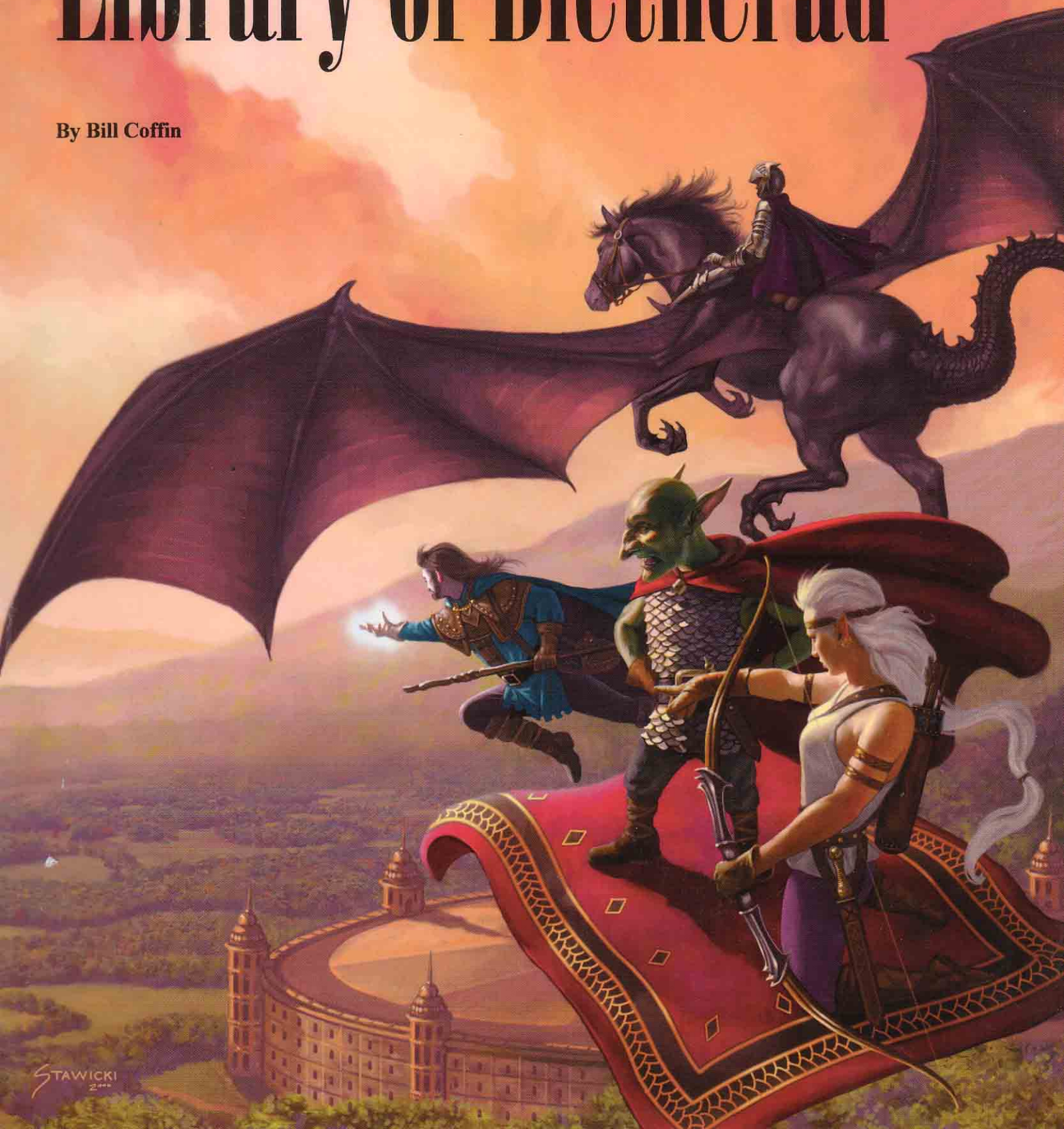


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By Bill Coffin



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Dedication

First and foremost, to Kevin and **Maryann** Siembieda, whose friendship and generosity make this all possible.

To my mom, **Roseanne** Coffin, and my dad, William Coffin Sr., for teaching me by example how wonderful it is to lose oneself in a good book. And for telling me that it might not be a bad idea to try writing some.

To Dabney Stuart, my first mentor, a man who taught me a whole lot about writing, publishing, and most importantly, spinning yarns.

And finally, to my incredible wife **Alli**, about whose grace and beauty I could write enough to fill the pages of a thousand tomes.

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Library of Bletherad™

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—*Kevin Siembieda, 2000*

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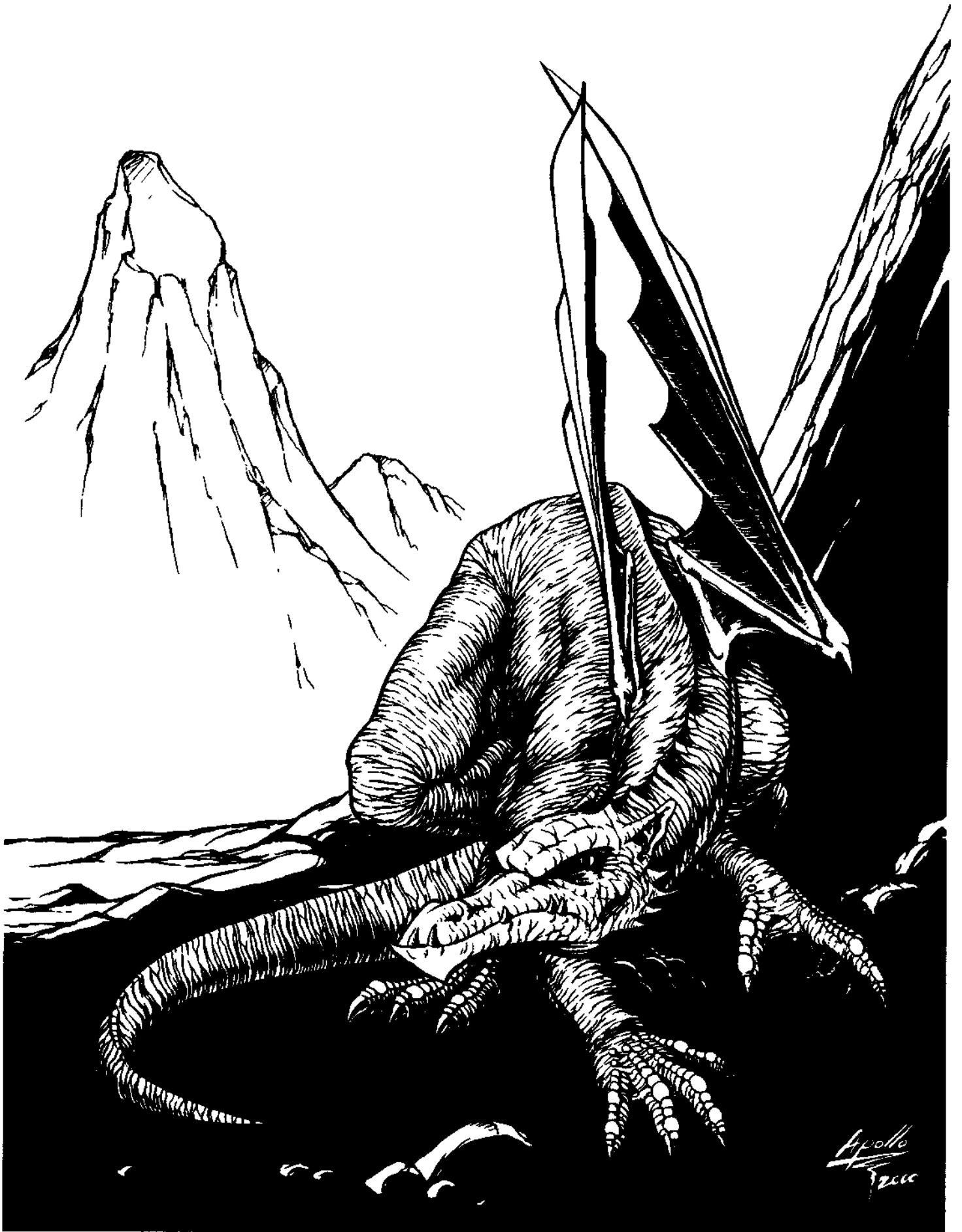
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Part One:

The Island

By Kevin Siembieda and Chester Jacques,
with additional text by Bill Coffin

The Isle of Y-Oda (pronounced why-OH-da) is located about 50 miles (80 km) offshore from the Eastern Territory, in the waters bordering the **Algorian** Sea. The island is fairly small, only 120 miles (192 km) long and 60 miles (96 km) wide. Its primary features are the twin volcanoes, Y and **Oda**, both of which have shown signs of impending eruptions. This potentially catastrophic event would lay waste to a sizeable portion of **Y-Oda**, hurling 20-25% of the **volcanoes'** land mass into the sky and covering nearly half the island with ash. The island lowlands are marked by rolling **hills**, meadows, light forest, and rocky beaches. The land is unusually fertile thanks to the large amounts of volcanic ash deposited over the millennia, and the climate is temperate.

Little land is actually cleared on the island, however, for it has only two settlements: the southeastern *Port of Arlluugra* and the northern *Port of Bletherad*. Both are relatively quiet, peaceful settlements with little trouble or unrest, with the exception of the Great Library of Bletherad, the world's largest, known library with antiquities that go back thousands of years. The Great Library is located on the outskirts of Port Bletherad and attracts a fair number of visitors each year.

Aside from the Great Library, however, Y-Oda is a land of little consequence. It is "officially" part of the Wolfen Empire and under its **control**, but the native **Y-Odans** have always considered themselves neutral. The Wolfen Empire has claimed the island for itself in order to administrate over the Great Library of **Bletherad**. For a nascent Empire desperately trying to win the respect of the human Empires it competes against, such recognition and prestige means a lot. The human nations, particularly the Eastern Territory, hotly dispute the **Wolfen's** dominion over Y-Oda and the Great Library, but so far, all they have offered on the matter are harsh words. The reality is that most human kingdoms do not care if the Wolfen want to say they own the island or not, as long as they continue to treat the island and its Library as "neutral ground" — a land of peace and learning where all people are welcome to visit and enjoy the Great Library.

The Ashlands

The twin volcanoes of Y and Oda are the most dominant features of the landscape. Both are **pyroclastic** volcanoes, which means they only erupt once in a long **while**, but when they do, it is a violent explosion that lays waste to the surrounding area. Both volcanoes have developed from the same hot spot, making them really two vents of the same volcanic system. This means when one of the volcanoes blows its **stack**, so too will the other.

After being quiet for at least 250 years, Mount Y has begun showing the early signs of an impending eruption, as steam begins to vent from its caldera, and mild earthquakes shake the island. Fresh water springs have also been reported to smell slightly **sulfurous** and periodically become very hot.

When the volcanoes erupt (it is always a matter of *when*, not *if*), it will be in a simultaneous explosion that will blow the tops off both. The shock wave and heat blast will destroy whatever is in its path, and the blast itself will be felt as far away as the Byzantium and **Timiro** Kingdoms! Thankfully for the tiny settlements of the island as well as the Great Library, the structure of the volcanoes will direct their blasts eastward, leaving the western half of the island virtually unscathed. There will be a great deal of broken windows, soot, and some minor structural damage to from the shock wave, but stoutly constructed buildings should fare well. The Great Library will suffer virtually *no* damage (aside from some books tumbling from their shelves), owing to its superb construction. On the other hand, the eastern edge of the island will not fare so well. What is not blasted to pieces by the volcanic concussion will be scorched by the hot air, hot ash and lava that will pour forth from the volcanoes for at least a week after the eruption. (Again, prevailing wind patterns should keep the vast majority of ash blowing to the east, away from the settled half of the island.) What remains of that half of the island will be an ash-covered wasteland where absolutely nothing survives unscathed. However, in a few years, plants will again begin to bloom and after a decade or so, life will begin reclaim "Volcano Alley." Until then, the area will live under the nickname given by the wary townfolk of **Bletherad**: *The Ashlands*.

Discovery ...

Ghosts and Ancient Ruins

The current towns on the island reportedly date back some 5,000 years, but *recent* archaeological expeditions (two led by Wolfen, two by **Elven** adventurers) have uncovered several ruins that prove the island was inhabited in the past — evidence at two sites suggests perhaps as long as 10,000 years ago! This means "somebody" was living on the island at the onset of the Elf-Dwarf War and that the secrets of Rune Magic might lie somewhere under the earth of Y-Oda. Such a tiny fraction of these ruins has been unearthed so far, that scholars have no idea how expansive or small they may be, or who once inhabited them. So far, *seven* ancient ruins have been **located**, each apparently the site of a different town or village. Three of these sites



were known to the local inhabitants from the large stones that protruded from the earth. According to locals, the stoneworks are the remains of ancient temples of some kind and of no importance. However, scholars and historians disagree, pointing out that one must wonder how many other ancient ruins lay buried under centuries of lava, ash and dirt — and what secrets they may hold. If these ruins actually date back to the era of the Elf-Dwarf War, the secrets of Rune Magic or other lost secrets (from the mystical to historical) might lie buried, waiting to be unearthed.

To add to the intrigue, the archaeologists have reported the wailing of ghosts around these locations, particularly at night. "Ghost sightings" around these places go back as long as any islander can remember, with the "wailing" usually occurring whenever the volcanoes become particularly active. The recent appearance of wailing ghosts coincides with the volcanoes **showing** signs of impending eruption. Local legend claims the ghosts are the spirits of those who perished during past eruptions long ago, and that they wail to warn the living when the twin mountains are preparing to blow their tops. But other legends suggest the ghost wail to warn of all sorts of dangers, from ocean storms to invaders.

The local rumor mills have begun working overtime to explain the back story behind the active volcanoes, the **10,000** year old ruins, and the wailing ghosts. Events like this are HUGE for the locals, but equally exciting and dramatic to foreign visitors who tend to let their imaginations run away with them about what this might all mean. Rumors among island visitors run the range from fairly accurate reports of events to unfounded hearsay to **wild**, unbelievable stories, preposterous speculation and outright lies. Many involve ghostly encounters, monsters, portals to other worlds, rune magic and lost treasure, while some are "doomsday" tales that suggest Y-Oda is about to be wiped from the face of the planet for any number of reasons. Consequently, any visitors to the island, especially those who linger at a village market or inn, are likely to receive an earful of scary **and/or** provocative stories, rumors and theories. Most of them are flat-out **lies**, but a few contain a kernel of truth or genuine insight. (It is left to the G.M. to decide which are true and which are pure hokum.)

To the native islanders, the discovery of the ghosts and the age of the ruins are the worst thing that could possibly happen, because they are just the kind of things that will bring more roughnecks and adventurers to the island. They have seen it time and time again: Where there are ancient ruins and mystery, there is bound to be treasure hunters in search of ancient secrets or forgotten treasure hordes waiting for those bold enough or lucky enough to unearth them — or so popular wisdom suggests. The villagers of both **Bletherad** and **Arlluagra** shudder at the thought of boat-loads of treasure seekers showing up, hitting the Great Library for research, and then taking to excavating the whole island. That sort of thing can only lead to trouble and a big mess. If nobody finds anything, many adventurers are likely to get angry about having spent so much time and money on a wild goose chase and take out their frustration on the locals. Things can only get **worse**, if a grand treasure or rare (and powerful) rune weapon or important artifact **is** found, because once news gets out, it is a sure bet the Wolfen Army will show up in no **time**, as will shiploads of Eastern pirates, spies, scholars and more adventurers! If the ruins should cough up something

important, the Wolfen Empire will definitely lay claim to it. Inevitably, the human kingdoms will protest, all of which will destroy the neutrality of the island and could turn Y-Oda into a war **zone**!

The more the locals think about this, the more the whole thing makes their heads hurt. All they really want is to be left alone to live their peaceful lives. As a result, most try to downplay the whole thing about the ruins and ghosts, shrugging it off like it was nothing. Moreover, many point out that they and their ancestors have inhabited the island, dug up old ruins and surrounding land for crops and none of them have ever found anything. Sure, some of the stoneworks are old, so what? If there were ever any valuables here, they are long gone or buried under a mountain of rock-hard lava. As for mystery, the only mystery to the natives is why everybody is suddenly making a big fuss over these ruins. At least, that's how many are playing it. And surprisingly, many adventurers are buying it. Surely if there was anything worth finding, it would have been found over the last 5,000 years. No? And while archaeologists and scholars are scratching and digging at the earth, most swashbuckling adventurers and pirates want no part of such boring labor. Meanwhile, any **Y-Odan** who is caught by his neighbors spreading rumors to off landers or encouraging further excavation will be sharply rebuked by his neighbors and perhaps even fined by the Wolfen authorities (who are quietly excavating one site on their own). While that might not seem very harsh to adventurers, being shunned by one's friends and neighbors has a huge impact and there is a strong sense of camaraderie among the villagers. Remember, even with the Great Library in their midst, both settlements are unused to the truly strange and exotic. Most are humble fishermen, farmers and **shepherders** who enjoy and want a quiet life. The reawakening of the volcanoes, the discovery of the ruins, the ghosts, and the fear that either settlement could become an adventurers' **boomtown** are all frightening and unwanted prospects for the poor **Y-Odans**, making this a time of serious uncertainty and potential crisis for the natives.

The Rumor Mill

The following are just some of the current crop of rumors circulating on the **island**, especially at places that cater to visitors, like the Library of Bletherad. Roll percentile for random selection or pick those that seem appropriate for one's campaign.

01%-07%: The ruins are the remnants of an old Elven advance camp where they conducted secret magical experiments! Who knows what secrets may lay beneath the earth.

08%-14%: The ghosts of Elven and **Dwarven** soldiers have been fighting every night on the northern edge of the island. Anybody who sees it happening will be drawn in and must fight for their lives! Those who die are doomed to become part of the ghost battle forever.

15%-18%: The Wolfen Imperial Legion is sending warships to the island right now to set up a garrison **here**! They should be landing in another few weeks.

19%-23%: Pirates were sighted off the northeastern coast about a week ago! There were two schooners, and they were flying the flag of *Crimson Jack*, the infamous Byzantium pirate!

24%-28%: To disturb the ancient ruins is to unlock the vaults of the dead. This will unleash a host of Entities upon those

who disturb these places, starting first with Poltergeists and Haunting Entities. Those who delve into the deepest bowels of the ruins will run afoul of Syphons and Tectonic Entities, perhaps even the occasional Possessing Entity, all of whom will extract deadly revenge, and send a handful of others into the world to cause mischief and mayhem. Avoid these places and leave them be.

29%-33%: An Eastern spy was seen on the outskirts of **Arlluugra** just the other day! Rumor has it he is mounting a secret excavation of one of the ruins for a member of **Timiro** or Eastern Territory.

34%-37%: The Wolfen want the secrets of the ancient ruins for themselves and have dispatched assassins and rangers to ambush and kill any who try to excavate them. Other people simply disappear without a trace, be it at the hands of the Wolfen or darker forces. **38%-42%:** The Monks of **Bletherad** are all arguing over what to do if they get flooded with adventurers and treasure hunters. There is talk about closing the Library down to the public, and admitting people only by appointment!

43%-49%: That sphinx of the Library, **Phlixt**, knows the secret behind those ruins everybody is talking about, but she won't reveal what it is.

50%-53%: Changelings secretly run the Library of Bletherad!

54%-58%: An Old One slumbers inside one of the volcanoes. They erupt when it has a nightmare — the ghosts are part of its bad dream.

59%-63%: When those volcanoes erupt, it will be because the volcanoes were triggered by some crazy old hermit and his magical workshop, up on Mount Oda.

64%-68%: There are some **Algor**, Wolfen and a few other people living on Mount Y. When she blows her stack, they will get blown to smithereens, unless somebody rescues them! If killed, their ghosts will roam the mountainside looking for what's left of their skeletons.

69%-72%: One of the ruins is a temple that is a gateway to another world. It was destroyed when Od first created the volcano of Oda to rise from the ground and bury it for all eternity. To unearth this temple is to reopen the dimensional portal and invoke the wrath of Od.

73%-77%: When the volcanoes **erupt**, it will cause a fissure in the earth out in the **Ashlands**, and all sorts of monsters will **come out** of it!

78%-81%: A fisherman pulled in a net of dead fish last week. He said they looked like they had been cooked already. You know what that means — another eruption might happen any day **now!**

82%-86%: The easternmost ruin is the birthplace of the legendary Zavor (or Yema, or Scarecrow, or other monster of legend, depending on who is telling the story). To disturb this place is to accidentally unleash more of these monsters into the world.

87%-90%: Mount Y is connected to the homeworld of the Worms of Taut. Whenever it erupts it flings a thousand Fire Worms and **Tri-Fang** into the world, and a thousand Tomb Worms ride the lava flow to feast on the flesh and bones of those who perish on the island.

91%-95%: There was an adventurer in Bletherad last week claiming that he actually met the fabled **Defilers!** Can you believe it? Do you think they are here? If so, what does that mean?

96%-98%: A few days ago, some adventurers pulled into Bletherad for some supplies and then set sail for the island of **Zy!** We told them not to go, but they went anyway. Just yesterday a fisherman was out netting, and he saw the wreckage of the adventurers' ship floating on the water!

99%-00%: They say if all the old ruins are dug up it will reveal a network of ancient, **Dwarven** magical workshops and things that will grant those who study it special powers. Things that will make one never grow old, or that will enable one to do things with his mind.

Arlluugra

The Southeastern Port

Total Population: 1,159 inhabitants plus around **3D4x10** visitors at any given time.

Racial Mix: 70% Wolfen, 10% Human, 10% Dwarf, and **10%** other.

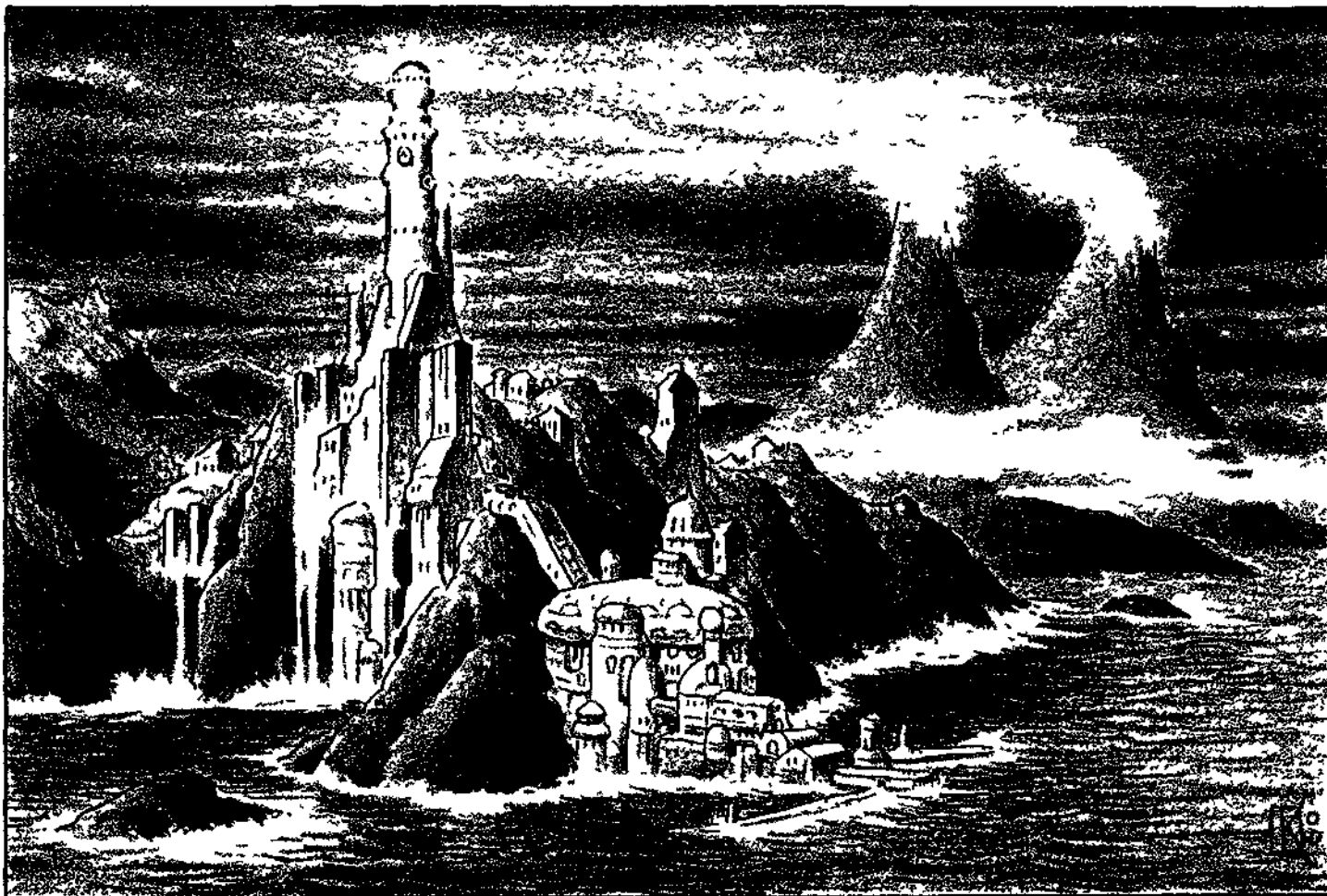
Main Business: Trade and Supply.

The Southeastern Port of *Arlluugra* is a large Wolfen village that shares the peaceful sentiments of Bletherad, although the population is predominantly Wolfen and tends to be less tolerant of humans and other races (except for Elves). This is a village of hard-working people, mostly fishermen and farmers. Visitors are welcome in this quiet community, but there is little to do other than relax or go fishing, sailing or on mountain hikes.

A wide, dirt road winds northward around the coast to the city of Bletherad and the Great Library. Another path leads up to the mountain of Oda nearby. A small tribe of Algor giants live at the summit, but even they are reasonably tolerant of human mountain climbers who show them the respect they deserve.

Points of interest within Arlluugra include:

- The **Boatworks**. Although there is no official shipyard, there are several Wolfen families skilled in carpentry and boat building who can effect repairs on any ship (they also build and repair the fishing boats used by the islanders). The only vessels these boat-builders can make from scratch are typical fishing boats, small sailboats, rowboats and Wolfen Trader Longboats (see *Adventures on the High Seas*, 2nd Edition for details on boats), but the larger types would take 2-8 months (2D4) to build. They can not build large ships from scratch, but they can repair them as well as build smaller vessels at 25% below the standard list price.
- The Docks. This is a small port, suitable only for small ocean vessels. For the most part, it houses the small fishing vessels used by the townspeople. These vessels are not ocean-going craft, and can just barely weather the trip to neighboring Zy Island — if they try it on a calm day. Large ocean-going vessels must dock at Bletherad.
- General Store and Lumberyard. This place specializes in the sale of nautical supplies — sails, rope works, pegs, and other parts and equipment for ships. Prices are about 20% lower than average. The owner is a crusty old mariner who is willing to give customers boat rides around the island if they



like. From the eastern shore of the island, he notes, one can catch a good view of the smoking volcanoes and the **Ashlands** they have created.

- **Alehouse.** This modest little clapboard house is what passes for the town inn and tavern. It is the haunt of a few local drunks who have nothing better to do than lose themselves in drink and perpetuate completely false rumors about the island to tourists and adventurers (for the price of a drink, of **course!**). Prices are average; quality is **fair** to good.
- **Town Council Hall.** This building is an old converted grain house that fills in as a community meeting hall, jail, and a few other civic functions. The **town's** Mayor and a few staff members spend their days here before retiring home. In general, though, they have little to do. All are concerned with the discovery of the ruins.
- **Archery Yard.** This area has been claimed by a 5th level Wolfen Long Bowman named **Ruskov Kon**, an ex-Imperial legionnaire and an ace with just about any kind of ranged weapon. Ruskov actually came out to Y-Oda to retire, and doesn't like the simmering developments on the island one bit. He will gladly help discourage any adventurers from hanging around in town. He is also the equivalent of the town's sheriff. Any troublemakers are asked once to leave. After that, the arrows start flying. A few warning shots, then he shoots to disable, then he shoots to kill.
- **Temple of Algor.** This stone temple is where everybody in town worships the sea god Algor. There is a story that once, long ago, the local priest managed to cajole a miracle from

Algor himself to give the people a bountiful fish harvest to counter a bad year of fishing. Alas, the priest died of a strange disease several years ago, and no new priests have come out to take his place.

Bletherad

The Northern Port

Total Population: 3,870 (approximately 1,000 of which are Scholastic Monks who manage the Library). **3D4x100** visitors (60% scholars and practitioners of magic) are present at any given time. Among these, 50% are human, 30% Wolfen, and 20% other.

Racial Mix of the Residents: 52% Wolfen, 31% Human, 6% Elf, 11% Other.

Main Business: Trade and "tourism."

Located near the middle of the island, between the twin volcanic peaks of Mount Y and Mount Oda, is the northern port city of *Bletherad*, said to have been founded by the Wolfen over 5,000 years ago. This claim is heatedly refuted by human historians, although polite visitors to the city never bring up the fact that Bletherad is not even a Wolfen name. The port city can accommodate medium to large ships, but like **Arlluugra**, has little to offer seafarers and adventurers except the most basic goods and services. The town's main attraction is the famous *Great Library*.

The Island's own legends about the Great Library start with the fall of the ancient Elf Empire. The end of the Elf-Dwarf War signaled the collapse of both the **Elven** and **Dwarven** Empires. The Empires fragmented into dozens of smaller kingdoms, cities, and clans. Anarchy reigned and society slipped into ruin along with the once-great cities. The books and art that had survived the War were stolen, **sold**, lost or hidden (and then lost). The collapse of Elf-Dwarf civilization caused the barbarian monster races of Goblins, **Orcs**, Ogres, Trolls and Giants to invade the **land**, stealing and destroying even more. The weakened Elven and Dwarven Kingdoms could not defend against the monster hordes and lost city after city. Each triumph made the invaders bolder and enticed more of them to flock to the many growing war bands where they too could partake in the looting, murder and revenge. Tens of thousands of Elves and Dwarves would die at their hands — one more tragedy to rise out of the madness of the Elf-Dwarf War.

In time, the once-great Kingdoms of Elves and Dwarves would fall to the barbarian hordes and soon become known as the monster-ridden "Old Kingdom." It was during those centuries that thousands of Elves and Dwarves fled their homeland and **scattered** across the world. Many would seek refuge among humans, while others would seek different avenues.

About 5,200 years ago, several families of Elves, Dwarves and some humans (many Changelings in disguise) came to the island Y-Oda, apparently fleeing from some menace on the mainland. They came upon a Wolfen village and befriended the canines. Together they established the village of **Bletherad** and over a period of nearly 500 years, built the Great Library. The Elves and their companions were all refugees from the Old Kingdom, dedicated to peace and desperately seeking to preserve a vast library that had been rescued by their forefathers 3,000 years earlier during the Elf-Dwarf War. They spoke of a prophecy concerning a "great library where all people could come and learn"; a place of knowledge and peace. The Wolfen islanders embraced this notion and together built the fabled Library. It is said that the first books and scrolls rescued from the Elf-Dwarf Wars barely filled one large room (less than **1%** of the gigantic Library's current size) but during the 5,000 years that followed, the Elves, Wolfen and their agents have gathered thousands upon thousands more. As the fame of the Great Library spread (mostly in the last 1,000 years), scholars, noblemen, mages and adventurers have donated or sold to them countless tomes. Today, less than a dozen libraries in the world offer even half of what one can find at the **Great Library of Bletherad**.

Among the original Elven founders was an order of Scholastic Monks (60% Elf, 15% Dwarf, 20% human, 2% Changeling, 3% other) — now known as the **Monastic Order of Bletherad** — who were instrumental in making the Great Library and administering it. Thanks to them the entire island population, including the Wolfen, is known for its tolerance and non-aggression toward all people, as well as their love for learning and appreciation of books and history — even most peasant farmers and fishermen can read one or two different languages, speak 3-5 and know the history of their island, the monks and their people. Only 15% are illiterate.

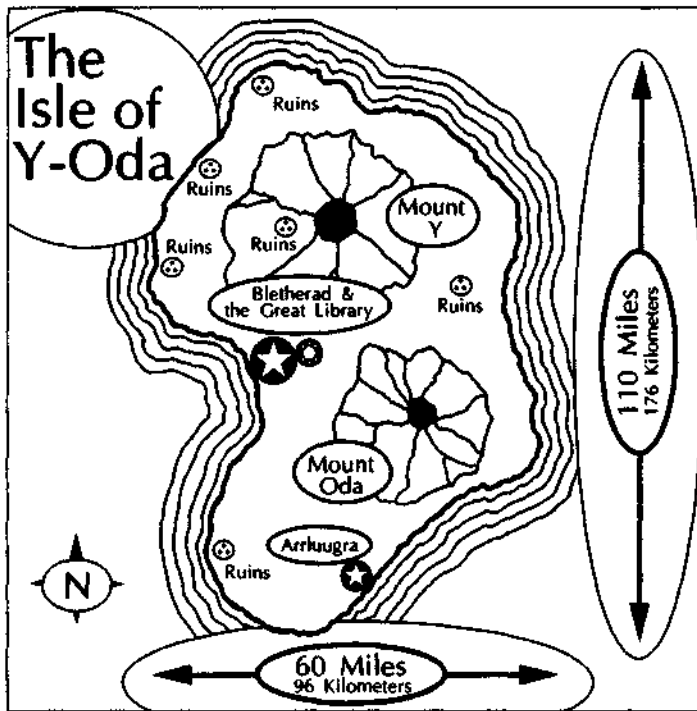
Today, the Order of Bletherad has well over two thousand members, many (50%) of whom are searching distant lands for

lost artifacts, bits of history and books of all kinds. Largely due to the geography, the Order is racially divided as follows: 48% Wolfen, 24% Elf, **15%** human, 5% Dwarf, 4% Changeling (usually disguised as humans), and 4% other. Within the city of Bletherad, the monks are generally held in high esteem, as nearly 88% of the townspeople follow their teachings of peace and tolerance.

Bletherad is generally regarded as a city, although its permanent population is under 4,000. In addition to the residents, thousands of visitors come to read the books and scrolls of the Great Library. Most stay for several days to several weeks, some for months, and some spend years poring over the collected knowledge of over 200 generations. This makes the streets and shops of Bletherad a bustling community with throngs of people representing virtually every known race, although Wolfen, Elves and humans are the most numerous. For a settlement of its size and remoteness, Bletherad is unusually prosperous, considerably more so than its poor neighbor, **Arlluugra**.

The heavy traffic from visitors works to make Bletherad appear to be more crowded and bigger than it really is. It also makes the port appear to be somewhat run-down from wear. Crime is minimal, mainly because of the peaceful nature of **Bletherad's** inhabitants and the monks' enlightened but efficient handling of law enforcement. Crime is also **low** because Bletherad attracts a higher class of people — namely scholars, historians, priests, nobles, practitioners of magic, and other highly educated and sophisticated visitors. The only reason to visit Bletherad is to go to the Great Library. For bandits, thieves, assassins, freelance warriors and other troublemakers, the island town is too remote and out of the way to bother with, so only those who have a respect for the place end up there. As of late, groups of adventurers and ruffians have begun visiting the town more frequently. Many come in search of clues to the whereabouts of ancient treasures, ruins, and forbidden places as well as information about gods, cults, people, places and secrets that *may* help lead to adventure and profit — clues and secrets believed to be contained in the scrolls, parchments and books at the Library of Bletherad. The most misguided and uneducated sometimes come expecting to find old treasure maps and obvious information just laying out in the open, waiting for somebody (like them) to find. These vagabonds usually leave quickly and disappointed, sometimes causing trouble before they depart. These silly warriors are often the victims of con-artists who will sell a fake treasure map for so many gold pieces or plant one to trick foolish or inexperienced adventurers into doing their dirty work for them. While the Library of Bletherad does not have treasure maps just sitting out in the open, it does contain a vast wealth of information and history. Those who are educated, realistic and know what they are looking for, *can* — indeed — find clues, maps and data that can help them in their quest or adventures. Of course, with the rediscovery of the ancient ruins, and the realization of their age, **musclebound** and uneducated treasure seekers (i.e. those willing to dig, fight, and explore) are likely to be all the more attracted to the island.





The City of Bletherad

The townsfolk are an honest bunch who treat most strangers in a polite and friendly manner. Any attempt by visitors to find an "unsavory" element in town will be met with puzzled looks and uneasy glances. This is definitely *not* the place to fence stolen goods or seek skullduggery. There is nothing particularly exotic or illegal available at **Bletherad**. There are no pawnshops, brothels, drug dens, gambling halls or thieves' guilds. In fact, most sailors find this port to be so boring that they usually shove off to more "fun" places within a day or **two**, sometimes within a couple of hours. Most ships stop only to deliver paying passengers who desire to visit the Great Library. Pirates avoid the place too, occasionally docking in port to do a bit of quick research or to make repairs that can't wait.

In addition to the lack of vice, violent pursuits, criminal opportunities, and other disreputable activities, most humans feel uncomfortable staying at a "**Wolfen**" port for any length of time, while others (like most adventurers) feel uncomfortable around so many "high class" and educated people.

While hardly offering the amenities of a big city, Bletherad does have a few notable spots visitors might consider checking out aside from the Great Library of Bletherad (which will be described elsewhere in this **sourcebook**). These include:

- **The Bookwurm.** Not to be confused with its main competitors, the "Bookworm" and the "**Bookewyrme**," this place is the oldest and most popular inn and tavern in town. Its food is delicious for the low price, its rooms are comfortable, and the whole place is clean and inviting. For more rough-and-tumble adventurers, staying here might be a bit of a shock, since the owners genuinely care about treating their customers well. Rates are three gold for a night's stay (scrambled egg breakfast included), 20 gold for a week (one meal a day) and 75 gold for a month (one meal a day, plus a big dinner at the end of the week). Each room can **accommodate** up to two guests, though most folks stay in their own rooms because they are so inexpensive. Half of the rooms are

currently filled by traveling scholars who are staying for a month or longer as they make day trips to the Great Library.

The owner of the place, **Luellyn Ludd**, is a sweet older woman who takes to mothering everybody who stays at her place. She is an avid reader and cuts generous discounts to any guests who bring her back copies of books for her to read. She prefers trashy romances and epics; the trashier, the better. Well liked and appreciated, most patrons, especially wealthy ones, leave Luellyn and her staff generous tips, which is how she really makes her living.

- **The Scriveners' Union.** This business is a group of **ten** freelance scribes who will accompany travelers to the Great Library and make copies for them on the spot for the same price the Library charges, only they are faster and make better quality copies.
- **Nuckleby's Bookbinding.** Those who gather large sheaves of notes and copied pages from the Library often come here to have them collected under one set of covers. Nuckleby charges one gold for every ten pages, two gold extra for heavy-duty binding (recommended), and another two extra gold for a hardcover. Unlike other binders who only glue their pages into the spine, Nuckleby takes the time to *sew* his pages in, resulting in a far higher quality product than his competitors. Most folks who go to Nuckleby will find their books still in outstanding condition **10** or **20** years later.
- **Bookstore.** This place makes a killing selling decent copies of some of the Great Library's most popular titles, including nine different versions of **The Tristine Chronicles**. For a slight overcharge, the place will also copy books for customers on demand, saving them the trip up to the Library. Since most folks are in town to use the Library, though, this service does not get used much except by those long-timers who don't need to go up to the Library every day.
- **The Bletherad Bake Shop.** The smell of sweet breads wafts through the city streets each morning courtesy of the proprietor, a talented Wolfen cook who learned his trade slinging grub for soldiers while campaigning against the **Coyle Hordes** in the western forests of the Great Northern Wilderness. The Wolfen baker almost always has a small line waiting for him from dawn through **lunchtime**. He also sells a lot of bread to the local pubs and inns. He is currently hard at work perfecting a new circular, doughy treat he calls a **baygh-kell**, which he is certain will be a smash hit once he figures out how long it takes to get them crispy on the outside and soft on the inside.
- **Blowhard's Pub.** **Blowhard** is an old fogey with a sketchy past. He claims to have done a lot of things in life: Ridden gryphons on the Isle of the Cyclops, won Emperor Itomas' favor as a Western gladiator, retrieved the crosspiece for the legendary rune sword **Castlerake** but lost it in a bet against a demon **lord** ... and similar sorts of things. Of course, if he has really done all of these things, then what the heck is he doing in Bletherad of all places? Despite his tall tales, the affable human runs a nice pub, and plenty of travelers gather here night after night to swap stories both real and made-up. Despite all the flat-out lying done here, at the end of the night, the custom is to give up one serious bit of news before leaving. In this **regard**, Blowhard's is a decent place for hearing juicy rumors and news. It just takes all night to get them.

- **Cardaugh Muroe, Tailor.** **Cardaugh** has lived his whole life in **Bletherad** and he earnestly loves the pace of life around here. Seeing people from all over the world come into his shop and walking the streets makes him feel as if he is traveling **to** exotic ports of call even though he has never set foot outside of his hometown. Although Cardaugh is an unassuming man about as likely to go on an adventure as he is to transform into a brick of gold, he is *the* authoritative source of international news on the island. "When one receives clients from all over the world, one learns how to listen to them," or so Cardaugh likes to say. Those looking for news about politics and other countries often come here to get a cloak mended or a tunic embroidered even if they don't need it. "In that case," Cardaugh might say, "allow me to mend that tunic of yours for free. You can just tip me later for the conversation."
- **Carriage Service and Livery.** There are very few horses on the island, and most of them are found at this stable at the end of town. During the day, the Wolfen owner has a pair of ogre rickshaw runners pulling very nice extra-wide carriages through the streets for two gold a ride. He also rents horses for **five** gold a day, plus expenses for feeding and grooming.
- **The Bletherad Docks.** This meager facility is hardly a world-class docking area, but it does offer over a dozen slips and water deep enough to handle even the largest ships (not that many ever come here). The dock workers all keep their personal fishing boats along a separate slip at the end of the facility. Most will give visitors boat rides to anywhere on the island for **6-10** gold. They will *not*, under any circumstances, give rides to the island of Zy, which they insist is home to monsters, Horrors, and a gate to Hades known only as *Hell's Fist*. While this might entice hardcore adventurers, they are going to have to find somebody else to take them to the **island**, since the dock workers all consider a trip to Zy certain doom. If the rough water doesn't capsize you, then the dangers of the island will surely finish off any foolish enough to set foot on it. The dock workers, like all islanders, will also be reluctant to give people boat rides to the **mainland**, both because of the danger of the journey and because there are no "civilized" ports of call; only miles of dangerous wilderness coastline.
- **Island Safari.** This is one of the few businesses in town basically designed to fleece visitors of their cash. For 15 gold a person, the guide will take them on a two-day island safari to hunt the "wild and dangerous monsters and animals of Bletherad!" The truth **is**, the island's game just isn't that diverse or impressive, and all that any customer is likely to bag is an exotic sea bird or two near the coast. Whales and porpoises are often seen and sometimes **chased**, but the safari boats are much too slow to catch them, and there are no weapons capable of slaying the aquatic beasts. The proprietor, a Wolfen named **Grrdryl**, likes to run the business because it is easy and it helps him to catch a glimpse of the ruins on the northern end of the island. For an extra 50 gold, he is even willing to drop anchor and run a half dozen sightseers to one of the ruins themselves (with customers around him, he figures any ghosts will go after his "foreign" guests instead of him).
- **Blacksmith.** The blacksmith is quite competent and able to repair or replace most small, non-magical items at a reasonable price. Any attempt to make the smith work on a magic item will only cause him to stop and mutter something about "**the curse of Oda.**" He can not be bribed or coerced into working on magic items, and will simply close up his shop if someone insists on it.
- **Auntie Ev's.** This favorite tavern is owned by "Auntie **Ev**," a friendly, **old**, "**male**" Wolfen, slightly balding and fat (Scrupulous alignment, 10th level soldier). Nobody knows why "Auntie Ev" calls himself that, but most guests figure it has to do with a nickname he acquired in the military. He will talk to anyone and inevitably turns to telling stories about his youth in the Wolfen Imperial Legion before his retirement on the island. If he is told an equally good story, the party will receive their entire night's drinks free (and possibly free lodging on cots in the back room). It can be assumed that everything said by Auntie Ev is based on truth, although he does have a tendency to exaggerate and repeat unsubstantiated rumors as fact. He is likely to mention the following, usually woven into the middle of a long tale about the time he caught his first swamp rat. Roll percentile for random rumors or pick the ones most appropriate.

About the Island:

- 01%-12%:** There have been sightings of Sphinxes at the twin peaks of Y and Oda. In fact, the secret protector of the Library is an ancient and powerful Sphinx known as "The Keeper," but don't tell anybody.
- 13%-25%:** The name "Bletherad" is actually **Grimborish** for "One Who Doesn't Sink in the Lagoon."
- 26%-37%:** The entire island is enchanted and was once the domain of a great faerie kingdom. The Great Library was actually built by them and is really a million years old. Nobody knows whatever happened to the faerie kingdom or its people.
- 38%-50%:** The ancient Temple of Oda is filled with many wondrous items, but no one has ever managed to touch them.
- 51%-62%:** The Wolfen in the monastic order are all really Changelings, but are peace-loving folk.
- 63%-75%:** Dragons and other powerful beings sometimes visit the Great Library.
- 76%-87%:** The god Od frequently finds peace and solitude at the top of Mount Oda. A temple and small group of warrior priests dedicated to Od can be found midway up the mountain.
- 88%-00%:** One of Od's treasure troves is hidden in a cave on Mount Oda. **Really!**

About the Wolfen & Politics:

- 01%-15%:** The Wolfen are smarter, stronger and more prodigious lovers than any human, Elf, Dwarf, or even Titan! That's a **fact!!**
- 16%-30%:** It would be great if Wolfen and humans could live in peace, like the inhabitants of this **island**, but he wouldn't hold his breath waiting.
- 31%-44%:** One of the great Wolfen Generals (no name is given) is planning on seizing the southern disputed lands claimed by the Eastern Territory — and possibly claiming the entire region for himself. He commands a legion of

Coyles that is five million strong! War brews on the mainland directly across the channel.

45%-58%: The Wolfen tribes are again at conflict and the Wolfen Empire may soon splinter. The Western Empire **is** secretly behind this turmoil.

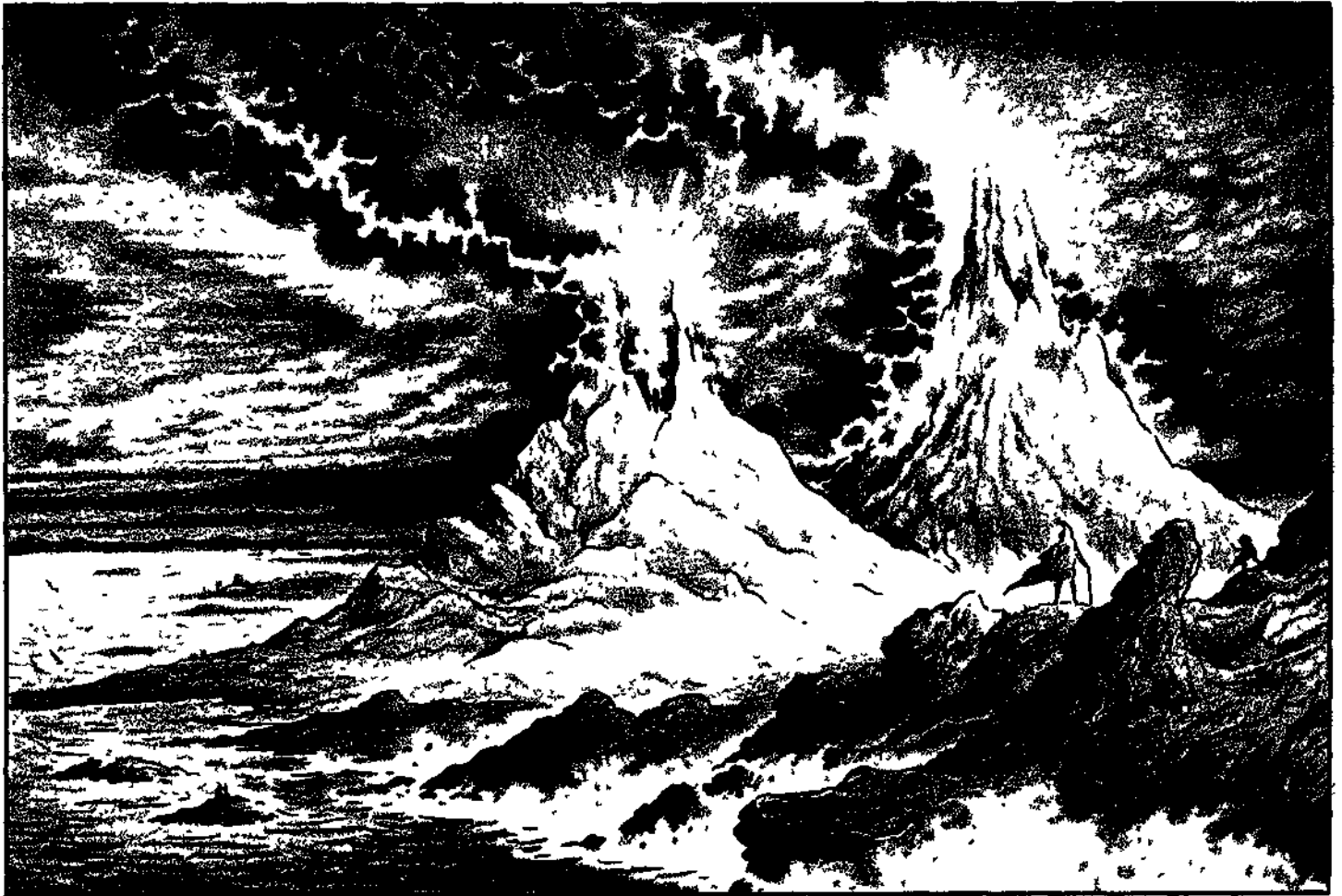
59%-72%: The Wolfen Empire has never been happy **with** the neutrality of this island and its acceptance of all races. Throughout the decades there have been discussions as to whether or not the island and the Great Library should be the exclusive property of the Wolfen Empire. However, while politicians and generals grumble, the Wolfen have respected

the island's neutrality and have never interfered **with** the affairs of Y-Oda's people or the Great Library.

73%-86%: There has been a lot of trouble along the coast of **Timiro**. It is rumored that children there vanish every day!

87%-00%: There is a place **in Ophid's** Grasslands that **is** a doorway to a dozen different worlds and where time **is** meaningless. That's where the fabled "**Defilers**" come from

Note: The big Wolfen has apparently had several bad experiences with practitioners of magic (don't ask) and dislikes them. He and his employees are cool toward them and don't tolerate even the threat of using magic **in** his establishment.



The Volcanoes

Mount Y

The larger of the two volcanoes on the island, Mount Y will lose its top and a good chunk of its eastern face when it erupts. When this happens the top of the mountain will look like a mighty hammer of the gods smashed it, laying bare its molten interior. The volcanic caldera is enormous (several **miles/kilometers in diameter**) and the entire eastern side of the volcano **will** become unscalable after any eruption, due to its thick layers of ash, unstable rock, and hardening lava flows. A decade after any eruption, when the mountain has once again stabilized, islanders will once again be able to scale the mount from any direction.

Only a relative handful of people make the volcano their home. Most are independent Wolfen clans and hermits who do not care for civilization or humans. There are also a few **Algor, Orc** and Goblin clans. All of them are fairly small (4D4 members) and keep to themselves. They generally do not make trouble with each other, and they leave the townsfolk down below alone. **Periodically**, some of these recluses will come down to rob or harass tourists and adventurers, but this is rare.

Nobody from either village is much inclined to go up and check out what these mountain tribes may be up to. Most assume the clans will be destroyed when the volcanoes erupt, but

despite that certainty, the few hardy souls who have explored the volcanoes insist that the tribes appear to be growing! According to some rumors, the clans are led by the infamous **Earth/Fire** Warlocks **Jobba** and **Kaisu Grishon**, who are organizing the clans into a motley army. The **Grishons** are said to be using the impending volcanic eruption as an "omen" that their time for revenge against the islanders is at hand. Most of the islanders brush this off as nonsense. Revenge for what? There has never been any hostility against the mountain folk before; why should they want to fight now? Others whisper, and only in the strictest of confidence, that there are groups gathering in strength up on the mountains, but they are the pawns of some shadowy group of secret soldiers who call themselves "The Zealotry." Rumor has it that they have some beef with the *Library of Bletherad* and aim to destroy the place.

Unable to hear such stories and not act on them, a small group of visiting adventurers went up to the top of the mountain to investigate a month ago. They have not **returned**, although some of their weapons and armor were reportedly found along a nature trail at the bottom of the volcano. Did they meet a foul **end**, or did they just forget some of their stuff before leaving the island? It is possible they died out there, but not because they ran into any enemies. There are a number of hot springs between Mounts Y and Oda, that folks like to bathe in. From time to time (an 01% chance per bath), the spring will experience a thermal spike, and the water will instantly get boiling hot. Anybody in the boiling pools will almost certainly cook to death (**2D4x10** damage per melee round). Likewise, vents of steam, **lava**, and landslides are a constant danger while the volcanoes rumble. Any one of these could have spelled doom to the adventurers, who were warned not to go. At least, that's what people in **Bletherad** like to think. They feel some kind of skullduggery is too much like the mainland. That's where **murder**, treachery and evil stuff happens, not here!

Mount Oda

Mount Oda is Y-Oda's southern volcano. Prior to the rumblings of its big brother to the north, Oda had been inactive for centuries and overgrown with thick vegetation. Since Mount Y has shown signs of activity, there have been some spontaneous defoliations of several large tracts of vegetation on Mount Oda, perhaps a sign that this volcano is also awakening.

The path leading to Mount Oda from **Bletherad** is still mostly overgrown, and any travelers will **find** their speed reduced to half their normal rate. Midway up the mountain, the light forest turns into alpine scrub and rock. **Algor** giants are said to live in this **region**, although they are seldom encountered. (For more details on them, see the *Curse of Oda* section, below.) An occasional Wolfen or **Coyle** is more likely to be **found**, but again, not in great numbers. Wildlife consists of rabbits, mountain sheep, birds and the occasional predator, including visiting **Peryton** and gryphons.

Although few talk about it, there is said to be a cave that contains either a vast treasure or a terrible **curse**, depending on who's telling the tale. The Monks of Bletherad deny both and discourage adventurers from mountain travel due to the danger of climbing around a potentially active volcano. But, as long as the rumor mills in town keep churning away, tales about mystery atop the mountain persist, and a few adventurers each year show up in search of it.

Note: Along the southern face of the volcano, where the path from Bletherad meets the mountain, there is a small temple dedicated to Od and inhabited by about 12 low-level priests and another 12 acolytes. Most of them are Wolfen, but there are a few humans and other races represented as well. The temple priests claim the mountain has been "touched" by Od, even though the god does not reside or even come to visit the mountaintop, at least not in the last 4,000 years (if ever). Although these temple folk know of some "curse" involving the top of the mountain, they do not put any stock in it. They too will discourage people from ascending the mountain unless they pay some kind of homage to Od at their temple. Those who refuse will not be threatened or **harm**ed, but they will be written off as fools who may invoke Od's wrath by trespassing on "his" mountain without permission. So far, nobody has been struck down by the god, but the temple priests remain confident that one day it will happen, and all their warnings to travelers will finally be validated.

The Curse of Oda

A large network of caves and lava tunnels honeycomb the interior of Mount Oda. A few of them are inhabited by Algor giants, others by Northern Grizzly Bears (not indigenous to the island, so they must have been brought here); others are empty. Somewhere near the top is one particular cave that has been blocked by large boulders. Nearby is a small hut and its inhabitant, an Elf hermit of scrupulous alignment named Haladriel the Eider. Haladriel has inhabited the volcano for quite some time, but the possibility of an eruption worries him. Though he has **precognitive** powers, he is unsure if they will be enough to give him sufficient time to evacuate the mountain before it erupts.

To characters of a good alignment, Haladriel will say the cave contains his valuables and the grave of his beloved, so he must ask them to honor his privacy and leave them undisturbed. Most good characters will be obligated by their alignment to honor the request. After all, they are adventurers and heroes, not thieves and bullies. However, anybody who can sense the truth will know he is lying. Furthermore, those who can see aura **and/or** sense magic will know that the hermit radiates magic and is more than he seems. Selfish and evil characters may ignore his request and try to sneak a look inside, or even attack the hermit. Either action will cause the Elf to attack with deadly magic, but only after he has dispatched a magic pigeon to a clan of **2D4+1** Algor who will come to his aid within 2D4+4 minutes. All will fight to the death!

The truth is that Haladriel is a 9th level Wizard with a remarkably diverse breadth of spells at his disposal. If threatened, he will immediately cast the *Anti-Magic Cloud* spell around the cave, turn invisible, and continue his attack with Wind Rush, Call Lightning and other powerful spells. His goal will be to either keep the intruders out of the cave or to kill those who get too close. If he has to, he will use additional magic to block the entrance, but he would rather not affect the local rock structure any more than he has to. (It might be a little unstable and moving the area's rocks around might cause a landslide or cave-in somewhere.) If Haladriel is killed or incapacitated, the player characters may have a few minutes to remove the boulders blocking the cave before the Algor arrive. Magic or superhuman P.S. will be required to move the 20 tons (**18.2 kt**) of rock. In the alternative, curious characters of a good alignment may find

themselves helping the good Wizard defend the cave against bandits or other evil forces, even though our heroes may have no idea of what they are fighting to preserve or protect.

Beyond the boulders is a lava tunnel with small natural chambers. Trapped inside for many years have been a pair of *Zavor*, bizarre little creatures whose diabolic evil nature is matched only by their total immunity to magic attacks! (Note: For a full description and stats for the *Zavor*, please refer to the stat block below or the *Monsters & Animals* sourcebook).

According to a secret document stored in the Library of Bletherad (and not made available to the public), an Elf Captain, some 4,000 years ago, led a campaign into Mount Oda to eradicate the 120+ *Zavor* thought to be living there. The author concluded at the end of his campaign that he thought he had successfully destroyed them all, but feared that a handful of *Zavor* may have survived. The caverns of the volcano are legion, and it would have been child's play for a couple of these creatures to evade the invaders. Since then, however, only these two *Zavor* have been discovered. They were found by a party of Monks of Bletherad, who in their pacifism, could not destroy the monsters. **Instead**, they imprisoned them in this cavern and charged the **hermit-Wizard Haladriel** and his **Algor** friends to guard the cavern with their lives. Above all else, they must not let the *Zavor* escape or fall into the hands of evil beings who might use the enchanted creatures for diabolical purposes.

In the event of an eruption, however, Haladriel fears for the cavern's integrity. He has not checked the cave himself for fear

of letting the creatures escape, but at the same time, he also can not exclude the possibility that when Mount Oda erupts, the cavern holding these creatures could rupture, letting them escape. Eventually, Haladriel will find the courage to check and see. Until then, he will simply keep his eyes open for *any* *Zavor* activity on the island and take appropriate action when and if any surfaces. The Wizard has also alerted the Monks of Bletherad of the situation, and they too keep their ears open for any *Zavor* outbreak.

For the Monks of Bletherad, the *Zavor* present a most grave problem. They wonder why so many inhabited the island long ago. Could it be that the creatures originated from this island? Or did the island fall to *Zavor* hordes in one of their infamous conquests? The world at large does not know that there was a time when tens of thousands of *Zavor* rampaged across the Palladium World in a scorched earth campaign that brought entire empires to their knees. The Monks fear that if the *Zavor* from Mount Oda were to escape, it would be little trouble for them to find the town of **Bletherad**, make trouble there, get hit by something magical (one of the adventurers in town is bound to try it) and begin duplicating from there. It is a worst case scenario, to be sure, but one that remains **possible**, if unlikely. As long as *any* possibility of a new *Zavor* outbreak exists, the Monks of Bletherad shall not rest easy. The image of the mainland covered by a seething carpet of rampaging *Zavor* is just too horrible to ignore.

Zavor

Excerpted from **Monsters and Animals, 2nd Ed.**

The *Zavor* are strange little **humanoids** of low intellect and uncanny power, for they are completely invulnerable to magic. This includes all passive magic and spells such as Charm, Globe of Silence, Sense Evil, Cloud of Slumber, Mesmerism, Tongues, Blind, Mute, etc. Even an immobilize spell will be shrugged off without the slightest hindrance or ill effect.

Magic weapons or magic energy attacks, such as rune swords, Paralysis Bolt, Call Lightning, Fire Ball, Wall of Fire, River of Lava (all are magic fires or energy) and so on, will split the *Zavor* into two identical creatures with equal abilities, hit points, and memory! Likewise, physical punches, kicks, claws, bites and breath attacks from *creatures of magic*, including the **Za**, **Loogaroo**, Sphinx, **Drakin**, Unicom, dragons, and Faerie Folk, will also cause the *Zavor* to split into a duplicate every single time it is struck! If the creature (either one or both) is struck by another magic energy attack, it will create another double, identical in every way. If this is continued, a small army of these weird creatures can be created in a matter of minutes. Once created, the duplicates are as permanent and real as the originals and will live until they are destroyed!

Magic barriers: Only magic that creates a permanent physical barrier can stop or impede the *Zavor*. This includes such barriers as walls of stone, clay, thorns, ice or other physical **damage**, such as hail, dust storm, wind rush, hopping stones, earthquake, **quicksand**, etc. Entirely magical barriers, such as **Immobilize**, Magic Net, Carpet of Adhesion, Impenetrable Wall of Force, and even Spells of Legend will NOT affect the *Zavor*.

Vulnerabilities: Thankfully, the *Zavor* are vulnerable to all **psionic attacks** with full effect and damage. Psychic energy, even Psi-Swords and **Pyrokinesis**, do not split the *Zavor* into du-



plicates. Zavor are also vulnerable to weapons made of silver, wood and iron; all do their full damage without creating a duplicate monster.

The origin of the Zavor is unknown and their purpose is equally vague. They have no craft, no society, and no goal except to destroy other life forms. Ironically, a Zavor prior to a magically induced duplication is shy, quiet, and completely **nonaggressive**, not even fighting to defend itself. It is only after it has been split into two (or **more!**) duplicates that it becomes intensely cruel and driven to slay ALL living creatures, from animals to humans! All intelligent beings, from **Orcs** to Elves, will kill a Zavor on sight. In a campaign that can only be called genocide, the Zavor were believed to have been completely annihilated. Unfortunately, this is not true, and their numbers have already risen to dangerous levels, though still quite minimal (probably less than 3,000 worldwide). Note: Those few scholars who have devoted their studies to the Zavor note that while there are a relative few of them currently in the world, the chances of these creatures undergoing some kind of mass duplication and forming a kind of "Zavor outbreak" increase exponentially with every single Zavor alive in the world. Once the level of Zavor reaches 5,000, scholars fear that a large outbreak will become inevitable.

Alignments: Diabolic evil.

Attributes: I.Q.: 1D6+1, M.E.: 2D6, M.A.: 2D6, P.S.: 3D6, P.P.: 3D6, P.E.: 3D6, P.B: 2D6, Spd: 2D6

Hit Points: P.E. +20.

S.D.C.: 2D4x10

Natural A.R.: 8, but is also invulnerable to poison, drugs, fire, cold, fall damage, magic, and magic weapons. Only psionics and normal weapons made of wood, silver and iron can inflict damage.

Horror Factor: 16

P.P.E.: 3D6

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 90 feet (27.4 m), see the invisible, prowl (50%), climb (60%), impervious to fire, cold, magic and magic weapons.

Attacks Per Melee: Three

Damage: Bite or claw attacks both do 1D6 damage, or by weapon.

Bonuses: +2 to strike, +3 to parry and dodge.

Magic: No abilities other than those described.

Psionics: None.

O.C.C.s: None.

R.C.C. Skills: Speaks Gobblely/Goblin (90%), Land Navigation (50%), W.P. Blunt.

Value: None.

Average Life Span: Immortal — lives until slain.

Habitat: Secluded, desolate areas, often in deserted ruins and tunnels when in small numbers. They swarm like locusts, destroying all life-forms when in numbers greater than 24! Zavor are known to exist among the ruins of the **Baalgor Wastelands** and the Old Kingdom. Rumors suggest they may also exist in (some say originate from) the Land of the Damned. Others have suggested they are the creations (play-things?) of the Old Ones.

Enemies: ALL life forms.

Allies: Absolutely none!

Size: Three and a half feet tall (1.1 m).

Weight: 45 to 70 pounds (20 to 31.7 kg).

Notes: Zavor are not born but are duplicated via magic attacks. The duplication process takes only two melee rounds (30 seconds). The creatures will use the weapons and armor of their victims, but are incapable of operating even simple devices, making things, or riding animals. They serve no (known) master, do not eat, and have absolutely no need or want for wealth, but do gather and keep easy-to-use magic items, like a flaming sword, which they might use to make more of themselves! Can use almost any type of weapon that is compatible with **their** physical strength. They do NOT use any bow weapons (or guns).



Part Two: The Library



A Place of Knowledge

Just to the north and west of the city of **Bletherad** stands a mighty fortress, a tower of stone five stories high whose majesty is surpassed only by the smoking volcanoes that stand to either side, off in the distance. This is the Great Library of Bletherad, the foremost library in the world. Here the Monks of Bletherad store **over five million** volumes or works on every subject imaginable, from obscure recipes to lost passages of the **Tristine Chronicles**.

It took a little over five centuries to construct the Great Library, and one look at it up close reveals why. Except for the palaces of kings and perhaps certain ruins of ancient empires, one will be hard pressed to find a grander building than the main hall of the library. It is a simple tower structure standing five stories high and ringed by a series of towers and patios for its occupants to retire outside when they wish to break from their research. At its base, the circular main hall is exactly one mile (1.6 km) in diameter, filling up the valley-like cleft in the island where the building is located. For one to pass through this area to gain access to the **Ashlands** on the eastern end of the island, he would have to scale the Library (not happening) or go around it. The building itself has formed a kind of dam cinching off the island at its only choke point. The building was placed here because it was thought that if the Library ever needed additional floors, they could be built to extend into the sides of the vol-

canoes' bases for added support. Now that the mountains seem ready to blow their tops, however, those plans have been scrapped for good. (Unless an Earth Warlock can provide a permanent remedy to the volcanoes, but that seems unlikely for now. Besides, much as the Monks fear another series of eruptions, they also would hate to disrupt the natural working of things, and capping the volcanoes would seem like a violation of nature's way.)

The Main Hall sits within the Scholastic Monastery of **Bletherad**, a walled compound that houses not only the Great Library, but an abbey for the monks, a hostel for visitors to the library, a series of gardens and workshops (where the monks ply their various trades), and many plazas and patios for visitors and monks to enjoy some peace and quiet. The entire compound is extremely well cared for, and it almost exudes a sense of peace and **tranquility**. Wide sidewalks, hedge mazes, fountains, and other amenities make this place one of beauty and grace. While it has the opulence of a royal palace, the layout and aesthetic of everything here maintains the kind of modesty one might expect from the monks who look after the place. Those leaders who build grand castles and palaces to impress their rivals would do well to take note of the simple majesty of the Great Library. Its exterior presence alone, coupled with the handsome construction of the other buildings in the monastery, commands a kind of awe unknown to all but a handful of buildings in this world.

This grandeur only continues as one enters. Visitors first walk down a grand hallway lined with numerous tapestries, sculptures and works of art that all together, represent a priceless treasure. The hallway ends at a large, multiple-entrance gateway, through which all visitors must pass. Before going through the gateway, there read signs in every **language**. stating:

*"WARNING! No magic is **allowed** nor can be performed inside the GREAT LIBRARY. Any being requiring magic to survive is advised not to enter. Furthermore, while ALL people are **welcome**, weapons and violence are not. Leave your hatred and prejudices at the door **with** your weapons and **armor**."*

Once reading these signs, visitors will notice that all along the preliminary hallway are check stations where they may surrender their weapons and armor. Visitors are issued a stamped metal voucher for their belongings without which they can not retrieve their things. Those who lose their voucher can get their property back but only after convincing the monks in charge that they are the rightful owners. Since a few of the monks have psionic powers, a simple scan for truthfulness will be all that is required before letting the person claim what is his. Visitors need not worry about their belongings being stolen, even if they are of tremendous value. The Monks are very honest and upright individuals who are repelled by the very notion of theft. Besides, the relatively easy-going security measures of the Library exist because everybody pretty much agrees to act in a civil manner here. If the monks were to break that trust by stealing items surrendered to them in good faith, it would not only blacken the Order's reputation, but it would eventually make it impossible to maintain any kind of security at the Library. In the 5,000 years or so that the Library has been in existence, there have been very, very few thefts of surrendered property, and in

each case, the monk was severely punished and the property was recovered.

Besides this grand main entrance, there are numerous auxiliary entrances on all sides of the building, each with a miniature version of the system displayed in the main entrance. At all gates, visitors are required to pay a donation of **five** silver, or one gold, to enter the Great Library. Once inside, visitors are free to stay as long as they like. There are ample facilities for guests to stay overnight if they like, although the unspoken courtesy is that those who stay longer than 24 hours donate another five silver/one gold to the Library. Such meager donations are the lifeblood of this institution and without them, the Great Library would have a much harder time running. Greater donations are welcomed and often paid to show appreciation, but do not earn one any special privileges.

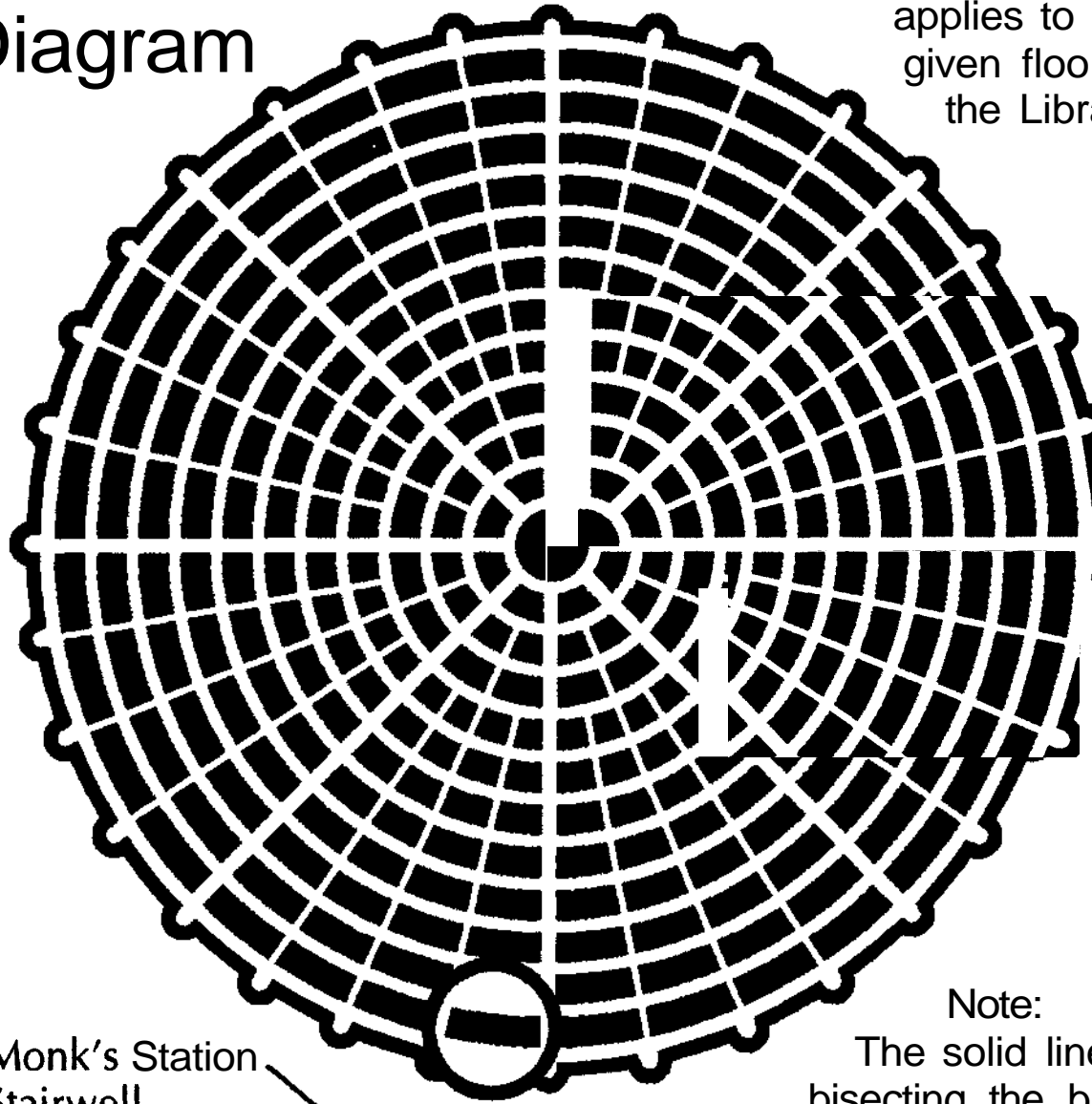
The first floor. The majority of the Library's ground level is taken up by a cavernous foyer and entry hall where visitors may meet with others, make arrangements with one of the Monks of Bletherad for food or lodging within the Library, or simply to walk around in a place where there is a bit of sound and space. The main foyer has a floor of polished marble, with grand **support** columns ringing its outer edge. Radiating from the chamber, like spokes of a wheel, are oversized hallways (20 **feet/6.1** m wide and tall) extending all the way to the outer edge of the building itself. Where each hallway reaches the outer wall of the Library there is a huge set of double doors leading to an equally huge balcony/patio where visitors can take a break from their studies and enjoy the fresh air. Many visitors enjoy taking their lunch out here, as well as holding informal study groups and other meetings. Although the balconies offer little privacy (anyone in the hallway leading up to it could spy on those outside), most people are respectful of others, and parties outside are left to their own business. Thus, groups who wish to meet in private can do so on one of the many balconies of the Library with little to no fear of being spied upon or other hostile intrusion.

Intersecting these radial hallways are a series of concentric circular hallways, like the age rings on a tree trunk. The "blocks" created by the intersections of these two kinds of hallways are themselves independent buildings that stretch from floor to ceiling, acting both as storage areas and support columns for the ceiling. These unique structures are simply referred to as the Library's "blockhouses," and they are the linchpin to how the Library organizes its vast collection. (More on that later!)

Every blockhouse has a single arched entrance which bears a plaque telling researchers what category of material can be found within. Upon entering, visitors will think that they have stepped into a smaller, self-contained library building. **Floor-to-ceiling** bookshelves are recessed into the inner walls of every blockhouse, and are usually crammed with books and scroll tubes. Likewise, the blockhouse's spacy interior is mostly filled by a tightly organized array of stacks (bookshelves) that stand up to ten feet (3 m) high. Footstools are readily available for patrons to reach the top shelves themselves. Halfway up the 20 foot (6.1 m) high walls of the blockhouse, a sturdy balcony rings the room, allowing easy access to the high shelves along the walls. In each corner of the blockhouse is a circular stairwell leading to the upper level of the chamber. Typically, a column

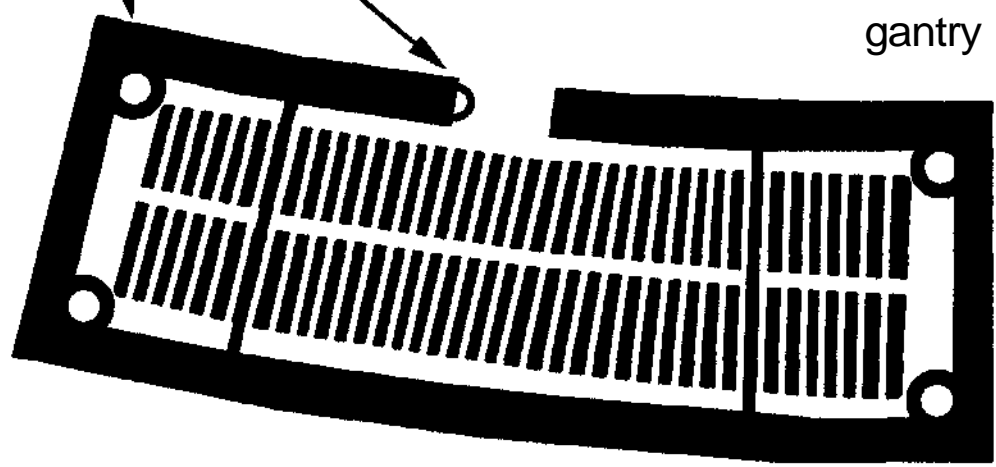
Blockhouse Diagram

Note: This diagram
applies to any
given floor of
the Library.



Monk's Station
Stairwell

Note:
The solid lines
bisecting the block-
house are its inner
gantry bridges.



← 1/10th mile (528 ft.) →
.161 km (161 m)

will have at least two metal gantry-bridges connecting the far sides of the balcony to each other, preventing browsers from having to walk all the way around the room to get to the shelves on the other side. Back on the ground, in a corner near the door is a Librarian's Station, where there will be a Monk of **Bletherad**, able and willing to assist patrons. The Librarians are also there to check out any materials patrons wish to borrow from the blockhouse — patrons are not allowed to take Library books off the premises, but they can borrow books from various blockhouses and bring them elsewhere in the Library for perusal. They just all need to be signed out from where they were taken first. When not helping sign books out, the Monks of each blockhouse are busy **recirculating** returned materials and integrating new selections into the stacks. (Thanks to superb planning, most of the shelves of the Library have some space left on them to accommodate growth, but space *is* running out. At the pace the Library is accepting new material, new storage arrangements will have to be made within the next **five** to ten years!)

The interior of the blockhouses, like the rest of the Library, is simply but comfortably **furnished**, with plenty of places for patrons to work and read at. Those looking to enjoy a relaxing read might grab one of the chairs or couches along the walls, while the more studious may opt to pull a chair up to one of the large oaken tables set up for just such a purpose. So that the inside of the blockhouses are not completely dark, they have a single large window built into each wall, allowing some light to come in, as well as offering a glimpse of the hallways outside. Bolted to the outer walls of each blockhouse, near the corners, are signs indicating what kinds of materials are kept **within**, as well as direction signs describing the contents of nearby blockhouses. This system works fairly well, just like street signs.

On this first floor of the Great Library, much of the room ordinarily taken up by blockhouses has been dedicated to the Main Foyer. Some of the blockhouses adjacent to the Main Foyer include several **Scrivening** Studios, where patrons may pay young Monks of Bletherad to "hand-copy" pages from any of the Library's books. The cost is two gold per page just for straight text. If the patron wishes to have a special lettering reproduced or added, that will cost **extra**, up to 10 gold per page depending on the complexity of the extra artwork. Simple sketches cost twice as much and finished illustrations and detailed maps cost 100 gold and up. The monks working in these studios are all fairly experienced and skilled at what they do. They are also fairly fast, requiring only **1D4** hours per page (which by ordinary standards is super-fast!) Of course, patrons are welcome to make their own copies of what they find **in** the Library, but hiring a scribe is the most popular option because it frees up people to conduct more research, grab a bite to eat, or take a rest while somebody else copies over the pages they need.

Elsewhere along the **Foyer's** edge are a few blockhouses reserved for administrative purposes and support functions. One blockhouse, for example, is a hostel for those guests staying at the Library for extended periods; another is a large kitchen where the Monks prepare and serve meals to those willing to pay a small fee (one silver) for them. The rest of the blockhouses on the floor are devoted to storing Library materials.

In the center of the first floor, right at the northern edge of the Main Foyer is a large garden area that extends all the way through to the Library ceiling and the huge glass skylight that lets filtered sunlight stream in.

The second, third, fourth and fifth floors. These are all laid out basically the same as the first floor, except there is no main foyer, so the *entire* floor is covered **in** blockhouses. At the center of each floor is an open space where one can look down at the magnificent garden on the first floor, or can look up for a glimpse of the outside sky.

On the fifth floor is a special Map Room with a separate admittance fee of 10 gold. This room contains all of the Great Library's maps (copies of maps and the occasional missed map may also be found in books throughout the Library). It is one of the most commonly visited sections of the facility. Small reproductions of most area maps can be purchased here or at the front desk in the Main Foyer on the first floor, but the quality of the art work is atrocious (these copies are the work of student scribes who are just learning how to use pen and ink). The prices for the maps are reasonable; 1-3 gold for a standard map, 8-20 gold for a more detailed one. However, the cheapest maps are so badly drawn that there is a **01%-75%** chance that they are inaccurate or impossible to read correctly. The more expensive maps are much more accurate, although occasionally flawed in minor ways (misspelling, scale is off, etc.). The maps are non-returnable and the Complaint Department is headed by a **large**, ugly Wolfen named **Vrrgryph** who answers most of the criticisms by rubbing his stomach and muttering something about how hungry he is. (Vrrgryph is really a gentle giant, and was given his position because of his incredible patience.)

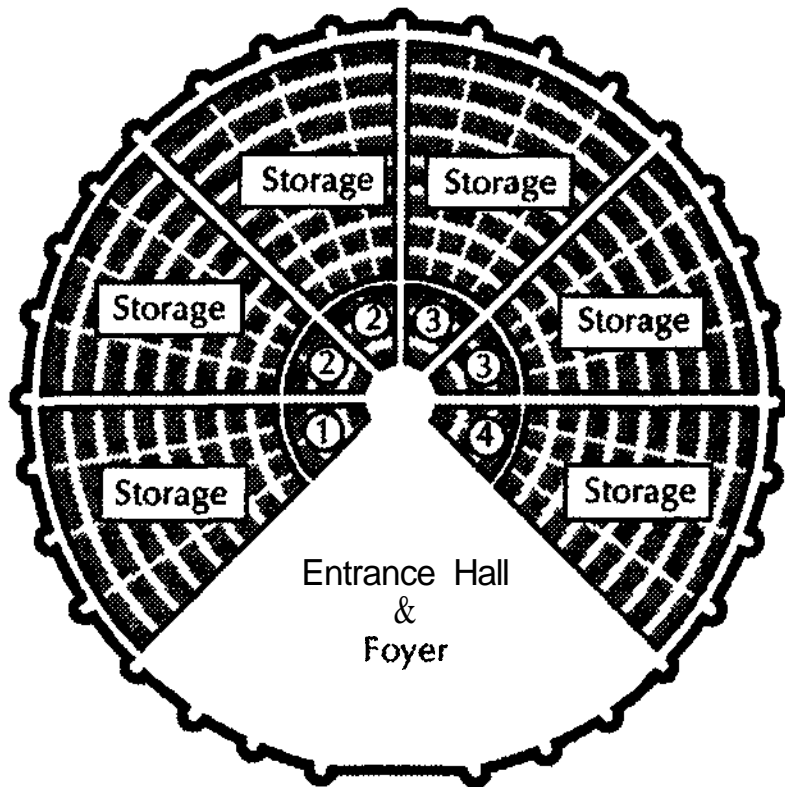
If the party wishes to consult the Map Room and make their *own* maps, they are welcome to do so for the price of admission (**10** gold each). However, those without an art skill or literacy in the language are at **-40%** to create an accurate reproduction. Copying a map isn't as easy as one might think, especially when one is trying to make a composite map out of three or four smaller **and/or** overlapping ones.

The basements. The general public knows that the Library has at least one level of basement for storage purposes, but few realize just how extensive the Library's **understructure** really is. The first basement is used by the Monks of Bletherad to store its **uncatalogued works** as well as suspected forgeries, fakes and supplies and other materials. A number of the blockhouses have also been converted into studies and dormitories for the Monks themselves. Below that, the second, **third**, and fourth basements are largely empty and rarely see any visitors whatsoever. Over the years, these darkened basements have come to resemble a cave, with bizarre subterranean mosses and lichens growing on the floors and blockhouse walls.

The second basement is empty and quiet. It would be used for additional storage space, should the Library ever need it. But for now, the first basement still has over half of its space available, so any further expansion downward is still a long way off.

Somewhere on the third basement, there is an **underground stream** that cuts across the entire facility, running through a **pre-cut** channel in the floor. Where the stream crosses a hallway path, small arched bridges have been built so traffic (if ever there was any) could continue unimpeded. Several species of blind cave fish and crustaceans live in the stream and some underground wildlife can be found throughout the third basement.

The fourth and fifth basements remain sealed off from the rest of the Library, as per the wishes of the original designers and builders. All that is known about these levels is that their



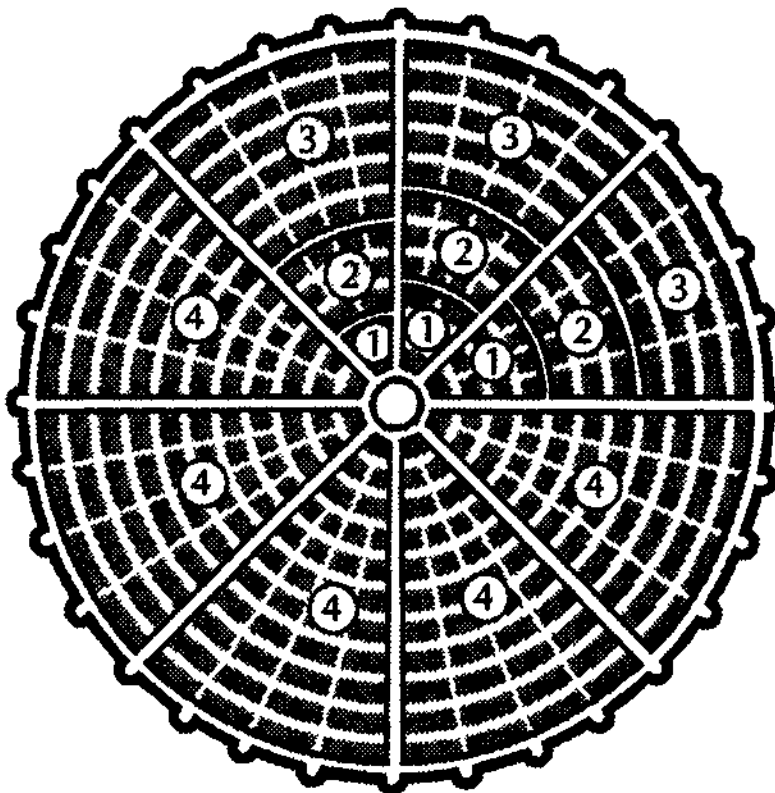
FIRST FLOOR

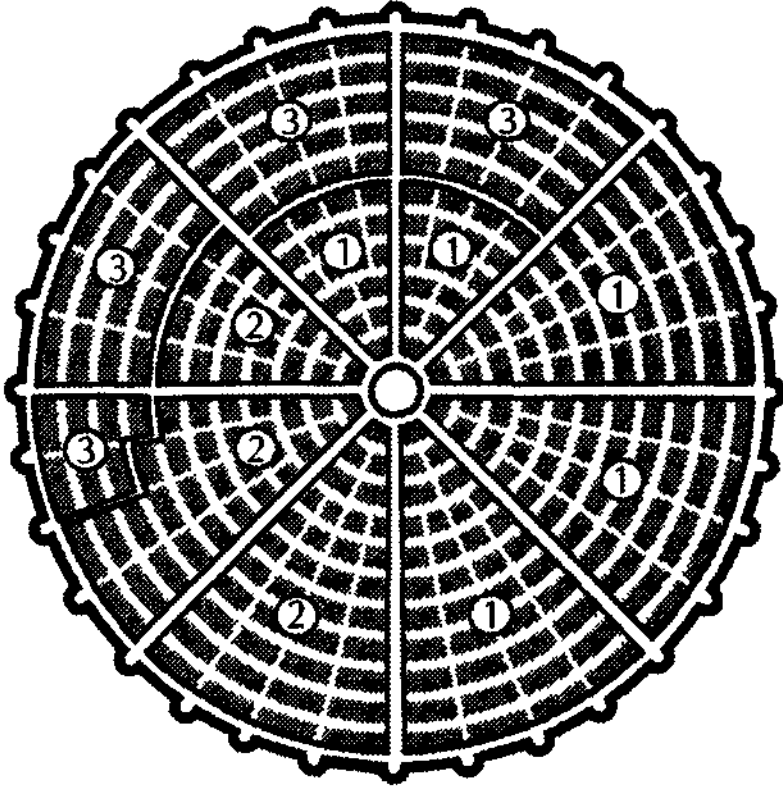
- 1: Administrative Offices
- 2: Scriveners' Studios
- 3: Visitors' Hostels
- 4: Kitchens and Eateries

NOTE: Storage areas are for holding newly catalogued works yet to be put into circulation.

FIRST BASEMENT

- 1: Monks' Dormitories
- 2: Studies & Scriptoriums
- 3: Cataloguing Chambers
- 4: Uncatalogued Works



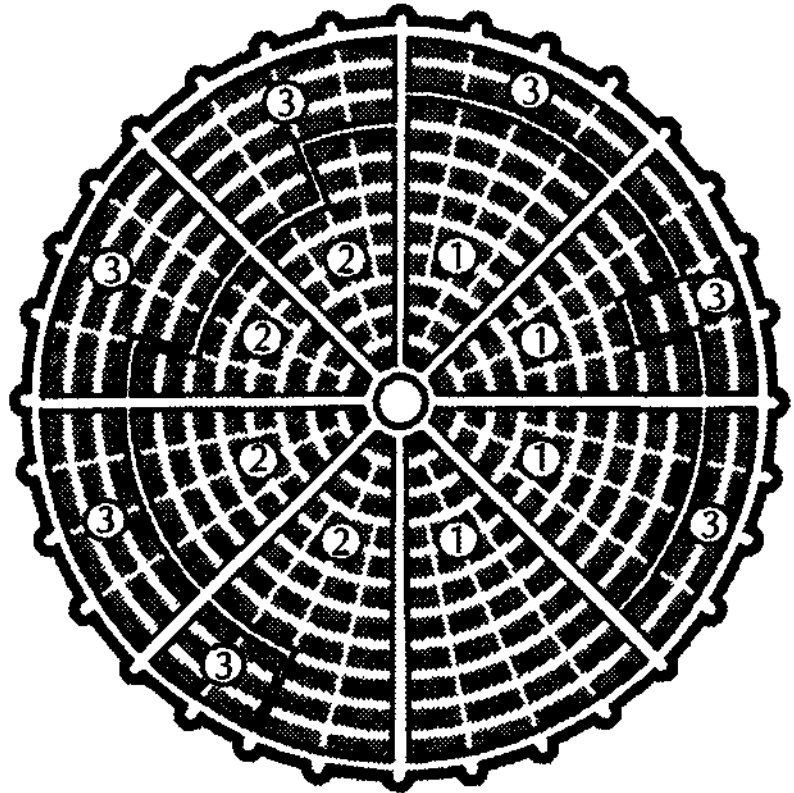


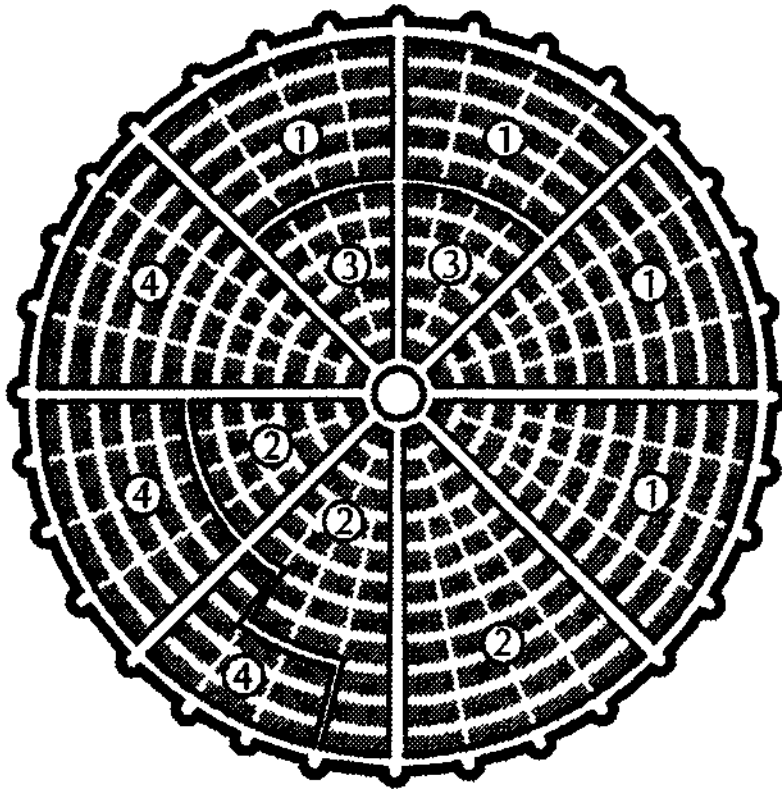
SECOND FLOOR

- 1: The Hall of the Monk (Generalities)
- 2: The Hall of the Mystic (Arcana)
- 3: Currently Unused Area

THIRD FLOOR

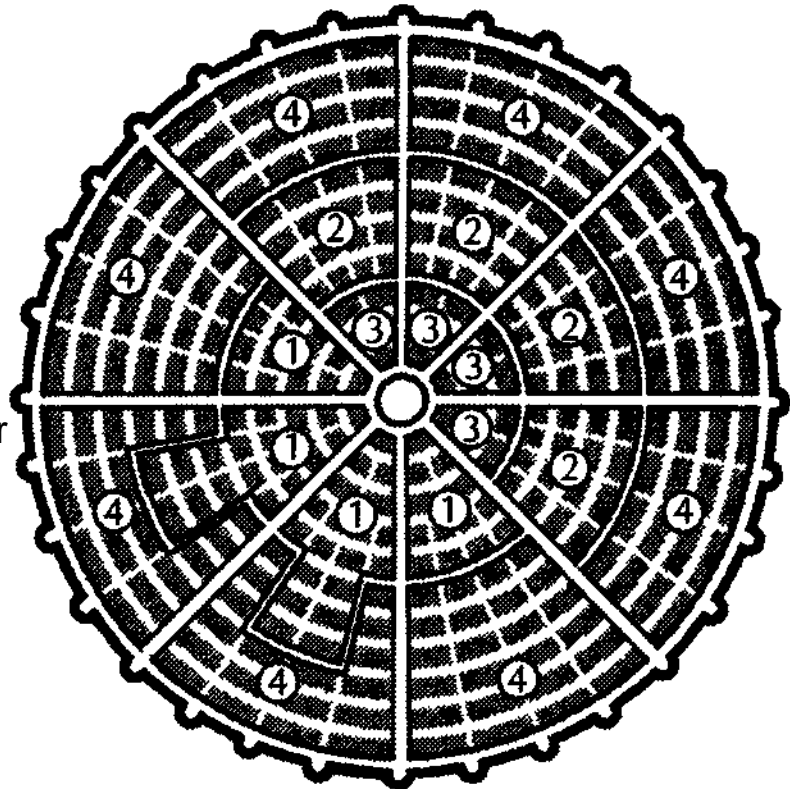
- 1: The Hall of the Prophet (Religion)
- 2: The Hall of the Prince (Society)
- 3: Currently Unused Area





FOURTH FLOOR

- 1: The Hall of the Cryptic (Languages)
- 2: The Hall of the Scholar (Nature)
- 3: The Hall of the Artifex (Invention)
- 4: Currently Unused Area



FIFTH FLOOR

- 1: The Hall of the Fool (The Arts)
- 2: The Hall of the Wanderer (The World)
- 3: Map Museum
- 4: Currently Unused Area

blockhouses have been chained and padlocked, as have the entrances to the floors themselves. The keys to these locks were supposedly destroyed, but there are some who speculate that the abbot of the Monks of Bletherad secretly keeps them in case he ever needs to gain access to these lower levels. The only explanation given for this lockdown can be read on large metal plaques bolted outside the **sealed-off** stairwells leading to these forbidden floors:

"Take heed, those who would enter, and know that passage beyond this point is hereby and forever FORBIDDEN. Trust in your benefactors and press on no further, for beyond these walls exist things beyond comprehension and matters best left

It would have been **child's** play for the Monks to batter down the locked portals to these final **basements**, but they have honored the mandate of their ancient predecessors. Surely, the Monks believe, they must have had good reason to seal off these levels. Still, those of them who know about the final basements worry what kinds of evils might be contained beneath their beloved Library.



The Bletherad Classification System

Making Sense of it All

The Great Library currently contains **over five million** books and scrolls on virtually every subject imaginable. Only books of instruction regarding magic are deliberately excluded, although there is a large section on magic lore as well as myths, legends, places of magic, and the supernatural. Copies of all major books and histories exist here in numerous editions and languages. This includes 32 different volumes of the *Tristine Chronicles*, 12 volumes of works by *The Chronicler* and volumes of religious works. In addition to the multitude of books and scrolls, the Great Library also offers a huge variety of works of art, mostly tapestries, paintings, sketchbooks and sculptures. About half are scattered throughout the Library as decoration and for aesthetics. The rest are located in an archival museum on the fifth floor. Indeed, just a cursory walk through one of the dozens of blockhouses drives home just how immense and comprehensive the Library's inventory is. And that does not even take into account new donations of books, scrolls and maps that arrive from all over the world on a regular basis!

Without some way to categorize all of this material, the Great Library would be worthless. Nobody could ever sift through all the material here on their own, and really, who would bother to research here if it amounted to looking for a needle in a haystack of **books**, scrolls and other references? Early on, the Library's designers recognized they needed some kind of classification system to give their collection order. Over the years, as the Library itself was built, the classification system used today was devised and implemented. But to understand how it works, one must first review a bit of the Great Library's history.

In the Beginning

According to legend, the Great Library was founded from the remnants of an even greater library known as **The Prime Incunabula**. That titanic place of learning was supposedly destroyed during the Millennium of Purification by a sect of zealots who felt that it was not enough to rid the world of magic, but they had to rid it of history and written knowledge, too. These "Purifiers," as they came to be known, laid siege to The Prime Incunabula with a great army, and after three days of intense, bloody fighting, the warrior monks of the library were defeated and the Incunabula was burned to its foundation. But before the place fell, ten groups of ten people each (known as *Decagons*) took as many books as they could haul and secretly escaped, heading out in all directions. Their goal was to travel as far as they could and establish a new library with the remains of the old. These places would be known as "Seed Libraries," for it was the hope of these brave souls that one day, the tiny libraries they were starting would one day grow into something approaching the lost splendor of The Prime Incunabula.

The Incunabula fell nearly 7,000 years ago. For the next two millennia, the survivors of that holocaust traveled the world, forever pursued by various sects of the Purifiers. Over time, most of the refugee groups who fled were found by the Purifiers and destroyed. By the time the Library of Bletherad had been founded (roughly 5,200 years ago), nine of the ten Seed Libraries had been destroyed. Only Bletherad remained. By then, the Purifiers were but a thin shadow of what they once had been. Internal division and time, coupled with fierce resistance put up by the other Seed Libraries had taken its toll on these villains, who no longer seemed capable of carrying out their insane quest to rid the world of written knowledge.

This, coupled with the Great Library of **Bletherad's** remote location ensured its early survival. Ironically, the efforts of the ten heroes from The Prime Incunabula who resettled in Bletherad were never truly recognized for their hard work. Oddly enough, this is because the Library's ten founders didn't *want* formal recognition. For reasons unknown to anybody, once the Great Library had gotten off the ground, its ten founders destroyed virtually all records of who they really were. All that remained was each founder's area of expertise, nothing more. Why they did this is unknown. The most popular theory was that these people believed if their identities became part of the Library, then their personal fame might overshadow the true reason for this place: To learn of the greatness of the world, not to revel in the deeds of a handful of people. Despite this philosophy, when the next generation of caretakers assumed control of the fledgling Library, they organized it into ten wings, each to commemorate one member of the Decagon. Thus, while the actual names and details of those heroes have been lost to **history**, their legacy lives on as the pillars of the greatest library in the world.

Today, the Great Library's inventory is divided into ten broad categories. For each of these categories, one of the original ten founders of the Great Library has been selected as its patron, a living embodiment of an entire species of knowledge. Thus, the Great Library's ten sections or "wings" are not named after the kind of information they contain, but after the title of their appropriate founder. They are:

- The Sage (**Uncatalogued** Works)
- The Monk (Generalities)
- The Mystic (**Arcana/lore**)
- **The Prophet** (Religion)
- The Prince (Society)
- The Cryptic (Languages)
- The Scholar (Nature)
- The **Artifex** (Invention)
- The Fool (The Arts)
- The Wanderer (The World)

That is why there is no numerical, alphabetical or some other kind of classification system at **Bletherad**. It is a unique manner of arranging the titles of the Library, and confusing to newcomers, but it has served the place well for centuries. Those who visit and learn the story of the Classification System agree that it pays the most proper kind of homage to those who risked their lives so that the light of knowledge would not be snuffed out from this world.

The Sage **Wing**: The Sage was the leader who assembled the Decagon that founded what would become the Library of **Bletherad**. All that is known of him was that he belonged to an ancient and powerful society of sages — demigods of a sort who together represented the greatest minds of the Palladium world. The Sage of Bletherad, however, seems to have been a bit of a maverick, since he was so fond of imparting his knowledge directly to any mortals willing to listen. This is not the way of most sages, which might explain why they did not all rush to the character's aid when he and his students fled the burning Incunabula.

In terms of classification, the Sage is the patron keeper of **uncatalogued** works — those volumes that have been accepted by the Library but have not yet been categorized. Over 90% of the books at the Great Library are donated from sources around the world. In recent years, the rate of donations has steadily climbed as various nation-states have gotten into a kind of prestige war with each other over who could donate the most (and most impressive) material to the Great Library. Surely, the winner of such a contest *must* be the most advanced civilization in the world — why else would they have such a plethora of learned material to donate? Or so the reasoning goes. Many of these donations come with synopses of their contents, but many more do not. Until these books can be evaluated by the **library's** overwhelmed staff of scholastic monks, they remain in the ever-growing **uncatalogued** Works section. This part of the Library is closed to visitors, unless they receive special clearance from **Phlixt the Keeper**, and none of the selections here are available for browsing, removing or copying.

The Sage's Wing is located in the first basement of the Library. Books stored here are first put into their proper **category**, and are later more specifically referenced for **their** final entry into the Library's Catalogues.

The Monk Wing: After the Great Library was founded, the Monk, who became its first Keeper after the Sage disappeared, laid down the administrative practices of the Library and began the first great drives to find whatever printed works they could add to the inventory. Under the Monk's relentless leadership, the Library's selection of materials grew explosively over a pe-

riod of some 50 years. By the time the Monk **died**, it is said, the Library had grown so much that it was hardly recognizable. What had begun as a pitiful shack of texts now was a handsome temple of learning overflowing with books and writings of every kind.

The Monk's Wing concerns generalities, the equivalent of a reference and special editions section. It contains books of especially rare character or those books which are primarily used to find other books. This section has more monks devoted to its maintenance than most others, since the majority of visitors come here first when looking for something, and as a result, more monks need to be on hand to show them to where to go in the library.

The Mystic Wing: In the Great Library's earliest days, texts of all kinds were stored here, not just non-magical ones. The change came about some fifty years after the **Library's** founding, when a small army of Purifiers caught wind of it and tried to burn the place down. In the ensuing battle the Purifiers were driven away by a large retinue of heroes who had rallied to the Library's defense, but not until after the damage had already been done. It was the first and **lat** time in the Purifiers would ever openly attack the Great Library, in many ways, the assault had been the last hurrah for the zealots, who seemed to expend the last of their strength in the final assault on the Great Library.

At the time, the Keepers of the Library had no idea that the Purifiers would not return, so to be safe, they excluded from their inventory *any* books or scrolls containing bona fide magical knowledge. It was just too dangerous. Even if there were no more Purifiers, the mere presence of any number of magical books would draw the worst kind of brigands from across the **world**, all seeking to capture the Library's mystical treasures for themselves. Thus it was decided that the Library would contain books *about* magic (including books that describe the various spells used by Wizards of the past), but not books that were magical or which actually taught spells or the secret knowledge of working magic in any way.

It fell to the Mystic, the founder who had overseen the Library's collection of magic text books, to dispose of the Library's magic books in a responsible way. History does not reveal what the Mystic did, but the popular story is that he removed these treasured tomes to a secret location on the mainland and started a tiny sub-library consisting entirely of mystical texts. Naturally, the existence of such a library has never been **verified**, though rumors fly fast and furious about such a place. The latest wave of stories puts this legendary library of magic somewhere deep within the *Land of the Damned*, where creatures of villainous intent have seized it and are putting its vast magical knowledge (including the *Dozen Spellbooks of the Laughing Lords*, *The Joker's Handbook*, and several true rune books) to wicked ends.

Now that all mystic manuals have been removed from its shelves, the Mystic's Wing contains books that *describe* spells and ley lines, magic items, rune magic, psychic phenomena, dreams and omens, and magic lore.

The Prophet Wing: The Prophet was a famous Priestess of Light who served **Ra** but reportedly could obtain divine favors from the other gods and goddesses within the Pantheon of Light as well. How she could do this stemmed from her tireless crusade to rid the world of the Pantheon of Taut, the enemies of her

lord Ra and the other deities of Light. So great were her efforts that Ra himself decreed to that *all* of the members of the Pantheon of Light would treat the Priestess with the manner befitting one of their own favored sons or daughters.

So it was that during the Siege of The Prime Incunabula, the Priestess called on all of the Gods of Light to help her and her comrades protect what they could of the library. Ra smiled upon this noble **endeavor**, and while he decided that nothing could be done to prevent the **Incunabula's** destruction, he certainly could help a faithful minion keep the dream of the Incunabula alive. During the fighting and narrow escape that **followed**, the Priestess performed numerous miracles, without which the Decagon would have certainly failed to get away and found their new library. Once the Bletherad site was established, the Priestess devoted the rest of her life to accumulating works of religious lore, especially those involving the Pantheon of Light, so that anybody may come to the Great Library and learn more about Ra and his fellow deities.

The Prophet's Wing is one of the most extensively sub-categorized and cross-referenced in the Library of Bletherad. It is also one of the most visited, a common starting point for researching any of the world's many mysteries and legends. Security (or what passes for it) in the Library is somewhat tighter here than elsewhere, since in the Prophet's Wing it is fairly likely that members of warring sects or Churches will bump into each other and may be tempted to renew their hostilities. Naturally, fighting of any kind is prohibited anywhere in the Library and the surrounding grounds, but when religious zealots are involved, there is no telling what will happen!

In addition to carrying extensive information on the world's religions and pantheons, the Prophet's Wing also contains a wealth of information on dragons, **elementals**, alien intelligences, angels, demons and **Deevils**, and the Old Ones. While not all of these other powers may be worshiped in the traditional sense, they definitely classify as "higher powers," and have been categorized in the Prophet's Wing.

The Prince Wing: More is known about the original Prince than any other Guardian of Bletherad. Supposedly, he was a warrior noble from what is now the Eastern Territory. With a modest retinue of knights behind him, he carved a sizeable swath of territory for himself from the Old Kingdom. Using a mix of raw courage and battlefield genius, he shattered numerous strongholds of monsters, outlaws and tyrants in his crusade to rid the land of savagery and tyranny. In this he was at least a little successful, for the lands he tamed remained civilized for a great many years afterward.

During the Prince's adventures in the Old Kingdom, he liberated the ruins of the ancient **Elven** city of **Shillandeor**, in which he found a series of ancient textbooks. He decided to donate them to The Prime Incunabula, but by the time he **arrived**, the place had already fallen under attack by the Armies of Purification. The Prince did what he could to defend The Incunabula, and helped the Decagons evacuate the premises late in the battle. He escorted them to the island of Y-Oda, where he stayed as a protector and ward of the new Library. Legend says it was the Prince who declared the Island of Y-Oda forever a spot of neutrality, but how he was supposed to have enforced this is an enigma. Most likely, nobody wanted the island until the Great Library had become the main attraction, at which point the island's neutrality was unquestionable.

The Prince's Wing concerns matters of society, government, law and warfare. It is the part of the Great Library where men at arms who can read will **find** themselves most comfortable, as many of the texts here deal specifically with the matters of steel and bloodletting. Those who are open-minded stand to learn a great deal, and those who take their learning to the battlefield will enjoy an immense advantage in terms of strategy and tactics. As any enlightened warrior, these, more than raw courage or luck, determine who lives and who dies when swords cross.

The Cryptic Wing: It was the Cryptic who has ultimately claimed responsibility for destroying the history of the Great Library. His admission to the fact is the only recorded acknowledgment of the deed at all. However, with this in mind, the story behind how the Library's history was destroyed is itself suspect, since what really happened apparently can not be verified by anybody. To the skeptical, what happened during the Library's early days is anybody's guess. After all, nobody has sent an **archeological** expedition to the reported site of The Prime Incunabula (probably because it is in the heart of the Old Kingdom Lowlands, making any such expedition fraught with peril). Until the existence of such a place is proven (it is said that no stone of the Incunabula remains standing), there will always be those who insist it never existed at all, and that the whole story of the siege and the Decagon is pure balderdash. These skeptics only have been strengthened by the fact that the person who erased the Library's history was a Diabolist by trade, an inherently distrustful profession infamous for keeping secrets and deception.

As for the Cryptic himself, the controversy surrounding his **obscurment** of the Library's history has far overshadowed what might be a far more important achievement, his decoding of the Great Conundrum, an ancient text salvaged from The Incunabula. The Conundrum was written in a form of code that once broken, supposedly would unlock secret meanings in every other ancient language — Elven, **Dwarven**, Gobblely, and several dead tongues. These secrets, once compiled, promised to reveal information of some kind that the gods themselves would dearly love to possess. What this information is nobody knows, since only the Cryptic decoded the Conundrum, and he never cross-referenced his findings with any other language. Unfortunately, the **Cryptic's** key to the Conundrum (but not the Conundrum itself) was destroyed in the Purifier's assault upon the Library of Bletherad shortly after its foundation. Ever since, Diabolists and other cryptographers routinely visit the Library to copy key pages from the Conundrum in the hopes of duplicating the efforts which broke the code so long ago.

The Cryptic's Wing of the Library is dedicated to matters of language. Active languages, dead languages, and secret languages are all covered in depth here. As with the Prophet's Wing, this part of the Library is visited fairly frequently, since its books offer translation keys for most of the other works in the facility. Many of the section's most universal works of translation have been copied entirely and multiple copies also can be found in the Generalities section (the Monk's Wing) for easy reference.

This section probably attracts the highest number of shady characters, since the books of this wing all purport to hold some kind of **secret knowledge** in some way, shape or form. As long as that is the case, there will always be those quiet schemers willing to pore over every last letter of the Wing in the hopes of

finding the means of unlocking the gates of power, fame and fortune.



The Scholar Wing: Virtually nothing is known of the original Scholar other than she was a person of keen intellect who had a deep appreciation for the natural world. Before her involvement in the evacuation of The Incunabula, it was said that she took part in an extended sea journey that discovered a chain of uncharted islands. The variety of plants and animals existing there was unlike anything seen elsewhere in the **world**, and she documented them all for future reference. Sadly, this work has been lost over the years, although a rough map of the archipel-

ago she visited remains in the Library to this day. Periodically, scholars and travelers seek out the map of the Archipelago in the hopes that they too might find it one day.

The Scholar's Wing covers matters of nature. The Palladium world is a vast and wild place, filled with many dangers and mysteries that the common man fails to understand. To the peasant in the field, a raging volcano or hurricane appears more like an angry god than the movement of the world's rock or air. What seem to be demons and monsters might only be exotic animals, no more evil than a dog or cat. And what might seem to be a mere rock or weed might actually be a miraculous substance or being in disguise. Others can be molded into tools or used to cure the sick. All of these things are within the province of nature, and while the inventors of the world (see the section on the *Artifex*, below) are almost universally **scorned**, those who catalog the natural workings of the world earn a bit of respect. After all, what they do is not to replace magic or the work of the gods, it is merely to catalog all of those things which ultimately are as plain as the birds in the sky, the soil of the fields, and the people of the world.

In the Palladium world, there really is no such thing as a "scientific method," as yet. Most of the understanding of the natural world comes from anecdotes and observations all catalogued and recorded for future reference. Much of this work overlaps or contradicts itself, and virtually none of it is cross-referenced. Anybody referencing the material in this part of the Library should know that while most of the texts here are accurate, pertinent additional information might be in a separate tome altogether, one that might not make sense to look in. Thus, a scholar might read in one book of a kind of herb that relieves headaches when chewed, not knowing that in another book, that same herb is noted to be toxic if swallowed. Before placing one's life in the care of any knowledge to be gained here, it should be verified by another source first. Such inconsistencies are the kinds of problems facing the fledgling naturalists of this world. Theirs is a subject almost too vast to fully **comprehend**, and while they try, their efforts produce as much misinformation as information.

The Artifex Wing: The Artifex of **Bletherad** was a **tinkerer** and inventor, a maker of machines and marvelous devices the like of which have only been rivaled by the greatest **Dwarven** engineers. The **Artifex's** salvage efforts for The Incunabula consisted of a speed-reading binge during which time he committed dozens upon dozens of lesser design notebooks to memory. Most of the designs featured there he knew would never work, but those that would he spent the rest of his life committing to paper. Over the years, the Artifex's notebooks became the cornerstone of this wing, one dedicated to the mastery of invention. However, the Artifex himself was an overly cautious man, and wrote most of his work in a strange form of code that nobody seems able to break. The Artifex outlived the Cryptic by twenty or thirty years, and ever since, many **cryptologists** have tried to crack the notebooks without success. The sketches and schematics therein are very detailed and show the basic workings of hundreds of bizarre devices. However, those who copy the sketches alone and try to build something from them inevitably fail. The final details of these inventions are contained in the code-writing within the notebook margins, and without that, none of the Artifex's work can be accessed.

Despite this, there are those builders and inventors who are virtually obsessed with the **Artifex's** work, and labor tirelessly to decode and explore his greatest achievements. Chief among these is the rumor that when the Great Library was built, the **Artifex** installed a massive system of gears within its foundation. With a flip of a switch, the entire building could sink into a recess within the earth and great plates would cover it up, protecting the place from harm. Such a fantastic deed would be unprecedented — not even the ancient **Dwarven** engineers could produce works like these at the height of their power. Not surprisingly, most folk write off this tale as nonsense. Indeed, the Artifex was a brilliant person, but was he really that brilliant? These would-be inventors of the world think so, and many of them make their pilgrimages to the Great Library both to access the works of the Artifex's Wing, but also to somehow gain access to the **Library's** lowest basements. There they can see for themselves if the Artifex's gears really do exist. The Monks of **Bletherad** know only too well about this, and they find the constant snooping of these visitors a real bother. While there are sub-basements of the Library that have been sealed off for thousands of years, the Monks respect the builders of the Library's wishes that those doors never be opened. Whether a secret gear-works exists down there is irrelevant; those who created this **fine** place of learning have asked that none venture too far below its foundations. The Monks of **Bletherad** aim to honor that request and therefore deny all those who seek their access. This has only strengthened the convictions of those who believe that gear-works await discovery down there, but for now, all anyone can do is speculate, since nobody has had the inclination of exploring that part of the facility by force.

The ongoing controversy (and the general sense of exasperation from the Monks of Bletherad that accompanies it) is just the tip of the iceberg regarding how the world in general regards the Artifex and those like him. In a world dominated by magic, technology and applied science will never be more than crackpot disciplines relegated to the fringes of serious study. The thought of unlocking the secrets of nature's mechanics, as well as deigning non-magical devices to emulate the same is discouraged as both dangerous and frivolous. It is one thing to become a master carpenter, or animal breeder, or stone mason. It is quite another to design crazy devices and machines with the intent of radically transforming such time-honored occupations. If doing things the hard way is so repellent, then learn magic, is the prevailing attitude. **Artifexes** run counter to this philosophy and are shunned because of it.

Virtually no kingdoms or universities devote much time or resources to the science of invention, and among the powerful and influential, there is almost nobody who would publicly advance the cause of such work. For this reason, the Artifex's Wing has become the only collection of its kind in that world, containing texts, notebooks, and scrolls on every kind of applied science in the Palladium world, from animal husbandry to architecture to the kind of exotic **gadgets** that makes most folks shake their heads in derision. The inventors of the world know that the only support they will receive is through each other, so there is a basic understanding among them (regardless of race, nationality or creed) that the Great Library is their central meeting place, where by donating works to and **copying** works from the Artifex Wing, they might share their wondrous designs and theories with each other.

The Fool Wing: During the final days of the Elf-Dwarf War, the Fool was known as the greatest storyteller and minstrel of his time. His skills were so great that his work became the standard against which all others were judged. Endlessly copied and referenced, he transcended the role of entertainer and became the embodiment of his craft.

Such intense fame would have spoiled any other entertainer. Under such intense scrutiny, one's muse tends to go silent, or is crowded out by a growing ego. To ward off both things, the Fool turned his talents elsewhere so that he could remain in top form but work in an arena where his authority was hardly as absolute: *international diplomacy*.

The Fool realized that one of the few things the warring Elves and Dwarves still had in common was a love for the Fool's stories. To bring these battling sides together, the Fool volunteered himself as a mediator between the **Elven** and **Dwarven** empires. Convincing enemies from both sides to attend a joint performance, the Fool spun yarns to the delegations about the nature of their conflict, and how their war efforts were not just hurting each other, but hurting themselves and innocent bystanders as well. By not addressing any nation or figure directly, and speaking only in dramatic metaphors, the Fool managed to get both delegations to at least consider hashing out some kind of peace treaty. For a shining moment it seemed as if peace would come to the land at last.

What happened afterward is unknown, only that the peace the Fool strove so hard to attain never materialized, and the war continued on its genocidal course. The Fool, it is said, grew so despondent that he gave up his craft and wandered the world like a whipped dog, dejected and broken. For the next thousand years, sightings of him popped up all over the known realms, indicating that the Fool was either some kind of immortal or that he had died and numerous others were taking his place. Regardless, one calling himself the Fool eventually arrived at The Prime Incunabula to donate a massive body of poems, plays and other works of fiction when the Purifiers laid siege to the place. The Fool acted heroically during the battle and aided many of the Incunabula's residents in their evacuation before finally quitting the premises himself. He traveled with the Decagon to found the new seed library, and stayed there for another few hundred years before mysteriously vanishing. While sightings of him continue to this day, his fame is hardly what it once was. Most of his work was oral and never recorded. What exists now are the many pale reflections of his stories, narrative traditions which have evolved on their own and in some ways, overshadowed the one great master who inspired them all.

The Fool's Wing of the Library is dedicated to the arts — drawing, painting, **acting/performing**, music, folklore, games, satire, and the like. It is considered to be one of the more frivolous wings of the Library, largely because so many of the works here are apocryphal or mere copies of each other. To find the truly marvelous works in this section, one must first sift through a mountain of dross, which discourages many patrons from spending much time here. Those who do, will eventually find a work of great quality, or that contains an illumination of some sort that in some way validates all of their tireless searching.

The Wanderer Wing: Like the Fool, the Wanderer is also thought to be a creature of great age, perhaps a dragon or some other being capable of living far longer than an ordinary mortal.

This figure was supposedly a traveler of great renown who periodically sent large shipments of scrolls, maps, and travel journals to The Prime Incunabula as an ongoing document of his adventures. In time, there grew to be a small wing of The Incunabula devoted just to the Wanderer's donations. Unfortunately, all of these were destroyed when the Incunabula was burned. The Wanderer himself was not on the premises at the time. He had heard the place was going to be attacked and he journeyed there as fast as he could, but by the time he arrived, the Purifier army had already begun its siege. Powerless to do anything, the Wanderer observed the carnage and did what he could to help refugees to safety once they broke out of the embattled place. He hooked up with the individuals of the Decagon, traveled with them to Y-Oda and helped them build their new library. Since one of the Decagon died early in the journey from The Incunabula (thanks to a wound she sustained in the battle), the Wanderer became a *de facto* member of the group, and has been immortalized as such by the inclusion of his title in one of the wings at the Library of Bletherad.

The **Wanderer's Wing** covers matters of the world: geography, cartography, travel and history. As the nations of the world grow more powerful and apparently head for a titanic conflict with each other, this section of the Library has received increasing attention both from donors and visitors. The once-poor cartography section has improved considerably, as visitors line up by the dozen to get copies of the latest maps of the world. Treasure-seekers and those on the trail of some ancient legend also have use for the section's many maps as well as its lengthy texts describing the various realms and histories of the world.

The Language of Books, Maps & Scrolls

The Great Library has multiple copies of many of its books (certainly of all important titles). These tend to be in a variety of different languages. At least 75% are written in **Elf/Dragonese**, 50% in Western, 33% in Eastern, 37% in Wolfen, 40% in **Dwarven**, and 15% in other languages (with 20% of those written in runes and 8% written in magic symbols). Of course, books in a preferred language may be in use even when several copies exist and there may be a waiting list to view it. However, most volumes are available within 4D4 days.

Random Language Determination of Available Books

- 01%-04%:** Magic Symbols
- 05%-22%:** Dwarven
- 23%-50%:** Elven/Dragonese
- 51%-69%:** Wolfen
- 70%-74%:** Northern Human
- 75%-85%:** Western Human
- 86%-90%:** Eastern Human
- 91%-96%:** Southern Human
- 97%-98%:** Runes
- 99%-00%:** Other (this includes secret codes, dead languages, and other unknown tongues)



The Monastic Order of Bletherad

This order of Scholastic Monks (for details on this O.C.C., please refer to the Old Ones, 2nd Ed. sourcebook), was founded in Bletherad at the same time the Great Library was founded. The library's ten founders were all scholars and adventurers, but their place was in the field, not administrating an institute like the one they were creating. They would oversee the creation of this thing, but they needed somebody to run it, especially once the founders themselves were gone. The answer to this was to recruit a monastic order for the job, which is precisely what they did.

On the mainland in what is now the Disputed Zone between the Wolfen Empire and Eastern Territory, there were a number of scholastic monasteries. One in particular, the *Monastic Order of the Quill*, caught the founders' collective eye as a group of unusually devoted, intelligent, educated and (most importantly) tolerant individuals. About half of their number were Wolfen, the other human, **Elf**, and a smattering of other races. For what the founders' needed, these monks would be perfect! The only problem was, they did not want the job.

These monks had inhabited a modest monastery in the forest for the last 300 years. They had built up a modest library of their own, and cultivated a fair local reputation as the place to go for **scrivening** and manuscript illumination. As tempting as the offer from Bletherad sounded, the Monks of the Quill had their own roots to look after.

Disappointed but understanding, the founders prepared to move on to one of the other monasteries in the area. Little did they realize that a band of Purifiers had tracked them to the Monastery of the Quill and launched a full assault against it as soon as the founders departed! Thankfully, the founders had not traveled far before they heard the terrible sound of battle. They raced back to the scene and routed the Purifiers, but by that time, the damage had been done. The Monastery of the Quill was fully ablaze, its library destroyed, and three quarters of its fellowship either dead or gravely wounded. Eternally grateful for the rescue, the surviving monks, now without a home, had a change of heart and took up the founders' offer to administrate their new library on Y-Oda. In what was his final official action, the dying Abbot of the Quill formally disbanded the fellowship and had it reformed under a new name: *The Monastic Order of Bletherad*.

So it was that through the fires of tragedy and a common enemy, the founders of the Great Library and the Monks of Bletherad joined forces. To this day, the monks own and operate the Great Library, but they will never forget the heroic founders who brought their order to the island. The monks are also mindful of the sinister Purifiers who destroyed their old monastery and are certain to be hatching some plot against the Great Library at this very moment. Though there has been no sign of Purifier activity on Y-Oda or the nearby mainland, the monks see that as no reason to grow complacent. From their point of view, zealots like the Purifiers never truly die. Like a treacherous disease, they hide in recession, biding time to spring forth again, perhaps in another form, perhaps as its old self, but always as dangerous as ever.

The Monastic Order of Bletherad is a small organization of no more than 1000 monks. Its only holding is the Library of Bletherad, which they make their home. Their primary business, of course, is administrating the Great Library, which means handling all of the new book donations, cataloguing and re-circulating borrowed materials, helping visitors find what they **need**, making and selling copies of Library material, etc. They also see to the more basic needs of the facility, like polishing the floors, cleaning the glass, keeping the hallways well-lit, and so on. Outside the Library, the monks also operate a very large garden (it is more like a small farm, where they grow the food they and their guests require) and a winery (their fine vintages sell quite well in Bletherad, making the Order a bit of needed cash).

In general, the monks are a very warm, **friendly** and tolerant lot who take great pride in their station at the world's finest library. They genuinely enjoy helping people navigate the stacks of paper and aiding them in their research. They only have two major sources of consternation: The nearby volcanoes, and a new (and troublesome) breed of visitor to their Library.

The monks basically feel that got lucky when mounts Y and Oda erupted but did not harm the Great Library. They worry that should there be another eruption, a lava flow facing in the wrong direction could send a molten river of destruction directly upon the Great library. Since the monks don't use magic for any purpose (they believe it taps directly into the power of the Old Ones and helps to rouse them from their slumber) and since they also do not receive favors from deities, they are at the mercy of the mountains. Most of them have taken a resigned attitude that

what happens, happens, and if the Library is destroyed, then perhaps it was simply meant to be. Others are a bit more frantic, and do not wish to see the Library destroyed by anything. Among this camp, there are a few who secretly wonder if perhaps some sort of magic intervention might not be appropriate — if an Earth Warlock could be hired to plug the volcanoes and spare the Library from future troubles, how bad could that really be?

The other problem weighing on these poor scholars is the influx of rowdy adventurer-types in Bletherad itself and paying visits to the Great Library. Historically, the Library has had few problems with riffraff, since they usually want nothing to do with what they see as a boring, stodgy old place. Since the recent discovery of ancient ruins, however, an unprecedented number of adventurers have swung by the island, in search of treasure. Of those who visit, perhaps half decide to visit the Great Library and see what adventure opportunities lie in wait for them there. Given that Y-Oda really is a sleepy, backwater island, most adventurers would ordinarily realize a quiet place when they see one and go on their way. But there now exists within the town of Bletherad an odious little industry that publishes "Adventurer's Guides" to the Library of Bletherad. These slipshod products typically give a comprehensive breakdown of every kind of book catalogued within the Library, and then lists the reasons why true, *hardcore adventurers* would want to reference such information. The most commonly distributed Adventurers' Guide is the *Bletherad Carbunculum*, written and produced by parties unknown (it actually says "by Anonymous" on the cover). The Carbunculum was originally entitled *An Adventurer's Guide to the Big Library* until the monks learned of it and re-named it the "Carbunculum" because books like this were, in the name of one uncouth monk, "a festering boil on the buttocks of this Library!" Humorously enough, the publishers of the work thought the name sounded distinguished (obviously not knowing what a "carbuncle" really is) and adopted it.

The Carbunculum is exactly the sort of book the monks feared would happen once adventurers started visiting the island in any capacity. The book is little more than an annotated catalogue of the Library's classification system, only with each entry in the system is some rough commentary on what book visitors should look for if they are in the market for hidden treasure, secret knowledge, or other stepping stones for schemes to earn fast fame and glory. Nowadays, a monk can bet on encountering at least three uncultured roughnecks pointing to some preposterous claim in the Carbunculum and wondering where in the Library they can find it. For the monks, it is all they can do to not break their vow of non-violence and haul off against these annoying rubes. (Note: There is more on the Bletherad Carbunculum at the end of this section.)

The Monastic order of Bletherad is currently led by Brother Taggand, Abbot of Bletherad. Abbot **Taggand** has run the Order for the last 15 years, and has kept the Library in tip-top shape. His keen sense for administration, managing money, and juggling the many different responsibilities of the Library is nothing short of amazing. Taggand is a 40 year old Wolfen who is **in** remarkably good health. It is not unfeasible for him to hold his post another 15 or 20 years, despite the fairly short (50 years) Wolfen life span.

Brother Serekese, Fraternus of the Library is one of the Order's second-in-commands. He is a 30 year old Wolfen in charge of the day to day operations of the **Library**, spending much of his time ensuring that the grittier aspects of Library operation (security, money collecting, cleaning, maintenance) are done to the tee. Although he is personable and has a good sense of humor, the pressures of his job have made him rather tight-lipped and serious.

Brother **Woundall**, Fraternus of the Abbey is a 30 year old Wolfen who once served as an Imperial Legionnaire before renouncing violence entirely. He has served with the Order of **Bletherad** for the last 10 years, and although he truly loves his monastic lifestyle, there is still a tiny violent streak in himself that he must check during times of duress. The recent onslaught of people entering the Great Library with copies of the **Carbunculum** under their arms is simply driving him **crazy**, and if he ever finds out who wrote the blasted thing, he will have to think long and hard about how much his vow of non-violence really means to him. Brother Woundall is in charge of the **abbey**, a separate building from the Library where the monks reside. The abbey has a number of scriptoriums, reading chambers, research rooms and other places where the monks of the Order can conduct their research without the distractions of the Great Library.

Brother **Alangate**, Fraternus of Special Needs is a low-key **Elven** monk of indeterminate age. He looks fairly young, but he carries himself with the wisdom and demeanor of an ancient. Brother Alangate takes care of the "special needs" of the Library and the monastery. Basically, whenever there is a problem that requires the Library or Monastery to seek outside help or to interact a lot with the local townsfolk or travelers, it is **Alangate's** responsibility to handle it. More than anything, he is the one who makes sure no feathers get ruffled when The Keeper, a Sphinx who handles Library security, roughs up some thief in the back alleys of Bletherad. Alangate also is the official Order liaison with bona fide heroes and adventurers who seek special access to the Library because of an important quest or mission. Alangate used to be quite the adventurer himself before he settled down in Bletherad, so he has a keen appreciation for heroes and is more than happy to offer what help he **can**.

Unbeknownst to the rest of the Order except for Abbot Taggand, Alangate is also the liaison to the Guardians of Bletherad, a secret order of adventurers whose sworn duty is to protect the Library from the plots of the Zealotry and other misanthropes. The rest of the Order consider the Guardians to be just a myth, and the world at large does not know the organization exists at all, which is the way both Brother Alangate and the Guardians like it.

Keeping the Peace

For the most part, the Great Library has very few security problems. There will always be unscrupulous visitors who try to steal a few books here and there (efforts almost certainly doomed to failure, for reasons described below), but there are generally few serious attempts to plunder the Library, assault its keepers, or bring any other kind of havoc to its hallowed halls. This largely stems from the kind of people who come here. Ne'er-do-wells and villains tend to stay away because there is little for them to do in the Library (let's face it — the average

crook is not bright enough to appreciate the value of what is in there).

However, there are those who sense an opportunity at the Library and undoubtedly will try to take advantage of its open and tolerant policies, its peace-loving monks, and its trusting nature. Like ants to a picnic, a certain dangerous element is attracted to the Library. The monks and their allies believe they can handle 99% of the Library's "**troublemaking** visitors." The *real* concern is what happens when that dangerous 1% pay a visit?

No Spilling Blood

All visitors are required to check their weapons and armor before entering the Great Library. There are absolutely *no* exceptions to this. It is one of the few iron rules of the Library. Inevitably, however, there are those who sneak a weapon past the monks at the gate. (The monks, after all, are not going to frisk everybody who comes in the building; they operate on the assumption that most people will abide by the rules.) Those discovered with a smuggled weapon will be asked to disarm immediately. They will also be given a stern talking to by the monks for violating the trust of the facility, an experience most good-aligned characters find deeply shaming; Selfish and Evil characters generally have little regard for the monks' rules. Those who resist or who are caught fighting in the Great Library are ejected at once (forcibly, if necessary) and will be barred from the premises for **life!** Self-defense is not a valid excuse for fighting in the Library, regardless of the circumstances. The Monks of Bletherad have survived without fighting, so they expect their guests to do the same.

Cast No Spell, Work No Magic

By far, the biggest defense mechanism in the Great Library is an anti-magic effect covering the entire interior of the building. Identical in effect to the Spell of Legend, Anti-Magic Cloud, this phenomenon neutralizes *all* magic within the Library! Magic spells will not work at all. Magic weapons, even **weapons**, lose their enchantment, while creatures of magic (i.e., Dragons, Mummies, Scarecrows, etc.) will feel their life force ebbing away at a rapid **1D4x10 S.D.C./Hit** Points a minute (only Sphinxes suffer no physical damage, but can not cast **magic!**)

This anti-magic effect is permanent and does not require any special spell or ritual to maintain. It was applied to the building's foundation when it was first built and has expanded to cover the entire building each time it was enlarged. Any future addition to the Library of Bletherad — a new wing, another floor, **etc.**, will be covered by the anti-magic effect so long as the addition physically connects to the main building. (No, a thin wall stretching a hundred feet to a separate, stand-alone building does not count.) Most students of magic believe it may be a lost Spell of Legend that protects the library. If nothing else, the anti-magic effect certainly lends credence to the Library's claim of being 5,000 years old.

The Keeper

The Library's head of security is a mighty Sphinx who calls herself the "Keeper." This creature came to the Library about 2,300 years ago to explore its many wonders. She was so impressed that she decided to stay, contributing over a hundred scrolls and a dozen books to the archives. The Keeper is the one

who supervises security at the facility and tracks down and punishes thieves and troublemakers. When somebody who tried to rob or damage the Great Library in some way turns up beaten to a pulp or is terrorized, it is safe to bet that they have had a close encounter with the vengeful Sphinx. The Monks of Bletherad don't entirely approve of The Keeper's conduct or temper, but acknowledge that she means well and is very effective at maintaining order and protecting the Library

The Keeper realizes that actually securing the entire Library of Bletherad is impossible with the meager amount of manpower she has available to her. The Monks of Bletherad are a small order and can not staff a person in every corner of the building full-time. Even if they did, the monks are complete pacifists who will be unable to stop a truly dedicated brigand from robbing the place or hurting other patrons along the way. The only real way to keep the Library safe is to make cutthroats afraid of operating here. And that is something the wily Sphinx truly excels at.

To that end, The Keeper maintains a network of Changeling spies and enforcers known as the *Morphean Fellowship*. These loyal individuals (usually disguised as visitors and sometimes as disreputable scoundrels to bait and lure out crooks and rogues) help The Keeper recover stolen artifacts and keep the Library safe. They brutalize and intimidate those who violate the Great Library so that word on the street, and in every mariners' tavern from here to the Timiro Kingdom, is that to cause trouble at the

Library of Bletherad is to invoke the terrible wrath of a crazy Sphinx and her mysterious (supernatural?) helpers. Just don't do it.

The Keeper, Quick Stats

Name: Known publicly as "**Keeper**" or "The Keeper," her true name is **Phlixt**. She roamed the Western Empire, Baalgor Wastelands, and Old Kingdom for 1,600 years before settling down in Bletherad.

Alignment: Unprincipled

Attributes: I.Q.: 24, M.E.: 21, M.A.: 10, P.S.: 25, P.P.: 19, P.E.: 25, P.B.: 19, Spd.: 13 (65 when flying).

Hit Points: 85

S.D.C.: 127

Natural Armor Rating: 10

Experience Level: 8th level Mind Mage. (Note: Sphinxes generally do not become Mind Mages. That Phlixt is one proves her to be a most rare and unique individual, even among Sphinxes!)

P.P.E.: 78

Horror Factor: 17

Psionics: Equivalent to that of an 8th level Mind Mage. Phlixt commands the following psionic powers:

Healing: All Healing psionics.

Physical: All Physical psionics.

Sensitive: All Sensitive psionics.

Super: All Super psionics EXCEPT **Psi-Sword**, **Psi-Shield**, and P.P.E. Shield.

I.S.P.: 116

Magic: Lore knowledge only.

Attacks per Melee: Four

Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +3 to strike, parry and dodge, +4 to dodge in flight, +2 to roll with impact, +4 to pull punch, +2 on all saving throws, and +6 to save vs Horror Factor. All are in addition to O.C.C. skill or attribute bonuses.

Natural Abilities: Never tires when flying, **nightvision** 120 feet (36.6 m; can see in total darkness), keen **nightsight** (can see in one-sixth of the light needed by humans), keen, hawk-like vision (can see fine detail up to two miles/3.2 km away), prowl (60%), track by sight (77%), swim (40%), normal leap 30 feet (9 m) high or lengthwise and flight-assisted leap 200 feet (61 m) up or across. Also can magically understand and speak any language.

Personality: The Keeper loves books and generally hates **thieves**, but her real rage is reserved for those who have the audacity to steal books, so working in the Library combines her life's greatest pleasures.

Possessions: Unbelievable wealth; approximately 100,000 in gold and silver, one million in gems, two dozen magic scrolls (each containing numerous spells), and a handful of high-quality weapons.

The Morphean Fellowship

This network of 24 Changelings act as **Phlixt's** agents regarding the security of the Great Library. They often pose as visitors within the Library and in the town. They specialize in tracking down stolen books and those who attempt to **traffick** them. (There are always a few people who can not play by the **rules** ...) Their standing orders are to find the culprits, apprehend them, and deliver them to Phlixt, who will mete out justice as she sees





fit. Usually it consists of giving the crooks a sound thrashing and ditching their unconscious bodies in a back alley of **Bletherad**. The Monks of the Library disapprove of the harshness of this **method**, but they also acknowledge that the Library needs *some* means of protecting itself from petty criminals.

The true identities of the **Morpheans** are known only to Phlixt, who has sworn not to reveal them under any circumstances. Not even the Abbot of Bletherad knows exactly who **Phlixt's** enforcers are, though he does know they are all Changelings, and that a fair number of them possess noteworthy psychic powers.

The Morpheans are part of a larger Changeling community on Y-Oda that consists of about 100 individuals. Most of these **shapeshifters** live in Bletherad. The Morpheans came to work for the Library when they were recruited by Phlixt, who realized that there were Changelings on the island, and that their unique talents could be put to good use. The Changelings accepted the offer in large part because they knew that even if they were found out by their employers (the Monks of Bletherad), they would not necessarily be persecuted for it. Plus, anything that could help cultivate good relations with the Monks was a positive thing. If ever a wave of anti-Changeling hysteria swept the island, the Morpheans and their friends and families could expect sanctuary from the Monastic Order of Bletherad. This kind of safety net is something very few Changelings ever get to enjoy.

A full 75% of the **Morphean** Fellowship are peasants or commoners with no extraordinary attributes or abilities other than

their natural **shapechanging** powers (typically 4th-7th level). The other 25% are **experienced**, literate and possess psionics of one kind or another (5th-10th level). A few of these are mercenaries and thieves whose talents come in handy when transgressors against the Library need to be taught a harsh lesson in why it's impolite to steal.

The Carbunculum

As mentioned before, the Bletherad Carbunculum (better known simply as the "Carbunculum") is a slapdash guide to the Great Library's most notable collection of books and scrolls as they apply to adventuring. It amounts to little more than a highly annotated catalog of the library's classification system with notes on why a "real adventurer" (read: treasure-hunter) would bother with any of the material in a given section of the Great Library. This roughshod approach to research and the Library in general has given uncouth, semi-literate adventurers the notion that if they kick around the Library long enough, the map to some fabulous treasure or something similar will just fall into their laps. Such an attitude is an affront to all serious scholars who visit the Library to do "real" research and to those adventurers on a legitimate quest or clue-searching. To heroes and field scholars, seeing country rubes, thugs and clods combing the Library in search of hidden treasure defiles what the Library is all about. To the monks, this new breed of patron is the worst annoyance conceivable.

Be that as it may, whoever is publishing the **Carbunculum** is a marketing genius. Every ship that enters the **Bletherad** dock (not that many do, but still) ends up buying a few copies. Even if one does not expect to follow up any of the "leads" in the **Carbunculum**, the book has become something of a "souvenir" of Y-Oda, and many sailors, merchants, and passers-by will pick up a few copies just to bring something home with them. The Monks of the Library fear that as this silly little book spreads far and wide, the world will get a mistaken impression of the Library not as a place of serious learning and research, but as a gold mine for adventuresome get-rich-quick schemers. The worst case scenario from this is that foreign powers or secret societies will decide to capture the Library for themselves so they can mine it for whatever it is worth. It seems unlikely that such a development would ultimately spring from the publication of a stupid little book about the Library's inventory, but stranger things have happened, and the Monks of **Bletherad** know it.

The **Carbunculum** is produced in **Bletherad**, but nobody knows by whom. Some point to the Zealotry or other Purification fanatics. Others suspect it is the product of an enterprising "visitor" because no Islander would do such a thing ... or would they? A Changeling, perhaps? That this secret has remained so for this long is pretty amazing, considering that **Bletherad** is a small community with an active rumor mill. Numerous copycat adventurers' guides to the Library have popped up since the **Carbunculum** has become a hit, but these are skimpy imitations that don't sell very well.

The **Carbunculum** sells for 10 gold and is sold by itinerant merchants who hawk the publication on street corners and such. The monks have tried to discourage the sale of these books, but for every guy they get to stop, three more seem to start up. By now, the monks have resigned themselves to the fact that the **Carbunculum** will always be around, folks will always buy it, and there will be an element within the Library who are searching the stacks of books for all the wrong reasons. Indeed, there *are* many books that offer clues and keys to great mysteries and treasures. On any given day, perhaps half of the Library's patrons are combing the stacks for just such things. However, these people also have a keen appreciation for their source material, and are conducting serious, in-depth research. They are also usually searching for such things to suit a loftier purpose — to defeat a villain, to solve an ancient mystery, to uphold the honor of a noble house, etc.

Many of the **Carbunculum's** purchasers can barely read, and their traveling companions are often complete illiterates who regard the Library as nothing more than a boring oddity. They simply want to be led by the hand to a particular book so they can tear out the page they need (or steal the **book/parchment**) and leave. They are the worst kind of boor, and the Monastic Order of **Bletherad** as well as The Keeper are wracking their brains to figure out how to separate the serious readers from the "barbarians" without violating the spirit of the Library as a place open to "all" people. It would not be fair to restrict the Library just to those who seem erudite. One possible solution came from a junior monk who proposed that the Library set up a secret "Carbunculum Wing" filled with apocryphal texts nobody will care about if they are stolen or vandalized. Since most **Carbunculum-readers** stick out like a sore **thumb**, they could be directed to this corner of the Library, leaving the rest of the facility in peace.

Below is a highly condensed version of the **Bletherad Carbunculum**, taken from what amounts to the **book's** table of contents. The actual book is a fairly thick volume that gives detailed notes on each and every subsection of the Library, as well as the "quick and dirty" synopsis of any book in the inventory which might be useful for finding treasure, becoming famous, or obtaining power. Much of the information in this book is flat out wrong or highly distorted versions of the truth. However, even serious researchers find themselves buying a copy (while nobody is looking, of course) because if nothing else, it really is an excellent overview of how the Library is organized.

(G.M. **Note:** Feel free to have fun with this, should a player character get hold of the book. The extent to which any commentary in the book is correct is up to you, but a general rule of thumb is that any one statement has a 10% chance of being dead-on. 50% of what one reads in the **Carbunculum** is pure bunk, 25% of it is rumor presented as fact, and another 15% is a seriously modified and misleading version of the truth. The problem is, many people who buy it have no inkling of just how off-target its supposed "expert" insider's advice is. Those who follow the **Carbunculum's** advice lock, stock and barrel are likely only to set themselves on a wild goose chase as well as earn the contempt of just about everybody who works at the Library. Should the heroes require a favor of Library staff later on, they will face an uphill battle, since clearly anybody found relying on the **Carbunculum** is either an idiot, a rogue, both, or something even worse. Of course, if you'd rather treat the **Carbunculum** as a serious source of adventure lore, then it could become a powerful tool for you as an adventure generator when either you or the players are stuck for ideas concerning what new direction the campaign should follow.)

The Sage: Uncatalogued Works

Generalities. Do not bother with this section at all. First, it's in the basement. **Second**, they don't let anybody down there. **Third**, the monks themselves don't even know what is in this section because it's where all the new books come to get classified. Just imagine — it is some poor bastard's job to actually *read* all that stuff. Gives me the shivers. Just skim through this section of the **Carbunculum** to get an idea of what the other sections of the Library hold.

Arcana. Magic. 'Nuff said.

Religion. They should have just called this section Higher Powers or something, because that's what it's really all about — getting really powerful creatures to do your dirty work for you. Somewhere in here is supposed to be a book that offers fool-proof methods of getting any god to grant a miracle for you, even if you're not a believer!

Society. Sure there's rules and laws and what-not. That's not the good stuff. The books on how to master new and exotic fighting arts — *that's* the good stuff. There is also a book on jails in here that offers sample layout maps for most of the world's dungeons and **incarcerators**. Bet you didn't know that most of them follow the same basic floor pattern, huh? Believe me, a little groundwork here could save you a 30 year stretch tomorrow. When you've escaped from your fourth jail cell because of what you learned **here**, don't forget to give the good old **Carbunculum** its due.

Language. Don't be put off by all the different languages. Most of them have easy to follow alphabets and keys to them so you can figure this stuff out in the field. Now, I'm not suggesting you bother to learn all this stuff yourself. That's why you hire a Diabolist or a scholar to come along with you. But before you head out into the big, bad world, have your resident egg-head give this section a gander. He might just uncover something.

Invention. Only for serious brains. Lots of schematics and *diagrams for machines and* cite *like that nobody can figure out* anyway. There are some good notebooks on how to make unusual siege engines, though, which is worth your while if you're one of those meres who specializes in taking out entire buildings.

The Arts. Not good for professionals like you and me, but good for a couple of laughs. Somewhere in this section are the memoirs of *Tirenn Lothannor*, a court jester in **Timiro** who pulled incredible practical jokes on the royal family. He was so good that he never really got in trouble for it, either. The royal family kept getting him out of jail to pull tricks on other folks in the court they didn't like. Man, what a job! How do you land something like that?

The World. Maps, maps and more maps. It used to be that unless you were an explorer, there was no reason to come to this section. But if you know where to look and what to ask for, this part of the Library might as well be called the "Treasure Map section," because that's what it really is. Check out the copying rooms up there sometime. There's a long line for a reason.

Undiscernible Works. Believe it or not, even though the monks can't figure books like these out, they will still keep them somewhere in case somebody just happens along who can read anything. Me, I'd just set them up for fire kindling. Old paper burns really well.

Damaged or Incomplete Works. What I said up top goes double here. Keep a waterlogged book? Hey, unless it's going to point me to the final resting spot of **Castlerake** and **Frostfoil**, don't waste my time.

The Monk: Generalities

Reference. If you're totally green, then give this section a quick once over. It will get your feet wet with what kind of information you can access here in the Library. The best part about this section, though, is that it's where experienced treasure hunters and adventurers like to pick up partners for their expeditions. Lots of times you'll find a real veteran who's got a great plan worked out, but lacks manpower. You hang out in this section long enough and the right people will begin tapping you on the shoulder. Trust me.

Bibliographies, Indexes and Catalogues. If you like what you see in the **Carbunculum**, then swing by here and peek around a little more. I'm warning you, there's a lot of useless stuff in here, but if you are really looking for a good lead to something special, this is the best place to start. Just watch out for the monks. They've got a real short temper and unless you're some scholar wearing three sets of spectacles, they don't want anything to do with you.

Dictionaries and Encyclopedias. Sounds dull, right? Wrong. A lot of these books are subject specific. So while a

general dictionary isn't much help to **you**, a dictionary of rune-making terminology might be. Likewise, taking a gander at an encyclopedia of the air galleons of Baalgor can't hurt if you're of a mood to try building one. Seeing the big picture now?

Manuscripts & Rare Books. These are noteworthy books because they are really one of a kind. Like the book of signatures that supposedly contains the actual handwriting of over a thousand of the greatest Wizards, Warlocks, and other men of magic from **the Time of a Thousand Magicks!** If you score access to this book, make sure to have a psychic scan it for you. He could probably make contact with one of those old spell casters through their signature or the book itself. Do that, and you're bound to learn something useful.

Incunabula. These are books that were written prior to the Elf-Dwarf War. They usually talk about what life was like in the Time of a Thousand Magicks. Undoubtedly you could use these to figure out where certain ancient ruins, temples and treasure hordes lie so you can go explore them, but all of these works are written in ancient dialects, so unless you are a language expert, you'll need the help of a monk or Diabolist to get anything from these books.

Other Notable Publications:

Publications Notable for Binding. This is a boring section. Basically, it just contains books that have been put together in weird ways. If you want to learn how to make books that will never fall apart, you might want to give this section a look see. Otherwise, pass.

Publications Notable for Illustration. Yeah, there are tons of great books here with paintings of nude Elves, but if you're seriously into something that won't waste your time, check out the *Annotated Book of Tapestries*. They are these really great reproductions of ancient magical tapestries that if you looked into them, you can actually see the pictures on them moving around! Some say you could even enter the world on the tapestry and have adventures in there if you really wanted to. The best thing of all is some of the tapestries presented in this book are actually hanging in the Library of **Bletherad!**

Publications Notable for Ownership or Origin. Check out the *Book of Sososhesthe Bloody*. He was some warlord in the Old Kingdom who supposedly killed over a million people. The numbers sound like an exaggeration, but it's a sure thing that he is the reason why you don't see many Gnomes around anymore. Word is the secret location of his tomb is encoded within the words of this book. If you find it, there's bound to be treasure there. And even if not, what Gnome wouldn't pay you anything for the chance to defile the grave of the one who wiped out their race?

Prohibited Works, Forgeries and Hoaxes. This is a really popular **section**, just because of some of the crazy things you'll find here. My favorite is the *Cookbook of Eleath*, a collection of recipes for preparing various non-human races, notably Goblins, Kobolds, **Orcs**, and Ogres. A secret and prized reference for the powerful and corrupt, the preface contains a copying manifest showing all of the previous owners who had ordered copies of this book. This particular volume was copied from various noble houses within the Western Empire, a Temple of Light, an order of Knights in the Timiro Kingdom, and a "gentlemen's club" of

the Eastern Territory. It is officially banned in all human nations due to its barbaric content. Oh, for you forgers out their, studying the forgeries in this section will help to teach you "what not to do."

Special Collections. This section is reserved for those bundles of books that are worth something because they're all together. Frankly, I never saw the value in these things as books, but as merchandise. You can bet the Library would pay plenty ransom to get them back if somebody were to make them "disappear." But you didn't hear that from the **Carbunculum**. Oh, no sir. Not here.

The Mystic: Arcana

Spells and Ley Lines. They'll tell you that there aren't any spellbooks in the Library, but don't you believe them. They're there all right. You just have to know where to look for them. There is even a book that's got every Spell of Legend in it somewhere in the stack! Look for a really big book with pressed steel covers and gears for where the binding should be.

Magic Items. There are something like 100 catalogues of magic items throughout this area. Most of them are really nothing more than free advertising from the Western alchemists who donated them, but there are a couple that detail things nobody's ever heard of before. Show these descriptions to those alchemists, and they'll be eating out of your hand to learn where you found out about such stuff.

Rune Magic. This section is pretty small and untrustworthy because so many of the stories you hear about rune weapons can not be believed. However, there are a few books, all written by **Cubular Benthee**, some old sage from **Timiro**, that are right on the money. They even have maps telling you how to get to where a lot of rune weapons were last seen!

Psychic Phenomena. If you have psychic powers, be sure to check out this section. Most of the bigger books are not what you want. Check out the personal journals and diaries. They often contain first-person accounts of people who recorded how they developed their own psychic powers.

Dreams, Portents and Mysteries. There's a book in here called the **Portentum** that isn't magical, but it does show you how to tell your fortune just by throwing down a few coins or flattened sticks. It's a pretty thick book, but well worth your while. Just about 99% of the prophecies foretold by this book eventually come true. Come on. You know you want to sneak a peek.

Magic Lore. The books in here are not so interesting as the monk librarians who run the section. They've read every book in here cover to cover and can tell you what you *really* want to know if you slip them a few gold coins for their trouble.

The Prophet: Religion

Pantheons. Everything you ever wanted to know about any major pantheon. Each pantheon's got its own section of books, so be careful. You'll find a lot of fanatics cruising the stacks looking to make trouble with each other, which the Library seriously frowns on. However, I've heard of a few professional hitters who do very well taking orders from the folks who visit this section. Let's face it, all of these churches have agendas against each other. The Library is as good a place for them to settle accounts as anywhere.

Pantheon of **Ra**. These guys act like they own the world. Don't be afraid to use that against them.

Pantheon of Taut Has a serious grudge against the Pantheon of Ra. A major contractor for assaults, killings and other kinds of shadowwork can be contacted here. Have your credentials handy.

Pantheon of Ma'ip. You ever hear of these guys? I sure haven't.

The Northern Gods. Big time warrior gods. There's even a new god in the pantheon named **Wolvenar** who the Wolfen all worship, so if you're in the market for working in Shadowfall or the far side of the Disputed Zone, it helps to brush up on your lore here.

The Southern Gods. Not too powerful this far north, but if you travel south past the Timiro Kingdom, these guys are all anybody worships. For some reason, they don't have too many books, and the ones they do have all seem to have some kind of secret ceremonial information in the back of the book or hidden between the lines. I hear **Diabolists** make a killing decrypting these books for the priests of this pantheon.

The Gods of Dragonwright. These guys are creepy, so watch yourself in this section. Best to stay away from it altogether unless you're looking to hook up with that renegade sect of "good" Dragonwright. In that case, this part of the Library will be your new home. But be on the lookout — other **Dragonwrighters** will mark you as one of the enemy, and they *will* come after you later. Of course, if you survive the attack, then it's a sure bet the "good" Dragonwright will hear about it and ask you to join the club. Or so I've heard.

Pantheon of **Rurga**. Just don't lie to any of them. They all know it when you do, and they'll cut your hands off for it. Trust me on this.

Independent Deities. These are the freelancers of the godhood, or something like that. Not quite the first-raters of the Pantheon, but still they can help you out in a jam. Great gods for independent thinkers.

Aco & The Juggernaut You know all those little Aco dolls you see everywhere? They're in devotion to the goddess of this pair, but what nobody will tell you is there's a book in here that shows you how to build a doll with special powers. The kind that can make Aco do favors for you, or force her to assume a mortal form for a day. Of course, the Juggernaut never likes it when that happens, but if you're quick maybe you can dodge him when he comes looking for some payback on **Aco's** part.

Algor. God of the sea. You had to take a boat to get here, right? You're going to have to take one to get to where you're going afterward. Check out **The Algorian Rites** in this section. It's supposed to contain a saying that will protect your ship from bad weather as long as somebody on the boat is saying it at all times. I've never tried it, but I heard it works.

Chantico. This guy's crazy. Check out a book called **Chantico Thought** down in the Religious Texts, Manuscripts and Manifestos section, and you'll see just how crazy he really is. I heard that a while back, a Monk of **Bletherad** went nuts reading this book, but he also learned where to find all of **Chantico's** worshippers throughout the world. He also supposedly learned that Chantico wants to destroy the Library of Bletherad. Good luck, dog-boy. Maybe if you were a *real* god, you'd stand half a chance.

Kirgi. Rat god. You travel *anywhere* in the Western Empire, you better be familiar with this guy and how he works. His disciples are looking for the last three volumes of *Kirgi Kirgeum* to complete some kind of ceremony they've been working on for years. For some reason, they can't or won't set foot in the Library of Bletherad. If somebody was to deliver these volumes to them (copies won't do), you'd have a sure friend beneath the streets of the Empire of Sin.

Utu. Lord of the Dead. You do not want to mess with these guys unless you want to join them. That's the hard part, since the Death Cult of Utu is pretty secretive. This section's got lots of books about the Cult but not by the Cult. Still, a few of them will practically point you to the doorstep of the Cult's nearest temple.

Vald-Tegor. Lord of the Undead. Even creepier than those Utu guys. Read enough books from this area and you'll never have to worry about vampires ever again. I'd bet my neck on it.

Tolmet. **Tolmet** the Cruel was in real tight with *Lictalon*, an ancient Wizard and hero who invented at least one Spell of Legend as well as a few power words. There is not much to learn about Tolmet that is of much use. However, a lot of these books offer information on Lictalon that you won't find in the Arcana section. It seems that no Wizards have put this together yet, but if they spent some time here, they could probably learn a few of *Lictalon's* spells and secrets.

Religious Organizations

Churches, temples, holy orders. You know the drill.

Noteworthy Religious Figures. I know a guy who once researched this section so well he could basically impersonate any religious hero of any pantheon in existence. He would go around pretending to be some ancient hero of the past, and the faithful worshippers would just shower him with all kinds of gifts — food, lodging, money, weapons, armor, items of magic, concubines, you name it. He did well by this racket and eventually retired happy and rich. It has been a few years since he quit the circuit, so now would be an opportune time to do a bit of reading and picking up where he left off. After all, every religion's got its heroes. Most of them died very heroic and very vague deaths, making it entirely plausible for them to return to the land of the living one more time. Play your cards right, and you'll be sitting pretty in no time flat.

Religious **Histories** & Geographies. An interesting selection of books that track the physical movement and spread of religions over the ages. Although no book comes right out and tracks it, I'm sure that if you cross-referenced enough texts from here, you could not only chart the spread and movement of secret religions, like the Cult of Utu or the Undead Cult of Vald-Tegor, but you could also *predict* where they are most likely to pop up next. For anybody who has got a grudge against such groups as these, a little digging in this section is invaluable. And for those who would want to protect such groups, the same thing applies. Why not see where your enemies think you will be next and either avoid those places or set up ambushes there?

Religious Texts, Manuscripts and Manifestos. More rambling justifications and explanations of more particular religions than you really care to know. Most of these offer little by way of revelation, but there are a few books here worth noting. *Chantico Thought* is a rambling, incoherent treatise written by *Chantico* himself that basically implicates every other pantheon

and deity out there in a huge conspiracy to make him miserable. Legend has it a Monk of **Bletherad** went mad decoding the secret meanings in this book, and whatever they are, the rest of the Order is keeping it covered up.

Truth Above All is a detailed explanation from the Pantheon of **Rurga** on the varying shades of lying and truth, and how to distinguish between them. This book strikes me as a little useless, since **Rurgan** theology dictates that all liars must be cut down, so **what's** the point of seeing what shade of gray somebody's untruth is?

The Book of Osiris makes for good reading, as it describes how the god was torn into 14 different pieces by the evil god, Set, and scattered throughout the world. I have it on good authority that the particular version of this book stored in the Library of Bletherad contains cleverly hidden clues as to the location of Osiris' various body parts. Just be careful — Set's minions are everywhere, and they want the pieces of Osiris just as badly as you do.

Theology and Dogma. This is where one will find all sorts of texts on religious creeds, miscellaneous literature, secret rites, and my personal favorite, persecutions and heresies. You want to know the really good stuff going on with any particular religion? Look up who is being accused of heresy and for what. That will give you more insight to the current state of the religion than reading a thousand dusty old books will. The Church of Light and Dark is especially fond of branding people as heretics, for some reason. In the Middle Kingdoms, a rebellious and religiously fanatical section of the Western Empire, over a hun-



dred people were burned alive for heresy just last year, but it is not just in the Empire of Sin, either. The Church of Light and Dark seems to have some kind of heresy problem within its ranks. Such a division can only mean golden opportunities for adventuresome sorts willing to get their hands dirty and choose a side of whatever conflicts brewing.

Dragons. This is the mother lode. There have to be ten books on every particular dragon that was ever named! All those **wyrms** keep treasure hoards like you would not believe, and the key to those early retirement funds lies right here, in the Great Library. They say that dragons, especially the adult ones, are practically invincible — and they are, if you haven't done your homework. But every dragon has its weakness, and if you find out what it is, you have just as good a chance of taking them down as you would fighting a Tusker. Tough and dangerous, but definitely doable. If there was ever a section of the Library that merited some serious reading time, it is here. And, since no magic works in the Library, you can be sure that the only folks here are fellow hunters like **yourself** — no dragons in disguise.

Elementals. Not much to write about here, since the people best qualified to write these books (Warlocks — you *do* know what Warlocks are, right?) generally do not like putting their thoughts to paper. Word is the **Wolfen** Imperials hire a lot of Warlocks out of this area, so be on the lookout for **non-Wolfen** spies and agents with coin purses in their hands. They are always recruiting.

Alien Intelligences. Nobody understands these things, least of all me. Don't spend too much time here, or you'll end up like one of those freaks who read the books in this section over and over and over again expecting to find some magic word or phrase that will bring the most powerful of these things to this world. Weird.

Angels. The most interesting thing here are a few books that mention how there is some kind of civil war between the angels going on right now, and it is being fought in secret in the Western Empire! It turns out that besides the four known types of angels, there are four **unknown** types too, and they are the ones causing all of the ruckus. **Apparently**, lots of these angels don't start out with all of their power, either. Most of them build it up gradually, and when they first start, they are no more powerful than your average mortal.

Demons and Deevils. Everything you ever wanted to know about a bunch of monsters that will definitely make your life miserable. You want to cut a deal with these guys, then be my guest, but don't say I didn't warn you. Also, do not try any funny business in this section — something like half of the world's demon and Deevil hunters can be found doing research here at any given time. Believe me, they have more than the means to handle anything you can dish out. I think these guys are also one of the reasons why the Library never gets attacked by monsters and the like. They know that over in this section is a small army of crusaders ready to cross steel at a moment's **notice**. Heck, the entire section is like an open-air market for information and lore to those guys. Most of them don't even read the books here — they already have them memorized. No, they just use the place as a convenient gathering spot to trade war stories and exchange rumors and information.

The Old Ones. Lots of material, but it is all really sketchy, since it's telling about prophecies and ancient history. What is

useful, though, is a six-volume reference set called *They Walk Among Us*, that describes, in detail, the six largest Old Ones cults in the world. Three of them are exclusively run by **Minotaurs** — two in the Old Kingdom Mountains and one in the Northern **Mountains**, near the Land of the Damned. The other three are made up of mixed races and all of them have front operations so they resemble a legitimate business during the day. There's one in **Timiro**, one in the Western Empire, and one in the Eastern Territory. I heard once that deep below the Library in a locked basement, they have books that give you the words needed to wake up the Old Ones. All one needs to do is find enough potential psychic energy to do it! I'm not sure if I believe that, but the point is moot, since you would be hard pressed to find these books anyway. Not that breaking into the sub-levels is **hard**, just that they are HUGE, and you will have no way of knowing where to begin looking.

The Prince: Society

Cultures & Institutions. This section is worth your time only because it lets you learn what things are important to different people. It will teach you why art is more important than weapons to Elves, and why weapons are more important than art to Dwarves. If you want to profit in this world, you have to know what everything is worth. But half of that battle is knowing who to keep in mind when you're angling for the serious gold.

Customs and Etiquette. Ever find yourself on the chopping block because you accidentally offended an **Orcish** Lord? Ever find yourself playing some crazy game with a skull in the Baalgor Wastelands just to beg some water off of a **Quorian**? Ever find yourself standing in the middle of the street with a pair of unfamiliar weapons in your hands and a seasoned duelist coming to carve his name into your gut? If **so**, then you *definitely* did not spend enough time **here**, did you? I never met a traveler who didn't learn something life-saving from the titles of this section. Be sure to check out *Customs and Cultures*. That book is a certified life-saver, especially if you are traveling anywhere **in** the southern half of the world.

Trade and Taxation. Believe it or not, plenty of cities will charge you traveling tax when you enter, just to skim 10% or 15% of your net worth off you for the privilege of visiting their fair city. Read through this section to learn how much you will get taxed for and where. Your coin purse will thank you for it.

Slavery & Emancipation. Sometimes, steady work pays better than adventuring, but most times adventuring is more exciting than steady work. If you want both, try the slave **business!** You get the thrill of combat when you round up your inventory and you get the satisfying payoff when you deliver them to Timiro or the Western Empire, or wherever your ship is heading to. This section will familiarize you with the nuances of the **local** and regional slave trades, as well as what kinds of creatures and skills are most marketable. Just be warned, if the Monks catch you spending a lot of time **here**, they'll give you some sermon about how slavery is uncivilized, and how nations that rely on it are doomed to fall. Oh, and one other thing, for some odd reason, your identity will spread like wildfire if ever you get into the slaving business. I don't know how it happens, but it does. You will find old friends **won't** want anything to do with you anymore, but all sorts of new business opportunities will

come your way if you're not too picky about the company you keep. However, you will also probably encounter adventurers every once in a while who want to free your inventory and drag you off to some place where you'll be tried as a criminal. This is almost a certainty, so be sure to read through the entire inventory of books to find places where this is likely to happen, and avoid them like the plague.

Diplomacy. Unless reading old treaties is your thing, then skip this section entirely. If diplomacy was really your calling then you wouldn't have picked up a copy of the **Carbunculum**, now would you? Of course, maybe a quick glance at some of the things here is useful if you ever score work as a bodyguard or you end up soldiering for a public figure. The various diplomatic procedures outlined here will give you some good pointers. Actually, those same procedures will also provide outstanding intelligence for assassins working the public market. These guys all tend to follow the same basic patterns, which you can read here. Learn the patterns, make the mark, hit your target, and collect your pay.

Law. One of the biggest reasons so many adventurers are growing old in prisons or stretching their necks at the end of a noose is because they travel from country to country without ever stopping to think about the different laws that apply from place to place. Spend a little time in the Law section and I guarantee you will never end up on the wrong side of a prison cell door again. And if you do, then at least you'll know enough about the system that's imprisoning you to know who to bribe,

when, and with how much, to regain your freedom. And hey, if all else fails, there is always the penology section.

Penology. One would be surprised how many Ogres think this means something else. Anyway, this is the section on the world's gaols and prisons. Delve deeply **into** the materials offered here; they might just give you important insights on how various prisons and penal systems work. When you know how a prison operates, then you'll know how to escape. I've got a dozen friends in a thieves' guild who will back me up on this.

Government. This section covers all the different ways people have made other people do what they want over the years. What seems most interesting is not in the specifics of how any one government has **worked**, but that there have been so many different kinds of them throughout history. Most of the really weird ones were tried during the Time of a Thousand Magicks or the Elf-Dwarf War. The basic list includes: *Autocracies* (governments which rest in **self-derived**, absolute power, as in a hereditary emperor), *bureaucracies* (rule by departments and appointed administrators), *confederacies* (government by a league of possibly diverse social elements bonded for a common goal), *democracies* (Rule by the people and their elected representatives. In the Palladium world, a rare and dangerous form of government. Representative democracies are often considered **republics.**), *dictatorships* (government by one in which power may not necessarily be self-derived), *gendocracies* (Rule by a particular sex. Female gendocracies are **gynocracies** while male gendocracies are **melocracies.**), *gerontocracies* (Rule by the **aged/elderly**), *hegemonies* (Rule by a coalition of power blocs), *ludocracies* (Rule by those who win a game or series of games, also sometimes called "ludicrousies"), *magocracies* (Rule by spellcasters), *matriarchies* and *patriarchies* (Rule by the oldest females/males of that society), *militocracies* (Rule by the military), *monarchies* (Rule by a single sovereign, usually hereditary, usually absolute), *necrocracies* (Rule by those who have died at least once), *numerocracies* (Rule by mathematics. Pure **numbers.**), *oligarchies* (Rule by a few rulers with co-equal power), *pedocracies* (Rule by the learned. Scholars, sages, and the like.), *plutocracies* (Rule by the wealthy), *psychocracies* (Rule by psychics), *soldacracies* (Rule by warriors, not necessarily of a military order), *syndicracies* (Rule by business interests), and *theocracies* (Rule by a deity or religious organization).

War. Everything you ever wanted to know about killing your enemies in large numbers. Perhaps the best section of the entire library.

Infantry. Of special importance are those texts covering field tactics, weapons handling and individual fighting styles. Many of the books here can teach you how to fight better within just a few short weeks of reading and practice at home.

Cavalry. Ever notice how it is always knights and palladins who know how to fight from horseback? Well, no longer. Their secret fighting techniques have all been revealed in **this** body of work. Many of these books are banned **in** the Timiro Kingdom where the cavalry forces there have been instrumental in suppressing slave revolts. The Timiro rulers are deathly afraid that if their slaves ever learned how to fight while mounted, it would go a long way to neutralizing the royal cavalry's edge.

Siege Warfare. Over thirty hard to find books describing how to build, transport and operate virtually every kind of siege



warfare device ever used. Weapons covered range from the common (**ballistas**, catapults, onagers and **trebuchets**) to the bizarre (the **screwjack**, **crankergun**, and **thunderball**).

Naval Warfare. Naval tactics and strategy, describes famous naval battles (mostly engagements of various states against the Western Empire), and provides detailed descriptions of every kind of ship in military service. Somewhere in here you can find a text that reveals the classified methods used to make the Bizantium stone ships! Nothing much on the Western Empire's Demon Black Fleet, sadly.



The Cryptic: Languages

Active Languages. Many adventurers rely on other folks in their parties to overcome any language barriers the group encounters. The average party of freebooters can speak between four and seven languages between them. This is all well and good, but what happens when you have to split up, or if you find yourself alone? In that **case**, you will wish you spent more time here, learning how to speak with the different people of the world. It's nothing exotic or particularly exciting, but these are skills that will probably save your life one day.

Dwarven. Learn it if you ever plan to explore the Old Kingdom Mountains or anywhere underground. The ancient Dwarves were fond of booby trapping everything. They also tended to label things as a warning, which will do you absolutely no good if you can't read them. Also a language commonly used for the construction of magic items and rune weaponry.

Elven. Worth knowing because a) there are a lot of Elves in the world, b) dragons often will not speak to anybody in another language, if they deign to speak to you at all, and c) it is the universal language of scholars, nobles, and merchants. If you learn

only one language, this should be it. It will give you the most distance.

Eastern Human. Spoken in the Eastern Territory (no surprise, there), the **Timiro** Kingdom, Phi and **Lopan** (which also use Elven heavily), and isolated outposts in the Old Kingdom and Great Northern Wilderness. The trick about learning any of the human tongues is that lots of humans will treat you solely on the kind of language you speak. Westerners and Southerners in general **don't** like Easterners and Northerners. If you know this and have a number of languages to speak, switching tongues in the right company can take you far. In general, Eastern is a good language to learn, since it is widely used and easy to pick up.

Southern Human. The tongue of the Land of the **South-Winds** and numerous groups within the Yin-Sloth Jungles who have no written language. Also used commonly in the **Floenry** Isles. Of the human tongues, this one is slightly more difficult to learn than the others, but do not let that discourage you, especially if you plan on adventuring in the Yin-Sloth Jungles or in the south seas. The vast majority of adventurers active in this region don't actually know Southern, and have to speak with the natives in Eastern or Elven, which only makes the natives resentful. It also gives the locals leeway to take advantage of you, so head them off at the pass and learn to speak as they do. You'll be thankful for it, especially if you're trying to break into the **South-Winds** drug trade or haggling deals with the pirates who infest the southern waters.

Northern Human. The language of the Island Kingdom of Bizantium and scattered human settlements throughout the Great Northern Wilderness. Of the human tongues, it is the least used throughout the world. Oddly enough, though, it is also a language you will find spoken in every major trading city in the **world**, thanks to the extensive trade routes of Bizantium sailors. Bizantium captains and crews are famous for their fluency in multiple languages, but they have also taken steps to assure that wherever they go, there is at least some area where they can speak their mother tongue and feel a bit more like they are at home. Northern is a language you usually are born into. Very few **non-Bizantium** people ever learn it because it is more worth their while to learn Eastern or Elven, languages any self-respecting Bizantium sailor or soldier also knows. Word is there is a bit of a cultural crisis over this in Bizantium because so many people are abandoning the traditional Northern tongue in favor of more commonly spoken languages. The royal families are supposedly considering a law that would make it illegal for anybody to speak in any language aside from Northern while on the main isle of Bizantium

Western Human. Right now, this is the most commonly spoken human language in the world. It is the official tongue of the Western Empire and its colonies in the Old Kingdom, Ophid's Grasslands, Yin-Sloth Jungles and Baalgor Wastelands. Since everybody wants to do business with Western interests, practically every merchant from the Eastern Territory, **Timiro**, Land of the **South-Winds** and Bizantium knows it. Western is an unusual and complex language that allows for many nuances and different shades of meaning. It is said that those fluent in Western are naturally better liars and manipulators, because their very language makes it easy to say something without really committing to it. Over **time**, this has made it so that people in other countries automatically distrust anybody speaking in

Western, calling it the "language of liars." Not too terribly far from the truth.

Wolfen. This language is spoken by all of the canine races (**Wolfen, Coyle, Kankoran**), as well as some **Algor** giants, **Bearmén** of the North, and the occasional non-canine ranger, huntsman or trapper operating in the Great Northern Wilderness. It is a difficult language to master, in part because canine vocal cords are unique and not every race can form the sounds that make up the Wolfen language. Despite this, Eastern soldiers are all taught at least a rudimentary form of Wolfen so they can spy on and interrogate the enemy. It also comes from the doctrine of it being wise to study the ways of one's enemy. The Wolfen in turn have countered this by teaching their soldiers to speak in code when in the field. By this, they talk to each other using lots of different metaphors, body **language**, hand signals, and **obscure** slang that the East has not figured out yet. So even if Wolfen soldiers are overheard, they are seldom understood. Note that many Wolfen pride themselves in speaking the **Elven** tongue as well.

Dead Languages. These are languages nobody speaks anymore. Most of them are languages of races that were exterminated in the Elf-Dwarf War. A few of them were languages of conquered peoples whose native tongue was outlawed in an attempt to erase their culture altogether. And some are languages that simply died out because people decided some other language was more practical. (This is the situation facing the Northern human language right now — virtually nobody speaks it anymore except people actually living on the **Bizantium** islands.) The reason why these books are important is because dead languages are very popular to use as code languages. Most people have no idea what these languages are, much less how to decipher them, so they are good to use for sensitive political documents, labeling magical ingredients, the numbers on combinations locks, and so on. They may also be important in reading and understanding ancient text.

Secret Languages: These are languages that are still used, but are not commonly spoken by any particular populace. They fall into three basic categories: *Diabolism, guild codes and languages*, and *cryptography*.

Diabolism, or in other words, runes. You know, that crazy old writing that is supposed to have magic power to it. Diabolists are always combing over this section, even though all the books basically say the same thing. It makes you wonder what these mages know that we don't. If you **can**, hang here and try to pick up some clues. Eventually, you're bound to stumble onto something big. A particularly good book to reference is *The Runic Way*. It'll teach you in a few hours what takes most Diabolists five years.

Guild Codes and Languages. Guild codes and languages are the single biggest reason why these things are so hard to infiltrate. You want to sneak inside a guild, learn how to talk their talk. There isn't a single guild in the world whose language hasn't been decoded and put on display in the Great Library. That's a promise!

Cryptography. How to write and break codes. If you've got a Diabolist in the group, you might as well drop him off here and pick him up again in a few days. As for you, this is a pretty good section especially if you ever get involved with politics in any way. Those guys write everything in code nowadays, especially

in the Western Empire. There isn't a single lord over there who trusts anybody, not even his bodyguards. (And with good reason, too. It pays to be disloyal over there.) And when these lords send messages to one another, it is always in code. There will come a day when you intercept a secret message of some kind. Better that you have some inkling of how to crack it, otherwise you will have to hire a professional and then have one more loose end to tie up when he learns of the letter's contents too. Better you just do some reading here and learn these things yourself.

The Scholar: Nature

Mathematics. This strange new science seems to get more and more attention every day from scholars, especially those who insist that if you create numerical patterns that are large enough, you can see into the future. **Riiiiight.** Next, they will be saying that numbers are some kind of universal language or something.

Astronomy & Celestial Mechanics. There's a book written by a scholar who got one of those magical Eyes of the Eagle and used it to look at the night sky. He says that if you look really closely, you can see other worlds out in the darkness, so far away they look like stars themselves. There are supposed to be seven or eight others, all moving around in big circles or something. I tell you, some people are just plain crazy.

Physics. There are three books you might want to check out. The first is *Draeda's Ladder*, a way of generating electricity without using magic of any kind. I don't understand it, but if you get it working right, you'll have these twin metal rods with lightning bolts jumping between them. Stick your hand between them and you'll get the shock of your life! The second is *Cadjuma's Pendulum*, and it is about how if you hang a heavy object on a really long wire and get it moving really slow, it will appear to move in different directions as the day goes on. This is supposed to prove that the world is rotating, like a giant ball. I don't buy it, but the **Timiro** Kingdom is offering a pretty big reward for the first person who can make a miniature time-telling device based on it. The third is *Sorkin's Wheel*, which talks about how you can put a spinning wheel on two curved tracks and get the thing to never stopped spinning. I think it's called "preposterous motion" or something like that.

Chemistry. This section is just chock full of cook books for whipping up all kinds of home brewed drugs, poisons, herbs and other fun stuff. There's even a book on how to create weird kinds of explosive powders.

Geology. Rocks. Boring as Hades unless you're a jewel thief, in which case this section will give you the last word on what you should be targeting. There is supposed to be a book in here that describes a number of unusual stones having strange **properties**, but I can not find it, which means either it has been stolen (unlikely), **misfiled** (even more unlikely), or some squatter keeps it off the shelf so nobody can learn its secrets.

Medicine. I never had much use for this section. You want healing, hire a healer or a priest! That's what **they're** there for. Just make sure that whatever you're doing with your tune makes enough money to cover their bills. As far as this section goes, the only book I found even remotely interesting was a manual on Goblin surgical techniques. This was pretty funny! It has a series of charts used to figure out what your problem is and

what you have to do to fix it. The three basic health problems, from the Goblin point of view are, "Does it **hurt?**", "Does it smell funny?" and "Is it a funny color?" That's not the funny part. The funny part is the cure section, where it pretty much tells you to heal everything by either dousing it with alcohol and setting it on fire, sawing it off, or bashing it with a rock.

Botany. Plants. Every day there are new books on this coming in from the Western Empire's plantations **in** the Yin-Sloth Jungles, and the Land of the **South-Winds**. If it's one thing these guys know, it's how to make drugs, teas and tonics. Almost all of the books they send in deal with the medicinal or recreational use of the various kinds of plants **you'll** find **in** that part of the world. If you don't mind working a bit for a huge payoff, try some speculative harvesting down in the jungles for a bit, with these books as your guide. Sell a shipload of wonder powder in Caer **Itom** and you'll be living the fat life forever, my friend. Take it from somebody who knows. There are also a number of titles describing odd plants from all over the **world**, especially those that pose a threat to **humanoids**. Things like the *Pitcher Plant*, which will pick up objects and pitch them at you with its tentacle-like vines, or the *Shambling Snapjaw*, a giant plant that can actually walk along on its root structure and lash out at you **with** big flytrap-like appendages on the end of its all too flexible stalks.

Zoology. Animals. You see a lot of big game hunters around here, looking to see where **in** the world they can find a particular creature. Most of them are just **thrillseekers** looking to bag the one thing that's evaded them all their lives. (If these guys are so tough, why don't they just go to the Baalgor Wastelands? Plenty of hunting opportunities there.) An increasing number of readers, though, represent arenas from all over the world. They are looking for dangerous, exotic and just plain interesting critters to pit against their fighters. Be mindful of this — these arena types have lots of money to burn, and are definitely looking for people to help them bag a trophy animal for the arenas. Most of them have their own ships too, and can leave straight away from Y-Oda, so if you are looking for adventure right away, spend a day or three killing time in the Zoology section.

The Artifex: Invention

Animal Husbandry. My favorite book in this section teaches you how to domesticate any animal, no matter how wild or dangerous it is. I've got a friend back West who tells me he has a pair of trained Tusker attackers he uses to guard his house. He says this book taught him everything he needed to know. Wonder if it will show me how to break in a young Gryphon?

Carpentry. Not much of use here. Although you might want to visit just to talk to this odd guy named *Farrison Horde* who claims he is going to become an important actor someday. That's a good one — a carpenter learning how to act! Haw!

Masonry. If you are a Dwarf, definitely look here. There are a bunch of books **in** various Dwarven dialects that I can't read, but friends tell me are full of useful knowledge. A lot of them describe how the Dwarves used to build their underground castles back in the old days, as well as all of those incredible surface structures. Too bad most of them got knocked down during the big war.

Metalworking. Sure, you can handle a sword, but do you know how to make one? Your Dwarven and Kobold buddies

sure do, so why not you? It's not like it's all that hard. Just check out the smithing books here and learn what they have to tell you. I know of a couple of guys who studied really hard in this section for a few years and then developed their own smithing style that is as least as good as Kobold work, if not better! And these guys are *human*. Word is, a bunch of jealous Dwarves are going to put a hit out on them if they even think about submitting their smithing secrets to the Great Library. In the meantime, take a look at *On Exotic Alloys*, a book that describes several strange metals and alloys with unusual and even magic properties.

Engineering and Architecture. This section's got floor plans galore. To the casual eye, it's nothing big, but if you're staging a raid, heist, break-out, break-in, or any other kind of uninvited entry work, you owe it to yourself to take in some of the plan books here. Lots of buildings have basic styles they all follow. Learn the layout to one **Timiro** fort and you've learned them all. How do you think so many adventurers land themselves **in** jail and then break out again? Because they know how all jails work, that's how. Same thing for just about any kind of building, especially public ones.

There is one book **in** particular that any explorer or adventurer should take note of. It's called *Defensive Engineering*, and it contains descriptions and building plans for just about every kind of booby trap ever devised. The book is written **in** ancient Dwarven, which might be a problem for some, but believe me, it is definitely worth the effort. You can bank your last sovereign



that if you ever go picking about the Old Kingdom, what you learn in this book will be put to good use indeed.

Agriculture. There is a book in here called *The Labor of Fruit*, or something, and it shows you how to grow produce six or seven times the size of what **you'll** find anywhere else. It doesn't require magic, just a fertilizer meal you make from dragon bone, unicorn horn and a few other ingredients. Hey, I didn't say it would be cheap! The point is, it helps you grow these gigantic fruits (I guess it would work for vegetables, too), and if you eat them, I heard you get magical powers.

Manufacturing. This is a pretty small section devoted to making lots of things at once. Kind of defeats the purpose of hand-crafted quality, I guess, but if you're trying to outfit an army I can see the merit in it. The thing is, where are you going to get the people to work these production machines? And if you get enough **workers**, how are you supposed to pay them? It's not like you can just chain little kids to the machines and make them work for nothing. I mean you *could*, but you'd have to be a really evil person to do it, I think.

Miscellaneous Inventions. Crazy stuff here. Things definitely not to try at home. I saw one plan for what looked like a golem the size of a human, only it was going to have all kinds of gears and machinery on the inside. I also saw the plans for some kind of adding machine that could work with numbers on its own, like a great big abacus with self-moving parts. How is anybody supposed to *build* these things? And like there's even a need for them. Better off spending your time and money learning magic than messing with this nonsense.



The Fool: The Arts

Drawing, Painting, **Printmaking** and Engraving. Read *The Fine Line*, a great work on engraving. Master the techniques listed there, and **you'll** be able to counterfeit even the most complicated coinage in no time.

Tapestries and Weavings. Little do the Monks of **Bletherad** know that within this section is a forgotten tome on the art of magical weaving. Those who master this ancient **craft** can work many wondrous things, including gaining complete control over one's enemies (all you need is a lock of their hair), making oneself immune to certain kinds of harm, and other effects.

Sculpture and Mosaics. In *Living Statues*, you will find a listing of over a hundred legendary heroes and adventurers who mysteriously disappeared during the course of their careers. According to this book, they all fell prey to a particularly dangerous Medusa whose gaze was so powerful, it even worked through a reflection! Scholars and more importantly, adventurers, have been searching for this Medusa's lair for **centuries**, both for the treasure it contains and because there are many heroes there who could be brought back to life. Surely the lord who frees these adventurers from their stony embrace could ensure their favors for a good while.

Music, Theater and Other Performing Arts. There are several books of interest here, all relating to the theater. *What to Perform Where* is an excellent account by a travelling performer as to what kinds of entertainment are considered proper in different countries. More than one nation will cut off the head of actors who cross the line on what is considered tasteful. Sir *Theaters*, *Six Secrets* covers the secrets and rumors about the six most prestigious theaters in the Western Empire.

Games and Amusements. Somewhere in this section is a book on secret training techniques for the **Lopan** Olympics. If you master the techniques of this text, your victory at the Games is **assured**, and fame and fortune will follow!

Epics, Legends and Folklore. There are no less than three dozen collections of legends and folklore here, each containing hundreds upon hundreds of stories. This one section contains more solid lore for any part of the world than any seedy bar or smoky tavern can ever tell. **Don't** be fooled by how serious scholars tend to brush off these works as balderdash. Everything you read here is true. Everything.

Poetry, Speeches, Essays and Letters. Even the great Bletherad **Carbunculum** is hard pressed to find any adventure fodder in a collection of colorless correspondence. There is no secret information here, no clues to hidden treasure, unsolved mysteries, unfinished quests, nothing. In fact, there is no reason why any self-respecting adventurer should check out this section at all. I would suggest you avoid it at all costs. Really, there is nothing to see here. Move along.

Satire & Humor. *The Letters of BanwickStrathgarry* were a collection of satires on Emperor Itomas of the Western Empire so scathing that not only did it land their author a date with the headsman, but his entire family, and anybody who publicly applauded the satires as well! To this day, they remain banned from the Western Empire, and anybody caught with a copy receives an instant death sentence. This only makes them all the more collectible, of course. In some parts of the **Empire**, prices for a full set of the satires are running up to 10,000 gold! Strangely enough, nobody seems to have copied them from Bletherad and exported them to the West, where they could make a killing on reprints.

The Wanderer: The World

Travel. Not much of use here, unless you count the few titles I would recommend.

Ten Years Underground is a good account of an **explorer's** entry and exploration of the Palladium Underworld, which you can access from a variety of spots on the surface. The Underworld is an endless network of caverns and tunnels that are said to house entire civilizations that have never seen the light of day. This travel book describes the very first of them. If you want to take a peek at the Underworld, take a peek at this book first.

In the Company of Dragons describes an ill-fated venture through the Yin-Sloth Jungles to the famed Dragon's Gate. Though none of the authors survived, *somebody* had to have sent the book back home. Perhaps the dragons living there secretly want recognition of some sort from the rest of the world?

And finally *Across the Shattered Lands* gives what has to be the definitive account of the current state of the Old Kingdom. So many rumors and stories circulate about what this barbaric

realm of monsters has become, but only this book truly gets it right. Reading it cover to cover is like actually going there. And, yearly updates keep getting sent to the **libaray** by an anonymous source, ensuring the information remains up to date.

Geography:

The Land of the Damned. These works only describe the coastline of the Land of the Damned; the interior of that place



remains unknown. No cartographic expedition has ever penetrated this realm and returned to present **their** findings, so what the land is like can be anyone's guess. What little *is* known is that somewhere in the middle of the realm is the *Great Rift*. Some say it is an incredibly deep fissure in the earth that separates the denizens of the Land of the Damned from each other. Others say it is a portal to the realms of Hades and **Dyval**, and that creatures from both pour out and wage war upon each other! There also is sketchy information about the actual coastline itself, how most of it juts straight out of the water for a hundred feet (30.5 m) or more, making any kind of ship landing a suicidal gesture. The waters battering these coastlines are so fierce, they would dash to pieces any ship trying to nestle itself against the rock cliffs. One would have an easier time trying to dock against the Rocky Coastline of the Baalgor Wastelands!

The Northern Mountains. The Northern Mountains are as unknown and as hostile a wilderness as the interior of the Land of the Damned. These mountains are like a stone wall separating the Land of the Damned from the rest of the **world**, as if to keep whatever lives in that terrible place separate from the larger

world. For the few willing to pore over these volumes, however, there are a number of obscure references to natural clefts in the mountains that act as hidden roadways through to the Land of the Damned! The going would not be easy, but it would surely be easier than scaling all those mountains. Along the way, there are supposedly a few towns and villages, too — monsters or some other barbaric folk.

Ophid's Grasslands. The dearth of books on this place match its **featurelessness** in real life. There is very little of interest here to the casual observer. But, as any Westerner who's strayed too far from the Ophid's Grasslands colony will tell you, this place has its mysteries and dangers, too. One book covers the movement of vast herds of centaurs throughout the region. These hoofed creatures number in the millions, and are so swift with their archery that they can shoot a bird from the sky at nearly a quarter mile (0.4 km) away. Another book gives the only accurate and true accounting of the Devil's Mark, a place where the barriers tying the dimensions together have broken, and horrors from across the **Megaverse** enter this world and make **their** home here.

The Great Northern Wilderness. These accounts are largely the work of hunters and trappers who logged their journeys through the Wilderness in diaries and gave them to the Great Library once they were finished. They tell of little, except that there are indeed human tribes of barbarians living in the Northern Wilderness, many of whom have had no contact with other humans at all. They apparently think they are the last of their kind, and do not even speak Northern — they converse only **in** a guttural form of Wolfen that even the Wolfen can hardly understand. These fierce folk reportedly can tame Tuskers like you or I would tame a dog, and they have them charge into battle alongside them. As to how these folk fare against the incredible number of Coyles recently spotted in the area is a mystery I would love to see solved.

The Island Kingdom of Bizantium. The geography of this tiny island nation is well known. What is not, **however**, is the secret network of defense reefs and chain barriers that protect the island shores from a foreign invasion. Any **outlander** ship that tries to land upon the Bizantium shore outside of an established portage will be in for a nasty surprise, and their vessel burst upon submerged rocks, **reefs**, and heavy chains strung up in front of inlets and bays. The world at large does not even know of such measures, much less how to avoid them. *The Lost Secrets of Bizantium* contains all of that information, and more. Be sure to get the relevant pages for yourself soon, before Bizantium spies destroy the book altogether.

The Wolfen Empire. Although the Wolfen Empire has been around for approaching a century, there is precious little cartography devoted to it. Part of this probably stems from the fact that no human party in their right mind will venture above the Disputed **Area**, and certainly not for map-making purposes. Any such group would be killed as spies. So, any mapping efforts must come from the Wolfen, who culturally just do not have much need for mapping their own domain. They know what their traditional boundaries **are**, so why map out the obvious? This explains why one sees so few Wolfen charts and maps. That, and they also have only recently developed a written language. Writing and cartography go hand in hand. That said, there is a nice selection of maps available in the Library, do-

nated by the Imperial Army itself. The Library *is* technically within the Wolfen Empire, so it would seem they feel that it would only be right to devote what they can to it. The nice thing about the Wolfen maps is that they are a lot more accurate than the few humans have done. I would be surprised if Eastern spies weren't crawling all over this entire section, making copies of everything they can find.

Y-Oda and Zy. There is more to check out here than you might think. Sure, Y-Oda and Zy seem like sleepy little islands, but **let's** face it: There is nothing really quiet in this world. Even here on Y-Oda there are mysterious ruins along the coastline. Plenty of books about that, even though the Monks don't like to admit it. Nobody knows who once inhabited the **ruins**, but it's probably got something to do with a massive rampage of Zavor thousands of years ago. Hey, if any are trapped in the ruins, you could bag them and sell them off to somebody — creatures that rare and dangerous have to have a price somewhere. Over on Zy there have been rumors of a dimensional portal called *Hell's Fist* that connects our world to Hades! According to the sources in this part of the library, the island could be crawling with demons of every kind *right now* and nobody would know about it!

The Eastern Territory. The geography of this region depends on who is writing the books about it. Eastern texts push their northern border almost to the foot of the **Bruu-ga-Belimar Mountains**, while Wolfen texts push the northern border all the way down to the *Great River*. The narrow band of territory that nearly cuts the nation in half provides a sharp dividing line within the country. Those areas north of "the choke point," as it is sometimes called, are more militarized and preparing for the coming conflict with the Wolfen. Those areas south of the choke point have got other priorities — maintaining strong trading ties with the **Timiro Kingdom** and Land of the **South-Winds**, and staving off barbarian incursions from the Old Kingdom. The differences in priorities between the two halves of the country underlay just how fragile this confederacy really is. Some suspect that given the right circumstances, the country could break apart into several smaller ones. Of course, the same could be said for the Western Empire and the Land of the **South-Winds**, so one might take that prediction with a healthy dose of salt.

Phi and Lopan. These two islands are probably some of the oldest territories continually occupied by the same people in the world. The Elves (and to a lesser **extent**, Eastern and Western humans) who have claimed dominion over these isles have basically turned them into a very minor version of what used to be the **Elven Empire**. Many of the cities, towns and regions here are named after ancient sites, and studying the modern geography of these realms offers many clues to the geography of ancient days. Those interested in combing Elven ruins in the Old Kingdom might wish to study the layout of Phi and Lopan for any mention of the ancient places that inspired the names of more modern settlements on either island. On an unrelated note, pay attention to the geography of the island of Phi. It is a popular vacation spot for Western nobles, but more importantly, the Empire of Sin is **not-so-secretly** planning an invasion of it. Anybody who wants to cash in on that action should familiarize themselves with the terrain.

The Timiro Kingdom. Easily one of the most completely mapped out regions of the world, the Timiro Kingdom section is filled with a great deal of redundant material. The only book

you want to read is *The Complete Timiro*, which not only offers comprehensive overviews of the entire Kingdom, but it pays special attention to its northern mountain region where intense fighting with Ogre tribes from the Old Kingdom rages daily. The mountain passes used by the Ogres are all mapped out in detail, even those little-used ones the Timiro military would like to keep classified.

The Land of the South-Winds. The geographical knowledge of this land is of varying accuracy and is incomplete, since the entire country's interior (towards the southern coast) has never been explored. The best books in this section of the Library are the ones that not only map out the cities of the realm, but also pinpoint the degree to which they are in the pockets of the dukes who officially rule the nation, or the various pirate clans, magical guilds and religious sects who are the real rulers.

The Floenry Isles. The extensive geographies written about this archipelago come not from formal cartographic expeditions, but have been taken from hundreds of ships' logs as they cruised the islands on various missions. Pirates, slavers, traders, missionaries, and adventurers all have visited the islands, and everybody takes away a different view of them. Many of the islands remain virtually uncharted because of the harsh wildernesses they harbor. Others, because the locals don't take well to visiting folk mapping out their domains. The relatively few people living there have enough troubles to worry about, what with pirate raids, religious strife, and other things. They don't like the thought of foreign agents prospecting the islands as potential takeover targets. And with good reason — in recent years, **Western, South-Winds** and Timiro warships have all been seen cruising the Floenry Channels. Their official reason is to hunt pirates, but the reality is that they are all examining the feasibility of annexing the islands and defending them against any foreign powers inclined to liberate them.

The Yin-Sloth Jungles. Anything reliable written about this region has been penned by slavers and pirates, not official explorers. These accounts are highly accurate, but they only give local perspectives of small regions of jungle. Thus, if you wish to visit a particular slaver's haven or pirate cove, you'll have all the information you need. Otherwise, the body of information **you'll** find in this section is nothing more than the accumulation of legends, lore, and tall tales. Of particular interest, however, are those accounts which describe how entire cultures of humans, Tezcats and other undocumented **humanoids** spend their entire lives living in villages tucked between various layers of the towering jungle canopy. In many parts of the jungle, the **treetop** canopies are so dense, they might as well be like the ground itself. People can walk on and build on them without any problem. Such folk usually never set foot on the ground, and become remarkably adept at vine-swinging and climbing, which explains why no slavers are ever able to catch them.

The Baalgor Wastelands. Most of the books on this area promise to include maps to where the *Golden City of Baalgor* once stood. They are even mentioned in the table of contents and referenced in the text, but if you try to find that section, **you'll** learn that it is just not there. It is as if it were never written. If this were just one book, it would be an annoyance. Two books, a coincidence. But over a dozen? Something odd is going on here. Someone or something is trying its best to keep the Golden City's resting place a secret. But why?

Mount Nimro. Be sure to reference the account of Mount **Nimro** written by *Rystrom Khejas*, a scholar who disappeared there not too long ago. Although Rystrom has been written off by most people, his account of the region is alive and well and in the Great Library. It contains highly accurate maps and descriptions of the safest routes in and out of the Nimro Kingdom, as well as accurate timetables for where and when the giant soldiers patrol there. With this information, one could wander the Kingdom for weeks and not get caught.

The Old Kingdom Mountains. Once the heart of the Dwarven Empire, these old mountains are riddled with the remains of subterranean Dwarven fortresses and cities. Most of them have been re-inhabited by Kobolds or other monster races, but there are a fair number of places that remain undiscovered. Though such sites are undoubtedly haunted, cursed, or extensively booby-trapped, the prospect of caches of rune weapons and other treasures is just too tempting for some adventurers to resist. On the surface of the mountains, one will find numerous settlements and interesting locales tucked away in the hundreds of valleys and glens lining the **mountaintops**. It is said that if one were to fully travel to every place of note within these ancient mountains, it would take several Dwarven lifetimes. For human visitors who hardly have that kind of time on their hands, only the most interesting places are of importance. Check out *The Place of Magic* to visit a city in the Mountains that holds some incredible mysteries, including a magical circle that will transform you into a near-god! Also skim through *The Dwarven Crown*, which describes the ruins of an ancient Dwarven city built atop Mount Kerebus, the highest peak of the entire mountain chain. The city was never taken by the Elves during the war, but for some strange reason, it lies deserted today.

The Old Kingdom Lowlands. What these books will tell you is that there are really three Lowlands — Western, Eastern and Southern. The *Southern Lowlands* lie sandwiched between the mountains, the Land of the **South-Winds** and Mount Nimro. It is said that the strongest and largest monster hordes and barbarian clans are concentrated here, where they launch constant incursions into the Land of the **South-Winds** and the **Timiro** Kingdom. The people of this region are rumored to have forged some kind of loose pact with the Nimro Kingdom, but with no real leadership for this, or any other part of the Old Kingdom, it is difficult to say if the deal really has been closed. The *Western Lowlands* lie to the north of the Old Kingdom Mountains and west of *Lake Gordath* (that **teardrop-shaped** body of water with a river leading to the Inland Sea; part of the lake is supposed to be incredibly deep, home to serpentine creatures nobody has ever seen before). The hordes of the Western Lowlands are incredibly numerous, but are endlessly fractured by internal division and the gradual encroachment of the Western Empire. The *Eastern Lowlands* are north of the Old Kingdom Mountains and to the east of Lake Gordath. There seem to be more Goblins here than anything else, which makes the region particularly anarchistic. This has been a boon to the Eastern Territory, for if there were more organized monster tribes living here, they might actually try to unite and launch an invasion across the river that separates them from human territory. Already, bold Eastern frontiersmen have established settlements on the far banks of the river, and have begun what they feel is the inevitable process of taking the Old Kingdom away from the monstrous barbarians who currently hold it.

The Western Empire. With so much political upheaval in its history, the borders of the Western Empire have changed more times than geographers can keep up with. Still, reading the various accounts of the Empire's dimensions gives the reader an excellent feel for the instability facing the noble families there.



The Isle of the Cyclops. Reading the exquisitely accurate accounts of the Isle of the Cyclops is probably as close to that realm as anybody is likely to get. The one-eyed giants are very selective about who they let on the island. Unless one is a Western noble, you'll have to find some other way onto this coveted soil. Nowhere else will you find such incredible pleasure dens and magic shops, where items are custom-made to **one's** liking on the premises! Thankfully, most of the books in this section offer at least a few different ways of sneaking onto the islands and maintaining a believable cover once there, so one does not have to spend the entire time in hiding. Be **warned**, however, if the Cyclops learn you have entered their island uninvited, you will pay dearly for it. However, trespassers have long been able to bribe their way out of trouble for the price of an unusual spell or shipment of alchemical component.

Peripheral Territories. These books are on the tiny, out of the way places nobody knows or cares much about. Mostly, they are small, uncharted rock islands. A few habitable ones are here and there, but they are a rarity. On one of **them, though**, some erratic nobleman from the **Bizantium** Kingdom took his entire family

and settled there. They have built a stone manor house, set up a few livestock farms, and have declared the island an independent kingdom. The general location for this island is given, but not its name, topography, or any further details about its residents.

Other Worlds and Dimensions! There are scattered books that describe over thirty alien worlds and dimensions. Most of them are sketchy accounts of the so-called *Heroic Realms*, places where the gods themselves live, or worlds that closely mirror this one. While most accounts agree that the Heroic Realms exist, few have actually traveled to them aside from the legendary *Defilers*. It is from their primary accounts of these places that most of the books in this section are based. Strangely enough, though, none of the *Defilers'* own accounts are stored here. In **fact**, nobody has ever seen them, which leads one to believe they have either been **hoarded**, stolen or destroyed. Surely, if one were to locate a true copy of the *Defilers'* travel journals they would learn many of the secrets of this world and those connected to it.

Cartography: The art and craft of making maps. Thanks to extensive naval traffic, the maps we have of our world are fairly accurate and **detailed**, although one does have to keep his eyes open — there are a fair number of slipshod works out there that are dangerously inaccurate. Be sure to verify your sources before staking your life on them. The whole cartography section is in a special map museum on the fifth floor, where the entire inventory is closely monitored by the Monks. Since you have virtually no chance of seeing these maps without the Monks' permission and supervision, I might as well just tell you what to expect here. You can then check the goods out for yourself.

Contemporary Maps of every realm of this world, ranging from ordinary political maps to ley line maps, maps showing concentrations of monster races, particular religions, cities of the world, trade routes, unexplored territories, etc.

Ancient Maps of what once was. Most of them are from the Time of a Thousand Magicks, the Elf-Dwarf War, and the Millennium of Purification. A remarkable few show what the world looked like during the Age of Light and the much-debated era of the Battle of the Gods. Clearly, if you are on the search for ruins or ancient places of magic, these maps are what you need.

Unknown Places. A small collection of maps charting places that do not fit in on this world. Where these maps have come from is anybody's guess. I suspect some of them were just fabricated by the Monks themselves to discourage people from prying into this section too far. My question is: why?

Treasure **Maps.** The Monks are now keeping them under lock and key, and are even considering the right to refuse certain patrons access to them. That can only mean two things; 1) the treasure maps they have on hand are really **good**, and 2) you're just going to have to hire some highbrow to go in and copy the maps for you. If that doesn't work, don't fear. Slowly but surely, the best treasure maps of the Great Library are getting out and can be bought from merchants on the streets of **Bletherad**. Go to the guy who sold you this copy of the **Carbunculum**, and he'll set you straight.

Ancient History:

The Age of Chaos. I probably shouldn't be saying this, but if you're one of those weird witch-types who worships these Old Ones, then this is the section for you. That is all I'm saying.

The Time **of** a Thousand Magicks. An excellent section of the library, chock full of books describing the dozens of lost magical arts from that time. The thing is, there were probably only about 12 major **spellcrafts**, each with anywhere from eight to twelve derivative styles. And each of those secondary styles had tertiary styles coming off them. A lot of these secondary and tertiary spellcrafts distinguished themselves by focusing on a particular kind of spell, like fire balls, or ways of seeing magically. Now, there are not supposed to be any spellbooks in the Great Library, but as a good jaunt through the Arcana section will tell you, that is not exactly the case. Half these books have not even been pulled off the shelf for a century, so how are the Monks going to know if what their inventory lists say is really correct? Be sure to scan this section for books with locks or other kinds of bindings on them. Chances are, they're either a spellbook or they have some equally important bit of knowledge in them. Just be careful. I had a friend once who busted open one of those locked books and a set of tentacles came right out of the pages and sucked him in. No joke, that.

The Elf-Dwarf War. Calling all **Summoners**, this section is a must see. During the war, both sides got into summoning creatures from all over the Megaverse to help in their war. That's how half the creatures you see in the Baalgor Wastelands got there. Although these are just history books, there are bound to be some dedicated to the kinds of circles used and what is needed to create them.

The Millennium of Purification. You want rune weapons, this is the section for you. Lots of the books here chronicle the rune weapons that got destroyed after the big war. But what you don't often hear, and what these book will tell you, is that not everybody wanted to purge the world of magic. A lot of folks, in fact, fought smaller wars just to keep magic the way it was. They lost, of course, but most of them hid their secrets and their rune items so that they would be lost rather than destroyed. Comb the passages of these books closely enough, and the places where those treasures got buried will reveal themselves to you.

General History:

The Land of the Damned. Most of what you will find here is rumor and pure fantasy. The truth is, just about anybody who has ever traveled to the Land of the Damned has not returned. And they certainly haven't come back to write a book about it. What you'll find here is theory and speculation, nothing more.

The Northern Mountains. This section is about as worthless as the one for the Land of the Damned, for much the same reasons. The Northern Mountains are like a sheer wall of towering mountainside. They are too high to fly over, and even if one manages to climb over the first range of peaks, there are two more waiting. It is just about as impossible a natural barrier as one will find anywhere. Most of the reliable stories from this place are of unsuccessful ascents, which really only describe the bad weather and how various members of the expedition died. There are a few books supposedly written by people living in the deep valleys within the mountains, but they sound unbelievable. First, they speak of huge settlements of Gnomes and Kobolds where there probably should be none. Then they talk of large Troglodyte warrens, and even entire villages where Changelings live out in the open, without trying to conceal themselves! Every few years, you hear of another group trying

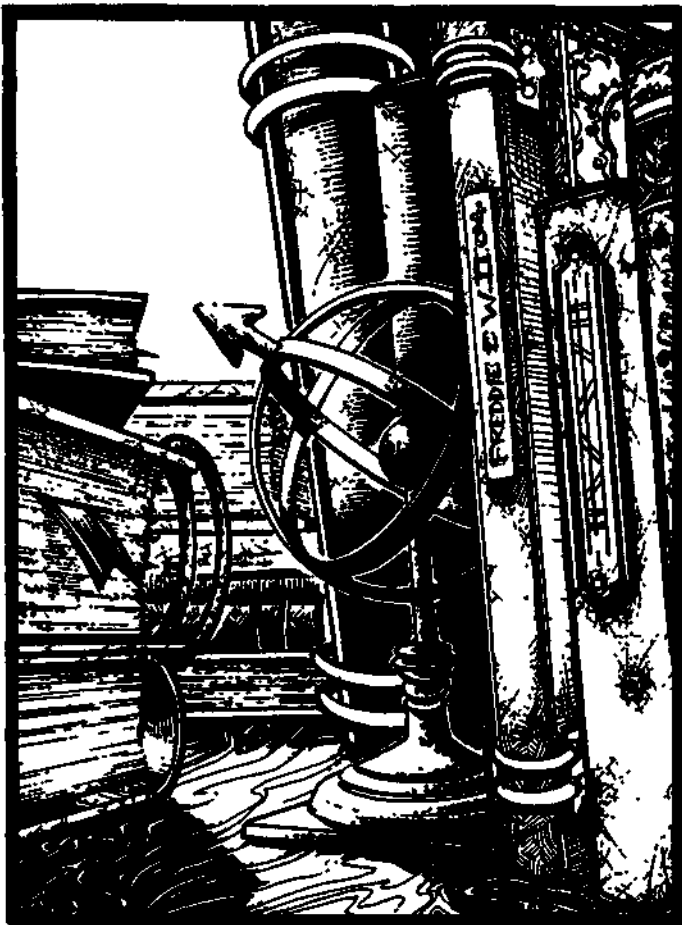
to make it over the mountains to see what's on the other side, but to me, it is just not worth it. Better to seek adventure in the rest of the world.

Ophid's Grasslands. What history? It's the Grasslands. Aside from the Western Empire's move into here, there hasn't been anything to record.

The Great Northern Wilderness. What applies to the Ophid's Grasslands goes double here. No civilization, no history.

The Island Kingdom of Bizantium. The book most worth reading of the whole lot is *The Houses of the North*, which not only gives you the history of every single noble house of the Bizantium Kingdom, but also lays out their extensive financial dealings over time. Give this a close enough read and you'll discover the dirt on whatever Bizantium noble family you desire. In the Bizantium Islands, this book is informally referred to as *The Extortionist's Handbook*.

The Wolfen Empire. For such a young nation, the Wolfen have a fair amount of history. Most of it is not about the Empire, but of the tribes that comprise it. A serious student of the canine imperials will learn that they have some pretty serious potential for civil unrest among them. The southern tribes seem the most eager for war with the Eastern humans, while those tribes to the north have a much more sanguine view of things. The funny thing is, the East could learn a lot about its enemy if they bothered to read up on them, but so many of those humans are convinced that the Wolfen are just bloodthirsty monsters that they treat them like some kind of barbarian race with no history to appreciate. Pretty short-sighted, if you ask me. The Wolfen know everything there is about the Easterners, and it will serve them well if and when the two sides come to blows.



Y-Oda and Zy. This section has practically nothing in it. The Monks of **Bletherad** are hiding something, I'd stake my name on it.

The Eastern Territory. From *Western Shores* describes how some of the strongest elements of Eastern society are Western fugitives and castaways. Reading this book gives you a good idea for why the West and East distrust each other so deeply. It also illuminates how the East probably has more to fear from the Empire of Sin in the long run than they do from the Wolfen Empire! Of course, anybody living on the island of Phi could tell you that. The number of Western ships on these shores bespeak of only one thing: invasion.

Phi and Lopan. These islands have a long and storied history dating well before the Elf-Dwarf War. Check out *The History of the Crafts*, for references to what kinds of ancient magic have been kept alive on these islands. Although it is not heavily publicized, it is a safe bet that at least three major forms of **spellcraft** thought extinct are still practiced in secret on Phi and Lopan. The books of this section will tell you what they are, why you'd want to learn them, and who on the island can teach you.

The Timiro Kingdom. Reading these history books will show you why the Timiro Kingdom is on the downward slide and how they got there. Of course, Timiro doesn't look like a country in serious trouble. It's got a strong economy, robust military, and the world's strongest navy, but if you look at the bigger portrait of the nation, it becomes clear that their overdependence on slave labor and the sharp racial division within that realm are steadily cracking its foundation. One day, the Timiro Kingdom will fall with little warning, and there shall be nothing its vaunted champions can do about it.

The Land of the South-Winds. Piracy. Rampant drug use. A corrupt nobility. Strange and evil magicks. Jungle wilderness. A people on the edge of revolt. What more could an adventurer ask for?

The Floenry Isles. Don't let these islands' small size and relative isolation fool you. They are as packed with interesting history as anywhere else, and much of that history is the kind of knowledge that smart adventurers can turn into opportunities. Like the religious troubles on **Enry Island**, the pirate kingdom on **West Mnn**, and the disappearances of ships around **The Rock**. Read and be illuminated.

The Yin-Sloth Jungles. The history of most books here are those accounts which cover the *Battle of the Gods*, a major event some 80,000 or 90,000 years ago. Most scholars insist it never happened because the *Tristine Chronicles* never mentioned it. But if you read enough of the region's history, you'll learn that not only did it happen, but there are plenty of indications that it could happen again very, very soon. Take it from the **Carbunculum** — there's trouble brewing in the jungles, and nobody knows for sure what it is or what it will spell for the rest of the world. But it sure can't be good, that much is for certain.

The Baalgor Wastelands. The history of this place is almost a subset of history for the Elf-Dwarf War, since the entire region was transformed by it. Almost every book you'll find here deals in some way with the destruction of the Golden City of Baalgor and the laying to waste of what once was a beautiful jungle paradise. Most of those interested in the history of this region are trying to figure out how to learn the magicks used to destroy it.

Those secrets are out there. They may not be in this section, but the magical forces used to destroy Baalgor are held somewhere within the Library. That is **100%**reliable.

Mount Nimro. For most of its history this region was shunned by everyone, thanks to its two smoking volcanoes. Even the **Elven** and **Dwarven** Empires relinquished control of the region because it did not really hold any promise for them. There is an interesting journal, however, written by somebody calling herself *Quilla the Purifier*, who claims to have been part of a team of adventurers who dropped a number of rune weapons into one of the volcanoes during the Millennium of Purification. Giants or not, if that were true, I'd be heading up an expedition right now to go there and fish those things from the fire pits. A treasure that incredible is worth any risk.

The Old Kingdom Mountains. Before there was the Elf-Dwarf War, before there was a Dwarven Empire, before there was an Age of Light, there was an Age of Chaos. A time when the Old Ones ruled supreme. The story we all believe is that the Old Ones were put to sleep by the forces of Light, and were entombed deep underground. The histories of this section point out that the Old Ones are most likely buried beneath the Old Kingdom Mountains somewhere, and that the mountains were actually created by the slumbering monsters in their sleep! There are always those crazy few who want to contact the Old Ones somehow. If that is you, then check out this section. Just know that you're toying with things you do not understand. The kinds of things that will get you killed ... or worse.

The Old Kingdom Lowlands. Of greatest worth here are the *Histories of the Fall*, accounts of the gradual disintegration of the Elven and Dwarven Empires following the Elf-Dwarf War. It makes for pretty good reading, and it gives one an excellent notion of the order in which the ancient cities and strongholds fell as the Old Kingdom was formed. That is important, because one can use that knowledge to trace the path the Elven and Dwarven treasuries took during that time. You don't think they left their valuables behind when their cities fell, do you? Sure, a certain amount of Elven and Dwarven riches were lost each time they lost a little more of their domain, but the final strongholds are where most of that stuff was stored. *Histories of the Fall* will show the reader where those final strongholds are. Some of them may even still be inhabited by descendants of imperial Dwarves and Elves. There even are a few accounts of how in a tiny portion of the Lowlands, Elven and Dwarven factions are *still* fighting, as if their ancient war never ended.

The Western Empire. Now that Emperor Itomas has a firm grasp on his Empire (as firm as anybody can get, I suppose), you better believe he has made an effort to rewrite history to suit his needs. None of the "official" histories of the Western Empire are to be believed — they all make it seem as if **Itomas'** ancestors have always been the legitimate rulers of the realm, and that all those who have opposed him are traitors and villains of the worst kind. Despite how blatant Itomas is about rewriting history, he realizes that he only needs to do it for a generation or so. After twenty years, especially if he kills anybody who refutes his version of history, then a whole wave of people will grow up believing only *his* version of things, and his control of the nation will become that much stronger. Only in places like the Library of **Bletherad** is the real history of the Western Empire safe, although even that is in question. A number of thieves and assassins' guilds have already been contacted about the pos-

sibility of ransacking or destroying this section of the Library as a means of tying up loose ends, history-wise. If you see anybody browsing here bearing the tattoos of an Imperial Janissary, beware.

The Isle of the Cyclops. The kind of historical purging that is going on in the Western Empire has already happened on the Isle of the Cyclops (which is probably where Itomas got the idea). When you scan the history of the Isle, all you see are references to the current ruling family and those who were found guilty for spreading the knowledge of lightning magic (the secret techniques by which the Cyclops make their famed lightning arrows and javelins). If you want to know what the real history of the Cyclops is, you are going to have to seek out a cell of the political underground present on the Isles. Known only as the **Azurians**, these rebels are secretly building the means to overthrow the government and reinstate what they claim is the rightful ruler to the Cyclops throne. The Azurians have placed secret messages within the texts of many of the books in this section of the Library. With a sharp eye and a sense for **cryptology**, one will learn how and where to contact these people and what one can do to help their cause.

Peripheral Territories. What you will find here are accounts of exploration trips that went to places not on any map. Unfortunately, none of them correspond to the actual maps the Library has of unnamed peripheral territories.

Other Worlds and Dimensions! Any history of another world or dimension has to be seriously suspect. How can we know the history of some other world when we scarcely know the history **of our** own?

Racial Histories: This section used to be a lot larger before the General History section was created. Now it only has books devoted to basic historical rundowns of Western Humans, Eastern Humans, Northern Humans, Southern Humans, the "Goblin Races" (which includes Goblins, Kobolds, **Orcs**, Ogres and **Trolls**), Giants, Faeries, **Wolfen**, Elves, Dwarves, Gnomes, and Other Races. The sections on Elven and Dwarven history are not worth reading — go read books on the Elf-Dwarf War instead. Books on Gnomish history are interesting because they chronicle the mass slaughter they have faced over the ages. They also point out the likeliest places where Gnomes live today. The stories of the Goblin Races are worthless — those barbarians don't keep any appreciable history. Besides, we all know their story: they live in the cracks and crevices of the world like rats, and when a legitimate empire weakens, they spring forth to finish it off, like vultures attacking an infirm grazer. Sickening.

Cryptic History. These are books that contain prophecies and really vague accounts of history that basically read like the **Tristine** Chronicles.

The Tristine Chronicles. The Library of **Bletherad's** oldest edition of the Tristine Chronicles is hotly debated by some, since it once contained a fairly detailed section on the War of the Gods, something virtually no other edition of the Chronicles touched upon. Those sections are now missing, thanks to the efforts of vandals or thieves who used magical means to erase those volumes of the Chronicles utterly (although rumor suggests the Monks have a "copy" hidden away someplace). Despite the criticisms leveled at the ancient Bletherad edition of the Chronicles, it remains the authoritative version until an older, more comprehensive edition surfaces. The ancient

Bletherad edition of the *Tristine Chronicles* is at least a tenth generation copy, and much of what it says may be embellished, mistranslated, or flat-out fabricated. It's impossible to tell. Actually, the Library has 30 different editions of the *Chronicles*, each **slightly**, and sometimes dramatically, different from one of the **others**.

The original *Tristine Chronicles* are thought to reside in a true Rune Book that somehow contains a limitless number of pages between its covers. One need only read its table of contents, place a finger on the section to reference, utter a power word and the book's pages flip right to that spot. This single volume version of the *Tristine Chronicles* is said to exist to this day (it *is* indestructible, after all), and were it discovered, its value as a historical artifact, as well as a rune item, is immeasurable.

The Great Library unfortunately does not have the one true copy of the *Chronicles*, but they do have the next best thing — a **32-volume** transcription of the true copy that is the most complete documented version of the *Chronicles* on public display anywhere.

Books One through Four chronicle the Age of Chaos, including the Beginning (Book One), the Rise of the Old Ones (Book Two), the **Progenation** (Book Three) and the Chaos War (Book Four).

Books Five through Eight chronicle the Age of Light. *Books Nine through Twelve* were said to have chronicled the Battle of the Gods, but their pages have somehow been erased entirely! No doubt magical means of some kind were used to remove the words from these hallowed tomes. Exactly who did this and why has yet to be determined, but the word is that the Monks of Bletherad are willing to hire adventurers of note to track down the culprits, bring them to justice, and get them to repair the damage they have wrought.

Books Thirteen through Sixteen chronicle the Time of a Thousand **Magicks**.

Books Seventeen through Twenty Chronicle the Age of Elves.

Books Twenty-One through Twenty-Four chronicle the Elf-Dwarf War, including the causes of the war and all hostilities through the First Peace (Book Twenty-One), the resumption of hostilities through the Second Peace (Book Twenty-Two), the resumption of hostilities through the Third Peace (Book Twenty-Three), and the resumption of hostilities through the Destruction of Baalgor (Book Twenty-Four).

Books Twenty-Five through Twenty-Eight chronicle the Millennium of Purification, including the formation of the Purification Pact and the first great Purge of magic and rune weaponry (Book Twenty-Five), the first War of Purification, in which those opposed to the purges tried unsuccessfully to stop them (Book Twenty-Six), the second War of Purification, in which a rift among the Purifiers themselves led to an internecine internal conflict (Book Twenty-Seven), and the end of the Great Purification (known as the *Atonement*) and the final destruction of the **Elven** and **Dwarven** Empires (Book Twenty-Eight).

Books Twenty-Nine through Thirty-Two chronicle the Time of Man, including the rise and fall of the great Prestida Kings and the subsequent rise of the Western Empire (Book Twenty-Nine), the Changeling Inquisitions (Book Thirty), the great Elven and Dwarven flight out of the Old Kingdom known

as the *Exodus* (Book Thirty-One) and the rise of the modern realms (Book Thirty-Two).



Part Three:

The Guardians

A Secret Little War

While the Isle of **Y-Oda**, the town of **Bletherad** and its Great Library would seem to promise little adventure or controversy, there brews within these places a secret conflict, one which might ultimately spell doom for the Great Library and those who care for it. It is a holdover of an ancient antagonism that began in the *Millennium of Purification* and has continued in one form or another to the present day.

First Blood

Those who know the Library of **Bletherad's** basic history understand how, during the Millennium of Purification, an ultra-fanatical sect known as The Zealotry, decided that it was not enough to destroy all magic; all written knowledge had to be destroyed as **well!** While the Millennium of Purification produced a lot of regrettable **behavior**, the deeds of the Purifiers went a step beyond. Way beyond. Nobody could say exactly what motivated their insane quest to rid the world of all libraries, least of all The Zealotry themselves. As far as anybody could tell, they had been whipped into a hysterical frenzy and set loose on the world's libraries like mad dogs. Their list of victims is long enough to fill a book, but their greatest victory (tragedy?) was their successful siege on *The Prime Incunabula*, the greatest single library the world has ever known.

The Prime **Incunabula** was a shining example of the **Elven** and **Dwarven** Empires at **their** heights. Containing the sum of both empires' literature, The Incunabula dwarfed the Library of Bletherad both in size and the scope of knowledge it contained. The expanse of this place was so great, it was said that taking the time just to read the title of every book, scroll and map stored there would take a little over three years! In comparison, doing the same in the Library of Bletherad would only take **115** days, according to a study done by a visiting mathematics scholar. If these figures are to be believed, then The Incunabula must have contained a minimum of *25 million* books, scrolls and maps!

Throughout the Elf-Dwarf War, the ancient Library had been spared by all sides of the conflict out of respect for its vast store of knowledge, and out of the hope that the victor of the war could claim The Incunabula for themselves. Though the place was right in the middle of the war zones, the building was never so much as scratched during the fighting. Even at the height of the Millennium of Purification, The Incunabula (which held dangerous mystic knowledge) was left be in favor of much bigger **fish** to fry, namely, rounding up all of the rune weapons and

"dark magic" used in the Elf-Dwarf War. It was not until the Millennium of Purification had largely ended that many of those who participated in the destruction of the world's rune magic had just begun to realize what they had done and began to reconsider. That's when The Zealotry first made itself known. Acting with a rabid thirst for blood and destruction **unexhibited** by anybody over the last thousand years, The Zealotry systematically sought out every library it could find and destroyed them. Over the course of a century, the movement's victories drew legions of fanatical followers, mostly **nonhumans** who saw this unbalanced crusade as an ideal way to help sweep away the remains of the hated Elven and Dwarven Empires.

By the time The Zealotry laid siege to The Prime Incunabula, the Elven and Dwarven Empires were completely shattered, leaving the grand library virtually defenseless. The Zealotry, however, had swollen to the size of a huge army that consumed its enemies like a swarm of frenzied locusts. Without even issuing demands for surrender, The Zealotry attacked, intent on razing The Incunabula into dust. Heeding the library's frantic cries for help, small contingents of soldiers, heroes and adventurers from neighboring kingdoms and city-states rushed to The Incunabula's defense and joined in a fierce battle against The Zealotry that lasted three full days. The Incunabula's defenders fought bravely, but in the end, The Zealotry was just too strong for them, and the library fell. In an orgy of destruction, the victors spent a week torching the library's millions and millions of books. By the time it was over, the building was a smoking ruin, its defenders lay dead, and the last light of a bygone golden age was extinguished. For many scholars, the fall of The Incunabula finally closed the chapter on the Age of Elves and Dwarves and set the stage for the rise of the Age of Man.

The Seed Libraries

All was not lost. During the final hours of fighting, ten groups of refugees fled the grand library with as many books as they could carry. Their plan had been to scatter to the far corners of the world and establish *new* libraries. Sensing their victory slipping away from them, The Zealotry foolishly split its remaining forces (which were bloodied and tired from the fighting thus far) into ten smaller armies. Each one assigned to chase down the escaping Seed Libraries and destroy them. Only then would The **Incunabula's** destruction be complete.

For the next two thousand years, The Zealotry mercilessly hounded the builders of the Seed Libraries and one by one destroyed them. However, the quest had not been without serious cost to The Zealotry, which already was on the verge of collapse after it destroyed The Incunabula. During the course of tracking

down the other Seed Libraries and their resilient **founders**, the ten Zealotry factions fell to quarreling with each other and largely disintegrated into a hundred small, fractious sects. The Zealotry's glory days, like those of the grand library's were over. It was inevitable, really — an organization bound together by such unreasoning hatred was doomed to unravel once it had achieved its greatest victory. Chasing the Seed Libraries was just an overly long epilogue to their conquest, and it was the perfect opportunity for all of the monsters and villains in The Zealotry's ranks to pursue their own goals or turn on their former comrades.

The Zealotry's disbanding is what saved the final Seed Library, which had been barely able to stay a step ahead of its pursuers. Sensing their time of danger had passed, they settled on Y-Oda and began building what would become the Library of **Bletherad**. The last remnants of one of The Zealotry's armies unsuccessfully assaulted the island shortly after the Library's foundation, but in the **5,100** years since, the Great Library has seen no overt signs of its ancient nemesis. For the caretakers of the Great Library, it seemed that the war was over at **last**, that The Zealotry had finally died, and that the keepers of the world's knowledge could breathe easily once more.

A Mystery Unsolved

Scholars who **studied** the matter could not relax. The Zealotry had been a bizarre and powerful enemy that defied logic and reason and remains an enigma to this day. For example, how was it that despite The Zealotry's size, nobody ever discovered who its leaders were? How did The Zealotry's troops seem to act in concert, though they were dispersed over the Palladium world? How, without any visible means of financial support or political power, did **The** Zealotry draw up such a large body of militant followers virtually overnight? And why, when The Zealotry began to fall apart, did it dissolve so completely? There is not a single scrap of physical evidence that the movement had ever **existed**, save for eyewitness accounts of their victims and the swath of destruction they carved across the world. It was if the whole movement was some insane delusion that once disbelieved, disappeared forever.

To the leaders of the Library of Bletherad, this seemed unlikely and suspicious. A menace as driven as The Zealotry does not simply appear and disappear without a trace like a mirage. Not an army capable of destroying the world's greatest library. There was more to this mystery, and the Monks of Bletherad were determined to find out what it was.

For close to a thousand years, while the Great Library slowly grew, the Order exhaustively researched The Zealotry. Their battles, their commanders, their movements, everything. And despite the mountain of findings they came up with, they were still unable to penetrate the heart of this enigmatic enemy. Who founded the fanatics? Where did it draw its strength from? All unanswered questions.

Finally, the Order dismissed the topic as a dead issue that had eaten up far too much time. If there was anything to **find**, it would have been found. And like that, the investigation into The Zealotry stopped, but not for everybody. Despite orders to not give the matter any further thought, there remained among the monks those who were convinced that the mysteries around The Zealotry could and should be solved. This tiny faction of the

Monks of Bletherad continued researching The Zealotry in secret, disguising their work as research for something else. As time went on, even these **diehards** began to doubt their own cause and slowly gave it up as a fool's crusade. Eventually, it got to be that there was never more than one or two people at a time continuing the search. When they grew old or too tired to continue, an understudy would be cultivated and the task passed along to him. Sometimes, there would be no understudy and the entire quest would languish for decades until a curious monk would begin devoting more time to it.

The Mad God?

This all changed five hundred years ago, when a brilliant young **Elven** monk named *Brother Larillion* began reading the Library's oldest copy of **Chantico Thought**, a rambling, 900+ page manifesto written by the mad god Chantico. This text, which has become a holy work to **Chantico's** equally insane followers, accuses every god and goddess of introducing every kind of evil into the world. It also calls for the destruction of all other pantheons so that Chantico, the only rightful deity, may claim dominion over everything. To most people, Chantico Thought is nothing more than the incomprehensible **ramblings** of a madman, but during Brother **Larillion's** research, he began to believe that somewhere in the tome would be a clue to discovering the true nature of The Zealotry. Larillion had no idea how right he was.

Over the next decade, Larillion scrutinized, analyzed and cross-referenced every canticle of Chantico Thought until he was more of an authority on the text than most followers of Chantico! Once he had fully dissected the work, Larillion no-



ticed a pattern of references to events in the Millennium of Purification and beyond that appeared to link **Chantico** himself to the sinister work of The Zealotry! To **Larillion**, it all made perfect sense. Chantico lusts for revenge against all gods and anybody else who he thinks has wronged him. The Prime Incunabula maintained a vast inventory of religious texts, and to **Chantico's** unbalanced mind it represented a vault of knowledge dedicated to his destruction. Thriving as he did on the chaotic times of the Elf-Dwarf War and the equally chaotic Millennium of Purification after it, Chantico cultivated a vast army of insanely loyal followers who, at the proper time, he drew together into a single fighting force and unleashed it against The Prime Incunabula and every other library it came across. This also explained why, when The Zealotry split into ten groups to pursue the Seed Libraries, it fell apart so quickly. The cults of Chantico are fueled by paranoia, conspiracy and treachery. Once the Prime Incunabula was destroyed, Chantico probably lost interest and left his minions to their own self-destructive devices. Or perhaps he had simply exhausted himself (indeed, he is perhaps the weakest of all gods) and could not hold his army of zealots together. In any case, the end result was that Chantico's brief reign as a "destroyer of knowledge" had come to an end. Yet the roots of his dark work remained, and so long as one of the Seed Libraries remains, and as long as Chantico still stalks the world (as he indeed does), then there will always be the *possibility* that the mad god will call forth another army to destroy **Bletherad** and whatever else has offended his unbalanced mind.

It's a compelling story. There is only one problem, although Brother Larillion exhaustively researched and **sourced** his findings, he also delved a bit too deep into Chantico Thought. By the time he wrote his thesis on the secret mastermind behind The Zealotry, he had **become** insane himself. His mind was corrupted by **the** insidious effect of Chantico's manifesto. Poor Larillion spent the rest of his days tending the monastery gardens and seeing to other soothing work in an effort to comfort his damaged mind. Meanwhile, the Order of Bletherad was presented with a serious problem: What to make of **Larillion's** work? It was far more than just a conspiracy theory — it held up under the closest scrutiny. Like Chantico Thought, however, it also was the work of a madman and therefore inherently untrustworthy. But what if it was right? What if **the** destruction of The Prime Incunabula and the flight from The Zealotry was all somehow the work of Chantico? If that were the case, then **the** Library of Bletherad could be in grave danger and not even know about it. The mad god could be plotting to launch some kind of invasion against them this very moment. More likely, one or more Chantico cults might simply pick up the ancient crusade in an attempt to please their god (who may no longer care about destroying libraries) and the monks wouldn't know until it was too **late!**

For most, the entire scenario seemed too unbelievable. Brother Larillion was **certifiably** insane, and the story he spun was so fantastic that it strained credibility. The Abbot decried **the** thesis as compelling but ultimately meaningless, nothing more than the evidence of a once-great mind gone to waste. **Before**, studying the origins and secrets of The Zealotry had just eaten up the Order's precious time and energy, now it had robbed the monks of a great mind. Thus, the matter was once again closed, and this time any monk caught doing further research would face immediate **defrockment!**

This was unsatisfactory to several monks, who resigned in protest over the matter. To **them**, Brother Larillion's work revealed that the Great Library faced a clear and present danger. If the Abbot and the rest of the Order were too afraid to confront that, then fine, but they would not sit idly by while the forces **that** destroyed The Prime incunabula prepared to finish **the** job by destroying the Library of Bletherad, too.

The monks who left were never heard from again by **the** Order of Bletherad, who did their best to forget about them, glad to expunge this kind of controversy from their **lives!**

A Secret Army

Meanwhile the monks who left formed a secret order called **the Guardians of Bletherad**, and dedicated themselves to investigating the possible resurgence of The Zealotry anywhere in **the** world so **they** could try to stop it. For these Guardians, it meant uncovering **the** secret cults and sects of the world in search of **the** shadowy disciples of Chantico. It would be a harrowing journey fraught **with** peril, madness, and self-doubt. Surely, **the** ancient remnants of The Zealotry did not wish to be found and would try to destroy whoever had discovered them. Just as surely, those who walked **the path** of **the** Guardians would enter a world of insane conspiracies and a hundred other kinds of madness **that** would batter against one's mental endurance like few other quests could. **Underneath** it all would be a nagging sliver of doubt: What if Brother Larillion really was wrong? What if all of the Guardians' work was for naught, and simply uncovered dangerous sects and cults that if left alone, would have not posed **the** Great Library any danger?

It was hardly an easy path **the** Guardians would walk, but what righteous crusade ever was? As far as **the** founders of **this** secret order were **concerned**, they were **the** only chance of saving **the** Great Library and other places of learning before Chantico inevitably sent his secret army into action. To fight such a diabolical force, **the** Guardians would have to use stealth, cunning and a relentless drive to pursue **their** enemy as their enemy had once pursued their ancestors. Fighting this secret war until The Zealotry and Chantico himself were wiped out entirely.

To do **this** right, **the** monks would need help. Fighting wars was entirely outside of their expertise and inclination. After all, **they** were mere scholastic monks, sworn never to lift a hand in violence against anybody or anything. However, **they** faced an unreasoning enemy **that** had to be destroyed, much like a virulent disease or a rabid animal. To that end, **the** Guardian Monks decided **they** would recruit heroes of uncommon **strength** and valor to help find **the** many arms of The Zealotry and deal **with** it accordingly.

Ten recruits would be sought, one for each of **the** ancient founders of **the** Great Library the Guardians were trying so hard to protect. Over **the** years, **the** monks searched far and wide for the right people. Eventually **the** found them: a Sage, a Monk, a Mystic, a Prophet, a Prince, a Cryptic, a Scholar, an **Artifex**, a Fool, and a Wanderer. **Together they** formed a circle of **strength**, a secret wall that would defend the Great Library against **the** evil designs of its enemies, a tiny army of heroes who would defeat **the** machinations of a mad god, or die trying.



The Guardians of Bletherad

Today, the Guardians of Bletherad consists of only of a handful of people — the ten Guardians themselves, various "new recruits" to help bolster the Guardians' ranks, and Brother **Alangate** of Bletherad, a monk from the Great Library who infiltrated the Order so he could provide the Guardians with access to the Library's vast archives of information. Brother Alangate secretly provides research to the Guardians, who spend all of their time "in the field," tracking down cells of the cult of **Chantico** and destroying them with the same kind of extreme prejudice that **Chantico's** zealots showed The Prime Incunabula and the Seed Libraries, so long ago.

It is not an easy life to be a Guardian. It promises only isolation from one's fellows, the burdens of terrible secrets the world must not know, and the constant danger of running afoul of a Zealotry blade. No Guardian has ever died of natural causes, a grim fact those within the elite order recognize upon entering. All learn to cope with it. For some, it is enough to be a soldier in a just cause. For others, the thrill of constant adventure makes up for the ultimate doom it brings. But for all, there lies at the heart of their quest a fundamental urge: to protect the knowledge of the world from destruction. For only by preserving the record of the past, can the children of today serve the world of tomorrow.

Since only a handful of people even know about the Guardians of Bletherad, joining their ranks is not easy. Historically, those who join are hand-picked by current members seeking a replacement for themselves or brave heroes deemed to be worthy new additions to their numbers. In recent years, however, the Guardians have realized that they need more help. Bit by bit, The Zealotry (the collective title for all of the various cells of Chantico's minions) "is" coming back to **power**. In the Western Empire, Chantico's zealots have a secret presence in nearly every major city. In the **Timiro** Kingdom, they have infiltrated high positions of various courts. In the Eastern Territory, they control powerful mercantile interests (including part of the flourishing mercenary industry there). And this is only the tip of the iceberg. If the Guardians are to keep pace with their ancient enemy, then they need to recruit more members. Thus, the Guardians have been aggressively recruiting and training additional members all over the world for the last 20 years — Holy Crusaders, **Witchhunters**, Undead Hunters, **Palladins**, Knights, Mind Mages and spies are at the top of their list, but anybody with the heart of a hero may be considered.

Progress has been fairly slow, since the Guardians are not willing to admit just anybody into their ranks. They are looking for heroes of uncommon quality of character. Raw power is not a consideration so much as a noble spirit and conviction to the cause. To prevent conflicts of authority, they generally do not extend invitations to characters of equal or greater level than they. If a subordinate reaches a higher level than their mentor after becoming a Guardian, then so be it. Once a recruit accepts

an invitation to join, he or she is subjected to several weeks of intense training. Most of it entails being able to read and perform **research**, both in a library and in the field. To be a Guardian, it is not enough to be handy with a sword or know how to cast spells. One must know how to observe, how to spot the tiny details and clues that will ultimately reveal the activities of The Zealotry. These are the things that will decide victory more than brute strength. The washout rate for Guardian training is almost nil, because the Order only extends invitations to those they have extensively observed and are certain can handle the responsibility. Note: Those who complete Guardian training receive the following skills at 1st level proficiency: Cryptography, Intelligence, Surveillance, Streetwise, and Lore: Religion. Those characters who already have these skills get a permanent, one-time bonus of **10%** to each.

So far, the Guardians have assembled two other field teams, each consisting of four to seven members. Many of these new recruits are the understudies of the prime Guardians and will, perhaps one **day**, be called upon to take over positions of leadership. In the meantime, these subordinate teams of Guardians pursue their own field agenda, periodically reporting back to their mentors and Brother **Alangate** to share news of their adventures and to receive any special instructions. When field teams of Guardians must be reached immediately, Magic Pigeons are employed. Otherwise, ordinary carrier pigeons (with an uncommon knack for homing in on their targets) will bring written, encoded messages to field personnel who can send return message on the same pigeon.

Rules of the Game

The nature of the Guardians' agenda makes the order fairly informal and flexible, but like any organization, it has its rules, and they must be followed if one is to remain a Guardian.

One: Secrecy is paramount. No Guardian must let the secret of their existence get out to the public. One of the reasons why the Guardians have fared as well as they have against The Zealotry is because the cult does not know they exist. If they did, these villains might unite and take serious action against the Guardians, and more importantly, the Library of Bletherad.

Two: Obey thy master. The ten Prime Guardians do not issue orders very often, but when they do, they are to be obeyed without question and followed to the letter. Despite its scholastic origins, the Guardians are fundamentally a secret para-military organization, and no insubordination will be tolerated.

Three: Show no mercy. The faces of The Zealotry are as evil as they are legion. Some **Chantico** zealots will appear to be just confused people who do not know of the evil they are participating in. This does not matter. Guardians are to show absolutely no mercy to any zealot, regardless of the circumstances. This is a harsh crusade, filled with grim realities. Those who can not deal with them should not become a Guardian.

Four: The Great Library above all. In the end, this is about protecting the Library of Bletherad from harm. If ever there appears to be a major attack or dangerous conspiracy being fielded against the Great Library, *all* Guardians are expected to get to Bletherad at once to mount a defense. It does not matter what else is going on in that Guardian's life; it must be put on hold or forgotten about until the Library is again safe.

Five: Let no roots grow. The nature of the Guardians' work demands that they constantly travel, risk life and limb, and spend long periods of time in effective isolation as they battle Chantico and his minions. Guardians who maintain close friends, romantic relationships, families, and other obligations to those outside of this order run the risk of having a conflict of interests during a time of crisis. While it is not forbidden to have relationships outside of the Guardians, it is strongly discouraged. "Maintain no ties in your life that you can not walk away from in a heartbeat," is the Guardian credo. In the long run, this is one of the most difficult aspects of a Guardian's life.

Six: Once a Guardian, always a Guardian. The solemn vows of this organization are for life! One does not retire from this order, or quit from it. This is not usually a problem, since the Prime Guardians do a good job of screening out any questionable recruits and most Guardians die violently in the line of duty. However, should one make it to "retirement age," the Guardians may allow them to switch to "inactive status," or function as a "reserve." Indeed, such an individual will join the battle against The Zealotry regardless of age or infirmity.

Seven: Secrets without, truth within. To maintain their secrecy, Guardians must often lie and deceive those outside of the secret order. It is an unfortunate and unavoidable necessity. However, deception is forbidden between fellow Guardians. Every defender of Bletherad is expected to trust his brother and keep no secrets from the Guardians, no matter what.

The Ten Prime Guardians

There are, and have always been, ten Prime Guardians, the mentors and Generals of the order. As the Guardians of Bletherad seek and accept new members into its ranks, these ten leaders will eventually phase into more of an administrative role, coordinating the efforts of field personnel from afar while they pursue more subtle avenues of striking at The Zealotry, such as through politics, economics, and other means.

For the moment, however, these ten heroes fight "in the trenches" just like all Guardians. Their dedication to the cause is unquestionable, as is their familiarity with the ways of the enemy. Each of these ten Guardians is a living library of Zealotry lore. Each has performed long and hard as a Guardian, having destroyed or helped destroy numerous Zealotry enclaves over the years. Together, they are a finely tuned team of experts who can perform their job with admirable efficiency. The Prime Guardians are **currently**:

- *Brother Priam*, Sage of Bletherad
- *Dhosa the Learned*, Monk of Bletherad
- *Ondemere the White*, Mystic of Bletherad
- *Nyodo Skatelin*, Prophet of Bletherad
- *Galathan of the Gate*, Prince of Bletherad
- *Sanister Lenox*, Cryptic of Bletherad
- *Agrippa Khejas*, Scholar of Bletherad
- *Malkin Falimede*, Artificer of Bletherad
- *Jase Wendryn*, Fool of Bletherad
- *Nurgeon Nevermore*, Wanderer of Bletherad



Brother Priam, Sage of Bletherad

Race: Human

Alignment: Scrupulous

H.P.: 55, **S.D.C.:** 10

Weight: 160 lbs (72.6 kg),

Height: 6 feet, 4 inches (1.93 m)

Age: 53

P.P.E.: 60, **I.S.P.:** 71

Attributes: I.Q.: 20, M.E.: 19, M.A.: 14, P.S.: 13, P.P.: 12, P.E.: 15, P.B.: 13, Spd: 30 (it used to be 40, but he's slowed down a little with age).

Disposition: Brother Priam is a weathered and world-weary individual whose once-jovial nature has been worn down by years of struggling against the agents of The Zealotry. All he really wants to do is retire from this bothersome secret conflict and live the rest of his life in the peaceful pursuits of any Scholastic Monk — contemplation, reading, writing, and perhaps a little gardening or craft work. This complex life of hidden conflict is not what Brother Priam had in mind when he became a monk, and the many adventures he has had have always been a bit of a surprise to him.

Experience Level: 12th level Scholastic Monk

Skills of Note: Cryptography (98%), Speak Eastern (98%), Speak Elven (98%), Speak Dwarven (98%), Speak Wolfen (98%), Literacy: Elven (98%), Literacy: Eastern (98%), Writing (98%), Public Speaking (98%), Basic Math (98%), History (98%), Lore: Demons & Monsters (95%), Lore: Magic (95%), Lore: Religion (95%), Land Navigation (90%), Locate Secret **Compartment/Doors** (85%), Astronomy & Navigation (90%), Biology (95%), Botany (90%), Art (98%),

Breed Dogs (98%/95%), Gemology (98%), General Repair (98%), Sculpting & Whittling (98%), Anthropology (70%), Archaeology (70%), Holistic Medicine (50%), Animal Husbandry (55%), First Aid (60%), Swimming (98%), **Running, Climb/Scale Walls (98%/85%), Forced March, Horsemanship: General (96%/81%), Falconry (70%), Detect Ambush (50%), Identify Plants & Fruits (30%).**

Special Abilities: Blessings, Exorcism, Penance and Sacrifice, Magic Knowledge (Recognize Enchantment: 90%, Recognize Magic: 75%, Power Words, Magic Symbols: 80%, Recognize True Wards & Runic Symbols: 80%, Recognize Magic Circles: 85%).

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Evasive Combat (SPECIAL!). This is a unique form of melee training available *only* to Scholastic Monks. For more information on it, please refer to the Scholastic Monk O.C.C. section of the **Old Ones™** sourcebook.

Actions Per Melee: Six

Combat Bonuses: +6 to automatic dodge, +2 to initiative, +4 to roll with **punch/fall/impact**, +3 to **back/flip** dodge, +6 to save vs Horror Factor, +5 to save vs possession and mind control, +2 to save vs poison and disease, +2 vs psionic attack and insanity, +1 to save vs magic. Excellent sense of balance (98%), walk tightrope/ledge/etc. (62%), leap 24 feet (7.3 m) long and 12 feet (3.7 m) high, and disarm 17-20 (a nonviolent **grappling-type move**).

Psionics: Brother Priam is a minor psionic with the abilities of Speed Reading and Total Recall, abilities which have served him *very* well throughout his career.

Weapons: None. Brother Priam, like all Scholastic Monks, is a strict pacifist and will *never* use violence upon another living thing. He carries with him a stout oak staff, a hatchet, a knife and a hammer, but these are all tools, not weapons.

Armor: While Brother Priam does not fight, that does not mean he never finds himself in dangerous situations. To be on the safe side when adventuring, he wears a suit of hard leather armor (A.R.: 11, S.D.C.: 30).

Magic Items: None.

Other Equipment: None, other than the standard starting equipment for a Scholastic Monk. Thankfully, the Library of Bletherad provides Brother Priam with what he needs before he embarks on any hazardous endeavors.

Dhosa the Learned, Monk of Bletherad

Race: Human

Alignment: Scrupulous

H.P.: 75, **S.D.C.:** 30

Weight: 160 lbs (72.6 kg),

Height: Six feet, three inches (1.91 m).

Age: 47

P.P.E.: 5, **I.S.P.:** Zero.

Attributes: I.Q.: 11, M.E.: 12, M.A.: 10, P.S.: 20, P.P.: 20, P.E.: 20, P.B.: 9, Spd: 36

Disposition: Dhosa used to be a **fine** warrior before giving it all up to become a Scholastic Monk, so during times of duress, his old gruff, take-charge attitude comes back with a vengeance. That is one of the things which makes him so suitable to be a Guardian of Bletherad — an ability to handle a

crisis situation without flinching or hesitating. Despite his salty demeanor, Dhosa is a good man who is personable and trustworthy, quick to make friendships, and loyal to all those who befriend him.

Experience Level: 8th level Scholastic Monk, 4th level Soldier (retired).

Skills of Note: Cryptography (80%), Speak Eastern (98%), Speak **Elven** (98%), Speak **Dwarven** (98%), Speak Wolfen (98%), Literacy: Elven (98%), Literacy: Eastern (98%), Writing (80%), Public Speaking (85%), Basic Math (98%), History (85%), Lore: Demons & Monsters (85%), Lore: Magic (85%), Lore: Religion (85%), Land **Navigation** (74%), Locate Secret **Compartments/Doors** (65%), Cook (75%), Sew (80%), Sing (75%), First Aid (85%), Pick Locks (65%), Prowl (60%), Streetwise (53%), Ventriloquism (44%), General Repair (85%), Brewing (75%/80%), Sign Language (40%), Dance (55%), Swim (85%), Climb/Scale Walls (**75%/65%**), Body Building, Forced **March**, Palming (40%), Concealment (32%), and Preserve Food (25%).

Special Abilities: Blessings, Exorcism, Penance and Sacrifice, and Magic Knowledge (Recognize Enchantment: 90%, Recognize Magic: 75%, Power Words, Magic Symbols: 80%, Recognize True Wards & Runic Symbols: 80%, Recognize Magic Circles: 85%).

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Evasive Combat (**SPECIAL!**). This is a unique form of melee training available *only* to Scholastic Monks. For more information on it, please refer to the Scholastic Monk O.C.C. section of the **Old Ones™** sourcebook. When he was a warrior, Brother Dhosa had known Hand to Hand: Expert, but those skills have long since disappeared from years of non-use, as has the rest of his military training.

Actions Per Melee: Five

Combat Bonuses: +4 to automatic dodge, +1 to initiative, +3 to roll with **punch/fall/impact**, +1 to back flip/dodge, +6 to save vs Horror Factor, +5 to save vs possession and mind control, +2 to save vs poison and disease, +2 vs psionic attack and insanity, +1 to save vs magic. Excellent sense of balance (80%), walk tightrope/ledge/etc. (50%), Leap 24 feet (7.3 m) long and 12 feet (3.6 m) high, and disarm 17-20 (a nonviolent **grappling-type** move).

Psionics: None.

Spells: None.

Weapons: None. While he carries a number of hand tools and a staff, none of them are ever used towards violent pursuits.

Armor: Like his mentor, Brother Priam, Brother Dhosa wears a suit of hard leather armor (A.R.: 11, S.D.C.: 30) under his voluminous monk's robes.

Magic Items: None.

Other Equipment: None, other than the standard equipment any monk has when venturing outside of the abbey.



Ondemere the White, Mystic of Bletherad

Race: Elf

Alignment: Scrupulous

H.P.: 45 **S.D.C.:** 10

Weight: 150 lbs (68.1),

Height: 6 feet, 2 inches (1.88 m).

Age: 229, looks to be in his thirties.

P.P.E.: 195, **I.S.P.:** None.

Attributes: I.Q.: 17, M.E.: 16, M.A.: 7, P.S.: 15, P.P.: 11, P.E.: 15, P.B.: 21, Spd: 22

Disposition: Soft-spoken and introspective, Ondemere has seen and done many drastic things in the defense of the Great Library. Of the current Guardians, his tenure is the longest, and he alone remembers first-hand the last time The Zealotry launched any kind of all-out assault on the Great Library. It was more than a century ago, and done under the cover of a group of bandits trying to sack one of the Library wings. Since then, he has adventured extensively throughout the region (both with and without his fellow Guardians of Bletherad) in search of The Zealotry's minions so that he may vanquish them before they ever find the nerve to strike at the Great Library again.

Experience Level: 8th level Wizard.

Skills of Note: Recognize Enchantment (75%), Recognize Magic (60%), **Speak/Write Elven** (98%), **Speak/Write Dwarven** (98%/98%), **Speak/Write Eastern** (98%/98%), Lore: Magic (90%), Lore: Demons and Monsters (90%), Mathematics (98%), Mathematics: Advanced (**98%**),



Dowsing (60%), Preserve Food (60%), Wilderness Survival (70%), Horsemanship: General (**73%/58%**), Escape Artist (60%), Intelligence (53%), Writing (40%), Swimming (85%), Climb/Scale Walls (75%/65%), Prowl (60%), Running, Sign Language (65%), Forgery (30%), Palming (25%).

Special Abilities: See and use ley lines, ley line drifting, and ley line **rejuvenation**.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Expert

Attacks Per Melee: Five

Combat Bonuses: +2 to roll with **punch/fall/impact**, +3 to parry and dodge, +2 to strike, +2 to save vs magic, +4 to save vs Horror Factor, +3 to spell strength, karate kick (2D4), snap kick (**1D6**), axe kick (2D6), paired weapons, body throw/flip and disarm, and W.P. Sword and W.P. Staff, both at 8th level proficiency.

Psionics: None.

Spells: All common knowledge spells, plus the following: Blinding Flash (1), See Aura (6), Chameleon (6), Mystic Alarm (5), Armor of **Ithan** (10), Energy Bolt (5), Astral Projection (10), Carpet of Adhesion (10), Circle of Flame (10), Mend Cloth (12), Apparition (20), Control the Beasts (**18**), Impervious to Energy (20), Dispel Magic Barriers (20), Fly as the Eagle (25), Negate Magic (30), and Sense Dimensional Anomaly (30).

Weapons: Ondemere carries a magical long sword named **Ivor's Bane** as his primary weapon. The sword inflicts 4D6 per hit and can cast Mini-Fireballs at 6th level proficiency three times a day. Other than that, Ondemere carries a **Dwarven**, silver-edged dagger (1D6+3) on his belt. He also might use his walking stick as a weapon; the stick has been enchanted to be as hard as iron and inflicts **2D6+1** per hit.

Armor: Ondemere **wears** a suit of Leather of Iron (A.R.: 14, S.D.C. 200) that has been enchanted both to regenerate lost S.D.C. (6 per hour) as well as cast the following spells up to three times daily in any combination: Multiple Image, Metamorphosis Human, and Metamorphosis Animal. The armor is a distinctive ivory-white color, and has become **Ondemere's** calling card. His title, in fact, is a reference to the armor, which he rarely is seen without.

Magic Items: Ondemere is fond of collecting potions, and will have 1D6 assorted types on his person at any given time. He also will have 1D4 scrolls on him containing 1D4 spells each. Most of these will contain spells he already knows but keeps for quick use, but some will be ones he's purchased from an Alchemist or plundered from treasure somewhere. What spells they contain is left to the G.M.'s discretion. **Ondemere's** only other magic item is a Quill of Endless Ink.

Other Equipment: Standard starting equipment for a Wizard. He also owns a fine riding horse named *Osiris*.

Nyodo Skatelin, Prophet of Bletherad

Race: Human

Alignment: Unprincipled

Hit Points: 48, **S.D.C.:** 15

Weight: 170 lbs (77.2 kg),

Height: 6 feet (1.83 m).

Age: 30

P.P.E.: **82**, **L.S.P.:** None.

Attributes: I.Q.: 15, M.E.: 17, M.A.: 15, P.S.: 19, P.P.: 11, P.E.: 20, **P.B.:** 10, Spd: 9

Disposition: Nyodo is a bit self-serving for a Guardian of Bletherad, something his superiors at the Church of Light and Dark thought needed to be remedied, so they charged him to seek out worthy causes and serve them for ten years. During this time, he was noticed by the old Prophet of Bletherad, who thought the feisty young priest would serve as his replacement. Nyodo accepted and since then has mellowed out considerably. He is probably the most steadfast Unprincipled character one is likely to meet. While he is constantly tempted to serve himself first and the Great Library **second**, the Library and his **friends** always seem to win out.

Experience Level: 7th level Priest of Light.

Skills of Note: Dance (80%), **Speak/Write** Eastern (98%), **Speak/Write** Elven (98%/98%), **Speak/Write** Western (98%/98%), Basic Math (98%), Lore: Demons and Monsters (80%), Lore: Religion (80%), Land Navigation (60%), Wilderness Survival (75%), Horsemanship: General (65%/50%), Horsemanship: Exotic (60%/50%), Land Navigation (60%), Heraldry (55%/60%), Interrogation Techniques (75%), Card Shark (48%), Swimming (80%), Running, Prowl (55%), Climb/Scale Walls (70%/60%), Forced March, Public Speaking (40%), and Sign Language (35%).

Special **Abilities:** Special prayers (blessings, prayers, miracles), healing touch, exorcism (49%), remove curse (49%), turn dead (50%), penance and sacrifice.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Basic

Attacks Per Melee: Five

Combat Bonuses: +2 to roll with **punch/fall/impact**, +2 to pull punch, +2 to parry and dodge, +1 to strike, +6 to damage, Karate kick (2D4), +1 to save vs psionic attack, +2 to save vs magic and poison, **W.P.:** Sword (+3 to strike and parry, +1 to **throw**), **W.P.:** Blunt (+3 to strike and parry, +1 to throw), critical strike **19-20**.

Psionics: None

Spells: Tongues (**12**), Ignite Fire (6), Fuel Flame (5), Impervious to Fire (6), Sense Evil (2), and Telekinesis (8).

Weapons: Nyodo's primary weapon is an enchanted mace that grants +1 attack per melee (**upping** his attacks to *six* when using it) and can burst into magical flame, inflicting 6D6 per strike, and having a **01%-45%** chance of setting combustibles on fire. When not **ignited**, the mace does 2D6 damage.

Armor: Nyodo wears a magical ring that grants him an additional 100 S.D.C.! Any damage he takes comes off this magical S.D.C. first. This layer of stamina regenerates 10 S.D.C. per hour. Aside from another ring he wears that magically bestows upon him a natural A.R. of 10, Nyodo wears no armor.

Magic Items: None, other than a magical talisman he wears around his neck that gives him +1 to spell strength when casting his various spell magic. This talisman is attuned specifically to the god **Ra**, and can only be used by priests devoted to that deity's service.

Other Equipment: Standard starting equipment for a Priest of Light, as well as **1000** gold, a riding horse and a pack mule for carrying the party's supplies.



Galathan of the Gate, Prince of Bletherad

Race: Human

Alignment: Principled.

Hit Points: 65, **S.D.C.:** 70.

Weight: 200 lbs (90.8 kg),

Height: 6 feet, 3 inches (1.91 m).

Age: 26

P.P.E.: 6, **I.S.P.:** None.

Attributes: **I.Q.:** 10, **M.E.:** 18, **M.A.:** 10, **P.S.:** 26, **P.P.:** 23,
P.E.: 25, **P.B.:** 12, Spd: 30

Disposition: Galathan is focused almost entirely on just three things: 1) protecting the Library of Bletherad from The Zealotry, 2) upholding the Code of Chivalry, and 3) perfecting his mastery of the sword. This has made him a little tough to talk to, since he has little to say that does not hinge on one of those three things. He is by far the **stiffest** Guardian of the group, and to those who do not know him well, his narrow focus might be mistaken for arrogance or aloofness.

Experience Level: 9th level Knight.

Skills of Note: Dance (85%), Heraldry (**80%/85%**), Horsemanship: Knight (**80%/70%**), Land Navigation (78%), **Speak/Literacy:** Eastern (98%), **Speak/Literacy:** Wolfen (98%), Speak Gobbely (98%), Military Etiquette (**95%**), Basic Mathematics (**98%**), Public Speaking (85%), Writing (75%), Body Building & **Weightlifting**, Boxing, Wrestling, Falconry (85%), Field Armorer (85%), Recognize Weapon Quality (swords only!) (85%), First Aid (80%), Detect Ambush (65%), Escape Artist (50%), and Intelligence (42%).

Special Abilities: The Way of the Horse only. **Galathan's** unusual training and obsession with blade weaponry has left him without the standard knightly skill of the Way of the Lance.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Martial Arts.

Attacks Per Melee: Seven (8 when using swords).

Combat Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +6 to strike, +9 to parry and dodge, +5 to pull punch, +5 to roll with **punch/fall/impact**, +2 to disarm, +11 to damage, +4 to save vs Horror Factor, +5 to save vs magic/poison, and +20% vs **coma/death**. **Body block/tackle (1D4)**, **crush/squeeze (1D4)**, Karate kick (2D4), crescent kick (2D4), roundhouse kick (3D6), snap kick (1D6). All jump kicks. Critical strike 18-20. Paired Weapons. Leap attack. W.P. Sword (+4 to strike and parry, +2 to throw). **Note:** Galathan has devoted his life to the study of swordsmanship to the exclusion of any other weapon proficiency, including the standard knightly skills of W.P. Lance and W.P. Shield. This gives Galathan the equivalent of an extra two levels in W.P. Sword as well as one additional attack per melee when fighting with swords of any kind. This makes him a very deadly and very specialized fighter who, without a blade in his hand, is at a *serious* disadvantage in combat.

Psionics: None.

Spells: None.

Weapons: Galathan fights with a pair of enchanted scimitars that are eternally sharp, inflict an extra die of damage (total damage: 3D6+3 plus P.S. damage) and alert him whenever evil comes within 50 feet (15.2 m). Galathan prizes these weapons above all of his other possessions, and he will spare



no pains in retrieving them if lost or stolen. Should they break in combat (especially as a result of a poor swing on his part), the warrior will become inconsolable for 1D6 weeks, during which time he will be at -4 to strike, parry and dodge, -15% on all skills, and -2 attacks per melee round.

Some years ago, **Galathan** ran afoul of a pack of Zavors, an encounter that taught him the virtue of carrying some kind of non-magical weaponry at all times. To that end, he keeps two ordinary long swords (2D6 each) on his horse; one is silver plated.

Armor: Galathan wears a suit of magical plate and chain (A.R.: 15, S.D.C.: 100) that is magically lightweight and noiseless.

Magic Items: None, save for his magic weapons and armor.

Other Equipment: 1D6x100 in gold and gems, plus standard fare for any knight. Galathan rides a prize war horse named **Bothall** and carries with him the typical gear found on an adventuring knight. When possible, he likes to travel light — just his swords, his armor, some food, and a journal to pen his musings.



Sanister Lenox, Cryptic of Bletherad

Race: Human

Alignment: Anarchist.

H.P.: 37 **S.D.C.:** 5

Weight: 150 lbs (68.1 kg),

Height: 5 feet, 10 inches (1.78 m)

Age: 40

P.P.E.: 130, **I.S.P.:** None.

Attributes: I.Q.: 14, M.E.: 18, M.A.: 13, P.S.: 9, P.P.: 12, P.E.: 12, P.B.: 10, Spd: 8

Disposition: Sanister is surprisingly friendly and talkative for a Diabolist. Those of his profession are often so occupied with their studies and secret knowledge that they lack sorely when it comes to relating to others. Not Sanister. His outgoing, gregarious nature has made him a favored member of the current Guardians of Bletherad, even if he tends to look the other way when wrongs need to be righted.

Experience Level: 7th level Diabolist.

Skills of Note: Art (75%), Cryptography (75%), **Speak/Write** Western (98%), **Speak/Write** Eastern (98/98%), **Speak/Write** Southern (98%/98%), **Speak/Write** Northern (98%/98%), **Speak/Write** Elven (98%/98%), **Speak/Write** Dwarven (98%/98%), Lore: Magic (80%), Basic Mathematics (98%), Sculpting and Whittling (85%), Forgery (60%), Intelligence (61%), Writing (65%), History (65%), **Gemology** (50%), Horsemanship: General (65%/50%), Swimming (80%), Dowsing (55%), and Wilderness Survival (65%).

Special Abilities: Power words, literacy: runes (95%), mystic symbology, recognize and understand magic circles (54%), use magic circles (70%), identify energized wards (65%), recognize enchantment (60%), and recognize magic (60%).

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Basic

Attacks Per Melee: Five

Combat Bonuses: +2 to roll with **punch/fall/impact**, +2 to pull punch, +2 to parry and dodge, +1 to strike, +2 to save vs

magic, +3 to save vs Horror Factor. W.P.: Knife (1D6), Karate kick (2D4), critical strike 19-20.

Psionics: None.

Ward Strength: 15

Ward Energization: 24 wards or ward phrases may be energized daily.

Weapons: Sanister tries to stay out of combat as much as possible. When he must fight, however, he relies on two main weapons. The first is a long **Kobold-crafted** dagger (1D6+2) typically coated with Basilisk's Eye poison (4D6 plus paralysis for 4D4 minutes). The second are a dozen darts he has also coated with Basilisk's Eye (1D4 plus 4D6 and paralysis for 4D4 minutes).

Armor: Sanister wears hard leather armor (A.R.: 11, S.D.C.: 30) underneath his robes, but only because Brothers Priam and Dhosa insist on it. Otherwise, Sanister would rather wear none at all.

Magic Items: None, aside from a set of six different Quills of Endless Ink, each enchanted to write in a different color. Sanister would very dearly like to acquire additional magic items. Chief among them is a rumored piece of dragon's bone shaped into a weird kind of stylus. According to **legend**, when a certain power word is spoken, the stylus **will** begin writing in *any* magical component the user desires! The device can also reportedly write upon the air in beams of magical energy, creating circles in mid-air! Armed with such an implement, a Diabolist could work incredible magicks, which is probably why everyone who has ever heard of this item always keeps an eye open for it. None have ever surfaced, so this might all be a wild goose chase that the Diabolist community won't relinquish.

Other Equipment: Aside from his typical assortment of **Diabolist's** gear, Sanister has assembled a handsome collection of alchemical components, including three ounces of powdered dragon bone, two sets of faerie wings, the tongue of a long-dead 12th level Wizard, and a fragment of a Unicorn horn that if powdered would amount to two ounces of the precious material. Sanister is stockpiling these components in the hope of trading them for the knowledge of additional mystic wards.



Agrippa Khejas, Scholar of Bletherad

Race: Human

Alignment: Scrupulous

Hit Points: 41, **S.D.C.:** 24

Weight: 140 lbs (63.6 kg),

Height: 5 feet, 6 inches (1.65 m).

Age: 20

P.P.E.: 4, **I.S.P.:** 65

Attributes: I.Q.: 21, M.E.: 21, M.A.: 18, P.S.: 18, P.P.: 18, P.E.: 18, P.B.: 18, Spd: 25

Disposition: Agrippa is tough and resourceful, a scholar-adventurer who relentlessly pursues her goals with a determination matched only by her renowned brother, **Rystrom**. Despite the great sadness she feels over her



brother's disappearance, she refuses to let that shatter her otherwise bright and optimistic outlook on life. As far as she is concerned, the only real evil is when good people do not stop bad things from happening. To Agrippa, evil can only ever win by default, and as long as there are even just a handful of heroes willing to lay their lives on the line to make the world a better place, then evil will *never* fully triumph over the world. It is a good vision she has, and her teammates sincerely hope the hardships she will face as a Guardian of Bletherad do not disillusion her, much as they fear they will.

Experience Level: 6th level Scholar and 1st level Long Bowman.

Skills of Note: Basic Math (90%), **Speak/Write Elven** (98%; she was raised with this as her native tongue), **Speak/Write Western** (95%/95%), **Speak/Write Eastern** (95%/95%), **Speak/Write Dwarven** (95%/95%), **Speak Wolfen** (90%), **Speak Gobblely** (95%), **Lore: Demons and Monsters** (75%), **Lore: Faerie Folk** (75%), **Lore: Geomancy and Ley Lines** (75%), **Lore: Magic** (70%), **Lore: Religion** (70%), **Anthropology** (55%), **Archaeology** (55%), **Boxing**, **Pick Locks** (55%), **Pick Pockets** (50%), **Locate Secret Compartments/Doors** (45%), **Prowl** (50%), **Streetwise** (40%), **Swimming** (75%), **Climb/Scale Walls** (65%/55%), **Body Building**, and **Running**.

Special Abilities: None, save for an uncanny ability to find danger and subsequently get out of it. More than a few of her comrades have remarked that her bad luck is matched only by her good luck. That she has stayed alive through the course of her adventures thus far is living proof that the gods indeed smile upon certain folk.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Expert.

Attacks Per Melee: Five (7 with a bow).

Combat Bonuses: +3 to roll with **punch/fall/impact**, +2 to pull punch, +5 to parry and dodge, +2 to strike, Karate kick (2D4), roundhouse kick (3D6), backward sweep, critical strike: 18-20, KO on a natural 20, W.P. Sword (+3 to strike, +2 to parry, +1 to throw), W.P. Blunt (+3 to strike and parry, +1 to throw), W.P. Archery (+3 to strike, +1 to parry, ROF: 5, +120 feet/36 m).

Psionics: Agrippa is a minor psionic with the abilities of **Telekinetic Punch** and **Telekinetic Leap**, powers she enjoys using in brawls or to escape tricky situations. Among several Wolfen tribes, her psionic powers have won Agrippa the nickname "Thunder Fist," in reference to some adventure she prefers not to talk about.

Spells: None.

Weapons: **Agrippa's** favorite weapon is her great bow, a nearly giant-sized long bow that can be broken down into several segments and bundled together for easy carrying. When assembled, this massive weapon can only fire its javelin-like projectiles (3D6) once per round. The weapon's range is 1,500 feet (457.5 m) without counting in **Agrippa's** archery bonus to range. Agrippa won the weapon off of a famed archer of the Wolfen imperial army several years ago. Since then, she uses it mostly to snipe at large targets from far away. She enjoys the weapon because it has character. Much more often, she relies on a slim, beautifully forged, silver long sword that is superbly balanced (+2 to strike and parry) and has an eternally sharp edge (2D6+3). Agrippa also usually keeps several small knives hidden on her person.

Armor: Agrippa wears a suit of studded leather (A.R.: 13, S.D.C.: 38) when in the field.

Magic Items: Only a magic ring that enables her to heal 1D4x10 Hit Points/S.D.C. either to herself or to somebody else by touch. The ring can do this 1D4 times a day; Agrippa does not know why the ring works more often on some days than on others.

Other Equipment: Agrippa is a very well stocked adventurer, having a few items of nearly every piece of field equipment an adventurer could want, short of really large and heavy items, such as a catapult, or a sailing ship. She keeps her belongings in an unused storeroom in a far recess of the Library of Bletherad monks' quarters, and before heading out on an adventure, she visits the room to stock up on what she needs.



Malkin Falimede, Artifex of Bletherad

Race: Elf

Alignment: Unprincipled.

Hit Points: 59, S.D.C.: 10

Weight: 160 lbs (72.6 kg),

Height: 6 feet, 1 inch (1.85 m).

Age: 410, looks to be in his late fifties.

P.P.E.: 4, I.S.P.: None.

Attributes: I.Q.: 19, M.E.: 25, M.A.: 8, P.S.: 9, P.P.: 12, P.E.: 12, P.B.: 20, Spd: 14

Disposition: Malkin is a kindly old Elf who loves learning for the sake of learning. Any friend of the Great Library is a friend of his. Likewise, any enemy of the Library will forever know his enmity. Due to his age, Malkin does not venture out into the field much any more. **Instead**, he is the primary researcher for the group, poring over texts and other resources at the Great Library while his comrades gather field intelligence on The Zealotry and other threats. Malkin is also the resident inventor of the group, forever applying his voluminous knowledge towards devising new **gadgetry** for the Guardians to field-test. The latest invention is a crossbow that has two bow mechanisms on the same stock, both perpendicular to each other. After firing, the user simply cranks the bow assemblies, locking the second one into place and can fire again without any interruption. (G.M. Note: The end result of this is the user can fire the crossbow, which has normal damage and range, twice in a row without stopping to reload; +1 attack per round).

Experience Level: 11th level Scholar.

Skills of Note: Basic Mathematics (98%), **Speak/Write Elven (98%/98%)**, **Speak/Write Dwarven (98%/98%)**, Speak Wolfen (98%), Speak Gobblely (98%), Anthropology (85%), Archaeology (85%), Astronomy & Navigation (90%), Biology (95%), Botany (95%), Advanced Mathematics (98%), Art (98%), Gemology (95%), History (98%), Masonry (98%), Field Armorer (98%), Lore: Magic (98%), Lore: Faerie Folk (98%), Lore: Demons and Monsters (80%), Lore: **Geomancy** and Ley Lines (80%), Lore: Religion (75%), Heraldry (**55%/60%**), Public Speaking (50%), Writing (40%), First Aid (98%), Medical Doctor (98%/98%).

Special Abilities: Somehow, Malkin possesses the ability to speak with animals, as if a permanent Speak with Animals spell has been cast upon him. Nobody knows how he obtained this power, nor is he inclined to discuss it. He merely enjoys using this gift from time to time, especially when it might benefit his teammates. Most commonly, he uses this to instruct carrier pigeons and falcons to seek out the Guardians in the field and relay messages from home to them. These birds typically know to wait for a return message to be affixed to them before returning home. Thanks to this ability, Malkin has developed rapports with a number of top-grade falcons and hunting dogs, though he possesses neither the Falconry or Breed Dogs skills.

Combat Training: None.

Attacks Per Melee: Has one attack but two noncombat "actions" per melee round.

Bonuses: +5 to save vs psionic attacks, mind control and illusions, +8 to save vs insanity, and 50% to charm and impress.

Other Combat Info: None. Malkin prides himself on never having gotten into as much as a single brawl over his long life, a deed unmatched by even the pacifist Monks of **Bletherad** within the group. If confronted with violence, Malkin would earnestly try to talk his aggressors out of hurting him. If that fails, he will rely on his wits to survive somehow. He will not raise his fist in anger, partly because he does not believe in it, and partly because at his age, it would do him very little good.

Psionics: None.

Spells: None.

Weapons: None. If Malkin has gotten by all this time without picking up a weapon, he certainly isn't going to start now.

Armor: None. What goes for weapons goes double for armor.

Magic Items: Malkin used to own an incredible treasure trove containing at least two or three of every basic type of magic item, save for magic weapons and armor. How he lost them all is a bit of a mystery, but it is one of the few things that gets this otherwise friendly soul visibly agitated when the topic is brought up. Somebody must have cheated, swindled, or outright robbed the scholar of his hard-won hoard of magic treasure when he was young. Despite a search of well over a century for his lost belongings, he never found them and gave up. He has not forgotten the loss, however, and whoever finds and returns the trove to Malkin (not likely) will earn his lifelong friendship. Given how well connected he is to folks within the Great Library, such friends could make use of access to restricted Library materials that very few others ever get to see. Of course, **Malkin's** influence only reaches so far, for deep below the Library's farthest cellars are vast chambers that not even *he* is allowed to visit. What secrets those places hold is a mystery Malkin has long yearned to solve, but dares not go against the Monks of **Bletherad's** decree to stay away from those particular basement storage chambers.

Other Equipment: His standard scholar's gear suits him well for his daily routine of researching and cataloguing texts, drawing new schematics in his design notebooks, and so on. In his workshop, Malkin has the prototypes for a myriad of odd new mechanical devices just waiting to be tested. Many of them probably have a lot more work to be done before they are perfected, but the seeds for a variety of new technologies all can be found in **Malkin's** laboratories. Among the most notable are:

- A type of glider whose wings can be flapped by working a series of foot pedals. Keep working the pedals, and the craft is supposed to stay aloft indefinitely even when the wind dies down.
- A kind of modified crossbow that fires an anchor-like **bolt** attached to a spool of high-tension metal wire or rope. When the bolt grabs on to its target, the operator cranks a winch on the crossbow to reel himself up. If the bolt line were detached from the crossbow and secured to the ground or another **object**, then the crossbow could be threaded onto the line and the hand crank could be used to slowly which the user along the line, as if moving hand over hand, only much faster.
- A wooden vessel shaped like a large round fish that can travel under the water! The marvelous **watercraft** is powered by foot pedals that drives a propeller, although somebody younger and stronger than he is needed to provide power (seats two peddlers and one pilot; the vessel is airtight with a one hour supply). Nobody dares get into this vehicle because who knows how it will act when it is under the sea? If this were some kind **ofmagic** vehicle, then people would clamor to try it, but since it merely relies on the ingenuity of a mortal **mind**, well, how safe can it really be? This is the kind of attitude that forever stymies great minds like Malkin. While there are those able to create wondrous non-magical technologies in this world, most such folk turn their attentions to magic, leaving the few who remain as physical inventors to be written off as dangerous crackpots.



Jase Wendryn, Fool of Bletherad

Race: Human

Alignment: Scrupulous.

Hit Points: 40, **S.D.C.:** 20

Weight: 160 lbs (72 kg),

Height: 5 feet, 11 inches (1.81 m).

Age: 29

P.P.E.: 5, **I.S.P.:** 60

Attributes: I.Q.: 12, M.E.: 10, M.A.: 18, P.S.: 15, P.P.: 16, P.E.: 16, P.B.: 14, Spd: 17

Disposition: Jase is a bit of a ham and showboat, but at heart, he is a good man who earnestly wants to see the righteous triumph over the wicked. He tends to tinge everything he does or says with a bit of melodrama, but perhaps that can be forgiven to a man considered by many to be one of the best storytellers alive. **Jase's** many yarns of the fantastic and heroic have captivated audiences from Timiro to **Bizantium**, which has only furthered his insatiable desire to play to the crowd. His recent joining the Guardians of Bletherad has been a bit of a strain, since it requires him to keep a bit lower profile than he is used to. He uses his celebrity to open doors and charm information out of people. Jase joined the Guardians because he figured it would give him lots of great story material down the line. Now he realizes that many of his experiences as a Guardian can never be revealed to the public. As that sinks in, he realizes that he wants to actually *be* one of the heroes that until now, he has only written stories about.

Experience Level: 7th level Bard.

Skills of Note: Cook (80%), Sing (85%, professional quality), Public Speaking (75%), Play Musical Instrument (70%, professional quality), Sign Language (70%), **Speak/Write Eastern (98%), Speak/Write Elven (98%/98%), Speak/Write Western (98%/98%), Speak/Write Northern (90%/90%), Speak/Write Southern (90%/90%), Writing (65%),** History (75%), Lore: Demons and Monsters (80%), Lore: Religion (75%), Land Navigation (70%), Boxing, Prowl (**55%**), Climb/Scale Walls (70%/60%), Rope Works (65%), Streetwise (44%), Use & Recognize Poison (40%/32%), Card Sharp (38%), Palming (30%), Concealment (30%), Swimming (80%), Forced March, Horsemanship: General (65%/50%), Running, Mime (45%), Dance (45%), Disguise (35%), and Escape Artist (35%).

Special Abilities: One of the reasons Jase has become such a popular storyteller is because he has a special gift uniquely suited to one of his talents. Jase is a minor psionic who has the power to create psychic **illusions**, much as one belonging to the Illusionist P.C.C. might, only Jase's powers are far more narrow in their scope and application. The only illusion power Jase can use is *The Panorama*, one of the most complex forms of illusions to be made. Jase has just enough **I.S.P.** to use the ability, but it leaves him entirely drained thereafter so he prefers to reserve its use for special occasions. (Besides, Jase is an excellent bard in his own right and does not routinely need to ply psychic tricks to win his audi-

ences.) Jase uses the *Panorama* when telling a story to a rapt audience. As he builds up his tale, he slowly works in the illusory powers of the **Panorama**, filtering it into each one of his audience member's minds over time, so that he is hitting them with it only once they are totally into his performance. This makes them at **-4** to save vs the effect of the **Panorama**, but by that time, any resistance is futile, since 90% of the folks in the crowd want to be drawn in to the worlds and deeds Jase is describing. And pull them in he does. As the *Panorama* takes effect, the images of his tale take on a life of their own, and those hearing him spin yarns **find** themselves journeying first-hand through Jase's stories, experiencing directly what he describes, living the lives of his characters. Jase can keep this up for one hour, after which he becomes exhausted, and the effect fades. To be sure that does not **happen** in the middle of the story, he generally ends his tales with a good 15 or 20 minutes to spare, leaving his dazzled audience wanting more. Jase has never used his unique ability in combat, but upon occasion, he has used it to get himself and his friends out of trouble.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Expert

Attacks Per Melee: Six

Combat Bonuses: +3 to strike, +6 to parry and dodge, +3 to roll with **punch/fall/impact**, +2 to pull punch, +1 to save vs magic/poison, +4% vs **coma/death**. Karate kick (2D4), tripping/leg hook, backwards sweep, critical strike 18-20. W.P. Sword (+3 to strike and parry, +1 to throw), W.P. Dagger (+3 to strike, parry and dodge).

Psionics: Only his *Panorama* ability, mentioned above.

Spells: None.

Weapons: Jase's primary weapon is a magical duelling sword he was given as a present by a Western lord for a remarkable performance. The sword, a long, thin rapier-like device, is magically indestructible and is superbly balanced (+2 to strike and parry). When used as a slashing weapon, it inflicts a paltry 1D6 damage. When used as a thrusting weapon, however, it inflicts 3D6 damage, and decreases his necessary roll for a critical strike by three (thus, when thrusting with this sword, Jase needs to roll a natural 15-20). Jase also carries a pair of **Dwarven** daggers (1D6+3) hidden in his ornate metal greaves.

Armor: A magical ring that confers a natural A.R. of 13. Jase also wears a suit of superbly crafted (and very stylish) studded leather (A.R.: 13; S.D.C.: 38) in case his ring is somehow neutralized. That, and it makes him look very flashy with the ladies.

Magic Items: Jase has picked up a number of minor magic items in his travels. Chief among them are a golden earring that transmits to him anything being said about him within 100 feet (30.5 m), a hairbrush that with a few strokes will position his hair just perfectly for the next 24 hours (it will look great even in pouring rain or high wind), and a pair of stylish boots whose laces will tie and untie themselves upon command.

Other Equipment: Jase carries with him a book of his favorite stories, a blank notebook and a Quill of Endless Ink (for jotting down story ideas on the go), a silver redbay flute (another gift from a pleased **patron**), a **squeeze-box/accordion** (a relatively new instrument to the Palladium world, but one Jase likes playing because it is unusual), a few **roman** candles

(no better way to end a show than with an impromptu fireworks display) and the standard starting gear common to any Bard.



Nurgeon Nevermore, Wanderer of Bletherad

Race: Human

Alignment: Unprincipled.

Hit Points: 60, **S.D.C.:** 34

Weight: 240 lbs (109 kg)

Height: 6 feet (1.83 m).

Age: 30-something.

P.P.E.: 2, **I.S.P.:** None.

Attributes: I.Q.: 12, M.E.: 8, M.A.: 6, P.S.: 17, P.P.: 19, P.E.: 21, P.B.: 10, Spd: 29

Disposition: Nurgeon is a man used to solitary travel and the harshness of surviving in the wild. He has little use for frivolous talk and would rather just work on the situation at hand. His laconic nature is such that he was once bet by a now-retired Guardian that he could not utter a sentence of less than three words, to which Nurgeon **replied**, "You lose."

Experience Level: 9th level Ranger.

Skills of Note: Animal Husbandry (90%), Land Navigation (88%), Speak Northern (98%), Speak Wolfen (98%), Speak Eastern (98%), Identify Plants and Fruits (80%), Skin and Prepare Animal Hides (90%), Track and Trap Animals (80%), Track **Humanoids** (75%), and Wilderness Survival (98%).

Special Abilities: None, other than that he has seen more of the known world than the rest of his comrades combined.

Nurgeon has traveled to every country on the Palladium **world**, visited many places most folks only dream about, and has had incredible adventures in them all. As a result, he possesses superior wisdom born of experience. He is unlikely to rush into a situation without thinking it out first, and when presented with a dangerous circumstance, chances are he has already been through something like it, and will have a way out of it in mind. This resourcefulness has saved the lives of his fellow Guardians of Bletherad more than once.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Basic

Attacks Per Melee: Six

Combat Bonuses: +4 to strike, +5 to parry and dodge, +4 to damage, +2 to roll with **punch/fall/impact**, +2 to pull punch, +3 to save vs magic, +12% vs **coma/death**. Snap kick (1D6), critical strike: 19-20, body throw/flip, W.P. Sword (+4 to strike, +3 to parry, +2 to throw), W.P. Knife (+3 to strike, +4 to parry, +4 to throw), W.P. Shield (+4 to parry, +2 to strike), W.P. Archery (+4 to strike, +1 to parry, Rate of Fire: 7, +180 feet/55 m to range).

Psionics: None.

Spells: None.

Weapons: Nurgeon has found that if he approaches danger carefully enough, he can usually handle it with just his wits and ordinary weapons. As a result, he does not like relying on magical weaponry, since he feels they would only make him depend on them too much and attract attention. His primary weapon is a fine longbow and a quiver full of arrows crafted by a master **Elven fletcher** in the Western Empire (2D6+2) who ships him a gross (144) to the Great Library every three months. He also has one Cyclops Lightning arrow (1D4x10 damage) and six silver arrows.

Nurgeon's secondary weapon is a simple Northern-style broadsword that has been crafted by some of the finest **Dwarven** smiths of the Island Kingdom of Byzantium. The sword does 2D6+3 damage, and is +3 to parry. The blade is a unique blend of silver and steel, enabling it to strike down certain creatures that are immune to ordinary weapons. On **occasion**, Nurgeon might carry a few other weapons to even things out, such as a **quarterstaff**, a morning star, a spear, or a few fighting knives.

Armor: Nurgeon's armor of choice is a suit of specially tanned studded leather that offers added protection (A.R. 13, S.D.C.: 55) without impeding his speed or mobility.

Magic Items: None.

Other Equipment: Nurgeon enters the field on a riding horse of the finest caliber named *Grenglen* and a stout pack mule named *Lucky Faustus*. The mule is burdened with a huge selection of ordinary adventuring equipment that makes Nurgeon well-equipped for just about any wilderness situation. Personally, he carries the typical starting gear for a Ranger plus his weapons.





The Zealotry

The Zealotry is a title given by the Guardians of **Bletherad** to describe the collective cults, sects, and secret societies in any way associated with the god **Chantico**. The title also applies to any group of people whose affiliation with Chantico can not be proven, but who can be connected with participating in the attacks on the Prime Incunabula and the Seed Libraries.

The difficult thing about these villains is that not even the Guardians know that much about them, and they are the world's foremost experts on them! One reason for this is that each cult group of Chantico followers is different, with their own personal agenda **and/or** interpretation of things. Most of what the Guardians know about The Zealotry is based on a large body of circumstantial evidence, past history and deductive reasoning. Doubtlessly, there is a large portion (at least 80%) of this loose confederacy of vengeful evildoers who could care less about the Great Library, and a third of **Chantico's** illiterate followers don't even know it exists. The only crimes these Chantico worshippers have committed against the Great Library is their association with the mad god and joining one of his malevolent cults — guilt by association (and a potential threat if mobilized as they were in the past). On the other hand, most Chantico worshippers are indeed villains who engage in criminal activity and strike against the authorities and other churches unprovoked in the name of revenge for their god. The Guardians realize this, and they strive very hard to only target those who are indeed active members of The Zealotry and not all Chantico cultists. This not

to be confused with showing mercy. Verified Zealotry members are hunted down and destroyed even when they beg forgiveness and claim to be reformed or remorseful for what they have done. Such individuals get credit for recognizing their crimes at the eleventh hour, but to a Guardian, it can not make up for them and they are executed. Likewise, when a Chantico cult involved in other diabolical activity is uncovered, the Guardians may *elect* to intercede and destroy them as well, or help the local authorities destroy the cult and scatter its members.

For the most part, The Zealotry is a tiny faction (no more than 10% of all Chantico cults) that follows the old **Purificationist** ways. These bands consist of small to medium-sized cults consisting of anywhere from ten to a hundred members. Most of these cultists lead double lives — maintaining a public face during the day and secretly conducting their evil business at night — and include people from all walks of life, from lowly vagabonds to dissatisfied nobles, to everything in between. About half of The Zealotry's numbers are ordinary folk — peasants, farmers, merchants, artisans, etc. The other half are adventurers of some sort, mostly Assassins, Thieves, Warrior Monks, and Priests of Darkness. Within The Zealotry, assassins are charged with disposing of Chantico's enemies quietly, if not always subtly. Zealotry warrior monks are the foot soldiers of the order, the disposable "grunts" who are dispatched when an enemy is to be destroyed without any attempt to keep things quiet. Zealotry Priests of Darkness are usually the lieutenants who make sure that field missions are completed to satisfaction. These priests form the sole **hierachy** of leadership within the Zealotry. Those not as devoted as clergy can never be anything more than pawns and foot soldiers of the priests who run the cult. Strangely, most of these non-clergy minions are satisfied with their place in the cult and follow their commands without question or hesitation, enjoying the violence and power (sometimes purpose) it gives them.



In addition to the Assassins, Warrior Monks and Priests of Darkness who make up the vast majority of The Zealotry's field personnel, adventurers with other talents may also be recruited to their ranks. "Black knights," "**anti-palladins**" and others who



seek revenge or feel disenfranchised are frequently members or friends of a Chantico. These can account for fearsome warriors whose devotion to **Chantico** is matched only by their lethality in open combat. Men of magic and psychics are also sometimes found within The Zealotry, but again, these are rare at best. The prevailing thought is that if Chantico wants his followers wielding incredible powers, they should be granted by him and him alone.

Major Zealotry Cells

To date, over one hundred cells of The Zealotry have been located and identified. Of these there are a handful which stand out as especially strong or influential factions that serve as a kind of nexus within The Zealotry. If any of these particular cells are **destroyed**, it is likely to have a ripple effect on the smaller and less organized cells. Hitting these groups would be like striking the head of an octopus. Kill the **head**, and the tentacles wither. These "head cells" can be found in the following cities:

- **Caer Itom.** The vaunted capital of the Western Empire. The Empire of Sin has perhaps the highest frequency and intensity of cult activity in the world, so those seeking out The Zealotry cell here will be hard pressed to discern The Zealotry's activities from those of a hundred other cults peddling the same basic brand of evil. That, and The Zealotry's influence in the Western Empire has been stronger than in any other part of the world. This cell should not be confronted without having done an extreme amount of research and preparation first. It reportedly is headed by a 10th level Priest of Darkness who calls herself *Chantico's Tooth*. Her lieuten-

ants are a cadre of Warrior Monks and Assassins, all 4th to 6th level. The total fighting strength of the cell is rumored to top 150 members, but that number is somewhat suspect. It is also believed that there are three non-fighting members for every fighting member within the cult, who act as a network of spies and informers throughout the city.

- **Epiphany.** The capital of the Western Empire's Middle Kingdoms, a rebellious and religiously strident province of the Western Empire. The Middle Kingdoms are marked by a nearly fanatical devotion to their Church of Light and Dark, to the exclusion of any other religions. Psychics are harshly persecuted here, and cult activity is unusually low for the Western Empire, largely because it has been so aggressively stamped out by the Church of Light and Dark, as well as the noble house in control. (The two might as well be the same governmental body; one does nothing without the other's consent.) The Zealotry cell here is exceedingly deep underground. By that, it is not literally subterranean, but its members and practices are such closely guarded secrets that virtually nothing has been learned of this cell whatsoever. Its leaders are supposedly a pair of twins who have actually met Chantico once. The strength of the cell is around 50 Warrior Monks and Priests of Darkness (who pretend to be priests of Light in public).



- **Shadowfall.** The capital of the Wolfen Empire. Cult activity in this city is also fairly low, but on the rise. Guardian information on this cell is pretty good, thanks to its several botched attempts to steal books from the Great Library. After apprehending the **cultists**, it has been fairly simple for the Guardians to track them back to their fellows and gain further intelligence on them. The cell is rather small — only about 30 members — but they are all veterans of the Imperial Legion and fanatics, which makes them all very deadly opponents. The average cell member is a 5th to 7th level Wolfen Soldier; nearly half of them are also 1st to 3rd level Priests of Darkness to boot. There are virtually no Warrior Monks or Assassins in this cell, making it something of an oddity. The cell leader is a high-ranking military officer named *Korsito Sinken*, a 10th level Wolfen Knight who has served the Imperial Legion with much distinction. Sir Korsito has also been a devotee of Chantico since his childhood and has lived a double life because of it. He has hand-picked every member of the cell, and their devotion to him is absolute. Sir Korsito also has the loyalty of several regiments of Wolfen troops who will gladly follow him into battle even against their own kind. If an all-out assault is to ever fall upon the Great Library, the Guardians fear Sir Korsito and his minions will

lead the charge. With his kind of authority, he could station all of his fighting forces on Y-Oda under the pretense of a show of force to the Eastern Territory. At that point, the Library could fall under attack at any time and be blamed on humans.

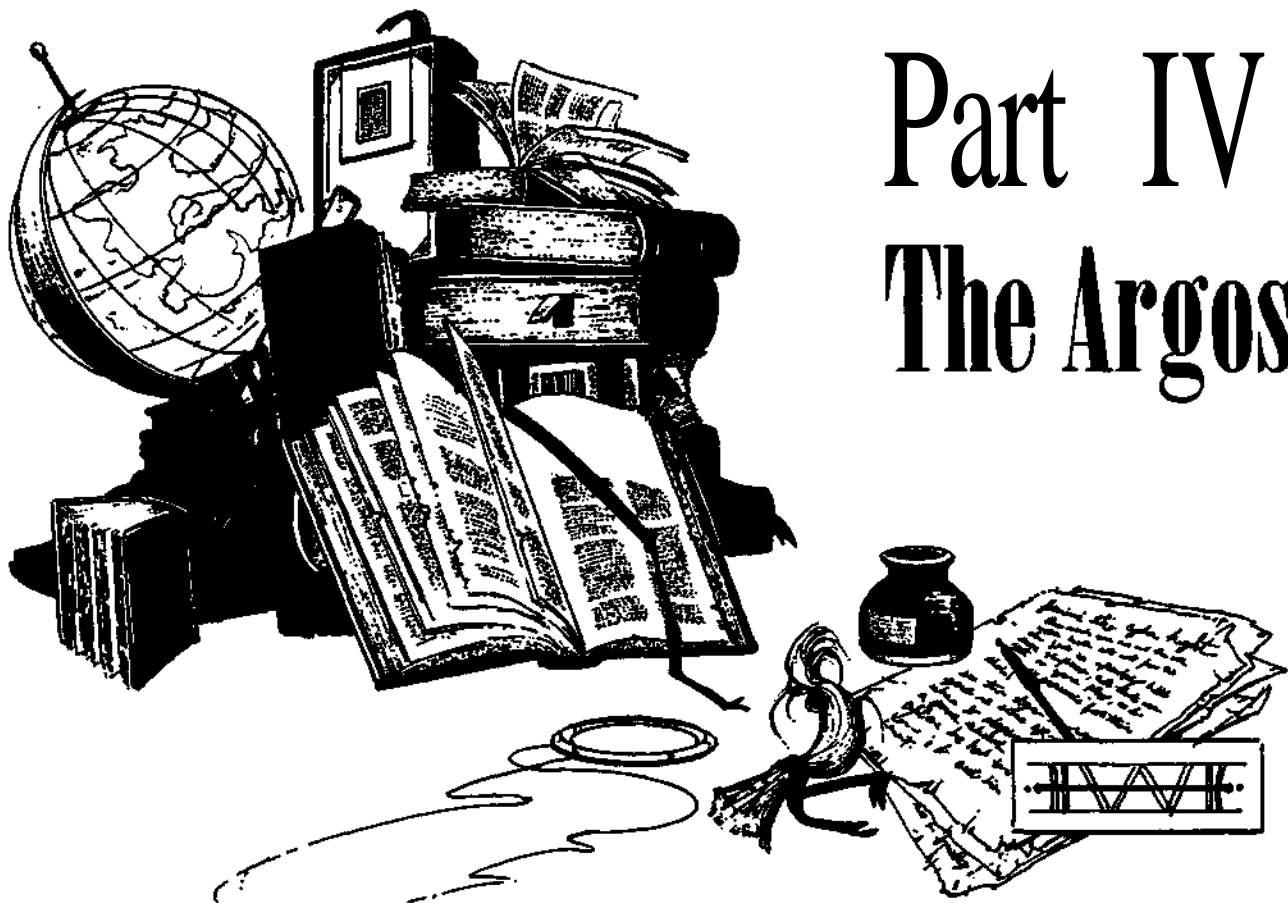
- **Llorn.** This powerful city of the Eastern Territory is renowned for being two things: The city through which all trade to and from the Great River passes, and the single largest recruiting station for mercenaries in the world. The freelance warfare business is a major industry in Llorn, and has allowed for people of all walks of life to congregate there. It has also made the city ripe for Zealotry cell activity. The cell there is rather large, over 200 members, and mostly consists of Mercenary Warriors and powerful merchants who have the means of hiring even more soldiers, if the need arises. The leader of the cell is a 9th level mercenary captain named **Erol Graber**. According to rumor, Graber has had several mystic signs carved into his back and is permanently charged with magical **energy**, giving him numerous spell-like powers. He is a brilliant but unpredictable opponent. Extreme caution is advised in confronting him.
- **Credia.** The capital city of the **Timiro** Kingdom. In the city's slum districts, there live vast numbers of the poor and dispossessed. These unfortunate souls make it a perfect recruiting and training center for Zealotry activity. The cell here operates almost out in the open under the guise of an **assassins'** guild. Its members are all trained in the fighting arts and assassination, and when performing missions can be recognized by the distinctive leather masks they wear. While each individual's mask is **personalized**, they all bear a demonic, canine-like visage. (Note: Over the last few years, these masks have become increasingly common with Zealotry members across the world, not just in Credia. Their existence is yet another piece of evidence that the many cults of **Chantico** are indeed acting in concert somehow, perhaps centrally manipulated by the mad god himself.) The force strength of this cell is almost impossible to tell. Numerous recruits are gathered each month for training, but any number of the cell's assassins are killed during that same time on field missions or during training and indoctrination. Estimates of the number of hardcore members of the cell range from 50 to 300. While not loved by the public, this group also has considerable financial and political resources at its disposal. Any Guardian in Credia must avoid detection by this cell, or the entire city may very well become hostile territory.
- **The Free City of Troker.** The cell in this pirate haven on the edge of the Baalgor Wastelands seems to be the nexus of all Zealotry activity in Mount **Nimro**, the Baalgor Wastelands,

and the western half of the Old Kingdom Lowlands. The city itself is a haven for every kind of depravity and lawlessness, allowing the cell to operate freely and openly without fear of persecution. The cell is led by **Skonz the Bold**, an Ogre Warrior Monk and Priest of Darkness who runs his cell more as a band of brigands than anything else. Skonz has between 60 and 70 additional members of his cell, nearly all of whom are Warrior Monks like himself.

A Final Note to G.M.S

It should be stressed that the Guardians of Bletherad have never been 100% sure that Chantico is really the force behind The Zealotry or that The Zealotry even still exists, much less is on the rise. The information presented in this section should be considered what the Guardians of Bletherad believe and suspect, and may not necessarily be accurate. While the Guardians have a large body of evidence that connects Chantico to The Zealotry, and have very good reason to believe that he, indeed, is massing an attack on the Library of Bletherad, there is definitely room for doubt. Perhaps The Zealotry of old was just a group of people who got swept away by the Millennium of Purification and went way too far in trying to make the world a safer place. Or, perhaps what the Guardians currently see as a huge secret network of independent cults and sects is really nothing more than a coincidence. The Palladium world is rife with secret societies and obscure cults and sects of every kind. It is possible that any linkage between some of them has been fabricated by the Guardians who are choosing to see something where nothing exists. In the back of every Guardian's **mind**, these nagging doubts persist. While the Guardians have uncovered and destroyed a number of dangerous cults and sects, who is to say that any of them are directly controlled by Chantico or were modern day factions of The Zealotry? And, who is to say that any of them were secretly gathering their strength to destroy the Library of Bletherad? For the Guardians, a "better safe than sorry" mentality and the fact that all Chantico worshippers are cutthroats allows them to cast such troublesome questions aside. After all, they *are* ridding the world of bad people — how wrong could that really be?

For the Game Master, the ultimate truth behind all of this is left to each individual G.M. Is there a world shaking conspiracy to be stopped? Or do the Guardians labor under an extraordinary delusion? Or is the truth something in between? Or does their campaign to protect the Library of Bletherad actually draw the attention and revenge of Chantico cultists, which in turn prompts the rebirth of The Zealotry movement. As you and your player characters explore this hidden little war, the truth (and scale of **conflict**) is up to you to decide.



Part IV

The Argosy

The *Argosy of Alarassa* is all that remains of the ninth Seed Library, the *Library of Alarassa*. This library had existed in the Northern Wilderness on the shores of the Dragon's Claw until unnamed forces, presumably The Zealotry, destroyed it 10 years ago. Only one librarian, a young monk named *Hoedric the Unready*, escaped with his life and a sackful of books. His plan had been to wander the earth until he could **find** a place to stow his precious cargo, but he never made it very far. He disappeared shortly after the fall of **Alarassa**, and his sack of books was presumed destroyed. The books survived, however, and were delivered to the Library of Bletherad by parties who chose to remain unidentified. The collection has recently been catalogued and is on display for public viewing in the Great Library's *Special Collections* section. It is emblematic not only of the many other special collections stored there, but of the kinds of wondrous knowledge that awaits anybody who plumbs the depths of the Great Library's vast inventory.

What follows in this section is a description of every item in the Argosy of Alarassa, including a copy of a letter Hoedric the Unready wrote to whoever found his precious bundle. In short, it exhorts those who **find** the bundle not to hoard it or sell it off as booty, but to find a proper resting place for it. In today's world, the obvious choice was the Library of Bletherad. Of course, what to do with **Hoedric's** letter has been a matter of some consternation to the monks, since it speaks of the secret war fought between the remnants of The Prime Incunabula and The Zealotry. Despite the Monastic Order's official declaration that The Zealotry no longer exists, it would appear that they have never truly gone away and might even still wish to harm the Library.

The powers that be within the Monastery simply do not wish to believe the letter, and have secreted it in one of the many underground vaults in the Great Library's basements. There, along with a small library of other "secret" material, the letter shall sit until its keepers decide what to do with it. The rest of the Order is unaware of the letter's existence; for all they know, the Argosy is just another collection of extraordinary books donated to the Library from afar. However, to the abbot and his **lieutenants**, **Hoedric's** letter has made them unwilling observers in a conflict that has simmered for thousands of years and may be flaring up once more. The heads of the Order are beside themselves over what to do, for they alone have no means of defending the Library. And if they openly recruit help, are they not violating their principles of non-violence? Even if they could reconcile that, recruiting soldiers to protect the Great Library seems like an invitation to trouble. If The Zealotry knows the Library is preparing for battle, then won't the fanatics be all the more willing to attack? That is the current train of thought, but without a viable alternate plan, the leaders of the Order are sticking their heads in the sand, doing nothing, and hoping that some solution will present itself, or that the problem will just go away.

Of significant importance is the fact that **Hoedric's** letter about the destruction of Alarassa covers events that happened roughly ten years ago. However this conflicts with the official history presented at the Library of Bletherad which states the ninth Seed Library was destroyed well over 5,000 years ago! For anyone affiliated with the Great Library or who just enjoys figuring a good mystery, this development is solid gold. For if one Seed Library other than the Library of Bletherad survived to the modern age, then it is possible others might have, too!



Judging from **Hoedric's** letter, the Library of **Alarassa's** inventory was about one-tenth the size of **Bletherad's**. This comes out to about half a million books and texts — an impressive library by any standard. As soon as the Monastic Order of **Bletherad** or the Guardians of **Bletherad** learn of this, they are going to want to investigate. The ruins of **Alarassa** might hold the keys to finding out if any other Seed Libraries have survived as well.

(Note: Thankfully, Brother **Alangate**, the leader of the Guardians of **Bletherad**, has read **Hoedric's** letter, made a copy, and has informed the current Guardians of its contents. The Guardians themselves are doing everything they can to expose and destroy **The Zealotry** wherever they find it, but it is impossible to tell if they are making any real progress. The truth is that the self-styled Purifiers may be secretly recruiting more members and founding more covert cells than the Guardians can destroy. If that is the case, then all the efforts of these heroes may be for nought, unless they somehow cultivate the means of matching **The Zealotry's** power sword for sword, man for man.)

Hoedric's Letter

*Take heed and bear witness to the truths that lie herein. For this is the final record of the Seed Library of **Alarassa**, the last of the Nine Great Libraries, and brother **institution** to the Great Library of **Bletherad**.*

*In ages past, there stood a Great Library, **The Prime Incunabula**. This place of learning was unsurpassed in all the world. Not one secret stood from its hallowed halls. Not one mystery lay unknown before it. And throughout the world, peo-*

ple from every land traveled to this Place of Wonder to learn, to discover, to grow.

*But then there came a Time of Darkness, when the world reeled from the war between Elf and Dwarf, and there reigned a thousand years of destruction during which nearly every ancient magic was destroyed. Cast into the fires of **Purification**. From these fires rose a virulent and fanatic group of people we know only as **The Zealotry**. Where they come from, who they answer to, and where they have obtained their great power are all unknown to us. It was first thought that **The Zealotry** were just another group of Purifiers intent on purging the world of all magic, but had gotten carried away and wished to destroy for the sake of destruction. What we know now is that their intent was to destroy information. Books. Scrolls. Maps. Any kind of recorded learning. Why they do this we can not say, but this insane drive of theirs led them to destroy **The Prime Incunabula**. And, they have tried their best to destroy every Seed Library which sprung from it.*

*There are those who believe all the Seed Libraries dead, save for the Great Library of **Bletherad**. They are not. For the sake of security, it was made to seem as if they had been ruined by **The Zealotry**, but the truth is that even as I write this letter, there exist a few other Seed Libraries, hidden throughout the world. Harbors of lost knowledge from times long past. Dear reader, these places are in the most dire peril, for **The Zealotry** has resurfaced, **and** just as they have destroyed our precious library at **Alarassa**, so too will they find the other Seed Libraries unless they are stopped. I fear once their taste for blood has been whet-*

ted, the armies of The Zealotry shall never rest until they destroy the Great Library as **well**. For the Great Library now stands as The Prime Incunabula once did, as a shining beacon of illumination and knowing. A lone defender against those forces that would return our beloved world to an Age of Darkness

If you are reading this letter, then it is because **I** have fallen to a premature end, and my quest to deliver my Argosy of Alarassa to **Bletherad** has failed. What information exists in this bundle is far more than a mere collection of books, scrolls and maps. It is all that remains of my fallen Seed Library. It is the remnants of thousands of years of hard **work**. It is also the sole testimony to The **Zealotry's** return. What you hold now in your grasp is far too precious to be squandered fueling a **campfire**, earning a few meager **handfuls** of a **pawnbroker's** gold, or used to launch a lifelong campaign of greedy quests. The knowledge you now hold is the property of the world, and so it is that you must deliver this to Bletherad. We of Alarassa kept hidden for fear that The Zealotry would **find** and destroy us, but we were fools, as is every other Seed Library that remains in hiding. If only we had pooled our resources or made our presence **known**, for then our loss might have meant something, and some great champions may have come to our aid. Alas, by keeping alone and **isolated**, we only make The **Zealotry's** work that much easier, for they strike us down **and** none are the wiser.

I beg you, no, I demand you see the Argosy and my letter to the Great Library of Bletherad. You must seek an audience with the highest authorities of that Library and make known to them the crisis facing us all. The world does not know of our strife, but we are all threatened by the long shadow of the resurgent Zealotry. Lest we gather our strength and defend against this most mysterious of **enemies**, the light of education may very well be snuffed out forever from **the face** of our **world**.

If it proves impossible to reach the Library of Bletherad, if they will not **see** you, or if they, for some reason refuse to accept the Argosy, then at least find one of the other Seed Libraries (sadly, I know not of their names or locations) and deliver it to them. Just do not let your petty fears and greed let the Argosy come to as ignoble and pointless an end as I have.

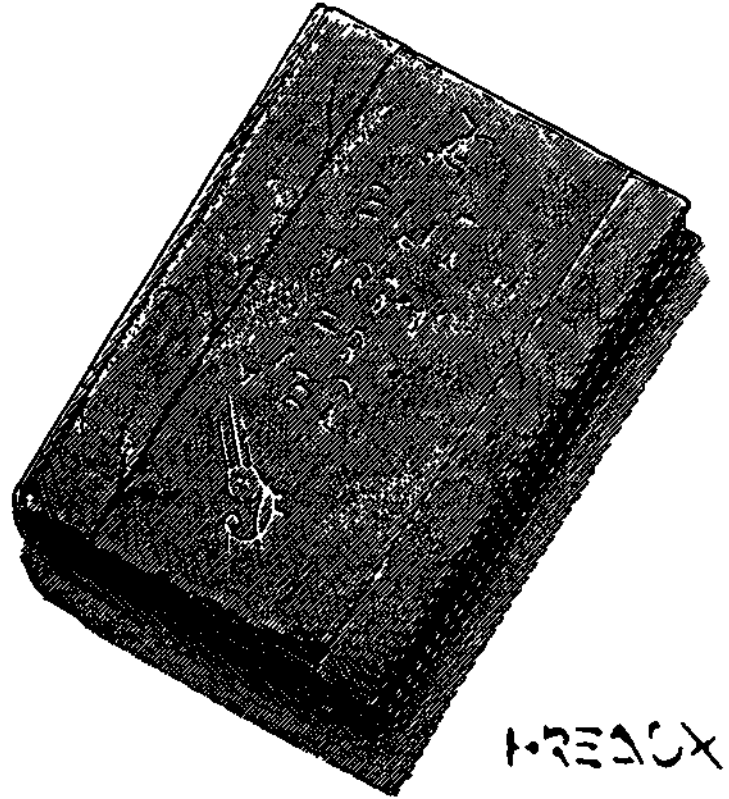
Should you honor this letter, then may the gods grant you the courage to complete my quest, the strength to withstand the many challenges it will present **to** you, and the wisdom to drink deep from the reservoirs of knowledge that both my humble Argosy and the Great Library have to offer. Ours is a dark and hostile world teetering on the edge of both ruin and **salvation**. Ours is the power to make this realm a better place for the children of tomorrow; the plans for doing so already lie in our hands. It is left to us to make something of them.

And should you fail to complete this quest I have laid before you, then know you this: The Zealotry cares not for you or your desires. It cares only to destroy all knowledge and those who would protect it. It will destroy you just as it destroyed Alarassa and so many other institutions. If you think you can resist their influence **on** your own, or **if** you think these villains will **take** you into their ranks, you are greater fools than even myself. **And** for that I pity you.

Now I must take leave of this writing to prepare for the fate in store for me. I hope **and** pray I have the strength to meet my end with courage and dignity. If not, then at least I hope my end

comes quickly and without much pain. So ends my final testimony.

— **Hoedric** the Unready, Scholastic Monk and acolyte of the Seed Library of Alarassa
— In the Age of the Reconstruction, on the tenth year of the reign of Emperor **Voelkian**
Itomas II (Western Calendar).



Books of Magic

The following are books of magic found among **Hoedric's** Argosy. They include uncommon elemental, spirit and spell magic. Many are super-rare or completely forgotten. The most notable books and spells are described below. Currently, these spell books are locked away in the basement of the Great Library of Bletherad while the monks try to decide what to do with them. (Remember, it is library policy NOT to make spellbooks available to the public. However, they hold significant historical value, so the monks don't want to destroy them.) Whether this magic can be discovered by other means (i.e. taught to a player character by a god or demon lord specializing in magic, like **Thoth** or the Old Ones, as well as ancient creatures of magic the likes of Lizard Mages, ancient dragons, and, perhaps, certain sorcerers in the *Land of the Damned* who are likely to know at least a few, if not many, of these arcane spells) is left entirely to the Game Master. Occasionally, one or more of these rare spells may be taught to a character as a reward or boon for courageous service by a **grateful** god, high priest, powerful mage or elder dragon.

The Tome of Northern Winter

This arcana reference is the Argosy's oldest and least complete book. It was originally written over a thousand years ago by *Nisus* **Glimwaver**, a renowned **Algor** Wizard who was killed

in his old age by unscrupulous treasure hunters seeking to ransack his personal library. Most of Nisus' books have vanished forever, but *The Tome of Northern Winter* remains, at least in part.

The original book was over 1,200 pages long, but the version that is in the Argosy of Bletherad is a mere 60 pages. It is said that when the book was first stolen by those who killed its author, it was torn into several sections, with each bandit getting one equal piece of booty. Somewhere along the line the other sections of the book (those with Nisus' spell formulae) were lost or destroyed. All that exists (as far as any one can tell) is this first section, which has been rebound into a book of its own. The fate of the other sections is unknown, but any hope of ever turning up more than one or two, ten page sections would be remote at best. The portion currently in the hands of the Bletherad monks includes new spells involving ice and cold. Note: Any can be selected by Water Warlocks who reach 10th level and higher.

Level Three



Cold Snap

Range: 100 feet (30.5 m).

Duration: One minute (4 melees) per level of experience.

Damage: Special.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Five

With a snap of his fingers, the mage chills the air surrounding a single character within range, making them feel uncomfortably

cold. If the victim fails his saving throw, he will shiver and make his teeth will chatter incessantly for the duration of the spell, making him distracted and uneasy. Under these effects, the victim is at -2 to strike, parry and dodge, and -10% on all skills. This spell has no effect on inanimate objects nor on those who are impervious to *magical cold*, such as **Algor** Giants.

Frostbite

Range: 10 feet (3 m) per level of experience.

Duration: One minute (4 melees) per level of experience.

Damage: 1D6 plus numbness.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Seven

The Wizard mentally inflicts a magical form of frostbite on his victim, chilling him for 1D6 points of damage and freezing his hands and feet! If the victim saves vs magic, then he only takes the 1D6 damage. **Otherwise**, the victim's hands and feet are painfully frozen, and for the duration of the **spell**, any skills requiring manual dexterity (such as picking pockets or playing a musical instrument) are extremely difficult, -50%. Likewise, handling weapons will be at -4 to strike and parry. Frostbite victims trying to fire a bow or a crossbow will have their rate of fire reduced to only one shot a round (two for Rangers and Long Bowmen; half for modern characters using **guns**)!

Note: The effects of this spell can be combined with the effects of Cold Snap.

Frosty Fingers

Range: Touch.

Duration: Instant.

Damage: 1D6 S.D.C. if torn away.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Six

By merely touching another object, the mage can reduce its temperature to freezing. The object will stay at that temperature until it returns to room temperature normally. This is especially useful when applied to metal objects. Touching a frozen metal object will cause it to stick to one's fingers/hand until either the object heats up (in 1D4 minutes) or if the person rips his hand away, causing 1D6 S.D.C. damage to himself. Note: Applicable only to smallish or narrow "objects" weighing less than 50 lbs (22.5 kg); living creatures, even plants, can NOT be frozen.

Ice Bolt

Range: 300 feet (91.5 m).

Duration: Instant.

Damage: 3D6 to mortals; 6D6 to Fire **Elementals** and other creatures who are fire/heat based or accustomed to hot environments.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Eight

A ray of blue energy flies from the spell caster's hand to the **target**, blasting it with cold magical energy. The target takes 3D6 damage unless it is a Fire Elemental, demon, Deevil, or some other creature accustomed to great heat, in which case the Ice Bolt causes 6D6 damage.

In addition, those struck by the Ice Bolt must save vs magic. Those who fail are *numbed* for the next 1D4 melee rounds, during which time, they shall lose one attack per melee and be at -2 to strike, parry and dodge.

Level Five

Frost Breath

Range: 50 feet (15.2 m).

Duration: One melee round.

Damage: 3D6 S.D.C./Hit Points to all caught in the cloud.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Fifteen

The spell caster breathes forth a cloud of icy breath that causes freezing damage to all who are caught in it. The frost cloud can be projected out to 50 feet (15.3 m) and covers a 10x10x10 foot (3x3x3 m) **area**, affecting everyone in its radius.

Ice Slide

Range: Self or other by touch.

Duration: Five minutes (20 melees) per level of experience.

Damage: Adds +1D4 to body block.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Fifteen

Casting this spell creates a stream of ice from the Wizard's hands to the ground and across the surface, effectively creating a ramp and a slick runway the spell caster can slide on. This magic is used to enable the mage to slide along the icy path as quickly as he generates it, and at a rate of up to triple his normal running speed (the spell caster can control his speed with a thought). Using this unique form of locomotion, the character can cruise along speedily and with great agility — +3 to dodge while using Ice Slide — but only forward movement is possible. The spell caster may "tow" up to twice his body weight in cargo **and/or** passengers, but towing the equivalent of his body weight slows him down to only *double* his maximum running speed, and towing 2x his **body weight** slows him down to his normal speed.

The ice beam being projected may only be directed at the ground and can not be used to cover living beings or to cover the sides of walls or trees. While sliding forward, however, the mage can bowl over whoever is in his way by performing a high-speed body block at +1D4 to damage. Nor can the spell caster create ice under the feet of others to cause them to slip and fall. Note that the ice left behind the mage as he zooms by quickly melts in one melee round (15 seconds).

The Ice Slide may not elevate more than 10 feet (3 m) off the ground. Any higher than that and the slide will collapse, and its rider will fall to the ground. Ice Slide can be used to cross water, and the trail it leaves can be used by others as a rudimentary bridge. However, they move at one third their normal speed across the slippery layer of ice. When spanning water or as an elevated surface, any given 10 foot (3 m) section of the ice slide can support up to 500 lbs (225 kg). Any more weight will cause the slide to shatter, and anybody on that section will fall.

Level Seven

Chill Blood

Range: 100 feet (30.5 m)

Duration: 10 minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: +1 to save.

P.P.E.: Twenty

This spell reduces the inherent goodness in its victim, effectively making him more "cold blooded." The net effect of this is that the victim's alignment temporarily shifts down two steps for the duration of the spell. The order of alignments is Principled, Scrupulous, Unprincipled, Anarchist, Miscreant, Aberrant, and Diabolic. Thus, if a Scrupulous person were hit by this spell, his alignment would temporarily change to Anarchist, while an Unprincipled character would become Miscreant evil!

This is a handy spell for getting enemies to turn on one another or to fuel a tense or aggressive situation — best used when the victim does not realize he is being magically manipulated.

When cast upon an evil character, this spell automatically brings out the most selfish, vile and cruel behavior, causing him to be a merciless, cold-blooded killer who may turn on friends and comrades at the slightest provocation. Exactly how cruel and murderous will depend on the character's disposition and external circumstances.



Deep Freeze

Range: By touch or up to 50 feet (15.2 m) away.

Duration: One hour per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Twenty-Five

With this spell, the mage can place a single living creature (person, animal, etc.) into a state of frozen suspended animation! If the victim fails to save vs magic, then an icy crust forms over his body and his skin turns a ghostly blue. For the duration of the spell, the victim will remain frozen; he will not thaw even if exposed to high temperatures. Aside from the spell caster de-

ceding to lift the spell prematurely, only a Dispel Magic, Dispel Magic Barrier, or Remove Curse spell may undo the effects of this magic. Upon coming out of Deep Freeze, the victim suffers 1D6 points of damage directly to Hit Points. This is the side effect of having undergone such a dramatic temperature change. While in the Deep Freeze, however, the individual is impervious to fire, heat and disease, and doesn't need to breathe (all the air necessary is held in the icy confinement).

A successful save vs magic means the target shrugs off the Deep Freeze with no ill effect whatsoever.



Iceball

Range: Thrown up to **100** feet (30.5 m) per level of experience.

Duration: Instant.

Damage: 3D6 direct to Hit Points of the main target; 2D6 area effect.

Saving Throw: None; the victim can dodge the Iceball if he sees it coming and rolls a natural **18** or higher.

P.P.E.: Fifteen

This spell conjures forth a large glittering ball of ice which the mage magically hurls at his target. The missile is magically directed and seldom misses. Upon impact, the Iceball inflicts 3D6 damage direct to the primary target's Hit Points! However, it also explodes on impact, sending out icy shrapnel. Anybody within 20 feet (6.1 m) of the blast takes 2D6 points of damage. Those wearing armor will see damage done to armor first. When the armor is shredded to pieces, any further icy shrapnel will do the same to their bodies (S.D.C. followed by Hit Point damage).

When used against an inanimate target (**cart**, wall, **door**, etc.), the Iceball inflicts **1D4x10+3** S.D.C., with shrapnel being the same.

Frostfire

Range: Up to 10 feet (3 m).

Duration: Varies, the same as a normal fire. As long as there is fuel to burn, the fire rages on.

Damage: 4D6 points per melee round.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Thirty

This spell will transform a normal fire into one composed of ice-cold magical energy. The fire will continue to spread like a normal fire but instead of scorching things into ash, it freezes them to the point that they blister or shatter into icy dust. Anything exposed to Frostfire takes 3D6 points of damage per melee round. Creatures immune to magical cold can endure the effects of a Frostfire without harm while creatures resistant to normal cold (and Water Warlocks) take half damage. Due to its unusual nature, Frostfire will spread across the surface of **water**, burning any vessel that comes in contact with it. However, on water, its duration is a mere 1D4 minutes per level of the spell caster. Likewise, throwing water on this flame to extinguish it makes it stronger (double size and damage for every minute it is fed by water). The only way to dose Frostfire is to smother it (sand works great) or use the magic spells, Extinguish Fire or Vacuum. A barrier of *magic fire* will block or stop Frostfire from spreading and cause it to die out in 2D6 minutes, but normal fire has no effect.

Level Eight

Snowblind

Range: Covers an area 50 feet (15.2 m) in diameter per level of experience.

Duration: One minute (four melees) per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Thirty-Five

This spell covers the area of effect with a thin layer of brilliantly white snow or sparkling ice-filled mist. While the snow does not impede movement at all, it does reflect all light, dazzling whoever is caught in the area of effect. Unless a successful save vs magic is made, the characters are temporarily blinded (-8 to strike, parry and dodge). This blindness will persist for another 1D4 melee rounds after the spell ends or after the victims step outside of the spell's area of effect. Even those who save vs magic will be at -2 to strike, parry and dodge while within the area of **snowblindness**. This spell has no effect on the spell caster.

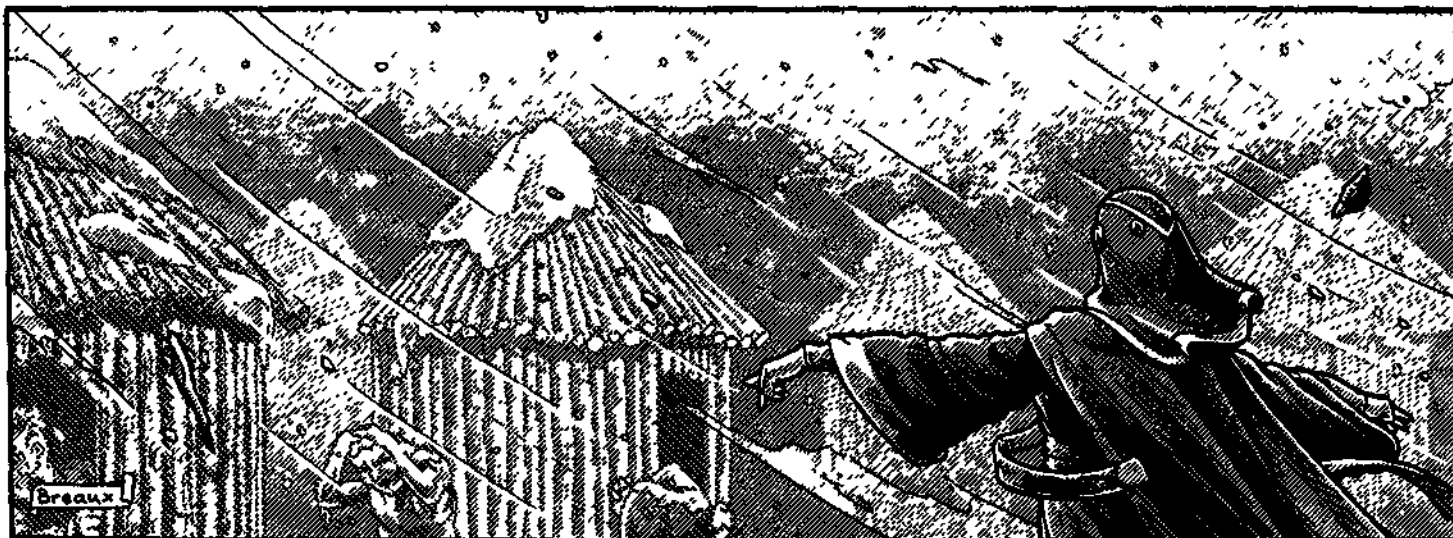
Level Eleven

Ice Storm

Range: Affects an area 100 feet (30.5 m) in diameter per level of experience of the spell caster and can be created up to a mile (1.6 km) away, but the target destination must be within the spell caster's line of sight.

Duration: Two melee rounds (30 seconds) per level of experience.

Damage: 1D6 per level of experience, plus ice encasement!



Saving Throw: None, other than to take cover or somehow get out of the area of effect.

P.P.E.: Two Hundred

Ice storms are prolonged periods of freezing rain that encase the entire area in a coat of ice. The weight of this accumulated ice eventually causes tree limbs to snap, roofs to collapse, crops to fail, etc. It is this kind of quiet devastation that the spell Ice Storm emulates, only more dramatically.

The first effect of **this** spell is not unlike a magical hail storm. Everything within the **spell's** area of effect takes 1D6 damage per level of the caster per melee.

Secondly, everything **in** the area of effect is slowly covered by ice, so that by the end of the spell's duration, it will be as if an Encase in Ice spell (**Palladium Fantasy RPG, 2nd Ed.**, page 244) had been cast on the entire area. People, monsters and animals **in** the ice storm will also be covered in ice if they stay in the area long enough. For each melee round spent within the ice storm, mobile creatures have a 25% chance of being entirely encased in ice. This percentage is a cumulative chance, so those who stay in the area for two melee rounds have a 50% chance of encasement, those who stay for three melee rounds have a 75% chance of encasement, and those who stay four melee rounds or longer have a **100%** chance of encasement.

Those covered in ice are in dire peril. The encasement has 10 S.D.C and an A.R. of 12, and inflicts 4D6 damage to bare flesh. Since victims' heads will also be encased in ice, they **will** be temporarily blind as well as **immobilized** until freed. They will also fall unconscious within two minutes of encasement and will suffocate within six minutes. The ice will melt naturally (but well after it would do the victims any good), can be broken off by friends or allies, or it can all be willed away by the caster of the spell.

Book of Bygone Spirits

Also known as the *Book of the Dead*, this volume was written by the ghost of an ancient (and unnamed) spell caster who had mastered many arts of necromancy and other magics. Having died a mysterious and untimely death the author never **assembled** his vast knowledge into written form. Apparently, the slain spell caster was so distraught over this, his restless ghost wrote *Bygone Spirits* from the hereafter. Night after night, the

ghost took control of a quill pen, slowly scratching out what little he could remember of his once-great store of knowledge. Naturally he could only recall a few of **his** most favorite spells, which are the most important part of the book. The rest of it is incoherent rambling. These spells have never been seen or referenced ever since, leading some experts to believe that these spells never really existed. Rather, that they are only the **ramblings** of a distraught spirit taunted by his memories of life.

There are those who insist, however, that those who travel to this Wizard's final resting place (which is itself a mystery — legend places it both in the Old Kingdom and the Great Northern Wilderness) might be able to channel the spell caster's restless spirit and get it to reveal the secrets of the unique spells mentioned in *Bygone Spirits*.

News of this book first surfaced some 200 years ago. Since then, numerous scholars and alchemists have reported seeing rare copies of *Bygone Spirits* that not only contain the actual spell formulae for the spells described herein, but also contain the spell formulae for several related spells commonly known by Wizards and Necromancers, including: *Commune with Dead*, *Animate/Control Dead*, *Commune with Spirits*, *Turn the Dead*, *Create Zombie*, *Clone*, and various healing and Necromantic spells. Since an actual copy of such an edition of *Bygone Spirits* has yet to be verified, such talk should be considered to be rumor at best. **G.M. Note:** If you wish to expand the selection of spells noted in this book, take a look at the *Bone Magic* section of the **Mystic Russia™** sourcebook for **Rifts®**. Nearly all of these spells can be used in a **Palladium Fantasy®** context (just change **M.D./M.D.C.** to **S.D.C.**). Spirit-based magic is most commonly reserved for Necromancers, Witches and Priests of Darkness.

Level Four

Cause of Death

Range: Touch.

Duration: Instant.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Six

The spell caster can, by touching a recently deceased (no more than three days) **body**, relive the final moments of that person's life. The caster witnesses the last 2D6 minutes of the de-

ceased's life as if he is hovering slightly above and behind the person's **head**, a silent, ghostly observer to the unfolding events. Since the mage has a somewhat detached vantage point, he may notice things the deceased did not, like a sneak attack from the **side**, or developments that happened in the person's presence while he was not looking. The spell caster can not affect the outcome, obviously, but he can learn details of the death that not even the deceased may be privy to.

Death Stench

Range: 10 foot (3 m) area per level of experience; up to a 50 foot (15.2 m) **area**, maximum. May be cast up to 100 feet (30.5 m) away per level of experience.

Duration: Four minutes (16 melees) per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Ten

This spell conjures forth a stifling odor of death and decay so strong that it can overwhelm whoever smells it. Those in the area of effect must save vs magic. Those who fail will be wrenched by gagging and nausea, and will be at -3 to strike, parry and dodge. Even those who save vs the magical effects of the stench must save vs a Horror Factor of 14. Those who fail that roll will be compelled to leave the area at once.

On the other hand, the Death Stench can be used to lure beings attracted to death, like Ghouls, Banshees and Tomb Worms, out into the open or into a trap.

Spectral Hand

Range: 50 feet (15.2 m) per level of experience.

Duration: One melee round per level of experience.

Damage: Varies.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Fifteen

The spell caster creates a ghostly, disembodied hand that he can mentally move about. The hand floats along at a maximum speed of 12. The hand may be used to attack others either by punching them (1D6 damage) or by grabbing a weapon; in either case, the hand has a +3 to strike and parry and a P.S. Of 20 for purposes of lifting and carrying.

The hand itself has no Hit Points or S.D.C. and can not be harmed by conventional means. However, a *Constrain Being* spell will keep the hand at bay or contained to one fixed location, while *Turn Dead* will hold it at bay, *Eternal Rest* will ban-

ish it (make it disappear) and *circles of protection* will keep it outside the circle.

Level Six

Eternal Rest

Range: 30 feet (9.1 m).

Duration: Permanent results.

Saving Throw: Standard; 12+ by spell or 16 by ritual.

P.P.E.: Thirty

Similar to the Exorcism spell in that it can banish ghosts from this **world**, Eternal Rest works best on those entities who mean no harm and more importantly, are not currently possessing anyone.

The spell can be cast like a regular incantation which takes a few seconds, or it can be performed as a ritual lasting 1D4 hours. When this spell is performed, all ghosts and entities in the area are informed that they are dead, their time on this world is over, and now it is their time to **rest/leave**. The spell breaks the fundamental misunderstanding of all ghosts, who are universally either ignorant of their own death, or because of the circumstances surrounding their death, refuse to accept it.

All ghosts affected by the spell get a saving throw against it. Those who make their save are unaffected. Those who fail realize the futility of their suffering, and give it up, dispersing their energies and leaving this world for good. Their spirit is finally at peace.

The spell caster may try this spell again on ghosts that resisted it the first time, but there is a danger in this. Should the spell fail a second time, the **ghost(s)** will become angry at the mortals who have meddled with it, and it will try to possess bodies and create all other kinds of havoc that the supernatural is infamous for. Moreover, it is more convinced than ever that it is not dead or is needed (+6 to save vs all forms of banishment).

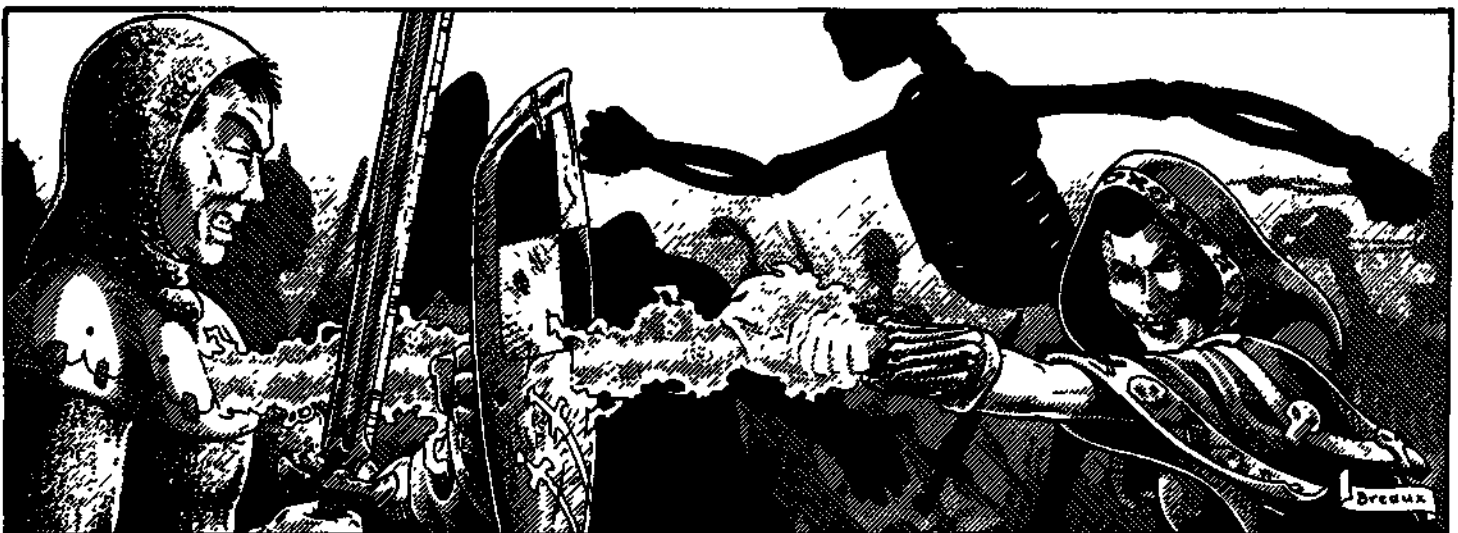
Note: This spell is only effective on **nonaggressive** ghosts. Entities that are already in a fighting mood will not be affected in the least by this spell and should probably just be exorcized.

Spectral Sword

Range: Self.

Duration: One minute per level of experience.

Damage: 1D6 to mortals, 1D4x10 to supernatural creatures,



1D6x10 to entities, other ghosts, spirits, and alien intelligences.

Saving Throw: None; parry or dodge only.

P.P.E.: Thirty

This spell conjures a sword of spectral energy into the spell caster's **hand**, not unlike a Psi-Sword. However, this implement really is intended for battling foes not of the mortal coil and resembles a "ghostly" version of a sword. Any ordinary person or animal struck by this weapon suffers only 1D6 damage as the spell's intangible blade passes through their body. Against Deevils, demons, or other supernatural enemies, the spectral sword inflicts 1D4x10 damage. Against spirits, entities, and alien intelligences the sword inflicts a whopping 1D6x10 points of damage.

Since this sword is on the same supernatural "frequency" as the creatures it was meant to destroy, supernatural foes can parry and block attacks made with this weapon. Mortal foes, however, have no such recourse. All they can do is dodge it; any attempt to parry the spectral blade results in it just passing right through the opponent and inflicting its 1D6 damage.

Level Eight

Receptacle

Range: By touch.

Duration: One day (24 hours).

Damage: Special!

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Fifty

This sinister spell makes its victim a likely target for possession by a Possessing Entity. Should the victim fail to resist the effects of this spell, then for the next day, he shall be like a beacon to all possessing entities within 100 miles (160 **km**)! To those entities, the character will seem like the perfect host to inhabit. The victim will be nervous and afraid of being possessed by spirits (-1 on initiative and -5% on skill performance) and will be paranoid about graveyards, animated **dead**, churches and funerals, and will avoid them. And for good reason, as any *Possessing Entity* within a 50 mile (80 km) radius of the character will be attracted to him. Likewise, *Poltergeists* and *Haunting Entities* are also attracted, and will follow the character around — scaring people and causing mischief — for the 24 hour period. Fortunately, they can not take possession of the victim's body. If a Possessing Entity appears, the victim of this magic will be immediately attacked and forced to engage in a battle of wills with the Entity, as described on page 185 of **The Palladium Fantasy RPG®, 2nd Ed.** Should the victim be possessed by an entity, the standard methods of removing it will apply — namely exorcism.

Ghostwalker

Range: Self or one other by touch.

Duration: One melee round per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Fifty

Using this magic, the spell caster can become ethereal and intangible, just like a ghost! In this state, the mage is a semi-transparent ghost-image of himself, barely visible and +20% to prowl (those who do not have the Prowl skill can, un-

der this spell, effectively Prowl at 30%). For brief moments (1D6 seconds, long enough to throw a physical punch or cast a simple spell), he can become visible and completely tangible (as if the spell were never cast). The Ghostwalker can also hover and fly at a maximum speed of 20 mph (32 km) up to 1000 feet (305 m) high. In the ghost state, he is also impervious to all physical and energy attacks, but psionics and magic (including those that can affect a **ghost/spirit**, like Constrain Being, Turn Dead and Exorcism!) will hurt him as a Ghostwalker. Likewise, the character will be unable to physically hurt or interact with others except with psionics. The only way to speak, cast magic or deliver a physical attack is for the Ghostwalker to momentarily becoming solid, during which time the character *can* be hurt by physical means.

A final note: While ethereal, the character will be thought of as a ghost by those who see or hear him. This gives the character a Horror Factor of 14. Likewise, while ghostlike, other ghosts and spirits will believe the character is one of them and *may* (01-20% chance) communicate with him.

Level Twelve

Ghost Ship

Range: Immediate area.

Duration: Two hours per level of experience (triple for supernatural lords of the dead; i.e. Death gods and demon lords).

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Three Hundred (half for Necromancers and supernatural lords of the dead).

This powerful magic conjures forth a spectral galleon, complete with a crew of ghostly mariners who are bound to the ship and will obey the spell caster's every command! The crew of the ship may not leave their stations on the vessel, so the commander of a Ghost Ship may not, for example, use these spirits to form a boarding party. **Likewise**, they will not attack any invaders who board the spectral vessel. Nautically, the ship will perform like a regular galleon, except that it moves at top speed no matter what the conditions (roughly 35 **mph/56 km**). Even in the fiercest storm, the ship will hardly rock at all, and will continue speeding along as if there was no storm. The ship and its crew all give off an unearthly glow, and the entire vessel has a collective Horror Factor of **15**. The ship is not armed other than with the weapons and abilities of its mortal crew. As many as three mortal passengers and one ton of cargo can be brought on board, per level of the spell caster's experience.

At the end of the spell's duration, the ship and its crew vanish without a trace over a period of 1D6 minutes. Any cargo or passengers on board will fall into the water if they do not disembark before the ship fades out entirely.

Haunting

Range: 100 foot (30.5 m) radius per level of experience.

Duration: Permanent!

Saving Throw: If the place being haunted contains holy ground, it gets a collective saving throw vs magic, at +2.

P.P.E.: Two Hundred and Fifty.

This spell is a curse that forever makes a place the abode of malignant spirits. Upon the casting of this spell, 2D4+2 Poltergeists and 1D4+2 Haunting Entities become locked to the area. These entities assume the personality of spirits of *anybody* who

died within the area of effect or whose body rests there as angry and restless **spirits**. They shall be doomed to walk this earth, unable to return to their much-deserved rest until exorcised or until the Eternal Rest spell is cast on them. Until **then**, these "ghosts" shall be angry and hostile to any living creature who enters the area. When cast upon a building, this spell makes the place virtually uninhabitable until the ghosts within are laid to rest. For stats and information on Poltergeists and Haunting Entities (the classic ghost), please refer to the **Monsters and Animals** sourcebook, page 52.



Shadow Magic

Before his untimely death in the mountains that join the Baalgor Wastelands to the **Nimro** Kingdom, famed Wizard and Scholar Gregor the Black wrote this definitive volume on the ancient and obscure magical art of *Shadowcasting*. This school of Wizardry had been prominent during the Time of a Thousand **Magicks**, but went into serious decline during the Elf-Dwarf War, as its greatest practitioners were all slaughtered in the fighting of that terrible age. For centuries, only a handful of Wizards kept the knowledge of this art alive, passing what they knew to hand-picked apprentices. Over the years, many Shadow Magic spells were lost one by one. Those that remain today represent only the smallest sampling of a once great and powerful art.

Gregor the Black wrote *Shadow Magic* in the hopes that should he die before he found an apprentice (as indeed was the case), his knowledge would not die with him. Unfortunately, Gregor never finished his book, completing only basic **descriptions** of a handful of Shadow spells, and not the actual formulae for learning them. If Shadow Magic is ever to survive, then those who read this book can try to concoct spells based on the data it contains or must seek out the few remaining masters of this art and beseech them to pass on what they know. Otherwise, Shadowcasting might very well disappear completely within the next hundred years, if not sooner.

Aside from Gregor the Black, the only other "known" practitioners of Shadowcasting include the following Wizards:

Skullen Macabra, a **Kobold** living deep underneath the Old Kingdom mountains.

Hanish Iron Eyes, a Wolfen serving in the Imperial Army somewhere in the disputed area between the Wolfen Empire and the Eastern Territory.

Cebelle the Weary, an old human crone living as a hermit somewhere in the Western Empire. Some say on the outskirts of Caer **Itom**, others say in the Yin-Sloth Periphery.

Mox Moda, an Elf last seen on the island kingdom of **Lopan**, but who disappeared around the time of the last Olympics there.

Rumor has it this forgotten magic still thrives in the Land of the Damned, but nobody knows for sure.

Level Two

Darklight

Range: Near self or up to 30 feet (9.1 m) away.

Duration: 10 melee rounds per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None

P.P.E.: Six

The Shadowcaster creates a small globe of ultraviolet light that illuminates a 10 foot (3 m) area per level of experience. This light will not keep any supernatural creatures at bay, but it will, for some strange reason, reveal the invisible. The spell caster can mentally move the globe of Darklight along with himself (at a maximum speed of 12), and he can also send it up to 30 feet (9.1 m) away.

Slip Shadow

Range: Self or others by touch.

Duration: Five minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None

P.P.E.: Five

While this spell is in **effect**, the mage has no shadow whatsoever, making it easier for him to sneak around unnoticed. This spell adds a **+10%** bonus to any Prowl rolls made under its duration; those who do not have the Prowl skill can, under this spell, effectively Prowl at 20%.

Level Three

Shadow Bolt

Range: 50 feet (15.2 m) per level of experience.

Duration: Instant.

Damage: 2D4 plus an additional 1D4 per level of experience.

Saving Throw: The victim may dodge if he sees the bolt coming and rolls, but is -5 to do so when it is cast in darkness.

P.P.E.: Six

The caster fires an inky black ray of dark energy from any part of his body he chooses. This spell does not require an specific gesturing of any kind. Add **+2D4** damage when cast at a ley line, and add **+4D4** damage when cast at a ley line nexus.

Level Five

Shadeshield

Range: Self.

Duration: Five minutes per level of experience.

Damage: 2D6 if used as a bludgeon.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Twelve

This spell conjures a large shield of pure darkness to be used by the spell caster. The shield offers standard resistance to physical attacks, and can be used as a bashing weapon to boot. In addition, a Shadeshield can be used to parry certain incoming magical attacks. This is a little tricky, however, and all parry rolls must be done at -5. Spells which may be parried by a Shadeshield include: Call Lightning, Ball Lightning, Energy Bolt, Fire Ball, Fire Bolt, **Mini-Fireballs**, Plasma **Bolt**, Shadow Bolt, Spectral Hand and Sword, Shadesword, Hail, Ice Ball, Ice Bolt, and Shards of Ice.

Shadowsight

Range: 100 foot (30.5 m) radius.

Duration: Two melee rounds per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Fifteen

When under the effect of this spell, every shadow within range acts as the Wizard's eyes and ears. Wherever there is a shadow within range, the mage can spy effortlessly and without any chance of detection, as if he were actually standing, concealed, in the shadow itself. Indoors and underground, this spell gives the mage virtually complete surveillance capabilities over a large area. As the spell caster moves, so does the area of effect. However, the mage must direct his attention to a particular shadow and the sights and sounds around it, not all shadows at once. Shadowsight can not see through walls, but if there is a shadow around the corner or on the other side of a wall, and within range of the spell, then the spell caster can still view and hear what is happening.

Wall of Darkness

Range: Covers a 20 foot (6 m) area plus 10 feet (3 m) per level of experience.

Duration: 10 minutes per level of experience.

Damage: Special.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Fifteen

This magic creates a towering wall of pure, magical darkness. No light can pass through it, nor can one see what is on the other side of it. Anyone who comes into contact with the wall must save vs magic or be magically paralyzed for one melee round. The effects of this paralysis are identical to those of the spell Paralysis: Lesser. Should a hand or arm be **paralyzed**, that person can not pick up objects, write, or use that hand or arm in any way for **15** seconds. Likewise, a paralyzed leg makes standing difficult, walking a real challenge, and running flat-out impossible. Those with a paralyzed leg have their Speed reduced by 80%, and they are at -2 to parry and dodge. If one's entire body is paralyzed, they will fall down and lie perfectly still. They can still breathe, and their heart will not stop, but other than that, the person is largely helpless. Those who fall into the Wall of Darkness will need a friend to **fish** them out somehow, otherwise they remain paralyzed for the full duration of the spell, recovering only when the wall disappears.

Wrapshadow

Range: 30 feet (9.1 m).

Duration: Four melees (60 seconds) per level of experience.

Damage: 1D4 per melee round in wraps.

Saving Throw: Special!

P.P.E.: Ten

Victims of this spell will find themselves assailed by **their** own shadow! As soon as the magic of the spell takes hold, the victim's shadow stands up off the ground or wall and wraps itself around the victim like a sheet. The shadow then begins to constrict, eventually holding the victim tightly, and preventing movement.

This spell can only be cast on one person at a time. Those who make their saving throw will break free of their shadow in only 1D4 melee rounds. Those who do not save will be held for the duration of the spell. The victim will take **1D4** points of

damage every melee round he tries to break free of its hold, speaks, tries to cast a spell or squirms around. Remaining still and silent avoids taking any damage at all. While wrapped up, the victim can not move, attack or defend himself. His only option is for a friend to incapacitate the spell caster, at which point, the enchantment instantly dissipates. The Dispel Magic and Dispel Magic Barrier spells can also make the shadow vanish. Characters with an M.E. of 18 or higher can struggle free by rolling an 18 or higher, but the shadow will try to wrap them up again the very next melee round and they will take **1D4** damage from each struggle.

Level Six

Shadow Boxer

Range: Up to 10 feet (3 m).

Duration: One minute (four melees) per level of experience.

Damage: Special.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Twenty

This spell animates the spell caster's shadow so that it may participate in combat! When the mage's shadow is animated, it adds one extra attack per melee round. The shadow itself has no Hit Points and can not be harmed by anything other than a Dispel Magic spell. To attack, the "shadow" may only use whatever weapons the spell caster has in hand at the moment and strikes at the end of the melee round. If the mage is unarmed or has his weapons sheathed, then the animated shadow may punch, kick, or grapple with opponents; it has all the same bonuses as its maker. The shadow may not perform skills or cast any spells nor gain the use of any of the caster's magic items.

Although animated, the shadow must remain attached to its maker. As a result, the shadow can stretch out to attack opponents as far away as 10 feet (3 m), but nothing beyond that. The only exception to this is if the spell caster has a bow or other missile weapon in hand. That being the case, the shadow may draw and fire missiles out to the weapon's normal range. The shadow is a "boxer" so all it can do is attack or parry. In the latter case, it may parry attacks directed at the spell caster as well as block or strike at attackers from behind.

Note: The spell caster's shadow is not intelligent nor does it have its own free will. It automatically responds to combat, responding accordingly to any **attack(s)** directed at its maker. Otherwise, it will behave like an ordinary shadow. Magic-using assassins have used this to their advantage more than once by casting the spell and springing their shadow into action when their intended victim least suspects any trouble. The Shadow Boxer can not be created in total darkness. The mage must be casting a shadow to use this magic.

Shadowfire

Range: 100 foot (30.5 m) radius +10 feet (3 m) per level of experience.

Duration: One melee round (15 seconds) per level of experience.

Damage: 3D6

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Twenty

This spell causes all shadows within range to transform into patches of burning darkness, a weird kind of black magical flame. Whoever comes into contact with this Shadowfire sustains 3D6 points of damage. Although this is technically burn damage, the spell Heal Burns will have no effect on wounds of this type. The flame only harms the living, which means that inanimate objects and the **undead** are unharmed. The only way to spread this fire is to somehow create more shadows in the area.

The only way to extinguish Shadowfire is by exposing it to strong light, such as bright lanterns, many torches or a Globe of Daylight. However, as long as the Shadowfire spell remains in **effect**, as soon as such sources of light are removed, the dark flames will return at once.

Level Eight



Shadesword

Range: Self.

Duration: Two minutes per level of experience.

Damage: 1D6 per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: Twenty-Two

This spell conjures a bladed weapon of pure darkness. The shape of the weapon is up to the spell caster, but most prefer to make this item one-handed so they may use it in conjunction with a Shadeshield. In addition to the damage **sustained**, anyone struck with a Shadesword must save vs magic. Those who fail not only take damage, but will be at -2 to strike and parry for the next melee round. Anyone receiving multiple hits from a shadesword must save vs magic for each, or suffer a cumulative

negative bonus for an extended duration (one melee per each strike by the sword).

While the spell is in effect, its maker can not sheath or throw the Shadesword, or the spell will break. Likewise, if it is knocked from its **creator's** hand, the implement will vanish and the spell will end.

Shades of Death

Range: By touch or up to six feet (1.8 m) away.

Duration: One day per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Twenty-Five

This spell can prolong the amount of time it takes a comatose or mortally wounded character to die by one day per experience level of the spell caster. This spell is useful for buying some time while searching for a means of returning a stricken comrade to life. Shades of Death has no recuperative power, however, and if by the end of the spell no means of resurrection or healing the stricken person can be applied, that person will die immediately.

Level Ten

Cloak of Darkness

Range: Self, up to 10 feet (3 m) away.

Duration: One minute per level of experience.

Damage: Special.

Saving Throw: Special.

P.P.E.: Eighty

A potentially devastating spell, this magic is generally shunned by those of good alignment because of its inherent cruelty.

Upon casting this spell, a huge, rippling jet-black cloak will billow out from the spell **caster's** back. (Or, if the caster is already wearing a cloak, then it shall be transformed into this likeness.) The mere sight of the Cloak gives the spell caster a Horror Factor of 12, but those who run away are the lucky ones. Against those who make their H.F. roll, the mage uses the Cloak as a sinister weapon, commanding it to drape over any single opponent (up to Giant-size) and swallow them whole! To perform this, the spell caster must first roll to strike, adding in only the Cloak's natural bonus of +3. To defend against the Cloak, one may only dodge out of the way; parrying the Cloak has no effect.

Those struck by the Cloak are swallowed up by it. Victims feel as if they are endlessly falling into a pit of pure, icy darkness. The dark magicks of the cloak instantly sap the victim of half of their Hit Points, although it leaves their S.D.C. intact. At this point, victims must save vs magic. Those who succeed will remain lost inside the Cloak for only one melee round (15 **seconds**), after which they shall be spit out, shaking and hurt but otherwise okay.

A failed save vs magic will make its victim remain in the Cloak for three minutes or the duration of the spell, whichever is shorter. Once the victim is spit out of the damned thing, the terrifying experience leaves him shaken. The character fights with all combat bonuses at half and skill performance is also half for 1D4 minutes.



Thankfully, the spell "caster can only keep one person swallowed up at a time, so the current victim must be disgorged before the next one can be swallowed. The same opponent may be swallowed and disgorged repeatedly, each time the victim losing half his current Hit Points. Each failed attempt to strike and swallow (roll to strike as usual) counts as one melee attack.

Curse of Darkness

Range: Touch or ten feet (3 m) per level of experience.

Duration: 24 hours per level of experience or (for 240 P.P.E.) permanent.

Damage: Special.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: One Hundred and Twenty, double to make permanent.

The victim of this curse must become a creature of the dark, unable to withstand any exposure to sunlight. Like a vampire, cursed individuals will burn, taking **1D4x10** points of damage *per melee round* of exposure to true sunlight. Exposure to a Globe of Daylight will inflict a mere 3D6 points of damage per round.

Living with the curse requires one to either become entirely nocturnal or to cover himself from head to toe with some kind of protective clothing to keep the sun off; full plate armor will work so long as the visor is kept down. Otherwise, the only remedy to this is a **Remove Curse** spell or somehow convincing the spell caster to remove it (not likely).

Level Eleven

Shadowgate

Range: Ten feet (3 m) per level of experience.

Duration: One melee round per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Two Hundred and Fifty

This awesome spell opens a portal between this world and the Realm of **Shadows**, that dark and mysterious world from which all Shadow Beasts come. As long as the portal remains open, one Shadow Beast (as per the spell Summon Shadow Beast) may be called forth and bound to the spell caster's service every melee **round**. In this fashion, a sorcerer may assemble a pack of Shadow Beasts with which to wreak havoc!

This power does not come without a price, however. For every single Shadow Beast summoned through the Shadowgate, the spell caster must perform a Battle of Wills, just as a **Summoner** would. If the spell caster succeeds, the Shadow Beast will do as he commands for 1D4+1 minutes (double for **Summoners**), after which the creature must either be sent back through the Shadowgate, or left to its own devices. Letting a Shadow Beast get out of control is dangerous at best and suicidal at worst, since these indiscriminate killing machines will often turn on their summoner just as easily as anyone else. **Note:** Shadow Beasts drawn through the Shadowgate behave exactly as if they would under the Summon Shadow Beast spell.

Level Thirteen

Shadow Self

Range: Self only.

Duration: Permanent.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: One Thousand!

This spell dramatically transforms the spell caster from a **flesh-and-blood** character into a creature of pure shadow! Those so transformed become a kind of monster able to merge with shadows (as per the Shadow Meld spell) at will. The mage retains his human shape, but will lose all other body features. His face, musculature, etc., all disappears and what remains is a flat inky blackness with eyes that glow slightly and a mouth which also glows slightly when opened. This monstrous appearance confers a Horror Factor of 12, and will encourage most folk to immediately shun or attack the character as some kind of demon or monstrosity (which is what he is, really). The character will no longer need to eat or breathe, though he will need to sleep. He also becomes effectively immortal; the character will no longer age, but he can be killed in combat, by poison, disease, etc.

While fighting, the character is considered a creature of magic, so any punching, kicking, clawing, biting, etc., he performs are considered magical attacks. Non-magical weapons (such as an ordinary sword or an axe) used by the character are still considered non-magical, even if the Shadow Self is using them. Likewise, only psionics, magic, magic weapons and weapons made of silver can hurt this being.

The Shadow Self can still wear clothing and use weapons and magic items if he chooses, or he can forego all of that and act as a creature of pure shadow. The dramatic change he has **under-**

gone will cause a random insanity to surface within 1D4 weeks. This insanity is **incurable**, and is just part of the process of becoming a creature of the shadows. Every 1D6 years **thereafter**, the character must save vs insanity or suffer another random insanity, a sign of his growing distance from normal mortal experience. Once done, this spell can not be undone.



Fulminations

This legendary book was originally penned by a team of Wizards who had joined forces in order to pioneer elemental-style magicks, especially those involving electricity. They had planned to publish the formulae of the spells they'd discovered, but as rumor has it, they were convinced by a higher power not to do so shortly before they released the final edition of their work. What they published instead were detailed descriptions of the magicks they had invented, leaving it to others to seek out the means of actually converting them into spells.

To this day, perhaps only a dozen practitioners of magic know any of the spells contained within *Fulminations*. Those who do guard their coveted knowledge most closely, and will only trade it with others offering equally obscure arcana, or who are offering to pay 5-10 times the going rate an alchemist would charge.

In addition, the formulae for a number of "common" spells involving electricity are also included within these pages. These are the Warlock spells: *Ball Lightning*, *Call Lightning*, *Electrical Field*, *Electro-Magnetism*, and *Protection from Lightning*. With the exception of Call Lightning, these spells are all Air Warlock spells, ordinarily **uncastable** by other men of magic. However, the formulae for these magicks have been written in such a way that Wizards can turn them into useable spells! To do this, one would have to perform a scroll conversion upon each of these spells at a penalty of -10%. Secondly, if the conversion goes well, the mage will have to expend double the usual amount of P.P.E. to cast them (Warlocks cast them for the listed amount). Third, any Warlock witnessing the Wizard casting these spells will *immediately* become very suspicious and may summon comrades to pay the spell caster a little visit. Depending on the Warlocks' temperament, they may only interrogate the mage for a few hours to find out how and where he learned *their* secrets. In a worst case scenario, the angry Warlocks may demand that the Wizard submit to a psychic Mind Wipe to forget all knowledge of the spells. Or, they may simply try to kill the character and be done with him once and for all.

Level One

Spark

Range: One foot (0.3 m) per level of experience.

Duration: Instantaneous.

Damage: May ignite highly combustible materials.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: One



A bright electrical spark flies off the spell caster's fingertips, causing an unpleasant but largely harmless jolt to whomever is hit by it (no damage). The spark will ignite any highly flammable material, such as **oil**, pitch, an unlit torch, dry paper, etc., upon contact. Note **that flammable** means things that will burn easily and vigorously. Things that are only *combustible* such as clothing, hair, wood, etc., will *not* be ignited by the spark, but may bear a tiny scorch mark.

Level Two

Static Charge

Range: Self or one other living being by touch.

Duration: One melee per level of experience or until the charge is released.

Damage: 1D4 damage +1 point per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Five

The spell caster electrifies himself or another person with a powerful static charge that will shock the next person who touches him. All of the subject's personal possessions are also electrified so touching any of them (as long as they remain on his person — removing them de-electrifies them) will also set off the charge and take damage from the item.

This spell can not discriminate between friend and foe, so if a friend accidentally bumps into a charged ally, he will take full damage. Likewise, whoever holds a static charge can hurt himself by charging up and then touching conductive material (i.e.,

metal or water) **with his** bare flesh. If that happens, then the character **will** have discharged the spell **into** himself, taking full damage from the blast.

Level Three

Electric Arc

Range: 30 feet (9 m) per level of experience.

Duration: One melee round (offering one or more shots).

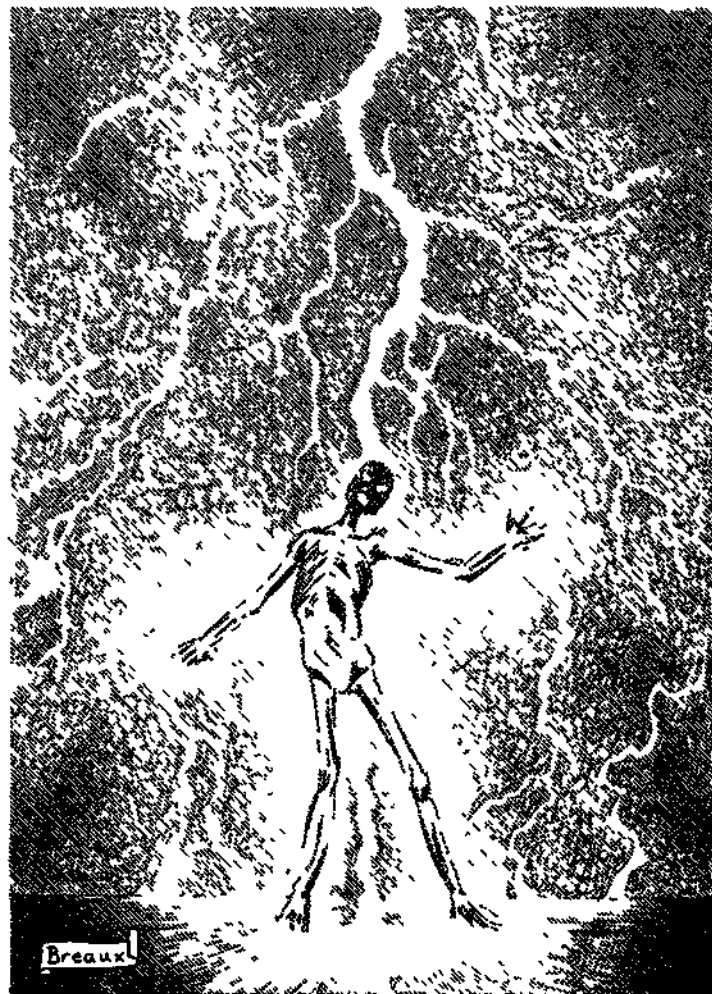
Damage: 2D4

Saving Throw: Dodge

P.P.E.: 8

A simple offensive spell, the Electric Arc causes a crackling bolt of blue energy to leap from the spell caster's **hand(s)** to the intended target — point and shoot; +2 to strike.

Each electrical blast counts as one melee **attack/action** and is limited by the character's total number of attacks. **This** means a character with four attacks per melee round uses up *two* attacks to cast the spell and fire once. This leaves two electrical attacks possible that melee round. While the damage isn't great, it **is** accurate, and is an easy, inexpensive spell to cast.



Lightning Bolt

Range: 100 feet (30.5 m) per level of experience!

Duration: Instant.

Damage: 3D6

Saving Throw: None, but the target can dodge the bolt if he knows the attack is coming and rolls a natural **18** or higher

P.P.E.: Ten

A single, powerful, bright blue-white bolt of crackling electricity springs forth from the mage's fingertips, eyes or mouth, blasting the target **with** a small lightning bolt. Point and **shoot**, +1 to strike.

Thunderbolt

Range: 200 feet (61 m)

Duration: Instant, but the thunderclap effect lasts for two melees (30 seconds).

Damage: Special!

Saving Throw: Save vs Horror Factor (10+) vs the thunderclap effect of the spell; there is no saving throw for the lightning damage.

P.P.E.: Twelve

This spell is a hybrid of the Wizard spell Lightning Bolt and the Air Warlock spell Thunderclap. Who or how **this** spell was originally designed is unknown, but prominent Warlocks suspect it was pioneered by a cabal of Wizards who have sought for eons to "convert" all known elemental magicks into forms that can be cast by Wizards.

When **this** spell **is** invoked, a bright bolt of lightning springs from the caster's fingertips, eyes, or mouth, blasting the target for 3D6 damage. At the same time, a terrific clap of thunder splits the air, startling everyone within 50 feet (15.2 m) of the blast site. The Thunderclap creates a Horror Factor of 10. Even those who save against H.F. are startled, giving the spell caster the initiative as well as a +1 bonus to strike and parry for the next two melee rounds.

Level Five

Electrify

Range: Self, one other or object by touch

Duration: One minute (four melees) per level of experience or until the electricity is discharged

Damage: 1D6 per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None

P.P.E.: Twenty-Five

This spell behaves like the Static Charge spell, with a few notable differences. First, the damage **is** increased to 1D6 per level of experience. Second, where a Static Charge may only be cast upon the spell caster or another living being, Electrify may be cast upon inanimate objects. The only condition is that the material being electrified must be able to conduct electricity. Thus, a metal sword may be electrified while a stone or wooden club may not. This spell is ideal for either delivering extra damage during melee combat or for laying traps.

Ride the Lightning

Range: Self only up to three miles (4.8 km) a minute.

Duration: One minute (four melees) per level of the spell caster.

Damage: None.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Twenty-Five

This dramatic form of locomotion is coveted by almost any spell caster who has a taste for making dramatic entrances and exits. Upon casting this spell, a thick bolt of lightning comes down from the sky and plants itself on the ground next to the

caster. While holding the bolt with at least one **hand**, the caster can fly through the air at the remarkable speed of 200 **mph** (320 km; can't go slower). While in flight the mage can not attack or cast spells nor does the lightning bolt inflict any damage. This spell must be cast outside or in a place that has access to the sky, even if only through a window (that lightning bolt has to come from somewhere), and the mage must be able to see or know his destination. Flying at this speed makes everything a blur, so observing things while flying is impossible.

Level Seven

Keyhole Lightning

Range: 300 feet (91.5 m).

Duration: One melee round, but can fire two small bolts per melee.

Damage: 1D4 per level of the spell caster, each.

Saving Throw: None, but the target can dodge the bolt if he knows the attack is coming; still, he's -3 to dodge.

Special Bonus: Can adjust the bolt's trajectory in mid-air making it +3 to strike.

P.P.E.: Twenty-Five

This spell causes the mage's hands to crackle with electrical energy, enabling him to hurl dazzling lightning bolts at his foes. The caster may hurl one bolt per attack. The bolts of this spell are extremely well guided and seldom miss. As they fly, the caster may even direct the bolts to bend around corners, swerve around obstructions (like a tree or another character) and fly through small openings in their search for the intended target. The spell got its name, in fact, from the Wizard who invented it. Legend has it he devised the spell so he might assassinate a rival by sending these lightning* bolts through the keyhole of his foe's locked door to his study.

Level Eight

Chain Lightning

Range: 300 feet (91.5 m).

Duration: Instant.

Damage: 1D6 per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None. This spell *always* hits its targets unless they roll a natural 20 or a modified 24 (with bonuses) to dodge!

P.P.E.: Forty

The caster creates one lightning bolt per each level of his experience. Each of the lightning bolts shoots down from the sky, hitting one of the caster's opponents. Each target may only be hit by a *single* lightning bolt (it has something to do with lightning never striking the same spot twice), making this spell ideal for handling numerous attackers at once.

The target or area to be struck must be within the caster's line of sight, and within 300 feet (91.5 m). Furthermore, this spell can only be cast outdoors or in buildings where there is a clear channel to the sky, like an arena or certain kinds of open-roofed theaters.

Level Nine

Spark of Life

Range: Touch.

Duration: Permanent.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Sixty

The mage can revive a recently deceased character by invoking this spell and touching the dead body. A bright spark of electricity will leap from the spell caster's hand into the body, and with a little luck, the deceased will come back to life. The success ratio for this spell is 40% +2% per level of experience (plus any bonuses to save vs **coma/death** the deceased may have). If the spell fails, multiple attempts can be tried, but each subsequent try is done at -10%. This spell will only work on bodies that have been dead for less than 24 hours, so while the mage can afford to take a few tries, time remains of the essence.

Upon a successful use of this spell, the person will revive in 1D4 melee rounds. **Note:** This spell will not restore missing limbs, heal burns, mend wounds or cure insanity, so any wounds need to be bound before being revived, or immediately thereafter. The character does get back 25% of his Hit Points. His remaining Hit Points and all of his S.D.C. must be recovered through rest, healing or other magical means.

Level Ten

Fulmination

Range: 600 feet (183 m) +50 feet (15.2 m) per level of experience.

Duration: Instant.

Damage: Ten points per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None. The victim can try to dodge the bolt if he sees it coming, but only on a natural 20 or a modified roll of 24 or higher (with bonuses).

P.P.E.: Seventy-Five

The spell caster calls forth a *massive* lightning bolt from the sky! Whatever is directly hit by the **fulmination** takes full damage. Everything within 25 feet (7.6 m) of the blast site takes half damage. Everything within 25 to 50 feet (7.6 m to 15.2 m) of the blast site takes 1D4 points of damage. If this spell is cast upon a body of water, then the blast radius is *doubled*.

Wall of Electricity

Range: Up to 300 feet (91.5 m) from the spell caster.

Duration: One melee per level of experience.

Damage: 1D4x10+1D6 per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Fifty

The spell caster can recreate an electrical wall that stands 10 feet (3 m) tall by 20 feet (6.1 m) long. It is only six inches (.15 m) thick. The size can be modified by the mage to be smaller or 10 feet (3 m) of length can be added for ever level of experience. Anybody who touches it or tries to leap or ride through it takes 1D4x10, damage +1D6 per level of the spell caster.

Level Twelve

Sheet Lightning

Range: Up to 300 feet (91.5 m) from the spell caster.

Duration: One melee per level of experience.

Damage: 1D4 per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: One Hundred and Fifty

Upon casting this spell, a horizontal sheet of electrical energy rains down from the sky to cover whatever target the spell caster chooses. The "sheet" of lightning is 10 feet (3 m) long and two feet (0.6 m) wide per level of experience, and will affect *everyone* caught inside of its expanse. Sheet lightning is excellent for attacking and driving away multiple foes or for cornering powerful ones.



Mystic Bulwarks

Umidus the Builder, famed **Dwarven** Wizard and eccentric from the Time of a Thousand Magicks, was perhaps best known for his obsession with using magic as a means of constructing things. Over the course of his very long and distinguished career, Umidus invented a number of kinds of spells toward this end. His goal, it was said, was to permanently erect an entire castle using nothing more than the mystic arts as his tools. He came fairly close, having finished roughly 90% of his dream castle when jealous **Elven** spell casters unleashed some kind of unknown magic force that destroyed the castle and poor Umidus, who was sleeping inside.

Most of **Umidus'** writings were annihilated in the cowardly attack, and since the Great Builder (as he liked to call himself) was as grouchy as he was brilliant, he had very few students who might have kept copies of his spellbooks. Thankfully, one of **Umidus'** very few fans had convinced the Wizard to let him copy a few of his spellbooks months earlier, so at least some of his work was saved. The compiled excerpts from **Umidus'** books became the *Mystic Bulwarks*. Over the years, however, endless copying and recopying of the original has rendered much of it **undiscernible**, so all that remains are a few **descriptions** of his more unique spells. The rest is gobbledygook.

Were *Mystic Bulwarks* somehow rewritten into something that could be **read**, it would contain the full spell formulae for a number of spells involving the magical construction of walls. Chief among them are numerous wall spells that remain in use today by both Wizards and Warlocks, such as: *Dispel Magic Barriers*, *Energy Field*, *Impenetrable Wall of Force*, *Wall of Thorns*, *Wall of Clay*, *Wall of Iron*, *Wall of Stone* (**Umidus'** favorite), *Screaming Wall of Flame*, *Wall of Flame*, and *Wall of Ice*.

The pages containing the spell formulae for all of these spells could be used either as scrolls or could be converted into spell knowledge if only they could be discerned. The Keepers who owned this copy of *Mystic Bulwarks* did so in the hopes that

someday, the writing within it could be deciphered and a new family of spells could be brought into the world. Whether this book would be allowed within the Library of **Bletherad** is unlikely, since it is right on the line of containing magical knowledge.

G.M. Note: All walls described in *Mystic Bulwarks* can be neutralized with the Dispel Magic Barrier spell. Most are considered Earth Elemental spells.

Level Four

Wall of Ivy

Range: Covers a 20 foot (6.1 m) area plus 10 feet (3 m) per level of experience.

Duration: 10 minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Fifteen (200 P.P.E. makes the ivy permanent. A permanent wall is not animated, just lovely).

This magic creates a dense wall of ivy vines that can stand alone or be attached to a **trellace** or wall. Each foot of these tough vines has 12 S.D.C., so chopping through them will be a laborious task. The vines of the wall are also animated, and will wrap around whoever comes in contact with the wall. Anyone so entangled will be at **-4** to strike and parry, and will lose two melee attacks per round while **struggling** to get free. Requires a combined P.S. of 19 or higher to pull free. Those with a P.S. **21** or higher can break free with one mighty **pull**, but it counts as one melee action and the character loses initiative. Note: The *spell caster* can climb the wall at double his normal **speed**, in **this** case, helped along by the animated vines.

Wall of Light

Range: Covers a 20 foot (6.1 m) area plus 10 feet (3 m) per level of experience.

Duration: 10 minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Fifteen

This spell creates a shimmering wall of luminescence, that not only lights up an area like a modern **ballpark**, but those not prepared to shield their eyes when the wall first goes up will be momentarily blinded by it unless they successfully save vs magic. Those blinded by the wall will be at **-8** to strike, parry and dodge for one melee round (**15** seconds). Note: This wall will keep vampires at bay, but it will not hurt them.

Level Six

Wall of Swords

Range: Covers a 20 foot (6.1 m) area plus 10 feet (3 m) per level of experience.

Duration: 10 minutes per level of experience.

Damage: 6D6 per melee round.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Thirty

With this spell, a massive steel wall bristling with sword-like blades comes into being. The wall itself has 150 S.D.C. total. Whoever is pushed or runs into the wall will suffer 6D6 damage as some of the wall's many swords hack and slash away at the victim. There are so many blade-appendages on the wall that

trying to parry them is a fruitless **effort**; for every one that gets parried, three more will sneak through. The only viable defense is to run away.

This brings up the second aspect of this wall — it can be moved. Unlike most magical walls, the spell caster can mentally push the wall along forward or backwards at half his normal running speed. Unless he can see through the wall (using some kind of **X-Ray** magic, perhaps), or he has an ally spotting for him, the mage will be unable to see where to steer his wall. When moving it down a large hallway or sweeping it across a crowded battlefield, the Wall of Swords is an unholy terror. When using it to chase around one or two enemies, it loses its effectiveness. Note that the wall can be **blocked/stopped** by other magic barriers or magically dispelled.

Wall of Revelation

Range: Covers a 20 foot (6.1 m) area plus 10 feet (3 m) per level of experience.

Duration: 10 minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: -2 to save.

P.P.E.: Thirty, but to make permanent for a period lasting 10 years, 930 P.P.E. must be spent.

This is a shimmering wall of translucent magical energy through which anything may pass. However, as one goes through the wall, it will detect invisibility, see the aura of any who goes through it, detect evil, magic, illness and the supernatural, all of which is silently transmitted to the spell caster who made it. The Wall will even alert the spell caster if the passer-through is not in his true form (i.e, has changed his shape).

G.M. Note: In ages gone by, certain rulers were known for having walls such as **these** permanently erected within castle entrances and throne room doorways. It is also said that this spell and others like it have been used to great effect toward the detection and persecution of Changelings throughout history.

Wall of Truth

Range: Covers a 10 foot (3 m) area plus 10 feet (3 m) per level of experience.

Duration: Five minutes per level of experience for the wall and the magical effect that compels those who pass to tell the truth.

Saving Throw: -3 to save.

P.P.E.: Forty, but to make permanent for a period lasting 8 years, 1040 P.P.E. must be spent.

This wall is a thin, hazy green mist. All who pass through it feel a tingling and sense of positiveness pass over them. When questioned by the spell caster who created the Mist Wall, all who passed will answer him truthfully. In ages gone by, kings and priests often erected such permanent walls in the entrance to throne rooms, alter rooms, sanctums and interrogation rooms.

Whirling Wall

Range: Self, covering a 10 foot (3 m) radius around him.

Duration: 5 minutes per level of experience.

Damage: Varies

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: Thirty-Five

This spell whips up a whirling barrier of magical stone plates that circle the spell caster at incredibly fast speed. For each level

of the caster's experience, four plates are created. Together, these plates form a tight defense against incoming attacks

The Whirling Wall provides the spell caster **with** an automatic parry to any incoming physical attack. (Spell and psionic attacks still get through.) For each plate in the wall, the **auto**-matic parry receives a +1 bonus. To get through a Whirling Wall with more than twenty plates in it, the attacker must roll a natural 20 or find some other way to get to his foe.

Missile and area attacks are the only feasible means of assaulting the Whirling Wall, since anybody trying to get close enough for a melee attack will be battered by the whirling plates before they can get through. Those who come into direct contact with the wall will automatically receive 1D6 damage, lose one melee attack that round, and will be thrown back 1D6 feet (0.3 to 1.8 m). On the flip side, each time an attacker gets hit by a whirling plate, it shatters and disappears.

The maker of the Whirling Wall may not move while the wall is up, but he may choose to **fire** the whirling plates at **his** adversaries. The plates may be hurled in volleys of up to six plates at once (6D6 damage). Each volley is considered a single attack, and the spell caster makes only one roll "to strike" for the entire volley. Plates fired off in volleys are destroyed whether they hit **their** target or not. Since these plates are magically guided, the caster receives a +3 to strike when firing them. No other bonuses apply. Those on the receiving end of a plate volley can try to dodge them at a penalty of -2.



Level Ten

Gem Wall

Range: Covers a 20 foot (6.1 m) area plus 10 feet (3 m) per level of experience.

Duration: 15 minutes per level of experience.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: One Hundred and Thirty.

A gem-like wall comes into existence forming a strong barrier between the spell caster and his enemies. The wall has 250 S.D.C. per level of its maker! The spell caster can *not* create this wall in mid-air so that it drops on somebody. Nor can the wall form right where somebody is standing and trap them inside. In such a case, the person is pushed back by the magic of the spell and will **find** himself on the other side of the wall from the caster.

Level Twelve

Dimensional Barrier

Range: Covers a radius of 250 feet (76.3 m), plus 50 feet (15.2 m) per level of the caster's experience.

Duration: One hour per level of experience.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: One Hundred and Fifty

This barrier prevents any kind of dimensional breach within its area of effect. That means no Rifts or dimensional portals can be created, nor can any dimensional **teleportation** work.

G.M. Note: This spell is an ideal method for trapping or blocking foes such as dragons and demons who ordinarily use dimensional teleportation as an escape method as well as a mode of transportation.

Great Wall (Spell of Legend)

Range: Varies.

Duration: One week per level of experience/permanent.

Damage: 1D6x10 to those standing in the wall's way.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 1,500/3,000

This spell is Umidus' crowning achievement both as a Wizard and as a builder. Although Umidus did not invent this spell of legend, it was he who rediscovered it after it had been forgotten for well over a thousand years. He first used this spell during the *Siege of Fedritem* (an act said by some to have forestalled the outbreak of the Elf-Dwarf War by several decades) shortly before his death.

When the spell is first cast, a mammoth, fortified wall springs up from the ground. The wall itself is 100 feet (30.5 m) long, 100 feet (30.5 m) tall, and 50 (15.2 m) feet wide. Large parapets stud the top edges of the wall, giving defenders atop it a good vantage from which to repel attackers.

When the Great Wall first bursts forth from the ground, it takes it a full 15 seconds to do so. This gives anybody standing there ample opportunity to either jump off or to ride the wall to its full height (and figure out how to get down later). Each melee round thereafter, the wall will extend itself on either side by another 100 feet (30.5 m). When initially casting this spell, the mage must decide whether the wall will be straight or if it will take the form of a circle.

The advance of this wall is unstoppable, as it will punch through or climb on top of anything in its path. Buildings, walls and other constructions will simply be punched through. Large obstacles like hills and mountains will simply force the wall to snake its way over them (and around waterways). The Great Wall will continue extending out at both ends for up to 1000 feet (305 m) per level of the spell caster. After the wall has finished growing, it will remain for a week per each level of the sorcerer's experience. If the caster chooses, he may expend 3,000 P.P.E. (instead of the usual 1,500) when casting this spell to make the Great Wall permanent. Doing this will also *permanently* sap one point of P.E. from the spell caster and the maximum possible length of the wall is half. **G.M. Note:** Despite the great costs of making permanent Great Walls, it is clear that both the Elves and Dwarves made several of them during their titanic conflict, as the ruins of such can be found crisscrossing the Old Kingdom Mountains and the Old Kingdom Lowlands.

Like a typical castle wall, the Great Wall has 500 S.D.C. per 10x10x10 foot (3m) section. Considering the wall is 50 feet (15.3 m) thick at any given point, this makes smashing through it a *major* undertaking.



The Runic Forge

Not long ago, a band of adventurers discovered a runic anvil deep in the heart of the Old Kingdom mountains. The anvil possessed great powers and had been used to craft dozens of rune items in its heyday during the Elf-Dwarf War. The band labored to carry the anvil home to the Eastern Territory, and along the way, it told the bard of the group about many of the magic items it had helped to create. The bard wrote down the accounts prior to his band of travelers getting waylaid by **Orc** bandits somewhere between the Old Kingdom lowlands and the Eastern Territory's southwestern border. The anvil was lost, but the bard's account of it somehow survived and ended up in a second-hand shop in the Free City of Troker. A scholar for the Seed Library of **Alarassa** discovered it and sent it to the Library. It is now one of the surviving books of the Argosy, a living catalogue of rune weapons of old.

As far as can be **told**, none of the rune weapons mentioned here were destroyed during the Millennium of Purification, but their whereabouts can only be guessed at. Curiously enough, although all of the following information was relayed by the runic anvil, the anvil never revealed its name or powers, presumably because it was too modest to do so. There is no telling what it can do, or what else it knows. The few scholars who have reviewed this account suspect that if discovered, the anvil would know the secrets of rune magic. Whether it would teach those lost secrets to anybody is yet to be **seen** — this anvil remains lost somewhere in the world (Old Kingdom? Baalgor Wastelands?) waiting to be found. The following descriptions are of 21 legendary rune devices. Presumably they are all scattered around the **world**, some perhaps, lost forever.



Ceradze the Hesitant

Type: Scimitar; Minor Rune Sword.

Damage: 4D6

Alignment: Principled

Powers: Ceradze is a minor rune weapon and has no other powers other than those common to all rune weapons (independent personality, indestructible, +1 to all saving throws, etc.).

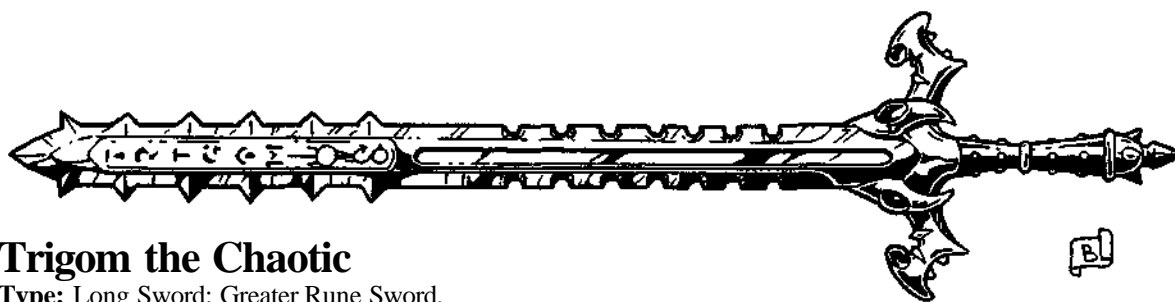
Curse: When unsheathed for battle, Ceradze's user will lose all but one of his melee attacks/actions for the first melee round. During that first round, Ceradze's user may use automatic parries, but may not dodge or try any other action. He will stand stock still, as if frozen in fear. What is really happening, however, is Ceradze is pooling its power for a devastating first strike! At the end of the first melee round, after every other combatant has exhausted their attacks, Ceradze's owner will fly into action, performing a lightning-fast strike that will automatically hit its target (unless Ceradze's owner rolls a natural 1 to strike). This first strike is an automatic critical strike; if the user rolled a critical strike for the attack to begin with, then the damage is tripled. If Ceradze's owner does not wish to attack by the end of the first melee round, then he may perform a single melee action. Starting with the second melee round, **Ceradze's** owner may fight normally.

While not exactly a curse per se, Ceradze's unusual method of entering battle has earned it the dubious title of

"the Hesitant," especially since a number of its owners have died while waiting through that critical first fifteen seconds to get their first blow in.

Personality: Ceradze is a peaceful entity and does not relish the thought of causing unnecessary bloodshed. However, once battle is **joined**, the weapon is cool and ruthless, fully ready to destroy those who oppose its wielder.

History: For the last several hundred years, Ceradze had been the weapon of choice for **CrajarKeleton**, a famous **Elven** duelist operating in Phi, **Lopan** and certain parts of the Western Empire. **Crajar's** phenomenal talent for parrying (some say it was a magical ring which made him so skilled at **deflecting** incoming blows) enabled him to wait out his opponent's opening moves, and then he would finish them off with a single blow from his mighty scimitar. Crajar made his living as a kind of freelance law enforcement official, offering to battle on behalf of an aggrieved party for the right price. Crajar recently died under mysterious circumstances in the Western Empire's Middle Kingdoms, however, and the fate of his famous sword is unknown. Some believe the renegade government of that breakaway province has stockpiled the weapon along with a number of other powerful magic items to be used in a future secession from the Empire.



Trigom the Chaotic

Type: Long Sword; Greater Rune Sword.

Damage: Special! When calculating damage, roll a D6 and consult the following table:

A die roll of 1: 2 points of damage.

A die roll of 2: 4 points of damage.

A die roll of 3: 8 points of damage.

A die roll of 4: 16 points of damage.

A die roll of 5: 32 points of damage.

A die roll of 6: 64 points of damage.

Alignment: Anarchist. The rune sword will allow itself to be handled by non-selfish characters, but it will not be very happy about it. If Trigom is owned by a non-selfish character, the first ten times the weapon strikes something in combat, there is a **01%-07%** chance that whatever damage the sword inflicts will be channeled into the *character*, not what was struck. After the tenth hit, Trigom will have gotten accustomed to its new owner, and the possibility of the sword hurting its handler will go away. **Powers:** All the common rune powers plus the following:

1) The holder of this sword can See Aura at will.

2) While this sword is in hand, it never will be accidentally dropped. Likewise, Trigom's wielder can not be disarmed of it during the course of open combat.

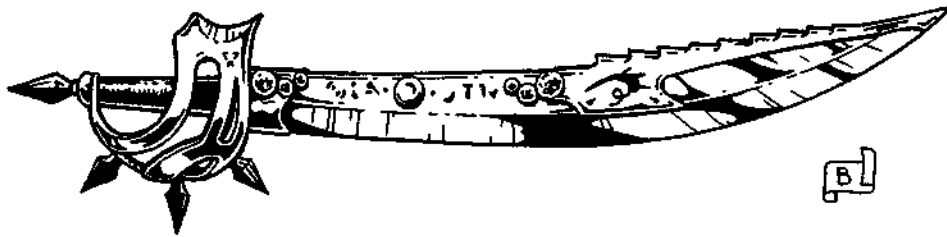
3) If the user holds Trigom out and concentrates for a full melee round, the weapon will point like a compass toward the nearest source of grave danger. Naturally, it will then encourage its owner to seek out that danger and vanquish it. Note: The definition of "**danger**" is left to the G.M.'s discretion. It could be a well-known monster or villain, or it could be a natural phenomenon like a simmering volcano, or it could be some little old lady who unbeknownst to her will awaken a terrible menace that will plague the world. Trigom can not discriminate between varying types and intensity of dangers. It just can sense a trouble spot in the world; how to handle it is up to **Trigom's** owner.

Curse: None.

Personality: Trigom is a reckless risk-taker who loves a good fight and skirting death and destruction. The sword will continually try to goad its owner into taking the riskiest way out of any problem, as well as undergoing chancy endeavors of every sort. The sword does not do this to get its owner into trouble; it is just a thrill junkie that lives vicariously through the exploits of its owners. Sitting unused in its scabbard is a fate worse than death for this weapon, and the more combat it sees (whatever the result), the better. If there is one thing Trigom feeds on, it is the unpredictability of life and death situations.

History: Trigom is just one of a number of "Chaos Swords" crafted during the Time of a Thousand Magicks. Trigom is one of the few that was actually designed into a bona fide rune weapon, however. Most Chaos Swords were simple wooden weapons enchanted with their unusual method of

dealing damage. Trigom and perhaps a half-dozen others were the finest of the lot, and all were presented to various **Dwarven** War Generals and their allies during the Age of Elves. When the Elf-Dwarf War broke out, many of these weapons were lost or captured by the Elves and cast into deep fissures of the earth. (Why the Elves found these weapons so repugnant is a mystery, especially since Trigom itself has been handled by numerous Elves during its history.) Among **Trigom's** many "achievements" (i.e., was used to great effect by somebody) include the slaying of the elder dragon *Thinbricke Smallscales* with a single blow, the capture of *Fortress Oerdag* during the Millennium of Purification, and several battles during the Western Empire's last round of civil wars. Trigom was last known to be the property of *Lord Geron Mael*, a knight of the Western Empire whose lands border the Old Kingdom, where he routinely battles hordes of bandits, monsters, and other hostile parties.



Sladjin the Marauder

Type: Cutlass; Greater Rune Sword.

Damage: 4D6

Alignment: Diabolic

Powers: In addition to **possessing** all common rune powers, Sladjin also bestows upon its user the following abilities, which can be used at will and at no cost to P.P.E. or I.S.P.:

1) Rot Wood (as per the earth elemental spell) at 10th level proficiency. Sladjin is especially fond of seeing this ability used for disabling large ships.

2) **Telekinetic Leap** (as per the physical psionic ability). This ability grants **Sladjin's** user to act as a one-man boarding party, able to leap to nearby ships with ease, or to leap to the top of a ship's rigging from the deck, giving him a strategic advantage in battle.

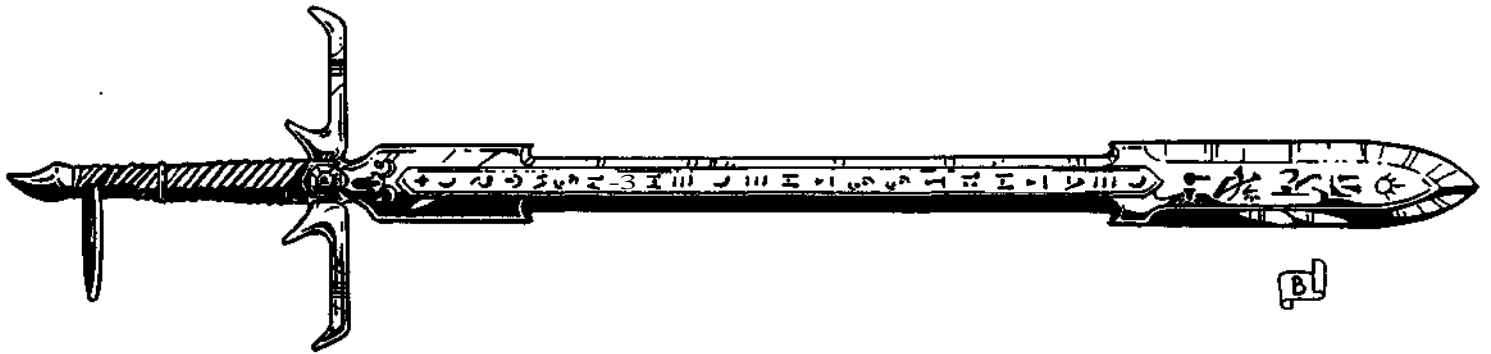
3) Cloud of Ash (as per the fire elemental spell) at 10th level proficiency. Sladjin's owner is unaffected by the spell, which will enable him to cover the deck of a ship with the spell and then wade into combat while the hapless crew try to defend themselves amid the burning ash.

Curse: None, other than that Sladjin has a well-deserved reputation for murder and villainy. Those who own this weapon will be assumed to be equally villainous unless they have a very extensive record to the contrary. And even then, one might wonder why exactly such a righteous hero would prefer to use such a blackguard of a weapon. The only folks who can get away with using Sladjin and not having their reputation tainted for it are assassins, bandits and pirates, for whose work this evil weapon was designed.

Personality: Sladjin has the spirit of the worst cutthroat imaginable. It revels in the senseless destruction of others, and especially enjoys the victimization of helpless people (especially

women and children). Unless Sladjin is paired with somebody equally diabolic, Sladjin will flood its owner with mental images of all the rape, murder and pillaging the sword has been a part of over its very long history. While this is **happening**, Sladjin's owner will suffer from terrible headaches and perhaps even some nausea from the revulsion caused by this sword's sick deeds. While under such a mental barrage, Sladjin's owner will be at -3 on initiative, -3 to strike, parry and dodge. The only remedy is to rid oneself of the weapon or to succumb to Sladjin's whims and become as evil as the sword itself. But at that point, one must ask: Who is really the master and who is the tool?

History: Sladjin has been an implement of terror along the southern waters of the Palladium World for centuries, having passed from one pirate captain to another. Periodically the weapon will be captured by either the **South-Winds** or **Timiro** navies, but before long, it always manages to find itself back in the hands of criminals. Sladjin played a pivotal role in pirate raids upon the Timiro cities of *Rankin* and *Nibis* over a thousand years ago. The Nibis raid was a suicidal gesture at best, since that fortified island is the home of a formidable array of Timiro warships. The pirates who organized that adventure had grossly overestimated their abilities and paid the price for it, but not before they successfully sank the Timiro frigate *Vanguard* and slew her captain using this rune sword's dark powers. Sladjin has also participated in countless acts of piracy on the high seas (especially in the waters separating the Land of the **South-Winds** from the Timiro Kingdom), along the South-Winds' coastline, and in and around the **Floenry** Isles.



Deathkiss, the Demon Sword

Type: Bastard Sword; Greater Rune Sword.

Damage: 3D6+10

Alignment: Aberrant. **Deathkiss** will allow itself to be used only by non-selfish individuals. If a selfish person picks up Deathkiss, the sword will request gently that she be relinquished at once. If refused, she will simply start killing the character by sapping him of 1D6 Hit Points per melee until the sword is let go. This draining attack is a pleasurable **experience**, and just as victims of the sword's wounds must resist the pleasure of the sword's bite (see below), so too must those selfish individuals under attack by the sword itself. If the selfish character can not bring himself to let go of the sword, or if a friend doesn't knock it from his hand, the selfish character might very well die holding on to the weapon. More than a few prospective owners of Deathkiss have met such a fate over the eons.

Powers: All the common rune powers plus the following:

1) +3 to all saving throws.

2) Adds +1 attack per melee round.

3) Soul Eating: If the sword is in contact with a victim it does 1D6 points of damage and if it is inside a victim, it does an additional 2D6 damage. The victim will never feel any pain from a Deathkiss wound. In fact, the sensation is so pleasurable that the victim must roll under their I.Q. on a D20 to avoid being immobilized by the shock of the sensation. And creatures killed by Deathkiss also have their souls consumed, making any kind of resurrection impossible. Deathkiss especially likes Selfish souls and will request more of them after a kill.

Curse: None, although the meaning behind the sword's title ("Demon Sword") has never been explained, leading some to think the weapon either contains the essence of a demon or was once a demon's property. In the second case, chances are that somewhere there is a demon host looking to retrieve the weapon, but such rumors have never been taken seriously, much less confirmed.

Personality: Deathkiss speaks to its owner in a soft, sensuous feminine voice. It comes across as very gentle and consoling, and will be steadfastly loyal to its owner. While **Deathkiss'** owner is alive, the sword will not allow herself to be held by anyone else unless her owner gives express permission for it.

Only when the owner dies or agrees to give the sword to somebody else will Deathkiss allow herself to be handled by another. Deathkiss will only ask those who pick her up uninvited to let her go. Those who refuse will fall under the life draining attack she uses on selfish handlers.

History: Deathkiss is carried in a sheath of iron chain interwoven with silver to form a special ward of preservation on its contents. The sword itself is a heavy two-handed bastard sword with a straight crosspiece. The pommel is a heavy "thorn" of sharp pointed steel. The handle is covered with twisted leather and has a loop of leather placed to be worn around the **wearer's** left wrist. At the center of the crosspiece is a two inch wide faceted topaz. On the other side of the sword from the gem is a circle of gold containing a rune inscription that **says**, "Death is the softest kiss."

Once drawn from its **scabbard**, **Deathkiss's** amber blade will ripple with a soft, shimmering glow. Complex and powerful runes are inscribed along the length of both sides of the blade.

The sword is very, very old, but it only ever remembers its last owner. Deathkiss was last the property of Mok A'Tal, a great war leader from the Eastern Territory. Mok A'Tal was last seen many years ago leading an exploration into the infamous *Tombs of Gersidi* near the **Timiro** Kingdom's border. He never returned from that ill-fated expedition, leading many to believe that his famed sword, as well as many of the other powerful magic items of his comrades still await discovery in that terrible place. However, in the last ten years, a new influx of adventurers have launched expeditions into the ruins, and a few have made it out alive. At least three different groups claimed to have had custody of the Demon Sword but lost it shortly after finding it. The current whereabouts of Deathkiss are **unknown**, but it is believed to be lost somewhere in the vast expanse of the Old Kingdom lowlands.

Note: This weapon originally appeared in the **Palladium Fantasy RPG, 1st Ed.**, under the adventure "The Tombs of Gersidi," by **Erick Wujcik**. This sword, like that adventure, has been a favorite among many long-time **Palladium Fantasy** fans. Deathkiss was reprinted here both to update it and to offer it to those who never got a chance to enjoy the weapon the first time around.



Jecetri the Messenger

Type: Throwing Knife; Greater Rune Blade.

Damage: 1D4x10 when thrown, 1D6 in normal combat.

Alignment: Unprincipled

Powers: All the common rune powers plus the following:

1) Jecetri (pronounced "jeh-KET-ree") enables its user to see clearly up to one mile (1.6 km) away. Images at that distance will appear as sharp and as clear as if they were being sighted through a powerful telescope or binoculars.

2) When thrown, Jecetri will fly up to one mile (1.6 km), so long as the thrower can see his target, is +4 to strike and does 1D4x10 damage.

If the thrower says his target's *true name* when hurling Jecetri, the rune dagger can not miss its target and strikes with a critical strike (2D4x10 **damage**)! When flying toward a "named target," Jecetri will fly around corners, dodge obstacles, and circle the victim until it can sink in. Once the dagger hits its target, it inflicts its terrible damage and **teleports** back into its owner's hand. However, Jecetri can only perform a "named strike" once to any given person. After that, if the target still lives, then Jecetri can only be thrown at them like a normal blade.

3) Upon hitting, Jecetri can deliver a telepathic message of up to one hundred words to its victim. This ability, sometimes called the "final word," is used most often to deliver a message of vengeance to those killed by the dagger, or a message of like intent.

Curse: None, other **than** the knife is virtually worthless when used in melee combat. Used as a hand to hand weapon, the dagger confers a -4 penalty to parry, and inflicts only 1D6 damage (although it is a magic weapon and will affect the undead and the supernatural).

Personality: Although Jecetri itself is of Unprincipled alignment, it will mirror the temperament of its owner. If its owner is a just warrior, Jecetri will be equally so. If its owner is obsessed with revenge and assassination, the dagger becomes a seething tool of dark retribution.

History: Jecetri's history is unknown up to about four hundred years ago, when the dagger was unearthed by a crew of laborers digging the foundation for a new castle in the Eastern Territory. How the dagger came to be hidden so deep underground is a mystery, and not even Jecetri itself knows of its origin, early history, or the circumstances of its burial. Once unearthed, the weapon became an official armament of the *House of Lirard*, a now defunct noble clan of the Eastern Territory. During its time with the Lirard army, Jecetri served valiantly, slaying a number of the house's enemies as well as an assortment of villains from the Old Kingdom. Most notably, the dagger turned the tide of the *Battle of Empty Graves*, some eighty years ago. During that engagement, the Lirard army had been fighting a losing battle against the undead army of *Dreldane of Sordun*, an infamous Necromancer of considerable power. Thankfully, *Lirardi* spies learned the **Necromancer's** true name the night before the battle and furnished their greatest warrior, an **Elven** Palladin named *Rilas the Red*, with Jecetri. When the Palladin saw Dreldane, he let

Jecetri fly and ended the battle in a single blow. In the celebration following **Dreldane's** defeat, tragedy struck the House of Lirard as assassins slew the Lirard noble family and Rilas the Red in a bloody midnight raid. Jecetri was stolen during the massacre and is currently thought to be the property of an assassins' guild operating out of the northern Eastern Territory. Since **then**, the descendants of the House of Lirard have put out a handsome reward to whoever brings these murderers to justice and returns Jecetri to its former owners. The question is, then, what kind of reward is enough to get somebody to relinquish a rune weapon?

Toltanna the Repentant

Type: Toltanna is a *vajra*, a mystic tool designed for holding P.P.E. and various spell powers. A vajra has a simple handgrip and a series of curved tines protruding from either end. The number of tines on both ends of the tool are identical. Toltanna is a *nine-point vajra*, one of the most powerful of its kind. That means on either end of the rune device are nine tines, each a magnifier and holder of magical energy. Greatest Rune Weapon.

Damage: 5D6 (see power #3, below)

Alignment: Unprincipled. Toltanna does not particularly care who handles it.

Powers: All the common rune powers plus the following:

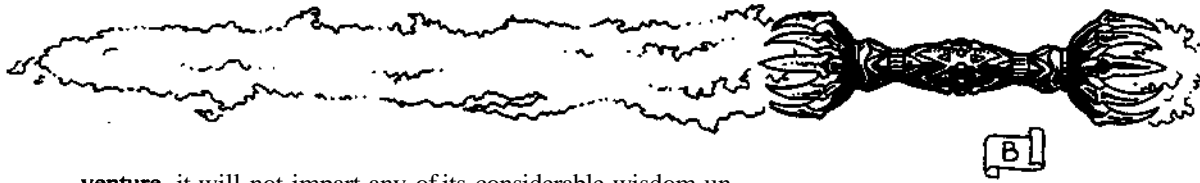
1) The device can store up to 300 P.P.E. for its owner to tap. This P.P.E. regenerates at a rate of three per hour. If the user wants, he can channel his own P.P.E. into the device for later use.

2) **Toltanna's** owner can also store up to nine spells in the device. This is done by casting the spell into the device, requiring the typical expenditure of P.P.E. The spell is held in the vajra until such time that the user wishes to use it again. At that point, the user can release the spell from Toltanna at no additional P.P.E. cost (each counts as one melee attack). Many of **Toltanna's** users have used this ability to barrage their enemies with **pre-cast** spells, thus decimating them before ever having to tap into the **vajra's** or their own P.P.E.

3) Upon mental command from **Toltanna's** owner, a glowing blade of magical energy will project from one of the vajra's ends, not entirely unlike a Psi-Sword. To do this, the user must channel 30 P.P.E. into the vajra or take 30 P.P.E. from Toltanna's P.P.E. reserve. Once the magical blade is in existence, it inflicts 5D6 damage per hit, confers a bonus of +2 to strike and parry, and will last for **10** minutes per level of **Toltanna's** user.

Curse: None, per se. Toltanna has been used to defeat a large number of monsters and villains in its career, and a few still remember the device and wish to extract revenge against it. Most notable among these are a dreaded cabal of *Lizard Mage Summoners* who reportedly rule a sizeable chunk of the mysterious Land of the Damned. Another is an adult Night Stalker Dragon named *Szgenis* who has coveted Toltanna for decades and vows to make it part of its personal treasure hoard. Whoever owns this remarkable device for any length of time will have to contend with either of these forces some day.

Personality: Toltanna is a fairly unobtrusive personality, content to passively observe its own use without objection or comment. Although the vajra has seen much combat and ad-



venture, it will not impart any of its considerable wisdom unless specifically asked by its owner, since it feels to volunteer knowledge **unrequested** is rude.

History: Forged when the empires of Elf and Dwarf were still young, **Toltanna** is one of the items that the Runic Anvil is most proud to be associated with. Despite **Toltanna's** mellow demeanor, the weapon yearns to bring justice and harmony to the world.



Hrodloc the Cleaver

Type: Big **Hrothgar** Axe; Greater Rune Weapon.

Damage: 6D6 or **1D6x10** (see #3).

Alignment: Anarchist

Powers: All the common rune powers plus the following:

1) The Long Strike. Up to three times a day, Hrodloc can project the force of its swing as a kind of magically directed shock wave. This attack has a range of 100 feet (30.5 m) per level of its owner.

2) Awareness up to 20 feet (6.1 m) away. Whoever owns this rune axe is attuned with his surroundings to such a degree that he can not be surprised and has a +5 bonus to initiative. This ability is always up, at no P.P.E. or **I.S.P** cost.

3) The Heat of Battle. After a full melee of combat, wielder may, if he desires, begin generating *intense* heat equivalent to that of the Fire Warlock spell Burst Into Flame. While evoking this ability, the damage done by a stroke of this axe increases from 6D6 to **1D6x10**. While in this state, **Hrodloc's** owner has a **01%-50%** chance of igniting any combustible he comes into contact with.

Curse: While no curses were imbued into this weapon at the time of its creation, it is said that those who own Hrodloc will contract Semi-Functional Mindless Aggression. However, this has never been **verified**, and could very well be the product of the unbalanced minds who have wielded this weapon rather than any shortcoming of the weapon itself. Only when somebody retrieves the axe and subjects it to an intense alchemical study will the truth be known.

Personality: Hrodloc has the temperament of a reckless warrior, quick to act, hot tempered, and one who takes pleasure from the heat of battle without any thought to its consequence or its greater context. In this regard, he is something of a mindless bruiser and thug. The axe means no harm, really — it just lives for the thick of the press and sees nothing wrong with the utter joy that bloodshed brings it. From Hrodloc's point of view, where is the harm in enjoying what you were designed for?

History: Hrodloc has spent most of its time in the Great Northern Wilderness, where it was sent as a gift to a certain Wolfen warlord by the Elves who commissioned it. The nameless Wolfen warlord had been wrongly thought to be the one who would unite the fractious Wolfen tribes under a single banner. Such a unification would not come until several thousand years later, long after the warlord who had originally owned Hrodloc died an ignominious death, and the axe itself was lost. Rumors abound about what happened to it and

its first owner. Most of them center around some kind of ambush on the shores of the Dragon's Claw bay area, while other stories concern the super-powerful ley line nexus in the **Bruu-Ga-Belimar** mountains. Whatever the cause, **Hrodloc** went missing for the entire Elf-Dwarf War and the Millennium of Purification. It was only seen again just ten years ago, apparently in the possession of a **Coyle** warlord who had used his runic might to band together a new horde of marauders. It was with this horde that the warlord planned to make trouble along the disputed border with the Eastern Territory. Before that happened, this warlord (who also is unnamed, strangely) was slain in an ambush. This one was apparently staged by some of his ex-lieutenants who wished to kill their

lord to get his mighty weapon. The story goes that those who staged *that* ambush died soon after in yet another ambush laid out by another group of bandits. Whether this seemingly unbreakable destiny of "death by ambush" is a true curse put upon the owners of this axe or just an extraordinary coincidence remains a mystery. Like the "curse" of Semi-Functional Mindless Aggression, it is a questionable aspect of the weapon that for the moment is just another part of **Hrodloc's** considerable body of lore.

Note: Naturally, it is up to the G.M. to decide if these things are really true or just hokum. We advise you implement what works best for your campaign, and what gives the weapon the most character.



Vagan's Hook

Type: Technically, this weapon is a Battle Axe, but it hardly looks like one. The device more resembles a large curved sword with an inward hook at its tip. On the other side of the hook, the blade thickens out and forms a counterweight that runs straight into the weapon's circular hilt. A Greatest Rune Axe.

Damage: 1D4x10

Alignment: Scrupulous

Powers: All the common rune powers plus the following:

1) To the owner of this weapon, it feels as if it weighs only 2-3 **lbs** (0.9-1.4 kg). However, to anyone else handling the weapon without the owner's permission, it feels as if it weighs over **100 lbs** (45.4 kg)! Even those who can heft the weapon under those circumstances will find it incredibly unbalanced, incurring a -5 to strike and parry penalty. These penalties do not apply to the weapon's rightful owner, of course, just those who help themselves to the item uninvited.

2) Any non-magical weapon or shield used to parry this axe will be shattered upon contact! Further, the weapon or shield will not have deflected the incoming blow one bit, which will continue to hit its intended target and inflict full damage. Magical weapons and shields can parry the axe, but they too run the risk of being shattered. Should a magical weapon or shield parry Vagan's Hook, the character wielding the rune axe should roll what his damage would have been if the attack had hit. That damage roll is the percentage chance of shattering the parrying implement. Thus, a magical sword that parries a blow that would have inflicted 40 points of damage runs a **01-40%** chance of shattering upon impact! Note: The only weapons immune to this effect are those enchanted for indestructibility or other rune weapons. This shattering effect does not work on armor, just items used to parry its attack.

3) While in combat with Vagan's Hook, the wielder has an Awe Factor of 12 among men at arms, and **15** among non-men at arms. Just seeing this whirling instrument of death in action is enough to inspire respect from the most skillful warrior. Those not versed in the ways of steel see this thing in motion and write it off as a suicide ticket — one would have to be crazy to go up against a weapon like this. Just *look* at it!

Curse: None. Skillful warriors who save against the awe factor of Vagan's Hook invariably will want to duel with its owner just to prove their skill, if not to try to win the device from its owner. This is hardly a curse, but more of an annoyance, especially when the owner keeps getting challenged by lesser warriors who really can not stand up to the punishment this axe deals out. At that point, how this situation is dealt with becomes a measure of Vagan's **Hook's** owner. Will he mercilessly slay any who challenge his strength, or will he learn that the *true* warrior's skill comes from *not* fighting?

Personality: A bit aloof, Vagan's Hook has undisguised contempt for most of those who fall before its blade. Unless the opponent put up a really good fight, the weapon will regard the fallen as just another poseur pretending to be a warrior of merit. Likewise, the weapon will not respect its owner's ability unless he is 7th level or higher, or defeats a truly worthy opponent in a fair fight. Until the owner wins the Hook's respect, the weapon shall make itself feel extra heavy and clumsy in its owner's grip, incurring a **-1** penalty to initiative, strike and parry.

History: Vagan's Hook was made specifically for the great **Dwarven** warrior *Laughing Vagan*, considered to be perhaps the finest axe-master in his day. While wielding this unusually shaped rune axe, Vagan's renown grew by leaps and bounds. The warrior bloodied many a battlefield with scores of dead enemies, and for close to fifty years it seemed as if

nobody would ever vanquish him. **Vagan's** career came to an end during the height of the Elf-Dwarf War, when at the *Battle of Needle Pass*, **Vagan** slew over one thousand **Elven** warriors by **himself**, and repelled the invaders!

The battle had taken place at an unusually narrow cleft in the mountains through which the Elven army had to pass. Vagan and a handful of others would hold the pass, and very soon into the fighting, only Vagan was left of his original unit. Armed only with his dreaded Hook, the stout warrior never stopped fighting until the Elven army withdrew, leaving behind an entire regiment of dead and dying soldiers. That battle marked the turning point in the first phase of the war, after which the battered but resilient **Dwarven** army began a long and **genocidal** counterattack into Elven territory. Vagan, **however**, did not accompany his brethren into the Elven Empire, during the course of the battle, the warrior suffered some kind of mental or emotional transformation, after which he said it was impossible for him to ever pick up a weapon again. He carried the Hook to the top of Mount Sullen (in what is now the Old Kingdom mountains), and hurled it as far away as he could. Vagan spent the rest of his days in hermit-like contemplation **while**, far away, the Elf-Dwarf War continued on its bloody course. To this day, stories persist that there remains an ageless Dwarven monk atop the Old Kingdom Mountains who preaches mercy and will dispense wisdom to those who seek it. This monk, they say, is Laughing Vagan, a sad old figure who neither laughs nor ages.

Vagan's Hook was not found until the Millennium of Purification, when it was secreted to a hidden arsenal where a variety of other rune weapons were being sheltered from the destructive efforts of the Purifiers. **The weapon** disappeared from that cache and has remained lost ever since. Three stories in the modern age attest that it still exists, however. The first comes from a hundred years ago, and speaks of a Western knight who wielded a "hooked axe that shattered whatever blade met it." Fifty years ago, there were stories of an assassin "whose Hook was the bane of even the mightiest warrior." And **today**, there circulate stories of a Dwarven soldier who insists that with "the Hook of the ancient master," he shall become the greatest warrior the world has ever known.

Kava and Kout, the Twins

Type: Paired Hand Axes; Greater Rune Weapons.

Damage: 4D6 each.

Alignment: Unprincipled

Powers: All the common rune powers plus the following:

1) When used singly or as paired weapons, each axe will return when thrown.

2) When used singly or as paired weapons, either axe can be spun around in its wielder's hand with such speed that it forms a shield that can parry incoming projectiles (including arrows, bullets and mini-missiles). When parrying projectiles in this fashion, the wielder of the Twins parries with a modest penalty of only a -2.

3) These long-hatted axes can be joined together to form a staff-like weapon with an axe head on either end. In this form, the Twins become as one. Damage from a single strike increases to 6D6, and the wielder gets one additional attack

per melee. Of course, paired weapon action with the Twins becomes impossible until the weapons are separated again. When in this form, the Twins act as a pole arm and not an axe; this should be kept in mind when calculating W.P. bonuses.

Curse: None.

Personality: Not much! Those who have owned these weapons remarked that for rune weapons, these two have incredibly subdued personalities, interacting with their owner hardly at all, even under the direst of circumstances. It is generally thought that the weapons spend most of their time in telepathic contact with each other, which is why they have little use for the company of the mere mortals who inevitably use them.

History: The Twins were originally crafted as separate **weapons**, meant for different warriors. Soon after their creation, however, they fell into the possession of a single knight (her race is uncertain), who enjoyed using the weapons in tandem. Unlike most rune weapons, which are impossible to use in tandem (their forceful personalities would be too much for their joint owner to bear), the Twins carried no such burden. Over the years, they have changed hands many, many times, and have only spent a few years separated from each other. It is said that since their forging, they have developed such an **attunement** to each other that whoever owns one of the axes and not the other will be magically compelled to seek out the other axe and do almost *anything* to obtain it. Other than this strange compulsion, the Twins are not known for making their owners go on quests or tasks of any kind.

Phiscode, the Cynic

Type: Mace and Chain; Greater Rune Weapon.

Damage: 4D6

Alignment: Anarchist

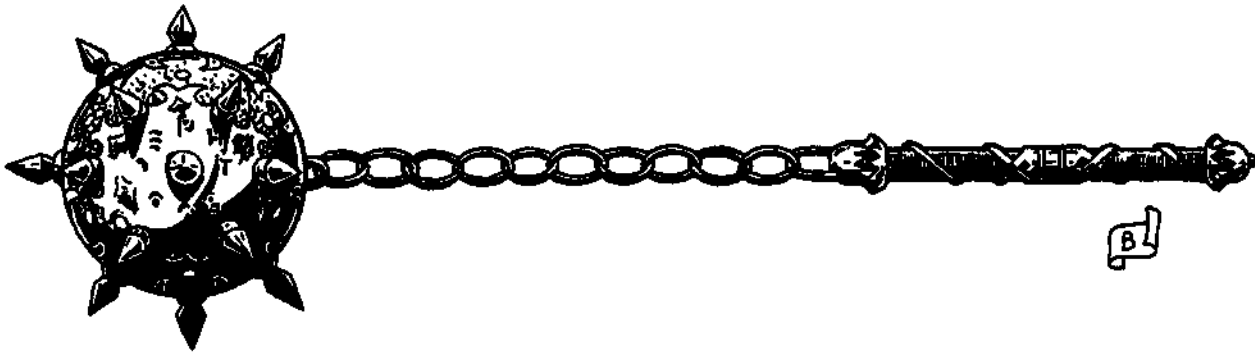
Powers: All the common rune powers plus the following:

1) Wizard Magic: Phiscode can cast any of the following spells at 5th level proficiency: See Wards, Sense Traps, Mystic **Alarm**, Detect Concealment, and See Aura. For this purpose, the weapon has 80 P.P.E., which it recovers at a rate of six per hour.

2) Three times daily, Phiscode can cast a superior form of the Words of Truth spell. The spell works as usual, except that those affected by it have no chance to resist the spell. Those whom Phiscode interrogates in this fashion are doomed to give up the truth, whether they like it or not.

3) Any Miscreant or Diabolic person wounded by this weapon must save vs magic to avoid developing terrible, vibrant scars. These **scars**, which reduce the victim's P.B. by -2, are known as the "Mark of the Liar," and have become Phiscode's calling card.

Curse: Whoever owns Phiscode is compelled to tell the truth at all times. The owner may choose to not volunteer pertinent information when talking to somebody, but he can not **deliberately** tell an untruth. Phiscode is not very willing to split hairs on this, so owners trying to lie and get away with it on a technicality are likely to be punished by the weapon for their insolence. When Phiscode decides to punish its owner, the character must save vs magic or lose 1D4 Hit Points *permanently!* Phiscode will not issue any warnings on this; as far as



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it is concerned its owner should know better. The weapon will explain the rules on this one time when it is first acquired by its new owner. After that, the owner is expected to uphold the truth, period.

Personality: Deeply suspicious of others, this weapon has something negative to say about everyone it meets. All it can see is the potential for duplicity and treachery in others, no matter how small, and focuses on that. ("You see that **Palladin**? Yeah, the one being decorated by the king for bravery. He seem shift to you? I think he just doesn't look right. Don't know what it is, but I wouldn't trust *that* guy with my life, that's for sure. That king's an idiot for giving him a medal. What, you don't believe me? **Figures.**")

History: The history of this weapon is almost completely unknown. It was actually *discarded* by its maker only a month after its creation, and whatever happened to it since then is unknown. The most recent yarn spun about this weapon was that it was in use by a wandering priest somewhere in the Land of the **South-Winds** who was on a mission to convert the various jungle tribes to his particular religion. Those who resisted got brained.

Merciless Murag

Type: Morning Star; Greater Rune Weapon.

Damage: 1D6x10

Alignment: Aberrant

Powers: All the common rune powers plus the following:

- 1) Soul Drinker! Murag may drink up to three souls a day. Those struck on a soul drinking attack must save vs magic, rolling a 14 or higher. Those who save suffer double damage from the blow. Those who do not save have their souls instantly **consumed**, and their life force forever snuffed out. Unlike other soul-drinking rune weapons, Murag has no other powers. It is said that the morning star once possessed many other powers but in time, as the weapon grew more and more corrupt, its powers disappeared one by one.

Curse: None, other than its merciless, bloodthirsty nature.

Personality: Grim and sullen, this weapon is a living example of the despair that a life of bloodshed brings. Murag originally was Principled, but over the millennia the countless deaths it caused took their toll on the entity within the weapon. In time, the weapon's alignment slowly slid downward into evil, and as it did so, its powers began to fade as a new power, the ability to drink souls, gradually emerged. Today, the weapon is a force of honorable evil that thoroughly reviles what it has become but has no desire to change its nature either. It simply exists to vent its discontent through the utter destruction of others. It is as if the souls this weapon devours are all in a futile attempt for Murag to fill the emptiness it feels within itself. Only characters of Aberrant or Principled alignments can use it, all others feel cold and frightened whenever they use it, and the damage it inflicts in their hands is a meager **1D4** points!

History: Through the ages, Murag has been used by champions and villains, heroes and cowards. Its breadth of experience is incredibly varied, and it would take an eternity for this thing to tell all of the stories of its travels. It is currently the possession of **LokungeBlack Socket**, a self-styled bandit warlord of the Old Kingdom who is building a small army for an eventual assault upon one of the more civilized realms, such as the Eastern Territory, the **Timiro** Kingdom, or perhaps even the Western Empire.

The Mucklechuck

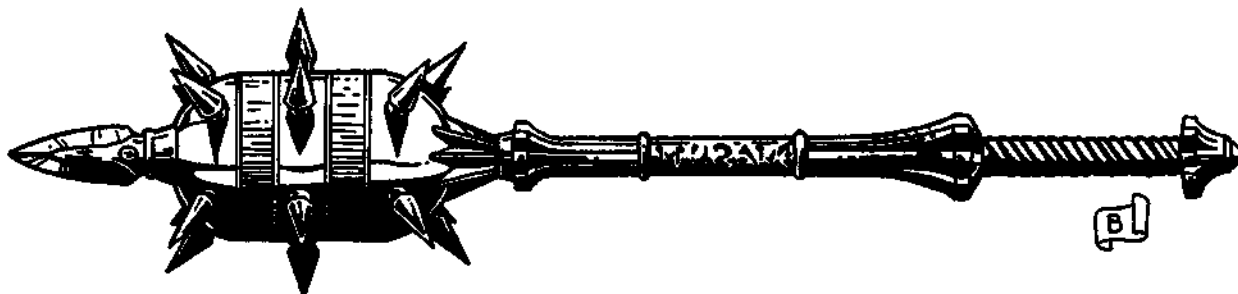
Type: Wooden War Club; Greater Rune Weapon.

Damage: 1D6x10

Alignment: Unprincipled

Powers: All the common rune powers plus the following:

- 1) Stunning Blows. Three times a day, the Mucklechuck can energize itself so that the next blow it lands on an opponent will knock him senseless unless he saves vs magic (13 or higher). Those who fail are knocked back 3D6 feet (1D6 meters) from the heavy blow and dazed for 1D6 melees.



B1

rounds (all combat bonuses, speed and number of attacks reduced by half while stunned).

2) Whoever owns this war club will be immune to the effects of any fear-causing magic or Horror Factor. The character is not necessarily prone to excessive risk-taking, nor will he have a false sense of immortality, he just **isn't** rattled or frightened while he has his magical war club at hand.

3) Elemental Magic: The **Mucklechuck** can cast the following Earth Elemental spells at 6th level proficiency: Identify Plants, Rot Wood, Grow Plants, Wither Plants, Animate Plants, and Wall of Thorns.

Curse: None.

Personality: This weapon has the gruff and dour personality of a crusty old codger who has seen it all and has yet to be impressed by any of it. For the most part, this weapon feels it has done its bit and would not mind being retired to a nice rack over a fireplace somewhere while listening to people tell stories about it for the rest of time. Alas, that is not meant to be, and time and again, it must suffer the hassle of being carried about by some adventurer and put through a lot of frivolous warring. The Mucklechuck really has grown rather tired of it all, and it does not mind sharing that with its owner.

History: "Ah ... you **don'** wanna hear it no how. Why you gotta bore me with this old rehash anyway?"



Cephestrecel

Type: Quarterstaff; Greater Rune Weapon.

Damage: 4D6

Alignment: Unprincipled

Powers: All the common rune powers plus the following:

1) The users gains +2 to spell strength, as well as a total of +3 to save vs magic (this is in place of the standard +1 to save vs magic that all rune weapons confer).

2) Cephestrecel *doubles* the user's P.P.E.

3) The staff also knows the following spells, which its owner may also use at will: **Darklight**, Wall of Light, Lightning Bolt, Ride Lightning, and Globe of Daylight, each at 6th level proficiency (descriptions are found earlier in this book). The P.P.E. requirement for casting these spells, however, will come out of the user's P.P.E. pool, which is doubled by the staff.

Curse: None, although the staff does have a disdain for all men of arms, an attitude its user often grows to share.

Personality: Cephestrecel is fairly blase about the ends to which its owner puts it, but it does enjoy a good fight now

and then The weapon exhibits disdain for anybody who can not solve their problems magically, as if that were the only real way of handling things. The weapon is especially contemptuous of men of arms, whose puny punching and bashing seems more like the pursuits of an animal than that of a higher being. In time, those who own this weapon will come to realize that its arrogance was typical of both the Dwarves and Elves at the time it was created.

History: Surprisingly little. The weapon was crafted for use by a practitioner of magic, but it was stolen literally from off the surface of the rune anvil on which it was hammered out! The events surrounding the theft are hazy at best, and there is no other information regarding where to find the magical staff. Since it is a Wizard's fighting tool, then a likely lead would be to visit the Wizard's Guilds of the West and East. They might be searching for it too, and would be in the market to hire some outside help for the task. Likewise, a research jaunt in the Great Library of Bletherad might turn up references to the staff and shed light on where it has been and who may have it at this time.



Chadham, the Mariner

Type: Trident; Greater Rune Weapon.

Damage: 6D6

Alignment: Scrupulous

Powers: All the common rune powers plus the following:

1) The holder of this weapon automatically enjoys the benefits of the Water Warlock spells Breathe Underwater, Swim Like the Dolphin, and Impervious to Ocean Depths. These abilities work at all times, at no P.P.E. cost.

2) Chadham can also cast the following Water Elemental spells at 6th level proficiency: Command Fish, Communicate with Sea Creatures, Speak Underwater, and Summon Sharks or Whales. For these powers, the trident has 100 P.P.E., which it recovers at a rate of 10 every three hours.

3) Chadham can also cast these additional Water Warlock spells at 6th level proficiency: Change Current, Calm Waters, Whirlpool, Hurricane, Part Waters, and Tidal Wave. For these powers, the trident has *another* 100 P.P.E., which it recovers at a rate of 10 every three hours. The two P.P.E. supplies in this weapon are separate and can not be used for each other's spell powers.

Curse: The owner of this weapon must immerse himself fully in water every 24 hours. If he fails to do this, he shall suffer 1D4 damage direct to Hit Points each hour until he immerses himself. Immersing himself will not heal this damage, but it will forestall any additional damage and satisfy the trident's needs.

Personality: Severe and business minded, **Chadham** has little use for anything outside of the mission at hand. If in the hands of a hesitant or slothful owner, Chadham will become miserable, begging its owner to either put it to some useful purpose or to relinquish it to somebody who will. For this action-oriented weapon of the sea, the worst fate possible is to languish for centuries in an undiscovered treasure trove. To

Chadham, that's like being in a coma. Or worse — a bad dream it can't awaken from.

History: In all of its years, Chadham has never been owned by anyone aside from Elves, who themselves all managed to hold the weapon for most of their lives. This places the trident in the unusual position of having been in use for thousands of years by a relatively small number of people. Most of these Elves were part of a sacred order devoted to the worship of the sea god **Algor**. Thirty years ago, that order vanished without a trace. Its famed trident turned up in the hands of a nameless **Elven** warrior who has subsequently forsaken the "dry world" for reasons unknown, and established a kingdom under the waves! Or so the story goes.



Balhan

Type: Spear/Lance; Greater Rune Weapon.

Damage: 6D6 (Spear)/1D6x10 (Lance).

Alignment: Principled

Powers: All the common rune powers plus the following:

1) Upon **command**, can transform from a long spear to a lance. In lance form, the weapon can only be properly used on **horseback**, and only by a Knight or a **Palladin**. Balhan will make itself feel too heavy to be lifted by any other O.C.C.

2) Grants the user Horsemanship: Palladin and Horsemanship: Exotic skills, both at 98%. If the user already has these skills, then they are raised to 98%. Also, the weapon grants the user an additional attack per melee while mounted on horseback and using the weapon as a lance.

3) This weapon inflicts double damage against any demon, Deevil, Alien Intelligence or dragon.

Curse: Balhan currently bears the curse of Misunderstanding, but this could be taken care of with a simple Remove Curse spell.

Personality: Balhan is an upright and moral crusader that wishes only to do the right thing in all cases. Though it was

crafted as an Elven weapon of war, it bears the Dwarves of this world no animosity. It will be especially cordial toward any good-aligned character who owns it. It will be less so with selfish characters, and any evil characters owning this weapon will virtually never enjoy any telepathic contact with the weapon whatsoever. Moreover, in the hands of evil, it only does half damage.

History: Balhan was crafted before the Elf-Dwarf War actually began, but even then, tensions ran high among the two peoples. The weapon was made as a present for the Captain of the Baalgor Lancers, an elite corps of Elven soldiers who were the pride of the Empire. The weapon was passed along from Captain to Captain over the centuries until the weapon was finally lost during the *Massacre of Senile Hill*, when every last Baalgor Lancer was wiped out in a brilliantly coordinated **Dwarven** ambush. The fate of the weapon remains unknown. It was thought to be taken into Dwarven custody and put into deep storage until the war's end. Such was the fate of many captured Elven weapons. Many of which remain locked away in Dwarven caches that remain unopened and undiscovered to this day in the Old Kingdom Mountains.



Arkane, the Controller

Type: Military Fork; Greatest Rune Weapon.

Damage: 1D4x10

Alignment: Aberrant

Powers: All the common rune powers plus the following:

1) Speed **Doubler**: Doubles the user's natural Spd attribute and gives him +2 to initiative and provides one additional attack per melee.

2) Shape-Changer: Arkane can transform into a less dangerous looking weapon of any type. When transformed, **Arkane's** runes disappear and it looks just like an ordinary weapon. However, whenever the weapon is drawn for combat, it resumes its natural self, with runes visible. This power has been used most commonly to transform Arkane into a small knife or club for concealment.

3) Free Will Consciousness: **Arkane** is completely self-aware, and has a free will and independent mind, so it can only be used by a person of *its* choosing. Arkane prefers Aberrant users but will accept anybody who has a sense of honor. Those who are dishonorable will receive **1D4x10** in damage each time they touch the weapon, as will any Elf (Arkane hates them). As an independent entity, Arkane has its own agenda and will frequently manipulate its user for its own insidious purposes. If necessary, Arkane will lie and even betray its owner if it means furthering its own goals. This also means that the weapon can refuse to let its user/owner (typically considered a “**partner**”) draw upon its powers and can strike/use its powers on its own, often contrary to the wishes of its owner! In addition, Arkane is impervious to mind control or possession of any kind, has a +1 to save vs illusion, an equivalent M.A. of 30, and frequently converses with its owner **telepathically** (again, often contrary to the user's wishes.)

Curse: None, except for the fact the Arkane is a ruthless creature who cares not one whit for the wants and needs of its owner. What Arkane wants, Arkane gets. If **Arkane's** owner is holding the weapon and tries to refuse the weapon, it will shock him for **1D4x10** points of damage!

Personality: **Cold**, heartless and obsessed with revenge. Arkane is incapable of striking up any meaningful friendship, even with a fellow Aberrant.

History: This weapon was created for the purpose of destroying the entire family line of **Godron Madara**, an **Elven** soldier who, in the Elf-Dwarf War, led his armies to many victories over the Dwarves. Godron was no champion of light himself, however, having ordered numerous mass slaughters of innocent **Dwarven civilians**. This military fork was crafted to be the perfect assassin's weapon, filled with the burning desire to destroy not only Godron but all of his kin, as well. Unfortunately, Arkane has no way of telling if he has actually succeeded in this quest, so his mission has turned into a quest to destroy all Elves and anybody else who it takes a disliking too, or thinks needs a good thrashing. Because of the weapon's forceful personality and insane agenda, it has actually been relinquished by a few of its owners in the past, despite the power the device brings. When last seen, it was the property of an assassins' guild, who kept the weapon as a kind of heirloom and brought it out for special jobs.

2) While his feet are on the **ground**, the wearer of Ironshoes has a 98% chance of maintaining his balance.

3) Ironshoes gives its user the ability of **Telekinetic Leap**, as per the physical psionic ability at will. This ability can not be used to add additional damage to kicking attacks, but the Ironshoes do negate the possibility of the character hurting himself upon landing.

Curse: Ironshoes bears the curses of Beets and Cinnamon Sticks, as per the Faerie Foods of the same name. Each effect can be neutralized with a separate Remove Curse spell.

Personality: Ironshoes is strangely devoid of personality. It is assumed the boots have some kind of presence within them, but it has never made itself known to any of its users.

History: These unusual iron boots were crafted as the last part of a grand suit of runic armor made for the Dwarven King **Wurgeld IV**, to celebrate his great victory over the Elves that led to the Second Peace of the Elf-Dwarf War. **Wurgeld**, of course, never lived to see the peace. He was ancient by the time the fighting finally ended, and his heart simply gave out once the responsibility of fighting the war subsided. Many of his subjects think that the only thing that had kept him alive for the last **10** years of his life was sheer determination to see this war to some kind of positive resolution for the Dwarves. Having achieved that, he went to his eternal rest without ever enjoying the praise his people had for him. In reverence for the fallen king, **Wurgeld's** armor was buried with him in his grand tomb, deep in the bowels of the Old Kingdom Mountains. The tomb itself was locked away and covered by controlled cave-ins so that grave robbers would not plunder the tomb later. Unfortunately, as the Elf-Dwarf war dragged on, the desperate Dwarves did just that. Tunneling back to the old **tomb**, they cracked open the vault and ransacked it of Wurgeld's priceless runic armor. The various pieces of the armor were distributed far and wide in the hopes that each piece would bring victory on a separate field. They did not, and most of the armor was simply lost in the fighting, scattered throughout time by looters, mercenaries and barbarians. Ironshoes are one of the few pieces that have finally surfaced since the end of the war. Reportedly, a Dwarven pirate named **Redbones the Lucky** was seen wearing the Ironshoes in the Free City of Troker (in the Baalgor Wastelands) only a

Ironshoes

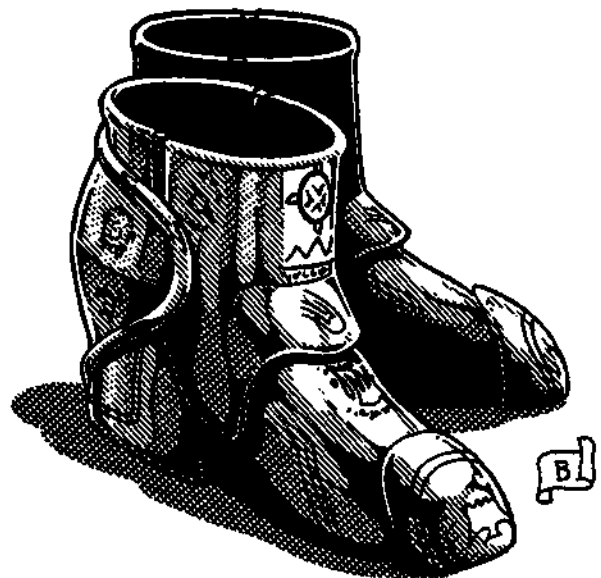
Type: Boots; Greater Rune Item.

Damage: +2D6 to any kicking attack.

Alignment: Anarchist

Powers: All the common rune powers plus the following:

1) Grants the wearer the abilities and bonuses of a Fleet Feet spell! That means the wearer's P.P., Spd and number of attacks per melee are all doubled! However, the character will be moving so fast that he will not notice everything that is going on around him and will be at -2 to initiative, and will probably never see a surprise attack coming. Also, the character is -20% to perform any skills requiring precise manual dexterity, such as picking locks, picking pockets, writing, carving, etc.



few short years ago. Redbones had stopped off in the pirate city to sell some slaves before returning to his lair in the southern seas, not far from the **Floenry Isles**, where he supposedly owns a large manor and commands a respectable flotilla of pirate vessels. There is even word that he is considering taking over one of the coastal cities of the Land of the **South-Winds** and making himself a Duke of that beleaguered nation.

The Hekestreon

Type: Rune Book; a Greatest Rune Creation.

Alignment: **Anarchist**

Powers: All the common rune powers plus the following:

1) The Hekestreon is a True Tome of Images, as described on page 260 of *The Palladium Fantasy RPG*, 2nd Ed. However, this book does not possess clerical or psionic powers. Its abilities are unique, as described below.

2) This book describes in incredible detail, various sites and regions of the world. Those who read it cover to cover and memorize its teachings (a process that takes **1D4** months of steady work) will gain the History skill for every major region of the world, at 66%. Those who already have such skills will find their skill ratios boosted to 96%.

3) Most amazing about the Hekestreon is a 24-page section in the middle consisting of a number of brilliant, colored illustrations of various parts of the Palladium World. Each of these pages has an illustration on one side, and strange runic writing on the other side. Should the reader speak aloud the runic inscriptions on the back of any of these pages, he will be magically transported to the location in the illustration! The effect is similar to* that of a Circle of **Teleportation**; anything within 10 feet (3 m) of the reader may come along with him — friends, **treasure**, equipment, desk, etc.

Every time the reader flips to one of these pages, the location in **the** illustration will be different. It is as if each page is a window to some randomly selected part of the world that changes with every flip of another page. Once the reader travels through one of these "Gate Pages," however, that page becomes fixed; it shall forever hold the illustration of the place the character has traveled to.

The last Gate Page of the Hekestreon will contain an illustration of the character's exact location when he first opened the book. The other 23 pages will all generate their location at random. To see where the Hekestreon might take its user, consult the random location table below.

Random Gate Page Location Table

01%-04%: The Land of the Damned.

05%-08%: The Northern Mountains.

09%-12%: Ophid's Grasslands.

13%-16%: The Great Northern Wilderness (West of the Wolfen Empire).

17%-20%: The Island Kingdom of **Bizantium**.

21%-25%: The heart of the Wolfen Empire.

26%-29%: Y-Oda

30%-33%: Zy

34%-38%: The Eastern Territory.

39%-43%: Phi

44%-48%: Lopan

49%-53%: The **Timiro** Kingdom.

54%-58%: The Land of the South-Winds.

59%-62%: The Floenry Isles.

63%-66%: The Yin-Sloth Jungles.

67%-70%: The Baalgor Wastelands.

71%-74%: Mount **Nimro**

75%-79%: The Old Kingdom Mountains.

80%-85%: The Old Kingdom Lowlands.

86%-90%: The Western Empire.

91%-94%: The Isle of the Cyclops.

95%-98%: Peripheral Territory. Usually, this means some uncharted little speck of an island off the coast somewhere. This *could take* the user to an undiscovered part of the Palladium world.

99%-00%: Another World or Dimension! This could be a gate to any of the Heroic Realms, the Elemental Realms, or just about any other place in the Palladium **Megaverse**.

Curse: None, other than the Hekestreon is exceptionally valuable, even among other rune items. Those who learn of it will want it, especially powerful wizards, priests, and rulers of nations.

Personality: The Hekestreon is a friendly and easy-going entity that enjoys being used when put to a good purpose. The book abhors wickedness and depravity, but not so much that it would prevent its user from the same, or would encourage its user to stamp it out.

History: This book was created as an instrument of peace during one of the lengthy lulls in fighting between Elf and Dwarf. It was an honored treasure of the **Dwarven** Empire, whose explorers used the book extensively in an effort to better chart the world. Exactly what happened to those Gate Pages is unknown, since they are not currently part of the book. It is possible that the Dwarves somehow "unbound" the rune book, removed the pages, and had them bound into another Rune Book. Were that the case, then there is in this **world**, a Hekestreon with up to **10** times as many Gate Pages as this one. Most, if not all of them would be "fixed," however, and would whisk the reader to places that might be radically different now from how they were pictured thousands of years ago.

Note: The Hekestreon is a large book that easily fills up the majority of a backpack. It magically locks when closed and can only be opened by its rightful owner. Otherwise, it remains inert and unreadable. The book itself, of course, is indestructible.

The Book of Ahriman

Type: Rune Book; Greatest Rune Creation.

Damage: Special! See below.

Alignment: **Unprincipled**

Powers: All the common rune powers plus the following:

This rune book contains a single Wizard's spell on each of its pages. Upon tearing a page from the book and shouting the power word "**Acba**," the spell on the page casts itself, as if from a scroll. Only one page can be torn out at a time (once per melee round), and the book contains 100 pages. So long as the last page of the book is not torn out, the pages will *re-generate* themselves at a rate of one per hour! Written in a bizarre form of magic code, the spells of this book are very difficult to decipher, making any scroll translation attempts at -33%.

When one opens this book, all they will see is the writing on the first page. Other pages can not be turned, only the first, it will be as if the rest of the book's pages are a solid piece of stone. When the first page is torn out and cast, then the next page will free itself to be turned and read. There is no telling what spells will be on any page of the book, for they randomly generate when each page is freed for use. This means there is no way for the reader to foretell or control which spells will next occur. To determine which spell comes up for each page, consult the random spell table, below.

Random Spell Table

- 01%-03%:** Blinding Flash (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 189)
 - 04%-06%:** Cloud of Smoke (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 189)
 - 07%-09%:** Ghost Ship (this book, page 77)
 - 10%-12%:** Armor of Khan (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 192)
 - 13%-15%:** Energy Bolt (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 192)
 - 16%-18%:** Impervious to Fire (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 192)
 - 19%-21%:** Impervious to Poison (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 192)
 - 22%-24%:** Telekinesis (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 193)
 - 25%-27%:** Blind (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 194)
 - 28%-30%:** Carpet of Adhesion (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 194)
 - 31%-33%:** Energy Field (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 194)
 - 34%-36%:** Frostfire (this book, page 74)
 - 37%-39%:** Magic Net (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 195)
 - 40%-42%:** Multiple Image (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 195)
 - 43%-45%:** Circle of Flame (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 196)
 - 46%-48%:** Size of the Behemoth (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 197)
 - 49%-51%:** Superhuman Speed (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 197)
 - 52%-54%:** Superhuman Strength (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 197)
 - 55%-57%:** Call Lightning (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 198)
 - 58%-60%:** Fire Ball (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 199)
 - 61%-63%:** Fire Fist (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 199)
 - 64%-66%:** Impervious to Energy (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 199)
 - 67%-69%:** Teleport: Lesser (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 199)
 - 70%-72%:** Agony (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 200)
 - 73%-75%:** Animate and Control Dead (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 200)
 - 76%-78%:** Shadeshield (this book, page 78)
 - 79%-81%:** Fly as the Eagle (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 201)
 - 82%-84%:** Heal Self (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 201)
 - 85%-87%:** Immobilize (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 201)
 - 88%-90%:** Invisibility: Superior (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 201)
 - 91%-93%:** Ghost Walker (this book, page 77)
 - 94%-96%:** Speed of the Snail (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 208)
 - 97%-99%:** Summon Shadow Beast (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 210)
 - 00%:** Invulnerability: Limited (PFRPG, 2nd Ed., page 201)
- Curse:** The owner of this book must save vs magic when first taking possession of it, or endure the curses of Glowing Eyes and Mumble. The mumbling curse will not get in the way of casting spells or in the use of this book.
- Personality:** The Book of Ahriman very much took on the personality of its creator, a vengeful and angry individual who took great pleasure in smiting his enemies. Ahriman was not a complete monster, however, and was known for showing great kindness toward women and children, regardless of their race.
- History:** Originally crafted by the Dwarven rune mage Ahriman during the Time of a Thousand Magicks, this book has served in many battles. Its first turned out to be its most fa-

mous, when Ahriman himself, armed only with his own mystic knowledge and this book defeated the mighty *Army of Kelder* in a great battle that lasted more than a week. Since then, the book has been a prized military implement of both the **Elven** and Dwarven Empires. During the war between those two empires, the Book of Ahriman changed hands several times and was used to great effect by both sides of that terrible conflict. The book has hardly been heard from or seen since the Millennium of Purification, except for a handful of incidents over the centuries in which it was mentioned to be the property of some Wizard or other adventurer. The last mention of it was 99 years ago in the Land of the **South-Winds**, where the pirate king *Erkander XX* used the book to terrify passing ships into paying tribute to him. When *Erkander's* fortress was destroyed by unnamed **Timiro** pirate-hunters, the book went missing once again and has not been located since. It is believed to be in either the Land of the **South-Winds** or more likely, in the Timiro Kingdom.



Jahoyo's Bracers

Type: Bracers; Greater Rune Weapon.

Damage: Special! See below.

Alignment: Anarchist

Powers: All the common rune powers plus the following:

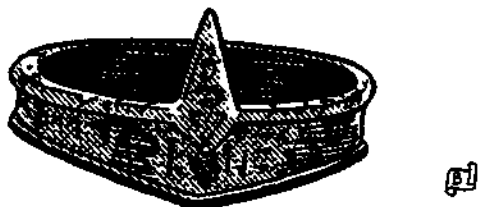
1) **Conjuring!** These enchanted arm-guards can conjure forth daggers that each do 1D6 damage. The wearer may conjure a dagger to appear in his hand, or he may conjure them with a throwing motion, causing the dagger to appear in mid-flight. Each bracer can conjure up to 12 daggers in a 24 hour period. When conjuring them in a throwing attack, the wearer may conjure as many as *six* daggers, hurling them in a single volley at the same target! The volley requires a single roll to hit and counts as one melee action. Likewise, it requires only a single dodge roll to evade. Those trying to parry the volley will have to roll a parry for *each* incoming dagger with a penalty of -3.

Curse: None.

Personality: Jahoyo's Bracers are as irreverent and reckless as **Jahoyo** himself, which is precisely what he asked for when he had them crafted.

History: Jahoyo Alder was a famed thief and trickster within the Elven Empire who reportedly had these weapons made for him by an equally rebellious Dwarf named *Grapho Natalin*. According to legend, Jahoyo used these bracers to aid in a lifelong career of adventuring and thievery, until he made the mistake of plundering the royal treasury of the Elven Empire, for which he was beheaded. His famed bracers were put on display in the Golden City of Baalgor, and were thought lost when that city was destroyed. However, they have since been sighted on a thief operating in the Western Empire who calls himself *Whisper*. It is said that *Whisper* bears a striking resemblance to Jahoyo, and even has a Dwarven **weaponsmith** for an ally.

Note: These arm-guards are more like armored greaves, since they cover the whole of the wearer's forearm. They also have enough room inside of them to conceal small items, such as a single dose of poison, a small scroll, another weapon, a pair of lock picks, etc.



The Darkness Crown

Type: A simple iron crown with no gems or precious metal adorning it, just carved runes over every inch of its surface. It is a Greatest Rune Creation.

Damage: Supernatural strength (see below).

Alignment: Diabolic!

Powers: All the common rune powers plus the following:

1) Immortality! The owner of the Crown will become effectively immortal. He shall never age, he will no longer require food or water, and he will become immune to all drugs, disease and poisons. He will gain **2D6x10** Hit Points, and his S.D.C. will double.

2) Master of the Dead! The user can *Animate and Control Dead* as per the Wizard spell at will and with no P.P.E. cost, at two levels higher than the user's current level of experience.

3) Transformation! Upon wearing the crown, the user transforms into a supernatural creature of pure evil. First, this bestows a Horror/Awe Factor of 16 upon the wearer of the Crown. Evil folk will look up to the wearer with awe, while all others will recoil in horror. Secondly, the user will radiate both magic and evil, and can be picked up by spells meant to detect such forces. Plus, his aura will become that of a very powerful, evil supernatural force. **Third**, the character is now a supernatural creature with supernatural strength, +2 on initiative, +1 melee attack, and his attacks can harm beings who can only be injured by magic. On the flip side, a **Palladin's Demon Death Blow** will work against the character, as will a Warrior Monk's Spirit Strike.

Curse: Whoever puts this crown on their head must save vs magic (18 or higher) or be transformed into the hideous monster described above. Those so transformed will most likely forget about their previous **friends**, family and obligations and will immediately set upon an agenda of taking over the world. Old acquaintances may be kept around only if they are willing to become the character's unquestioning lackeys. Otherwise, the character will at first distance himself from his old comrades, then will return to destroy them. The only way to break this transformation effect is to remove the crown from the user's **head**, but that will not be easy. **First**, it requires a *supernatural* P.S. of 20 or higher. Secondly, one must get close enough to the wearer to actually pull it off. There is no other known way of breaking the Crown's **effect**, but divine intervention has never been **tried**, so the effectiveness of that approach is unknown.

Personality: Pure, unfettered evil. The Crown was created to bring misery and strife to this **world**, and such desires are all

that consume the wicked spirit that lives within the Darkness Crown. It cares not for anything on this world, but cares only for the process of destroying the living and making them suffer along the way. Anything else is an alien and irrelevant waste of time.

History: The Darkness Crown was forged by *Thekeda the Mad*, a once great **Dwarven** runesmith who went insane during the final days of the Elf-Dwarf War. The madman created a series of purely diabolical rune items that should never have been built in the first place, this is one of them. Most of the others were found and destroyed during the Millennium of Purification, but the Darkness Crown survived somehow. It turned up shortly after the Millennium ended, and became the possession of a sad and pitiful Goblin who thought he would unite his people and take over the world. He was almost instantly slain by the Great Horned Dragon he served, who added the Crown to his treasure hoard, but had the good sense not to put it on. The dragon was eventually slain in its sleep by a band of adventurers, who stole into its lair looking for treasure. The hoard was split up between the seven adventurers, who immediately began fighting among themselves over who would keep the Darkness Crown. After that, the record of the device grows unclear, but it is thought that the last surviving adventurer put the Crown on and has stayed in the Old Kingdom to slowly gather the means to build a vast army of monsters and barbarians to march upon the nations of the world and destroy them, one by one.



The Journals of Sir Garrydyn

Religion: Demons and Deevils



The Journals are a harrowing first-person account of the career of Sir Garrydyn, a famed **Elven** Palladin who battled the forces of Hades and **Dyval** until it drove him mad. Reading this detailed but disturbing book will grant the reader a one-time, permanent +10% bonus to a **Demon/Devil** Lore skill roll. If the book is on hand when one makes such a skill roll, then an additional +10% bonus is conferred. The price for this knowledge, however, comes at the cost of the **reader's** mental health, for the reader must save vs insanity or suffer a random insanity.

Perhaps the most interesting part of this tome is its appendices, which profile 66 demons and Deevils by their *true names*, including 6 Demon and Devil Lords (ala the Demon Lords of Credia, etc.) never before recorded. This information is worth a king's ransom to any **Summoner** or **Demonhunter** because it can be used to manipulate these monsters like puppets, if need be. Books such as these are reviled in Hades and Dyval because of the power they grant mortals over infernal creatures. At present, none of the creatures named in this book know their true names are no longer secure. Once any of these names are used, however, the rest of the demons and Deevils will become aware of the tome and their inclusion in it within 1D4 months. At that point, whoever owns this book (or any copies) will be in dire peril as these creatures begin scouring the world to destroy those who might control them.

The 33 Demon Names

Sub-Demons: **Thwophodde** (**Gurgoylite**), Prong (Gargoyle), **Garbag** (Gargoyle), **Berebus** (Gargoyle Lord), Gink (Gargoyle Lord), **Vulture** (Gargoyle Mage)

Lesser Demons: Quetch (**Alu**), Fuubuulu (Aquatic), **Vagar** (Aquatic), **Higiri** (Banshee), Cluptchuk (**Couril**), **Eriilo** (Labassu), Bocodda (**Labassu**), **Vilo** (Lasae), **Vulo** (Lasase), Roga (Mare), **Szlam** (Mare), Alcadash (Succubus), **Prunaak** (Incubus)

Greater Demons: **Weehang** (Demon Locust), **Hukka** (**Gallu**), **Galg** (**Gallu**), **Hurul** (Jinn), Xexe (Jinn), Bogdish (Magot), **Youngfester** (Magot), Poxfodder (Night Owl), **Barbaros** (**Rakshasa**), **Punigil** (**Rakshasa**), Verbatis (Vampire)

Demon Lords: **Songhollow**, Mepheseum, and Blague.

Three named Demon Lords

Songhollow, Minor Demon Lord

Songhollow appears as a strange cross between a human and a gargoyle. His skin has a stony, yellowish look to it, and his limbs are all a little longer than they should be, giving this wretch a spindly, unsteady appearance. He is ashamed of how he looks, and will destroy any mirror he sees. If he happens to spy himself in a pool of water or some other reflective surface he can not destroy, he will run from it. Many years ago, Songhollow fell out of favor with the Demon Lords of Hades, and was banished to the mortal world. He now wanders the world, seeking victims to vent his misery upon.

Alignment: Miscreant.

Hit Points: 200, **S.D.C.:** 300

Natural A.R.: 14

Horror Factor: 14

Weight: 500 lbs (227 kg), **Height:** Nine feet (2.7 m).

P.P.E.: 250

Attributes: I.Q.: 10, M.E.: 12, M.A.: 4, P.S.: 30 (supernatural), P.P.: 14, P.E.: 20, P.B.: 5, Spd: 30 (running), 75 (flying)

Equivalent O.C.C.: 12th level **Earth/Fire** Warlock.

Equivalent Skills: Basic math (98%), intelligence (77%), track humans (80%), swim (80%), climb/scale walls (90%), interrogation (80%), wilderness survival (77%), **demon/deevil** lore (98%), faerie lore (80%), religious lore (80%), and land navigation (66%)

Special Abilities: **Nightvision** 300 feet (91.5 m), see the invisible, resistant to **fire**, cold, and electricity (normal attacks do



no damage; magical attacks do half damage), bio-regeneration 4D6 S.D.C. or Hit Points once per melee round, magically knows all languages.

Attacks Per Melee: Six by hand to hand or two by magic.

Combat Bonuses: +2 to initiative, +4 to strike and parry, +3 to dodge, +15 to damage, +2 to pull punch, +2 to roll with punch/fall/impact.

Other Combat Info: Restrained claw attack (2D6), full strength claw attack (4D6), power claw attack (1D4x10), bite (2D6), kick (2D6), wing buffet (2D6). **Songhollow** will not use weapons in combat.

Magic Spells: The demon knows all Fire and Earth Warlock magic at 12th level proficiency.

Psionics: None.

Weapons: None; uses whatever is at hand.

Armor: None; has no need for it; see Hit Points, S.D.C. and A.R.

Magic Items: None; uses whatever is at hand, but may keep particularly intriguing or powerful ones.

Mepheseum, Minor Demon Lord

Mepheseum is a hulking brute with enormous arms, wickedly clawed hands, and tiny, shriveled, useless legs. He walks around on his arms and also uses them to launch himself into his enemies. Mepheseum is an unthinking brute of a monster who exists to be manipulated and ordered around by more powerful demons than he. Like an attack **dog**, he both respects and fears whoever can dominate him (excluding mortals), and he will follow his commands faithfully. On the flip side, he shows utter contempt for *anybody* he thinks he can bully **around**, and is

known for his cruel pranks, abusive disposition, and tormenting of such lesser beings. This means he will terrorize and bully most lesser or greater demons with impunity, and mortals are regarded as little more than playthings and sheep to be herded, sheared and slaughtered as one deems fit. Mepheseum especially despises Deevils, whom he considers to be second-rate demon wannabes and a hated enemy. The cruelty and torture he inflicts upon them is worse than any other.

Alignment: Miscreant.

Hit Points: 160, S.D.C.: 400

Natural A.R.: 15

Horror Factor: 14

Weight: 500 lbs (227 kg); Height: Five feet (1.5 m). He would be ten feet (3 m) tall if he was not essentially missing the lower half of his body.

P.P.E.: 10

Attributes: I.Q.: 7, M.E.: 5, M.A.: 5, P.S.: 50 (supernatural), P.P.: 16, P.E.: 25, P.B.: 7, Spd: 20

Equivalent O.C.C.: 10th level mercenary.

Equivalent Skills: Climb/scale walls (90%), prowl (88%), wilderness survival (88%), interrogation techniques (88%), track **humanoids** (77%), boxing, and wrestling.

Special Abilities: **Nightvision** 200 feet (61 m), see the invisible, see aura, resistant to **fire** and cold (normal attacks do no damage; magical attacks do half damage), bio-regeneration 2D6 S.D.C. or Hit Points once per melee round, magically knows all languages, dimensional **teleport** (66%). Mepheseum can also "leap" by propelling himself with his arms up to 50 feet (15.2 m) in any direction.

Attacks Per Melee: Seven by hand or by special ability.

Combat Bonuses: +5 to strike and parry, +1 to dodge, +15 to damage.

Other Combat Info: Restrained punch (2D6), full strength punch (1D6x10), power punch (2D6x10), bite (3D6), head



butt (3D6). **Knockout/stun** on a natural 20, **crush/squeeze** (1D6x10), **pin/incapacitate** (17-20).

Mepheseum can produce a shock wave by hitting the ground that inflicts 3D6 damage to everything within 30 feet (9.2 m).

This shock wave will shatter any glass and make dogs howl in **its area** of effect.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Weapons: None, but **Mepheseum** will pick up discarded weapons and use them in combat. He is also fond of throwing heavy items of any sort at his enemies, including people and other **enemies!**

Armor: Mepheseum wears a heavy suit of tattered plate and chain (A.R. 15, S.D.C. 200) that he does not really need because of his natural A.R. He wears it just because he likes the look of it.

Magic Items: None. He would love to find something that made up for his lack of legs. Something like a flying carpet would be nice. Or better yet, a magical set of **prosthetics!** **Small**, one-handed magic weapons, rings and charms are also appealing.



Blague, Minor Demon Lord

Blague appears as a grizzly bear whose fur has been replaced with a coat of thorny scales the color of dust. He speaks with an incredibly deep, rumbling voice, that at full volume carries incredible destructive force. Unlike most of his demonic kin, Blague actually enjoys the company of powerful and evil mortals and does not mind conspiring in their plans provided he is treated with the respect (and a hefty share of the booty) that he thinks he deserves. Blague has absolutely no use for Songhollow and Mepheseum, and will kill them if locked in the

same room for more than 10 minutes. Blague is grudgingly respectful of the other Demon Lords of Hades and will serve them, particularly if the mission at hand is something he can (often literally) sink his teeth into. If ever given the chance to elevate himself to their level, he will do so with the firm intent of becoming the lord of *all* demons himself. Until then, he travels throughout the dimensions looking for ways of making himself more wealthy and more powerful. The acquisition of powerful rune weapons and magic is one avenue to his dreams and may be targeted by this monster.

Alignment: Aberrant

Hit Points: 300, **S.D.C.:** 300.

Natural A.R.: 15

Horror Factor: 16

Weight: 750 lbs (340.5 kg), **Height:** Eight feet (2.4 m) tall at the shoulder, 14 (4.3 m) feet long from nose to tail.

P.P.E.: 300, **I.S.P.:** 150

Attributes: I.Q.: 19, M.E.: 20, M.A.: 20, P.S.: 25 (supernatural), P.P.: 15, P.E.: 20, P.B.: 20, Spd: 40 (**running**)/100 (flying)

Equivalent O.C.C.: 10th level Mind Mage.

Equivalent Skills of Note: Basic math (98%), wilderness survival (98%), climb/scale walls (88%), prowl (88%), swim (88%), track **humanoids** (88%).

Special Abilities: **Nightvision** 300 feet (91.5 m), see the invisible, see **aura**, resistant to fire and cold (normal attacks do no damage; magical attacks do half damage), bio-regeneration 2D6 S.D.C. or Hit Points once per melee round, magically knows all languages, and dimensional **teleport** (88%).

Attacks Per Melee: Six by physical, psionic or vocal attack (see Other Combat Info, below).

Combat Bonuses: +4 on initiative, +6 to strike and parry, +3 to dodge, +10 to damage, +6 to pull punch, +1 to roll with **punch/fall/impact**, impervious to Horror Factor and possession.

Other Combat Info: Restrained claw attack (2D6), full strength claw attack (5D6), power claw attack (1D6x10, but counts as two melee attacks), bite (3D6), and head butt (2D6).

Vocal Attack (Special!): Blague's voice is so incredibly loud that anything spoken over a whisper inflicts damage. Once per round, Blague can shout at his enemies in either a directed sonic blast, or an area effect blast.

The directed sonic blast has a range of 500 feet (152.4 m), and inflicts 6D6 to whatever it hits! Plus, if the target fails to save vs magic, he will be knocked back as if hit by a *Wind Rush* spell and deafened for 1D6 minutes!

The area effect blast will inflict 4D4 damage on everything within a 50 foot (15.2 m) radius of the demon. Those caught in the blast can save vs magic for half damage.

Note: Blague can only use this vocal attack once per melee round without harm to himself. If he uses this attack more than once per melee round, he has a 25% cumulative chance of hurting his throat so badly he can not speak at all for 1D4 weeks.

Spells: None.

Psionics: All physical and sensitive psionic abilities, plus the following Super-Psionics: Bio-Manipulation (10), Bio-Regeneration (Super; 20), Catatonic Strike (40), Cause Insanity (30), Empathic Transmission (6), Group Mind Block (22), Induce Nightmare (15), Insert Memory (25), Invisible Haze (30), Mental Illusion (20), Mind Block Auto-Defense, Mind Wipe (special) and Telekinetic Force Field (30), all equal to a 6th level Mind Mage. I.S.P.: 150.

Weapons: **None**, doesn't want any unless they are powerful magic.

Armor: None, doesn't need any; to use armor is a sign of weakness.

Magic Items: Blague maintains an immense hoard of wealth and magic items (including several rune weapons, if rumors are to be believed) somewhere on the Palladium world. Some demonology experts maintain Blague's lair can be found in the Great Rift of the Land of the Damned, while others insist it is within the ruins of an ancient citadel in the Old Kingdom, where a contingent of **Orcs**, **Ogres**, **Trolls**, **Kobolds**, and other monsters guard it night and day.

The 33 Deevil Names

Lesser Deevils: **Ridish** (Deevil), **Paol** (Deevil), **Erorag** (Deevil), **Harnoath** (Devilkin), **Shissan** (Devilkin), **Cersar** (Dire Harpy), **Thurnnor** (Dire Harpy), **Zysensk** (**Fenry**), **Charinder** (**Fenry**), **Oddswallow** (Fenry), **Ghero** (Fiend), **Merkess** (Fiend), **Vynstath** (Fiend), **Nadoch** (Fiend), **Pakshi** (Gorgon), **Oolmas** (Gorgon), **Shargok** (Imp), **Thuthan** (Imp)

Greater Deevils: **Rorgresto** (Arch Fiend), **Quordo** (Arch Fiend), **Yentomurae** (Arch Fiend), **Gwardok** (Beast), **Shalina** (Beast), **Thausean** (Horror), **Umrikoth** (Horror), **Ybaut** (Serpent), **Alikan** (Serpent), **Vych** (Wraith), **Shimsor** (Wraith), **Zyxli** (Wraith).

Deevil Lords: **Tentac**, **Harrowheart**, and **Ocalypse**.

The three-named Deevils

Tentac, Minor Deevil Lord

Tentac appears as a giant floating, disembodied eyeball with eight worm-like tentacles hanging from its underside. This hideous creature feeds by slaying its prey and then drinking their souls, much like certain rune swords. It makes no attempt to communicate with anything else, not even other Deevils or even the Deevil lords. This may be, Sir **Garrydyn** theorized, because Tentac communicates in a way no other creature can possibly understand. Other scholars speculate that it only communicates psionically and only by implanting thoughts, ideas and dreams (or nightmares as the case may be) into the minds of lesser beings. Indeed, cult worshippers and witches pledged to Tentac claim to be "infernally inspired" by dreams, nightmares and visions.

Whatever Tentac's agenda, it is his own. Most believe the **tentacled** destroyer hates life and beauty, and does what it can to inject pain, horror and cruelty into the world. Tentac is considered to be a minor Deevil Lord only because it is a loner who avoids infernal politics and keeps to itself.

Alignment: Diabolic

Hit Points: 310 and **S.D.C.:** 420 for the main body; 40 per each tentacle.

Natural A.R.: 10

Horror Factor: 17

Weight: 300 lbs (136.2 kg), **Height:** Tentac is ten feet (3 m) in diameter and its tentacles can stretch up to 25 feet (7.6 m) from its body.

P.P.E.: 99, **I.S.P.:** 296

Attributes: **I.Q.:** 8, **M.E.:** 22, **M.A.:** 22, **P.S.:** 20, **P.P.:** 6, **P.E.:** 20, **P.B.:** 1 (stone cold **UGLY!**), **Spd:** 33 (22.5 mph/36 km); **Tantac** floats off the ground in a permanent state of natural **levitation** so it essentially flies wherever it travels.

Equivalent O.C.C.: 9th level Mind Mage.

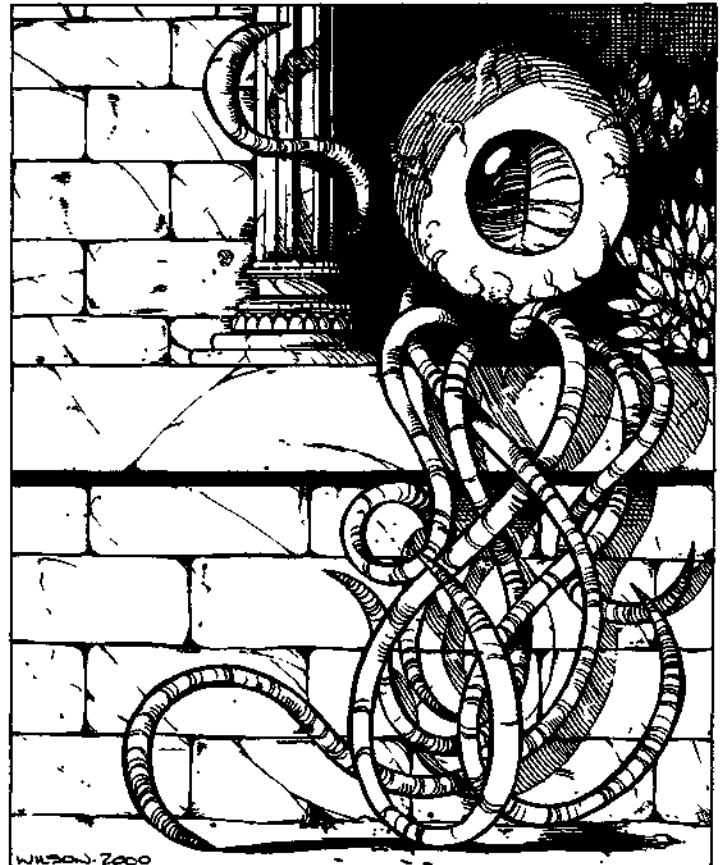
Equivalent Skills: Track **humanoids** (76%; when tracking individuals with 100 or more **I.S.P.** or **P.P.E.**, **Tantac's** success ratio increases to 98%), Land Navigation 98%, Prowl 60% and philosophic thought. That's it for skills. This thing is more like some kind of devilish killing machine and tormentor than an individual of any sort. It relies entirely on its natural abilities.

Special Abilities: **Nightvision** 1000 feet (305 m), see the invisible, see aura, see in magical darkness, impervious to disease and poison, impervious to possession and mind control, resistant to electricity (normal electrical attacks do no damage; magical attacks do half damage), bio-regeneration 4D6 S.D.C. or Hit Points once per melee round, dimensional **teleport** (66%) and magically knows all languages.

Attacks Per Melee: Eight by tentacle or five by psionic attack.

Combat Bonuses: +3 on initiative, +1 to strike, +10 to parry and entangle, +3 to dodge, +6 to disarm, +6 to pull punch, +5 to damage, +4 to save vs psionic attacks and illusions. Impervious to both Horror Factor and insanity.

Other Combat Info: Tentacle whipping strike (2D6), tentacle jab (1D6), tentacle grab — no damage the first **round**, but 3D6 constricting damage each *melee action*, each subsequent constriction counts as one melee action. To break free a **com-**



bined P.S. of 30 is necessary or the **tentacle(s)** can be severed. It can also use its tentacles to trip opponents — roll to strike, if it wins the roll its opponent is knocked off his feet, losing initiative and one melee action. **Tantac** can also strangle an adversary using one of its tentacles. To break its grip a combined P.S. of 30 is needed or the tentacle must be severed or the demon otherwise forced to let go. Victims of strangulation are killed within two minutes, but even those who manage to survive suffer 4D6 points of damage.

Soul Eating: Tantac can devour the souls of those it has slain. This process takes a foil melee round and must be performed no more than four minutes after the moment of death. The demon must clutch the dead body in its tentacles and begin the process of siphoning off the individual's soul for consumption. If this process is somehow disturbed during that melee round (15 seconds), the victim's soul remains intact and lost to Tantac. If not, then the soul is forever gone, having been devoured by this hideous monster.

Spells: None.

Psionics: Tentac knows *all* psionics!!!

Weapons: None; never uses them.

Armor: None; never uses any.

Magic Items: None; seems to have no desire for them.



Harrowheart, Minor Devil Lord

Harrowheart cuts a classic Deevilish figure, with his giant, reddish **humanoid** body, furry canine legs, horned head, leathery wings, and long scorpion's tail. This creature is fond of masquerading as a humanoid and moving among them so that he may work his fiendish charms. Harrowheart is a grand schemer and loves nothing more than to hatch convoluted plots simply for the sake of spreading misery and confusion. He is especially

fond of instigating betrayal, murder and small scale war. Harrowheart lusts mightily after his cohort Ocalypse, but she routinely pushes him away. This has made him insane with both anger and desire for her. One day, he will lose all control of himself and attack her with foil force. By the end of that encounter, either Harrowheart will have been defeated and limp away humiliated to plot his **revenge**, or Ocalypse will be his unwilling and disloyal consort (basically a slave who despises and plots against her master).

Alignment: Diabolic.

Hit Points: 350, **S.D.C.:** 200

Natural A.R.: 13

Horror Factor: 14

Weight: 300 lbs (136.2 kg)

Height: Seven feet (2.1 m) in demonic form, but can assume any humanoid shape from Gnome to Troll size.

P.P.E.: 199

Attributes: I.Q.: 16, M.E.: 16, M.A.: **24**, P.S.: 24 (supernatural), P.P.: **20**, P.E.: 24, P.B.: 18, Spd: 22 (running), 60 (flying)

Equivalent O.C.C.: 9th level Wizard.

Equivalent Skills of Note: Recognize enchantment (98%), recognize magic (98%), lore: magic (78%), lore: demons and devils (88%), mathematics (88%), prowl (**76%**), swim (55%), interrogation (66%), intelligence (66%), surveillance (60%), wilderness survival (60%), track **humanoids** (76%), W.P. Sword.

Special Abilities: **Nightvision** 100 feet (30.5 m), keen, hawk-like vision, good hearing, see the invisible, resistant to fire and cold (normal attacks do no damage; magical attacks do half damage), bio-regeneration 2D6 S.D.C. or Hit Points once per melee **round**, magically knows all languages, and can **metamorph** into any humanoid form at will (can maintain that form indefinitely).

Attacks Per Melee: Six by physical attack or two by spell.

Combat Bonuses: +3 to strike, parry and dodge. +2 to pull punch, +2 to roll with **punch/fall/impact**, +2 to initiative.

Other Combat Info: Restrained punch (2D4), foil strength punch (3D6), power punch (6D6), head **butt/horn** gore (3D6), power head **butt/horn** gore (6D6), flying head **butt/horn** gore (**1D4x10**, counts as two attacks), scorpion sting (3D6 plus victim must save vs poison — Scorpion's Blood — or take another 4D6 damage).

Spells: Harrowheart knows all Wizard spells level 1-4, plus the following spells: Circle of Flame (10), Call Lightning (15), Fire Ball (10), Fire Fist (15), Impervious to Energy (20), Time Slip (20), Agony (20), Animate & Control Dead (20), Dispel Magic Barriers (20), Life Drain (25), X-Ray Vision (25), Love Charm (which he repeatedly tries using on Ocalypse; 40), Sickness (50), Spoil (30), Age (50), and Havoc (50).

Psionics: None.

Weapons: When in humanoid form, Harrowheart is fond of carrying two-handed swords, such as Claymores or **Flamberges**. For some reason he absolutely detests blunt weapons of any kind, and not only will he not use them, but in combat, he will specifically pick on those who wield them above all others.

His current favorite weapon is a minor, Diabolic rune dagger that returns when thrown and inflicts 5D6 damage.

Armor: When in human form, Harrowheart usually wears an

ornate suit of plate armor (A.R.: 17, S.D.C.: 160). When in demonic form, he wears no clothing of any kind.

Magic Items: Harrowheart once owned a runic sword, a runic shield, and a runic set of armor, however, within the last thousand years he was not only robbed of these, but the culprit also made him forget the details about them! The identity of the thief is unknown. This crime has Harrowheart obsessed with finding out who did it. He will follow any lead on this, no matter how thin, in order to exact terrible revenge on those responsible.



Ocalypse, Minor Deevil Lord

Ocalypse has the body and face of a beautiful Elven maiden, except her Deevilish features make her attractiveness a monstrous one. She has scarlet skin, yellow eyes, pointed teeth, and a long, forked tongue. Her hair is a mane of living fire, and whenever she opens her mouth, a glow emits from it like the coals of a hot furnace. She has cloven hooves for feet, and a long thin tail with an arrowhead-shaped tip to it.

Ocalypse is a savage beast who owes the demon lords of Dyval a great many favors. Periodically they call her in on them, and she will spend the next 2D6 years in the service of one of her infernal lords. During other times, she roams the Palladium world freely, looking for mortals to enslave. She must constantly fight off the amorous advances of her cohort Harrowheart, who she has no interest in, but enjoys teasing and embarrassing, especially in front of the Greater Deevil Lords. Ocalypse gains special joy in learning the true names of other demons and Deevils and binding them to her service. She is a master manipulator and a competent leader who often commands groups of lesser beings.

Alignment: Diabolic

Hit Points: 225, **S.D.C.:** 288

Natural A.R.: 12

Horror Factor: 13

Weight: 160 lbs (72.6 kg), **Height:** Six feet (1.83 m).

P.P.E.: 155, **I.S.P.:** 108

Attributes: I.Q.: 11, M.E.: 9, M.A.: 9 P.S.: 15, P.P.: 15, P.E.: 15, P.B.: 30, Spd: 30

Equivalent O.C.C.: 8th level Diabolist and 10th level Summoner.

Equivalent Skills of Note: Literacy: runes (98%), mystic symbology, recognize and understand magic circles (56%), use magic circles (70%), identify energized wards (65%), recognize magic (60%), seduction (92%), and streetwise (90%).

Special Abilities: Immune to all drugs, poisons, and diseases. **Nightvision** 200 feet (61 m), see the invisible, see aura, resistant to fire and cold (normal attacks do no damage; magical attacks do half damage), bio-regeneration 2D6 S.D.C. or Hit Points once per melee round, magically knows all languages, dimensional **teleport** (80%), charm/impress (92% — quite the seductress).

Attacks Per Melee: Four by psionics or physical attack.

Combat Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +2 to strike, parry, dodge, +2 to disarm, +4 to pull punch, +2 to roll with **punch/fall/impact**, +3 to save vs magic, +7 to save vs Horror Factor and possession.

Other Combat Info: None. Ocalypse does not enjoy physical combat and would much rather manipulate her enemies into fighting each other. If cornered into a physical confrontation, she will put up a fight until she takes two or three good hits, after which, she will try to teleport to safety, where she can begin planning her revenge.

Spells: Ocalypse knows all power and summoning circles, and routinely offers to teach this information to willing mortals in exchange for a year's worth of servitude (not a pleasant experience, but she will forget to mention this up front), to be called in at a time of her choosing. This pact is the rough equivalent of a witch's pact in terms of its **unbreakability**.

Psionics: Ocalypse can perform any physical or sensitive psionic power, at 6th level proficiency. I.S.P.: 108.

Weapons: Ocalypse's favorite weapon is a magical bullwhip that is indestructible, +2 to strike and disarm, and does 4D6 damage per lash.

Armor: Ocalypse wears a suit of spiked leather armor (A.R. 15, S.D.C.: 200) that regenerates 25 S.D.C. an hour! The suit itself radiates evil, and anybody wearing it besides her will have the aura of a greater demon.

Magic Items: None, other than her armor although she will gladly collect and use items that enslave, dominate and control others.





The Assassin's Cookbook



Nature: Chemistry

This classic text (also known as "The Deadly Dozen") of how to brew the most potent of potables has long been a standard training manual for any self-respecting assassins' guild in the Western Empire. The book has, in the last century, been exported to the Eastern Territory, the Land of the **South-Winds**, and the Free City of Troker (in the Baalgor Wastelands), where it reputedly receives widespread use. The Wolfen Empire is supposedly looking to get a copy so it may translate it into Wolfen and implement it as a field manual for the Imperial Scouts, who often double as thieves, spies and assassins when large numbers of the enemy are unexpectedly encountered.

Ingestive poisons are those which must be consumed by the victim (i.e., **drunk**, eaten or inhaled). They are always sold in single doses and generally* require 2-8 (2D4) melees to take effect. Most are colorless or nearly colorless. Some have varying odors and tastes. Almost all come in liquid form or sometimes a powder that dissolves quickly in liquid. Saving throw: 14 or higher.

Injected poisons are sometimes called "blood poisons" because they must enter the bloodstream via a cut, wound or injection. Touching or tasting (just a little bit) the poison does no damage. Saving throw: 14 or higher.

Contact poisons are absorbed through the skin by touch and usually come in the form of a salve or a powder. Saving throw: 14 or higher.

Ingesting any contact or injected toxin (other than the tiniest of tastes) will cause immediate nausea and half damage. Saving throw: 16 or higher.

The Assassin's Cookbook covers twelve poisons in all: *Shady Jack*, *Blueskin*, *Ghost*, *Threestep*, *Dunderhead*, *Rutterkin*, *Quintus*, *Inferno*, *Stonebones*, *Gibber*, *Spiderbite*, and *Last Rites*.

Dunderhead

Dunderhead is an injected poison that comes in a thin paste one might smear on the blade of a knife or sword. More commonly, however, it is used to cover long needles or stickpins so assassins can hit their target in a crowd or in quiet places without staging a full-blown assault. (One must roll a successful Palming skill roll after sticking somebody with a pin to conceal the implement.) Damage: 6D6 per dose initially, plus if the vic-

tim does not save vs poison again, he will lose 1D4 points of I.Q. and skill performance is half normal for the next 1D4 weeks (I.Q. and abilities return after that point). Cost: 450 gold per dose. Antidote: 1000 gold and takes 24 hours to take affect.

Gibber

Gibber is powdered handshake drug delivered in the same manner as Stonebones, only this one inflicts nerve damage to its victim, specifically in the language center of the brain. Although there is some initial damage, the lasting effects are in the victim's inability to form coherent words, as if he had been hit with the Mumble curse. Damage: 3D6 initially as well as an inability to speak coherently. Try as the victim might, he will not be able to speak anything that does not come out as gibberish. He still can write and use sign language, however. The mumbling effects last for 3D4 days. Note: For each dose the victim takes of Gibber, there is a 3% cumulative chance the mumbling effects of this toxin are permanent. Cost: 300 gold per dose. Antidote: 850 gold per dose. Neutralizes the poison, restoring the ability to speak within 2D6+12 hours.

Inferno

Inferno is an uncommon poison distilled from several plants found in the Yin-Sloth Jungles. It is an injected poison, and immediately upon application, the victim takes damage but also experiences a debilitating burning sensation. Inferno is applied as a liquid but must dry out (the weapon must be exposed to the air for a full melee **round/15** seconds) first before application. If applied wet, Inferno is harmless. This drug is used a lot on gladiators who are supposed to lose their bouts. Damage: 4D6 damage, plus the victim suffers from terrible burning in his wound that renders him -2 on initiative, -2 to strike, and parry and -10% on all skills for the next 30 minutes *minus* the victim's number of P.E. points. **Thus**, an Inferno victim with a 24 P.E. will suffer from the burning effects for only 6 minutes. Cost: 300 gold per dose. Antidote: 400 gold per dose; rarer than the poison. Neutralizes the poison, eliminating the burning and penalties within 1D6 minutes, but does nothing about the damage.

Spiderbite

Spiderbite is a contact poison that comes in the form of a creamy lotion or, depending on where it is **manufactured**, a skin oil. Either way, just a tiny drop or dollop of the substance needs to be pressed to the victim's skin to induce an immediate effect. The victim will feel a sharp stinging sensation during which the poison inflicts its primary damage. For the next hour, the victim will experience a dull burning **and/or** throbbing at the poison's contact **point**, as if he has just received a nasty **spider's** bite. Over the next three days, the flesh around the poison's entry point will die off, leaving a festering divot around the wound area. If the victim survives, the wound will not fully heal (unless aided by magic or psionics) for at least 2 weeks. This damage closely resembles the bite of the vagabond spider, an arachnid common to most parts of the world. Damage: 1D4x10 upon initial contact. Local necrosis thereafter. Cost: 400. Antidote: 400 gold per dose. Neutralizes the poison, stopping damage from subsequent melee rounds and restores 1D4 S.D.C. or Hit Points.

Stonebones

Stonebones is known as a "handshake" poison, since it is most commonly applied during formal functions when public

figures must shake hands with large numbers of people. The assailant typically wears a protective salve (or barrier cream) on his hand, and then sprinkles it with a dose of powdered Stonebones. Upon making contact with the victim's flesh, the poison sinks in and takes effect **3D4** minutes later. Once the poison **hits**, the victim feels extreme lethargy and stiffness in his joints, as well as a general feeling of persistent nausea. Stonebones does not permanently harm or disable its victim, which is why it is often used as a "warning device," a means of showing the target they are vulnerable and can be struck by their enemies at any time. It is often used to blackmail and threaten. **Damage:** **3D4** minutes after application, the victim's P.S., P.E., P.P., and Spd. all reduce by **2D4** points. The minimum a victim's attribute may be reduced to by this poison is **3**. These effects will last for **1D4** days. **Cost:** 400 gold per dose. **Antidote:** 400 gold per dose. Neutralizes the poison restoring attributes to normal within **1D6+4** hours.

Blueskin

With no taste or odor, Blueskin would make a perfect ingested poison if not for the fact that it almost immediately causes its victim's skin to turn blue, as if they have been subjected to sub-zero temperatures. Victims familiar with this toxin (a successful Recognize and Use Poisons skill roll will work) are often able to administer its antidote (a large dose of vinegar) before the drug's truly harmful effects kick in. Those that fail to do so usually die. Because it is so easily **detected**, Blueskin is considered a **beginner's** poison, and its use marks the activity of an amateur who can not afford anything more sophisticated. **Damage:** **1D6x10** per dose. **Cost:** 75 gold. **Antidote:** 75 gold. Neutralizes the poison and restores **2D6** S.D.C. or H.P.

Ghost

Ghost bears no taste but a slightly sweet odor, one easily covered up if applied with the right base, such as certain wines or sweetmeats. Ghost inflicts no damage, but upon taking effect it puts its victim into deep coma that resembles death. The victim feels no pain and is actually alive, but just barely. This state of extreme torpor will last **1D4+1** days, long enough for most victims to be declared dead and to be buried. Only when the drug wears off does the victim realize that he has been buried alive. Any sounds the victim makes from his living tomb are often ignored by family and friends as the mournful wailing of the recently deceased's ghost. This drug is generally reserved for special vengeance missions, where the client does not just want the target to die, but to suffer a bit beforehand. **Damage:** Paralysis. **Cost:** 800 gold. **Antidote:** 1000 gold; rare. Neutralizes the poison and restores the individual within **1D6x10** minutes.

Rutterkin

A no-nonsense blend of toxins, this injected poison is not the world's deadliest, but it is fairly cheap, which helps make its use widespread. Rutterkin is a thick, sticky liquid that sticks well to blades but not necessarily to arrowheads, because the toxin beads up and will fly off en route. Any missile attack envenomed with Rutterkin that flies more than 50 feet (15.2 m) will lose its poison before the weapon hits. **Damage:** **3D6** per dose. **Cost:** 100 gold per dose. **Antidote:** 50 gold per dose. Neutralizes the poison and restores **1D6** S.D.C. or Hit Points.

Quintus

This is generally considered the bigger, badder brother to Rutterkin. It involves many of the same ingredients, but they have been prepared using a variety of secret methods that make the brew much deadlier. It is also an injected poison and it is also unsuitable for missile attacks greater than 50 feet (15.3 m). In certain cities, the use of this drug under any circumstances is an automatic death penalty. In others, any non-guild sanctioned use of this drug is a guild-enforced death penalty. **Damage:** **2D6** damage every melee for the next **1D4+2** melee rounds, per dose. **Cost:** 750 gold per dose. **Antidote:** 250 gold per dose. Neutralizes the poison, stopping damage from subsequent melee rounds, and restores **1D4** S.D.C. or Hit Points.

Shady Jack

A moderate, nutty taste and virtually no odor. Best used when mixed in with dishes of roast game (pheasant, venison, etc.) or rich desserts to mask the flavor. **Damage:** **1D4x10** damage per dose. **Cost:** 200 gold. **Antidote:** 75 gold. Neutralizes the poison and restores **2D6** S.D.C. or Hit Points.

Threestep

A complicated mixture of poisons that kills its victim gradually. Threestep has no odor or taste, but it does register a fairly bitter aftertaste that the victim usually picks up shortly after the first wave of effect hits. Although there is *no antidote* for this poison, victims familiar with the poison (a successful Recognize and Use Poisons skill roll will work) should be able to neutralize any further effect with a magical Healing Touch, magically bestowed immunity to poison, psionic purification, or any form of bio-regeneration. **Damage:** **4D6** initially. **2D6** minutes later, the victim must save again or take another **4D6** damage and his senses feel dull (reduce skill performance and speed by half). **3D6** minutes later, the victim must save *again* against poison or take an additional **6D6** damage. **Antidote:** None per se, other than magical or psionic healing.

Last Rites

Perhaps the most lethal contact poison commonly in use. Last Rites comes as a powder, salve or ointment. Sometimes it can even be obtained in a liquid or gel form, as well. Upon contact, the victim will feel a strange, almost electric buzz at the contact point, like he has been shocked somehow. For the next three days he will feel increasingly uneasy and ill, although no serious nausea will set in. After 72 hours, the poison will finally kick in, having spent the last three days coursing through the victim's bloodstream, preparing for what is tantamount to a huge, coordinated strike on the victim's nervous system. When the poison kicks in, the victim suffers a massive system-shock and in most cases, simply drops dead without warning. This poison is used most often by assassins who enjoy toying with their victims by telling them they only have three more days to live or as a potent means of blackmail. ("Provide what I want within 72 hours and I give you the antidote. Don't and you **die**.") Many victims spend that time scrambling for an antidote, but it is super-rare and many believe there is none. Only master poisoners and assassins in the Land of the **South-Winds** hold the secret of the herbal cure for this toxin, nobody outside of this strange land has ever developed one. **Damage:** Initial queasiness, but after three days, **2D6x10+12** damage occurs in a massive attack

on the nervous system. If the victim should, by some **miracle**, survive, permanently reduce I.Q. by one point and P.E. and Spd. by 1D6 points. **Cost:** 2,000 gold per dose (half that price in the Land of the **South-Winds**). **Antidote:** The herbal antidote conies as a tea that completely neutralizes the poison within 2D4 minutes! Super-rare and typically costs 30,000 to 50,000 gold from a reputable alchemist or healer — sometimes a king's ransom or terrible favor from black mailers. Note: Most magical and psionic healing are ineffective against this poison. Only the Restoration spell will completely negate it and a psionic Purification can help, but only in the slightest, reducing the damage inflicted by 10% (can only be applied once).



The Brass Menagerie

Nature: Zoology

When this book was unearthed during the early days of the Western Empire, it verified the rumors that for years there had existed in the **Floenry** Islands a mad Wizard and Alchemist who had built a huge laboratory, nicknamed the **Brass Menagerie**, for creating monstrous creatures. This Wizard, whose name has been erased from all **records** to prevent others from trying to contact his spirit, was supposedly inspired by legends of other monsters said to have been created by Alchemical means, such as the Chimera and Green Mold.

So it was this mad hermit established his Menagerie somewhere in the Floenry Isles, where he created a variety of creatures. Some of them died out immediately, others continue to roam the world **today**, **although** in very small numbers. On top of those he created, the madman also traveled far and wide to capture a variety of exotic beasts, presumably to keep as reference or as victims of alchemical transformation. When done, he would sell his creations to gladiatorial arenas, zoos and wealthy nobles. Failures that lived were often set free, and some of his monsters simply escaped.

Exactly what happened to this individual is unknown. Legend states that his creations overthrew him, destroyed the lab and escaped the island, but the fate of the Wizard, as well as that of his bizarre progeny, remains to be seen.

What follows is a small selection of some of the creatures he created in largest numbers that are said to exist in the world **today**. Should any of these monsters be encountered in the wild, one might recognize them with a successful Lore: Demons and Monsters roll at -10%. Those who recognize these beasts will also recognize their pricelessness, for not only are these beasts rare, but they are also the sole link to the full story of what **happened** in that laboratory in the **Floenries**.

This particular catalog contains eleven entries, just a fraction of the total inventory of the Brass Menagerie. They are: the *Am-*

phisbaena, *Blue Hooligan*, *Garuda*, *Hsigo*, *Kraken*, *Megapede*, *Silver Salamandyr*, *Silodor*, *Slamhound*, *Voltek*, and the *Yin Lord*.

Amphisbaena

Also known as the **Hoopsnake**, the Amphisbaena is a large, venomous, two-headed serpent known for attacking anything, even when unprovoked. Since there are so many different sub-species of **amphisbaena** (those resembling rattlesnakes, **co-bras**, pythons, **blacksnakes**, etc.), they are presumed to be the result of an alchemical experiment.

Alignment: Considered an evil predatory monster that is highly aggressive.

Attributes: I.Q.: 1D4 (animal), M.E.: 1D4, M.A.: 1D4, P.S.: 1D6+12, P.P.: 2D6+12, P.E.: 1D6+12, P.B.: 1D6+12, Spd.: 2D6+20

Hit Points: P.E.+10

S.D.C: 40

Natural A.R.: 7

Horror Factor: 10

Average P.P.E.: 3D6

O.C.C.s Available: None.

Natural Abilities: **Thermo-vision/nightvision** 50 feet (15.2 m), **prowl** 80%, **swim** 66%, **climb:** 76% and **track by scent** 60%.

Hoopsnake: One head takes the other in its mouth, forming a circle. In this configuration, the Amphisbaena can roll along at up to triple (3x) its normal speed!

Hypnosis: If the Amphisbaena makes eye contact with an opponent it can attempt to mesmerize them if the victim fails to save vs psionic attack (roll 14 or higher). Mesmerized opponents will be dazed and confused for the next 2D4 melees, and will be at -4 to strike, parry and dodge and -25% on all skills.

Attacks Per Melee: Three by bite attack or mesmerism.

Damage: Bite for 2D6 plus another 3D6 damage if the victim fails to save vs poison. The Amphisbaena can attack with both heads simultaneously but must use two melee attacks to do so.

Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +2 to strike and dodge.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Average Life Span: 10 years.

Size: 7-10 feet (2.1 to 3 m) long.

Weight: 75-100 lbs (34-45.4 kg).

Habitat: Old Kingdom, Baalgor Wastelands, and Eastern Territory.

Languages: None.

Enemies: Anything it can catch, kill or eat.

Allies: Amphisbaena have shown an indifference towards **Orcs** and **Ogres** (it probably doesn't like how they taste). This makes the creature a popular pet (and bodyguard) for those races. Training Amphisbaena not to attack other creatures on sight is almost impossible, so most who keep them as pets store them in large jars or baskets in between feedings. Definitely not the kind of creature to have hanging about one's neck.

Physical Appearance: The Amphisbaena resembles a thick, two-headed rattlesnake, cobra, or other kind of venomous serpent.

Notes: Aside from their use as a pet, these creatures are worthless. Their prodigious breeding is making them a serious problem in the border settlements of the Eastern Territory, where these **Hoopsnakes** are dramatically increasing in number



Blue Hooligan

These malevolent creatures presumably have a more proper name, but this is what they are commonly known as both in the Faerie world and among other **humanoids**. Vile and rotten to the core, these evil, over-sized faene-like monsters revel in causing pain and misery. They are especially fond of stealing (and eating) small children and pet animals, slaying livestock, poisoning water wells, cutting people's Achilles' tendons in their sleep, and other acts of pointless malevolence. They are bullies at heart and will flee whenever confronted with superior force, but they never forget a face and can hold a grudge for centuries. It is said that no matter what, a Blue Hooligan *always* gets even.

Blue Hooligans are apparently the lowest rung of a whole family of evil Faerie Folk which includes Hooligans of every color of the rainbow, presumably with different powers. All are

wicked, depraved creatures bent on striking fear and misery into the hearts of mortal folks. Fortunately, the Blue Hooligan is the most common of his kin, and these blue fiends are quite rare.

Alignment: Miscreant or Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q.: 2D4+4, M.E.: 1D6, M.A.: 1D6, P.S.: 2D6, P.P.: 4D6, P.E.: 2D6+6, **P.B.:** 1D6, Spd.: 3D6 (running), 3D6x10+40 (flying).

Hit Points: P.E.x2

S.D.C.: 3D6

Natural A.R.: 10

Horror Factor: 13

Average P.P.E.: 1D6x100, plus can draw P.P.E from ley lines and ley line nexus points.

Natural & Special Abilities: Winged flight, **nightvision** 200 feet (61 m), see the invisible, keen normal vision, sense the location of small children 50% within 5 miles (8 km), sense the location of pregnant women 66% within 2 miles (3.2 km), sense the location of elderly folk 77% within 5 miles (8 km), track humanoids 60%, and the special power to shrink down to the size of a Pixie (roughly one **foot/0.3** meters tall; +10% to prowl at **this** size).

Attacks Per Melee: Four by physical attack or by magic.

Damage: Blue Hooligans can strike with their claws for 2D6+2 damage, **kick** (3D6) or bite (2D4). They can also use weapons, but prefer to rely on their magic abilities.

Bonuses: +1 to initiative, +4 to dodge while in flight (works like an automatic dodge), +3 to roll with **punch/fall/impact**, +4 to save vs Horror Factor, and +2 on all saving throws.

R.C.C. Skills: Its own vulgar dialect of Faerie Speak and Gobblely (98%), plus two additional languages (base skill +20%), identify plants and fruit (75%), holistic medicine (45%), surgeon (50%), brew (76%), cook (80%), preserve food (75%), recognize and use poison (76%), land navigation (80%), track animals (70%), Faerie lore (66%), prowl (88%), climb (76%/66%), W.P. knife and two of choice. Skills do not increase. Recommended as an villainous non-player character (**NPC**).

Faerie Magic: Fear, Ignite Fire, Fool's Gold, Horrific Illusion, Animate Object, Reduce Self, Agony, Spoil. Plus, the power to *mix* people, places and things, as described on page 61 of the **Monsters and Animals, 2nd Edition sourcebook**.

Psionics: None.

Average Life Span: Effectively immortal and can die only by being slain.

Size: Five feet (1.5 m) tall.

Weight: 80-100 lbs (36.3-45 kg).

Habitat: Anywhere, but they only come out at night or during foul weather/severely overcast skies, but are found mainly in the Old Kingdom, **Lopan**, Phi, Eastern Territory, Y-Oda, Zy and the Great Northern Wilderness. Blue Hooligans find sunlight repugnant and avoid it at all costs, spending their days in caves, under rocks, hiding in cellars, or other dark places. When hit by sunlight, Blue Hooligans become frantic and distracted (lose one attack per melee, -3 to initiative, strike, parry, dodge)

Languages: Speak their own low form of Faerie. Most other faeries (even evil ones) find Blue Hooligans' speech to be particularly coarse and vulgar, and avoid having conversations with them.

Enemies: Pretty much anybody. Very hot tempered and vindictive.

Allies: Mainly only other Hooligans, but even then, they tend to turn on one another pretty quickly. Clever mortals can always use **this** to their advantage when confronted by multiple **meanies**. Occasionally Bogies and Pucks, but regard both as rivals.

Physical Appearance: Blue Hooligans are tall, rail-thin **humanoid** with spindly arms and legs, sickly blue skin, and lank black **hair** typically cut in a mohawk. They possess large, white, **irisless** eyes and leering grins full of pointy teeth. Their long, knobby fingers are tipped with wickedly hooked, black claws, and they sport a large pair of diaphanous, insect-style wings on their backs. Blue hooligans wear virtually no clothing; just some tattered rags. For some reason, they find the very concept of wearing any kind of hat insulting and will be especially cruel to those who wear them.

Notes: These creatures will sometimes hoard treasure but only because they enjoy stealing and keeping nice things from their rightful owners. However, they generally do not covet wealth themselves. They might fight with each other over who gets to say what happens to stolen loot (Destroy it? Give it to its owner's worst **enemy?**), but not because they desire to keep it for themselves.



Garuda

Just about every culture on the Palladium world has made some reference to gigantic birds that could blot out the sun with their outstretched wings and could carry **off** the largest of beasts

in their talons. If ever such creatures stalked the world, they are extinct now and have been for quite some time. Thus was born the alchemical experiment to transmogrify ordinary birds into such giant birds of prey. The closest thing to a successful result was the **Garuda**, an enormous turkey buzzard that rapaciously devours animals and **humanoids** with impunity. Thankfully, though giant, this bird is considerably smaller than those great birds of legend.

Alignment: None. Considered an evil predatory monster.

Attributes: I.Q.: 1D4, **M.E.:** 1D4, M.A.: 1D4, P.S.: 2D6+16, P.P.: 2D6+16, P.E.: 3D6+20, P.B.: 2D6, Spd.: 1D6 (walking), 2D6x10+22 (flying).

Hit Points: P.E. +50

S.D.C.: 50

Natural A.R.: None.

Horror Factor: 12

Average P.P.E.: 1D6

O.C.C.S Available: None.

Natural Abilities: Winged flight, keen eyesight (can see out to three **miles/4.8 km** on a cloudless day), keen hearing.

Attacks Per Melee: Three by talon, beak, or wing buffet.

Damage: The **Garuda's** large talons inflict 4D6 damage per swipe, but the creature must be attacking from above to be able to use them. Otherwise, the Garuda attacks by pecking with its large beak (3D6), or by buffeting its opponents with its wings (2D6 damage, plus roll to maintain balance or lose next attack).

Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +3 to **strike**, and +6 to dodge while **in** flight.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Average Life Span: Unknown. **Garudas** are just beginning to be raised in captivity, and specimens have been observed to live up to 25 years, though it is believed they could live even longer than that.

Size: Six feet (1.8 m) tall at the **shoulder**, 24 foot (7.3 m) wing-span.

Weight: 500-600 **lbs** (227-272.4 kg).

Habitat: Any mountainous region, particularly the Northern Mountains and the **Bruu-ga-Belimar** Mountains; rarely found south.

Languages: None.

Enemies: None, per se. The Garuda is a predator at heart, and will target anything it thinks it can easily overpower. Unless trained as an attack animal, Garudas will break off combat **if** their adversary inflicts a few good hits (reduces its S D.C. to zero), especially if it happens in the space of a melee round. Otherwise, it will continue to harry its prey mercilessly until it weakens it enough to stop fighting and be carried off in its talons and eaten.

Allies: None, although the Wolfen are making a concerted (and somewhat successful) attempt at domesticating these great birds for use as aerial steeds (-15% to Horsemanship: Exotic Animal skill). Garudas are proving difficult to train, but it can be done, and several early efforts have yielded highly efficient **warbirds** capable of performing well in combat. However, they are better used as attack animals, like a falcon, than an airborne steed. The Wolfen Imperial Army is very pleased with their progress so far and hopes to have an entire combat wing of attack Garuda ready within the next year or two.

Physical Appearance: **Garudas** look like gigantic buzzards — hulking birds of prey with black and dark brown feathers, bright yellow beaks and leathery, yellow legs. They have fearsome talons on their feet, and their feathers tend to have a slightly ruffled, disheveled look to them. When standing, turkey buzzards tend to let their heads hang low, giving them a somewhat sinister, vulture-like appearance.

Value: A fully **trained**, combat-ready attack or riding **Garuda** would probably sell for 100,000 to 200,000 gold. Maintaining these beasts is fairly **difficult, however**, as they require a small cow or 2-3 sheep every day for **food**, a large roosting area, and will react aggressively to anybody but its trainers/owners.

Notes: The Eastern Territory has recently discovered the Wolfen's attempt to domesticate the **Garuda**, and is figuring out what to do to counter it. They will probably try to avoid domesticating the birds (which would require a hunting trip into the high mountains and Wolfen territory to acquire them). Yet one more reason to hate and fear the Wolfen.

Hsigo

The Hsigo is a curious race of winged monkeys that could just as easily come from the Yin-Sloth Jungles as from an alchemists' lab. Their origin, however, hardly matters as much as their wicked nature, foul temperament, and positively miscreant demeanor. Hsigos enjoy themselves most when having fun at others' expense. The mildest form of this "fun" might be to continually pester or annoy somebody. The worst form entails entire torturing and murdering the weak and innocent, as well as keeping slaves.

Alignment: Selfish or evil.

Attributes: I.Q.: 1D6+6, M.E.: 1D6+6, M.A.: 1D6+6, P.S.: 1D6+12, P.P.: 2D6+9, P.E.: 1D6+9, P.B.: 2D6, Spd.: 2D6+18 (triple when flying).

Hit Points: P.E.+20

S.D.C.: 3D6+18

Natural A.R.: None.

Horror Factor: 9

Average P.P.E.: 3D6

O.C.C.S Available: Thief, Assassin, Mercenary Warrior, or Priest of Darkness. Hsigos can become men of magic, but this is very rare, since these little **beastmen** rarely have the patience or aptitude for something as strenuous as learning magic.

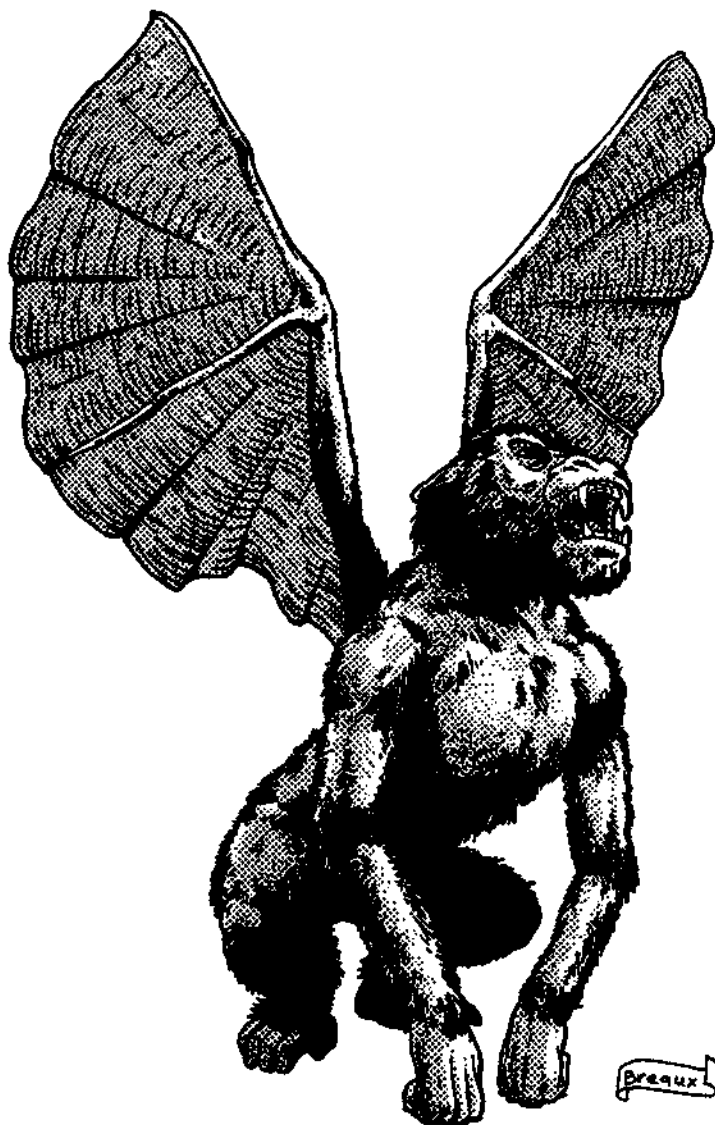
Natural Abilities: Winged flight, nightvision 200 feet (61 m) keen hearing, keen sight, prehensile feet (Hsigos can and perform complex manual skills with their feet, including wielding weapons (at -2 to strike and parry), advanced sense of touch (+10% to all skills requiring delicate finger-work, such as palming, pick pockets, pick locks, locate secret compartments/doors, etc.), climb (76%/76%) and swim (45%).

Attacks Per Melee: Four physical attacks for wild Hsigo, or by O.C.C. training (+1 attack per melee for those trained).

Damage: Hsigos can claw or bite for 2D4 damage +P.S. attribute bonus (if any), or they can use weaponry.

Bonuses: +3 on initiative, +3 to parry and dodge, +2 to roll with **punch/fall/impact**, +1 to all saving throws, plus bonuses from attributes and O.C.C. or skill training.

Magic: By O.C.C. only; rare.



Psionics: None. Hsigos have no psychic potential.

Average Life Span: 15-20 years. Hsigos grow from birth to maturity in a span of three years.

Size: Three to four feet (.9-1.2 m) tall; 8-10 foot (2.4 to 3 m) wingspan.

Weight: 70 to 80 lbs (31.8-36.3 kg).

Habitat: The **Floenry** Isles, the Land of the **South-Winds** and the Yin-Sloth Jungles. They are also occasionally found in the Old Kingdom, Western Empire, **Timiro** Kingdom and the southern parts of the Eastern Territory, but these are usually escaped slave stock or monsters from the gladiatorial arena living and breeding in the wild. Can not tolerate the cold of the Northern winters for long.

Languages: All Hsigos are fluent in Gobblely (98%) and Elven (85%). They vastly prefer to speak in Gobblely, since Elven hurts their vocal cords.

Enemies: None per se, but larger **humanoids** are not to be trusted, in general, and they instinctively prey on and enslave the weak, including children, women, Gnomes and Goblins.

Allies: Hsigos seem to enjoy acting as spies and thieves and are sometimes companions or minions to powerful warlords, priests and men of magic. Wild ones may even join forces with a party of adventurers, a pirate crew or some other band of wandering **folk**, as well as serve a **Summoner**, Priest of Darkness or other dark power. Since Hsigos are natural spies, sneaks, and thieves they often have no problem finding work

elsewhere or simply stealing whatever it is they need. Many are happy and productive members of pirate crews in the south seas. These quarrelsome creatures seem attracted to power but rarely have the drive or discipline to achieve it themselves, so they act as lackeys to those who do.

Physical Appearance: Hsigos are large, tailless monkey-like creatures with short brown fur and a pair of leather bat wings sprouting off their back. Hsigos have large fangs which are usually bared during times of stress.

Notes: Hsigos are *very* fond of small magical items and weapons as well as gold and gems, and will pursue such things eagerly when an easy opportunity presents itself. Hsigos are also natural gluttons and love to gorge themselves on fine food and drink. They can not hold their liquor well, and will get tanked after just one glass of wine or tankard of beer.



Kraken

The Kraken are giant, tentacled sea monsters who can spell doom for any **ship** that passes over them. They are the things of legend, and every sailor lives in fear of the day they see this monster's tentacles break the surface. Kraken are supernatural creatures that developed in the deep sea and were first documented several thousand years ago. It is thought that there was an **unhatched** Kraken in the Brass Menagerie when it fell to ruin

Alignment: Diabolic!

Attributes: I.Q.: 2D6, M.E.: 1D6+12, M.A.: 2D6, P.S.: 1D6x10+50 (supernatural), P.P.: 1D6+10, P.E.: 3D6+22, P.B.: 1D6, Spd.: 1D6 (on land), 1D6x10+22 (underwater).

Hit Points: P.E. +110 for the body.

S.D.C.: 150 for the main body; 70 per each of its 1D4+6 tentacles.

Natural A.R.: 10

Horror Factor: 16

Average P.P.E.: 2D6x20

O.C.C.s Available: None. Considered an evil predatory monster.

Natural Abilities: Breathe underwater, detect surface movement out to one mile (1.6 km; 76%), track blood scent in water up to 10 miles (16 km), **bio-regenerate** 4D6 Hit Points/S.D.C. per melee round, maximum depth four miles (6.4 km).

Attacks Per Melee: Four. **Krakens** actually have 7-10 tentacles, but they can only strike with up to four of them in any given melee round.

Damage: Krakens can lash out with their horn-covered tentacles, inflicting great damage. A restrained strike does 2D6+30 (including P.S. bonus), a full strike does 1D6x10+30 (including P.S. bonus) and a power strike does 2D6x10+30 (including P.S. bonus, but counts as two melee attacks). The Kraken can also grab things with its tentacles and crush them for 1D6x10 damage per melee round unless the victim hacks himself free or slays the beast. Alternately, grabbed victims may be fed into the **Kraken's** toothy maw and chewed for 1D6x10 damage before being swallowed. Swallowed victims will suffer 4D6 damage each melee due to exposure to stomach acids, but they can try to hack their way out of the monster.

Bonuses: Immune to Horror Factor, +3 to save vs magic and psionics.

Magic: Krakens instinctively know the following water elemental magic: Command Fish, Communicate with Sea Creatures, Whirlpool, Hurricane, Part Waters, Summon Sharks or Whales, Summon and Control Storm, Tidal Wave, and Calm Waters. Performing any of these abilities drain's the creature's P.P.E. just as if it had cast the spell as a Warlock.

Psionics: None.

Average Life Span: Centuries! Nobody has ever documented how long a Kraken lives for, but the conventional wisdom says it must be for at least 500 hundred years. They might very well be immortal, dying only when slain.

Size: Huge! A Kraken's **head/body** is 100 feet (30.5 m) long and 50 feet (15.2 m) wide. Its tentacles measure 300 feet (91.5 m) long.

Weight: 10-12 tons.

Habitat: Deep salt water. Thankfully, no Kraken has ever been encountered closer than 20 miles (32 km) to shore. Otherwise, numerous coastal towns would be at the mercy of these horrific leviathans.

Languages: None that anyone can tell. It may be capable of telepathic communication, but that is just a theory. When one encounters a Kraken, it is in no mood to converse with anybody. It just wants to destroy and eat.

Enemies: Anything large enough to gain its notice. Underwater, large sharks, whales and even sea serpents are most often attacked. On the surface, any vessel larger than a lifeboat is likely to attract the monster's attention.

Hungry and angry Krakens are known to pull themselves up onto ships (usually hanging half in the water) to snatch

and eat 4D4 crewmen or until repelled. When clinging to a ship, the vessel's speed is reduced by half and damage is likely to be done to the masts and structure of the vessel. Unfortunately for sailors, particularly in the southern seas and oceans, the **Kraken** has learned that ships carry easy to catch "food" (i.e. sailors). When a Kraken is spotted, it is best to try to outrun the damned monster. Vessels smaller than a schooner are likely to be pulled underwater by the Kraken, torn up and sunk, survivors and dead bodies being gobbled up by the beast.

Allies: None, although sometimes summoned by **Summoners** to attack enemy ships.

Physical Appearance: A Kraken looks like a nightmarish combination of a giant **squid**, a hammerhead shark, and some kind of dinosaur-like creature. When first born, they are only the size of a small rabbit, and are helpless for the first few weeks after hatching. Then they undergo exponential growth until they reach full size.

Notes: It is believed that **Krakens** spend nine months in a state of torpor (sluggish, sleep-like condition) and wake up to embark on a three-month feeding frenzy during which time nothing around the creature is safe.

Giant squids are often unjustly blamed for the havoc wrought by Krakens, since both are huge, creatures known to attack ships. As a result, giant squids have been hunted mercilessly off the shores of the Western Empire, causing a recent dip in their numbers. Meanwhile, no ship's crew has ever slain a Kraken (although a few with spell casters on board claim to have done so), much less brought a carcass home to show others. This is the biggest reason why so many folks believe the Kraken to be a myth.

Dwarven and **Troglodyte** legends speak of some kind of land-based variant of this creature that lives deep underground and is the terror of anyone who ventures into the Palladium Underworld. Stories abound of those desperately trying to avoid giant tentacles that search out the Underworld's caverns and tunnels, snatching the unfortunate and dragging them to a quick, dark death.

Megapede

For centuries, a small armored creature known as the **Minipede** infested the Old Kingdom, hiding under rocks and preying upon small creatures such as mice and ground-nesting birds. After some intense alchemical experimentation, a gigantic variant of the creature was born: the Megapede.

Essentially an enormous, magically powered centipede, the Megapede enjoys a combination of heavy armor and an array of natural and magical weaponry. These creatures can still be found in the Old Kingdom as well as the northern reaches of the Yin-Sloth Jungles, and Mount Nimro. They have become voracious and indiscriminate predators capable of crashing local ecosystems to satisfy their incredible appetites.

Megapedes have no known alchemical value and are impossible to domesticate. Yin-Sloth **headhunters** reportedly can make incredibly hard and lightweight shields out of these creatures' **chitinous exoskeletal** plates (a typical small shield has an A.R. 15 and 100 S.D.C., but weighs only 4-6 **lbs/1.2** to 1.8 kg).

Alignment: Considered an evil predatory monster.

Attributes: I.Q.: 3 (insect intelligence), M.E.: 1D6, M.A.: 1D6, P.S.: 2D6+18, P.P.: 1D6+12, P.E.: **1D6x10+10** (extremely resilient little buggers), P.B.: 1D6, Spd.: 1D6+24

Hit Points: P.E.x2

S.D.C: 2D6x10

Natural A.R.: 15

Horror Factor: 14

Average P.P.E.: 2D6

O.C.C.S Available: None.

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 100 feet (30.5 m), prowl 50%, swim 85%, climb 80% and track by scent 60% (+15% if tracking blood scent or decay).

Web Spray: The Megapede can spew forth a web of sticky strands equivalent to a magic net spell. The creature can fire a web spray up to four times per 24 hour period. Megapedes are infamous for spraying opponents with web and then either trampling them to death or scorching them with fire breath. Once the prey is dead, the Megapede eats at its leisure.

Attacks Per Melee: Four.

Damage: The Megapede typically bites its prey for 3D6 damage, but it can also gore them with its horns (4D6) or gore them on a full running charge (**1D4x10**, plus knocks the victim off their feet so they lose initiative and one attack). If a Megapede desires, it may trample prone opponents for 4D6 damage. For missile attacks, the Megapede can also breathe a stream of fire out to **150** feet (45.7 m) that inflicts 5D6 damage initially and then another 2D6 damage each melee round until it is extinguished — it goes out after 2D4 melee rounds on its own.

Bonuses: +3 to strike, +1 to dodge, +4 to save vs poison, +2 to all other saving throws.

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Average Life Span: 10 years.

Size: Up to 25 feet (7.6 m) long, 6 feet (1.8 m) wide and 6 feet (**1.8 m**) tall.

Weight: 3,000 **lbs** (1,362 kg).

Habitat: The Old Kingdom, Yin-Sloth Jungles, and Mount Nimro.

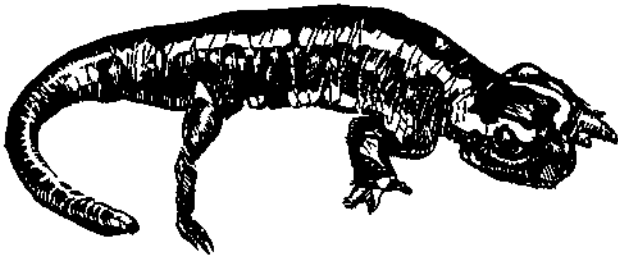
Languages: Megapedes can communicate with each other though a series of chirps and **clicks**, but they show no interest in communicating with other creatures. They just want to eat them.

Enemies: None.

Allies: Megapedes will sometimes act in concert to hunt especially large prey, like giants or large wild beasts, but that is the extent of their sociability.

Physical Appearance: The Megapede is an enormous, segmented insect covered by a thick, chitinous carapace. The coloration tends to vary from a mottled gray to a fiery red.





Silver Salamandr

These curious little creatures were built from scratch in the Brass Menagerie. They are fully intelligent and have personalities as complex and developed as any major **humanoid** race. Their small size, total immunity to heat, and mastery over certain forms of magic as well as other abilities, make them potent little creatures more than capable of handling themselves during times of trouble. Most Silver **Salamandrs** embark on a life of adventure and excitement, either on their own or as the traveling companion of a larger humanoid, hitching a ride on their shoulder or in a satchel. Their small size and innocuous appearance make them perfect spies, and they can often sidestep many of the dangerous situations facing most adventurers altogether.

Salamandrs absolutely *love* treasure, but are frustrated by their inability to transport any meaningful amounts of it. They therefore must live vicariously through the riches of wealthy adventurers, or by living in and around the treasure hoard of a noble, dragon or monster, such as a sphinx or a Za.

Alignment: Any, but tend towards selfish alignments.

Attributes: I.Q.: 3D6, M.E.: 3D6, M.A.: 3D6, P.S.: 3D6 (supernatural), P.P.: 3D6, P.E.: 3D6, P.B.: 3D6, Spd.: 3D6

Hit Points: P.E. **attribute number** +1D6 per level.

S.D.C.: 30 (does not gain S.D.C. from O.C.C. and skills).

Natural A.R.: 12

Horror Factor: 8

P.P.E. Average: 4D6 +1D6 per level of experience.

O.C.C.S Available: All Silver Salamandrs are natural Fire Warlocks and may not change their O.C.C. for any reason.

Natural Abilities: Total immunity to heat and fire (normal and magical), resistant to cold (normal cold does no damage, magical cold does half damage), magically understands and can **speak/write** all languages, **nightvision** 200 feet (61 m), prowl (78%), climb (88%), chameleon (as per the 1st level Earth Warlock spell, but can be done at will with no P.P.E. cost).

Attacks Per Melee: Three breath attacks or two Warlock spell attacks per melee round. Silver Salamandrs can breathe a triple blast of mini-fireballs (as per the fourth level Fire Warlock spell) at will. The mini-fireballs have a range of 90 feet (27.4 m) plus 10 feet (3 m) per level of experience, inflict 3D6 damage per triple blast, and the fire balls can only be dodged if the target knows they are coming and rolls an **18** or higher.

Damage: The Silver Salamandr has *no* real means of physical attack. Despite its great strength and amount of Hit Points (for its size, anyway), it is too small to meaningfully bite, kick, or hit its opponents. For defense, it must either rely on its mini-fireballs ability, or its other spell powers.

Bonuses: +4 to dodge plus the bonuses common to the Fire Warlock O.C.C.

Magic: Fire elemental spell casting abilities as per the Warlock O.C.C.; starts at level one.

Psionics: None; they have no psionic potential.

Average Life Span: 100 years, although some insist they have the ability to live up to 250!

Size: Eight inches (20 cm) long, from the tip of the nose to the tip of the tail. The tail takes up nearly half its total body length.

Weight: One-third of a pound (**149 grams**)!

Habitat: Anywhere, even in arctic cold climates, but are usually found in southern climes. The internal heat generated by the Silver Salamandr is enough to keep it safe from freezing, but it will complain loudly and persistently about the current conditions so long as it must contend with ice and snow. Given its druthers, the intelligent being will find a nice spot in an active volcano, a steam spring, desert or jungle and reside there until its wanderlust or desire for treasure sends it elsewhere. When they are not actively adventuring, Silver Salamandrs are notoriously lazy and complacent.

Languages: Magically speaks, writes and understands all languages fluently (98%).

Enemies: None, except for those Wizards, **Summoners** and Alchemists who try dissecting these creatures as potential components. Most ordinary folk, including fighters, do not even know they exist.

Allies: Anybody they can make friends with. Salamandrs are fairly personable, although they are sometimes prone to wisecracks and mouthing off at inopportune times, which can make their companionship a little trying. ("Oh, come on! I was complimenting that Ogre. Instead of saying he was dumb as a stone, I said he was as *smart* as a stone! Pretty clever, huh?")

Physical Appearance: Silver Salamandrs look like oversized versions of their amphibious namesake except their moist silver skin has a cold metallic quality like real silver. In fact, when standing motionless, one can easily be mistaken as a silver statue. The oldest may have darker grey stripes, spots or a mottled pattern to their skin, depending on the individual. They have large, round, black eyes that have thin slit irises to them. When casting spells or shooting mini-fireballs, the whites of their eyes tend to glow a little.

Value: The blood of a Silver Salamandr is used in a variety of magic potions and salves (worth 100 gold an ounce), their tongues used for spell casting (worth 2000 gold), and their bodies used in other concoctions (worth 2000 gold).

Notes: These tiny creatures of magic are extremely rare, with perhaps as few as 300 in the world — but then nobody knows for sure, and the creatures themselves claim there are at least a thousand or two in the Yin-Sloth Jungles alone. Thanks to their great strength, they can push, pull and lift large, heavy objects. They can also manipulate small objects like keys, lock picks, matches, needles, coins, quill pens, etc. with their **forelimbs**, but it takes a fair amount of effort, and they may do nothing else while handling such things. Silver Salamandrs are simply too small to wield any sort of weaponry, even Gnomish hardware; they are just too small. They could wear a magical ring as a neck collar if they wanted to, and some individuals have found interesting ways to wear other magic charms, medallions, etc. Otherwise, they really can not carry, wear or use tools, clothes, jewelry or other items.



Silodor

Silodor (not to be confused with the dinosaur-like **Silonar**) are the traditional enemies of the **Za** — wicked fiends who enjoy inflicting misery on **humanoids** in a never-ending quest to accumulate wealth, magic and power (for a detailed overview of the canine **Za**, see page 164 of the **Monsters and Animals, 2nd edition sourcebook**). **Silodor** are great winged panthers who hail from an alien dimension and were originally introduced to this world during a mass summoning over 3,000 years ago. While most of the details of that event are lost, it is confirmed that the 99 Silodor brought to this world escaped the bonds of their Summoners and killed them in a battle that lasted for three days and three nights. When it was all over, only 77 of the original cats **remained**, free to roam the world as they wished. They have since become solitary creatures, wanting little to do with the world of mortals, and especially of Summoners, whom all Silodor inherently distrust.

Sometime during their stay on this world, the Silodor encountered the **Za**, and a deep and instant animosity formed between the two. Whether or not these creatures bear some ancient grudge or whether they just instinctively cannot stand the sight of each other is unclear. The Silodor insist that they simply can not abide by the presence of the foul **Za** and feel compelled to destroy them. The **Za**, who are known for lying and deceit, insist that the Silodor have waged an unjust war of genocide upon their kind since before recorded time, and must themselves be stopped in their cruel crusade. When pressed to take a side, most humanoids side with the Silodor because those creatures are generally far more trustworthy than their dog-like adversaries.

It is believed that there are presently less than 50 Silodor left alive. They no longer seem to have either interest or the capability of procreating, nor do they have any means of returning to the dimension from which they were originally summoned. On this world, they are a dying race and it appears there is nothing to be done to reverse that.

Alignment: Tend toward Unprincipled and Anarchist alignments, but occasionally, a few good and evil Silodor can be found.

Attributes: I.Q.: 2D6+6, M.E.: 2D6+10, M.A.: 3D6, P.S.: **3D6+6**, P.P.: 3D6+6, P.E.: 3D6+6, P.B.: 2D6, Spd.: 3D6 (triple that when flying).

Hit Points: P.E.x3, +2D4 per level of experience.

S.D.C: 2D4x10

Natural A.R.: 12

Horror Factor: 12

Average P.P.E.: 5D6 or by magic O.C.C.

Average I.S.P.: M.E.x2. This is only for Silodor who do not choose a psychic O.C.C. Those who become Psychic Sensitives, **Psi-Healers**, Psi-Mystics, Mind Mages or Illusionists will have the starting **I.S.P.** of that particular O.C.C.

O.C.C.S Available: Silodor are natural psychics and usually (66% of the time) choose one of the Psychic O.C.C.s (**tending** toward Psi-Sensitives, Mind Mages and Illusionists). Those who do not become a psychic O.C.C. usually become Scholars or Wizards.

Natural Abilities: **Nightvision** 250 feet (76.3 m), see the invisible, detect evil, detect magic, winged flight, bio-regeneration 4D6 Hit Points or S.D.C. per melee **round**, **prowl (76%)**, land navigation (88%), and wilderness survival (88%).

Attacks Per Melee: As per O.C.C.

Damage (excluding P.S. bonus): Silodor can claw their opponents for 3D6+6 damage or they can bite them for 2D6+6 damage. They are rather fond of physical combat, and do not mind mixing it up with their opponents. They are also shrewd fighters, and will use any dirty tricks, opportunities or tricky strategies they can think of.

Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +1 to strike and parry, +2 to dodge (+4 to dodge when flying), +2 to save vs Horror Factor and poison, and +1 to all saving throws. This does not include **O.C.C.**, skill or possible attribute bonuses.

Magic: By O.C.C. only.

Psionics: All Silodor possess the psionic powers of a first level Mind Mage: Mind Block, See **Aura**, Alter Aura (self), Meditation, and three powers of choice from each of the four psionic power categories (Healing, Sensitive, Physical and Super). **Silodors** may *not* choose the Super-Psionic disciplines of Mind Wipe, Psi-Sword, or Possess Others unless they become Mind Mages and reach 3rd level of experience or higher.

Average Life Span: 300-400 years.

Size: Nine feet (2.7 m) plus a tail measuring another three feet (0.9 m).

Weight: 600-700 pounds (270-315 kg).

Habitat: Can be found worldwide, but are most common in remote mountain and jungle regions.

Languages: Magically understands and speaks all languages.

Enemies: **Za** and evil creatures in general.

Allies: None per **se**, but may ally with humanoids who prove their trustworthiness. Silodor are wary allies at first but once their friendship has been earned, it is for life.

Physical Appearance: Silodor are huge, powerful panthers with a broad set of feathered wings on their back. Their eyes shine like polished glass and are a lighter shade of green or blue (the wing feathers are often trimmed in the same color as the **cat's** eyes). Except for their eyes and a few bits of edge

trimming on the feathers, Silodor are uniformly colored throughout their bodies, fur and wings alike. They range from a pearly gray to varying shades of dark blue to jet black. Their teeth are brilliant white and their tongues are pink.

Notes: Silodor tend to be a bit aloof around **humanoids** but when in the company of another Silodor, they grow extremely friendly, playful and affectionate toward one another. Silodor *never* fight among their own kind.

For some reason unknown even to Silodor, dragons tend to show these creatures great respect in reference to some deed the cats performed long ago. Some scholars believe the winged cats played an important role in the *Battle of the Gods* or in the great war against the Old Ones, but this is just pure theory and has yet to be proven in any way.



Slamhound

These large dog-like creatures are also a creation of the Brass Menagerie. A heavily modified version of a mastiff, Slamhounds are large, hulking creatures with powerful builds, jet black fur, coal-red eyes, and great other ram's horns. Their dog-like intelligence is marred by their incredible savagery, which makes them almost impossible to train and absolutely lethal when encountered in packs. However, Slamhound packs are totally controlled by the *alpha-hound*, the oldest and strongest individual. Kill or incapacitate the alpha, and within 1D4 melee rounds, the other pack members will instinctively turn on each other in a frenzied melee to determine a new alpha. This struggle usually takes 2D4 minutes and will leave several members of the pack dead or dying.

Slamhounds have become a favored attack animal of the barbarian races of the Old Kingdom and Baalgor Wastelands (Goblins, Kobolds, **Orcs**, Ogres, Trolls and Giants). Giants are

especially fond of them because they are so much larger than these creatures and are not quite so easily threatened by them.

In the wild, Slamhounds are usually found in packs of 2D4. They are prolific breeders and have litters of 3D6 pups at a time. Half of these die or are killed by their litter mates within the first weeks following birth. If the pups are all separated at birth, however, all will grow up into healthy adults.

Slamhounds are instinctive hunters and will frequently target a lone creature or **humanoid**, attacking it relentlessly until it is destroyed or until the pack alpha is put out of commission. Whenever more than one Slamhound is present, the animals form a pack and travel and hunt as a pack.

Alignment: None; considered an evil predatory monster.

Attributes: I.Q.: **1D4**, M.E.: **1D6**, M.A.: 2D6, P.S.: 2D6+10, P.P.: 1D6+15, P.E.: **1D6+12**, P.B.: 2D6, Spd.: 88 (60 **mph/96 kph**). Slamhounds can go from a dead stop to maximum speed in the span of a single melee **attack/action**. They can also run at top speed for a number of hours equal to half their P.E. score.

Hit Points: P.E.+40

S.D.C: 1D4x10

Natural A.R.: None.

Horror Factor: 12

Average P.P.E.: 16

O.C.C.S Available: None.

Natural Abilities: **Nightvision** 300 feet (91.5 m), prowl (55%; in dark conditions this increases to 88%), track by smell (75% **+15%** if following a blood scent), can smell prey one mile (1.6 km) away, swim (65%), can leap 4 feet (1.2 m) high and 8 feet (2.4 m) long from a standing position and can leap *ten times* that height and distance when moving at full speed.

Attacks Per Melee: Four.

Damage: Slamhounds can bite for 2D6+6 damage, claws do **2D4+4** damage, head butt does 3D6 damage, or the animals can ram their opponents. A Slamhound needs only one attack and a little room to get up to maximum **speed**, after which it can ram targets with its large horns (counts as two melee actions). A ram inflicts 4D6 damage (plus P.S. bonus, if any) and has a 01-60% chance of knocking the victim off its feet (victim loses one melee attack and initiative). Skilled pack hunters, Slamhounds are notorious for ramming their adversary/prey one time after another, never giving it a chance to get up, and until it stops moving; literally battered senseless or beaten to death. Once incapacitated, the Slamhound feeds on its victims. This ram attack is also used to knock horses and characters off their feet, making them more vulnerable to attack, especially from other Slamhounds in a pack.

Bonuses: +3 to initiative, +2 to strike, +3 to dodge, +4 to save vs Horror Factor, +2 to all other saves, in addition to likely attribute bonuses. Resistant to heat (normal heat does no damage, magical heat does half damage).

Magic: None.

Psionics: None.

Average Life Span: 10-15 years.

Size: 4-5 feet (1.2 to 1.5 m) long, with the tail adding another foot or two (0.3 to 0.6 m).

Weight: 100-130 pounds (45.4 to 58.5 kg).

Habitat: The Old Kingdom, Ophid's Grasslands and certain parts of the Great Northern Wilderness (and perhaps, the plains in the Land of the Damned). These creatures used to

roam the easternmost reaches of the Western Empire but have been exterminated from that region after an intensive hunting effort.

Languages: Communicate to each other through a series of barks, grunts and growls.

Enemies: **Slamhounds** will consider anything as potential prey if the pack has a chance of bringing it down. Otherwise, a single **Slamhound** will consider preying upon anything up to three times its body weight! Slamhounds are hated by wild dogs and wolves who may also fall prey to the hounds and who will attack a lone hound on sight. A lone Slamhound will inexplicably run when confronted by two or more wolves or dogs, a tactic used to keep them away from human settlements.

Allies: Other Slamhounds. The typical pack consists of **2D4** members, occasionally as many as 10.

Value: Slamhounds are *impossible* to domesticate, but they are coveted as wild animals to be unleashed against opponents in the gladiatorial arena. Also note that Slamhounds leave *nothing* edible behind, not even bones, when they feed. This makes them somewhat valuable to those nefarious elements (such as thieves' and assassins' guilds) that have a need of making bodies disappear without a trace. As such, they can command **600-1200** gold each.

Physical Appearance: A hulking dog with jet black fur, red eyes (that glow slightly in the dark), and great yellow **ram's** horns.

Voltek

These creatures are what resulted when their creator managed to forge a composite of a giant scorpion and an electric eel, with a few other "improvements" thrown in for good measure. The result is a fearsome giant predator that has been known as the "**mage's bane**" for their habit of preying upon those with high P.P.E. and for lying in ambush within ley lines and at ley line nexuses.

Alignment: Considered an evil predatory monster.

Attributes: I.Q.: 1D4+1 (animal), M.E.: 1D6+6, M.A.: 1D6, P.S.: 2D6+10, P.P.: 2D6+10, P.E.: 2D6+10, P.B.: **1D6**, Spd.: 2D6+20

Hit Points: P.E. attribute number +20.

S.D.C: **1D4x10+8**

Natural A.R.: 12

Horror Factor: 12

Average P.P.E.: Up to 200. The Voltek feeds on P.P.E., nothing else, and lives in constant search of it. If these creatures can find a ley line or a ley line nexus, they will simply stay there feeding constantly. Otherwise, they will seek out creatures with high amounts of P.P.E. (over 20) and attempt to kill them and absorb their Potential Psychic Energy. A Voltek considers itself fully fed when its P.P.E. is at 200. If it cannot feed, it will lose **10** P.P.E. a day, during which time it will constantly seek out a source of nourishment. **Volteks** can absorb P.P.E. from ley lines as well as energy unleashed at the moment of death the same way a Wizard can.

O.C.C.s Available: None. Volteks are predatory animals.

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 300 feet (**91.5** m), see the invisible, prowl (50%; in dark conditions or on ley lines this increases to 70%), climb (**60%/60%**), land navigation (66%),

swim (40%), can leap 6 feet (1.8 m) high and 10 feet (3 m) long.

Ley Line Camouflage (special): When hiding on a ley line or a ley line nexus, Volteks are nearly invisible: 90% **undetectable** if **unmoving**, 70% **undetectable** if moving two feet (0.6 m) per melee round or slower, 20% undetectable if moving up to six feet (1.8 m) per melee round, totally visible if moving faster than six feet (1.8 m) per melee round.

Attacks Per Melee: Four by claw, bite or electrical bolt.

Damage: Volteks can fire a bolt of electricity from the stinger-like appendage at the end of their curved tail. Electrical bolts inflict 4D6 damage and have a range of 250 feet (76.3 m). Volteks can also channel electricity through their large, **pincer-like** claws for 5D6 damage per strike. Each time a Voltek uses its electrical powers, it drains the beast of 10 P.P.E., so if it is extremely hungry/depleted, it will not waste energy until it has fed. Volteks can strike with just their unpowered claws for 3D6 damage, an uncharged tail swat also does 3D6 and a bite does 2D6 damage.

Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +3 to strike, +4 to parry (a Voltek can parry incoming attacks with its **pincers.**), +2 to dodge; this is in addition to any possible attribute bonuses. Also resistant to heat and cold (take half damage; magic attacks inflict full damage) and immune to electricity, poison and disease (even magical attacks).

Magic: Volteks can not practice magic, but they are creatures of magic and can inflict damage to those harmed only by silver or magic, including supernatural beings.

Psionics: None.



Average Life Span: 20 years.

Size: 7-10 feet (2.1 to 3 m) long. The tail is another three to four feet (0.9-1.2 m) long, but it curves back over the creature's back and does not add to their overall length.

Weight: 250-300 lbs. (112.5-135 kg).

Habitat: Found anywhere there are ley lines. They are seemingly immune to severe warmth or coldness, and will migrate along ley lines to wherever they lead. Curiously, once a Voltek has traveled the full length of a ley line, it grows tired of it and will often leave to seek out a different ley line. Most Volteks encountered outside of ley lines are most likely migrating or lured away by some other source of P.P.E.

Languages: None.

Enemies: All life forms, especially supernatural creatures and those possessing high amounts of P.P.E.

Allies: None.

Value: An entire Voltek carcass will fetch approximately 500 gold at any alchemist's shop, but a live one will get 1500-2000 from a gladiatorial arena in need of one, half that from evil beings who sometimes chain the beast up as a guard animal to a lair or treasure hoard (intruders must get by the monster to get to the chamber beyond). However, they make lousy guard animals and even arena monsters because of the large amount of P.P.E. they need on a regular basis.

Physical Appearance: Volteks resemble giant black Emperor scorpions, except where their tail should have a stinger, there is an odd forked appendage from which the beast fires its electrical blasts. A Voltek's pincers are oversized and particularly menacing looking.

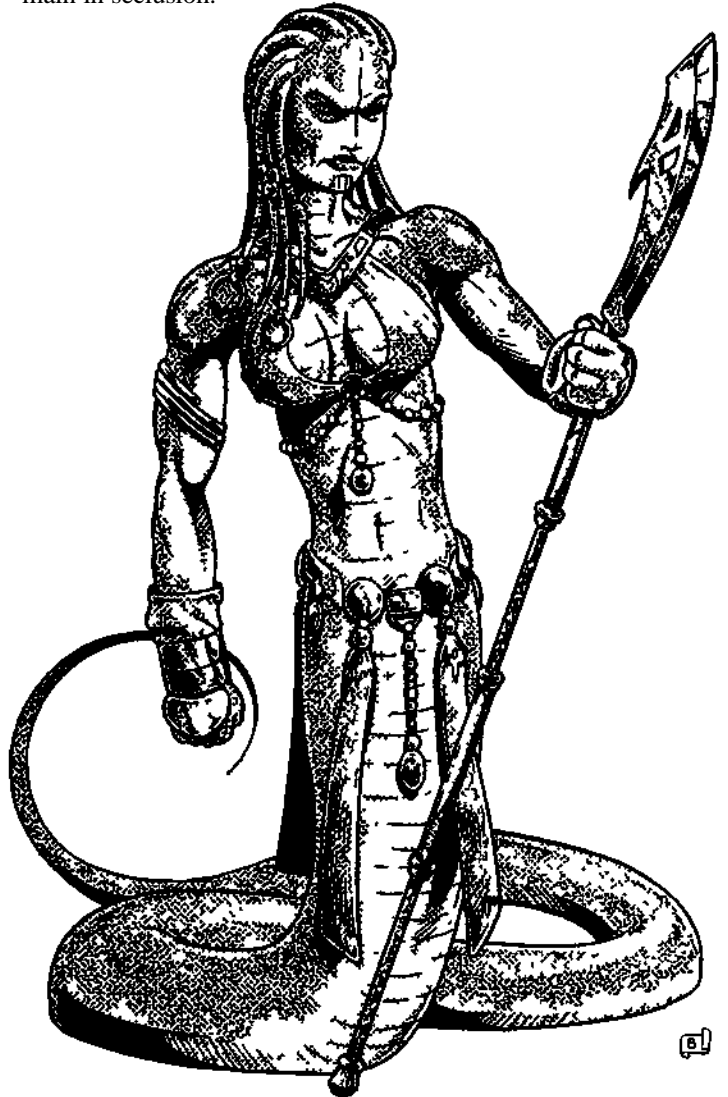
Yin Lord .

By Bill Coffin & Kevin Siembieda

These beautiful, powerful creatures were one of the crowning achievements of the mad Wizard who created them. A perfect fusing of serpent and **humanoid**, the Yin Lord is a hardy and capable creature especially well suited to living in the deep jungles of the **Floenry** Isles, Land of the South-Winds, and the Yin-Sloth. It is believed that these creatures, in league with the Silodor, led the rebellion that destroyed the Brass Menagerie and set its prisoners free. Like all of those creatures, the Yin Lords largely disappeared after the overthrow, but they have been sighted on several of the Floenry isles as well as in the jungles bordering the Land of the **South-Winds**.

The truth is, despite their monstrous appearance, the Yin Lords are a highly rational, compassionate and even noble race that deeply wishes to establish contact with other intelligent beings. The Yin Lords are too few in number to form their own civilization, but not wishing to live like animals in the wilderness, they have decided to try to integrate themselves with the "civilized" peoples of the world. Much of their experience and observation of humanoid behavior has been of the many pirates, smugglers and slavers operating in the southern regions, so the Yin Lords know they must be careful. One wrong move will alert the world to a new "monster race" that should be **destroyed**, just for safety's sake. And while it saddens them, the Yin Lords realize by human and most people's standards, they *are* monsters. They have enough experience to know that most people fear and recoil from **snakes**, and "snake-people," like themselves, are all the more menacing.

Consequently, the Yin Lords tend to live on the edges of civilization, observing how others live and work as they try to formulate some plan of introducing themselves in a way that won't frighten their prospective new comrades. In the Land of the South-Winds, the Yin Lords hope to do this by aiding human settlers in their border clashes against the large and well-organized Tezcat population in the area. In the best case scenario, the Yin Lords can introduce themselves by providing captured Tezcat War Chiefs as a sign of good faith. It is a serious gamble to take, but the way the Yin Lords see it, they have few other options. Their numbers are few as it is, and not likely to increase substantially any time soon. If they are to live like a civilized people, then they must take a leap of faith and make some serious effort to **join** them. Meanwhile, a few tiny bands of Yin Lords (3-6 strong) have tried to make contact with adventurers and **tiny** jungle settlements **with** mixed results. One group of humans panicked and fled, another slaughtered all the Yin Lords they could find and a third (a group of snake worshippers to begin with) fell to their knees in awed reverence and continue to treat them like "gods" despite the protests of the **Yin** Lords to the contrary. Despite this, some Yin Lords have made successful contact with seafaring captains and a few adventurer bands who have accepted them as (relative) equals with minimal trepidation. This has given them reason to hope, even though their human and **Elven** "friends" have warned them not to hold out much hope for being accepted, and have counselled them to remain in seclusion.



Alignment: Any, but tend toward good and selfish ones. Those few who lean toward evil usually become Aberrant. Miscreant or Diabolic Yin Lords are a true rarity.

Attributes: I.Q.: 3D6, M.E.: 2D6, M.A.: 2D6, P.S.: 3D6+6, P.P.: 3D6+6, P.E.: 3D6+4, P.B.: 2D6+6, Spd.: 2D6+10

Hit Points: P.E. +1D6 per level of experience.

S.D.C.: 30 plus those gained from O.C.C. and skills.

Natural A.R.: None.

Horror/Awe Factor: 12; let's face it, most humans and even Goblins, Orcs and Ogres are afraid of snakes!

Average P.P.E.: 4D6 is typical of most Yin Lords.

O.C.C.S Available: Any! Yin Lords have proven remarkably versatile and adaptable to almost any way of life, from warriors to psychics to clergy to men of magic, just like humans.

Natural Abilities:

Climbing: Using their strong arms and long tail, Yin Lords are naturally adept at climbing and scaling, with a base skill of 60%/55% +5% per level of experience.

Swimming: 60% +5% per level of experience. Although Yin Lords can not breathe underwater, they can hold their breath for a number of minutes equal to their P.E. attribute score and survive depths of up to 600 feet (183 m; roughly three times greater than even modern humans can endure without special deep sea gear).

Track by Smell: The character can follow a known scent up to 500 feet (152 m) away at a base skill of 25% +4% per level.

Prehensile Tail: The rear end portion of their snake-like bodies is pure muscle and prehensile, so it can strike like an extra limb (+1 attack per melee round) as well as curl around and hold, carry, and pull objects and weapons. In fact, the tail is so sensitive and manageable that it can even be used to work machines and pick locks and similar skills (although at a -5% penalty).

Bio-Regeneration: Like many serpents and reptiles, the Yin Lords have an impressive measure of bio-regenerative capabilities. Fingers and the last quarter of the tail will completely regrow if lost, within 1D4+4 weeks. Hands and arms also regrow, but take much longer, 1D6+6 months. Meanwhile, the lower half of the serpent body can be destroyed and regrown if properly treated to avoid a lethal amount of blood loss and infection. This, however, takes 2D6+9 months. Yin Lords also recover from illness and loss of S.D.C. and Hit Points twice as quickly as humans.

Attacks Per Melee: Three (including tail strike) for vagabonds and untrained youngsters or by O.C.C.

Damage: Yin Lords can engage in fisticuffs or use weapons the same as a human. They can also lash out with their tail for 3D6 damage as well as disarm, entangle, hold and constrict an opponent using their tail. In the latter case, the tail swiftly wraps itself around the opponent to constrain and hold him (the same as the Wrestling skill ability to "pin"). Each subsequent melee attack, the Yin Lord can choose to inflict 2D6 +P.S. bonus in damage to the "pinned/entangled" opponent by constricting the tail to crush him. The opponent can only break free if he is stronger than the Yin Lord or if other opponents attack the Yin Lord and persuade him to let the constricted captive go. At the serpent character's option, a Yin Lord can, once it has wrapped up an opponent with its tail, strike with fists or weapons rather than constrict. Such at-

tacks still require a roll to strike since his victim is struggling, but only a roll of 1-4 will miss the otherwise helpless opponent.

Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +2 to disarm, +2 to dodge, +2 to pull punch (and tail strike), and +1 to save vs poison and disease; all are in addition to likely attribute, O.C.C. and skill bonuses. Remember, the tail adds one extra melee attack per round.

Magic: By O.C.C.

Psionics: Standard; same chance and range of abilities as humans.

Average Life Span: 120 years, but the harsh conditions most Yin Lords live under prevent them from dying of old age.

Size: 12-16 feet (3.6 to 4.9 m) from the top of the head to the tip of their tail. They typically stand five or six feet (1.5 to 1.8 m) tall the same as humans, with roughly 60% (7-11 feet/2.1 to 3.3 m) trailing behind them as their snake tail.

Weight: 500-800 lbs (225 to 360 kg); all muscle.

Habitat: The Floenry Isles, the Land of the South-Winds and the Yin-Sloth Jungles are their current places of habitat with a few small clans eying the Western Empire Periphery. They can adapt to any climate, however. Yin Lords are rarely found in groups of more than 3D4 and there are probably less than 1,000 worldwide. If they could peacefully integrate into society somewhere, their numbers would probably begin increasing dramatically after another generation or so. They give birth to 1D4 live young after an 11 month pregnancy and can give birth once every three years till about age 40. Most do not bear children more than 3-5 times.

Languages: Elven and Southern.

Enemies: Any evil humanoids, but Tezcats and Lizard Men in particular, both of which seem to have taken an immediate (instinctive?) hatred toward the Yin Lords. It is likely they see them as a threat and rival. Yin Lords rightfully fear that most people, human and inhuman, will consider them monsters to be destroyed. Ironically, Faerie Folk take an immediate liking to them, similar to how they regard Elves.

Allies: None, but would like to live aside humans, Elves, Dwarves, and Gnomes — they have never seen a Wolfen, Coyle or Bearman, but have heard all the stories describing them as baby eating monsters and barbarians to be feared and shunned.

Physical Appearance: Yin Lords have a broad, muscular humanoid upper body and a long, sinuous snake-like tail from the waist down. These humanoids have vaguely Elf-like facial features (such as almond-shaped eyes and pointed ears), as well as long black or iridescent red hair often worn in a long braids, ponytails, tied up in a topknot or as dreadlocks. They have a gold skin with iridescent green scales of varying hues. The eyes have a sparkling gold iris with warm brown or emerald green pupils at the center. The body of the males is often accented with dark gold or green stripes or a mottled pattern of some kind, while the females are not. Although their skin is made of very fine, tiny, smooth scales and they have a serpentine body shape, Yin Lords are mammals or something in between a human and a snake, like birds or warm blooded dinosaurs of old.

On Numismatry

Currency & Political History

This is a book about Palladium **numismatry**, or in other words ... money! The currencies of the world, their denominations, their looks, and their relation to each other. In general, it is a lengthy, dry and fairly boring work most notable for the fact that virtually nobody can ever bother to read the entire thing. **However**, it *does* contain very detailed information on the metallurgy of every national currency in production. Such information generally is considered by most kingdoms to be "State Secrets," since every nation's coinage differs in terms of exact gold and silver content. No state coin is **100%** gold or silver — they are always cut with other alloys. However, unlike modern day Earth coinage, these coins do always have a large amount of precious metal to them. Richer nations generally have more precious metal in their coins than poorer nations. Knowing how much to mix in is information counterfeiters have been seeking for quite some time, since figuring out the right mix (even through intense experimentation) has proven difficult and time consuming. Should any thieves' guild learn of this book, they will probably expend serious manpower to obtain or copy it in the false hope that it contains the metallurgical formulae for the **world's** various currencies (it does not). It is the aim of various nefarious elements in the Palladium world that by learning how to duplicate government coinage, they can begin mass producing it themselves.

Currencies

The Western Empire

The basic Western Empire denomination is the *imperial*, also sometimes referred to as the *raptor*, since all Western coinage features on one side a stylized image of a bird of prey. On the other side of Western coins is the visage of a famous Emperor. These tend to change with the political climate, and considering how turbulent Western politics have been over the last few centuries, the Emperor gracing the back of any given coin is always a surprise. This has given rise to a thriving coin-collecting trade within the Empire and in foreign ports of call where heavy Western trade occurs. It would be virtually impossible for one to collect all the different versions of every kind of Western coin, but avid collectors try anyway, sometimes paying outrageous prices for obscure or hard-to-find coins. The *Vikere* series of imperials, for example, is one of the most obscure types of western coinage out there because the Emperor it commemorates lasted only three days, long enough to order coins minted in his likeness but not long enough to see them into circulation. As a result, the *Vikere* line has an exceedingly small mint run, and 90% of the coins minted were later melted down as a sign of loyalty to the military junta that deposed the short-lived Emperor. *Vikere* coins typically fetch a collector's price of anywhere between 1,000 and **10,000 (1D10x1,000)** times their face value. Most of these coins are accounted for, but a few more turn up each year, sought after by adventurers who know what they are worth or by lackeys, mercenaries and goons hired by wealthy

(and obsessive) collectors willing to crush anybody who dares to get in the way.

One should note that the **Isle** of Cyclops, a distinct but allied nation of the Western Empire, also has made the imperial its official currency. For most of its history, the Cyclops have had no formalized currency of their own. They simply traded in carefully measured amounts of valuable magical ingredients or in gems and jewelry. Only when it created a fraternal relationship with the Empire of Sin did the Cyclops Isle adapt a coinage system. Still, this is more to serve the Westerners who visit the Isle rather than the Cyclops who live there. Western coins are small and difficult to use in a large Cyclops hand. To this day, Cyclops prefer to deal in alchemical reagents, bricks of precious metal and gemstones. If they have to truck with coinage, then they will have a non-giant servant count out coinage into bags, which the Cyclops will use instead. In general, Cyclops like to judge value by the weight of something. The thought of carefully smelting coins and tracking them against other nations seems like a waste of time to the one-eyed giants.

Gold imperials break down into five denominations — 5 gold imperial, 10 gold, 25 gold, 50 gold, and 100 gold. Silver imperials break down into just three denominations — 1 gold, 5 gold, and 10.

In game terms, one Western imperial is equal to one gold piece.

The Eastern Territory

The basic Eastern denomination is the *crown*. For years, the Eastern Territory relied on a number of different locally minted currencies due to its utter lack of centralized government. However, as the specter of war casts its shadow over the East, most of the kingdoms, states and principalities that comprise it have agreed to conform to a single monetary standard. As war with the Wolfen grows ever closer on the horizon, the East must purchase the war materials and personnel it can not make for itself. Mercenary and mercantile centers along the east coast, west coast, and the Great River have always been hamstrung by irregularities among local currencies. What one is worth in one area might not be the same just ten or twenty miles down the coast! For merchants, this is a bit of a hassle, and it discourages trade, even to potentially lucrative areas such as the Eastern Territory. Likewise, one of the things discouraging some mercenaries to work in the East (despite its abundant opportunities for military freelancers) was that before recently, one might get paid in a variety of different types of coin. Those soldiers returning from a profitable tour in the East often found their pay substantially reduced by skeptical moneychangers who offered cut-rates for their Eastern coin. Since the introduction of the *crown*, these problems have largely been solved, as evidenced by a sharp increase in merchant and mercenary traffic flowing into the confederation.

To avoid offending any of the many different states that make up the Eastern Territory, Eastern coinage is nearly **feature-**

Currency

Eastern Coins



Western Coins



less. The thought was that if various members of the confederation were honored on the new coinage, those left out would object, and it could lead to a collapse of the entire program. For the sake of everyone's ego, the organizers of the new currency thought it better to just leave the coins blank, except for a faint imprint of a simple crown, symbolizing that when a nation truly comes together, no one part of itself stands out apart from any other — it all blends into a new whole.

There are five denominations of gold crowns: 1 gold crown, 2 gold crown, 5, 20, and 50. There are only two silver crown denominations — 1/2 crown and one crown. Silver crowns are generally considered pocket change.

It should be noted that although this new currency is largely used throughout the Eastern Territory, the myriad of old currencies have not left circulation yet and will probably serve as a secondary monetary standard for at least another generation (assuming the new national currency lasts that long). Those trading in the various local and regional currencies of the East must keep a close eye on their exchange rates, as they have become more volatile as war and the new currency place the older monies' usefulness into question. In time, the powers that be behind the unified currency might try to outlaw any **old**, outstanding currencies, which would make a lot of loose change the standard coin for smugglers, **slavers**, pirates, **thieves**, etc. Likewise, such a move will probably create safe havens (along the Great River, most likely) where outlaw money is accepted, encouraging the outlaws of the realm to all gather and do business in one place.

Phi and Lopan

The basic currency shared by these ancient island nations is the *marque*, a monetary holdover from the **Elven** Empire. During the Time of a Thousand Magicks, marques were a hybrid currency agreed to by both the Elven and **Dwarven** Empire in one of a number of genuine attempts to bring both cultures closer and repair the growing schisms between them. When the Elf-Dwarf war broke out, the *marque* became a virtually worthless **currency**, except for its gold or silver content, and rather ignored by both the Elven and Dwarven empires as "tainted money" because it bore the stamp of their enemy. As the war ground on and the treasuries of both sides depleted, the *marque* briefly returned to favor, having been kept alive as a provincial currency in places like the northern isles of Phi and Lopan.

An unusual tradition with *marques* is for those who hold them to inscribe some cryptic message along the outer edge of the coin, often in secret code or runic script. Most of the time, this is mere graffiti, cliches, romantic sayings, and so on. However, spies and secret societies on the islands and on the nearby shores have used this tradition to pass along sensitive messages. Since everybody carries coinage with encoded writing on it, it makes an undetectable medium for conveying "hot" information. Every once in a while, important "code coins" fall into the wrong hands and inevitably cause a ruckus as those who inscribed them try to get them back. In recent years, a number of Western espionage plots have been foiled in this manner, as their operatives' code coins got away from them and let slip important military plans in the works involving the potential invasion of the island of Phi. In each case, bands of adventurers were the ones who originally obtained the encoded coins and involved themselves **directly** in **opposing** the West's attempts both to retrieve the coins and to further its military expansion into the lands of the East.

Phi/Lopan *marques* are noted for having angular **interdesigns** on them that correlate to their value. A 30 gold piece coin, for example, will have a triangle bordering both faces. The image engraved in the center of any given *marque* usually is a portrait of a past leader of the isles, although in recent years, there has been a trend to engrave runes or mystic symbols as the main decoration of *marque* coins.

There are seven denominations of gold *marques* (**mq**): 10 (circle), 30 (triangle), 40 (square), 50 (pentagon), 60 (hexagon), 80 (octagon), and 100 (decagon). There are also seven denominations of silver *marques*, each of which is worth one tenth of their gold counterpart: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 10.

Island Kingdom of Bizantium

The official Bizantium currency is the *royale*, a standard that dates back 600 years, to when the Island Kingdom first declared its sovereignty. Over the centuries since then, as **Bizantium's** trade lanes have made it one of the more prominent sea powers of the world, the *royale* has become more than a mere type of coin. It has become an emblem of the Bizantium Kingdom and those who are loyal to it.

Bizantium *royales* all feature a picture of the city where they were minted on one side, and the picture of a famous Bizantium ship on the other. Since there have been so many noteworthy ships, crews and captains over the **years**, the variety of coins bearing their image is rather large. To add to this, each year, the

Bizantium monarch holds a festival during which the greatest sea captains of the realm are celebrated for their deeds over the last 12 months. At the end of the festival, heroes are immortalized by having an image of their ship (with the name of the captain and crew) added to the Bizantium library of coin design. A limited coin pressing is immediately minted to add these commemorative coins into circulation. Every five or ten **years**, the Bizantium treasury mints additional currency to replace that which has been lost or smelted. For the minting, every design in the library is used, ensuring that those given the "honor of the coin" are forever part of the Bizantium currency.

For Bizantium sailors, this is one of the greatest honors their country can bestow. Unfortunately, it has also inspired numerous captains to acts of pure recklessness just so they might be recognized for their bravery at **year's** end. (Needless to say, this has been the death of a number of ships and their crews.) Likewise, this has also caused many fierce rivalries between Bizantium **captains**, each of whom see their fellow captains as competitors for top honors at the end of the year. Over the centuries, there have been 22 documented cases of Bizantium **captains** assaulting each other in a mad race to rid themselves of their competition. In this manner, assassinations, naval battles, and other misadventures have been the result.

To try to quell all this, the Bizantium monarchy has recently instituted a year-end regatta in which all of the land's prominent captains are invited to a single race around the main island of Bizantium. The top three winners will each be commemorated in coin for that year. For the race, each captain is issued a standard Bizantium schooner. Captains usually pick their best crewmen for the race, but sometimes captains find themselves without a crew, in which case they must hire freelancers. These "scabs" are viewed **with** utter contempt by the other racing crews, and should expect harsh treatment from them after the race.

There are five basic denominations of gold royales: 5, 10, 25, 50, and 100. There are three denominations of silver royales: the half, one and two.

The Old Kingdom

Old Kingdom coins are the monetary remnants of the **Elven** and **Dwarven** Empires. Since history from that time is so obscured, it is impossible to tell what coins from this currency belonged to what empire. A few are easy to tell — the 50 gold piece, for example, features Elven Lord **Kril**, a wise and just ruler of the Elven Empire who oversaw one of the brief periods of peace with the Dwarves during the war era. Likewise, the 25 gold piece coin is most likely Dwarven, for it has engraved on it an unknown rune of some kind, the sort of mystic writing that only the Dwarves fully mastered. The rest of the coins are of unknown origin.

Old Kingdom currency has no official name. It is merely known as "gold" or "Kingdom golds" and is the oldest form of money to be found in this world. These coins are unusually fine and pure. That, combined with their age, makes them one of the most valuable currencies anywhere. It also is one of the most universal, since Old Kingdom coins are accepted in any port of call at face value (no need for money changing). This makes them extremely valuable to merchants and adventurers, who routinely travel between countries and who also have a deep animosity toward money-changers.



Old Kingdom Gold

THE OLD KINGDOM DRAGON COIN

THIS RARE COIN IS WITH ELEVEN GEMS, INCREASING ITS VALUE TO 7000 GOLP VALUE WITHOUT GEMS 1000 GOLP

25 GOLD COIN ELVEN LORD KRIL 50 GOLD 100 GOLD 500 GOLD PIECE

OLD KINGDOM DRAGON WEIGHT 4 OUNCES

Northern Coins

0 GOLD PIKE 25 GOLD PIECE 50 GOLD PIECE 100 GOLD PIECE

200 GOLD piece

SILVER COINS

5 GOLD PIECE 10 GOLD PIECE 20 GOLD PIECE

THE WOLFEN IMPERIAL 50 GOLD PIECE

WOLFEN COINS ARE CARRIED ON A STRING BELT OR PURSE

The problem with Old Kingdom currency is that there is hardly enough to meet the demand for it. After all, the Elven and Dwarven Empires are long gone, and the unusual composition of these coins makes it impossible to make any more. One could try, but a simple metallurgical test of the product would immediately reveal it to be a fake. Apparently, the ancient empires either included some unknown precious metal into the mix when they minted these coins, or they used a forgotten form of smelting that bonded the gold and silver together somewhat, making a unique, third type of metal. Either way, Old Kingdom coins are not able to be reproduced. For those wanting to score a batch of their own, their best bet is to organize an expedition into the Old Kingdom and search through one of the hundreds of ruins there for lost caches of money. Such a trip would hardly be an easy one; the Old Kingdom is now a savage place filled with monsters, wild animals, hidden mysteries, and a horde of barbaric **Orcs**, **Ogres**, **Trolls**, **giants**, and worse. Those who venture into such a realm had best be prepared to face the gravest of dangers, or else they will not return to tell of their trip.

There are six known denominations of Old Kingdom gold coins: 25 gold (decorated by a ward of some kind), 50 gold (decorated by a portrait of the **Elven Lord Kril**), 100 gold (decorated by a nondescript female warrior, perhaps the famous Elven knight *Llarria the Just*), 500 gold (decorated by the portrait of a sphinx, perhaps *Fur ago the Furious*), 1,000 gold "Dragon Coin," (so named because of the large, coiled serpent embossed on its surface), and 5,000 gold "Great Dragon Coin" (a special "Dragon Coin" studded with various gems). There is no silver Old Kingdom coinage.

The Wolfen Imperium

Minted currency is a new development for the **Wolfen**, who for centuries had relied on a barter economy and using coinage pilfered from ancient treasure hordes or pilfered from the bodies of Eastern travelers, soldiers, and settlers. Now that the Wolfen Tribes have unified under one banner, it was thought that minting a single currency would help legitimize the Imperium as a legitimate nation in the eyes of its human counterparts.

The thing is, having only just launched its currency, the Imperium does not have very many coins minted yet. As a result, the Wolfen Imperium is in dire need of extra metallurgists and new smelting facilities, as the ones they already have are seriously overworked. The Wolfen Imperium has even taken to hiring **non-Wolfen** freelancers, provided they can be trusted. Such professionals generally are required to take a formal oath of secrecy to the Imperium not to reveal the metallurgical formulae of Wolfen coinage to anyone outside of their kingdom. Furthermore, these newcomers are generally required to live in the Imperium for another **five** years after terminating their working relationship with the Wolfen. (The Imperium hopes to avoid turnover by paying its moneymakers well and providing them with some nice perks, like land grants and hereditary titles to those who run the operations.) **Non-Wolfen** have their choice of where to stay in the Imperium, but most of them choose the *Kingdom of Havea*, a semi-independent state that is actually ruled and largely comprised of humans who enjoy their status as Wolfenclients.

Shadowfall, the Wolfen capital, has converted entirely to a cash economy, as have a number of the main tribal capitals. But the vast majority of smaller Wolfen establishments — remote trading outposts and military garrisons, still have not seen a single com. The Imperium is trying to remedy this by sending large shipments of freshly minted cash, ranging from 10,000 to 40,000 (**1D4x10**) legions to such locations to speed the transition from a barter to cash economy. However, sending large money shipments anywhere in the Imperium is a serious security risk. **Coyle** bandits, Eastern raiders, Wolfen criminals, and free adventurers all have a stake in capturing these shipments. Successful banditry of this sort would provide the criminals with a hefty prize they could either spend back in a more civilized part of the Imperium or smelt it into something else, such as trading bars. The trading bar option is more likely, since any provincial spending huge amounts of cash in any Wolfen city (especially if they are **non-Wolfen**) will seem very suspicious.

The basic Wolfen monetary unit is the *legion*, so named to remind Wolfen citizens that nearly every part of their society, including their economy, is ultimately tied to the military. Without that, there would be no Wolfen Imperium, and their coinage

is a commemoration of the Wolfen heroes on whose shoulders their entire society rests.

There are **five** denominations of gold legions (**gl**): 10, 25, 50, 100, and 200. There are four denominations of silver legions (**sl**): 5, 10, 20, and 50. Silver money is used more often in the western frontier of the Imperium and around the **Bruu-ga-Belimar** mountains, where substantial silver veins have been discovered. Unfortunately, a lot of more rural Wolfen are having a hard time grasping that a silver **10-legion** coin is worth as much as a **10-legion** gold coin.

Gold legions are usually decorated with bits of Wolfen writing. The **100-legion** coin has a picture of a cockatrice on one side, commemorating the slaying of Shadowfall, the cockatrice whose conquered lair became the foundation for the Wolfen capital. The **200-legion** com bears a picture of a **mountainscape** emblematic of the entire Great Northern Wilderness, which the Wolfen claim entirely as their own.

Silver legions all bear the image of Wolfen **militaria**. the **5-legion** has a sword, the 10-legion has a great axe, the **20-legion** has a great sword, and the **50-legion** has a picture of a generic Wolfen Imperial, the soldiers who defend the realm from harm.

The Timiro Kingdom

The basic Timiro monetary unit is the *sovereign*, although gold and silver coinage are sometimes also called *knights* and *squires*, respectively. The Timiro currency has a long history, despite the many political changes that have affected this small but influential human kingdom.

Perhaps the most unusual aspect about Timiro sovereigns is that within the kingdom, it is illegal for any "slave race" to carry it. According to ancient law, Goblins, Hob-Goblins, **Kobolds**, **Orcs** and Ogres are all strictly forbidden to lay their hands upon any Timiro com. Over the years, this has been interpreted so that even free "slave peoples" within Timiro or visiting it fall under this law. More than a few innocent people have been unjustly prosecuted for breaking the law in this **regard**, and in recent times, the law itself has become a symbol of both the Timiro government's gradual decline and that society's impending troubles with its large slave population. Several years ago, several thousand slaves across a number of **Timiro's** largest cities conducted the "Change-Purse Revolt," where they all openly carried small sums of sovereigns in plain view. This surprisingly nonviolent protest (rumored to be organized by a wily **Orc** who understands that sometimes, fighting is not the best answer to one's problems) was met by heavy-handed squads of Timiro knights, both on foot and on horseback. By the end of the day, the Change-Purse Revolt had turned into a near massacre, as the rebellious slaves were rounded up and whipped severely for their crimes. Over a dozen slaves died during the roundup, and a dozen more during the whippings. Since then, the anniversary of this event has become a cause for slaves throughout the Kingdom to stage small riots, especially in the cities of *Credia*, *Aracho*, and *Old Timiro*. The **Timiro** government fears that "Sovereign Day," the informal name given to the anniversary of the revolt, will only become more and more violent as the protest riots increase in size and vigor. There are elements within the Timiro military who propose staging a massive crackdown on any and all rioters next Sovereign Day to teach the slave pop-

ulation a lesson in who really controls the country. More level heads within the government fear that such a show of force will only spark a slave revolt so serious it would be tantamount to civil war. With increasing border warfare against the Ogre tribes of the Old Kingdom, the last thing **Timiro** needs is to be overthrown by its own slaves.

Timiro sovereigns are octagonal coins with holes in the center. All gold sovereigns are the same size — the only thing that differs is the size of the center hole, which gets larger with less valuable coins. Silver sovereigns follow the same pattern, but in general are smaller than their gold counterparts. Silver sovereigns are considered pocket change. Aside from some official governmental stamping along the edges, sovereign coins generally do not sport any kind of decoration or **pictograms**.

There are six denominations of gold sovereigns (gs): 10, 20, 40, 80, **100**, and 250 (rare). There are five denominations of silver sovereigns (ss): the half, **1, 2, 3**, and 5.

The Land of the South-Winds

The basic monetary unit of the Land of the **South-Winds** is the *ducat*, in reference to the ducal system of government that land has used since its foundation. The nation is split into a series of independent provinces each ruled by a single Duke or Duchess (the gender-independent title for a **South-Winds** ruler is a *ducat*). The **South-Wind** ducals gather periodically to form a parliament during which time they appoint a ruling triad of ducals who effectively run the country. It is a somewhat unsteady form of government, one which has proven extremely open to corruption on almost every level. It has further been undermined by the fact that the actual boundaries of **South-Wind** provinces keep **changing** as the country's political climate shifts every few years. Still, for all of its shortcomings, the ducal system is the traditional way of governing this **fractious** country, and if it is one thing the **Southlanders** have a deep reverence for, it is tradition.

The ducat's biggest problem as a currency is that it belongs to the most impoverished of the human nations. While the Land of the **South-Winds** is the oldest human realm in existence, its fortunes have never amounted to much, thanks to a hostile environment, rampant piracy and drug use, and a ruling elite more interested in lining its own pockets than actually running the country. As a result, the ducat is fairly light in precious metals, having a lower gold and silver content than almost any other currency around. Only the South-Wind's long-standing trade routes make the money acceptable in any foreign ports.

Due to the country's constantly sliding economic state, the ducat has become something of a laughable currency. Many of the merchants, sailors and pirates who do business in the Land of the **South-Winds** often take the **Southlander** coinage they receive to other lands, where it is smelted into its prime **components** and sold off in bulk. The net result of this has led to a bloodletting of the **South-Winds** national treasury, which has constantly had to use more and more of its gold and silver to replace its disappearing currency. A decade ago, the Ducal Parliament decreed that since the national treasury was nearly bankrupt, no further supplies of gold or silver would be released except for the direst of emergencies. To make up for missing currency, the Land of the **South-Winds** has launched the revolutionary practice of printing *paper money*! Most other lands find

this practice both strange and illogical. Actually *print* money? Whoever heard of such a crazy idea?

Despite foreign derision, the paper currency has begun to work well in the **South-Winds** as a "loose change" currency. Merchants look forward to larger-denomination ducat bills being printed because it would enable them to carry large sums of money on their person but not have to labor under the weight of it all. The switch to paper currency has largely stabilized the gradual devaluation of Southlander money, and will probably remain in effect until the nation somehow procures enough precious metal to re-establish a stable coin-based currency.

Naturally, there are problems with the new money, namely counterfeiting. The Southlander Dukes have yet to perfect a way of printing money that can not be printed up by independent parties as well. So far the counterfeiting problem has not gotten very large; only a few thieves guilds have tried it with any success before they were shut down or taken over by the Dukes. But the Dukes fear that eventually there will be an epidemic of counterfeiting so bad that it will cause rampant inflation and pretty much make the Southlander ducat worthless. At that **point**, the Southlander people, who already live under poor conditions, might simply revolt. Even if they do not, the collapse of the ducat would probably require the Land of the **South-Winds** to abandon it altogether in **favor** of another foreign currency. The likeliest candidates would be either Timiro *sovereigns* or Eastern *crowns*. Although the Land of the **South-Winds** has close ties to the Western Empire, it simply does not have a strong enough economy to effectively implement Western *imperialism*.

There are only two remaining denominations of gold ducats (du): 25 and 50. Like all Southlander money, it features portraits of the members of the first ducal family who conquered this land and established the first cities here. There are three silver ducat denominations: 1, 5, and 10. **And**, there are five paper denominations: **1, 2, 3, 4** and 5 ducats.

Mount Nimro

Like the Wolfen **Imperium**, the Nimro Kingdom of the Mount Nimro region is a new addition to the Palladium world. A nascent nation of Giants and their allies, the Nimro Kingdom remains largely unknown to most other human kingdoms.

Initially, the only money the Nimro Kingdom could produce came from coinage plundered from other realms and re-smelted into large "trading bars" weighing about 200 **lbs** (90 kg) apiece and worth anywhere from 100 to 50,000 gold, depending on their metallurgical content. Since large veins of precious ore have been located and tapped within Mount Nimro, the giants have been able to craft a more consistent series of denominations for internal trade. At present, the Nimro Kingdom really does not carry on much formalized trade outside of its borders, so the trading bars it makes are mostly for the purposes of its internal economy. Should the Nimro Kingdom establish trading relationships with other states such as the *Orcish Empire* or the *Free City of Trokerin* the Baalgor Wastelands, the sheer size of their trading bars will prove troublesome. Hefting a heavy gold brick is no big deal for a Giant. For anybody under Giant-size, however, that becomes more of a problem. Of course, the prospects of the Nimro Kingdom trading outside of its borders is a bit of a pipe dream, really. The other human nations detest the

Giants, especially the Western Empire. The Giants intend to wage war upon their human neighbors someday, but they are no fools — humanity has driven **Giantkind** to the brink of extinction already, and they will certainly try again. If the Kingdom should fall, having its wealth concentrated in huge bars will at least make it difficult for humans and other short folk to plunder the nation's wealth.

There are six grades of gold trading bars, each named after a particular kind of Giant. There is the 100 gold "Titan," the 500 gold "**Algor**," the 1,000 gold "**Gigante**," the 5,000 gold "Cyclops," the 10,000 gold "**Jotan**," and the 50,000 gold "**Nimro**." **Nimro** and **Jotan** trading bars are fairly uncommon and are produced more for show than anything else. The hefty amounts these trading bars are worth make them a bit impractical for everyday use in the Kingdom since most Giants do not make that much money. That is why the **Nimro King Sunder Blackrock** has authorized the production of a new line of silver trading bars that are more realistic for the average Giant to use. These bars are named after the various "shorties," or non-Giants who live in the Kingdom. The bars in general are also called "shorties," and come in five denominations: the 50 gold "Goblin," the 100 gold "**Kobold**," the 150 gold "**Orc**," the 200 gold "Ogre," and the 250 gold "Troll."

For loose change, the **Nimro Kingdom** uses whatever other currency it comes across. There is a great deal of Old Kingdom currency in the **Nimro Kingdom**, most of which eventually gets smelted into trading bars.

The Orcish Empire

The basic monetary unit of the Orcish Empire is the *rakh*, a Gobblely word for "**victory**." This refers to the battles fought by the Orcish Empire's leader, **Doragon**, against the Western Empire over a century ago. Back then, **Doragon** led his army of **Orcs**, **Ogres** and **Trolls** in a massive insurgency against the Western slavers who had taken over a large chunk of the jungles. After some initial success, **Doragon's** army was driven back into the jungle south of what is currently the southern border of the Western Empire's Yin-Sloth Periphery. The West declared victory, but in reality, the victory was **Doragon's**, for in successfully resisting the West, his armies gave birth to the Orcish Empire, a place where the monster races preyed upon by the West could live in relative safety.

There are only five denominations for Orcish *rakh* (rk): 1, 5, 10, 50, and 100. Each of these coins has inscribed on its face a picture of an ordinary, non-magical weapon made famous during the battles against the Western Empire. These weapons were all lost during the fighting, but they remain powerful symbols of hope and freedom to the Empire's people. Periodically, expeditions are sent to the old battlegrounds to find these lost relics, but the jungle conditions make such a search almost impossible. Still, that has not stopped other Orcish Imperials from mounting search after search. Nor has it stopped Western slavers and soldiers from searching there in the hopes of stealing a precious symbol from the reviled Orcish Empire. Should any of these lost weapons be **recovered**, they would be worth a lordly sum to either the Orcish Empire or any interests in the West that might want to put the relic upon display.

The dagger found on the back of a one gold *rakh* belonged to an Orcish assassin named **Thruuk Gul**, who reportedly slew a

Western commander by throwing his specially balanced "hurling iron" at him from two hundred paces. The iron supposedly entered the right eye-slit in the **commander's** helmet, killing him instantly and driving his forces into confusion.

The short sword found on the back of a 5 gold *rakh* belonged to an Orcish soldier whose true name remains unknown to this day, but was known among his comrades as *The Collector of Heads*. The Collector was apparently fond of severing the heads of fallen enemies and keeping them on display for the world (and more importantly, his fellow soldiers) to see. His short sword was his standard beheading device.

The broadsword found on the back of a 10 gold *rakh* belonged to an Ogre warlord named **Grom Brohad** who served directly under Lord **Doragon**. During some of the heaviest fighting, **Brohad** single-handedly defeated an entire column of 30 Western troops who made the mistake of trying to flank **Doragon's** forces by running up a nearby stream. Mired in the muck and making entirely too much noise, the Westerners were found out by **Brohad**, who **singlehandedly** engaged the column and slew every man in it.

The axe found on the back of a 50 gold *rakh* belonged to an ogre mercenary named **Dvorgan the Simple**, a borderline idiot of a person whose only real talent was manual labor. **Dvorgan** was a simple woodcutter before the war (he was hardly suited for anything else), and was of an unusually mild demeanor, for an Ogre. When Western slavers killed his family, **Dvorgan** transformed into an unholy terror obsessed with destroying as many Westerners as possible. His simple **logsplitting** axe became a weapon of mass destruction as the mad beast hewed into dozens of Western soldiers over the course of the war. **Dvorgan** was finally cut down while the Orcish army was retreating, and his steel axe head was never recovered.

The lance found on the back of a 100 gold *rakh* belonged to Lord **Doragon** himself, after he had "liberated" it from the Western knight who had wielded it before. For the duration of the campaign, **Doragon** flew the war banner of his new Orcish Empire from his lance and often carried it into battle as a rallying point for his troops. The lance was lost when **Doragon** himself was ambushed by Western troops in a last-ditch attempt to capture the Orcish leader alive. **Doragon** barely escaped with his life, but his lance and banner were lost during the fighting. The banner is almost certainly gone by now, since it was made of mere cloth, but the lance was made of lightweight steel (an experimental design abandoned shortly thereafter by Western **weaponsmiths**) and probably lies undiscovered in some part of the Yin-Sloth Jungles.

Exchange Rates

Anybody who has traveled between countries knows how the value of money changes depending on where one spends it. Currency exchange rates — how much one currency is worth when changed over to that of another country — is perhaps the simplest way of comparing the strength of different national economies.

In the Palladium World, currency exchange rates are one of those things for which most people have no appreciation. The vast majority of folks never venture more than a few dozen miles from where they were born, so they never see how currencies might change in value from place to place. Adventurers, on

the other hand, travel far and wide, visiting many different kingdoms and collecting many different coins of the realm. For these intrepid few, it pays to know how much one land's currency is worth in the next. The gold of the **Timiro** Kingdom goes a lot farther in the Land of the **South-Winds** (a poorer nation than Timiro so its coins have a much lower gold content), for example, but unless travelers know enough to capitalize on that, merchants and money-changers will be all too happy to **bilk** the ignorant of their extra cash. Many cities, especially those near trade lanes, sidestep this problem by requiring all transactions to be done in the recognized coin of the realm, forcing visitors to get their money changed if they wish to spend it.

Visiting the money-changer is never a pleasant experience, since they tend to charge a fee of anywhere from 10% to 25% of the amount being changed. Even if one is exchanging a rich currency to a poor one, by the time the money-changer is through skimming off their share, the hapless traveler might be worse off than he started. Alas, such are the risks of spending cash in foreign lands.

There is a way of getting around this, namely by carrying money in a form recognized by everybody. The most common is cut, polished **gemstones**, long considered the "merchant's currency" because they are easy to transport, easy to hide (nobles and merchants often sew them into their clothing where they can not be easily filched), and are easy to "break" by spending them at a shop and receiving local currency in change (thereby avoiding the need to visit a **money-changer**). The problem with this is that it only works for relatively large sums. Expecting to receive proper change when trying to pay for a mug of ale with a five-carat diamond is just begging for trouble ("Here's yer change, a **100** Western gold").

Another routinely **used** financial medium are valuable alchemical supplies and components, such as dragon bones or Faeries' wings. These hold their value well regardless of what land one travels in, provided there is a magic shop, alchemist or school of magic, and they can be parceled out in small enough amounts (sometimes) to be used for a variety of purchases. However, alchemists can be even harsher on exchanging these things for cash than the average money-changer is on trading cash for cash, so one should be careful in choosing an alchemist with which to do business.

There are three basic "tiers" that Palladium currencies fall into:

The First Tier

- The Old Kingdom
- The Western Empire
- Phi and **Lopan**
- The Island Kingdom of **Bizantium**

The Second Tier

- The Eastern Territory
- The Timiro Kingdom
- The Wolfen **Imperium**

The Third Tier

- The Land of the **South-Winds**
- Mount **Nimro**
- The Orcish Empire

The general rule of thumb is that when converting currency one step **down**, double the amount. Thus, **100** Western imperials are worth 200 Eastern crowns. Likewise, when converting cur-

rency one step **up**, cut the amount in half. Thus, **100 South-Wind** ducats are only worth 50 Timiro sovereigns. When converting currency more than one step up or down, maintain the same formula. Thus, **100** gold from the Old Kingdom is worth 200 Wolfen legions or 400 Orcish **rakh**.

G.M. Note: These exchange rates are *optional rules only*. They are included merely if you wish to add a little more realism and detail to your campaigns. If you and your players are comfortable with all gold being worth the same, then by all means, please do not feel that you must abide by these rules.

The White Paper Treaty —Diplomacy

Among the **Alarassa** Library's many treasures is a genuine copy of the original White Paper Agreement, the treaty signed by the Western Empire, the Timiro Kingdom, the Land of the **South-Winds**, and the Island Kingdom of Bizantium a little over 400 years ago. The treaty officially ended the Western Empire's attempt to take over the world by force though the use of its dreaded fleet of *Demon Black Ships*, evil warships that harness the power of summoned monstrosities. Ever since the signing of the White Paper Treaty, the Western Empire has dismantled its entire fleet of Black Ships and sworn never to build them again. However, as the Empire of Sin grows stronger by the day, so too do the sentiments of some Western nobles to find a way out of the White Paper's obligations. Certainly the Empire of Sin could just ignore the treaty, but there are too many nobles within the Empire as well as other human nations who respect the letter of the treaty too much to abide by its utter disregard. Thus, those Western nobles who most want to resume building the Demon Black Ships have been looking for some kind of way to do it legally, no matter how shaky the justification may be.

The Alarassa version of the White Paper might be the answer these nobles have been looking for. In this "original" draft, there is a loophole buried deep within the legalese of the treaty that would allow the West to resume building their ships if it was for the purposes of *defending* the Empire, not expanding it. All the Empire would have to do to is engineer some attack upon its interests (real or staged), and they could technically use this loophole to justify a new Demon ship fleet. This draft was written by the Western contingent during the original treaty meeting, but it was suspiciously "lost" (i.e., the other three powers made it disappear) before the actual signing ceremony, and a new draft had to be hastily assembled on the spot. The new draft excluded the little loophole the Western delegates had arranged for themselves, and they soon found themselves bound by an ironclad agreement.

Amazingly enough, it seems that the original version of the treaty has survived all this time! And it bears the signature of each of the Timiro, Bizantium and **South-Winds** delegates. All it needs is a Western Empire signature (it can be any ruling Western lord, even a current one) to make the agreement official. Should the Empire of Sin find out about this version of the document, they will want very, very badly to retrieve it. Shrewd adventurers who get a hold of it could easily parlay it into a

massive cash reward (worth millions!) from the West as well as other favors if they play their cards right. Or, they could profit nearly as well by making sure the document got into Eastern, **Bizantium** or **Timiro** hands. Putting this into **South-Winds** custody is not a good idea, since most South-Wind Dukes are in some way bought off by the West, and will pass the treaty along to them for trade considerations and political favors spread over several decades.

The irony of this whole thing is that unbeknownst to most of the world, the Western Empire really has been reconstructing its Demon Black Fleet, without regard for the White Paper Treaty. Emperor Itomas has kept the whole operation a secret until such time as he feels it right to reveal his dreaded warships to the world. Those Western nobles who create a fiasco over the acquisition of this document will do so not knowing that it will all be for nothing.

In any event, if and when the West formally launches a new Demon Black Ship fleet, the world will surely suffer for it. None of the old powers that once defeated the West could do so quite so easily today. The Empire of Sin is much stronger, and the Land of the **South-Winds** and the Timiro Kingdom are both weaker than they once were. The Eastern Territory is too concerned with fighting the Wolfen and other self-interests to bother with the West right now. Or if they did, they could only field a distracted effort. Although the Bizantium navy remains powerful, it is not a juggernaut, and could not stand up to the West alone. Should the Western Empire use a newfound power to exert its influence upon the ocean trade lanes, the shift in the **world's** balance of power would be dramatic over the next decade or so, as the West's coastal influence slowly creeps inland and the Empire of Sin begins spreading across the Palladium world like a virulent, unstoppable plague.

The Justice Wheel — Old Style Law

The Justice Wheel is an ancient device originally used sometime during the Elf-Dwarf War. Reputedly invented by Lord **Zeribar** the Mad of the **Dwarven** Empire, the Wheel was one of the least predictable means of administering justice. Whether **Zeribar's** love for "chance justice" contributed to the peasants' revolt that ultimately killed him, will never be known, but his legacy lives on in what is perhaps his only (questionably) meaningful contribution to society: The Justice Wheel.

Stories of Zeribar and his notorious Wheel abound, especially throughout the Eastern Territory and Timiro Kingdom, but *The Justice Wheel* now in the hands of the Library at **Bletherad**, thanks to the **Alarassa Library's** Argosy, is the only written account of it. This book describes in-depth the history of Zeribar the Mad and the many different means by which he administered justice. Most of them were cruel **and/or** bizarre. Nearly all relied on some element of randomness. His crowning achievement was his Wheel of Justice, a fairly simple implement that many of his subjects approved of, perhaps because it was a step up from his other brands of justice. Better to put one's fate into the spin of a wheel than the hands of Zeribar the Mad.

The Wheel itself was a large metal disc mounted on a turning-table (like a roulette table or a lazy Susan). The disc was divided into numerous pie-like slices, and on each one was engraved the name of a particular type of punishment. The convicted would grab one of the many handles of the Wheel and give it a spin, watching nervously as his possible fates slowly moved underneath the turning-table's pointer. Whatever punishment stopped beneath the pointer would be administered on the spot. Failure to abide by the punishment of the Wheel of Justice typically resulted in another spin of the wheel. At that point, if the convict spun a punishment equal to or less than what he originally got, then he would have to spin again until something more severe turned up.

Sometimes men guilty of heinous crimes would get off with the lightest of sentences or worse — they would be acquitted! Sometimes those guilty of minor infractions suffered torture and

death, but oddly enough, most of those who were sentenced by the Wheel of Justice were given appropriate punishments. Some thought it was because the gods themselves would intervene and make sure **Zeribar's** Wheel would stop only on those punishments that were rightful. Others thought the Wheel was merely a huge ongoing coincidence, and that the device was more to satisfy **Zeribar's** obsessions with "random justice at the hand of fate" than with keeping the peace. Still others believed that the will of the convicted could somehow play a part in how the Wheel decided. Perhaps the truly guilty knew in **their** hearts what punishment they deserved, and the Wheel, hearing that, answered in kind.

What really was the reason behind why the Wheel of Justice worked as it did is anybody's guess. The Wheel itself was destroyed during the Millennium of Purification, even though it was not a magical item. It is mentioned in numerous written accounts (usually descriptions of **Zeribar's** madness and erratic leadership), and so its legacy lived on that way. The author of *The Wheel of Justice* is an **Elven** knight who encountered an **Orcish** court that had built a copy of the device deep in the Old Kingdom to deal out justice, some 200 years ago. After that, the knight became interested in the device, procured it from the **Orcs** (some believe he merely killed them for it) and delivered it to his home in the Eastern Territory, where his grandchildren tend to it today as a historical oddity. Very few know this second Wheel exists, but if they were to realize it is the only copy, certain collectors and scholars would pay anywhere from 20,000 to 80,000 (**2D4x10,000** gold) for it, and the Wheel's resting place would be besieged by treasure hunters in an instant. Of course, with the information in the book *The Wheel of Justice*, new "copies" could be made and put into use.

A Spin of the Wheel

For G.M.S wishing to incorporate the Justice Wheel into their campaigns, simply use the table below to simulate how the device worked. Those forced to spin the Wheel should roll **percentile** dice and see what happens based on the number rolled.

As for the Wheel itself, while the only *known* copy with genuine historical significance lies in the Eastern Territory, there could easily be numerous others throughout the world, especially in the Old Kingdom, the Yin-Sloth Jungles, the Land of the Damned, and any other region governed by monsters, to whom the inherent unfairness of the Wheel and element of chance are most appealing.

Remember, these same odds and punishments are typically dealt out to both those known to be guilty and those "accused" of a wrongdoing and who may be innocent. The wisdom is that *fate* will free and innocent person without penalty or dish out the lightest of possible sentences (the thought here is that while the accused may be innocent of this particular crime, the Wheel of Justice is making him or her pay for some past wrong or crimes).

Percentile Roll Results

01%-03%: Acquittal! Even if the convict is clearly guilty as sin, the charges against him are dropped. As far as the prosecutor is concerned, the matter is officially closed. The victim has no other recourse other than to cope with this injustice, perhaps hoping that the guilty party will slip up in the future and will be punished for another crime. Better luck next time, eh?

04%-06%: Probation! The accused gets off, but will be on probation. The length of probation is determined below. During this time, if the individual is convicted of *any* other crime, not only will he face punishment for that deed, but he will also face an additional spin on the Wheel of Justice for the crime he was put on probation for.

01%-12%: Life!

13%-24%: 4D6 years.

25%-36%: 3D6 years.

37%-48%: 2D6 years.

49%-60%: 1D6 years.

61%-74%: 3D6 months.

75%-87%: 2D6 months.

88%-00%: 1D6 months.

07%-09%: Vendetta! The victim and the victim's friends and family may administer their "own" justice to the accused. Any conduct visited upon the individual by the victim and his associates during this time is considered fully legal and sanctioned by the authorities involved in the case. The victim may even hire professionals to carry out the vendetta, but this may be considered dishonorable or cowardly, depending on local culture. The accused, by the way, will be released from custody and allowed to live out his life as he sees fit. Of course, with a vendetta hanging over him, chances are he will want to lay low or leave the area. If the vendetta is not performed within the allotted amount of time, the accused becomes a free man with vendetta time served. The length of the vendetta's official sanction is as follows:

01%-12%: Life!

13%-24%: 4D6 years.

25%-36%: 3D6 years.

37%-48%: 2D6 years.

49%-60%: 1D6 years.

61%-74%: 3D6 months.

75%-87%: 2D6 months.

88%-00%: 1D6 months.

10%-12%: Restitution! The accused must pay the victim restitution equal to *twice* the value of whatever he is accused of doing — stealing, vandalism, **destruction/loss** of property, personal injury or murder. In the latter two cases, the accused must provide the equivalent of what the injured or slain party would have earned in a healthy lifetime. If the accused committed some other personal crime (i.e., assault, rape, disfigurement, etc., sometimes murder or maiming) for which no monetary value can be readily determined, then it is up to the prosecutor to make a "fair" determination. In general, commoners are worth more than slaves; soldiers and knights are worth more than commoners; clergy, psychics and men of magic are worth more than military; and nobles are worth more than anybody else. This is a crude model, open to a great deal of interpretation and modification. The value of a life varies considerably from place to place.

13%-15%: Restitution! As above, but the accused must only pay the *actual* value of what was stolen, damaged or destroyed. Murder requires a re-roll. If this category is rolled again the cost of restitution for loss of life or crippling injury is 10,000 gold for commoners and warriors, 20,000 for nobles, priests and mages.

16%-19%: Fine! The accused must pay a punitive sum to the local authorities, the amount of which is determined below. The individual has 2D6 months to pay this amount, during which time if he posts 10% of **it**, he will be released from custody. Otherwise, he must rely on friends and family to raise the money for him. For especially large sums, the character may arrange for some kind of payment plan if the local authorities (and in some cases, the victim) are willing to consider it.

01%-10%: 4D6x10,000 gold.

11%-20%: 3D6x10,000 gold.

21%-30%: 2D6x10,000 gold.

31%-40%: 1D6x10,000 gold.

41%-50%: 1D4x10,000 gold.

51%-60%: 2D6x1,000 gold.

61%-70%: 1D6x1,000 gold.

71%-80%: 1D4x1,000 gold.

81%-90%: 2D6x100 gold.

91%-00%: 1D6x100 gold. (You got off lucky!)

20%-23%: Forfeit Goods! The accused must forfeit *all* of his worldly possessions to the authorities, even if they lie outside of the authorities' jurisdiction — enforcing this judgement in other nations is the prosecutors' problem. Forfeiture is immediate, and the only thing the individual may keep are the clothes on his back, nothing else.

24%-27%: Forfeit Goods! Same as above, but the accused need only forfeit those belongings that are currently on his body, including weapons, armor, magic items, jewelry, coins, horse (if present) and clothing! This punishment is designed to be humiliating as the character is literally stripped of all his immediate worldly goods and sent naked into the world for all to see. Possessions such as house, land, animals, bank accounts, etc., remain untouched.

28%-31%: A different Humiliation! The accused is put on public display (usually in a very small cage or some kind of stockade) for all to see and ridicule. While so detained, passersby will usually insult, spit upon, hurl rotten fruit and vegetables at, or hit the accused without a second thought.

How the individual is treated after his Humiliation ends depends on the local culture. In some places, once out of Humiliation, one is completely forgiven, whereas in other places, the "stigma" from a Humiliation never goes away. The duration of the public Humiliation is as follows:

01%-10%: Life!

11%-20%: 1D4 years.

21%-30%: 2D6 months.

31%-40%: 1D6 months.

41%-50%: 1D4 months.

51%-60%: 2D6 weeks.

61%-70%: 1D6 weeks.

71%-80%: 1D4 weeks.

81%-90%: 1D6 days.

91%-00%: 4D6 hours.

32%-35%: Banishment! The convict must leave the locality for a length of time to be determined below. (Note: Some discretion may be used in determining the length of banishment in accordance with the severity of the crime; pick-pocketing might not merit life-long banishment, for example.) The scope of banishment depends on the severity of the crime and the authority of the prosecutor. A mere village justice only really has the ability to banish individuals from the village and its surrounding area, for example. It is up to the community itself to enforce the banishment. The accused (and presumed guilty) must leave the area immediately upon sentencing.

01%-12%: Life!

13%-24%: 5D6 years.

25%-36%: 3D6 years.

37%-48%: 2D6 years.

49%-60%: 1D6 years.

61%-74%: 3D6 months.

75%-87%: 2D6 months.

88%-00%: 1D6 months.

36%-39%: Hard Labor! The accused must spend time working the toughest jobs the local authorities can find. This typically includes quarrying stone, digging ditches, clearing jungle, and participating in grand labor projects (like building castles, pyramids, defensive walls). In the alternative, those who get hard labor may be forced into military service. This is done by fitting armed convicts with an iron collar which is itself attached to a long chain. The chain is staked to the ground in such a way that the guilty individual can not easily pull it out. Hundreds of convicts may be "staked out" like this, creating a buffer for the real fighting forces waiting behind them. Hard labor conscripts are often used to build fortifications, although they are sometimes used as expendable front-line troops and assigned the worst duties and deadliest missions. Needless to say, the life expectancy of recipients of hard labor is rather short, although there persist stories of those who somehow survive and go on to become heroes or notorious.

01%-12%: Life!

13%-24%: 5D6 years.

25%-36%: 3D6 years.

37%-48%: 2D6 years.

49%-60%: 1D6 years.

61%-74%: 3D6 months.

75%-87%: 2D6 months.

88%-00%: 1D6 months.

40%-43%: Whipping! The accused is to be lashed with a bull-whip (2D6 damage) for his crimes. This usually is a public spectacle in which the convicted individual is lashed and then set free. Unless the local authorities are unusually cruel, most whippings constitute 2D6 lashes, depending on the severity of the crime. Giant-sized convicts, including Ogres and Trolls, receive an extra 1D6 worth of lashings because they can take it. If the character dies during the whipping ... oh, well.

44%-47%: Caning! Similar to whipping in most respects, and it can be equally painful and lethal. The average caning involves 3D6 strokes (4D6 strokes for giant-sized convicts) from a short flexible staff (1D6 damage per strike) of some kind. Deaths during caning are infrequent, but they do happen.

48%-51%: Beating! The guilty party is roughed up until all S.D.C. and approximately half his Hit Points are depleted, then let go. During the beating, the individual is restrained in some fashion so he can not defend himself. This ordeal may take a while, especially if the character's crime was severe, if the local authorities are cruel, or if they have some personal score to settle with the individual. A beating can take minutes or hours. Those that last longer than four hours require the convicted character to save vs insanity or suffer a random insanity, the side effect of his overly long ordeal.

52%-55%: Tar and Feather! An odd mixture of a Beating and Humiliation, the guilty party is set upon by either local law enforcement or citizens who will pummel him into submission (typically until all S.D.C. points are gone), pour sticky tar all over his body, and then dump bird feathers on him. The resulting mess takes 2D4+8 days to wear off and is a constant source of hilarity and name calling for those who see him.

56%-59%: Servitude! The accused must spend time as the servant of the local authorities in whatever role they see fit. Hard labor roles are not considered, only "soft" ones such as cleaning stables, cooking for the local prison, **blacksmithing**, etc. The punishment typically makes use of the convict's talents and abilities. The character typically receives the barest of food and shelter during this time, the length of which is determined as follows:

01%-10%: Life!

11%-20%: 1D4 years.

21%-30%: 2D6 months.

31%-40%: 2D4 months.

41%-50%: 1D6 months.

51%-60%: 1D4 months.

61%-70%: 4D6 weeks.

71%-80%: 3D6 weeks.

81%-90%: 2D6 weeks.

91%-00%: 1D6 weeks.

60%-63%: Quest! The accused must perform some kind of act on behalf of his prosecutors and his victim(s). Typically, this act is both a form of restitution, a penance, and a punishment all rolled into one. The trick with this is making sure the individual carries out the quest once released from custody. To keep things honest, agents of the court may accompany the convict on his travels. Or, some magical means of monitoring the character may also be employed. (Note: For this purpose, crystal balls are highly effective, although those items are

rare and few authorities will have any. Psychic means of spying is also a good method, since agents may astral project to the **convict's** whereabouts and **pester/harass** him until he carries out his assigned task.)

64%-67%: Broken Limb! A limb is broken for his crimes. The authorities are not responsible for re-setting the broken **limb**, so the character had better make sure to see a Healer soon before an infection sets in or permanent damage results. The limb to be broken is typically an arm or leg, but can be a wrist, ankle or even a finger, depending on the crime and the mercy of the prosecutor (a rarity).

01%-10%: Finger/Toe. Roll 1D10 to see how many are to be broken.

11%-39%:Hand

40%-60%: Arm

61%-80%:Foot

81%-00%:Leg

68%-71%: Branding! For his crimes, the convicted individual must endure some kind of visual identification process. This may be done with a hot branding iron, tattooing, scarification, superficial mutilation, or similar means. The result of this is the character loses two points of physical beauty (P.B.), and wherever he goes, he can be easily identified by the mark he bears. The sub-table below determines where the brand will go.

01%-20%:Leg

21%-30%:Hand

31%-40%: Arm

41%-60%: Torso (Chest, Stomach or Back)

61%-80%:Neck

81%-00%:Face

72%-75%: Amputation/mutilation! The convict is to lose a body part, as determined below. Under certain jurisdictions, the convict is required to perform the amputation himself!

01%-10%: Fingers or Toes. Roll 1D10 to see how many are to be cut off!

11%-20%:Hand

21%-30%: Arm

31%-40%:Foot

41%-50%:Leg

51%-60%:Eye (one)

61%-70%: Ears (both)

71%-80%:Nose

81%-90%:Tongue

91%-00%: Genitalia (There's no delicate way to put this, is there?)

76%-79%: Imprisonment! This character found guilty by the Wheel of Justice is confined for a period of time to repay his debt to society. Whether the individual serves his time with other inmates or in solitary confinement is determined by the crime and his conduct within prison (good behavior can reduce a sentence by 50%). The length of time to be served is found **below**. In some cases, the time served far exceeds the natural life span of certain convicted. This is not an error. This is merely incentive for short-lived peoples to behave in places where the Wheel of Justice remains in use.

01%-10%:Life!

11%-20%: 5D6x10 years.

21%-30%: 4D6x10 years.

31%-40%: 3D6x10 years.

41%-50%: 2D6x10 years.

51%-60%: 1D6x10 years

61%-70%: 1D4x10 years.

71%-80%: 4D6 years.

81%-90%: 2D6 years.

91%-00%: 1D6 years.

80%-83%: Armed Conflict! A typical favorite in which the convict is sentenced to mortal combat in the nearest arena, or any other such forum. Some halls of justice even have their own arenas built into them for immediate dispensation of this punishment!

Betting on these events is often rampant, and the convicts rarely win the battle. Those who do are usually granted their freedom, unless they win in such a way that the public disapproves of it, or obvious cheating was involved, in which case further combat or another spin of the Wheel of Justice may be sentenced. How much weaponry and armor the convict receives is up to the local authorities, but it rarely amounts to much. The number of foes the character is to face, as well as whether or not he is to be drugged before combat, is also left to the local authorities' discretion. The type of foe to be faced is determined below.

01%-25%: Monster! Unthinking brutes, such as **Manticores**, **Kelpies**, and the like are typically used for this purpose.

26%-50%: Animal! Lions, tigers, bears, wolves, and giant lizards are standard fare for this one. Great cats in particular are commonly used both because they are so lethal and because they tend to play with their victims a little, allowing for a good spectacle.

51%-75%: Prisoner! The ultimate justice — whoever wins clearly has been favored by higher powers to be set free, right?

76%-00%: Gladiator! Tough luck, the local favorite has been selected to dispense justice. These seasoned pros often will only perform showy moves and grandstanding once their convicted foe has been crippled or seriously wounded.

84%-86%: Torture! The convict is to be subjected to any manner of physical, mental, **and/or** emotional cruelties to pay for his crimes. Most places have particular individuals who specialize in this sort of work and are all too skilled at what they do. In general, a character must save vs insanity every 1D4 hours while being tortured. Failing this roll results in either a random neurosis or a random phobia (50-50 chance). During long torture sessions, it is easy for multiple insanities to pile up on a single character. When this happens, the individual has really cracked under the strain and will forever bear the psychological scars of this experience. The length of the torture session is as follows:

01%-09%: 1D4 hours

10%-18%: 1D6 hours

19%-27%: 2D4 hours

28%-37%: 3D4 hours

38%-47%: 2D6 hours

48%-57%: 2D8 hours

58%-67%: 2D10 hours

68%-77%: 3D6 hours

78%-87%: 3D8 hours

88%-97%: 3D10 hours

98%-00%: Indefinite! The convict will be tortured until he shows some clear sign of mental breakdown **and/or** repentance for his crimes.

87%-90%: Execution! This is it. The big one. Hope you did something to deserve it. The method of execution is one of the following:

01%-16%: Drawn and Quartered

17%-32%: Drowning

33%-49%: Beheading

50%-67%: Burned at the Stake

68%-84%: Hanging

85%-00%: Poison

91%-93%: Prosecutor's Choice! The punishment may be something off this list or it can be something "special" the prosecutor has in mind. **Note:** For many cruel prosecutors, this is the best result there is! In fact, there have been a number of instances in which prosecutors have tampered with their Justice Wheel so that it lands on this selection more often. Of course, not every prosecutor will succumb to such temptation, as those caught tampering with the Wheel will have to face it themselves.

94%-96%: Spin Again! Lucky you! You get to roll on the table again.

97%-99%: Spin Again Twice! Reroll on this table two more times, ignoring the 00% roll, below. *Both* punishments will apply, even those that seemingly contradict each other, such as Death and Life Imprisonment. In cases such as these, it is the prosecutor's duty to figure out a way of making these work somehow. In the aforementioned example, the convict might be imprisoned for life and is tortured every year or every month and magically rejuvenated.

00%: Reversal! The convict spins again on the Wheel, only whatever punishment turns up is imposed upon whoever the convict wronged in the first place! In cases where the victim of the original wrongdoing no longer exists (i.e. they were murdered by the accused), then the next of kin gets the punishment. If there are no kin, the prosecutor conducting the proceedings typically receives the reversed sentence.

World Books & Maps

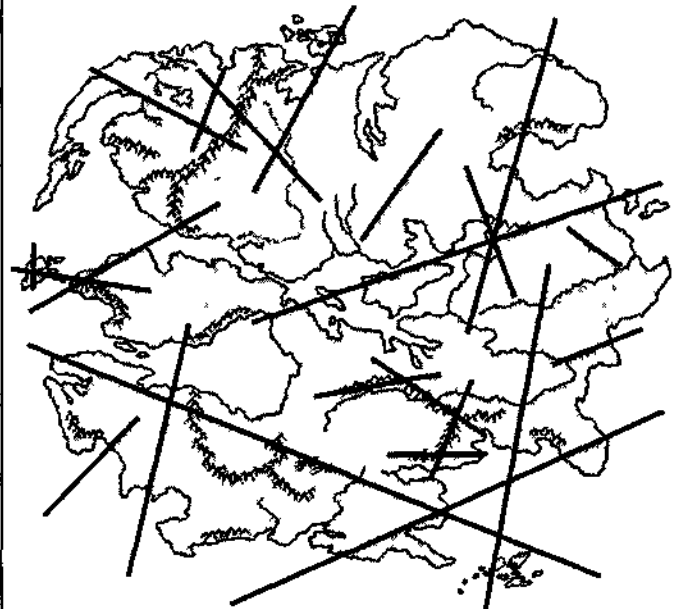
The World: Cartography; Modern Maps

Modern Ley Lines

This map is one of the first major attempts to graph the Palladium World's major, known ley lines. It was drafted during the Time of a Thousand Magicks, when magic coursed much more powerfully through the world than it does now (or so many say). The vast expanse of time between then and now *may* render this map inaccurate. According to certain scholars, the Elf-Dwarf War did something to the natural flow of energy throughout this **world**, causing many ley lines to shift alignment or to break altogether! If this is true, then there really is no telling of the exact nature of the **world's** ley lines today. Most of the lines shown in and around the Western Empire have been proved true by the various Wizards' guilds there. And, the large ley line nexus in the **Bruu-ga-Belimar** mountains has also been verified by nu-

merous Wolfen and human scouting expeditions. Other than that, however, any ley lines marked on this map should be verified in person before their location is entirely depended upon.

Known Ley Lines of the World

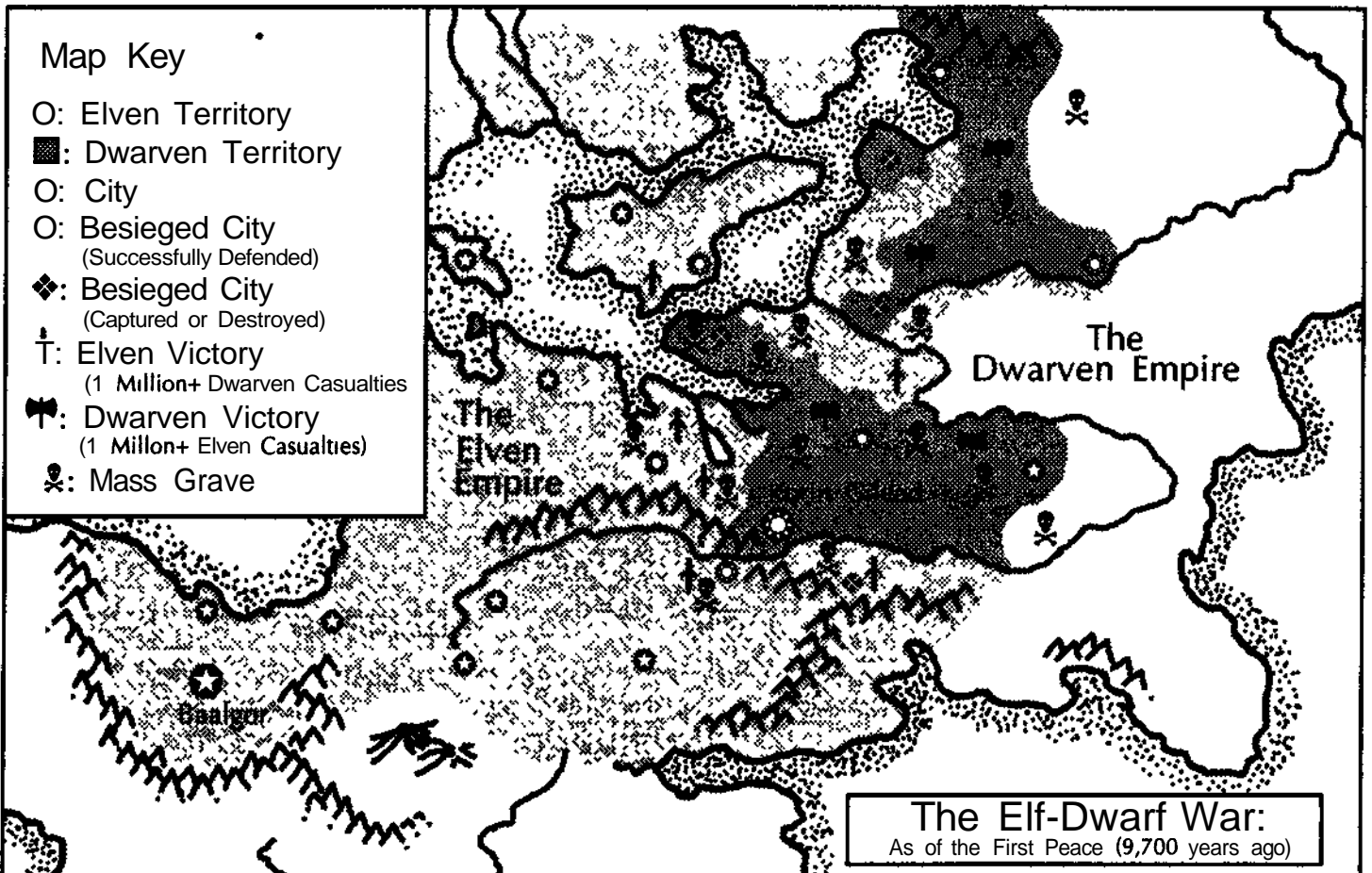
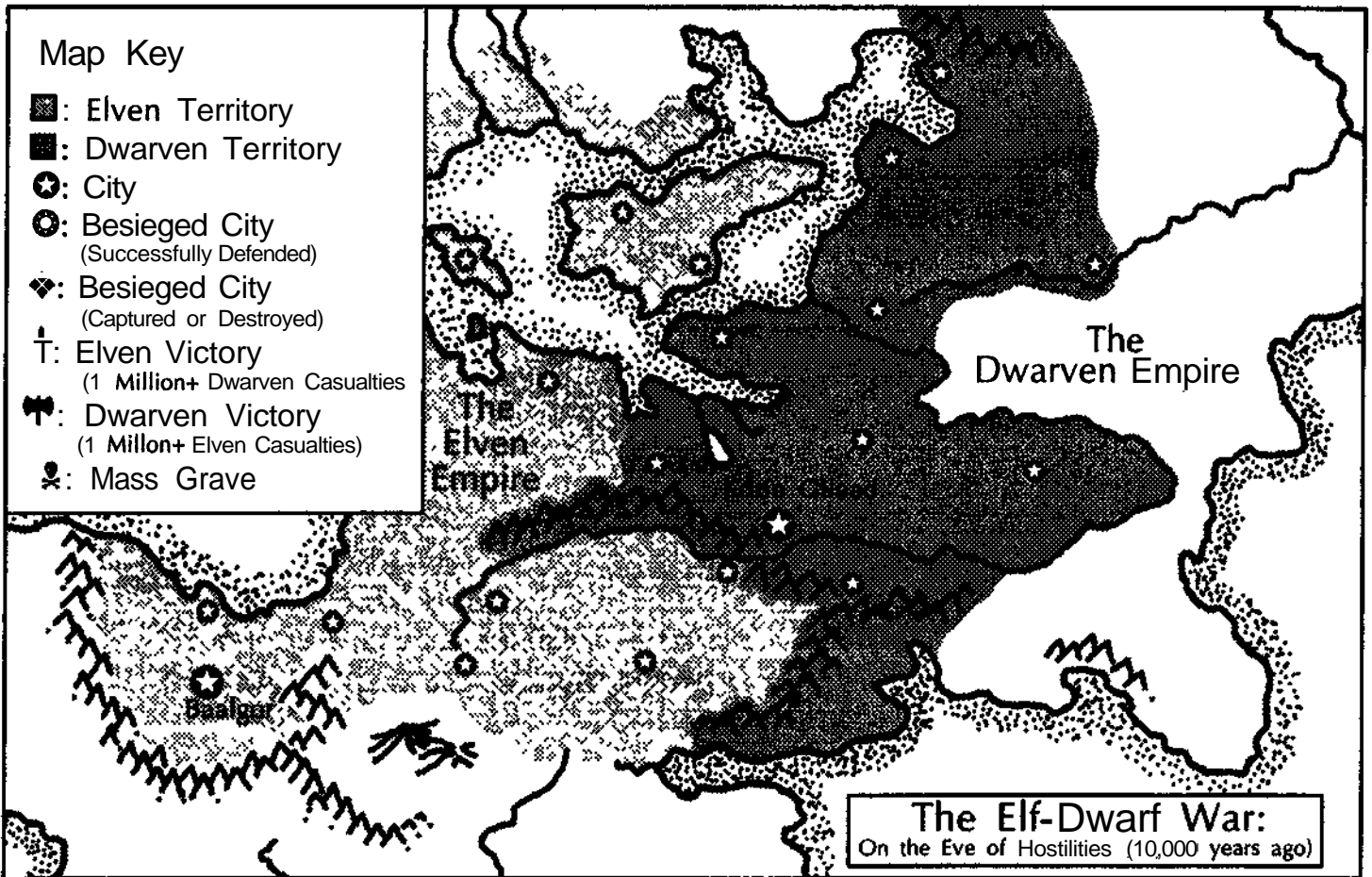


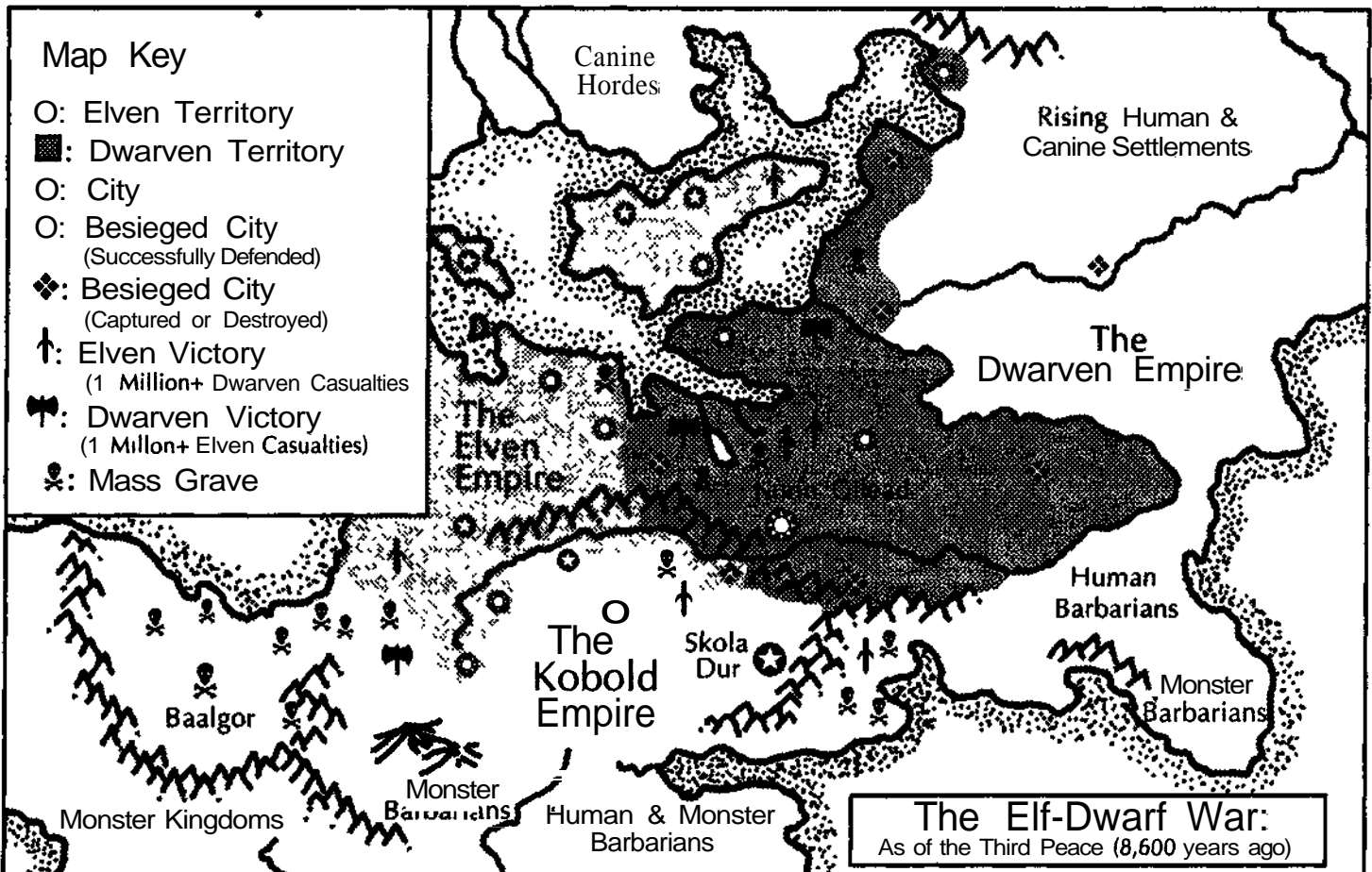
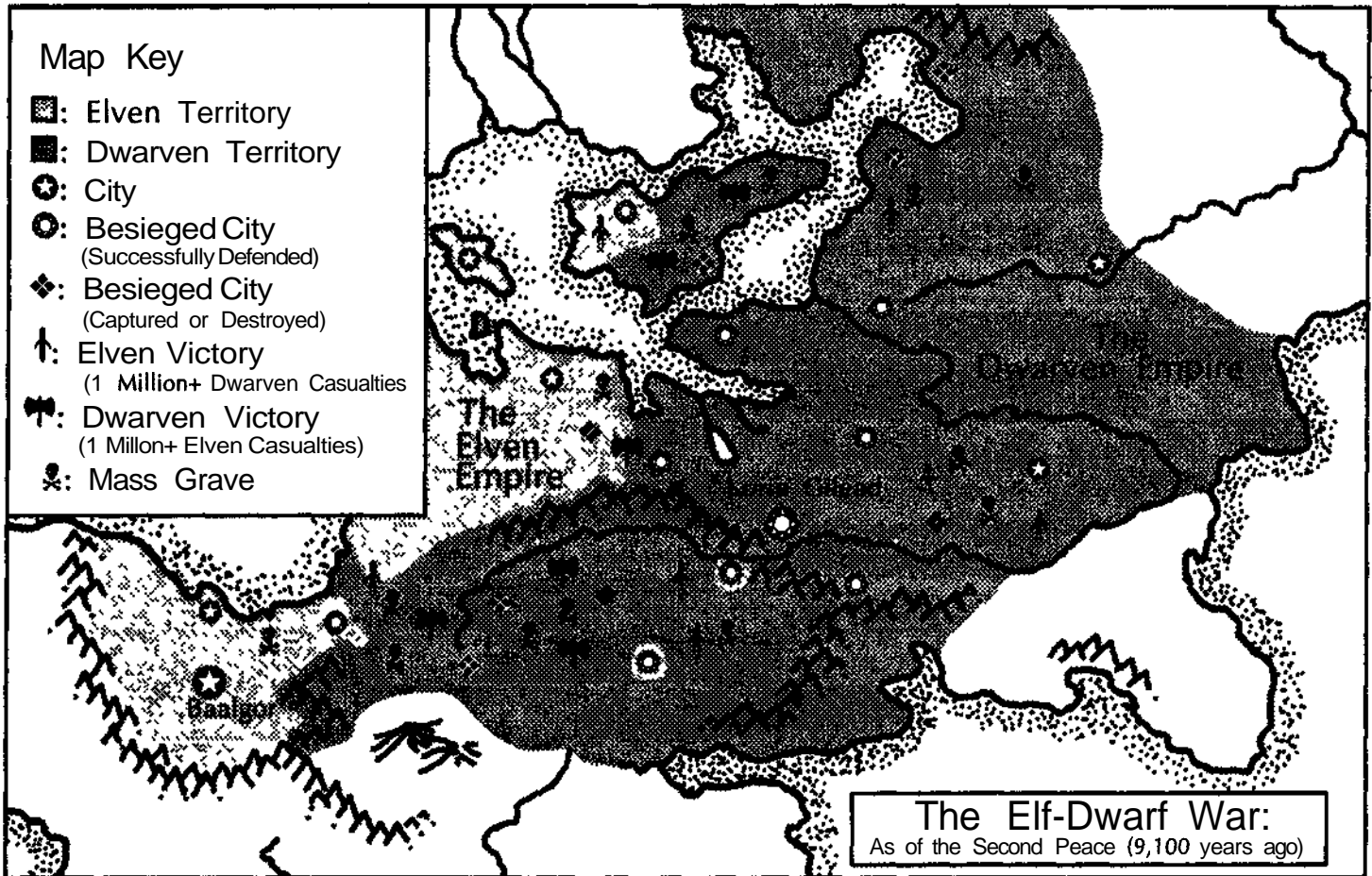
Note: There has never been a concerted effort to map the world's ley lines in the modern age. Thus, the lines of this map only mark the most notable ones. The accuracy of any ley line map can not be guaranteed, as ley lines seem to shift or even vanish over long periods of time. The reason for this remains a mystery, even to the greatest mages and scholars.

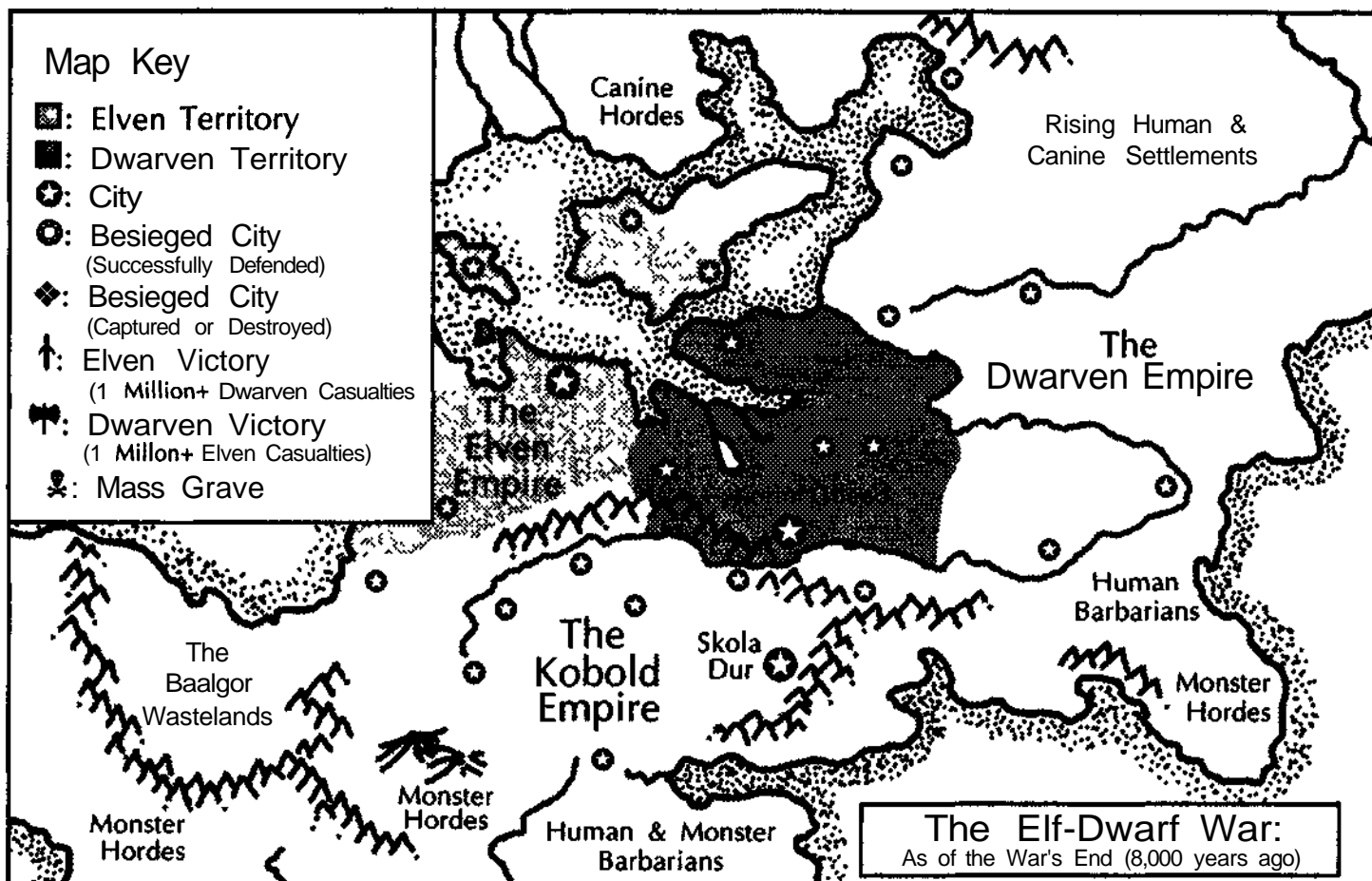
A History of the Dire Conflict

This map book is a modern recreation of as much of the Elf-Dwarf War as is currently known. All this book contains are maps of the battles and territories held during the course of the War. Of greatest interest to modern scholars are the five key maps of the work — a map of the **Dwarven** and **Elven** Empires at the beginning of the War, maps of what each empire looked like during the war's three major **interbellum** periods (the First, Second, and Third Great Peace, as they are called) and what the empires looked like after the war's end.

These maps are particularly important because they have been verified by numerous secondary and tertiary sources that offer clues as to the political boundaries of the warring empires during their great conflict. This information is of great value to archaeologists and scholars interested in locating specific Elven and Dwarven ruins. Without any other **guides**, finding particular places in the Old Kingdom is virtually impossible. Thus, maps such as these have become extremely hot property for those looking to delve into the past. Unfortunately, many such maps exist; almost all are forgeries or are incredibly inaccurate. The maps of this book, on the other hand, provide an uncommonly accurate view of what the Elven and Dwarven Empires looked like when they locked in mortal conflict. Of course, not even these maps may be **100%** accurate, since they do rely on various cartography from the **period**, and as any serious student of maps







knows, those made during the Great Peace periods often were drawn with a certain Elven or Dwarven bias. In the end, the only truly accurate maps will be the ones drawn by those who visit the Old Kingdom themselves and **rechart** the region.

The Heroic Realms

There are dozens of other realms and dimensions, places not so terribly unlike the Palladium World. Just two of these, Hades and **Dyval**, are the home to terrible monsters and evil overlords who would like nothing more than to spread their special brand of misery across the Megaverse. But there are other realms like this one, filled with various kinds of mortal folk, some **bad**, some **good**, most falling somewhere in between. The eternal struggles of right and wrong, life and death are waged in these places as anywhere else, and serve as proof that the Palladium world is not *the* world, but perhaps a stepping stone to innumerable other places. Each of them is filled with its own wonders and mysteries, its own heroes and villains. Each begs to be explored, if only those with the will to travel could just find the means. These are the Heroic Realms.

This book, which apparently is just the first of a multi-volume set (where the other volumes are is anyone's guess) describes in detail, six of the so-called "Heroic Realms." They are:

Hades, a warped reflection of the Palladium World and the realm of demons. Where lakes, rivers and oceans exist on the Palladium **world**, eternal fires exist on Hades, making it an unbearably hot place suitable only for the infernal demons who inhabit it.

Dyval, a world covered by forests and small lakes, and also the realm of Deevils. Each of the major Devil lords maintains a citadel here and controls a vast domain. Most of Dyval remains wild and **unexplored**, however, filled with Deevils of every sort including creatures never seen on the Palladium World.

Regnum, a majestic realm where magic is at its height and the land is ruled by a dozen grand empires who have not warred upon each other in over 10,000 years. Yet, there brews discontent in this garden of paradise, and many of the realm fear a great destruction is soon to befall the entire realm.

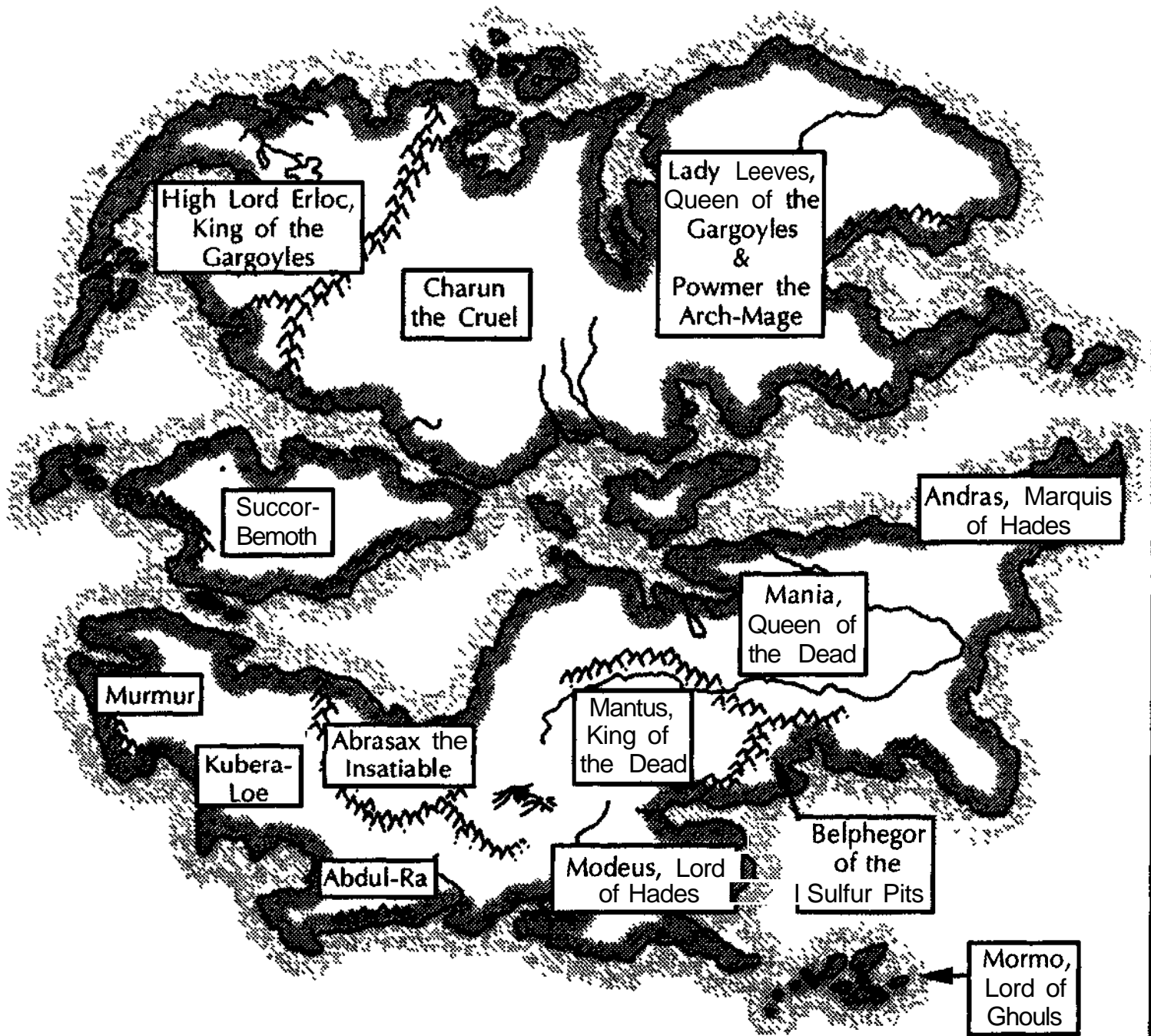
Golthos, a dark and brooding realm of eternal twilight where the purple sky is laced with black clouds and what little light filters through to the land has a sickly, sepia tint to it. Many of the kingdoms here dwell amid the ruins of a once great empire that spanned the entire world but was destroyed by forces unknown to anybody.

Jeretlan, a realm of young kingdoms and empires where dozens of **humanoid** races compete for living space in a world where magic runs wild. The ley lines here whip across the land like hungry serpents, and where the lines join, terrible storms of destructive force result, scouring the land of all life.

Skorrda, an ocean world where the only land is that of a vast and world-spanning archipelago. Each major island is home to a different kingdom, many of which have formed confederate empires spanning thousands of islands. Threatening the world is the insidious advance of the **Schismata**, an army of religious fanatics devoted to a terrible and mysterious pantheon that seeks nothing less than to convert the world to its faith. Those who resist are to be destroyed.

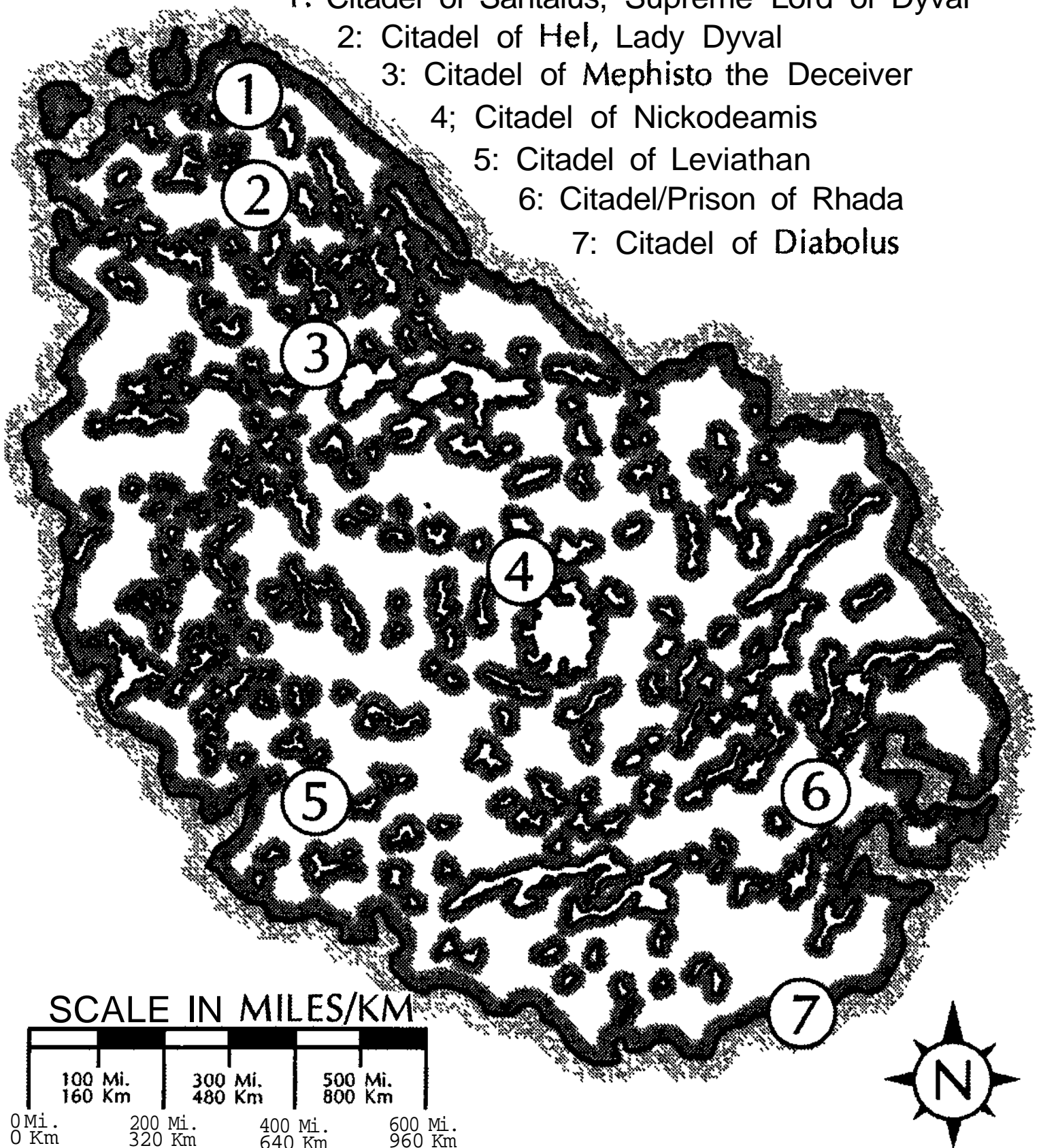
The Heroic Realm of Hades

NOTE: Each Demon or Gargoyle Lord's name appears at the site of their domain. Rabdos the Strangler and the Four Demon Beetles have no domain. Mictla the Devourer's domain spans much of Hades but is deep underground.



The Heroic Realm of Dyval

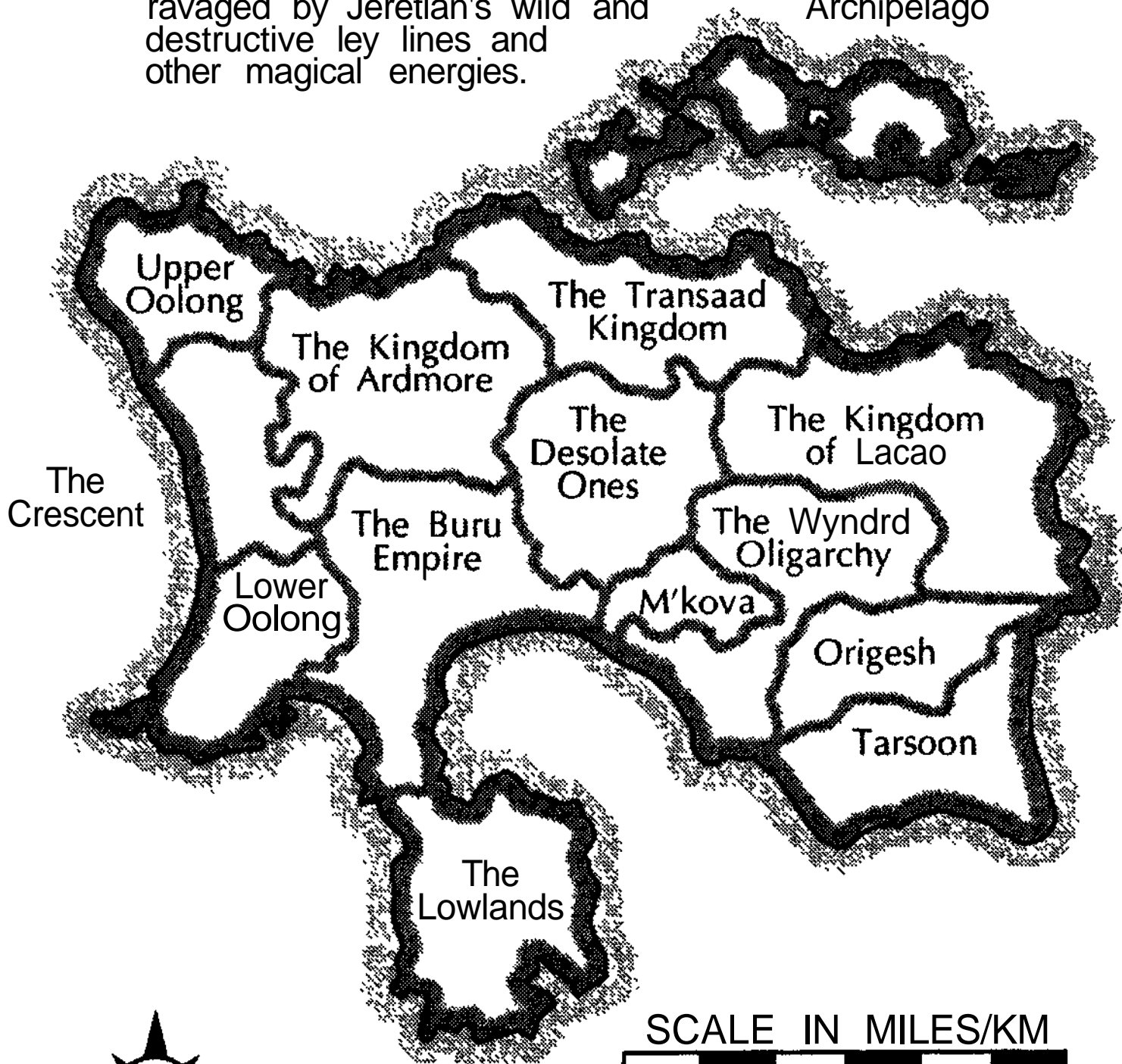
- 1: Citadel of Sahtalus, Supreme Lord of Dyval
- 2: Citadel of Hel, Lady Dyval
- 3: Citadel of Mephisto the Deceiver
- 4; Citadel of Nickodeamis
- 5: Citadel of Leviathan
- 6: Citadel/Prison of Rhada
- 7: Citadel of Diabolus



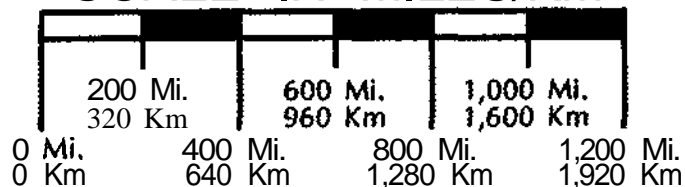
The Heroic Realm of Jeretlan

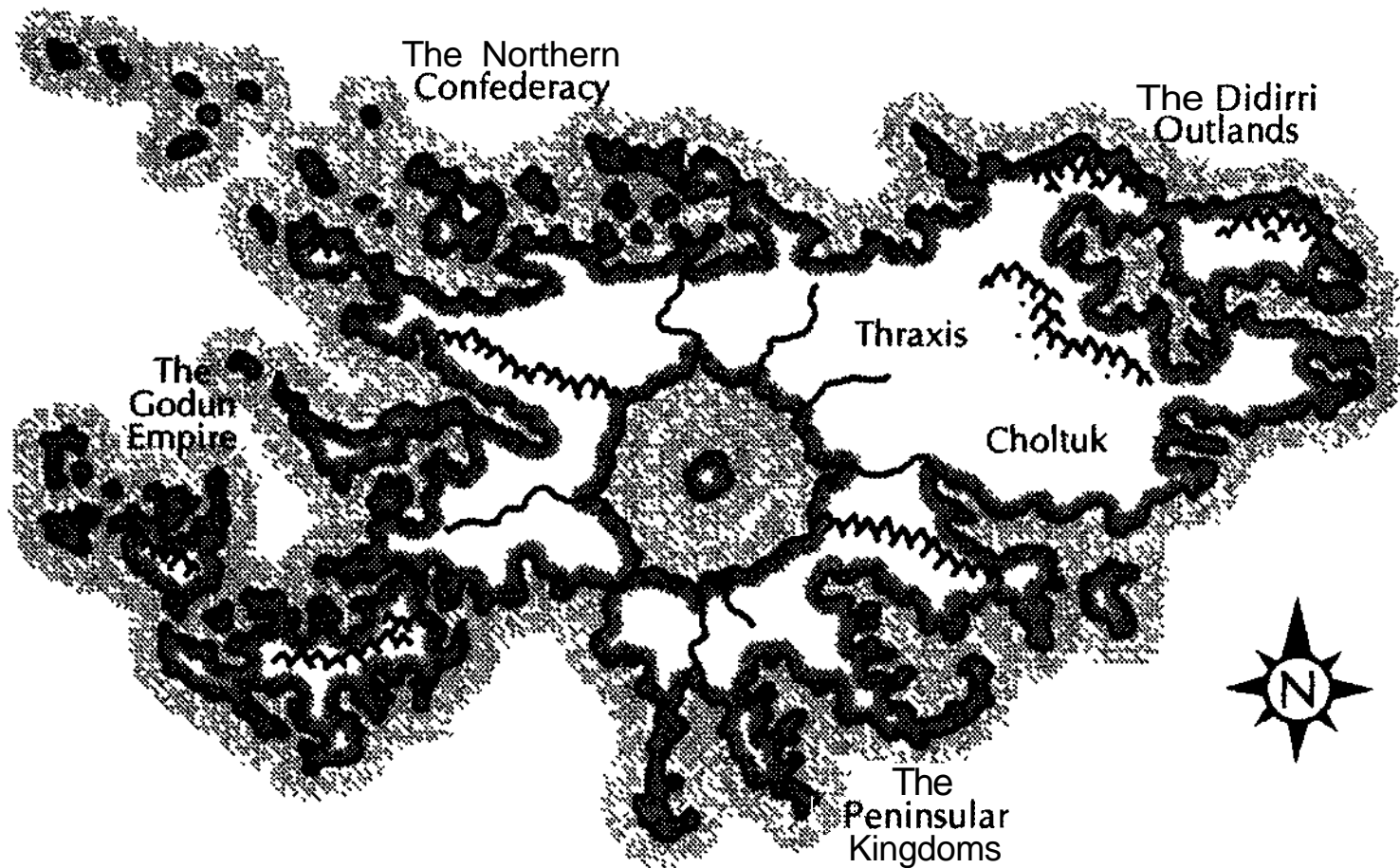
NOTE: Much of the continent's native environments have been ravaged by Jeretlan's wild and destructive ley lines and other magical energies.

The Cereti Archipelago



SCALE IN MILES/KM





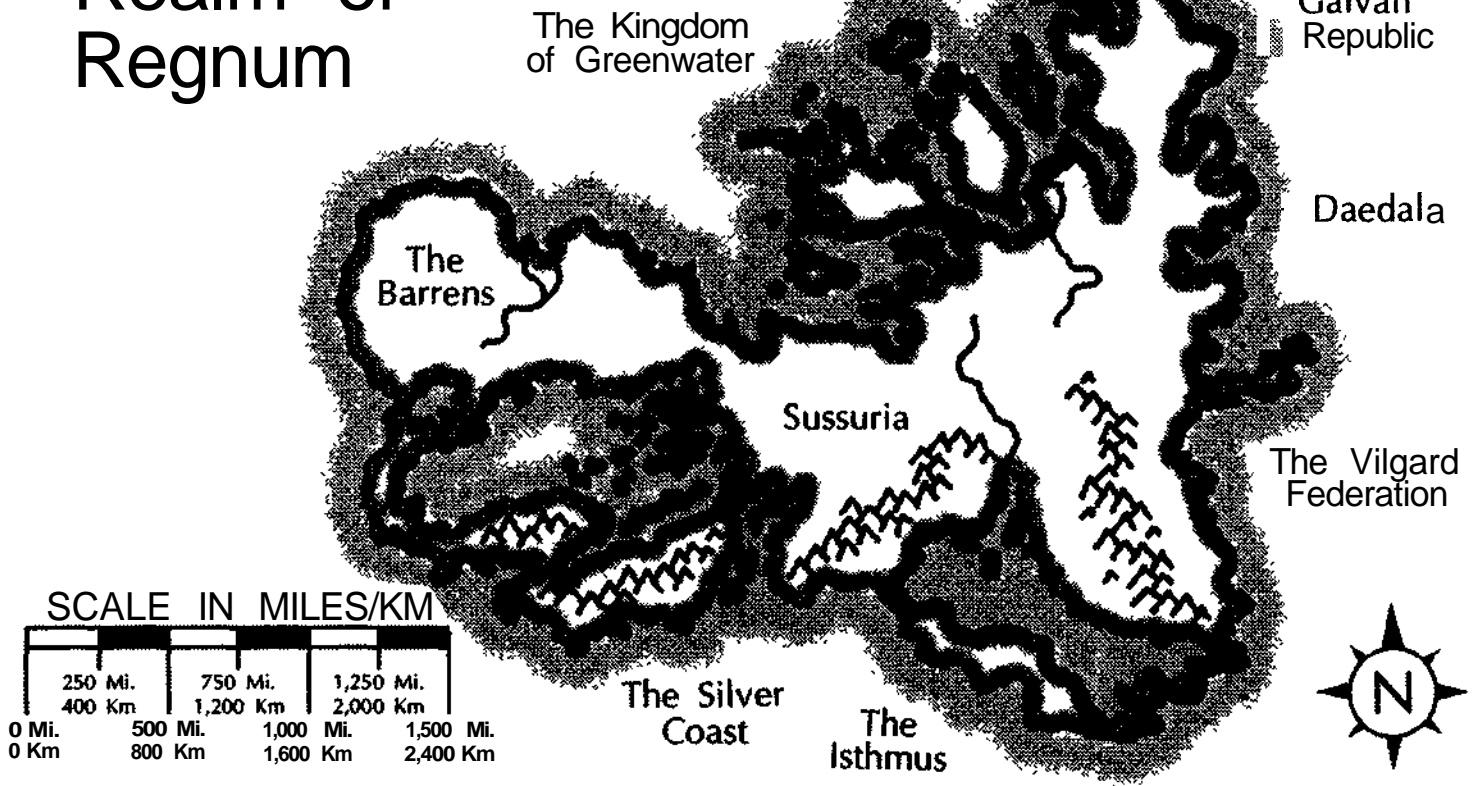
The Heroic Realm of Golthos

SCALE IN MILES/KM

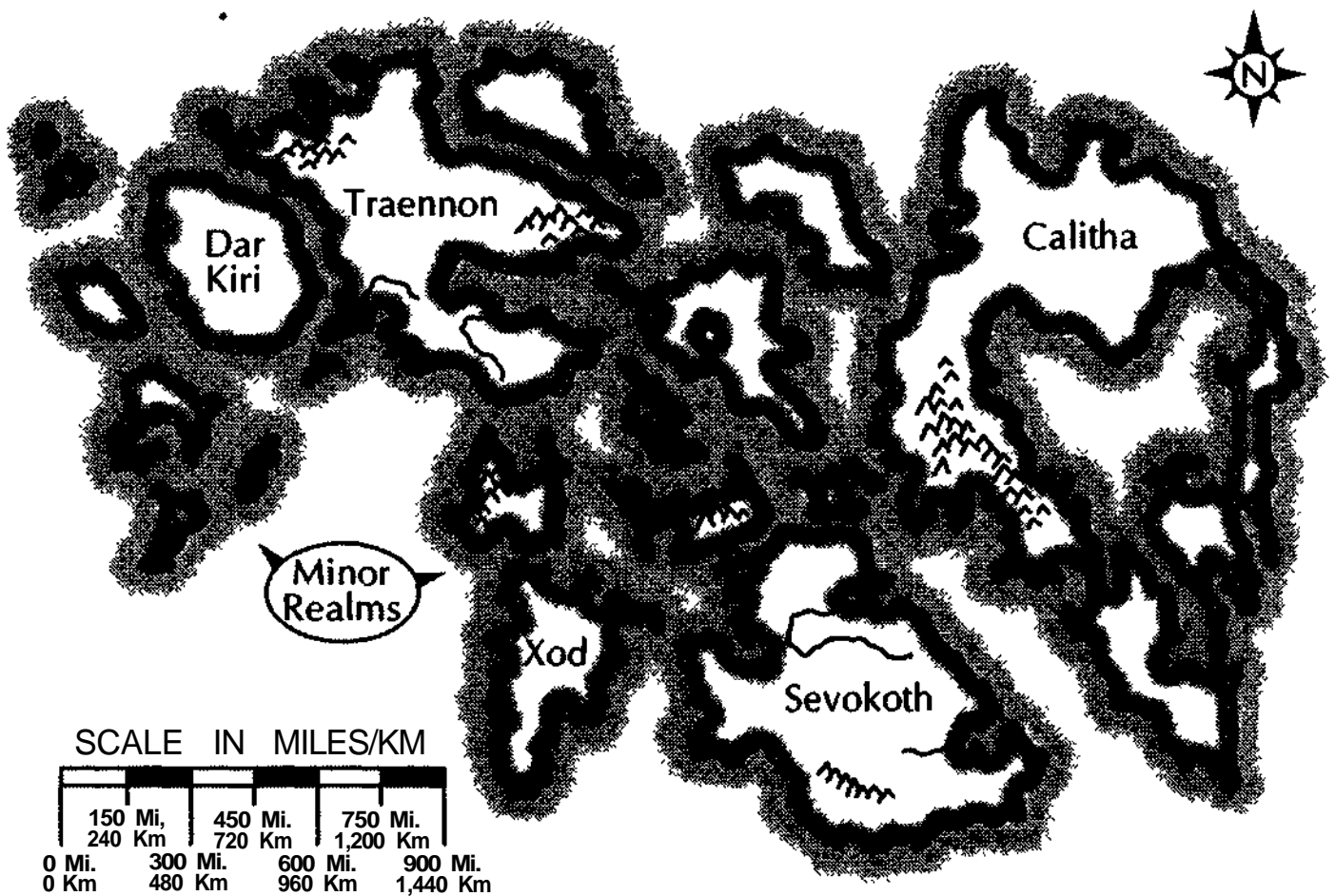


Note: Each section of this book provides a single overview map of the realms and then follows it up with page after page of text. Unfortunately, the text has been written in an alien language that no Palladium scholar has yet deciphered. All that can be read are a few lines of border notes written in **Elven** by an **unattributed** author. Until the rest of the book can be understood, all it can offer is a tantalizing glimpse at places that capture the imaginations of any explorer or adventurer who learns of them.

The Heroic Realm of Regnum



The Heroic Realm of Skorrdia



Roads to Adventure

Hidden Riches

Legends and Treasure Maps in the Known World

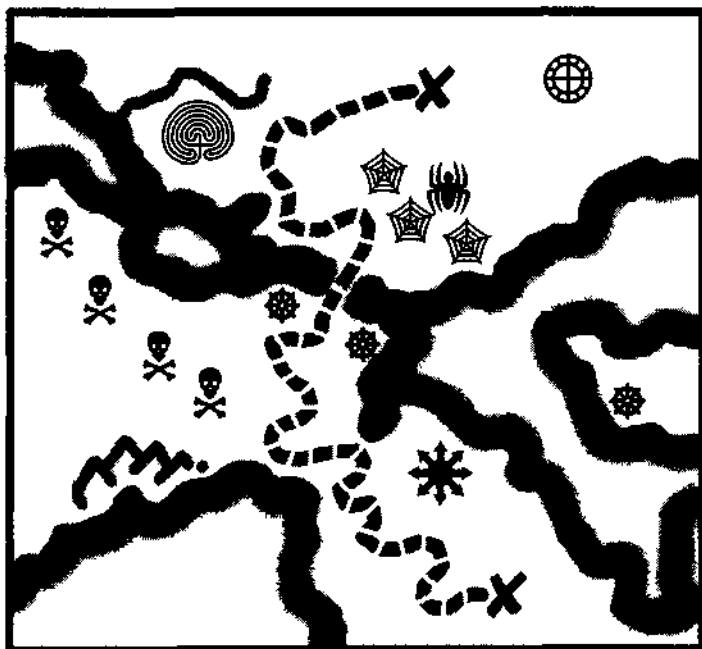
The Sunken Treasure Fleet of Caer Kurgas



it turned **out**, the Western houses that sent the fleet were, themselves, destroyed shortly thereafter and the records of the caravan were all lost and forgotten. Meanwhile, those in Caer Kurgas who knew of the caravan committed suicide when foreign troops broke through the dockside defenses. All this time, a vast fortune has rested on the sea floor off one of the Western Empire's largest cities, and nobody has known of it.

Of course, that makes the presence of this map, which shows the final resting spot of the ships, suspect. Who charted the area and fixed the location of the sunken vessels? How did the map come into the Seed Library of **Alarassa's** possession? And, what is to say that whoever made the map never plundered the treasure for himself? Still, such a prospect within easy striking distance of the city, no less, would be difficult for many adventurers to ignore, even if there turned out to be nothing left to plunder. After all, what self-respecting freebooter would pass up on a chance (no matter how remote) of cashing in on a lost Western treasure fleet?

The Treasure Map of Cholrud Lawless



NOTE: The map has no known scale or legend.

Sunken Fleet •

Off the coast of Caer Kurgas, the second largest city of the Western Empire, a vast naval battle was fought 409 years ago in a war later known to the West as "**Fimosob's Folly**." It was a disastrous Western campaign to take over the world but turned into an utter defeat as the Kingdom of **Bizantium**, Timiro Kingdom and Land of the **South-Winds** joined forces against the Empire of Sin. The Battle of Caer Kurgas was one of the final engagements of the war, when a vast **Bizantium-Timiro** fleet prepared to launch an amphibious invasion of the city, and from there threaten what is now Caer Itom. The last of the Western Demon Black Ships formed a blockade of the city, and though outnumbered six to one, very nearly defeated the invaders. The ships fought for over two days, but by the time it was all over, Timiro soldiers held the city (all Bizantium forces were destroyed in the fight), the Demon Ships lay at the bottom of the ocean, and the West teetered on the edge of defeat.

What happened next is well known — the West crumbled and signed the White Paper Treaty, admitting its defeat and publicly promising to never again build any more Demon Black Ships.

What is not generally known, however, is that during the fighting, a caravan of mercenary ships attempted to thread through the fighting and deliver a shipment of much needed gold, supplies and foot soldiers to the city. It was a suicidal gesture, since the caravan of ships were sunk as soon as they entered the battle area. Since then there has never been an attempt to salvage the nearly one million gold stored on those ships! As

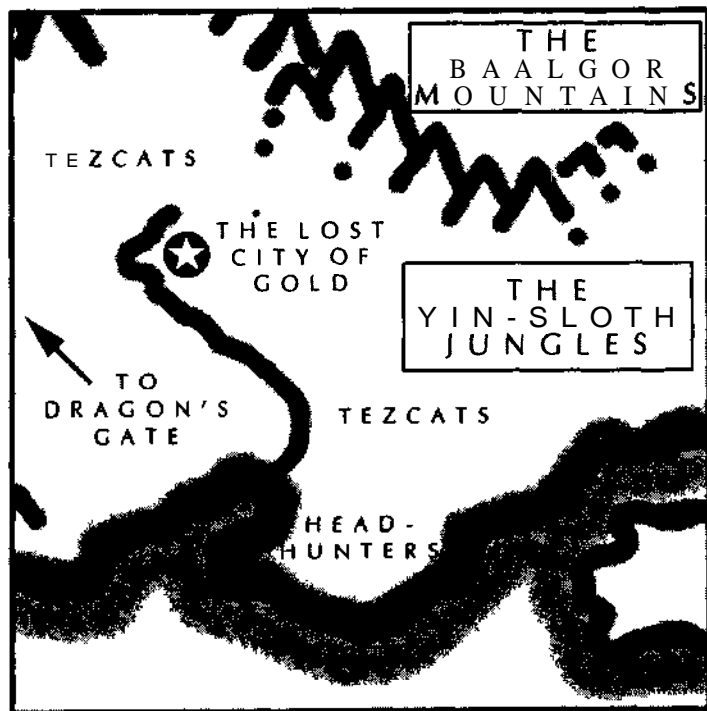
The Mystery of Cholrud Lawless

Three hundred years ago, a mysterious swordsman named **Cholrud Lawless** entered the **Lopan** Olympics gold event for tournament swordsmanship. Not only did Lawless defeat every opponent without getting a scratch on him, but during his final match, as he grappled with his opponent, his tunic was ripped from his shoulders. The incident revealed a vast tattoo on the **warrior's** back reported to be a treasure map of some kind. His back revealed, Lawless defeated his opponent with a deft killing stroke, gathered his swords and fled the field. He was seen hours later boarding the first vessel off the island, not bothering to claim his prize for winning, or to partake of the post-games festivities. Rumors flew fast and furious afterwards as to the story behind the map on his back.

One hundred years later, Lawless was apprehended infiltrating the fortress of a renowned Wizards' guild of the Western Empire. While in custody, the map on his back was again discovered, as was the fact that Lawless himself was apparently immortal and had not aged a day in well over a thousand years! Immediately, the Wizards set to copying the map, for it certainly led the way to a treasure worth finding, whatever it was. Lawless broke free before the map could be completed and slew the Wizards and map makers. However, during the fight, Lawless was forced to flee the guild house, leaving behind the unfinished map. The guild house itself was destroyed in a massive assassins' assault some years later, during which time the partial Lawless Map was discovered. Since then, the map has become the property of an assassins' guild headquartered in the wilderness of the Western Middle Kingdoms, from which agents are routinely dispatched to either learn more secrets connected to the map or to find and apprehend Lawless himself.

G.M. Note: Lawless is at least a 10th level **Palladin** (he can be made more powerful if that will better suit your campaign) who does not age. He can be killed, but unless he is burned to ashes, the warrior will regenerate and return to life. Other than that, his stats and particulars are left to your discretion.

The Lost City of Gold



The Lost City of Gold

Somewhere in the deep Yin-Sloth Jungles, it is said there lies a city of gold, supposedly the capital of the ancient human civilization that some scholars believe once claimed the whole of Yin-Sloth as their domain. (The vast majority of learned historians insist this is all hokum, and that no such place ever existed.) According to some legends, the city structure was unscathed by the Battle of the Gods, although its inhabitants were all destroyed, leaving their proud capital an empty shell. In time the jungle overgrew it, and the lost city now lies buried beneath the vast foliage. It is said that there are trade lanes cut through the

jungle that go right over the lost city, but it is so completely buried that nobody realizes that they are walking over a square mile of solid gold construction. The value of the city is incalculable. More gold can be found here, it is **said**, than lies in all the treasuries of the world. Which begs the question: Supposing one does find the city, what do you *do* with it? And more importantly, how does one convince the dragons of **Dragon's Gate** not to simply take it for themselves? Maybe they already have?



Steelgreaves

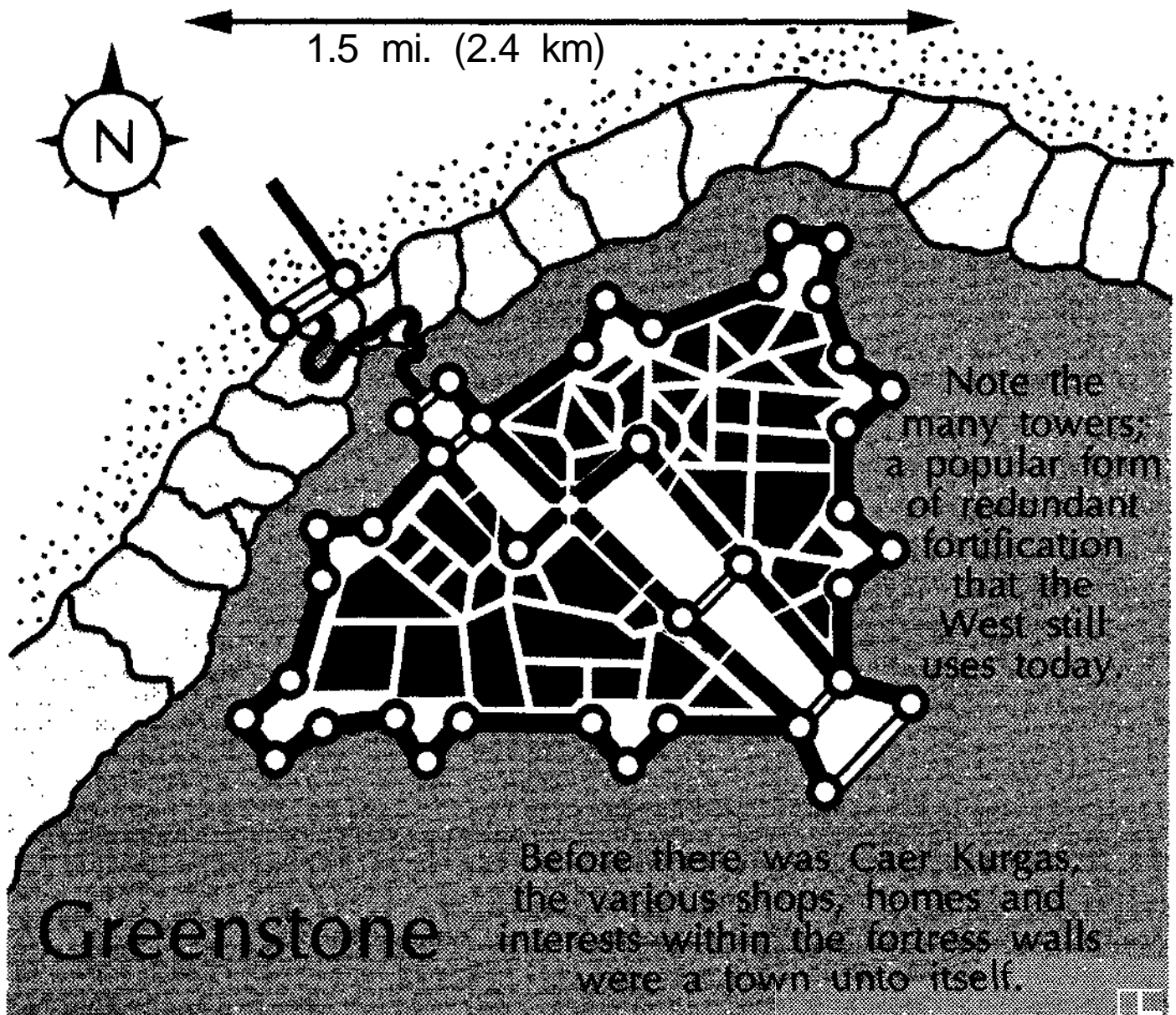
The **Dwarven** city of Steelgreaves was home to the largest armory and forging center in the Empire. It was overrun and destroyed three times during the course of the Elf-Dwarf War, and by the time hostilities ended for good, the city had been rebuilt once more. The reason the Dwarves would not give the city up is because it centered around the entrance to one of the finest mines in the realm, where there lay a vast intersection of gold, silver and iron seams, as well as other valuable minerals even deeper into the earth. The Steelgreaves mines eventually broke through to the **Underworld**, where the Dwarves built a second city. Since the Dwarven Empire **crumbled**, the city has laid abandoned. Its mines are still able to produce vast amounts of ore, just as the **undercity** is most likely to remain in prime condition, and perhaps even inhabited! The undercity remains a vast prize to be won, for legends speak of how some of the ancient rune forges were centered there as well as storage facilities for items crafted but never released to anyone's custody. A trip to Steelgreaves **today**, will be nothing short of murderous, since it rests in the treacherous, monster filled Old Kingdom and it is likely that tribes of monstrous **humanoids** (Kobolds, **Orcs**, Goblins, Ogres, etc.) have taken the city over for themselves, and may even be mining its ores.

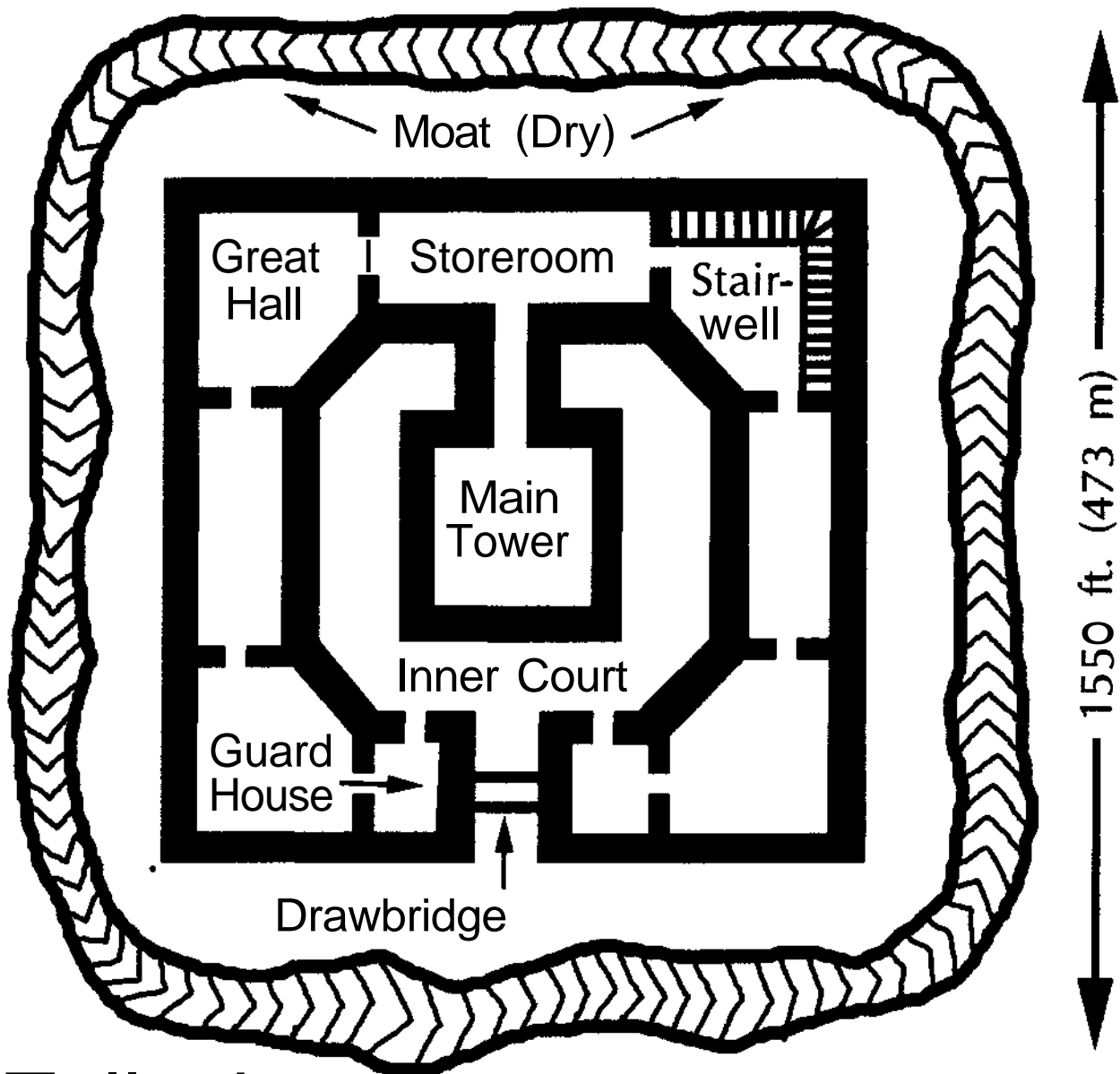
Walls of Stone Invention: Engineering and Architecture

The Palladium world is filled with hundreds of castles, fortresses and strongholds of every shape and size. Most of them pass into obscurity as their usefulness comes to an end, their builders can no longer maintain them, or they are demolished in battle. However, there are a relative few that stand **out**, either for the part they have played in history or because they feature a particularly innovative or memorable design. The ancient book, *Walls of Stone*, commemorates a handful of these special fortifications by giving their history and basic diagrams of their original floor plans. Most, if not all of them, have almost certainly fallen into some state of ruin or decay.

Greenstone

This old castle stands atop the sea cliffs of **Caer Kurgas**, the second largest city of the Western Empire. It is an ancient (and now decrepit) fortification that once was the mightiest castle in the realm. As the nearby city grew, the need for the castle dissipated, and it gradually fell into ruin. It now lies abandoned and reportedly *haunted* by the ancient lords and soldiers who once manned it. Nobody lives amid these ruins aside from renegade cultists, drug addicts, and other vagrants.





Tallspire

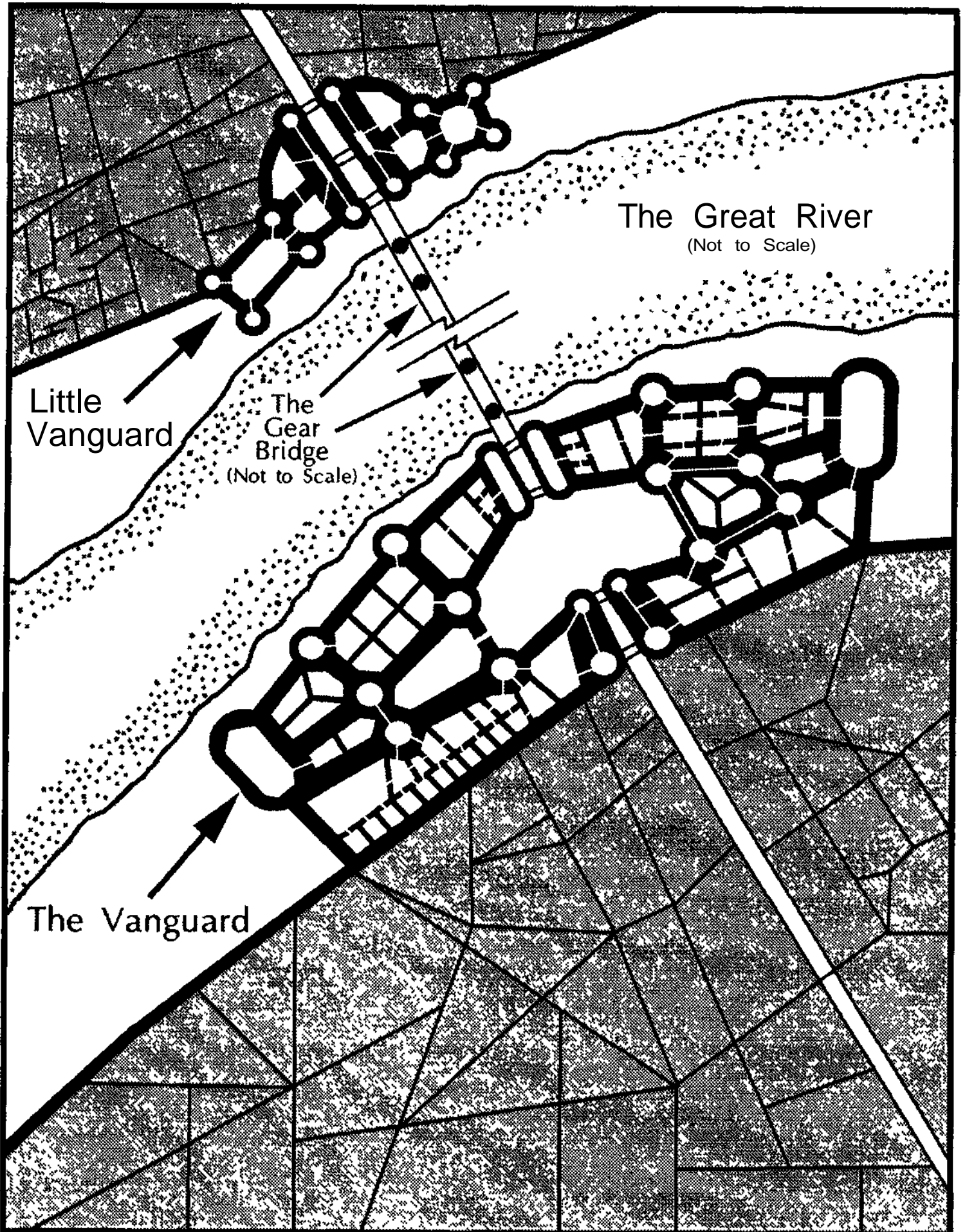
Main Keep: 5 stories (50 ft./15.3 m)

Main Tower: 30 stories (300 ft./91.5 m)

Tallspire

A **Dwarven** castle of great renown, Tallspire was the meeting place where the treaty of the Elf-Dwarf War's First Peace was signed. Though the treaty acknowledged the temporary defeat of the Dwarven **Empire**, the castle Tallspire was never captured, despite three separate sieges against it (at great cost to the Elves, the Dwarves might add). In the later stages of the war, the castle was again successfully defended on several occasions, and it

was breached only in the final days of the war, when a traitorous Dwarf opened the gates and admitted the **Elven** attackers. Amazingly, the castle sustained minimal damage during the course of the war, and it is assumed that its remains are in reasonably good shape even today. It doubtlessly has become the headquarters of some tribe of monstrous barbarians, who retire to it after a lengthy campaign of terror and marauding.



The Vanguard

This mighty Eastern castle stands on the southern shore of the Great River, looking directly into the heart of the *Disputed Territory* between the Wolfen Empire and the Eastern Territory. It is one of the oldest of a string of castles positioned along the river's edge as a defense against any kind of Wolfen invasion. The castle itself is especially large and well fortified. Over the years, a sizeable town has grown to the south of it, as the castle is also the guarding point for one of the few bridges that actually spans the width of the river. The bridge itself is a major feat of engineering, courtesy of the many Dwarves in the employ of the Eastern humans. The stone bridge has drawbridge-like mechanisms every quarter mile (0.4 km) along its length that can open up and let ships pass through. Alternately, they can also be used to effectively cut off the bridge and halt the advance of invading ground troops. The devices work on a system of gears and cranks. A team of two brawny individuals stand on a platform that forms the hub of the gear assembly and together work the crank. As they turn it, the bridge segment slowly rotates horizontally downriver, opening a channel through the otherwise low bridge. (It stands only 13 feet/4 m above the river's surface, and frequently gets flooded out, but to build the bridge any higher would have been prohibitively expensive. As it stands, the bridge is an amazing accomplishment, since the river it spans is nearly a mile (1.6 km) wide.) When the bridge segments are rotated 90 degrees, the "crankers" lock the segment in place with a single twist of their crankshaft. When the bridge segment is to be rotated back into place, the crankshaft is unlocked, and the segment gears itself back into place utilizing a kind of wind-up mechanism submerged at the bridge segment's base. This prevents the crankers from having to rotate the segment back into place while going against the river's current. The Vanguard has a smaller fortress on the far side of the river as well, known as the Little Vanguard. It too has become the hub of a thriving settlement and will prove most difficult to attack, should the Wolfen feel so inclined.



Stone Heart

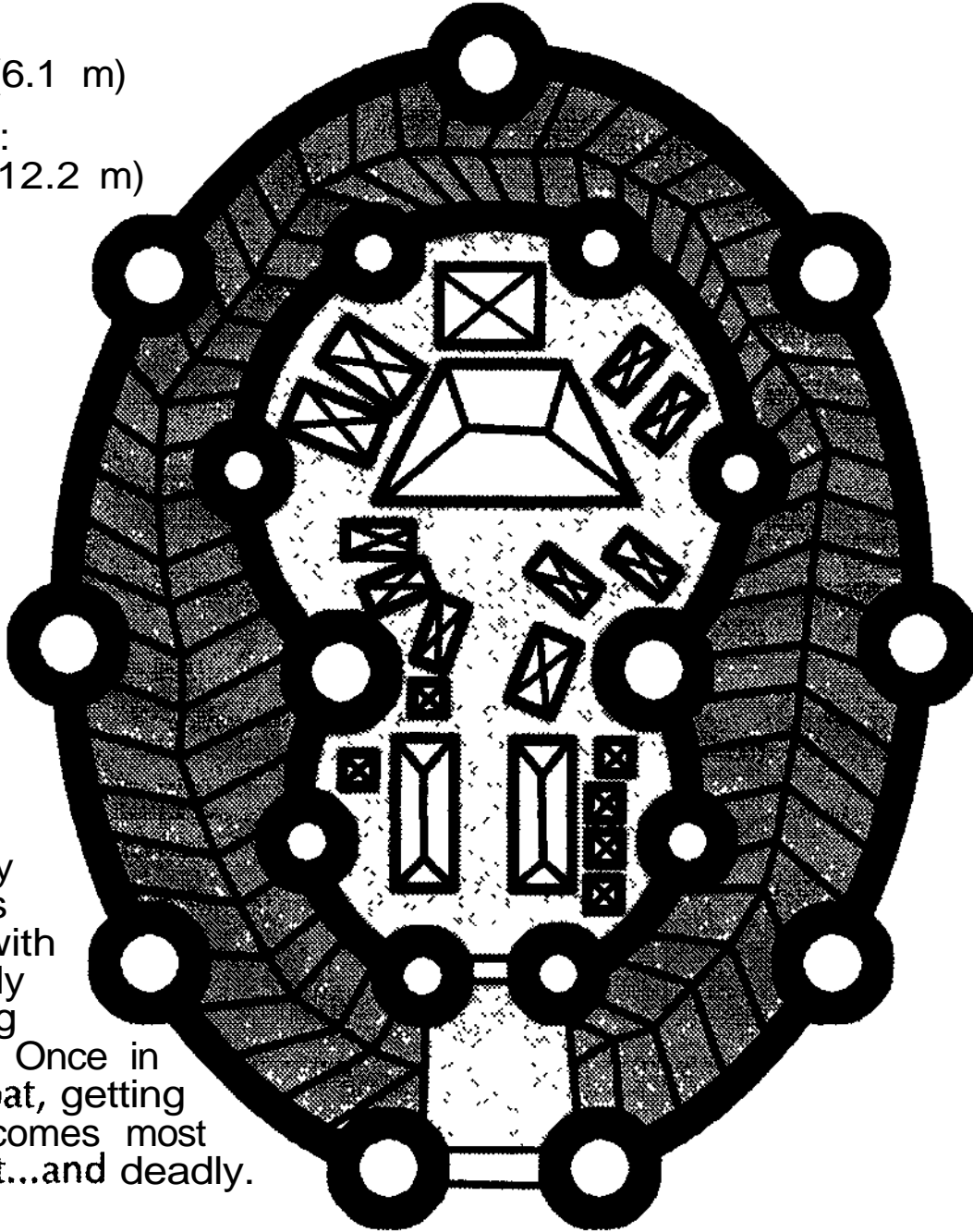
Stone Heart was originally built as a simple wooden *motte* and bailey fortress, although one could hardly tell that once its final construction was complete. Its wooded walls had been replaced by stone ones, numerous guard towers were added to the outer and inner walls, and the original courtyard area had to be expanded, giving the overall shape of the place a somewhat "figure eight" look when viewed from above. This fortress served numerous Dukes of the Land of the **South-Winds** until it was terminally neglected due to a lack of funding. Over the span of a century, the once-impressive fortification was slowly demolished and its stones used to build houses and other structures.

← 750 ft. (229 m) →

Walls:
20 ft. (6.1 m)

Towers:
40 ft. (12.2 m)

Moat:
20 ft.
(6.1 m)

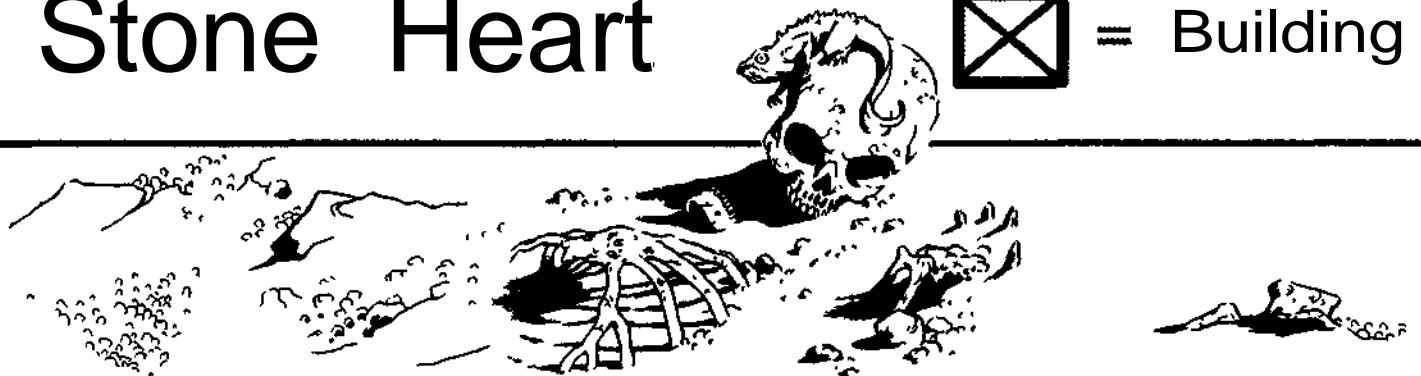


Note:
The dry
moat is
lined with
inwardly
pointing
stakes. Once in
the moat, getting
out becomes most
difficult...and deadly.

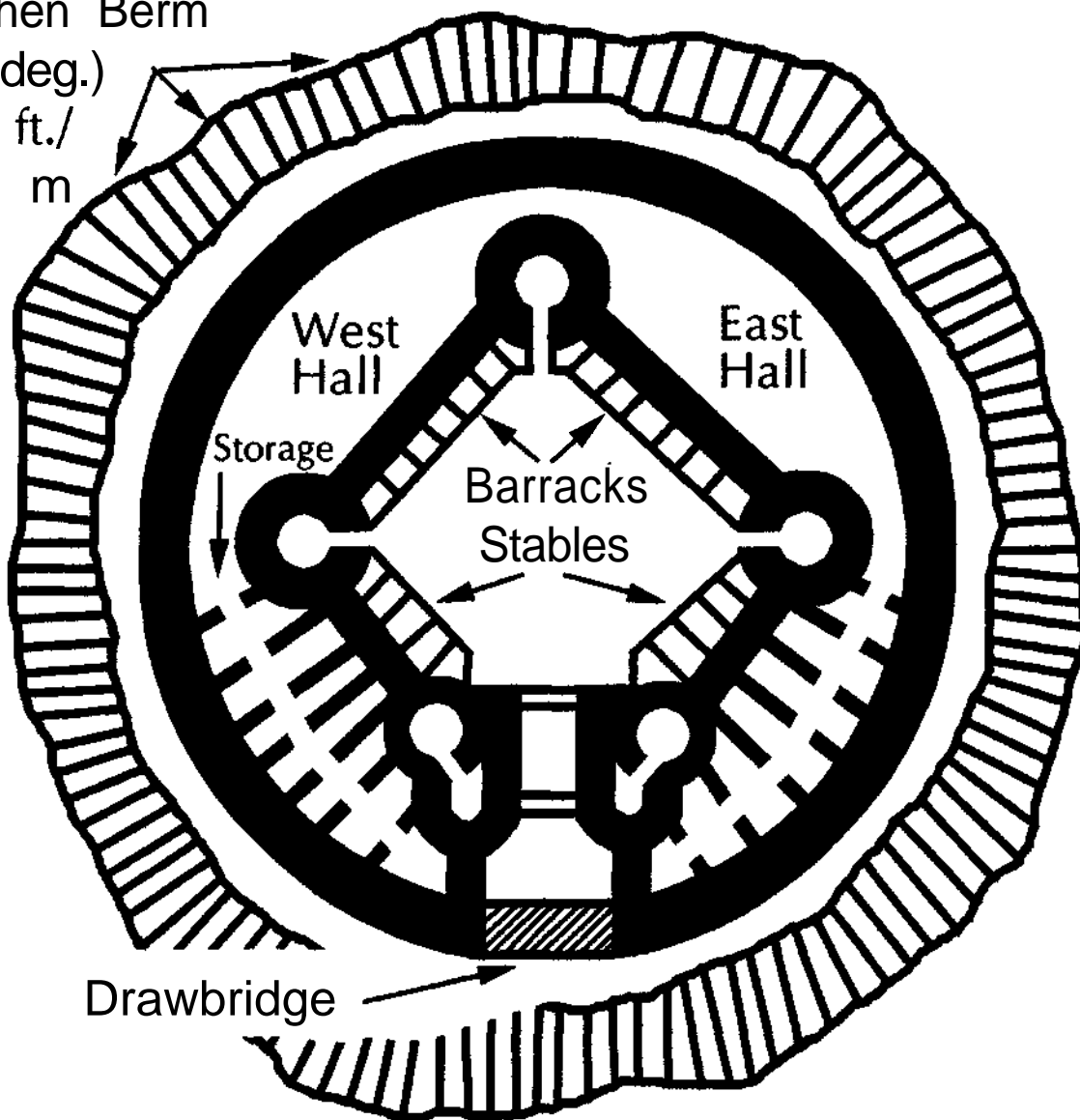
↑ 900 ft. (274.5 m)

Stone Heart

☒ = Building



Earthen Berm
(45 deg.)
250 ft./
76.3 m



2000 ft. (610 m)

Fort Valoris

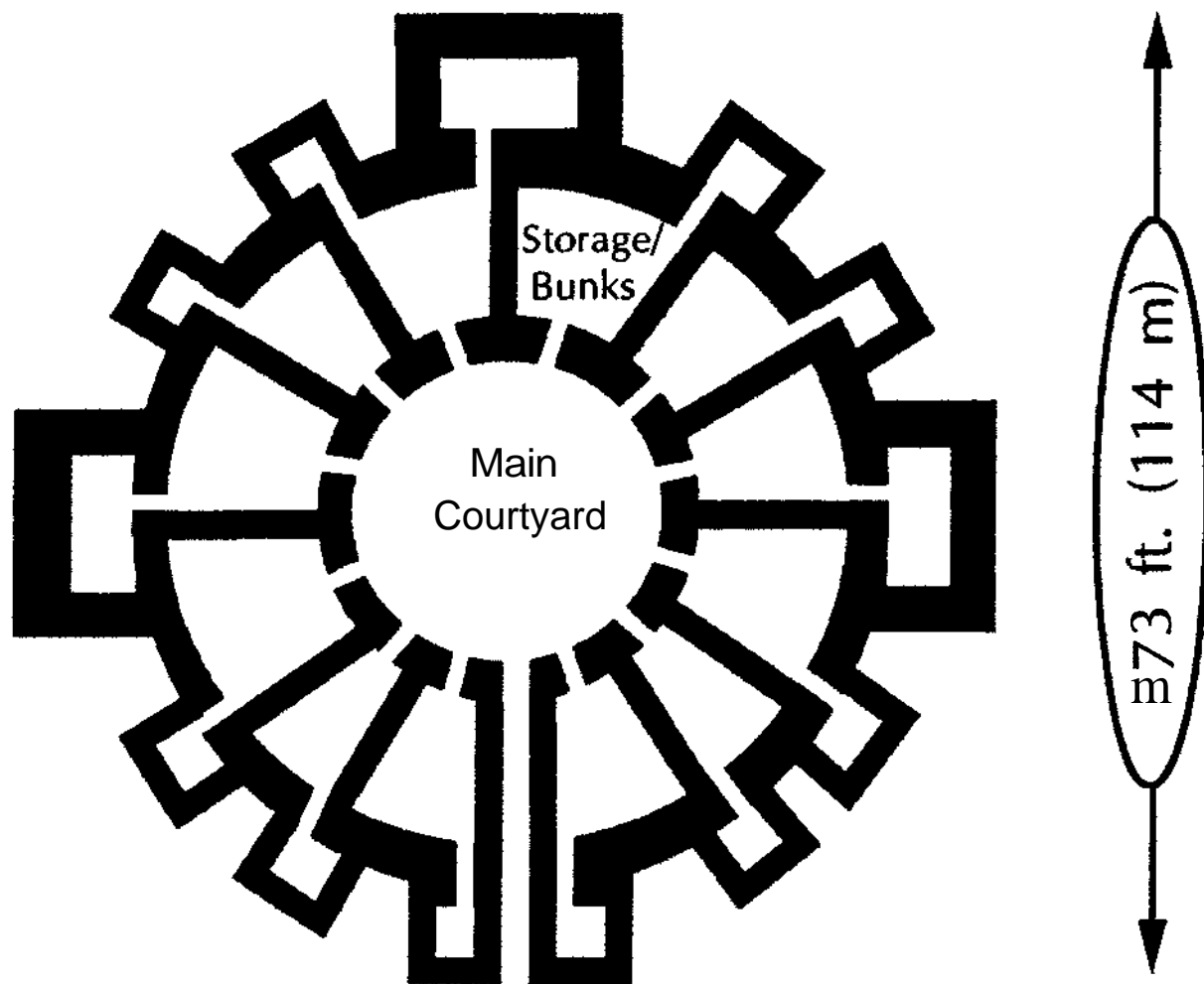
Note: All vegetation is cleared from the base of the berm out to 500 ft. (152.5 m)

Fort Valoris

Valoris is a fortified outpost built along the edge of the Western Empire's territory in the Yin-Sloth Jungles. The post was built as a pilot to see how it would perform in the oppressive jungle environment. Due to the heat and humidity, work crews only ever built wooden fortifications since moving stone was just too strenuous. However, since the West was engaged in open hostilities with what would become the Orcish Empire, wooden fortresses were not holding up in battle. Thus, a modest stone one was proposed and built. Valoris was completed within

a year, and it actually did fall under Orcish attack once, which it successfully repelled. Shortly afterward, the war ended and the nobles in charge of this section of territory had been bankrupted by it. No further stone fortresses were built in the region, which is perhaps for the best, since the stone walls have gradually sunk into the soft earth. One day the sinking process will cause the entire structure to crumble into ruins, assuming it has not already done so.

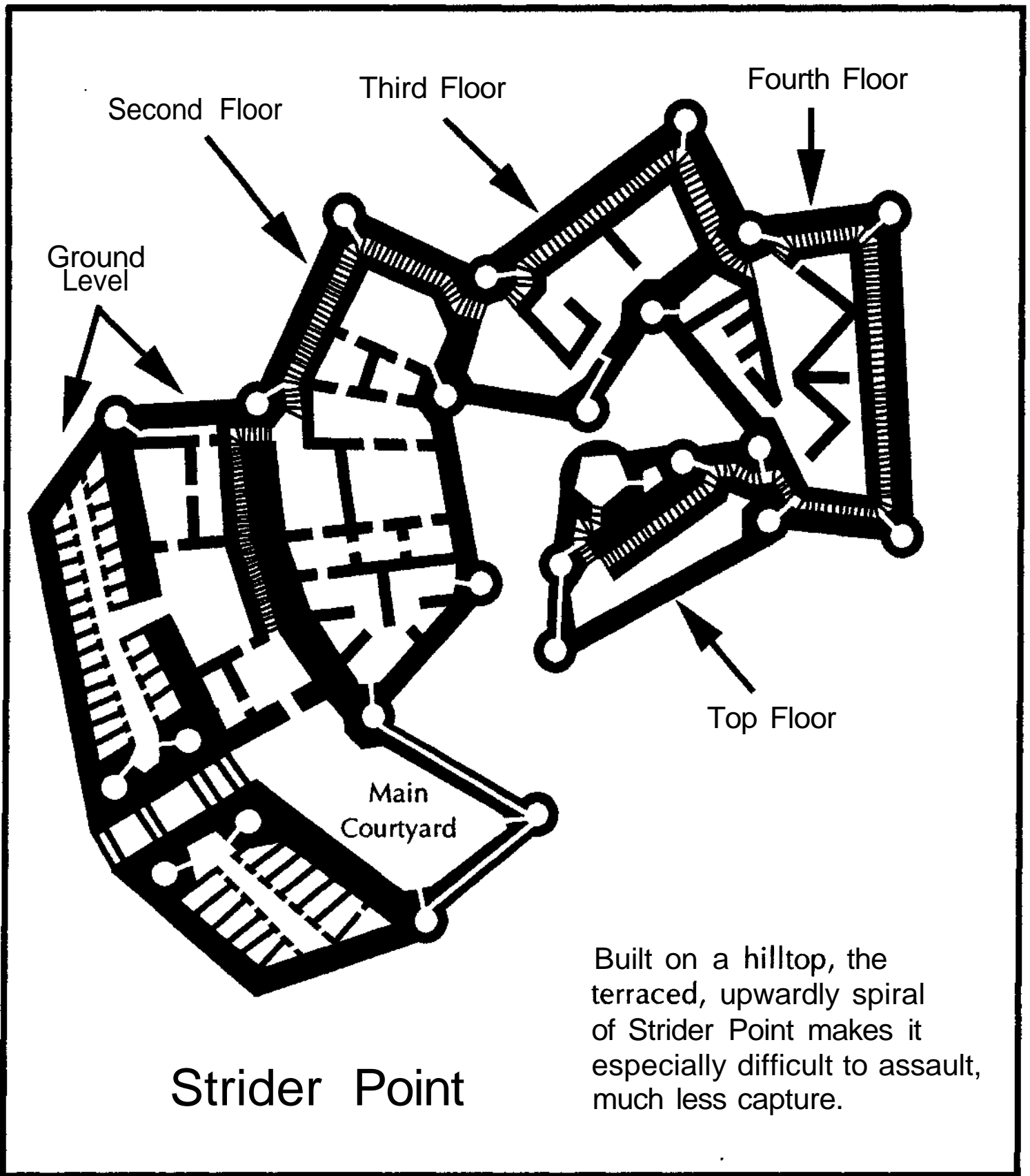
Fort Ironclaw



Main Wall: 20 ft. (6.1 m)
Towers: 40 ft. (12.2 m)

Fort Ironclaw

This fortress is unremarkable by Wolfen standards but it played an important role in the early history of hostilities between the Eastern humans and Wolfen Imperium. To date, this fortress remains the sole point in Wolfen territory north of the Disputed Zone that has been captured by Eastern forces. Granted, the Wolfen recaptured the site a week after, with a massive counterattack, but that it was captured at all has been a major bragging point for the East. The fort has since been substantially refortified to ensure that such an embarrassment never happens again.

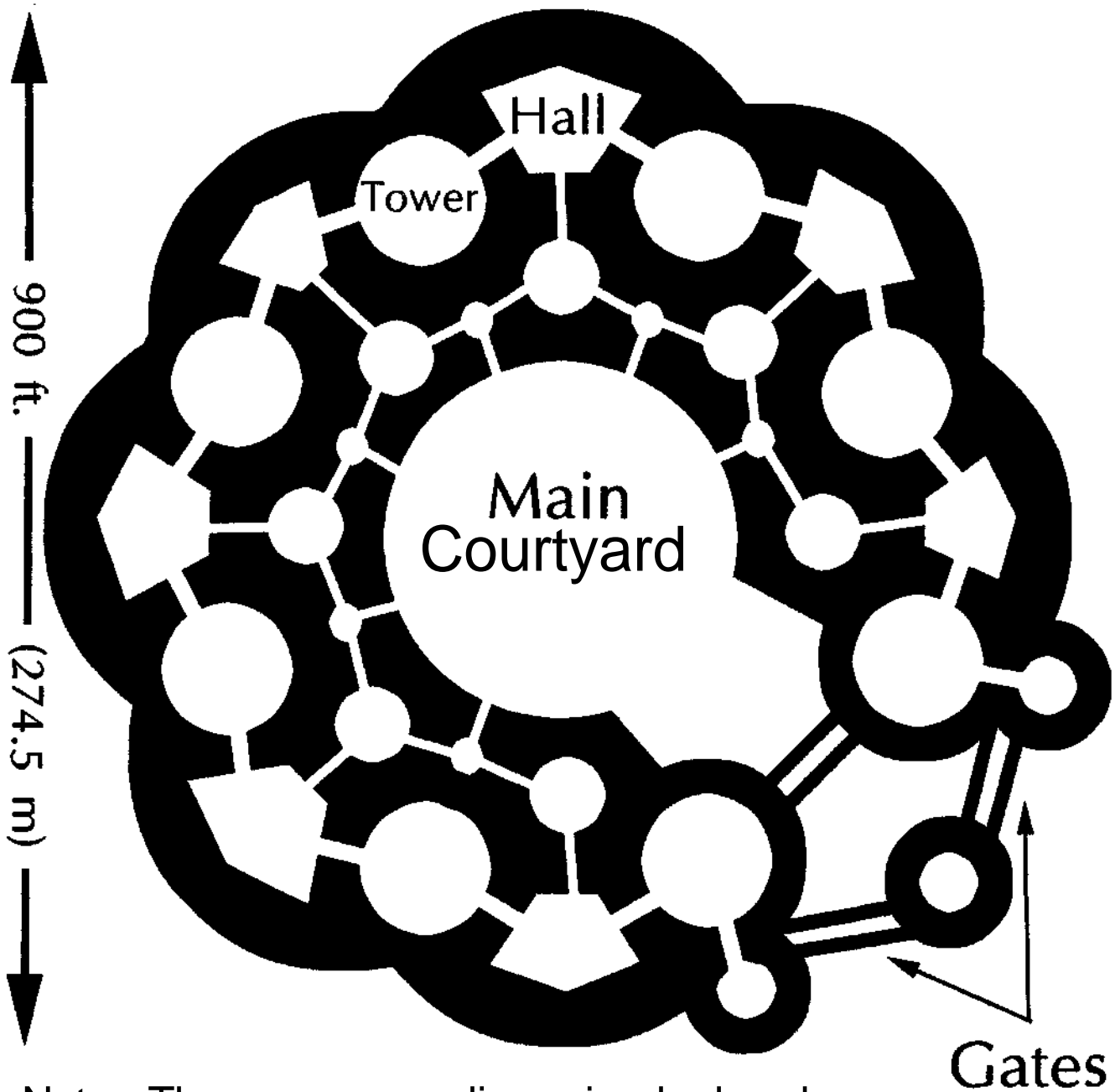


Strider Point

Built on a hilltop, the terraced, upwardly spiral of Strider Point makes it especially difficult to assault, much less capture.

Strider Point

A modest stronghold tucked away in the Old Kingdom Mountains, Strider Point is notable for its innovative terraced wall defenses, which proved most troublesome for invaders to overcome.



Note: The seven medium-sized chambers ringing the main courtyard were mostly used for storage, but doubled as extra guardhouses during times of siege.

Shillendar

Main Floor: 30 ft. (9.1 m)

Towers: 150 ft. (45.8 m)

Shillendar

This **Elven** stronghold was typical of the structures used for most of the later Elf-Dwarf War. Much of the artistry and clever architecture that went into earlier designs was sacrificed as the war dragged on and the Empire simply wanted as many bare-bones strongholds as it could produce. The ruins of Shillendar were reportedly reclaimed by humans long after the place was originally abandoned, and supposedly it is the capital of a tiny human kingdom deep within the Old Kingdom.

The Bat

This most unusual stronghold was built into a cliff face in such a way that made it look like the structure was dangling from the rock overhang above it. In reality, the stronghold bore deep into the cliff and was never in any danger of falling off. This design was implemented to give the stronghold a clear view downward at the paths entering the mountains below. During times of war, soldiers would hurl rocks, boiling oil, arrows and anything else they could find at approaching soldiers, who often were powerless to retaliate because the Bat was too far out of arrow range.



The Air Galleons of Baalgor

A Lost Magical Art

By **Bill Coffin and Kevin Siembieda**

One of the lost arts from the Age of a Thousand Magicks was that of the majestic Elven air galleons. During the Elven Empire's glory days, the skies were filled with dozens of beautiful winged sailing ships cruising gracefully through the air. Nearly all of these ships were destroyed during the course of the war, as were the means to make them. Although this book contains the blueprints for four common air vessels, the ultra-lightweight woods and magic used to build them no longer exist. The wood supply was destroyed, along with the rest of the Baalgor rainforest at the end of the war. Moreover, the magical construction process and spells necessary to enchant the Air Galleons were one of the many arts lost from that period. If any instruction for their magical creation was ever written down (and it may not have been), it was surely destroyed during the Age of Purification. Over the centuries since, many a practitioner of magic has toiled to recreate the process, but to no avail.

Still, as long as the old stories of Air Galleons are known, there will be those in search of their secrets. For example, there are those who insist that similar trees must still grow in abundance in certain parts of the Yin-Sloth Jungles, just as some believe that the lost magical knowledge to make the craft fly must have been preserved somewhere. Perhaps in the library of a Wizard Guild with a tradition that goes back thousands of years,

(in the Western Empire, **maybe?**), or in some ancient ruin in the Old Kingdom, or someplace like the Library of **Bletherad**. Of course, these hopeful individuals seem to ignore the fact that if this were the case, then somebody is likely to have found them and recreated the Air Galleons by now.

Others insist that a tiny handful of these ancient vessels, five or six, may have survived into the modern age. Such notions are given credence by unsubstantiated legends and stories told by southern seafarers for thousands of years who *claim* to have seen a "Flying Ship." Such sightings are always in remote parts of the world or far at sea during strange storms. The majority of these supposed sightings occur in southern waters around the Yin-Sloth Jungles, the farthest edges of the **Floenry** Island chain and beyond, at the Edge of the World.

One of the most convincing and popular of these stories dates back nearly 300 years and recounts how a **South-Winds** merchant ship got caught in a terrible storm returning from the Floenry Islands. The vessel was sinking fast, miles from the nearest land. Massive waves, gale-force winds and driving rain made deployment of lifeboats impossible. The crew knew they were doomed. As the vessel began to drop beneath the waves, an unnatural calm fell over the waters around the crippled ship as the storm raged on a mile around them in all directions. A moment later, a sailing ship appeared in the clouds above and floated down from the heavens. The "Angel Ship" as it is called in the story, rescued all hands and carried them safely to the southern tip of the Land of the **South-Winds** and departed. A trip that would have taken the merchant ship two weeks by sea, took the Angel Ship only two days by air. The crew of the flying vessel was said to have been equally divided between Elves and Titans clad in silver and gold. The Angel crew avoided contact and words with the frightened and awed survivors, but provided ample food and water. Witnesses confirm that the crew of the merchant ship appeared on the southern shores, their ship and cargo nowhere to be found.

Another famous story only 80 years old tells of a lone **Eandroth** survivor from an adventurer group that went exploring in the Old Kingdom Mountains. As the story goes, he and his teammates discovered an ancient **Dwarven** stronghold filled with booty confiscated from vanquished enemies, and among them, three ships that floated in the air! Unfortunately, they were housed in an underground bunker with no obvious way to get them out (if there was a large exit, it had been buried by a landslide or similar mishap). Unprepared for their good fortune, the group gathered as much small, valuable loot they could carry and departed. On the way back to civilization, the group was waylaid by a clan of **Orcs** and Ogres. Only three of them escaped, but they lost everything and the two others (not as hard as the Eandroth) died from exposure. The Eandroth gathered a new team and went back six times to find the treasure trove, but to no avail. Those who traveled with him on these treks said he seemed to get crazier with each unsuccessful trip, and some began to doubt whether his story was real or the ranting of a madman. The Dwarven treasure trove was never found again and the Eandroth, who became known as **Maldrum the Mad**, wandered off into the wilderness alone, and was never heard from again.

Myth or truth? Nobody knows. Treasure hunters prefer to believe such yarns are true. An elusive treasure that will make the individual or group who should one day recover the lost secrets

or even a single Air Galleon famous and **powerful**, or so they choose to believe. Such is the stuff of dreams. In truth, the magical secrets behind the Air Galleons are probably forever lost, just like the secrets for making rune weapons and scores of other **magicks** from bygone eras.

If, by some miracle, the secrets of the Air Galleons were discovered, the process of making them (if the right wood could be found) would be a long, arduous process and fraught with peril. First, one must find the right materials and shipbuilders to make the vessel as per the specification required.

Second, the construction of an Air Galleon would attract extreme amounts of attention and excitement (a difficult secret to keep, especially when numerous people would be involved, and you know what they say about "loose lips"). Local lordships to Kingdoms like **Timiro** and the Western Empire would have a keen appreciation for what a vessel of this sort could do for them both militarily and economically, and covet the secrets for themselves.

Third, the end costs of construction will run incredibly high (finding and importing the rare **wood**, other materials, pay for the builders, rent of a shipyard, etc.). Most likely beyond the means of even famous and successful adventurers.

Fourth, the construction is likely to be sabotaged and the vessel (finished or unfinished) confiscated by a powerful military or nation, stolen, or sabotaged or destroyed — and perhaps those who rediscovered the ancient secret destroyed along with it! Certain powers might feel if they can't have the air ships, **no**-body should (destroying it and the methods of its construction would preserve the status quo, after all). Likewise, lunatics like The Zealotry and other Purifiers might feel this forgotten magic should remain forever "lost."

Lastly, once the vessel was finished, it would hover eight feet (2.4 m) off the ground and require a captain and crew to pilot her the same as any normal ship at sea. The captain and crew would only need the appropriate skills for handling an ordinary nautical vessel, nothing more, so what's stopping them from stealing the vessel (**and/or** the secrets of its construction) for themselves?

Stats from the Past

The following pages describe and **stat** out the standard types of ancient Air Galleons once used by the Elves. If any have survived into modern times, adventurers *may* occasionally encounter one or two. However, even at the peak of their construction during the Elf-Dwarf War, there were never more than a thousand at any given time. This was because the creation process was difficult and expensive in both magic (P.P.E.) and materials, as well as time consuming. All (or virtually all) are believed to have been destroyed a few years before the Great War came to an end. Although impressive combat vessels, even an armada of air ships was very vulnerable to Air Elemental Magic as well as flying opponents such as winged demons, Gromek and other flyers (warriors on flying steeds, airborne Wizards, dragons, etc.). The demon hordes summoned by the Dwarves in the last years of the War decimated the Elves' Air Fleet.

Still, stories persist recounting chance encounters and sightings in remote parts of the world. Most of these sightings have been from a distance so the viewers may have mistaken some-



thing else for an Air Galleon, or these tales may be the product of lies, delirium (caused from too much alcohol, exposure, lack of water or food), magical illusions or wishful thinking.

Piloting Air Ships: The old **Elven** Air Galleons pretty much steer themselves. Left unmanned, they float about eight feet (2.4 m) off the ground, but when piloted, are said to have been able to climb up into the clouds and dive like an eagle. (The top climb rate for any given Air Galleon is half its cruising speed. The top dive rate is twice its maximum speed. Power dives are dangerous maneuvers though, and require a specific piloting skill and roll to pull out successfully or the craft will plummet uncontrollably and crash.)

Air Cutter

A small, single masted vessel built for speed and maneuverability above all else. It was never intended to be a military craft, but was pressed into service during the early days of the Elf-Dwarf War. Weapons were generally not mounted on the Cutter, as the spell casting abilities of its passengers were considered armament enough. Otherwise, it was used for reconnaissance, insertion and extraction, light cargo, conveying messages, aerial hunting trips, and pleasure cruising.

Type: Mostly transport and pleasure, but converted nicely into a light **scouting/reconnaissance** aircraft.

Crew: Five; one captain, one **wingmaster**, two **sailmasters** and a navigator. Additional capacity for 20 passengers, crewmen, or soldiers — bowmen and spell casters were often used in times of war for long-range attacks.

Size: 60 feet (18.3 m) long, 20 feet (6.1 m) wide.

Excess Cargo Capacity: 15 tons.

Top Speed: 60 mph (96 km)

Cruising Speed: 20-30 mph (32-48 km).

Maximum Altitude: 3,000 feet (915 m).

S.D.C. by Location:

Mast — 75

Sails (4) — 30 each

Wings (2) — 150 each

Front Section — 400

Mid-Ship — 300

Rear Section — 300

Hull per 10 foot (3 m) area — 150

Keel per 10 foot (3 m) area — 150

Rudder — 80

Estimated Cost of Construction: 3.4 million gold.

Air Corsair

These gaff-rigged vessels were fast and rugged, well suited for light military service and **exploration**. In the Elf-Dwarf War, they saw a great deal of use as an aerial blockade runner, out-flying most anything the Dwarves could put in the sky and delivering much-needed supplies and personnel to isolated Elven outposts. The extreme airworthiness of these vessels also made them supremely suited for navigating the harsh and unpredictable winds over the Old Kingdom Mountains. There these vessels terrorized **Dwarven** surface settlements by bombarding them from the air without warning or mercy — raining down arrows, flaming pitch and bolts of magic (lightning, fire balls, etc.). As the war continued, many Air Corsair pilots turned rogue and began offering their services to anyone willing to pay.

These dreaded "sky pirates" were, for a time, the scourge of the skies over both the Elven and Dwarven Empires.

Type: War, scout, patrol, blockade runner, piracy, exploration.

Crew: One **captain/pilot**, one navigator, and ten sailors to handle the sails and rigging. Could accommodate an additional 30 passengers, craftsmen, soldiers, spell casters, etc.

Size: 80 feet (24.4 m) long and 20 feet (6.1 m) wide.

Excess Cargo Capacity: 18 tons.

Top Speed: 50 mph (80 km)

Cruising Speed: 10-25 mph (16-40 km)

Maximum Altitude: 5,000 feet (1,525 m), nearly one mile.

S.D.C. by Location:

Front Mast — 50

Main Mast — 150

Sails (5) — 40 each

Wings (2) — 150

Front Section — 500

Mid-Ship — 400

Rear Section — 400

Hull per 10 foot (3 m) area — 175

Keel per 10 foot (3 m) area — 275

Rudder — 100

Estimated Cost of Construction: 4.8 million gold.

Air Frigate

These large yet surprisingly nimble air ships were equally suited as warships and as heavy-duty **merchantmen**, thanks to their sturdy construction and high altitude capability. They were the cornerstone of the Elven Aerial Navy, and for nearly a century, these vessels held virtual air supremacy over Dwarven territory. It is said that when the shadow of these craft crossed Dwarven settlements, entire crowds would scatter and flee screaming, for they knew the Elves had come to rain death and destruction upon them.

Type: Warship and merchantman.

Crew: 50 sailors, including the **captain/pilot** and navigator.

Could accommodate an additional 100 passengers.

Size: 160 feet (48.7 m) long and 40 feet (12.2 m) wide.

Excess Cargo Capacity: 50 tons.

Top Speed: 50 mph (80 km)

Cruising Speed: Typically 15-20 mph (24-32 km).

Maximum Altitude: 8,000 feet/1.5 miles (2,438 m/2.4 km).

S.D.C. by Location:

Front Mast — 125

Mid-Mast — 175

Rear Masts (2) — 125 each

Large Sails (4) — 50 each

Small Sails (7) — 40 each

Wings (2) — 150 each

Front Section — 1,600

Mid-Ship — 1,300

Rear Section — 1,400

Hull per 10 foot (3 m) area — 180

Keel per 10 foot (3 m) area — 220

Rudder — 150

Estimated Cost of Construction: 8.4 million gold.

Dreadnought

These massive vessels were slow and clumsy, designed **mostly** to deliver large numbers of troops to battlefields far from home and to engage in heavy **combat**. In the days preceding the war, it was ships such as these that helped make the Elves so powerful. They often had up to a **dozen** of these vessels circling the skies with full military complements on board, awaiting instructions. As soon as they got a message sent via Magic Pigeon ordering them into **battle**, they would swoop into action, delivering a lethal attack upon whoever had offended the great **Elven** Empire.

Type: Warship

Crew: 80 sailors, including **captain/pilot**. Could accommodate up to 200 passengers (usually combat troops).

Size: 300 feet (91.5 m) long and 100 feet (30.5 m) wide.

Excess Cargo Capacity: 300 tons. Could carry a full complement of horses and even small disassembled siege engines (e.g., ballistas, light catapults) in the cargo hold.

Top Speed: 25 mph (40 km)

Cruising Speed: 8-10 mph (12.8 to 16 km).

Maximum Altitude: 8,000 **feet/1.5 miles** (2,438 m/2.4 km).

S.D.C. by Location:

Front **Mast** — 150

Mid-Mast — 200

Rear Masts (2) — 125 each

Large Sails (4) — 75 each

Small Sails (8) — 50 each

Main Wings (2) — 250 each

Secondary Wings (4) — 125 each

Front Section — 2,200

Mid-Ship — 1,800

Rear **Section** — 1,500

Hull per 10 foot (3 m) area — 250

Keel per 10 foot (3 m) area — 300

Rudder — 200

Estimated Cost of Construction: 12 million gold.

Engines of Destruction

Siege Warfare

This book is a modern classic on the art of siege warfare and was written 70 years ago as a joint effort between some of the leading experts in the field. The effort was sponsored by a coalition of noble houses of the Western Empire who wished to codify the way in which they conducted siege warfare upon each other. In a display of sportsmanship rare for any place (but especially so for the Western Empire), the nobles all agreed to establish standards on what siege weapons were acceptable to use on each other. Just to make sure the standards were objective, the nobles hired the services of a number of siege warfare specialists from all over the world to write the definitive guide to "standard" siege weaponry. Among these experts were:

Guilder Nockett, a famous **Dwarven** mercenary from the Western Empire who was best known for the time he had an Invulnerability spell cast on himself and then catapulted his body into an enemy castle. He also supervised a tunnelling effort in that same campaign that collapsed an entire side of a castle, leading to the facility's immediate storming and capture.

Acadan Prila, an Eastern siege specialist known for constructing the siege engine that successfully bombarded the *Aerie*, an infamous Wolfen stronghold built into the side of a cliff face in the **Bruu-ga-Belimar** mountains and generally considered unassailable by ground troops and impossible to assault with missiles. **Prila's** precision bombardment shattered the stronghold and killed over half of the troops within, forcing the remainder to flee.

Mali Olog, a **Southlander** soldier famous for implementing unique ballistas (huge crossbows) on naval vessels. His crowning achievement was overseeing the construction of an experimental warship that had huge, retractable ballista arms built into the fore of the hull that could swing out and lock into place dur-

ing combat, transforming the entire ship into a giant weapon. Firing missiles the size of the secondary masts, the ship successfully speared a notorious pirate ship from nearly a half-mile (0.8 km) out, sinking her.

Rhareth Lasares, a Timiro siege captain who, with a single onager and crew, successfully defended the coastal Timiro town of **Tanith** from a pirate attack. In a three-hour engagement, Lasares and his crew sunk two schooners and a bark, and seriously damaged the pirate flagship, a renegade Western frigate! Honored for his valor (and more importantly, his accuracy), Lasares became a leading siege gunner in the Timiro army and served with distinction throughout many border skirmishes with the Ogre tribes of the Old Kingdom.

Together, these four authors, with several additional **sources**, penned *Engines of Destruction*, a textbook on the "standard" siege weapons of the day and their various applications. The book has since been widely copied and can be found in the barracks of almost any siege weaponry crew in the world.

Siege Engines

Siege warfare in the real world is a prolonged and difficult job for the military that is far removed from the hectic, individual action most adventurers are likely to see. Most "sieges" consist of blockading a fortified position, applying constant attacks to its fortifications and strongholds, and starving the defenders into submission.

In the world of **Palladium Fantasy**, however, sieges often utilize magic onslaughts (spell casting, **summonings** and other works of magic) and divine intervention, as well as conventional siege machines, infantry pressure, and blockades. In these cases,

contentional heavy artillery — siege engines — are another (comparatively inexpensive) weapon in the army's arsenal. However, among attacking forces where magic is minimal, or against a foe without magic, siege weapons and traditional siege tactics make an excellent alternative to the use of magic. Cost may also be a factor in the reason to use siege machines instead of magic, especially against warring hordes of Goblins, **Orcs** and **Ogres** where the presence of magic among the enemy is likely to be minimal. The **Wolfen** use both types of approaches to "siege combat" with near equal effectiveness. In all cases, siege weapons are typically only deployed against large armed forces and fortified positions.

For many warriors, operating siege weapons is a coveted assignment — how else does a simple fighter get the chance to knock down an entire castle wall? Plus, mercenaries and soldiers trained in siege weapons are specialists who get two or three times the going rate of pay. And they usually are not even on the first lines of combat! In general, **Knights** and **Palladins** disdain heavy weaponry as "grunt work," and tend to stick with their cavalry charges and hand to hand combat. As a result, these characters are not likely to take *W.P. Siege Weapons* unless they came from a lowly background before choosing their current elevated O.C.C.

All of the siege engines described below require the *W.P. Siege Weapons* skill to effectively operate and maintain them. For siege engine crews that are not entirely skilled with *W.P. Siege Weapons*, apply the following modifiers.

Penalties & Modifiers for the operation of Siege Weapons

If only 75-99% of the crew has *W.P. Siege Weapons*, then the weapon will fire at -4 to strike. Also, the damage inflicted by the weapon will be reduced by 25%. This accounts for the crew not knowing where to hit their target and because such unskilled shots tend to hit off-center and glance off their target. In addition, the crew's rate of fire will be halved.

If only 50-74% of the crew has *W.P. Siege Weapons*, the weapon fires at -6 to strike, its damage is halved, and it takes four times as long to operate.

If only 25-49% of the crew has *W.P. Siege Weapons*, the weapon fires at -8 to hit, its damage is reduced by 75%, and it takes eight times as long to operate.

If less than 25% of the crew has *W.P. Siege Weapons*, the weapon is at -10 to hit, and its damage is reduced down to 10% of its normal damage. The weapon also takes sixteen times as long to operate.

With the exception of arbalests, siege weapons are designed to hit large, stationary objects. But now and then, gunners might feel the need to hit a moving target — say, a dragon or a Major Elemental. For hitting moving targets with large siege weapons, the following modifiers apply:

Penalties & Modifiers for hitting small and moving targets

Ballistas (all types), light springals, light catapults, light onagers: -8 to strike small (man-sized or smaller) moving targets, -5 to strike large (giant-sized and larger) targets.

Medium springals: -4 to strike small moving targets, -3 to strike large moving targets.

Heavy springals: -3 to strike small moving targets, -2 to strike large moving targets.

Medium and heavy catapults: -8 to strike small moving targets, -6 to strike large moving targets.

Trebuchets cannot be aimed at moving targets. Period.

Arbalests

Arbalests are very heavy crossbows with greater range and hitting power than conventional crossbows. Although a personal weapon, they classify as siege engines because their weight and slow reloading time only makes them practical for siege warfare, when firing fast and furious is not quite so important. Since these things are so powerful, they are cocked by a crank, winch, or other hand-held mechanism. Sometimes these cocking devices are built into the arbalest, as is the case with cranks and winches. Otherwise, cranking devices such as cocking hooks are separate tools that the operator must keep around for reloading. (A common tool was a pair of hooks worn on the gunner's belt.) Due to the lengthy reloading process, the maximum rate of fire for these weapons is two shots per melee round, regardless of the character's personal speed or strength. In addition, *W.P. Archery* does *not* confer any bonuses or increased rate of fire when using an arbalest. Even though they resemble crossbows, they still require the *W.P. Siege Weapons* skill to use.

Light arbalest: Damage: 2D6. Range: 740 feet (225 m). Weight: 7.5 lbs (3.4 kg). Cost: 100 gold, plus 30 gold per dozen bolts.

Medium arbalest: Damage: 3D6. Range: 1,090 feet (332 m). Weight: 12 lbs (5.4 kg). Cost: 150 gold plus 35 gold per dozen bolts.

Heavy arbalest: Damage: 4D6. Range: 1,400 feet (426.7 m). Weight: 18 lbs (8.0 kg). Cost: 200 gold plus 40 gold per dozen bolts.

Ballistas

Ballistas resemble wagon-sized arbalests that fire javelin- or spear-sized projectiles. Typically, they are crewed by two or three gunners. Although **ballistas** cause much less damage than heavier siege engines, they remain a popular and effective battlefield device because they are relatively light, easy to transport, and use cheap ammunition. Ballistas also are commonly used on warships (including well-equipped pirates and merchants) as an anti-personnel weapon and as an anti-ship weapon. Small vessels, such as corsairs, lighters, and trimarans aren't large enough to support a ballista. Medium-sized vessels such as barks, caravels, merchantmen and **Wolfen** longboats can support one or two ballistas. Large vessels such as war galleys, behemoths, destroyers and frigates can support up to four ballistas. The maximum rate of fire for ballistas is once every five minutes (20 melees rounds).

Light ballista: Damage: 1D4x10. Range: 1,155 feet (352 m). S.D.C.: 100. Cost: 2,000 gold plus 480 gold per dozen missiles.

Heavy ballista: Damage: 1D6x10. Range: 1,320 feet (402 m). S.D.C.: 150. Cost: 5,000 gold plus 600 gold per dozen missiles.

Note: The aforementioned damage is for ballista arrows. Flaming arrows will do an extra 4D6 per melee round until ex-

tinguished, and will have a 12% chance of igniting what they hit (if it is combustible). **Ballistas** can also fire small rocks (10 lbs/4.5 kg each). The range is the same, but the damage for these is only 5D6.

Springals

Springals are another type of javelin-projecting weapon in which missiles are placed on a frame, and a flexible wooden arm (or *springer*) is drawn back and released. The springer hits the butt of the **missile**, firing it. Springals are roughly the same size as **ballistas**, but they fire much smaller projectiles, about the size of a normal javelin. The real advantage to Springals is that they can be built to fire more than one projectile at once, making them an effective anti-personnel weapon. Like ballistas, **springals** also can be used as shipboard weapons. (They are rumored to be very popular among the pirates of the southern Yin-Sloth coastlines). Light springals fire a single projectile, like a cross between a ballista and an arbalest. Medium springals typically fire 8 projectiles upon a 10 foot (3 m) target area that can accommodate up to 5 man-sized **humanoids**, 3 giant-sized **humanoids**, and 7 small (dwarf-sized or smaller) humanoids. When hit by a big cluster shot like this, all targets within the target area must successfully dodge the shot or get hit by multiple projectiles. Large springals typically fire 16 projectiles upon a 20 foot (6.1 m) area that can accommodate up to 10 man-sized humanoids, 6 giant-sized humanoids or 15 small humanoids. Like with a medium **springal**, all targets in the target area for a heavy springal must dodge to avoid getting hit. Of course, if a medium or large springal is fired against a large object like a building or ship, then the damage is just to the structure. The maximum rate of fire for a springal is once every five minutes (20 melee rounds). **Springals** require a four-man crew to operate.

Light springal: Damage: (1 projectile) 4D6 to a single target. Range: 825 feet (251 m). S.D.C.: 100. Cost: 2,000 gold plus 30 gold per missile.

Medium springal: Damage: (8 projectiles) 4D6 to everything within a 10 feet (3 m) area. Range: 825 feet (251 m). S.D.C.: 150. Cost: 3,500 gold plus 240 gold per 8 missiles.

Heavy springal: Damage: (16 projectiles) 4D6 to everything within a 20 foot (6.1 sq. m) area. Range: 990 feet (301.7 m). S.D.C.: 200. Cost: 4,000 gold plus 480 gold per 16 missiles.

Note: Like ballistas, springals can fire flaming projectiles. Flaming arrows will do an extra 4D6 per melee round until extinguished, and will have a 12% chance of igniting what they hit (if it is combustible).

Catapults

Catapults consist of a 12x5 foot (3.7 x 1.5 m) frame with a heavy crossbeam mounted and braced perpendicular to it. Behind the crossbeam, a large system of cords called a *skein* holds the arm of the machine. Using a winch-like device, the crew tightens the skein and cranks back the catapult arm, which is topped with a basket for holding its projectile. Then the crew locks the arm into place (usually with a metal loop and a hook) and loads a heavy rock or a flaming bundle into the basket. The crew releases the arm lock and the arm snaps forward, hitting the crossbeam, launching with great speed whatever was loaded into the basket.

Light catapults require **4-man** crews. Medium catapults require **6-man** crews. Heavy catapults require **8-man** crews. The difference in crew size is because heavier catapults require more brute strength to ratchet the arm back into firing position.

Like ballistas, catapults are used as shipboard weapons. Medium ships can accommodate one catapult and heavy ships can accommodate two. (Ships can support more ballistas than catapults because their ammunition is smaller and weighs less.) Catapults often are built with wheels so they can be towed to and from the battlefield. The maximum rate of **fire** for a catapult is once every five minutes (20 melee rounds).

Catapults are indirect fire weapons, which means they fire their missiles in an arc. While this gives them greater range, it **also** gives them a *minimum range*, a range under which the device can not hit anything. Enemies who get in under a catapult's minimum range are immune to it and can easily launch an attack upon the crew.

Light catapults cost 5,000 gold. Medium catapults cost 7,500 gold. Heavy catapults cost 10,000 gold. Ammunition is free where you can find it. Otherwise, specially carved stones typically cost 25-50 gold each. Specially prepared flaming bundles cost 50 gold each. Crews tend to buy specially prepared bundles rather than make their own (the specially prepared ones almost always burn better and have better explosive dispersal).

Light catapult: Damage: 5D6. Minimum range: 100 feet (30 m). Maximum range: 900 feet (275 m). S.D.C.: 250. Cost: 5,000 gold. Stone ammunition, typically 10 lbs (4.5 kg) each, is free if readily available or two gold each from a stone quarry; 50% less if purchased in large quantity.

Medium catapult: Damage: 1D6x10. Minimum range: 100 feet (30 m). Maximum range: 1,070 feet (326 m). S.D.C.: 300. Cost: 7,500 gold. Stone ammunition, typically 20-30 lbs (9-13.5 kg) each, is free if readily available or 4-5 gold each from a stone quarry; 30% less if purchased in large quantity.

Heavy catapult: Damage: 2D4x10+10. Minimum range: 100 feet (30 m). Maximum range: 1,240 feet/378 m. S.D.C.: 350. Cost: 10,000 gold. Stone ammunition, typically 40-80 lbs (18-36 kg) each, is free if readily available (not likely) or 6-12 gold each from a stone quarry; 25% less if purchased in large quantity.

Flaming bundle (all sizes): Damage: 5D6+2D6 damage per melee until extinguished; effects everything within a 10 foot (3 meter) area. **01-75%** of starting a fire if it hits something combustible, such as a straw roof. The resulting fire will cause **1D4x10** damage the first melee round after the initial **hit**, then will double in damage each subsequent round as the fire spreads. Keep in mind that a stone building with a thatched roof will only lose the roof this way, while a wooden building will be consumed. Use common sense when determining the spread of fire — a stone castle is not going to burn to the ground, though it may sustain some smoke damage and its inhabitants may find it impossible to breathe if subjected to a large and smoky enough blaze. Cost: 50 gold each.

Ice Blocks: Reduce damage by 20% for comparable sized blocks of ice, which may be readily available or made by magical means.

Onagers

Onagers are identical to catapults except they use a sling to hold their missiles instead of a basket. While this gives onagers a slightly better range, they cannot be used to fire flaming projectiles.

Light onagers require four-man crews. Medium onagers require six-man crews. Heavy onagers require eight-man crews. Like catapults, onagers are often built with wheels so they can be towed to and from the battlefield. The maximum rate of fire for an onager is once every five minutes (20 melee rounds).

Light onager: Damage: 5D6. Minimum range: 100 feet (30 m). Maximum range: 990 feet (301.7 m). S.D.C.: 250. Cost: 5,000 gold.

Stone ammunition, typically 10 lbs (4.5 kg) each, is free if readily available or two gold each from a stone quarry; 50% less if purchased in large quantity.

Medium onager: Damage: 1D6x10. Minimum range: 100 feet (30 m). Maximum range: 1,155 feet (352 m). S.D.C.: 300. Cost: 7,500 gold. Stone ammunition, typically 20-30 lbs (9-13.5 kg) each, is free if readily available or 4-5 gold each from a stone quarry; 30% less if purchased in large quantity.

Heavy onager: Damage: 2D4x10+10. Minimum range: 100 feet (30 m). Maximum range: 1,320 feet (402 m). S.D.C.: 350. Cost: 10,000 gold. Stone ammunition, typically 40-80 lbs (18-36 kg) each, is free if readily available (not likely) or 6-12 gold each from a stone quarry; 25% less if purchased in large quantity.

Ice Blocks: Reduce damage by 20% for comparable sized blocks of ice, which may be readily available or made by magical means.

Trebuchets

Trebuchets are the grand-daddies of all siege weapons. These monstrosities hurl large stones like catapults and onagers, but instead of using torsion to fling their projectiles, a **trebuchet** arm is attached to a counterweight. When a trebuchet is fired, this counterweight rotates downward due to gravity, seesawing the firing end high in the air, where it launches its missiles. Trebuchets are popular heavy siege weapons because they hurl mas-

sive stone missiles (550 lbs/247.5 kg for a light trebuchet, up to 825 lbs/371 kg for a medium trebuchet, and up to 1,100 lbs/495 kg for a heavy trebuchet) at their targets. One hit from a trebuchet will shake all but the stoutest of fortresses, and a sustained bombardment will eventually destroy whatever it is shooting at. The downside? Trebuchets are about the size of a large **house**, and typically must be constructed at the siege spot. Moreover, a trebuchet counterweight could weigh up to 22,000 lbs (9,900 kg), and the ammunition is not light either, so there needs to be a ready supply of stone nearby. (This is one of the reasons why the Western Empire's army prefers to employ Earth Warlocks to wreck castles instead of using such large and cumbersome machinery.) Also, a **trebuchet's** large size makes it an easy target for other siege weapons and magical defenses. But for non-magical ways to smash through castle defenses, there is no better alternative.

Trebuchets have no easily defined market value because they are built at a siege site. Even if they could be bought on an open market, it is highly doubtful that the local authorities would allow it for security reasons.

Light **trebuchets** (isn't that an oxymoron?) require **12-man** firing crews. Medium trebuchets require **16-man** crews. Heavy trebuchets require **20-man crews**. The maximum rate of fire for a trebuchet is once every **15** minutes (60 melee rounds).

Light trebuchet: Damage: 4D6x10. Minimum range: 100 feet (30 m). Maximum range: 900 feet (275 m). S.D.C.: 400.

Medium trebuchet: Damage: 1D4x100. Minimum range: 150 feet (45 m). Maximum range: 990 feet (301.7 m). S.D.C.: 450.

Heavy trebuchet: Damage: 1D6x100. Minimum range: 200 feet (60 m). Maximum range: 1,155 feet (352 m). S.D.C.: 500.

Other Siege Weapons

For information on a variety of other commonly used siege weapons such as *siege towers*, *battering rams*, the *mouse*, *mantelets* and *quicklime*, refer to Palladium's **Compendium of Weapons, Armour and Castles**. It also includes floor plans for 40 different castles, plus stats and depictions of 45 different types of armor and over 700 different weapons adaptable to any role-playing game system! Enterprising G.M.S can extrapolate damage statistics from the descriptions given.





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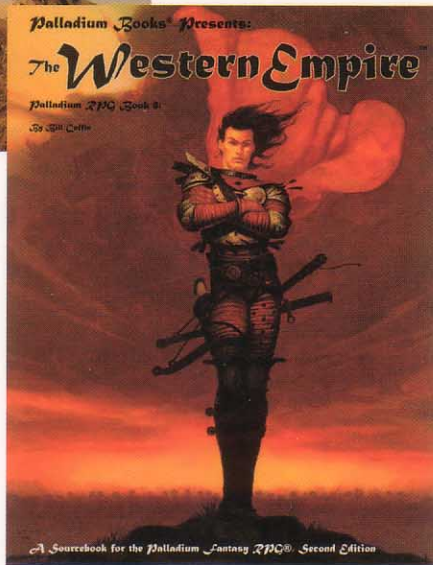
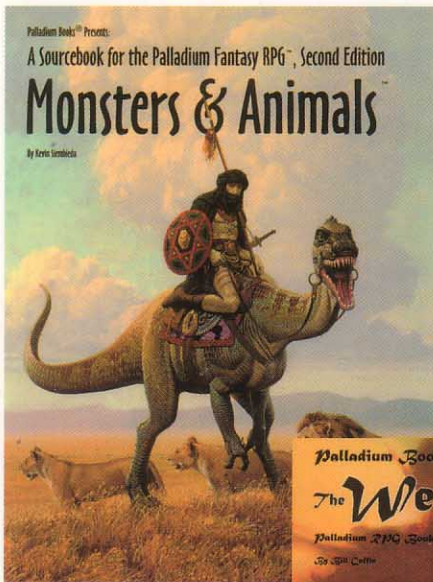
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