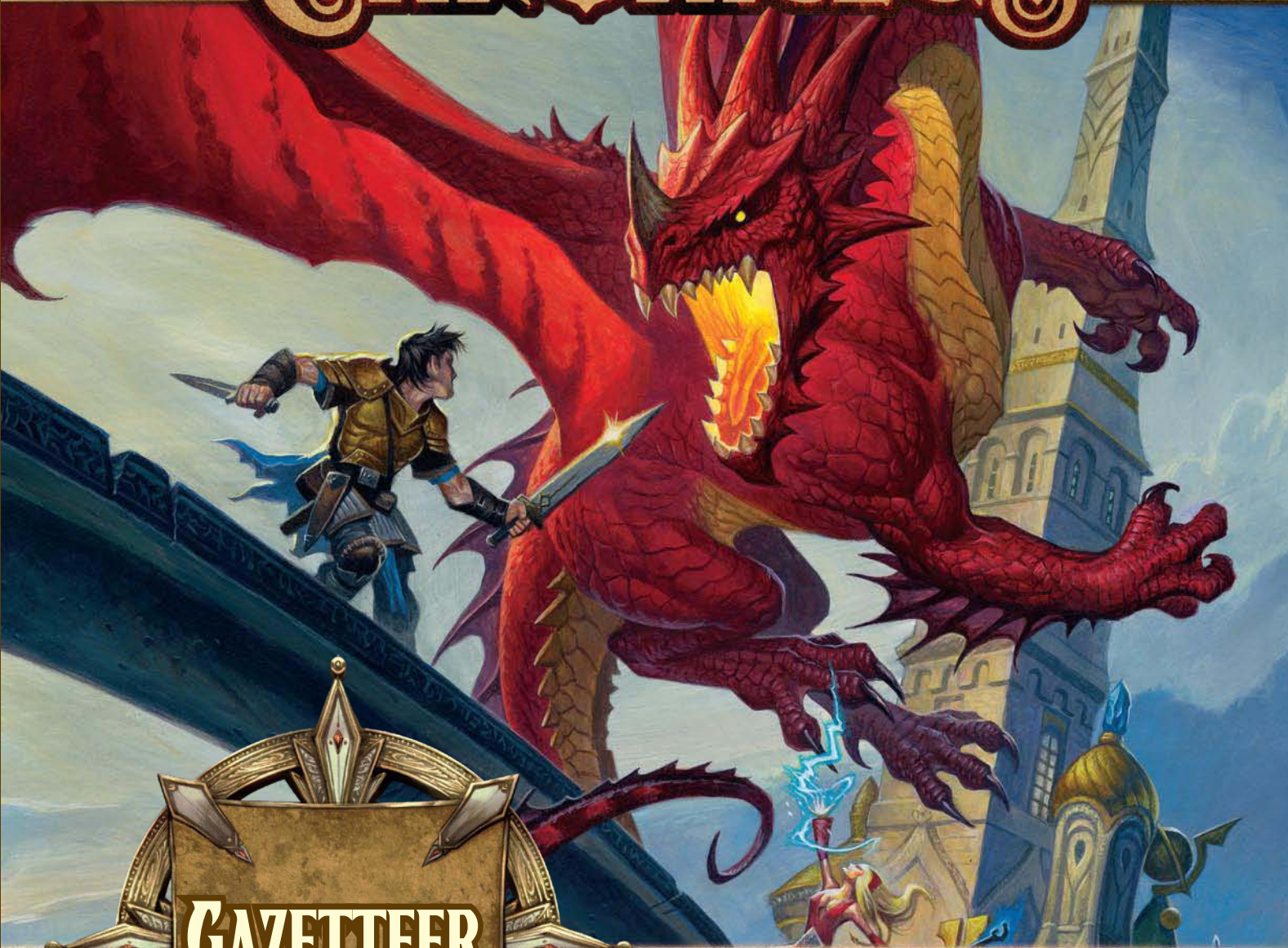


# PATHFINDER CHRONICLES™



By Erik Mona and Jason Bulmahn



# Religious Symbols



Abadar



Aroden



Asmodeus



Calistria



Cayden Cailean



Desna



Erastil



Gorum



Gozreh



Iomedae



Irori



Lamashtu



Nethys



Norgorber



Pharasma



Rovagug



Sarenrae



Shelyn



Torag



Urgathoa



Zon-Kuthon





# GAZETTEER

A *Pathfinder Chronicles*™ Supplement

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## Introduction

The greatest heroes of Golarion's modern age record their victories in an ongoing series of chapbooks known as the *Pathfinder Chronicles*. The amazing, often unbelievable tales bound in these oft-traded volumes tell of lost gods and sunken continents, of creatures older than the world itself who fell from the stars in the eldest of days, and of the fantastic ruins they left behind.

The authors of these tales belong to the Pathfinder Society, a loose-knit group of explorers, archaeologists, and adventurers who span the globe in search of lost knowledge and ancient treasures. Some seek to unlock the secret history of the world, piecing together the past one fragment at a time. Others are in it for the money, filtering priceless antiquities through a series of unscrupulous merchants to enrich themselves beyond measure. Other Pathfinders take up the trade because they find the thrill of risking their lives more addicting and exhilarating than any vice or drug.

### THE PATHFINDER SOCIETY

A shadowy inner circle of masked leaders known as the Decemvirate rules the Pathfinder Society from the bustling metropolis of Absalom, the so-called City at the Center of the World, positioned on the Isle of Kertos in the Inner Sea. There,

in a huge fortress complex called the Grand Lodge, the Ten manage a vast organization of operatives spread throughout the Inner Sea region and beyond.

These operatives, known as venture-captains, coordinate teams of Pathfinders in the assigned regions, tipping them off to ancient legends, passing along newly discovered maps, and supporting their efforts in the field. The venture-captain provides an ideal “in-world” source of adventure leads, making him an indispensable NPC in your Pathfinder campaign.

That doesn't necessarily make the venture-captain an unswerving ally, however. The ultimate goals of the Decemvirate are inscrutable, and not even the venture-captains understand the full picture of what the Pathfinder Society does with all of the information it collects.

Each venture-captain oversees the activities of several tightly knit groups of Pathfinder field agents who conduct much of the exploration and adventure that fuels the society as a whole. Perhaps your player characters are one such group, moving from locale to locale to discover the lost secrets of dead civilizations and the wondrous treasures they left behind.

Pathfinder agents provide detailed written reports of their exploits to their venture-captains, who then forward the





most compelling records to the Grand Lodge in Absalom for consideration by the Decemvirate. Periodically, the masked leaders of the society collect and publish the greatest exploits into new volumes of the *Pathfinder Chronicles*, which they send back to their venture-captains in bulk for distribution to field agents. Whenever a new volume of the *Pathfinder Chronicles* hits the field, dozens of adventurers flock to the sites described therein for further exploration and adventure.

Although they belong to the same society, individual groups of Pathfinder agents often find themselves at cross-purposes in the field, particularly if each team reports to a different venture-captain. Competition between Pathfinders rarely results in outright battle, but certain agents aren't above collapsing passages, triggering ancient traps, or selling out their rivals to hostile natives—all in the name of friendly competition, of course.

Player characters in a Pathfinder Chronicles campaign need not be members of the Pathfinder Society in order for the organization to play a critical role in their adventuring lives. Although the volumes of the *Pathfinder Chronicles* themselves are intended only for the eyes of Pathfinder agents, there are unaffiliated adventurers, crooked scholars, and ambitious antiquarians who track down stray volumes and use them as maps to adventure. Even the oldest volumes, whose subjects have been plundered again and again, often contain hints leading to undiscovered treasure. Beyond the books, the PCs might also encounter a rival Pathfinder group in the field, setting up the society as lifelong antagonists or allies.

## THE INNER SEA AND THE AGE OF LOST OMENS

The Pathfinder Society bases itself in Absalom on the Inner Sea. To the north is the continent of Avistan, seat of once-mighty empires like Chelax and Taldor, and site of the ruins of Lost Thassilon in Varisia. South, across the wide waterway of the Inner Sea, lie the secrets of Garund, a sprawling continent of arid deserts and fecund jungles, where the mighty pharaohs of Osirion emerged from the Age of Darkness to chart a new destiny for humanity.

The crumbling remnants of countless lost civilizations abound upon Avistan and Garund, drawing explorers and adventurers from all corners of Golarion. Some of these nations fell in the cloudy days of prehistory, like the lost continent of Azlant and the mysterious terraced pyramids of the Mwangi Expanse. Others collapsed in recent memory, as occurred in the so-called Sodden Lands along the edge of the Eye of Abendego, a permanent hurricane off Garund's western coast.

The Eye appeared a century ago, at the birth of the current era of mankind's history, the Age of Lost Omens. Until a century ago, the destiny of humanity was guided by an ascended mortal known as Aroden, the last survivor of Old Azlant, first of the great human kingdoms of antiquity.

In the early days of recorded history, Aroden walked Golarion among his people. When Azlant sunk beneath the sea, a victim of its own pride and arrogance, Aroden ventured to Avistan. There he raised the *Starstone* from the depths of the Inner Sea, helped to found both Taldor and Absalom, and protected his people from the depredations of horrific villains such as the wizard-king Tar-Baphon and the nigh-unstoppable Spawn of Rovagug. Then, thousands of years ago, Aroden departed Golarion, vowing to return on the eve of mankind's greatest triumph.

The Last Azlanti's powerful church in the empire of Chelax traced this prophecy to a specific day just over a century ago. With great ceremony and circumstance, thousands of clerics of Aroden and the Chelaxian nobility who supported them gathered in a vast ceremony at the Chelish capital of Westcrown, eager to see their deific master manifest in the flesh to usher in a new age of triumph.

Instead, terrible storms darkened Golarion's skies, and the assembled clerics lost all connection to their god. For 3 weeks, winds and waves ravaged the world, drowning coastal nations and casting governments into ruin. In the north, Golarion shifted slightly in the direction of the infernal Abyss, granting terrible demonic forces control over a widening region of the world. The Eye of Abendego remains as the greatest physical aftershock of Aroden's apparent death, but the psychological scars upon humanity will take centuries to fully heal.

Perhaps worse, Aroden's disappearance shattered one of the most reliable prophecies humans had ever known, shaking their faith in the solidity of the future. Since this tragic event, no significant prophecy has come true in any way, leading scholars to name the current era the Age of Lost Omens.

This uncertain world serves as the backdrop for your Pathfinder Chronicles campaign. It is a world 100 years from catastrophe, a place of overwhelming danger with an unknown future.

It is a place in need of adventurers willing to make that future their own. So polish your swords and armor and ready your most potent spells.

Your new campaign world awaits!

## USING THIS BOOK

This book provides a broad overview of the Inner Sea region of the world of Golarion, the official campaign setting of *Pathfinder* and the *Pathfinder Chronicles* adventures, sourcebooks, and Adventure Path campaigns published by Paizo Publishing. It's a handy resource for players and game masters looking to flesh out the world beyond a given adventure, and it contains hundreds of compelling hooks leading to even greater adventures. Paizo will fill in some of these blanks as the years go by, but others are here for you to explore in your own campaigns.





## Characters

The following races are found throughout the Inner Sea region and make excellent choices for player characters. Sidebars throughout describe the human ethnicities.

### DWARVES

Dwarves divide their history into three epochs. The first covers the original subterranean life of the race's progenitors, a dour time of toil and monotonous craft. The second era, generally considered to be the height of dwarven culture and influence, encompasses the dwarves' epic struggles against their orcish and goblinoid enemies, including the final war and the resulting push to the surface world of Golarion, still hidden from light in the grasp of the Age of Darkness. The third era began near the end of the human Age of Anguish, when the cloak of shadow and ill tidings from the fall of the *Starstone* finally passed for good, and the glory of the dwarves soon passed with it.

The mountain ranges and primeval forests of Avistan bear witness to the glory of the ancient dwarves in the form of crumbling abandoned citadels and moss-choked eroded statuary. The dwarves today are too few in number to populate all of their old holdings, and while they might have reclaimed some of these places, other creatures have moved in and show no signs of leaving without a struggle.

Dwarves today are most common in the northeastern section of the Five Kings Mountains, with a Gathering Council meeting at Highhelm roughly every 200 years to discuss affairs of import to dwarfkind. Over the centuries, these gatherings have become more contentious and diverse, as dwarves have grown increasingly isolated from one another. The rosy-cheeked warrior-skalds of Kalsgaard in the Lands of the Linnorm Kings and the squat, hairless contemplatives of Osirion's Ouat caste might share blood, but their cultures are strikingly different. In this era, what it means to be a dwarf remains more fluid than ever before, and the whitebeards of the oldest dwarven halls know this disparity as a sign for what it is—the impending extinction of dwarf society.

Dwarves stand about a foot shorter than humans, on average, and are stockier even than a burly half-orc. Incredibly dense creatures, most dwarves are about 100 pounds heavier than they appear due to their strong skeletons and tightly packed musculature. Most dwarves wear their hair long, with men nearly always favoring long beards. Traditionalists festoon their beards with elaborate braids, small battle trophies, or beads commemorating important events in their lives, and the shaving of a beard is considered a deliberate departure from time-honored dwarf traditions.



Adventuring dwarves tend to be the most reserved and conservative members of their bands, while at home their interest in immersing themselves in the world of the “Inheritor Races” is interpreted as a passing youthful phase. Dwarves tend to view their elf companions as weaklings who abandoned the world and allowed orcs dominion during the Age of Darkness. They see half-orcs as the progeny of a race dwarves warred with for millennia before humans started counting millennia. No one holds a grudge like a dwarf.

Still, even an obstinate dwarf is capable of looking past the prejudices of his ancient people to make exceptions for his battle-tested comrades, and dwarves value friendship higher even than the gems and gold that notoriously fuel their lust for adventure.

## ELVES

Elves reached their peak thousands of years before the rise of humans and clashed constantly with humankind as it clawed its way toward civilization. Despite superior skill in arms and magic, the old elves could not stem the endless tides of savage human warriors.

Never a fecund race, the elves knew they must ultimately cede the world to their barbaric cousins. As their numbers grew fewer and fewer, the wisest among them turned their attentions to a series of interplanetary gates created in antiquity to explore the many worlds of Golarion’s star. On the eve of the Earthfall, the elves abandoned Golarion to its sad fate, departing through their gates to a mysterious community called Sovyrian, the legendary homeland of the elves.

Some of the few elves who stayed behind took refuge from the world-cataclysm of the Earthfall by delving deep into the subterranean chambers below Golarion. There, in utter darkness, the elves discovered a terrible presence and were forever changed. Their skin turned black as night; their hair took on a shade of utter white. They had become drow—meaning “accursed”—tainted exemplars of the worst traits of high elvenkind: capriciousness, cruelty, arrogance, and disloyalty. In the darkness they thrived, dominating neighboring cultures of derro, duergar, troglodytes, and worse to become perhaps the most potent threats of the world below.

Sensing that their old human enemies had evolved enough to be reasoned with, thousands of elves returned to Golarion from Sovyrian in 2632 AR, causing great tumult throughout Avistan. These elves resettled many of their old holdings, taking up arms against human warlords who refused their ancient claims of birthright and sovereignty. Beneath the great elven city of Celwynvian, in Varisia’s Meiriani Forest, the elves came upon the descendants of those who had stayed behind.

Unsure of these new developments and facing mounting losses from vicious drow and their vile allies

surging up through the lightless depths below, the elves collapsed the tunnels below Celwynvian and abandoned the haunted capital, embarking across Avistan in a great procession to the ancient elven kingdom of Kyonin, on the far shore of Lake Encarthan. Some instead traveled west along the island chains of Varisia to raise the Mordant Spire on the edge of the world. For generations, the elves remained an ephemeral presence in Golarion, dwelling in secluded forest kingdoms or isolated island homes. Tentatively, as the centuries passed, the elves emerged from their strongholds and now thrive wherever elves once lived on Avistan and even parts of Garund, whether or not the current rulers of those lands accept their timelost sovereignty.

Elves are slighter and taller than humans, with long pointy ears and pupils so large they fill most of the eye. Most elves keep to the wild natural places of the world where, over time, they take on aspects of their environment. In cultured lands elves bedeck themselves in the finest garments, and the seldom-spotted high nobility of Sovyrian are known for their unearthly grace and raiment of otherworldly beauty.

Elves who grow up outside sheltered elf society do so among people who grow old and die in the time it takes a long-lived elf to simply reach maturity. This experience warps the elves and grounds them in the world in a melancholy way many “proper” elves cannot understand. Elves call these creatures the Forlorn, and they make up a disproportionately large number of elves who consider themselves adventurers.

## GNOMES

Of all the demihuman races of Golarion, the wily gnomes cling tightest to their ancient immortality. When Old Azlant itself was but a collection of curious primitives still scratching at the surface of science, gnomes dwelled not in the mortal world of Golarion but with its mysterious progenitor, the First World, realm of the fey. Gnomes first appeared on Golarion during the Age of Anguish, as the lifting darkness of the previous era revealed a changed world. The stocky, wrinkled talespinners of the oldest gnome enclaves have a story and a smile for nearly every event in the history of the race since, but of the original advent of gnomes on Golarion they claim only that the idea struck the gnomes out of the blue, and they simply stepped from one world to another out of curiosity. The eldest dragons and the reclusive aboleths speak of a great tragedy in the First World that mirrored the devastation on Golarion brought on by the *Starstone*, and they claim that the gnomes fled their homeland to wash suspicion from their mischievous hands.

The first gnomes on Golarion scarcely understood what it meant to be mortal. They abandoned concepts of family



and kinship in a mad dash to explore their new world. Had it not been for the retention of their peerless cleverness and nonlinear genius, the gnomes would have been destroyed in the era of their diaspora, for like the First World, Golarion was filled with creatures more than willing to devour a curious gnome. Unlike in their shadowy homeland, the gnomes did not know the secrets of manipulating the strange new space and shadows, and thousands were lost to the depredations of mortal Golarion. Most who survived did so by forming communities called enclaves, where gnomes uncharacteristically banded together for mutual protection. Others discovered that the Second World had shadows of its own, and warped their minds and bodies into dangerous forms capable of defending themselves. The descendents of these curmudgeonly misanthropes, called the Lonely Ones by the gnomes themselves, are known to humanity as spriggans.

Today, gnomes can be found throughout Golarion, particularly in the hills and forests of Avistan, where they built the first enclaves and managed to find some measure of peaceful coexistence with the natives. The largest and most influential gnome settlements on the continent include Brastlewark, the legendary capital of the Gnome King, within the borders of Cheliax; the elusive Shay Citadels of Irrere near Holgrim; and the welcoming and boisterous community of Thom, in the River Kingdoms.

In Garund, gnomes thrive in Katapesh and Nex, and many appear to have had roles of significance in the courts of the pharaohs of Ancient Osirion. The jungle folk of the Mwangi Expanse view gnomes as evil spirits, perhaps because the darkened jungle canopies appealed to the vicious Lonely Ones from the very beginning and appeal to them still. A few of the earlier editions of the *Pathfinder Chronicles* contain tantalizing hints of a debased spriggan society inhabiting a monolithic stone city at the heart of the jungle, but subsequent expeditions have been unable to uncover it.

Gnomes stand about three feet tall, with males slightly larger than females. They are slither and somewhat taller than halflings. Their ears are rounded like those of a human, but their hair tends toward vibrant hues unseen in other races without the use of dyes. Their skin, too, bears unusual coloration along natural themes, from the alabaster white of fresh snow to the blush of a rose to the dark brown of oak (and even sometimes hints of green!). Of the common races of Golarion, gnomes look the most alien and out of place.

Their unusual nature might be evidenced in their skin and hair, but it is underscored in their inscrutable nature and demeanor. The simple act of existing in the mortal world remains a challenge for gnomes, whose very essence is used to the mutable and unpredictable nature of the First World. As a result, gnomes tend toward eccentric pursuits they believe “anchor” them to Golarion, particularly collecting stories and friends, but also more eccentric quarries such as nicknames, thimbles, outfits, scissors, or broken mechanical objects. Few gnomes feel at ease when at rest, so most carry around some sort of project to keep themselves occupied during life’s slow moments.

With their oversized eyes and small faces, gnomes appear outwardly friendly, but their highly mutable facial muscles result in occasionally unsettling toothy smiles and disturbing grins. They are prone to practical jokes and the cackling laughter of a gnome is infectious, at first, before it becomes annoying and (at times) terrifying. With laughter and mockery—as with almost everything else—gnomes don’t quite know when to quit.

## HALFLINGS

With their short statures and tendency to blend into the background, halflings don’t receive much notice from the other folk of Golarion. Their origins date back to the beginning of humanity. From the very start, they seem always to have walked alongside mankind, living in human



### Azlanti

The first civilized humans of Golarion were the Azlanti, a proud race with skin ranging from olive to pale white, and dark hair almost approaching black. No pureblooded Azlanti survive into the modern era, but their cultural tradition is so rich that many members of descendant races, notably Taldans and Chelaxians, often claim Azlanti heritage.

Curiously, several widespread legends suggest that when the sea claimed Lost Azlant, it took a portion of her people as well. This race of cunning gilled humans makes frequent war against the elves of the Mordant Spire, and is thought to have the ear of the ruling council of Absalom. They are the Gillmen—the Low Azlanti—degenerate remnants of a once-proud empire who have become something slightly less than human in their mysterious life under the sea. They interact openly with proper humans only in the vice city of Escadar on the Isle of Kortos, where they maintain an embassy to the surface world.





cities, adopting human customs, seeing to the common needs of humans as cooks, entertainers, and menials. It's easy to take them for granted.

Even if the world doesn't pay much attention to halflings, halflings are always paying attention to the world. Halflings are inveterate opportunists. Unable to physically defend themselves from the rigors of Golarion, they know when to bend with the wind and when to hide away. Yet a halfling's curiosity often overwhelms its good sense, leading to chronic bad decisions and narrow escapes. The other races of Golarion consider halflings lucky since they so often escape by the skin of their necks, but the fact is that the halflings themselves are to blame for putting themselves in such dangerous situations. It's not that the halflings don't know any better—it's that they simply can't help themselves.

Halflings claim no cultural homeland and control no settlements larger than rural assemblies of free towns. Far more often, they dwell at the knees of their human cousins in human cities, eking out livings as they can from the scraps of larger societies. In most places, this casts them as underlings and menials. In the diabolical Empire of Chelax, it casts them as slaves. Here, halflings are known as "slips," half-men worthy of scorn and contempt. Slips, in the lingo of the trade, are less effective workers than humans but last longer, maintaining an unparalleled optimism and willingness to endure. They rarely revolt, seldom struggle overmuch, and get along with the master's children. Only their physical weakness keeps their cost reasonable.

Despite their curiosity-driven wanderlust, halflings possess a strong sense of house and home. A halfling takes great pride in his domicile, often spending above his means to add to the common comforts of home life. This domestic sensibility makes them ideal servants, butlers, and cooks; halflings themselves see no shame in such tasks, with even indentured or enslaved halflings taking pride in their work.

Even the most dutiful servant tires of his work eventually and longs for the wider world. Halflings constantly measure get-rich-quick schemes and opportunities for adventure and crime against the safety and protection of their current situation, but when the right chance comes along, they snatch it with a moment's notice. The suddenness with which a halfling decides to abandon one life for another often takes other races by surprise, but the halfling is always looking, always calculating. He leaves only when the moment is right, but he almost never lets that moment pass him by.

Halflings stand just inches shorter than gnomes and make up with bravery and optimism what they lack in stature and strength. The bottoms of their feet are naturally covered in tough calluses and the tops often sport a tuft of warming hair. Many prefer to wander the world bare-footed. Most have almond skin and brown hair, tending toward black as one approaches the Inner Sea. Emotionally, halflings embrace nonexclusive extremes. They're easygoing but excitable, prone to laziness but frenetic when roused. Ironically, their greatest strength is their perceived weakness—if halflings can count on one advantage it's that they're continually underestimated.

## HALF-ELVES

Of all the common races, elves and humans have the longest bond. In ancient times, the elves warred against their feral human cousins, eventually abandoning the world to human brutality on the eve of Earthfall. Many elves remained in the isolated parts of the world, and as humans developed society, art, and magic, the elves watched from the shadows. In time, they reached out in friendship to the developed humans, and old enemies became friends—even lovers.

It's not difficult to imagine why elves and humans breed together. To a human, an elf represents an unattainable beauty. Elves, with their height, slim

## Chelaxian

The distant, bastard descendants of Azlanti refugees spread throughout southern Avistan as if entitled to the land by the gods themselves. Sharp-featured with dark hair, dark eyes, and pale skin, Chelaxians differ from their duskier Taldan cousins due to widespread intermixing with pale-skinned Ulfen raider-merchants in the distant past (from whom they also gained the legendary Chelaxian wrath).

Chelaxians are best known for their pride and ambition, possessing a sense of entitlement that has followed them through history. They tend to sneer upon savagery and respect strong authority. Quick to be offended and slow to forgive, Chelaxians hold grudges longer than most other humans. They are most common in the current and former holdings of the once-vast Empire of Chelax, including Andoran, Galt, Nirmathas, Molthune, and the southern reaches of Varisia. Most speak Taldane.





figures, wisdom, and grace, are often seen as perfect humans, creating an attraction many humans find impossible to resist. Elves appreciate humans' vivacity, their lust for life, and their willingness to act at a moment's notice. To elves, humans represent freedom, brashness, and excitement. While the most staid isolationist elves decry these factors as weaknesses of the human spirit, other elves find the traits irresistible. When elves and humans breed, half-elves are the inevitable result.

The term "half-elf" is deceptive, for only a fraction of creatures so labeled come from the offspring of a human and elf parent. Others are many generations removed from the original coupling, yet exhibiting traits of one race or the other that ensure they never quite fit in either.

Half-elves have no ancestral homeland and they seldom gather in groups composed exclusively of half-elves. Instead, they usually try to fit within either human or elf society. The half-elves generally thrive in human communities, where they frequently become artists, bards, or entertainers. Despite this warm welcome, many half-elves avoid mixing with their human cousins, for foremost among the racial gifts granted to them by their elven progenitors is a long natural life. Half-elves often survive 150 years or more, and must watch as three or more generations of their human friends wither and die before their eyes. The older a half-elf grows, the more likely he is to be overcome by melancholy and nostalgia, speaking wistfully of lost friends from simpler times. Many half-elves avoid this sad fate by seeking succor in full-elven communities, where *they* are the short-lived ones. Elves look upon their half-human spawn with an equal measure of pride and pity, and the elves' natural haughtiness and self-centered natures ensure that half-elves are truly outsiders no matter where they dwell.

Half-elves generally look like attractive humans with slightly pointed ears. They stand about a half-head taller than humans and rarely put on unseemly

weight no matter what they feed themselves. Those with stronger elven traits are more likely to be viewed as outsiders by humans, who nonetheless remain strangely fascinated by them. Half-elves whose looks favor their human side tend to have a difficult time in elven society, with conservative elder elves subtly pushing them to discover their human heritage by exploring the world at large (and thus abandoning the pure elf community). Half-elven skin tones usually take on the hue of the human parent.

Adventuring half-elves tend to be well traveled, with extensive networks of contacts picked up during their long lives among both humans and elves. Rather than tending toward a particular class or role within a party, half-elves are most often jacks-of-all-trades with a wide variety of skills and abilities. They make for trustworthy, dependable companions, and while they don't quite fit into the societies of either parent race, they feel most at home on the road and are well suited for a life of exploration and excitement.

## HALF-ORCS

Everybody hates half-orcs. In human society, they represent an evolutionary step backward, a repulsive mix of two lines that should not cross. At best, most humans pity half-orcs as the unfortunate product of subhuman breeding, unwanted progeny born of violence or perversion. Orcs consider the half-breeds among them the thinking spoils of past victories, weaker cousins cursed with the softness of inferior stock. Either way, their inner conflicts often urge many half-orcs to seek genuine conflict as guards, goons, gladiators, or adventurers. For while both orcs and humans debate whether or not the half-breeds truly belong to their races, no one questions their inherent ferocity and value in a fight.

Half-orcs have existed in Golarion since the first battles between orcs and humans in the dying days of the Age of Darkness, when the Skyquest of the ancient dwarves pushed the brutal orcs from their subterranean homes to



## Garundi

An ancient race of dark-skinned humans with no known ties to the Azlanti culture dominates Garund, the massive continent south of the Inner Sea. They emerged from the southern extremes of the continent in distant antiquity, and the deep black Garundi complexion common in nations like Geb is thought to represent the purest strain of this great and noble race. In northern nations like Thuvia, where Avistani and Keleshite blood flows more strongly, a Garundi's tone ranges from light brown to the deep red of Osirion's ruling caste. Garundi often bear high cheekbones and prematurely white hair. They commonly speak Osiriani, although countless dialects abound.

The Garundi are most commonly found on the east side of Garund, and spread from its northern reaches, at Osirion, south through Geb and beyond. Some Garundi migrated across the continent to settle the western coast as well, but they are vastly outnumbered there by the Mwangi, with whom they infrequently interbreed.



the surface world. Aided by the cloak of night cast upon the world by the *Starstone* strike, the orcs subjugated the fearful, sickly humans with ease, terrorizing central and northern Avistan for centuries before the darkness lifted and rebellious humans cast their new masters from their gruesome thrones. With the aid of the dwarves and halflings, the humans made waste of the young orcish kingdoms and pushed their enemies to the desolate mountains and darkened forests of the world. The orcs have never ceded their claim upon their “ancestral” lands, and the raids have continued throughout history.

Half-orcs are most common along the borderlands of the hostile wilds, where orcs launch raids against their civilized cousins. The deep interior of the Kodar Mountains hides many crumbling orc cities still teeming with the vicious creatures, while the Menador range—cleared of orcs in the early days of the Age of Enthronement—once more echoes with savage war drums. The Hold of Belkzen takes its name from an orc, and its tribal armies represent the largest open gathering of orcs in Avistan. Wherever orcs march hand-in-hand with conflict, half-orcs thrive. Further from these strongholds, in the cosmopolitan cities of the Inner Sea and Garund, the folk of the civilized world live free from the reality of orcish terror, so half-orcs enjoy lives relatively free from bigotry and suspicion.

Often despite their best efforts, half-orcs have great difficulty shedding their savage natures and adapting to the world of humans. Impatient, impulsive, greedy, prone to violence when frustrated, and perhaps a bit stupid, half-orcs display many disagreeable orc traits, and yet they are also indelibly human. Capable of delicate craftwork and beautiful art, most half-orcs have a deeply hidden compassion and empathy. They are capable of the full spectrum of human emotions, including some completely alien to their more savage side. These emotions gain half-orcs intense ridicule in orc society, but the perceived weakness is actually the half-orc’s greatest strength. While half-orcs commonly serve at the very bottom of orc raiding parties and in the dregs of orc

society, their natural cunning and ingenuity affords them opportunities to lead by example and take charge of the very orcs who had brutalized them in youth. For all the mockery and derision full-blooded orcs heap upon their half-breed cousins, they’re certainly willing to follow them if the half-orc consistently provides victorious plans and lucrative spoils—provided, of course, that the half-orc is capable of defending his rule in combat. Some orc warlords breed them as tacticians and spies.

Adventuring half-orcs often relish the chance to move from place to place, especially to lands far-removed from the depredations of the orcs. A soldier in an orc or human army subsists on meager pay until he dies in battle. The adventuring life often has the same end, but with the promise of a far greater reward. Such half-orcs often serve adventuring parties as “dumb muscle,” but ironically, those half-orcs who survive a lifetime of bigotry to become adventurers have done so almost exclusively thanks to their wits.

## CLASSES

While the majority of characters struggling to survive across the face of Golarion are commoners, experts, or warriors, truly exceptional heroes are made of sterner stuff. The following section explores each standard class in detail, giving it a place in the world. These descriptions also include alternative rules for these classes designed to match their abilities to the flavor of the *Pathfinder Chronicles* campaign setting.

### Barbarian

Barbarians are a misunderstood lot. Much of this confusion comes from the wide variety of barbarian lifestyles. While the tribes who rule the Lands of the Linnorm Kings follow the ancient traditions and rites of their ancestors, making them among the most “civilized” barbarians, their brethren who wander the wastes of Sarkoris are little more than monsters, attacking and devouring anything that crosses their path, be it man or beast.

### Kellid

The curious and violent nature of the Kellid tribesmen of Avistan’s northern plains lead many to lives of exploration and adventure in the temperate southlands of the Inner Sea. Brawny, dark-haired, and tempered by the harsh conditions common to the flatlands of the Mammoth Lords or Numeria, Kellids are considered primitive by much of the civilized world. Some Kellids practice an ancient animistic religion, but most bow these days to Gorum.

Trapped between the treacherous Witch Queen of Irrisen to the west and the disastrous Worldwound to the east, Kellids tend to distrust magic, and even those who have abandoned their superstitious homelands for the civilized south tend to hold arcane matters in low regard. Kellids are common throughout Avistan (especially on the fringes of Old Cheliax). Most speak Hallit and have little time for the fancy written languages of weaker peoples.





**Appearance:** Most barbarians dress plainly, using materials harvested from hunts, be it fur, scales, or leather. Barbarians who hail from a tribe often carry some sort of token or talisman to mark their allegiance. While many tribes also use war paint before going into battle, those from less civilized groups wear it almost constantly. Barbarians from the jungles of Garund dress similarly to their northern counterparts but tend to practice tattoo arts far more frequently.

**Nations:** In Avistan, barbarians most typically hail from the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, the Realm of the Mammoth Lords, the Worldwound, Numeria, and the Storval Plateau of Varisia. In Garund, barbarians are most commonly found in the Sodden Lands and the Mwangi Expanse.

**Class Abilities:** Barbarians trained in the cold climates of the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, the Realm of the Mammoth Lords, and Sarkoris sometimes have the cold resistance ability, which replaces the trap sense ability.

*Cold Resistance (Ex):* At 3rd level, a barbarian gains cold resistance 2. This resistance increases by 2 for every 3 additional levels the barbarian attains, for a total of cold resistance 12 at 18th level.

## Bard

From the royal dancers of Osirion to the savage skalds of Numeria, bards perform across the face of Golarion. While the common folk welcome them in almost any taproom, others view them as vagabonds and thieves (a reputation that some have no doubt earned). Able to ply their trade anywhere, these skilled performers have more freedom than most, but their lives are not without restrictions. The city of Absalom, for example, requires that any performer wishing to earn coin on a stage must be a part of the performer's guild, leaving only the streets to those without such membership.

**Appearance:** In the major cities of the Inner Sea, bards tend to wear colorful clothing so as to attract attention to their shows. In the world's wilder regions, performers tend to dress as the common folk do, so as to better blend in if things go sour. Trained performers often wear badges or other signets to mark their tutelage, assuming their schools bear some renown. Some place this mark on their instruments instead.

**Nations:** Nearly every nation across Golarion has bards of one sort or another. In the north, these tend to be warrior skalds, who sing the praise of their fellows before riding into battle. Along the Inner Sea, these performers tend to be trained in one of the great schools in Absalom, Oppara, or Westcrown. Many bards of the distant south take on the role of lore keeper, using song and dance to track the history of their people. Only the nation of Razmiran outlaws performers, preferring instead to preach the litany of its all-consuming faith.

**Class Abilities:** Bards trained at one of the great schools of the Inner Sea tend to favor one instrument above all others, focusing their training. Such bards have the specialized training ability, which replaces bardic knowledge.

*Specialized Training (Ex):* At 1st level, a bard must choose a single category of the Perform skill. Whenever the bard performs bardic music using the chosen category of the Perform skill, he is treated as being 2 levels higher when determining the effect and save DC. In addition, a bard with specialized training can make use of his bardic music one additional time per day, assuming that the additional usage uses his chosen category of the Perform skill.

## Cleric

With the exception of the godless folk of Rahadoum, religion plays an important role in the lives of most of Golarion's people. As a result, clerics devoted to good and neutral gods are held in high regard in most communities.



### Keleshite

Casmaron's interior east of Taldor is a place of sprawling deserts and fantastic climes, a bewildering world of eroded civilizations inhabiting even more eroded cities of broken monuments and toppled stone. Just as Taldor and later Chelixa were great in the West, so was the Padishah Empire of Kelesh great in the East—and remains so today. The westernmost Keleshite outpost is Qadira on the Inner Sea, and from this post the entire civilization launched aggressive designs upon both Avistan and Garund. These treacheries caused great wars and upheavals in the past, but the region is currently in the thrall of a century-long period of grudging trade and cooperation.

Beyond Qadira, Keleshites are common in Absalom, Katapesh, Osirion, and Nex. They pride themselves on horsemanship, hospitality, and music. Both women and men wear their uniformly black hair long, with lengthy beards common in adult males. Most Keleshites encountered in the Inner Sea region speak Kelish.





Those who venerate darker powers face almost universal scorn and are outlawed in many places. Most clerics find themselves constantly needed for their healing skills, divination abilities, and divine counsel. Local clerics usually administer these services, with adventurers often excused from such duty to attend to other matters of interest to the faith. Wandering clerics spread the word of their faith through deeds and public sermons across Golarion. While considered a mild nuisance by some, they are generally tolerated. For more information on the gods of Golarion, see Chapter 4.

**Appearance:** Most clerics keep two sets of clothing: vestments for use on holy days and during sermons, and common wear with the emblems of their faith woven into their clothing. Adventuring clerics tend to favor functionality over religious iconography, but those with the coin often emblazon their symbol on armor, shields, and cloaks, or incorporate it into fanciful ornamentation on weapons and jewelry.

**Nations:** Clerics can be found in nearly every nation on Golarion, with two exceptions. Religion is entirely banned in the country of Rahadoum, so few clerics are said to come from that place. In the nation of Razmiran, religion is practically forbidden, with the only sanctioned “faith” being that of Razmir himself. Clerics of the Ascended—the living gods Iomedae, Norgorber, and Cayden Cailean—most frequently hail from Absalom, but those who were trained elsewhere usually make it a point to pilgrimage to that holy site.

**Class Abilities:** Clerics who follow one of the Ascended gods have a closer tie to their faith than other clergy. As such, these clerics can call upon the powers of their faith more easily, gaining the spontaneous domain casting ability. Taking this ability requires the cleric to choose only a single domain, instead of the normal two.

*Spontaneous Domain Casting (Su):* A cleric who takes this ability only chooses one domain when selecting his

first level of cleric. The cleric can swap prepared spells into domain spells from his chosen domain in addition to the normal spontaneous casting. The cleric can lose any spell that is not a prepared domain spell to cast any spell on his domain list of an equal or lower level.

## Druid

While the number of druids in Golarion is low, their scarcity is magnified by the propensity to keep to their own affairs. Most druids are loners, preferring the company of nature to that of their fellow man—even those of their order. One of the few exceptions to this are the druids of the Wildwood Lodge, who hold court on the Isle of Arenway in the center of the Verduran Wood. Those traveling by water up the Sellen River often treat with the druids, promising not to harm the wood in exchange for protection and passage. The mysterious druids of Arenway also host the Moot of Ages, held every summer solstice. During this time, druids from across Avistan and Garund swarm the island in an esoteric collegium.

**Appearance:** Druids generally prefer clothing and weapons made by their own hands to those crafted by others. For most, this means rough-spun tunics of wool and plant fibers, leather pants and boots, and wooden weapons. Adventuring druids often carry some metal weapons and gear as needed, but keep to the natural ways whenever possible.

**Nations:** Wherever there is nature, a druid might call the place home, from the deserts of Thuvia to the brutally cold wastes of the Crown of the World. The only places almost totally devoid of druids are those that have been warped or twisted from the natural path, such as the Worldwound, Geb, Nex, Tanglebriar, and the Sodden Lands, although even in these unnatural climes a druid might be found trying to set matters aright.

## Mwangi

The deep brown, relatively short and wiry inhabitants of central Garund appear primitive in the eyes of many along the Inner Sea coast, where they have a reputation of savagery and tribalism. The so-called Mwangi Expanse that dominates maps of the southern continent thus paints with a single brush a hugely diverse people, leaving the Mwangi one of the most mysterious and little-understood folk of Golarion.

Cultural development within the expanse varies widely, from the simple canoe-traveling jungle swamp dwellers of the interior to the all-too-civilized flesh merchants and butchers of Desolation Cape at Garund’s southern tip. Along Garund’s western coast, Mwangi are known as excellent boatmen and guides, and in Thuvia some few have adapted to the decadent civilization of the north to become members of the controlling caste. The Mwangi sometimes fiercely resist Garundi immigrants, but just as often they adopt the Garundi ways. Most Mwangi speak Polyglot.





**Class Abilities:** Due to the constant spread of civilization during the Age of Enthronement, many druids took to the mountains for solace. These druids adapted to the rocky terrain and have gained the mountain stride ability. This ability replaces woodland stride.

*Mountain Stride(Ex):* A druid with this ability can move through rocky terrain at her normal speed and without taking damage or suffering any other impairment. Magically manipulated terrain, such as *spike stones*, affects her normally.

## Fighter

Fighters make up the backbone of most military forces and militias and account for most mercenaries as well. Training in the martial arts is common throughout Golarion, especially considering the recent and current conflicts. While those of the warrior class are more common, fighters are in much higher demand, often chosen to lead or to tackle particularly dangerous foes. Mercenary companies across Golarion comprised almost entirely of fighters sell their swords to the highest bidder, engaging in the deadliest of tasks. In a profession where scars are a badge of honor, fighters often find their share of honor and then some.

**Appearance:** Few other classes vary more in appearance than fighters. Most wear armor and carry a variety of weapons, but from there differences abound. Some wear numerous medals, showing off their conquests or achievements, while others scorn such adornment in favor of more intimidating garb, such as draconic helms and demonic arms. Still others prefer to blend in, wearing well-worn armor with little decoration. Those of noble lines or part of an organized force often display some sort of heraldry on their shield or cloak. Some go so far as to carry a banner or pennant, to impress those they meet or otherwise announce their identity.

**Nations:** Fighters can hail from any part of Golarion. While barbarians are a bit more common in the north of Avistan and the heart of Garund, fighters can still be found there, practicing with local weapons and armor, honing their martial skill.

**Class Abilities:** Numerous martial academies around the Inner Sea region teach weapon skill, tactics, diplomacy, and other tools useful for war. Fighters who attend these schools may choose to take additional class skills. Taking this option replaces the bonus feat gained upon taking the first level of fighter.

*Class Skills:* A fighter trained at a famous war college or fighting school gains the following class skills (in addition to the normal fighter class skills): Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Knowledge (architecture and engineering)(Int), Knowledge(geography)(Int), Knowledge (nobility and royalty) (Int), Sense Motive (Wis).

*Skill Points at 1st Level:* (4 + Int modifier) x 4.

*Skill Points at Each Additional Level:* 4 + Int modifier.

## Monk

While many seek purity of mind or body, few have the devotion to walk the path of a monk, making them a rarity in Golarion. There are relatively few monastic orders in Avistan and Garund, and even they are small. While some set out upon the monastic path through independent study, most monks who learn outside an institution do so under the tutelage of a lone master. These apprentices can be found nearly anywhere, performing a host of chores designed to strengthen their bodies while learning all the master has to teach to enrich their minds. Most monks pay homage to Irori, who promises to show them the path to self-perfection.

**Appearance:** Monks prefer to dress simply, in loose-fitting robes or other garments that allow for a maximum range of movement. Such clothing is usually

## Taldan

In the East, Azlanti fleeing the devastation of their homeland mixed with Keleshite frontiersmen of ancient desert empires. In time, the progeny of these unions formed the kingdom of Taldor, the oldest surviving Avistani nation bordering the Inner Sea. Taldor remains but a sliver of its original self, having once spanned much of southern Avistan by conquering and nearly absorbing the native Chelaxians. Even in remote locales like the River Kingdoms and Ustalav one can still find families of Taldans remaining from the days of the ancient empire.

Taldans generally display light brown hair and a bronzed complexion betraying clear Keleshite influence. Men favor short beards with women commonly donning elaborate wigs festooned with fancy curls and delicate bows. Typical of the decadence that has eroded Taldor for centuries, a more elaborate wig is a sign of social status, resulting in fierce competition between rivals. Most Taldans speak Taldane, the tongue of ancient Taldor.





plainly adorned, although some orders demand its members wear more extravagant uniforms. In either case, cleanliness and order play a strong role in the garb of every monk.

**Nations:** Monk orders are uncommon in Avistan and Garund, with the notable exceptions of Hermea and the Isle of Jalmeray. Both these societies place a high value on the purity of the self and have a high number of monks in their ranks. With the spread of Irori's faith, some temples have begun to train monks as part of their devotion.

**Class Abilities:** The monks on the Isle of Jalmeray are of mostly Vudrani descent and hold to different traditions than the monks of the west. These monks choose from an alternative selection when selecting bonus feats.

*Bonus Feat:* At 1st level, a monk may select either Improved Grapple or Point Blank Shot as a bonus feat. At 2nd level, she may select either Stunning Fist or Deflect Arrows as a bonus feat. At 6th level, she may select either Improved Trip or Rapid Fire as a bonus feat. A monk need not have any of the prerequisites normally required for these feats to select them.

## Paladin

Few adventuring classes demand the respect and high regard afforded to paladins. The common folk of Golarion treat paladins with honor and look up to them as shining examples of good and decency. Although darker lands shun and even hunt these righteous warriors, most paladins seek out darkness in hopes of spreading the light of justice. Many paladins serve Iomedae, ascended goddess of valor and justice. A good number, however, bend a knee to Erastil, watching over the common folk; Torag, finding service as a general or commander of men; or Sarenrae, wandering the land and spreading the word of light. Occasionally, a paladin might worship Abadar,

Irori, or Shelyn, but these are far less common than the others, rarer even than those who hold no single deity above others along the path of the righteous.

**Appearance:** Unless circumstances call for subtlety, paladins prefer to keep their appearances clean and orderly, as signs of their devotion. Slovenly behavior is a sign of weak conviction and will, and as such is greatly discouraged. Paladins in Golarion show the sign of their faith proudly upon their gear, although not to a point of vanity. Paladins also tend to carry some sort of token or badge as a sign of their fealty to whatever mortal power they serve, be it king, general, or lady.

**Nations:** Not surprisingly, paladins abound in Mendev, holding back the hordes of demons that infest the Worldwound. Lastwall is another beacon, with the Holy Citadel of Light in Vigil training more and more paladins every year. Andoran has a young corps of holy warriors, many using their faith to underscore political ideology as members of that nation's insidious Eagle Knights. Paladins also frequently hail from Absalom, Brevoy, Osirion, and Taldor, although unconventionally trained holy warriors can come from nearly anywhere.

**Class Abilities:** Paladins trained in the Holy Citadel of Light focus specially on the destruction of undead and are often charged with cleansing the land around Gallowspire of its necrotic taint. These paladins gain the light of purity special ability, which replaces the remove disease ability gained at 6th level and all increases in that ability.

*Light of Purity (Su):* Starting at 6th level, a paladin with this ability can emit a burst of blinding light once per week. This light acts like a *daylight* spell, save that it only lasts for 1 round per level of the paladin. In addition, any undead within 30 feet of the paladin emitting this light takes 1d6 points of damage per round for every

## Tian

The reclusive folk of Tian Xia inhabit a vast continent on the opposite side of the planet. Because these lands are a great distance from Avistan and Garund, Tians are seldom seen in the Inner Sea region, although the markets of Katapesh and Absalom ensure that they are not completely unknown. A very small number of Tian explorers and refugees cross the treacherous arctic Crown of the World each year, making them somewhat more common in northlands such as Varisia and the Lands of the Linnorm Kings.

Tians are not drawn from a single race or culture, but this distinction is lost on the common folk of Avistan and Garund, who consider them a monolithic people. Despite their differences, all Tians have straight black hair and dusky skin. Most have brown eyes, but blue and green are both common. Tians encountered in the Inner Sea region generally speak Tien.





two levels the paladin has attained. A Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 the paladin's level + the paladin's Cha modifier) halves this damage. A paladin may use the light of purity one additional time per week for every three additional levels he has attained, to a maximum of five times at 18th level.

## Ranger

Rangers are a common sight in many rural communities, from the town trapper to the scout for the local militia. These woodsmen are especially prevalent in the heart of Avistan, where their blend of tracking and woodland survival skills is in high demand. Much has fallen to the wild in the years since the collapse of Cheliox, and rangers are often needed to scout out areas that once were tame. While many rangers work alone or in small independent groups, it is becoming more and more common for rangers to join up with various military orders as professional scouts and forward observers.

**Appearance:** Rangers tend to dress in a manner functional to their current environment: furs and heavy coats for colder climates to light leathers and airy cloaks for warm areas. These outfits are often colored so as to blend in with the local flora. Some rangers even go so far as to work plants into their outfits. The often ragged and unkempt appearance of rangers leads many to believe that they are wild folk who are not to be trusted. Rangers who belong to organized scout units tend to carry documentation to prove their affiliation.

**Nations:** Although Molthune, Kyonin, Andoran, and many of the River Kingdoms feature rangers heavily in their armies, none are so elite as those from the Fangwood of Nirmathas. These vigilant woodfolk often oppose the machinations of the druidic Wildwood Lodge, who sponsor rangers of their own. Most rangers prefer solitude to fraternity, living secluded lives as trappers, mountain hermits, and wild men.

**Class Abilities:** Rangers who join a military unit sometimes find it difficult to keep a more exotic animal companion and instead choose a different path. These rangers focus their training on a single animal, to the exclusion of all others, forming a tight bond. This ability replaces the wild empathy ability.

*Enhanced Companion (Ex):* Upon gaining an animal companion at 4th level, the ranger must choose a single type of animal. The ranger cannot call a different animal companion. The ranger's effective druid level is equal to the ranger's level -2 (instead of the normal 1/2) for that type of animal. This animal must be on the basic list of companions that can be chosen at 4th level and cannot be changed.

## Rogue

Wherever there are traps to be disarmed, guards to sneak past, and treasure to be looted, a rogue most likely lurks nearby. Rogues thrive in every city and most towns, operating freely or as part of a larger guild or organization. While most common folk would rather the local thief swing from a gibbet, such scoundrels represent only a fraction of those belonging to the rogue class. Many find honest work as part of the local militia, as covert spies, or even as guards. Others prefer to work freelance, taking on the role of adventurer to recover stolen property, explore dangerous dungeons, or capture fugitives. A good number of rogues indeed turn to a life of crime, stealing from the rich and poor alike, either alone or as part of a dangerous thieves' guild.

**Appearance:** Rogues with a job tend to dress in the garb of their profession. Those who work freelance dress like everyone else to blend in. Sometimes this might require the finest silks, while other occasions call for muddy wool—it all depends on the job.



## Ulfen

Millennia of trading and ocean raiding brought the seed of the ruddy, pale-skinned inhabitants of the Lands of the Linnorm Kings to all corners of Avistan. About 2,000 years ago, armadas of dragon-headed longships emerged from the Steaming Sea to make war and to pillage eastern Avistan's coastline, forever changing the course of history and the bloodlines of countless nations. These raids have decreased significantly in the last several centuries, especially since Cheliox's domination of the Arch of Aroden, gateway to the lucrative Inner Sea. Still, the Ulfen retain a reputation for seamanship and ruthlessness in battle that predates the recorded history of most Avistani nations.

Ulfen men wear their blond, light brown, or red hair long, sometimes in simple braids. Men commonly wear beards. Women take braidwork much more seriously, weaving their hair into symbolic designs of artistic, representational, and sentimental value. Most pureblood Ulfen speak Skald, the tongue of their homeland.





**Nations:** Rogues hail from every nation in Golarion. Most learn their trade on their own, but others are taught by a guild in one of the major cities. Absalom, Manaket, Oppara, Sedeq, and Westcrown all host large and influential guilds, some of which operate more openly than others.

**Class Abilities:** Rogues trained in shadow-shrouded Nidal are renowned for their use of poison and other vile toxins to weaken and kill their foes. This ability replaces the trap sense ability.

*Poison Master (Ex):* At 3rd level, the rogue can use poison without any chance of poisoning himself. For every three levels of rogue beyond 3rd, the DC for any poison coated on the rogue's weapons increases by +1 if the target is poisoned as part of a sneak attack.

### Sorcerer

While most common folk cannot tell the difference between a sorcerer and a wizard, those who can know to respect and even fear those born with a natural arcane talent. Sorcerers in Golarion often trace their heritage to some powerful magical creature, be it a dragon, demon, or even an angel. Other sorcerers develop their gifts absent a special heritage. Whether this is a natural phenomenon or the result of the environment is a matter subject to great debate in the arcane world. Some scholars suggest that such arcane manifestations are growing more and more common, while others vigorously deny the hypothesis.

**Appearance:** While the personal look of sorcerers varies wildly, they tend to follow one of two general paths. Those who flaunt their gifts dress in colorful, elaborate guises, hoping to attract attention through more than just their abilities. Others seek to keep their power a secret and dress to blend in with the locals, or at the very least to avoid suspicion.

### Varisian

The nomadic folk of Varisia have spread to all corners of Avistan and beyond. Traveling in great extended families, they form wandering communities and roam the continent as fate and whim dictate. They don't believe in claiming land and consider themselves welcome anywhere in the world (regardless of how others might feel about them). Although their travels keep them mostly in the country, they occasionally venture into cities to trade and raise coin through entertainment or exploitation. They are a people enthralled with superstition and mysticism.

Varisians have deep olive skin and hair that ranges from black to auburn (and very rarely shock white), often worn long by men and women. Elaborate tattoos on the arms, chest, legs, and even the face serve decorative and descriptive purposes. Although found everywhere, they are most common in Varisia, Ustalav, and the areas surrounding Lake Encarthan and its numerous river systems. They speak Varisian, but as a traveling people they often learn as many other languages as possible.

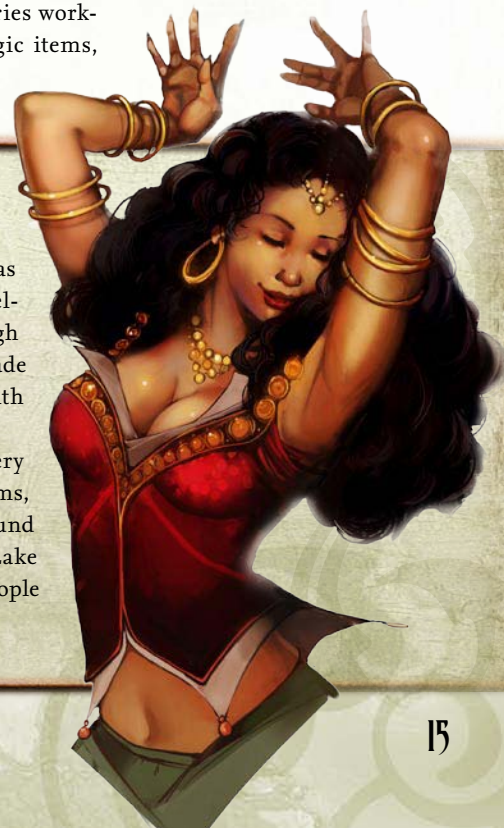
**Nations:** Sorcerers can be found in nearly every nation on Golarion, although they are most common on the Isle of Hermea, whose draconic lord is said to nurture and foster such abilities. Other areas that have seen a great deal of magic over the years, such as Geb, Nex, Sarkoris, and Varisia, tend to produce more sorcerers than their neighbors.

**Class Abilities:** Sorcerers raised on the Isle of Hermea do not call familiars like others from the mainland. They instead focus their development on harnessing their inner reserve of magic, for use in times of need. This ability replaces the summon familiar ability.

*Hidden Reserve (Su):* Starting at 1st level, a sorcerer with this ability can call upon a hidden reserve of magical energy to cast additional spells. This reserve can be used to cast any spell the sorcerer could normally cast, but the sorcerer is fatigued after the spell is completed. If this spell is of the highest level that the sorcerer could normally cast, the sorcerer is exhausted instead. This ability cannot be used while fatigued or exhausted. It can be used a number of times per day equal to the sorcerer's Charisma bonus.

### Wizard

Cloistered away in ancient libraries, poring through tomes of forgotten lore, wizards are an enigmatic lot. Most folk fear their power but respect them for their knowledge. Wizards on Golarion tend to focus on their studies, traveling from place to place, ever in search of new spells and knowledge to add to their repertoire. Others eschew this route and instead expand their knowledge through research and experimentation, spending countless hours in their laboratories working on new spells, magic items, or theorems. In either case, the pursuit of a





goal, be it knowledge, power, or fame, is never far from a wizard's thoughts.

**Appearance:** Many wizards are so driven by their goals that personal appearance is of little concern. After all, when plumbing the depths of the universe, what difference does the cleanliness of your robe make? Others care deeply about their raiment, preferring to dress in a manner befitting their power and prestige, wearing colorful robes decked with gems, precious metals, and magical trinkets.

**Nations:** Wizards are a varied lot and can be found in nearly any community. There are great wizard colleges in Absalom, Cheliox, Geb, Kyonin, Nex, Nidal, Rahadoum, and Varisia, all of which focus on their own individual philosophies.

**Class Abilities:** Wizards who train at the Arcanamirum, a famous college of the magical arts located in Absalom, spend much of their time studying the practical applications of their spells, often in the school's dueling fields. As such, some of them have learned the arcane duelist special ability, which replaces the Scribe Scroll feat gained at 1st level.

*Arcane Duelist (Su):* Wizards with this ability are specially trained to push their spells when needed to gain the upper hand. When pushing a spell, the wizard can choose one of the three following effects: increase a spell's DC by +1, add +2 to the level check to overcome spell resistance, or add a +2 morale bonus on attack rolls made with the spell. A wizard can use this ability a number of times per day equal to his Intelligence bonus. Using this ability is a swift action.

## LANGUAGES

Hundreds of languages and dialects are spoken in the Inner Sea region. The following list presents a broad overview of some of the most prominent human languages.

**Azlanti:** The living language of Old Azlant died with the destruction of its home continent eons ago. Survivors fleeing the devastation of their homeland mixed with local populations in Avistan and elsewhere, and the human cultures that flowered during the Age of Destiny often rightfully claim lineage dating back to the earliest known advanced human society on the planet. Thus, Azlanti words and grammatical structure serve as the foundation of Taldane, the most commonly spoken language in the region. Certain Azlanti words survive to the present day, but it generally takes a scholar or the employment of magic to decipher the time-faded glyphs of secluded (or submerged) ancient ruins on what remains of the devastated, largely sunken continent of Azlant. Only the mysterious sea elves of the Mordant Spire speak the language fluently, barking

aristocratic orders to explorers they discover investigating the Azlanti ruins they claim as their own.

**Common (Taldane):** Taldane is the ancient tongue of the kingdom of Taldor, whose borders have encompassed much of Avistan in the five millennia since its founding on the eastern shores of the Inner Sea. Because the language's influence expands as far north as Varisia and even into Garund in the south, Taldane is sometimes called Common or the Common Tongue. When Cheliox split from Taldor, the language remained the official tongue of the new empire, whose residents often call it Chelaxian. No matter what it is called, however, Taldane is the language most likely to be understood throughout the Inner Sea region. Taldane's root language is Azlanti, but certain Kelish, Skald, and even Hallit terms and concepts have worked their way into common usage in the thousands of years since the language first took form.

**Hallit:** The harsh Kellid tongue of Hallit is considered by most cultured folk a crude language of illiterate barbarians. Modulations of tone and volume play a much stronger role in its construction than in other languages, often resulting in speech that sounds like a heated argument. The tongue has no formal written form (as most of its speakers do not read or write). Frontier scholars of the River Kingdoms have, throughout the centuries, pieced together several competing systems of phonetic transcriptions that often do more to confuse the issue than to help it. Because many menials in Absalom and the borders of the old Chelish empire speak Hallit, the tongue is often used by servants wishing to speak freely under the noses of their unwitting masters.

**Kelish:** The domain of the Padishah Emperor of Kelesh, greatest of the Diamond Sultanates, sprawls across much of central Casmaron. From the shining sands of Qadira on the Inner Sea to the edge of distant Vudra, the Kelish tongue—throaty, phlegmatic, passionate—holds sway. Its florid script recalls banners in flight, twisting and turning on the desert winds.

**Osiriani:** The national language of Ancient Osirion is the oldest known living human language spoken in the Inner Sea region (save perhaps Vudrani, if that culture's improbable mythology is to be believed). The language contains predominantly short-syllable words combined in bewilderingly complex patterns and arcane hierarchies of syntax. Its written form is hieroglyphic in nature and highly symbolic.

**Polyglot:** The countless tongues of Garund's Mwangi tribesfolk share enough remnants of a mysterious root language that members of different tribes from vastly divergent regions of the Expanse can generally understand one another even though they appear to be speaking completely different languages. No written form of modern Polyglot exists, but ruined cities and vast monuments half-



swallowed by jungle still depict script from ancient times thought to be related to the lost ancestor language.

**Shadowtongue:** As a willing vassal of diabolical Cheliox, secluded, shade-haunted Nidal enjoys all the benefits of cooperation with the most powerful human kingdom of western Avistan without the usual oppression and exploitation common in the empire's other holdings. The nation's unusual cultural and religious traditions mesh well with the ascendant wickedness of Cheliox and remain protected from outside influence. Foremost among these traditions is the secret language known as the Shadowtongue.

Thought to have been handed down from the Midnight Lord Zon-Kuthon to the people of Nidal during the lightless terror of the Age of Darkness, Shadowtongue is a soft, sibilant language in which many syllables are pronounced with a delicate intake of breath. The overall impression is of a whispered tongue that sounds to most ears as if it is being spoken backwards. The reclusive winged folk of the Devil's Perch call the Shadowtongue Whisprin, and claim that the language itself stands at the root of Nidal's legendary cultural malignance.

**Skald:** The lore of the Linnorm Kingdoms suggests that Skald came to the people of the northland by way of dwarves in the Age of Destiny. The lyrical, somber language shares several characteristics with Dwarven, including a complete runic alphabet. The language is not Dwarven (thanks to thousands of years of subsequent development), but a Skald speaker can communicate with a Dwarven speaker with some difficulty.

**Thassilonian:** The ancient human Empire of Thassilon flourished in the era of Old Azlant and perished in the same great catastrophe. The monolithic stonework of the dead empire lingers still in northwest

Avistan, from the massive Storval Plateau and the southern cities of Varisia to the treacherous mountains of Belkzen to the edge of the Lands of the Linnorm Kings. The enigmatic runelike script is based upon magical symbols important to the Runelord dictators of ancient Thassilon and is little understood by those outside academia. Still, Thassilon's grasp was extensive in ancient times, and its language survived long after the fall of its mighty runelords.

**Tien:** The "common" tongue of Tian Xia is an amalgamation of words from a dozen languages spoken in the ancient empires and border kingdoms of the other side of the world. Tonal differences play an important role in Tien, so that two words might sound the same to outsiders but have vastly different meanings depending upon pitch and tone. True to the rigid, complex societies of Tian Xia, Tien boasts a wide array of words connoting politeness and courtly procedure. Seldom heard in Avistan or Garund, Tien is spoken occasionally in Absalom, Katapesh, and the northern nations bordering the Crown of the World.

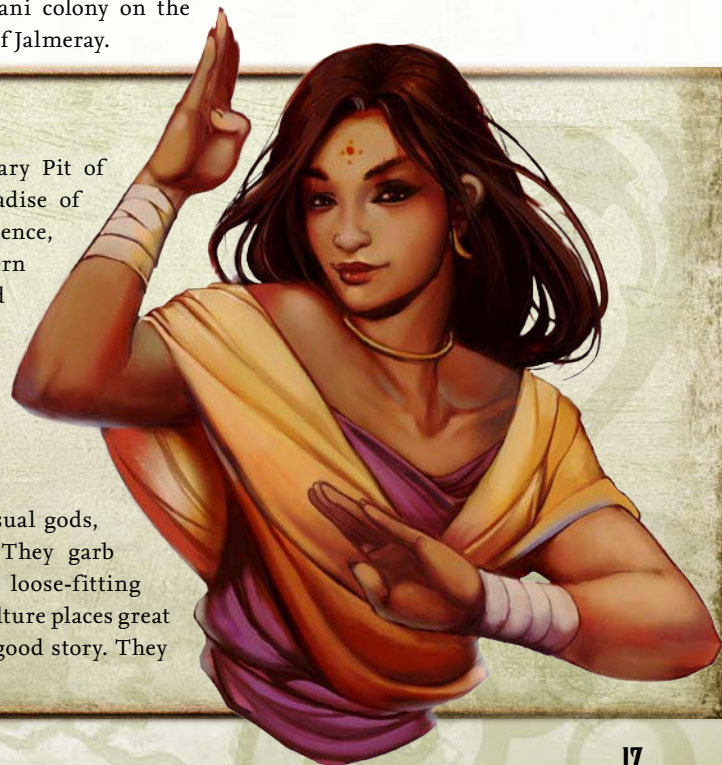
**Varisian:** The rolling, sultry tongue of Varisia's natives can be heard throughout Avistan, making it a common "middle ground" language between strangers in the River Kingdoms and barbarian lands of the north. Its written form shares the alphabet used by Taldane.

**Vudrani:** On the border of the Far East stands the great Kingdom of Vudra, a near mythical place of wonders and untold riches. Its lilting, birdlike language is common throughout interior Casmaron, but is quite rare in the Inner Sea region except perhaps in the markets of Absalom and Katapesh, and of course the Vudrani colony on the Isle of Jalmeray.

## Vudrani

East of Taldor, east even of the Kelesh deserts and the legendary Pit of Gormuz, lies the sprawling Kingdom of Vudra, an earthly paradise of immense temples and infinite wisdom. A power of undeniable influence, Vudra is nonetheless a great distance from the Inner Sea. In western Avistan, the dark-skinned, exotic Vudrani are oddities to be gawked and marveled at, legends to those not inured to the wonders of the worldly markets of Katapesh or Absalom. The Vudrani recognize the importance of both nations with territorial holdings on the Isle of Jalmeray. Agents of the island colony often go on diplomatic missions throughout the region, but they are trusted in few courts outside Absalom.

The Vudrani worship a bewildering array of thousands of unusual gods, a religious system little understood outside their homeland. They garb themselves in luxurious garments of the finest cloth, favoring loose-fitting clothing appropriate to the warm clime of their homeland. Their culture places great value on beautiful, deliberate movement and the ability to spin a good story. They speak Vudrani.







## Time, The Cosmos, and the Great Beyond

**T**he planet Golarion orbits a yellow star in a distant corner of the multiverse. A blue world of titanic oceans and massive continents, it spins through the cosmos as it has for tens of millions of years.

More than a dozen worlds neighbor Golarion. Nearest is Castrovell, the Green World, home to lush forests, weird swamps, and oceans of multi-hued gas. Fourth from the sun is Akiton, the Red Planet, a place of tyrannical empires, fabulous monsters, and deserts in the beds of ancient oceans. Along with the cratered moon, these worlds loom large on Golarion's night horizon, although the common man knows little of their origins or the fabulous cultures that thrive upon them. And there are worlds beyond the vision of Golarion's most skilled astrologers, spheres of malignant gas inhabited by inscrutable entities with designs of their own upon Golarion's fate.

The *Pathfinder Chronicles* speak of active gates in the ruins of Lost Azlant that lead directly to these unusual locales. The Abadari heretic Govan the Wanderer posited

a network of such gates linking all of the worlds to one another, but definite evidence of such a system has eluded discovery throughout history. Still, soothsayers and foolhardy adventurers alike often look to the stars and wonder at the possibilities that lie beyond the sky.

Past the sky, past the planets, past the universe itself dwells the infinity of the Great Beyond, a bewildering assortment of impossible dimensions and mythical domains commonly referred to as the planes. Here are the homes of the gods, and here also dwell the spirits of the dead and the great beasts and creatures of legend—demons, devils, angels, genies. Horrible or beautiful entities from beyond the planar gates might visit the world and make playthings of its people, but the common man of Golarion has no expectation to see these things in person, and a cynic might suggest that they do not exist at all.

Many residents of Golarion believe theirs to be a so-called “Second World,” with the First World existing as a rough draft of reality, a place where concepts take on life and form, and where the ghosts of possibilities that



## DAYS OF THE WEEK

Day	Task
Moonday	Work, religion (night)
Toilday	Work
Wealday	Work
Oathday	Work, pacts signed, oaths sworn
Fireday	Work, market day
Starday	Work
Sunday	Rest, religion

## MONTHS OF THE YEAR

Month	Season	Deity
Abadius	Winter	Abadar
Calistril	Winter	Calistria
Pharast	Spring	Pharasma
Gozran	Spring	Gozreh
Desnus	Spring	Desna
Sarenith	Summer	Sarenrae
Erastus	Summer	Erastil
Arodus	Summer	Aroden
Rova	Autumn	Rovagug
Lamashan	Autumn	Lamashtu
Neth	Autumn	Nethys
Kuthona	Winter	Zon-Kuthon

used to be or never were pose great danger to the world that is. The First World is a place of powerful spirits and ancient customs and politics. It is said that the fey have a window into the First World, that they might indeed be a part of it, but to the ordinary man and woman of Golarion it is legend, a place glimpsed only in fever dreams and youthful innocence. A place of peerless beauty and limitless danger.

Golarion has no shortage of dangers all its own, and the world is rife with opportunities for exploration and excitement. The old prophecies have failed and the future is uncertain. The heroes of the current age will be those who step forward to meet the challenges and dangers of Golarion and claim its treasures and glory for themselves. A world of adventure awaits!

## TIME

Golarion spins on its axis once every 24 hours. Weeks consist of seven days, with 52 weeks per year. Each year has 12 months, each of which corresponds to a popular deity. For ease of use, this book conforms to the dating conventions used by the city of Absalom, a massive independent city-state whose history spans dozens of human empires. Absalom's expansive influence ensures that the city's calendar has achieved great popularity throughout the world, though many independent nations maintain their own systems.

## THE ROLL OF YEARS

The current year is 4708 AR (Absalom Reckoning). As the calendar advances in the real world, time also marches forward in the world of Golarion. This book was published in 2008, with the corresponding year ending in the same digit. Next year will be 4709, and so on.

## AGE OF DARKNESS

- 5293 Earthfall. The *Starstone* tumbles to Golarion, creating the Inner Sea and kicking off a thousand years of darkness. Azlant and Thassilon destroyed. Elves depart Golarion.
- 5102 Orcs first emerge onto the surface world, fleeing vicious pogroms from righteous dwarves tunneling toward a prophesied land of the open sky.
- 4987 Dwarves fulfill the Quest for Sky, emerging for the first time upon the surface of Golarion.

## AGE OF ANGUISH

- 4294 The veil of dust and darkness lifts from Golarion. Primitive peoples grasp and claw for power in a broken world.
- 3923 The Pit of Gormuz opens in central Casmaron, disgorging the Spawn of Rovagug upon Golarion for the first time.
- 3708 Belkzen besieges Koldukar.

## AGE OF DESTINY

- c. –3472 Founding of Ancient Osirion.
- c. –3000 Osirion at its height under the reign of the God-Kings.
- 2323 Shory aeromancers establish Kho as the first of their legendary flying cities.
- 1498 The Four Pharaohs of Ascension join forces to rule Osirion, initiating that empire's Second Age.
- 1431 The power of the Four Pharaohs breaks and Osirion again slips into decline.
- 1281 Taldor founded by descendants of Lost Azlant and indigenous primitive humans.
- 892 Nex and Geb at war.
- 841 Osirion fails to replace the assassinated governor of Thuvia, effectively ceding the province to barbarism.
- 632 The Tarrasque, greatest of the Spawn of Rovagug, devastates Avistan. The gods themselves enter a pact with the arch-devil Asmodeus to lock away the Armageddon Engine forever.
- 473 The Linnorm King Ulvass discovers Arcadia, establishing the colony of Valenhall as an earthly paradise.



## AGE OF ENTHRONEMENT

1	Absalom founded. Aroden, the Last Azlanti, raises the <i>Starstone</i> from the depths of the Inner Sea and becomes a living god.	2632	Elves return en masse to Golarion via the Sovyrian Stone in Kyonin.
23	First Siege of Absalom—Warlord Voradni Voon's ill-planned siege fails catastrophically.	2742	The Choking Death spreads west from Iobaria, decimating human populations in northeast Avistan.
37	Taldor's First Army of Exploration destroys the Goroth Lodge in the Verduran Wood and charts the Sellen River as far north as Sevenarches.	2765	Cayden Cailean drunkenly survives the Test of the Starstone.
166	Nex unsuccessfully sieges Absalom.	2822	Vudrani rajahs wrest control of Jalmeray from the decadent Arclords of Nex.
253	Nex captures the Isle of Jalmeray.	2920	A violent earthquake rocks Qadira and Taldor, killing tens of thousands in both nations.
576	Nex vanishes from his capital in Quantum during a Gebbite attack that kills thousands.	3007	Cheliax founded as western frontier of Taldor.
632	Geb attempts to escape Golarion in an act of ritual suicide, but soon returns as a ghost.	3129	Assassins murder Grand Prince Jalrune of Taldor.
763	Khiben-Sald, the legendary Maharaja of Vudra, spends a decade on the Nexian Isle of Jalmeray, bringing eastern culture to the Inner Sea.	3203	Tar-Baphon returns to life as the Whispering Tyrant. The lich king unifies the orc hordes of Belkzen and terrorizes central Avistan.
896	Aroden mortally wounds the wizard king Tar-Baphon on the Isle of Terror at the center of Lake Encarthan.	3313	The nation of Irrisen is born when the Witch Queen Baba Yaga conquers the eastern reach of the Lands of the Linnorm Kings.
1140	Artokus Kirran formulates the <i>sun orchid elixir</i> .	3754	Taldor launches the Shining Crusade against the Whispering Tyrant.
1532	Qadiri operatives topple the decadent Pharaoh Menedes XXVI, establishing the first in a long line of foreign rulers over Osirion.	3801	The Shining Crusade secures a beachhead on the northern shore of Lake Encarthan, in Ustalav.
1707	Andoran founded as western border of Taldor.	3818	The Knights of Ozem summon Arazni, the warrior-goddess Herald of Aroden.
1893	Norgorber passes the Test of the <i>Starstone</i> , following Aroden's path to divinity.	3823	Tar-Baphon humiliates and kills Arazni.
1975	Ulfen longships raid heavily along the west coast of Avistan and in the region now known as Cheliax.	3827	The Whispering Tyrant imprisoned in Gallowspire.
2133	Taldor's Seventh Army of Exploration pacifies the Isgeri tribe of Kellids inhabiting the valleys between the Menador and Five King Mountains, forming the protectorate of Isger to capitalize on trade from Druma and inner Avistan.	3828	The Shining Crusade officially comes to an end with the founding of Lastwall, a holding of Taldor tasked with watching over the prison of the Whispering Tyrant.
2217	The cult of Sarenrae flourishes in Osirion, threatening the Qadiri Satrap, who banishes the zealots to the western deserts.	3832	Iomedae, heroine of the Shining Crusade, successfully attempts the Test of the <i>Starstone</i> and becomes Aroden's Herald.
2361	Varisian wanderers settle the Principality of Ustalav north of Lake Encarthan.	3890	Geb abducts Arazni's corpse from the Knights of Ozem, reanimates her as a lich, and takes her as his Harlot Queen.
2498	The Oath Wars begin in northwest Garund. Clergies of Nethys, Norgorber, and Sarenrae vie for dominance.	3923	Merivesta Olinchi of Nex, famed satiric playwright, assassinated during the premiere of her masterpiece, "The Conception Exception."
2253	The resurgent Cult of the Dawnflower vanquishes the Satrap of Osirion, establishing an independent dynasty of Keleshite sultans.	3980	The Rending. Droskar's Crag erupts, rocking much of southern Avistan and causing widespread destruction in Darkmoon Vale. Sections of Almas washed away in massive flooding.
2497	The demon Treerazer begins his perversion of the forests of Kyonin.	4043	Kazavon drives Belkzen orcs from western Ustalav.
2555	The city of Azir exiles all clerics, burns their temples, and enacts the Laws of Man.	4079	Qadiri army crosses Taldor's southern border.
2560	The bloody Oath Wars come to an end, as the Laws of Man spread throughout the region.	4081	Chelish King Aspex the Even-Tongued breaks from Taldor, claiming Andoran and the winged folk of the Devil's Perch by diplomacy and Galt and Isger by force. The decade-long power grab becomes known as the Even-Tongued Conquest, and greatly undermines Taldorian influence throughout western Avistan.



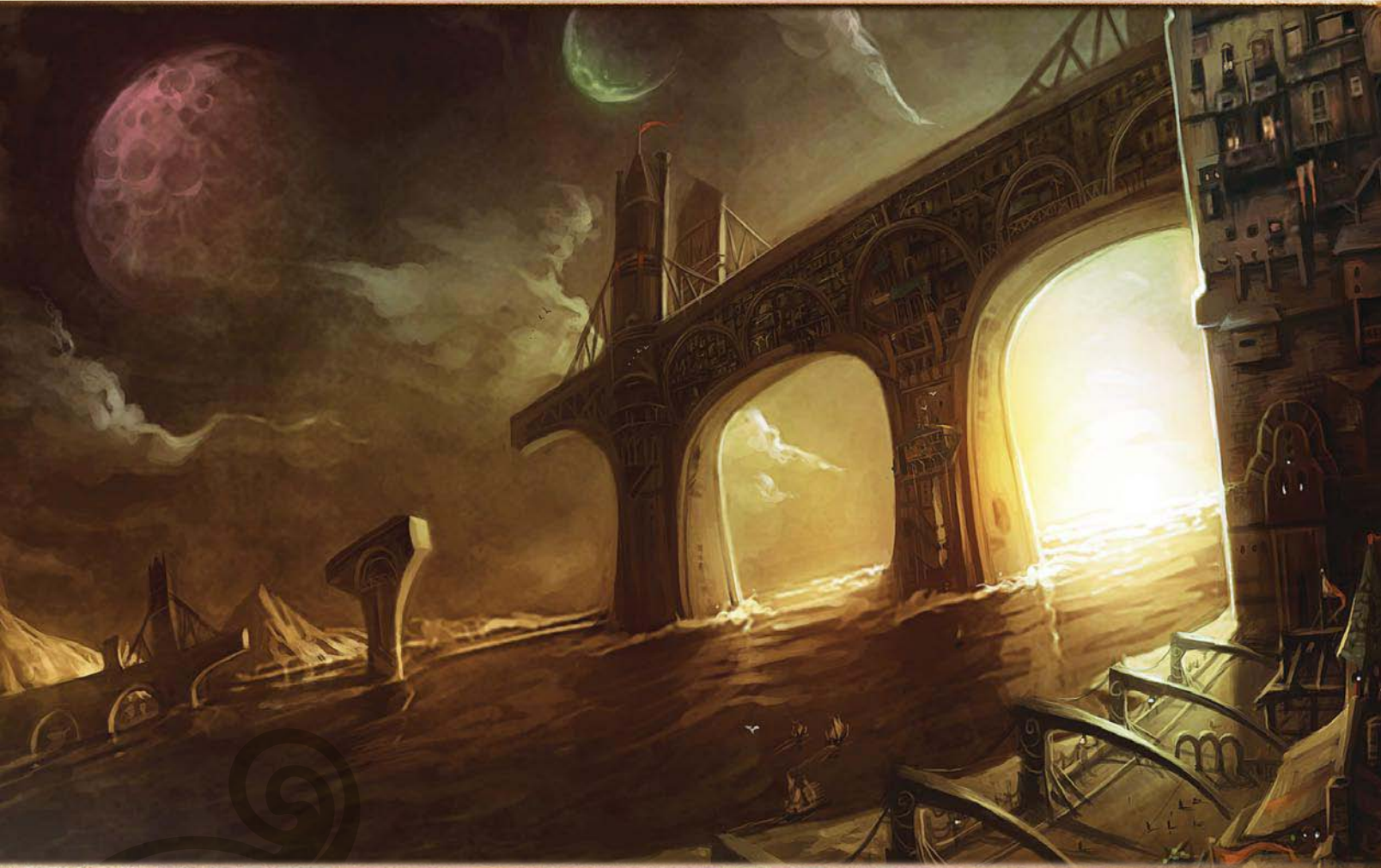


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| <p>4137 Under the banner of the mad prince Haliad I, Cheliox unsuccessfully sieges Absalom for the first time. Gains in Garund, however, grant Cheliox complete control of the Arch of Aroden, cementing a naval supremacy that remains to this day.</p> <p>4138 Cheliox establishes the colony of Sargava on Garund's western shore.</p> <p>4217 The Yellowtongue Sickness ravages Avistan.</p> <p>4305 King Haliad III of Cheliox launches the Wars of Expansion to broaden the empire's northern borders by claiming land in Molthune and Varisia. This struggle lasts more than a century and spans the reign of five Chelish monarchs, eventually becoming known as the Everwar.</p> <p>4307 Foundation of the Pathfinder Society in Absalom.</p> <p>4317 Pathfinder Durvin Gest explores the ruins of Lost Azlant.</p> <p>4329 Geb petrifies the invading army of the Pirate Queen Mastrien Slash, creating the Field of Maidens.</p> <p>4332 Durvin Gest casts the Lens of Galundari into the Nemesis Well near Osibu.</p> <p>4338 Nidal falls to Cheliox.</p> <p>4407 Cheliox founds Korvosa in the frontier region of Varisia.</p> <p>4410 Cheliox cedes territorial ambitions in Varisia and Belkzen, officially ending the Everwar.</p> <p>4499 Choral the Conqueror carves Brevoy from the corpses of Rostland and Issia.</p> <p>4507 Chelish army forces Shoanti barbarians to the Storval Plateau.</p> <p>4508 The Forest King Narven dies in the Arthfell Forest.</p> <p>4552 Mengkare, the great gold dragon, begins his grand experiment on the Isle of Hermea.</p> <p>4576 First Hellknight order, the Order of the Rack, founded in Westcrown.</p> <p>4584 Chelish explorers from Korvosa settle Magnimar.</p> <p>4603 Taldor and Qadira reach an uneasy peace.</p> <p>4605 King Gaspodar of Cheliox prepares for prophesied manifestation of Aroden, foretold to mark the advent of the Age of Glory.</p> | <p>own lives after evacuating their people from what becomes known as the Sodden Lands.</p> <p>4622 The faltering Church of Aroden launches the First Mendevian Crusade.</p> <p>4632 The province of Molthune declares its independence from Cheliox.</p> <p>4638 Second Mendevian Crusade.</p> <p>4640 Diabolists of the House of Thrune wrest control of Cheliox, brutally ending three decades of vicious civil war. A dark shadow envelops the empire.</p> <p>4648 The northern half of Molthune rebels against the avaricious nobles in Canorate.</p> <p>4655 The conflict in Molthune ends with the founding of Nirmathas.</p> <p>4661 Razmiran established.</p> <p>4667 Red Revolution begins in Galt.</p> <p>4669 The People's Revolt transforms Andoran.</p> <p>4674 The pirates of the Shackles unite under one banner to harass the fleets and merchants of the north.</p> <p>4682 Queen Domina of Korvosa courts the Hellknight faction of Cheliox, gaining service of the Order of the Nail.</p> <p>4697 The Goblinblood Wars shake Isger.</p> <p>4698 A terrible earthquake rocks Absalom.</p> <p>4699 The royal house of Rogarvia vanishes in Brevoy, leaving the nation in turmoil. House Surtova takes the contested crown.</p> <p>4700 Over the course of the month of Rova, the eyeless bodies of thirteen krakens wash up on the western shores of the Isle of Kortos.</p> <p>4701 Gnolls surge from White Canyon in Katapesh, attempting to enslave the population of the walled city of Solku.</p> <p>4702 The Runelords stir to life in Varisia. In the sleepy town of Sandpoint, gifted artist Jervis Stoot murders 25 men, women, and children.</p> <p>4703 The <i>Night Terror</i>, a Chelish merchant ship thought lost to the Eye of Abendego years ago, is found adrift off the Andoren coast in pristine condition but with its entire crew missing.</p> <p>4704 White Astrid slays Boiltongue and becomes a Linnorm Queen; her use of strange weapons she claims were gifts from "earth spirits" enrages other rulers of the Land of the Linnorm Kings.</p> <p>4705 The Gray Corsairs sink three Katapeshi slave galleons in the Inner Sea.</p> <p>4706 Followers of the Gorilla King behead 17 missionaries and Aspis Consortium merchants in the Mwangi Expanse.</p> <p>4707 Adventurers reopen the Bloodsworn Vale. Pharaoh Khemet III opens the ruins of Osirion to foreign explorers.</p> <p>4708 The current year.</p> |
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## AGE OF LOST OMENS

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| <p>4606 Aroden dies, leaving the Empire of Cheliox without a divine mandate.</p> <p>4608 Thousands abandon Korvosa for Magnimar.</p> <p>4609 Osirians overthrow their Keleshite masters and Prince Khemet I takes control, citing a bloodline that dates back to the ancient pharaohs.</p> <p>4613 Baba Yaga installs her daughter Elvanna as sovereign of Irrisen.</p> <p>4615 The astrological philosophers of Lirgen take their</p> | <p>4705</p> <p>4706</p> <p>4707</p> <p>4708</p> |
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## Gazetteer of Nations

The vast oceans of Golarion crash upon the shores of eight continents. The smallest of these, **Sarusan**, lies far from trade winds in the trackless sea and thus remains unknown to most modern cultures, half-recalled in oral traditions or hidden away in the lost literature of dead civilizations. The largest continent in the world is **Casmaron**, an ocean-sized mass straddling the planet's northern hemisphere. Nomadic horse-tribes span the wild central steppes, forming a buffer between the desert empire of Kelesh and its opportunistic satrapy states in the west and the expansionist monarchs of the mahajanapadas of Vudra—the storied Impossible Kingdoms of the distant east.

West of Kelesh, past the treacherous World's Edge Mountains, Casmaron expands into an immense peninsula called **Avistan**. From devil-guided Chelixa to the ancient kingdom of Taldor to the elven forests of Kyonin, Avistan is a diverse land built upon the ruins of countless lost civilizations. Perhaps the greatest of these

sites are found in the frontierlands of Varisia, remnants of the ancient Runelords of Thassilon, contemporaries of Old Azlant who perished in the same catastrophe.

South of Avistan, across the volatile tradeways of the Inner Sea, lies **Garund**, seat of the pharaohs of Osirion and home of the cutthroat markets of Katapesh, the unmapped jungles of the Mwangi Expanse, and the magic-blasted warplands between Nex and Geb. Along the continent's west coast whirls the Eye of Abendego, a catastrophic reminder of the apocalypse-storms that ravaged Golarion for weeks following the death of Aroden. A legion of pirates based in the Shackle Isles uses the permanent hurricane as a refuge from which to launch attacks on the world's sea lanes.

The bravest pirate captains abandon the coastlines of the civilized world and set off across the sea in search of completely uncharted waters. A thousand miles west of the Arch of Aroden is a nightmare maze of jutting cliffs, twisted tors, and jagged channels that once formed the proud island continent-kingdom of **Azlant**, first of the great human



realms of prehistory. When the arrogant elite of Old Azlant revolted against the aboleth lords that had raised them from barbarism, the aquatic masterminds brought down a great rock from the sky, triggering a world cataclysm that sank most of Azlant below the waves. The mysterious Mordant Spire sea elves still ply the roiling channels of continental ruin in their skimmers, guarding the few remaining secrets of their ancient enemies—the most technically and magically advanced human culture in history.

Few vessels survive the insidious whirlpools and ravenous sea monsters of Azlant to reach the open waters of the western Arcadian Ocean and the lush continent for which it is named: **Arcadia**, a wooded paradise 4,000 miles west of Avistan. The handful of explorers to venture there and return to the courts of the Inner Sea speak of vast natural resources, gorgeous panoramic displays of unbridled nature, and fierce, warrior-like native inhabitants. The largest permanent Avistani settlement on Arcadia is Valenhall, near the continent's northeast periphery, where the elderly soldiers and monarchs of the Linnorm Kings go to die.

A sprawling arctic desert called the **Crown of the World** squats upon the brow of Golarion, grasping with icy mountain claws the northern reaches of Avistan, Casmaron, and Tian Xia. Encased deep in the ice, at the very top of the planet, are the ruins of an ancient humanoid civilization, its name and legends long lost to history. The ruins predate Thassilon, Azlant, and even the coming of the aboleths to Golarion, and their existence and origin remain among the world's most intriguing mysteries.

Despite having the least hospitable climate of any continent on Golarion, the Crown of the World remains one of the most traveled routes for world explorers who venture across the ice shelf from one continent to the other. By far the most exotic of these travelers come from **Tian Xia**, a northern continent in the planet's eastern hemisphere, opposite Avistan. Despite this trickle of merchants and political exiles, tales of Tian Xia are rare outside the distant north and the markets of Katapesh and Absalom.

## THE INNER SEA

The Pathfinder Society bases itself in Absalom on the Inner Sea, the trading and cultural hub of two continents. The broad seaway stretching from Avistan to Garund represents one of the most heavily traveled trade routes on Golarion, and on any given day scores of national flags flutter from the masts of thousands of ships plying its waters.

The following gazetteer presents a brief description of nations on the two continents of the Inner Sea, presenting a wide variety of ideas and possibilities for *Pathfinder Chronicles* campaigns. Numbers listed after city names at the top of each entry represent able-bodied adult populations. Languages and religions are listed in order of local popularity. All years are in Absalom Reckoning (AR).

## Absalom

### CITY AT THE CENTER OF THE WORLD

**Alignment:** N

**Capital:** Absalom (303,900)

**Notable Settlements:** Diobel (4,850), Escadar (11,700)

**Ruler:** Lord Gyr of House Gixx, Primarch of Absalom, Protector of Kortos

**Government:** Grand Council composed of representatives from several major noble houses and religious groups. The greatest of this council, called the primarch, enjoys a wide range of powers.

**Languages:** Common, Osirian, Kelish

**Religion:** Abadar, Iomedae, Aroden, Norgorber, Cayden Cailean, Nethys, Sarenrae, Calistria, Shelyn, Irori

The Isle of Kortos, in the eye of the Inner Sea, stands astride dozens of major shipping lanes. Its sprawling city-state, ancient Absalom, thus earns its title as the City at the Center of the World. The confluence of mercantile, strategic, and religious influence in Absalom has attracted would-be conquerors throughout history. The ruins of dozens of siege castles litter the grounds outside Absalom's walls, and its harbor is so choked with the masts and moldering hulls of sunken warships that safely reaching the city's docks requires the steady eye of a paid pilot. Yet Absalom has never fallen.

Legend claims that Absalom was founded by Aroden himself when the Last of the First Humans raised the *Starstone* from the ocean depths and left it in its current resting place at the heart of the city. Since those ancient days, a succession of self-made noble families have vied for control of Absalom, an endless battle whose weapons include subterfuge, betrayal, and assassination. The city's culture is an amalgam of customs and beliefs drawn from Osirion, Thuvia, Cheliox, Andoran, Taldor, and Qadira, and many of the noble houses identify themselves closely with elements from those nations. The common folk represent an even wider array of cultural influences, from Mordant Spire elves to Tian traders to travelers from other planes. As a result, food, song, and clothing from nearly every corner of Golarion can be found here if the visitor knows where to look.

This cross-mixture of culture and ideas engenders a thriving community of learning and the philosophical arts. Many of Golarion's most adept insitutions of magic exist within the walls of Absalom, including the Arcanamirium, a large school of magical study founded by the Arclords of Nex; the College of Mysteries, a more exclusive arcane school; and the Clockwork Cathedral, a prestigious academy devoted to the study of constructs and machines.

Nearly all of Golarion's gods have temples in Absalom (some of them secret), but four religions have dominated local affairs for centuries. Each of these deities—Aroden,



Norgorber, Iomedae, and Cayden Cailean—entered Absalom as humans and left as immortal demigods after completing the infamous Test of the *Starstone*. Surrounded by a deadly maze of traps, guardians, and wards, the *Starstone* is a gateway to divinity for those who survive and a terrible death for those who fail. The clergies of these Ascended deities hold great power in Absalom, although the influence of Aroden’s moribund church has waned since the death of its god a century ago. Ambitious would-be deities scheme to attempt the Test, establishing cults and temples in Absalom’s Ascendant Court and drawing worshipers and support. For every Ascended god who survives the Test of the *Starstone* to achieve everlasting fame and adoration, there are hundreds who fail the attempt and are forgotten.

Absalom is comprised of several bustling districts, each with its unique character. The following represent some of the larger, more powerful neighborhoods of the city.

**Ascendant Court:** Most of Absalom’s temples congregate in the Ascendant Court, the hub at the center of the city’s great thoroughfares. The *Starstone* itself rests in a massive cathedral perched atop a pillar of rock surrounded by a seemingly bottomless pit. Three bridges cross this expanse, one for each of the Ascendants’ faithful. A fourth bridge, corresponding to Aroden and maintained by his aging clergy, crumbled when an earthquake rocked the city a decade ago and has not been repaired. Seekers of the *Starstone* must find their own way across these well-guarded spans before risking the legendary dangers of the cathedral itself.

The promise of the *Starstone* attracts legions of would-be deities, zealous cultists, and desperate followers eager for something to believe in. Every day, pilgrims from around the world visit the great chasm at the center of the district. Some write their wishes and dreams onto pieces of paper they drop into the pit, hoping to send a message directly to the gods. Others hope to catch a vainglorious fool or righteous hero in an attempt to snatch divinity. Agents of Absalom’s thieves guild prey upon the visitors by picking pockets, running cons, and demanding protection money from various “deities in training.”

Notable churches in the district include the Temple of the Shining Star, where clerics of Sarenrae honor the sun; the Seventh Church, site of one of Iomedae’s 11 miraculous Acts; and Cayden’s Hall, a grand tavern devoted to the Accidental God where his faithful honor their master with upturned tankards and eager fists. Not far from the heart of the district lies the enormous Cathedral of Failure, where silent caretakers erect small shrines to unsuccessful seekers of divinity. The oft-empty chambers of this dour edifice echo with the memories of conquered aspirations and forgotten dreams. Those sensitive to the whispers of spirits find the cathedral’s winding passages and baroque galleries almost unbearable.

**Azlanti Keep:** A district all to itself, this massive stone fortress sits near the northern edge of Absalom to protect the city from land-based invaders. The keep houses the city watch and the First Guard, an elite group of warriors, wizards, and scouts whose sole purpose is to root out and eliminate threats to the city. The citadel’s architecture is among the oldest in Absalom and reflects influences of the city’s Azlanti origins by way of Aroden. Wide balconies offer a commanding view of the city in all directions, and the immense flat roof of the structure forms a useful battle platform in times of siege.

**The Coins:** Situated just north of the docks, this district hosts most of the foreign traders and seamen who come to the city. The transient nature of the Coins’ residents attracts illicit trade in the form of drugs, slaves, and contraband. At the center of the district, near the major thoroughfare, trade in the Coins takes on an air of respectability at the Monger’s Mart or the Grand Bazaar, where the merchants put on a pretense of fair play and legal wares. Negotiations in this tough district often erupt into blade-fighting, and more murders take place in the Coins than in any other district save the treacherous Puddles.

**Ivy District:** Overlooking the harbor and seedier sections of town from atop a short bluff, the verdant Ivy District attracts some of Absalom’s most influential artists and craftsmen. Minor nobles, gifted actors, and popular bards call the Ivy their home, and while certain “soft” crimes such as narcotics and prostitution thrive here, in general the residents of the district have little tolerance for hardened criminals or indigent street-dwellers. Numerous theaters, bawdy houses, and galleries serve as common ground between the high and low classes of Absalom, resulting in a great deal of cross-class intrigue.

**The Petal District:** Perched atop Aroden’s Hill, with the whole city at its feet, Absalom’s Petal District is home to the wealthiest merchants and most powerful nobles in the wealthiest and most powerful city in the world. Decadent palaces, fabulous towers, elaborate gardens, and glittering promenades characterize the district, which gets its name from the well-tended rows of flowers that run down the center of nearly every street. The overwhelming beauty forms a strange backdrop for the treacherous politics of Absalom’s ruthless upper class, where nobles and merchants resort to poison and murder as often as negotiation and armistice.

**The Puddles:** On the opposite side of the spectrum (but no less ruthless) are the city’s poorest of the poor, who dwell in the soggy lowlands of the Puddles because they have little chance or opportunity elsewhere. A terrible earthquake 10 years ago sank the Puddles just below sea level at high tide, resulting in persistent minor flooding and erosion of building foundations and society. Honest citizens fled the district years ago, ceding it to the addicts



and criminals. Thieves and cutthroats abound here, and more than one guild of dubious character operates from the slouching, unsteady buildings of the Puddles.

**Surroundings:** The landscape surrounding Absalom is littered with 31 major ruins, the so-called “Siege Castles” that are all that remain of failed attempts by foreign armies and power-mad sorcerers to take the city by force. The immense and weirdly beautiful Spire of Nex is located 10 miles north of Absalom and remains a popular adventuring spot thousands of years after it was abandoned by its influential master. Other Siege Castles include the treacherous El Raja Key and the Red Redoubt of Karamoss.

Absalom also counts two smaller settlements under its banner. Diobel, a popular port on the western shores of Kortos, serves those wishing to bring illicit goods to Absalom by avoiding its watchful harbor masters. Escadar, on the small island of Erran just north of Kortos, is home to a sizable garrison and a flotilla of war galleys stationed to patrol the waters north of Kortos and watch for invaders or pirates.

## Andoran

### BIRTHPLACE OF FREEDOM

**Alignment:** NG

**Capital:** Almas (76,600)

**Notable Settlements:** Augustana (54,200), Bellis (4,800), Carpenden (10,600), Falcon’s Hollow (1,400), Oregent (22,700)

**Ruler:** His Excellency Codwin I of Augustana, Supreme Elect of the Free Peoples of Andoran

**Government:** Fledgling democracy

**Languages:** Common

**Religion:** Abadar, Erastil, Iomedae, Aroden, Cayden Cailean

In the opening years of the Age of Lost Omens, the death of the demigod Aroden threw empires into chaos. Mighty Cheliox, greatest of human kingdoms, fell to savage wars of assassination and plunder. Pretender after pretender sought to seize the Chelish Throne, and the kingdom’s outer provinces looked toward the heartlands with dread. When peace came to Cheliox, it came at a terrible price. The meticulous and evil House Thrune held the empire in its grasp and, with the help of diabolical servitors bound by magic and fell contract, this new aristocracy demanded obedience from the old.

The furthest dependencies of Cheliox remained isolated from the madness

pouring from the new capital of Egorian, and slowly slipped from Thrune’s talons. Closer to the capital, nobles whose families had been loyal to Cheliox for centuries faced an impossible choice. In Andoran, the greatest and most cosmopolitan of Cheliox’s holdings, the nobles reluctantly submitted to the rule and whims of the scheming devil-masters, betraying their nation and igniting a political fire that burns brighter now with each passing year.

Andoran got its start 3,000 years ago as the westernmost marchland of Old Taldor, a vast wooded plain populated by a curious, peaceful folk in awe of their more civilized eastern neighbors. The seemingly endless timber from the Arthfell Forest fed a growing shipyard at Augustana, and soon Andoran became critical to Taldor’s navy and exploration of the seas beyond the Arch of Aroden. Andorens settled the disastrous Sun Temple Colony on Azlant, and their ships were among the first to reach the shores of central Arcadia, establishing strongholds that serve the nation to this day.

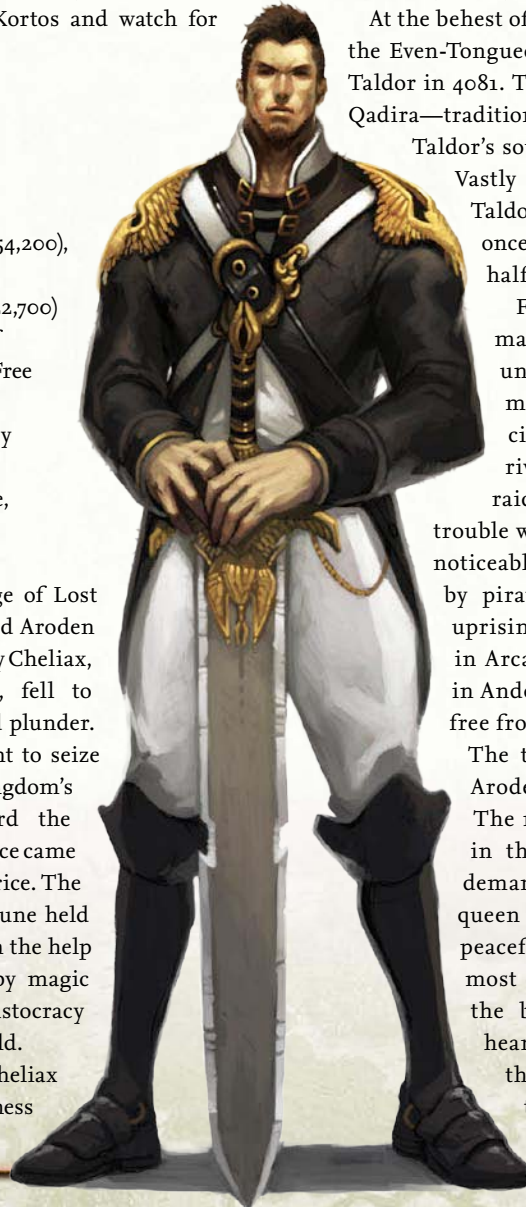
At the behest of the influential Chelish King Aspex the Even-Tongued, Andoran abandoned its ties with Taldor in 4081. The move came just as the armies of Qadira—traditional enemies of the empire—crossed

Taldor’s southern border in a brazen invasion.

Vastly weakened and beset by decadence, Taldor could not fight on two fronts at once. It ceded Andoran, Cheliox, and a half-dozen other states without a fight.

For centuries, it seemed Andoran had made the right choice. Trade thrived under the kings of Cheliox, and the merchants of the nation’s towns and cities grew more and more powerful, rivaling the hereditary nobles. Orc raids from the Five King Mountains, trouble with druids and fey in the country’s noticeably dwindling forests, harassment by pirates on the open sea, and native uprisings disrupting colonial operations in Arcadia were constant threats, but life in Andoran remained mostly peaceful and free from upheaval.

The trouble in Cheliox in the wake of Aroden’s death threatened that peace. The nation’s margrave and his relatives in the ruling class capitulated to the demands of Cheliox’s new diabolical queen in the interest of keeping things peaceful. They judged correctly that most of their citizens preferred to avoid the bloodshed that had drowned the heartlands, but incorrectly assumed they would trade safety for servitude to the pawns of the Nine Hells.





## CURSE OF THE DARKMOON VALE

The government wags of Augustana and Almas scheme on such a grand scale that those predicting trouble for Andoran might imagine it striking there, in the populous, cosmopolitan cities of the Inner Sea coast. Instead, trouble brews in the sparse northern uplands, near secluded Darkmoon Vale and the scattered logging community of Falcon's Hollow. The Vale lies at the heart of a long-dead dwarven enclave from the Age of Darkness, and its wooded lowlands enshroud dozens of eroded temples and monasteries. Some of these forlorn ruins cap elaborate subterranean complexes once inhabited by dwarves. Some tunnel miles underground in the Darklands of the world, a realm one does not disturb without inviting dire consequences. The restless spirits of the dwarven dead reveal a highly decadent culture at the time of collapse, and the byproducts of that unhallowed society still emerge from time to time from toppled monuments and overgrown tunnel mouths.

Readers interested in further exploring the region should consult the *Pathfinder Chronicles: Guide to Darkmoon Vale* and the *GameMastery/Pathfinder Modules Do: Hollow's Last Hope, D1: Crown of the Kobold King, D1.5: Revenge of the Kobold King, and LB1: Tower of the Last Baron*.

By 4669, the outrage grew too great for the proud merchants of Andoran. Citing the anti-nobility screeds of Galtan philosophers like Jubannich and Hosetter, the merchants rallied the common man to demand greater rights and cast down the old order. Unlike in Galt, whose own revolution went astray, the merchants of Andoran did not seek to kill their former lords. Instead, they offered citizenship in the new kingdom without a king, where all men were equal and leaders ruled only at the mandate of the people. Those who agreed were welcomed into the new order. Those who refused faced the noose. Either way, the nobles' holdings became the property of the state and were often immediately sold off or given to supporters of the so-called People's Revolt.

Today, Andoran owes its power to a consortium of political radicals, wealthy merchant lords, and sympathetic aristocrats who seek to spread the political philosophy of Common Rule and open new markets throughout the world. Much of the nation's impressive wealth comes from precious antiquities raided from distant, unmapped lands such as Arcadia and the Mwangi Expanse. Competition for these resources grows fiercer by the year, and exotic locales like the ruin-laden deserts of interior Osirion or slivers of ancient Azlant have hosted proxy wars between agents of Andoran and enemy powers like Cheliox and Taldor.

Andorens seek not just to transform their homeland, but to export their cultural, philosophical, and mercantile

beliefs to the world. Years ago, the heroes of Andoran emptied the nation's prisons and freed all its slaves in an attempt to bolster the strength of the Revolt, and its people have henceforth subscribed to a militant abolitionism. Agents provocateurs dispatched from the capital city of Almas actively seek to undermine the Inner Sea slave trade and those nations that support it, which is nearly all of them. The world thus views Andorens as troublemakers and unwanted ideological imperialists.

The Supreme Elect of Andoran, currently Codwin I of Augustana, manages the Executive Office, a huge bureaucracy that handles most governmental affairs in the nation. The 350 citizen-representatives of the People's Council sit on marble benches in the monument-laden capital at Almas. Many once held noble titles, while others rose from slavery or serfdom to speak for their home counties in the assembly. From the highest government official of Andoran to its lowliest servant, nearly everyone believes in the tenets of the People's Revolt that transformed their nation some 40 years ago. They are the children of the second and third generations of liberty, and their faith in the Andoren way is resolute.

## Belkzen, Hold of

### SAVAGE HUMANOID HOMELAND

**Alignment:** NE

**Capital:** Urgir (28,700)

**Notable Settlements:** Wyvernsting (11,320)

**Ruler:** Prominent orc champions and their respective clans include Grask Uldeth of the Empty Hand, Tulluk Clovenface of the Haskodars, and Hundux Half-Man of Murdered Child

**Government:** Numerous tribal hordes vie for dominance

**Languages:** Orc

**Religion:** Rovagug, Lamashtu, Zon-Kuthon

*Ymir's Saga* tells the tragedy of Koldukar, second of the 10 Sky Citadels of dwarven prehistory. In the dying days of the Age of Darkness, the dwarves erected enormous stone keeps like artificial mountains to protect their people. This done, the dwarves looked out from their vast balconies upon the night-black lands of the surface world with pride and ambition, for the shadowed hills and open spaces of Golarion were theirs to inherit, the rightful prize for completion of the eternal Quest for Sky.

As the dwarves had marched ever closer to the surface, they pushed ancient enemies ahead of them in a series of great genocidal wars. The most relentless and cunning of these enemies—the orcs—emerged from the depths centuries before the dwarves and waited eagerly to avenge the warfare of countless millennia. Some of the Sky Citadels, like Highhelm in the Five Kings Mountains and Janderhoff in Varisia, resisted the orc assaults. Not so



mighty Koldukar, in the foothills of the Hungry Mountains. There, at the Battle of Nine Stones, the Sky Citadel fell to the most revered hero of orc folklore, a savage warrior king who gave his name to the nation: Belkzen.

Belkzen held together his fledgling nation long enough to erect massive stone temples and monuments throughout the plains surrounding the conquered citadel of Koldukar, renamed Urglin, (“first home” in Orc). The Hold of Belkzen became a legend among orcs, attracting them from throughout Avistan.

A line of petty conquerors, orc and otherwise, has laid claim to Belkzen over the centuries, whipping the orcs into obedience until an inevitable defeat or betrayal from within. The legendary lich-king known as the Whispering Tyrant usurped Belkzen’s throne in 3204, uniting the warring orc tribes of the plains and mountains and forming an immense army of savage humanoids unheralded since the subterranean times. That force relentlessly harrassed the kingdoms of Avistan in a series of abominable invasions and raids that lasted more than 500 years, until Taldor and its allies launched the Shining Crusade that imprisoned the Whispering Tyrant below Gallowspire and thrust Belkzen once more into chaos. Thus has the nation remained for centuries upon centuries. Leaders come and go, but the savagery and resilience of the orcs of Belkzen remains a terrible constant.

Non-orcs seldom survive long in Belkzen. Roving hordes of orc warriors and their associated allies and servitor beasts wander the countryside, occasionally settling in meager communes amid the crumbling ruins of monumental buildings from Belkzen’s time. Only in the capital at Urgir, where the strongest tribes exist in an uneasy peace, can an outsider expect to pass unmolested and unabduted, and even then only if he or she bears the sign or fetish of a high-ranking orc warlord. Many Pathfinders, arcanists, and explorers find risking the bad reception worthwhile, for even though their stink permeates nearly every chamber of Urgir, the orcs have not yet discovered all of Koldukar’s lost passages and unclaimed treasure. Others come to Urgir for trade, to muster an army of orc mercenaries, or to purchase slaves captured by orcs on raids against neighboring lands.

In the country’s nothern wastes, warriors from Wyvernsting dash across the border to abduct the giant, antediluvian creatures of the Realm of the Mammoth Lords, transporting them to Urgir for later sale to the armies and arenas of the south. The kingdom of Cheliox has of late developed a voracious appetite for the weird beasts of the north, swelling the coffers of Wyvernsting’s ambitious ruler, Hundux Half-Man, who is thought to have ambitions upon Urgir and who fashions himself a warrior king in the mold of Belkzen himself.

The ruined castles of countless would-be tyrants dot Belkzen’s landscape, giving warning to any outsider hoping

to bend the orcs to his will. One of the most impressive of these monuments, the fortress Scarwall, gazes down upon the flatlands of Belkzen from its perch atop a spur of the Kodar Mountains. Visible along the crude road from Wyvernsting to Urgir, the castle was once home to an Ustalavian general named Kazavon who ruled Belkzen early in the fifth millennium. The orcs use Scarwall as a landmark but never venture within, for Kazavon’s rule ended in madness, and uneasy spirits violently haunt his unhallowed home.

Warring along Belkzen’s southwestern border with Lastwall continues as it has since the final days of the Shining Crusade. Orc warriors flock south to test their blades against human steel as they have for centuries, but the orcs’ numbers grow greater and greater every year. Soon, the gray-haired warriors of Lastwall fear, the orcs will overwhelm this last bulwark, and the hordes of Belkzen will spread a bloody scar across Avistan once more.

## Brevoy

### STRUGGLE BETWEEN NOBLE HOUSES

**Alignment:** CN

**Capital:** New Stetven (32,850)

**Notable Settlements:** Port Ice (13,260), Restov (18,670), Skywatch (6,590)

**Ruler:** King Noleski Surtova

**Government:** Hereditary monarchy (Salic primogeniture)

**Languages:** Common, Hallit, Skald, Varisian, Draconic

**Religion:** Abadar, Pharasma, Gorum

Taldorian explorers colonized the plains south of Lake Encarthan about 2,000 years ago, conquering the plague-ridden inhabitants of an ancient frontier colony of the legendary eastern steppe kingdom of Iobaria. Over time, the Taldorian settlers and rustic Iobarian survivors coalesced into two relatively stable, independent nations.

To the south was Rostland, led by the warrior-lords of the Aldori swordpact, situated between the frontier capital of Restov and encapsulating the whole of the twisted Gronzi Forest. So great was the swordsmanship of Rostland’s leaders that the Aldori style is still widely taught in Avistan centuries after the fall of the kingdom that spawned it.

North of Rostland was Issia, a coastal land surrounding the boisterous capital of Port Ice, haven to scoundrels and lake pirates. Issian raids ranged the length of the Sellen River in those days, giving even a Verduran woodsman reason to fear the sounds of splashing oars by moonlight. The greatest pirate family, House Surtova, thus had an influence that spanned the whole of the Lake of Mists and Veils and the waterways connected to it.

Rostland and Issia cycled between war and peace throughout the centuries, but constrained their attention to one another, largely ignoring the outside world. In 4449,



however, the outside world came crashing in with the arrival of Choral the Conqueror.

A rowdy, terrifying warlord with uncertain ties to the folklore of the region's original Iobarian inhabitants, Choral arrived astride a black unicorn on the shores of Needle Lake with a few ragged mercenaries and barely 300 mounted knights, announcing the foundation of a new nation called Brevoy. By Choral's decree, all the lands from Restov to Port Ice would follow his commands.

Nearly everyone in Rostland and Issia ignored the proclamation, of course, but within a few months tax collectors from Choral's settlement at New Stetven appeared among the farmers of western Rostland, forcing the swordlord Estruan Aldori to dispatch an army to deal with the upstart. Choral's forces lured the Aldori legion into the river canyon south of New Stetven, where Choral unleashed his hidden allies. Two enormous red dragons appeared atop the canyon, bathing the entire valley floor in a deadly fire that left few survivors. History records the resulting battle as the Valley of Flame, and somber songs recounting the defeat remain a popular part of the folk culture of the River Kingdoms, Brevoy, and Mendev. After destroying the army, the dragons proceeded to Rostland proper, where they initiated a brutal campaign of fire and blood that reduced a once-proud nation to ashes. Within a handful of days, the Aldoris had no choice but to surrender.

When word of Rostland's fall reached the Surtova lords in Port Ice, the river pirates immediately surrendered to Choral and his "dynasty" of hirdsmen and sycophants, who proclaimed themselves part of "House Rogarvia," a new aristocracy superior to the lands' former rulers. Choral's dragons withdrew from the campaign, appearing in later years only to seize the fortress of Skywatch, an old observatory in the Uvall Hills, from a handful of Aldori loyalists. Choral himself vanished only a decade after his mysterious appearance, leaving his Rogarvian heirs three centuries to rule a populace terrified of the return of the Conqueror and his legendary red wyrms.

The Rogarvians rigorously enforced law and order, relentlessly taxing the people of Brevoy to establish a series of roads connecting Choral's nation to the River Kingdoms of the south and the tradeways of central Avistan. New Stetven flourished, even if most of the benefit went to its brutish rulers. The country of Brevoy, if not all of its people, prospered.

Then, in 4699, 300 years after Choral's proclamation of rule, the nation underwent another sudden, dramatic change. Every member of House Rogarvia present within Brevoy's borders simply vanished on the same winter day. Turmoil ensnared Brevoy until Noleski Surtova, the wily old descendant of Issia's pirate kings and the ruler of Port Ice, seized power and proclaimed himself King of

Brevoy. The event didn't go over well with the remaining Aldori partisans in the region, but intermarriage between the Surtovas and the Aldoris and worry of a Rogarvian return stayed their hand. An uneasy truce between the two ancient rivals holds to this day, but tensions continue to build, and old Aldori blades bear new polish for the first time in centuries. Something is about to break in Brevoy.

Meanwhile, the old fortress of Skywatch, long a bastion of Rogarvian power, mysteriously cut itself off from the rest of Brevoy on the same day the nobles disappeared, refusing to allow anyone, even supply caravans, into or out of the settlement. So far, no message sent to Skywatch has received a reply, and divination magic cannot penetrate its ancient walls.

## Cheliox

### DIABOLICAL EMPIRE IN DECLINE

**Alignment:** LE

**Capital:** Egorian (82,100)

**Notable Settlements:** Brastlework (3,500 gnomes), Corentyn (13,400), Kintargo (11,900), Ostenso (14,200), Pezzack (4,800), Senara (5,200), Westcrown (114,700)

**Ruler:** Her Infernal Majestrix, Queen Abrogail II of the Thrice-Damned House of Thrune

**Government:** Imperial bureaucracy headed by influential noble families (such as Thrune and Elliendo)

**Languages:** Common, Infernal

**Religion:** Diabolism, Erastil, Iomedae, Aroden, Zon-Kuthon

When the great god Aroden died, a part of mighty Cheliox died with him. For centuries, the orthodox clergy of humanity's greatest deity prepared for the advent of a 1,000-year reign in which the Last Azlant would once again manifest on Golarion and lead his chosen people to victories that would rival the ancient triumphs of the Age of Destiny. Instead, disastrous storms wracked the whole planet for 3 weeks, shaking the faith of the people of Cheliox and casting its government into chaos. When the rain and wind finally relented, the ruling family of Cheliox stood bereft of its centuries-spanning mandate from heaven, and the kingdom fell to infighting and civil war.

After three decades of anarchy, an alliance of diabolic spellcasters wrested control of the bloody capital at Westcrown from brigands and installed the greatest of their number as Abrogail I, infernal Majestrix of Cheliox. Abrogail's armies, often with the support of carefully bound devils from the depths of the Nine Hells, soon quelled dissent in the empire's heartland, gaining the new regime a measure of respect and legitimacy. Few among the gods-fearing citizens of Cheliox approved of their fearsome methods, but wherever the diabolists installed themselves, the opportunistic savagery of the last generation soon ceased, and a dark peace embraced the kingdom.





Lawful to a fault, the diabolists established themselves as a new aristocracy, moving the nation's capital to Egorian on the shores of Lake Sorrow, taking on ostentatious titles like paracount or paraduke, and forming an oppressive ruling caste superior to the old order in pretension and efficiency. Under the red-and-black standard of Asmodeus, Cheliox once more claimed its former glory, if not the righteousness of years past.

The new government immediately set to bending its outer dependencies to the new order, forcing the nobles of distant lands to profess adoration of blasphemous devils to avoid the ministrations of the Hellknights of Cheliox, relentless killers clothed from head to toe in imposing infernal armor. Most important were the inner vassal states first brought under Chelish control during the so-called Even-Tongued Conquest of 4081, when the wily old King Aspex the Even-Tongued broke with Taldor in a decade-long campaign of war and diplomacy that brought the neighboring provinces of Andoran, Galt, and Isger, as well as the secluded winged folk of the Devil's Peak, into the nascent Empire of Cheliox.

One by one, the rulers of these nations swore fealty to the diabolical House of Thrune, often over the fierce objections of their citizens. Rebellion and the ensuing chaos in the northern holding of Molthune cut off the

imperial heartland from its frontier colony in Varisia, which subsequently became the reluctantly independent city-state of Korvosa. The shadowy kingdom of Nidal, however, long a thrall of Cheliox, enthusiastically supported the empire's evil turn, dispatching thousands of shadowcasters and shadewrights to bolster Egorian's efforts to bring the other vassal states into line.

Briefly, it appeared as though the new regime might maintain the borders of old Cheliox and perhaps even expand, but the cold precision of the Hellknights and the outright blasphemy of Thrune's diabolical allies soon proved too much for the common people of Galt and Andoran, who declared themselves independent of the decadent empire and rejected the divine right of the nobles who had betrayed them to devils. Riven by subtle internal divisions and grudgingly following the advice of tiefling ambassadors dispatched from the depths of Hell, the leaders of Cheliox allowed their former vassals their rebellion, focusing instead on the far more lucrative colonies of Sargava in Garund and Anchor's End in distant Arcadia. The Hellknights and their infernal allies continue to root out rebellion and dissent in the heartland, where even speaking against the ruling order is a crime punishable by torture and public execution.



Pezzack, in the razor hills of the Devil's Perch, remains a hotbed of sedition and plotting against the new aristocracy of Cheliox, but its fierce people are completely cut off from the outside world by naval and land blockades. Only the fact that the winged folk can fly protects them from periodic raids that raze the town to the ground. Elsewhere, the people of Cheliox are tired and defeated. Even citizens with no investment in the diabolic order turn in a suspected traitor to achieve wealth and social advancement. Westcrown, the old capital, is a crumbling mirror of its former self, where the remnants of shamed and ostracized noble houses do their best to maintain a crumbling city utterly abandoned by the orderly civic planners of Egorian. Shadowbeasts imported from Nidal stalk Westcrown's streets at night, devouring traitors and supporters alike. The port city of Ostenso is home to the largest naval works in Avistan and hosts the vaunted Chelish Navy, the dominant military force on the waters of the Inner Sea. Here, on the eastern edge of Cheliox, war is in the air, as soldiers gather to protect the homeland from the righteous rebels of Andoran, and perhaps soon to attack that land and put an end to its pernicious republicanism forever.

Cheliox is a hopeless, decadent empire weakened by losses in glory and colonial wealth but deluded with pretensions of greatness spurred on by the infernal court and its fell adherents. It is a stain on the face of Golarion, and a mockery of what was once the greatest kingdom of mankind.

**Druma, Kalistocracy of  
MERCHANT'S RELIGIOUS PARADISE**

- Alignment:** LN
- Capital:** Kerse (18,300)
- Notable Settlements:** Detmer (8,200), Highhelm (5,600 dwarves), Macridi (3,200)
- Ruler:** High Prophet Kelldor
- Government:** Mercantile Oligarchy
- Languages:** Common, Dwarf
- Religion:** *Prophecies of Kalistrade*, Torag

The isolated hill country of Druma hosts the most productive gem and precious metal mines in Avistan, granting its doctrinaire leaders—adherents to the *Prophecies of Kalistrade*—overwhelming influence over the politics and affairs of the entire Inner Sea region. The *Prophecies*—dream-records of an eccentric mystic from the early days of the Age of Enthronement—dictate a personal routine involving sexual and dietary prohibitions, exclusive adornment in the color white, and the wearing of full-length gloves to prohibit physical contact with those outside the cult.



At its heart, the *Prophecies of Kalistrade* encourage adherents to justify their worth in the celestial order through the attainment of personal wealth. High-ranking merchant-lords of the state, indistinguishable from the quasi-religious bureaucracy that supports the official philosophy, adorn themselves with gold and platinum chains and glistening gemstone baubles as a show of their status and wealth.

Traveling “prophets” of Druma make constant targets for overzealous thieves and confidence men, but knowledgeable denizens of the underworld give them wide clearance, knowing that their untold wealth all too often buys a host of magical contingencies, powerful divinations, and vengeful assassins. The jewel-bedecked traders thus comport themselves with an assiduous arrogance and casual fearlessness that frequently grants them the upper hand in negotiations.

Clever diplomacy played a critical role in the rise of the prophets more than 2,000 years ago, when their calm mediation at long last united the squabbling dwarves of the Five Kings Mountains. The human folk of Druma had long suffered under the conflicting decrees of the high kings ruling from their mountain citadels, and the Kerse Accord of 2332—facilitated by white-gloved adherents of the *Prophecies of Kalistrade*—ultimately granted the humans autonomy and significant control over the vast mineral resources of the upcountry south of Lake Encarthan. As the region's historical dwarf lieges turn increasingly inward to their ancient mountain vaults, the prophets of Druma consolidate their domestic power by ensuring widespread dedication to the *Prophecies of Kalistrade*. Other religions and non-believers meet with grudging tolerance in the Drumish homeland and casual indifference elsewhere in the world. Outsiders seldom achieve positions of rank and influence in the official bureaucracy, and adherents always favor each other in financial dealings.

Those who swear by Kalistrade's writings do not flinch at the disruption to prophecy triggered by the death of the living god Aroden and the advent of the Age of Lost Omens. The most potent prediction of the *Prophecies* concerns an imminent hour of victory, in which adherents to the way leverage their financial power to, in effect, “own” the world, becoming its masters and achieving a sort of metaphysical immortality. That other prophecies have proven false in recent years gives little pause to believers, who cannily contend that theirs is a secular prophecy immune to the dictates of magic and wholly up



to the faithful to see through to completion. Aroden does not control whether the *Prophecies* come true, they claim. Adherents to the *Prophecies* do. Their constant expansion and ever-growing financial holdings continue to inch them toward the ultimate goal of their philosophy.

Although many Drumish dwarves support the self-denying rhetoric of Kalistrade's prophets, the official doctrine recognizes only humans as worthy of the universe's ultimate reward. Social status and cultural upbringing do not matter to a Drumish merchant, so long as the adherent is capable of generating wealth for himself and thus prove his value to the world. Even freed or escaped slaves are welcome to live by the dictates of the *Prophecies*, meaning many refugees from Cheliox or Isger seek the fields and mines of Druma as the first step to greater success in the footsteps of Kalistrade. While some few escape the clutches of poverty to become members of the ruling elite, most find that their meager accumulation of wealth cements them into lowly positions as menials or indentured servants. Many join Druma's justly infamous Mercenary League, while others abandon the dour nation for the "freer" freedom of the River Kingdoms.

## Galt

### ETERNAL REVOLUTION

**Alignment:** CN

**Capital:** Isarn (42,700)

**Notable Settlements:** Edme (13,600), Litran (4,900), Woodsedge (14,200)

**Ruler:** Citizen Goss, Chairman of the Revolutionary Council

**Government:** Revolutionary anarchy

**Languages:** Common, Hallit

**Religion:** Calistria, Cayden Cailean, Erastil, Shelyn, Norgorber, Iomedae

When Cheliox fell to devilry with the ascendancy of the vile House Thrune, the scholars of its most distant vassal, Galt, exploded with opprobrium. The half-elf philosopher Hosetter, dean of the Torvin Academy of Edme, issued a series of scathing political essays entitled *Imperial Betrayal* that soon spread to the volatile cities of Andoran and even the Chelish heartland, enumerating the crimes of Cheliox's new overlords and calling the people of a once-proud nation to arms in defense of their common ideals. At the same time, Darl Jubannich, the famous poet of Woodsedge, capitalized on the unrest by issuing his own highly publicized missives in a broadsheet series called *On Government*, which undermined the very concept of the divine right of kings. Sedition spread to all corners of the empire, taking root in the disgruntled merchant classes of Almas and fomenting open rebellion in Isarn, the ancient capital of Galt. From there, rebellion blossomed into revolt, with unruly mobs tearing down the old institutions

of Chelioxian rule and condemning the nation's effete nobility to the guillotine.

Only 5 years after helping the Revolutionary Council he chaired establish Republicanism as the law of the land, Hosetter himself was condemned to the headsman's axe. Jubannich fled to Andoran, abandoning the bloody experiment he had helped initiate. Galt fell completely under the sway of the mob, and the Red Revolution has lasted now more than 40 years.

The people of Galt have been fiercely independent throughout history, first as a semi-independent ally of Taldor and buffer against the wild nations of the River Kingdoms and later as the easternmost province of the old Chelish Empire. When Galt fell to Cheliox in the Even-Tongued Conquest, few of the decadent nobles in Oppara mourned its loss, considering it but the most civilized of the lawless River Kingdoms, a place where respectable thieves and brigands went to retire. On the frontier far from Westcrown, Galt developed a reputation for loose laws and even looser morality, a magnet for artists, free-thinkers, and unorthodox scholars. Passion has always run deep in Galt, and a nation once known for its hot-blooded character has transformed into a nation best known simply for its blood.

No government since Hosetter's execution has lasted more than a handful of years. From time to time, a bully or patriot rises to take command of the Revolutionary Council, but the reigns are always short, as infighting and betrayal condemn leader after leader to public executions before frenzied crowds. Only the masked judges of the nation's elaborate show trials command enduring power, as their anonymous nature protects them from retribution. The Revolution found its roots in political idealism and an attempt to scapegoat the nation's Chelish nobility for its economic and social problems. But the old nobles are long gone, fled to the River Kingdoms or Andoran or thrust into the guillotine. The old revolutionary fervor and bloodlust still remains, but the aspirations of the past have given way to bitter recrimination and endless efforts to punish those responsible for the nation's current woes. Revolution has plundered Galt's treasures, destroyed its universities, and betrayed its people. Little remains now save hatred, distrust, and fear—and the tireless guillotine.

Galt's neighbors look upon their former ally with apprehension and dread, fearing the spread of the mob into their own borders. Andoran, having survived a revolution of its own inspired by the same thinkers and political situation, is especially wary of events in Galt, and keeps a large army of minutemen stationed at the nations' common borders in the Verduran Wood and the Five Kings Valley. Overwhelmed by refugees in the early decades of Galt's coup, Andoran now refuses entry to all but the





most wealthy and important members of Galtan society, a class that grows thinner by the season. In the nearby River Kingdoms, especially in Gralton, Pitax, and Miven, disgraced Galtan nobles gather mercenary armies to raid their old homeland, hoping to displace the Revolutionary Council and reclaim their deserted manors.

Strangers come to Galt only under the most dire emergencies or at the behest of vast sums of money. Many Galtan nobles, clerics, and merchants left their homes in great haste, abandoning priceless treasures, relics, or family members. The wealthiest of these unfortunates hire mercenaries to retrieve what they have lost, while others offer only penniless pleas to the kind-hearted. The unmitigated chaos of four decades of Revolution brings great opportunity to adventurers who are literally willing to risk their necks.

## Geb

### DOMAIN OF THE DEAD

**Alignment:** LE

**Capital:** Mechitar (42,000)

**Notable Settlements:** Graydirge (9,400), Yled (119,200)

**Ruler:** Geb (ghost locked to Golarion until convinced of Nex's death)

**Government:** Undead dictatorship

**Languages:** Osirian, Kelish

**Religion:** Nethys, Urgathoa, Zon-Kuthon

In the final centuries of the Age of Destiny, two immortal wizard kings named Nex and Geb engaged in a legendary arcane struggle that engulfed the east coast of Garund in a millennium of catastrophic magical warfare. The southern sovereign, a wicked Osirian necromancer from an exiled noble house, vowed to survive until the battle was finally won. This he has done, after a fashion, embracing undeath in himself as well as in the culture and government of the nation that bears his name. For like their wizard king, the aristocrats who rule Geb and guide its destiny are all undead.

Signs of the relentless, near-endless struggle with Nex are everywhere in Geb, especially in the north near the blasted no-man's land known as the Mana Wastes. Nearly all of Geb's cities and major settlements bear scars of ancient warfare even today.

Nex and Geb battled on through the early centuries of the Age of Enthronement, blighting one another with vicious magical attacks. Near the apex of the conflict, Geb



used potent *wish*-magic to draw the life from the land of Nex, turning that country into a wasteland. Nex responded by calling down a series of cataclysms upon Geb, killing tens of thousands of people. Geb rose from the devastation by animating the bodies of all his slain subjects, sending them north in vast legions of the walking dead.

In 576, Geb besieged the Nexian capital at Quantum with banks of bilious yellow fog meant to murder Nex and his eccentric court. Although thousands died in the attack, Nex was not among them, and he has not been seen since. Uncertain of his triumph, Geb lived the next several decades in bitter anguish, robbed of the victory he so greatly desired. By 632, the uncertainty had grown too intense, and the immortal necromancer departed the world in an act of ritual suicide.

Death offered no respite from Geb's torment. Convinced that Nex had somehow escaped his vengeance, Geb returned to Golarion as a ghost, chained to the world until he could be sure of his ultimate triumph. Upon his grim return, necromancy took a prominent role in all of Gebbite society. Neighboring nations took notice of the decay spreading from Geb's cities and swiftly sought to stem it at its source, resulting in raids, naval blockades, and assaults that have plagued Geb for millennia.

In 4329, for example, a rogue pirate queen named Mastrien Slash led an army of female warriors across Geb's southern borders in an effort to put an end to the undead kingdom. With a few potent words, Geb turned the entire advancing army to stone, creating what is known today as the Field of Maidens. Such defeats are typical for Geb's enemies, but plotting proceeds apace in the courts of foreign lords looking to make a name for themselves by destroying Golarion's longest-ruling leader and his deathless kingdom.

Since the disappearance of the archmage Nex, the nation that bears his name has achieved relative peace with its southern neighbor. Geb still employs necromancy in all things, owing to its ghostly liege. Its people use undead to farm their food, allowing the living to dwell in the cities to study necromantic arts and practice great works of craft. They even trade some of this zombie-harvested food to Nex in exchange for various rare components and goods.

The Blood Lords, royal mages who serve Geb in all things, run most of the day-to-day operations in Geb. These powerful necromancers are trained in the capital of Mechitar but spread their influence across the entire nation. Over time, many of the Blood Lords have become undead creatures themselves, and Geb counts numerous ghouls, vampires, shades, and liches among its grim aristocracy. Certain slave castes exist only to slake the inhuman hungers of these unliving nobles. And yet Geb makes no war against its neighbors, provides safety and health to its citizens (both living and dead), and attempts to influence the outside world in extraordinarily subtle ways. Geb himself seldom

## THE DEAD LAWS

A great many of Geb's complex laws regulate necromancy and the undead. While unintelligent undead have no rights and are treated as property, the dead laws grant citizenship to intelligent undead, conferring upon them just as many rights as granted to the living. Those undead who require sustenance from the living are provided for by specially bred chattel. The dead laws also cover the recently deceased, conferring ownership of the body to the family if they intend to use it to create undead, and to the state if they don't, so that the corpse can be raised to serve the kingdom. Outlanders who die in Geb are subject to similar laws and are usually confiscated by the Blood Lords. The dead laws also prohibit the use of positive energy against undead. While the destruction of unintelligent undead merely carries a fine, the destruction of sentient undead carries a charge of murder, with the penalty being execution and subsequent reanimation as a mindless food harvester.

manifests before his people these days, trusting much of the nation's governance to his debased lich lover, Arazni, the so-called Harlot Queen of Geb.

## Irrisen

### WITCH QUEEN ENCLAVE

**Alignment:** NE

**Capital:** Whitethrone (24,900)

**Notable Settlements:** Algidheart (6,720), Hoarwood (8,970)

**Ruler:** Queen Elvanna, Fourteenth Daughter of Baba Yaga

**Government:** Monarchy

**Languages:** Skald, Hallit

**Religion:** Lamashtu, Zon-Kuthon

Nearly every youth in Avistan fears the White Witches of the North, who dwell in palaces of ice and steal wicked children in the dark of winter. Few, however, know how true the tales really are. Nearly 1,400 years ago, the territory that comprises Irrisen belonged to the Linnorm Kings. During one particularly harsh winter, a host of trolls and cold fey marched down from the Crown of the World, led by Baba Yaga, an incredibly powerful sorceress from a distant world of the Great Beyond. Directing her forces from a mobile fortress, the self-proclaimed Queen of Witches quickly subjugated the region, killing any who resisted and enslaving the rest. The fighting ended just 23 days after it began, and the nation of Irrisen was born. Summer has never returned to the region.

Strangely enough, Baba Yaga herself seemed uninterested in ruling and instead installed one of her daughters to govern the fledgling kingdom. Every 100 years, the Queen of Witches returns and installs a new Daughter to rule for the next century. The old Daughter, along with all of her children, then leaves with Baba Yaga to explore the strange



worlds she is said to frequent. The new Daughter quickly goes about installing her children into positions of power throughout the kingdom. Male children marshal forces and protect the realm, while females see to the government and administration of the land, often regardless of age. These granddaughters of Baba Yaga, collectively known as the White Witches, command a level of respect and obeisance from their subjects that borders on worship. Whether this is out of fear or genuine adoration is a matter of great speculation.

Citizens of Irrisen find themselves quite isolated from the rest of Golarion. Due to the eternal winter that hangs over the region, few traders make stops there, and travelers are rare. Inhabitants spend most of their days farming what few crops grow in the harsh climate, gathering wood for their fires, and avoiding the ire of the White Witches. Beyond its natural hazards, Irrisen is also home to a wide variety of wicked fey creatures and numerous tribes of ice trolls. The White Witches hold these creatures in high regard, and in many provinces harming them is a serious crime.

Irrisen has few friends beyond its borders. The Linnorm Kings to the west have not forgotten the winter war that birthed their neighbor, an insult aggravated by the frequent raids by fey and trolls that steal supplies, weapons, and occasionally children. The Mammoth Lords to the east have an uneasy truce with the current queen, but with her time nearing an end, the future might bring new conflict on this front.

## Isger

### THRALL OF CHELIAIX

**Alignment:** LN

**Capital:** Elidir (11,900)

**Notable Settlements:** Logas (4,300)

**Ruler:** Hedvend VI, Steward of Isger

**Government:** Vassal State of Cheliaz

**Languages:** Common

**Religion:** Diabolism, Erastil

Isger stands at the border of two worlds, straddling the most lucrative trade route in Avistan. On one side is Druma and the exotic markets of Lake Encarthan. On the other is Cheliaz, the ravenous empire, gateway to the Inner Sea. Aided by the meticulous white-gloved merchants of the kalistocracy and the insatiable business interests of the empire, more gold travels through the winding valleys of Isger than anywhere else in Avistan, and thus has it been since the nation's founding more than 2,000 years ago. Accordingly, Isger has never truly been free.

Taldor's Seventh Army of Exploration pacified the region between the Menador and Five Kings mountain ranges in the middle years of the Age of Enthronement, naming the blood-soaked lands for their vanquished Kellid foes of the Isgeri tribe. For centuries, a baron of royal blood ruled

from the old capital at Logas, funneling the masterworks of Highhelm and old elvish artifacts plundered from the ruins of Kyonin to the imperial treasure vaults of Oppara. As Taldor's focus drew increasingly toward internal matters and the imperial heartland became more insular, Isger began to feel isolated and estranged from its patron. The situation collapsed during the so-called Even-Tongued Conquest, when Cheliaz broke from Taldor and claimed Isger, by force, as the first holding of a new empire.

In the six centuries since, the economic fortunes of Isger and Cheliaz have become so deeply entwined that Isger lost much of its cultural identity. The Steward and his court at Elidir are a joke, a sham aristocracy propped up by long financial and familial ties to the old wealth of Cheliaz. But despite a certain affinity for the nobler days of Cheliaz in the spirit of Isger's people, the relationships between Isger and its parent nation have always been one-sided. Most of Isger's natural resources were stripped centuries ago to benefit the greater empire, and even today all local road taxes and tariffs are shipped directly to Egorian and the Chelish bureaucracy.

Resentment of the current order grows deep in Isger, but unlike in Andoran and Galt, where similar sentiment inspired political reforms, the old-money Chelish nobles who hatch revolution in the back-alleys of Elidir do so to support a corrupt old order that cares little for the lesser people, and for the people of Isger least of all.

Persistent problems with the savage humanoids of the Chitterwood erupted 11 years ago into open warfare, as dozens of goblin tribes poured from the forest to raid caravans on the route from Logas to Elidir. Commanded by fierce hobgoblin warriors previously unknown in the region, the tribes murdered hundreds of travelers, merchants, and fighting men before turning their ravenous appetites to the towns and villages north of the Five Kings.

The outright slaughter brought about an unlikely alliance of the Hellknights of Cheliaz, Druma's Mercenary League, and the Andoren Militia, all of whom protected their financial interests and native soil by launching a brutal counterattack, pushing the monstrous raiders back to their darkened wood in a 4-year series of conflicts known as the Goblinblood Wars. By the time the fighting ended, thousands of Isgeri citizens and foreign fighters were killed and devoured by the goblin menace, and much of the foreboding woodland between Logas and the River Keld was put to the torch. Most of the surviving goblinoids took refuge in the natural caves below the wood, and at last life in Isger approached normalcy.

The nations that came to Isger's aid expected a certain payment, of course, and now Isger's fortunes are controlled by foreign powers more than ever before. With the foreigners gone and his own army decimated, Steward Hedvend and his men command only the roads of Isger. The wild lands beyond—dotted with burnt-out villages



and scattered with the bones of dead soldiers—have fallen completely to banditry. What little coin remains in the hands of Isger's rulers is spent hunting down outlaws, and the steward's agents post bounties on brigand leaders and resettled villages, drawing even more desperate warriors to pacify things in the hinterlands. It remains to be seen if these efforts are improving things or making them worse, but so long as trade continues unmolested on the road to Druma, the steward is content to treat Isger's problems as a secondary concern.

## Jalmeray

### KINGDOM OF THE IMPOSSIBLE

**Alignment:** CN

**Capital:** Niswan (10,300)

**Notable Settlements:** Padiskar (8,200)

**Ruler:** Kharswan, Thakur of Jalmeray

**Government:** Colonial Princely State

**Languages:** Vudrani

**Religion:** Irori, elementalism, mysterious eastern religions

Although he long ago departed the nation that still bears his name, the wizard-king Nex weaved a centuries-spanning life so incredible that tales of his exploits and audacity stretch from the eastern coast of Garund north to Varisia and beyond. About 4,000 years ago, as the story goes, strange ships swarmed over the eastern horizon, dispatching a vast retinue upon Nex's port of Quantum. The train of acrobats, dancers, mystics, and elephants comprised the ostentatious entourage of Khiben-Sald, greatest Maharaja of the eastern empire of Vudra.

The bizarre foreigners—at this time wholly unknown in the Inner Sea region—became fixtures in the court of Nex, and Vudran culture influenced the art and dress of the wizard-ruled nation, triggering a strong sense of orientalism that persists to the modern day. During the decade in which he was resident in Nex, Khiben-Sald and his folk inhabited the craggy forested island of Jalmeray, off Nex's eastern coast, decreed a formal holding of Vudra by no less an authority than Nex himself.

Khiben-Sald's traveling court erected dozens of temples to their strange gods, attracting a wide variety of heretofore undiscovered elemental creatures to the isle in an effort to increase its considerable natural beauty and charms. It is said that the maharaja's court brought the worship of Irori to the Inner Sea, and while the foreigners' stay was brief, its influence upon Nex, Katapesh, and Absalom can scarcely be overstated. Distant Vudra became part of the regional sphere, with ships of merchants, prophets, and explorers regularly appearing over the horizon of the Obari Ocean. When Khiben-Sald finally returned to his homeland, he left behind only a handful of glorious monuments and bound genies as a sign that he had ever been on Jalmeray at all.

## SLAVE SHIPS OF THE INNER SEA

Although despised by the revolutionaries of Andoran and Galt, slavery remains a lucrative trade on the Inner Sea and the backbone of most agrarian societies. The yellow-sailed slave galleys of Okeno are the most famous and feared of the slave-takers and sellers, but countless independent operations ply the seaways with ships packed with manacled human cargo. Pirates of the Shackles frequently raid the Sodden Lands and Mwangi interior for fresh stock, while older civilizations like Osirion and Taldor breed generations of enslaved or indentured labor as a matter of course.

Humans of all races make up the hardest and highest-valued slaves, while dwarves and gnomes escape widespread enslavement due to their reclusive natures. Common belief holds that elves make the poorest slaves and invite the most trouble, while halflings remain a popular choice in cosmopolitan Absalom and in the cities of Cheliox, where they are derisively known as slips. Orcs, gnolls, and other barbaric races frequently raid human settlements to sell their captives to slavers bound for distant ports.

The meddling Eagle Knights of Andoran, with the tacit support of the merchant-princes of Druma, actively oppose the trafficking of sentient creatures, planting sleeper agents in Okeno and the crews of the most egregious slavers in an effort to upset operations and free captives before they are sold. A mysterious armada known as the Gray Corsairs patrols the seaways in an effort to curb the slave trade, notably succeeding in the summer of 4705 with the sinking of three enormous Katapeshi galleys bound for Westcrown.

A few centuries later, Nex himself abandoned Golarion, leaving his magical kingdom to an uncertain future. In time a faction of dogmatic wizards called the Arclords of Nex assumed rulership in Quantum, following the dictates of a possibly apocryphal journal of arcane incantations and revelations said to have been penned by the nation's archmage founder and preserved by his servants. The Arclords ruled Nex for centuries before internal strife forced them out of the good graces of the nation's tolerant citizenry, and hence into exile. The shamed arcanists set off to cross the Obari Ocean into uncharted distant lands, but instead put in at Jalmeray, using the nearby island as an outpost from which to subtly influence the affairs of their homeland.

Unable to best Khiben-Sald's loyal genie guardians and distrustful of the unusual, alien magics discovered at the island's heart, the Arclords sealed the old Vudrani ruins and established their own holdings upon Jalmeray, becoming a regional power with influence not only in Nex but also throughout Qadira, Taldor, and Katapesh. The apprentices of the first Arclord inhabitants of Jalmeray spread throughout Avistan and Garund, establishing schools of magical instruction in the ancient methods of



their missing master and seeding their particular style of arcane art throughout the continents.

Then, in 2822, alien ships once more appeared on the high Obari and set anchor in the wave-ravaged harbor of Niswan. Hundreds of Vudrani rajahs embarked upon Jalmeray, curiously wondering at the audacity of the Arclords and their perversions of the changes Khiben-Sald had brought to the island. Was he not the greatest maharaja of Vudra, they asked? Did he not dwell upon Jalmeray at the bequest of Nex himself? The Vudrani nobles produced improbable but apparently accurate genealogical information proving their familial ties to Khiben-Sald, calmly inviting the Arclords to abandon their ancestral island home. When the stodgy wizards refused, the rajahs summoned an army of marids from the depths of the sea. They battered the island with relentless storms that sank all but one of the Arclords' ships. More than a thousand years after the departure of Maharajah Khiben-Sald, the Isle of Jalmeray once more belonged to Vudra.

The Vudrani nobles immediately unsealed their ancient monuments and stirred their otherworldly guardians once more to life. Within decades, they established great monasteries upon the island, spreading word to the followers of Irori throughout the world of a new form of physical and mental discipline from the distant East. All who could survive the journey were welcomed to venture to Jalmeray and endure a series of seemingly impossible challenges. Those who thrived were accepted in one of three monasteries, there to develop physical mastery and an unusual magic of the mind.

The challenge still stands centuries later, and those willing to brave a race against a djinn, wrestle a dao, and outwit an efreet are accepted into the monastic orders of Jalmeray to learn the secret arts of a distant people. Few residents of the Inner Sea understand these strange disciplines or the even stranger folk who teach them, but the adherents of the Impossible Kingdom command respect—if not trust—throughout the nations of the Inner Sea.

## Katapesh

### BAZAAR OF THE BIZARRE

**Alignment:** N

**Capital:** Katapesh (212,300)

**Notable Settlements:** Okeno (13,700), Solku (4,900)

**Ruler:** The Pactmasters of Katapesh

**Government:** Anarchic plutocracy led by faceless, inhuman merchant league

**Languages:** Kelish, Osirian, Common, Tien, Vudrani

**Religion:** Abadar, Sarenrae, Nethys, Irori

The legends say that a man can find anything in the teeming markets of Absalom, but on this topic the legends are wrong. For although the City at the Center of the World

boasts some of the finest merchants and wares of Golarion, there are some items so illegal, so dangerous, so outright bizarre that they cannot be found there. For such quarry, a buyer must seek the offerings of Katapesh, home to the greatest (and weirdest) markets in all Golarion.

The inhuman merchant council that rules Katapesh arrived out of nowhere in the Age of Destiny, carving out of a lawless region of desert coast an outpost for unusual and illicit trading with whomever ventured to their arid settlement. In time, the outpost grew into a town, then a city, and finally into a powerful nation with economic ties throughout the kingdoms of the Inner Sea.

Members of Katapesh's bizarre ruling caste cloak themselves in flowing garments that cover every inch of their 7-foot-tall, spindly frames. Garish masks conceal the pactmasters' featureless faces and muffle their deep, alien voices. The pactmasters never leave Katapesh for any reason, dealing with outside nations through hired human intermediaries and friendly merchant princes. They sponsor no army and enforce few laws upon their citizens, nearly all of whom engage in some form of trade (much of it illicit). Their chief protectors are the Aluum, relentless golems powered by the eternally bound souls of aged slaves. Even life is for sale in Katapesh, which boasts the most lucrative and varied slave markets in the hemisphere.

The fabulous wares of Katapesh bring travelers from throughout Garund and Avistan, attracting traders from far-off Vudra and Tian Xia. Some even come from other planes, and it's not unusual to encounter a dwarven gemmer, an ogre magi fleshcarver, and a gnoll slaver along the same stretch of street. The lax trade policies of the ruling elite (who actively participate in the markets) ensures that Katapesh offers delights and wares unavailable anywhere else in the multiverse. The pactmasters' golems enforce the nation's only law—that fighting must never get in the way of business.

Perhaps Katapesh's most dangerous export is pesh, a powerful narcotic derived from the spoiled milk of a rare cactus that grows in the interior deserts. Addicts from all corners of Garund and Avistan flock to the pesh parlors of the capital to wallow in their disastrous and ultimately fatal indulgences.

The walled town of Solku, in Katapesh's western reaches, suffered an infamous siege 7 years ago when gnoll tribes surged from White Canyon and attempted to enslave the whole town. Paladins of Iomedae and the town's battered militia finally turned back the savage humanoids at the Battle of Red Hail, and while gnolls remain welcome in the markets of the capital, in the hinterlands they are little trusted. The gnolls themselves, no longer content to raid for slaves in the southern deserts of Osirion on the other side of the mountains, frequently attack Katapeshi caravans and travelers in the wilderness. That these slaves are welcomed in the capital and the flourishing slave



markets of Okeno says much about the humanitarian nature of Katapesh's mysterious ruling caste.

## Kyonin

### KINGDOM OF THE ELVES

**Alignment:** CG

**Capital:** Iadara (56,340)

**Notable Settlements:** Greengold (10,400)

**Ruler:** Queen Telandia Edasseril, the Viridian Crown

**Government:** Monarchy

**Languages:** Elven

**Religion:** Calistria, Desna, Nethys, obscure elven deities

Kyonin is a beautiful realm of untamed nature, full of vibrant forests, pastoral glens, and breathtaking vistas.

Although few modern scholars know the secrets

of the secluded kingdom's history, elves

have dwelled in the region for thousands

of years. Abandoned, ruined elven

settlements dominate the Fireani

Forest north of the Five Kings

Mountains, their timeless beauty

echoing an era before the Age

of Darkness, when the elves had

hostile relations with the humans

of Old Azlant. Just before the

Earthfall, elves from throughout

the world gathered in Kyonin to

step within the sacred *Sovyrian*

*Stone* and abandon Golarion to

environmental destruction and

barbarism. Where the elves

went is a mystery to outsiders,

but they remained missing

for thousands of years, leaving

behind only a few stragglers to

watch over their abandoned realms.

Throughout the long centuries, many

of the elves who remained on Golarion became estranged

from the culture and beliefs of their people, assimilating

into barbaric human society as the Forlorn. The remaining

loyal elves in Kyonin kept to the illusion-shrouded capital

in Iadara, leaving the abandoned communities throughout

the nation fallow for artifact-looters, squatters, and vandals.

So many elven heirlooms and artifacts flowed south as

plunder from Kyonin that reclaiming them remains a major

challenge. Most elves consider the collection of these items

by non-elves a slight against all elvenkind.

The worst of the malign influences to roost in Kyonin in

the era of the elves' somnolence was Treerazer, the demonic

self-declared Lord of the Blasted Tarn. The Fireani Forest

thrummed with the compassion and deliberation of the

elves, a lifeforce the demon sucked from its vegetation like

marrow from a bone. The beast corrupted a vast swath of

the southern wood with his poisonous tongue, cautiously testing the defenses of Iadara and the forest's hard-pressed protectors hiding there. The demon's probes led it to the *Sovyrian Stone*, a morsel too delicious to pass up. Corrupting certain of the remaining guardian elves, Treerazer sought to augment the elaborate gateway so it would connect Golarion to the Abyss rather than to the elven refuge.

In response, the elves returned to Golarion in an immense parade that took weeks to complete. Tens of thousands of elves cleansed the Fireani of monstrous threats and foreign settlers, reestablishing old communities and raising forgotten battle standards upon a half-remembered world. Treerazer himself proved impossible to slay, so the elves hedged him into a haunted sliver of the forest called the

Tanglebriar, a twisted and evil vale watched

night and day by elven sentinels, lest the

demon stir again.

Expecting the worst from the

barbaric humans of Golarion, the

elves braced themselves for fero-

cious combat. Instead, they dis-

covered Avistan in the midst

of the Age of Enthronement,

an era of civilization and re-

finement (relatively speaking).

Convinced that modern hu-

mans could be reasoned with,

the elves elected not to leave

once more via the *Sovyrian*

*Stone* but instead to return to

their old kingdoms through-

out Avistan and Garund.

In places, these claims met

with resistance and war, but

in others the old network of

elven citadels and cities flares

once again with life.

Kyonin itself remains a closed realm. The elves welcome

few visitors within their borders, instructing strangers

to venture first to the small human port community of

Greengold, where arrangements can be made for travel

into the nation's interior.

Graceful crystal and wooden spires break above the forest

canopy at the capital of Iadara, with towers and bridges

built in harmony with the surrounding forest. Despite this

pleasant facade, however, several potent threats face the

capital. The elven nobles have grown restless over the years,

frustrated with the lack of progress against the evil dwelling

so close to their home. Others press Queen Edasseril for

greater rights in opening up lost elven kingdoms scattered

across Golarion, hoping to restore elven rule and reestablish

ancient rites of trade. Worse yet is the threat posed by the

drow, vile descendants of elves who remained on Golarion





and sought refuge in the depths of the earth, where they were forever changed. Elves seldom speak of the drow to outsiders, but fear of their ebony-skinned cousins underlies much of the official policy coming out of Kyonin these days.

### Lastwall

#### WATCHFUL BORDER KINGDOM

**Alignment:** LG

**Capital:** Vigil (9,780)

**Notable Settlements:** Castle Firrine (540), Vellumis (12,340)

**Ruler:** Watcher-Lord Ulthun II, Bearer of the Shattered Shield of Arnisant

**Government:** Military Dictatorship

**Languages:** Common, Varisian

**Religion:** Gorum, Iomedae

Nearly a thousand years ago, Taldor launched the Shining Crusade against the rising forces of darkness gathering under Tar-Baphon, the Whispering Tyrant. For five centuries the debased witch-king had ruled central Avistan, unifying the savage tribes of Belkzen before claiming the whole of Ustalav as his doom-shrouded, haunted domain. From all provinces of the empire came warriors eager to stem the tide of madness in the north, gathering an immense assembly of armies and factions dedicated to defeating and destroying Tar-Baphon. The host of foreign soldiers commandeered the Ustalavan town of Vellumis as a foothold against the lich-king.

Over the next 26 years, the forces of Taldor, along with help from the dwarven kingdom of Kraggodan and the Knights of Ozem, slowly hacked its way to the lich's capital, Gallowspire. Just outside the rotting city, the forces of the Whispering Tyrant and the Shining Crusade met in a final titanic battle. At a pivotal moment in the battle, the Taldorian General Arnisant imprisoned Tar-Baphon beneath the tower at the evil city's heart, although the victory later cost him his life.

When the Shining Crusade officially came to an end in 3828, Taldor created a permanent presence in the region to keep an eye on the haunted ruins of Gallowspire and to watch over the lich's prison. It named the new province Lastwall, the final bulwark against the greatest evil mankind had ever known.

When Cheliox broke with Taldor, Lastwall declared neutrality in the conflict, citing the need to maintain its sacred duty free from political concerns. Cheliox quickly agreed. Taldor protested the move, but the crippled empire had little power to take action against its faraway province. This act officially severed all ties with foreign powers and made Lastwall an independent nation.

Over the last 700 years, Lastwall has ruled itself through a near continuous line of watcher-lords, stretching all the way back to General Arnisant. Lastwall enjoys good

relations with Nirmathas, its newly formed southern neighbor, but faces constant threats from the savage humanoids that occupy the Hold of Belkzen and from the undead monstrosities that still lurk in Ustalav. Watcher-Lord Ulthun II is a young man with great ambition toward securing these borders and perhaps even expanding them. The unwed 19-year-old leader has already proven himself in battle, and enjoys strong popularity among the people. It is no surprise, then, that the line of suitors to his throne often stretches well outside Castle Overwatch in Vigil.

Lastwall's people are a hardy folk. Although they live in the shadow of great evils, they are warm and friendly to outsiders, especially those who have come to help hold the line. In recent years, the number of knights-errant and glory seekers visiting Lastwall has greatly diminished due in large part to the call to arms in Mendev against the teeming hordes of demons that infest the Worldwound. Many in Vigil grow concerned that they might not have the strength to hold off the orcs of Belkzen for too much longer if this trend continues.

### Linnorm Kings, Lands of the

#### FRIGID VIKING HOMELAND

**Alignment:** CN

**Capital:** Kalsgard (72,080)

**Notable Settlements:** Bildt (6,730), Halgrim (26,340), Jol (9,900), Trollheim (12,120)

**Ruler:** Sveinn Blood-Eagle, White Estrid, Ingimundr the Unruly, Opir Eightfingers

**Government:** Loose confederation of tribal monarchies

**Languages:** Skald

**Religion:** Erastil, Torag, Desna, Gorum

In the frigid lands north of Varisia dwell the Viking tribes of the Linnorm Kingdoms, legendary across Avistan for their prowess on the battlefield and upon the open sea. The land takes its name from the four saga heroes who command the loyalties of its warlike, storied people. As has been the custom since the earliest days, only warriors who have bested a linnorm in single combat can claim rulership in the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, with the hero-hungry populace flocking to their victorious banners. Roughly speaking, the nation divides itself into four kindgoms loosely based near the regional capitals of Jol, Halgrim, Bildt, and Kalsgard. The latter is the largest city in the territory and home to Sveinn Blood-Eagle, the most powerful of the four Viking lords.

An immense, invisible First World Rift spans the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, resulting in a wide variety of near-mythic creatures inhabiting the northland wilds. Foremost among these beasts are the serpentine fey dragons known as the linnorms, but nature spirits, weird trolls and giants are more common here than almost



anywhere else in Golarion. In particular, the hooded female spirits known as norns seem to be tied to the region's fate. Their knowledge of the future makes them able prognosticators to the heroic Linnorm Kings, even in an age when none of the old prophecies seem reliable.

The overworked, frigid landscape north of the Grungir Forest cannot support the land's Ulfen natives, and threat of starvation remains a real problem, especially in the depths of winter. Many able-bodied adults avoid this fate by joining naval crews or trading caravans bound for distant lands. These expeditions always pack plenty of their homeland's salted fish, animal pelts, and woolen clothing for trading, but they also bring sharpened axes and metal-rimmed round wooden shields, for the Vikings prefer warfare and pillage to trade.

Some of the land's monarchs even personally attend their questing warships, such as when White Astrid of Bildt famously led 15 longships in a daring raid against the Nidalese port at Nisroch before breaking the Chelaxian blockade at the Arch of Aroden to put in triumphantly at Absalom. Foreign victories bring great prestige at home, but Linnorm Kings who leave their contentious homeland often face political struggles upon their return.

Dragon-prowed longships of the Linnorm Kings emerged in force from the Steaming Sea to raid southern settlements late in the second millennium of the Age of Enthronement, but landborn Ulfen humans from the region had traded as far east as Brevoyn in the previous age. The Viking raiders spread the seed and culture of the northmen throughout the ports of the Inner Sea, where folk of pale skin and tawny hair still thrive to this day.

When an aged Linnorm King is ready to pass into the afterlife, he initiates a risky island-hopping naval adventure into unknown territory at the top of the world. Such journeys over centuries have resulted in the Arcadian community of Valenhall, whose inhabitants believe themselves to be living in another world.

### Mammoth Lords, Realm of the LOST LAND OF THE DISTANT NORTH

**Alignment:** N

**Capital:** None

**Notable Settlements:** Hillscross (8,400), Icestair (11,300), Tulguth (3,900)

**Ruler:** Mighty Kuldor, Herdsman of the Bearpelt Following

**Government:** Loose alliance of primitive tribes

**Languages:** Hallit, Giant

**Religion:** Gorum, Minderhal, Rovagug

North of the forbidding Kodar Mountains, as one travels east from Avistan's coast, the rustic civilization of the Lands of the Linnorm Kings and Irrisen eventually gives way to a brutal tribal society little changed from the barbarism of prehistoric

times. Clad in animal furs and bearing fetishes of feather and bone, hordes of nomadic Kellids wander the northern plains. These Kellid wanderers war with one another, intimidate each other with legendary acts of bravery, and trade in relics and lore gleaned from outsiders walking the Heavenly Road over the Crown of the World (which spills out upon Avistan at the treacherous descent known as the Icestair). Strangest of all, enormous creatures that died out millions of years ago elsewhere thrive in this isolated northland, especially near the Tusk, a massive mountain spur that bisects the nation.

Orc raiders from Belkzen frequently cross the Kodar range to capture titanic beasts such as mastodons, woolly rhinos, giant sloths, and even dinosaurs for export to armies and exhibitions in the civilized south. This spreads the Realm of the Mammoth Lords' reputation as a place of walking giants far and wide, even if few foreigners manage to survive the deadly trek to the realm itself.

The tundra between Icestair and the Hoarwood bears the bloody smears of endless conflict between the indigenous Kellid tribesmen and the witch-guided Ulfen of Irrisen. Packs of crafty, ravenous trolls range the low country along the Gullik River, a regenerating bulwark against the war-frenzied Mammoth Lords and their savage followings. The realm's eastern borders are even more dangerous, abutting the chaos-warped fallen barbarian kingdom of Sarkoris deep within the shadow of the demon-infested Worldwound.

The realm has no unified government, although certain followings collude on matters of war and trade. Strength is the greatest authority, but despite their primitive nature the local folk are wily and intelligent, favoring leaders who display not just physical prowess but also wit and guile. Druids and rangers thrive in the Realm of the Mammoth Lords, with their mastery over animals granting them great prestige and status in their followings.

Since ancient times, the folk of the Mammoth Lords have had strong affection for the giants of the Kodar Mountain uplands. Young bravos frequently raid into the hills in an attempt to slaughter as many giants as possible while leaving a youth alive for abduction and adoption into the tribe. Certain mystics revere these foundling giants with a near-religious fervor, but most of the children grow to rely upon the tribe and protect it like family. Most followings larger than 100 nomads contain at least one giant, while the largest Mammoth Lord tribe—the Bearpelt Following of Mighty Kuldor—boasts nearly a dozen.

While the Kellids revere their giant cohorts and some beast cults have developed around the immense creatures that roam the land, they hold only a small handful of gods sacred. Gorum and the giant god Minderhal predominate, their dour philosophies mirroring the desperate existence of life in the distant north. If the followings hold one reverence in common, it is the regard with which they hold the Tusk and the yawning caverns that open in its deepest valleys.



Incredible rumors suggest that the beasts that make the realm famous somehow emerged from an impossible underworld with its own false sun, a savage microcosm in which the dinosaurs never died and humans never emerged from their primitive origins. The Pathfinder Society has mounted five expeditions to this rumored inner world, but none of have ever returned from the country alive.

## Mendev

### CRUSADER THEOCRACY

**Alignment:** LG

**Capital:** Nerosyan (64,700)

**Notable Settlements:** Egede (39,410), Kenabres (12,330)

**Ruler:** The Crusader Queen Galfrey, Sword of Iomedae

**Government:** Monarchy

**Languages:** Common, Hallit

**Religion:** Iomedae, Aroden

Tales of demonic monstrosities spewing from the distant north spread swiftly throughout Avistan in the beginning of the last century. The “Song of Sarkoris” related the fall of a wicked barbarian kingdom to cosmic horrors from the Great Beyond. “The Ballad of Prince Zhakar” told of the brave march into a chaos-warped land by a band of Mendevian heroes who died one by one fighting their way to the center of the blight, a “wound in the world.” Ministers of congregations shaken by the death of Aroden seized upon songs like these and reports of vile creatures from the north, whipping their followers into a frenzy of religious fervor.

The clergy of Iomedae led the way, stepping from the shadows of their bewildered masters in the faltering church of Aroden. Nobles in Cheliox, Isger, and Andoran, fearing growing domestic discontent and threatened by hordes of mercenaries and freeswords roaming their countrysides, joined with the Iomedean church to sponsor the first Mendevian Crusade in 4622. Thousands of pilgrims soon made their way up the River Road from Cassomir to Chesed and across the Lake of Mists and Veils to Mendev.

Before the crusades, most northerners knew nothing of Mendev, a proud kingdom descended from Iobarian exiles and ne'er-do-wells. As related in the tale that still fuels new recruits to the crusade, Mendev's last prince died in the ruins of Sarkoris, near the rupture in reality known as the Worldwound. Chaos on Mendev's western front has increased disastrously in the decades since, with the total loss of Drezen in 4638 triggering a Second Crusade that some scholars believe drew so many righteous men and women from Cheliox that the diabolical House Thrune wrested control of the empire with relatively little opposition.

Foreigners engaged in the holy wars against the blight of the Worldwound now outnumber the native people of Mendev, who have been pushed aside and treated as an

underclass by the nation's new inhabitants. In theory, the crusaders follow the greatest of their number, the righteous Queen Galfrey, Sword of Iomedae, a Mendev-born Chelaxian duchess trained in the Aldorian battle-arts. In practice, mercenaries and professional soldiers outnumber the pilgrims, and while Galfrey's commanders and armored guardians keep the populace reciting the Acts of Iomedae and focused on rooting out demonic influence in the Iobarian underclass, a real brutality and lawlessness lurks just below the surface.

The uneasiness is worst in the border town of Kenabres, where the charismatic old Iomedean legate Hulmun has led a zealous pogrom against demon-worshippers since the launch of the Third Crusade in 4665. Hundreds of indigenous Mendevians and pilgrims have burned at the stake since those dark days, and the screaming flames echo the passion of Mendev's most fervent zealots. Galfrey's government does little to halt the torture and extermination, preferring to focus upon military matters in Sarkoris.

The Mendevian capital at Nerosyan was once an old Issian pirate outpost, and despite the presence of paladins, priests, and holy men, the frontier town retains some of its unruly character. The length of the Sellen River from the capital west to Storasta falls within the region warped by the Worldwound, and the town's harbor guard must keep careful watch for unthinkable horrors emerging from the river depths.

Along the border of Sarkoris, a string of fortresses named for generals lost in the Worldwound looks out over the twisted geography across the river, housing battle-hardened warriors rotating between defending Mendev from rapacious hellspawn emerging from the Worldwound and suicide missions into the heart of the chaos in an attempt to stem it at its source.

Slowly but surely, the reality-bending chaos of the Worldwound consumes more and more of the world, spreading its malign influence ever southward. A string of rune-encrusted menhirs known as *wardstones* keeps the worst of the demonland's inhabitants and influence from spreading, but the stones must be maintained with careful prayer and ritual, and remain constant points of attack by demons and their servants from within the wound.

Sooner or later, the *wardstones* will fail. The Iomedaeans are on their fourth crusade, and the goodly kingdoms of the world are running out of heroes. Unless something changes soon, the Worldwound will encompass all of Avistan.

## Molthune

### TERRITORIAL EXPANSIONISTS

**Alignment:** LN

**Capital:** Canorate (27,450)

**Notable Settlements:** Eranmas (11,970), Fort Ramgate (2,200)

**Ruler:** Imperial Governor Markwin Teldas



**Government:** Military Oligarchy  
**Languages:** Common, Varisian  
**Religion:** Iomedae, Abadar, Erastil

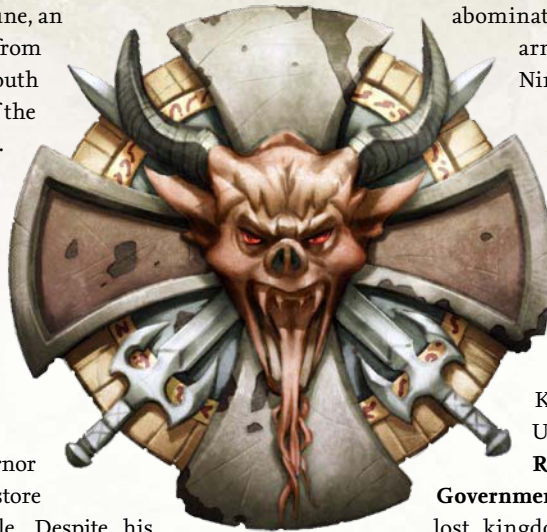
With the collapse of Cheliox following Aroden's death, many of the empire's marchlands fell into open revolt. One of the first among them was Molthune, an enormous province stretching from the Menador Mountains to the south all the way north to the border of the military province of Lastwall. Molthune's loss further crippled the wounded empire, inspiring other provinces like Galt and Andoran to break from Cheliox.

Unfortunately, peace would not find the newly independent nation for some time. Using ancient maps of the territory to define its boundaries, Governor Kellon quickly attempted to restore order to his beleaguered people. Despite his attempts, the independent folk of the Fangwood Forest resisted his rule, seeking to break away from the old traditions that treated them as little more than indentured servants. Acts of sabotage at the various lumber camps throughout the region eventually led to all-out rebellion, and in 4655 the Fangwood rangers announced the birth of their own new nation, Nirmathas. His position as governor greatly damaged, Kellon soon relinquished his title and faded into ignominy.

The intervening years have seen six new governors, each drawn from the Molthuni Army, and various levels of open warfare with Nirmathas. Although each governor has failed to cow the folk of Nirmathas, Molthune's current leader, Markwin Teldas, has ordered the construction of a new fortress along the northern border, from which to launch greater assaults. Fort Ramgate (so named because of the repeated attempts by raiders to destroy its main gate) nears completion, an event sure to precede even greater conflict between the two struggling nations.

Most citizens of Molthune fall into one of two distinct groups: city dwellers and laborers. The city dwellers, almost all of whom live in Eranmas or the capital of Canorate, are considered "Imperial Citizens," and may participate in local governance and foreign trade and move freely about the country. Most of the rest of the populace are laborers. These indentured servants till the great fields of the central plains and perform most of the common work that keeps the economy of Molthune afloat. While many laborers resent their position, most take pride in their work, seeing it as one part of a greater whole that allows

Molthune to maintain its proud traditions while forging a new future based in independence. Governor Teldas recently proclaimed that any laborer can gain the status of Citizen by serving in the armies of Molthune for a period of 5 years. While this decision enjoys strong popularity with the working masses, the elite consider it to be an abomination. Teldas hopes the swell in the army's numbers allows him to retake Nirmathas, thus quieting his critics.



## Mwangi Expanse

### JUNGLE WILDERNESS

**Alignment:** N

**Capital:** None

**Notable Settlements:** Bloodcove (5,280), Jaha (5,600), Kibwe (3,800), Mzali (36,900), Nantambu (14,500), Osibu (9,800), Ruins of Kho (unknown), Senghor (26,430), Usaro (8,790)

**Ruler:** None

**Government:** Countless tribal strongmen, lost kingdoms, unorganized nomad bands, and one enraged gorilla king

**Languages:** Polyglot

**Religion:** Shamanism, ancestor worship, Angazhan (demon lord of beasts), Gozreh

Some of the oldest human ruins in the world lie scattered throughout the interior jungles of Garund, cracked through with powerful roots and rubbed smooth by the passing of millennia. The reclusive tribal inhabitants from whom the forests and wildlands take their name trace their heritage to forgotten kingdoms and lost nations, but they have fallen far since the days of their zenith, and their glorious past remains a mystery not just to the outside world, but also to themselves.

No accurate maps of Garund's interior exist, and the Mwangi, elven, and less-recognizable tribes of the Expanse seldom declare formal borders. Some nomadic groups wander the jungles and valleys without ever settling anywhere for long. Several locales within the trackless wild attract potent malevolent spirits, sentient plant colonies, juju zombie cults, or similar hazards, making them shunned by right-thinking natives and explorers alike.

Chelaxian explorers first penetrated the Mwangi Expanse during the reign of the expansionist Prince Haliad I, establishing a colony at Sargava that still exists (if precariously) to this day. Centuries earlier, the insidious Asp Consortium established a beachhead at a scurvy port known as Bloodcove at the mouth of the powerful Vanji River, from whence its meticulous





agents penetrated and exploited the near-limitless exotic resources of the vast Mwangi interior.

The so-called Fever Sea west of Garund was quieter in those days. Outcast Mwangi and exiled pirate lords managed (mostly) bloodless coexistence in the Shackle Isles, but had not yet developed into a serious naval threat. The vast wealth traveling north from Bloodcove and Eleder attracted more and more pirates, and the coming of the Eye of Abendego in the first weeks of the Age of Lost Omens largely cut off the colonization effort from the rest of the world.

Stories of the early explorers and colonists still filter north to the ears of opportunistic merchants, excitement-starved treasure-seekers, and wily Pathfinders. The tales speak of lost cities and gorilla kings, of religions grown ancient by the time the *Starstone* fell, and of riches undreamed by the most fecund minds of the civilized north.

The stories speak of Jaha, the great crumbling city at the heart of the northern jungles, a bewildering array of terraced fortresses and irregular courtyards. The star-seeking mystics of Lirgen spoke of Jaha in prophecy and dogma, recognizing the ruin's importance to the past and the future. After the Eye of Abendego destroyed Lirgen and most of its orthodox theocrats, a rogue faction of Lirgeni astrologers led a splinter group of refugees to Jaha. By sword

and axe, the Lirgeni pacified the degenerate primitives inhabiting the city before reclaiming the ruined structure from the jungle. The xenophobic, increasingly erratic ruling caste of Jaha has of late erected dozens of enormous marker stones throughout the city for an unknown purpose.

Many miles south of Jaha lies the treacherous Lake Ocota, home to mysterious aquatic beasts from primordial times. These long-necked predators occasionally range the numerous rivers of the Expanse, stretching heads full of needle teeth upon muscular serpentine necks to snatch prey from the decks of rafts or from the riverbanks. A monolithic ruined city called Usaro on the southern coast of the lake is the seat of the mighty Silverback King, the feral monarch of a society of intelligent, bloodthirsty apes known as the spawn of Angazhan. The king, himself the latest in a long line of awakened gorillas, is the most honored earthbound servant of the demon lord of beasts and a major threat to all humans in the Expanse, native and otherwise.

The Silverback King's treasure vaults contain priceless riches plundered from defeated tribes and enemies, but surely the greatest riches hidden in the expanse can be found in the fabled Ruins of Kho, a crashed flying city of the Shory civilization that ranged Golarion in the Age of Destiny. Nearly all expeditions to the ruins—mentioned in





several ancient Osirian texts and visited by at least one early Gebbite adventuring hero—end in tragic failure, and only a few explorers have returned to tell tales of vast stretching ramps spanning impossible towers, shattered amphitheatres of green glass, and enormous engines the size of granaries still thrumming with ancient energy. Without exception, even the most successful plunderers of Kho meet with unforeseen bad luck. Most of them manage to die from it after a few years of treading carefully. Such is the legend of Shory artifice, however, that not even certain death deters the desperate from trying to discover it.

South of Lake Ocota, across the spirit-haunted Bandu Hills, the Screaming Jungle looms like a wave of verdant terror on the horizon. The confounding tangle of towering trees and sentient man-killing plants gets its name from the constant screeching of millions of monkeys that inhabit the canopy. The cacophony can be heard several miles in all directions from the forest, and most travelers notice the screaming before the woodland itself comes into view. The most significant community within the Screaming Jungle is Osibu, site of the world-spanning Nemesis Well into which the Pathfinder Durvin Gest famously thrust the *Lens of Galundari*.

At the southwest edge of the jungle lies Mzali, oldest of the ruined cities of the Mwangi Expanse and the most heavily populated by far. About a century ago, the population of the great overgrown city exploded when pilgrims from all over the Expanse came to see for themselves a bizarre phenomenon. The witch-doctors of a strange religion both enticingly new and unthinkably old produced the mummified remains of Walkena, a boy prince of the near-mythical original Mwangi society. Within the last 30 years, the mannikin mummy sprung to cruel life, issuing orders to its prosperous cult that whipped his followers into rage against the colonists of Sargava and all outside influences in the Expanse, and open warfare has been the rule ever since.

## Nex

### MONUMENT TO A LOST WIZARD-KING

**Alignment:** N

**Capital:** Quantum (60,000)

**Notable Settlements:** Ecanus (23,400), Oenopion (8,900)

**Ruler:** The Council of Three and Nine

**Government:** Bureaucracy led by a council of representatives from various political factions and arcane traditions

**Languages:** Osirian, Kelish, Common, Vudrani

**Religion:** Nethys, Abadar, Pharasma, Lamashtu, Irori, Norgorber

The Age of Destiny spawned countless luminaries who left indelible marks on history, from Azghaad, the first pharaoh of ancient Osirion, to the orc hero Belkzen, who conquered the great dwarven citadel of Koldukar. Aroden

himself walked Avistan as a mortal in those distant days, when each new century seemed to spawn a legend of its own. One of the greatest of these legends emerged on the east coast of Garund in the ancient city-state of Quantum, a wizard-king of peerless arcane skill possessed of unheralded creativity and eldritch genius. That conqueror was the archmage Nex, whose arcane legacy survives to the modern day in the form of a nation that bears his name.

Nex boasts the most cosmopolitan and refined cities of Garund's east coast, with the capital at Quantum rivaling the extravagance of Oppara in Taldor or Sothis in the era of the legendary God-Kings of Osirion. Monumental palaces and impossible spires crowd the city's chaotic streets, which wind past hanging gardens, open-air mazes, and bustling souks. The crumbling statues of Nex and the ancient heroes who traveled with him and forged his kingdom look out upon the city's roofs and balconies, a constant reminder of the man who made Quantum and the surrounding land his own.

In his time, Nex traveled the world and the Great Beyond, established important tenets of magical theory that remain influential today, and vastly enriched his private nation through his adventures and the judicious application of *wish*-level magics. Territorial ambitions in the south eventually brought Nex into conflict with another arcane warlord, the calculating genius Geb, inheritor of a rich magic tradition tied to a lost colony of ancient Osirion.

Nex's conflict with Geb spanned centuries, with each wizard-king extending his life through the application of certain poultices and the imbibing of arcane elixirs. During these struggles, a series of foul workings by Geb blighted the land of Nex beyond the cities, which benefitted from impervious magical protection. After the disastrous touch of Geb, plants refused to thrive in the wildlands of Nex. Ever since, the wastelands have lain barren, inhabited by outlaws and the descendants of great magical beasts summoned during the years of conflict with the south.

As their war dragged on, Nex finally achieved true immortality when he created a personal demiplane at a fluxpoint of multiversal energy, a domain the wizard-king dubbed the Crux of Nex. The immortal archmage carved a shard of the Crux to erect the impossible spire from which he launched an unsuccessful siege of Absalom, and again at his palace in Quantum to form the mysterious Refuge of Nex, a last-resort bunker to shelter himself from his enemies.

Nex vanished after a disastrous Gebbite attack bathed the capital in a cloying, poisonous fog in 576. Some claim he died in the assault, while others say he simply withdrew to his refuge, abandoning his followers and the kingdom that bore his name to their fate. Somehow, the confused remnants of his authority managed to keep Geb at bay, and in the centuries since, the nation has fallen into the hands of a succession of arcane fraternities and cults of personality



who purport to represent the departed archmage's plan for the subjects he left behind. The contentious Council of Three and Nine is an attempt to build consensus within Nex's infamous factions, and while the nation remains characteristically crippled with bureaucracy it nonetheless has never been conquered, despite the best efforts of Geb and political forces from within and without.

Society in Nex centers around Quantum, as it has for countless centuries. The city attracts a wide assortment of inhabitants, from ambitious wizards seeking to perfect their craft in one of Quantum's vaunted arcane universities to outsiders summoned to Golarion by long-dead mystics to merchants from Druma, Jalmeray, Vudra, and even Tian Xia. The city thrives upon its diversity of thought, trade, and influence and shows little tolerance for xenophobes. A creature that might be considered a monster or worse in the ports of the Inner Sea is merely a citizen in Nex, where legend holds almost anything is possible.

Deep in the barren interior of Nex, the alchemists of Oenopion toil at the creation of the eldritch elixirs and potions so common to the capital and so important to the nation's economy. The craftiest, most reliable homunculi come from Oenopion, which also boasts an impressive golemworks and an immense ooze colony. The latter dominates the town's miasmatic central lake, forming a sentient hive mind useful for potent divinations and the utter disposal of faulty artifice, renegade constructs, and enemies of the state.

South of Oenopion, 3 days by boat along the Ustradi River from Quantum, lies the sprawling city of Ecanus, a fortress town created to fuel the war effort against Geb and the hub of Nex's awe-inspiring military. Battlemages trained in warfare and tactical evocation form the backbone of the mobile force, backed up by nightmare monstrous beasts churned out by the city's monumental fleshforges. Building-sized artifacts created by Nex himself, the fleshforges are responsible for a significant portion of the murderous creatures that haunt the wastelands between Nex's cities, the Barrier Wall mountains, and even the eastern jungles of the Mwangi Expanse.

Farther south the barrens give way to an ever-shifting nightmare of magic-blasted desert forever twisted by the ancient spellduels of the wizard-kings and their potent servants. This forbidding landscape—the Mana Wastes—marks the ever-shifting, unclaimed border between the two nations. Its unpredictable danger and otherworldly inhabitants promise a swift death for most explorers, but some few political exiles, escaped slaves, and dissident thinkers find their way through the Wastes to Alkenstar, an independent city-state in the western foothills where magic refuses to function.

The ancient war with Geb left an eternal stain upon Nex and its culture, but open warfare with the necromancers

of the south faded into reluctant trade centuries ago, and these days Nex imports most of its foodstuffs from Gebbite plantations worked by zombie slaves. Obstinate factions in the capital, notably the star-crossed Arclords of Nex, argue that the current state of détente would enrage the wizard who gave his name to the kingdom, but it has been centuries since Nex last appeared in the world of Golarion, and history marches ever forward without him.

## Nidal

### SHADOWY SERVITOR STATE

**Alignment:** LE

**Capital:** Pangolais (18,900)

**Notable Settlements:** Nisroch (24,320), Ridwan (11,400)

**Rulers:** The Umbral Court

**Government:** Militaristic theocracy

**Languages:** Shadowtongue, Common, Varisian

**Religion:** Zon-Kuthon, Diabolism, Desna

When the strike of the *Starstone* cast Golarion into a thousand years of darkness, the warrior clans of ancient Nidal cried out for the protection of their long-forgotten gods. Their pleas instead reached the ears of a malignant entity from a distant corner of the Great Beyond who uniquely appreciated their predicament and delighted in their fear of the dark. The immortal being—a powerful entity from the Plane of Shadow known as Zon-Kuthon—offered the terrified humans succor from the darkness in exchange for unquestioned obedience for eternity. Facing extinction with the blotting out of the Sun, the proud warrior-lords of Nidal relented, ensuring the nation's eternal survival while enshackling its freedom.

Thus did the rulers of Nidal become shadowbound to the Midnight Lord, an eternal bondage revealed by the dull black eyes of Nidal's Umbral Court. Lesser citizens of Nidal know that opposition to the court means death, swiftly deferring to the orders of even the most minor of their lords. Some members of the aristocracy are more powerful and influential than others, of course, including the Black Triune of Pangolais, the dark druid Eloiander of Ridwan, and the persuasive sorcerer Kholas, adviser to Queen Abrogail in Egorian.

Senior members of the Umbral Court convene thrice annually in Nidal's secluded capital of Pangolais, which sprawls below the eternal shadow of the Uskwood. So little light reaches the cobbled streets of Pangolais that it is nearly impossible to distinguish day from night, and strangers to the city soon find themselves lost without a guide. Such a service demands outlandish fees, for outsiders are forbidden from walking the winding ways of Pangolais.

The port city of Nisroch serves as the public face of Nidal. Traders from Cheliox, Korvosa, and northern



Varisia sometimes put in to Nisroch to trade or repair damaged vessels, but strangers seldom linger long in the shadowlands of Nidal, finding its people inhospitable and suspicious of outsiders. Art and music are all but forbidden in Nidal, and much of the nation's culture involves esoteric mysticism related to shadows and darkness. Recent reports from spies amid Andoran's Gray Corsairs suggest that pirates from the Shackles dock in Nisroch with increasing frequency, but little is known of the reasons behind their visits and the implications they might have for Nidal's relationship with Cheliox, which constantly wars with the pirates along Garund's western coast.

Along Nidal's eastern border, in the foothills of the Menador Mountains, the small city of Ridwan serves as the center of worship for the faithful of Zon-Kuthon. Adherents believe that the rift limned with black flame and cloying smoke in the city's central square is the spot where the Midnight Lord first emerged upon Golarion. The site is a powerful gate to the Deeping Darkness, a particularly vile chasm at the heart of the Plane of Shadow, from which Zon-Kuthon's clerics pluck legendary nightmare beasts. Once sufficiently dominated and broken to the will of the Umbral Lords, the otherworldly shadows serve Nidal at home and abroad.

Since the fall of Nidal 370 years ago in the Everwar, "abroad" has most often meant Cheliox, where shadowcasters trained in Ridwan and Pangolais support the diabolical legions of that nation's transformed government. For centuries after their humiliation in the Everwar, the folk of Nidal bristled at Chelioxian occupation and influence. During the struggle for the throne following Aroden's death, the Umbral Court threw its support behind the House of Thrune, which rewarded the act by withdrawing Cheliox agents from Nidal once its own power was assured. Now Nidal stands once again as its own entity, yet remains intimately entwined with the darkness at Egorian.

## Nirmathas

### WAR-TORN WILDERNESS

**Alignment:** CG

**Capital:** Tamran (9,730)

**Notable Settlements:** Skelt (5,400)

**Ruler:** Forest Marshal Gavirk

**Government:** Meritocracy

**Languages:** Common, Varisian, Hallit

**Religion:** Erastil, Gorum, Iomedae

The people of Nirmathas are in search of a national identity, a search frustrated by a perpetual state of war with their southern neighbor, Molthune. During the years of turmoil following the collapse of Cheliox, Molthune's governor claimed the southern reach of the Fangwood as part of his newly independent nation.

Soldiers from the regional capital at Canorate ensured political stability, but soon came to be resented by the locals of the port city of Tamran and the rangers of the Fangwood as agents of oppression. For years, Cheliox had stripped the region of resources while providing little in return. When new mandates from Canorate simply changed the flow of exploitation from one city to another, the promise of a new era collapsed. What started as a few minor acts of sabotage soon blossomed into a guerilla war for independence.

The early years of the conflict were bloody and disorganized, with bands of woodsmen and other irregular troops acting independently. All of this changed when a half-elf trapper named Irgal Nirmath united a handful of groups into one sizable force. As his victories mounted, Nirmath drew more rebels to his banner. His legend spread throughout the north. Even the commanders of the Molthuni forces began to respect the cunning and might of Irgal's Axe, as his force came to be known.

After 7 years of war, an uneasy border solidified and the rebels declared the newborn nation of Nirmathas. Irgal had precious little time to enjoy the fruits of his cunning, as he fell to an assassin's blade in 4657. With no central government, the nation stood on unsteady ground. That autumn, the leaders of Tamran and the forest town of Skelt gathered to select a new marshal to lead the defense forces and the nation as a whole. The same system has been in place ever since, with a council of elders selecting a new marshal every 4 years based entirely upon military skill. While some would prefer to select a leader based on his skills in diplomacy or trade negotiation, the unstable nature of the region and its hostile southern neighbor do not allow for such indulgences.

The current Marshal, Weslen Gavirk, hails from Tamran, a city sacked five times since the founding of Nirmathas. Growing up in the city bred in Gavirk a deep-seated distrust of Molthune and a strong compassion for the victims of that nation's aggression. Gavirk directs his forces from the city, preparing for a major campaign against Molthune's new construction at Fort Ramgate, hoping to destroy it before it can be used to launch an invasion of the Fangwood.

The people of Nirmathas are a fiercely independent folk, consisting primarily of woodsmen, artisans, and trappers. With the nation's entire economy based on the bounties of the Fangwood, the Nirmathi treat the forest as a sort of sacred ground that must be held at all costs. They are on good terms with the folk of Lastwall, with whom they share the wood's northern reach, and the people of Varisia. A recent passage opening through Bloodsworn Vale has given Nirmathas an independent trade partner on the western side of the Mindspin Mountains, a vital link to finished goods and weapons.



## Numeria

### SAVAGE LAND OF SUPER-SCIENCE

**Alignment:** CN

**Capital:** Starfall (32,400)

**Notable Settlements:** Castle Urion (1,240), Chesed (59,690), Hajoth Hakados (6,780)

**Ruler:** Kevoth-Kul, the Black Sovereign of Numeria

**Government:** Barbaric monarchy

**Languages:** Hallit

**Religion:** Desna, Gorum, Nethys

The headwaters of the mighty Sellen River system emerge from powerful lakes and springs in the arid plains of Numeria, the greatest of the so-called River Kingdoms and the site of the strangest otherworldly influence on all of Golarion. Before the coming of demons in the Worldwound, Numeria had been on the verge of uniting several of its neighbors into a vast empire of the north, but the fall of Sarkoris and the subsequent horror in the north changed Numeria's trajectory. Now the brutal Black Sovereign and his council of wicked sorcerers struggle to keep things together while outside influences threaten the nation from all sides.

In the civilized south, Numeria is best known as the source of Skymetal, extremely rare metallic alloys useful in weaponcraft and magical artifice. The most common of these is adamantine, but seven varieties exist, each with its own properties and arcane affinities. Demand for these most precious of metals sees them traded and sold as far away as the markets of Geb, and the reputation of "Numerian steel" extends well into central Casmaron.

The shards of twisted metal gathered by Numerian wanderers and traded in all directions come from the scattered debris of a great metal mountain that fell from the sky many millennia ago, perhaps even before the Age of Darkness. The enormous bulk was a vessel from the depths of outer space, and when it broke up over the plains of Numeria its destruction bathed the region in weird energies that result in strange mutations to this day. The largest fragment of the vessel, with a great many intact cabins, dominates the landscape near Numeria's capital city of Starfall and is known as the Silver Mount.

Life in the grim capital is a perverse, barbarian version of the decadent courts of the south, steeped in addiction to vile liquids extracted from the Silver Mount and patrolled by metal men rescued from the tarnished edifice. The word of the Black Sovereign is law in Starfall, with the debased sorcerers of the Technic League and their Gearsman servants enforcing the will of Numeria's brutal dictator. Those who follow his lead (and sometimes revel in it) participate in the dark, carnal rewards of conformity, while rebels and the dregs of society live only to serve.

The tyranny of Starfall extends throughout the nation to threaten the many nomadic barbarian Kellid tribes that range the northern plains. While most fear the word of the Black Sovereign, the canniest know the ruler's fearless legions can only be in one place at one time, and thus freedom abounds where the Black Sovereign does not cast his jealous gaze.

In the last century, Numeria has absorbed vast numbers of pilgrims and religious warriors venturing from southern lands to the crusades of Mendev and the Worldwound. These travelers often take the so-called River Road from the Inner Sea up the Sellen to Chesed, and from there to Mendev and the glory of holy war.

Most pilgrims first approach Numeria at the imposing Castle Urion, where the Sellen forks east and west. The new fortification stands on land claimed by the Black Sovereign, but a full detachment of griffon-riding Knights of Iomedae ensures the protection of travelers and administers to those in need of medical or spiritual attention. During the first two Mendevian Crusades, most travelers took the western fork of the Sellen, venturing north along the haunted border of Ustalav to reach crusader-occupied Storasta and eventually Nerosyan, capital of Mendev. When Storasta and the surrounding river fell under the tainted sway of the Worldwound, the pilgrims at Castle Urion began to flow eastward, toward the near-independent trading community of Hajoth Hakados.

The river journey from there to Chesed sees frequent raids from the lawless barbarian nomads of eastern Numeria, but as the attacks represent one of the final challenges before reaching the end of their quest, many pilgrims actually look forward to these battles. Finally, the travelers reach the coastal city of Chesed, on the Lake of Mists and Veils, the final destination before arrival in Mendev.

The Technic League welcomes visitors to Chesed for the coin they bring, and protection of this flow of capital has greatly changed Numeria in the last century. Wily merchants in Chesed know that many pilgrims are dupes, and more of them lose their final pennies in Chesed than at any other point in their long journey. Most travel by boat to their final destination in Egede. Unscrupulous captains often charge exorbitant fees for this service, safely banking on an increase in unthinking zealotry as the pilgrims get within sight of their goal.

## Osirion

### LAND OF THE PHARAOHS

**Alignment:** LN

**Capital:** Sothis (111,989)

**Notable Settlements:** Eto (9,740), Ipeq (12,730), Totra (52,360), Shiman-Sekh (6,680)

**Ruler:** The Ruby Prince Khemet III





**Government:** Celestial Monarchy

**Languages:** Osirian

**Religion:** Nethys, Sarenrae, Pharasma, Lamashtu, Irori, Norgorber, Rovagug

For almost 2,000 years after the *Starstone* fell from space to create the Inner Sea, chaos and ruin defined Golarion. The old empires were cast down and strange creatures born of darkness and fear stalked the land. It was a time of barbarism and terror, a slow decline into extinction for humankind. Humanity rose again in the jungles and deserts of the south Inner Sea coast. Osirion, a land of living god-kings and monolithic pyramids, arose as a civilized beacon in a world ruled by barbarism, the first of the great kingdoms of man's Age of Destiny.

A prophet of Nethys known as Azghaad unified the warring tribes along the River Sphinx, initiating Osirion's first pharaonic dynasty in the city of Sothis, which still bears titanic statues carved in his image. The Osirian folk honored their pharaohs as gods in the flesh, acceding to their every whim and marching upon their grand ambitions. Within 500 years, Osirion controlled vast territories in Thuvia and modern-day Rahadoum and Katapesh, as well as a lost colony that eventually became the kingdom of Geb. This

First Age of Osirion generated pyramid tombs and temples for scores of pharaohs and their servants, many of which remain undiscovered (and well defended) to this day.

A succession of lesser pharaohs and temporary foreign conquerors ruled Osirion in the middle centuries of the Age of Destiny, erecting cities and temples of their own in an attempt to leave a permanent mark on history. Most are forgotten today. During this period, Osirion waned in influence throughout the Inner Sea, ceding its marginal colonial territories.

Four competing warlords known as the Four Pharaohs of Ascension halted Osirion's decline about two centuries before the foundation of Taldor, restoring the nation's influence and holdings using force and guile. The resulting prosperity fueled a rebirth in the nation's spirit, marking Osirion's Second Age.

In 1532, foreign influence ended Osirion's pharaonic era when Qadiri agents toppled the corrupt government of Pharaoh Menedes XXVI, establishing Osirion as a satrapy of the Keleshite Empire of the East. Over the centuries, migrants from Kelesh changed the ethnic character of the nation, razing many of the old monuments and structures to the ground in an effort to chart a new destiny for Osirion.



This destiny brought the sun-focused religion of Sarenrae to Osirion, whose own religious traditions had always centered strongly upon the movements of heavenly bodies. As the cult of the Dawnflower achieved greater popularity among Keleshite and Garundi alike it became a threat to the satrap, who banished the dervishes to the deserts of Thuvia.

Members of the Dawnflower cult murdered the Satrap of Osirion in 2253, establishing the first in a long series of independent Keleshite sultans who ruled from Sothis. The last of these dictators fell to rebellion exactly 100 years ago, handing the nation to Khemet I, a Garundi prince who traced his lineage back to the Azghaadi Dynasty of Osirion's First Age. Thousands of years of oppression and decline made the people eager for a savior, and Prince Khemet offered them hope. Today, Khemet's grandson rules Osirion, calling himself the Ruby Prince. Some say he might one day change this title to pharaoh, but such a shift would surely trouble the desert nation's neighbors.

The youthful Prince Khemet III has opened the borders of Osirion to treasure seekers from around the world, offering a high bounty to those who uncover the hidden wonders of the past. As a result, Sothis is filled with treasure hunters of all shades. While the guards are keen to watch for anyone stealing the heritage of Osirion, there are plenty of ways to smuggle these ancient artifacts out of the country, and Osirian relics have become a valuable commodity in markets across Avistan.

## Qadira

### DESERT FRONTIER KINGDOM

**Alignment:** N

**Capital:** Katheer (132,450)

**Notable Settlements:** Gurat (8,490), Sedeq (89,760)

**Ruler:** Xerbystes II, Satrap of Qadira

**Government:** Satrapy of the Keleshite Empire of the East

**Languages:** Kelish

**Religion:** Sarenrae, Rovagug, Irori

Qadira lies upon the Inner Sea and thus is counted as part of Avistan, but in spirit and character the nation belongs to central Casmaron. An ancient kingdom of arid deserts and exotic cities, Qadira is the westernmost satrap state of the Padishah Empire of Kelesh, a great empire of the distant east. Ethnic Keleshite humans make up a significant majority of the nation's inhabitants, but along the hard-fought ancient border with Taldor there are signs of greater mixing with Avistani stock.

Xerbystes II, the ambitious young ruler of Qadira, is a viceroy of Kelesh's emperor, paying him an annual tribute of 13 golden bulls and 300 concubines for the vast pleasure palaces of the imperial heartland. Although the emperor allows Xerbystes near-autonomy regarding issues of

domestic rule, Qadira's strategic importance as a window into Garund and Avistan means that the young sovereign has little control over international affairs, deferring in these matters to his vizier Hebizid Vraj, who serves unknown masters in the east. The generals of Qadira's armies likewise follow orders from Kelesh, although they show deference to the satrap when doing so does not jeopardize their secret orders.

Xerbystes is served by an immense court of landed nobles, promoted military veterans, famed explorers, and wizened advisers known as the Peerless—a body that sees to the day-to-day administration of justice within the nation and that generally supports the satrap in political matters. Several aligned tribes of nomadic horse and camel riders from Qadira's coastal deserts also swear fealty to Xerbystes.

The powerful cult of Sarenrae enjoys great status in Qadira, and its scimitar-wielding dervishes comprise a significant portion of the nation's military. The zealous adherents of the Dawnflower have long guided affairs in the region, famously inspiring the invasion of Osirion that brought that ancient nation under the sway of Kelesh in the middle years of the Age of Enthronement. Indeed, the meddling of Keleshite zealots of Sarenrae in part triggered the disastrous Oath Wars of Rahadom that reshaped much of northern Garund some two millennia ago.

Despite widespread gains in the southern continent and an undeniable cultural influence upon the whole of the Inner Sea, Qadira is best known for its endless rivalry with Taldor, a struggle that dates to before recorded history. Taldor itself formed in response to Keleshite movement into the region deep in the Age of Destiny, and open warfare between the two nations has defined most of modern history. The old enemies have engaged in a tense peace for more than a century, but memories in Taldor still linger upon the Qadiri invasion of 4079 that enabled the Even-Tongued Conquest of Chelias and forever shattered Taldor's imperial ambitions.

The eternal conflict with Taldor defines the local geography, with strings of ruined fortresses and sturdy modern castles littering the borderlands of both nations. Along the central coast, Qadira's capital, Katheer, reflects the long wars with Taldor, sheltering the nation's vast navy within its well-defended canyon-like harbor. The white-sailed dhows of the Qadiri fleet keep the peace along Garund's east coast in the sunlit waters of the Obari Ocean, and often dock in such ports as Quantum, Katapesh, and Absalom.

Qadira's capital city is also a stronghold of philosophy, mathematics, and astrological science, a point from which the challenging ideas of the distant east filter through to the eager minds of the western world. Students from throughout Avistan flock to Katheer's colleges, libraries,



and institutions of arcane art in order to resolve questions unanswerable anywhere else.

Those seeking answers also frequently venture to Gurat, an imposing citadel-city nestled high in the Zho Mountains. Built as a series of terraced balconies clinging to the edge of a precarious mountain spire, the curious city is home to the wretched Mouthpiece of Gurat, a deathless cyclops chained in a vaulted chamber within the mountain's very peak and discovered here in ancient times by the first inhabitants of Qadira. For countless centuries the Mouthpiece has served the emperors of Kelesh as an oracle, and his cryptic mutterings seem to hold true even after the death of Aroden. It was the Mouthpiece who suggested the timing of Qadira's invasion of Taldor that resulted in the collapse of the enemy empire. The Mouthpiece too warned of the coming of the Oblivion Roc, of the shattering earthquake of 2920, and of the Yellowtongue Plague that scourged Avistan almost 500 years ago. For the last century the prophetic visions have come hard for the Mouthpiece, and each must be torn from him as a beast tears meat from the bone. The creature's anguished screams echo across the great balconies of Gurat nearly every day, now, suggesting dire times in store for Qadira.

## Rahadoum

### THE KINGDOM OF MAN

**Alignment:** LN

**Capital:** Azir (72,370)

**Notable Settlements:** Botosani (23,540), Manaket (26,780)

**Ruler:** Malduoni, Keeper of the First Law

**Government:** Council of Elders led by the Keeper of the First Law

**Religion:** None (see below)

Worship of the sun-goddess Sarenrae crashed like a wave over northern Garund in the third millennium of the Age of Enthronement, shaking governments and bringing hope and faith to a receptive people. As the movement spread west from Thuvia, it encountered fierce resistance from the independent city-states of the northwest coast, who favored Nethys and Norgorber. Religious warfare between the sworn followers of the three gods resulted in the disastrous Oath Wars, which wracked the region for more than 6 decades.

In 2555, the weary militia of Azir put all of the great city's temples to the torch and exiled remaining members of their clergies. Led by the philosopher Kalim Onaku, the militia stabilized the warring city and set down a list of new laws, the first being, "Let no man be beholden to a god." Over the next 5 years, the laws of Azir spread across the region, ending the Oath Wars and expelling all forms of religion from the land. Communities willing to swear

by the new Laws of Man were welcomed into Onaku's growing nation of Rahadoum.

In the years since Onaku's death, Rahadoum has been ruled by a council of elders, with representatives from every major settlement and nomadic group. Each council in turn elects one of its members to be the Keeper of the First Law for a period of 5 years. While a lack of religion brought the region the peace it so desperately desired, it has come at a serious price. Plague ravaged Azir and Botosani three times in the past 500 years, and the prospect of famine hovers over the fragile land like a shroud. A century ago, Manaket was among the most lush ports of the Inner Sea. Today, it is choked by the encroaching desert sands, its famous gardens a memory of the distant past. While few dare speak it aloud, nervous whispers abound that the gods have finally decided to punish the people of Rahadoum for their insolence. Still, they hold to their ancient laws and avoid any contact with religion.

Visitors to Rahadoum often arrive via ship at Azir (known by many as "Port Godless") to trade for the country's fine cloth, exotic produce, and priceless gemstones. Foreigners must submit to a thorough search by the Pure Legion, a group of specially trained soldiers who watch for any signs of religion. Possession of such contraband carries heavy fines and potential exile, while preaching religious doctrine routinely garners imprisonment or worse.

Rumors in Azir suggest that a powerful cult of Iomedae has taken root in Botosani with the blessing of the locals. If true, the Pure Legion might be forced to take drastic measures against the city's people to root out the believers.

## Razmiran

### THEOCRACY OF THE LIVING GOD

**Alignment:** LE

**Capital:** Thronestep (17,340)

**Notable Settlements:** Xer (9,200)

**Ruler:** Razmir, The Living God, Lord of the 31 Steps

**Government:** Theocratic Dictatorship with Razmir at its head, supported by a council of Visions

**Languages:** Common, Hallit

**Religion:** Razmir (false god)

Razmiran is a nation of fanatical tyranny ruled by a man who claims to be a god. Founded only 47 years ago out of territory carved from the River Kingdoms, the young nation has a commanding view of Lake Encarthan and exerts an increasingly meddlesome influence on trade upon the lake and its associated waterways. The warlord Razmir has attracted a zealous army to his banner, whipping it into religious fervor and belief in His perfect image.

Day-to-day life in Razmiran is normal enough, so long as it does not interfere with the business of the state religion



or the whims of the local priests. Those who defy Razmir's faith quickly find themselves assaulted or imprisoned by his masked acolytes and enforcers. Those who join his faith often find a quick path to wealth and comfort, usually at the expense of local lay worshipers. These acolytes are sent off to the Exalted Wood for training, and all return quite changed, acting in step with the dictates of the faith despite any previous misgivings. This leads some to believe that much more goes on in the forest than simple training. Some whisper that acolytes are exposed to powerful magic that warps their mind and soul.

Governance of Razmiran falls to the Visions, a council of high-ranking clergy that carries out Razmir's erratic mandates. Each Vision possesses unique talents, from sorcery to swordplay, and a varying degree of cunning and brutality. With each dressed identically, it is hard to tell them apart, meaning that most folk obey them without question just in case. The common folk fear the Visions nearly as much as they fear Razmir himself.

The aging dictator of Razmiran sits atop his 31-stepped throne, hiding his mortality behind an ivory mask. He uses powerful sorcery to enact miracles and punish those who doubt his power. Razmir claims to have used the *Starstone* in Absalom to achieve divinity, but any who have visited the City at the Center of the World know this to be false. The truth is totally suppressed in his realm, with "spreaders of sedition" facing a host of harsh sentences, from exile to execution.

Razmiran's neighbors view the expansion of its cult into their lands as a plague. The willing defection of several border communities to the banner of the Living God underscores the danger posed by Razmir, pushing his neighbors ever closer to taking up arms against him. Razmir maintains a large army of faithful acolytes and conscripts as a bulwark against invasion. Although he has not yet used this force to launch attacks against his neighbors, its numbers continue to swell.

**River Kingdoms, The**  
**INDEPENDENT REALMS OF LOW CHARACTER**

**Alignment:** CN

**Capital:** None

**Notable Settlements:** Daggermark (27,460), Gralton (9,200), Mivon (10,870), Pitax (8,790), Sevenarches (4,340), Tymon (8,230)

**Rulers:** Various warlords, megalomaniacs, bandit kings, retired adventurers, and exiled princes

**STEPS OF THE LIVING GOD**

Those who follow the teachings of Razmir are organized by their loyalty to the faith and accomplishments in the name of the Living God. These orders are referred to as "Steps," in accordance with the number of steps the faithful is allowed to ascend when in the presence of the Living God. Each follower is assigned a simple robe and a mask to denote his station in the faith. The orders are as follows:

Title	Robe Color	Mask
Acolyte of the First Step	White	Iron
Priest of the Third Step	Gray	Iron
Herald of the Eighth Step	Black	Iron
Mask of the Twelfth Step	Blue	Silver
Vision of the Fifteenth Step	Red	Gold



**Government:** Too numerous to mention, including regions of absolute anarchy

**Languages:** Common, Hallit

**Religion:** Calistria, Cayden Cailean, Erastil, Norgorber, Desna, Gorum, Lamashtu

North of the Verduran Wood, the vast Sellen River system is a low road through rugged forest country claimed by bandits, outlaws, and thieves. These so-called River Kingdoms swear fealty to no one but themselves, extending their power only so far as their mercenary armies or bands of roving bully-boys can defend. Few accurate maps of the region exist because its borders change so frequently. The willful, tiny River Kingdoms extinguish each other with petty wars or political intrigue, but a new community always rises from the old, and nothing stays the same for very long.

The fluid nature of the River Kingdoms and the individualistic, at times xenophobic nature of its untrusting people makes the region an ideal destination for those seeking anonymity or escape, drawing criminals, freed slaves, political radicals, and exiled princes from throughout Avistan.

The greatest of these congregate annually at a gathering known as the Outlaw Council, in the wretched city of Daggermark, a place best known for its capable assassin's guild and the quality of its poisoners. There, retired adventurers rub shoulders with zealous cultists of forbidden gods and thriving bandit lords to chart the destiny of the free men and women who call the River Kingdoms their home.

The half-orc champion Ullorth Ungin, one of the most influential members of the Outlaw Council, controls



the shopworn city-state of Tymon a short distance from the intrigues of Daggermark. Founded by a Taldorian gladiator and hero of the Fifth Army of Exploration that mapped the riverways of the unsettled territory dozens of centuries ago, Tymon's gladiator colleges and fabled arena enjoy a reputation that stretches into all lands that thrill to the dance of bloodsport. The insane "living god" Razmir hatches plots against Tymon from his expanding homeland to the southwest, forcing Ullorth Ungin to consider turning his trained warriors loose not on the arena floor, but upon the field of battle.

Nearby, the elegant stone gateways that dot the secluded forest community of Sevenarches bear obvious signs of elven craftsmanship. The borders of the First World grow thin in the immediate region, resulting in a preponderance of fey creatures and nature spirits such as treants. A human druidic sect known as the Oakstewards took over the stone arches and surrounding community thousands of years ago, pledging to keep outsiders (especially elves) away at all costs. The ruling council of Kyonin is aware of the settlement at Sevenarches and would like to reinhabit the land to finish work started before the Age of Darkness, but so far the elves have been unable to come up with a plan short of complete genocide of the humans living there currently. The oldest bardic lore of the region suggests that in ancient times each of the seven arches was a portal to another world. If true, the elves' hands might not be forever stayed by altruism. Eventually, factions in favor of genocide might win the day in Iadara, leading humans and elves to make war once again.

The weary inhabitants of Gralton, northeast of Sevenarches on yet another tributary of the Sellen River, have had their fill of war and violence in recent years. Most are members of the old aristocracy of Galt, exiled or fled from their homeland following the terrible Red Revolution. The displaced nobles plot endlessly to reclaim their lost homelands or rescue treasures or allies from the chaos of Galt, and their need for strangers in support of their position makes Gralton one of the friendliest communities in the River Kingdoms. The jovial nature masks desperation about the situation at home as well as the fact that a large number of the town's inhabitants appear to be under the subtle influence of some malign psychic entity.

Pitax, one of the northernmost River Kingdom settlements, is the domain of the megalomaniacal Numerian lord Irovetti, who in the course of extensive travels throughout Avistan kidnapped some of the greatest sculptors, poets, and bards of the civilized south to chronicle the tales of his glorious victories. His remarkable city—garish and impressive on first glance but tawdry and cheap in the main—exemplifies the typical realm of the River Kingdoms.

Like Gralton, the marshy plains of Mivon have become home to an exiled people, in this case the Aldori swordlords who fled Rostland in the era of Choral the Conqueror. Blademasters from all over the world seek the academies of Mivon to learn the ancient battle arts of the Aldori, who accept only the finest candidates able to prove themselves in a series of escalating duels.

Dozens of similar city-states and minor realms dot the waterways of the River Kingdoms, each with a unique ruler and deadly idiosyncrasies of its own.

### Sargava

#### COLONY ON THE VERGE

**Alignment:** N

**Capital:** Eleder (8,900)

**Notable Settlements:** Kalabuto (11,340)

**Ruler:** Baron Utilinus, Grand Custodian of Sargava

**Government:** Independent colonial barony

**Languages:** Common, Polyglot

**Religion:** Aroden, Abadar, Iomedae, Gozreh, Shelyn

On the wrong side of the Eye of Abendego, along the rain-soaked jungle coast of Desperation Bay, lies Sargava, an ancient colony of Cheliox cut off from its homeland by geography, pirate fleets, and the march of history. The failing crops, native uprisings, and naval threats of the last century have all the hallmarks of a death spiral, but ironically the very isolation from its patron state that leaves Sargava in such threat and disarray has also protected its people from the social decay and diabolism that has ensnared their homeland. In a sense, the best of old Cheliox survives here in the jungles of Sargava. But it is unlikely to survive long.

Gained in a push by the land-grabbing prince Haliad I more than 500 years ago, Sargava has long held the distinction of being Cheliox's most distant surviving colonial holding (several attempted colonies exist in Arcadia, but none ever lasted longer than a century).

When Aroden's death threw Cheliox into disarray, wealthy old Baron Grallus backed the conservative House Davian, funneling the vast natural resources of Sargava to Davian's holdings in Corentyn. The raw goods plundered from the land filled the coffers of Cheliox's established order and ancient Mwangi relics abducted from the jungles summoned a vast army of mercenaries to Davian's azure standard.

It wasn't enough. Davian fell with so many other pretenders to the Chelioxian throne in the vicious Battle of a Hundred Kings. Corentyn burned in defeat, and old Baron Grallus found himself alone in the wilderness.

Word spread fast of Thrune's victory in Cheliox and of the emergence of diabolism in the imperial heartland. Summer brought a flotilla of imperial ships to the



horizon, packed with an army of surveyors, interpreters, missionaries, miners, and nobles loyal to the new regime. Just as the greedy Chelaxians first viewed the lush green coastline of Sargava, a larger fleet surged from Desperation Bay, its ships flying the black flags of the Free Captains of the Shackle Isles.

Buying off the pirate fleet cost Sargava half its stores and open-ended promises of tribute in timber and medicines, but the quick sinking of the expeditionary force and the fierce destruction of lone infiltrators since have time and again proven the wisdom of the maneuver. To this day, Sargava appreciates the support and defense of the Free Captains and remains essentially free of Chelaxian entanglements. The arrangement has also kept Sargava broke, with the lion's share of the colony's proceeds filling Port Peril coffers. The Free Captains give the current Baron, Utilinus, autonomy so long as the payments keep coming, allowing the colony to run its operation much as it has for centuries.

The greatest current danger to Sargava comes not from the ocean, but from internal strife. Since the earliest days of colonization, the Chelish legions sought to subjugate the local Mwangi tribesmen and adapt them to the imperial way of life. The crumbling, ancient city of Kalabuto, on Sargava's eastern border, used to be the greatest example of this conversion—a working, cooperating community of thousands of natives held under the sway of a handful of Chelaxian shepherds. Aroden's death robbed his clerics of their powers, greatly undermining the superstitious natives' trust in the new system. Many became unruly and rebelled against their foreign masters.

At the same time, a mysterious cult honoring the mummified remains of an ancient child captured the native city of Mzali, on the edge of the Screaming Jungle along the southern edge of the untracked Mwangi Expanse. The child claimed relation to the time-lost Mwangi kingdom that had originally erected the cyclopean stones of Kalabuto and Mzali, attracting many natives to its cause. Mwangi tribal warriors armed with spears and reed shields have harried Sargava's borders ever since, sacking Kalabuto on three occasions before being driven back into the wilderness. Thus far the Chelaxian settlers have managed to retain their colony, but with no reinforcements coming from the homeland to replace fallen soldiers, the Mwangi will not be deterred much longer.

## Shackles, The

### TREACHEROUS PIRATE ISLES

**Alignment:** CN

**Capital:** Port Peril (43,270)

**Notable Settlements:** Drenchport (9,690), Quent (12,560), Ollo (7,340)

**Ruler:** Captain Kerdak Bonefist, the Hurricane King

**Government:** A council of pirate lords dominated by the self-styled Hurricane King

**Languages:** Common, Polyglot

**Religion:** Calistria, Cayden Cailean, Gozreh, Norgorber, Pharasma

The island chain and treacherous coast known as the Shackles comprise a collection of bandit and slave cities that use the ravenous Eye of Abendego as cover for their illicit activities. Old ruins of bygone civilizations dot the region, and the carvings on their crumbling stone walls depict horrible acts of cannibalism and sacrifice. When Chelish explorers uncovered these ruins some 600 years ago, they decided the place was haunted and continued south, eventually founding the colony of Sargava.

As the years passed and the trade ships from Sargava became increasingly lucrative, pirates began to roam the area, using the ancient ports to hide from Chelish warships. Numerous small communities grew from these pirate ports, with some even accepting business from legitimate merchants.

In 4606, the Eye of Abendego formed just north of the Shackles, a stubborn after-effect of the torrential storms that wracked Golarion following Aroden's death. This gigantic, permanent hurricane forever changed the shipping lanes in the region, with most civilized nations forgoing any hope of trade with Sargava. The pirates of the Shackles soon fell to infighting over quickly dwindling resources. With the most likely outcome being the complete dissolution of the Shackles, the pirate lords banded together, forming one pirate fleet to sail under the banner of their newly elected Hurricane King. In the spring of 4674, the first ships of the Shackles fleet, under the command of the so-called Free Captains, began to ravage merchant caravels far to the north, near the Arch of Aroden.

Over the past 30 years, foreign powers have launched numerous concerted efforts to battle the pirates of the Shackles, but few have met with any success. All of the Free Captains excel at sailing close to the Eye of Abendego, giving them an easy escape route from less-experienced pilots. The Shackles themselves have been assaulted twice, but both times the invaders (once from Rahadoum and once from Chelias) met with disaster, losing most of their fleets to the ravenous storm and treacherous waters.

Today, the Shackles consist of a number of outlaw ports, where pirates rest from their ventures and trade their ill-gotten gains with unscrupulous merchants. The people who live in the ports are mostly runaway criminals, escaped slaves, and seekers of forbidden goods such as drugs, poisons, and evil magic. Ruling over each port is a powerful pirate lord who dispenses loot from recent raids and administers pirate justice whenever applicable.



A malicious rumor currently circulating suggests that one of the lords has offered to sail a Chelaxian fleet to the ports in exchange for immunity for past crimes. Whether this is true or just some ruse to unseat one of the lords, the rumor supports the well-known fact that Chelax would go to some lengths to see the pirate confederacy annihilated.

### Sodden Lands, The HURRICANE-RAVAGED WASTELAND

**Alignment:** CN

**Capital:** None

**Notable Settlements:**

Hyrantam (1,340), Jula (200),  
Kokutang (2,100)

**Ruler:** None

**Government:** None

**Languages:** Polyglot, Common

**Religion:** Unknown

The Sodden Lands are all that remains of two small nations utterly destroyed by the fierce Eye of Abendego. Today, more than a century after the birth of the storm, the region is all but abandoned, with the only inhabitants being either truly desperate or adventurers in search of forgotten treasure.

Before the storm, this region was divided into two parts, the northern nation of Lirgen and the southern kingdom of Yamasa. Lirgen was a peaceful land, ruled over by astrological philosophers who took their edicts from the heavens and relied heavily on prophecy in their rule. It is said that one could not even barter a trade in Lirgen without first asking the permission of the stars. The kingdom of Yamasa was another story. The *Pathfinder Chronicles* recount that the natives of this tribal kingdom descended from cannibalistic savages who once ruled the western coast of Garund. Although most of those practices were outlawed over the years, dark rumors whispered that the Koboto, or ruling class, still practiced the old ways, raiding passing ships and their peaceful northern neighbors for appropriate sacrifices.

The whipping winds of the Eye of Abendego wiped out most of the coastal communities within a few days, and many inhabitants fled inland as quickly as possible, seeking refuge in the heart of the jungle. The Koboto of Yamasa refused to leave, and little is known about their fate. Some whisper that they linger on, having fully reverted back to their old ways, hunting and feasting on any who dare wander the region.

Meanwhile, in Lirgen, the appearance of the Eye caught the astrological philosophers completely off-guard. They acted quickly to evacuate their people, many of whom are



### BRAVING THE EYE

Few captains are skilled or foolhardy enough to risk sailing anywhere near the Eye of Abendego. Those who come within 150 miles of the center of the permanent storm find themselves assaulted by windstorm-level winds (60 mph) that make ordinary ranged attacks impossible. These winds and the accompanying rain force captains to make a DC 15 Survival check to avoid getting lost and a DC 15 Profession (sailor) check to avoid drifting off course. These checks must be made once per hour. Failing either of these checks draws the ship closer to the hurricane.

For each failed check, the DC of subsequent checks increases by +3. If a captain fails three consecutive checks, the ship takes damage equal to 1/3 its maximum hit points, halving its movement and increasing all Profession (sailor) check DCs by +5. This damage continues for each subsequent failed check. A ship damaged in this manner three times sinks in 1d10 minutes as the hurricane tears it apart.

now spread throughout Avistan and Garund. After the commoners fled, the rulers searched for a means to abate the disaster while hiding from its terrible winds. In 4615, they made a profound discovery that shattered their most deeply cherished beliefs, and 4 days later, all those who remained in Lirgen committed suicide by thrusting daggers into their own eyes, taking their terrible secret with them. Those who seek out this forbidden lore come back mad, if they manage to come back at all.

Today, the Sodden Lands are just that—a vast, ruined wasteland subject to constant flooding, hurricane winds, and torrential downpours. Those seeking to explore and plunder the region often make for one of the three remaining cities, Hyrantam (the former capital of Lirgen), Jula, and Kokutang (the former capital of Yamasa). It seems that horrible aberrations are drawn to the ruins of Lirgen, wandering the ancient observatories, while hungry cannibals and their pets stalk the villages of Yamasa. In either case, few inhabitants are willing to treat with outsiders.

### Taldor

**DECADENT FAILING EMPIRE**

**Alignment:** N

**Capital:** Oppara (109,280)

**Notable Settlements:** Cassomir (32,340), Maheto (11,790),  
Wispile (8,670), Yanmass (6,900), Zimar (17,540)



**Ruler:** Grand Prince Stavian III, Emperor of Taldor, Scion of Aroden, Doge of Andoran, Defender of Galt, Eternal Monarch of Cheliox, Primarch-in-Waiting of Absalom, etc.

**Government:** Decayed bureaucratic empire

**Languages:** Common, Kelish

**Religion:** Abadar, Aroden, Cayden Cailean, Shelyn, Sarenrae, Norgorber, Calistria

Shortly after the Pharaohs of Ascension ruled Osirion, Azlanti survivors of the Age of Darkness founded the kingdom of Taldor along the east coast of the Inner Sea. The oldest Taldorian legends hold that Aroden himself walked among the kingdom's earliest settlers, a claim strengthened by the presence in Taldor of the oldest known temples to the Last Azlanti. Certainly the seat of Aroden's worship centered in Taldor for millennia, and in all that time it seemed that the rise of both nation and immortal hero were inexorably linked.

When Taldor's pioneering Armies of Exploration pacified the native tribes of central Avistan in the first half of the Age of Enthronement, clerics of Aroden stood at their side to bring the spiritual treasure of civilization to a barbaric people. When the Taldorian navy successfully defended the port capital of Oppara from the tentacled terror of the Entropic Kraken, it did so under the blessing and omnipresent will of Aroden.

As the years passed by, colonial operations in Avistan brought Taldor unparalleled wealth. Many towers and villas in the capital shone with gold plating, granting the Gilded City a title that persists to this day. Over the centuries, the jaded folk of Taldor became increasingly obsessed with ceremony, social fads, and elaborate costuming. Taldor's culture grew more decadent and detached from the outside world.

Old enemies in Qadira sought to take advantage of Taldor's decadence by engaging in a series of escalating conflicts over the course of centuries. The warring culminated in a massive invasion of Taldor by Qadira in 4079, triggering the Even-Tongued Conquest only a few days later. By then, even the church of Aroden had abandoned Taldor to its mercurial obsessions and unwholesome appetites, moving the center of the religion to Cheliox, further bolstering the power of Taldor's one-time vassal.

The gold plating of Oppara is a distant memory today, having been chipped away by vandals and salvagers centuries ago. With its surface now stripped away, Taldor stands exposed beneath the crumbled veneer of its pretense toward high society and avant garde culture. What lies beneath is myopic, ailing, and terminal.

Thousands of noble houses claiming heritage dating back to Taldor's earliest days squabble for control of the nation's overtaxed, moribund bureaucracy. Avarice and betrayal is the rule of the day, and no one trusts anyone for long.

When everyone looks out only for his own interest, cross-purposes often lead to assassination. Among the nobility, everyone always looks for an opportunity to increase one's station. Taldor's spoiled sovereign protects himself from the treachery of his peers by employing mercenaries from the Land of the Linnorm Kings as his personal guardians, a role they have played since ancient days.

As no emperor can trust the vicious factions of Oppara, the fierce northern barbarians make fearsome and effective guards. They are paid with whatever treasure they can carry from Taldor's gleaming treasure vaults at the culmination of an agreed-upon term of service. The Vikings protect the office of Taldor's grand prince rather than the grand prince himself, a fact made clear when the Red Mantis assassinated the sitting Emperor Jalrune in 3129. The guards immediately swore fealty to the assassins' employer—while Jalrune lived they would defend the emperor with their lives, but a dead patron cannot pay.

Taldor's influence is on the wane, and has been for some time. Yet its culture spawned many of the nations that now control Avistan's fate, and what was once among the most powerful human kingdoms in the world will continue its slow slide into oblivion for centuries to come.

## Thuvia

### DESERT LAND OF ETERNAL YOUTH

**Alignment:** LN

**Capital:** Merab (56,870)

**Notable Settlements:** Aspenthar (25,680), Duwwor (8,300), Lamasara (11,450), Pashow (4,320)

**Ruler:** Ilepodus, Patron of Merab; Prince Zinlo of Aspenthar; Zamere, Queen of Lamasara; Kharane, Defender of Duwwor; Guldis, Emir of Pashow

**Government:** Loose association of independent city-states bound by treaties of trade and mutual defense

**Languages:** Osirian, Polyglot

**Religion:** Nethys, Sarenrae, Pharasma, Gozreh

During the height of the God-Kings of Osirion, the vast deserts of Thuvia belonged to humanity's first great empire. As the power of the pharaohs waned, however, much of their outlying territories fell to lawlessness. So it was with Thuvia. When the last Osirian governor of the area was murdered in -841, Sothis dispatched no one to replace him. While the regional government held on for a few more years, without support from Sothis it was quickly overthrown. Over the next 2,000 years, the entire area lacked any sort of stable government, with most of the settled areas reduced to warring city-states with few interests beyond their own immediate needs. With limited natural resources and little in the way of arable land, most other civilized nations saw no reason to conquer the area.



All of this changed in 1140, when Artokus Kirran, an alchemist in Merab, experimented with the sun orchid, a flower that grows only in the heart of the Thuvian desert. When properly treated, he discovered, the nectar from a sun orchid could be used to create a powerful brew that could halt aging. While the process was expensive, Artokus swiftly discovered that the demand for his elixir far outweighed its supply, at any price. Artokus soon had to begin turning away potential customers, as he could not create the brew fast enough. A year later, the first foreign warship laid siege to Merab, demanding the sun orchid formula, forcing the ailing town to call upon its neighbors for help. In exchange for a cut of the lucrative new business, all of the city-states eventually banded together to protect the region, uniting under the ancient Osirian title of Thuvia only 2 years later.

Despite the value of the *sun orchid elixir*, the ruling council in Merab decided to limit the production to six vials per month, the exact extent of Artokus's production capacity. They also decided to keep the formula safe by commanding Artokus to keep it to himself only. Local warlords erected a large fortress to protect the alchemist, and it is said that he lives there to this day, continuing his ancient work. Each month, a blind, mute assistant emerges from the fortress with an iron case containing the six vials. This is a day of celebration in Merab, as it means that ships from foreign lands will soon arrive laden with rich goods to trade for the costly elixir.

Over the passing years, much of Thuvia's economy has become centered on the production of the *sun orchid elixir*. Since the rare flowers are only found in the deepest parts of the desert, groups of hunters constantly range the dunes and oases to find them. Numerous nomad camps support these groups, forming a network of caravan routes that leads from oasis to oasis. While the government in Merab controls the cities, these so-called Water Lords rule the interior. The cruel tribal warlords fiercely guard the few oases and lakes of Thuvia, forcing those who seek out the sun orchid to pay exorbitant prices for water and other basic supplies. Explorers lucky enough to find an orchid must get it out of the desert alive, for outlaws looking for an easy "discovery" abound.

### Ustalav, The Immortal Principality of FOG-SHROUDED LAND OF GOTHIC HORROR

**Alignment:** NE

**Capital:** Caliphass (15,640)

**Notable Settlements:** Ardis (12,080), Carrion Hill (9,200), Karcau (10,240), Tamrivena (4,200)

**Ruler:** Prince Aduard Ordranti III

**Government:** Loose confederacy of counties

**Languages:** Varisian, Common, Skald

**Religion:** Desna, Pharasma, Urgathoa

### SUN ORCHID ELIXIR

Magic can do a great deal to extend one's life, but most of these paths lead to a perverted form of undeath or are simply so powerful as to be extremely rare. As such, the *sun orchid elixir* is a valuable commodity. Those who imbibe a draft of the potent brew cease to age for 1d4 years, with no apparent side effects. Not surprisingly, vanity-seekers go to nearly any length to acquire the elixir, resorting to bribery, extortion, and murder. To curtail such troubles, the use of the elixir is outlawed in Thuvia (with the notable exception of the formula's creator). Anyone found breaking this law is executed, and foreigners who bring such troubles to Thuvian shores face exile and are banned from further purchases.

Each vial of the elixir requires six mature sun orchids to create and 1 month's time to ferment, although the exact formula used is a state secret. The vials typically sell for about 20,000 gp each, with the sun orchids needed to brew them often commanding a bounty of 500 gp apiece.

A region of dense forests and sharp mountains, of fog-shrouded moors and frequent storms, the Immortal Principality of Ustalav has the infamous reputation for being the birthplace and rebirth-place of tyrants.

In the middle years of the Age of Enthronement, Varisian wanderers settled in the shadows of the Hungry Mountains. Following the sword of the hero Soividia Ustav, these disparate communities—largely split along ancient Varisian family lines—gradually expelled the savage tribes of orcs, Numerians, and Sarkorians, establishing a nation that spread west beyond the Shudderwood, east to the Sellen River, and south to Lake Encarthan.

For more than 500 years, the Principality of Ustalav followed the line of Soividia Ustav, yet the clannish Varisian natures of its people led to endless quarrels and territorial debates. In 2862, facing near civil war, Princess Carmina Ustav divided her domain into 16 counties, formally establishing holdings for her land's most influential families. These ruling families were free to administer their lands as they saw fit, so long as they remained loyal to and met the demands of the crown.

A still greater threat emerged in 3203. Largely unknown to the scions of Ustalav, their forefathers had chosen a cursed land in which to settle, a curse that took form with the resurrection of the wicked warlord Tar-Baphon as a vile lich-king known as the Whispering Tyrant.

The lich quickly conquered Ustalav, and for more than 600 years he ruled an empire of undead and living slaves founded on the country's corpse. When finally the Shining Crusade succeeded in imprisoning the dreaded immortal within his fortress of Gallowspire, the victorious knights freed the lich's living slaves,



ceding them 14 of the principality's original counties. Virholt and Grodlych, the counties nearest Gallowspire, remained under the control of crusader sentinels stationed in Lastwall.

Reestablished as the Immortal Principality of Ustalav, the country readopted the majority of the laws and systems of its near-legendary past. As the line of Soividia Ustav was long broken, the crown came to rest with the House of Ardeav—one of the few noble families to survive Tar-Baphon's centuries-long reign.

Since the end of the Shining Crusade, Ustalav has been wracked by two small civil wars and seemingly endless political intrigue pitting one county against another.

As his final act, in 4674, the ailing "Eunuch Prince" Valislav Ordranti decreed that the country's capitol, historically based in Soividia Ustav's home city of Ardis, be moved south to the larger, more cosmopolitan port of Caliphass. Ordranti's longtime companion—but never wife—Millarea Caliphass gave birth to an heir shortly after the prince's death. Although the child's claim might one day be realized, Valislav's brother, Prince Aduard III, took command of Ustalav years ago and is firmly entrenched as the nation's legitimate ruler.

Today, Ustalav is a land steeped in traditions, ancient Varisian superstitions, and grim legends. Beyond the remaining counties, the country is divided into three regions: Soivoda, the Palatinates, and Virlych.

Soivoda remains most true to the ways of the founding empire, where the families of powerful counts rule over rugged and largely impoverished lands. This largest of the three regions dominates the country's eastern half and is comprised of the counties of Amaans, Ardeal, Barstoi, Caliphass, Odranto, Sinaria, Ulcazar, Varno, Verssex, and the Furrows.

To the west, the Palatinates surround the Shudderwood, where many small communities of simple folk eke out livings in the shadow of the wolf-haunted forest. The palatinates of Canterwall, Lozeri, and Vieland form this region.

The most dreaded of Ustalav's three regions, the rocky and barren lands that were once the counties of Grodlych and Virholt are now known as Virlych—a largely unpopulated area surrounding Gallowspire, the throne and prison of the Whispering Tyrant. Sentinels from Lastwall still patrol this region, largely as a traditional chore of dubious honor, but Ustalav considers the cursed land part of its dominion. Few civilized people make their home there, forsaking it to tales of roaming abominations and the lich-king's deathless minions.

## Varisia

### WILD FRONTIER REGION

**Alignment:** N

**Capital:** Korvosa (18,486)

**Notable Settlements:** Celwynvian (unknown), Kaer Maga (8,000), Magnimar (16,428), Riddleport (13,300), Urgan (5,800)

**Ruler:** No centralized ruler

**Government:** Unaffiliated City-States

**Languages:** Varisian, Common

**Religion:** Abadar, Desna, Erastil, Calistria, Gozreh, Lamashtu, Pharasma, Norgorber, Urgathoa, Zon-Kuthon

At the height of Old Azlant, the wizened mystics of that island continent-kingdom exiled a powerful wizard named Xin for his heretical beliefs that cooperation with the lesser races could build a greater nation. The outcast arrived on the shores of Avistan with an army and a plan. He established the empire of Thassilon, and in so doing brought commerce and civilization to the simple folk he found living on Avistan as nomads, a people known as the Varisians. As Thassilon's reach and influence continued to grow, Xin appointed seven of his most powerful wizardly allies as governors, splitting his empire into seven nations. Xin's governors, each focused on one of the seven schools of rune magic he himself helped define in accord with his seven virtues of rule, became known as the runelords.

Yet Xin's optimism was sadly misplaced. The runelords wrested control of his empire from him, and for centuries their cruelty led Thassilon along the path of decadence, ultimately collapsing into ruin when the *Starstone* rocked Golarion (although sages argue to this day upon the exact cause of Thassilon's demise).

The region remained wild for thousands of years, inhabited only by barbarian tribes known as the Shoanti and the nomadic Varisian survivors of Thassilon's fall, until it came to the attention of expansionist Chelixa, whose armies marched on the region in 4405. Chelixa armies drove the warlike Shoanti into the rugged regions to the northeast, while colonists adopted a tenuous peace with the native Varisians under the pretense of bringing "culture and civilization" into their lives. It was at this time that the ancient frontier came to be known as Varisia.

Modern Varisia is a region of conflict, a strip of frontier laid against the land of barbarians and giants to the northeast—the Storval Rise. Although no central government controls Varisia, three city-states have emerged, each of which could some day soon claim control over the region. The eldest and largest of these is Korvosa, a city of Chelixa loyalists ruled by a monarchy but cleaving close to Chelixa in a bid to be reabsorbed into the empire. The second largest city in Varisia, cosmopolitan Magnimar, flourishes while Korvosa, at best, stagnates in its thick traditional values. And further to the north lies Riddleport, a solution to those who find law of any sort oppressive—Riddleport serves as safe harbor for mercenaries, thieves, bandits, and pirates of all cuts.



Yet bandits and pirates are far from the only perils that haunt this ancient land. In many areas, Varisia remains a true wilderness, claimed by deadly predators and ferocious humanoids none too eager to share their territories with the advance of humanity. Along the coastal reaches, hundreds of goblin tribes dwell in sea caves and thistle-thick woodlands, bickering among themselves until leaders strong enough to unite several tribes at once take hold. Further inland, ogres and trolls hold court on rugged mountaintop and in deep forest glen, yet the true lords of the wildlands are the giants. Descended from the slave castes of ancient Thassilon, giants of all types call the true wilderness reaches of Varisia home, and their periodic forays and raids against humanity make for constant and brutal reminders that this realm is far from tame.

Other creatures dwell in the darkest corners of Varisia as well—monsters in some cases left over from Thassilon's rule, tales of whom frighten even the giants of the land. These include mighty dragons, the cannibal spirits known as wendigos, sinister and capricious fey, pockets of scheming lamia-kin, and even sinister explorers and pilgrims from other worlds whose eldritch corners brush unwholesome and unwelcome against parts of this haunted landscape. And against this menacing backdrop broods an even darker evil, for the ancient lords of the land are said to exist still, dead but dreaming, awaiting the time for their return to rule over lands once theirs. Should these all-but-forgotten runelords rise, Varisia could be but the first of Golarion's nations to fall.

### Worldwound, The EVER-SHIFTING DEMONIC WARLAND

**Alignment:** CE

**Capital:** None

**Notable Settlements:** Drezen (unknown), Dyinglight (unknown), Iz (unknown), Storasta (unknown), Gundrun (unknown), Undarin (unknown)

**Ruler:** None

**Government:** None

**Languages:** Abyssal, Hallit

**Religion:** Demon-worship

A century ago, the death of Aroden transformed the culture and politics of the Inner Sea nations. His death knocked Golarion out of metaphysical alignment in the direction of the Abyss, a nightmare realm in the Great Beyond screaming with wicked souls and vicious demons.

In the north, strangeness first emerged in the barbarian nation of Sarkoris, a sprawling scrubland north of Numeria known for its fierce painted warriors and bizarre witchery. Sarkorian mystics spoke of ascendant chaos, a thinness between this world and the next. Strange, ravenous creatures stalked the Northmounds, long a site of mystery

and ill-tidings. Soon, utter foulness consumed the entire region, centered around the Worldwound, a mile-wide cosmic blight limned in black flame southwest of the barbarian city of Iz.

The physical world itself becomes more unpredictable as it approaches the Worldwound. Terrain changes before the eyes, shifting form with a torturous deliberation that seems to cause pain to the earth itself. Foul creatures spew from the madness at the center of the blight, monstrosities from the depths of the Abyss. These vile creatures quickly overran the remains of poor Sarkoris, scattering its people and spreading the legend of an insidious taint in the north. Since then, the lands of the Worldwound have been the exclusive realm of demons and those who serve them.

The upheaval of Aroden's death brought focus to a vast library of esoteric writings and minor myths about the Last Azlant, and much that was once considered fringe theory or unlikely folk story has come to be regarded with higher authority. One particular tale of a still-mortal Aroden relates a journey to the distant north and a struggle against a foul cult dedicated to the demon prince Deskari, Lord of the Locust Host and usher of the Apocalypse. Aroden, it is said, drove the cult of Deskari into the Lake of Mists and Veils and forever locked the north from demonic influence. When Aroden died, his protection fell from the land of Sarkoris. Adherents of Aroden and his servant Iomedae the Inheritor thus believe it is their responsibility to pacify Sarkoris and seal the Worldwound.

To this end, the pontiffs of those religions called the First Mendevian Crusade, as well as the three that followed. Zealous followers of the Inheritor from throughout Avistan travel up the Sellen River to Mendev in an attempt to support the crusaders, but aside from constructing a tenuous hedge to keep the demons from spreading further south (for now), little progress has been made in purging the land of demons, who seem to grow in number with each passing month.

Nor is the malign, almost sentient chaos of the Worldwound content to stay within its carefully proscribed borders. The northern crusader city Drezen formerly stood within the borders of Mendev, but in 4638 the *wardstones* protecting it faltered under demonic assault, and the whole city fell under the influence of the Abyss. Tens of thousands of pilgrims and warriors drowned in the demonic wave that followed, depleting the armies of Mendev and necessitating the calling of the Second Mendevian Crusade.

Today, the warriors of Mendev engage in the noble Fourth Crusade against the demons of the Worldwound. Throughout Avistan and the world, men and women of strong character and boundless ambition look to the darkness of the north with purpose and determination.





## Religion

From the simple farmer praying for a bountiful harvest to the devout cleric drawing upon his deity for strength and magic, worship is a daily part of most lives in Golarion. Although countless deities and extraplanar entities influence the world and its people, this chapter examines only those most commonly worshiped throughout the lands bordering the Inner Sea.

### Abadar

#### MASTER OF THE FIRST VAULT

**God of cities, wealth, merchants, and law**

**Alignment:** LN

**Domains:** Earth, Law, Nobility, Protection, Travel

**Favored Weapon:** Crossbow

**Centers of Worship:** Absalom, Andoran, Brevoy, Cheliax, Katapesh, Molthune, Nex, Sargava, Taldor, Varisia

**Nationality:** Taldan

Abadar is said to dwell in the perfect city of Aktun, where he watches over the First Vault. Legends maintain that its vast halls hold a perfect copy of every object ever made,

from the flawless longsword to the faultless law. From Aktun, the Master of the First Vault works his plans to bring civilization to the entire world.

Abadar is often shown as a clean, well-dressed man bearing the markings of riches and civilization. From his gold breastplate to his richly embroidered cloak, everything about him is refined and cultured. In addition, the Master of the First Vault always appears with an ornate key about his person.

Clerics of Abadar are an organized lot, spending much of their time helping communities thrive and grow. They care less about morals as the expansion of civilization. Despite this, their efforts generally trend toward the advancement of all, as this helps the growth of civilization.

### Aroden

#### THE LAST AZLANTI, LAST OF THE FIRST HUMANS

**God of human culture, innovation, and history**

**Alignment:** LN

**Domains:** Glory, Knowledge, Law, Protection

**Favored Weapon:** Longsword



**Centers of Worship:** Absalom, Andoran, Cheliox, Mendev, Sargava, Taldor  
**Nationality:** Azlanti

Some 5,000 years after the destruction of Azlant, its last true son—the immortal hero Aroden—raised the *Starstone* from the depths of the Inner Sea, installing it in Absalom and becoming a living god. In time, Aroden became the patron deity of Taldor, a nation rife with Azlanti blood and hungry for conquest. As Taldor's influence spread, so too did the reach of Aroden's proud religion. By the time the empire's periphery reached the western frontier of Cheliox 700 years ago, Taldor itself had grown decadent and effete. Aroden's chief clergy decamped from the Taldorian capital of Oppara to the capital of Cheliox, which soon thereafter declared itself independent from Taldor's corrupt reach.

The most zealous followers of Aroden later fled the Chelish heartlands for missionary work on the nascent empire's expanding borders or, increasingly, to the demon-haunted crusadelands of the distant north. A century ago, for reasons still poorly understood, Aroden died, leaving his followers adrift and bereft of miraculous ability. This collapse eventually led to the downfall of Cheliox and the seizure of that nation by forces in league with diabolism. Much of Aroden's cult has turned to his divine patron saint, the missionary heroine Iomedae, but the full repercussions of the death of the Last Azlanti have yet to be felt.

## Asmodeus

### PRINCE OF DARKNESS

**God of tyranny, slavery, pride, and contracts**

**Alignment:** LE

**Domains:** Evil, Fire, Law, Magic, Trickery

**Favored Weapon:** Mace

**Centers of Worship:** Cheliox, Isger, Nidal

**Nationality:** Devil

Some say that when the world was forged, Asmodeus wrote the contract of creation, agreed to by the gods. His faithful believe that this contract holds the key to their lord's final victory, ushering in a new age under his infernal reign.

Frequently imagined as a red-skinned human with black horns, hooves, and a pale aura of flames, Asmodeus often appears as a foil in art depicting good deities. In his temples, such roles are reversed, with the Prince of Darkness standing tall as the other deities bow before him.

Public temples dedicated to Asmodeus thrive in Cheliox, where they often share space with the nation's bureaucracy, although secret shrines are scattered across Golarion. Asmodeus's impeccably clean and orderly clerics dress mostly in dark tones—usually black with red accents. His faithful can be found among slavers, bureaucrats, tyrants, and some silver-tongued nobles.

## Calistria

### THE SAVORED STING

**Goddess of trickery, lust, and revenge**

**Alignment:** CN

**Domains:** Chaos, Charm, Knowledge, Luck, Trickery

**Favored Weapon:** Whip

**Centers of Worship:** Absalom, Galt, Kyonin, Nex, River Kingdoms, Shackles, Taldor, Varisia

**Nationality:** Elf

Although the elves worship a great many deities, they hold none so highly as Calistria. The Savored Sting speaks to the mercurial, detached nature that makes elves elves. Some favor her as a trickster goddess, while others appreciate her lustful, audacious spirit. Ever scheming and planning her next conquest, Calistria is always maneuvering to a more advantageous position.

Iconography of the faith depicts Calistria as the ideal of elven beauty, dressed in revealing gowns with long graceful ears, slender limbs, and a suggestive smile playing across her lips. Giant wasps, her favored creatures, commonly appear beside her.

In human lands, temples of Calistria often host a lively community of sacred prostitutes, each with his or her own contacts in the community. The resulting hotbed of gossip, double-dealing, and opportunities for revenge assure the cult's growing popularity.

## Cayden Cailean

### THE DRUNKEN HERO

**Demigod of freedom, ale, wine, and bravery**

**Alignment:** CG

**Domains:** Chaos, Charm, Good, Strength, Travel

**Favored Weapon:** Rapier

**Centers of Worship:** Absalom, Andoran, Galt, River Kingdoms, Shackles, Taldor

**Nationality:** Taldan

The legends say that Cayden Cailean never meant to become a god. As a hired sword working out of Absalom, Cayden was renowned for taking on any job, so long as the cause was just and the coin was plentiful.

He often spent his earnings on potent drink. One night, in his stupor, a fellow drunk dared him to take on the Test of the *Starstone*. Thereafter, Cayden Cailean vanished, presumably slain by the artifact's powerful guardians. A few days later, however, he emerged from the *Starstone's* sacred cathedral as a living god.

In art, Cayden Cailean appears as he did in life, with a tankard of ale in one hand and his sword in another. Other depictions of the Drunken Hero display broken shackles about his wrists, representing Cayden's escape from the concerns of mortal life.



Members of Cayden's faith make excellent guides, quick to smile at danger and always willing to have fun in even the direst of circumstances. His festive temples resemble common ale halls and attract members of all social classes.

## Desna

### SONG OF THE SPHERES

**Goddess of dreams, stars, travelers, and luck**

**Alignment:** CG

**Domains:** Chaos, Good, Liberation, Luck, Protection

**Favored Weapon:** Starknife

**Centers of Worship:** Kyonin, Lands of the Linnorm Kings, Nidal, Numeria, River Kingdoms, Ustalav, Varisia

**Nationality:** Varisian

While the other gods created the world, legend holds that Desna was busy placing stars in the heavens above, content to allow the other deities to create a place full of wonders for her and her faithful to explore. Since that day, all those who look up to the stars find themselves wandering in the endless mysteries of the sky.

Desna often appears as a comely elven woman, clad in billowing gowns with brightly colored butterfly wings on her back. Delicate clouds of butterflies frequently accompany her image.

Wanderers at heart, the faithful of Desna travel the world in search of new experiences, while always trying to live life to its fullest. Their temples are light, open affairs, with most possessing a skylight to allow in the night sky and a significant number of astrological charts to mark important celestial events.

## Erastil

### OLD DEADEYE

**God of Farming, hunting, trade, and family**

**Alignment:** LG

**Domains:** Animal, Community, Good, Law, Plant

**Favored Weapon:** Longbow

**Centers of Worship:** Andoran, Cheliox, Galt, Isger, Lands of the Linnorm Kings, Molthune, Nirmathas, River Kingdoms, Varisia

**Nationality:** Ulfen

Worship of Erastil dates back to before the Age of Darkness, when early humans began to domesticate and dominate the natural surroundings. Pastoral legends claim that Old Deadeye crafted the first bow as a gift to mortals so they might learn to hunt and survive in the dangerous world.

Erastil's rustic followers often carry a carved wooden placard bearing their god's image. He appears as an old human trapper with bow in hand or as a tall humanoid creature with the head of an elk. These images often depict Erastil fighting off wild animals and other beasts.

Erastil's faithful can be found in most small villages and towns, administering to the people less through sermons and more by deeds. His clerics are often called upon to help build homes, birth children, oversee trade, and bless crops. Shrines to Erastil are almost always simple wooden buildings that serve rural communities as gathering places.

## Gorum

### OUR LORD IN IRON

**God of strength, battle, and weapons**

**Alignment:** CN

**Domains:** Chaos, Destruction, Glory, Strength, War

**Favored Weapon:** Greatsword

**Centers of Worship:** Brevoy, Hold of the Mammoth Lords, Lands of the Linnorm Kings, Lastwall, Nirmathas, Numeria, River Kingdoms

**Nationality:** Kellid

Gorum's clerics say the Lord in Iron was forged in the first great battle between orcs and humans. When the dust from the conflict finally settled, all that was left was one suit of iron armor. Since that day, dying warriors and victorious knights sometimes swear that they see Gorum delivering their deathblow or charging alongside them.

The Lord in Iron commonly appears as a suit of terrible spiked full plate armor, with a pair of fiery red eyes but no flesh visible.

The most important of Gorum's priests don similar armor for important ceremonies and in battle. Followers claim the spirit of Gorum lives in iron, be it armor or weapon, taking great care to polish and maintain metal arms.

Warriors from across Avistan and beyond call out to Gorum to strengthen their blades and aid them in upcoming battles. His temples are more akin to fortresses than places of worship, made to withstand any assault.

## Gozreh

### THE WIND AND THE WAVES

**God of nature, weather, and the sea**

**Alignment:** N

**Domains:** Air, Animal, Plant, Water, Weather

**Favored Weapon:** Trident

**Centers of Worship:** Mwangi Expanse, Sargava, Shackles, Sodden Lands, Thuvia, Varisia

**Nationality:** Mwangi

Sailors claim that Gozreh dwells at the horizon, where the sea meets the sky. Born of the ocean's fury and the wind's wrath, Gozreh is a fickle deity. Those who ply the waters or rely upon the rains know this better than most, and are sure to placate Gozreh and honor him when the winds and waves are favorable.



## DEITIES OF GOLARION

Deity	AL	Portfolios	Domains	Fav. Weapon
Erastil	LG	Farming, hunting, trade, family	Animal, Community, Good, Law, Plant	longbow
Iomedae	LG	Valor, rulership, justice, honor	Glory, Good, Law, Sun, War	longsword
Torag	LG	The forge, protection, strategy	Artifice, Earth, Good, Law, Protection	warhammer
Sarenrae	NG	The sun, redemption, honesty, healing	Fire, Glory, Good, Healing, Sun	scimitar
Shelyn	NG	Beauty, art, love, music	Air, Charm, Good, Luck, Protection	glaive
Desna	CG	Dreams, stars, travelers, luck	Chaos, Good, Liberation, Luck, Travel	starknife
Cayden Cailean	CG	Freedom, wine, bravery	Chaos, Charm, Good, Strength, Travel	rapier
Abadar	LN	Cities, wealth, merchants, law	Earth, Law, Nobility, Protection, Travel	crossbow
Irori	LN	History, knowledge, self-perfection	Healing, Knowledge, Law, Rune, Strength	unarmed strike
Gozreh	N	Nature, weather, the sea	Air, Animal, Plant, Water, Weather	trident
Pharasma	N	Fate, death, prophecy, birth	Death, Healing, Knowledge, Repose, Water	dagger
Nethys	N	Magic	Destruction, Knowledge, Magic, Protection, Rune	quarterstaff
Gorum	CN	Strength, battle, weapons	Chaos, Destruction, Glory, Strength, War	greatsword
Calistria	CN	Trickery, lust, revenge	Chaos, Charm, Knowledge, Luck, Trickery	whip
Asmodeus	LE	Tyranny, slavery, pride, contracts	Evil, Fire, Law, Magic, Trickery	mace
Zon-Kuthon	LE	Envy, pain, darkness, loss	Darkness, Death, Destruction, Evil, Law	spiked chain
Urgathoa	NE	Gluttony, disease, undeath	Death, Evil, Magic, Strength, War	scythe
Norgorber	NE	Greed, secrets, poison, murder	Charm, Death, Evil, Knowledge, Trickery	short sword
Lamashtu	CE	Madness, monsters, nightmares	Chaos, Evil, Madness, Strength, Trickery	falchion
Rovagug	CE	Wrath, disaster, destruction	Chaos, Destruction, Evil, War, Weather	greataxe

Gozreh has two equally depicted aspects. When at sea or over water, Gozreh is a woman with wild, flowing green hair whose body transforms into endless waves. In the sky and over land, Gozreh appears as an aged man with a long white beard emerging from a mighty storm cloud. Temples in port cities venerate both images.

Gozreh's temples always open to the sky above and often contain some sort of pool or open water at their heart. Travelers preparing for a long ocean journey frequently seek the counsel of his clerics, who also bestow an annual blessing upon farmers before the spring planting.

### Iomedae

#### THE INHERITOR

**Goddess of valor, rulership, justice, and honor**

**Alignment:** LG

**Domains:** Glory, Good, Law, Sun, War

**Favored Weapon:** Longsword

**Centers of Worship:** Andoran, Chelax, Galt, Lastwall, Mendev, Molthune, Nirmathas, Sargava

**Nationality:** Chelaxian

As a mortal, Iomedae rose to prominence in the era of the Shining Crusade, where she led the Knights of Ozem in a series of victories over the Whispering Tyrant. Success in the Test of the *Starstone* a short time later granted the valiant swordswoman a spark of divinity and the attention of Aroden, who took her on as his herald. Today, her church has absorbed most of Aroden's remaining followers and

devotes a great deal of its focus to the Mendevian Crusades against the horror of the Worldwound.

Iomedae appears as a fierce human mistress of the sword, complete with full battle armor, heraldic markings, and resplendent shield. Her holy text is the "Acts of Iomedae" (or simply, "The Acts"), a recounting of personal miracles in ancient times by Iomedae throughout Avistan and Garund as demonstrations of the power of Aroden.

Followers of Iomedae have a strong sense of justice and fairness and an even stronger dedication to swordcraft and statesmanship. They believe that justice comes from law, enthusiastically supporting the spread of civilization to "savage" peoples. Her clerics have a reputation for trustworthiness that serves them well in political affairs.

### Irori

#### MASTER OF MASTERS

**God of history, knowledge, and self-perfection**

**Alignment:** LN

**Domains:** Healing, Knowledge, Law, Rune, Strength

**Favored Weapon:** Unarmed strike

**Centers of Worship:** Absalom, Jalmeray, Katapesh, Nex, Osirion, Qadira

**Nationality:** Vudran

The followers of Irori claim he was once a mortal who achieved absolute physical and mental perfection, and thus attained divinity. While many Avistani of the Inner Sea are



wary of his strict adherents, the disciplined regimen of the Master of Masters is gaining popularity among those who seek order in these troubled times.

Irori is very rarely depicted in art because his faithful believe that any icon of him could not hope to live up to his perfect image. Instead, they describe him as a flawless Vudran man, with no hair save a long braid, simple robes, and wooden sandals.

Temples dedicated to Irori are not generally open to the public. Inside, his faithful study and train night and day in an endless quest to achieve perfection and purify their lifeforce. Those who rise to the rank of master are said to go to Irori's side when they die, to serve him forever, while those who fail are reincarnated to begin the journey anew.

### Lamashtu

#### MOTHER OF MONSTERS

**Goddess of madness, monsters, and nightmares**

**Alignment:** CE

**Domains:** Chaos, Evil, Madness, Strength, Trickery

**Favored Weapon:** Falchion

**Centers of Worship:** Belkzen, Irrisen, Nex, Osirion, River Kingdoms, Varisia, Worldwound

**Nationality:** Demon

Gnolls claim that when Lamashtu first saw the hyena, she took it as her consort and the first gnoll was born. Minotaurs say the same of bulls, and a thousand such stories abound about all manner of creatures, each citing the Mother of Monsters as the beasts' progenitor.

Lamashtu's crude depictions usually paint her as a jackal-headed woman, with long feathered wings, taloned feet, and a great swollen belly. Such images frequently include a multitude of monsters gathering to her call, with the favored rising above the rest.

Those who worship the Mother of Monsters seek out deformity both in themselves and others. Scarring rituals and mutilation are common among the faithful. Although she is typically venerated by monstrous races such as gnolls, medusas, and goblins, some human cults practice her dark litanies in secret, promoting tainted births and destroying works of beauty.

### Nethys

#### THE ALL-SEEING EYE

**God of magic**

**Alignment:** N

**Domains:** Destruction, Knowledge, Magic, Protection, Runes

**Favored Weapon:** Quarterstaff

**Centers of Worship:** Absalom, Geb, Katapesh, Kyonin, Nex, Numeria, Osirion, Thuvia

**Nationality:** Garundi

Ancient Osiriani texts mention a powerful God-King named Nethys, whose mighty sorceries allowed him to see all that transpired, even across the planes of the Great Beyond. The knowledge he gained through these visions fueled his divinity but shattered his psyche. Ever since, Nethys has been of two minds: one set upon destroying the world, and another pledged to protect it.

Nethys is often shown with both his aspects in action. One side of him is burned and broken, unleashing terrible magic upon the world, while the other half is calm and serene, using magic to heal the sick and protect the innocent.

The church of Nethys tries to walk between these two paths, but individual shrines or temples might take to one aspect or the other. In either case, clerics of Nethys promote magic in its many forms, regardless of the purpose it is put to. This makes the faith popular with wizards, regardless of their choice of study.

### Norgorber

#### THE REAPER OF REPUTATION

**God of greed, secrets, poison, and murder**

**Alignment:** NE

**Domains:** Charm, Death, Evil, Knowledge, Trickery

**Favored Weapon:** Short sword

**Centers of Worship:** Absalom, Galt, Nex, Osirion, River Kingdoms, Shackles, Taldor, Varisia

**Nationality:** Taldan

Little is known of Norgorber's life in Absalom before he ascended to godhood through the Test of the *Starstone*. Members of his debased faith go to great lengths to keep his life a secret, using murder if necessary to obscure Norgorber's origins. Some believe that if the Reaper of Reputation's true nature were discovered, he would be undone.

Norgorber's cult splits itself into four groups, with each one focusing on one of his aspects and ignoring the others. They often wear masks as symbols of this devotion and to keep their own identities secret (even in Absalom, where the church is marginally allowed). Despite this split, the faith still works together in some regards, taking careful actions meant to shape the future according to some secret plan.

Temples dedicated to Norgorber are rarely known to be such. They are often hidden in other legitimate businesses, transformed at night so the faithful can plot and pray. His clerics are master imitators, stealing others' identities and using them to cover up dark deeds.

### Pharasma

#### LADY OF GRAVES

**Goddess of fate, death, prophecy, and birth**

**Alignment:** N

**Domains:** Death, Healing, Knowledge, Repose, Water

**Favored Weapon:** Dagger



**Centers of Worship:** Brevoy, Nex, Osirion, Shackles, Thuvia, Ustalav, Varisia

**Nationality:** Garundi

Sitting atop an impossibly tall spire, Pharama's Boneyard awaits all mortals. Once there, they stand in a great line, waiting to be judged and sent to their final reward. Only the unworthy end up in her graveyard, their souls left to rot for all eternity. Legends claim that Pharama knew the death of Aroden was fast approaching and even judged him, but did nothing to warn her followers, many of whom were driven mad by the event.

Pharama is depicted as the midwife, the mad prophet, or the reaper of the dead, depending upon her role. Pregnant women often carry small tokens of her likeness on long necklaces to protect the unborn and grant them good lives.

The clergy of Pharama gathers in gothic cathedrals, usually located near a town's graveyard. Her faithful despise undead and go to great lengths to destroy such abominations wherever encountered.

## Rovagug

### THE ROUGH BEAST

**God of wrath, disaster, and destruction**

**Alignment:** CE

**Domains:** Chaos, Destruction, Evil, War, Weather

**Favored Weapon:** Greataxe

**Centers of Worship:** Belkzen, Hold of the Mammoth Lords, Osirion, Qadira

**Nationality:** Monster

In the dawn of prehistory, Rovagug was born to destroy the world, but all the other gods stood against him, side by side. Countless died in the struggle, but in the end, Sarenrae sliced open the world to imprison him within and Asmodeus bound him there, keeping the only key. The only images of Rovagug show him as a terrible monster of unimaginable size and power.

Of all the religions, few are more despised by civilized people than Rovagug's. His temples are banned in nearly every major city, driving his followers to erect secret shrines. In the wild lands, various monsters pay homage to him, including driders, orcs, ropers, and troglodytes. Many of his faithful believe the Earthfall awoke their god, and that the time of his freedom fast approaches. Foremost among his stirrings are the so-called Spawn of Rovagug, immense beasts that periodically surge from the Pit of Gormuz in central Casmaron, site of the Rough Beast's imprisonment long millenia ago. The legendary Tarrasque is merely the most powerful and terrifying of the Spawn, although several others have left their mark upon history over the years.

## Sarenrae

### THE DAWNFLOWER

**Goddess of the sun, redemption, honesty, and healing**

**Alignment:** NG

**Domains:** Fire, Glory, Good, Healing, Sun

**Favored Weapon:** Scimitar

**Centers of Worship:** Absalom, Katapesh, Osirion, Qadira, Taldor, Thuvia

**Nationality:** Keleshite

When the primal forces created Golarion, Asmodeus planted a malignant evil upon the world under cover of perpetual darkness. The doctrine of Sarenrae's faith tells how the Dawnflower brought light to the world, and with it came truth and honesty. Those who had turned to evil saw their wickedness and were forgiven by the light of Sarenrae.

Religious art depicts the sun goddess as a strong woman with bronze skin and a mane of dancing flame. While one hand holds the light of the sun, the other grasps a scimitar, so that she might smite those who do not change their ways.

The clergy of Sarenrae are peaceful most of the time, administering to their flock with a gentle hand and wise words. Such kindness vanishes when the church is stirred to action against an irredeemable evil. At such times, her clerics become dervishes, dancing among foes while allowing their scimitars to give them final redemption.

## Shelyn

### THE ETERNAL ROSE

**Goddess of beauty, art, love, and music**

**Alignment:** NG

**Domains:** Air, Charm, Good, Luck, Protection

**Favored Weapon:** Glaive

**Centers of Worship:** Absalom, Galt, Sargava, Taldor

**Nationality:** Taldan

An ancient story tells of how Shelyn stole the glaive *Whisperer of Souls* from her half-brother Zon-Kuthon in an attempt to redeem him. Obviously, this didn't work, but to the intelligent weapon's great frustration, neither do its continued attempts to corrupt or influence her.

All depictions of Shelyn, regardless of race or ethnicity, show her as a young woman barely out of her youth, with eyes of blue or silver. Shelyn's ankle-length chestnut hair bears several strands colored bright red, green, and gold. She always wears tasteful clothing and jewelry that accentuates her beauty without revealing too much of it.

Shelyn preaches (and practices) that true beauty comes from within, and she favors romances not based solely on lust. Clerics of Shelyn endeavor each day to create something of beauty, whether artistically or through unconventional forms, such as a gardener tending a flower garden.



## Torag

### FATHER OF CREATION

**God of the forge, protection, and strategy**

**Alignment:** LG

**Domains:** Artifice, Earth, Good, Law, Protection

**Favored Weapon:** Warhammer

**Centers of Worship:** Kalistocracy of Druma, Lands of the Linnorm Kings

**Nationality:** Dwarf

The dwarves believe that Torag created the world at his great forge, striking it again and again with his hammer. As the rocks tumbled and the sparks flew, the dwarves were born of stone, with bellies full of fire.

Torag is usually shown as a powerful dwarf, busy hammering at his forge. He is the consummate planner, with a contingency for nearly every situation.

Torag counts nearly half his clerics among the dwarves, although a great many humans have taken up his call in recent years. His faithful are skilled architects, craftsmen, and military planners. Guardians and watchmen sometimes offer up prayers to the father of creation, hoping he protects them as they watch over their charges.

## Urgathoa

### THE PALLID PRINCESS

**Goddess of gluttony, disease, and undeath**

**Alignment:** NE

**Domains:** Death, Evil, Magic, Strength, War

**Favored Weapon:** Scythe

**Centers of Worship:** Geb, Ustalav

**Nationality:** Varisian

Some claim that Urgathoa was a mortal once, but when she died, her thirst for life turned her into the Great Beyond's first undead creature. She fled from Pharasma's endless line of souls and back to Golarion, where her touch caused rotting and foulness, bringing disease to the world.

The Pallid Princess appears as a beautiful, raven-haired woman from the waist up, but below that her form rots and withers, until only blood-covered bones remain at her feet.

Urgathoa finds favor with the undead as well as those hoping to become undead. As such, her clerics must often keep their activities secret. People sick with the plague make offerings to the Pallid Princess in hopes of alleviating their illness, but most turn to Sarenrae. The occasional gluttonous prince might make offerings to Urgathoa as well, be they for more food, women, or other carnal pleasures.

## Zon-Kuthon

### THE MIDNIGHT LORD

**God of envy, pain, darkness, and loss**

**Alignment:** LE

**Domains:** Darkness, Death, Destruction, Evil, Law

**Favored Weapon:** Spiked chain

**Centers of Worship:** Belkzen, Cheliax, Geb, Irrisen, Nidal, Varisia

**Nationality:** Alien

The *Umbral Leaves*, which chronicle the history of Zon-Kuthon, claim that he was once the half-brother of the beauty goddess Shelyn, but that his envy over her talents led him to commit terrible acts against her and her works. For his crimes, the gods of Golarion banished Zon-Kuthon to the Plane of Shadow, there to reside for as long as the sun hung in the sky. Unfortunately, in the depths of the Age of Darkness, Zon-Kuthon emerged from his prison to a benighted Golarion and wept tears of joy. Here was a world ripe for the conquering, hidden from the light of the stars and cloaked in fear and entropy.

Zon-Kuthon is almost never depicted by his followers, but his presence manifests as a deep darkness lurking in the center of paintings, and as a standing doorway that leads only to emptiness.

The Midnight Lord wreaked terrible havoc upon the world in the Age of Darkness, but his malign influence has mostly been purged over the years. The lone exception to this is the Shadow Court of Pangolais, the secret rulers of Nidal. In this dark nation, the faith of the Midnight Lord still rules supreme, the leaders issuing edicts from their pitch-black council chambers.

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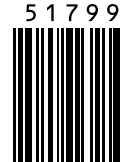
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