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The remaining runes (Woda through Qalik) are the *Lesser Runes*. Unlike the Whisperers and Dukes, the Lessers aren't assigned a gender, but unlike the Songs, they aren't assumed to include both genders, either. The Lesser runes are entirely *neuter*, and considered weak, as runes go, at least on their own. In both fortune-telling and rune-carving sorceries, these runes bind and weave other runes together, a kind of "mortar" to the greater sigils' "bricks."

EVERY MAJOR URESIAN island uses the Temphis Runes in *some* way, with only minor regional variation to the glyphs. While the languages of the kingdoms differ, they use similar enough sounds to make the runes a nearly-universal link between the Uresian tongues. Most also use the runes for magic, although methods differ.

**Boru:** Boru uses the Temphisian Runes for writing, but only a little for magic, preferring their own native sorcery-glyphs the High Dreamer claims they stole from a ruined hall of Heaven.

**Helt and Lochria:** These are the only lands where the runes see virtually no use as a written language (the Heltish script resembles claw-marks), but *runestones* are still valued as enchanted items, and rune carving is common – blending the Temphis Runes with local magic.

## The Songs



**Keyboard Equivalent: A**

Abra is the primal form, and most scholars consider this Song to be not only the most powerful rune, but also the oldest. Carved examples of Abra have been found in pre-Skyfall ruins containing no other recognizable glyphs. Among the Dwarvish runecarvers of Orgalt and Laöch, Abra is the rune of creation. When used by Sindran oracles, Abra represents ambition, creative enervat, and eao.



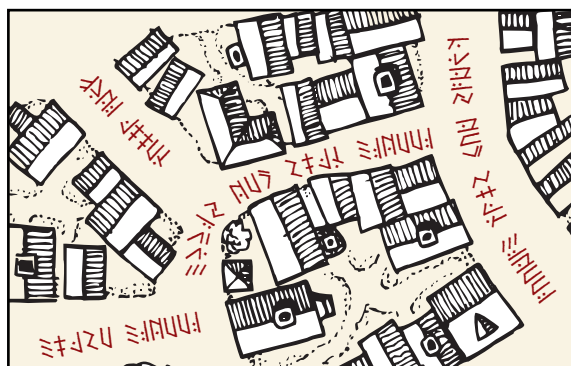
**Keyboard Equivalent:** U

Uaju is presumed to be nearly as ancient as Abra, but there's very little evidence to support the notion. It's been found in pre-Skyfall ruins, but only carved near other examples of the full set of runes. It represents control of what has been created, will made manifest through skill or knowledge. The Dwarvish runecarvers carve it as the rune of raw power or sorcery. In the Sindran oracle, Uaju is the rune of desire, longing, and leadership.



**Keyboard Equivalent:** E

This rune is ubiquitous as the sigil woven into the robes of Yemite necromancers, often in semi-ethereal threads of enchanted silver. So, most people assume that it is the Song of death or decay. Rather, the rune signifies learning, development, and growth. The dwarves call it the Rune of Wisdom, and carve it into crowns to insure that their kings will carefully consider decisions. Sindran seers associate Ezarn with the qualities of kindness, charity, and the tendency to acquiesce.





# The Whisperers: The Tale of Flori



Sora (𐌺𐌺𐌺𐌺, mapped to S), Féal (𐌺𐌺𐌺𐌺, mapped to F), Chesra (𐌺𐌺𐌺𐌺, mapped to C), Poros (𐌺𐌺𐌺𐌺, mapped to P), Kesra (𐌺𐌺𐌺𐌺, mapped to K) and Toloss (𐌺𐌺𐌺𐌺, mapped to T) tell the tale of Flori, a mythical girl from before the Skyfall who, according to legend, became the world's greatest thief and liar, and who seduced every king in the world. She died on a secret island of her own, surrounded by her wealth.

Sora, the first Whisperer, represents Flori's childhood in the Forgotten Port of Xan (Xan is also a lesser rune; see below). It represents water, darkness, and silence to the rune carvers. In the Sindran Oracle, Sora is associated with self-consciousness, sadness and sympathy.

Féal, the second Whisperer, represents the deluge that destroyed Xan – a flood brought on by a terrible storm when the Sea Dragon fought Bortak and Nasho, the gods of the whale-hunters. Flori survived, but her family didn't. It represents the violence of nature to the rune carvers (it's carved on King Thorvald's axe, which strikes with the force of lightning), but also isolation (which is why the axe can also let Thorvald travel invisibly). The Sindran Oracle focuses on the second interpretation, associating Féal with separation, isolationism, loneliness, and sincere reflection.

Chesra, the third Whisperer, is called Flori's Awakening, and it represents her years as a wanderer, learning the trade of the thief and the skills of the seductress. This was her life of happy adventure, and the last time she would make any real friends. The rune carvers use Chesra as a symbol of skill and craftsmanship (like its counterpart, Jesra) but with connotations of unfairness – “the rune

of special advantage,” the cheating rune. It is also the symbol for sex. In the Sindran Oracle, the rune represents sensuality, friendship, and desperation.

Poros, the fourth Whisperer, tells the tale of Flori's first great achievement – the seduction of King Bacho (almost certainly not his real name, just a reference to the rune's related Duke) – who loved her so much that he rebuilt the port of Xan for her, giving her a home again, but devoid of the lives she grew up with. Flori is said to have wandered the streets of New Xan each night, searching for the ghosts of her family. Despite Flori's failure to find them, the rune carvers still find that this rune's power is strongest for communication with spirits (and recently, they've found it is strong for communication among the living, as well). In the Oracle, Poros is the rune of maturity, experience, and the loss of innocence and wonder.

Kesra, the fifth Whisperer, speaks of the abandonment of Bacho for a spree of new seductions spanning all the old empires of pre-Skyfall Uresia, and a series of outrageous related robberies (in one tale common in the Rindenland, Flori is said to have picked the pocket of Mlaatuk, the Sun God, not realizing that Mlaatuk's pocket is where he kept the moon during the day – she returned it to him, embarrassed by her only serious miscalculation, and never robbed a god again). This is the master rune of theft and deception to the rune carvers. In the Sindran Oracle, Kesra is the rune of freedom, dishonesty, and wanderlust.

Toloss, the sixth Whisperer, is the symbol of Flori's death, alone on a secret island of riches. King Bacho is said to have arrived in a rainstorm that same night, wearing a tattered cloak, having given up his kingdom to search for her all his life. He found her dead, and his weeping flooded the island and sank it forever beneath the sea. The rune carvers employ it as the rune of death, loss and mourning. In the traditions of the Oracle, Toloss is the sigil of secrecy, heartbreak, and fearlessness.

## Using the Runes in Play

**Player Handouts:** With so many visual styles available, the GM enjoys greater power to create interesting player handouts: *Temphis Scrawl* for handwritten notes, *Temphis Scrivener* for ancient tomes and official documents, *Temphis Runic* for maps and decorations, and so on. Since the Runes are a simple substitution cipher, they're easily learned by the players, and within a session or two they'll be able to read them without pausing to look the runes up!

**PC Magic:** Player-Characters can build runecarving wizards or Dwarf master craftsmen, or play a character who practices the Sindran Oracle, reading fortunes for money (and perhaps amusing the party with cryptic doubletalk).

**Character Names:** Most Uresian cultures recognize the significance of the runes when naming. The *first letter* of any name is particularly important, and often chosen with both its own meaning, and it's meaning relative to the character's birth-sign, in mind.

**Treasure:** Ordinary runestones are common items, but *enchanted* ones range from those that speak aloud as oracles to those you toss at foes (they burst into a manifestation of the rune's meaning).

**Exposition:** A reading of runestones (use the rune-cards included with this set in a pinch) can be a GM tool for providing atmosphere and vital clues at the same time in the form of an NPC oracle.

**Adventure Design:** The runes can also be used as a kind of Random Adventure Generator, by doing a private “reading” of the party's future, and then adapting that reading into new adventures.

**Clues and Puzzles:** Since there are multiple interpretations of each rune, a rune or two carved in an unexpected place provides a clue in the form of a puzzle. If *Toloss* (𐌺) is hewn into a rock wall, does that mean there's a secret door nearby (Toloss is the rune of secrecy, and relates to a tale of lost treasure) or a deadly trap (it's also a death rune)? Maybe *both* . . . and maybe additional carvings down the corridor will deepen the mystery . . .

# THE TEMPHIS RUNES

## Rune Cards

A very-quick-and-very-dirty-and-kind-of-adorable substitute for runestones!  
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