with Chris, I set about to fix this.

Readers familiar with the trilogy will recognize many things in these pages—though there are many changes from the world of the novels as well. This is a natural part of the fiction writing process—some things worked, others did not.

Readers not familiar with the series are advised that

**there are significant spoilers**

in this document, and it is advised you drop some coin and get the books— they are some of the best fiction I have read, and really bring the empire to life. Then come back and enjoy.

This was written for a friend, to help in his task— it is rough around the edges to be sure, but hopefully it will help you in some way if you are interested in Istar.

Enjoy.

*John Grubber, May 2004*
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Introduction

The Empire of Istar is a place of legend in Ansalon, maybe even in all of Krynn. It was the pinnacle of mortal civilization- or at least claimed to be. Little written about the actual empire has survived, save that the clergy dominated it, and the Kingpriest doomed it. The people of the land were by no means innocent- indeed the corruption and pride of the Kingpriest merely exemplified the mood of the citizenry.

This article is intended to open ancient Istar to campaigns- to allow adventures within her borders and bring the ancient empire to life. A campaign set in Istar will likely challenge PC’s in new ways, for they will have few friends, especially if they are of certain character classes or races. Many factions vie for scraps of power from the Kingpriests table, and many crimes have been committed to gain the courts favor. Despite its seemingly settled and civilized appearance, there are still wild places in Istar and dangers on her roads. Some of the lands of Istar are heavily policed, others are not, especially in the frontier lands of Gather, Midrath and Falthana. These lands remain untamed, in spite of the best efforts of the Empire to bring them in line. The native groups remain defiant, even in the face of imperial genocide and colonization.

Adventure hooks and Character information can be found in Appendix C, at the end of this piece.

In order to fully understand the status and power Istar held in Pre-Cataclysmic Ansalon, its origins and development must first be discussed. To this, we now turn ourselves.
Part One: History

The history of Istar is driven by economics, as are most nations. From its barbarian tribe origins to its decadent heights, the pursuit of wealth has motivated the powers that be in Istar. The geography of the land caused this, as Istar is ideally suited to agriculture and the making of products that other nations might strongly desire.

The history of Istar is generally divided into four sections. The first portion deals more with the people that would become Istar than the empire itself, but it is important to consider as Istar eventually turns on the indigenous peoples that are similar to her own ancestors. These people, some freed ogre slaves, some nomads that had never worn shackles, banded together millennia ago to survive in a hostile world. The second era of Istaran history deals with the rise of the city states and their banding together into an agricultural empire. The third era focuses on Istar at her mightiest, and empire that dominated trade and culture across a continent. The final era of Istaran history culminates in the Cataclysm, and deals mainly with the final three hundred years before the vengeance of the gods descended. It is the time when Istar’s corruption and pride were widely known, though unopposed- an age of oppression, not simple influence, as the centuries before had been.

Before the City-States:

The indigenous peoples of the Empire of Istar are a skeleton in its closet. Those they work tirelessly to crush are their own distant kin. It is from groups just like these that the first cities formed in the Age of Might. Before the formation of settlements and agriculture, humans lived in tribal states, wandering the plains as nomads and hunter-gatherers. Those that were not of the plains lived as slaves to the fallen Ogres in the mountains, brutish creatures whose own empire had fallen millennia before. Indeed it was in the mountains of Western Istar that the human slaves of the High Ogres first liberated themselves. Little is known of these uncivilized times, for no written histories were kept.

The Foundation Times:

Long ago, almost two thousand years before the Cataclysm, the future empire of Istar began to form. At first little more than a series of city states with a mutual defense pact, the influence of the inner ring grew and expanded out beyond the mountains. The city-states united under the banner of Istar and then began to
expand westward, towards the other human realms, in search of trade. They found an ally in Solamnia, a fellow fledgling nation newly released from distant Ergoths thrall. Together these two new nations grew and expanded until they dominated much of the continent. But Istar was not content. Two nations, Seldjuk and Karthay, had refused Istars invitations to join the growing nation, preferring instead to remain independent. The people of the coastal lands remembered well the ancient times when they had been ruled by Ogres, then by their heirs, the Minotaurs. They had no desire to yield their self-determination to another master, and remained separate from Istar until the Eighth century before the Cataclysm. At that time, Istar used its considerable political and economic power to force the smaller nations to capitulate and join the empire.

The die of Istars doom was cast in these foundation times, for the Shamans of the tribes became the priests of the cities, a mysterious elite caste that existed outside of the rulership systems. These men and women bent the ear of the rulers as they and their god’s saw fit, and through it all, the people feared their wrath. Indeed since the days when they had lived as tribes on the savanna, the holy men and their fantastic powers had been both feared and respected. The rise of a political system that might change this was not in the best interests of the new holy caste, and they challenged it at every opportunity. When people saw the priests doing good works that the kings and rulers could not, they began to question the authority of their rulers. While they never toppled a ruler, the faith of the people soon became placed in those who could affect their lives directly- the religious class. So it was that a dual power structure developed as the empire developed, one of kings, viziers and senators, and one of high priests, revered sons and acolytes. One existing in the light, and one in the shadows.

The Heights of Empire:

The Age of Might was an age of great peace and prosperity for Ansalon. The last thousand years before the Cataclysm were dominated by the Empire of Istar, whose clergy wielded ultimate power by the turn of the final century. The peace for some came with a price- freedoms were sacrificed for security and stability for some. Istar was Ansalon’s bread-basket, and so ruled food supplies. Control a mans belly, the scholars say, and you control his life. Istar excelled at this. Using blockades, embargoes and trade sanctions, she subdued any who stood against her, using agents and advisors in foreign governments to sow dissension and confusion. Many of Istars external conquests were undeclared wars, shadowy power plays designed to weaken enemies from within and increase their dependence on Istar. The Kingpriests and their minions even used dark magic to weaken enemies and gain allies,. This tactic was always suspected, but not confirmed until the discovery of a confession manuscript from an Istaran priest. In this document he describes how secret pacts were made with minions of
Morgion and Chemosh, to ravage Solamnia’s crops and weaken her people. Once so devastated, Solamnia turned to Istar for aid. The abundance and quality of Istaran food goods reduced Solamnia’s agricultural independence, and increased her need for Istar. So it was that by playing on Solamnic honor, Istar gained the most powerful military force of Ansalon, the Solamnic Knights, as her own army, for no cost. The Solamnics swore protection of the nation that had given aid in Solamnia’s hour of need, though it was Istar that had secretly created that desperate situation.

The End Times:

Though there were no declared wars, Istar and her agents waged campaigns both within the Empire’s borders and throughout Ansalon. There were bounties on entire races, peoples thoughts were controlled, and any dissenters mysteriously disappeared in the night. Despite the peace and prosperity, it was truly a dark age of oppression for much of Ansalon. The haughty Istarans preferred manipulation to military might, though they were not above using the legions within their borders in police actions to subdue the barbarians in the outlying provinces.

Istar’s might was initially economic, for its central plains fed and clothed much of the continent. As the empire grew, the clergy grew as a class, and began to exert a deeper control. Istar’s economic tactics gained momentum after the military alliance with Solamnia. After this treaty, Istar had access to a standing military that it did not have to pay to maintain, yet could control because the Knights served Paladine, the patron God of Good. Whatever Istar, the religious center of Ansalon, deemed a cause worthy of Paladine’s attention, the Knights would turn their interest towards.

Over the centuries, the momentum of Imperialism grew and Istar suppressed first Karthay and later Seldjuk, independent realms that were Istar’s main rivals in the human realms. Blockades, trade wars and sanctions all worked to isolate the two nations from the rest of Ansalon, and once the military might of Solamnia was brought to bear, the starved lands were easily conquered.

Within her borders, the seemingly peaceful empire is riddled with strife. The conquered realms of the Northeast never lost their hatred for Istar, and the many indigenous peoples of the empire waged constant warfare for their autonomy. Outside of the Inner ring surrounding Lake Istar and the western provinces, so-called savages live, driven there by land-hungry settlers. They exist in tribal states, in all types of terrain, eking out lives that are under constant ideological or cultural assault. The survival of many of these groups in the face of genocide is a testament to their intelligence and tenacity.
Part Two: Geography of Istar

The empire is vast, covering almost half of Pre-Cataclysmic Ansalon. The north sits along Krynn’s equator, the lush jungles nourished by frequent rains. Further south the central lands of Istar are a broad grassland, mainly unsettled before the heathen wars. The extreme southern parts of the empire are desert or badland, reaching to the temperate forests of Silvanesti. The western provinces of the empire are similar to parts of Solamnia, the inhabitants being settlers from the far eastern realms of that nation. The eastern coast is extensively cultivated and settled, the remnants of human nations that formed when they broke the shackles of Ogre slavery and later the oppression of the Ogres proteges, the Minotaurs.

In spite of the expansive settlement and infrastructure, the lands of Istar are far from safe. The increased militarism of the police state and is mainly responsible for this, as the persecution of non-human races has made those races that much more desperate in their actions for survival. Unwanted in any land, they live as outlaws, as raiders and nomads, rescuing kin from slave caravans, never staying in an area long lest they be rounded up. Being a human or a proclaimed follower of the Light is no security in this age, for the corruption of the Church means no one is safe from her agents. Those who bow to the empire are safe only so long as they are useful, after which they are exiled or they disappear.

Much of Istars wealth comes from trade. Its agricultural economic base made it important to the rest of Ansalon, while the power of the clergy ensured that it could not be easily conquered. The presence of these two things removed the need for a large military or advanced technology to develop within Istar, though it is imported from other nations. The geography of Istar also prevented the development of metallurgy to the heights employed by dwarves or even other human nations- there are few veins of iron ore and nickel. Consequently, native Istaran metalwork is made of bronze, copper and gold, all soft metals that are easily produced and worked. The advent of the Spice trade brought Istars dominance to its peak. Many of the plants that were so highly prized elsewhere in Ansalon grew only in the jungles of Istar, and later in the Nordmaar Colonies of Ergoth. After the conquering of Tucuri in the north and The Dravinaar in the south, Istar had access to both quarried and sea salt, which further stimulated trade. Other sources of salt and spices existed in Ansalon, but the machinations of Istar shut down those sources, removing their markets by means at times legal and non.
Regardless of the shadowy methods employed to gain and maintain the peace, it did have some beneficial effects. Art and literature attained new heights, driven there by a growing upper class. Exploration flourished, as new lands were contacted and new peoples converted to the ways of the true gods. Rumors persist that at the time of the Cataclysm, the Kingpriest and his inner circle were preparing to mount several huge expeditions to the continent of Taladas, in hopes of establishing an earthly Kingdom of Paladine there. Under Istars rule, the roads of Ansalon were safer, allowing people to travel, with approval and proper documentation, farther than ever before. Huge structures, buildings and statues the likes of which had not been built since the Age of Dreams appeared throughout the Empire. These kept the poor working and helped to unify the people towards a common goal, a tactic every ruler in every race in every time has employed.

Istars dominance of commerce and religion and the sway it held with Solamnia solidified its position as the only superpower in the world. Scholars and philosophers will forever ponder the good Istar might have done, had it not rotted from within, dying slowly over the centuries as its core became more corrupt.

The peace inside the empire was shattered by the wars between rival Kingpriests and by the heathen wars in the last decades before the Cataclysm. From 36-31PC a series of droughts devastated Ismin, the agricultural hub of the Empire, and when opportunity arose, the lands of the unsettled realm of Gather were invaded. The people of Istar, weary of war in their lands did not support the conflict, at least initially. The tragedy at the Vaults of the Kingpriest in 30PC allowed the upper echelons of the clergy to turn the public against the peaceful inhabitants of the untamed lands, and once more stir the people to support more bloodshed.

The wars in Gather spread to other parts of the empire, from the jungles of the Falthana Basin to the sands of the Dravinaar. All across the empire Knights of Solamnia, led by Warrior-Priests of the Order of the Divine Hammer battled the godless heathens in the name of the Kingpriest and all that was unholy.

Technology:

Istar is very crude technologically. It did not need to develop much advanced technology to exploit its rich environment. What it didn’t have, it was able to buy, steal or extort from its neighbors. Whatever food it did not use, it was easily able to sell. Istars location and prosperity ensured that it would rule the world. While much of Ansalon runs on metal-banded spoked wheels, the empires caravans rumble along on solid wooden disks. Their fields are worked with
heavy bronze plows, each pulled by massive horses, while in the Vingaard Valley, a comparable agricultural realm, rows of steel plows extend from the sides of ox-driven wagons.

Istar was primarily an agricultural power, as such, much of its technology was developed to increase yield, cultivate those lands too dry or wet, or otherwise prosper in the realm of farming. Though large parts of Ansalon are arable, most of this land fell inside the borders of Istar. As a result, Istar supplies much of the food for the continent. Istar also grows much of the materials used in the making of cloth and basketry, both of these industries being raised to very high levels of sophistication by the skilled citizens of the empire.

The myriad of products Istar generated from its agricultural diversity were highly prized by other races and nations, countries that gladly traded their own expertise and products for them. Consequently, Istar hired the best engineers and miners from human and dwarven lands, having them build or instruct the Istarans in mining, masonry and architecture. The mountains of Istar held little iron, but they did have plenty of copper and other soft metals. As a result, the early Istarans mastered soft-metal extraction and casting, making bronze the alloy of choice for art, armor and weapons. Istar never moved beyond the development of bronze in its metallurgical sciences. As a rapidly growing empire with the power of the clergy behind it, there was no need to. The sheer size of the empire allowed vast armies to be fielded and supported by priests from many gods, placing less numerous enemies at a disadvantage. Once the nation began to expand, alliances with Solamnia and other steel-producing allowed the legions to equip themselves in even better manners.

In engineering Istar was never exceedingly original- accomplishments of this type were more easily made by hiring someone who was properly skilled. Thus, the majority of public works found in the empire were designed by outsiders. Dwarven smiths and Solamnian engineers built the sewers and catacombs of the empire- providing water to even the highest floors of the apartment tenements. The roads of the empire were renowned for their durability and breadth, so large they were that entire caravans could pass each other on bridges and in passes with enough room for horsemen to pass between them. These wonders still stand after the Cataclysm, some claimed by squatter empires that would use the greatness of the past to ensure their greatness in the future. Of course, there are few Istarans left to protest the appropriation.

Glass:

Glass-making has been raised to an art form in Istar. Several cities in the southern provinces are known continent-wide for their artistry. The expansion of
the empire allowed this trade to flourish, as the new provinces had access to pigments that allowed even more beautiful creations to be made. In addition to a burgeoning trade in completed works, Istar’s glassworks also deal in raw ingots of many colors, that are used in other nations glass industries. The products of the city of Micah in West Dravinaar are particularly prized by mages and priests, their artistry and quality lending themselves well to enchantment.

Pottery and Clay:

The many deltas and rivers of the empire provided clays that ensured that Istar developed pottery early, and raised it to the most advanced level ever achieved on Ansalon. This clay finds use in all aspects of Istaran life, from vessels and tiles to wall-plaster and artwork. The river deltas provide ample amounts and varieties of clays, in fact the finest wares of this type in all Ansalon come from Istar. Red, white, brown and even blue clays come from all across the empire, wrapped in wet sackcloth to be sold to artists, while finished works are found throughout the continent. Several royal houses of Ansalon, including those of the Elven and Dwarven Kingdoms, have commissioned entire sets of flatware to be made by the pottery-houses of the empire. As with the mining industry, the clays of Istar provide several pigments used by artists and textile-houses across the continent.

Metals:

Though numerous ranges of mountains crossed the empire at its height, they were poor in metals. Copper and tin were common, as was gold, but iron or nickel, essential for steel-making were not. Nickel was not available until the annexation of Falthana and Seldjuk to the empire in about 800PC. Consequently, Istar has developed a thriving soft-metal economy but imports most steel or iron it requires. The metal mining also allowed Istar to develop a lucrative dye and pigment-making industry, which flourished even further after the new provinces began to provide iron and nickel. The domineering trade agreements Istar had already established ensured that in short order, the only pigments easily available were those created by Istarans.

Textile-making:

The ample grasslands and arable plains of Istar encouraged development of cloth-making, as did the presence of sheep. Flax, hemp and cotton grew naturally in various provinces, and were transplanted even further as the empire grew. The textile-houses of Istar are almost as feared as the quarries, many a slave has been boiled alive in the pigment vats, or crushed in the linen presses. Those that are lucky enough to survive those lowest ranking tasks risk dismemberment in
the machinery of the animal powered looms. They, along with the theft laws, are
the source of many of the arm- or hand-less beggars found in the empire. Istars
clothin guilds greedily eye the silks of Silvanesti, but no amount of money has
been enough to loosen the elves tongues on this secret industry. Since it has not
been able to control the silk trade, Istar has instead sought to destroy it. Through
her agents, Istars guilds spread lies, raided shipments and murdered many
traders, all to encourage people to ‘buy Istaran.’

Stone:

The mountain ranges of Istar are rich in all manner of stone, from granites and
marbles to gems and decorative stone. These are sold across Ansalon, hauled in
massive carts or by ship finding homes in all manner of extravagant architecture.
The quarries of Istar are renowned for their quality but feared for their
conditions. They are the destination of many of the empires slaves- often a final
destination. Mass graves dot the mountainsides, though they are unmarked and
never spoken of. The dead are thrown in like cordwood, the tailings and
unsellable stone dumped over them, and they are soon forgotten. There are
always more slaves. The law-makers see to that.

Architecture:

Istaran architecture did not achieve a unified style until the last two centuries
before the Cataclysm. Prior to this time, the varying cultures that had united to
form the empire each had a distinctive building style. Temples to various gods
had specific forms that were common regardless of the area, but in general,
structures varied widely. The western portions of the empire were heavily
influenced by Dwarven and Solamnic architecture, favoring heavy stone
structures, thatch and plastered wood upper stories. The eastern empire, by
contrast, favors airy structures that can make use of sea breezes to cool their
interiors in the tropical sun. Eastern buildings also favor pillars and lofty arches,
structures that would be later adopted by the Minotaur nations, who had built
them while enslaved by Istar. The southern empire is a vast desert, the
Dravinaar, and as such is sparsely populated. There are only a few towns, built
by the nomads as trade centers around oases, and one city, Losarcum- the jewel
of the desert princes. It is a mysterious place, of soaring minarets and domes, of
buildings carved into the bedrock, all nestled within a mazelike canyon. The
province of Gather, in the northern coastal reaches of Istar, is largely unsettled,
being the domain of nomads, barbarians and savages. The exception to this is the
province of Falthana and the land surrounding Karthay, a city that had once
rivaled Istar before being subjugated by it in about 800PC. This area is filled with
hostile natives, but the cities themselves thrive on their natural resources. The
mountains make masonry buildings the most common, their brick walls plastered and whitewashed.

**Sites and Landmarks:**

Pilgrimages are common in Istar, it is a nation with a lengthy and turbulent history, so there are many places where significant events took place. Battle sites, visited by veterans or pilgrims of the warrior gods, dot the frontiers, while the sites of religious hierophanies, places where a god made contact with mortals, are also commemorated.

**Fortresses and Garrisons:**

Throughout the empire the Istaran Legions and the Solamnic Knights established garrisons and fortresses to protect the local citizenry. The forts range in size from small keeps with less than a score of soldiers up to huge citadels with hundreds of guards. They patrol the countryside, dealing with raiders, monsters and any other dangers. In certain cases, they are called upon to aid the local constabularies, in law enforcement or investigation of crimes. The commander of a given fort also acts as lawgiver when the town is too small to have magistrates and imperial advocates of its own. In larger centers, the soldiers are also employed in the building of roads, fortifications and bridges. During an invasion or civil war, these forts are the first line of defense, holding key bridges and passes until reinforcements arrive. Some provinces resent the presence of imperial forces or their allies, as they tend to meddle where they are not wanted. The troubles caused by the bored soldiers are extensive, ranging from corruption among the Istaran Legionnaires to dogmatism and rigidity among the Solamnics. The Eastern provinces in particular revile the intrusions of both military groups, they see the presence of them as Istars way of trying to suppress their independence. Along the frontiers, the soldiers often abuse the locals without fear of reprisal, as their distant commanders sit idly in comfortable offices in the cities of the inner ring. The many peaceful indigenous groups in Istar bear the brunt of this oppression, those that do not languish in dungeons are sold to slavers or end up decorating the walls of the forts as warnings. The citizens of Istar have an uneasy relationship with their protectors that alternates between fear and fanatical loyalty- people tread lightly lest they anger some petty soldier and invite disaster. Mounted and on foot they travel the roads of the empire, protecting the travelers- though they are more dangerous than any highwaymen- for they are above the law.
Citadels of the Order of the Divine Hammer:

The Order of the Divine Hammer spread rapidly throughout Ansalon in its brief history. As servants of the Kingpriest, it was their holy duty to protect pilgrims who were travelling to Istar. Consequently, they built countless forts along the roads of Istar, many with their own funds or donations. Many of the early members of the Order were wealthy landowners seeking to gain favor with the church, or landless second sons with inheritances to squander. Regardless of their origins, they would build a citadel and garrison it, watching over a section of road and the lands around it. In this way, they gained a petty barony of sorts within the empire that ruled the world. The warrior-priests of a given fort would often ride with pilgrims, offering them hospitality at the citadel in exchange for whatever the pilgrims could afford as a donation to keep the citadel open. The donations were usually very small, if any were given, but in exchange, the names of the pilgrims were often inscribed on the wall of the citadel's chapel, as a list of the blessed and generous. While they traveled in the lands of a given fort, the pilgrims were requested to wear medallions bearing the name of the warrior-priest and the fort where he was stationed. This served as a warning to raiders and as a message of the warrior-priests good work in the kingpriests services. At the edge of a forts protectorate, the medallions were sometimes turned over, sometimes kept, and the pilgrims were turned over to representatives of the next fort for continued escort on their pilgrimage. Often times, a monastery will be part of a fortress, or close to it, the two groups providing each other with company and essential services.

The forts themselves are often small, housing only ten to fifteen men. Life within the forts is quiet and spartan, dedicated to prayer, patrol and the labors required to keep the fort running. The central feature of the citadel is a chapel to Paladine and Kiri-Jolith, where daily prayer services are held. Within the walls there are also stables, a barracks for the men, quarters for their leader and a hostel for travelers. The buildings simple and the fortifications heavy, but the chapels are often heavily decorated. The members of the Order stationed there often dedicate much of their private time to beautifying their forts chapel, so that in the event clergy, or the Kingpriest himself visit the chapel, they will see the piety of the men who are there, and reward them.

Monasteries:

Istar is the center of the religious world on Ansalon. Consequently, there are homes to followers of most gods within its borders. This changed in the last half-century before the Cataclysm, but prior to that enclaves dedicated to almost any god could be found in secluded, private places. Often time the monasteries are several hours outside of a town, high in the mountains, deep with the humid
jungles or in other areas where people tend to not settle. The life of a monk often requires great time alone or away from the influences of society. This isolation often makes monasteries towns in themselves, with smithies, gardens, granaries and stable facilities. All are run by monks, many of whom gave up professions and careers to dedicate themselves to study and worship. Their unique skills allow them to serve their god by serving their fellow devotees.

Some monasteries welcome travelers, pilgrims and seekers of wisdom, while others guard their privacy jealously, directing visitors to shabby hostel facilities just outside the monastery walls if not turning them away completely. As mentioned above, some monasteries are attached or close to fortresses belonging to the Order of the Divine Hammer. In the last decades before the Cataclysm, when the Kingpriest and his minions turned on other clergy of the True Gods, these groups had strained relations at best, open hostility at worst. In many cases though, the opposing groups grudgingly accepted the other as necessary for survival of their own group.

**Monumental Architecture:**

The heights of Istars might lead her to build many works of colossal architecture—monuments to achievements, might and ominous arrogance. Massive statues of bronze stand over roadways, images of legionnaires and kingpriests, symbolic guardians of the empire itself. The pride of Istar is even found on the waterways, for the river canyon that guards the mouth of Lake Istar is flanked by massive stone carvings. They stand against the walls of the canyon, holding it open as though mortals themselves could keep the planet in its place. Huge archways and walls are found in the cities of the empire, monuments of past achievement both peaceful and martial. They are most common in the inner ring, in the wealthy cities surrounding Lake Istar. The decadence of ornamentation is found everywhere, from fountains to bridge pylons—all depict the glories of Istar and her mortal creators.

**Shrines:**

In addition to temples, the faithful often build shrines to the Gods along the roads of Istar. In many cases the builder claimed to have received a vision in a particular spot and directives to build a shrine there, though their placement along established roads leads one to suspect otherwise. They are usually simple in structure—grottos, caves, cliff walls or roofed wooden structures, and the builder often lives close to the site, to clean and care for it. They usually disdain material comforts, living as hermits or on handouts from pilgrims. The hermits are rarely priests, but always hold their faiths dear, seeing themselves as having an integral place in the gods’ plans. The nature of the site depends on the god it
venerates and the capabilities of the worshipper. The wealthy and constructionally competent build lavish and complex shrines, while the poorer faithful rely on hand-carved wood or stone statues. These sites are also rumored to be able to cause miracles and give visions of the gods.

Throughout the empire’s core there are also shrines commemorating the birthplaces of the various Kingpriests. They are common pilgrimage sites in the empire, some people travelling to at least one every year. Some pilgrims follow a specific route, travelling to the sites in a certain order.

**The Vaults of the Kingpriest:**

High in the Usiah Mountains, west of the inner ring, is the home of the Daughters of the Light. This semi-secret sect is devoted to the worship of Paladine, though they slowly were manipulated and deceived until they became little more than a private harem for the Kingpriests. Their citadel was ancient in the days before Istar, a relic of the fallen High Ogre civilization, though is so heavily modified as to be almost unrecognizable. The remains of many famous religious figures in Istar’s history, including many kingpriests, are entombed within the catacombs. Deeper below these are secret chambers where there is confiscated artwork and texts deemed offensive to the gods. There are even rumors that arcane magical artifacts are held there-bound by powerful magic and fearsome guardians. Thankfully, the mercenaries that slaughtered the female occupants of the citadel did not discover these chambers, for they might have unleashed unspeakable horrors upon Ansalon in their blind greed.

Understanding the significance of the fall of the Vaults to mercenaries in 30PC is instrumental to understanding the final chapter of Istar’s history. The blood spilled there was used by the last Kingpriest to manipulate the people of the empire- to make them believe they were all threatened by the barbarians within their borders. After the anger of the people was stoked, the ranks of the military swelled. Under the banners of the Order of the Divine Hammer, the wars to cleanse Istar of Heretics began.

The Vaults were reclaimed, but became a private retreat for the Kingpriest, manned by warrior-priests of the Divine Hammer, who maintain a penitential vigil upon its walls, payment for their failure to stop the slaughter.

**The Zephaniah Necropolis:**

South of the Vaults of the Kingpriest, on a windswept mountain plateau is the Zephaniah Necropolis. Built in the earliest days of Istar, it contains the remains of all manner of people- from chieftains and commoners to the first kingpriests. It
is a sprawling complex, a true city, for thousands are entombed in its mounts and crypts. It is patrolled by soldiers constantly, for the rich tombs are tempting to looters. Robberies still occur however, usually by corrupt guards or by those who have paid them to look the other way. A small fort sits outside the gates, the home to the legionnaires who walk the silent streets.

The Nine Provinces of the Istaran Empire

Dravinaar (East):

This province is equal parts sandy desert and rugged badlands. There is little water, except during the spring rains, when the dry riverbeds overflow their banks, turning the desert green for a few short weeks. The plants that survive in the dry valleys are scrub grasses and cacti. The very southern tip of the province that surrounds Yandol is a grassy plain, though much has been cultivated by the residents of the area.

East Dravinaar experiences frequent storms, tempests blown in from the Skeleton Coast and the Eastern Courrain Ocean. The vast stretches of flatlands turn seaborne hurricanes into huge dust storms that can bury caravans and small towns in their wake.

Cities:

Yandol

Population: 30000 Resources and Industries: Shipping, Grain Farming

This city lies at the confluence of the Lumogra River and the Sartiel River. From its vantage point on the northern river bank, Yandol controls most of the southern trade that leaves the Istaran Empire. Though it is classified as being part of the backwater of the empire, the city remains important because of its proximity to Silvanesti and other realms. As such, the walled town appears nondescript, but is actually filled with agents from various nations seeking information from and about each other. Yandol is an ancient city, founded long before the empire, and its addition was the result of border treaties, not warfare or referendum. Consequently, its citizens care little for the affairs of empire, though they often unknowingly play host to those who determine it.

Yandol’s role as a trade city ensures that it has a large upper class, who frequent the many social clubs of the city. It is on this neutral territory that emissaries and ambassadors, spies and saboteurs all ply their trade. All of them know why they are there, and they revel in their tasks, playing one against another, using
information to buy more information. Yandol is a vital link in the security chain of Istar, and of many other nations as well. The decadent role-playing and deal-making of the city nobles rivals that of Istar or Silvanost, there is little role for men of arms in the aristocratic city- to resort to violence would invite disaster in ones future dealings. Interestingly enough, people in Yandol seem to have a habit of stabbing themselves in the back or cutting their own throats before they fall into the river in their alcoholic stupor. Coincidentally, agents of the various nations also have a habit of leaving the town at night.

**Attrika**

Population: 10000 Resources and Industries: Glassmaking, sand mining, quarrying, shipping, salt mining

Perched on a mesa at the edge of the Dravinaar Barrens, Attrika overlooks the Western Lumogra River. Along with Losarcum, It is responsible for much of the transport of Istaran goods south into Silvanesti and to the Ansalon coast. The base of the mesa is riddled with caves, the squalid homes for the thousands of slaves who work the sand and stone quarries surrounding the city. Raw glass ingots and quarried sandstone are Attrika’s main sources of income, although shipping has raised its prominence as Istar grew.

The windswept plateau is virtually impregnable, the only route in is a long spiraling road that loops around the mountain twice before it reaches the top. All along the route landslides can be triggered to block the path for invaders. Massive cisterns and storehouses lay underneath the city, protection against the threat of sieges. The Northern edge of the mesa overlooks the river, and a huge water-worn shallow cave serves as the city’s docks. On the banks of the river, terraced fields fed by slave-powered irrigation systems provide much of the food the city needs. What isn’t grown is bought from ports further upriver, sent to Attrika on massive log barges.

The buildings of the city are squat and sprawling, the smooth, squared walls of one providing support for its neighbors. Rarely more than three stories, the stone and mud-brick buildings have tiny windows but their roofs are dotted with skylights and openings, allowing sunlight and air into the central courtyards of the homes.

**Dravinaar (West):**

The Sea of Shifting Sands dominates this western half of this province, its barren sands providing a natural defense against those who would invade Istar. The Devatas River valley, which runs along the western border, is green year-round,
its lush riverside fields renewed annually by the flooding river. It is here that many rare fruits and vegetables, prized in the cities of Ansalon, are grown. The eastern portion, the region surrounding Losarcum, is a red-stone badland, full of deep canyons and rugged plateaus. Little grows here naturally, except after the rainy season. Nomads and raiders stalk the cliffs and mesas, while the camel-riding desert princes traverse the caravan routes across the sandy wastes.

**Cities:**

**Losarcum**

Population: 25000 Resources and Industries: salt mining, quarrying, trade center

Losarcum is a city with a pivotal role in the history of Istar and of Ansalon as a whole. Though it was originally nothing more than a secure trading point for the desert nomads, it assumed importance when the Wizards Conclave built its fifth Tower of High Sorcery there. The trade port was always important regionally, but the construction of the tower and its subsequent destruction placed the city at the center of Istaran politics for a time.

The desert princes rule from Losarcum, nestled safely in its maze-like canyons, controlling all trade that enters or leaves Istar for points south. Traders are usually loathe to risk the perils of the Sea of Shifting Sands, and instead opt to travel on the rivers that lead past Losarcum. The rulers of the city recognize this, and exact tolls, sell supplies and trade goods with all who pass through. The Sartiel River is steep-sided over much of its passage through Dravinaar, offering few spots for safe anchorings or the transfer of supplies. Thus, the rulers of Losarcum can exact whatever price they desire from their customers.

The citizens of the city are very friendly, viewing every traveler as a potential customer. As such, the region around the docks is filled with stalls, carts and wandering merchants, all hawking their wares to sailors and travelling merchants.

The city itself sits on a plateau within a canyon, accessible only by water and through winding paths through the narrow canyon. This only affords access to the outer gates. Beyond these portals, grand facades carved into the rock of the cliff faces, high tunnels lead the traveler up a spiraling road towards the city. Upon exiting the tunnel, the visitor is treated with a breathtaking vista. The canyon walls rise all around, within them sits the city itself, its winding streets and closely crowded buildings slowly rising away from the entryway in a series of terraces. The reddish stone of the desert badlands is carved into all manner of shapes, revering the gods as the desert princes know them, ornamenting every
face of their small city. Beyond the furthest rise, where sits the tower of High Sorcery, the land drops into a steep ravine that leads to the docks and the river far below. Those who would seek to invade the city must come through the ravine or the tunnel, both sites that are easily defended. Losarcum has never fallen to outside invaders, its only troubles come from those that dwell within.

The tower sits on the highest point of land in the city, built there by the Conclave at the invitation of an ancient cheiftain of the desert dwellers who came from a long line of magic users. Though his skills were modest, the Omir Muirtal held wizards in the highest regard, and granted them a haven within his city. Wizards dwell throughout the city, even outside of the tower, tolerated, though still somewhat mistrusted by the citizens.

Micah

Population: 15000 Resources and Industries: Glassworks, river trade

Micah is geographically isolated from much of the rest of Istar. Sitting in an alluvial valley along the Devatas River, it tends to deal with outsiders only rarely. It is the largest of many settlements along the river, all of whom subsist on the crops they grow in the rich soils of the river banks. The other major industry in Micah is the glassworks. The abundance of greenery provides ample fuel, and the Sea of Shifting Sands provides the medium for the artisans. Their delicate work is known across Ansalon, and has made the city’s Glass Blowers guild very wealthy. Though not highly prized in Istar itself, the delicate crystal and glass objects the make are very popular among the elves of Silvanesti to the south, who are their main customers.

The buildings are low and usually only single storied, but the wealthier merchants and glassblowers sometimes build larger homes. Entry to the dwellings is typically through the roofs, access to these being by ladders or stairways. The city is small and unwalled, the desert around the valley being protection enough from invaders by land.

Other Cities:

Felthum

Population: 10000 Resources and Industries: Spices, Corn

Rionis

Population: 20000 Resources and Industries: Corn, Pottery
Falthana:

Falthana is made up of several different types of geography, from the rugged mountains and green hills of the north to the misty jungles of the south and the thin band of arable soil that runs between them. The coats are heavily populated, but the superstitious people avoid the jungles and mountains. The peaks of the Worldscap Mountains, they say, are wandered by the ghosts of the fallen ogres who once ruled there, while the savages of the jungles eat any who wander into their domains. The disappearance of caravans along the roads through the jungles has only added to the fear. Consequently, most traffic into or out of the settled regions of Falthana is by boat. Interestingly enough, it was the presence of the jungle barrier that saved Falthana from complete dominance by Istar. Unknown to Karthay, Istar sent two entire legions by land to subjugate the cities. The armies marched through the jungle, hacking and burning the foliage to build a road for supply convoys. They foolishly destroyed the homes and desecrated burial sites of the jungle dwellers, and for that transgression, they paid a terrible price. The fierce indigenous people of the region attacked them savagely, slaughtering them with poison, traps and nighttime assaults. Weighed down in their heavy armor, the legionnaires were no match for the fury of the natives. Legends persist that some of the soldiers survived, and were adopted into the tribes of jungle dwellers, but on one has ever confirmed this.

Rain falls frequently throughout the region; savage storms are swept in from the seas the that surround it and funneled south into the jungle. The mountains and the Northern regions are otherwise bathed in sunshine, making the air hot and humid much of the time. By contrast, in the south only rarely does the sun break through the clouds for more than a few hours, cooling the air and making it heavy with fog. The rains make the lands very fertile. Even in the high mountains, there is enough pasture for intensive alpine herding. The rains also make the jungles incredibly lush, with the green canopy sometimes rising two hundred feet or more above the jungle floor. There are many secrets buried in the jungle depths, hidden there for millennia.

The rugged northern mountains of the Worldscap Range are among the highest peaks on Ansalon, jutting up out of the seas in a crescent that crosses the peninsula. This was the earliest home of the Ogres, the lofty peaks where they built their kingdoms to reach their parent gods. They were the last of the kingdoms to fall to the human rebellions, forces of change that swept east and west from the Khalkists, toppling the ancient race. The bones of empire sit upon the peaks, abandoned or destroyed, empty of all life. Even animals shy away from them. Some tribes of Ogres still live high in the mountains, though they are hunted occasionally by humans and Minotaurs alike. The Ogres avoid harassing the humans with an almost fanatical paranoia, but they fearful of raising more
organized hatred. Thus, the herders and miners of the region enjoy relatively safe lives, though they are always aware of the shadows of the past looming over them.

Cities:

Karthay

Population: 50000 Resources and Industries: Mining, Dye-making, Quarrying, Logging, Overland Shipping, Alpine Herding

The capital of Falthana, Istars most reluctant province, Karthay is distant enough from its sovereign city that it remains outside of most Imperial politics. This is exactly how its rulers prefer it. After its capitulation in 800PC, the Istarans installed several governors, none of whom served for more than a year. Their terms in office were usually ended by untimely deaths, public disgraces or civil disorder. In the end, the Istarans allowed the Karthayans, and by extension all the cities of Falthana, self-rule, though they must pay heavy tribute to the empire and allow the presence of Istaran Military, lest rebellions brew. The cities agreed to the terms, and consequently, if there is a home for those who would topple Istar, it is probably to be found in Falthana.

Karthay is heavily industrialized; smelters, forgehouses, stockyards and sawmills surround it, the smoke and smells form these sites drifting across the city as the winds shift. There are no human slaves in Karthay, nor in any of Falthana- the citizens of the region know all too well the feeling of being under the heel of another, though they do shackle the minotaurs that inhabit the region. This is more retribution than necessity, for they seek vengeance on their former masters. Farmland surrounds the city as does a vast network of roads into the mountains and jungles. In this way, the Karthayans can rapidly and efficiently exploit their environments. From their clay and metal deposits, Karthay controls the only supplies of the rich royal-blue pigment prized by artisans across Ansalon. Textilemaking and dye-making was another industry Istar had partial control over, but wanted to dominate- thus, Karthay had to be ‘persuaded’ that to become part of the empire was in its best interests.

The buildings are a blend of High Ogre austerity and human ingenuity. The walls are flat and featureless, plastered and whitewashed against the blazing heat of the sun. The roofs are covered in a blue slate common to the region, though this is augmented with painted clay tiles. The end result is that the steeply pitched roofs of the Karthayan style of architecture become intricately patterned works of art, full of geometric designs and symbols.
The city is ruled by a Lord Mayor, who is advised by counselors from industry and the clergy. As a result, sessions of the Karthayan council are never dull, for each counselor tries to bring about misfortune for the others, and profit from it. Their agents live at every level of society, working to fill their masters desires.

Beakwere

Population: 20000 Resources and Industries: Shipping, Spice Trade, Fishing/Whaling, Mining, Shipbuilding

The legendary ships of Karthay are actually built in Beakwere, though the title refers to a time when Karthay was the name of the independent land. The city occupies a long stretch of shoreline, though it in itself is not very broad. As the desire for ships grew, the city spread along the coast, but not further inland. The southernmost quarters of the city are filled with wharves for fishermen and whalers, while the northern reaches are crowded with woodworkers shops and dry-docks, cavernous buildings to build the massive hulls of the Karthayan ships. Most of the shipwrights are Sakai, a group of natives that live along the coasts of northern Falthana. They came to the cities seeking wealth and prestige, given to them by their proficiency with sailcraft of all types. They are secretive about the design principles of their craft, forming a mysterious guild that shipwrights from cities across Ansalon would greatly like to infiltrate. There are many other groups in Beakwere, other guilds and associations, brotherhoods and orders that wield great influence in the halls of power. The fishermen and whalers are one of them. Beakwere is a large city, but has little arable land around it, what does exist is claimed by the spice barons, wealthy aristocrats that would fatten their coffers before their countrymen. Consequently, the majority of Beakwere’s food is imported or caught at sea. This control of food gives the guild, Habbakuk’s Sons, great leverage in pricing and import of other food goods. The spice barons were poor farmers once, peasants that tried to eke out a living on the soils around the city. Their lives were plagued by a weed that grew quickly and infiltrated their fields, usually overtaking and choking out other crops. The weed was pepper. The world of the farmers changed quickly once a desire for pepper was found. Some bought more land, forcing out neighbors and even family, until only four families remained to dominate the trade. Selective breeding allowed each plantation to develop several different types of pepper, all of which fetch high prices across Ansalon. The secrets of the spice trade are well kept, many a Mill-Master has died for too a loose tongue. Istar wanted to gain access to the trade, but without access to Falthana, they had to establish their own trade port. Thus, they built Vellas. The spice barons live on huge estates that virtually surround the city, as well as maintaining apartments or manors within it. Secrecy is paramount to them, their warehouses and mills walled and guarded like small keeps. People disappear in these places, or suffer death under
mysterious circumstances, but the town guard, their purses full, turn a blind eye to it.

Other Cities:

Maeloon

Population: 20000 Resources and Industries: Logging, Fishing/Whaling

Pesaro

Population: 30000 Resources and Industries: Spice Trade, Salt, Fishing/Whaling

Yerasa

Population: 25000 Resources and Industries: Shipping, Shipbuilding, Logging, Fishing, Spice Trade

Gather:

Virgin grassland makes up most of Gather, with the exception of the northwestern shore, the eastern jungles and the Vulpinea Marsh. All manner of animals wandered the unspoiled savanna before the wars of conquest. Prior to the barbarian wars, the lands were largely uncultivated, although the wars in the last decades before the Cataclysm resulted in a huge rush for land in the new province. The western coastal region is a huge marsh, a vast wetland criss-crossed by rivers. The culture of the northwestern coast is very different than the rest of Imperial culture, due mainly to its isolation and colonial origins. The province is hot and dry during most of the year, but spring brings renewal to the dry grasslands, in the form of floods and torrential rains. Hurricanes and cyclones sweep in from the Northern Courrain Ocean raising tall grasses along the northern coastal lands and giving birth to the dense rainforests of Eastern Gather.

Cities:

Tucuri

Population: 60000 Resources and Industries: Salt, Rice, Fishing, Spice Trade, Mud-Brick Making, Clayworks

Tucuri sits on the shores of the Northern Courrain Ocean, the unofficial capital of the region. The city’s origins are lost to antiquity, though its inhabitants are
physically very different from the people of the rest of the empire, which hints at a colonial history. It was only the subjugation of the natives and the conquering of Gather in the Heretic Wars that brought it into the Empire. Built of mud-bricks and wattle and daub plaster, the city is low and sprawling, its narrow winding avenues filled with all manner of stalls and vendors carts.

The flat-roofed buildings vary widely in design, some square, some domed, pyramidal and tiered. All are united by their red-brown walls and white, geometrically-painted designs. The people of this city have not developed the arch, instead using post and lintel structures in their buildings. As a result of the limitations of their construction methods, buildings in the region are only two or three stories tall. The city and its residents do not use glass for windows, instead relying on ornate wood lattices to fill the rounded openings. This allows ventilation and light, while providing protection and privacy as well. The lattices themselves are works of art, their elaborate designs fetching high prices in the decadent inner ring cities.

Over time, as the area surrounding it was explored and the barbarians of the area contacted, the city became a center for sea trade and exchange of ivory. Little organized industry occurs in the city, it is mainly a trade and storage center for raw materials.

The coastal regions east and west of the city are extensively irrigated and cultivated. Rice paddies surround the city to the west, while cornfields stretch out to the east. Along both coasts are salt fields, where tidal pools evaporate into thick cakes of sea salt. Beyond these fields, the land expands into the plains of Gather, vast savanna dotted with small clusters of trees and water holes. Caravans constantly travel to and from the city, along the coast to other cities, and deeper into the untamed heart of Gather to do business with barbarians.

The major feature of Tucuri is the university. Founded by one of the first kings, it is a center for philosophy and learning known throughout Ansalon, and is a popular destination for intellectual pilgrims. Despite its simple surroundings, the university is home to some of the finest minds, who produce many works of metaphysical and spiritual philosophy. The nature of the learning was one of the reasons the Kingpriest sought to acquire the city. Branded as heretics for their studies, the scholars were supposedly deeply involved with forms of magic derived not from the gods or the moons, but from within the wielder themselves. The Kingpriest and his minions, both fearing this power and coveting it, decided to destroy the university and spirit many of the holdings away to the Vaults of the Kingpriest. The siege of Tucuri and the fall of the university in 25PC was one of the darkest days in the intellectual history of Ansalon, second only to the Lost Battles and the persecution of the Wizards Conclave. In that battle, the scholars
and students of the university resisted the besiegers using means both magical and martial, but eventually, they surrendered and the survivors were marched out of the city, never to be seen again. The ruins of the campus sprawl across the western end of the city, the lands never resettled- the superstitious residents of the city are loathe to approach the walled and gated site.

**Vellas**

Population: 20000 Resources and Industries: Spice Trade, Logging, Shipping

Istarans founded Vellas in the sixth century before the Cataclysm to compete with the cities of Karthay as the source for Ansalonian spices. At the time, the region that was to become the province of Falthana was not yet part of the empire, and any sea-bound trade to Istar’s inner ring had to pass through Karthay’s territorial waters. The site, initially chosen for its location, proved unwise as the city floods yearly and is slowly sinking. In their desire to create a stable and secure port, the Istarans brought tons of stone north, stone that proved too heavy for the soft soils of the peninsula. Huge sections of the heavy city walls sank, to such a point that in the last century before the Cataclysm, they became breakwaters for the city harbor. Erosion from logging, the weight of the stone and the overuse of wells have collapsed the ground, the city slowly sinking until the streets themselves flooded in some districts. The subduction of the land proved fortuitous for shipping, as larger ships were able to be towed in closer to the city to offload their wares and take on freight. Much of the lower levels of the city, the basements and first floors of the buildings, are now deep under water, lost to time. The dirty water of the port stains the white stucco walls, marking the tides as accurately as any clock. As the residents adapted to the slowly sinking city and the occasional collapsing building, they built graceful bridges of stone, wood and metal over the canals. Larger ships can access the western position of the city, while skiffs, gondolas and barges of shallow draught ply the canals throughout the rest. Some of the trading grounds are on these barges, huge floating platforms anchored together as movable marketplaces. As in other cities along the spice routes, the merchants control the city, even blocking access to certain parts of the city to foreigners lest they spy on the spice merchants. Small plantations have sprung up in the cleared countryside around the city, where crops of various spices are grown, adding to the city’s wealth. The other major source of income for the city is timber. The jungle hardwoods are cut and floated down the many jungle rivers to the city. The southernmost portion of the city’s harbor is surrounded by sawmills, their products filling caravans bound for all across Ansalon. The logging camps continue to push further and further inland, encroaching on the lands of the jungle natives. They have reacted violently in response to the Istarans actions, attacking caravans and logging camps with savage fury. The Istarans responded by bringing a much heavier military
presence into the region. For the time being, this has stopped most attacks by the natives.

**Aldhaven**

Population: 25000 Resources and Industries: Slaving, Overland Shipping, Quarrying, Bounty Center

Aldhaven has a dubious place in the history of the empire. Sitting among the foothills of the Usiah mountains, it is the final city most people city before they enter the inner ring, the cities that surround lake Istar. It is in these cities that the wealth of the empire is concentrated. Aldhaven acquired its prominence in 94PC, when the Kingpriest placed a bounty on the heads of those races he deemed evil. When a member of any of those races was found they, or their heads, were taken to Aldhaven, and turned in for the bounty. It was not uncommon in the last century before the cataclysm to see caravans headed toward this city, trains of wagons, filled with the living or with the remains of the dead. The grisly trophies were mounted in great cage racks along the central avenue, a testament to the power of the kingpriest, while the living were sent to the inner ring, to the slave markets of the cities there. Aldhaven is known and feared by non-humans, especially its prisons, where the captured await their fate. As mentioned, some are enslaved, while others found unsuitable for work are executed publicly and their remains added to the racks.

The city is small and walled, the buildings inside having red tile roofs and white plastered walls. Fully half of the city, everything west of the racks, is prisons, slave markets and holding pens, heavily patrolled by Warrior-Priests, Solamnic Knights and Istaran Clergy. The remainder of the city, east of the avenue of the racks, holds the temples, and apartments of the bureaucrats and administrators that run the gruesome industry.

**Other Cities:**

**Ghuth**

Population: 10000 Resources and Industries: Corn, Salt, Fishing, Ivory

**Samekh**

Population: 15000 Resources and Industries: Salt, Fishing, Rice
Ismin:

Ismin is mostly broad plains, huge grain and grazing fields that feed the empire. The mountains of the eastern fringes support extensive gem mining, for both precious and semi-precious stones. This wealth gives Ismin more political leverage than a province with its population should have. The senators from Ismin were also the chief opponents to the Heretic Wars, not because they were worried about the tribal dwellers there - rather they were concerned that the presence of another mainly agricultural province would usurp their power. The presence of a usable coast for fishing and shipping was another potential threat to Ismin’s dominance among the provinces outside the inner ring. The roads of Ismin are not as heavily patrolled as Istars, especially when one reaches the mountains. Many a caravan has disappeared over the cliffs or in a blind canyon, its occupants never seen again. Traders and Pilgrims alike travel with weapons exposed in this part of Istar, for the servants of the Kingpriest that are encountered are often servants in name only. A traveler is as likely to be ‘taxed’ or forced to pay a ‘toll’ as they are to be robbed or attacked by raiders. Consequently, most elect to travel unescorted, and take their chances with whoever or whatever they encounter.

Cities:

Edessa

Population: Base of 10000, varies by season (Trading and War Campaigns)
Resources and Industries: Water, Overland Shipping, Trading, Mercenaries

Edessa is an ancient city, and was originally a trade camp for the plains dwellers. The city, known as being the site of the military musters during the wars against the barbarians, sits inside the caldera of a dead volcano. The cone of the volcano itself never formed, instead the volcano burst open on the plains like an open sore, its burning contents spilling out its western edge. It was this natural eruption process that created one of the best-fortified cities in the empire. The lava flow was eventually carved into the grand entryway, while the cauldrons edge was modified into a natural wall, complete with spire towers. Over the centuries the fortifications have been improved, stone being quarried away from the outer walls to steepen them, and brought inside to build the structures of the city. The cyclopean walls are the most prominent feature to the first-time visitor, but by no means are they the only one. The Duapara aqueduct, built in 623PC, runs about forty miles east until it reaches the Devatas River. The aqueduct is a marvel of engineering, made up of several separate pipes, pump stations, reservoirs and catchbasins, all capped with a flagstone road. The entire structure stands forty feet tall and thirty wide, broad enough for caravans to pass in either
direction. In the center of Edessa sits the grand reservoir, a heavily guarded man-made lake to fulfill the cities water needs. Catacombs and sewers are linked to the water system, and the excess and wastes of both are pumped outside the city walls where they have formed a lush field plot west of the city. On both sides of the grand entryway there are camps, where mercenaries, caravans and traders offer their services. Few outsiders are let into the city proper, beyond the massive bronze Setebo Gates.

Those that are allowed entry are ushered into the warehouse quarter and have a ‘guide’ permanently assigned to them during their stay. They are never allowed to remain overnight, for there are no inns in Edessa, only whatever is available outside the walls.

The city is small, but is densely populated, its people crowded into stone tenements five and six stories tall. From a distance, the upper reaches of these structures can be seen over the city walls, and those closest to them often maintain rooftop siege platforms by order of the city rulers. In its long history Edessa has never fallen, even when the aqueduct has been blocked. Its freedom has been maintained by secret tunnels, built into the underground foundations of the aqueduct, that carry water, and in dire times, all manner of supplies, in submerged containers. The existence of this network is known only by the rulers of the city, the grand council. The secrecy maintained by the city on matters such as this is a cornerstone of its security.

All types of goods come to Edessa, as it is one of the few cities on the central plains of Istar that are safe from raiders. Massive warehouses fill one section of the city, close to the entryway, so that trade goods can enter and leave without foreigners seeing much of the city or its defenses.

Edessa was chosen by the Order of the Divine Hammer as a muster site because it is centrally located in the empire, and easily accessible by foreign mercenaries seeking work. From its walls were launched the wars to cleanse the lands of Gather of the heathen barbarians and their false gods. From its walls were hung the bodies of slain chieftains, grisly prizes in a misguided war.

**Jaggana**

Population: 10000 Resources and Industries: Ivory, Exotic Animal Trade

Laying on the edge of the frontier of Gather, Jaggana is a city populated by the seediest folk. Nowhere else in the empire does lawlessness rule as it does in Jaggana. The city is the center of the empires ivory trade, as well as the hub of the exotic fur trade for eastern Ansalon, industries which make it famous and
infamous, depending on who is discussing it. Escaped slaves, mercenaries, disgraced soldiers and poachers call Jaggana home, and this is exactly how the Imperial Court likes it. By leaving the town untouched and its inhabitants unhindered, the Court has created a home for the unwanted. The place has drawn others of its dwellers ilk from elsewhere in the empire, for they know their lifestyles are accepted there, and thus, the undesirables leave ‘better places.’

There are few law-abiding citizens in Jaggana, and even fewer law enforcers. This is exactly how the citizens like it. They live by a harsh code, but it is a code that works. Few live to violate it twice, regardless of their position. Even bureaucrats sent from Istar have fallen victim to Jaggana’s swift ‘justice,’ when they have overstepped the bounds of their power. After a certain point, Istar stopped sending tax collectors out, and started sending caravans full of the unwanted. Turned out on its outskirts, the wretches of the rest of the empire were given what Istar termed a ‘choice:’ freedom in Jaggana, slavery in Aldhaven, or death in the arena. Not surprisingly, the first option was the most popular. The newer citizens quickly find a place in the maze-like criminal city, or just as quickly end up in a shallow grave outside it. Among Kiri-Jolith’s followers, to be given a ‘Jaggana posting’ is slang for an assignment likely to end ones life. They are the only law enforcers of the city, though they are unofficial in their duties. They are not sent there by the Kingpriest or his minions, but rather as a punishment by their own superiors for transgressions and atonement quests. There are a lot of holes in the grasslands, say the priests of Kiri-Jolith. They fill some of them.

Originally a farming community, Jaggana later became the staging ground for many of the land rushes that occurred when Gather was conquered. As the land around it was tamed, hunters began to populate the city, building a thriving and grisly industry. Expeditions now leave the city almost daily, caravans of slaves and wagons, mercenaries and the idle rich, all seeking prize kills or quarry to sell. The animals that are captured are held in massive stockades that surround the city, before finding homes in private menageries, travelling circuses, as work animals, or in the arenas. The huge cages and pens are mazelike, the pitiful cries of their occupants audible even over the city walls at night. The city quickly outgrew its walls when the Kingpriest decreed it as asylum for the unlawful in 84PC. Slums and shantytowns exist alongside the pens, to the wealthy of the city, the occupants of each are little different.

Architecturally the city is similar to distant Tucuri, but its expansions are Istaran in style. Squat, square, mud-brick buildings give way to plastered walls and tiled roofs at random, built for the wealthy when mysterious fires cleared land in the crowded walled city. Tenements and warehouses, built hastily for the rapidly
growing population, fill much of the city, sitting on the former estates of the affluent of the former town.

Jaggana is ruled by several groups, bodies that constantly war against each other, forming alliances and breaking them as daily routine. The hunters, mostly former mercenaries who fashion themselves aristocrats, control the outer portions of the city, while the rest is controlled to varying degrees by crime families, street gangs and smugglers, though the three often overlap. Any business done in Jaggana is done with one of these groups, making every citizen an accessory to some type of crime on an almost daily basis.

The seedy den is also home to cults of Morgion and Chemosh, and a flamboyant temple of Hidduel. The criminals and rogues are always working to ingratiate themselves with these groups, hoping that the potentially powerful aid they might provide could help influence dealings.

The market quarter is the only place in the city where there is some element of order, placed there by Istaran soldiers to ensure that at least marginally fair business dealings are practiced. They care little for the rest of the city, but the market is where outsiders travel when seeking goods, and so they maintain a heavy presence during trading season to ensure economic stability. A buyer can find many things in Jaggana besides animals and ivory-slaves, textiles and other products from across the empire find their way there, usually as part of a raiders plunder. Few of the businessmen in Jaggana’s market come by their stock in an honest way.

**Other Cities:**

**Bael**

Population: 5000 Resources and Industries: Mining, Grain Agriculture

**Mithra**

Population: 10000 Resources and Industries: Grain Agriculture, Herding

**Istar:**

The inner ring is Istars manufacturing and mercantile hub. There is a great deal of farming done here, but the mountains are also mined for precious metals. Each of the cities of the inner ring is famous for dealing with specific raw materials, their industrial complex being built around this specialization.
As it was the original nation of Istar, the province is very similar throughout, especially in aspects such as architecture, language dialects and customs. This is also the most heavily policed province and the most densely populated- its population is more than that of all the other provinces combined. Istaran legionnaires, Solamnic Knights and Warrior-Priests of the Divine Hammer patrol the cobbled highways, protecting the many pilgrims and citizens that travel them. The delta lands around the Southern Gulf of Asapha grow many edible plants, their rarity elsewhere making them highly prized.

Cities:

Calah

Population: 20000 (15000 (Island), 5000 on mainland and tidal flats) Resources and Industries: Fishing, Aquatic Plant Harvesting, Clayworks

Calah is one of the oldest cities in the Empire, built on an island in Lake Istar. The island sits on a tidal flat, which lays exposed during low tide. At high tide, the waters around the city are filled with Calah outriggers, boats with broad pontoons for stability. Some of the city’s overflowing population live on these craft, which settle into the mud at low tide. The flats are filled with edible plants and aquatic life, which provide a large portion of the city’s wealth, in year-round trading.

The city itself is small, mainly due to its island confines. The narrow cobblestone streets twist and turn up the steep slopes, weaving between the labyrinthine buildings. Built in traditional Istaran style, the gleaming white walls and red tile roofs of the buildings are visible from miles away. The island city is accessible by road and water, though the tidal fluctuations hamper traffic from larger lake craft. Most water-borne cargo is brought first to dock facilities on the mainland, known as the Low City, before being sent on to the High City by wagons. Taverns and seedier structures have appeared around the dockyards, havens for a criminal element that the city guard does not let onto the road to the High City. Thieves and their ilk do operate in the High City though, smuggled there by fisherman or in secret panels under trade wagons.

Rumors persist that the island is riddled with catacombs and tunnels, home to entire communities, but no one has ever returned from the sewers to tell the tale, though their bodies, have eaten by something, do turn up in the tidal flats around the island.
Istar


The lordcity of the world’s mightiest empire is a place of many wonders and many terrors. Visitors are rarely treated to the same city that the slaves and servants regularly see. The clergy rule this city above all others, sending innocents to the slave pens for the slightest transgression. The streets are the cleanest of the empire, as befits the city of the Gods. Its broad cobbled avenues are empty of beggars and panhandlers, they are rounded up regularly and taken to shelters where they are fed and their ills healed. Then they are turned over to landowners to work off their debt to the empire. Consequently, few are foolish enough to try to make a living on the streets of Istar.

The Knights of Solamnia make their Eastern Headquarters here, to supplement the Fortress in Taol. It is largely a ceremonial site, more of an embassy than a garrison or fortress- the buildings behind its ornamental wall have no fortifications or defenses, for they rightly believe that none would dare to attack the Knights of Solamnia inside the Holy City. The Order of the Divine Hammer make their home in the eastern end of the city, close to the Gates of Elodor. Their headquarters, the Edificum Justae, sits close to the street, welcoming all that seek justice and wisdom.

Kautilya

Population: 60000 Resources and Industries: Foundries, Mining, Trading Center, Herding

The bronze city is perched on a cliff overlooking the grasslands east of Lake Istar. The site was chosen for protection, as at the time of its founding, the Falthana Giants still lived in the once-forested region. In the last century before the Cataclysm, the rolling grasslands are used for sheep and cattle farming, while the mountains south of the city are mined extensively. Tin and copper are dug out of the mountains and dredged from the nearby rivers to feed the empire's thirst for bronze. Consequently, the foundries and smelters of the eastern city belch smoke during the day, and cast a fiery glow into the night. Their fires are so large that they are visible for miles, the herdsman able to use the light of the city as beacon for their returning charges. The refuse from the smelters is cast into clay molds, which create a glassy black stone the Kautilyans use for the roofs of their bathhouse water-tanks. The baths of Kautilya are legendary across Ansalon, their mists obscuring an entire district of the southern city as their waters are heated.
by the foundries nearby before being piped into the communal pools. There are few class distinctions in Kautilya, the baths have been responsible for their removal. After disease ran rampant through the city in the seventh century PC, it was mandated that all citizens would bathe daily or face expulsion. The overall result was that the miners and the herders rubbed shoulders with the merchants and the nobles in a substitute agora. In time, city life came to revolve around the baths, entertainers performing there, even marketplaces setting up outside them.

Kautilya is known for its bronze foundries, their products sought after throughout Ansalon. The city is built in the Istaran architectural style or red tile roofs and whitewashed walls, these augmented by ornate bronze castings typical to the city. Most buildings have only one or two floors, the pall of smoke from the foundries and smelters hanging just above the roofs. At the foot of the windswept cliffs, a large trade camp sits on the river edge, to receive products from Lattakay and Karthay and send them on to the inner ring. All manner of goods pass through this trading yard, from rock to livestock, silk to slate tiles.

**Odacera**

Population: 70000 Resources and Industries: Trading Center, Clayworks, Shipping, Rice, Mud-Brick making

Sprawling along the southern coast of Lake Istar, the walled city of Odacera is renowned for its fine porcelain and clayware, as well as the rice harvested in the lakeside paddies around the city. Ferries or cargo and passengers cross the lake daily for Istar and Calah’s trade port, and for the riverside trade camp of Kautilya. Ground cargo from Losarcum and the Dravinaar passes through Odacera, as well as from Micah. Much of Odacera is marketplace or factories, the heat from their giant kilns wafting through the city like a dry desert wind. The city also makes some mud bricks, but the prices are usually better for flatware than masonry, so this remains a small industry.

In the western part of the city, the newer part, people make their homes in crowded tenements, while the remainder of the city’s residences are houses of various sizes. The poor make their homes along the walls of the port, though some have even taken to the waters, living in small boats anchored together along the breakwater. The town guard in turn regularly threaten the areas, burning hovels, sinking boats and arresting people. It is their hope that the harassment will eventually drive the urchins to Jaggana and away from their betters in Odacera.
Other Cities:

Biyerones

Population: 25000 Resources and Industries: Logging, Shipbuilding, Shipping, Rice, Flax and Cotton, Textilemaking

Chidell

Population: 50000 Resources and Industries: Trade Center, Shipping, Fishing, Sugarcane, Quarrying, Dye-making

Gamesh

Population: 40000 Resources and Industries: Trade Center, Herding, Cheese-making, Wool, Weaving

Midrath:

Istar's least populous province is mainly grassy hills, misty forest, and jagged mountains. In the Northern tip is the Dragonsmoor Swamp, where the Falthana giants harvest fruits and tubers for trade, while the southern lands are mined and used for pastoralism. Logging was extensive in the area in the past, until the lands of the Falthana began to be encroached upon. The normally peaceful jungle dwellers attacked the logging crews viciously when ancient burial grounds were disturbed, before melting back into the foggy jungles. In response, Istar sent several companies of mercenaries and soldiers, these were found weeks later, their broken bodies hanging from the giant trees along the logging roads. The attacks intensified when the Istarans began to send miners in to explore the mountains, among them the giants sacred pathway to the heavens. These men were never found. In the south, around the cities, the land is covered in rolling hills, cleared for fruit orchards, where much of Istar's produce comes from.

Cities:

Cuda

Population: 15000 Resources and Industries: Alpine Herding, Cheese-making, Fruit Orchards

The city of Cuda is one of only three large settlements in Midrath. Others exist, but they are all in the south, far from the jungles and their fearsome denizens. The city sits upon a rise at the foot of the mountains, walled-in to protect itself
from raids. Throughout its history, Cuda has faced threats from all around, be it Ogres in the mountains, or the natives in the Jungles. Long ago, before the walls were built, the jungles were much closer to the city, and it was plagued by the various jungle dwellers, who raided and killed seemingly for the sheer joy of it. As intense logging continued, the homeland of the Falthana Giants was pushed back, allowing the small town some element of safety—at least for a while. With the natives withdrawn, the Ogres of the mountains capitalized on an unsuspecting populace and began a reign of terror. Istar finally dispatched legions to protect the city and deal with the threat, which resulted in the building of walls. Several hundred years after its founding, Cuda is surrounded by miles of rolling orchards, all belonging to the wealthy families of the city. Once the Ogres were driven out of the mountains, the lush plateaus were found ideal for grazing several different types of livestock, which led to a thriving cheese-making industry among the Cudans. The lands around the city are heavily patrolled by a private army, paid for by the barons that own the orchards, while the city guard patrols the streets within. An Istaran garrison sits on the road between Cuda and Shiv, a sentinel between the two that protects them both, though Shiv needs the aid much more than Cuda.

The city was built on the ruins of an even older site, possibly an Ogre estate or colony, judging by the catacombs that run beneath it. The chambers are far taller than a human, and continue upwards into the mountains, though no one has ever ventured there and returned to tell of it. Architecturally, the city is built in the Istaran style of white walls and red-tiled roofs, though the roof designs are similar to those of Seldjuk, not the cities of the Inner Ring. Even the cyclopean walls are whitewashed, giving their smooth surfaces brightness visible miles away across the rolling hills of southern Midrath.

Shiv

Population: 10000 Resources and Industries: Alpine Herding, Cheese-making, Herding, Quarrying, Logging

Sitting at the foot of the mountains, Shiv is a city under siege. Its people are attacked by the jungle dwellers, mountain monsters, and creatures from the caves beneath the peaks, with frightening regularity. Try as they might, the city rulers have been powerless to stop the attacks. Even the presence of the garrison to the south has not stopped the assaults, and there are those that believe the soldiers presence has intensified them.

Shiv sits upon sacred burial grounds, a fact that continues to anger the jungle dwellers around it. They want nothing less than the destruction of the city, but they lack the technology to do it. Without siege machinery or ladders to scale the
walls, the giants cannot gain access to the wood-and-stone palisaded city. Yet they are seen charging down the darkened city streets bellowing war cries and lighting fires, slaying those that try to stop them. Town guards say that they fight the savages, but their weapons do no harm, the giants have powerful magic to protect them. There are those who say they cannot be killed, that the living do not war with them, for they never make it inside the city. It is the vengeful spirits of the dead, they say, that set the fires and attack the guards of those who desecrate their graves and disturb their rest.

The miners and loggers venturing out of Shiv are under constant guard, even still, arrows and spears hurtle out of the jungle depths to claim them, and it is a common site for ore and lumber wagons to have several shrouded bodies atop them when they return to town. Their palisaded camps are heavily fortified towns in themselves, for they never know when a savage raid could occur. Mercenaries patrol around them constantly and the mining companies pay priests well to remain among the rugged workers and provide their skills in times of need. Novice workers often break under the claustrophobic conditions, and visitors marvel at the grim determination of the workers in the face of the native torment. Drums and horns split the silence of the night, flaming arrows whistle into the camps unprovoked, but the assaults only strengthen the workers resolve to remain.

In the mountains, the goatherders are constantly threatened by goblins, ogres and their ilk, who would just as soon steal a shepherd to eat as their sheep. The shepherds of Shiv are not the solitary herders of other lands- the presence of the monsters prevents that lifestyle. Instead they travel in groups, heavily armed and armored, on sure-footed ponies to flee attack if need be. Sheep dogs and attack dogs, some times as many as five or six for each herder, travel with them, prowling the hillsides and plateaus, their keen senses warning of hidden attackers. The watchful atmosphere extends to their mills in the mountains, which resemble small keeps with their fortifications and guards. Midrath is second only to Gather in its untamed wildness, but it is only a matter of time before the legions come to drive the raiders out. Until then the herdsmen remain vigilant.

**Other Cities:**

**Marl**

Population: 20000 Resources and Industries: Nuts, Tubers, Logging, Gem Mining, Quarrying
Seldjuk:

Istars easternmost province features a variety of environments, ranging from desert in the south to coastal rainforest in the north and east. The grassy plains are a result of extensive logging, the majority of Istars softwood lumber coming from this region. The mountains are also quarried for granite, the foundations of the Kingpriests Great Temple being taken from here. Around Lattakay, vast irrigation projects feed the cotton and flax plantations that provide raw materials for Istars huge textile industry.

The province is ravaged occasionally by hideous creatures that surge out of the surf to wreak havoc on the coastal villages. The Istarans are powerless to prevent these raids, for the monsters attack at night and disappear back beneath the waves, beyond the reach of the servants of the empire. The rare survivors give raving accounts of sickle-clawed monsters and fish-headed men with rows of razor teeth, but there are never bodies to support their stories.

Vast barrier reefs run the length of the coast, chewing the bones of ships fed to them by the terrible gales of the Courrain Ocean. The youths of the coastal villages frequent the shallows in outrigger canoes, diving for pearls, harvesting corals and hunting the exotic sea game of the reefs.

Cities:

_Lattakay_


Lattakay has a long history, being built in the Age of Might by Minotaurs, before being captured by freed human slaves when they rebelled against their Minotaur masters.

One of the largest cities of the empire, Lattakay is also one of the largest cities of Ansalon, and has a vastly diverse economy. This is one of the primary reasons Istar sought to annex the nation of Seldjuk in 730PC.

The plains surrounding the city were clear-cut and plowed millennia ago, and now the forests to the north support Lattakay’s massive shipbuilding industry, the largest in Ansalon. This too was a product of Minotaur influence. These ships ply the seas around Ansalon, fishing, whaling and trading with the people of all nations and races. The warships of Lattakay are second only to Falthana’s in sophistication, placing both former independent nations in direct competition
with Ergoth for domination of the seas. The mines of the region swear fealty to Lattakay in return for her protection from raiders, which further enriches the city. Its mints and treasuries have proven tempting prizes to pirates for centuries, but the city has never fallen to a siege. It came close in 34PC, when a Minotaur fleet blockaded the harbor and troops surrounded the land approaches. Solamnic Knights and warrior-priests of the Order of the Divine Hammer broke the siege, driving the Minotaurs off with their attack.

The shorelines and low fields around the city are extensively irrigated and cultivated, growing primarily rice and other moisture-dwelling crops. As the land slopes gently up away from the shore, the crops turn to fields of grains, corn, and flax. All of the small communities of the area bring their produce to Lattakay for trade, swelling it population in the trading seasons. This overflow population lives in campgrounds to the west of the city, on a broad, raised plot of land surrounded by a moat. The moat occurs naturally, a result of the extensive irrigation in the area, and functions well to both keep traders in and thieves out of the camp. Marketplaces exist in the city, squares and bazaars that the merchants travel to from the guarded camp to ply their trade each day.

One of Lattakay's most prized products is salt. From its docks, huge cakes of sea salt travel all over Ansalon, bringing great wealth to the saltmakers and their families. The salt is collected from huge fields along the shores of the Eastern Courrain Ocean, where it is made in large squared pans several inches deep. When the waves enter, the clay, brick, and stone pans fill with water through several channels along the shore-side. Once full of water, the shoreward drains are blocked, and the water allowed to evaporate. This leaves behind thick plates of sea salt that the saltmakers break up with hammers and picks, and load onto wagons and take it into the city. Some companies sell raw salt in large chunks, while others grind it into granules for sale. Regardless of what type is sold, caravans and shiploads of salt leave Lattakay almost daily, bound for many different distant ports.

The city is built in a similar style to Karthay and the cities of Falthana, a legacy of the Ogre and then Minotaur control of both areas. The layout of the buildings was originally very rigid, of squares and rectangles, the curves of domes and arches being almost non-existent prior to the human liberation. After the former slaves took over, they began to experiment with architecture, creating buttresses, vaults, arches and domes on new and old buildings alike. The walls are whitewashed plaster, many of them being decorated with geometric patterns painted in blue or bas-relief, while the roofs are crowned with blue-glazed tiles or plastered domes and cupolas. Awnings and shutters, in patterns to match the rest of the structure, shield the interiors from the tropical sun, while allowing breezes in to cool the air.
In its past, the city was ruled by a lord mayor, who oversaw a council of representatives from the different districts of the city. After the siege in 34PC, the government was never reinstated. Lattakay is an occupied city, ruled by the Istaran clergy, the Knights of Solamnia and the Order of the Divine Hammer. The Governor of Lattakay, rules both city and province, and attempts to control the guilds that operate within the city.

The trade guilds and some types of clergy are the true powers in the city. In particular, the priests of Habbakuk and Zeboim as well the priesthoods of Reorx and Shinare hold great sway with the populace. They control access to the city and the products she transports, giving these groups great leverage that the minions of the Kingpriest would like to control. Though the occupying forces have tried to control trade, their excessive taxes and monitoring have only encouraged the already burgeoning black market economy of Lattakay. Through the cities catacombs and sewers goods travel by hand or floating pallet, skirting the dockmasters and port authorities and the taxes they levy. Smugglers, when they are caught, are treated harshly, their bodies dangling from gibbets throughout the dock quarter and outside the cities gates. The dungeons of Lattakay, once renowned for being empty of all save the most heinous of murderers or miscreants, are now overflowing with all those the oppressive occupiers deem criminal. Often times these so-called unsavory characters will be hauled away in the dead of night for questioning, their shops and homes confiscated. Soon after, these same homes are burned or become dwellings for agents of Istar, both public and secret. The powers of Istar are slowly working to infiltrate the city and control it, but have had little success in breaking into the close-knit groups.

Zaladh

Population: 10000 Resources and Industries: Gem Mining, Grain Agriculture, Mercenaries

This city is perched on a rise overlooking Huttamay Pass, the only southern overland route into Midrath and the rest of the empire. Most trade into or out of Seldjuk comes through the pass, and heavy protection tariffs are levied on any caravans and travelers. Consequently, this high-walled trading fortress is very wealthy. A thriving gem mining industry and vast grain fields south of the city add to its riches. The dwellings of the citizens have spilled out of the confines of the walled city, causing much tension as arable land is used up for new dwellings and farmers have to travel further from the city to do their work.

Zaladh was built upon and in the style of the High Ogre cities in the ruins around it, though over time the human occupants and their Minotaur slaves
have embellished the stark architecture. The gray stone walls are decorated with white-painted geometric patterns and the human added tile roofs are glazed in blue, matching the style of Lattakay.

Other Cities:

Tailyon


Taol:

The hills of Taol are famous for the wines they produce, while the mountains are known for the wool and meat produced by the Taoli herders. Many crops are grown throughout the province, the lush soils being suitable for numerous varieties of grapes, olives and dry climate fruits. The southern portions of the province, around the Devatas River, produce abundant amounts of coarse clays in a variety of grays, whites and reds, depending on their exact locations. They are less expensive and of a more robust quality than those made in Odacera, but are very popular due to their affordability. The cities of Ideos and Kriath are known for their clayworks, for they produce highly durable objects for the transportatoin and storage markets, not just home use.

The people of this land speak a mixture of Solamnic and Istaran, indicators of their heritage as colonists and eventual subjects. Their mixed backgrounds often causes tension with other Istarans, who regard them as half-breeds and potential traitors to the empire. It was the rich Solamnic heritage of the area and its Istaran ties that made the Knights of Solamnia choose it as their Eastern Headquarters.

Cities:

Govinna

Population: 80000 Resources and Industries: Grapes, Wineries, Olives, Olive Oil, Quarries, Grain Agriculture, Dye-Making, Clayworks

The cities of Taol are heavily influenced by Solamnia in their style, of stone lower levels and whitewashed upper levels, originally brought to the area by immigrants after the Rose Rebellion and the War of Ice Tears. Govinna is the oldest of these cities, founded in about 2000PC, even before Istar became a single nation. The city is roughly circular, the Hizarbin River running through its heart, leading south to its sister city, Ideos. It is renowned for its wineries and
vineyards, their vintages fetching high prices throughout Ansalon. Even the Silvanesti purchase the high quality wines from this region. In the mountains north of the city stone is quarried for use in construction and paving. The gray stone of the mountains has little in the way of aesthetic appeal, thus it is used mainly for functional architecture. Stone from Govinna is used throughout the western empire as building foundations, for fortifications and in industrial construction. Govinna’s place in Istaran history would be secure just through its industrial capacity, however, its role in the religious history of Ansalon is also significant. In the last century and a half before the Cataclysm, Govinna was the home of Puscenkyn and his successor, Theorollyn III, self-declared Kingpriests. The presence of the two kingpriests, regardless of their veracity, resulted in many temples being built in the region. Churches and temples of Paladine dot the city, the green copper of their roofs standing out against the somber slate and thatch of the other buildings. The temples rise higher than most buildings, their roofs kept low to conserve heat in the sometimes cooler province. Taol is the only Istaran province to receive snow, a result of the close mountains and their effect on climate. The other important building of the city is the pantheon, an ancient temple dedicated to all the gods, regardless of their nature. Candle-lit religious processions fill the narrow streets of Govinna at night, leading alternately to the temples, the tombs of the Kingpriests or the pantheon itself. The eastern city is used mainly for commerce and industry, the artisans and craftsmen making their homes there, while the western city, across the river, is filled with temples, estates and homes, the gated dwelling place of the wine barons that run the city. Much of the employment comes from working their fields or their quarries, or in the massive wineries they maintain. The gap between poor and rich is never more evident than at sunset, when the exhausted workers shuffle home from the vineyards and their masters ride past them in coaches.

Ideos

Population: 50000 Resources and Industries: Trade Center, Grapes, Wineries, River Trade, Herding, Dye-Making, Clayworks

Situated at the source of the Hizarbin River, Ideos is a large city of wineries and clayworks. The hills around it are heavily cultivated, filled with row upon row of grapevines, all the product of selective breeding. The riches generated by the wines has made the city disproportionately wealthy. The poor of Ideos are the middle-class in the rest of the empire. The banks of the river provide a rich white clay, used extensively in ornate pottery, flatware and paint pigments. These industries are small compared to other cities, but are in gaining in popularity because of their affordability. The city outgrew its walls ages ago, but being part of the empire, its citizens had little fear of invasion and never built new ones. The
Wineries and warehouses fill walled districts, one for each of the five large families, guarded by mercenaries that have served the houses for generations.

Guilds control this city. They in turn are controlled by the priesthood of Shinare, who control much of the transportation of goods on Ansalon. The wineries are held by differing families who founded the city in about 500PC as a center for herding. The rich soils quickly induced the change from sheep herding to agriculture, which flourished after the clergy of Paladine made the Ideon vintages the official sacramental wine in their ceremonies. The families each maintain fields and wineries, along with private bands of soldiers to provide security. The rivalry is so heated between the houses that raids on each others fields, caravans and wineries are common. The workers of Ideos are treated much better than in Govinna, with good reason. The workers in Ideos are part of a guild, as such, if they are mistreated by employers, they are free to quit and seek employment with another house. The busy harvesting and pressing seasons ensure that workers are always employable, so everyone constantly tries to lure workers away from each other in hopes of sabotaging or slowing production of a rival. There is little open conflict in Ideos, but there are many shadowy deeds done in the dark of night.

Ideos is home to the auxiliary headquarters of the Solamnic Knights, the Citadel of Bohemund. From this huge fortress—rivaling Vingaard Keep in size, the Knights administer their forces in Eastern Ansalon. The Fortress itself is not part of the city, but is rather a city unto itself, with its own gates and entryways. The portals to the city stand open much of the time, allowing the citizens and knights unobstructed passage. Consequently, many of the senior Knights maintain manors within the city or estates around it, and the Solamnics can be found throughout the city. There is already a great deal of tension in the city between the Knights and the Istaran Legions in their Bastion. The Legion resented the status granted the Solamnics by the Kingpriests, while the Solamnics look down on the career soldiers as little more than mercenaries. They waged constant public and private campaigns of slander and disrepute against each other, factionalizing the city and its residents.

The tension between the two groups was only compounded by the arrival of the Order of the Divine Hammer and the Warrior-Priests of Kiri-Jolith. Though the Knights also worship the Horned God, they do not share the warrior-priests philosophies or holy abilities. Differences of opinion at political functions have more than once boiled over into armed confrontations. The Legion welcomed the arrival of the warrior-priests, hoping that they would equalize the power base in the city and the empire as a whole, but soon found that the Order of the Divine Hammer was even more fanatical than the Solamnics. The Sons of Kiri-Jolith were granted even greater power by the Kingpriest, who placed them at the head
of both the Legions and the Solamnics Knights stationed in the Empire. All three
groups eye each other with suspicion, though the public favors the dedication to
service that the priests display. This displeases the Solamnics who worry that
they are losing their heroic status in the eyes of the people.

Other Cities:

Kriath

Population: 15000 Resources and Industries: Coal-Mining, Grain Agriculture,
River Trade, Clayworks

Strath

Population: 20000 Resources and Industries: Alpine Herding, Copper Mining,
Cheese-making

Tamesh

Population: 20000 Resources and Industries: Coal-Mining, Herding, Cheese-
making, Dye-making
Part 3: Peoples of the Empire

Citizens:

The people of the empire are not evil in the true sense of the word. Rather, they are infected with a dangerous sense of manifest destiny, that Istar should rule the continent and eventually the lands beyond. This misguided righteousness clouds their collective judgement, resulting in the characteristic Istaran arrogance. The population of the empire is exceedingly racist- they believe that the problems of Ansalon’s past have been brought on by the other, lesser, races. This attitude is also fostered by the politicians and clergy, who see themselves as the most favored of the Paladine, the most entitled to work his will and establish a heavenly kingdom in the realm of mortals. Dissenters to this view are quickly silenced.

Through careful manipulation and propaganda, the upper echelons of Istaran power have molded the people into zealous patriots, willing to die for Istar and her leaders. In their religious fervor, the Istarans have come to believe that they have a gods-given task of saving a flawed world from itself, that theirs is the duty to wipe away the darkness that stains the mortal world, leaving only a realm of light and goodness.

Slaves:

The slaves of Istar are a myriad lot. They come from many races and many cultures, but they have one thing in common- they have wronged the mightiest empire of Ansalon. Accidents of birth, crimes against the state; in some cases, even presence within her borders is enough to earn an unfortunate their shackles. They perform the majority of the labor in the empire, giving them a decidedly short life span. Istars slaves work at all levels of society, some living lives so privileged that they almost forget that their lives belong to another. Some live on estates with their masters, while others huddle together in shantytowns outside of the cities’ walls. In this way, the unsightly slaves are kept from the view of the more civilized people. They are overlooked in society, their presence forgotten- consequently, the slaves of the upper houses hear much, far more than they let on, while those of the lowest levels are little more than vermin.
Istaran Legions:

The military arm of Istar is her legions, soldiers armed and armored in bronze, stationed throughout the empire. Once the proud domain of career soldiers and future politicians, the legions of Istar have descended to little more than organized banditry. In the last two centuries before the Cataclysm, the power-hungry Kingpriests worked to swell the ranks of the legions, emphasizing quantity over quality. The training of the soldiers remains the same, but no longer do they have the same ethos of duty and honor. This is typically earned over years of service, from officers and colleagues that exemplify it. Individuals of this type became fewer and fewer as manipulation placed the greedy in the positions of power; not those who were best suited for the tasks. The Knights of Solamnia trained the Istaran legions and lead them in battle, though this changed with the advent of the Order of the Divine Hammer. As the Solamnics began to voice opposition to the will of the Kingpriest, Istar needed stronger armed forces of its own. Under the command of the warrior-priests, the legion’s ranks grew further, swelled with less than ideal members. The quality of character declined over centuries, playing into the hands of the powers of Istar, for the soldiers were obedient, but not particularly moral, both highly desired for the wars that were to come. They were mercenaries acting as career soldiers, and behaved as such. In the last century, wars between the rival Kingpriests had slain many of the young legionnaires and their most capable commanders, leaving a depleted, fragmented army of mediocrity. This trend of weaker military personnel rotted the army from within, and by the time of the last Kingpriest, the legions are havens for the lazy and inept, the vicious and the cunning— all looking out for themselves. The camaraderie so typical in an effective force is absent in the armies of Istar.

Solamnic Knights:

The Knights of Solamnia are generally highly regarded in Istar. Leading groups of Legionnaires, they have patrolled the roads and borders of the empire for centuries. They provided leadership and training where Istar provided troops; consequently, the tactics of the Istarans are very similar to those of Solamnia. The powers of Istar are more than willing to tap the skills of the pompous Knights, learning from them what they desire, while discarding the constricting codes of conduct. The Knights fail to see this, instead believing that the Istarans will see the wisdom of Solamnus’ teachings in time.

The Knights speak highly of their own history, their present reputation standing on the accomplishments of the past. Many of the senior knights hold titles in Istar, as petty lords or barons, maintaining estates given in recognition of centuries of service. Some Solamnic families have been split or been transplanted
to Istar, having not visited the lands of Solamnia in decades. They still speak fondly of Solamnia, quoting poetic epics of old though many have likely never seen their ancestral homeland.

The Knights held their position of privilege for several centuries, but as the leaders in Solamnia voiced disapproval of the Kingpriests methods, the status of the Knights subtly changed. The rise of the Order of the Divine Hammer brought the changing military structure of Istar to the fore. The warrior-priests assumed a role of public service and heroism previously held only by the Knights, and as the members of the order spread into other lands, the Knights began to grow alarmed at the loss of their prestige. Pride roused the jealousy of the Knights, and tensions between the two group’s rose.

In the last three decades before the Cataclysm, the Knights are no longer proud and boastful, instead, they are suspicious and aloof, impatient with the flippant Istarans who disregard their centuries of work and laud the efforts of the fledging warrior-priest order. The resentment only grew as the Knights were displaced as the commanders of Istars armies and the people of the empire began to forget them. As young Solamnics began to leave the Knighthood for the Order of the Divine Hammer, the distrust and resentment turned to anger. The stage was set for violent clashes between the two orders.

**Indigenous Peoples:**

Aside from the city-dwellers and other citizens of the empire, there are numerous groups of humans that live throughout Istars provinces. These groups are geographically specific to the areas they are found in, as they are products of their environments. Their technology and social systems vary wildly, but there are similarities between groups that were once more closely related. Generally they make use of bone, stone, horn, and teeth in creating tools, supplementing this with wood or metal that is traded or taken from ruins. They practice Shamanism, a form of spirituality that seems crude to outsiders, but is in fact as complex as the priesthoods of the cities. Their gods and otherworldly powers are no different, except in that natives often worship beings that combine two gods traditionally known as separate entities or divide one being into multiple aspects. Their practices are at times distasteful to outsiders, a misunderstanding that the Kingpriests and their agents have used to turn public sympathy against the ‘heathen barbarians.’ Their families and social structures are very different from traditional Ansalonian cultures, often comprising several generations, confusing rules regarding descent and marriage and strange customs concerning the roles of men and women within the cultures. Simply put, the indigenous peoples of Istar are different from the city-dwellers. The Kingpriest however, would have the city-dwellers believe that they are better than the natives, that they are the
chosen of the Gods and that they should ‘save the wayward children from
themselves’ by enlightening them. Failing that, the heathen beliefs are an affront
to the gods and should be wiped out.

_Dravinaar (East and West):_

The desert and badlands of this region are mainly uninhabited. Where people do
gather, it is at oases to trade. The Dravinaar Desert is ruled by the desert princes,
the chieftains of camel herders and horsemen that traverse it. They are wealthy
by any standards, clothing themselves in voluminous fine silks and adorning
themselves in ornate jewelry. The harshness of their realm tans them
permanently at a young age, giving even children wizened appearances. The age
and status of an individual is evident from the tattoos on their face and forearms,
each denoting accomplishments and titles. The groups are family based, and
comprised of roughly forty to sixty individuals.

While the sandy deserts are home to the desert princes, the rocky badlands are
ruled by the Dravina, fierce bands of raiders that live high in the cliffs and
canyons, disdainning cities or constructed dwellings. Their groups are small,
containing no more than thirty individuals, and each group has a fierce
allegiance to its animal totem. Little is known of their social structure, the scribes
of Gilean from the Great Library who attempted to make contact with the group
were never seen again once their caravan left Losarcum. Dravina raiders
supposedly have numerous divinatory and sacrificial practices that they engage
in frequently. The residents of Losarcum and other settlements of the badlands
tell stories of these gruesome acts, of night fires atop distant mesas and chanting
echoing through the canyons and gorges.

The raiders typically attack settlements at night, although daytime strikes on
caravans are not unheard of. Wearing sand-colored hooded fur robes and wood
masks of their totems, the Dravina seem to appear from thin air, and fade away
almost instantly when they finish an attack. Any wounded raiders that cannot
escape commit suicide by weapon or hunger strike, preventing questioning. Try
as they might, the Istarans, desert nomads and residents of Losarcum have never
been able to locate the raider groups current homes, only abandoned dwellings.

The totems that the groups revere are of many types- some reptilian, some avian,
some elemental and even a few supernatural patrons. Regardless of the type, the
groups have many shamans among them, beings that appear to wield potent
magical abilities. The masks they wear are very ornate, evidence of a high degree
of manufacturing skills, which makes the absence of permanent dwelling sites all
the more puzzling. Weapons of the raiders vary, but typically they wield a stout
staff with several spikes at one end. This is used varyingly as a club, quarter-staff
and spear, as well as an acrobatic aid when the agile bandits mount a settlements
fortifications.

**Falthana:**

There are many types of terrain in Falthana, including semi-temperate rainforest,
jungle, mountains, plateaus and coastal lands. The size of the province and its
distance from the imperial core and other civilized lands have allowed a variety
of native cultures to form and flourish, though they, their homes and their ways
of life are under constant pressure from the expanding sedentary population.

The forests of the Northern coast are home to the Sakai, native fishermen and
whalers renowned for their skill and their sailcraft. The Sakai live in raised
longhouses that run parallel to the seashore, their roofs standing strong against
the winds and storms of the Courrain Ocean. Sitting four to five feet off the
ground, the longhouses hold as many as seventy people, and so a village usually
has no more than three or four of the structures. As they use no metal, the Sakai
build their homes with lashings of wood and skins. The longhouse frames are
made from the hardwoods of the deeper forest, cut into planks and beams, while
the longhouse walls and roofs are woven from the abundant grasses and split-
bamboo of the coastal regions. They are sophisticated in design, with shuttered
windows, roof drains, and stone fireplaces to drive out the dampness. There are
other structures in the villages, most importantly, the gathering hall. In this
massive domed hall, fifty to sixty feet high at its center, the group gathers around
the chief to resolve disputes, receive blessings for upcoming hunts and trips to
sea. Only the portion behind the throne has walls, which are decorated with
relics and treasures of the kings- the remainder of the hall is wall-less, open to
the sea breezes. In the center of the dome hang great images of sea creatures,
stylized whales, fish and creatures of the deep. They are made of reed frames
and animal skins, painted into the desired patterns. To the Sakai, the sea is all,
the sea is their home, though for sins in their past, they were cast out upon the
lands to survive. The huge figures that hang over the court of the king represent
the gods and powers of the sea, as well as their children. The Sakai ships are
small and high-prowed, with stabilizing pontoons extending on both sides. The
lateen-rigged crafts hulls are dug out of massive tree trunks, as are the pontoons.
On top of this they use reed and bamboo to construct high forecastles for
harpooners and covered oar-banks for the rowers that help propel the ship in
whalehunts. Captains of ships and harpooners have prominent roles in the Sakai
culture, their tattooed bodies describing the glories of past hunts and their
lineage. The Sakai belief is that they come from the sea and shall one day return
to it- as such, they associate family totems and lineage’s with the creatures of the
sea. A member of a particular totem is forbidden from harvesting members of its
own totem animal, for it is seen as eating ones own kin. The punishment for
breaking this or any of the major Sakai laws is expulsion from the totemic group and the attachment of a land animal totem to a person. When this happens, their tattoos are defaced and a land animals image is scarred onto them, marking them permanently. These individuals become second class citizens of the society, serving as slaves or servants to the true people. They eat only after all others have eaten, they may never again enter the longhouse of the totems, but more importantly, they are forbidden from ever again putting to sea. To the Sakai, this is a fate worse than death, for it means that when one dies, they will never return to the lands of their ancestors, never reach the afterlife and must wander the earthly forever. Only when a great quest, set out by the king, is completed, will they be allowed burial at sea, though the prohibition in life still stands. These outcasts live in small lean-to’s at the villages edge, the closest they are allowed to come during the night. In the daylight, they have freedom of movement, except entry to the longhouses, but they can never make eye contact with members of their former home totem.

The Sakai are short and lean, their nut-brown skin covered in tattoos regardless of gender. While the men spend their time whaling and fishing, the women tend massive kelp-beds and harvest aquatic plants close to shore in flat-bottom skiffs. Both wear little more than loincloths in the tropical heat, these made from woven plant fibers and decorated with shells. Some of the women also spend their time diving for pearls, harvesting coral and shells, and prying loose shellfish for food, except if they are of a totem that prohibits it. The king of a Sakai village has many wives, though they are married in title only. The women generally choose who they will marry, which is subject to the approval of the males mothers and sisters. Once married, the couple moves into the longhouse of the male, taking status as the lowest ranking female of the groom’s family. During the marriage ceremony, the king and the groom are both married to the woman, giving every married woman in the village the status of queen. The eldest females are also the only shamans of the group, and act as advisors to the king on all matters. He has a council of warriors to advise him also, and in matters of great import, he will hear the words of both in the audience hall, then put to sea to hear the words of the gods and ancestors, then return to the village to render a decision.

Some groups of Sakai venture inland to harvest foods from the forest, but in general, they avoid the depths of the rainforest and the denizens that dwell there.

The jungles of the Falthana Basin extend into Midrath, and are home to the Falthana giants, a race of nomadic eight-foot tall humans. They are described in detail below in the section on the indigenous people of Midrath. They once ranged across both provinces, but their numbers have dwindled.
Gather:

Gather has one of the most diverse environments in the empire, ranging from coastal forest and swamp, to rainforests and grasslands, all of which are inhabited by so-called barbarians. The jungles of Eastern Gather are home to the Ishana, scattered tribes of matrilineal hunter-gathers and occasional plot farmers. The olive-skinned tribesmen live in groups of about thirty people, all of common ancestry. Upon reaching marriageable age, the males leave the group to find a mate in a neighboring tribe. In this way all the females of a social group are interrelated, it is the adult males that are migratory. The loincloth-clad Ishana live a semi-nomadic lifestyle, clearing a jungle plot to build crude huts and plant their crops. Within a few years, the soil is exhausted and the group abandons the site to find another. In addition to hunting, gathering and crops, the Ishana also fish on the many rivers in the jungle, and harvest waterside plants. The increase in trade between Vellas, Aldhaven and Biyerones resulted in two roads being carved through the jungle, which greatly altered the lives of the jungle dwellers. With the coming of the city-dwellers, there also came occasional slavery. The Ishana responded to the abductions with raids on trade caravans. Their wooden spears and blowgun darts are coated in various poisons, some lethal, some merely to incapacitate. The objects stolen from caravans have done much damage to traditional Ishana culture, especially the use of metal tools. Elaborate rituals had formed around finding the right tree for specific tools and the fabrication of these items. As metal tools tend not to wear out or break as often as wooden tools, entire areas of the Ishana belief system are disappearing. Some have even left their groups, travelling to the cities around the jungle, offering themselves as guides and harvesters of the jungles exotic plants. While some have been hired, many are also enslaved. As a group, the Ishana are generally peaceful, except when it comes to the Tessawi, another native group that they call ‘the night demons’. These groups fight often, over land, food, and water.

The other threat that faces the lifestyle of the Ishana is the growing presence of Istaran loggers, who clear-cut areas, which allows the soils to wash away. The logging reduces the area where the Ishana can potentially live, a fact that the natives are not happy about. They respond to the presence of the loggers in various ways, ranging from nuisance harassment and theft to outright attacks. Sometimes they steal workers’ food, sometimes they take saws and axes, and in rare cases they kidnap workers and deposit them near towns at the jungles’ edge. The loggers respond in similar non-lethal ways, though deaths have occurred on both sides when tempers have flared. Emissaries from the Ishana have made some efforts to teach the loggers about better ways to harvest the trees, methods that allow forest regeneration, but so far their lessons have fallen on deaf ears. A sense of urgency builds in their messages, for they fear the consequences if the loggers anger the capricious spirits of the rainforests.
The Ishana share their jungle home with the Tessawi, a group of tree-dwelling, albino hunter-gathers, all of whom are under four feet tall. They are a group of nocturnal, nomadic humans, who live mainly off small animals, fruit and insects. A highly social and friendly people, they are shy when dealing with outsiders and prone to rapid exits. They spend much of their time in the dense jungle canopy, sleeping on leaf and grass beds high in the boughs of trees. Their weapons are simple, consisting of blowguns, throwing sticks, bolos and long thrusting spears, which also double as balance sticks when they run along tree-limbs. Clothing is of little use to the Tessawi, they tend to wear only a string belt or harness for weapons over their painted bodies. Their groups are kin-based, but are led by males- unlike the Ishana, it is the females who leave the group. Raiding is common between Tessawi groups, to steal food, talismans, religious artifacts and women. By the later stages of their lives, some women have lived in five or six groups and borne children in each. The Tessawi were the first peoples encountered by the road-building crews, who reacted violently to the strange little people who dropped into their work camp in the middle of the night. The agile Tessawi are popular as slaves, especially in the mines of the empire and consequently their numbers are in decline.

They are age-old enemies of the Ishana, though the two groups will rarely attack each other. Confrontations or wars usually consist of shouting matches, taunts and object throwing, where the ‘armies’ line up across from each other and take turns in an orderly fashion. Scribes of Gilean describe the process as more of a symbolic ritual performance than a war or a battle, for the display often ceases if an individual from either side is hurt. When it is not a time of war, the tree-dwelling Tessawi torment the Ishana by throwing things down upon their villages, to collapse the roofs of the thatch huts. The Ishana react by aggressively hunting and killing any Tessawi they can find. Their heads are often tied in trees surrounding Ishana villages as warnings.

The plains of Gather are home to groups of horsemen, nomadic hunters that follow the herds during the dry seasons. During the wet seasons, they retreat to high ground and build semi-permanent dwellings. By the beginning of the last century before the Cataclysm, some have begun to engage in pastoralism and limited agriculture. Their homes are seasonal though the sites are permanent, and they migrate from one site to the next as the season changes. In the areas closer to Aldhaven, Tucuri and Jaggana, some have made settlements, wood-palisaded villages with wattle and daub houses. They are a patriarchal society, though a members lineage is traced through their female relatives. The women of the tribe rarely ride into battle, though they are responsible for breaking, breeding and training the horses the group rides. While the males are hunting the myriad of game the savanna offers, the women are also engaged in the gathering of roots, tubers and the harvest of termites from the giant hives that
dot the grasslands. The acts of the women are generally social tasks performed in
groups. Consequently, the women of the tribes are the storytellers and shamans,
the makers of tools and the raisers of children.

Along the northern coast, the Vulpinea Marsh is home to the Nauru, a migrant
group of dark-skinned hunter-gatherers who live almost exclusively on the
waters in flat-bottomed skiffs and barges. Over the time they have been in the
swamp the group has fissioned several times. Consequently, the groups are
loosely structured, the young males and females migrating between groups to
find suitable mates. There are only four or five groups of Nauru, each numbering
no more than fifty individuals, as once a group reaches about one hundred
people, it splits into two. A headman or chief controls the group, determining the
route taken throughout the swamp. The name given to him, Lofanga, bears a
strong resemblance to ancient Ergothian, specifically the title of captain. This
lends further credence to the theory that the group is descended from survivors
of a wrecked Ergothian colony ship from ancient times. A Lofanga is advised by
a shaman, Rotuma, who consults the stars and the natural world for wisdom
about which way is best to go. He performs elaborate rituals involving liquid-
filled bowls, and ceremonial maps, all to advise the Lofanga well. The people of
the group respect the Rotuma’s knowledge, but do not like the authority he
wields with the Lofanga.

The rarity of dry land makes it necessary for them to wander the rivers of the
marsh, sleeping, gathering and hunting from their watercraft. Their finely built
barges are often seen traveling down the coast to Tucuri, where they take part in
the great bazaar on the waterfront. Once there they sell the exotic animals they
capture, sometimes as food, sometimes as pets or menagerie creatures. They also
trade herbals and medicinal plants, procuring supplies for their families in the
swamp. Many sailors who see the barges they build try to buy them, recognizing
the quality and skill of their construction, but it is forbidden for a Nauru to sell
one. The barges, or Tumotu, are dwelling places for ancestral spirits, the ashes of
whom are mixed into the paints they cover them with. The Nauru believe that
their ancestors protect the craft- and the destruction of one is an occasion of great
sorrow, commemorated with a funeral and a sacrificial fire. In this fire, the craft
is burned, and the ashes mixed with the paint destined for new craft, that the
ancestors might steer the new craft as well as they did the old. Sometimes the
Nauru build platforms in the trees of the swamp, but these are mainly religious
structures, where sacrifices can be left for the spirits that rule the swamp.
**Ismin:**

Much like the province of the capital, Ismin is empty of ethnic groups, likely because it was the two central provinces that allied together to form the heart of the future empire. The grasslands are cultivated almost completely, and are dotted with towns and farms across their great breadth.

**Istar:**

Much of the province of Istar is empty of indigenous peoples, they have long since been assimilated into the general population. However, the jungle that sits across the bay from the Jungles of Sadrahka is home to the Epushi, a group that long ago split form the Ishana of Sadrahka. Their family structures are almost identical, as are their technologies, though the Epushi take to the waters more often, poling along in their dugout rafts seeking trade from passing ships and to spearfish in the bountiful rivers of their jungle. The also make forays into the swamp to the northwest of their homeland, traversing the great lake to harvest the exotic swamp fruits and herbs. They practice the same migratory subsistence farming as the Ishana, though their family groups are smaller, making the compounds cleared for planting smaller as well. The Epushi have the same troubles with loggers and other industries that the Ishana have had, although the Falthana giants have proven to be valuable allies. Between them, the two groups have proved to be very troublesome opponents for the forces of Istar to subdue.

**Midrath:**

The province of Midrath is the least settled of the Eastern provinces. The resistance of the various native groups, as well as the hardness of the jungles themselves have made the process of ‘civilizing’ Midrath long and difficult.

The expansive jungles of Northern Midrath are home to the Falthana Giants, a race of eight-foot tall humans, living in tribes of several hundred individuals. They defy the laws of the empire, crossing the provincial borders into Falthana and back into Midrath regularly. Feared throughout the eastern empire, the fierce jungle dwellers are one of the few groups that have stood against Istars armies and emerged victorious. They subsist on fruits and tubers harvested from the jungle, as well as numerous types of small game.

The giants live in wood palisaded villages, of tall, cylindrical mud-brick homes. The secretive Falthana’s villages are well guarded, the only non-tribe members who have ever been inside one are scribes from the Library of Palanthas. In their ethnographies they describe that the Falthana live in a patrilineal society, though they have strong matrilocality marriage practices. This tradition of sons going to
live with the tribe of their wife leads to frequent alliances of villages, as several intermarriages will bind the groups together at multiple levels. Even stranger is their practice of polygamy, which means that a male spends much of his time travelling to the tribes of his wives. The beads worn in their hair indicate the number of children they have sired, and it is not uncommon for a man to have dozens hanging in his long black hair. While the men are responsible for all food-getting, the women of the tribe spend much of their time weaving clothing and crafting the long spears the tribesmen wield. The presentation of one of these spears is a significant event in a male's life—he receives one from his mother upon entering manhood, one from his wife upon marriage and at the time of his death, one is made for him by his eldest daughter. In a Falthana male's funeral, the body is wrapped and placed high in the trees, while for females the body is wrapped and placed within a hollow tree. Once the bodies have decomposed, the remains are buried in long mounds that crisscross the jungle floor. The Falthana defend these burial grounds vigorously, attacking trespassers on sight.

The center of Falthana religious belief is Magani-kuto, a sacred mountain, which in their click-tongue translates to ‘souls stairway.’ It is here they say that the souls of the departed leave for their journey into the afterlife, and the souls of the newborn travel down into the mortal realm. Their beliefs in reincarnation and an afterlife are a result of the high mortality rate their children have, four of five dying before age ten from disease, animals, or injury. For every child that dies, a mother ties a white bead into her single long braid. Elderly woman often loop their grayed braid about their shoulders, its white beads clicking as they walk. Mourning is brief for the Falthana know that a soul only enters the other realms to consult with the spirits upon their failings and to be instructed in the mysteries of life. When they re-enter the world, this knowledge is buried deep within them, being released only if the time and conditions are right. In this way, any person of greatness is seen as the rebirth of a past person of import, while those who are not heroes or leaders are revered as people of great wisdom at their death. No one in Falthana society leads a life of insignificance— a mundane life of peace is lived obviously by one who did not lead that life before, and were instructed to change when they descended from the realms beyond.

The tribes’ villages are led by an elected chief, though only the women of the tribe may vote. Their selection is based on who has provided the most for the village, as well as who can perform the greatest song of ancestry. An intensely musical people, the Falthana use mainly percussive rhythm in their music, created by slamming spear-butts into the ground or an empty log, clacking spear-shafts together or slapping their leg with the flat of the broad spearhead. Foot stomping and clapping compliment the spear music, which accompanies all aspects of daily life, giving rhythm to every activity. The giants have two distinct languages. One, the language of song, is rich and lyrical, and bears some
similarities to very ancient Elven, while the other, the language of conversation, consists mainly of staccato clicks and sounds, as yet undeciphered. Their size gives the Falthana deep voices, which they can project with incredible power and distance, allowing news and information to travel between villages rapidly. Guardians perch high in the trees above the villages and throughout the jungle, as both questing hermits and sentries. Before manhood, a young male must spend a month living high among the great trees, the elders, as the Falthana know them. In this time he must reflect and meditate, making contact with the natural, spiritual world around him. For young females, they must spend a month living on the waters, their feet never touching dry land, and complete the same tasks as a male. Both must find their own food and shelter, and at the same time observe the world around them for incursions and foreign trespassers.

The powers of Istar see the noble jungle dwellers as little more than animals, as they do all the indigenous peoples of the empire. Consequently, they regularly try to capture giants for domestication as slaves and servants. When this inevitably fails, the proud beings are sent to the arenas where they fight animals, the only creatures that prove a match for them. On rare occasions, a Minotaur and a Falthana giant enter the arena to do battle, and event that usually draws capacity crowds. The skilled Minotaur and the savage giant are even matches for each other, providing great entertainment for the bloodthirsty citizens. Those that are sent to the arena must be watched carefully, lest the commit suicide. They see the body as a shell, and if the shell dies in an Istaran prison, its soul will still travel up the stair and back down it, to be reborn into their homeland.

That homeland is under constant attack from Istar, in the form of loggers, miners and those who would seek to destroy the great jungles where they make their homes. In the last decades before the Cataclysm, leaders have arisen among the groups of Falthana and led them in attacks on all manner of groups that have invaded the jungles. The wealthy elite of the inner ring would like nothing more than to crush the resistance of the savages, but so far, as in Gather to the north, the armies of the Kingpriest have met strong resistance.

_Seldjuk:_

Containing some of the highest mountains on Ansalon, Seldjuk is a region of many climes. The mountains are barren and windswept, their crags and bluffs broken up by scrub plateaus and rolling valleys. The sea level coasts are hot and humid, the frequent storms giving birth to rich rainforest of hardwoods and fertile grassland. The jungle is heavily logged, while the grasslands are both harvested and cultivated, and mining takes place in the lowest foothills of the steep mountains.
Istar’s easternmost province is heavily settled, especially on the coast. Consequently, the only indigenous peoples of the area that remain are the Kreso, a group of alpine herders that live on the high mountain plateaus. Their large clans are scattered throughout the Name mountain chain, so there is no real account of their numbers. Living in extended families of thirty or forty people, the Kreso build rough, walled villages from the shale and sod of the highlands. Over decades the crofts settle and the grass roofs and all chinking turn them into hollow hills, the only evidence of their habitation the smoke from the peat-fire hearths within. The age of a home can generally be discerned in this way, for the older the home, the more hill like it appears. The Kreso subsist by herding a relative of the giant mountain sheep that the Taoli of Western Istar herd. Other occupations include the gathering of peat fuel from the alpine bogs, acting as travel guides and the making of clothing and blankets from their flocks wool.

The villages of the Kreso are simple stone and thatch crofts, containing often only a few dozen structures and the pens around them for their flocks.

**Taol:**

This province is heavily cultivated, consequently, there are few indigenous peoples in it. Most were assimilated into the settler culture in ages long past. The mountains in the northern tip are home to groups of Taoli, men and women that live on the high plateaus with herds of long-haired mountain animals. The fiercely independent Taoli live in circular tents raised around a center pole, the entire extended family dwelling within. Groups are small, no more than twelve to fifteen people, but they meet with other groups often, to share stories, news and trade. They have resisted all offers to join the people of the plains below them, preferring instead to remain in their mountains where they are closest to the gods.

Their tents are highly prized by the military, as they are suitable for large groups of men in all manner of conditions. Their construction has thus far remained a secret of the Taoli, despite bribes and threats. Whenever emissaries have broached the subject, the short, stocky Taoli simply pack up and leave, regardless of the time or weather. Scholars from the Library of Palanthas have spent much time with the Taoli, as they have remained successfully sovereign against a tide of opposition. These scribes believe that the Taoli are descendants of High Ogre slaves, humans that the ancient mountain dwellers used to mind their flocks. The creatures they herd do bear a more than passing resemblance to those depicted in mosaics found in High Ogre ruins. Once the High Ogre civilization collapsed, the slaves remained in the mountains. They had long enjoyed the relative freedom alpine herding requires, and as such the collapse of the Ogre Kingdoms affected them minimally. Traditional Taoli folklore includes stories of the herders
actually aiding Ogres after the collapse, and given that they continue to trade peacefully with the savage fallen Ogres, this may be true.

The Clergy of Istar:

Holypersons of Istar can be divided up into three main categories: Priests of Darkness, Priests of Neutrality and Priests of Light. The attitude of the individuals varies depending on this, as well as the placement of one's own god within a pantheon's hierarchy.

Clergy of Darkness are almost non-existent by the time of the Cataclysm. In the last century before the Cataclysm, the people of Istar and most of Ansalon's nations began to unofficially persecute the followers of the shadow gods. The Kingpriest brought the persecution to prominence in 27PC, when he declared the worship of the gods of darkness an act of heresy. Consequently, most followers converted, fled the empire or hid their beliefs. The priests did the same, their temples burned or destroyed, their holiest artifacts confiscated or destroyed by the minions of the Kingpriest. Those brave enough or foolish enough to remain in Istar practice their faiths in secret, meeting in abandoned warehouses or basements—priests who once gathered their flocks in grand cathedrals reduced to hushed service held in tiny apartments or barns outside of towns. They are a fearful lot, always looking over their shoulders, expecting to be arrested at any time. Their faith gives them comfort though, as does the whispered warnings that the Kingpriest upsets the balance at his and the world's peril. The clergy of darkness exist in secret at many levels of society, in some of the least likely places. Though they are persecuted, the faithful are content to watch and wait for their opportunity to restrike the balance, and then shift it in their favor.

Those beings that choose to spread the teachings of the gods of neutrality are in a precarious position. Long expelled from certain societies, they find themselves facing growing distrust and antipathy from the populace. Some have brought their faiths underground, practicing them in much the same way as the clergy of darkness, while others have worn them even more proudly, flaunting their faith in the faces of the zealous Istarans. They are tempting targets, but prior to 9PC had not yet faced the full anger and pious fury of the citizens. After this date, the Kingpriest began to openly voice distrust of those who followed the gods of neutrality. This was enough to hasten the departure or hiding of followers and their beliefs. These priests vary widely in terms of personality, though a general sense of unease and distrust pervades them. They remember well the fate of the temples of darkness and their priests, and how they did nothing to stop that from happening, and are now fearful of facing the same fate. The Kingpriest faced no threat from the neutral priesthoods, and it is likely he knew this—he did however lose a great deal of wealth to them, for they and their guilds controlled
much of Ansalon’s industry and trade. Some argue that this is the true reason that the followers of the gods of neutrality were persecuted- it is given credence by the fact that the priesthoods of Reorx and Shinare, the priesthoods that controlled industry, wealth and shipping, were attacked so relentlessly. Some priests have chosen to aid the followers of the gods of light in their tasks, but they are typically shunned by their peers.

The clergy of the Light are renowned and feared throughout the continent, especially the followers of Paladine, for they are the direct servants of the Kingpriest. Regardless of their deity, they walk the streets proud and defiant, sure in their knowledge that the shields of Istar’s name will protect them. They tend to travel in groups, dedicated to a single god or the gods of light, and preach to all they encounter. They hunt mages and priests of darkness tirelessly, driving them out of Istar, enslaving them, or executing them outright. Priests of neutrality have not yet faced the same difficulties- they are merely harassed, their homes and temples vandalize. In some outlying areas, they are even run out of town, but the people of Istar still have enough grudging respect for the gods of neutrality to not harm their followers. People learn a path for the priests, who are often escorted by legionnaires, for they are fearful of angering one and inviting visitation of their wrath. Consequently, the priests rule Istar through intimidation and fear, though for the most part, the citizens do not seem to mind. They know their own place, and the place of the clergy, and seem quite happy with the hierarchical relationship. A priest of the light is usually a proud, haughty individual, full of zealous rage and xenophobic anger, intensely intelligent, yet fully unaware of the manipulation to which they have been subjected.

Religion and the Citizens:

The people of Istar are exceedingly religious, at least in public. All pay homage to the Kingpriest and his benevolence, though there are those who worship different gods in secret. Public rituals are heavily attended, though it is not mandatory, there are those who will notice absences. Consequently, attendance is high at all levels of society. Businesses and homes maintain shrines and prayer chapels where the gods are praised according to each faith, though in the last decades before the Cataclysm, these shrines are focused more on the Kingpriest and the worship of Paladine. Priests of the Light travel the cities of Istar constantly, seeking to bring the word of Light to people in their homes. This is what they claim to do, but what they are really doing is checking up on the citizens. Only a fool would dare to deny entry to the priests, to do so invites disaster. Many are the people who have found their reputations, both personal and professional, ruined and their livelihoods destroyed by the power-mad clergy of Istar. They are the lucky ones. Those who publicly oppose Istar or
worship the gods of darkness usually disappear in the dead of night. Their neighbors know what happens, they hear the screams as families are hauled from their beds. When the morning comes, the priests of Istar denounce the former dwellers as cowards who have fled the Light of Goodness under cover of darkness.

Worship is performed throughout the day, according to the beliefs and practices of each god, though the structure and nature of the services has changed somewhat. Instead of teaching about a particular God, the central topic of worship is devoted more to how that particular god relates to Paladine as the supreme god of good. The manipulations and oppression of the Kingpriest and his minions has resulted in a trend towards monotheism, where Paladine is supreme, and the other gods are very subordinate to him. The perceived cosmic order is played out in society, for the priests of Paladine hold the places of highest prestige, while the servants of the other gods are their lessers. Though people worship Paladine and the Kingpriest, religion is rarely discussed outside of closed quarters and trusted friends, and in Istar there are few of these, for everyone has their price. The truly faithful of Istar have learned the hard way to trust no one.
Conclusion

A campaign set during the Age of Might is very different than those in other ages. There are two main routes a campaign can take in this age. In the first, Players will likely find their characters on the side of the Empires enemies, with allies they would normally see as monsters or outlaws. If however the PC’s take the side of the establishment, as its servants they will be charged with furthering the goals of Istar without question. If they have lived in the Empire all their lives, these goals will likely be their characters own, since they will be products of the Clergy’s propaganda and enculturation.

A central theme of campaigns in this period would be that of change, both from the character’s point of view and in the world itself. The events of the empires history will affect characters fates, regardless of their class, and witnessing the events should change the outlook of the characters themselves. In spite of the laws and decrees of the Kingpriest, the lines between good and evil, light and darkness are very blurred, and characters’ realization of this will likely come at a hefty price.

If DM’s opt for a less epic style of campaign, the lawlessness of some parts of the empire is very suitable for adventure campaigns. Outlaws and bandits exist throughout the empire, as do dangerous tribes of savages, and wandering monsters. The reach of the military in Istar is long, but even it cannot be everywhere at once.

Istar is also built upon the bones of earlier civilizations, specifically the Bakali, Minotaur and High Ogre cultures, thus, there are ample ruins to explore and ancient secrets to find.
Appendix A: Timeline of Istar

Before the City-States:

2400PC The minotaurs, slaves of the fallen ogres, rebel and drive their former masters into the mountains and into central Ansalon. The minotaurs enslave the humans that the ogres used as food and slaves.

2400PC - 1750PC Unknown times. During this period the natives of Istar existed in a tribal state. Towards the end of this period the city-states formed around Lake Istar's fertile shores.

The Foundation Times:

1750PC Istar, comprised of the cities of the inner ring, forms and expands over several centuries.

1480PC Istar grows as a trade center

1270 PC The human slaves of the Minotaur kingdoms rebel, overwhelming the less numerous Minotaurs. They enslave their masters, not heeding the lessons of the past. The Minotaur cities are renamed by their liberators. The free humans form free nations, Seldjuk and Karthay.

1100 - 800PC Istar Dominant

850 - 727PC Istaran Trade Wars

800PC Ever greedy for land and power, Istar wars with Seldjuk and Falthana. After 70 years of sporadic fighting the Istarans finally manage to subdue the fiercely independent lands.

673 - 630PC Istar and Silvanesti Clash

The Heights of Empire:

600 - 280PC Union of Istar and Solamnia solidifies

573PC Salius Ruven attacks Istar with an undead army, Solamnic Knights come to Istars aid after Istaran Legion wiped out, laying the groundwork for
Solamnia to be the defacto military superpower on Ansalon

530 - 522PC Ogre Wars and the Dwarfmeld

490 - 476PC Solamnic Dependence on Istar grows

480 - 470PC Environmental destruction in Solamnia forces greater dependence on Istaran products (caused by the cult of Morgion, under the direction of far-seeing Elven high priests in Istar)

460PC Istar is the center of commerce and culture

280 Istar declares world righteousness, and status as center of world religion
Eusymmachus is crowned first Kingpriest with the Crown of Power

260 - 212 Temple of Paladine built at Istar

255 Eusymmachus I dies, Eusymmachus II crowned

Istar grows Corrupt; the elves withdraw to Silvanesti

230 Eusymmachus II dies, Theorollyn crowned

219 Theorollyn I assassinated, Theorollyn II crowned

215 Theorollyn II deposed by Ardosean I; establishes rival church in Losarcum

197 Ardosean I abdicates, becomes advisor to Ardosean II

191 Theorollyn II dies in exile, surrounded by followers who proclaim he is the true Kingpriest

188 Ardosean II dies suddenly from illness; Ardosean resumes the mantle of power

186 Ardosean I dies; Ardosean III crowned

182 Ardosean III dies suddenly; Revered Children unable to decide on a successor

182 - 180 Interregnum- no reigning Kingpriest

180 Hysolar chosen as new Kingpriest
171 Hysolar dies; Sularis, a Solamnian and the first non-Istaran Kingpriest, crowned

149 Sularis dies; succeeded by Giusecchio, the son of an Istaran merchant family

138 Giusecchio assassinated; Quenndorus succeeds him after one of Istars Merchant Guilds is found responsible

132 Quenndorus dies of old age; Vasari I crowned

120 Vasari I dies mysteriously; Vasari II chosen as successor. Crown of Power stolen before coronation; in the ensuing confusion, Pusenkyn also declares himself Kingpriest. No further Kingpriests have holy powers until Beldinas.

120 - 118 Battles between the followers of the two Kingpriests; Istaran legions factionalized

118 Factional stalemate ends; Pusenkyn and followers leave Istar and choose Govinna as their holy city. Vasari II declares Manifest Virtue. Priests of Istar begin to lose access to the most powerful gifts of their gods.

118 - 100 Relative peace as Istaran and Govinnese factions vie against each other; neither gains an advantage.

104 Pusenkyn dies; Theorollyn III crowned in Govinna

102 Ardosean IV declares himself Kingpriest in Losarcum, forming third faction

100 Vasari II dies of old age; Vasari III crowned in Istar

100 - 98 Vasari III clashes with Theorollyn III and Ardosean IV

98 (summer) Ardosean IV lays siege to Istar; Vasari III given up by the people of the city, executed. Ardosean IV becomes new Kingpriest.

98 (autumn) Theorollyn III attacks Istar. Ardosean IV repels him.

98 (winter) Ardosean IV grows ill, abdicates. Eusymmachus III crowned.

97 Theorollyn III attacks again, the armies wipe each other out. Knights of Solamnia declare Theorollyn III a false Kingpriest; he is imprisoned in the High Clerist’s Tower. Eusymmachus reasserts authority as the one true Kingpriest, reigns for nearly 50 years.

96 Silvanesti send Loralon to Istar as emissary to help keep the peace. Elven presence established in Istar
Genocide of evil races Sanctioned.

Dominance of the Istaran Clergy

Istaran Clergy controls most areas of Social Life

Priests of Istar lose access to much of their god’s gifts

Elven influence of the Kingpriests inner circle grows.

A schism forms within the Wizards’ Conclave, develops, led by Muscyndis Alipha. Based on his writings, the Moon Priests Sect Forms

Eusymmachus III dies; Eusymmachus IV crowned.

Minor revolts in the border provinces; put down by Knights of Solamnia. Unrest continues.

Eusymmachus IV falls ill. Search for new Kingpriest begins

The Order of the Divine Hammer is formed, under the leadership of Radulpho diSiyan. The Divine Hammer is a militant order of the priesthood of Kiri-Jolith. They are created as the Kingpriest’s personal guard and defenders of the faith

The Minotaur siege of Lattakay is broken by the Order of the Divine Hammer, who are assisted by Solamnic Knights.

The slaughter of the Daughters of the Light and the looting of the Vaults of the Kingpriest. diSiyan commits suicide in his grief and guilt.

The Order of the Divine Hammer supplants the Solamnic Knights in Istar as the heroes of the people; many low-ranking Knights leave the knighthood for the new order

Beginning of the Persecution and the expulsion of the Clergy of Darkness

Tucuri falls to the forces of Istar

Beginning of the persecution of Wizards by the Priests of the Moons and the Divine Hammer

Loralon quits Istar; Quarath becomes Beldinas’s chief advisor. Beginning of the persecution of good races.
21 The Order of the Divine Hammer, leading the Solamnic Knights and the remnants of the Istaran Legions, embarks on crusades to cleanse the barbarian lands of Evil and heathen worship.

The End Times:

19 The Lost Battles

The Kingpriest enters the Tower of Istar

The Conclave destroys the towers of Daltigoth and the Ruins.

The Clergy grants them safe passage to flee to Wayreth if they will destroy no more of the towers. Tower of Palanthas cursed.

15 Growing tension between the Knights of Solamnia and the Divine Hammer as the warrior priests become heroes to the populace.

9 Beginning of the persecution of Neutral priesthoods

8 The destruction of the Pantheon of Karthay by the Order of the Divine Hammer. As a result, a wave of iconoclasm sweeps through Ansalon, destroying images of the gods and replacing them with images of the Kingpriest.

7 The Order of the Divine Hammer begins raiding warehouses and businesses of the followers of Shinare and Reorx.

6 Edict of Thought Control

3 The destruction of the Edificum Justae in Istar. The Order of the Divine Hammer begins to collapse without a leader.

2 Divine Hammer falls into disrepute.

Beginning of the persecution and expulsion of the Priests of the Light.

1 Beldinas declares his intent to invoke the gods directly.

Divine Hammer declared anathema, disbanded. Knights of Solamnia return to prominence

0 Loralon summons the last true priests to Godshome

Beldinas invokes the gods, causing the Cataclysm. Istar destroyed.
Appendix B: Products and Resources by Province and Terrain

Jungle: (Falthana, Midrath, Seldjuk, Gather)

- exotic birds and game
- herbs and medicinal plants
- fruits, vegetables and nuts
- hardwoods

Oceans, Rivers and Lakes: (All)

- whaling
- fishing
- pearl diving
- shells
- plant life
- clay for pottery and tile
- treasure hunting
- salt

Savannah: (Dravinaar, Istar, Ismin, Taol, Gather)

- large game
- flowering plants
- menagerie creatures

Plantations and Farmlands: (Ismin, Seldjuk, Istar, Taol, Gather)

- coffee, sugar cane, corn, yams, cotton
- grains, fruits, flowers, herbs, spices, flax
- cattle
Mountains: *(Istar, Ismin, Midrath, Falthana, Taol, Seldjuk)*

- gold, silver, copper
- semi-precious gems
- ornamental stone
- salt mining
- quarries
- alpine herding

Desert: *(Dravinaar, Seldjuk)*

- salt
- small game
- medicinal and hallucinogenic plants
- sand for glass making

**Appendix C: Encounter Tables**

The following Encounter Tables are appropriate for use throughout the Istaran Empire.

**Tropical or Subtropical:**

- plains, forests, hills, swamps, mountains or desert

**Waterborne:**

- saltwater, freshwater, surface, depth,
Nordmaar is one of the most mysterious places in all of Ansalon. While civilization elsewhere has rebounded since the Cataclysm, at the time of the War of the Lance, this savage peninsula remains locked in a dark age of superstition and fear. Within its dark jungles and humid swamps, players will face dangers and wonders unlike anyplace else on Krynn.

Nordmaari culture is the result of both its tumultuous history and its geographic isolation. It is a haven for pirates and slavers, a land of savage beauty, where the unwary traveler often meets with a swift doom.

After the Chaos War, the wilds of Nordmaar hold even greater dangers, for the forces of chaos were able to wreak much havoc in this sparsely populated land. The inhabitants of entire villages disappeared, wiped out by the minions of Chaos, while stranger creatures appeared in the wake of the Black Tide.

In the Fifth Age, the proximity of the islands known as the Teeth of Chaos has also given rise to tales of strange creatures coming ashore. No matter what the time, the people of this land need brave heroes to explore their home and protect them from its dark denizens.
The tribal inhabitants of the Nordmaar Islands had no written language, as such there is little in the way of recorded history. What is known of their land before the arrival of the Ergothians in 215PC is shrouded in legend and myth. The founding of the Ilmatar colony on Nordmaar Island is when historians typically begin their histories of the region. The arrival of the colonists and their impact on the existing cultures there is well documented in the diaries of missionaries, colonists and the few islanders that the colonists taught to read and write. Each presents a different tale. The historians take their characteristic passive stance, while the colonists speak of the great gifts they bring to the uncivilized barbarians. The islanders themselves though tell a very different tale. Theirs is one of tragedy and despair, of history of slavery and disease, poverty and
destruction all at the hands of the colonists.

The earliest accounts of the islands are in a journal sent to the Imperial Court in Daltigoth, from the hand of Kavalie Heyeirdah, the explorer credited with discovering the Nordmaar islands. Her words are lost now, but secondary sources note that she described the inhabitants, with their pale, painted skin and simple clothing as heathens and savages, simple children who could greatly benefit from the benevolence of the Ergothian Emperor. Based on her report, the empire sent several ships to establish colonies. It was the establishment of these towns that spelled the doom of the island dwellers.

The troubles began slowly at first, according to the manuscript of Anouto Mikwande, a slave bookkeeper on a large cotton plantation. The colonists kept to themselves first, building their villages close to the sea from which they had come. Soon walls of earth and wood surrounded the settlements, presumably to protect those within. The new colonists began to clear away more of the dense rainforest on the island’s coast for planting, and within a few years, huge fields of cotton, sugar cane and rice were being worked. Tragedy struck the colonists when an epidemic killed many on the Ergothians. The leaders of the colonists, fearing dark magic at the hands of the savage islanders, leapt into action. At the same time, they requested aid from Daltigoth. By the time the ships of soldiers arrived, the surviving colonists had rounded up many of the islanders and herded them into camps. With so few people to work the fields, new blood was needed in order to make the colonies survive. That new blood was the islanders. Slavery had come to the Nordmaar Islands.

Using superior technology and mounted cavalry, the forces of the Empire easily dominated the Islanders and their simple tools. Soon most of the natives of the islands were in irons working the fields, or were hiding in villages deep in the jungle, where the horsemen could not reach. So things remained for over one hundred years. The natives remained hidden in the jungles, while the slaves and colonists lived in ever growing towns and plantations. As the Cataclysm approached, the original colonies became small cities, and great mansions were built at the plantations. No longer fearing the savages in the jungle, people began to move out of the walled towns and villages.

The clergy were the only group that took an interest in the Islanders as anything more than slaves. Seeking to civilize those who remained in the darkness of their jungle heathenism, priests of all kinds would come to the islands, to convert wayward children to the true worship of the Gods. Towards this end, mission churches and schools were built throughout the islands, and small forts were built to protect them. The life of a slave was a harsh one, for though the initial settlers were kind and
simple people, who appreciated the wisdom of nature and survival that the natives shared, their descendants were not. Decades of production had made the landowners wealthy and greedy, and this only increased with the discovery of metals in the Northern Island, Lessinamaar.

The commencement of mining brought an increase in pirate raiding both in frequency and ferocity.

Piracy had always been a problem in the area, even before the arrival of the Ergothians. Islander legends speak of horned demons from the sea that would come and drag the unworthy back to the underworld with them. The colonists scoffed at such tales, dismissing them as superstitions, at first. Not so after the first minotaur slave raid. The settlers, unprepared for such an event, were easy pickings for the seasoned slavers. Once the minotaurs and other pirates found out that there was gold on the islands, they would prowl the seas like hungry wolves, swarming on any ships they could. The pirates, whether human or minotaur, decreased their trade in slaves- gold and silver were far more valuable. The colony did not maintain any sort of protective fleet, so the area became a haven for pirates, some even making their lairs on the islands. Coincidentally, the increase in pirate activity around the islands and the corresponding decrease elsewhere allowed the spice trade out of Vellas to flourish, causing much rivalry between it and Palanthas, the center of world trade at the time.

One might wonder why Ergoth itself did not send a fleet to protect its colonies, but at the time, Ergoth was in a steady decline. In fact, the establishment of the Nordmaar colonies represents to historians Ergoths last effort to assert itself as a world power. The arrogance of the Kingpriest would put that effort to an end a few decades later.
The Natural World of the Nordmaar Archipelago:

The islands are generally tropical and dominated by thick rainforest. If there is a paradise on Krynn, this group of islands is it. Hundreds of species of birds and animals, species found nowhere else on Krynn, flourish in the lush jungles. Unfortunately, the rare wildlife also make the islands a popular hunting destination.

The archipelago consists of three large main islands and two smaller ones, although the waters around them are dotted with dozens of tiny isles. The sea between the islands is also filled with coral reefs, making navigation treacherous for larger ships, though the canoes and sailcraft of the natives have no difficulties with the shallows. The natives often put to sea in huge flotillas, casting their nets or whaling in the bountiful waters.

The vegetation varies according to one's elevation. Much of the islands are covered in dense jungle, its multi-layered canopy soaring hundreds of feet above ground. These rainforests have all manner of animals and plants, some growing and feeding on others, without ever touching ground. The forest floor is a maze of fallen trees, warm mist and ferns, a haven for larger animals and those who do not wish to be found. Nearer to the lowlands, the jungle gives way to tracts of misty swamp, crossed by canals. Willows arch over these like a roof, moss and vines hanging low over the waters.

The primordial environments of the islands are also home to dozens of types of giant reptiles, beasts that have not walked the face of Krynn since the time of the Bakali. The ground shudders with their footsteps, and many are the boats the seagoing ones have sunk among the reefs. A popular pastime among the colonists involves taking armed parties deep into the jungles to hunt these fantastic creatures for sport. The disappearance of hunters only made the quarry that much more prized by their comrades in the cities.

At sea, the maze of coral reefs that surround the island harbor animal life of all kinds. Schools of fish, sharks, whales, all make at least temporary homes in the clear blue waters. The natives harvest much plant and animal food from the waters, which is why they figure so prominently in islander mythology. The colonists see some of the virtues of the reefs, especially regarding food. Mostly though, the reefs are an inconvenience to their shipping, to the point that several attempts have been made to clear paths through the reefs with metal clad ships. The iron hull plates corrode quickly, but by dragging these low-riding hulks across a reef, furrow can usually be carved out of the fragile reef that will allow an Ergothian galleon to pass without lightening its load. The natives, whose traditional fishing grounds have been damaged because of this practice, were less than impressed, and continually try to thwart the efforts.
People of the Nordmaar Islands:

Islanders:
The native residents of the Nordmaar Islands are a simple people, living generally in harmony with nature. Much of their time is spent building their massive oceangoing canoes, fishing or engaging in lively storytelling. Compared to farmers and herders, such as the colonists, the average islander has a great deal of free time. Physically the pale skinned islanders are thin and tall, the average height for males and females being over six feet. Eye colors are green or brown, and the islanders' wavy hair is typically fire-red or black. Hair length varies, but it is typically worn no longer than the shoulders. They wear little clothing, typically loose wraps or loincloths of bright reds, oranges and greens. White is worn by pre-adolescent members of the society- after their initiation to adulthood they wear the clothing of that group. Ornamentation and body adornment consists of bracelets, anklets, neck rings, earrings, nose-rings or pendants. The islanders are very superstitious; consequently, no piece of jewelry is without perceived protective significance. Shamans wear animal skins, and adorn themselves in bones, rattles, skulls, and mummified animal parts, all with magical significance. Their bodies are normally unmarked, but during religious events or warfare they paint themselves with geometric shapes or patterns that mimic animal markings. In warfare, the islanders typically use long spears, bows and shields. Hand to hand combat is performed with heavy clubs, the edges of the hardwood cudgels sharpened or studded with stones. They rarely wear armor, except for animal skin capes.

Prior to the arrival of the Ergothian colonists, the natives feared the deep jungle, claiming that malevolent spirits dwelled within it. After they began to be rounded up as slaves, many natives overcame their age-old superstitions and
fled into the darkness. Islander villages are found sporadically along the coastline, usually concentrated around good fisheries or abundant fruit and nut gathering areas. The arrival of colonists and the discovery of gold on Lessinamaar shattered this peaceful tribal existence. Soon after, prospectors, miners, more colonists began to arrive, pushing the locals further and further into hostile lands, while they gathered the bounty from nature. The pirates cared little for the islanders, except when it came to slaves. The islanders, are known for their beauty, and usually fetch a high price in slave markets all across Ansalon. Thus, pirates sometimes abduct entire native villages, the women for brothel slaves and the men for slave labor. Some of these they sell to the colonists, who, in their ever-increasing laziness, gave up the practice of capturing new slaves on their own. They would rather simply pay someone to do it for them. Thus, the sadistic economy of the region sustains itself.

**Colonists:**
The first generations of dark-skinned Ergothian colonists were a hardy lot, and were not responsible for the institution of slavery in the islands. They learned from the islanders, and were able to survive because the natives taught them to use the resources of the new land and to heed its dangers. Their children however, were not so kind. Once the plantations were established, and the wealth began to accumulate, the colonists' descendants grew greedy. The plague epidemic of 192PC was the turning point in the fate of the primitive islanders. Seeing their cohabitants suffering and dying, the natives offered their aid. They soon came to regret their kindness. Seeing the healthy natives working their fields, the leaders of the colonists believed that the savages were using magic to try wipe out the settlers, to drive them from their lands. Many of the people, already fearful and suspicious of the 'savage' natives, were only too willing to turn on them. The few healthy colonists, using mounted cavalry and superior technology, were able to round up many of the islanders and force them to work. After the epidemic passed, the people continued their vengeance upon the natives that tried to kill them, by enslaving more of them and burning their villages. This set the remaining free islanders running, deep into the heavy jungle where the colonists would not pursue them.

The wealthiest colonists live in a frivolous world all their own, of fanciful art and costume balls, carriage rides and sport hunting, while nearby their slaves eke out a living on scraps.

**Slaves:**
The native slaves of the Ergothian landowners are a miserable lot. After decades forced labor in the fields, the spirits of many are broken. When the days work finishes, most are simply retire to the slave camps on each plantation to live out their sad existences. The shanty-filled slave camps are small towns in themselves,
with a central hall or clearing, around which are clustered small, barracks-like dwellings. Social life often consists of music, dancing and religious ceremonies, rituals that the superstitious landowners have done their best to discourage. The no longer wear the colorful clothing of their free relatives, instead clothing themselves in loose white leggings and tunics. Their hair is kept short so as to stay clean in the filthy slave camps, and they are not permitted to wear any of their traditional jewelry and adornment. The Ergothians have systematically stripped the islanders of almost every aspect of their traditional culture, though the islanders are growing more resistant to their masters.

Savages:
After the enslavement of the natives, groups of islanders fled their coastal villages into the deep jungles. Once there, they built small compounds, some high in the trees, some in large caves, all to escape their oppressors. From time to time, they would strike out, raiding a plantation too close to the jungle edge, freeing the slaves there. These slaves would join the groups, working to help further slaves escape their owners. Over the decades, they have lost much of the rich culture that the other islanders possessed, descending into cannibalism and barbarism, little more than animals. In the centuries they have lived in the jungles, the average height for savages has decreased to little more than five feet, regardless of gender. They tattoo their small bodies and ritually scar them in elaborate patterns even on their faces to show their totemic allegiance. Adornment consists of feathers, bones, stones, and animal claws woven into or tied to untreated animal skins. They wear masks in battle to draw power from their animal totems. Their weapons are very crude; being made of heavy bone clubs, sharpened sticks and animal horn picks. Their ferocity has developed in
response to the dangerous lands they inhabit.

On Lessinamaar, the savages are somewhat different, as they are lead by Bakali and Jarak-Sinn. In their damp caves and jungle huts, they worship the lizardmen as living gods. The few Bakali maintain their hold through the use of impressive magic and their ability to control the giant reptiles of the jungle, things the savages cannot do. In turn, the human savages show their devotion by tattooing their bodies and wearing masks that emulate the faces of the giant beasts the Bakali control. Their raids on colony towns and islander villages are all the more fearful because of these masks. The survivors speak of demons ride out of the darkness on dragons and killing anything that dares stand against them. Consequently, the islanders have begun to build shrines at the rainforest edges to placate the vengeful jungle spirits. Few have escaped these fierce jungle dwellers. Those that have describe them as living in caves, crude lean-to's or on platforms lashed to the crooks of trees. The savages, who file their teeth sharp points, eat mainly meat that is raw, as they apparently no longer have knowledge of fire-making.

**Sea Pirates:** Pirates rule the seas around the islands. The riches of the colonists, as well as the abundant slaves, made the area ripe for the picking. Humans and minotaurs alike, they came from all around Ansalon to plunder the green isles. Making their lairs in the many coves around the islands, the pirates prevent much traffic from reaching the island unmolested. Of course, the pirates are smart enough to know that they cannot rob or sink all of the ships- that would bring military action from Istar, Solamnia or Ergoth. As numerous as the pirates are, they are not united, and a determined armada from any of these nations could set them running. In light of this knowledge, they usually board the ships, exacting a tax, in the form of goods, coins or prisoners, to allow the ship safe passage. The veteran merchant captains who ply their trade in the area have adapted to this situation, which occurs with alarming regularity.

**River Pirates:** Many of the river deltas on the islands lead further inland, to lakes and river networks. Those who sought to avoid piracy at sea were often surprised to find the same threat on land. The river pirates often masquerade as savage native groups, travelling in dugout canoes or paddle-driven catamarans. True natives engage in piracy too, charging out of their riverside villages, taking to the water to surround their prey, while others climb out onto the trees over the rivers, to drop into the midst of their quarry. Some even live on their boats, towing a large barge where their leader lives. As a group, they migrate up and down the murky waterways, gathering food from the jungle around them and the travelers they raid. Anyone who lives through a river pirate attack should consider themselves lucky, their survival is wholly unintentional.
Pre-Cataclysmic Religion:

The beliefs of the islanders and the colonists both before and after the Cataclysm are vastly different from elsewhere in Ansalon. Before the arrival of the Ergothians, the islanders maintained a system of beliefs that venerated most gods in some form or another, though their tribal beliefs focus on spirits and forces of nature. These spirits are representations and combinations of the traditional Krynnish Gods, based on their spheres of influence.

The savage's beliefs are very crude, consisting of sacrifices to their totems to gain benefits, to avoid negative effects or to give thanks. Their sacrifices are myriad, some are blood or liquid libations, others volcano sacrifices, still others are ritual drownings or sacrifices to animals. Regardless of the method, the sacrifices are frequent and violent. In some instances, they steal objects from colonists, burning them or otherwise destroying them so that they can gain the power that the colonists have and drive the foreigners from their shores. The savages also engage in divinatory practices, very similar to their more civilized islander cousins.

The colonists and their religions are very similar to the faiths as practiced in other lands of Ansalon, as they were brought from them. From the savage villages of the interior, to the slave towns of the plantations, religion was a communal affair. Rituals were participated in by all, and were led by shamans in elaborate costumes.

Shamans are respected in the native societies, although they are rarely liked. They are tolerated for the knowledge and power they wield, but generally disliked and mistrusted for the same reasons. They are a necessary evil to the islanders; a source of contact with the spirit realm, fonts of wisdom about the natural world. Often, even the leader of a tribe will defer to the shaman, but they know their place, and would never try to take control openly. Instead, they manipulate the superstitious islanders and live comfortable lives, often believing the wild tales they spin.

Zivilyn, the patron of time and its passage, is particularly important to the islanders, who know him as Zoyobra, and rely on him to regulate their lives and the cycles of nature. As such, the arts of divination are widely practiced throughout the islands. Outsiders will likely find the methods of divination distasteful at best, horrifying at worst.
Divinatory Methods:

The worship of Zoyobra takes the form of a diverse variety of divinatory styles, their practice aimed at removing the uncertainties of life. They are practiced throughout the islands, though some may only be practiced by a few specific groups. Scholars from the Library of Palanthas journeyed to the region, chronicling the cultures there as they came into contact, changed and assumed new forms. It is they who determined the importance of the Zoyobra worship practices, and categorized them into the following types. While they are listed separately, often times several different ones are performed together as one ritual.

Divination through Observation of the Atmosphere:

Aeromancy: Observation of atmospheric conditions such as storms or ripples on water, such as tides. In this way, the success of an expedition to sea can be determined before it leaves.

Astromancy: Observing the movements of the stars, planets and constellations will reveal the fate of the world as a whole, not just the islands and their dwellers.

Austromancy: Winds bring the future if they come from the east, the past if from the west. By listening to the words they whisper, a shaman can bring wise council to a chieftain.

Nephelomancy: The observation of clouds, specifically their movements and forms, reveals specific events in the past or future, depending on the direction in which they move.

Botanomancy: Plants and herbs are often used by the native shamans to induce a trance-like state. In this state, the shaman can communicate with the dead, and with animals or plants.
Divination through Animal Means:

Animals are particularly important to the islanders. They speak with the shamans, often revealing guilty parties, evil sorcerers or other causes of misfortune. This is the most important thing to the natives, as knowing the source of their problems allows them to cope with an unfair world. Not coincidentally, divination assumed a greater importance after the arrival of the oppressive colonists.

*Oomancy:* The examination of bird or reptile eggs and their contents can reveal the past of a specific person.

*Ornithomancy:* Prediction of the future is done by observing bird flight or listening to their songs. Birds also bring news of distant lands in poetic styles.

*Ichthyomancy:* The future is predicted by examining fish entrails, their contents and markings found therein. The intestines reveal the future successes of the angler, as well as where they will die. The time of their death however, is unknown.

*Aruspicy:* Animal intestines are inspected in the same manner as fish intestines, but the goal is to see the present in another place, not the future. As with fish intestines, the hunter is the focus of the augury, though the entrails reveal past acts and successes, not the results of hunts yet to come.
Divination through Objects:

Belomancy: Arrows are useful for determining the fate of a dead person. In the ritual, a suspended arrow will point towards the location of a departed soul. If the arrow does not point south, towards the island of the dead, it is an indication that the soul is not at rest, and sacrifices must be made until it is. Failure to do so, the shaman warns, will result in nocturnal visitations by the vengeful spirit.

Ceromancy: Shapes and patterns found in melted wax reveal the future of the candleholder, according to the shamans who observe the ritual.

Lecanomancy: When a shaman throws an object belonging to a sailor into the water, the ripples and sound reveal the present situation of a person away at sea. The water can be in a container, a lagoon, river, or the sea itself.

Cleromancy: Pebbles, bones, shells, pearls or other objects thrown on a flat surface reveal the events yet to come for the caster.

Crystallomancy: By gazing into a shiny surface, the present in a distant place can be seen. In some cases, the shaman can communicate with the person viewed, thus altering the future.

Divination through the Elements:

Hydromancy: Water is the medium by which the Native shamans and witch doctors foretell the success of a voyage to sea. It is practiced on inland waters, on the coasts and at sea when a ship heads for its home port.

Capnomancy: Altar or hearth smoke reveals the future events that are to take place in a specific place, but they are unreliable, as they present only one possible future in uncertain terms.

Lampadomancy: Lamp flames reveal the past of a specific place, of events that transpired there.

Pegomancy: After they were enslaved, fountain water became a source of seeing the present in faraway places for the native islanders. In this way, they could see distant family, though they could not communicate with them.

Pyromancy: As with smoke, fire is examined for visions of the future. The images in the flames are more reliable than those presented in smoke.
Divination through Human Means:

*Anthropomancy:* Truths can be found by examining the intestines of a human sacrifice or other dead person. The knowledge revealed pertains only to the past, ending at the time of the individual's death.

*Ciromancy:* Hand shapes and lines are the guides to a person's life. They map out the roads walked and hint at those to be traveled in the future.

*Gyromancy:* By drawing a chalk circle, and having a person run around it until they collapse, a shaman can determine their fate in the coming hours.

*Spodomancy:* Ashes of a sacrifice are powerful, as they combine the power of both an objectual and an elemental divinatory practice. As such, they are able to predict the future with a great deal of accuracy. Consequently, they are among the most difficult and taxing for a shaman to perform.

*Tephromancy:* The remnants of a burnt offering are useful, as ash-writing, when performed by a shaman in trance, can reveal the past and future of a person, but not its present.

*Oneiromancy:* The dreams of a shaman hold great power, as do the dreams of another when a shaman interprets them. They give warnings, reveal secrets of the past and present and hint at events yet to come.

*Sciomancy:* Shadows act in much the same way as dreams. They are consulted by a shaman for the wisdom they hold about past events. They are eternal witnesses to time passing. Wherever an event occurs in any amount of light, a shadow observes it. It is the shaman's task to find and communicate with that shadow.
The Gods of the Archipelago:

Habbakuk and Zeboim are also very important to the islanders; aspects of them, Kahene-ma and Hecali-ma, are worshipped as the king and queen of the seas. Feasts are held in their honor several times each month, whenever a moon is full, and a great festival occurs yearly to mark the Night of the Eye. While the lord of the sea is given great homage and thanks, his wife is feared and sacrifices are made so she will grant safe voyages. Often times, the natives mark these sacrifices and ceremonies on huge barges, floating temples that they tow out to sea with their huge dugout canoes. At the culmination of the ritual, the barge-temple itself is set ablaze, a burnt offering to their gods.

Takhisis, known as Gtaka, is the twin of Gtoko, an aspect of Hidduke, the trickster. Whereas he is sly and cunning, she is slow-witted and vicious. Together, with the aid of their servants, the Kangata, they trick mortals into fighting each other for the spirits amusement.

Sargonnas, known as Kothanele, is the main evil power that the Nordmaari placate. He is the central cause of misfortune in the world, the granter of sorcerous powers to his followers. Sacrifices are made to drive him off and suspected followers are driven from their villages.

Paladine is worshipped as Mahune, the mover of the sun and clouds. He rows it across the heavens in his ship, the clouds forming his wake in the sky. Without his daily journey, there would be no rhythm to the cycles of Nuerde.

Nuerde, as the islanders know Mishakal, is very important to the islanders. She is an earth spirit that renews the world and its cycles, setting life in motion again and again. She decides the number, gender and fate of all children that people have. Consequently, many sacrifices and ceremonies are held in her honor, by parents hoping for many healthy children. From her spring the plants and the jungle itself, which is part of the reason the natives fear and respect it so much.

Chislev is not worshipped specifically by the islanders. Rather, aspects of her, in the form of animal spirits are venerated. Sacrifices are made, sometimes in town squares, or at crossroads, or in jungle shrines, to ask for the blessing of the animal spirits. These spirits in turn lord over the animals of their species, according to the believers, and act according to the worship given. This changed very little after the Cataclysm, except in the savage islanders who fled deep into the jungles. Their worship involves living blood sacrifices, designed to bond the animals with the people, and give them attributes of each other.

The Moon Gods are very important to the people, both before and after the
Cataclysm, as they regulate the tides. *Tisifon* (Solinari), *Mayara* (Lunitari) and *Ouama* (Nuitari) determine the good times for fishing and whaling, and as such, are equated with great sea creatures that sail through the skies in Paladine's wake. No one is venerated above the others, although Nuitari, the dark moon is often linked with Taratemaar, the isle of the dead, where the entrance to the underworld is.

On the southernmost island, Taratemaar, where it is forbidden to go before the end of one's life, lies the kingdom of Tarano-me. It is the isle of the dead and of death itself, for he reigns there on a throne of bones. So say the legends of the islanders. He leaves his grim seat of power, flying out into the world on Ouralobus, an enormous serpent. Dragging a net, his task is to catch the souls of the newly dead as they leave their bodies, and judge them. The worthy are released to continue their journey to the afterlife, while the unworthy are hauled in and forced to serve him. His serpent mount has a head at each end of its body, to tear apart the souls of the wicked and trap them in the world to serve him. The islanders greatly fear the coming of Tarano-me, who combines aspects of Chemosh and Morgion, but the being itself is viewed as essential to the continuation of the world itself. Certain people, if they have not been diligent in their sacrifices, may be forced to join his journeys to haul in the day's catch of souls. They are known as Suli-Tar, the soul-fishers. If one displeases Tarano-me while in his service, they may be forced to return to the world of the living, as slaves to a witch or shaman. In the centuries since the colonists' arrival, an elaborate cult grew up around this idea of resurrection, often connecting it with prosperous landowners or the wealthy.

These people, their rivals would claim, bribed a witch to drag a departed soul back to the world as a slave, to work their fields without need of food, rest or water. The presence of the undead on the islands is accepted by the islanders as a fact. They cannot be destroyed, rather they must be appeased, and thus elaborate sacrifices are made to them. The natives of the islands do not believe that all undead are evil- most are selfish and jealous of the living, but some are helpful, and can provide much wisdom to those with the courage to ask. Since they gain their powers from Kothanele, those who summon the undead risk being cast out of their communities. Because of his association, their acts are kept secret from family and friends, performed in the wilderness away from civilization and prying eyes.

To the islanders, *Sirrion* is not a singular being, but rather a whole series of dangerous, unpredictable fire-spirits, the Biel Makh. Because of this, much effort is spent trying to calm their restless nature. Among the people who dwell near the grassy coasts, this is especially important in the dry season. If the fire-spirits are displeased, or too pleased, they run amok, causing huge fires, which can
quickly escalate into forest fires if they reach the dry jungle edges. As a counter to the fire-spirits, people pray and sacrifice to aspects of Habbakuk and Zeboim, who bring the rains to the world.

*Reorx* is mostly unknown to the Nordmaari Islanders. To them, the world is made up of Paladine's body in the skies above and Mishakals body beneath it. They believe in creation out of divine love. The idea that the world could be created with tools, as though it were a canoe, or a home, is alien to them.

*Branchala*, the patron of music and the arts is also not specifically worshipped by the islanders. This is because music is essential to their culture, so much so that it has never been separated from it. Percussion and wind instruments are the most common among the islanders, their sounds often echoing throughout the lands at night.

The savages worship their gods, which are essentially aspects of *Chislev*, the Moons and Tarano-me. The exception to this is the savages of Lessinamaar, who worship the Bakali and the giant reptiles of their jungle.

**Colonial Architecture:**

The buildings of the colonists are heavily influenced by their builders' Ergothian heritage, though adaptations have been made to suit the materials available. The plastered, whitewashed buildings are roofed in red clay tiles, while green-painted shutters and awnings block the frequent rains that batter the islands. The mansions and plantations are similar in style, but the slave shantytowns are built crudely, of castoff wood and thatch. The arched windows and doorways of the buildings are welcoming, often opening onto the street. Some townhouses have yards filled with exotic plants and animals, hobby gardening, topiary and private menageries being popular among the decadent colonists. The natives fear these gardens, with their animal-shaped hedges and wrought-iron fences. More than one person has disappeared in the lavish estate gardens of Ilmatar, and the superstitious slaves know why. Nature they say should not be bent to mortal will, nor should it be imprisoned. The disappearances are its way of sending a message- one that has fallen on deaf ears.
Technology:

The arrival of the colonists meant the end of the natives' unique technologies. Their tools, made of natural materials, were replaced with the Ergothians metal implements. Those islanders that fled into the jungles found new ways to use what they found there. Bows, spears and axes are the typical weapons of the islanders that are free, while the slaves, the colonists use steel swords and shields.

The islanders make use of the natural materials around them. Bones, teeth, horns, and claws are easily worked, but retain keen edges and points. For this reason, the natives make extensive use of them. Coral and stone from Lessinamaar are also utilized, for the same reasons. Talismans and charms, popular among the people regardless of the time period, are made of all manner of materials. In addition to the above, mummified animal parts, feathers and carved wood are used. Islander clothing is an elaborate combination of skins, masks, furs and feathers, a variety only enriched by the arrival of the colonists and their textiles.
Places of Interest in the Archipelago:

Prior to the Cataclysm, much of the islands were shrouded in heavy jungle. This makes exploration inland difficult, but not impossible. There are many towns and forts to be found, abandoned by settlers, pirates and missionaries, some mysteriously predating the Ergothian arrivals. The coastline is dotted with pirate lairs, while the rivers are frequented by hostile natives, river pirates and traders.

Native Villages:

Villages vary widely, depending on the environment they are in. Those on the seashore or riverbanks have little in the way of fortifications, instead, the residents rely on being able to flee into the jungle or out to sea if they cannot fight off a foe. Their woven-reed huts are cylindrical with coned roofs and can be collapsed and rolled up for travel in minutes.

In the jungles, the savages build their homes in the boughs of trees, on vine-lashed platforms or in caves. Travel through the jungles is on the backs of a variety of large lizards or in the massive interwoven tree branches. The people learned of the lizards from the few remaining Bakali who inhabit the islands, ancient beings that passed on stories of their glorious civilization. These lizard mounts climb quickly through the trees, leaping gracefully between the branches or swimming in the many rivers and tributaries of the jungles.

Pirate Lairs:

The pirates that plague the islands make their lairs in many different places. Some have chosen caves along the coasts, others in ruined monasteries a few miles up the rivers. The majority live in secluded coves or on the countless small uncharted islands in the area. They range in size from simple hidden docks where a ship can lay safely at anchor, to villages where the several ships of the larger pirate fleets can hide.

Missions and Forts:

The religious expansion that occurred after colonization resulted in numerous missions being built in various places on the islands. They were often very isolated, being so placed as to have the closest contact with the heathen natives. Dedicated to many different gods, some are in use, some are in ruins, while others have been taken over by the natives when the priests abandoned them. Villages often sprung up around them, becoming trading centers and eventually small towns.
Selinn, the Ruins of a Bakali City:

On the coast of Lessinamaar, strange ruins emerge from the jungle, cross the beach, and continue into the sea. They are the ruins of an ancient Bakali city, a relic from the Age of Starbirth. The stonework of the ruins has survived the interceding ten millennia well, although the decorations on those that are exposed have long since been worn away. Further inland the ruins continue though they are cloaked in layers of vegetation and prowled by vicious animals. Exploration is dangerous but ancient secrets abound if the body and spirit are willing.

Islander Temples:

These massive structures are high upon the tree-covered volcanoes, and are built as massive stairways leading to the cloud-shrouded peaks. There are some chambers along the way, but not even the islanders recall the origin of the structures. At the time of the Ergothians arrival, the natives are believed to have been making regular human sacrifices into the volcanoes. This practice continued after the colonist's arrival, but to a lesser degree, due to the outsider's interference and the destruction of the indigenous cultures.
**Nuerde's Children:**

These massive rock towers stand on the southeastern coast of the Island of Nordmaar, running for miles parallel to the islands high cliffs. In the ancient days of the earliest race, the Bakali, a series of massive fjords and inlets stretched along the coastline, but over the millennia, they were eroded away. The pillars themselves are anywhere from a few hundred feet to a mile or more off shore, and the tallest ones are hundreds of feet tall. They are riddled with caves at their bases, making perfect hiding places for pirates and raiders. One of the governors even had a pillar turned into a prison and asylum, hiring dwarves to expand the caves at its base and delve a spiraling tunnel up to its peak. Few knew of the prisons existence let alone its location, for inmates were not known to leave it once condemned.

**Reefs and Shoals:**

The waters of the archipelago are laced with coral reefs and sandbars, making navigation in deepwater craft hazardous at the best of times. The most well-known of these sites, and the most dangerous, is the Boneyard Shoals, the place where the Ergothian Armada met the Pirate fleet in 96PC. Even decades later, the masts and rigging of some of the hulls can be seen at low tide. The natives have little trouble with the reefs, as their watercraft sit high enough to sail anywhere safely. Many a slaver has heedlessly pursued an islander boat, only to have their ship run aground in the shallows, the hull holed by the razor-sharp coral. In the last few decades before the Cataclysm, some of the pirate groups began to use stolen native boats, allowing them greater speed, mobility, and the advantage of surprise.

**Zeboim's Tail:**

One of the sandbars off the Western coast of Siwerdemaar presents a hazard to navigation second only to the Boneyard Shoals in magnitude. While not a true reef, this sandbar has destroyed many a ship over the centuries. Depending on the moon phase, the tides can allow safe passage or bring doom to a vessel. The danger is compounded by the fact that the area is surrounded by coral reefs and the sandbar itself shifts from year to year. From time to time, the movement of the sandbar, through the work of waves and wind, exposes some of its past victims. The crushed and broken hulls of the half-buried ships provide temptation to many adventurers and treasure-seekers, dozen of whom disappear each year when the tides suddenly change. Those who heed the tidal cycles still face dangers inside the rotting ships and the crews that folklore says still pilot them. Zeboim's Tail has become a grave for wise men and fools alike.
The Islands:

**Nuerde Mare (Nordmaar):**

This is the largest island, situated in the center of the cluster. Its central bay is the first place Heyeirdah's ship, the Kinshaya, made landfall, and where first contact was made with the islanders. The first colony village was founded here, on the eastern coast, and the island is surrounded with sandy beaches on its coasts and many calm coves. The northern tip rises into a volcano, Atanuerde, the daughter of Nuerde. The island itself is heavily jungled in its interior, but on the eastern coast, much land has been cleared for irrigated plantations. The Governors Road runs the length of the island, while the Heyeirdah Trail runs its width. Most of the colonist residents do not leave their walled plantations except to go into towns. The cliffs of the southern tip are also home to several families of rocs, giant birds that terrorize the islands and the seas around them.

Cities, Towns and Villages:

**Jachim:**

This fishing port is the second settlement the natives built in the archipelago. It was founded after the natives showed the colonists one of their most fruitful fisheries and sea-harvesting grounds. Initially the town was accessible only by land. The only craft that could make it through the treacherous reefs were the nimble and high-riding islander boats. After the bounty of the region was discovered, the settlers began to search for ways to allow larger fishing ships to the area.

**Demares:**

The fertile hills of Northern Nordmaar's tip provided the colonists with much of their crop variety. Beans, squash, wild rice and corn all grow here, and seeds were transferred to the other colony sites. Some plant types did not survive in their new locations, which necessitated the founding of an agricultural center here. The deep waters of the northern coast area also allowed a port to be founded, one that began to ship exotic foods to other parts of Ansalon. This shipping trade grew, until Demares became part of the spice trade route around northern Ansalon. Demares quickly became one of the wealthier towns of the islands.
Ilmatar:

This is the first town settled by the colonists. Heyeirdah landed here and made first contact with the islanders, so it was only natural that the Ergothians set up their first town at the same site. The town is built on the shore of a deep natural bay, one of the few in the archipelago. The town grew quickly, overtaking the walls that were built in less than twenty years. Much of the land around it was cleared, either for farming or for building materials. Consequently, the landward side of the town is a maze of bridged irrigation canals and bulwarked fields. Islander workers and slaves live in encampments built against the town walls, while most landowners live within the town or on protected plantations in the country. The largest single building in the town is the great temple, although the hilltop garrison and the governors mansion dominate the landscape. As the town expanded and outgrew its existing walls, new ones were added where needed. The result was a maze of walled and gated city quarters, each having only one or two ways in and out. The buildings are crowded together, often one using the wall of the next for support. The west end of the town is prone to flooding, and as a result is empty of all but the most unsavory characters. Vermin, of both the two and four-legged kinds, lurk in the sewers and catacombs beneath the cobblestone streets, emerging from the gratings to prowl and plunder in the dead of night. Ilmatar was conceived as the capital of the colonies, but it never attained the economic prominence of most other cities, due mainly to its lack of natural resources. In the rapidly growing colonies, fertile land is not rare, and without a major second industry, the city languishes in mediocrity among the many colony towns.

Belanus:

Perched on the rocky western shore of Nordmaar, the rough plank town of Belanus was founded for two reasons—wood and gold. The advent of mining on the Lessinamaar had resulted in an increase in piracy throughout the archipelago. The losses were especially high on the long northern route to Ilmatar, which crossed Felina’s Deep before sailing down the eastern coast of Nordmaar. After the loss of several shiploads of newly minted coin, the colonial government took action and sought out a new route. By skirting the southwestern coast of Lessinamaar, the captains of the transports could land at the new port of Belanus, then send their cargo overland to Ilmatar for safekeeping. This route was particularly effective because there were few places where pirates could hide, and the transports were close to land for much of the journey.

Belanus is also known for its gigantic trees, useful in all manner of building. The town boasts several drydocks for shipbuilding and repairs, as well as several
mills where useable lumber is cut for sale in other parts of Ansalon. The presence of loggers, shipwrights and mercenaries to guard the gold shipments makes Belanus a very rough town, full of brothels, taverns and gambling houses. It is also one of the first places missionaries built temples in, so that they might preach to the workers there about their sinful ways. Clergy are tolerated in Belanus, but they are definitely not welcome. More than one priest has had to defend their preaching with their fists in this rough coastal town.

**Gandulla:**

The pirates of the seas around Nordmaar were the founders of Gandulla. Originally, it was nothing more than shallows where ships would drop anchor for trading. Weapons, slaves and stolen goods were traded and stolen, the pirates would say that if it could be found in the islands, it could be found at Gandulla. Eventually gambling dens and docks began to appear on land, followed by artisans and herbalists who would repair or heal with no questions asked. There was no law in the town, or even a local government.

Everything changed in 95PC, when the colonial government, tired of the raiding and piracy, raised a militia in Ilmatar and Belanus. They marched overland, hacking through the thick jungle for days before reaching Gandulla. The town, at the end of a line of cliffs and nestled among the children of Nuerde, was undefended. Few ships lay in the cove, and the army swept aside resistance simply by its presence. The next time a pirate ship docked in Gandulla, its captain was surprised when the other anchored vessels turned weapons and demanded surrender. Gandulla became another safe port among the colonies.
Lacyna Mare (Lessinamaar):

Gold was the main reason the port on Lessinamaar survived. The Northern parts of the island is windswept and barren, the jungle of the other islands being absent here. The deforestation a result of the extensive mining that has taken place over the years. The smelters belch black smoke and ash into the sky year round, casting shadows over the rest of the island, and turning the whitewashed walls of the buildings to a dingy gray. Much of the western coast, including the waters around it, are polluted with the toxic byproducts of the refining process. Strange creatures dwell in the land and the sea here, giving rise to fearful legends whispered among the slave miners in their shantytowns around the smelters. The southern half of the island is unexplored and carpeted in jungle, a shroud over the extensive Bakali ruins that lie there.

Cities, Towns and Villages:

Jotan:

This is the third colony port built on the islands. Situated on Lessinamaar, the western island, it is the center for the minerals trade, several foundries and smelters being found within its walls. The existence of Jotan is purely accidental, as it was the only sheltered cove where the second wave of colonists could wait out a storm on their way to Ilmatar. Once they had dropped anchor and come ashore, they discovered the mineral riches that lay close to the surface. One of the ships went on to Ilmatar, seeking supplies and workers, while the remainder set up a compound and began surveying the area. The thirst for gold was the main reason the emperor dispatched further colonist fleets. The port grew slowly at first, before exploding when the gold rush began. Within a decade, its wooden walls were replaced with stone, and buildings several stories tall began to rise above the simple dwellings and warehouses. As the number of colonists grew, they surveyed further and further, finding surface deposits and founding two new towns. The natives were unconcerned with the arrival of the colonists, that is, until the mining began. The smelters needed fuel, which the trees provided. With the loss of the trees and plants, the rich soils disappeared, washing into the waters with the heavy rains. The black smoke fouled the waters around the port, but the colonists were unconcerned- they could buy food with gold produced in the minting houses. The advent of mining and commerce brought with them the arrival of the first guilds in the islands, the priesthoods of Reorx and Shinare. Together, these two groups had a firm hold over much of the industry and goods trade across the archipelago and Ansalon itself. The city is heavily policed, and maintains the largest standing militia in the islands. Its island-based prison is well known across Ansalon, so much so that Ergoth itself sends its most
dangerous convicts there.

**Aiusa:**

Sheltered by the Emperors Wall Shoals, Aiusa's main mineral product is silver. It is also the departure point for the treasure fleets bound for Belanus. Coins and ingots minted in Surid are brought here overland, as it lessens the time and distance for the laden ships to travel in the treacherous waters. Consequently, Aiusa is almost as heavily guarded as Jotan, and maintains the only cavalry forces on the island, for patrolling the roads and escorting the treasure caravans. Architecturally, it is similar to Jotan and Ilmatar, although, as it is a much smaller town, being the most recent of the settlements on Lessinamaar. In addition to its role in treasure transporting, Aiusa is also the operations base for many of the expeditions into the heart of the island, whether explorers or big-game hunters. Not surprisingly, there are many mercenaries and much disposable wealth in Aiusa. From time to time, the savages of the southern portion of the island attack Aiusa, riding in on enormous lizards, sinking ships in the harbor or destroying caravans before they arrive. In response to this, Aiusa is aggressively hunting natives, offering bounties for every savage's head brought to the local magistrates. The mayor has also contacted the governor of the colonies on several occasions, seeking to gain aid from Ergoth, but so far, the efforts have been fruitless.

**Surid:**

Sitting on the edge of the dying grasslands, Surid is a city devoted to the harvesting of gems. The hills south of the city abound with different types of precious and semi-precious ornamental stones, the backbone of Surid's wealth. The town also quarries a great deal of building stone, material the towns on the other islands have snapped up to replace the baked bricks they had been forced to use for walls. The proximity to the desert has also created a thriving glassware industry in Surid, with products that fetch high prices throughout Ansalon. As with the other cities on Lessinamaar, the pursuit of wealth is of singular importance, regardless of the environmental destruction that is caused. Surid is largely untouched by the savage raids, which is surprising, as it is the source of food for the island. Its proximity to Forseti and Demares make it the major agricultural trade port, as it is often easier and faster to ship good across land on wagons than through the storm-tossed seas and their treacherous reefs. If the natives were to turn on this largely undefended town, they could quickly starve out the other two. The semi-circular bay the town is built in is almost all harbor and warehouses, with most people making their homes in flats above the storehouses or in tenements near the town wall. Large wagons rumble down the wide streets constantly, bringing food or mined goods to the other two cities.
Shipping, whether on sea or land, is the real source of Surid's wealth. The grain merchants control prices for the rest of the island, a contributing factor to the tensions between the cities. Surid can survive without the others because of its crafty arrangements with sea captains, the other two towns however cannot survive without Surid. Rumors persist that the savages who raid Aiusa are not completely undirected in their attacks, but evidence to support this theory is scarce.
**Istayen Mare (Istinamaar):**

Smallest of the major islands, Istinamaar's main industry is agriculture. It was here that the colonists originally found many of the wild plants the subsist off of. The unique ecology of the land also prevented many of the more exotic plants from thriving on the other islands. It is the trade in these that Forseti finds its wealth and significance.

Most of the island is arable plains, except for the southern tip. It is covered in jungled hills. Among these hills dwell all manner of primates, creatures that have proven very popular in the menageries of the wealthy across Ansalon. Expeditions regularly leave Forseti with the intention of capturing some of these peaceful and shy animals, and it is not uncommon to see them on chains or in cages in the markets of the city.

**Cities, Towns and Villages:**

**Forseti:**

The city of Forseti allowed the colonies to survive. From the lands around it came the crops that feed and clothe the colonists as well as provide no small measure of its economic prosperity. Sadly though, the other part of Forseti's wealth comes from the exotic animal trade. The island is devoid of large predators, and consequently, a huge diversity of small animals has developed. The wealthy across Ansalon purchase these as pets, dissection specimens and even buy parts as spell or potion components. Much of the city is warehouses or makeshift selling zoos, where buyers from Istar to Tarsis can pick and choose for their distant customers. The proximity to the open sea also makes Forseti home to a thriving whaling industry, whose products can be found throughout the merchants quarter. The city is one of the major trade ports for the group of islands as Istinamaar is unfettered by the reefs and shoals that surround the rest of the islands. Goods come from all the islands and when a trader comes to the Nordmaar Archipelago, they go here first. It is the most diverse of the cities, having many temples to many gods, and being the first stage for the arrival of many guilds and trading companies in the archipelago.
**Cuerde Mare (Siwerdemaar):**

This island is mostly mountainous, with some flatlands on its eastern coast. The steep mountains are covered in vegetation, their slopes almost impassable to travelers. Much of the animal life here is birds, snakes or small mammals, all living high in the lush forest canopy. The interior and western coast of the island is mostly unexplored, though savage native groups do live within the rugged jungle valleys. Much of the wealth generated comes from fisheries off the eastern coast, among the reefs and shoals that lie in the fish migration routes. The reefs also provide many exotic corals, shells and pearls that the residents sell to art supply buyers and jewelers when they stop to trade. The towns of this island are the poorest in the archipelago, as the settlers are not Ergothians and the other colonists are fearful that other nations are jealous of the archipelagos wealth.

**Cities, Towns and Villages:**

**Turan:**

The survivors of a wrecked Istaran trade fleet landed here in their lifeboats, quickly building a palisade to protect themselves from the fearsome indigenous peoples. Their paranoia was well-founded, as they were quickly attacked by savages from the islands interior. Siwerdemaar was almost completely depopulated during the height of the slave raiding times, with the exception of those who fled into the jungle depths. The survivors and their children had a long memory, and the sight of foreigners on their shores brought back old hatreds. Consequently, many of the Istarans live within the town's walls, only venturing out into the surrounding fields during the day when their mounted guards and watchtowers can protect them. The town is a popular seasonal base for whalers from as far away as Palanthas, who have found that the Ergothians, though willing to trade and do business, are not as welcoming when it comes to foreigners taking up residence. Architecturally, Turan is very different from the Ergothian towns. The buildings are Istaran in style, with central courtyards and colonnaded walks, statuary pillars and detailed door lintels. The excess of the few stone buildings stand in stark contrast to the simple wooden buildings that surround them. This arrogance in everything is typical of Istarans, and, not surprisingly, the Ergothians rarely visit these shores.

**Kubera:**

When the Istaran trade fleet was destroyed, some survivors were sent north, and founded Turan, while others were blown south of Zeboim's Tail. Where they landed, they built Kubera. As with Turan, there are a few stone buildings in the
Istaran style, while the remainder are simple wooden structures. The residents live off their fisheries and pearl harvesting, but have started to explore some of the fruits of the jungles edge for possible orchard growing. The Istarans have recently requested that the Kingpriest send troops to protect them from the savages. The Istaran Legion built a fortress at Kubera and is currently doing the same at Turan. Presumably, they are laying the groundwork for an increased Istaran presence on the Island.

Gorias:

This town was established shortly after the discovery of the Istaran towns. Although it is a fishing town, many of its residents cast nets for more than fish. The true reason the emperor ordered the town built was to keep spy on the Istarans and to act as a base for Ergothian troops should a war erupt between the dying Ergothian Empire and the all-encompassing might of Istar. Its buildings were mostly wood, hastily erected so that stone walls could be built. Slave labor quickly replaced the wooden structures with stone once the town was secured. In only a few years, the Ergothians had established a deepwater port and a military garrison that could defend itself, if not overtake the Istaran settlements as well. It maintains a large militia, the largest of all the islands for a town of its size, as well as a mounted police force that patrols the countryside of the southern half of the island. Its fishing and whaling fleet operates mainly on the southern and eastern sides of the island, which occasionally causes conflict with Istaran fishing fleets. The Ergothians could easily fish elsewhere, but the fishing fleet is merely a cover for several spy vessels which keep close watch on the Istaran towns activities, as well as observing the arrival of any Istaran ships. After losing much of its empire in the past, the Ergothian Imperial Court takes few chances with its newest prize possession.
**Tara ta Mare (Taratemaar):**

Known as the island of the dead, it is the dwelling place of Tarano-me on his throne of bones. The island is heavily forested, with high cliffs surrounding it. It rises straight up out of the sea, climbing steeply into Tarano-take, a steep-sided volcano covered in jungle. Natives fear the place more than any other, and will not go there under any circumstances under their own death. Here is only one location where ships might land, Heyeirdah's Cove, and it is choked with the half-sunk wrecks of the first colonists who attempted to live there in 177PC. No one knows whom, if anyone, inhabits the dark jungle island, and few have been daring enough to try to find out. Those who have been were never found.

**Cities, Towns and Villages:**

There are no known settlements on this island. The colonists built one, Ackal’s Landing, in 177PC, but it was destroyed shortly after it was founded. The town is in ruins, plants will not grow there—not even insects dwell in its devastation. From time to time though, the beating of strange drums can be heard drifting across the waters towards the other islands. When they hear these drums, the islanders panic, rushing about to find cover, so that they are not in the open when Tarano-me comes. Many of the natives on the other islands regularly sacrifice animals and paint the central posts of their huts with the blood, to ward off Tarano-me.
The impact of the fiery mountain upon Krynn was an act that changed the world forever. The world of the islanders and colonists, always small and self-contained, was irrevocably altered, some say for the better, others for the worse.

After the Cataclysm, the Islands were no longer islands. Instead, they were part of a huge peninsula, thrust above the sea in the turmoil. A section of seafloor, hundreds of miles long, now connected the islands with the mainland.

As with the remainder of the continent, little is known of the history of Nordmaar in the first two centuries after the cataclysm. Much of the time was likely spent rebuilding and cleaning up the wreckage, or devoted to creating fortifications to fend off raiders. Many refugees came to Nordmaar after the
cataclysm, lured north by the climate and the abundance of unpopulated fertile land. Tragically, many of these first refugees fell victim to disease and the strange denizens of Nordmaar's jungles. The savanna is dotted with the ruins of farms, trading posts and towns, their builders dead or long since fled to the coastal towns.

**Geography After the Cataclysm:**

The rise of the Nordmaar peninsula during the Cataclysm resulted in a rapid expansion of the former island environment. Bordered by a band of desert in the south, the new land was quickly overtaken by colonizing plants and grasses. Slowly trees and shrubs began to appear, and in less than a hundred years, the great jungles of the islands had expanded to fill much of the risen seafloor. Some areas of land were lower in elevation than others, which gave rise to the Great Moors of Southern Nordmaar, west of Valkinord. Within the humid confines of both environments, animal life abounds, without the threat of settlers. As a result of this, and because of the rich ecology, animals in the jungles, from insects to birds, reptiles and mammals, grow to huge sizes, some fully half again as large as elsewhere on Ansalon.

To the north of the desert band is a broad swath of grassland. Across this stretch of savanna herds of wildebeest and antelope graze, survivors of initial post-Cataclysmic migrations.

The desert itself is a vast dune sea, with mountains of sand, some from the seafloor, some from before the Cataclysm, soaring as much as two hundred feet high. Closer to the mountains, the desert land is much more rugged, taking the form of badlands, deep ruts carved out of them by rains and flash floods. This arid wasteland is an effective barrier against incursions of land-hungry conquerors, but also keeps much of Nordmaar's most dangerous fauna trapped there. Indeed, they only people who are foolish or brave enough to cross the desert are merchants in their caravans.

The decrease in population as well as the increase in land area has made Nordmaar a very sparsely inhabited place. As a result, much of the coastline is pristine sandy beach or thick jungle, giving rise to its reputation as a savage wasteland devoid of civilization. Travel through the interior is on the numerous rivers, lakes and deltas carved by the Cataclysm, as roads quickly become overgrown. Consequently, most villages are on a river or other body of water. The weather of Nordmaar also plays a part in its habitation patterns. There are several other larger cities in Nordmaar, most being remnants of colonial towns rebuilt after the Cataclysm.
People of Nordmaar (Post-Cataclysm):

Islander-Colonists (The Nordmaari):

The destruction of the Cataclysm affected all the residents of the Nordmaar Islands. From savage to slave, pirate to plantation owner, all suffered under the wrath of the Gods. In the tumultuous years that followed the impact, nature ran amok in the new peninsula of Nordmaar. The survivors of the tidal waves, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions were forced to put aside their differences to survive in this new land. The two groups grew together over the years and decades, becoming the Nordmaari as history knows them. Their beliefs and religions, as well as their cultures, melded together as the groups intermarried and old hatreds began to dissolve. Forced to cooperate, the groups found that they were not so different after all.

Savages:

Little changed for the savages when the cataclysm happened. Many died in the natural disasters, but as the jungle expanded, so too did their homes and numbers. There are now many groups of savages living throughout the jungles, some have even migrated out onto the plains to find abundant food there as well. They still attack the settlements, albeit with decreasing frequency. The Nordmaari leave them alone, being concerned with rebuilding their shattered nation, while they have grown even more fearful of civilization. Some of the natives that fled deep into the jungles, and the slaves they rescued took to a life of raiding after the Cataclysm. They thunder out of the jungle or grasslands on horses or giant lizards, and into a village seeking treasure and slaves. Their attacks typically take place at night, so that their numbers and appearances can be disguised under animal skins. Day raids are known to occur, but with much less frequency. To further add to the terror they spread in their nocturnal raids, they carry torches, setting the simple fenced villages alight as they retreat into the darkness. In the jungle, they are equally vicious, but much more subtle. They will often sneak into villages in the night, drugging people with potent insect venom, and stealing them away. In the morning, the village awakes to find many people missing, giving rise to legends of supernatural creatures that steal children away to feed themselves. After the Second Cataclysm, many fled the deep jungle of the north, telling tales of strange creatures within. Creatures that can raise fear in the savage jungle dwellers must be terrible to behold.


**River Pirates:**
Rivers crisscross the peninsula after the Cataclysm, new places for the pirates to prowl after the islands disappeared. Travel on the waterways is unsafe at best, for the predators stalk the tributaries in sleek, oar-driven craft, overloaded with rowers to overtake even the swiftest of vessels. Riches or slaves, the pirates have no preference. No survivors are left in their wakes, only drifting, burned-out hulks. Some are descendants of native river pirates, some of sea pirates who took to land after the cataclysm. All are ruthless and brutal raiders.

**Sea Pirates:**
The pirates that roam the sea around the peninsula are mostly Minotaur, the brutal might of the beast-men having slowly forced the humans out. As a result, a journey through the seas around Nordmaar is costly. The Minotaurs attack mainly for slaves, seeking captives to work in their island nations. The pirates are not fools though, and are careful to raid only ships and towns far from the few naval bases Nordmaar maintains.

**Post-Cataclysmic Religion:**
Religion among the mixed descendents of the Islanders and Colonists is very different from either group's practices before the Cataclysm. The forced mixing of the islanders and the colonists in order to survive also mixed their belief systems. The result was a blend of primitive beliefs in spirits, divination and the undead, coupled with the hierarchical organization of the colonist's traditional religions.

The civilized residents of Nordmaar after the Cataclysm have become a superstitious people, much like the natives their ancestors enslaved. Offering sacrifices to spirits in their homes, at sea, in the fields and in the rebuilt temples, the believers of the new, combined religions have a rich and varied spiritual life. The Nordmaari always wear numerous charms and amulets to protect themselves, fearing the curses and witchcraft of others. So great is their fear of certain malevolent spirits that great festivals are organized frequently throughout the year to placate the beings. These festivals involve elaborate dancing, sacrifices, and fire-lit nightly processions through the streets of the towns. Often times, people wear costumes representing the power they specifically wish to calm or invoke, hoping that the spirit will notice them and act accordingly. As before the Cataclysm, the festivals, which can last for days, culminate in great sacrifices, either of animals, idols, objects or foods, all to show piety to the spirits that surround the people. In times of great stress and danger,
people have even sacrificed themselves for the good of others.

The divinatory practices followed by the islanders before the cataclysm were adopted and modified when the various groups banded together to survive after the Cataclysm. Even the 'civilized' town dwellers make signs to ward the evil eye, bad luck, and evil spirits. Fortunetellers and shamans are fixtures in cities, often having their own quarter filled with gaudily painted buildings where they perform elaborate rituals according to their specialty. The Nordmaari have a complex spiritual life, often using the abilities of the mediums and oracles to maintain contact with dead kin or exorcise a possessed individual. The influx of refugees from the mainland around the peninsula also provided inspiration for many new practices.

The beliefs of the more isolated tribal islanders and the savage jungle dwellers are very similar to their pre-Cataclysmic beliefs. To them, the Cataclysm was a punishment visited upon the evil colonists and their empires.

Settlements of the Peninsula:

In parts of Nordmaar, particularly around the Great Moors, entire buildings are built on massive pontoons, made from hollowed-out tree trunks or on huge log barges. Casinos, inns, marketplaces, all can be found on these floating platforms, connected to each other by mazes of gangplanks and catwalks. Smaller boats of varying designs also have homes and buildings built on top of them. These are all lashed to each other by vine ropes, and then tied to strong anchor trees along the river's edge. Some of these villages migrate up and down the rivers acting as travelling markets and bazaars, breaking apart, only to reform in a different pattern at their destination. This is where many of the inland settlements get supplies. The coming of one of the floating markets may be the only outside contact a village has throughout the year.

**Jachim:**

This city predates the Cataclysm, and was an important center in the spice trade. From its docks the exotic goods of the islands were sent to faraway lands, a tradition continued after the Cataclysm. With the rise of the Nordmaar peninsula and the expansion of the jungles, the variety of exotic trade goods exploded, meaning more profits for the merchants of Jachim. The traders have long ruled the city, even blocking outsiders from certain parts of it during trading season. In this way, the shippers never know the true worth of the products traded in the market district, only the inflated prices the traders sell them for. Before the destruction of Istar, Jachim and Vellas, the city that controlled Istars spice trade,
maintained a strong rivalry. The competition escalated at times to blockades and even combat on the high seas.

**Jennison:**

After the War of the Lance, Jennison is a city of refugees, a home for the displaced. The town was originally built shortly after the Cataclysm, as a fishing village on the newly risen coasts of Nordmaar. After the destruction of Valkinord in 348AC, many of the survivors who escaped the slave march fled north and settled in Jennison. It is a rough and tumble town of stone and plank buildings; most of them built hastily when the homeless began to flood through the gates. Consequently, it is also filled with slums, beggars and petty crime.

**Jotan:**

This was one of the first cities built on the islands by the colonists. It weathered the destruction well, but after the Cataclysm, the city was forever changed. The waters of the harbor had slowly risen, in some places as high as the second floor of buildings in the town. People fled the lower floors of their homes, leaving the main floors submerged. Rather than moving completely, they simply began to travel throughout the flooded streets in rafts and barges, continuing with business as usual. At first, people built crude hovels on the red tile roofs of the shorter dwellings, but in time, they began to build new structures on them as well. Some took a different approach, opting instead to live on their barges, lashing them together to for stability. It has become known as the city of canals, a testament to the flexibility of people and their will to survive.

**Melkar:**

This small town subsists on fishing, harvesting the exotic plants of the jungle and as a base of operations for explorers and treasure-hunters. From its shores groups set out for Turan, the sunken city, as well as to the mysterious Islander temple that rises from the open sea. It is here that some of the great barge-temples are built each year to be sailed to the temple and burned as a sacrifice.

**North Keep:**

The colonial capital of Ilmatar has changed little more than its name in the years since the Cataclysm. Its harbor is gone, much like Tarsis in the south of Ansalon, but it has found several new industries by which it survived. The rise of the peninsula lands and the plains of Nordmaar allowed the extensive farming to continue, while the Mureau River allowed provides a great deal of fish and waterborne animal life.
**Pentar:**

This small fishing village is made up mainly of the descendants of survivors of the towns of Lessinamaar. As before the Cataclysm, this rough town is plagued by savages raiding on the backs of giant reptiles. It is one of several towns made up of the mixed descendants of colonists and islander slaves. The residents farm, herd and fish to survive, in the traditional ways of the pre-cataclysmic islanders. The fertile hills to the east of Pentar are grazed or worked on occasion, but herdsmen that bring their charges into that area risk attacks by the beast-riding savages, who may thunder out of the jungle at any time or by the many marauding predators of the jungles edge.

**Robann:**

Perched on a hilltop, this city sits at the intersection of three roads and three climates. Consequently, it has the most diverse population of any city in Nordmaar. This diversity in turn results in a wide range of available products from the desert khans, the swamp dwellers and the plainsmen of central Nordmaar. In a land with so few roads, if products from eastern Ansalon wish to enter Nordmaar by land, they must come through Robann. The city also has a large library and a thriving black market antiquities trade, all plundered from the ruined cities in the desert or the Sea Elf City of Votana in the Great Moors. As with products entering Nordmaar, if something is leaving Nordmaar by land, it will likely come through Robann.

**Ubasta:**

After Pentar was raided several times in its first year, some refugees fled further north, towards Jotan. A group of militia from Jotan met them en route, demanding that they turn back. The now homeless people refused, but without weapons, could not continue. Instead, they searched the area, finding a suitable location for a town of their own. The site chosen by the settlers was a hilltop overlooking the inland countryside and the seas to the west. Ubasta is a city with two main parts, the docks and the town proper. The town on the hilltop is walled, as are the docks. The road down the hillside to them is also walled, so that the fishermen can be defended wherever they are. The long walls run along the wide road, and over the years, the town has started to build up along the path. Booths and shops are built against the walls, and in some places, the road has been completely covered by buildings, forming a tunnel of sorts. The wretches of the city fill this area, forming a gauntlet of poverty that people must pass through on a daily basis. Pickpockets, prostitutes, beggars and muggers all haunt the stretch of road, from the wharfs to the gates of the upper town.
**Unger:**

The survivors of Forseti’s destruction built Unger in a sheltered bay a few miles from the ruins of their town. Forseti was heavily damaged and remains mostly flooded, centuries after the Cataclysm. Unger has become a trade point for Demares and Jotan, as it sits along the only route between the two. Its local government exacts tolls from caravans that pass through, unless they are willing to set up camp outside Unger. If they stop, and force customers from the city to travel to Unger to do business, the tolls are waived. The exotic animal trade that had made Forseti famous before the cataclysm continues, but to a much lesser extent. Now, creatures are sought mainly for spell or potion components. The access to the jungles on the rest of the peninsula has made this new enterprise profitable as well, much more so than selling live animals. The savages of the jungle regularly raid the caravans en route to Unger, as well as waylaying hunting parties. In a few instances, groups of the tattooed jungle dwellers have even entered the city, climbing over its earth and wood walls to free animals within. This has lead to a bounty being placed on the savage's heads.

**Valkinord:**

This town, the only deep-water port on the peninsula, was built after the Cataclysm to house refugees from sunken Nordmaar cities. The urgency of the task make its architecture and style somewhat different than North Keep. The town is very simple, with buildings made of rough masonry and thatch, and a simple grid layout. Much of the city is devoted to tenement-style housing, each building being several stories tall. In this way, the most people can be fit into the smallest space. Unfortunately, the crowding has also lead to Valkinord having crime, vermin and disease problems. The most prominent feature is its high walls and fortified breakwaters. It was destroyed during the War of the Lance and never rebuilt. The town's crude sewer system is woefully inadequate, the waste canals in the city often come close to overflowing. Work crews have been sent into the tunnels to clear blockages and widen them, but more often than not, the laborers disappear somewhere in the maze of dark tunnels.

**Willik:**

One of many floating towns on the rivers of Nordmaar, Willik was originally an anchored barge on the Mureau River Delta. Over the centuries, this floating town has developed a well-deserved reputation as being a seedy den of villains. Willik, the town's first captain, died long ago and his barge has long since sunk, but the criminal element he harbored remains. The layout is ever changing, as boats leave or join the floating town. Various gangs and river pirate groups frequent the place, but it is mostly neutral territory for them all.
Wulfgar:

This town is little more than a trade site, a gathering place for caravans of goods from across Nordmaar and the surrounding region. The town itself is very small, but well fortified. The trade grounds are outside its walls and certain areas have been claimed by merchants from particular cities. There few buildings on the trade grounds, most are seasonal booths or open-walled wagons. The majority of the walled town is built around a small pond fed by an underground spring, and it is this need of water that brings traders. There are few other places where drinkable water can be found on the grasslands, consequently, if the traders want to get water and do business, they must pay the town leaders. Some of the city groups have banded together, using their own funds to build portable stockades, so that their goods and people can be protected from the raiders that plague the peninsula. The people of Wulfgar care little about the outsiders, as long as they can pay their trading fees and water rights. If the town were not so well-defended, the other cities would have hired mercenaries long ago to do something about the problems.
Bakali Hut

Native Villages:

The homes of the former Islanders are very similar to their Pre-Cataclysmic counterparts. Some are permanent while many are easily transported, as most of the small barbarian groups are nomadic. The frequent floods and long rainy season have caused the residents to adopt many unique architectural adaptations.

In most places, flood or storm surges can be as much as ten feet, and so the dwellings in the jungle interior are typically built on tall stilts. These also help to keep out some of the larger predators, although if they are hungry enough, the raised shanties provide little protection.

On the savanna, the majority of natives are herders, and live in round reed or thatch huts. These are collapsed and rolled when the village moves, as is the tall fence that surrounds them. These nomadic groups are often small, consisting of only a few dozen members of a family.
The coastal villages are similar to their jungle counterparts, being built on stilts or on the land above the high tide marks to avoid flooding. The native villages on the coast between Melkar and Demares are different though, even from other coastal dwellers. Unlike most of the other natives, their settlements are permanent. The structures are simple in layout, often built square or rectangular out of split log planks. The stilts themselves are elaborately carved trees trunks, raised as pillars, stairs and ladders forming part of their intricate artwork. The secretive inhabitants of these mist-shrouded villages are known for their fishing and whaling prowess, as well as their skills with their massive oceangoing canoes.
Places of Interest:

**Turan:**

Some towns the colonists built survived the Cataclysm, while others were destroyed instantly. Some though, like Turan, went to their doom silently, surviving earthquakes and storms only to sink slowly into the azure sea. The process took days, but when it was finished, the town, still intact, lay almost completely submerged. After the Cataclysm, the red tiled roofs of the buildings, as well as their uppermost stories, jut above the surface of the water, the only evidence that land once existed there. The inhabitants fled to the new peninsula, abandoning homes that now stand in the open sea.

**Selinn:**

This ruined Bakali city now rests upon a grassy plateau on the edge of the Oghama highlands, slowly being swallowed by the greenery surrounding it. The sands of the sea, which had long protected it, were washed away in the Cataclysm, revealing one of the best preserved examples of the architecture of this mysterious ancient civilization. Its egg-shaped domes, soaring arches and elevated roadways seem at harmony with the lush surroundings, as though they were born out of them.

**Islander Temples:**

Only one of the Islander temples survived the Cataclysm unscathed, the temple of Istinamaar. The others were destroyed or submerged, although the one built on Siwerdemaaar is still accessible. Its great stairway rises out of the sea, the mountain it is carved into forming an artificial island. Islander boats often dock at these stairs, so pilgrims may climb the stairs to seek the wisdom of their ancestors.

**The Boneyard Wastes:**

After the Cataclysm, the Pre-Cataclysmic reef that was the Boneyard Shoals was thrust above the waters. Now known simply as the Boneyard Wastes, it sits on the great savanna, in the middle of a vast field of scrub and short grasses. No larger vegetation grows there, and animals shun the place. Natives avoid it too; their legends say that spirits wander through the scattered hulks, seeking vengeance for their deaths and looking for souls to feed upon.

**Coral Forests:**
As with the Boneyard Shoals, vast coral reefs were thrust above the sea when the peninsula was created. It is an alien landscape, of arches and caves, populated with strange plants and even stranger ruins- the former homes of sea elves and other underwater races. These are found throughout the peninsula, in any of the lands that were once beneath the sea.

**Sea Elf City:**

Just as Selinn, the Bakali City, was revealed during the Cataclysm, so too was the Sea Elf City of Votana. Its architecture is unlike anything else on Krynn, elegant and ornate, strangely familiar to those who have seen Silvanesti, yet very different. Buildings are built of brightly colored coral and other stones, and carved with bas-relief images of sea life.

**The Pillars of the Sky:**

During and after the Cataclysm, rapid erosion destroyed the cliffs and shoreline of the former island further, as well as some of the pillars themselves. Now they stand as sentinels over the savanna of central Nordmaar. In the vast grasslands, the natives believe that it is these stone towers that stop the sky from falling. Their tops have become overgrown with vegetation, which has even begin to creep down the sides of the towers, like a green curtain. The pillars are riddled with Pre-Cataclysmic pirate lairs and ruins, the most feared of which is the ruins if Esimau's Aerie, the Ergothian Prison.
The War of the Lance in Nordmaar:

What transpired in the Nordmaar Peninsula during the period surrounding the War of the Lance is largely a mystery. What is certain is that the ranking commander of the Red Dragonarmy, Hakael Sepharoth, ruled the area with an iron fist. Educated in Kalaman, Sepharoth knew the problems learned people could cause his rulership. Anxious to prove his worth to Emperor Ariakas, he systematically rounded up and executed herbalists, librarians, even bookkeepers—any who might speak against him. Anyone literate disappeared in the night. His brutality was revealed early in his reign, in the razing of Valkinord. Though he commanded more than enough troops and dragons to demand the small city's surrender, as a show of force he sacked the city, burned much of it, and forced-marched the citizens south to Neraka. Thousands died en route, those that lived were never seen again.

When Valkinord had been obliterated, the commander's terms for surrender were immediately sent to North Keep. In open mockery of the city's raised defenses, a red dragon flew over the capital, dropping a sack into a fountain in its center. The sack contained the head of Valkinord's mayor, the treaty of surrender stuffed in the mouth. North Keep surrendered less than a day later. The savages of the jungles and the plains struck at the Dragonarmies from time to time, using their trapping skills and knowledge of the landscape to harass the occupiers. The end of the war saw the Dragonarmies defeated, but not driven out of some occupied areas. Sepharoth held onto his rule, even after the dragons left, eventually building Jennison into a major northern trade port.
Nordmaar and The Chaos War:

Two years after Sepharoth's death, the armies of Ariakan swept across Ansalon, followed by the minions of Chaos. The Knights of Takhisis conquered Nordmaar with little trouble, their brute footsoldiers adapting very quickly to the jungle terrain of Nordmaar. The ruler of Nordmaar, Sepharoth's son, Bezrial, had such a tenuous grasp of his power that even his own troops threw down their weapons when they saw the ebony-clad knights stride out of the surf.

Suthysa Camuel, one of the dark knights, took over as provisional governor of Nordmaar, establishing a garrison while the remainder of his forces continued on their conquerings. His rule was short-lived, only weeks later the Chaos War began.

The summer had been unseasonably warm, even in Nordmaar's dense rainforests. Fires raged across the peninsula, through the jungles and the savanna, blotting out the sun with their smoke. Tremors began to rock the earth, until finally, Tarano-take, in the great swamp, erupted. The blast was heard hundreds of miles away, and a rain of fiery ash blanketed the region, creating a perpetual twilight for the wars duration. At the same time the mountain erupted, a wall of water appeared off the northern coast. Silently, the wall of water swept southwards with an unnatural slowness, strange shadows writhing within. Over a hundred feet tall and scores of miles long, the tainted waters engulfed the beaches, then pressed into the jungle itself. After what seemed like an eternity, the wall finally stopped. It remained in place, like a murky glacier, covering huge areas of the northern peninsula, until Chaos was banished. With the departure of the Father of All and Nothing, the mass of water collapsed, flooding a huge area.
Nordmaar in the Fifth Age:

The end of the Chaos War and Second Cataclysm had little physical effect on most of the Nordmaar Peninsula. The flooded lands were the exception. Jotan, Ubasta, Pentar, Demares and Unger were all destroyed by the wave, and their inhabitants fled or wiped out. The shells of the buildings remain and have since been reclaimed by survivors. Plagued by nightmares, strange beasts from the sea and the jungles, the residents would leave, but they have no where else to go. In the lowlands, where the tainted waters pooled, strange creatures and plants appeared, their presence accompanied by even stranger events. Many savages, former dwellers of the jungle depths began to leave their sheltered home, emerging into the plains, seeking work and a place in the realm of mortal civilization. They spoke fearfully of creatures prowling the jungle depths, of monsters that destroyed and ravaged the settlements within. In 16SC Mohrlex, the Black Dragon known as Pitch arrived and took up residence in the Great Moors of Southern Nordmaar. With the arrival of Pitch came the resurgence of the reptilian Bakali and their kin, who have begun to rebuild their ancient civilization under the dragon's protective gaze. The remainder of Nordmaar is a free realm and has become a center for refugees from the conquered lands.

The lands of Nordmaar, both before and after the Cataclysms, are filled with adventure and danger. Its dark history holds many secrets, while its future lies in preserving its freedom. In the fifth age, it is one of a few free realms, and consequently it is lusted after by many powers. It is a land that has a unique relationship with the gods, and with magic itself. Regardless of the time, heroes are always in short supply in this savage land.
Bakali Raft

Appendix 1: A Timeline of Nordmaar's History

The history of Nordmaar before the Cataclysm is one of tragedy and despair, a pitting of two peoples against each other. Only when the world was sundered in the Cataclysm could they find peace and learn to live side-by-side.

The natives of the islands had no written history before the arrival of the Ergothians. It was only the arrival of the colonists, and their subsequent enslavement of some of the natives that precipitated literacy amongst the natives. The events of the archipelago's history before colonization are shrouded in mystery, myth and legend. Consequently, the following timeline begins with the first contact.

220PC (2341 Years after the ascension of Ackal Ergot)
The Ergothian explorer Heyeirdah makes landfall on the island of Nuerde Mare during his circumnavigation of Ansalon. As she sails in from the south, the islanders believe she comes from the island of Tara ta Mare, and prostrate themselves before her.

219PC After several months in the company of the Islanders, Heyeirdah leaves, to continue her journey and report to Terrapyn IX, the Emperor of Ergoth, of what she has found.

218PC Heyeirdah arrives in Daltigoth, to the accolades of the people and her liege.
After hearing of Heyeirdah's journey and the bounty of the islands, emperor Terrapyn decrees that Ergoth shall protect the humble Islanders by establishing a colony there.

A fleet of ships leaves Daltigoth for the islands, now named the Nordmaar Islands by Imperial decree. After rounding the Cape of Storms, the naval escort turns back to Ergoth to defend the imperial seat of power. The slow ships of the colonists, and their inexperienced crews are easy prey to pirates, storms, and shipborne illness. Fully half of the flotillas is lost in the months-long journey to the islands.

The colonists finally make landfall on the eastern shore of Nordmaar Island, establishing Ilmatar, their first town, there. The numbers of colonists and their alien appearance makes the natives apprehensive, and contact is not made between the groups for almost two months. In that time, deaths occur due to disease and accidents, but are blamed on magic of the savages that inhabit the island.

The colonists survive their first year, and begin to establish themselves, building granaries, mills, clearing fields and stone walls for Ilmatar.

The natives and the colonists begin to conduct trade and the mistrust between the groups fades. Some natives, attracted to the curiosities of the colonists leave their coastal villages and enter the towns, seeking to make themselves like the colonists. Always looking for more workers, the colonists accept their aid, eventually some are taught to read and write, and are given important tasks on the rapidly growing plantations.

Jachim founded.

Jotan founded.

Demares founded.

Forseti founded.

A plague epidemic breaks out in the colony, but affects only the Ergothians, not the natives. Many people die, so many that the survival of the colony itself is threatened because there are not enough workers to procure food. The islanders offer further aid, this time though, the paranoid colonists and their militia imprison many of the natives, accusing them of using magic to try and trying to destroy the colony. With mounted soldiers, steel armor
and weapons, the natives are helpless to stop the colonists from throwing them in irons as slaves.

191PC The governor of the Islands, Shinial Perrakys, declares that the islanders must be made to pay for their bewitchery and evil magic, and slavery is officially instituted on the islands. Many of the natives who are not imprisoned flee deep into the jungles when their families are rounded up or killed for resisting.

190-153PC The colony grows, especially when a second wave of settlers arrives from Ergoth. Smaller outpost villages are founded on each of the outlying islands.

177PC Ackal's Landing founded.

176PC Contact is lost with the village of Ackal's Landing, on Taratemaar, the southernmost island, within months of its founding. Search parties from Nordmaar find no bodies, just the remains of the buildings.

152PC Gold is discovered on Lessinamaar, causing a gold rush on the islands. Soon after mining begins, pirates begin to appear in the waters of the archipelago with increasing frequency.

152PC Aiusa founded.

150PC The economic boom on the islands continues, and priests journey to the islands, setting up missions, churches and schools in the towns at first, but soon in the jungle itself, to reach the savages there. The religious expansion culminates in the founding of the great temple of Paladine in Ilmatar, a project that will take almost ten years to complete, as the stone must be quarried on one of the other islands.

150PC Surid founded.

140PC The Great Temple is completed, Giusecchio, the current Kingpriest of Istar, visits the islands to commemorate the temple. His ship is guarded by Solamnic and Istaran warships.

138PC Belanus founded.

117PC The slaves in the plantations, lead by the holy man Seala, put down their
tools and refuse to work, demanding that they be set free of slavery, be allowed
to own land and have rights equal to the colonists. Their resistance is proven
futile, when the colonial militia attacks, forcing them back to work with violence
and threats.

101PC Turan and Kubera founded by Istaran shipwreck survivors.

97PC After over fifty years of pirate raids, stealing riches and slaves, the new
emperor of Ergoth, Kovabiel IV, sends a fleet to protect the islands.

96PC The Ergothian fleet arrives, and engages a pirate fleet at the Boneyard
Shoals. The Ergothians, unfamiliar with the area and heavily outnumbered, are
wiped out, dying at the hands of the pirates, or when their ships run aground on
the reefs in the shark-infested waters. The pirates suffer heavy losses as well,
resulting in a decrease in pirate activity over the next few years.

95PC Gandulla is occupied.

93PC The decrease in pirate numbers clears the way for Minotaur pirates to enter
the area. Some are pirates, and some are part of a Minotaur Imperial Fleet, both
are seeking slaves and gold, and use any means to get it. Entire towns of natives
and colonists disappear in their wake.

36PC Frustrated with Ergoths lack of aid in dealing with the pirates, the
colonists, under governor Ouranos, declare their independence, and petition
Solamnia and Istar for aid. Both nations recognize the independent status of the
islands, hoping to drive the final nail in the coffin of the Ergothian Empire, long a
nuisance to both.

35PC Ergothian troops arrive to put down the rebellion by occupying Ackal's
Landing and blockading the harbors of the colony's other ports. They are forced
to retreat after being defeated in a series of sneak attacks by colonists being
covertly supplied by Solamnia.

35PC Gorias founded.

33PC Ergoth finally grants independence to the islands after Solamnia signs a
treaty of alliance with the Islands provisional government.

29PC A native uprising occurs, lead by Yawid Misolon, an Islander sorcerer, who
leads hordes of undead to destroy the towns and bring freedom to the natives.
The colonists, with the aid of missionary priests, fight them off, but not before
Ilmatar is sacked and the Great Temple burned.
25PC Raids by savages out of the jungles, intended to free slaves, had always been an infrequent problem. They begin to escalate in frequency and severity, several plantations are burned and their owners disappear.

23PC Istaran troops, led by members of the Order of the Divine Hammer, land at Kubera, to aid in civilization of the heathen natives. They disappear in the jungles of Siwerdemaar, and are never found.

0 The Cataclysm. The Island of Lessinamaar sinks, while the peninsula of Nordmaar surfaces. Natives, slaves and colonists band together to survive in the devastation.

0AC Unger founded.

1-30AC The struggle for survival. As the cooperation of the groups continues, the cultures blend together into the earliest forms of contemporary Nordmaar. The jungles of the islands expand rapidly, taking advantage of the fertile new land of the peninsula.

5AC Pentar founded.

7AC Valkinord founded as a new port for the new land.

8AC Willik founded.

14AC Wulfgar founded.

53AC Ubasta founded.

238AC Jennison founded.

348AC The Red and Green Dragonarmies sweep into Nordmaar, under the leadership of Hakael Sepharoth. They never manage to fully stamp out the persistent resistance, but hold the lands even after the war ends.

383AC The Chaos War. As fires destroy the jungles and grasslands of Nordmaar, the Knights of Takhisis appear and conquer it, using the ports as bases to land troops and strike other parts of the continent. Soon after the conquest is complete, a huge tidal wave engulfs the northern coast, destroying many towns and causing flooding miles inland. In the south, Tarano-take, in the Great Moors, erupts, darkening the skies. Chaos and his minions arrive, laying waste to much of the region.
0SC The Second Cataclysm

16SC Mohrlex, the black dragon, arrives and establishes dominance over Southern Nordmaar. Northern Nordmaar becomes a free realm. Refugees flood its coastal towns from the dragon realms around it, as in the days after the first Cataclysm.
Appendix 2: Resources and Products (Pre- and Post-Cataclysm)

The islands, and later the peninsula of Nordmaar are very rich in natural resources, which is why they were so prized by Ergoth before the Cataclysm. There are several types of environments, each providing a different bounty. They are grouped by environment rather than by island as the islands ceased to exist after the Cataclysm, and most types of environment found there are also found on the peninsula.

Jungle:

* exotic birds and game
* herbs and medicinal plants
* fruits, vegetables and nuts
* hardwoods

Oceans, Rivers and Lakes:

* whaling
* fishing
* pearl diving
* shells
* plant life
* clay for pottery and tile
* treasure hunting

Savanna:

* large game
* flowering plants
* menagerie creatures

Plantations:

* coffee, sugar cane, maize, yams, cotton
* textiles, sugar
Mountains:

* gold, silver, copper
* semi-precious gems
* ornamental stone
* salt

Desert:

* salt
* small game
* medicinal and hallucinogenic plants
* sand for glass making

**Terrain types by Island:**

Nordmaar: Savanna, Mountains and Jungle

Lessinamaar: Desert, Hills, Mountains, and Jungle

Siwerdemaar: Jungle and Mountains

Istinamaar: Jungle, Mountains, Savanna and Hills

Taratemaar: Jungle and Mountains
Appendix 3: The Spirits and the Gods

**Paladine:** Mahune  
**Mishakal:** Nuerde  
**Habbakuk:** Kahene-ma  
**Majere:** Not worshipped prior to the arrival of Ergothian colonists.  
**Zivilyn:** Zoyobra  
**Zeboim:** Hecali-ma  
**Takhisis:** Gtaka  
**Sirrion:** Worshipped as the fire-spirits, Biel Makh  
**Branchala:** Not specifically venerated, since music is integrated into every aspect of tribal life.  
**Sargonnas:** Kothanele  
**Solinari:** Tisifon  
**Lunitari:** Mayara  
**Nuitari:** Ouama  
**Kiri-Jolith:** Not worshipped prior to the arrival of Ergothian colonists.  
**Gilean:** Not worshipped prior to the arrival of Ergothian colonists.  
**Chislev:** Worshipped in the form of animal spirits.  
**Reorx:** Not worshipped prior to the arrival of Ergothian colonists.  
**Hiddukel:** Gtoko  
**Shinare:** Not worshipped prior to the arrival of Ergothian colonists.  
**Chemosh:** Tarano-me  
**Morgion:** Tarano-me
Appendix 4: Encounter Tables

The following Encounter Tables are appropriate for use among the Nordmaar Islands before the Cataclysm and after it.

*Tropical or Subtropical:*

* plains, forests, hills, swamps, mountains or desert

*Waterborne:*

* saltwater, freshwater, surface, depth,

*Prehistoric: **

* all

(** Before the Cataclysm, prehistoric creatures were only found in the waters around the islands or on the island of Lessinamaar. After the Cataclysm, the giant lizards spread throughout the peninsula, but not beyond because of the southern desert.)
Appendix 5: Adventure Seeds

Nordmaar is a region filled with adventure possibilities, regardless of the time a campaign is set. Urban, dungeon or wilderness adventures-whatever the DM's and Player's particular tastes, this little-known area of Ansalon can fill them.

Pre-Cataclysmic Adventures:

* Spying for Ergoth or Istar on Siwerdemaar
* Caravan guards on Lessinamaar
* Hired guards for gold shipments to Ilmatar
* Animal catchers on Istinamaar
* Exploration of the Selinn Ruins
* Investigation of the ruins of Ackal's Landing
* Pirate Hunting
* Rescuing pirate captives
* Hunting escapees from the prison on Lessinamaar
* Spying on the pirates of Gandulla
* Hunting a sea monster that has been attacking ships
* Treasure hunting in the wrecks on Zeboim's Tail
* Exploration of the mountainside Islander temples
* Fighting off savage raiders
* Undead hunting on Nordmaar
* Searching for lost explorers

Post-Cataclysmic Adventures:

* Rescuing survivors during the Cataclysm
* Exploring city ruins
* Caravan Guards
* Exploring Bakali and Sea Elf Ruins
* Exploring the Boneyard Wastes
* Exploring the Esimau's Aerie, the Ergothian Asylum
* Guerrilla warfare against the occupying Dragonarmies
* Fighting the minions of Chaos
* Spying on Mohrlex
* Hunting raiders or marauding monsters
* Rescuing pirate captives
* Searching for lost explorers

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The following manuscript, written in the first century after the Cataclysm, was brought to me in 361AC by a traveler who recovered it from the ruins of Daltigoth. I purchased it from her in the city of Haven during my visit to the fall harvest festival of that year. It details one of the most turbulent times in the history of the Conclave, and it includes some rare information about our accusers, the Priests of the Moons. The work, translated from Low Ergothian, is incomplete, consisting of excerpts of only a few chapters, but its title Hystoirum Penitatus im Deios Lunae is known both to me and to my colleagues at the Great Library of Palanthas. I hope it will provide those of our order who have a curiosity about our history with some thought-provoking reading on the nature of society and of our order itself. Only when we hold ourselves up to the harsh light of scrutiny can we truly see our flaws.

Syrhrinus the White, of Kalaman
Head Librarian of the Tower of Wayreth
Spring 363AC
In Darkest Days: Chapter 1

The Origins and History of the Priesthood of the Moons

In the seventy-sixth year before the Cataclysm, a rift developed within the Wizard’s Conclave. This division over doctrine set the stage for one of the darkest periods in the history of Ansalon and magic itself. The disagreements, philosophical at first, were based on the purpose of magic’s existence in the world. Some members of the Order of High Sorcery felt that the power should be a tool for the gods of the moons. The majority of the members, however, retained the traditional belief that the magic of the moons was at the disposal of the wielder, who may have answered to a particular deity, but was in no way a servant of that god. The controversy began when a young mage named Muscyndis Alipha, an Ergothian, published a treatise at the tower of Daltigoth. Alipha is an interesting character in the history of magic. Initially, he aspired to become a priest, but he failed in this task when his latent talents in the arts of wizardly magic displayed themselves. Distraught over his own sense of impiety and failure, he wandered for months, crossing the continent in his journeys. This sojourn affected him deeply, according to his memoirs, for he saw the poverty and squalor that many lived in, and believed that he had the power to change it. Finally accepting that he in fact had been gifted and not cursed with his abilities, he sought out the Wizard’s Conclave and joined it. The years that followed are not well detailed, but it is known that he became a mage of some renown, particularly in his service to the communities to which he traveled. His experiences in the seminaries of Kalaman, where he studied for the priesthood, however, had changed him. He retained the deep faith of his youth, and he eventually published a paper that combined his faith with his ideas about magic. He discussed new roles for mages and a brighter future in which they lived in the open. The ideals struck a chord with members of all three Orders and in dining halls of all the towers, debates occurred. The discussions were amicable at first, but over the months some wizards grew more forceful in their views, and tempers flared.

In 73PC, apprentices at the Tower of Daltigoth, led by Alipha himself, began openly practicing their beliefs and converting others. They declared that they were no longer mages, but priests, who honored their gods through service, not selfishness. The Priesthood of the Moons was born. Branded as renegades by the Conclave, the Priests of the Moons fled Daltigoth and the other towers and sought refuge in the fold of the Kingpriest of Istar. The clergy welcomed them with open arms, even allowing these wayward sons and daughters who had returned to true faith to build their great temple in the city of Calah. Though the Priests of the Moons were few in number when they arrived,
the Kingpriest, Eusymmachus III, and his advisors knew that a strong priesthood devoted to the gods of magic could one day become a powerful ally. To this end, they were patient and allowed the fledgling order to grow in safety.

His patience was rewarded in the decades that followed, as the Priesthood of the Moons swelled to include hundreds of members. It had not yet begun to build temples across Ansalon, but its members traveled widely, preaching and working with the people, gaining much sympathy as they did. Their doctrine of servitude made them popular with the citizens and the new Kingpriest.

When Eusymmachus IV looked at the Priests of the Moon, he saw an order that would well suit his plans. Manipulative advisors had made many of the Kingpriests fearful and paranoid about the power and wealth of the Conclave, and the presence of a popular order that already had tense relations with the Conclave proved too tempting a tool to waste. After several prominent members of the Priesthood of the Moons, including Alipha, were murdered, and the Conclave was implicated, the Kingpriest and his close advisors found it easy to make the public dislike of the Conclave turn to zealous hatred. With the gracious aid of the Kingpriest, the priesthood launched a massive investigation to find the culprits. Initially created to seek justice, it soon became an arena for the trial and execution of mages. The Lost Battles were about to begin.

Skillful manipulation of the population fanned the embers of mistrust into the flames of hate, and within weeks, wizards were being burned at the stake. Tribunals sprang up across Ansalon, led by Priests of the Moons and made up of Knights of Solamnia and a new militant order devoted to Kiri-Jolith, the Divine Hammer. Local magistrates and constabularies became involved, but it was mainly the continent-spanning institutions that controlled the trials. From Tarsis to Palanthas, Karthay to Daltigoth, wizards found themselves hunted down and put on trial.

The persecution of the Conclave lasted for years, and in that time the Priests of the Moons created an internal order whose primary goal focused on hunting mages. Skilled in both spell-use and martial combat, these individuals led parties of Knights and warrior-priests throughout the land in search of hidden magic-wielders. In the trials, they also acted as accusers, questioners, and final arbiters. Five years after they began, the mage-hunt reached its climax. No longer content to ferret out evil individuals, the Priests of the Moons turned their righteous might on the towers themselves, the sanctuaries of the Conclave.

Peasant levies were raised across the breadth of Ansalon in preparation for the attacks on the wizards' strongholds. Joining again with the Knights of Solamnia and the Order of the Divine Hammer, the Moon Priests prepared to lay siege. On
the eve of the first attack, the wizards struck first. The archmages of the Towers of Daltigoth and Losarcum destroyed their towers, using potent magics to level the buildings. The show of force by the Conclave was very effective, for Beldinas, the Kingpriest himself, decreed that the attacks would halt. (The Kingpriest's hold over the populace, though never officially political, was incredibly strong; he had installed sympathizers and puppets to positions high in the Istaran Senate.)

At his command, the armies stayed their hands and allowed the wizards to retreat to Wayreth, per the Kingpriest’s agreement with Fistandantilus. The people believed that the Kingpriest was concerned with public safety in the towers’ cities, but the true reason for the pause in the battle was much less noble. The Kingpriest and his advisors sought not to save lives, but to secure the artifacts secreted within the towers. If the remaining towers were destroyed, these items would be lost, thus the wizards were allowed safe passage. Again, the machinations of the Kingpriest were thwarted, for though he gained the tower of Istar, he lost the Tower of Palanthas. As is well known, a member of the Order of the Black Robes threw himself from the parapet, barring the entry to all save the "Master of Past and Present." In the end, the Lost Battles, as they came to be known, were a pyrrhic victory for the Kingpriest, for he gained only one of the five towers he sought to claim.

The entry of the Kingpriest into the halls of Istar's tower is one of the grimmest days of the Conclave, for it marks the first and only time an unworthy has controlled a citadel of magic. Little is known of the events of this turbulent period, for there are no surviving records of the Kingpriest's time in the tower. What is certain is that at the same time he took up residence there, the Kingpriest also took the wizard Fistandantilus as an advisor. Though claimed to be a meeting of the minds to establish a lasting peace between clergy and Conclave, it is more likely that a bargain was struck. Fistandantilus never again left Istar. Instead, he remained ensconced at the Kingpriest's side. The gods alone know what the evil archmage whispered to the holy man, but it could be nothing good. With two towers in ruins, one occupied, and one blocked by a curse, the Conclave faced its darkest hour. Safely hidden in their tower in the magical forest of Wayreth, the Conclave retired from the world and watched as the fanaticism of the Kingpriest's minions expanded and accelerated.

Though the wizards had fled from society, the persecutions continued. In most cases, as before, those tried and put to death were innocent. In truth, toward the end, the accusations had little to do with the Conclave, or with magic at all. They were instead directed at the deformed, the poor, strangers, or the unpopular--everyone society deemed undesirable. If a neighbor experienced good fortune, it
was because he used magic. Conversely, if someone experienced ill fortune, it was because someone used malevolent magic against her. Thus, many innocent people became the victim of class and social hatreds now expressable through legal means.

Little has survived to document the last days of the Moon Priests before the Cataclysm, but it is known that the priests, along with much of the existing clergy, were recalled to Istar by the Kingpriest or the heads of their orders. Some chose to go, while others went to Calah, where their great temple had been built. When the true priests left Krynn before the Cataclysm, the true Priests of the Moons were among them. Days later, the Cataclysm struck. Those Moon Priests who survived shared the beliefs of their brethren, but were wicked and corrupt, like much of Krynn’s populace.

Within the Conclave, sympathies existed for the Moon Priests, and in the decades after the destruction of the fiery mountain, the priesthood reappeared. Though evidence of the gods was gone from Krynn, few could dispute the presence of the moons above it. Zealous burnings of Knights and witches worried the mages, and fearful of history repeating itself, the Conclave took action. As the wizards saw it, the Priests of the Moons were not evil unto themselves. Rather, they were devoted people who had been manipulated by the clergy into serving the corrupt ends of the Kingpriest. In their pious brethren, the ranking members saw both a useful tool and a deadly enemy. Choosing to look past the differences in beliefs, the Conclave summoned the believers to Wayreth, welcomed the priests back to the Order, and gave them a role: renegade hunters. They could have their freedom of beliefs, but they must serve the Conclave and be subject to its laws.

In an effort to escape being hunted by the people of Ansalon, many of whom held them to blame for the Cataclysm, the priests agreed to work with the Conclave. They saw that, though the Conclave members were selfish in their use of power, they at least policed themselves. Renegades did not. They followed no code of conduct save whatever served their own ends — they were the true manifestation of the selfish use of magical power. Setting aside a portion of the Tower of Wayreth as a temple and quarters for the priests, the Conclave let them practice their skills of investigation and interrogation. Their safe existence had a price, though: They could not build temples to the Moon Gods, nor could they preach against the Conclave. Thus, they were allowed to exist, but only in small numbers.

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The common question asked about the Lost Battles is why the wizards did not fight back. At the time, the Conclave had relatively few members. Indeed, total
membership may have been under one thousand, with the majority of these being untested students or those having only recently passed the Test of High Sorcery. The road to becoming a powerful mage is a long one, which can take decades to complete, if ever. Thus, most wizards are of low to moderate power, with archmages being extremely rare individuals. It is also important to note that these individuals were scattered between towers, colleges, and hermitages across a continent. In the end, all wizards, regardless of power, must rest, a luxury in short supply during a siege. A war with the populace could not be won, for the Conclave’s resources and members were simply spread too thin. Even mercenaries, who rarely question a source of pay, did not wish to fight against all of society.

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The Priests of the Moons have proven remarkably skilled in dealing with renegades, using their martial and holy abilities to their fullest extent. In some cases investigation is all that is required, in others apprehension, and in some unfortunate instances, assassinations are deemed necessary. By allowing the priesthood to flourish under their watchful eye, the Conclave can prevent future persecutions and, more importantly, deal with renegades using agents who lack a wizard’s vulnerabilities.

Novice mages often ask why the gods allowed the persecutions to happen. Unfortunately, no firm answer to this question exists. Holy scriptures of all the gods tell of the All-Saints War, which is a time before the beginning of creation when the gods themselves warred for control of the souls waiting to be born. The planet itself was ravaged in the conflict, and at the end of the war, the gods all swore an oath that no one of them would ever make war upon Krynn again. They must let the inhabitants of this fledgling world choose their fates. They could be directed, and manipulated, but the gods themselves could not fight each other on the world of mortals. Thus, some say that the mistakes during the time of the Kingpriest could not be prevented and that they resulted from mortal folly that the gods could not act to stop.

However, others say differently. They believe the gods of the moons were among the weakest deities, because their believers, the wizards, were so few in number. When the Priesthood of the Moons arose, the moon gods let them fight the mages so that the stronger would survive. If the wizards prevailed, nothing would change, but if the Moon Priests were victorious, a more socially acceptable veneration of the moon gods could take hold on Krynn. No one can answer this save the three gods, and if there is one thing all deities do well, it is keep secrets from their followers.

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In Darkest Days: Chapter 4
The Structure of the Priesthood of the Moons

At its inception, the inquisition initially sought to find the murderers of Alipha and his disciples. Small and inexperienced as the priesthood was, it could not administer such a task on its own. Again, the Kingpriest offered aid. Othniel Belshasyr, a high-ranking Revered Son of Paladine, acted as liaison between the Kingpriest and the new church. In time, he became a trusted advisor to the Council of Abbots, which ran the Priesthood of the Moons. Of course, a fledgling priesthood needs resources to mount such a monumental investigation, and again, the Kingpriest offered help. Belshasyr controlled the flow of money into the Priesthood of the Moons coffers, and soon the inquisition itself, though he never did so openly.

The Church of the Moons was never very elaborate in its structure. It was still a young institution at the time of the Cataclysm, and bureaucracy of the kind in the Priesthood of Paladine can take millennia to develop. Each temple is controlled by an Abbot, and the size of a given temple usually indicates that individual's level of influence. The Council of Abbots, made up of nine members -- three devoted to each moon god -- is chosen from among these priests. The sequence of progression is as follows:

**Novitia:** Novitia are the lowest ranking members of the Priesthood of the Moons. They are not yet ordained, and they typically spend five years studying to advance. Duties of a Novitia include day-to-day tasks in the temples, though they are not permitted into those rituals beyond the first circle.

**Initiata:** Initiata is the second step of progression. These individuals can gain entry to all holy services, but only as observers. They hold responsibility for administrative tasks at the temples. Members remain at this level for three or four years before advancing.

**Acolycia:** Acolycia can take part in all rituals but are not yet permitted to lead or perform such tasks. Aspirants at this level remain here for an indeterminate time until they are ordained. In the final phase of this level, the individuals undertake missionary work or a preaching journey, during which they must travel to a distant land and spread the word of the Moon Priests.

**Ordinata:** The title of Ordinata is granted after Ordination. Ordained priests may lead rituals, and they must spend one year of every three traveling and preaching. The majority of members of the Clergy of the Moons rise no further than this.
**Prioria:** The title of Prioria is granted only rarely, and only after decades of service to the gods. At the time of the Cataclysm, less than forty Prioria existed. They are capable of ordaining and of accepting hopefuls into the faith as Novitia.

**Abbot:** An Abbot rules the church of a given city or region, using the temple as an administrative seat. Abbots are chosen by the Abbots of the Council and hold the title for life.

**Abbot of the Council:** Nine individuals control the doctrine and direction of the Priesthood of the Moons. Alipha set nine as the number of Council members so that no one person could control the church, believing that the group would balance itself out in decrees and reign in temperance.

*(Manuscript fragment ends)*
In Darkest Days: Chapter 11

The Persecutions

The Priests of the Moons were already popular public figures, and when some of their most prominent members were murdered in quick succession, the public willingly granted them the leeway needed to see justice done. As noted, they initially set out to find the responsible party, but at the urgings of Belshasyr, they quickly came to believe that the Conclave itself would not rest until its competition, the Priesthood of the Moons, was eradicated. Advisors of the Kingpriest lent their views, and soon the Council of Abbots saw conspiracies all around them. They decided to root out those hidden magic-users and hold them accountable for their schemes. The people of Ansalon, long jealous of the mages, were eager to see the Conclave get what they felt it deserved. To this end, the priests created manuals based on their beliefs and doctrine that would aid them in finding and questioning suspects. The first of these tomes, the Persuum Hereticus, was written by Daviel Erastus with the aid of Belshasyr. Its key points were posted in cities across the continent, and with its aid, the populace could easily identify magic-users in their midst. When one of the many traveling Moon Priests arrived with a caravan to dispense justice and cleanse the land, the populace had already whipped itself into a fervor and had both suspects and evidence ready for the priests’ perusal.

The Litigatum Hereticus, used only in tribunals, consisted of detailed instructions on how to question and prove one’s accusations, as well as how to resist the sorcery suspects were likely to employ against foes. This book was written by Belshasyr and Ennemoser Sartorio, the foremost of the earliest Moon Priest inquisitors. Few copies of these books have survived, but those who have read them speak with great worry that something as tragic could happen to us again. The wording, they say, is such that there is no escape once accused, save to admit guilt and be granted a mercifully quick execution. To protest one's guilt, it seems, is to invite torture, public humiliation, and, eventually, residence in an unmarked grave.
Sequence of Events in a Trial

What follows here is a brief synopsis of the events that transpire in a typical trial sequence, from suspicion at the beginning to pronouncement of punishment at the end.

1. The people of a town or village begin to voice suspicions about a person, and this talk intensifies when witnesses to unspeakable acts of witchery are found. If not imprisoned until the arrival of an accuser, the suspect is placed under house arrest or closely watched by neighbors. Once a priest arrives, he or she listens to accounts of the accused as well as statements from witnesses.

2. A traveling Moon Priest accuses the suspected magic-user. These mage-hunters travel with entourage caravans so that heretics can be tested and given a hearing immediately upon reading of charges and, if required, be transported to a tribunal. Professional advocates also travel with this entourage so that they can give the defendants a proper representation.

3. When a suspect is found and accused, the individual often has to undergo tests of piety and purity prior to being formally charged with practicing heretical magic. Subjects who do not survive the tests are publicly proclaimed innocent, and the process ends. If they survive these tests, formal charges are laid.

4. The suspect is formally charged and brought before a tribunal. In the presence of overwhelming evidence, the Moon Priest acts as magistrate and can make a ruling. If there is sufficient evidence for a trial, the suspect is transported to the nearest Temple of the Moons and incarcerated in its Inquisitorial Hall.

5. At a trial, a prior or prioress questions the accused according to methods and procedures set out in the *Litigatum Hereticus*. An advocate from within the Priesthood of the Moons may defend the accused, or the accused may defend him- or herself.

6. A Holy Magistrate, the highest-ranking clergyperson of the local temple, makes a ruling based on the defendant’s repentance, confession, or denial of charges, and the evidence present. In some cases, these rulings are made by juries of local ranking Knights of Solamnia, Members of the Divine Hammer, and the Priesthood of the Moons.

7. When the defendant is found guilty, the punishment is determined based on the nature of the charges.
The Mage-Hunters

Priests of the Moons who take up the glorious mantle of mage-hunter are highly respected by their brethren. Only the most pious and courageous of the Order are invited to join, and even then, only three in five aspirants survive the rigorous training. When they emerge from their training after a full year away from the rest of the priesthood, these individuals, already powerful priests, have great combat, investigative, and oratory skills.

They wear little armor, retaining the simple robes of their chosen order within priesthood. However, across their backs are slung scimitars of the highest quality. Jewelry, from rings and circlets to earrings and bracelets, covers the hunter. Crafters within the Moon Priesthood create items that repel the malevolent magics of a mage resisting arrest and gift the mage-hunter with them upon ascension to the rank. Though all mage-hunters carry the scimitar, some higher ranking hunters also wield the Garafa -- a short staff with a crescent-shaped blade at its head. These symbols of power and rank are bestowed upon the mage-hunters by the Council of Abbots.

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In Darkest Days: Epilogue

Afterword and Adventure Seeds

Translator’s Afterword

The persecution of magic-users was indeed one of the darkest times in the art's history. So too was it a dark time for the rest of the population, for it was only a symptom of the plagues killing the civilization of Ansalon from within. No one was safe from accusation. Anyone -- man or woman, adult or child -- could be accused and put to death. The pendulum of our civilization swung toward darkness and was held there by the will of the powerful in Istar, which is something that we must never allow again! The past can be mourned, but we, as mages, must keep a watchful eye on society to prevent a tragedy like this from happening again. Truly the price of freedom is eternal vigilance.

--Syrrhinus the White

Adventure Seeds

A roleplaying campaign set during this time period can have many possibilities. Here are some examples:

- A player character or important NPC could be accused of magecraft, leaving it to the other members of the party to rescue him or her.
- The PCs could try to find the true murderers of Alipha and his cohorts -- murderers within the Kingpriest's own court.
- For a twist, the PCs could be thrust into the role of advocates, or even accusers, in the persecutions.
- As Priests of the Moons, the PCs could be sent on missions to capture and return a ranking Conclave member for trial, or perhaps to retrieve an artifact of renown "stolen" by the Conclave.
- Similar to the above, priest characters may be sent on missions across the continent to bring the word of their gods to the people there. They may encounter any manner of danger or intrigue along the way.
Mage hunters are specialized priests of Krynn’s moons, utterly dedicated to their code of beliefs. By the code’s decree, by the sanction of their elders and by the Conclave itself, they are charged with finding those who would transgress the Conclave’s laws and bring them to justice.

A mage hunter possesses abilities both magical and martial, and many a renegade has ended up dead or captured for underestimating a seemingly bookish investigator. Though mage hunters are charged primarily with apprehending renegades for trial by the Conclave, they are sanctioned to use any means to neutralize a threat. They are not above killing; in fact, some hunters prefer it -- acting as judge, jury and executioner themselves involves less paperwork than a lengthy trial. Their resources are extensive, for the Conclave considers renegades the greatest threat to magic and its acceptance by society.

Mage hunters are quite diverse in personality and method. Some adhere to the letter of their laws, others the spirit. However, they are all willing to die in the pursuit of renegades -- indeed, many have. The copper doors of the great Temple of the Moons in ancient Calah and the walls of the Chapel of the Moons in the Tower of Wayreth record the names of those slain in the line of duty.

**History**

Before the First Cataclysm, priests of the moons were typically charismatic, yet grim inquisitors with an almost fanatical zeal, thirsting to avenge the death of their founder and his closest disciples. As their anger subsided over time, the flames of righteousness filled them, fanned by the Kingpriest and his minions. Consequently, in the decades before the First Cataclysm, mage hunters were often cold, hard-eyed men and women, intolerant and arrogant, seeing themselves as the true followers of the moon gods. Their bravado earned them many followers, and it was not uncommon for the most renowned to travel in caravans, surrounded by entourages.

After the Cataclysm, when the Conclave absorbed the priesthood, the personalities of the hunters changed. Gone was the defensive attitude and the arrogance, replaced by the determination and piety of a humbled order. Though their holy powers were gone, their skills in oratory and investigation remained. Prior to the return of true faith, they remained at the Tower and advised mages about dealing with renegades, or acted as prosecutors in the Conclave’s trials. When divine magic returned, they leapt at the chance to again prove themselves
and took a leading role in hunting renegades. Their zeal has returned, an enthusiasm matched by those who follow other gods and wish to spread their teachings.

In terms of personality, mage hunters possess an extreme dislike and distrust of mages and many profess a desire to convert or otherwise harass them. Moon priests are exceedingly pious individuals, honestly believing the rhetoric they preach.

The Priesthood of the Moons in the Fifth Age

The priesthood suffered greatly in the Chaos War, with many of their few adherents dying valiantly battling the chaos incarnate they had always worked against. Though their patrons and matron are gone, the priests of the moons are ever vigilant. Their numbers are dwindling, as are those of the remaining true priesthoods, but they retain their beliefs and act in their gods’ names. Some have even chosen to study the new magical arts as means to this end, believing that the powers granted can still be used for selfless ends. As before the Second Cataclysm, there are those who abuse their abilities, seeking to use their powers for selfish ends. These are the principal enemies of the priesthood now, for the actions of these individuals turn the people against all magic users.

The Academy of Sorcery had no formal ties to the priesthood before its destruction, nor does the Citadel of Light, though both maintain small chapels at which the few faithful could worship. The Academy’s chapel was formally dedicated to the moon gods, while at the Citadel, it was nondenominational, in fitting with First Mystic Goldmoon’s desires to move beyond the worship of gods. They now have no true temples or meeting places, acting instead as a network of safe-houses and contacts in various cities. They are active in the free lands and the domains of the dragon overlords. Most have adopted a profession to blend into society and work in secret, though some still wear their vestments proudly, having the mystical or sorcerous training to defend their bravado.

In the Fifth Age, Priests of the Moons still adhere mainly to their ancient teachings and codes, even wearing their traditional vestments and equipment, though the enchantments no longer function. Their belief system has evolved away from the moral black and white of the past when dealing with magic and its use; now they seek to quash elements large and small that seek to destabilize society. They travel the land, often alone or in very small groups as in the days before the First Cataclysm, ferreting out renegades, though they presently deal more with those who inflict chaos and upheaval. In a time of tyrants such as the Fifth Age, a group such as the priests of the moons can have a profound impact, even if it is only on a small scale.
Mage Hunter Description

Regardless of the times, an experienced mage hunter has contacts throughout most cities, at all levels, on both sides of the law. From these sources, they gather threads of information, weaving and braiding them into aggressive prosecutions -- and in many cases, into a hangman’s noose.

Eligible Classes

The mage hunter is a specialized champion of the priesthood of the moons; as such, mage hunters are almost exclusively clerics of Solinari, Lunitari, or Nuitari. Membership is by invitation only, and characters must undergo secluded, yearlong training during which they prove their worth by completing small quests and other tests. Two of every five aspirants do not survive the training. Upon completion, they take the following oath and follow it unto death, peaceful or otherwise:

The Code of Alipha:

• Magic is a gift through which the will of the moon gods is worked.
• Those who use the gift selfishly and irresponsibly offend the gods.
• Those who offend the gods must be punished.

Requirements

To be invited to join the mage hunters, a character must fulfill the following:

• Alignment: Any Lawful
• Race: Though there are no strict codes limiting membership, priests of the moons and mage hunters in particular are almost exclusively human. Some elf worshippers of Solinari are found in their ranks.
• Base Attack: +5
• Knowledge (Religion): 8 ranks
• Profession (Arbiter): 6 ranks (This is knowledge of precedents, legal proceedings, and the laws of several lands or institutions.)
• Knowledge (Arcana): 6 ranks
• Spellcraft: 3 ranks
**Class Skills:** In addition to access to the regular cleric skills, the mage hunter can choose from the following additional skills:

- Bluff (Cha)
- Gather Information (Cha)
- Intimidate (Cha)
- Perform (Cha) (In the case of the mage hunter, the skill is in oratory and legal arguments for trial purposes, as opposed to entertainment skill)
- Sense Motive (Wis)
- Speak Language

Skill points at each level: 3+ Int modifier

**Feats:** Training for the mage hunter prestige class gives a character the following feats:

- Great Fortitude (+2 Fortitude saves)
- Iron Will (+2 Will Saves)
- Leadership (Leadership score calculated as described in the rules for Leadership on page 45 of the *Dungeon Master’s Guide*.)

**Special:** Members of this class must have completed their year of training and survived, or they can be in the process of completing a final quest or quests when they join a party.

**Spells:** Mage hunter spells are divine in nature; characters with this prestige class follow its specific spell progression table (see below). As lawful characters, they may not cast Chaos spells. In addition, mage hunters cannot cast the following: *cure light wounds, cure moderate wounds, cure serious wounds, cure critical wounds, healing circle, heal, regenerate, mass heal,* and *true resurrection*. While moon priests worship all three moons, individual priests can pay veneration to particular moons. Spell choice and use should reflect alignment.

**Class Features**

**Detect Magic:** After taking their oath to Alipha and performing the rituals to become mage hunters, characters can detect magic at will, as per the spell.

**Martial Weapon Proficiency (scimitar):** Upon joining the elite order, a mage hunter is trained in the use of the scimitar.
**Resistance Bonus:** Mage hunters typically deal with renegade wizards, as such, they must stand against a spellcaster in combat. At 2nd level, a +1 resistance bonus is added to any saving throws a mage hunter makes against spells. The bonus does not apply to spell-like abilities, only to cast spells or item-generated effects.

**Exotic Weapon Proficiency (garafa):** Upon reaching 4th level, a mage hunter can be trained in the use of the garafa—a crescent-bladed short staff. This is available at the DM’s discretion, and it is presented only when the character has served as a mage hunter for at least three full levels.

**Spell Turning:** At 10th level, a mage hunter can cast *spell turning* once per day as per the spell of the same name (as though by a caster of 13th level).

**Weapon and Armor Ability:** Mage hunters disdain armor, preferring to wear their faith as a shield. Amulets, rings, and their holy vestments grant the mage hunter various kinds of protection. The items worn are chosen by the individual user and are bestowed upon them by superiors or purchased. In combat, a mage hunter uses the garafa, a bladed quarterstaff in combat, or the scimitar, typically worn across their back.

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Most moon priests wear the *Amulet of the Moons*, which is a lesser medallion that acts in the same way as and *amulet of natural armor* +2. Mage hunters also wear the *Mantua Divina*, their holy vestments, which function as a *cloak of resistance* +2. Some priests of the moons of significant notoriety and repute are also granted Alipha’s Seal, a *ring of protection* +3. The bonuses these items offer to saves help offset the moon priest’s lack of traditional armor. Individuals often wear a wide variety of other magical jewelry and items for protective purposes.

The garafa is the length of a quarterstaff, having a bronze-shod foot and a crescent-shaped blade at its head. It is the same overall length as a quarterstaff, though it’s twice as heavy. The blade inflicts wounds much as would a scythe, while the shod end deals damage similar to that of a quarterstaff.

Mage hunters also use the scimitar, and it is commonly found amongst its lower ranks. Some are nonmagical, but some may be ensorcelled uniquely, with no two having the same capabilities. Few of the ancient swords from Alipha’s time have survived.

The most valued and useful possessions of any mage hunter are their manuals, the *Persuam Hereticus* and the *Litigatum Hereticus*. The former is a tome of wisdom for use in hunting mages, while the latter is a guide to successful prosecutions of them.
Introduction:

Krynn has many gods, and these beings have taken an active interest in the affairs of mortals since the dawn of creation. The gods have shepherded or manipulated their creations, with varying results, for almost ten thousand years. In that time, elaborate priesthoods devoted to the twenty-one deities have developed. These priesthoods possess a rich variety in their beliefs, codes, and practices, all of which players can use to enrich the roleplaying experience.

Material on the priesthhoods does exist, but it needs expansion. In this article, the reader will find discussions and descriptions of many aspects of the Krynnish clergy and their faiths. While much of the following information is new, some is also drawn from the Tales of the Lance boxed set, the Dragonlance Adventures hardcover book, and the many Dragonlance novels and anthologies.

Use of this source information is optional. For the nongamer, it may be entertaining and make the word of the Dragonlance Saga more vibrant, while the roleplayer may find the descriptions useful in characterization or creating new adventures.

The material included here is designed for use in campaigns set during the Age of Might or the very late Age of Dreams. It is during these times that the civilizations of Ansalon developed and institutionalized organized worship of the Gods. After the War of the Lance, when the worship of the True Gods returned, the religions took somewhat different forms. This material can be used as a guide to creating them, with the rationale that within the libraries of Krynn there are descriptions of the religions of Pre-Cataclysmic Krynn. The churches of the Fourth Age will likely use these historical materials in the development of the renewed churches. Certain parts of the worship, specifically Holy Scripture, remain the same, as they are the divinely revealed word of each god.
Chapter 1: Holy Vestments

The clothing of the clergy, their vestments, are of extreme importance. They, along with the Medallions of Faith, are visual proclamations of faith and allegiance of the individual wearing them. Besides being a profession of beliefs, they also serve as a statement of power, for only ordained priests may wear them.

As there are many gods, so too are there many different types of priestly garb. The type of material, its colors, styles, and decorations all have importance, as they are visual links to specific gods.

Colors are symbolic of the gods’ domains, the attitudes of their priests, and the duties of the clergy. Gods who control the sea or sky will likely have clergy that favor blue or white clothing, while a god such as Sirrion, the patron of fire, has disciples garbed in yellows and reds. A priest of Gilean, who is charged with observing the events of the world but oathbound not to influence them, wears gray, while priests of Hiddukel favor golds and rich purples—the colors of decadence and greed. The aforementioned priest of Gilean must be out in the world to observe it, and thus they make their vestments from simple, strong fabrics. The devout of Hiddukel, on the other hand, wear as much finery as they can afford, so as to display the glory of their god and their piety as a follower. Generally, if priests must travel, they favor functional vestments, while temple-dwelling clergy indulges in lavish costumes. In a large city, such as Istar or Palanthas, one is likely to see clergy of many gods, wearing their vestments as an advertisement as much as a show of faith.

Vestments versus Vesture:

There are two main types of apparel that priests wear. The first, vestments, are the focus of this article as they are the most likely clothing that Player Characters and Non-Player Characters will be encountered wearing. In a sense, they are work clothes, apparel that the religious figure would wear while out and about in public. The second type, vesture, are related to specific ceremonies, offices and rituals, where formal attire is required. Vesture will only be dealt with in a brief, general way. Based on the descriptions of formal clothing below and the further detailed descriptions of each priesthood, ceremonial garb can be created as needed.

Vesture is clothing that an ordained priest wears when receiving visitors, performing sacred tasks, or celebrating a ritual. It is elaborate in decoration, symbolic in its features, and generally quite cumbersome. These factors, combined with its tremendous expense, make it prohibitive for all but temple-bound clergy. Characters will likely not possess this type of clothing as it is
impractical outside of a temple or other sacred site. As PC’s are most likely to be
traveling, they will most often be found in vestments, that is, clothing that retains
sanctity, but without compromising functionality. A warrior may not find a
priests robe and stole practical, but compared to full religious regalia; it is a
world apart in convenience.

Steeped in tradition, the vesture of a priest consists of many possible layers of
separate garments, each worn in specific combinations with other pieces.

**Glossary of Relevant Terms:**

Though each priesthood refers to their vesture by different names, all make use
of ceremonial clothing. The apparel may be an elaborate form of their vestments,
or entirely new garb. The terms given below are a general sample of the variety
possible in religious clothing.

**Alb:** This is the simplest of all holy garments. Designed to fully cover the
cassock, it extends to the floor, and its tight-fitting sleeves extend to the wrist.

**Cappa Magna:** The great cape, as it is called, is usually worn as a winter cloak
due to its weight and heavy construction. It closes in the front down to the waist,
has a hood, and at times has a long train for a mounted wearer.

**Cassock:** This is a simple cloak, closed at the waist by a sash. Its body and
bottom is generally tubular, but at times the lower hem flares outwards. The
sleeves are form fitting, but include a wide cuff that extends to mid-forearm. The
cassock buttons at the chest, in the centre or laterally on the left side of the chest,
and has a short upright stiff collar.

**Chasuble:** This poncho like cloak was adopted from the secular citizens as was
the surplice. The length of the rectangular cloak varies, but a common feature is
that it does not have sleeves. It origins, though secular, lie specifically in the
farming classes of Northern Ansalon, who wore an oiled version of the poncho
over their clothes during the rainy season, allowing them to work in the fields.
There are two main types of chasuble, the planeta, an elaborate, ornate garment
worn by the highest members of the church, and the casula, a simple version
worn by traveling missionaries and lower ranking priests. The presence of a
hood on the chasuble is optional, depending on the priesthood. Those that
possess them are also known as amphibalus.

**Douillette:** This long, loose-fitting coat is worn over the simar or cassock. It is
also known as the ecclesiastical overcoat, and has long, snug-fitting sleeves, and
a broad, open collar, to allow the other collars to protrude through. The
douillette closes from neck to hem by buttons or hook-and-eye clasps.
Gloves and Gauntlets: Long worn by various priesthoods, these items allow priests to touch sacred objects and perform rites that the unclothed hands are not permitted to do.

Fascia: This is simply another name for the sash that binds a piece of clothing at the waist. It varies in width, from four to eight inches. It is not a belt, nor should it be treated as such by the wearer. The side the trailing ends of the fascia, or cincture, drapes on varies among the priesthoods that use it, but has spiritual significance among the priesthoods.

Ferraiolo: Also known as the priests cape, this garment is hoodless and has a broad flat collar extending out to the shoulders. The cape itself is made to cover the entire body from neck to heel, and can be worn closed (though it does not clasp) or thrown back over the shoulders. It is one of the final layers of the holy vesture worn in ceremony.

Mantelletta: Sometimes called the short mantle, this garment reaches just below the wearers knees, usually to shin length. It is similar to the cassock, except that it claps only at the neck and is sleeveless, instead possessing large slits for the arms to pass through.

Mantellone: This is essentially a high-collared sleeveless vest, designed to be worn over the cassock and faschia. The vest hangs to the floor, typically, but shorter lengths are possible.

Mozzetta: This short cape is similar in shape and length to the cape on the simar, except that it closes in the front, whereas the simar cape does not. It also has a stiff upright collar that may be closed or open, as with the rabat.

Rabat: This is worn by several different priesthoods, from all three of the pantheons, although some only wear it as part of their vesture. It is a rectangular cloth that drapes over the shoulders and has a stiffened collar, of varying heights, that rises to encircle the neck of the wearer. Depending on the priesthood, it may be closed in the front or open, and this opening may be squared, rounded or v-shaped.

Simar: This is very similar to the cassock, except that it has a cape which drapes down the wearers back, covering their shoulders and extending to mid-back. The cape hangs to the wearers elbow, and does not fasten in the front.

Stole: Also called an orarium, the origins of this ceremonial scarf are both secular, in the sense that it provided warmth, and sacred, in that it is an essential part of the burial shrouds of many cultures. The stole is worn over both
shoulders, or if the wearer is unordained, from one shoulder to the opposite hip, where its open end is fastened together. The decorations and color of the stole, as well as specific details of its shape vary by season, ceremony and priesthood.

**Surplice:** This is a cloak worn over the rest of the vesture, and had its origins in the secular greatcloak. Its length varies by climate, being longer and heavier in colder climates. The neck may be rounded or squared, while the full sleeves may hang to ground level. This is a highly ceremonial garment, requiring attendants to mind that the sleeves do not catch fire or otherwise become obtrusive.

**Zuchetto:** This is more commonly called the calotte or skullcap, and is somewhat rare among Krynnish priesthoods, being worn only by disciples of Zeboim, Chemosh and on occasion, the followers of Habbakuk.

**Fabrication Materials:** The materials of which clerical clothing is made depend largely on the priesthood, the god worshipped, and the culture the religion is based in. In large urban centres velvet, silk, satin, damask and merlino (broADCloth) are available, while in smaller places, wool, linen or leather may be the only materials available. The nature of the priesthood itself will affect the choice of material. For example, certain gods, such as Majere or Kiri-Jolith forbid the use of extravagant materials by their clergy, while others, such as the followers of Hiddukel, are encouraged to use it. Symbolically, the cloth type reflects the philosophy of the priesthood, and is intended to have an effect upon any worshipper viewing the priest, such as awe, fear, reverence or peace.

Ornamentation is equally diverse, in detail and material of construction. Precious metals, stones, shell, bone or horn are all used for buttons, clasps and closures, while metal threads of silver and gold are often used for embroidery. Details about medallions of faith and their material construction are discussed in a later chapter.
Part One: The Gods of Darkness

Black is the most common color of the priests of darkness. In all, four of the seven priesthoods robe themselves in it. The Cult of Morgion chooses brown robes with a black stole, while the faithful of Hiddukel and Zeboim stand out from the rest even more. Their clothing is colorful and opulent, making them easy to spot, and in some cases, avoid. Black is an appropriate color for many of the groups as it is the color of secrets, lies, and the night.

Takhisis

Priests and priestesses of the Queen of Darkness wear a belt less, hooded robe of black cloth. It has voluminous sleeves with large open cuffs. The hem, hood edge, and cuffs all consist of black silk.
Sargonnas

The clergy of the god of Vengeance favor a more utilitarian style of clothing, though it is not without extravagance. The uniform consists of a black silk tunic, with the sleeves ending at mid forearm and leggings ending at mid-calf. Blood-red silk is wrapped tightly around the lower leg and forearm, and a red silk sash winds snugly around the waist. This garb fits well under most armor or over clothing, and it provides a high degree of mobility. The use of silk wraps was adopted from the nomads of the Northern Deserts, as it is an excellent defense against arrows and edged weapons.
Chemosh

There is no true priesthood of Chemosh--the populations of even the most vile lands would simply not allow it. What does exist, though, is an unfortunately widespread mystery cult dedicated to him. Its members wear hooded black calf-length robes edged in brown, and goat skull masks. The material the mask is made from varies with the power and rank of the individual. Initiates wear a stylized white leather cowl, gaining the skull once they have completed a sacrifice to Chemosh. As one advances in rank within the group, painted or engraved markings are added to the mask, as well as small ornamental objects. At the highest levels, the skull mask is plated in silver, with the high priest of a given area plating the mask in gold.
Morgion

As with Chemosh, only a cult is dedicated to Morgion. Its members wear a floor-length brown robe with a black cuff and hem stripe. Over this is a black cloth stole, which matches the black cloth wrappings on their wrists. The hood is deep, hiding the face of the wearer in darkness and keeping their identity a secret. This secrecy is especially important in the Cult of Morgion, so no member may betray the identity of others.
Zeboim

Few priests of Zeboim exist, though these few are found in coastal communities. While many towns and cities hold no great love for her, they pay homage out of respect and fear. Her priests wear a long, hooded robe of deep green—the color of the sea. Over this is a deep red stole, which almost reaches the ground with its length. The loose, belted outer robe covers an under-robe of red that matches the stole.
Hiddukel

The clergy of the Lord of Lies and False Bargains are known for their finery. Made of the finest materials available, these deep purple, low-collared robes are covered by a calf length embroidered black vest. The stitching is elaborate and done with gold or silver thread, and the satin purple robe is often decorated with gems or ornamental stones. A picture of decadence, these richly clad priests favor all things opulent and extravagant in their lives. Other than the basic color scheme and clothing style, there are no other requirements for the vestments of Hiddukel’s priests. In a given temple or area, however, the more richly attired one is the more powerful one is likely to be, as displays of wealth by the weak often result in that wealth being removed from them.
Part Two: The Gods of Light

From Mishakal’s pale blue to the rich copper of Majere’s monks, to Branchala’s green and gold, the color palette for vestments of the Gods of Light is very diverse. White however, dominates this group, as a symbol of purity and light. In some cases, such as Habbakuk's priesthood, white is used, but so is deep blue, a symbol indicating the specific realm of that god, the sea. As with the Gods of Darkness, certain clergy groups involved themselves with people more often, and being noticed is part of their priestly duties. Thus, the followers of Branchala, as performers, wear clothing that will draw attention to them.

Paladine

The priests of Paladine clad themselves in hooded white robes, similar to those worn by the priests of Takhisis. The material usually consists of silk, but the priests also use other coarser materials. Ornamentation and finery does not marr the simplicity of the robes. In fact, the priests use the plainness of the garb in an attempt to be anonymous so that only their deeds are remembered in the name of their God.

Kiri-Jolith

There are no temples to the God of Justice. This reflects the idea that justice must be everywhere in a society to be effective. If it is found within one specific building, it is bound there. As such, the followers of Kiri-Jolith are travelers, and their simple vestments reflect this. They wear a hooded robe of heavy brown cloth, which is knee length and has sleeves extending to mid-forearm. Under this is a pair of tan-colored leggings and a matching tunic. A belt of the same cloth as the outer robe keeps the tunic closed.
Mishakal

Those who serve Paladine’s consort wear hoodless robes of sky blue. Where the priests of Paladine seek anonymity, the servants of Mishakal strive to put a mortal face on the warmth and kindness of their God and her gifts.
Habbakuk

The clergy of the Fisher King wear hoodless robes of white and a hooded stole of deep blue. The white robes resemble those worn by the priests of Mishakal, while the stole is that of Paladine’s priests. This is in recognition of Habbakuk’s divine parentage and how he represents aspects of both made manifest in the world. The deep blue color of the stole also represents a calm and tranquil sea, contrasted to those who worship Zeboim, who robe themselves in the dark green of storm-tossed waters.
Branchala

Those who worship the Singer of Life wear vestments very different from the other Gods of Light. They wear a sleeveless tunic and leggings of green silk, with golden yellow sashes crossing their chest and back and tying around their waist. Yellow boots and wrist wraps complete the outfit. While a seemingly outlandish garb for a holy person, it must be remembered that to honor their patron, the priests travel and perform for people. Thus, an outfit that catches the eye and allows for freedom of movement in traveling is ideal. In colder climates, the tunic is sleeved or supplemented with a green hoodless cloak or cape.
Majere

Humble in their devotions, the followers of the patron of meditation and dreams favor a simple, functional robe. In ancient times, they wore a hoodless robe of red, but with the growth of the priesthood devoted to Lunitari in the last century before the first Cataclysm, Majere’s devout chose a new garb. Most of these monks have since worn a collarless red tunic and leggings, covered by a red-brown sleeveless coat that falls to the knees in length. The hems and cuffs consist of black satin, while the wrist wraps are the same red-brown as the coat. The simplicity of the outfit is a reflection of the humility demanded by their God, as well as the fact that priests of Majere must partake of physical labor to sustain themselves and their secluded monasteries.
Part Three: The Gods of Twilight

The priests of the gray are the most diverse in their vestments. Reds, yellows, grays and greens all appear among the priesthoods, showcasing the variety of spheres of influence present in this group of the pantheon. The variety of vestments also reflects the variety of personalities present among these disciples, though generally they all follow the same pact of non-interference. These are the gods who are present in the daily aspects of most people’s lives, and as such their uniforms reflect a sense of utilitarianism.

Gilean

Of all priesthoods, those of the Order of the Book are the most humble. Charged by Gilean with recording events as they see them, these men and women of all races wear a simple hoodless robe of coarse gray fabric. Belted at the waist with a cord, the scribes of the book are permitted to wear almost anything underneath, provided the gray robe covers it. This is symbolic of their vow of non-interference, that regardless of personal allegiances or opinions, they must set all aside when they take the Oath of the Tobril.
Chislev

The priests of the Beast Goddess are a secretive group, sometimes even more so than the followers of the Gods of Darkness. Wearing hooded, floor-length brown robes edged in yellow and green, these hermitic druids are rarely seen outside of their sacred groves or city-bound temples, and as such are not readily recognized by the populace.
The Hammer-Wielder’s priests are few in number among non-dwarves, but they are a powerful group. They wear a red, knee-length tabard, its sleeves and front made of coarse gray leather. The hems and seams are intricately tooled, but are still very functional, as the disciples must honor their patron by working at a forge. The leather of course protects them from the intense heat, and it is a badge of honor among the faithful to have a scorched apron. Only the lowest ranking initiates and apprentices have no burns on their vestments, which changes as they become more proficient as craftsmen. Under the tabard, they typically wear iron-red or gray tunics and leggings. Often times though, the tunic is discarded due to the intense heat of the forges. Artisans who work with other materials than metal will frequently be found wearing them though.
Sirrion

As the scribes of Gilean are the most humble and unassuming of holy men, the priests of the fire god are the most flamboyant. Wearing golden yellow leggings and tunic with the calves and wrists bound in red silk, these beings stand out in a crowd. The yellow tunic has voluminous sleeves and large cuffs, trimmed in red to match the sleeveless thigh-length vest of the priesthood. A red flame motif decorates the edges of the clothing. Beautiful in its design and stitching, the satin cloth ripples like flickering fire as the wearer moves.
Zivilyn

Those who worship the Tree of Life favor a moss-colored hoodless robe with gold trim. Over this they wear a stole of golden yellow, rounded on their back, descending to mid-thigh. This stole is trimmed in the same green as the floor-length robe itself.

Shinare

The goddess of commerce and industry has extremely simple vestments for her priesthood. This is a reflection of the duties the faithful must perform. Above all else, Shinare is a goddess of doing, as such, her followers must wear clothing that allows them freedom of movement to perform their day-to-day profession. Thus, the disciples of Shinare wear a simple brown smock, belted at the waist, and hemmed in gold and silver. Under this thigh-length clothing worshippers typically wear the uniform of their profession be it blacksmith or baker.
Part Four: The Gods of Magic

Moon Priest of the three orders
Nuitari

The priesthood of Nuitari differs from the mages of the Order of the Black Robes. Where mages practice in secret, hiding under hoods, the priests of the dark moon wear a mid-calf-length, hoodless black robe. The collar and cuffs of the robe are form fitting, through the remainder is loose and flowing. In addition, the hem, cuffs and collar are made of a common fabric, while the remainder of the vestment is silk.

Solinari

The priests of the white moon resemble those of the black moon in their attire, as in the Wizards’ Conclave. They favor a hoodless white robe that drops to the knees and possesses a low collar and snug cuffs. Ornamentation is nonexistent, as the entire garment consists of simple fabrics. As with their brethren moon priests, the followers of Solinari see themselves as being the true instruments of their patron’s will, allowing him to work through them, rather than using the power he grants for their own ends, as mages do.

Lunitari

The devotees of the red moon wear the robes of their brethren Moon Priests and for the same reasons. Their hoodless red robe has snug collars and cuffs, as a symbol to show that nothing is hidden to those that seek the truth and believe. A wizard, they claim, wears a hood and hides their hands because they work for selfish ends, while a priest of the moons works their deities will on Krynn, as has nothing to hide.
The Holy Order of the Stars

Part 2

Medallions of Faith

All of clergy of Krynn’s True Gods wear medallions of Faith. They are a visual proclamation of faith second only to vestments and vesture in prominence. Medallions of Faith are also worn by citizens who believe in a particular god, one whose spheres of influence are usually related to how they make their living. They are all magical in nature, gifts from the gods to their faithful, though the powers can be revoked if a person commits acts that displease the deity.

This chapter describes the types of medallions, as well as a physical description of the medallions of each faith. The common powers of all medallions as well as the powers specific to each God are also discussed.

History:

From the very earliest days of Krynn, when the gods walked its surface teaching their ways to mortals, there have been medallions of faith. At first they were simple objects, crafted of crude unworked materials such as stone and bone. As the millennia passed, the churches of each god developed and so did the artistry of the Medallions of Faith. At the height of the religious age of Might, before the Cataclysm, Medallions of Faith were true works of art, wrought of the finest material, by the most skilled of artisans. Priesthoods had favored craftspeople, and to be awarded the right of crafting Medallions for a temple often secured ones reputation as a masterworker for life. Indeed gaining one of these lucrative contracts was a shadowy business all its own, where bribery, theft, slander and even murder were not unheard of. The creation of these artifacts is one of the rare instances where the followers of different gods would work together- the faithful of Reorx in particular have crafted beautiful medallions for priesthoods of both Light and Darkness.
Types:

There are several types of Medallions of Faith; each used by a specific type of person. Their fabrication materials and powers are directly linked to their intended role.

**Token of Faith:** These are the simplest types, often made of only one type of a given material. They are used by common worshippers and unordained priests as professions of their beliefs. They are also known as Token Medallions and Token Medallions of Faith.

**Lesser Medallions:** When a priest is ordained, they receive a Medallion of this type from their superiors. The majority of the clergy, being of the middle ranks, use these, until they reach the upper ranks of their respective church.

**Greater Medallions:** Those members of the uppermost ranks of the clergy receive a medallion of this type.

**High Medallions:** The highest-ranking member of a priesthood is given a High Medallion by their deity. There are only a few of these powerful artifacts present upon Krynn at any given time, and when a wielder dies or falls from grace, their Medallion is destroyed. In a very few instances, the medallion will survive, as part of a god’s mysterious plots. In some cases, the Medallion is given to a person of great piety that lies outside of the church structure, but is still an ordained priest.

**The Missionary Medallion:**

There is another type of medallion—though it does not physically differ from the other types. The Missionary Medallion is possessed by those members of the clergy that leave their own lands to spread the will and words of their god to those who have not yet been enlightened. The only difference between these medallions and the other types is in their powers. The missionary medallions have the capability to create copies of themselves with a power level of a Token Medallion. These are created as gifts from the god to a new follower to show gratitude for the devotion as well as to provide a physical link to the god. Once a new worshipper has been instructed in the worship of their new deity, they will be given a Lesser Medallion by the missionary, which must be crafted as any other new medallion is. In order for the new priest to be given a Greater medallion, they must leave their homeland and travel to the missionary’s home to receive further instruction. Once this is complete, they receive a Greater Medallion and return to their homeland to continue spreading the faith and instructing new priests.
Powers:

The various types of Medallions of Faith each grant specific abilities based upon the god they are devoted to. The special power can only be used once per day, and is restricted to ordained clergy only - Token Medallions do not grant the special ability. These powers are detailed below in the entry for each god.

If an unordained priest or a citizen worshipper uses a more powerful types of medallions than they are entitled to, that artifact will only function as though it were a Token Medallion of Faith. Conversely, if a high-ranking clergy member uses a Medallion that is not typically used by one of their station, that Medallion acts as though it were of the appropriate type. In addition, they all have the capabilities listed below, some of which are reversible as found in the Players Handbook. There are following restrictions on the powers’ usage:

**Token of Faith:** one of minor protection*, remove fear, or bless each day

**Lesser Medallions:** combine and two of protection from evil/good, remove fear, or bless each day

**Greater Medallions:** combine and three of bless, protection from good/evil, remove fear, detect good/evil, sanctuary each day

**High Medallions:** combine, bless, protection from good/evil, remove fear, sanctuary, detect good/evil, purify food/drink, augury, aid, enthrall each once per day

*Minor protection* functions identically to the spell *Protection from Evil*, except that it is directed at a specific phenomenon at the time of the artifacts creation. Examples include protection from insects, fire, cold, good or evil, etc.

While these abilities may seem to make priests rather powerful beings, it should always be remembered that the gods of Krynn have always been very active in the realms and lives of their followers. Indeed if priests were not such powerful beings, they would not have assumed the social and political prominence that they had prior to the Cataclysm. By extension then, the disappearance of true priests before the Cataclysm would then be a disastrous event, as history proved it to be.
Materials:

A medallion of Faith is a work of art, regardless its mystical capabilities. They are made of a variety of materials- metal, gems, stone, wood and osteodontokeratics (bone, tooth, horn, scale, shell and claw).

Readers interested in the specific materials used to create the medallions are directed to the descriptions below as well as to the bibliography, where ample information can be found about gems, stone and their associated folklore.

While the medallions themselves are empowered by the will of the gods, the physical artifact is created by mortals- the exception being the High Medallions, which are crafted in the otherworldly realms of the gods. Because mortals from different cultures in different locations make them, the medallions will follow a general pattern, but will vary in specific details and materials. Each medallion is made for a specific person, and is not crafted until that person is deemed ready by their superiors.

Once an unpowered medallion is made, it is given to a priest who possesses a medallion of their own that is at least one step higher in power. This priest uses their own medallion and devotion to imbue the new one with the appropriate powers. This process can take days, weeks or even months, depending on the type being created, and involves prayer, rituals, fasting and sacrifices before it is ready. The recipients must also undergo a period of ritual preparation to purify themselves before receiving their Medallion. It is for these reasons that a priest safeguards their Medallion so fervently- it is their personal link to their god. To lose one is to lose ones direct tie to a god, and most likely to ones understanding of their place in the plan of their patron.

As time passes, a medallion can become even more personal by engraving or carving images or symbols in its surface. Often these are homage’s to the deity, words of prayer or scripture holding special significance to the priest.

The following are descriptions of the most widely found forms of artifacts used by members of the Holy Order of the Stars.
The Gods of Darkness:

Takhisis:

The Medallion of faith used by the priesthood of Takhisis is a crescent made of onyx, jet or obsidian. Typically, it has a silver setting, though gold is not unknown. The artifact is suspended from a small ring in the setting with the points directed downwards. In some rare cases, there are inscriptions in the surface of the artifact.

The special powers granted to priests of Takhisis by the wearing of the medallion are the spells light and cure light wounds. Both are typically used in their reverse forms.

Sargonnas:

The priesthood of the God of Vengeance have chosen a bird as their Medallion. It is commonly made of Sard, Jet, Serpentine and Carnelian, all in the image of an elaborate stylized condor. The bird is set in gold or copper, its joined wingtips forming the ring by which it is suspended about the wearers neck.

In addition to the general powers listed previously, a Medallion of Faith in Sargonnas grants the wielder the command spell.
Chemosh:
The followers of the lord of the undead wear a small horned skull around their necks. In rare instances, it is a real skull from a small animal, but typically, it is carved from stone or cast in metal. Those made of stone are combinations of quartz rock crystal, onyx and topaz, while silver and bronze are the favored metals.

A Priest of Chemosh can use their Medallion to Animate Dead once per day.

Morgion:
The constellation of the Black Wind is the inspiration for this Medallion of Faith. The favored materials are onyx and brown rock crystal inlaid in a silver or copper setting. Sard or agate is used to represent the eyes of the Lord of Decay.

The Medallions of Faith in Morgion are unique among the Gods of Darkness. The worship of the Lord of Decay has a price. It has the ability to Cause Light Wounds once per day, the wielder must use the ability, be it on plant, animal or even themselves. If they do not perform this act of devotion, their Medallions cease to function until they do.
Zeboim:

The devotees of the capricious sea goddess wear an image of a turtle shell, made of jade and sard, set into a copper frame. In some instances, shell and coral are used instead of stone.

The medallion of a priest of Zeboim allows the wearer to Instill Fear once per day. In addition to this, an ordained priest of Zeboim will never drown due to accident while they wear their medallion, except if they have displeased their temperamental goddess. The medallion does not grant them the ability to breathe water or free movement while underwater- it only protects them when they are swept overboard. It is not useable for sneaking aboard ships or in underwater caves- abuse of this ability will likely lead to its revocation by the goddess that grants it- usually at the least opportune times. It is Zeboim’s way of protecting her faithful and penitent.

Nuitari:

The priestly followers of the dark moon share their Medallion of Faith with their brethren Moon Priests. It is a circle of silver divided into three sections. The two crescent-shaped divisions represent Solinari and Nuitari, while Lunitari occupies the space between them. The portion devoted to Nuitari is made of obsidian, jet or onyx.

The clergy of the god of the dark moon can use their medallion to cast Light once per day, although the spell is usually used in the reversed form- Darkness.
Hiddukel:

Those people who adhere to the teachings of the Lord of False Bargains wear a finely wrought image of broken merchants scales. The image is made of precious metals, usually gold and silver, and encrusted with any gemstones the wielder can afford. The scales are set into a ring of silver and gold, which holds the image together.

The medallion of Hiddukel grants the manipulative priests the use of the *Command* spell once per day.
The Gods of Light:

**Paladine:**

The patriarch of the Deities of Light uses a triangle of silver and pearl inlay as his symbol. Other symbols, such as the tree or anvil, are specific to certain races, and represent the most important aspects of those races. The tree is sacred to elves, while the anvil of the dwarves is as important as the hammer, the symbol of Reorx. The Hammer and Anvil represents the dwarven view of the creation of the world through the cooperation of the two greatest gods, Thak and Reorx.

The symbol of Paladine grants its holder the ability to cast the spell *Light*, at will, up to three times per day. In addition, the priests of Paladine are able to also cast the spell *Courage*, once per day.

**Branchala:**

The singers of the Song of Life have a great variety in their Medallions of Faith. The most popular symbol is that of a harp, while some of the Bards choose a musical instrument typical of their race or culture. All are finely wrought of gold, silver and rare woods.

The instrument image grants the wielder the ability to *Enthrall* a crowd as per the spell. This is especially useful in entertaining large groups and spreading the words of the true gods, as well as calming angry crowds or other enemies.
Habbakuk:

The worshippers of the Fisher King wear an image of a phoenix, crafted of Lapis Lazuli and or turquoise, set into a frame of silver. The phoenix’s wings are spread and its claws extended, an image of majesty and fierce protectiveness.

The wielders of this symbol are able to cast the spell Courage once per day. It is for this reason that priests of Habbakuk are so valued by military commanders.

Kiri-Jolith:

The Bison Gods followers wear several different symbols, though the most popular is the horn. Crafted of ivory or alabaster and set in a clasp of precious metals, the horn of Kiri-Jolith is roughly three inches long, and in some cases is covered in scrimshaw carvings. These etchings are usually a single word or brief phrase drawn from the Holy Text of the Priesthood of Kiri-Jolith.

The horn of Kiri-Jolith bestows the ability to increase morale, as per the spell Morale, upon its wielder.
**Majere:**

A stylized spider of copper and serpentine is the image that adorns the adepts of the Master of Mind. It is a symbol of the mystery and majesty of nature, even in its most humble forms.

The spider icon grants the priest the ability to call a swarm of insects, once per day, as per the spell *Summon Swarm.* The swarm is made up of insects only, rolls from 1-30 summon spiders and ants, rolls between 31 and 60 draw centipedes, beetles and scorpions, rolls from 61-90 summon all manner of flying insects, while a roll between 91 and 100 draws a swarm from all three types.

**Solinari:**

The priests of the white moon are brethren to the priests of Lunitari and Nuitari, and they share the holy symbol with them. The crescent of Solinari is made of quartz, pearl or white coral, and occupies the portion of the medallion to the left of Lunitari’s red center section. It sits opposite the crescent of Nuitari, but is bound within the same circle, symbolic of the ideological unity but the devotional opposition. The layout of the medallion is also symbolic of the cosmic placement of their parents’ constellations.

The wielders of the Moon Medallion who follow Solinari can use their medallion to cast the spell *Light,* once per day, in addition to the general powers described above.
Mishakal:

The teardrop eternity symbol of the fertility goddess is crafted of silver and turquoise, though in some cases, lapis lazuli or rare blue jade is used. The stones used are sought in water, where they have often been worn very smooth and may have the rare natural teardrop shape the medallion requires. After being found, the raw water-worn stones are highly polished and mounted in the silver backing.

The wielders of the infinite fertility sign are able to use the spell *Chant*. Once per day, they can bestow the boons and penalties of that prayer. The benefits can be given, the penalties or both, at the wielders discretion.
The Gods of Twilight:

The clergy of Neutrality are often called upon to work to maintain the balance, in both large and small ways. A priest of twilight may have to thwart a priest of darkness one minute, and rein in a priest of the Light the next. For this reason, their medallions grant two abilities.

Gilean:

The scribes of the Book of Creation have a replica of the Tobril as their symbol. In its twin surfaces are inscribed figures representing two words of ancient Ergothian, the first of the known human languages that was written. On the left, is carved the word *meth*- which translates to ‘truth’. On the right is carved *ameth*-literally, ‘life.’ They are the words by which a scribe lives, the search for truth in life, and that the ultimate truth is life. As a scribe ages, he must add to these words of wisdom that have guided his or her life by reflecting on them and inscribing further symbols on the covers of their personal reflection journal.

The book talismans are intended to help the priests complete their duties, as such, they allow the wielder to *Comprehend Languages* (Verbal and Written) as per the spell. The scholars also can use the spell *Personal Reading* (even without a persons true name) in order to gain further information about their subject or informant.

Lunitari:

The clergy of the red moon wear a symbol identical to their brethren, the triple-divided moon. The central section is crafted of rose quartz, sard, red topaz or agate, and set in a silver frame.

The medallion allows the wielder to cast *Light* or its reverse, *Darkness*, each once per day, and *Phantasmal Force* once per week.
Zivilyn:

Those who revere the tree of knowledge and life are given these gifts by their medallions. An entwined oval ring of silver and gold surrounds a tree image, from roots to crown. It is made of precious stone, usually jade and rock crystal.

The medallion allows the priest to cast the spell Augury at will, up to thrice per day, and the spell Divination once per day. These spells must be cast; if they are not, the priest must spend a day in prayer, atoning, before they may cast any spells the next day. The information gained from these spells often helps the priest in daily activities, for the clergy of Zivilyn typically find roles as magistrates and advisors to politicians.

Chislev:

The mother of the beasts has a feather as her symbol. Her followers wear a feather of yellow, green and, brown made of topaz, jade and flint shards, set into a copper frame. Some priests of cultures that do not work stone make theirs of painted wood or real feathers.

The feather medallions of Chislev bestow the ability to cast the spell Animal Friendship once per day as well as the spell Sanctuary. With these abilities, the priests work to defend their sacred woodlands and the beasts that dwell within.
**Reorx:**

The clergy of the forge god have some of the most finely wrought medallions of faith. Made of precious metals, the symbol is a ring connecting the tips of a four-pointed star. Over these is a pair of upright tongs and a smiths hammer. There is much symbolism in the shapes used: the circle represents the completeness and unity of the world and existence, while the star is the souls of the beings within it. The Hammer and tongs represent the tools by which the world and mortals were created.

A priest of Reorx can cast the spell Spiritual Hammer once per day, and can also use the spell Mend. The reverse of the spell, Rend, is also available, and is especially damaging to weapons and armor, though it pains the priest to do such things, seeing the destruction as an insult to their patron.

**Sirrion:**

The followers of the fire god are few, and wear a medallion depicting flames of many colors. At the base of the fires is an opal, while the flames are of many types of stone, all set into a gold or copper frame. The colors in the stones are highly variable, usually according to the wielders choice when a medallion is created. Consequently, no two medallions are alike.

The medallions allow the priests to cast the spells *Flame Blade* and *Faerie Fire* once per day. Flame Blade can only be used once the priest has been attacked- violence can never be initiated with it.
Shinare:

The followers of the goddess of commerce and industry use their medallions in conducting fair and equitable business. They are shaped like a griffin’s wing, and are made of many types of materials. A priest of Shinare may possess several symbols throughout their life, one being replaced by another as the priest accumulates more wealth and can afford finer materials and workmanship. When one is replaced, it is buried in a solemn ceremony that involves the transfer of its power to the new medallion, after which it is laid to rest in a small ornate casket.

The medallions enable the wielder to Detect Lie at will, and cast the spell Friends once per day. These abilities often prevent cheating and theft in business dealings. Consequently, priests of Shinare often find employment as harbormasters, cargo inspectors, marketplace managers and tax collectors.
The Holy Order of the Stars
Part 3
Temples of the Gods

Gods of Darkness:

*Temple of Sargonnas*

*Outside*
Temple of Takhisis

Outside & Floor Plan

Images Copyright 2004 John Grubb
Temple of Hiddukel

Floor Plan
Temple of Zeboim

Outside & Floor Plan
Gods of Light:

Temple of Mishakal

Outside

Temple of Branchala

Outside
Temple of Kiri-Jolith

Outside & Floor Plan

Images Copyright 2004 John Gubber
Temple of Majere

Floor Plan
The Gods of Twilight & Magic:

Temple of Sirrion
Outside

Temple of Zivilyn
Outside
Temple of Chislev

Outside & Floor Plan
Temple of Reorx

Outside

Temple of the Moon Priests (Gods of Magic)

Floor Plan
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What follows is my compilation of the history and ultimate tragedy of the militant priesthood of Kiri-Jolith. Within it, the novice knight will find an Order both virtuous and flawed, a group that we as fellow followers of the Horned One would do well to understand. Dates within are in Istaran reckoning, with Pre-Cataclysmic dates following in parentheses, for ease of reference. Let this misguided group serve as an object lesson as to why we must never ally ourselves with a servant of the Gods, lest we become their puppet.
Henri deRochefort

At Sancrist

Of the Order of the Rose

The Knighthood of Solamnia

Winter, 341AC

The last century before the Cataclysm was a time of great strife in Istar. Civil wars raged as pretenders to the mantle of the Kingpriests attacked the seats of each others power. The Istaran government, long since rendered impotent by the power and influence of the Church, was powerless to stop the fighting. Knights of Solamnia and Istaran legionnaires, each loyal to different Kingpriests, fought each other for decades in the outer provinces, with tense peace giving way to skirmishes and outright battles periodically. Finally, in 927IA (35PC), the fighting ceased. The last of the pretenders was imprisoned and his supporters scattered. Peace and spiritual unity had come to Istar at last.

Less than one year later, the Kingpriest, Beldinas formed The Order of the Divine Hammer. Chosen from the ranks of the priests of Kiri-Jolith, this new militant order still worshipped the Bison God, but now served the Church of Paladine. Created as defenders of the faith and as an elite personal guard, these warrior priests answered only to the Kingpriest, and operated outside the laws of Istar.

The Days of Glorious Service:

The Order distinguished itself only months after it was formed, when, under the skilled leadership of Radulpho diSiyan, a force of Solamnic Knights and a small contingent of warrior-priests broke the siege of Lattakay on the eastern coast of Istar. Three months previously a Minotaur fleet had blockaded the city by land and sea in a dispute over land rights. Outnumbered almost ten to one, the warrior-priests and the Knights they led relied successfully on the teachings of Kiri-Jolith to outwit their foes, and subsequently suffered few losses.

The Vaults of the Kingpriest, established by Ardosean I during his reign, were the site of the Order’s second great trial. Within its walls, the Daughters of the Light, a secret order dedicated to Paladine’s worship lived. Their task was to safeguard artifacts and copies of sacred scriptures of Paladine. Over the
centuries, knowledge of the place grew, and its contents became the subject of rumor and legend. Some said the wealth of the Kingpriests was contained within the mountain stronghold, others claimed that artifacts of arcane power were stored there, so they might never be used again in war. Whatever the actual contents, the Vaults of the Kingpriest existed in safety for several hundred years. In 930 IA (30PC) the Order of the Divine Hammer, acting as escort to a caravan of Revered Daughters, journeyed to the stronghold. When they arrived high in the frozen mountains, the doors were barred to them, and the walls were manned by mercenaries. Males, long since barred from entering the sacred place, stood within, and claimed the place as their own. In a daring raid, the Warrior-Priests, with the aid of the Revered Daughters, gained entry to the citadel, and drove its occupants out. When they searched the halls, no living were found within. The Daughters of the Light had been slaughtered by the mercenaries as the warriors fled. Their bodies lay throughout the levels of the Vault, a mute testament to their defensive efforts. In his grief over his failure and hasty action, diSiyan hurled himself from the battlements. His body was never found.

The public, upon hearing of the massacre, were rightly outraged. When the advisors of the Kingpriest released the information, it was not mercenaries that had overtaken the sacred place, but barbarians from the outlands of Gather. The death of diSiyan was covered up, and instead it was told that he led the raid himself, falling to a barbarian arrow in the heat of battle. The public had thirsted for heroes to rally behind, and the Kingpriest had found them: The Order of the Divine Hammer.

The death of diSiyan had been fortuitous for Beldinas and his advisors. Long an opponent of the Kingpriest's efforts to loosen the Order's strict entry codes, diSiyan’s death gave Beldinas the leverage needed to expand his personal guard.

The beliefs of diSiyan, the first Lord Protector, were rigidly held by the initial entrants to the order, as they coincided directly with the priesthood of Kiri-Jolith, of which they were all members. After a few years however, they fell by the wayside as the Kingpriest grew impatient with the slow growth of his elite guard. Bowing to pressure from Beldinas and his inner circle, the leaders of the Order of the Divine Hammer began to look the other way when an aspirant of less than ideal character presented themselves for entry. As the guidelines for entry relaxed, the nature of the order began to shift. The noble aspirations of the upper echelons were held by fewer and fewer of the members.
The through skillful manipulation of their fear, the Kingpriest was able to turn the people of the Empire against the various barbarian tribes that lived within its borders. Graphic descriptions of barbarian practices, as well as carefully laying the blame for increased raider activity all served to build public support for a military solution to the problem of the barbarian heathens. The slaughter of the Daughters of the Light and the looting of the Vaults of the Kingpriest were the event that finally spurred the angry public to action.

The Heretic Wars:

In 931IA (31PC), the Kingpriest, proclaiming to be acting on the advice of his inner circle, dispatched military forces to quell uprisings among the dangerous heretical barbarian tribes of the outer regions of Istar. This army consisted mainly of Knights of Solamnia, led by members of the Order of the Divine Hammer. The warrior-priest commanders had been high ranking Priests of Kiri-Jolith prior to forming the Order, their decades of study of the Sacra Justae giving them a deep understanding of martial skills and strategy that made them inspiring and cunning leaders. On the initial successes of these missions, the membership of the Order swelled, peasants, who previously were ineligible to serve in anything but a levied army flocked to this new banner that held no prejudices based on birth. Even junior Knights of Solamnia left their Orders, a trend that raised great concern at the upper levels of the Knighthood. Tension quickly rose between the two groups.

As the love of the people raised the warrior-priests to higher glories, the Istarans began to cast harsh words upon the Knights who had long protected them. The Solamnics were criticized, both publicly and in the Istaran Senate, for failing to act sooner to put down the revolts in the outer provinces. Across Ansalon, the failures of the Knights in ages past were remembered, while their successes were diminished.

The sentiments of the fickle citizens continued to turn against the Knights with each success of the new Order. For a time, the Knights of Solamnia even withdrew from the city of Istar, moving to Ideos, a city in the Istaran Province of Taol, and forsaking the Citadel of Bohemund, their garrison in the empire’s capital.

One might ask why, someone might choose to join the holy armies of Istar in their missions. The answers are numerous. At the end of the Age of Might, Ansalon was a realm at peace, and many a noble and peasant had a thirst for excitement in a world lacking it. Thus, when the restrictions upon the order were loosened, they flocked to its banners, seeking adventure. This hunger for glory and excitement went hand in hand with a desire for monetary gain. The
lands of the barbarians were largely unsettled, but were rich in natural resources. In exchange for their aid, the Kingpriest had promised land in the liberated territories to the upper classes. Those who refused to offer martial or military aid were threatened with excommunication, and whispered stories of the fate of the cast out were usually enough to make them lend their swords. The peasants were a different story. For them, all that was required was three meals a day and a small amount of pay. The thought of doing the work of the gods was an important incentive to them, but by no means was it the only one. It is important to note that there was many among the armies that believed the rightness of their task, the enlightenment of heathen barbarians towards both the Gods and civilization. They listened to what the corrupt priesthood told them, and believed they were doing the right thing. When word spread of the chance to gain wealth and title, mercenaries flocked to Edessa, the site of the Istaran musters. A few of the outlying cities of the empire even emptied their prisons, offering the condemned a chance to redeem themselves in service to the Kingpriest and the Gods. While the influx of less than ideal members disturbed the leaders of the Order, they bowed to the pressure of the Kingpriest and his reassurances that the wayward among them would find faith soon enough, and be lifelong followers of the war god.

In 935IA (27 PC), the machinations of the Kingpriest turned towards the clergy of the Gods of Darkness, and the Order of the Divine Hammer was the sword he used. Under his direction, temples to the Gods of Darkness throughout the empire were looted and burned, the priests within rounded up or expelled beyond the borders of Istar. Some priests, particularly those dedicated to Sargonnas, fought back, inflicting heavy losses in the name of the God of Vengeance before finally succumbing to the combined might of the Knights and the warrior-priests. As the people saw the warrior-priests leading the Knights of Solamnia in expelling darkness from the land the heaped greater and greater praise on their protectors. Soon, the banners of the Horned God fluttered throughout the empire as people gave worship to the God whose servants worked so tirelessly to protect them.

As they traveled, the members of the order, as well as the entourages they gathered, sang the praises of the Kingpriest and the glory of Istar. As a result of their preaching, there was an acceleration in the public shift from worship of the Gods to the adulation of their voice on Krynn, the Kingpriest. Within the Order, the beliefs of many of the lower ranks began to turn against the priesthoods of other gods, even to the point of violence. So it was that in 954IA (8PC), the Order of the Divine Hammer was responsible for one of the greatest affronts to the Gods yet witnessed- the destruction of the Pantheon of Karthay.
In the late Age of Might, there were those among the citizenry and clergy that still believed in the ideal of the balance, that both good and evil are necessary in the world. Their numbers were few, but they maintained temples in many of the larger cities of Ansalon. These temples were dedicated to all the gods, regardless of their nature. These Pantheons, as they were called, were shrines where each god might be venerated in safety, to give thanks, beg forgiveness or make requests to. They were popular with travelers, and they became popular meeting places for discussions of theology, dogma and ethics of the various religions. This open dialogue terrified the Kingpriest, for he feared that the common people might begin to accept the Gods of Darkness and their followers into their lives. In his fear he proclaimed that to discuss the teachings of one God in relation to another was an affront to both Gods and was a heresy of the worst sort. The Kingpriest further proclaimed that not only was it a sin to discuss the ideals of one God in the presence of another God’s worshippers, it was sinful that the depictions of these should be housed together, a stain that tainted all the images. Spurred by their own piety and their faith in their liege, the Order of the Divine Hammer entered the Pantheon of Karthay, and destroyed the likenesses of the Gods within. After the statues were smashed, the building itself, which had stood for over a thousand years, was burned.

This act of zealous destruction, an expression of their misguided loyalty to the Kingpriest, began a great furor of iconoclasm throughout the empire. Across Istar, sculptures of the gods were vandalized and replaced with images of the Kingpriest. The Kingpriest, the people claimed, had shown them the error of their ways, and was their true shepherd in faith.

In the last decades before the Cataclysm, Istar dominated art, religion and culture across Ansalon. But, try as they might, the Kingpriest and his minions had never been able to completely control commerce and manufacturing. These were completely under the sway of the clergy of Reorx and Shinare, the Gods of industry, building and commerce. The followers of the two neutral gods, through their control of the guilds in many cities, were able to stop the Istarans from determining prices and taxes on all goods. This refusal to submit to Istars dominance and the enormous monetary losses infuriated the Kingpriest, as it had several of his predecessors. Beldinas however, now had a means to alter the situation to his advantage- the Order of the Divine Hammer.

Under his command, in 9551A (7PC) the warehouses and halls of the priesthoods throughout the empire were raided, while in other areas of Ansalon, agents of the Kingpriest turned the public against the Forge God and the Matron of Commerce. The kingpriests minions implicated their rivals in scandals of cheating, theft and extortion, all to make the citizens turn against the priesthoods. As the scandals and distrust of the neutral priesthoods grew,
the Order began to seize more and more property, using the money gained to fund further efforts to discredit. The public loved the Order for its efforts to bring justice to those who had been cheated by the merchants, money-lenders and craftsmen. Soon riots targeting the followers of the two neutral gods, their homes, businesses and places of worship began to occur across Ansalon. Graffiti marked the doors of their homes, their warehouses were burned, while the people themselves were forced to flee the towns and cities. In only a few short months, the manipulations of the Kingpriest had removed one more rival from his world.

The Fall of the Order:

The collapse of the Order of the Divine Hammer is a subject of much debate. While some scholars link the fall to this event, others cite other causes. The riot is not recorded in any surviving histories, but does exist in the journals and memoirs of some eyewitnesses. Given the absolute control the Kingpriest had over Istaran society, it is not surprising that this event may have been purged from the official records. Further research into sealed portions of the Library of Palanthas may end the debate, provided Lorekeeper Astinus opens the forbidden volumes.

- Henri deRochefort

Less that two years before the Cataclysm, the fortunes of the Order of the Divine Hammer had turned. After open conflict with the Knights and heretical proclamations from within their ranks, the Kingpriest forsook them and the citizens turned against their saviors. Within weeks, the warrior-priests were being hunted as outlaws throughout Istar and the rest of Ansalon. Most fled, those that remained to try to vindicate their Order were imprisoned or publicly executed.

The final fate of the Order was sealed when their temple in Istar, the Edificum Justae, was the scene of a massive riot on the fifth day of Gildember, 959IA (3PC). Citizens filled the streets, demanding that Apulia Guiscard, the current Lord Protector and head of the Order, be turned over to them. Tensions escalated and violence erupted. The warrior-priests attempted to drive their attackers off without fighting, but soon had to defend themselves. Vastly outnumbered, they finally fell to the rioters, and the Temple was burned. With its destruction, the Order of the Divine Hammer faded from the circus that was the Imperial court of Istar.
Symbols of the Order:

The new order chose the bison manifestation of Kiri-Jolith as their symbol, designing their vestments and icons around it. The Bison, a symbol of strength and wisdom in plainsmen lore, is believed to be the earliest animal symbol associated with the Gods, as it plays such a central role in the barbarian culture.

The hammer is an important symbol in most cultures— it is both tool and weapon, it can build a civilization and defend it. The Order of the Divine Hammer exemplified this idea. They were known to aid in the building of a barn as quickly as they would protect it. It was this sense of responsibility and cooperation with the commoners that endeared the Order to them.

The Duties of the Priesthood:

In worship, the Order is very different than the followers of Paladine. They do not have temples per se, but large gathering halls, complete with barracks, that include chapels to the Bison-God within them. The Order pays homage to its patron in worship, but in accordance to their own duties, they are often travelling the lands of Ansalon, where temples to Kiri-Jolith are not found. As such, they worship in their holy places when they are found, but they also can consecrate a place for their thrice-daily worship in a ritual that lasts a few minutes. Once completed, the member can lay out their prayer rug, and commence with their prayer prostration’s. Prostration to Kiri-Jolith is important as it symbolizes the humility with which they approach their worship and their roles in the world. They are servants of the people and of their god a task that demands that he individual sacrifice their own ego and goals for the good of the many.

The Order of the Divine Hammer was initially created to serve as a personal guard to protect the Kingpriest and the holy city, and in times of war, its members, priests of Kiri-Jolith, would serve as advisors on military matters. Soon after the Orders liberation of Lattakay, the Kingpriest realized he had a powerful ally that could sway the public’s opinion on key matters, allowing him to stretch his rule even further. The directives of the Order changed, to include not only protection of the Kingpriest, but to protect pilgrims as they traveled to the city and other holy sites. In addition, they were given leave to travel to faraway lands, converting the people there to the worship of the true Gods and to travel Ansalon writing wrongs whenever they encountered them. With these new goals, the priesthood quickly gained popular sympathy and support. It was a common sight in the last decades to see a caravan of penniless pilgrims travelling toward Istar, The Zephaniah Necropolis or any number of holy sites, flanked by heavily armed and armored warriors. These
warriors sought no reward, giving their guardianship willingly at the Kingpriests behest. Some even took up residence along the routes, establishing garrisons or fortresses along the more dangerous roads, all to ensure that anyone, rich or poor, who had faith in the gods, would be safe on their journey.

The Beliefs of the Order:

The warrior-priests follow the same scripture as the priests of Kiri-Jolith, the Sacra Justae. In its pages, the wisdom of the martial arts is set out. Its teachings describe the fundamental philosophies of Kiri-Jolith, specifically the ideals of war. The teachings are for commanders and soldiers alike, and speak of the role of each in victory. While it is also a manual of war strategy, the writings also speak of the importance of the preservation of peace. Armed conflict, it is taught, is not to be entered lightly, only after all other options have failed should the swordarm be raised. It is written that truly just wars are won without bloodshed. The Order of the Divine Hammer seeks resolution first, but does not shrink from combat when it is left with no other options.

Equipment of the Warrior-Priests:

The sanctioned weapon of the order is the hammer, and may be of several types. The mounted warrior-priests favor the Bec-de-Corbin or the crowbill, while the footmen use mattocks, ornate mauls and war hammers. The epaulets and helms of the Order are decorated with images of the bison incarnation of Kiri-Jolith, the horns on the helm coming from one of the great bison of southern Solamnia. Over their padded leather armor, members wear a knee-
length white tabard the symbol of the order emblazoned upon its front. The symbol also appears on their shields and the outer face of their long gauntlets. The final piece of their war apparel is a great cape of Bison fur, the harvest of which has caused a great deal of anger from plains barbarians protesting the reckless slaughter.

Structure of the Order:

The Order of the Divine Hammer answers directly to the Kingpriest, and is unfettered by the bureaucracy that paralyzes the Knights of Solamnia. In the thirty years the Order existed, few titles were created for its members. Many of those belonged to one individual or were carried over from the existing hierarchy of the Priesthood of Kiri-Jolith.

Lord Protector: This is the leader of the entire order. He is final arbiter in internal disputes that reach him and determines official direction of the Order.

Lord Marshals: There are six Lord Marshals, who act as advisors to the Lord Protector and are responsible for administration of the Orders day-to-day existence. One of these men, the Lord Marshal Liaison, is responsible for communication with the Priesthood of Paladine and the Kingpriest.

Marshals: These men lead expeditionary forces and are the administrators of the Orders outposts along the roads of Ansalon. On special celebratory days, Marshals lead prayers, instead of Commanders-at-Arms.

Commander-at-arms: Men who possess this title lead the Brothers and Attendants in battle. They are also charged with leading daily prayer services in the field and at the Orders chapels in Ansalon’s cities.

Brother-at-arms: These lowest ranking ordained members are the backbone of the Order. They spend as long as ten years in sojourn, crossing Ansalon working the will of their patron. After completion of their sojourn, they are assigned permanently to an outpost or a section of road, which they protect at any cost. Many of these men take it upon themselves to build shrines and chapels to Kiri-Jolith along their road, as way-stations for travelers and pilgrims.

Attendant-at-Arms: As unordained members of the Order of the Divine Hammer, the attendants are the most numerous. They maintain the chapels and shrines of the Order, and their garrisons make up the backbone of its military forces. As they are unordained, they possess no priestly magic. Culled from all walks of life, these men who patrol the empire are at times of unsavory character.
Conclusion:

The Order of the Divine Hammer was a group that the Knighthood could learn much from, both in terms of service and in what to avoid. The sudden death of diSiyan caused irreparable damage at too early an age- imagine what our order would be like had Vinas Solamnus died before completing the writing of the Oath and the Measure. Such was the fate of the warrior-priests of Kiri-Jolith. Willing servants of the Kingpriest and the citizens of Ansalon, they were doomed to be turned on by both. A sad fate indeed, and one we in the Knighthood know all too well.

Henri deRochefort

Order of the Rose
Adventure Seeds and Game Notes:

The time of the Order of the Divine Hammer is one of the most socially turbulent in Ansalons history. There are innumerable possibilities for roleplaying within this age, for it is an era when the acts of mortals had the most lasting of impacts.

* As members of the Order, Player Characters could be sent into the outer provinces to quell an uprising, retrieve an artifact, rescue a captive or kidnap an enemy of Istar.
* As members of any of the groups the Kingpriest has targeted, the PC’s could find themselves fugitives, or at the very least accomplices of fugitives.
* Those PC’s who follow the teachings of another deity may find themselves branded heretics, while magic-users will be lucky to survive within the empire for any length of time.
* Depending on who the PC’s are, supplies may be abundant or scarce, for Istar in its last century was a paranoid police state. Questions will always be asked, suspicions always raised, and mercenaries always ready to collect one of the Kingpriests bounties.

Player characters of this class follow the experience point chart and general guidelines of the priesthood of Kiri-Jolith, as set out in the Tales of the Lance Boxed set. If they join the Order after the death of its founder, they will not have access to priestly magic. If they join before, his death, depending on their actions, they may lose their powers or retain them until the time of the Cataclysm.
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Most of the Dragonlance® game material focuses on the period long after the First Cataclysm. While these are interesting times to be sure, the period during and after the Cataclysm can present interesting and exciting situations for roleplaying. The meteor shower that occurred during the Cataclysm had devastating effects, but little detail is given as to the actual events that transpired within it and as a result of it. This short piece presents possible events that would occur shortly before, during, and after such a catastrophe. Dungeon Masters and Narrators can easily use these suggestions to help develop their own campaigns.
Chronology of Events

Before the Cataclysm: The Thirteen Signs of Warning

- Disappearance of true priests throughout the land
- Green skies and the cyclone in Istar
- Fear and panic among the kender
- Moonless nights (only Nuitari present)
- Black flame of Thoradin
- Fires will not burn throughout the land of Solamnia
- Storms and wildfires across the plains of Abanasinia
- People turning on each other throughout the land (including Lord Soth's actions)
- Unnatural fog in Palanthas
- Trees bleeding in Silvanesti
- Animals rampaging in Qualinesti
- Tides and floods of blood in the North
- Eruption of the Lords of Doom and other mountains

Immediate Effects  
(1–2 hours before impact up to 7–10 days after impact)

- Thunder and fire in the heavens (meteors passing through atmosphere)
- Stampedes and animal agitation
- Impact occurs, causing water and rock vaporization
- Shockwave, with a rain of molten rock
- Earthquakes, avalanches, mudslides, and volcanoes
- Firestorms, winds, and tidal waves, stampedes
- Dust cloud or rain of ash and blood (Istar region)
- Perpetual darkness

Long Term Effects  
(From impact time to years after the event)

- Death of sea life
- Drought and forest fires
- Temperature drop
- Crop failure
- Animal starvation
- Epidemics
- Wars and raiding mercenaries
- Increase in undead
- Encroachment of animal life
Impact and Aftermath Timeline

- 0–10AC: struggle for survival, governmental collapse on all but local (village) scale, epidemics, famine, crop failures
- 10–20AC: recovery begins (crop failures, famine end), wars, purges, civil disorder, epidemics
- 20–50AC: minor recovery continues on a localized scale
- 50–100AC: low prosperity, population stabilizes (deaths = births)
- 100–200AC: recovery begins on a regional scale
- 200AC and beyond: Cataclysm relegated to history, its immediate physical effects no longer affect commoners

Geographic Effects

The initial impacts, since the asteroids struck earth and water, had two effects. The white-hot asteroid vaporized the water, creating a cloud of scalding steam, while the heat and force generated from the impact threw pieces of the planet’s crust and the asteroid into the atmosphere. This lead to a rain of molten rock, which started fires of various types. The ground shockwave from the various impacts fractured the planet along any fault lines, causing volcanoes and earthquakes. The volcanoes caused fires as lava crept across the land, as did the burning ash thrown into the skies. Earthquakes turned soil slopes into mudslides as rains and aftershocks liquefy them. In the high mountains, avalanches resulted due to increased heat. All of these destroyed many towns or cities that survived the initial impact.

Weather Effects

As the shockwave moved outward from the points of impact, a wall of air was pushed before it. Within this wall of air, storms of hurricane force occurred, and the superheated air ignited whatever it touched that was combustible for a range of several hundred miles out from the impact point. In some locations, precipitation did not occur, while in others monsoon force rains became commonplace. The ash, dust, and water vapor thrown into the atmosphere blocked out the sun for months, and as the water mixed with ash, a black rain fell. This rain coated plants, and buildings, causing further devastation as plants died and buildings collapsed. The friction from the impact, as well as the ash in the air, caused an initial rise in temperature, melting glaciers, causing extensive lowland flooding, and destroying crops and arable lands. A sudden drop followed this rise in temperature as sunlight could not penetrate the blocked atmosphere. When the temperature dropped, glaciers at the poles and in the mountains expanded, further lowering water levels. Cooler temperatures and a lack of sunlight destroyed remaining plant life.
Social Effects

The social effects of an event like the Cataclysm cannot be understated. Large portions of the population, especially in the Iстarian region of Ansalon, died in the impact or its immediate effects. Those that survived faced food shortages, wars, raids by animals, insects and monsters, marauding undead, plagues, fires, shortages of fresh water, hoarding, rationing, and shortages of common items. Those that survived came to wish they had not. The first few years following the Cataclysm also saw mass migrations, ships full of dead bodies drifting at sea, fields of shipwrecks lying in open plains, and religious zealotry. Witch burnings and crusades were the most common exhibition of this phenomenon. Large-scale society ceased to exist for the most part, as the infrastructure was in ruins. Few, if any bridges survived the initial event, making travel across rivers difficult or impossible. Society was reduced to village level in most cases, as communication with outsiders was difficult, pointless, and discouraged. The mass migrations left many abandoned towns, forts and keeps, while in other places, the hopeful gathered, causing further shortages, riots, and social unrest. The economy collapsed, leaving money worthless, and in other cases, prices were beyond affordability. Within cities, walls or buildings may collapse, streets cave in onto catacombs or sinkholes, giving characters new areas to explore or rescue survivors. As protection of what meager supplies became of paramount importance, it is obvious why steel became the most valuable coinage.

Floral and Faunal Effects

The initial impact generated so much heat through friction that the oceans over a large area boiled, killing much of the existing sea life. As these organisms decayed and wash up on shores, waters would be poisoned, killing further life. The drop in temperature retarded crop growth, as did the lack of sunlight. As plants die, animals were forced further into civilized lands to search for food. Those living things that drowned in the floods decomposed, poisoning water, eventually causing epidemics of diseases as insect and scavenger populations exploded. Forest fires drove herds of animals into stampedes, causing further devastation and plant depletion. Large burned or flooded forests dotted the landscape, as did sea floor area that had been thrust above the surface. Exploration of this alien world presents many unique opportunities to characters.
Character Effects

Characters in this time face many challenges, but they also have many opportunities. Supplies are costly, and money is worthless. Bartering is the most effective form of commerce, and some items are not available at any price. Weapons and tools are especially valuable, as skilled craftsmen are few and far between. Characters may find themselves forced to use crude iron or bronze weapons if steel is not available. Magic-users face difficulty in obtaining their fabricated spell components, and until vegetation rebounds, herbal components as well. Any minor magical ability displays could be seen either as a sign of a savior or as the mark of a witch. Both situations have interesting possibilities. Priests have no abilities, though, as with mages, herbalism skills could be useful. Legend says that no true clerics walk the land after the Cataclysm, but this need not be true. If a campaign begins before the Cataclysm, a character could refuse the call of their god and be stripped of their powers. This presents a challenge as a character could still try to follow the teachings and spread his or her god's message, to varying effects, without the aid of his or her deity. Warrior characters face little difference, unless they were a Knight before the Cataclysm. Knights of Solamnia, as is widely known, were blamed for not averting the event, thus a character may be forced to go into hiding or disguise themselves. This all presumes that the characters survive the initial earthquakes and floods. Characters may also be conscripted into civil militias to aid in city defense or to look for survivors in ruins.

Adventuring Hooks

There are numerous possibilities for adventuring after the Cataclysm. Accumulation of monetary wealth is relatively useless, except in the least damaged areas. Retrieval of a magical item, clearing a path for refugees, mapping an area, protecting a village, and carrying messages to distant cities are all possibilities for adventures in this new, dark age. As mentioned, the Cataclysm resulted in many new unique areas for characters to explore. Examples of these include undersea cities and landscapes thrust above the surface, shipwrecks of all types, from before or during the Cataclysm, and many abandoned cities, forts, keeps or cave complexes. There are also Bakali and High Ogre cities, abandoned for ages, that the Cataclysm may expose. There is no limit to the possibilities in this new world. It truly is a time in need of heroes.
This compilation of John Grubber’s work is dedicated to John himself for all the effort and time he put into this material, everyone at Sovereign Press for adopting Krynn and continuing quality supplements, the authors & artist that contribute with fascinating tales & visions of Krynn, the members of the dragonlanceforums.com for keeping Dragonlance alive with a great community and sense of friendship and my lady “Cat” for understanding the time I spend in Krynn. Hope everyone enjoys the format that I put together of John’s work. I wanted to make it printable so fans could add it to their collection.

- Canlocu