

Great Dust Desert

Star Sea

Lu

King of
DYRA

Sea of Gold
Gwyneth

Nargaria

rac **GAZETTEER** *Sea*

Eternal Ocean

Sea of Storms

BY JAMES WALTERS

will

*Being a summary of the people, history,
and legends of the great kingdoms
and continents of the world of Dyra.*

*Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons Player's Handbook, Third Edition, published by Wizards of the Coast

Dyra Gazetteer

By James Wauters

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CHAPTER 1

The World of Dyra

It is time to enter the world of Dyra. It is a land of adventure and wonder, a place that has witnessed the rise of mighty empires, powerful city-states, and realms ruled by great and noble lords. It is also a world at the edge of darkness: old kingdoms collapse into decadence, while humanoid tribes emerge to reclaim lands they once possessed. Ancient evils stir in their slumber, worshipped by dark minions who seek nothing less than the release of their vile masters. The civilized world is besieged by the insidious forces of chaos and destruction, slowly giving more ground with each passing decade.

The time has come to stand fast against the darkness, to turn back the armies of the night, and to reclaim the land for man and his kin. It is a time for heroes to emerge, to walk in the paths of legend, and to forge legends of their own.

Continental Geography

The continents of Dyra are home to the majority of the world's known kingdoms and creatures. They have climatic ranges from arctic in the extreme north and south to tropical at Dyra's equator. There are 6 major continents, 2 major oceans, and 4 open seas on Dyra's surface. There are many major geographical features or remnants of fallen (not forgotten) empires across these lands and seas.

Ainsree

Ainsree, to its people, is known as "Inner Fortune". This island continent is located on the southern hemisphere and west of the Noyi Isles. Its western most coast it is connected by a thin isthmus to the continent of Ondsare. Ainsree is a vast land of the ancient orient. From its northern mountains, central plains, southern forests, and coastal isles, Ainsree is full of wonder.

Andreoa

Known as "The Bold" this isle continent holds its lands high above the water. Mountains and hills dominate the continent from coast to coast, with the exception of its southwest coast, and a few

isles. It is located between the main continent of Lleollan and Ondsare. Its lands are rich with great metals, crystals, and has a few active volcanos. Its cliffs are home to a variety of peoples, including dwarvenkind and giant-kin. It's ruled by many powerful elemental giants that live on its highest peaks.

Lleollan

The largest of all the continents on Dyra. It is known to the Elves as "Living Tree", and to the Humans as "The Voice of Many". Its lands contain all climates; vast deserts, icy glaciers, to tropical southlands. There are eight major kingdoms across its wide lands. Achdar, Gwynneth, Narsaria, Nerwach, Ran, Onhur, Shirishad Lands, and Jian Tei. It's the only continent with large seas and borders the ancient Realm of the Ice King. Most of the known races can be found here and with a very diverse amount of cultures. (Arabic to Zulu)

Noyi Isles

The Kyree (Sea Elves) dominate these isles and have the third oldest history in all Dyra. They are home to both the Kyree and Shukara. Kyree live on the southern isles while the Shukara live in the Northern most isles. The central isles, also known as "The Graves", has continuously been fought over for hundreds of years by both Kyree and Shukara. The Noyi Isles are rich with lush lagoons and great reefs that are full of life. Many surface dwellers avoid these isles at all cost.

Ondsare

This picturesque continent is full of beautiful waterfalls, thick vegetation, and mountainous jungles. Natural forces keep outsiders at bay and a council of 'guardians' keeps unwanted folk out. Known as the "Hunting Beast" these lands flow with powerful energies and many magical beasts roam its surface. The eastern border holds a divine passage leading to the continent of Ainsree.

Vandrac

The "Land of Dragons" holds a remarkable pose to the rest of the continents as it contains keys

to ancient draconic magics and otherworldly gates. Veiled in supernatural storms and powerful elements it hides its surface to the rest of Dyra. In all of history many adventurers have traveled to Vandrach, but less than a handful have ever returned. Mountains sleep there next to the Sea of Gods.

Other Places: Uthra

Uthra is the underdark; a vast underground area that stretches to all the continents. A vast variety of races that live among the ugly depths of the underdark, these are, but not limited to: the Drakari (drow), Dras (half-demons), Kylithians (mind flayers), Sakheti (unique), Beholders and their kin, and many others. These races have't surfaced Dyra in over 300 years since the "Treaty of Uthra" on LLeollan Kingdoms.

Other Places: Eternal Ocean, Restless Ocean

The Eternal Ocean is home to a variety of under-sea races. Two are derivative to the Kyree. To the north the Ya Shoel are savage and tribal, and the Brahmen are thinkers allied with sentient dolphins and whales. To the south the Miahn Sahlunk, a gnomish under-sea race, live in a great under water city. The Restless Ocean hosts the Quintroth, giant-kin living on the edges of a deep canyon.

Other Areas of Interest

Realm of the Ice King -the great polar ice cap.
Great Dust Desert - a mysterious ancient desert.
Haelrac - an isle of elementals and outsiders.
Tssik Ess - a great insectoid city-fortress.
Valshan - a grand snakemen, and reptillian lair.
The Exerop - a legendary deep under-sea place.

The Calendar

In Dyra, most folk mark time with the changing of the seasons. Those who require more a more accurate reckoning use a 364-day calendar, commonly known as the Ambian Calendar (since it originated with the Ambian Republic, who adopted it from the Sylvari). The Ambian Calendar is divided into 12 months; most are 30 days long, while four have 31 to accommodate the solstices and equinoxes. Each month is roughly divided into four seven-day weeks.

Months of the Year

Scordelos	Spring (16 th : Spring Equinox)
Theres	Spring
Toresk	Spring (1 st : Greeningdawn)
Agahst	Summer (16 th : Summer Solstice)
Halembor	Summer
Klas	Summer (1 st : Midsummer)
Darfell	Autumn (16 th : Autumnal Equinox)
Vesmer	Autumn
Malruik	Autumn (1 st : Grimnight)
Lyhtan	Winter (16 th : Winter Solstice)
Jynval	Winter
Ramas	Winter (1 st : Midwinter)

Days of the Week

Sunday	Rest
Stoneday	Building and crafting
Waveday	Commerce and trade
Woodday	Nature
Flameday	Conflict
Windday	Knowledge and learning
Moonday	Reflection

The Moons

Two moons travel around the world, Ralos and Meera. Ralos follows a 28-day cycle, going through its phases 13 times each year. Meera has a 24-day cycle, and is full for only a single night each time (as opposed to the three days Ralos is full). Lycanthropy is governed by Ralos, while Meera is said to have influence on the souls of the dead.

Hours of the Day

Dyra has a twenty-four hour day. Most people don't require precision that can measure those twenty-four hours. There are water clocks and similar mechanisms for those that need to, like alchemists, and those who think they need to, like wealthy merchants or noblemen, but most people are content with a more general view of the hours of the day. Listed below are the terms for the hours (both common and archaic) as well as the time they refer to.

Newday (Primus) - Early morning; from dawn until halfway between dawn and noon; roughly 6 AM to 9 AM.

Highmorn (Manum) - Late morning; from halfway between dawn and noon until noon; roughly 9 AM to 12 PM.

Sunhigh (Tercus) - Early afternoon; from noon until halfway between noon and dusk; roughly 12 PM to 3 PM.

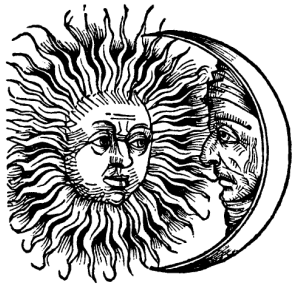
Sunfade (Posmerum) - Late afternoon; from halfway between noon and dusk until dusk; roughly 3 PM to 6 PM.

Eventide (Vesperus) - Early evening; from dusk until halfway between dusk and midnight; roughly 6 PM to 9 PM.

Moonrise (Nessum) - Late evening; from halfway between dusk and midnight until midnight; roughly 9 PM to 12 AM.

Deepnight (Shadus) - Early night; from midnight until halfway between midnight and dawn; roughly 12 AM to 3 AM.

Nightfade (Noxum) - Late night; from halfway between midnight and dawn until dawn; roughly 3 AM to 6 AM.



CHAPTER 2:

People of Dyra

While a variety of races live in (and under) Dyra, the known world is dominated by humans. While a single race early in its history, humanity developed into five major cultures. Migration and inter-mingling over time has erased cultural divisions in many areas, but humans can still generally be distinguished by cultural customs and appearances. The five cultures are the *Hassites*, the *Khazrani*, the *Marrshites*, the *Skalnir*, and the *Varghani*.

The Hassites are the dominant cultural group in Gwenneth, Achdar, Narsaria, and Nerwach. Most of the inhabitants of the entire continent of Lleollan are Hassitic, as are the people of Ainsree and partly in Andreoa. Hassites are fair-skinned, with complexions that pale the farther north one travels. They tend to have blond or light-brown hair, though red is not uncommon. Hassites are the tallest of humans, with an average height just under six feet. They tend to be resourceful, efficient, and believe in a strong work ethic. They easily accept authority, and generally value safety over liberty.

The Khazrani clans are found primarily in the Achdar and Cold Plains. They are tan-skinned with hair ranging from brownish-blond to black - medium brown being the most common. Labelled “barbarians” by other cultures, the Khazrani are a fierce, boisterous lot. The hardy plains riders have a dislike of authority, and highly value their individual freedoms. However, the Khazrani do tend to be brash and somewhat impetuous, especially in situations foreign to them.

The Shirurshad Lands and Jian Tei are dominated by the Marrshite culture, although some reside on Andreoa. The Marrshites have brown or black hair, with skin ranging from light copper to brown. They tend to be independently-minded, and even the citizens of the Syrhaat Dominion consider themselves more free than those who live outside their country. They are a festive and adventurous folk, though their society tends to be marred by an elitist attitude towards other cultures and creatures.

The World's Crown Mountains are home to the Skalnir. They are similar in appearance to the Hassites, though they tend to have a broader build and a shorter average height (five and a half feet is considered tall for a Skalnir). Due to their physique and affinity for rune magic, some have speculated that the Skalnir are related to the *Rumir*, the ancient dwarven race that became extinct millenia ago. The Skalnir are a stalwart, warrior people, seemingly in a constant state of war with their neighbors (which include the horrors of the Chaos Wilderlands as well as more mundane enemies like Sith'aal and Viss'Tahk). Some Skalnir also live in northern parts of Nerwach.

The Varghani are a warrior folk that dominate the vast Great Dust Desert in western Onhur. Their skin is golden in color, and their hair dark, ranging from dark brown to blue-black. Given the nature of their homeland, the Varghani are a self-reliant, hardy folk. However, the harsh environment has also turned them into a rather stern, often humorless people.



A Varghani merchant

Other Intelligent Folk

While humanity may consider itself the dominant people of the world, there are other races that would contest that claim, including those who flourish

where humans would perish. These include the aquatic *Kyree* and *Shukara*, the reptilian *Sith'aal* and *Viss'takh*, the enigmatic *Dhazyra*, and the bestial races: the *Kragharim*, the *Orcazhai*, and the *Tauroks*.

The *Kyree* are a race of aquatic humanoids. They are very similar in appearance to Elves - who they commonly ally with - though their skin has a greenish-blue hue, and their hair tends towards bluish tones. The fingers and toes of the *Kyree* are webbed; their necks bear gills, their eyes are larger, and small fins emerge from their wrists, ankles, and elbows. The *Kyree* are a brave, loyal people, though their numbers have slowly been declining since the spawning of the *Shukara* (who hunt them mercilessly).

The insidious *Shukara* are a derivative race of the *Kyree*. Created by the influence of the *Shadrathu*, the *Shukara* retain basic humanoid features, but are covered with a spiny, reddish-orange exoskeleton. Members of the race possess a greater physical strength than the *Kyree*, as well as a savage bloodlust which, at times, has been likened to sharks in a feeding frenzy. The *Shukara* greatly outnumber their brethren, and are a danger to both ocean-going ships as well as coastal villages, which are frequently the targets of raids by the degenerate sea-folk. *Shukara* do not keep slaves or captives, and consider the flesh of “drylanders” to be a delicacy.

The *Sith'aal* are a race of reptilian humanoids who dwell among mysterious ruins deep in the *Ran Jungles*. Believed to have been created by the sorcerers of *Xolta-Moras*, they are snake-like in appearance - humanoid from the waist up (though with serpentine heads), scaly tail from the waist down. Some are gifted with four arms rather than two. Cruel and merciless, the snakemen give no quarter in combat, and prisoners are only taken for torture and vile experiments.

The *Viss'takh*, unlike other non-human races, are the only race that can say they truly enjoy a pleasant and thriving existence; the *Ari* and *Runir* no longer exist, while the *Kyree* have been in a downward spiral since the creation of the *Shukara*. The *Viss'takh* are humanoid reptiles, though they are more human than the serpentine *Apallyons* - they (always) have two arms, as well as two legs, while tails are non-existent. The lizardmen are a violent, primitive people, quick to

take up arms against those who have displeased them. They can be found in the *Shrinking Lands* of *Ran*.

The *Dhazyra* are a nomadic people found throughout the known kingdoms, though primarily in *Gwynneth* and the *Shirishad* lands. For the most part, they appear Human, but they possess a number of qualities which are not shared by any of the four human cultures. The *Dhazyra* tend to be slightly taller than other people, and their facial features have a slight more severity than typical humans. They also speak a tongue of unknown origin, which bears no resemblance to any known language, modern or ancient (though most speak at least one other language, usually *Varghani*). Most notable about the *Dhazyra* is their propensity for colorful, garish clothing and a love of strong drink and festive music.

The *Kragharim* are a race of beastmen spawned by ancient druids and are an intermingling of humans and animals. They are bipedal humanoids, but their hair, skin, and heads are those of different types of animals. Most *Kragharim* are canine in appearance, but there are other types as well, including cat, stag, goat, and ram, while wolf and boar are the second most common. The *Kragharim* bear a hatred for humans, *Tauroks*, and *Viss'takh*.

The *Orcazhai* represent a failed attempt by the god *Shaarizad* to create a “perfect race.” The *Orcazhai* are a species that is sub-human rather than super-human. Commonly called “Orcs” for short, this race consists of primitive, brutish humanoids of varied size and intelligence. *Orcazhai* are tribal in nature and extremely violent - when they aren't fighting humans and their kin for lands they are convinced are their birthright, *Orcazhai* tribes generally fight one another (often consuming the bodies of their slain tribesmen). They have many strongholds in *Orn*.

Combining the strength of a bull with the intellect and dexterity of a Human, *Tauroks* are truly a warrior race. Physically, the *Tauroks* look like well-muscled humans (male and female), though their necks and shoulders are very hairy (on the verge of being furry), and they have the heads of bulls (only the male *Tauroks* have horns, while the females possess multiple teats). Most *Tauroks* live in the *Tauron Mountains*, with their *Sentauri* brethren; the *Sentauri* are an off-shoot race combining a bull's body with a *Taurok's* upper-body.

Underworld Races

While most races live on the surface of Dyra or in its waters, there are a number that, either by choice or necessity, live in the vast Underworld that runs beneath it. These include the Drakari, the Dràs, the Kylithians, and the Sakhete.

The Drakari, also known as “Drow”, “Dark Elves”, or simply “Darklings” are a strong humanoid race, slightly shorter than humans, but possessing great endurance and agility. They also have special abilities which allow them to conceal themselves in darkness and increase their range of hearing in

underground places. Drakari are a cold, humorless people, expressing little emotion and seemingly void of compassion or empathy. Their origin is a mystery, as they seem to only have ventured to the sunlit world in the past 200 years. This may be why they escaped the Lleollan plague, which destroyed their surface-dwelling kin.

The Dràs are a hybrid race, the result of (successful) magical experiments by the Drakari Empire to create a race that was half-human and half-demon. Though primarily an Underworld race, the Dràs have started to establish a greater presence on the surface world, particularly in the Haelroc mountains and the Great Dust Desert. They bear an intense hatred for humanity, and have expressed their goal to see it destroyed.

The Kylithians are an enigmatic race, said by some to be an aberration of nature. They possess tentacles, which they use to extract the brains of their victims (which has given rise to the term “mind flayer” to describe them). In addition, explorers of the Underworld have reported that the Kylithians wield a form of magic unlike any that is known on the surface. These beings are cruel, cold, and often possess unfathomable agendas.

The Sakhete are very unusual creatures. Their bodies are barrel-shaped and surrounded by tentacles, with a

mass of smaller tentacles on their underside (used for mobility). The top of the body is surrounded by eyes, and four mouths are evenly spaced around its middle. Each mouth holds a proboscis-like tongue, which the creature plunges into victims and then uses to suck out vital fluids. The Sakhete are a thriving race, and have established a moderately

advanced society in the Underworld. Though their alien personalities are difficult to gauge, they are reported to be passionate, driven, and overly cruel. They fight with a horrific ferocity, and revel in torture and dismemberment of their foes.

Those of Elven Blood

Though the Sylvari are long gone, there yet remain those who have elven blood in them. The disease that killed the Sylvari did not affect those who were not “pure” Sylvari – dirty elves & half-elves. Why they were spared is a mystery, though most assume that their human sides helped to prevent the plague from taking hold. In any case, ‘dirty’ elves & half-elves can still be found throughout the kingdoms, as well as those who are predominantly human but possess elven ancestry. Wild and high elves are considered “dirty”.

Dead or Departed Races

Some races of ancient origin can no longer be found in Dyra today. Among those that are known are the Cah, the Runir, the Sylvari, and the Quanyari.

Little is known of the enigmatic ancients known as the Cah. No accurate records remain describing their appearance, though ancient carvings seem to describe a tall, sallow-skinned people, humanoid in shape. They disappeared shortly after having been cursed by the great Shadrathu; whether they died as a people or simply left the material plane again is a mystery.

Once one of the major races of Dyra, the Runir have been gone for centuries. They were a race of dwarves, averaging three to four feet in height, with stocky features, stone-colored skin, and bearded faces. The efficient and humorless Runir were master craftsmen, and their handiwork is still sought-after today. They were also the creators of a discipline of magic called “runecraft”, which modern wizards outside of the Skalnir have yet to master. Unfortunately, around 2,000 years ago, the Runir left Dyra. The hordes of Orcazhai that had spread through the mountain ranges and the Underworld were overwhelming the Runir; rather than be wiped out by the humanoid tribes, they left to find a new home. They traveled deep within Andreoa through

elemental portals to reach the unknown lands beyond, and haven't been heard from since.

The Sylvari were a tall, slight-featured, graceful people, with a love for knowledge, nature, and the arts. After the fall of their great sky-cities, the Sylvari still prospered, rebuilding their homes and learning to co-exist with their local environments. They built a small but impressive civilization around their cities. However, their opposition to the Mystarchs of the Drakari Empire resulted in their complete destruction.

Cousins to the Sylvari, the Quanyari evolved along a different path after the fall of the sky-cities of the Ari. The Sylvari landed on Lleollan, while the Quanyari landed on Ainsree. Physically similar to the Sylvari, the Quanyari become somewhat less graceful and more muscular, being dominated by a militaristic cultural attitude. At the height of their power they controlled a large portion of southwestern Ainsree, but they retreated to Ondsare around 225 BAR. Attempts to communicate with them since have either failed or have been forcibly turned away. If the Quanyari still inhabit Ondsare, they have no interest in the affairs or concerns of the rest of the world.

Human Languages

An interesting trait of humanity is their profusion of languages. Most non-human races share a single language, but humans speak no less than ten major languages and a host of variants and dialects. The reason for this is a topic better left to sages and linguists; herein is simply a summary of the various languages of humanity and its kin.

Human languages can be grouped into three families: *Hassitic*, *Ainsretic*, and *Khadratic*. These names reflect older languages that humans formerly used, before years of migration, isolation, and other factors caused the linguistic divisions that are evident today. It is believed that these three languages in turn were originally derived from a single language, known as “Vargo-Altaenean”, which the original human tribes and citizens of fabled Aan apparently used.

The Hassitic languages include *Iltanese*, *Tarinic*, and *Altaevian*. Iltanese is the primarily language spoken east of the Sea of Cold. Tarinic is a close

variant of Iltanese, and is also known as “Court Ulthian”, as it is generally only used by the nobility. All official documents and laws are written in Tarinic, and all commerce legalities (excises, etc.) must be conducted in Tarinic. Altaevian was the language of the Great Republic. Similar in some ways to Iltanese, it is commonly used in all the kingdoms of Lleollan. Because of its use by well-travelled free traders, Altaevian is sometimes known as “Trade Common” (or simply “Common”), as its use has spread to various ports and cities of the world.

Ainsretic, probably the most difficult language family, encompasses all the tongues of Ainsree, the Shirishad lands, and Jian Tei. The dialects are very different. Ainsretic includes *Taracian*, *Isenati*, *Aesyrian*, and *Syrhaati*. Taracian is a widely-known language, spread throughout the east and south by the master merchants of Taracia (the ancient counterpart to modern-day Jian Tei). Isenati is the vernacular of those who live in the Great Dust Desert. Aesyrian is similar to Isenati, though it has evolved over the years into a different dialect. It is spoken in the far north by Varghani. Syrhaati is the language of the Syrhaat Dominion, though its use is slowly being superseded by Taracian.

The Khadratic languages are spoken in the North Realms and the Barbarian Plains. They include Varinian and Khazrani. Varinian is used in the far reaches, a remnant of the fallen kingdom of Varinia. Khazrani is the common tongue of the various barbarian clans, though each has its own particular variant (those of the Kalumesh and the Ghassan are different enough to warrant being classified as minor languages, derivatives of Khazrani).



A final language worth noting is Dhazyni. Dhazyni is the tongue of the enigmatic Dhazyra, the colorful, nomadic folk found in Gwynneth and the Shirishad lands. It is not a wide-spoken language, as would be expected, but it is unique in that it bears no similarity to any other known language, and those not of the Dhazyra find it virtually impossible to learn. Additionally, Dhazyni has no written form.

Non-Human Languages

Humans do not, of course, have a monopoly on the spoken word. Languages of the other races of Dyra include *Auroni*, *Drakdriel*, *Ortuuk*, *S'seric*, *Sylvan* and *V'stalic*.

The bullmen of the Tauron Mountains speak Auroni. It was originally adopted from Sirylic (the language of the Xolta-Moras sorcerers, creators of the Tauroks), but evolved in its own, unique manner.

The Underworld-dwelling Drakari speak Drakdriel, which is a derivative of the Sylvari language. While very similar, Drakdriel has evolved into a less flowery, less colorful tongue.

The myriad humanoid races that constitute the Orcazhai speak a guttural, halting language known as Ortuuk. Ortuuk has no written form, though observers sometimes confuse the primitive symbols and markings of orc tribes as Ortuuk “words”.

The S'seric language is spoken by the Sith'aal, the snake-men of the southern jungles. It seems similar in many ways to V'stalic (spoken by the Viss'takh), but linguistics scholars have noted that the two languages are very different, and the perceived similarity is only due to perceptions that the Sith'aal are somehow kin to the lizardmen. S'seric is actually very similar to Sirylic, in form if not pronunciation. More interesting is the fact that the S'seric alphabet is virtually identical to the Sirylic. Sages agree that the Sith'aal, like the Tauroks, were the creation of Xolta-Moras, perhaps to be used as a secret army to invade Syrhaat.

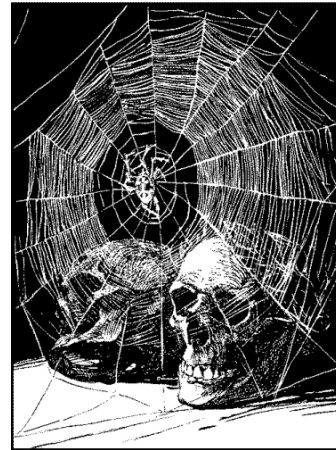
V'stalic is the tongue of the reptilian Viss'takh. It is a difficult language to learn (for humans, at least), but its pictographic alphabet is fairly simplistic.

Dead Languages

Like kingdoms and cultures, languages also rise and fall over the course of history. But dead languages can still surface on occasion, perhaps in the form of runes on an ancient blade, or perchance glyphs scrawled on a weathered parchment. Two such languages are *Sylvadriel* and *Runic*.

Sylvadriel was the language of the Sylvari. Its derivative Drakdriel is spoken today, and Sylvadriel script is occasionally found in old treasure hoards or dusty tomes of great libraries.

Runic is the language of the long-departed Runir. A brusque speech, it seemed to mirror its alphabet, which consisted of symbols formed solely of straight lines.



CHAPTER 3:

A Brief History of Dyra

Dyra has a long and rich history, spanning countless years. A detailed discussion of the various ages is beyond the scope of this work, but the summary that follows should be sufficient to give one an overview of the tumultuous past of this world. Years are listed in “Ambian Reckoning” (AR), as the Ambian calendar is the most common calendar in use.

Time Before Time

The history of the world before it existed is difficult to record, for obvious reasons. Most of this age is described in mythology, and thus varies from culture to culture. There are some elements, however, that are common throughout the various traditions. Most religions state that before Dyra, there was the realm of Panthea, created tens of thousands of years ago by a race of ancient, divine beings known as the Elder Gods. The Elder Gods populated Panthea with various flora and fauna, and created the First Races to walk the land: the industrious Husda, the intellectual Cah, the barbaric Truk, the insidious Yaot, and the peaceful Sr’inhg. They also created the Myraphum, spiritual guardians to watch over their new world. After this, the Elders left Panthea to its own devices and retreated into the Outer Void.

Eventually, some of the Myraphum grew proud, which led to greed and hubris. Rather than simply watch over Panthea, these Myraphum felt they should instead rule over it. Led by a group known as the Shadrathu, the rebellious Myraphum enslaved the Truk and the Yaot, and used them to destroy the Husda and the Sr’inhg. The Cah managed to escape; they fled to other realms with Shadrathu in pursuit. The other rebellious Myraphum, now rulers of Panthea, renamed themselves the Maelyaphum.

Those Myraphum still loyal to their original task gathered their energies and set to war with their fallen brethren. For aeons this conflict raged, with neither side gaining an advantage. For every steadfast Myraphum slain by the Maelyaphum, the remainder seemed to grow in power...and for every fiendish

Maelyaphum that was dispatched, it was as if two more took its place. Ultimately, the end did come, in the form of a devastating cataclysm. The raw, magical energies employed by both sides were too much for the world of Panthea to handle: the world was torn asunder, and the warring multitudes fled into the Void. There the Myraphum, of which there were thirteen, created a place for themselves which they called Vigilis. The Maelyaphum formed another realm - a hellish, nightmare place known as Maledicium.



A Maelyaphum clashes with a Myraphum

Despite all that had happened, the Myraphum still felt bound to the task given them by the Elder Gods. Their original charge no longer existed, so the Myraphum agreed to create a new world out of the remnants of the old. To prevent a repeat of the past, they formed a concord, later known as the Divine Council. A new world would be created, through the combined efforts of all the Myraphum. However, neither Myraphum nor Maelyaphum would be allowed entrance to this world without consent of those who would inhabit it. In this way, the two eternally-diametric hosts would not come into direct

conflict, as such an event would undoubtedly end in the same sort of destruction that was wrought on Panthea.

Though they disagreed on myriad details, ten of the thirteen Myraphum agreed to be bound by the pact. The remaining three fought their brethren, refusing to adhere to the agreement. Their resistance was short-lived, however, as each stood apart from the others, and individually were no match for the combined might of ten Myraphum. The first to fall was known as Hhiltara the Damned; she was forcibly bound by the others, for which she cursed them and pledged to oppose them in any manner she was able. The second was Aadu, though he was driven mad by the process of tying him to the Council. The final Myraphum, one known as Shaarizad, was able to resist the binding process, and fled Vigilis to hide in the Outer Void.

After the formation of the Divine Council, the Myraphum set to the task of creating a new world. Drawing together the sundered remnants of Panthea, the world of Dyra was crafted. Content with what they had wrought, the Myraphum created the four Root Races to populate the world: the avian Ari from air, the stout Runir from earth, the peaceful Kyree from water, and the reptilian Viss'takh from fire. These tasks drained the Myraphum of much power; shortly after, Shaarizad returned from his exile and attempted to take advantage of the situation, to claim dominion over Dyra. With their last energies, the Divine Council wove a prison around Shaarizad and cast him back into the Outer Void. Then, their powers exhausted, the Myraphum fell into a long slumber (they would later awaken, stirred by the worship of the beings they and others created, who would look on them as gods).

Emergence of Humanity and the Orcazhai

Years after the gods fell into their slumber, the Cah, who had fled millennia before, returned to Dyra. They did not return alone - the Shadrathu still followed them. The Cah were unable to prevent the Shadrathu from coming into Dyra with them, though they did manage to destroy two and imprison the rest. Unfortunately, just before they were bound, the Shadrathu unleashed a terrible curse of degeneration on the Cah. To prevent their knowledge and magical abilities from being lost

forever, the Cah sought to pass them on to one of Dyra's indigenous races. Regrettably, these races were unable to fully grasp what the Cah tried to teach them. So, they created a new race of beings as a legacy of their intelligence and skill. This race was humanity.

Shortly after being taught the mysteries of magic, an experiment by human sorcerers in the far south spawned a major cataclysm, resulting in the fall of the sky-cities of the Ari. Most of the cities were destroyed, but a few survived fairly intact. The Ari were avian, but not enough to survive on their own among the clouds, and thus became earth-bound, clustered around the surviving cities. The Ari who fell to Lleollan became the Sylvari, while the Ari that landed on Ainsree become the Quanyari.

Some years later, the bound deity Shaarizad broke free of his prison and returned in another attempt at conquest. This time, he crafted his own "chosen race", the Orcazhai, from captured beings of various races. However, the dark god vastly underestimated the amount of divine energy required to create a new, sentient race. Shaarizad was unable to finish his effort, which resulted in a brutish race of subhuman creatures, as well as his collapse from the expenditure of too much power. Subsequently, the Sylvari, Humans, Viss'takh, and Runir destroyed his temples, slew his cultists, and burnt the writings of the religion - all attempts to prevent the dark god from receiving worship that would resurrect him.

Age of the Sorcerer-Kings

About 2500 years ago, humanity outgrew its birthplace, and various tribes, divided by different ideals and philosophies, began to migrate to other lands. Most traveled to the west and then in various directions to the rest of Lleollan. There were nine major tribes at the time - five became the basis for the modern cultures of the Varghani, the Marrshites, the Hassites, the Khazrani, and the Skalnir. Of the remainder, one traveled far to the southwest, beyond the desert, another to the lands west of the desert, and yet another built boats and sailed east, across the horizon. Little is known of the fate of the first two; nothing is known of the last.

The ninth tribe that remained was quite different from the others, for they were the Magicians: humans instructed in the use of sorcery. It had been

the intention of the Cah for all humans to learn magic, but their time was limited due to the Shadrathu curse; the intent was for those they taught to in turn teach their brethren. However, the Magicians greedily kept what they learned secret.

Due to their command of magic, the Magicians were able to advance in a number of fields much more quickly than the other human tribes. In 1425 BAR, the Magi built the first great human city, known as Aan. It was an architectural marvel (unrivaled to this day), and stood for years as the de facto “capital” of magic. Despite this, it didn’t take long for the “Ninth Tribe” to break into factions, each with their own view on how to practice magic. Different groups left Aan to found their own realms (usually enslaving the indigenous populations they found). Over the next few decades they established the kingdoms of Khemsa (necromancers), Satar (summoners), Xolta (war magic), Moras (alchemy and constructs), Syrhaat (enchantresses), Zammut (illusionists), and Aruk-Sai (shapechangers).

As might be expected given the arrogance and elitism of the magical kingdoms, they engaged in numerous conflicts. Great items of power were crafted, thrall warrior races were created (such as the bull-like Tauroks), and armies of slaves, soldiers, and sorcerers fought and died. Aruk-Sai was conquered by Moras, which was in turn vanquished by Xolta. Syrhaat annexed the realm of Zammut, and the Quanyari, taught magic by a renegade archmage named Ur’Zaal, seized territory on the mainland and established the empire of Az’gotha.

The empires of the sorcerer-kings endured for many years, but all eventually fell into ruin. Xolta-Moras disintegrated into warring factions after the disappearance of their ruler, the infamous “Supreme Mystarch” Daemos. Years of slave revolts finally caused Khemsa to collapse, while similar events forced the Quanyari to retreat from Ainsree to the Ondsare lands. The Satar Empire was overcome by a mysterious plague, believed to have originated in Maledicium. Only Syrhaat survived, but it too was forced to deal with in-fighting and slave revolts, and has been in a slow but steady decline ever since.



The Supreme Mystarch Daemos

Spÿre Founded

Since the fall of the ancient empires, the practice of magic was virtually nonexistent in the known kingdoms (Syrhaat still had a fair number of enchantresses, but isolationism kept them confined within its borders). In 252 AR, however, a group of Iberian priests from Stalis (in Atalîsmyr, later Talismarr) found a cache of magical books and scrolls in the ruins of an ancient Xolta-Morassan city. From this they taught themselves how to use magic and established the Obsidian Tower, a magical university. The city of Spÿre rose around the tower, and became a center for all things magical.

Fall of Kingdoms, Rise of Empires

In 298 AR, the throne of Selara (a kingdom on the Restless Ocean Coast) was seized by a dark wizard, a being, only partially human, known as Zar-Adân. A magician of great power, he had discovered an ancient cache of tomes from the Khemsa Empire. He used the books to raise an army of undead warriors and seized the Selaran palace. Soon after, Zar-Adân turned his sights towards the neighboring kingdoms of Atalîsmyr, Qa’Damar, and Vargros. Fearing a fate similar to Selara’s, the three countries banded together to stop the wizard, using all the resources they could muster, as well as assistance from the magicians of Spÿre. The alliance against Selara was successful, though it left all four kingdoms in a weakened and disarrayed state from which they would never recover. Unfortunately, Zar-Adân escaped before he could be brought to justice.

A few months later, the Ambian Republic took advantage of the Selaran War’s aftermath and

conquered the four countries involved. A few years later, it defeated the kingdom of Arenir, as well as many minor states throughout the eastern regions. Ambia was established as a great power that would see no rival for many years.

During this time, other major countries were establishing themselves as well. In the far east, the kingdom of Jian Tei, a normally peaceful kingdom, on the southeastern coast of Lleollan, embarked on its own campaign of expansion, eventually conquering all the lands east of the Crystalpeak Mountains. In the Barbarian Plains, the armies of Khazrantia crossed the Skull River and laid claim to all the lands between it and the Wild Mountains, assisted by the Ghassan tribe. Lands between Shirishad Lands and Jian Tei became the territory of sorcerous Marasinia, and even Syrhaat reclaimed some of its old provinces in the south.

A new imperial age had begun.

The Mystarchs

In the early years of the fourth century, Marasinia was a relatively small power in comparison to the other empires of the time. Most strategists gave it little notice, assuming that it would be assimilated by one or more of its neighbors. However, those who discounted Marasinia had little understanding of its rulers' beliefs and their ambitions, as well the lengths they would go to realize them.

Marasinia was ruled by a great council of sorcerers. As wielders of sorcery, rather than wizardry, they considered themselves superior to their arcane brethren. The Marasinian sorcerers, who dubbed themselves *Mystarchs* (a term from ancient Xolta-moras), believed they were of a "pure" magical heritage and were directly descended from the Ninth Tribe of humanity, the original magicians. The Mystarchs claimed that any "brute" descended from the other, "inferior" tribes could learn wizardry, but only by being of the "blood of Aan" (in reference to the ancient magicians' city) did one possess true power.

Eventually, this dogma led the Mystarchs to conclude that wizards were not the only people "inferior" to them - they believed that all beings, human or otherwise, were inferior unless they were sorcerers. This prejudiced world-view was used to

justify virtually every action the Marasinian Empire would later take, and helped bring the world to the edge of madness and destruction.

Ascent of a Dark Empire

Like its neighbors, Marasinia lay dormant for many years. Conquest inherently has practical limits, and the empires were, for the moment, spending their time strengthening political and economic control of the various territories they had won in the recent past. The Mystarchs of Marasinia, however, focused their efforts on quests and expeditions, seeking out the magical secrets of the ancient empires. Marasinia had no desire to simply be as powerful as fabled Xolta-Moras or dreaded Satar; they planned to exceed their power, to become the greatest force the world had even seen.

The Mystarchs were successful in most of their searches and quests, and used the mystic secrets from the tomes of long-dead magicians to teach themselves new and terrible spells. They used their newfound knowledge to augment their military and workforces with hordes of demons, constructs, and other unnatural creatures. They also set to enslaving intelligent beings (a practice which became more widespread as Marasinia grew) as well as magically engineering others, using techniques pioneered by Xolta-Moras.

During the remainder of the century, the Mystarchs extended their empire throughout Lleollan. Ambia, which had grown weak through factionalization and in-fighting, was the first to fall to the mighty sorcerers. They next moved against the north, defeating the Khazrantians and seizing the North Realms. They then advanced to the west, attempting to subjugate the Khazrani barbarian tribes. The tribes were not an easy opponent to defeat, and the Marasinians never really had much control over them, despite claiming the Khazrani Steppes as part of their empire. The extent of Marasinian control in the Barbarian Plains was the effectively limited to establishing a backwater province named Calythir, near the Gulf of Vaelagard. Calythir was meant to be used as a staging area for future incursions into Andreoia.

Outside the Empire

Despite their incredible expansion, not all of Lleollan fell beneath the rule of the Mystarchs.

The three major powers that stood apart from Marasinia were the city-state of Spÿre and the Ulthian and Syrhaati empires.

Spÿre was a particular thorn in the Mystarchs' collective side. Despite the fact that the Marasinians claimed wizardry to be inferior to sorcery, they were never able to defeat the wizards of Spÿre (due in part to the large number of refugee wizards who fled from the empire to the city). Shirushad also had a large number of Marasinian immigrants, and between their military and magical forces, the eastern imperium was able to keep the Mystarchs on the northwestern side of the Crystalpeaks. Syrhaat, on the other hand, was distant enough that they didn't concern themselves with Marasinia, and who likewise give little thought to them.

Death of a People

Marasinia had enemies within its borders as well as without. Particularly bothersome to the empire were the Sylvari. The elven folk, from their homes in the Aelarion Forest, the Avrin Forest, and what is now the Forest of the Forlorn, were a constant source of aggravation for the Mystarchs. The Sylvari had engaged in a campaign of raids, sneak attacks, and other assaults for years, ever since Marasinia began conquering Ambian territory.

In 374 AR, while the Mystarchs were engaged in their wars with the central barbarian tribes, the Sylvari decided to intensify their campaigns against the empire to full-scale warfare. With backing from Spÿre and Jian Tei, elven hosts from the great forests invaded Marasinia on three different fronts, while smaller enclaves in other woodlands assumed the task of raiding and marauding. The Sylvari had no delusions about defeating Marasinia, but they hoped to at least throw the Mystarches into disarray long enough for the Spÿrrans and Jian Teians to shatter the empire's power.

It was common for the Marasinians to magically enslave those who they conquered, assuming they were considered "useful" and they choose to not serve the Mystarchs willingly. To that end, the empire, seeing a possible use for the Sylvari, attempted to enchant them, using their controlling

magic to force the elves into obedience. Their attempts proved unsuccessful; it appeared that the Sylvari were particularly resistant against such powers. What the Mystarchs did then was more frightful than any other event in recorded history.

Despite their abundant resources, the Marasinians knew that a full-scale war against the Sylvari would be costly, and would open them up to attack from Spÿre and Jian Tei. Knowing that they couldn't enchant

them, and not wanting to fight them directly, the Mystarchs sought another solution. Using lore and magic from ancient Xolta-Moras, the Marasinian sorcerers were able to magically engineer a vile disease, one which would only affect pure elves. In 377 AR, they unleashed this terror on the Sylvari throughout the empire. To the delight of the Mystarchs, their creation was an incredible success. By 380 AR, to the astonishment and horror of the rest of the world, the Sylvari race was dead.

The Aetheric Collector

The genocide of the Sylvari had at least one positive consequence, in that it motivated Syrhaat to take notice of Marasinia and its actions. The Primarch (empress) of Syrhaat pledged the resources of the Dominion to an alliance already formed between Spÿre and Jian Tei. Together, the three kingdoms vowed to destroy the Mystarchs and end the atrocities of the Marasinian Empire for good.

With the Spÿre-JianTei-Syrhaat alliance, the Marasinian Empire faced a real threat for the first time since its inception. Despite their vast hordes of outsiders and thrall-warrior armies, they believed that

The Aetheric Collector and Divine Magic

Both arcane and divine magics were affected by the Aetheric Collector. It is not known whether this was by design or by accident, but regardless, after the Collector was activated, clerics, paladins, and other divine spellcasters were unable to use their spells. They were still able to call upon the divine powers granted them directly by their deities (such as the ability to turn the undead). This suggested that divine spells were inherently of the same nature as arcane, the difference being that the former operated based on the will of the gods, the latter on the will, knowledge, and actions of its wielders.

the alliance could overpower them without a great deal of effort. To save their empire, in 387 AR the Mystarchs developed a “secret weapon” that would secure both their rule and the conquest of the remaining realms.

In the heart of Kyrantheim, the capital city of Marasinia, the sorcerers crafted a great, magical artifact they called the *Aetheric Collector*. The Collector was a large, spherical construct built from myriad gemstones, jewels, and precious metals. Its purpose was to draw in the magical energies that flowed throughout the world, containing them within itself as a reservoir accessible only by the Mystarchs. With the power of magic lost to Spÿre, Jian Tei, and Syrhaat, they would easily fall to the sorcerers (or so they planned).

Unfortunately for the over-confident and arrogant Mystarchs, the Collector worked - too well and too quickly. Mere moments after their activation ritual was complete, it indeed sucked in the entirety of the magical energies flowing through Dyra - cutting off magicians outside Marasinia, but also those inside. The Mystarchs suddenly found themselves without their sorcerous powers. That, however, was the least of their problems.

Besides preventing spellcasting, the Aetheric Collector dispelled enchantments used throughout the empire, as they relied on magical energies to operate. Magical portals closed, floating towers crashed to the ground, and magical architectures collapsed. Even worse, the controlling magics binding Marasinia’s various thrall creatures - whether native or foreign to Dyra - were sundered. This resulted in the demons, constructs, elementals, charmed beasts, and other multitudes that once served the Mystarchs to be freed. The creatures quickly turned on their former masters, and then unleashed their wrath on anything and everything they happened upon.

But the direst result of the Aetheric Collector’s activation was what happened to the Shadrathu. Millenia before, these dark beings had been confined to prisons with gates bound by magic. Though they were relentless in their attempts to break free, the flows of magical energy kept them from doing so. The disappearance of magic, however, gave them the opportunity they had longed for. The prison gates did not immediately sunder, but the Shadrathu were

able to slowly force them open. As they did so, their evil influence poured forth, corrupting the lands around them.

Age of Chaos

The years following this catastrophe (called the *Mystarchs’ Ruin*) were known as the *Age of Chaos*. It was time of horror and madness, with demons, devils, and other outsiders running amok, evil creatures and races being spawned by the Shadrathu’s influence, and neither arcane nor divine magic available to combat them. With evil running unchecked throughout Lleollan, humanity and its kin were pushed back into pockets of resistance scattered around the continent. Not being a part of Marasinia, Spÿre, Jian Tei, and Syrhaat contained the largest concentrations, but other “fortress-states” could be found elsewhere.

Though conventional magic was no longer accessible, a new form of magic emerged during the Age of Chaos. Certain wizards, seeking any magic that might remain in the world, found that they could draw upon the dark powers of the Shadrathu to work magic. This new discipline was dubbed *nethermagic*, but it functioned in essentially the same manner as conventional magic. However, it was rejected by most of those who formerly were wizards and sorcerers, as it brought with it a horrible price, since Shadrathu energies were not meant to be used by mortals.

Summoning Magic and the Marasinians

With the magical energies bound in the Aetheric Collector, it stands to reason that the various outsiders summoned and controlled by the Mystarchs would have returned to their extra-planar homes rather than remain on Dyra. This was not the case, as the majority of outsiders the Marasinians controlled were brought in through magical portals, rather than through summoning magic. Because of this, magic was not needed to keep them in the material world, only to keep them controlled. With the lost of magic, the controller magics disappeared - but the outsiders remained. Fortunately, the magical portals could no longer function, so the outsiders were unable to use them to bring in more of their kind.

Aetheric Liberation

Though the survivors of the Mystarchs' Ruin were holding fast against the darkness engulfing the world, it was obvious that theirs was a losing battle, and eventually they would be completely overwhelmed. They realized that the only chance they stood against the outsiders, Shadrathi, and other evils was to somehow restore the flow of magic throughout the world. To that end, they decided that the destruction of the Aetheric Collector was their best hope (they were unsure whether that would fix the damage the Mystarchs caused, but they reasoned it had to be tried). In 412 AR, a large force of warriors, priests, and others from Spÿre, Jian Tei, and elsewhere was assembled to assault Kyrantheum, the old Marasinian capital, where the Collector was found.

The story of the band's assault on the city is better told elsewhere. But the end result was a success: they made their way to the Collector and destroyed it. Unfortunately, all those involved perished, as the destruction immediately caused the magic energies within to burst forth, destroying virtually everything near it and devastating the surrounding countryside (since nothing living could withstand the intense magical energies that had been released in such a short time). Kyrantheum became a blackened ruin (now known as the *Black City of Wizardry*, a bit of a misnomer but a name that has stuck over the years), and the lands for hundreds of miles around it were turned into an ashen wasteland, known today as the *Grey Waste*.

The destruction of the Collector was not the end of the war, but it was the greatest victory thus far. Armies began to rally behind clerics and paladins who were able to cast spells again, and those who had practiced wizardry and sorcery in the past and still lived hurried to re-learn what they had once known, and to pass this knowledge onto others. Kingdoms began to push back against the darkness, and the possibility of a future kindled the fires of hope throughout Dyra.

The World Today

The current year is 558 AR, about 150 years after the Aetheric Liberation. Since then, humanity and its brethren have been fighting an uphill battle to restore order and civilization. Though they have had more failures than successes, the successes have been great and lasting: the Sea of Cold Coast and the North

Realms have been reclaimed, while Jian Tei has grown strong and stable, even with the emigration of many people who sought to return to their homelands or carve out new kingdoms for themselves. The Shadrathu appear to have been thwarted in their attempts at escape, and survival is no longer humanity's only concern; family, commerce, and the arts have renewed importance.

Of course, the future is not certain - Syrhaat continues in the decline it has been experiencing since before Marasinia was a problem, and while the Shadrathu are still shackled, their influence continues to pervade the world (and it is believed that one of them, Sel'naga, did indeed escape). The wilderness is still a dangerous place, cults of Shaarizad are on the rise, and only a small portion of Lleollan can truly be labelled "civilized". The future is still uncertain, but it most certainly will be interesting.

In the year 526 AR, about 32 years ago, the kingdoms of Achdar, Gwynneth, Narsaria, and Nerwach signed treaties that led to the creation of a great Arch-Mage and Arch-Sorcerer council. These combined kingdoms are known as the Gentium Quinque, or Nations of Five in the old tongue. The mages and sorcerers are simply referred to as "The Council". They jointly rule over all five kingdoms. Recently, due to the loss of communications and apparent seige of Narsari, the Council has forbid any and all intrusions to and from the Kingdom of Narsari. Strict border patrols, as well as, inquisitors have been dispatched to determine the source of Narsaria's take over.

CHAPTER 4:

Kingdoms, Empires, & Other Realms

This chapter details Dyra's myriad kingdoms, independent towns and cities (collectively referred to as "city-states"), and other major regions of interest.

The description of each region is preceded by listing of various details; this format is explained below:

The name at the top of each entry is the most common term for the region.

Proper Name: The official name the region uses for itself (if applicable)

Government: A brief description of the region's government as well as applicable notes about its structure, power, or function.

Ruler: The reigning monarch or ruling body. A brief game statistic in the format "[alignment gender class level]" follows for the ruler or significant individuals. Statistics for non-human rulers will include their race as well.

Population: The estimated population of the region, as well as any racial breakdown, if there are any significant non-human populations present.

Cities: This is a list of cities and towns of notable size that are either within the boundaries of the region (if a kingdom or geographical area) or which fall within its influence (in the case of city-states). Each city is given a rating based on its population, as listed below:

M (Metropolis)	25,001+
LC (Large City)	12,001-25,000
SC (Small City)	5,001-12,000
LT (Large Town)	2,001-5,000

Settlements smaller than large towns are not listed. The first city listed is generally the capital of the region.

Religions: The dominant religions in the region.

General Alignment: The alignment followed by most people (and usually the government) in the region.

Resources: Lists the resources produced by the region that are in great enough quantity to allow for their export.

Allies: Supportive kingdoms, groups, and organizations, as well as alliances the region belongs to.

Enemies: Kingdoms, organizations, and/or alliances that are hostile to the region.



Kingdoms & Empires

Aelorea

Proper Name: Sacred Theocracy of Aelorea

Government: Theocracy; ruled by a clerical hierarchy with supreme power invested in the high priest of the Aelorean religion

Ruler: His Holiness, the Archpriest Maximillian Amroth, Most High Prelate of Adonhim [LE male fighter 5 / inquisitor 10]

Population: 1,231,000

Cities: Aelor (LC), Lanelar (SC), Sevasolta (SC)

Religions: Adonhim (all others forbidden)

General Alignment: LE

Resources: Glassware, foodstuffs, silver, cloth

Allies: None

Enemies: Lhyrna, Spÿre, Ulthia, wizards, sorcerers, all other religions

Aelorea is a country ruled by an oppressive and dogmatic church, which worships (as they phrase it) the “One True God”, named *Adonhim*. The priesthood is unique in that none of its clerics call upon any sort of magical power. To the Aeloreans, all magic, whether it’s arcane or divine, is demonic in origin. They consider wizards and sorcerers to be the servants of infernal beings, and classify all gods other than Adonhim as demons in disguise. The theocracy actively pursues the destruction of those who practice magic, both within Aelorea and without.

To aid them in their “holy mission” to defeat magic, the Aeloreans mine and purchase onyx, which repels magical energy and creates “magic-dead” areas for wizards, sorcerers, and clerics. Large quantities of onyx have been placed throughout Aelorea, to protect the region from the predations of “demonic” magic users, while onyx stones are embedded in armor and weapons for the Aelorean army. They also have refined many skills useful in sensing the presence of magic, as well as dispelling it or resisting it completely. It is located somewhere east of Jian Tei.

Aldanor

Proper Name: Kingdom of Aldanor

Government: Hereditary feudal monarchy

Ruler: His August Majesty, King Gareth Harcourt [LN male aristocrat 6]

Population: 480,000

Cities: Newhelm (SC), Calstan (LT)

Religions: Ramm, Aeryand, Alyara

General Alignment: N

Resources: Foodstuffs, cloth

Allies: Ilmara, Miradel, Talismarr

Enemies: Gharakaag, Irathia, Ralynia

Aldanor is a kingdom ruined by greed. Alwyn Harcourt, the previous king, was an avaricious and ambitious man, consumed with the idea of ruling the entirety of the Sea of Cold Coast. His desires led to years of skirmishing and occasional warring with neighboring kingdoms, and eventually led him to traffick with dark, otherworldly forces. In 553 AR, Alwyn, who was also a skilled wizard, decided to summon a horde of demons to help him in his conquests and hasten the formation of his sought-after empire. During his summoning ritual, however, Alwyn was assassinated by a Ralynian spy; unfortunately, the infernal gateway the king had created was already open, and with his death, there was no easy way to close it.

The demons that came through the gateway ravaged western Aldanor, laying waste to towns, villages, and everything else they found. The Aldanorran army was devastated, and eventually the king’s son and heir, Gareth Harcourt, called for help from the other kingdoms of the Sea of Cold Coast, as it was obvious that left unchecked, the hordes would threaten more than just his kingdom. Ralynia refused to send aid, as it had suffered the most from Alwyn’s campaigns. Ilmara and Miradel, however, eventually sent forces into Aldanor, and Talismarr later joined them. Eventually, the combined forces of the four kingdoms were able to stem the tide and close the gateway. Aldanor, however, lay in ruins.

Today, the kingdom is a shell of its former self. King Gareth and most of his people live along the ruined coast; the rest of Aldanor is either deserted or home to marauding bands of humanoids striking out from Gharakaag. The three countries that helped against Alwyn’s demons continue to provide assistance to Aldanor - with the understanding that Gareth will pursue an agenda different from his father’s.

Al’Sharaq

Proper Name: Kingdom of Al’Sharaq

Government: Theocracy; ruled by the leader of the Brotherhood of Ineffable Darkness, a Shaarizad cult

Ruler: The Black Priest [NE male cleric (Shaarizad) 16],
 Earthly Emissary of the Profane Master
Population: 380,000
Cities: Kharkuum (SC), Kherash (LT), Sahzarem (LT)
Religions: Shaarizad
General Alignment: NE
Resources: Gems (rare), narcotics, slaves
Allies: Church of Shaarizad
Enemies: Shesada, Asyra, the Swords of Lightning,
 Swords of Fire

There are few areas in Lleollan where the dark god Shaarizad is worshipped openly; Al'Sharaq is one of the few. Located in the desolate north of the Great Dust Desert, the kingdom of Al'Sharaq is ruled by the *Brotherhood of Ineffable Darkness*, one of the largest cults dedicated to the evil deity. In accordance with the precepts of their faith, the cult has established this kingdom as a starting point for the eventual conquest and subjugation of the rest of the world.

The lands controlled by Al'Sharaq have little in the way of resources, and most of the people who live there are either immoral nomads who adhere to the religion or slaves brought in from other lands. The Sharaqi towns are essentially fortified slave camps, with Sahzarem being a holding area for thralls destined for the mines of Kherash or a worse fate in the city of Kharkuum.

Amaristan

Proper Name: Grand and Illustrious Sultanate of Amaristan
Government: Hereditary feudal monarchy
Ruler: His Most Eminent Brilliance, Sultan Sulaylah
 Ayama Ibn Larakesh [N male aristocrat 11]
Population: 865,000
Cities: Haadarat (SC), Abbala (LT), Khamir (SC),
 Caros (LT)
Religions: Ramm, Aeryand, Lis
General Alignment: CN
Resources: Foodstuffs, livestock, narcotics, spices
Allies: None
Enemies: Maraada, Viss'takh tribes

One of the largest kingdoms in the Shirurshad Lands, Amaristan, is a hotbed of political intrigue. Sultan Larakesh is ruler in little more than name only, as the loyalties of the Amari people lie not with him, but with one of two opposing factions within the country. The more powerful faction (though not by much) is *House Dhazran*, a very old noble family which held the throne of Amaristan decades ago. Dhazran seeks to

oust Larakesh and rule the sultanate themselves. Opposed to them is the noble house *Azakhari*, relatively young but powerful and influential. Azakhari disputes Dhazran claims to the throne, but for no better reason than it being a position they desire for themselves.

The two noble houses are not the only players in this game, however. Amaristan is also home to the *Brotherhood of the Jade Serpent*, a powerful and somewhat enigmatic monastic order situated in Haadarat, the Amari capital. The Jade Serpents, though influential, have nowhere near the power of either Dhazran or Azakhari; however, were they to give their support to one of the two sides, that faction's victory would be virtually assured. The noble houses continually court the monks, attempting to secure their alliance and thereby the defeat of their rivals. The Brotherhood, in the meantime, is scheming to turn the entire situation to their advantage, preferring to be the winner in this conquest, rather than simply acting as kingmaker.

In the meantime, Amaristan can be an interesting - and dangerous - place for those who aren't participants in its political struggles. While Dhazran is based out of the port city Khamir, and Abbala is the home of Azakhari's estates, the rest of the country has divided loyalties, even within the same town or village. Smaller noble houses are players as well, seeking to attach themselves to whichever House has the upper hand in a given week, with loyalties shifting on a regular basis. Actions and deeds that would appear to be of no consequence to an outsider take on entirely different meanings in Amaristan. The safest place to visit is likely the town of Caros. It is dominated by the Church of Lis, which so far has chosen to exclude itself from most Amari politics.

Asyra

Proper Name: Kingdom of Asyra
Government: Unknown
Ruler: Unknown
Population: 420,000 (estimated)
Cities: Kaheri (SC), Sathamon (LT)
Religions: Unknown
General Alignment: Unknown (perhaps LE)
Resources: Cloth, gold, rare wood
Allies: None
Enemies: Al'Sharaq

Westernmost of the Great Dust Desert's known kingdoms, Asyra is a land shrouded in mystery. Given its remote location, as well as its less-than-hospitable neighbors (Al'Sharaq, the Forest of the Forlorn, and the Dragon Empire), it is not a place many have visited. Those who have braved the journey tell of a place populated by a humanoid race of some sort, though all the citizens are completely covered in robes and veils. The robes vary in color, with red, green, and white being predominant; the colors apparently have some sort of social significance. Though a seemingly pleasant enough people, visitors to Asyra have reported that they do practice slavery and are given to outbursts of cruelty and intolerance. The architecture of their settlements is unusual, seeming to draw upon both ancient Khemsan designs as well as unknown sources. Asyran buildings also tend to be larger than necessary and have superfluous features, such as extra windows and buttresses in places they are not needed.

Essengard

Proper Name: Grand Duchy of Essengard
Government: Militaristic monarchy; ruler is the highest-ranking general from the kingdom's army, and selects his or her successor from the military forces
Ruler: His Valiant Supremacy, Archduke Lars Aatan [LN male fighter 17], Lord-Protector of the North
Population: 660,000
Cities: Essenmoor (SC), Highcrystal (SC)
Religions: Baltur, Aegar
General Alignment: LN
Resources: Furs, gems (common), iron
Allies: Greyspire, Valnysia
Enemies: Chaos Wilderlands, Tarrvik

Essengard is a realm dominated by its army. The Essens believe that only a life disciplined through military order can truly survive in the harsh North Realms. All inhabitants of the kingdom over the age of 14 must undergo rigorous martial training, and from the age of 16 to 40, everyone must serve part of the year in active military service. Whether this is a good choice of lifestyle is debatable, but it has kept Essengard free of monsters from the Chaos Wilderlands as well as Tarrvish invaders, both of which are continual threats to the kingdom.

Though Essengard has allied itself with both Greyspire and Valnysia in its struggles against the various evils of the North Realms, it does so grudgingly. The wild and disordered Valnysians vex

the orderly and structured Essens, and the latter would likely be at war with the former were it not for the mutual threats they face. The kingdom isn't overly fond of Greyspire either; despite the lawfulness of the city-state and its lack of any real threat, the knights and citizens of Essen find it difficult to trust a kingdom ruled by something that isn't human. Essengard is just northeast of the Star Sea.

Achdar (now Gharakaag [a.k.a. Orn])

Proper Name: Achdar; "Gharakaag" is the name commonly used for the region
Government: None
Ruler: No central ruling body
Population: 945,000 (Orcs 65%, Ogres 20%, Humans 10%, Other 5%)
Cities: Aorkeon (LC), Reashar (SC), Tanisor (LC), Lerain (LC)
Religions: Shaarizad, Hhiltara, Tehmorix, the Shadrathu
General Alignment: CE
Resources: Timber, silver, gold, copper, gems (uncommon, rare), slaves
Allies: None
Enemies: Aldanor, Larman, Shirishad Lands, Gwynneth

Located just east of Gontar's Bay, in the middle of the Wild Mountains, Achdar now is a land of anarchy and violence. Once, the region was part of the sprawling Ambian Republic; however, since the fall of Ambia the area has been a lawless wilderness, home to marauding orc tribes and those seeking refuge from civilized kingdoms. In 531, an attempt was made by a powerful orcish warlord to unify the tribes; it ended in failure, but the name of the orc, "Gharakaag", is now used by sages and scribes when they refer to this chaotic realm.

The region is a wild, dangerous place, inhabited by orc tribes, dire beasts, and worse. Pirates and buccaneers make their hideouts along the coast, while covens of evil wizards and nethermagi gather further inland. Demons claw their way out of a dark chasm known as the *Hellsrift*, while the Slavemasters of Blackport seek more merchandise to add to their inventories. Fortunately for the neighbors of Gharakaag, there is no central organization to the region. The once fertile lands of the 12 Great Tribes of Orn are now scorched and in complete ruin.

Gothmoor

Proper Name: Gothmoor
Government: None

Ruler: No central ruling body
Population: Unknown
Cities: Vasterrak (LC)
Religions: Hhiltara, Shaarizad, Tehmorix
General Alignment: CE
Resources: None
Allies: None
Enemies: Irathia, Shirishad Lands, Jian Tei

The realm of Gothmoor is a dark, haunted land, located in the far northeastern area of Lleollan. Perpetually cloud-covered and shrouded in fog, it is a dismal, dreary place. Those few who have journeyed here speak of dark, crumbling ruins, villages and hamlets where the inhabitants live in a hopeless daze, and a general feeling of eeriness and unease. Fell creatures are said to inhabit the wealds and fens of Gothmoor, and some claim that the spirits of the damned can be heard screaming in the wind. Naturally, very few people travel here if they can help it.

The only major settlement in Gothmoor is the city of Vasterrak. The city is dominated by the Tower of the Horned Shadow, the home of a powerful vampire named *Zeldros the Nightbringer*. Outside the tower, Vasterrak is a vile, nightmarish place, home to all manner of intelligent undead. It is feared by most, and not even the hardy Orcazhai from the Wild Mountains will dare venture too close to the dark city.

Irathia

Proper Name: Kingdom of Irathia
Government: Dictatorial monarchy
Ruler: His Eternal Sovereignty, King Zallara Mauros [LE male blackguard 10 / paladin 9]
Population: 980,000
Cities: Edinmarsh (LC), Carsus (SC), Silvenwater (SC)
Religions: The Shadrathu
General Alignment: LE
Resources: Gems (uncommon), herbs, silver, slaves, timber
Allies: Ralynia
Enemies: Aldanor, Gothmoor, Ilmara, Miradel, Talismarr, Zeldora

The evil realm of Irathia is a blight on Lleollan, a dark kingdom ruled by a darker monarch. Zallara Mauros was once a great hero, a man whose valiant deeds and courageous feats were the stuff of bards' songs and children's dreams. Something happened many years ago, however, that caused this great

knight to turn his back on his oaths and his admirers. Mauros left the path of light and descended into the pits of wickedness and malevolence. No one knows exactly what happened, but given the open worship of the Shadrathu in Irathia, one can guess as to which dark forces he now gives his loyalties.

At his keep in Edinmarsh, once a protected town of Syleuin, Mauros gathered a mighty army of evil - Shadrathu-worshippers, orcish warlords, Drakari assassins, and numerous other fell creatures. Establishing the town as his capital, the fallen knight rode forth on a nightmarish steed, conquering all that stood between his castle and the Sea of Cold Coast. Warriors from Miradel and Ralynia, Essengard's militia, and the free people of the region stood against Mauros, but they were continually pushed back until the blackguard had reached the limit of his army's strength. By the time his campaign was over, the lands north of the Star Sea, From Calythir to Essengard were his and lands south of the Star Sea had returned to their own.

While civilized, Irathia is not a place many care to deal with. Some merchants traffic with the Irathians, though most try to avoid the place due to its evil nature as well as the high taxes Mauros charges on trade. Zeldora will not trade with Irathia at all, and spends considerable gold making sure that they have the swords to keep the Irathians from moving too far east. It would be in their best interests, and those of the realm's neighbors, to see the kingdom defeated. Unfortunately, while containment has worked thus far, actually invading and destroying Irathia is a feat beyond the resources of its enemies.

Ivenmir

Proper Name: Hold of Ivenmir
Government: Magocracy; ruled by an order of wizards known as the "Ice Wizards"
Ruler: No single ruler; decisions made by the Ice Wizards, though they do little actual governing
Population: 450,000
Cities: Stormgard (SC), Greyharbor (LT), Odira (LT)
Religions: Aegar, Iberis
General Alignment: N
Resources: Fur, foodstuffs, ivory
Allies: None
Enemies: Ulthia, Free Cities of Calythir

Little is known of the northern kingdom Ivenmir. Originally it was a province of the Ulthian Empire,

but after the invasion of Novaskora in 483 AR, a cabal of mages known as the *Ice Wizards* seized control of the area and declared it to be a sovereign kingdom under their control. Though they control Ivenmir, they do little in the way of actual governing, leaving such tasks to the leaders of the Ivenese towns and clans.

What exactly the Ice Wizards do is not well-known. No one is sure of their agenda, and their activities tend to be private. Occasionally they will lead an expedition into Novaskora or a raid on Calythir, but what they hope to accomplish by such activities is a mystery. The inhabitants of Ivenmir are left to their own devices, but they speak of things they have seen and experienced which suggest the Ice Wizards are performing numerous experiments with various types of magic.

Gwynneth

Proper Name: Enlightened Kingdom of Gwynneth

Government: Magocracy; ruler is an Arch-Mage chosen by the Council, a multi-member wizard and sorcerer council that governs the Gentium Quinque.

Ruler: His Most Honorable Radiance, Lord Solomon Wickford [LG male wizard 17], Herald of the Magi Champion.

Population: 2,080,000

Cities: Gwynnin (LC), Archbridge (LC), Freeport (LC)

Religions: Baltur, Alyara, Church of All, Cira, Solon

General Alignment: LG

Resources: Horses, foodstuffs, timber, wine

Allies: Achdar, Narsaria, Nerwach

Enemies: Aelorea, Darklings, Orcazhai

Despite its proximity to the Khazrani and the Orcazhai, Gwynneth is a peaceful, prosperous land. It is home to numerous farmers, horse-breeders, and woodsmen. Their peace and prosperity is directly attributable to the Knights of Baltur, who govern the kingdom. The paladins are responsible for keeping the Aeloreans at bay, as well as any foul creatures that may enter Gwynneth from the northern lands.

Though their rule may seem overly-dogmatic at times, the paladins truly have the best interests of the Gwynneth people at heart, and they strive to do whatever they can to protect them and their livelihoods. They are not interested in conquest, though they have slowly begun to spread farther up the west coast, claiming additional lands to raise the horses for which the kingdom is renowned. This resulted

in the complete merger of the Kingdom of Langein with the Kingdom of Gwynneth. They are now one.

Maraada

Proper Name: Province of Maraada of the Restored Marasinian Empire

Government: Magocracy; ruled by a cabal of sorcerers known as the “Blood of Aan”

Ruler: No single ruler; the Blood consists of nine members called “Mystarchs”, and governing decisions are decided by collective consensus

Population: 480,000

Cities: Z’haar (SC), Haarghul (SC), Vedal (LT)

Religions: The Shadrathu

General Alignment: NE

Resources: Herbs, narcotics, ivory, rare wood

Allies: None

Enemies: Amaristan, Talismarr, Valdahar, Yar

Some would liken Maraada to a viper’s nest, though most agree that the latter is more pleasant and far less dangerous. Maraada was once part of the Syrhaat Dominion, until an ambitious group of evil sorcerers laid claim to the region. This group, calling themselves the *Blood of Aan*, alleged that they were the descendents of fallen Marasinia. Their express purpose is the re-establishment of the Marasinian Empire and conquest of the known kingdoms of Lleollan.

The Blood of Aan rule Maraada as their supposed forebears did, served by demonic soldiers and enslaved servants, and slaying anyone discovered to be practicing wizardry. Excursions over the Sidra Peaks to raid Valdahar are common, both due to its proximity as well as it having once been a part of Syrhaat (which Maraada continues to hold responsible for the fall of Marasinia, along with Spÿre and Ran). There are even rumors that the Mystarchs are researching both the ancient plague Marasinia used against the Sylvari as well as their designs for the Aetheric Collector.

Fortunately, Maraada is relatively weak, though it is always seeking to expand its power. So far, it has established an outpost in middle eastern Onhur, at the fortress of Ankhara. Both Ilmara and Talismarr have laid siege to the Maraadan stronghold in the past, but to no avail. The quickness by which the Mystarchs were able to reinforce the fortress suggests that Ankhara may have a runegate that Maraada has learned to reach from their southern kingdom.

Miradel

Proper Name: Sylvan Kingdom of Miradel

Government: Elected monarchy; monarch is selected by a consensus of community leaders from throughout the kingdom every three years; traditionally, rule is minimalistic at best

Ruler: His Honorable Lordship, King Varen Galendil
[CG male half-elven ranger 9 / druid 7]

Population: 810,000 (Humans 70%, Half-Elves 30%)

Cities: Aranmor (SC), Aeldmont (LT), Highwood (LT)

Religions: Dynera

General Alignment: CG

Resources: Wine, herbs, gold

Allies: Aldanor, Mystwood

Enemies: Irathia, Gharakaag, Ralynia

Nestled in the living lands between Star Sea and the Sea of Cold, Miradel is a green paradise. It is home to lush woodlands, rich fields, and crystal streams. The people that live here are an honest, simple folk, content to work the land and help each other when needed. While druids and rangers are relatively uncommon in other countries, in Miradel they are a rather familiar sight.

Despite their abundance of resources, Miradel exports little; the Miradese aren't as concerned with commerce or trade as much as other countries. They are no strangers to mercantilism, however, and are considered some of the shrewdest bargainers in Lleollan. This is especially true in the town of Aeldmont, which is a common stop for caravans heading east or west realms. Northern parts of Miradel, touching the Star Sea, are continuously raided by Irathian fortune hunters seeking Miradel's treasures.

Life in Miradel is just as perilous as anywhere else in Lleollan; while the Sea of Cold Coast is relatively quiet, the eastern borders are rife with humanoid tribes, and monsters from Gharakaag who now inhabit northern Cold Plains and frequently accost the eastern part of the kingdom. In addition, Irathia is an ever-looming threat, as it has long desired to annex Mystwood and Miradel. Fortunately, the Miradese are a vigilant people, and are well-trained in the use of sword and bow, as their enemies regularly learn.

Ralynia

Proper Name: Kingdom of Ralynia

Government: Hereditary feudal monarchy traditionally; government currently in a state of disarray

Ruler: Baroness Selwyna Balthasard [N female aristocrat 10] (interim)

Population: 900,000

Cities: Queensport (LC), Aethewell (SC), Seagate (SC)

Religions: Aeryand, Alyara, Dynera, Iberis, Ramm

General Alignment: CN

Resources: Foodstuffs, furs, timber

Allies: Irathia

Enemies: Miradel, Aldanor

Ralynia was once a fairly prosperous kingdom, if not a friendly neighbor. Between disputes with Miradel over hunting and logging in the Silveroaks and border skirmishes with Aldanor, Ralynia was not well-liked among the countries of the Emerald Coast. With recent events, however, other realms that gave little concern to Ralynia are now suddenly interested in the coastal kingdom.

For two years now, Ralynia has been in a state of anarchy. In 546 AR, the king and his entire family died when a mysterious plague struck the former capital of Queensport. The plague was believed to have been magical in nature; while it was devastating to those who contracted it, it struck less than two percent of the city's population, and was seemingly confined to the city's upper classes - the rich and noble. Among the victims were the king and his extended family - including all those with legitimate claims to the Ralynian throne.

Ralynia is now in a state of decline. The various noble families (those outside Queensport and those within that were not affected by the plague) have been squabbling since the plague hit, unable to come to a consensus on who should be allowed the throne. They did agree on appointing Baroness Balthasard as an interim liaison between Ralynia and ambassadors from other kingdoms, but since her decisions require backing from the noble houses, her position holds virtually no power. With no central authority, lawlessness has overcome the land, and the commoners are flocking to Ralynia's three major cities, overburdening their resources. To the displeasure of its neighbors, some of the kingdom's nobles have approached Irathia with overtures of trade and allegiance. Agents from Miradel, Talismarr, and Ilmara have begun operating in Ralynia, in an attempt to steer it away from that path and towards one more in line with their own agendas.

Sarenland

Proper Name: Kingdom of Sarenland
Government: Hereditary feudal monarchy
Ruler: His Noble Lordship, Prince Vikdor Shaden [N male fighter 14]
Population: 1,260,000
Cities: Sarenton (LC), Esteria (SC), Westfaire (SC)
Religions: Aegar, Ramm
General Alignment: N
Resources: Mercenaries, rare wood, horses, gems (common), copper
Allies: None
Enemies: Maar

A shadow of what is once was, Sarenland is a kingdom striving to re-create itself. As recent as fifteen years ago, Sarenland ruled all the lands south of Aelegea between the Ash River near Asyra in the east and Spýre and Maar to the west. It also controlled about three-quarters of the coastland between the two main peninsulas, in neighboring Jian Tei. Sarenland was truly a power to be reckoned with, and had both the resources and the drive for conquest; unfortunately, it also had ambitious nobles who considered themselves better suited for ruling than the king of the time. Civil war broke out in 545 AR; it continued for three years before the Saren king finally captured the treacherous noblemen and had them put to the sword.

By the time the war ended, Sarenland was devastated. The king left the southwestern coastlands as well as the territories beyond their original peninsula to their own devices, as he lacked the means to enforce any sort of order on them. This resulted in a heavy influx of refugees, which the kingdom had no means to support. Eventually, many of these folk became sellswords, as life in Sarenland offered them virtually nothing.

The war has been over for a decade, and the kingdom has started to re-establish itself. Gem and copper mines in the Grey Mountains have helped it to rebuild its treasury, while some Sarens have helped to establish the kingdom as an exporter of horses (though Saren horses are generally considered inferior to those of Gwynneth stock). Some daring souls even brave the journey to the Aelaron Forest, to harvest rare elven woods that grow nowhere else but there.

Syrhaat [a.k.a. Onhur]

Proper Name: Most Glorious Sovereignty of the Syrhaat Dominion
Government: Hereditary feudal empire; entirety of dominion ruled by Primarch (empress) with provincial government administered by other nobility
Ruler: Her Eternal Magnificence, Beloved of the Goddess, Primarch Yulara Gaaratari [LN female aristocrat 16]
Population: 3,960,000
Cities: Hadira (M), Altesh (LT), Immazu (SC), Laharu (SC), Ulem (LC), Yidra (LC)
Religions: Alyara, Dynera, Lis
General Alignment: LN
Resources: Iron, foodstuffs, cloth, gems (uncommon), mercenaries, wood, spices
Allies: None
Enemies: Maraada, Valdahar, the Sith'aal

The ancient Syrhaat Dominion is the oldest kingdom in known Dyra. It is also one of the largest, though it is much smaller than it once was. In its prime, Syrhaat dominated the region known as the Southern Kingdoms, ruling all the lands from present-day Ran in the west to the entirety of the Jian Tei Peninsula in the east. Over the years, however, the reach of the Dominion has receded; Syrhaat has been in a state of decadence and stagnation for centuries, with its rulers and people retreating to its decaying cities along the dominion's Bay of Dreams. Syrhaat still lays claim to the entire area north of the Ran Jungles and west of the Sea of Cold. The name Onhur was given when for the great Pharaoh Menmaat Onhur III.

Syrhaat is a matriarchy, which is rather unusual in Dyra. It's Primarch (Empress) has been female since its creation, and the high nobility has always been reserved for women: Autarchs (essentially the equivalent of duchesses), Exarchs and Tetrarchs (countesses and marquesses), and Archons (baronesses) are always women, while the highest ranks men are allowed are Praetorius and Lictor (magistrates). The majority of the army is made up of men, though many are thrall warriors.

As Syrhaat continues its decline, its people are being seen more in other kingdoms. A slow exodus is occurring, as some Syrhaati abandon their homeland for younger, more vibrant lands. The rest continue to hide behind the walls of their coastal cities, wallowing in drug-induced slumber and decadent gatherings. In the meantime, the Sith'aal creep

deeper into the Dominion, while the border provinces collapse or secede. Syrhaat is certainly in its twilight years, and it would seem to be only a matter of time before it joins its brethren in the annals of history.

Talísmarr

Proper Name: Kingdom of Talísmarr

Government: Oligarchy; ruled by a body known as the Mariners Council, which draws its membership from prestigious Talísmarran captains (noble-born or not) known to be expert seamen

Ruler: No single ruler; the Mariners Council ranges from seven to fifteen members, and governing decisions are decided by a majority consensus

Population: 750,000

Cities: Vanira (SC), Aris Point (LT), Stalis (LC)

Religions: Aeryand, Aegar, Iberis

General Alignment: CG

Resources: Foodstuffs, transport

Allies: Aldanor, Ilmara, Lhyrna

Enemies: Irathia, Maraada, the Shukara, Yar

The kingdom of Talísmarr is located to the east of the Aldanor, between Essengard and Achdar. It is under constant conflict with the Orcazhai from Achdar, and although they have aid from Essengard's militia, the borders struggle each day. Ironically this landlocked kingdom has the most sought after ships and sailors. And yet they call Talísmarr their home.

Talísmarr is the dominant naval power in the Sea of Cold and Eternal Ocean. The presence of their fleets has helped to keep the region safe for mercantile shipping, at least for those vessels serving Talísmarr's allies and those countries it does not consider enemy powers. For ships that originate in kingdoms like Irathia or Ran, privateering is not only permitted, but encouraged.

Tarrvik

Proper Name: Kingdom of Tarrvik

Government: Hereditary feudal monarchy

Ruler: High Lord Laric ar'Tarrvik [NE barbarian 8 / fighter 7], Master of the Northlands

Population: 805,000

Cities: Halldor (SC), Alesunn (SC), Kurakol (LT), Kyraal (LT)

Religions: Aegar

General Alignment: NE

Resources: Ale, iron, livestock, slaves

Allies: Maraada (rumored)

Enemies: Essengard, Greyspire, Valnysia, Khazrani tribes, Tauroks of the Tauron Mountains

Tarrvik is a relatively new country, having been founded about 25 years ago. It was established by Aeric ar'Tarrvik, the father of the current High Lord. ar'Tarrvik was a fierce, powerful barbarian warrior of the Khazrani clans who carved out a kingdom for himself in the frigid North Realms. He was a harsh ruler, but also a fair one, and under his reign his country grew and began to prosper. Tarrvik even became known for quality beef from the cattle it exported. Unfortunately, ar'Tarrvik's son Laric grew jealous of his father's power, and slew him on the steps of his very throne.

Since seizing power in 552 AR, Laric has turned Tarrvik from a somewhat respectable kingdom into an evil, tyrannical state. He has added slavery to the country's exports, including Taurok and Khazrani prisoners. He has also begun a campaign of conquest, expanding Tarrvik's holdings westward; recently he has established a military outpost at Kurakol. From this town Laric has been staging raids against Greyspire and Essengard, testing their defenses while he builds up his army. There are even frightening rumors that he has been secretly meeting with emissaries from Maraada, for dark purposes that many fear to contemplate.

Jian Tei

Proper Name: Eternal Imperium of Jian Tei

Government: Hereditary feudal empire; entirety of dominion ruled by Emperor with provincial governments administered by other nobility

Ruler: His Exalted Imperial Majesty, Emperor Marcus Carlidyus [LN male fighter 5 / aristocrat 15], Supreme Ruler of the East

Population: 10,200,000

Cities: Ulthanium (M), Crucible (LT), Halykos (LT), Meravax (SC), Myridia (LC), Noriya (LT), Ravillus (LT), Rusav (LT), Sindal (LC), Sinytus (SC), Terrantia (LT), Tetrigrad (LC), Urnsk (M)

Religions: Aegar, Dynera

General Alignment: LN

Resources: Cloth, foodstuffs, gems(common), gems(uncommon), gems(rare), ivory, livestock, silver, timber, whale oil

Allies: None

Enemies: Aelorea, Ivenmir, Wild Mountains humanoid tribes

The Jian Tei Imperium is the largest country in known Dyra. It controls a large part of far west and far east Lleollan, dominating two-thirds of the lands touching the Sea of Gods, and the Restless Ocean. Jian Tei is also one of the oldest countries in the world; only Syrhaat and Spÿre have existed longer.

The empire was much larger in the past, having once controlled both Novaskora and Ivenmir; however, in 493 AR, a great orcish army from the Wild Mountains attacked Jian Tei in the west, invading the province of Novaskora and seizing control of the area surrounding the Zarev River. The orcs commanded great beasts and constructs of immense power, forcing Jian Tei to field a major portion of their army against them. The savage humanoids forced the Jian Teians back, though the Imperials were able to hold their line at the Kraslov River. While this war was raging, separatists in Ivenmir, led by a cabal known as the *Ice Wizards*, broke free of the empire and established their own kingdom. Jian Tei was unable to defeat the orcs, nor was it able to reclaim either of the two provinces it had lost.

Like most empires, Jian Tei has expansionistic desires, but the dangers of Achdar help to keep them in check. The Wild Mountains are home to an unusually high number of evil humanoids and other monsters, and the Jian Tei army spends most of its time defending the empire rather than conquering new lands. In the north, Novaskora requires continuous attention, as do the various creatures that inhabitant the northern seas (and tend to raid coastal towns and villages). In the far northeast, the Grey Waste and the Dark Morass provide an effective barrier against incursions in that direction. But Jian Tei is nothing if not patient. It is constantly plotting and scheming for ways to expand its power. In fact, reports of Jian Tei soldiers being spied in places such as Miradel and Ainsree suggest that they may have found a new way in which to extend their reach.

Valnysia

Proper Name: Kingdom of the Vykir
Government: Hereditary feudal monarchy
Ruler: The Fearsome Bear, King Vilder Hervard of the Vykir [CN male barbarian 16]
Population: 645,000
Cities: Coram (SC), Aldenmark (SC), Hilversin (LT)
Religions: Aegar
General Alignment: CN

Resources: Ale, furs, ivory, whale oil
Allies: Essengard, Greyspire
Enemies: Chaos Wilderlands, Tarrvik

The “kingdom” of Valnysia is more of a collection of semi-civilized warrior clans, who by consensus accept the rule of a nominal king. The majority of the Valnysian clans all belong to the Vykir tribe, which has been dominated by the Hervard clan for decades. King Hervard speaks for the Vykir and the rest of Valnysia in dealings with other countries, but otherwise his position is more for the resolution of disputes that cannot be resolved by the clans involved.

The Valnysians are a wild, warrior folk who spend the majority of their time in battle. Usually they fight the creatures of the Chaos Wilderlands, but Tarrvik is a common adversary. They are also given to exploring the lands around the Fire Lake, ranging far to the south of Valnysia, as well as into the Frostlands. They occasionally raid over the border into Essengard, but this is discouraged by both the king and most of the clans. The Valnysians realize that the northern kingdoms must stand together against the threats posed by both the Wild Mountains and the kingdom of Tarrvik.

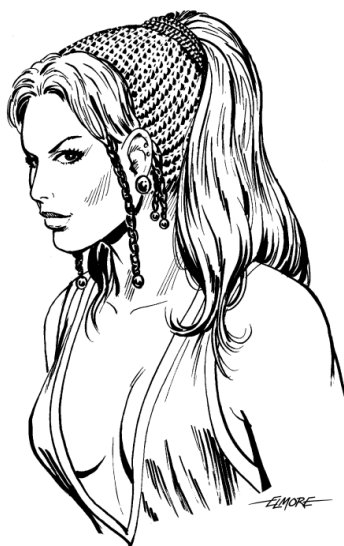
Ran

Proper Name: Grand Kingdom of Ran
Government: Dictatorial monarchy
Ruler: Her Most Beauteous and Radiant, Queen Syrena Zinâth [NE female sorcerer 11], Most Radiant Star of the Emerald Coast
Population: 305,000 (Humans 80%, Viss'takh 20%)
Cities: Khemal (SC), Samora (LT)
Religions: Hhiltara, Ramm
General Alignment: N
Resources: Gems (common, uncommon), wine
Allies: None
Enemies: Ilmara, Maraada, Talismarr

Ran is a hot mountainous jungle land, having little contact with outside kindgdoms. Most of the population lives along the coast, though a few settlements are located inland, near the handful of Rannish mines or vineyards that provide a modicum of income for the country. The inhabitants of these settlements are generally human, though Viss'takh are not uncommon, though their appearance and mannerisms suggest marked differences between humans elsewhere and those in Ran. This kingdom is

also one of the few realms where the religion of Hhiltara is practiced openly.

The Queen of Ran, Syrena Zinâth, is a particularly unique individual. An accomplished sorceress, Syrena is also a follower of Hhiltara, as well as heir to the fortunes of her House. Her most striking characteristic, however, is her seeming agelessness. Syrena ascended to the Rannish throne in 505, at the apparent age of 30 (or so). That was over 50 years ago, but Syrena is still Queen - and still looks exactly the same. Many have sought the secret to her timeless appearance, but no answers have been uncovered yet. Given her associations and tastes, most agree that she has dealt with sinister forces to retain her looks.



Syrena Zinâth, Queen of Ran

Syrena rules from Khemal, an ancient city which predates Ambia and may be, given the architecture of its buildings, older than Satar. Most of the sprawling city is in ruins; the populace only occupies a small area, known as *New Khemal*. The ruins - *Old Khemal* - are populated with a variety of dangerous creatures.

City-States

Free Cities of Calythir

Proper Name: League of Free and Independent Cities of Calythir

Government: Confederation of independently governed

cities and towns

Ruler: No individual ruler; each member of the League dictates its rulership, usually based on an individual lord or a ruling council

Population: 750,000

Cities: Ilidar (LC), Beren (SC), Bladeport (LT), Celigast (SC), Greyriver (SC), Grimhel (LT)

Religions: Aegar, Aeryand, Dynera, Lis

General Alignment: N

Resources: Ale, copper, foodstuffs, furs, ivory, whale oil

Allies: None

Enemies: Ivenmir, Khazrani barbarian tribes, Frostlands raiders

Northcentral Lleollan is home to a collection of independent towns and cities which constitute the Free Cities of Calythir. Over 200 years ago, Calythir was an outlying province of the Marasinian Empire. After the collapse of Marasinia, the inhabitants of the region cast down the provincial governor and declared their independence. The populace gathered around the six major settlements in the region, and spent the Age of Chaos defending their towns and cities, surviving as best they could.

Despite being autonomous, the cities and towns of Calythir realized the prudence of mutual cooperation, particularly in such a dangerous and secluded part of the world. During the Age of Chaos, the various settlements established an alliance for mutual support and protection. This alliance continues to the present day, since the threats may be different than they were decades ago, but they nevertheless exist: Ivenmir has designs on Calythir as well as Novaskora, the Al'Sharaq barbarians are a constant menace, and fell creatures from the Realm of the Ice King and the Frostlands also threaten the region.

Greyspire

Proper Name: Free and Sovereign City of Greyspire

Government: Draconic dictatorship

Ruler: Queen of the Vale, Saryntiera [LG female silver dragon]

Population: 32,000

Cities: Greyspire (SC)

Religions: Aegar

General Alignment: LN

Resources: Furs, iron

Allies: Essengard, Valnysia

Enemies: Chaos Wilderlands, Tarrvik

The northern city of Greyspire is truly unique place. It is built within and on the sides of a lone crag of

the same name, at the mouth of a large mountain valley. The heart of the city is actually the lair of a dragon, a 750-year old silver named *Saryntiera*. The city was established years ago as a trading outpost. Travellers and merchants plying the northern climes noticed an almost complete lack of bandits or monsters in a large area focused around a large, solitary grey mountain half-way between the Westtowers and the Icemaidens. This mountain, which they dubbed “Greyspire”, seemed to be a relatively safe place in an otherwise dangerous wilderness. A village developed at the base of the peak, and in time, began to grow and prosper.

While Greyspire grew into a sizable settlement, the inhabitants never realized that their prosperity and safety was due to Saryntiera’s efforts to keep the area free of evil and chaotic forces. Eventually, knowing that someone would discover her lair at some point, the dragon revealed herself to her “charges”. A negative reaction greeted Saryntiera, which she expected, but surprisingly, it quickly changed to one of admiration and acceptance. The Greyspirrans, it turned out, were a pragmatic and prudent folk; if their fortune was due to the presence of dragon, particularly a good dragon, then so be it. The townsfolk pledged their fealty to Saryntiera, and turned over governing responsibilities of the city to her. The daily activities of the city are handled by a council of elders, guildmasters, and similar folk, but matters of importance are deferred to the dragon.

Life under Saryntiera’s rule has continued to be prosperous, and smaller settlements now dot the “Vale of the Ice Queen”. The area is still a dangerous place, given incursions from the Chaos Wilderlands over the Westtower Mountains, as well as raids by far-ranging Tarrvish marauders. Even more bothersome are the self-styled “dragonslayers” from distant lands looking to stake their place in history by killing Saryntiera. Fortunately, most of these people never even make it past the dragon’s loyal subjects.

Ilmara

Proper Name: Free and Sovereign City of Ilmara

Government: Hereditary feudal monarchy

Ruler: His Most Illustrious Highness, Prince Andros Helsen [NG male rogue 7 / fighter 10], Ever-Vigilant Lion of the West

Population: 700,000 (Humans 95%, Half-Elves 5%)

Cities: Ilmara (M), Coreth (LC)

Religions: Alyara, Iberis, Aeryand

General Alignment: NG

Resources: Foodstuffs, timber

Allies: Aldanor, Shesada, Talismarr

Enemies: Gharakaag, Irathia,

The city-state of Ilmara is the largest metropolis in the known world, and it stands as a bastion of good among the kingdoms of the Sea of Cold Coast. The city is a center for trade and learning, and the inland regions it controls are home to lush forests and fertile plains. These are all characteristics which have gifted Ilmara with a degree of prosperity that is the envy of many kingdoms.

Ilmara’s prosperity has led to the rise of a middle class that is somewhat larger than would be expected for a realm of its size. However, the bulk of the population remains peasantry. Given the climate and bountiful nature of the region, though, Ilmaran farmers tend to enjoy a better way of life (relatively speaking) than their counterparts in other realms. The region is also home to a high number of adventurers, most of which use Ilmara as a launching point for excursions into the ruins and wilds of Gharakaag or the Great Dust Desert.

Maar

Proper Name: City of Maar

Government: Lord mayor, appointed by and ruling in conjunction with a civil council comprised of various city guildmasters

Ruler: The High Magistrate Vorjarn Cagh [NE male fighter 5 / rogue 10]

Population: 15,000

Cities: Maar (LC)

Religions: Hukko

General Alignment: CN

Resources: Narcotics, ale, herbs

Allies: None

Enemies: Sarenland

The city-state of Maar has gained a rather nefarious reputation in Lleollan, being dubbed the *City of Thieves*. This name may have been earned in part by the rumor that half of Maar’s Ruling Councilors are also members of the Maar Thieves Guild. Whether or not this story is true, Maar is known as a city to be avoided by honest merchants; however, for those who wish to deal in goods that aren’t necessarily common, or even legal (*especially* those that aren’t

legal), Maar is the place to come - even for many of those “honest” merchants. and likewise for their eastbound counterparts looking to trade along the Sea of Cold Coast.

The Thieves Guild is the most visibly prominent faction in the city, but not necessarily the most powerful. The Assassins Guild (known commonly as just “the Guild”) maintains less of a public presence than the Thieves Guild, though its power is far greater. Maar assassins are sought throughout the continent. This patronage has filled the coffers of the Guild, and allowed them leverage for a great deal of covert control. There is a saying in the city: “The Thieves Guild rules Maar because the Assassins Guild lets them.”

In spite of its apparent wickedness, Maar has few enemies. The only one of note is Sarenland. Maar stands as an obstacle to certain Saren nobles who desire expansion of their kingdom westward. Sarenland desperately wants to spread out along the Sea of Gods, but periodic, mysterious deaths in the Saren nobility and military (some would allege “assassinations”) have prevented this.

Shesada

Proper Name: Most Holy City of Shesada

Government: Theocracy; ruled by a clerical hierarchy with supreme power invested in a Rammite priest

Ruler: Blessed Protector of Shesada and Keeper of the Sacred Fire, Fashar Marakhari [N male cleric (Ramm) 17]

Population: 17,000 (Humans 85%, Viss'takh 15%)

Cities: Shesada (LC)

Religions: Ramm

General Alignment: N

Resources: Spices, gold

Allies: Ilmara, Swords of Fire, Church of Ramm

Enemies: Al'Sharaq, Swords of Lightning, Church of Aegar

Shesada is a small realm, located to the east of Nerwach and just past Lake Algrmi. This amazing “Holy City” crouches at the foot of two major ranges, the World's Crown Mtn. range and Belvor Mtn. Range. It is the largest trade center in this region; caravans travelling between these two mountains, heading west to Nerwach, usually stop in Shesada before continuing on -

Sorcery and Wizards

While it is widely-held that wizards far outnumber sorcerers in Dyra, this belief may be untrue. While many people are wary of mages in general, sorcerers are a target of much greater distrust than wizards. Though the Marasinian Empire met its end over 150 years ago, the memory of its rulers' atrocities still lingers. As such, many sorcerers will hide their true profession, and claim to be wizards instead.

Besides being a trade center, Shesada is the heart of the Church of Ramm. The chief temple of the religion is found in this city, and the high priest of the temple (who also serves as lord mayor) is recognized universally by Rammmites as the temporal head of the faith. The fact that Shesada is home to the clergy of a war god helps to keep it safe from attackers, particularly Al'Sharaq. The Shesadans are only too glad to accompany caravans travelling northwest, as it gives them the opportunity to engage the Sharaqi raiders who commonly accost the desert trade routes.

Spÿre

Proper Name: Free City of Spÿre

Government: Magocracy; ruled by the “Council of Nine”, a group consisting of eight specialist archmages (one for each magical school) and one representative of the Alchemists Guild

Ruler: Governing decisions are decided by collective consensus, though general mayoral power is appointed on an annual basis to a member of the Council; the current Lord Mayor is Her Thaumaturgical Magnificence, Maerlysa Gwynn [N female wizard (evoker) 20]

Population: 19,000

Cities: Spÿre (LC)

Religions: Iberis

General Alignment: N

Resources: Magical knowledge

Allies: None

Enemies: Aelorea

Nestled between Havenwood and the Grey Mountains, Spÿre is the hub of Dyra's magical community. The magi who established Spÿre in 252 AR wished to have a sanctuary for those who studied the arcane arts. The city they built has withstood countless trials and tribulations, including repeated attempts by the Marasinian Empire to destroy it completely.

While sorcerers are welcome in Spÿre, the city is mainly centered on the use of wizardry. It is home to the Obsidian Tower, a magical university for those who would become wizards, particularly specialists. It is also home to the head lodge of the Alchemists Guild, which attempts to keep a reign on the creation and distribution of enchanted items everywhere in the known realms. The success the Guild has enjoyed over the years in this endeavor has given rise to rumors that they have access to unbelievable divinatorial powers or are in league with unsavory groups such as the Maar Assassins.

Talek Pharos

Proper Name: City of Talek Pharos
Government: Unknown
Ruler: Unknown
Population: 13,900 (estimated)
Cities: Talek Pharos (LC)
Religions: Unknown
General Alignment: Unknown (perhaps LN)
Resources: Magical knowledge, transport, gems (rare)
Allies: None
Enemies: None

Enigmatic Talek Pharos is believed to be the oldest existing city in Dyra. When Xolta-Moras was rent asunder by civil war, most of its cities and citadels were laid to waste. The rulers of Talek Pharos, however, chose to separate themselves from the conflict. Using great magics, they shifted the city to the Astral Plane. After the fall of Xolta-Moras, Talek Pharos returned.

When it was within the Ambian Republic, the city remained much as it is today: closed but for some trade, a mystery to all who knew of it. When Ambia fell to Marasinia, the city rulers again withdrew from the Material Plane. The Mystarchs sought to plunder Talek Pharos for ancient knowledge from Xolta-Moras, but despite their best efforts, they were unable to bring the city back. After Marasinia collapsed, the city again returned.

Despite attempts to learn more about the mysterious city, very few people know anything about it beyond what is commonly known from history. Talek Pharos has a foreign quarter where they engage in some trade with the outside world, as well as providing magical transport (via spells or magical portals) to those rich enough to afford the cost. The

rest of the city is closed off to foreigners, fueling any number of wild rumors about the place. Some people believe it is inhabited by the Sylvari, who fear letting anyone become aware of their presence. Others maintain that the residents are no longer human - if they ever were - or even that the city is an observation post for otherworldly beings.

Tarat City-States

Proper Name: Tarat City-States
Government: Hereditary feudal monarchy (Sahar); oligarchy (Tazadir); hereditary feudal monarchy (Qet)
Ruler: His Exalted Majesty, Caliph Aldir Marakah [N male aristocrat 13] (Sahar); the Council of Elders (Tazadir); His Illustrious Reverence, the High Sultan Kemras Imtra-Iuru [N male fighter 3 / aristocrat 15]
Population: 680,000
Cities: Qet (SC), Sahar (SC), Tazadir (LC)
Religions: Aeryand, Lis, Alyara
General Alignment: N
Resources: Narcotics (Tazadir); slaves, wine/spirits (Sahar); copper, gems (common), silver (Qet)
Allies: None
Enemies: Viss'takh tribes

The area around southwest Jian Tei was once a province of the ancient Khemsan Empire. When Khemsa fell two centuries ago, the city of Qet was able to maintain order in the region, and quickly established itself as the dominant power in the southern peoples. Billing itself as the *Qeshan Empire*, the country ruled the area around the bay as well as the coastlands on the Sea of Serpents. The Qeshans could not escape the "Age of Chaos", however, and felt the effects of it as much as anyone. The Qeshan Empire collapsed as Qet gathered its forces to protect itself. Other cities and minor principalities broke free from the empire, but the only ones that survive to the present day are Qet, Sahar, and Tazadir.

Qet is the largest of the three cities, and controls numerous mines in the southern Qeshan Mountains. Tazadir is the second largest, and is a nexus for illicit substances; the fields north of Tazadir are filled with various narcotic crops, which continually yield bountiful harvests. The smallest, and most decadent of the ancient cities, is Sahar. Dubbed the *City of Earthly Delights* by foreigner visitors, Sahar is dedicated primarily to all manner of physical and culinary entertainments. It is known the world over for its pleasure slaves, though there is growing

suspicion that the Shadrathu Sel'naga may actually have a presence in or near the city-state.

Valdahar

Proper Name: Free and Just City of Valdahar

Government: Feudal monarchy, governed jointly by two Autarchs, one male and one female; each Autarch is selected by the merchants, nobility, and landowners of the city and surrounding lands

Ruler: His Noble Grace, the Autarch-ra Samur Marida [N male fighter 4 / bard 5] and Her Honorable Radiance, the Autarch-tu Indrana Vadra [LN female fighter 2 / monk 6]

Population: 480,000

Cities: Valdahar (LC), Dassa (SC)

Religions: Alyara, Iberis, Ramm

General Alignment: LG

Resources: Spices, glassware, gems (common), whale oil

Allies: Lhyrna

Enemies: Maraada, Syrhaat, the Sith'aal

Over the years, the Syrhaat Dominion has been slowly withdrawing its military from outlying provinces, leaving them to fend for themselves (though still demanding tribute). Most of these provinces have fallen to invaders, such as those bordering the Uhntari Jungles, or simply ceased to be, as became the case for those south of the Indrus Mountains. The city of Valdahar, however, realized years ago that it could no longer depend on Syrhaat for its survival, and declared itself a free and independent kingdom. This move generated expected enmity from Syrhaat, but the Dominion has neither the forces nor the will to reclaim the area.



Autarch-ra Samur Marida and Autarch-tu Indrana Vadra

Valdahar is a medium, struggling realm. The city rules over an area bounded by the Worlds' Crown Peaks,

the Ran River, the Gulf of Dreams, and the Bay of Ran. Sea. It is trying to secure the lands to its south, including the fertile forests of Ran around the Ran River area, but Maraada raiders and incursions by the Sith'aal make this task difficult. Despite its hardships, however, the country is fairly prosperous. Refugees from Syrhaat's neglected provinces have made their way here, adding their talents and strengths to Valdahar's economy, culture, and military. The city has also become a bastion for social equality, as it has abandoned Syrhaat's matriarchical societal structure and adopted a government where men and women are treated as equals. This decision is due to the fact that while Syrhaat claims its longevity is due to its female rulers, it has failed to escape the decline to which empires of the past succumbed. Valdahar hopes that its somewhat unusual authorial system will help it to survive.

Zeldora

Proper Name: Free City of Zeldora

Government: Oligarchy; ruled by council known as the "Merchant's League" which consists of the heads of the five most powerful merchant houses in the city

Ruler: No single ruler; governing decisions are decided by a collective consensus of League members

Population: 45,000

Cities: Zeldora (M)

Religions: Aeryand

General Alignment: N

Resources: Trade nexus

Allies: None

Enemies: Irathia

If it could be said that there is a merchant's haven on the continent, then that place is Zeldora. The city thrives on commerce and trade, and has been dubbed the *Crossroads of Dyra*. Its streets are filled with shops, carts, and booths selling everything and anything one could imagine. Sindalese silk from the eastern Ulthian Imperium, fine wines from the Samoran vineyards in Ran, artifacts from the ruins of Xolta-Moras; from the mundane and ordinary to the exotic and unusual, all such items have passed through the Zeldoran bazaars - and the city has grown enormously wealthy from their sale.

Though any kind of goods can find its way to the city, two things are strongly discouraged by the Merchant's League: slavery and narcotics. They aren't illegal in Zeldora, but those who wish to deal in them are taxed so heavily as to make such

ventures too costly. This wasn't the case years ago, but pressure from Ilmara, Lhyrna, and Talismarr helped to influence the League to change their laws concerning those two types of "merchandise" (Blackport, in Gharakaag, has become the new center for the slave trade, while drug trafficking now tends to originate in Maraada).

Other Places of Note

Anaarum: Once a magical academy for the Jian Tei Dominion, and home to its most prized alchemists, Anaarum was devastated after the Age of Chaos. The huge fortress-town is a crumbling ruin, overrun with all manner of terrible beasts. Great stores of magic are said to still be found there, but those few who have searched for them have had little success.

Ankhara: Ankhara is a Maraadan outpost found within Onhur. The sorcerers of Maraada use this fortress-town as a base of operations for their dealings in the eastern realms. It is rumored that there is a runagate between Maraada and the fortress, which the Mystarchs use to quickly move people and material between the two places.

Asgarth Mor: Found on the coast of Gharakaag, Asgarth Mor was once Selara's greatest city. It was devastated after an earthquake in 295 AR, which left half the city submerged under Gontar's Bay. The ruins are now inhabited by evil bipedal amphibians.

Azrulêth: Azrulêth was once a flying citadel, built by the evil warlord Bel'talin Manslayer deep in the Chaos Wilderlands. Bel'talin planned to fly over the Westtower Mountains and use the citadel as a staging point for attacks in the north. Saryntiera of Greyspire, as well as various folk from that city-state, Essengard, and Valnysia brought Azrulêth crashing to the ground, killing Bel'talin in the process.

Black City of Wizardry: The *Black City of Wizardry* is the modern name for the ruins of Kyrantheum, the ancient capital of Marasinia (though the Marasinians practiced sorcery, for whatever reasons the name "Black City of Sorcery" never caught on). The Black City is where the Mystarchs' Aetheric Collector was located, and where it was destroyed. The Collector's destruction blackened the remnants of the city's buildings, thus giving it its name.

Though the dangers are great, some still brave the Grey Waste to scour the ruin for items of value, most hoping to find some ancient, forgotten lore of the sorcerous empire.

Citadel of Bone: Southeast of the Tauron Mountains are hills which are a traditional burial ground for Khazrani barbarians. Years ago, a powerful necromancer named Lashyan raided these hills, defiling the cairns and crypts and using the bones of the dead Khazrani to build a horrific castle. From here he had planned on raising an undead army and building a kingdom for himself. The necromancer was killed when outraged Khazranis and warriors from Calythir joined forces and laid siege to his castle. The barbarian clans tore the Citadel down and re-buried the bones, but there are rumors that the place has been rebuilt and is as terrible as it was before.

Corathmyr: The forest-shrouded tower in Direwood, Gharakaag's northern forest, is known as Corathmyr. It is the home of the legendary lich Vasilaros. Vasilaros keeps to himself, pursuing goals known only to him; however, those who attempt to accost his manor quickly learn just how powerful the lich is.

Crimson Labyrinth: The eastern coast of Andreoa is home to a large stronghold known as the *Crimson Labyrinth*. The Labyrinth is built of reddish stone (hence its name) and is a sprawling, unordered complex. It was not built by the Touroks, but by a mysterious wizard who is known to dwell there. How he built the Labyrinth and for what purpose is only known to him.

Dhasara: Dhasara is a ruined city that was once part of the Qeshan Empire. The city tried to revolt and break away from Qet but was unsuccessful. For this, every inhabitant of the city - man, woman, or child - was put to the sword, to provide a lesson to the rest of the empire. Today, their ghosts haunt the Dhasaran ruins, seeking revenge on all those who live, particularly the Qeshans.

Harrstad: Harrstad is a large, fortified trading town, primarily populated by Tauroks from the Tauron Mountains. It was originally established to trade with Tarrvik as well as to provide a home base for explorers travelling into the North Realms. Since the change of monarchs in Tarrvik, however, it has

become mainly a defensive settlement, keeping the Tarrvish from expanding further east.

Haven: Located at the southern most point of Onhur, Haven is a large Zeldoran trading outpost. It hosts a population of about 4,000, and is used by the city-state as a trading center for the Southern Kingdoms. Merchants use magical means to quickly transport goods between Haven and Zeldora, though such methods are costly. The city-state is currently seeking a cheaper alternative.

Ilishur: The ruins of Ilishur, in the southern Haunted Plains, are an enigma. The architecture in Ilishur's buildings matches no known historical style; the buildings are also sized for people who are about fifteen feet tall. The ruined city is generally avoided, both due to its dangerous location as well as the fact that magic seems to operate in a bizarre, chaotic fashion there.

Khai: The fortress of Khai is found in the wilderness east of Amaristan. It is the home of the *Warlords of Khai*, a highly skilled mercenary company. The services of the Warlords are sought across the continent.

Khazrani Steppes: Also known as the "Barbarian Plains", the central Lleollan steppes are home to a variety of barbarian tribes. Some of the tribes are friendly to foreigners, others are extremely hostile. All are warlike, and when not fighting one another, they engage in raids and skirmishes with neighboring kingdoms.

Lor Elesna: Lor Elesna is a ruined Sylvari city tucked away at the eastern end of the Star Sea. Fell creatures and the undead inhabit the place, keeping the curious or adventurous at bay. It is said that fires burn in the ruin in the evening, and an ominous, eerie chanting can be heard throughout the night.

Lyranorr: Lyranorr is a ruin found in western Aldanor. Lyranorr was once one of the greatest cities of the Sea of Cold Coast, but was overrun by demons in 553 AR when the Aldanorran king's summoning magic failed. Today the ruins are inhabited by humanoids from Gharakaag, as well as a few demonic beings that still remain in the area.

Na-Tomal: Located in southern Ran, Na-Tomal is a ruined, coastal city. Little is known of it, as most

people avoid Na-Tomal entirely, believing it to be cursed. Those who've braved the ruins report that it appears to have been abandoned centuries ago.

Northgate: Northgate is a walled, independent town found northwest of Irathia. It is considered the "Gateway to the North" (hence the name) by caravans traveling to the North Realms. The rulers of Northgate have a powerful, magical artifact which enables them to fend off would-be conquerors, including barbarians from the north and Irathian soldiers from the south.

Radima: A great city hundreds of years ago, Radima fell victim to the wars between Ambia and Marasinia. Originally an Ambian city, Radima held fast against continued assaults. The Mystarchs wanted to take the city for themselves, but it became obvious to them that that would take too much time and too many resources. Instead, the Marasinians simply used their magic to blast the city to ruins, levelling the buildings and killing virtually all the city's inhabitants.

Rel Eldara: Located in the Wild Mountains, Rel Eldara is a ruined city of the Sylvari. Given its location, few have explored it, so it is very much a mystery. Rel Eldara was known to be home to a great Sylvari army, and legends claim that a huge cache of magical weapons and armor can be found within the ruins.

Set-Maaru: Set-Maaru is a huge tomb found in the Great Dust Desert. This pyramidal structure is the last resting place of Luxatehen-Re, a great Khemsan ruler. Luxatehen-Re chose to construct Set-Maaru as a monument to his greatness. The 10,000 slaves that built the tomb were ritually sacrificed in an attempt to elevate Luxatehen-Re to godhood. The bodies of the slaves are buried in a necropolis that surrounds the pyramid.

Seven Cities of Whispered Secrets: The Seven Cities are a collection of ancient ruins found on the southwestern edge of the Great Dust Desert. Little is known of the region where the cities are found, as few dare to venture there and fewer still return. Those who have speak of cities with great, broken towers, desolate landscapes, and numerous undead.

The Shattered City: Found in the Haunted Plains, the Shattered City is a true mystery. That it was once

a city is not certain; what is known is that whatever it was, the place was constructed of massive amounts of obsidian. At some point, some great force literally broke the place into thousands of pieces. Whether the source was arcane, divine, or something else, no one knows. The broken ruins are home to a variety of evil creatures, most notably beholders, which dwell here in disturbingly great numbers.

Spire of the Black Serpent: This lone mountain contains a vast cavern complex that was once home to an ancient blue dragon named Daurgorithax (though a blue dragon, its scales were so dark that most thought they were black, hence the name “Black Serpent”). Daurgorithax was an evil creature that terrorized most of Lleollan. It was eventually slain by a small army of Flameknights from Shesada. The Rammite priests were unable to find the dragon’s treasure, though, as their numbers were so decimated after the battle that it was all they could do to fight their way back out of the Spire. Since then, the Shesadans have talked about going back and recovering the horde, but they lack the necessary fervor to do so.

Szaran: Szaran was the capital of the old Khazrantian Empire. It was laid waste when the Marasinians invaded Khazrantia, and lay in ruins for years after. It holds little of value, having been ransacked over the years by barbarians, travelers, Tarrvish raiders, and bandits. Today, Szaran is generally a gathering place for brigands and other unsavory folk. Expeditions from Northgate to “clean out” the ruins take place once or twice a year.

Tamras: When the Syrhaat Dominion was at its peak, Tamras was its greatest southern city. Today the city lies in ruins, having been abandoned ages ago as the influence of Syrhaat receded. It has been reported that the serpentine Sith’aal have begun to inhabit Tamras and are re-building it to suit their needs.

Tyr Aegas: After the Marasinians unleashed their elven plague in 377 AR, the Sylvari of Tyr Aegas turned in desperation to the dark god Tehmorix. The God of Disease answered their call and prevented the plague from affecting them. His solution, however, was to transform them from Sylvari into a variety of horrific creatures. Many subsequently went into the Underworld to better serve their new

master, while others spread through the Forest of the Forlorn.

Vagir: Vagir is a stronghold used by the barbarian clans who live in northern Novaskora. From Vagir the north-born warriors alternately wage war against Ivenmir or the humanoid tribes found further south.

Valkhat: Ages ago, Valkhat was a great Niamoran temple to Aegar. When Orn, or Achdar, fell to the humanoid tribes of the Wild Mountains, the temple was overrun and desecrated. Stormraiders of the Imperial Church regularly try to recover Valkhat from the orcs and their kin, but so far they have been unsuccessful.

Valta: Valta is a forgotten temple west of Ankhar. Little is known about this ruin, save that it is tended by demonic guardians who are unable to leave its grounds.

Wintercrest: Once a Essengardian city, and the northernmost permanent settlement on the continent, Wintercrest has been in ruins for over 30 years. It was overrun by evil humanoids and Shadrathi before the Essengardians could turn them back. Since then, few have desired to live in the city, and it has been avoided.

Zalakhov: Zalakhov is a ruined Aeryandrite temple in central Achdar. It was overrun and desecrated by orc tribes from the Wild Mountains decades ago.

CHAPTER 5:

Geography of Dyra

The major geographical features of Dyra are detailed in this chapter.

Forests & Woodlands

Aejirinosk: Cold and snowy Aejirinosk is an immense forest found in far northern Jian Tei. The name roughly translates as *Aegar's North*, a reference to the belief of many that the Storm God makes his residence here. Aejirinosk is mostly unexplored, due to the variety of predators that lurk within, as well as the density of its trees and its extremely harsh weather.

Aelarion Forest: This woodland is located in the in the kingdom of Aelorea. It is home to many strange and unique types of plants and trees, created by the elves that once lived here. Some of these plants exist nowhere else in Dyra, but retrieving them from the Aelarion is rather difficult. It is inhabited by fell creatures summoned long ago and undead from ancient ruins, as well as an unusual abundance of young dragons.

Aroch Forest: The Aroch Forest is located in southern Ulthia. It is a huge hardwood forest, and its resources - wood as well as plant resins, herbs, and game - are a major part of the Imperium's internal economy. However, over the past few years, a large coven of Myrshae has been causing trouble for the Ulthians in the Aroch, blocking numerous hunting and logging efforts.

Avrin Forest: The Avrin is a large forest which covers the northern half of Essengard. While it provides a great deal of timber to the kingdom, the deeper woods are home to numerous bandits as well as monsters that wander in from Wintercrest. It is also the site of numerous clashes between Essengard and Tarvvik, as the latter lays claim to large portions of the eastern forest.

Centiswood: Found in central Essengard, Centiswood is a moderate-sized forest. It was once much smaller, but it has grown unnaturally fast over the past fifty

years. The reason for this peculiar expansion is an issue of concern for the people of Essengard.

Coastwood: Coastwood is a hardwood forest found to the west of Amaristan. Very little is known of the place, though there are rumored to be ancient Satarite ruins deep within the wood.

Demonhaunt Forest: The triple border west of Maraada is covered by the Demonhaunt Forest, a large, evil-infested woodland. Spectres and fiendish spirits roam through the trees, and the fringes are the hunting grounds of Malsidian Hounds, large, red-eyed wolves possessed of a seemingly human intelligence. It touches Sarenland, Asyra, and Maraada.

Forest of the Forlorn: This woodland is so-named for the pitiful, doomed souls that wander beneath its ancient canopy. Ages ago, this forest was a verdant paradise, filled with bountiful flora and fauna, and inhabited by a number of elven clans. However, in 377 AR, the Sylvari of Tyr Aegas called on Tehmorix to spare them from the Marasinian plague. To save them, the dark god transformed them into a number of evil, vile creatures. These monsters now roam the forest, spreading rampant decay and destruction.

Forest of Twisted Trees: This horrific woodland is located in the far northwest of Lleollan, in the Chaos Wilderlands. Little is known of the forest as few have ventured there, given the dangers of the Wilderlands. Those who have returned speak of huge, towering trees that have been transformed into nightmarish mockeries of great oaks and pines, and of fell creatures that lurk within. Creatures of both Chaos and Undeath can be found in this forest, and many believe that the Shadrathu Ver'giryth makes its home in the heart of the wood.

Havenwood: Havenwood is found in central Lleollan, between Irathia and Ivenmir. It is best known for a unique variety of plant known as the jeweled oak. These trees bear fruit that contain hard, gemstone-like seeds, known as oakstones. Oakstones are valuable not only because of their rarity, but because of the difficulty in obtaining them: the

center of Havenwood is home to numerous Dendrites (also known as *Chaos Trees*, they are sentient, evil trees spawned by the Shadrathu Ver'giryth). Whether the origin of the jeweled oaks has something to do with Ver'giryth is a topic of much debate; the oakstones appear to be harmless, but despite this, many people are not comfortable wearing them, and some fear to even touch them.

Mystwood: Mystwood can be found to the east of Miradel. The forest gets its name from the fog that rolls in from the Star Sea each morning and envelopes the trees for the better part of the day. This woodland used to be of greater size, but heavy deforestation by Ralynia reduced it in recent years, until the Miradese intervened. There are many legends surrounding Mystwood; to those willing to listen, local residents will relate any number of stories about the place, from tales about spirits frolicking in the wood to yarns about eerie, glowing lights seen darting about the pines.

The Silveroaks: The Silveroaks is a hardwood forest found in Talismaar. It is wild but safe, and provides the Talismaarians (and Aldanorran poachers) with game and timber. Many famous boatmakers came from Silveroaks.

Silverwood: This woodland is found in the southern Syrhaat Dominion. It is home to the rare talisk, an elk-like creature prized for its soft, tawny coat. Due to the value of the talisk hide, excursions into Silverwood are common. Most of them, however, are unsuccessful, as the forest is home to numerous predators as well.

Thornwood Forest: This dark wood was once a lush, green woodland which covered much of Niamorn, Tamor, Lerderan, and Om. More recently, though, it has become a haven for Orcish tribes, enclaves of nethermagi, and dark spirits, all of whom are perfectly content with the twisted trees that make up this now forsaken place.

Uhntari Jungles: The three major jungles in Ran are the Uhntari Jungles. The mahoganies and teaks of this woodland reach well beyond those regions recorded by most cartographers. As one might reason by their size, the jungles are home to many mysteries, not least of which are ancient ruins of unknown origin. They are also host to the Sith'aal, the evil serpentmen, as well as any number of

hideous creatures spawned by the Shadrathu L'thogua.

Vinojar Forest: The Vinojar Forest is found in southwest Jian Tei. It is a wild place, left largely untouched by the city-states - other than the Qeshans, who harvest a fair amount of timber from the forest.

Mountains

Burning Peaks: The Burning Peaks cut across the northern Varghani Desert like a black, festering wound. So-named for their abundance of volcanic activity, the mountains are a bleak, desolate place. Their upper climes are perpetually shrouded in dark grey clouds, and ash covers the surrounding sands. Inhospitable to humans and their kin, the mountains are nonetheless home to a variety of creatures, including fire drakes and flame spirits.

The Crystalpeaks: These mountains are found in near Fire Lake and partly make up the northern border of the Shirurshad Lands. The Crystalpeaks received their name from early settlers in the region, who said that they would sparkle like great crystals on clear, sunny days. Legends also speak of crystal castles built on the mountaintops, inhabited by people made of unknown origin.

Dragonstongue Peaks: The southern foothills of the Dragonstongue are dotted with villages and hamlets of the people of Jian tei. These are mostly mining communities as these peaks are rich in gold, silver, and some gems. Despite its name, the Dragonstongue range is no more dangerous than any other mountainous area, though it is home to an unusually high number of wyverns.

Grey Mountains: The Grey Mountains are found in northern Narsaria, forming a natural barrier between the Kingdom of Gwynneth and the Kingdom of Narsaria. Some of the highest slopes on the continent, the Grey Mountains are a place of mystery and danger. Legends abound claiming ancient Xolta-Moras ruins can be found within, and explorers tell stories of strange and outlandish creatures that make their homes here. Given that Spÿre has an unusual amount of interest in the Greys, it is possible that the claims about ruins may not be mere legends.

The Icemaidens: An offshoot of the Westtowers, the Icemaidens are rich in iron deposits. Greyspire and Essengard each have a multitude of mines in these mountains. Some of the finest weapons available are made with steel forged from *Ice maiden Iron*.

The Icewall: The mountains of the Icewall are some of the highest in Dyra. This treacherous range forms a barrier between the Frostlands and the rest of the continent. There is said to be a great tunnel running through the center of the Icewall, allowing safe passage to a mythical kingdom in the far north. Periodically, explorers will set out from Northgate in search of this tunnel, but it has yet to be discovered.

Indrus Mountains: This small collection of mountains is located in southeast Syrhaat. Humanoid tribes have been on the rise in the southern Indrus as the Syrhaati armies have retreated to the north side of the range. There are also two ruined Runir cities within the Indrus Mountains, though little is known about them.

Northwind Mountains: The Northwind Mountains are a northern offshoot of the Varghani Mountains. The Northwinds provide a natural protection against inhabitants of the Empty Lands. The peaks are otherwise unremarkable, though they are home to a few desolate humanoid tribes.

The Orcfangs: These mountains are so-named for their fearsome, jagged appearance. Originally just a small string of hills, the Orcfangs were created by the Mystarchs as some sort of topographical experiment. True to their name, today the Orcfangs are inhabited by various humanoid tribes, as well as other dangerous creatures. Calythir spends a great deal of time keeping the beasts of the Orcfangs at bay.

Qeshan Mountains: These low peaks are found in the far southwest, in the Jian Tei Kingdom. The Qeshan Mountains are a wall between the Tarat city-states and the harsh Vinojar forest; their presence helps to provide the city-states with a climate less severe and more livable than the surrounding areas. The people of Qet also believe that the mountains contain a huge fortress which houses numerous legions of golems and constructs. The army of automatons is supposed to be awaiting the rightful

heir to the Qeshan throne, who will use them to forge a new empire in the southern Jian Tei.

Sidra Peaks: The southern Sidra Peaks once formed the western border of the Syrhaat Dominion. Today these mountains separate Maraada from Valdahar. The Sidras are more dangerous than most mountain ranges as many creatures summoned by the Maraadans have made the place their home.

The Stone Curtain: The Stone Curtain is a large mountain range found in northwestern Syrhaat. It forms the northern border of the Empty Lands, and in itself is considered a place to avoid. Little is truly known of these mountains, but caravans that have passed the Curtain often claim to see great flying beasts in the skies over the peaks. It is also said that two great Drakari cities are found just under the mountains, and numerous passages lead from them to the surface.

Tauron Mountains: These mountains are located in central Lleollan, north of the Khazrani Steppes. The Taurons are not very high, having been weathered over many ages. They have a heavy Taurok population; centuries ago, the bull-men, fleeing their enslavement in Xolta-Moras, made their way to these mountains. They settled the peaks, adopting them as their new home.

Ulthian Mountains: The Ulthian Mountains are a small range found in eastern Jian Tei. The mountains aren't particularly remarkable, though they do yield a profitable quantity of gemstones.

Varghani Mountains: The young and jagged peaks of the Varghanis form the known world's most hated mountain range. They form a natural barrier between the Empty Lands and the Great Dust Desert and are riddled with monster lairs, ancient cairns, and cavern connections to the Underworld.

Westtower Mountains: The Westtower Mountains, in far northeastern Lleollan, separate the civilized North Realms from the vileness and evil of the Chaos Wilderlands. The mountains are infested with all manner of chaos beast and Shadrathi, which the forces of Greyspire and Essengard regularly destroy when they enter the domain of either kingdom.

Major Bodies of Water

Sea of Gods: This huge sea is one of the four main bodies of water in all of Dyra. It dominates the westernmost quarter of Dyra from pole to pole. It is also one of the most dangerous. With the rise of Maraada, and the breakdown of the Syrhaati navy, piracy has risen and aquatic predators have become more numerous. Aelorean Inquisition Fleets patrol the sea at will, attacking and sinking ships they declare to be in league with “demonic forces”. Talismarr does its best to protect the shipping lanes of the southern regions, but the northern and eastern parts of the sea are rapidly becoming areas best avoided.

Eternal Ocean: The second of the four main bodies of water in all of Dyra. It's western side borders the Sea of Gods and it's eastern side lines with the Noyi Isles. The Eternal Ocean is relatively calm and quite forgiving for sailors and fisherman of all kinds.

Freyden Bay: Freyden Bay is an extension of the Restless Ocean, found next to the western Jian tei peninsula. It is relatively free of threatening sea creatures and is home to a particularly tasty species of crab.

Narsarian Sea: These unpredictable waters are found south of the Sea of Cold, between Narsaria and Onhur. The Narsarian Sea provides access to the Sea of Cold and all its ports. Talismarr and Gwynneth are in fulltime protection its shipping lanes.

Gontar's Bay: Gontar's Bay is found between Narsaria and the Shirurshad Lands. The gulf is rife with vile sea creatures which regularly raid both kingdoms. Despite this, fishing here is very good, and there are many who risk the dangers of the gulf for its lucrative bounty. These folk stick near the shore and quickly learn to be as skilled with the sword as they are with the net and trident.

Sea of Storms: This violent and vast sea is the third of the four main bodies of water in all of Dyra. It stretches from Lleollan to the southern pole. Its western border is the Noyi Isles, and its eastern border is Narsaria, and the edges of Andreaoa and Ondsare. The dark murky depths conceal great threats as monsters are common throughout. Rumors of Shukara dark rituals in deep chasms, and constant raids keep coastal garrisons from becoming bored.

Lake Phoenix: Lake Phoenix is a huge freshwater lake found on Jian Tei's eastern peninsula. It is a beautiful, clear lake, once the subject of many ancient elven ballads. It has not suffered due to its proximity to the salty seas; it is possible that some magical properties of the lake actually keep the evil drake-born creatures of the Sea of Serpents at bay. The alchemists of Spÿre often journey here and return to the city with barrels of Lake Phoenix water. The wizards claim that the water is remarkably pure and helps facilitate the creation of potions and other enchanted items.

Lake of Drowned Souls: This huge salt lake is found near the Empty Lands, resting near the Northwind Mountains. Those few who have trekked here say the lake is both lifeless and haunted. Legend has it that the lake was once land, home to an ancient kingdom that defied the gods. In return for their heresy, the kingdom collapsed into the earth and was filled with water. The people of the kingdom were drowned, and their tears of anguish mingled with the water, making a salt lake. The island in the center of the lake was supposedly home to those who repented and thus were spared by the gods. Whether these folk still live there is unknown.

Perilous Sea: The Perilous Sea is found to the south of the Syrhaat Empire. It is not particularly dangerous, despite its name, but the Shukara population there has been rising, and some claim that an aquatic breed of Sith'aal lives there as well.

Sea of Cold: The Sea of Cold is probably the best known body of water in all of Dyra. It has been used for centuries, from the days of the Xolta-Moras Empire to the present. The bay has been so thoroughly mapped over the years that mariners travelling anywhere between or west of Amaristan (Shirurshad Lands) and Esteria (in Sarenland) can identify depths, currents, and even the locations of shipwrecks. Despite the size, its depths are unsurpassed.

Sea of Serpents: The Sea of Serpents can be found off the coast of southeast Jian Tei. Its name comes from the fact that the sea is quite literally a hunting and breeding ground for numerous aquatic monsters. The Sea hosts very little traffic.

Seadrake Bay: This arm of the Sea of Storms is tucked in along the coast of Onhur, near the Haven. The Seadrake is infested with pirates, as none of the

neighboring regions have the resources or desire to drive them out. In addition, there are numerous hazards in the bay, and only the pirates seem to know how to safely avoid them.



Vigilance in Seadrake Bay

Sieglan Sea: The Sieglan Sea is found to the north of Ulthia. It is named for a storm giant that lived on the large island between Narsaria and the western parts of Andreoa. The giant claimed the sea as his own but granted leave to use it as long as he was left alone. Great sharks prowl the Sieglan's waters but usually avoid large ships.

Skesgart Sea: This northern sea is a frigid, uninviting place. Freezing winds roil its waters throughout the year, and winter brings heavy fog that blankets Maar, Jian Tei, and Sarenland. These kingdoms know to fear the fog as it masks the raids of Shukara and other aquatic monsters.

Star Sea: These calm well known waters are rich with lush habitat for many creatures. The only disturbances would come from the watring peoples on its surface. For centuries this sea was ruled by the Sylvari, but now the Irathian navies make their raids south on Miradel. It is rumored to hold deep portals.

Rivers

Aedar: The Aedar runs from the Tauron Mountains to the Fire Lake, and forms part of Tarrvik's western border. In the past, the Tauroks of Harrstad used the river to trade with Tarrvik, Essengard, and Valnysia, but this route has been

closed off by High Lord Laric.

Ambian: This river flows north to south from the Star Sea, through the lush forest realm of Miradel, past the city-state of Zeldora, and into the Sea of Cold. During the days of the old Ambian Republic, the river was important for fishing and trade, as it was navigable up to present-day Star Sea. In modern times, it is still often used for either, but is subject to strict shipping laws.

Aro: The Aro River runs through the center of Lynortis, connecting the towns and villages of west Narsaria to the port city of Llaris. The Aro is navigable to Lake Lynortis and the foothills of central mountains of Narsaria and sees a great deal of traffic.

Essenrun: One of Lleollan's longest rivers, the Ash runs from the frozen north lands to the Star Sea. It is a wide, deep river, but it has been corrupted due to its proximity to the Irathia. The Ash sees a moderate amount of barge traffic south of its junction with Ralynia's northern border. It is navigable all the way to the Star Sea, but virtually no one actually travels beyond the junction, given the dangers of the warring Irathians and Essengardians, and the fact that few people have reason to be that far north.

Raerwen: The Raerwen River was once one of Gwynneth's most heavily trafficked waterways, as well as being a major source of fish and eels. However, the war with the Orcazhai has infested the northern areas with many trolls. The Raerwen River descends from the Cold Plains to the Sea of Cold.

Serpent: Flowing from western parts of the World's Crown Mountains, this river marks part Ran's northern border. It received its name due to the winding path it followed. Today, the name is just as appropriate, as the area around the river is controlled by the Sith'aal serpent-men. It empties into the Bay of Ran.

Ulnor: This river, or series of rivers, flow throughout the lands of Achdar. During the new moon, the river's waters take on a dark, black color. Additionally, the river is caustic, making it dangerous to cross or drink from. Aelorea has always talked about mounting an expedition into the western hills to determine the source of the unusual nature of the river. They have yet to do so.

Zarev: The great frozen river of the north. Year-round, most of the river is indeed frozen, but the deepest water still flows. Stormraiders believe the river is sacred to Aegar, and water from its depths makes potions and holy water extraordinarily potent.

Zarr: This Jian Tei river originates near the ruins of Szaran and ends at Lin Tao. Although beautiful it is quite treacherous, as it is filled with large rocks and dangerous rapids. It also has quite a few amazing waterfalls.

Wetlands

Azayar (Sinking Land): The fetid marshes of the Sinking Land are found in the center of south Ran. The Fens are replete with horrific creatures, including Sith'aal, giant insects and huge, venomous snakes. A number of rare magical and medicinal herbs grow nowhere else but the Azayar, so expeditions into the swamp, despite the danger, are not uncommon.

Dark Morass: This large swamp is located between in the Haunted Plains. It is home to numerous bizarre creatures, twisted and mutated by the waters of the Demonsblood River. The threat they pose pales, however, compared to the undead dragon Andraathrux, which makes its lair in the center of the Morass.

Frost Fens: These bogs lie far to the north, beyond Jian Tei's borders, and are considered an extension of the Chaos Wilderlands. Despite being so far north, the Frost Fens are not completely frozen, though freezing winds continually sweep over the bogs. Numerous evil creatures make their home here, and the few travelers who have ventured any considerable distance into the Fens claim to have seen large, Cyclopean structures standing amid the icy marshes.

Gara Marsh: This small wetland is found at the mouth of the Serpent River. It is not particularly dangerous, though bandits and brigands fleeing Valdaharran justice tend to congregate here and in the forest north of the Marsh.

Harrmoors: The Harrmoors are located to the north of the Tauron Mountains. These marshes are home to typical animal predators, but their true danger lies in the various deep mires and pools that can lead the unwary to a quick drowning. Familiar

with the safe trails in the Harrmoors, some of the Harrstad Tauroks have begun using the swamp as a refuge from which to raid Tarrvik.

Joden Swamp: This cold marsh is found in the middle of Achdar. The local orc tribes avoid it, as it is infested with numerous will-o-wisps and particularly vicious carnivorous plants.

Nightmarshes: The swamps known as the Nightmarshes are found between Valnysia and Gothmoor. The swamps are replete with undead corpses as well as a number of bizarre, dangerous (and often evil) monsters of various forms. Valnysia maintains numerous garrisons on the southern edge of the marshes; they are rarely idle, given the virtually constant incursions of creatures into the kingdom. For some reason, all clerics and paladins are unable to take control of the Nightmarsh undead, so the invaders must simply be destroyed.

Skullmarsh: Skullmarsh is a lowland quagmire, fed by the Wyvern and Venom Rivers. It is said that this swamp is home to numerous hag necromancers; some speculate that the creatures of the Haunted Plains are under their control.

Wastelands

Az'gotha: Az'gotha is a large island found to the southeast of Ainsree. It is an enigmatic place, as few have chosen to explore it, and those who have often do not return, if they venture too far inland. Once, the island was home to the Quanyari, an ancient race related to the elven Sylvari. But over 750 years ago, they cut off contact with the outside world. They appear to have retreated to the heart of Az'gotha, as their coastal cities and settlements have been left to ruin. Surviving, xenophobic Quanyari may be the explanation for the disappearance of those who have tried to explore the inner reaches of the island.

Chaos Wilderlands: Sporadic growths on the continent of Lleollan are known as Chaos Wilderlands. They are truly dreadful and foul realm, filled with bizarre weather, insane humanoids, and horrific creatures. Whether the nature of these places are due to the wrath of the gods, the influence of the Shadrathu, or an accumulation of evil magic is unknown. Evil and chaos rule there, and the Wilderlands are constantly trying to expand beyond their current means and spread

into the kingdoms of man. Though Greyspire, Essengard, and Valnysia have been successful at keeping the Chaos Hordes at bay, their numbers grow stronger every year while the resources of the three kingdoms are slowly drained. It may only be a matter of time before the north is overwhelmed by Chaos.

The Dragon Empire: The continent of Vandrac is home to the enigmatic Dragon Empire. If humans or their kin ever ruled here, there is no historical evidence. Even the Marasinians, for all their arrogance, never attempted to claim this area as their own. The name of the place comes from the fact that it is littered with dragon bones and skulls, including complete skeletons in numerous locations. Living dragons of various sizes have been seen here as well; mostly blue and red, but other colors are not unknown. Those who have told of these sights are people seeking the “Oracle of Valira”, sometimes known as the “Dragon Oracle”. The Oracle lives in the hills in the center of the Empire. He (or she - no one knows whether the Oracle is male or female, or even if it is human) is said to be able to answer any question posed to it. However, no query will be answered until the asker is able to answer a question from the Oracle. The questions given range from ridiculously simplistic to incredibly complex. It is not unknown for people to go on quests to seek an answer for the Oracle, if the question they themselves have is important enough.

The Grey Waste: The Grey Waste is a desolate region located in northwest Jian Tei. It is truly a barren place; no vegetation grows there, nor is it a habitat for creatures of natural origin. The skies above the Waste are continually grey and dreary, and a chill wind blows throughout. The only things of interest in this realm of the damned are the crumbling walls of ancient cities, and the ruins of Kyrantheum - the *Black City of Wizardry*. Over the years, the Waste has had a detrimental effect on the lands bordering it, though this corruption advances very slowly.



The Grey Waste

Haunted Plains: The Haunted Plains are found in northwestern Lleollan. The Plains are a barren, horrific place. Few kingdoms established here have ever lasted, and though they claimed it as part of their empire, even the Marasinians avoided the region. As the name implies, the Plains are haunted. Undead, both corporeal and incorporeal, are common here. Their origin is unknown; some believe that spirits denied an afterlife by the gods are banished here, while others believe that it is the earthly realm of the dark goddess Hhiltara. There are other monsters to be found here besides undead, including beholders, gricks, and basilisks.

Great Dust Desert: Western Lleollan is dominated by the harsh Varghani Desert. The Varghani is the largest wasteland in the known world. Few folk live in this cruel environment; there are a handful of nomadic clans that eke out an existence here, but most keep to oases or the scattered kingdoms that cling to the desert’s hills and mountains.

CHAPTER 6:

Religions of Dyra

The people of Dyra venerate many beings, ranging from demons and demigods to “greater” gods and entities beyond description. However, there is a collection of deities whose worship is widespread and seemingly universal throughout the various kingdoms and races. Collectively referred to as the “Awakened”, these gods, thirteen in number (though twelve until recently) are discussed below.

Aadu (AH-due)

**The Divine Maelstrom of Chaos and Disorder
God of Destruction, Entropy, and Chaos**

Domains: Chaos, Destruction, Disorder, and Entropy;

prayer for spells may take place during Moonrise

Typical Worshippers: Anarchists, madmen, nihilists

Worshippers’ Alignments: CE, CN, NE

Symbol: A dull silver disk with a spiral glyph (the “Sign of Madness”) carved into it

The entity known as Aadu has many guises, which is not surprising given its chaotic nature, but it usually is depicted as “the Maelstrom:” a large, swirling mass of ooze and foul wind from which tentacles, pseudopods, eyestalks and other writhing extensions emerge. Aadu is truly mad and in his madness seeks to undo the whole of Creation. Those who serve it, usually suffering from insanity themselves, believe themselves to be its divine instruments, destined for reward in whatever afterlife the god may offer.

Aegar (AY-gahr)

**Warlord of the Four Storm Winds
God of War, Storms, and Smithing**

Domains: Creation, Storms, War, Ore, and Strength;

prayer for spells may take place during Nightfade

Typical Worshippers: Barbarians, fighters, rangers, sailors, smiths

Worshippers’ Alignments: NG, NE, CG, CN, N

Symbol: A steel mountain with a lightning bolt punched out of the center

The god Aegar is commonly depicted as a large, bearded, burly warrior, clad in chainmail and bearing

a mighty greataxe. Illustrations of the god often portray him in a mountainous setting, amid heavy winds and storms and accompanied by his large, white wolf “Vargreig.” Aegar revels in warfare and combat, as well as the fury of violent weather, such as thunderstorms, blizzards, and hurricanes. His clerics train themselves and others in the art of warfare; they also assist smiths in their craft (primarily the production of weapons and armor).

Aeryan d(air-EE-and)

**Supreme Merchant of the Celestial Bazaar
God of Trade, Wine, and the Seas**

Domains: Sea, Commerce, Water, and Travel; prayer for spells may take place during Sunfade

Typical Worshippers: Fishermen, merchants, sailors, winemakers

Worshippers’ Alignments: Any non-chaotic

Symbol: An inverted, gold triangle, etched with a wave over a goblet

Aeryand is commonly depicted as a large male with a long beard and green hair. He has wine-colored skin, is clad in garments woven of vines and seaweed and wears a multitude of priceless rings, necklaces, and other jewelry. Paintings of Aeryand often portray him at the center of debauched, wine-soaked revels. This god epitomizes the quest for wealth and riches, as well as their enjoyment once acquired. His clergy, the *Acolytes of Wealth and Wine*, seek to emulate him and work towards filling the coffers of their temples and shrines.

Alyara (al-YAR-ah)

**Most Glorious Queen of the Morning’s Light
Goddess of Love, Light, and Healing**

Domains: Good, Healing, and Sun; prayer for spells may take place during Newday

Typical Worshippers: Bards, courtesans, healers, lovers, opponents of the undead, Syrhaati

Worshippers’ Alignments: Any good

Symbol: A yellow metal disk, shaped like a radiant sun, with a dove etched into its center

The goddess Alyara is portrayed as a young, beautiful woman with long, flowing hair, clothed in radiant light and bearing a staff of yew with laurel trim. Her church adheres to the goal of bringing light and compassion to the world. Alyara's exclusively female clergy - the *Sisters of Hope and Desire* - travel the world, spreading the word of their goddess and crusading against darkness and hatred.

Baltur (BALL-ter)

Most Holy Lord of Truth and Justice
God of Strength, Protection, and Justice

Domains: Not applicable - the Knights of Baltur are paladins; prayer for spells may take place during Newday

Typical Worshippers: Fighters, knights, noblemen, paladins

Worshippers' Alignments: LG

Symbol: A silver disk inlaid with a gold Balturic Cross

The god Baltur is depicted as a tall, muscular man, generally human, wearing golden full plate armor. He bears a shield emblazoned with the Balturic Cross and wields a finely crafted longsword known as *Calbidorn*. Baltur is the epitome of the heroic warrior dedicated to truth, justice, and righteousness. His priests, a martial order known as the *Knights of Baltur*, are dauntless crusaders, constantly striving to combat the evils and injustices of the world.

Dynera (die-NEAR-ah)

Sacred Mother of All That is Green
Goddess of Nature, fertility, and renewal

Domains: Not applicable - the Myrshae are druids; prayer for spells may take place during Newday

Typical Worshippers: Druids, farmers, foresters, half-elves, herbalists, hunters, rangers

Worshippers' Alignments: LN, N, CN, NG

Symbol: A wooden disk carved with an ankh above a tree

Dynera is rarely depicted by her priests - the *Myrshae* - in an artistic manner. When they do describe her, they speak of a "three-fold goddess," who changes her form from a young maiden to a matronly woman to an aged crone. Dynera represents nature and all that it encompasses. Her priesthood works to teach people how to live in harmony with the world around them and to prevent its unnecessary destruction or abuse.



A Myrshae

Hhiltara (hil-TAR-ah)

Damned Lady of the Shadows
Goddess of Fear, Darkness, and Undeath

Domains: Shadow, Fear, Undeath, and Evil; prayer for spells may take place during Deepnight

Typical Worshippers: Assassins, blackguards, necromancers, rogues

Worshippers' Alignments: Any evil

Symbol: A lead disk with a crescent moon carved on the left and a skull on the right

The dark goddess Hhiltara is described as a statuesque, red-haired woman with leathery bat-wings, and red-brown skin, wearing a tattered black robe and having a face covered with a veil sewn into her skin (it is said that the face of "True Fear" is concealed behind the veil). Hhiltara is the embodiment of fear, darkness, and the unnaturalness of Undeath. Her clerics serve her will by spreading evil and fear, as well as working to create undead servants while seeking to become undead themselves.

Hukko (HUCK-oh)

Masked Lord of Trickery and Illusion
God of Chance, Thievery, and Trickery

Domains: Deception, Luck, Travel, and Trickery; prayer for spells may take place during Eventide

Typical Worshippers: Bards, gamblers, rogues

Worshippers' Alignments: Any non-lawful

Symbol: An orange-metal disk with an engraving of masks of sorrow and joy

Hukko is portrayed as a humanoid dressed in a long robe of ever-changing color and design and wearing a hood or mask. This garb makes Hukko's gender indiscernible, though the deity is generally considered to be male. Hukko is the patron of those who seek their livelihood in non-conventional ways. His religious philosophies and priests, called *Tricksters*, are not necessarily evil, but most kingdoms and organizations do not look upon them favorably.

Iberis (AYE-beer-us)

All-Knowing Celestial Sage
God of Knowledge, the Arts, and Travel

Domains: Knowledge, Protection, Travel, and Glyph; prayer for spells may take place during Newday

Typical Worshippers: Actors, artists, bards, explorers, loremasters, monks, sages, wizards

Worshippers' Alignments: Any non-chaotic

Symbol: A silver diamond inlaid with a bluish metal shaped like an "Iberian Cross"

Iberis' preferred form is that of an old, white-haired man dressed in grey robes and holding a large tome. Smaller books hang from his belt, along with a palette, a quill, and similar artistic tools. Iberis is the god of knowledge and its acquisition, as well as the various arts (painting, writing, music, sculpture, etc.) and traveling. His priests, known as the *Scholars of Iberis*, travel the world over, seeking knowledge of any and all kinds. Their findings are recorded in scrolls and tomes and stored in Iberian temples.

Lis (LISS)

Sacred Lady of the Ultimate Mysteries
Goddess of Death, Sleep, and Dreams

Domains: Night, Sleep, True Death, and Destiny; prayer for spells may take place during Eventide

Typical Worshippers: Illusionists, monks

Worshippers' Alignments: Any neutral

Symbol: A skull-shaped silver amulet, with a carving of a stylized eye

The mysterious goddess Lis is depicted as a beautiful woman with alabaster skin and jet-black hair. She is clad in a silky, cellophanous black robe, with a hood that shadows the upper half of her face and is

surrounded by a silvery-grey mist. The souls of the dead as well as the dreams of the slumbering are her domain. Her priests, the *Gatherers*, help comfort those who are dying as well as provide funerary services and protect the dead from being violated by necromancy. It is not known what their purpose is in regards to dreams.

Ramm (RAHM)

Red Master of Warfare and Conflict
God of War, Fire, and Vengeance

Domains: Fire, Vengeance, War, and Strength; prayer for spells may take place during Sunhigh

Typical Worshippers: Evokers, fighters, Viss'takh

Worshippers' Alignments: NG, NE, CG, CN, N

Symbol: A gold flame surrounding an upright sword

Ramm is portrayed as a fierce, large, muscular warrior, wearing a suit of red-yellow half-plate covered with crests and spikes. His eyes are pure red, with small fires flickering from them, and he leaves prints of flame wherever he steps. Ramm wields a mighty greatsword and leads legions of fallen warriors to battle in the afterlife. He is a god of war and retribution and a master of fire and flame. His clerics, the *Flameknights*, are dedicated to combat training (for themselves and others), participating in warfare and battle, and pursuing vengeance for those who are unable to do so on their own.

Shaarizad (SHAR-uh-zahd)

Prince of Absolute Evil and Unspeakable Torment
God of Evil, Murder, and Suffering

Domains: Torment, Evil, Murder, Chaos, and Despotism; prayer for spells may take place during Deepnight

Typical Worshippers: Assassins, blackguards, Orcazhai, torturers, tyrants

Worshippers' Alignments: Any evil

Symbol: A dark metal disk, engraved with a skull flanked by two serpents and topped with a bat

Shaarizad is a malevolent god of pure, unadulterated evil. There is no single physical description that fits him, as Shaarizad is portrayed differently by the various cultures and races that know of him, and even his own cults disagree on what their god's "true" form is. The most common descriptions lean towards either a shadowy, incorporeal being or a

tentacled, abominable horror. Shaarizad seeks nothing less than to establish an empire of evil across the entire world, enslaving its inhabitants to his vile rule. His priests, the *Shadarans*, dedicate their lives to furthering this objective, believing they will be rewarded when this time comes.

Tehmorix (TEM-or-icks)

Great Lord of Plagues and Pestilence
God of Disease, Slime, and the Underworld

Domains: Evil, Plague, Ooze, and Underworld; prayer for spells may take place during Nightfade

Typical Worshipers: Underworld races

Worshippers' Alignments: Any evil

Symbol: A hand crafted from grey metal with a fly etched into or punched through the palm

The customary image of Tehmorix is horrific, the most hideous of all the gods. He is human from the waist up, though with four arms and the head of a stag beetle. From the waist down, Tehmorix has the body of a giant slug-like creature, which exudes a thick, odious slime. He is the god of all things hideous and loathsome - slugs, leeches, slimes, oozes, and all manner of insects and spiders - as well as the dark places they scuttle. Worse, however, is his power over disease and plague. Through his priests, the *Children of the Plague*, Tehmorix seeks to reshape the world according to his own twisted design, using illness and pestilence to eliminate the "weak" and "worthless."

The Shadrathu

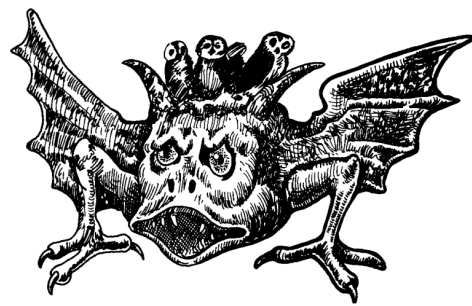
The Shadrathu are some of the most powerful entities in the known world, second only to the gods themselves. Though not divine beings, they do receive their share of adoration and worship. This comes not only from the creatures they have spawned, but from others seeking that which they feel only these evil horrors can offer them. A brief description of each Shadrathu is given below.

Azirakesh, the Unholy Gatekeeper: When the Cah arrived in Dyra, they were unable to close the interplanar gateways they entered through quickly enough; the Shadrathu came in right behind them. However, one of their pursuers was only partially manifest in the world before the gates collapsed. This one is known as Azirakesh, and it was caught in

the closing, finding itself trapped between worlds. Its binding is unique: while the other Shadrathu are imprisoned with runes or symbols, Azirakesh is not - but there appears to be no way to free it, either. The dreadful being now acts as a conduit between the material world and Maledicium (and possibly other realms as well). Passage through Azirakesh need not conform to the edicts of the Divine Council, but the Shadrathu will not simply open for evil's sake. It has its own, alien agenda, and always exacts a high price for the use of its services.

L'thogua, the Father of Those Who Walk in Darkness: L'thogua is trapped in an immense pit, in a cavern located under the deepest Ran Jungles.

The inside of the pit is covered in various runes and glyphs, which keep L'thogua trapped inside and held in a semi-liquid, amorphous, mostly mindless form. The prison is a paradox of sorts - to free L'thogua from the prison, the runes that trap him must be destroyed, but to get to the runes, L'thogua must be moved out of the way. And due to its mindless nature, L'thogua will destroy anything that comes within 100 yards of it. The only agenda that L'thogua seems to pursue is to spawn a variety of evil creatures. These creatures have a variety of intelligences - some are mindless killers, while others are free-willed and break away from L'thogua to pursue their own goals. Many of the more dangerous and abhorrent creatures roaming the Underworld were spawned by L'thogua.



One of L'thogua's creations

Sel'naga, the Whisperer of Forbidden Pleasures: Sel'naga is a being of sexual deviance and perversity, and is worshipped by those whom society would consider decadent and deviant. It has been described as a large, amorphous mass, roughly 50' in diameter, with a variety of orifices and appendages, the purposes of which it would not be proper to

describe. A plethora of mucal secretions also cover this Shadrathu; they range in aroma from pleasant to foul, with purposes both obvious and unknown. It was believed to have been imprisoned within a large cavern, deep in the Stone Curtain Mountains, served directly by a large cult made up primarily of humans and Drakari.; however, recent tales suggest that Sel'naga is actually free and has some role in the rulership of Asyra, Maraada, or Sahar. This Shadrathu is served by human and Drakari cultists. Hedonists to the extreme, they will go to any lengths to satisfy their perverse yearnings, all in the name of service to Sel'naga.

Azatharu, the Slumbering Horror: It is known that Azatharu was imprisoned by the Cah in a huge vault on an island, somewhere in the northern Sea of Storms. That island was subsequently sunk by a major earthquake, sending the vault to the bottom of the sea. The vault was eventually discovered by the Kyree. Azatharu was able to work some influence beyond its rune-covered walls, tempting the Kyree with promises of power and forbidden knowledge. Most of the sea-folk rejected the whisperings of the Shadrathu, but a few succumbed to greed and gathered to listen, and eventually, worship. In return for their adoration, Azatharu was able to effect a change in their physiology, spawning the Shukara (and a few other sea species as well). The Shukara were much fewer in number than their brethren, but physically superior and savagely violent. They attacked the Kyree, devastating their numbers, and initiating a population decline that continues to the present day. Today, the Shukara and other creatures mutated by Azatharu can be found throughout the world's seas and oceans.

Ver'giryth, the Creeping Hunger: Dwelling in the Forest of Twisted Trees, Ver'giryth is an entity that is similar to L'thogua, but rather than spawning new monsters, this Shadrathu's forté is to change that which already exists. This is accomplished by the spreading of disease and malevolent plant-life - Ver'giryth breeds diseases and fungi which envelope trees, plants, and other vegetation, warping them in strange and unpleasant ways. This, in turn, passes on to animals, usually killing them outright, but often changing them into something more pleasing to the "Creeping Hunger". Helping to spread the foulness of Ver'giryth are the *Ar'drune*, a small cult of evil druids. They believe the Shadrathu represents the next stage of nature's evolution. Ver'giryth

recognizes their devotion and has seen fit not to consume them, though the Ar'drune eventually turn into something less than human and more like fungus. Ver'giryth's prison is in the form of a massive, misshapen, grotesque tree, with hundreds of gnarled branches that ooze a corrosive, poisonous sap. The tree's taproot has a variety of glyphs carved into it; this root must be severed from the tree to free the Shadrathu.

Pazaretu, the Many-Handed Corruptor: Seven Shadrathu followed the Cah into Dyra, but in the battles that followed, two of them were slain rather than imprisoned. In one of these victories, the Cah solidified Pazaretu's essence into a metallic form, and then shattered it into countless pieces. This splintering caused shards of the dark entity to be scattered across the world. When they landed, many sank into the ground, penetrating deep into the hills and mountains of Lleollan. In some places, these fragments somehow fused with existing metal deposits, forming a strange, new element which was dubbed *darksilver*. Darksilver is a rare metal, with the unusual property of boosting magical enhancements placed on an item crafted from the material. However, the evil influence of Pazaretu still exists within the item, which causes unpleasant side effects.

Yaelagoth, the Shaper from Beyond: Yaelagoth was the other Shadrathu the Cah managed to defeat. Its original form is unknown, as it was either transmogrified into a huge sphere by the Cah, or had that shape to begin with. In either case, after its defeat, Yaelagoth was hurled into the heavens, becoming the moon Ralos. Despite being dead, this Shadrathu still holds a great deal of power; when Ralos is full, it is able to cause the change from man to beast for those cursed with lycanthropy.

CHAPTER 7:

Groups & Organizations of Dyra

Herein are listed summaries of the dominant groups, orders, and organizations of Ryh'ardha's kingdoms.

Aelorean Inquisition

For the rulers of Aelorea, it isn't enough to simply prohibit magic in their own kingdom. They see it as their mission to eradicate what they consider "demonic energy" as well as those who wield it. To that end, the Aeloreans have the Inquisition. An order of holy warriors and priests, the Aelorean Inquisition wages a bloody crusade against those who use magic, whether they channel it like wizards and clerics, or simply use it, such as a knight with a magical blade or an explorer with enchanted boots.

The Inquisition works both within Aelorea's borders as well as without. They operate openly in the theocracy but conduct their missions in secrecy in other kingdoms. The Inquisition is also in charge of Aelorea's navy, using it to prey on vessels in the Ambian Sea that they suspect may be harboring magic.

Alchemists Guild of Spÿre

The skills necessary for creating enchanted items are both valuable and rare. Their value is obvious, but their rarity is due to the Alchemists Guild of Spÿre. The guild maintains a lucrative trade in magic items, thus the reason why they wish to keep the means of creation under their control. A magician need not be a guild member to be able to enchant items, but if they come to pose a threat to the alchemists' monopoly, action will be taken. This could include the "disappearance" of the wizard in question, and potentially whoever was responsible for teaching him the necessary skills. There is a rumor that the Alchemists Guild has an arrangement with the assassins of Maar to handle these cases.

The Alchemists do not have any control over the creation of magic items by divine spellcasters, but

that is generally not a concern for them since most churches do not make enchanted items simply to sell. The Church of Aeryand did at one time, which resulted in friction between the two groups, but the guild and the church have since come to an understanding (as they would describe it; cynics prefer to use terms like "collusion" and "cartel"). Scrolls are something that the Alchemists do not try to regulate, due to their ubiquitous nature among wizards and sorcerers.

In game terms, alchemists are simply wizards or sorcerers who possess the Item Creation feats. In Dyra, these feats must be taught, and the only people permitted to teach them are alchemists or those who gain their permission. Note that the alchemists have an almost uncanny ability to discover those who try to bypass them.

Ar'drune

Where the goddess Dynera has the Myrshae to serve her, the Shadrathu Ver'giryth has the Ar'drune. The Ar'drune are similar to the Myrshae, but rather than preserve and foster nature, they seek to pervert and corrupt it. They see the natural world as the first part of a two-step process, with Dynera providing raw material, followed by Ver'giryth shaping it to perfection. These "dark druids" aren't spared from the Shadrathu's designs, either. Over time, the Ar'drune are slowly mutated into strange and horrific creatures. This is welcomed by Ver'giryth's celebrants as they believe this is a blessing from their master.

There are likely hundreds, perhaps thousands, of the Ar'drune. They operate throughout Ryh'ardha in the deepest parts of its forests, and are most common in the Forest of Twisted Trees, the Forest of the Forlorn, and Havenwood.

Ar'drune who have not yet mutated are represented by neutral evil druids.

Blood of Aan

The Blood of Aan is a society of sorcerers who seek nothing less than the restoration of the Marasinian Empire. The members of this group are as bigoted and prejudiced as the rulers of the ancient empire, proclaiming the superiority of sorcery over all other powers and professions. There are believed to be around 150 people "of the Blood", though their ranks are open to any who practice sorcery and share their views. The Blood currently controls the kingdom of Maraada and the fortress-town of Ankhar. They also operate covertly in other lands, working to subvert foreign kingdoms while furthering their own foul agendas.

Daughters of the Light

The Church of Alyara, known primarily for its beautiful, healing priestesses, is also in charge of the Daughters of the Light. The Daughters are a militaristic sisterhood, dedicated to hunting and eliminating the undead. They are headquartered near the Essengard city of Caereon, with numbers in excess of 250.



A Daughter of the Light dispatching the undead

Eldritch Order of the Ur'Zaal Scrolls

The ancient archmage Ur'Zaal was one of the greatest and most powerful wizards the world has

ever known. During his lifetime, Ur'Zaal recorded his magical rituals and spellwork onto a collection of scrolls. After his death, these scrolls were lost, scattered across the continent through travel, trade, and theft. Today, these parchments can be found in dragon's lairs, treasure vaults, and private libraries. Their owners, however, are generally not aware of what they possess, as even those who practice magic lack the skills to decipher Ur'Zaal's writings.

There is an order of mages, however, who do know how to read these scrolls - or parts of them, at least. Known as the Eldritch Order of the Ur'Zaal Scrolls, this society of about eighty magicians seeks to recover as many, if not all, of the ancient scripts as possible. Members of the Order seek to master the power once known to Ur'Zaal and his contemporaries, but which is lost to today's wizards and sorcerers. To that end, their primary goal is the recovery of all the scrolls by any means necessary. They are not an evil organization, but their desire for Ur'Zaal's lost knowledge is incredibly great; so great that many of the steps they've taken to secure the few scrolls they have would generally be considered evil.

Free Trade League

The Free Trade League is a mercantile association, primarily operating in the Sea of Cold Coast, but containing members from coastal kingdoms from Sarenland to Amaristan. The League claims to be an economic alliance of various merchants and noble houses, assisting one another for mutual gain. There is, however, strong evidence their purpose is to establish a cartel to control shipping and trade in the Narsarian Sea, such that they can maximize their profits and power over mercantile activity in the area. They regularly work against Ilmara, Zeldora, and Talismarr - the dominant economic powers in the area. Talismarr has gone so far as to declare the League to be a criminal organization, banning it and its members within its borders; the inland kingdom claims that a great deal of pirate activity directed against their ships is actually supported and funded by the League, and even alleges that the League has dealings with the Slavemasters of Blackport.

The Guild

The “Guild” is the common term for the Assassins Guild of the city-state of Maar. The members of the guild, austerey dubbed “Guildsmen”, are without a doubt the best assassins in the world. Combining stealth with a small amount of magical power, the Guildsmen know no equal, and are sought-after the world over. Their cost is high, but with it comes the assurance that unless exceptionally unusual circumstances arise, they will complete the job they were paid to do.

Guildsmen are represented by the assassin prestige class. No other type of character may take the assassin prestige class, with a few exceptions (such as the Sisters of the Dark).

Hand of Darkness

This evil organization is a clandestine network dedicated to the schemes of Sakhemet, a lich who dwells somewhere in the Great Dust Desert. Agents of the Hand operate throughout the continent of Lleollan, working to further the undead wizard’s dark agenda. It is a mystery as to exactly what Sakhemet’s goals are, but it is known that his minions are currently seeking the body parts of the ancient Mystarch Daemos (after his death, the archmage was dismembered and his head, limbs, and torso were scattered across the continent).

Ilmaran Thaumaturgical Society

The Ilmaran Thaumaturgical Society is a large organization of wizards and sorcerers, united by the goal of furthering their own best interests through cooperation and mutual aid. It is essentially a magicians’ guild, though unlike traditional guilds, the Society encompasses an area greater than just a city or kingdom. A network of members can be found throughout the Sea of Cold Coast. Outside of its home in Ilmara, the Society maintains chapter houses in Shesada, Talismarr, Aldanor, Miradel, and Ralynia. Members also operate clandestinely in Irathia, Yar, and Gharakaag.

The Society is an off-shoot of Spÿre’s Order of the Obsidian Tower. At one time, Ilmara and the

surrounding kingdoms were subject to the edicts of the Tower, but the Sea of Cold Coast magicians eventually broke away due to philosophical differences. Members of the Society tend to be more driven by the practical application of magic, whereas the Tower is more concerned with study and research. The Society also tends to take a broader approach to magic, encouraging its members to embrace all disciplines, rather than specializing as the Tower magicians do.

Knights of the Silver Falcon

This knightly order was founded over 200 years ago in the Ambian Republic. The elite knights of this group were originally charged with the defense of Ambia’s western borderlands against the incursions of humanoid tribes and other evil invaders. When the Marasinians attacked the Republic, the Silver Falcons traveled east to bolster Ambia’s defenses. Once it became obvious that Marasinia had the upper hand, the Knights sent word west and had their resources and assets moved underground (figuratively and, in some cases, literally), so they could continue the fight when the Republic inevitably fell.

For years the Knights staged raids against the Marasinians, engaged in espionage and sabotage, and in general did what they could to hamper the sorcerous empire. They were somewhat more effective during the Age of Chaos, however, since then they could operate in the open. They aided people where they could, created and defended pockets of civilization, and escorted refugees into those areas. At the end of the Age, the Knights also helped destroy the Aetheric Collector.

Today, the order’s purpose is to protect and preserve the civilized kingdoms of Lleollan from the encroachments and predations of dark realms and evil humanoids. To that end, they have established themselves in Ilmara (where they are headquartered), Talismarr, Aldanor, Miradel, and Gwynneth. They are welcome in most of those kingdoms, though the Gwynnethians often take issue with the Knights’ tactics; while they are good, they don’t always follow a lawful agenda. The Knights are interested in spreading their organization to other regions, once their numbers exceed the roughly 250 members they currently have.

Nethermagi

Many common folk fear wizards and sorcerers, but more feared than those, and rightly so, are the wielders of nethermagic. This power, discovered during the Age of Chaos, gives its users a great deal of power; but it corrupts them, turning them into evil, twisted creatures over a relatively short period of time. Nethermages draw their energies directly from the Shadrathu, and seek their release - in addition to whatever dark agendas they follow.

To some folk, there is no distinction between nethermages, sorcerers, and wizards. This is something the latter two fervently detest. They actively hunt and kill the dark mages for this reason, moreso than just to curb their evil.

It is unknown how many nethermagi there are, though they likely number in the hundreds, if not thousands. They do not operate from a central location, though they are commonly found in Gharakaag and Irathia.

Order of the Obsidian Tower

The Order of the Obsidian Tower is a large, guild-like organization dedicated to the common good of wizards and sorcerers. It is based in Spÿre but operates throughout Ambia, and has a minor presence in Calythir. At one time, the Tower (as it is commonly known) encompassed the Emerald Coast as well; that area is now served by the Ilmaran Thaumaturgical Society.

The Tower emphasizes research and study, with many members dedicating their life's work to the development of new spells, rituals, and similar activities. This contrasts greatly with the Society, which believes that magic is useless if it is not used and applied on a regular basis.

Ordos Arcanis Ex Imperium

The "Arcane Order of the Empire" is the official magical society in the Sarenland Kingdom. There are many advantages afforded by membership in such a large organization, such as access to spells and components, teachers for various disciplines, accommodations when traveling, and so on. The biggest advantage to joining, however, is that it keeps one from being thrown into an imperial prison. The

practice of arcane magic is illegal in Sarenland unless the user is a member of the Ordos Arcanis. In this way, the throne attempts to keep control of a potential threat, while providing it with ample magicians for wars, magic item creation, and other tasks requiring the talents of numerous wizards and sorcerers.



A wizard of the Ordos Arcanis ex Imperium

Qa'ta Azaad (The Black Veil)

This secretive organization operates in the Great Dust Desert. It was founded during the days of the Khemsan Empire. At that time, the members of the Qa'ta Azaad were imperial assassins. However, at some point later in Khemsa's history, they broke from its rulers and aided the rebelling slaves who eventually brought down the desert empire.

Today, the Black Veil's rogues and rangers operate as mercenary assassins in Syrhaat, and are the most feared group outside of the Maar Assassins. It is commonly known that they operate near Valta, but most believe their headquarters to be somewhere in the Tarat Bay, either in one of the city-states or even in the ruins of Dhasara. In addition to their

mercenary work, the Veil also appears to have another agenda, involving the recovery of various items of magical and mundane nature throughout the desert and the Sea of Cold Coast. What they may be looking for, and why, is a mystery.

Sisters of the Dark

The Sisters is a society of Hhiltaran priestesses trained as assassins. They are similar to the Guildsmen assassins of Maar, though they are bitter rivals of that organization. The Sisters are semi-autonomous, operating both for the Hhiltaran church as well as for those who require their services and do not or cannot use the Guild.

The Sisters of the Dark make their home in the Irathian port of Carsus.

Sisters of the Dark are clerics of Hhiltara who have taken the Assassin prestige class.

Warlords of Khai

The Warlords of Khai are an elite group of mercenaries, headquartered in a fortress in western Ainsree. They are renowned the world over for their martial prowess and superior tactical skills. The Warlords are known to be honorable warriors, but they can be merciless when need be. They are selective about their work and who they hire out to as well; sometimes it appears that their motives on a particular job are directed by something other than money. The Warlords have roughly 300 mercenaries in their membership; since many consider one Warlord to be the equivalent of ten normal fighters, this number is fairly substantial.

Slavemasters of Blackport

While slavery is illegal in many kingdoms, it is allowed in many more. As such, there are lucrative opportunities to be had in the slave trade. One such group profiting from this unsavory business is the Slavemasters of Blackport. Operating from their stronghold in Gharakaag, the Slavemasters acquire their “merchandise” both through trade with kingdoms like Irathia as well as raids on their neighbors or lone sailing vessels on the Restless Ocean.

Templars

The Templars are a militant, priestly order of the Church of Baltur. Based out of Ilmara, the four-hundred-odd Templars dedicate their lives to the destruction of evil outsiders, particularly the Maelyaphum (demons and devils). To a lesser extent, these paladins also hunt the undead. Given their purpose, the arrival of a Templar in an area is a cause for both celebration and fear.

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DYRA

IT IS TIME TO ENTER THE WORLD OF DYRA. IT IS A LAND OF ADVENTURE AND WONDER, A PLACE THAT HAS WITNESSED THE RISE OF MIGHTY EMPIRES, POWERFUL CITYSTATES, AND REALMS RULED BY GREAT AND NOBLE LORDS. IT IS ALSO A WORLD AT THE EDGE OF DARKNESS: OLD KINGDOMS COLLAPSE INTO DECADENCE, WHILE HUMANOID TRIBES EMERGE TO RECLAIM LANDS THEY ONCE POSSESSED.

ANCIENT EVILS STIR IN THEIR SLUMBER, WORSHIPPED BY DARK MINIONS WHO SEEK NOTHING LESS THAN THE RELEASE OF THEIR VILE MASTERS. THE CIVILIZED WORLD IS BESIEGED BY THE INSIDIOUS FORCES OF CHAOS AND DESTRUCTION, SLOWLY GIVING MORE GROUND WITH EACH PASSING DECADE.

THE TIME HAS COME TO STAND FAST AGAINST THE DARKNESS, TO TURN BACK THE ARMIES OF THE NIGHT, AND TO RECLAIM THE LAND FOR MAN AND HIS KIN. IT IS A TIME FOR HEROES TO EMERGE, TO WALK IN THE PATHS OF LEGEND, AND TO FORGE LEGENDS OF THEIR OWN.