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FULL METAL FANTASY ROLEPLAYING GAME
KINGS, NATIONS, AND GODS

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First digital edition: May 2013.

Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Kings, Nations, and Gods (digital version) . . . . ISBN: 978-1-939480-11-8 . . . . . PIP 406e

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POWERS OF THE IRON KINGDOMS

Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules introduced you to western Immoren and its diverse peoples. In addition to providing the core rules for the game, the book included an overview of the setting's history and a section detailing daily life in the Iron Kingdoms. While this gave players a taste for the world, nothing less than a full book could do justice to these unique nations.

With *Kings, Nations, and Gods* you can explore the Iron Kingdoms in unprecedented depth: this book presents details on the varied history, government, and society of Cygnar, Khador, Divided Llael, Ord, and the Protectorate of Menoth. Outside these core kingdoms of the setting, there are other nations and factions in western Immoren worthy of eventual examination. Cryx, Ios, Rhul, the Skorne Empire, and the powerful groups inhabiting the wilderness regions between bastions of civilization all offer plentiful game options and will be featured in future Full Metal Fantasy books.

Kings, Nations, and Gods contains a treasure trove of options for both player characters and antagonists, including new careers, abilities, spells, adventuring companies, gear, warjacks, and more.

Chapters open with an overview of the nation's history, starting in antiquity and tracing the important events of each sovereign's reign from the founding of the kingdom until the present. Next is a section describing the kingdom's government and military, delineating the powers of its rulers, describing its system of laws and politics, and summarizing the forces that defend it or advance its wars abroad. The society and culture section that follows this describes what makes each kingdom and its peoples distinct. This includes the place of religion in society, both for the major faiths and for the minor cults working from the shadows.

Next each chapter describes the lay of the land. From the duchies of Cygnar and Khador's volozkya to the territories of Divided Llael, Ord's gravs, and the provinces of the Protectorate of Menoth, each major region is explored in terms of geography, people, regional leaders, and overall place in the kingdom. The towns and cities are described, with major cities brought to life through detailed descriptions. Every city in the Iron Kingdoms has its own flavor and opportunities for adventure or intrigue, whether characters are native-born patriots, independent mercenaries, or foreign spies sent on missions from their homelands. The most powerful organizations headquartered in each kingdom are also detailed, along with descriptions of their goals and their reach abroad.

At the end of each chapter is an extensive player section containing expanded options for characters to employ during creation and advancement. For each kingdom a large number of thematic options are included for player characters as well as kingdom-specific allies or adversaries. While the *Core Rules* book offered a small number of iconic kingdom-specific careers, such as the Trencher and the Iron Fang, *Kings, Nations, and Gods* tremendously expands these possibilities.

In addition to entirely new careers, each player section also includes career options—customized variations on previously printed careers. For example, the Cygnar Player Section includes the new Stormsmith career as well as career options for Arcane Tempest Gun Mages, Cygnaran Warcasters, Illuminated Arcanists, Storm Lances (a Knight/Stormblade career option), and Trencher Commandos (a Ranger/Trencher career option). Game Masters running games with existing characters that have backgrounds appropriate to these options are encouraged to allow players to use these career options right away, modifying characters as needed. New careers can be incorporated as characters accumulate enough experience to acquire them.

It is worth taking the time to explore each player section regardless of where your game is set or the characters' origins. While some careers are exclusive to a given kingdom, others are widespread across western Immoren. For example, the Khador Player Section presents both the Man-O-War career, which is specifically Khadoran, and the Horseman career, which is open to all nations. Similarly, some chapters' Gear sections include military equipment and options readily found elsewhere.

Each player section ends with an extensive examination of kingdom-specific steamjacks, including military warjacks for that kingdom's army. New 'jack chassis types and upgrades are provided to replicate each kingdom's versatile arsenal. Military warcasters will aspire to control these formidable machines, knowing all the while that their enemies on the opposing side of the battlefield are bolstered by their own powerful warjacks.

Filling in each kingdom's military careers, gear, and warjack arsenals is a major aspect of the player sections of this book and enables Game Masters to incorporate military themes in their adventures. An entirely military-themed adventure provides an exciting backdrop for new campaigns. Specific adventuring companies have been included in each chapter to facilitate this type of play.

Military careers and themes add depth and excitement to non-military games as well. A scenario set in the criminal underworld of a major city could run into trouble with the local army garrison, while characters exploring the wilderness might be intercepted by a foreign invasion force. A pirate-based game can be enriched by including clashes with the Ordic Royal Navy and its Ordic Marines and Trident Arcanists. Many adventuring mercenaries have military backgrounds, which may have left them with old obligations that could resurface to test their deeper loyalties.

Countless opportunities for adventure, action, intrigue, and suspense lie within the provinces and cities of western Immoren's major kingdoms. Before long you will be caught up in the culture, lore, and flavor of each nation. A wealth of stories and adventures await!

IRON KINGDOMS
CAPITOL
CITY
FORTRESS
FEATURE OF INTEREST
RAILROAD
ROAD
MOUNTAINS
HILLS
FOREST (temperate)
FOREST (boreal)
SWAMP
SCALE (in miles)
25 50 75 100 200 300 400
N
S
E
W
MEREDIUS
KHADOR
CRYX
CYGNAR
ORD
LLAEL
RHUL
IOS
PROTECTORATE
BLOODSTONE MARCHES
The Khardic Sea
Sea of Blackice
Wailing Sea
Sea of a Thousand Souls
Gulf of Cygnar
Winterborn Lake
Lake Nyereek
Tapping River
Icebrand
Targoss Lakes
Forest
ULDENFROST
Helvongen River
Ides River
Searsfell Forest
Falconstream
TVERKUTSK
Helvongen Bay
Beladal the Maid
Beladal the Crone
Nesh River
The Rimeshaws
Shard Spires
Icebladee River
Borokuhn Mountains
DROTUHN
Malgur Forest
Nyssehatha Mountains
Burningfrost Plains
Broken Mirror
Glass Peaks
GRODDENGUARD
FARHALLOW
Foundation River
GRIDDENGUARD
GHORD
ULGAR
Armsdeep
Flatfell River
Skybridge
Ageros River
North Agreed
BRUNDER
Aeryth Dawnguard
Hammerfall
HELLSPASS
Eversael
Silver Tip Peaks
Ranger Cliff Road
Thundercliff Peaks
Gravewater
SKIROV
PORSK
Wolfwood
Yelkhor Bluff
Severed Reach
Ice Watch
OHK
Bitterrock
CHEROV-ON-DRON
Fort Brunsis
Castle Tsepesei
Kovosk Hills
Veryhorg Headlands
Uld Vroggen
NEW VROGGEN
Palace of Khazomir
Bronc's Point
SKROVENBERG
Lothpool
KHARDOV
Rastok Castle
Kalvorn Hills
Blackroot Wood
Mastrad
Lake Mastrad
Broken Sword
Gallowswood
Borstov Landing
Kalvorn Bay
Shadowald
Searwall
MIDFAST
Marata Hills
Lord Khazarek's Tomb
PORT VLADOVAR
Sailor's Lament
CORBHEN
Lake Vannorcar
Mere Daron
Mere Tagno
CMERIN
FELLIG
Fort Baird
Deepwood Tower
Thornwood Forest
Almare Woods
ARMANDOR
Rabanour
North Berek Moors
The Warrens
HEARTHSTONE
Torry Torvall
BERCK
Berck Harbor
Olgunholt
Fisherbrook
Stonebridge
CARRE DOVA
Shearwater Narrows
Bay of Stone
FIVE FINGERS
Dragon's Tail
Serpent's Gorge
TARNA
Lake Thornhead
PT. BOURNE
RAINSMARKET
Dragonspine Peaks
Fort Ballon
Fort Falk
The Gnarls
Caulder Keep
Caulder Pass
Craal Valley
Caerly's Crag
CERYL
Watcher Peaks
Fort Whiteroak
Demonhead Pass
Upper Wyrmwall
FHARIN
Marcrfells
Kortar Fastness
Rotterhorn
Pillars of Rotterhorn
NEW LARKHOLM
ORVEN
KING'S VINE
Deer Druckerung
Westwatch
Rimmerdeep Lake
IRONHEAD STATION
Tower
Eastwall
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Boar Hills
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RAMARCK
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Forthway River
Steelwater
Ingrane
Salt Walls
SUL
CASPIA
Gelis
Elmal Hills
Steelmane
Wyrmwall Mountains
Gulf of Middlebank
Sentinel Point Naval Fortress
The Gnarlbacks
CLOCKERS COVE
HIGHGATE
Quarry Reef
Aerennia
Monastery of the Order of the Fist
Sithney
Deadlands Bay
Harber River
Fenn Swamp
Southshield
Great Cygnaran Observatory
Broken Coast
Sandbottom Point
Capewall Bay
MERCIR
ANCIENT ICTHIER
Arlentus
BLACKROCK
Dragon's Roost
Dragonmoor
The Pits
BLACKWATER
Bard's Branch
SKELL
Castle Moorcreig
Scarbellow River
Wyrm's Teeth
DREGGSMOUTH
Broken Skulls Cove
White Shard Reef
MOROVAN
Hell's Hook
Bloodshore Prison
Gate of Storms
The Moon Arch
SHYRR
Archenbench
LYNSHYNAL
IERYN
Mount Borgo
Harrenhold
Old Karska
RYNYR
Rivermeet
LAEDRY
Redwall
Willow Barrens
ELSINBERG
Gregwind Tower
RHYDDEN
IRYSS
Aeryth Ellowyn
The Forbidden Temple
Tsingrah
Misthough
Gates of Mists
Tower Peaks
MERYWYN
Dock Lake
Ravensgard
Northgard
Bloodmeath Marsh
Glimmerwood
Twilight Gate
Hawksmire
Mount Skyfeth Breen
Scarlet forth
Klakhor fortress
Tyrant's Lash
Widower's Wood
Castle of the Keys
Combs Beacon
CORVIS
Blindwater Lake
Fort Rigker
TERNON CRAG
Tomb of Lost Souls
Greybranch Gap
Balaash fortress
Sand Watch

CYGNAR

INTRODUCTION

The kingdom of Cygnar is a land of contrast and division, might and vulnerability, from the halls of power to the most remote townships. The coastline stretches along the foreboding Broken Coast all the way north to the Dragon's Tongue River and the interior bristles with mountains and dense forest, yet it boasts bustling centers of industry and scholarship as well as swathes of untamed wilderness. The nation has long been a pioneer in engineering and scientific advancement, and its army fields the most advanced mechanika in the Iron Kingdoms. It is a kingdom mightily proud of its historical achievements while all too aware of its fragile future.

Despite a temporary lull in hostilities, the threat of war looms over Cygnar. In recent months the Thornwood has fallen to Khador, and the Protectorate of Menoth was beaten back just before its zealous forces could take the capital. Even now the armies of Cryx and the Skorne Empire test its western and eastern borders. Yet despite all these threats, Cygnar endures.

Historically Cygnar's people have been thought to be welcoming and fair-minded, with a diverse population representing many races and creeds, an economy that encourages trade with other kingdoms, and a government receptive to foreign envoys. The largest Rhulic conclaves in the Iron Kingdoms are in Cygnar, as are notable populations of gobbers, ogrun, and even Iosan exiles. Several of the largest populations of trollkin live within Cygnaran borders. This inclination toward open-mindedness has been challenged and sometimes shattered by internal strife, including uprisings by trollkin and a religious civil war. Today there is no part of Cygnar free of troubles, whether from internal or external threats.

Cygnarans live amid a perilous time, and the memory of recent terrors is still fresh in the minds of many. Fourteen years ago a tyrant occupied the throne, a man who abused his authority to inflict a corrupt inquisition upon his subjects. While the despot was overthrown by his brother, good King Leto Raelthorne, the strain of recent wars has undermined confidence in his rule. Unrest stirs in the halls of the Royal Assembly even as the defenders of the realm train and arm themselves against the inevitable resumption of war.

HISTORY

As with the other Iron Kingdoms, Cygnar's history begins with the Corvis Treaties. But the roots of the kingdom stretch back to the ancient time when civilization was initially carved from the wilderness by the first Menite priest-kings. Cygnar can rightfully claim its capital as the oldest enduring bastion of human civilization in western Immoren.

CALACIA AND CASPIA

Most historians trace the roots of Cygnaran history to the founding of the Hold of Calacia in 2800 BR by the descendants of Cinot. This fortress was erected at the mouth of the Black River under the direction of the warrior-priest Valent of Thrace, who united the formerly scattered Menites who had settled into this region after the Time of the Burning Sky. That disaster had driven Menites from the first great city of Icthier as the southern region became a desolate wasteland, the descendants of Cinot, had slowly spread north. Until Thrace, those dwelling near the Black River lived in disparate small villages, fending for themselves against the horrors descending from the Wyrmwall Mountains to the west.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF CYGNAR

Ruler: King Leto Raelthorne

Government Type: Parliamentary Monarchy

Capital: Caspia

Ethnic Groups & Approx. Population: 3.4 million Caspian; 2.7 million Midlunder; 1.2 million Thurian; 400,000 Morridane; 265,000 gobber; 242,000 trollkin; 180,000 Ryn; 135,000 bogrin; 120,000 Rhulfolk; 90,000 ogrun; 80,000 Tordoran; 20,000 Idrian; 18,000 Khard; 14,000 Umbrean; 12,000 Scharde; 1,000 Iosan; 300 Nyss

Languages: Cygnaran (primary), Llaelese, Ordic, Rhulic, Khadoran, Sulese

Climate: Temperate in the north and central regions, moderated by prevailing southwest winds, with more than half the days overcast in the north. In the south, sub-tropical to tropical with frequent showers.

Terrain: Mostly rugged hills and mountains in the central regions (Wyrmwall); mostly flat or gently sloping along the Black River to the east; high plains along the northwest and central banks of the Dragon's Tongue River; swamps along much of the coastal lowlands in the south and southwest.

Natural Resources: Coal, petroleum, mercury, natural gas, sulfur, tin, copper, limestone, iron ore, pyrite, salt, clay, chalk, quartz, arable land.

Valent brought them together to create his great hold and soon fostered a thriving city. His people multiplied in the safety he provided and spread into the nearest wild lands, taming them and establishing farms. At the limits of civilization, a great wall was eventually erected that would be called the Shield of Thrace. Even as the Hold of Calacia prospered, the savage tribes of the Molgur were spreading and becoming bolder.

Golivant was the first great priest-king to arise after Valent, and it was his destiny to forge his people into a great army that would march forth against the Molgur. The Molgur retaliated in kind and swept as a great horde down from the mountains upon the Shield of Thrace, but Golivant proved his civilization would not fall so easily. The wall held, and the will of the Molgur was broken. In the years that followed, Golivant marched into the mountains and drove out the savage tribes, who were never again united as a people.

Golivant's legacy was nearly undone after his death, when rivals killed his son and fractured the unified people of the river valleys. It would fall to his grandson, Golivant III, to end this civil strife. Under his rule, Calacia expanded and its walls rose ever higher and stronger. These edifices he saw consecrated in the name of Menoth and deemed holy work that would stand the tests of time. Calacia became the city of Caspia, known thereafter as the City of Walls.

THOUSAND CITIES ERA

While Caspia would become the greatest of the southern kingdoms, it was not alone. The dark kingdom of Morrdh came to power before even the first stones were laid for Calacia. Morrdh would leave an indelible imprint on the southern lands, primarily as a vile enemy to those who would inherit the region. Whereas Golivant was blessed with the favor of Menoth and used his power to eradicate the Molgur, Morrdh took another path. Despite being founded by descendants of Cinot, it turned from the Creator and swore pacts with unholy beings. Its people learned forbidden powers, and the dead walked among them.

As Caspia prospered in the south after the collapse of the Molgur, other fiefdoms and townships arose across western Immoren. During the Thousand Cities Era, fortified towns across the region looked to the needs of their own people, engaged in trade, and waged occasional wars, whether for conquest or to settle their disputes. Around 1850 BR, a confederation of fiefdoms north of Caspia entered into a loose alliance that became known as the Midar and later as the Midlunds. Never united under a single king, these diverse communities nonetheless shared common interests and worked to secure their mutual defense, particularly against Morrdh. The conflicts between these two peoples would rage for hundreds of years as Morrdh sought to expand its power into the south.

Along the western shores emerged the kingdom of Thuria, which expanded its borders through both conquest and diplomacy to become a sea and land power. A sophisticated people, the Thurians became noted for their oratory, debate, and grasp of philosophy and did much to spread education and learning. They eventually came into conflict with the Tordorans farther to the north. That people proved to be superior in war, particularly at sea. Later in the era the Tordorans subjugated the Thurians and eventually waged their own wars against the Khardic Empire, which dominated the frozen north.

This era, marked by the rise of the Twins, was shaped as much by the rise of new philosophies as it was the spread of civilization. Though the ascensions of Morrow and Thamar resonated across western Immoren, they were felt nowhere so keenly as in the lands of Caspia. The two were born in that city, and it was here most of their great deeds took place. After Morrow was given dominion over the city, the Twins fell into strife and Morrow banished his sister. His years of rule changed the city irrevocably and provided an ideal of leadership still held to this day.

The final confrontation in the lives of the Twins—a clash that would result in both of their deaths and subsequent ascensions—took place in Caspia after Thamar returned to battle her brother. While the Morrowan faith eventually spread across western Immoren, it began in Caspia and was preserved at the Divinium, a hidden monastery built in the mountains to the west of the City of Walls. This secret church was vital to the survival of the cult of Morrow in these early days as the Menites waged a bitter war to eradicate the upstart faith.

The teachings of the Twins took deep root in Caspia and Thuria, which in later centuries became centers of higher learning. The faith of Morrow spread quickly through the Midar townships, which were intimately familiar with the face of evil through their periodic conflicts with Morrdh. Midaran accounts say Morrow's guiding hand led to their victory over those depraved people in 1500 BR and ended their domination of the Thornwood. After the destruction of Morrdh, its scattered people became the Morridanes, the last of the major peoples that would join Cygnar after the Corvis Treaties. Morridanes still face prejudice from the legacy of their ancestry, and most take no pride in it. In the modern era they have become a more rustic but stalwart people of the northern woods, both familiar with and wary of the darkness buried beneath the earth.

At the end of the Thousand Cities Era, Caspia and Thuria enjoyed a golden age called the Clockwork Renaissance, with tremendous advancements in engineering, architecture, navigation, astronomy, and the arts. The center of the Church of Morrow was moved from the Divinium to Caspia at the site of Morrow's ascension. Great works of sacred architecture and sculpture were erected while steamships plied the rivers and coastal waters. The faiths of Menoth and Morrow reached a reconciliation, allowing the priests and worshipers of these contentious religions to coexist.

THE ORGOTH CONQUEST

Its full potential never fulfilled, the Clockwork Renaissance ended abruptly with the arrival of blackships on the western shores of the continent. The invaders struck first against the Khardic Empire in the north, but soon their thirst for war and bloodshed reached across western Immoren. In the following decades, additional blackships landed in Thuria and western Caspia, and the Thousand Cities were swallowed one by one.

CYGNAR
CAPITOL
CITY
FORTRESS
FEATURE OF INTEREST
RAILROAD
ROAD
DUCHIES AND PROVINCES
MOUNTAINS
HILLS
FOREST (temperate)
FOREST (boreal)
SWAMP
SCALE (in miles)
25
50
100
200
250
Great Zerutsk
KHARDOV
RORSCHIK
Lake Volningrad
VOLNINGRAD
Rustok Castle
Wood
Moskrad
Lake Moskrad
RUSTOKNIA
DOROGNIA
Broken Sword
Gallowswood
Searswall
MIDFAST
Boarsgate
Murata Hills
MURIO
Lake Vannogcar
CORBHEN
Fort Baird
FELLIG
CMERIN
Mere Tagao
ALMARE
COSETIO
Almare Woods
ARMANDOR
North Berck Moors
TORDORO
The Warrens
HEARTHSTONE
BERCK
HETHA
Olgunholt
CARRE DOVA
Bay of Stone
FIVE FINGERS
Serpent's Gorge
TARNA
Dragon's Tongue River
PT. BOURNE
Fort Balton
OXMEATH
The Gnarls
THURIA
Guilder's Run
CERYL
CLOUTSDOWNS
Demonhead Pass
Watcher Peaks
WESTERN MIDLUNDS
Lake Thornmere
Torre Wythmoor
WYTHMOOR
Mollado
Fisherbrook
Stonebridge
BOURNWORTH
THORNWOOD
Torre Torcail
Rohannor
Deepwood Tower
NORTHFOREST
Thornwood Forest
Blindwater Lake
fort Rhyker
CORVIS
Northguard
Ravensgard
Bloodsmeath Marsh
BLOODSBANE
Black River
Drek Lake
Glimmerwood
Widower's Wood
Comb's Beacon
TERNON CRAG
Hawksmire
Mount Shyleth Breen
Twilight Gate
Scarleforth
Klokhor Fortress
Castle of the Keys
Greybranch Gap
Tomb of Lost Souls
BAINSMARKET
NORTHERN MIDLUNDS
BLOODSTONE MARCHES
Balaash fortress
Dragonspine Peaks
fort falk
Caerly's Crag
Crael Valley
Barrick
EASTERN MIDLUNDS
Fort Whiterock
FHARIN
Upper Wyrmwall
Marchfells
Kortar Fastness
Rotter
Pillars of Rotterhorn
NEW LARKHOLM
RIMMOCKSDALE
ORVEN
SOUTHERN MIDLUNDS
KING'S VINE
WESTSHORE
Westwatch
Rimmocksdale Lake
IRONHEAD STATION
Nine Stone
Henge Hold
Eastwall
Black River
Tower Judgment
Boar Hills
Drer Drakkerung
Dying Strands
Gharlghast Island
RAMARCK
MANSGRAVE
STEELWATER FLATS
SULONMARCH
IMER
Erud Hills
Gelis
WESTINMARSH
Ingrane
Forbridge River
Steelwater
SHIELDPOINT
Steeltongue
CASPIA
Salt Vale
SUL
Windwatcher's Passage
SCHARDE ISLANDS
GIANT'S HEAD
Wyrmwall Mountains
Sentinel Point Naval fortress
GEDORRA
The Guardians
Gulf of Middlebank
SOUTHPOINT
CLOCKERS COVE
HIGHGATE
Acrennia
Quartz Reef
Gulf of Cygnar
Dragon's Roost
Dragonmoor
FENNMAR
Fenn Swamp
VARHDAN
BLACKROCK
Southshield
Great Cygnaran Observatory
Broken Coast
Deadsands Bay
Sithney
The Pits
BLACKWATER
MERCIR
Barrel Branch
SKELL
Sandbottom Point
Eggwall Bay
RAELTHORNE
Scalefloor River
CULLENROCK
Castle Moorcraig
Wyrm's Teeth
DREGGSMOUTH
Bloodshore Prison

Only Caspia remained free, although at a cost. The city's armies could barely defend its great walls, and its outer territories fell to the Orgoth. In the midst of a great siege, the invaders feigned an interest in seeking terms, a ruse that lured the high priests of both the Menite and the Morrowan religions out to be captured and executed. Even this did not break the Caspian will, and the city did not surrender. In the centuries that followed the people of Caspia remained free, though the city's isolation forced them to go to extremes to support the city's diminishing population.

The enslaved people of western Immoren became chattel to their conquerors. Ancient divisions were forgotten as whole populations were uprooted and enslaved. The Orgoth created a single province from the lands to the south of the Dragon's Tongue and west of the Black River. From these lands, raw resources and thousands of slaves were sent back across the ocean, throwing the region into a long dark age.

For centuries the Immorese lived under the lash. Their toil built lasting edifices and paved roads to connect Orgoth provinces, and the city of Corvis rose from the swamps by the labors of thousands. Slowly the waterways began to move with commerce and industry, albeit under the watchful gaze of the region's hated masters.

This era saw a tremendous decline in the faith of Menoth, whose priests could no longer make claims to absolute authority. There was a commensurate rise in the Church of Morrow, whose message of self-realization, patience, and benevolence struck a chord with the oppressed masses.

REBELLION

All who dwell in modern Cygnar know in their bones the Rebellion could never have happened without their ancestors. While all Immorese suffered under tyrants, the seeds of rebellion began with those who would be united under the Cygnus.

It is said Morrow foresaw the faiths of Immoren extinguished by the Orgoth and in the face of this crisis Thamar negotiated the Gift of Magic. Sorcerers began to be born among the Immorese, particularly in the Thurian region. Under the direction of Sebastian Kerwin the first conspiracy of arcanists founded both the Arcanist's Academe and the Circle of the Oath in the city of Ceryl. The study of magic and alchemy was refined and the foundations laid for centuries of arcane advancement—and, more important, for the creation of weapons to arm the growing Rebellion.

The Rebellion truly began in Fharin in 1 AR as the Orgoth prepared to send eight thousand slaves across the waters of the Meredius. The early success of those first rebels ignited the Iron Fellowship, which drew its following from the people of Thuria, the Midlunds, and Caspia. Though the Iron Fellowship was soon crushed, it set an example for those who followed, and thus the Rebellion raged for two hundred years across western Immoren.

Thurian battle-mages joined ragtag armies armed with the first firearms. Ultimately, however, it would be the colossals that would drive the Orgoth away, and their invention was inextricably bound up in Cygnaran innovation. The great foundries of Caspia would assemble these great machines using materials provided in an arrangement with the northern nation of Rhul.

The construction of the colossals was risky and by no means assured, endangered near the end by Khardic spies who stole plans for the great machines and built their own colossal foundries in Korsk. These foundries were discovered by the Orgoth, who visited severe reprisals upon the people there. Fortunately, none of this prevented Caspia's colossals from marching forth alongside southern armies to lay siege to and eventually obliterate the Orgoth strongholds. The leaders who coordinated the forces of the Rebellion were known as the Council of Ten, and after years of fighting, their victory was well earned. In the aftermath of these battles, they met in the city of Corvis to lay down the terms by which the Iron Kingdoms would be established.

FOUNDING OF CYGNAR

The people of the south entered into the Corvis Treaties in 203 AR from a position of strength, having won countless victories using the colossals and the battle-mages who controlled them. This was fortunate, as the discussions about the borders of these nascent kingdoms had become contentious. Northern delegates were eager to restore the ancient borders of the Khardic Empire, but this was generally deemed unacceptable in light of the divisions wrought by over six centuries of foreign rule. In the end the Council of Ten settled on the borders established by the Orgoth in the creation of Cygnar, Khador, Llael, and Ord. Thus, southern Thuria, the vast Midlunds, the forest that had once been home to the Morridanes, and Caspia joined to become the nation of Cygnar.

Once established, Cygnar began the work of rebuilding and recovery. The first king was Benewic of the Caspian House of Govant, who was crowned Benewic I and known as "the Bold" in the Council of Ten. His armies had borne the banner of a golden Cygnus on a field of blue, and this became the symbol of Cygnar.

Benewic ably managed the early years of reconstruction, enforcing peace during a chaotic time. He created the Royal Assembly as a body of the kingdom's nobles to enact laws under the will of the king for the common good. Benewic is noted for entering into equitable treaties with the trollkin of both the Thornwood and the Gnarls, represented by the only trollkin to sit on the Council of Ten, Grindar of the Tolok Kriel. He also cemented a formal friendship with Rhul in 204 AR, which resulted in the Treaty of Enclaves in Cygnar. Benewic offered Rhul several pieces of land deep in the Wyrmwall Mountains, and in turn the dwarves contributed tremendously to rebuilding Cygnaran cities while establishing their own thriving enclaves, subject to Rhulic law. Similar treaties were eventually adopted in the other Iron Kingdoms.

Benewic's death during a hunting accident stalled reconstruction efforts and put the continuance of the Cygnaran government in peril. The next five years saw continuous political strife as no less than thirteen claims were made on the throne. Much of this bickering had to do with the uncertain state of Cygnaran law regarding noble lines dating

from the Thousand Cities Era. Cygnar's early laws defaulted to the Caspian precedence, which made no stipulations for the bloodlines of Thuria or the Midlunds.

The unstable political situation offered opportunities for outside meddling. Herald of Bloodsbane, descended from one of the great Midlunds houses, called on Llaelese supporters to help him seize the throne in 223 AR. This was accomplished with very little bloodshed, and his success forced some stability on the capital, although his court remained a hotbed of intrigue. Herald was indebted to his Llaelese allies and was pressured into accepting unfavorable trade terms as well as hosting a large number of troublesome Llaelese ambassadors at the royal palace.

It was not just in the arena of politics that the shine had rubbed off the anticipated golden era after the Rebellion. In 232 AR the Stronghold of the Fraternal Order of Wizardry in Ceryl was rocked by scandal—the secretive cabals in the city had developed appetites for unwholesome power and had delved into matters better left unexplored. This led the prestigious magus, Copernicum, to renounce the order. Evading several assassination attempts to silence him, Copernicum and his closest supporters sought sanctuary in the Sancteum. They allied themselves with the Church of Morrow and founded the Order of Illumination, a group dedicated to hunting down those who practiced black magic.

Just a year later, King Herald was assassinated; within days, the Llaelese King Kyrvin III was also killed, likely both victims of the same conspiracy. The culprits were never identified, as the suspects were too many. With the support of the Royal Assembly, Benewic's illegitimate son came forward to succeed him. He adopted the name of his father and was thus crowned Benewic II, eventually earning the moniker Benewic the Fair for his thoughtful and just rule. He proved to be a proper heir of the Govant dynasty.

COLOSSAL WARS AND TROLLKIN UPRISINGS

After taking measures to rein in Cygnar's nobility, Benewic II faced the first stirrings of strife between the young Iron Kingdoms. This began with the rise to the Khadoran throne of Lavesh Tzepesci, who proved to be a vicious and ambitious tyrant. Early in his reign, Lavesh restored Khadoran industry and mining—not for the good of his people, whom he worked like slaves, but to arm for war.

By 241 AR mages of the Fraternal Order of Wizardry had managed to refine the cerebral matrix into the first true steamjack cortex, small enough to be set within a more modestly sized machine. This and other mechanikal improvements resulted in the first laborjacks, steamjacks built for aiding in construction and the hauling of goods. Wealth flowed into the order as demand for laborjacks outstripped production.

In Khador, Lavesh feared Cygnar's arsenal of colossals. The Khadoran sovereign would not be satisfied until Khador had built its own. Proclaiming himself the lord of Old Korska, a region ceded to Llael in the Corvis Treaties, Lavesh stirred his nobles to action with fresh outrage over post-Rebellion injustices. He encouraged a conspiracy that began with the infiltration of the Fraternal Order of Wizardry by Khadoran agents. These arcanists stole a vast repository of lore and, upon returning to the Motherland, earned positions and titles as the founders of the Greylords Covenant. This arcane order became inextricably bound to the Khadoran Army, providing the mechanikal expertise to build modern factories for laborjack production and to improve the designs of the original colossals.

Any potential Cygnaran response was forestalled by the trollkin uprisings that swept the Gnarls and the Thornwood beginning in 242 AR. In the decades after Benewic I, many Cygnarans seeking lumber for reconstruction efforts had committed treaty violations. Trollkin tempers flared, and they retaliated swiftly with violence. Ord experienced similar intrusions into its eastern and southern townships. This stretched across several years of difficult fighting in hostile terrain and eventually forced King Benewic II to order his colossals into the fray. With nothing to match them, trollkin died by the hundreds beneath the pulverizing blows of these machines. In 247 AR the kriels surrendered, ending what is now known as the First Trollkin War.

Cygnaran spies learned of the great Khadoran foundries built at the behest of King Lavesh, and so Cygnar's colossals and the companies assigned to support them were stationed in the Thornwood. These became the Colossal Guard, a vigilant force whose existence was hoped might temper Khador's enthusiasm for conquest. Despite this, in 250 AR King Lavesh unleashed the might of his nation, including many newly built machines, against both Ord and Llael. Cygnar could not stand idly by while its neighbors were crushed, so it sent armies to join Ord and Llael against the northern aggressor.

This war took a tremendous toll on all these nations and shattered the notion that there could be peace between the Iron Kingdoms. Cygnaran generals were appalled to see their colossals outfought and outmaneuvered by Khador's more modern machines. The great forges in Caspia were tasked with improving the work of previous generations, and soon new colossals took to the fields. The battles of this war ground on for years as each side pushed their resources, economies, and citizens to the breaking point.

King Benewic II was so intent on victory that he personally led his forces in the war, hoping to inspire them with his presence. While this was initially effective, he was eventually ridden down by Khadoran cavalry and his severed head was paraded before the horrified Cygnaran lines.

This might have shattered the morale of the grief-stricken Cygnaran Army, but Benewic's heir Woldred had been fighting nearby and rallied the soldiers to avenge their king. Woldred proved to be more than a worthy successor as he pushed the Khadorans back in victory after victory, gaining momentum that took him nearly to Korsk. In 257 AR, with its treasury bankrupt and its army in full retreat, Khador surrendered, finally ending the seven-year-long conflict. King Lavesh lived on to oppress his people for another fifteen years, but his aspirations had been quashed. The peace terms forced Khador to dismantle both its colossals and the factories used to build them.

The war was nearly as costly for the victors as it was for the defeated, leaving Cygnar and Ord vulnerable. In the intervening years, the trollkin kriels had regained their strength, having remained as angry and resentful as ever. The Second Trollkin War began in 262 AR, and this time the kriels were better armed and organized and had learned lessons from past battles. Taking advantage of the difficult terrain in the great forests, they defeated Cygnar's colossals. Built to lay siege and to fight other great machines, colossals proved ill equipped to give chase through the trees after small bands of elusive skirmishers.

King Woldred ordered his generals to build weapons better suited to this war. This gave rise to the modern warjacks, smaller machines better able to navigate more treacherous battlefields. These warjacks stood against the kriels and gave Cygnar a clear advantage in driving the trollkin back to their villages. When Woldred met with them at Hadriel Fens, however, he wisely perceived the trollkin had legitimate grievances. Ultimately, the king generously granted many concessions to the kriels and promised to help them rebuild their homes.

RESTORATION

The end of the Colossal War and the onset of Woldred's long reign initiated a period of great prosperity and innovation known as the Restoration. The king was a tireless servant for the public good and earned the epithet Woldred the Diligent. In addition to proving himself as a soldier on the battlefield and a broker for peace, Woldred was a learned man and oversaw many reforms. He commissioned projects to improve the infrastructure for both trade and defense. During his time on the throne, he laid the foundation for the nation, and all Cygnaran kings who came after him benefitted from his work.

The Colossal Guard was decommissioned in 286 AR. That same year, Woldred implemented his last and most enduring legacy in Cygnaran law when he drafted his Accord-by-Hand Covenant. This law enabled Cygnaran kings to name a successor rather than heeding primogeniture.

Woldred hoped this measure might spare Cygnar the vagaries of uncertain dynasties such as had proven ruinous in ancient Caspia. He also wished to avoid the battles over claims to the throne that had disrupted Cygnar in the years after the death of his grandfather, Benewic I. His accord included stipulations that the chosen successor must be of a notable and acknowledged lineage, but it allowed that the descendants of certain houses of Midar and Thuria were as prestigious as the lines of Caspia. As had been the case since ancient times, succession was to be witnessed and overseen by ranking priests of Menoth, who had the divine sanction to bless the reigns of kings.

THE GRIM YEARS OF MALAGANT

Regrettably, when Woldred died in 289 AR his own terms of succession could not be found, and he died without issue. Ranking Menite priests insisted Woldred's terms had indeed been drafted and feared they had been stolen. This seemed to be confirmed when Woldred's nephew Malagant stormed the palace and seized the throne. A tyrant, Malagant silenced all who spoke against him, executing dozens of ranking nobles and gaining a stranglehold over the Royal Assembly.

This bloody beginning worsened when public outcry shook Malagant's hold on the throne. The king entered into an alliance with the Church of Morrow, which had grown strong during the years of the Rebellion. By then Cygnar's population had become overwhelmingly Morrowan, and many thought it unseemly that the Menite priesthood retained its traditional grip on the government. Endorsing Malagant brought the Church of Morrow into the political realm as never before. This also served to pacify many of the kingdom's citizens and nobles.

Then Malagant turned on the Caspian Temple of Menoth. Against the advice of his Morrowan allies, he accused the temple's priests of high treason and had them arrested, tried, and executed. By 290 AR over two hundred Menite priests and officials had been sent to the gallows. This provoked years of severe religious unrest and created a lasting rift between the two faiths. Once secure in his power, in 293 AR King Malagant decreed the Church of Morrow to be the state religion of Cygnar, and all ancient rights once granted to Menite priests were revoked. Dozens of temples in the western city were desecrated, and several were set ablaze. Malagant sent the army into the city, allegedly to protect Menite citizens whom he ordered relocated to the eastern city while seizing their assets for the crown. The city east of the Black River became home to the city's Menite minority, cementing the religious division.

Subsequent generations debated at length Malagant's actions and his worth as a king. Most argued that the elevation of the Church of Morrow was the only positive aspect of his reign. Others insisted Malagant had set in motion events that would lead to the Cygnaran Civil War. For better or worse, Malagant the Grim left his mark on the nation.

THE THREAT OF NORTHERN EXPANSIONISM

The year 293 AR also marked the beginning of what would eventually be called the Border Wars, as Khador launched new offensives to recover lands it considered its own. The timing of this conflict was no coincidence: Khador's Queen Cherize sought to exploit Cygnar's religious struggles. She manipulated a large tribe of savages living in the northern Thornwood called the Tharn, hoping to use them to seize a portion of the northern forest. Her aim was to cut off the Black River and by doing so interfere with Cygnar's ability to come to the aid of Llael.

The involvement of the Tharn alarmed the Cygnarans sufficiently to set aside their religious differences. The Tharn were reputed to be cannibals and cultists of the Devourer Wurm, a devolved people descended from the ancient Molgur. King Malagant capitalized on this reputation as well as on rumors that Queen Cherize was a Thamarite sorceress by describing this struggle as one of good versus evil, of civilization versus the Wurm. The Church of Morrow added defenders and priests to the battles along the wild northern border. Not to be outdone, the realm's beleaguered Menite communities sent warriors as well, eager both to prove their patriotism and to battle against worshipers of the Wurm.

Ultimately, the war in the Thornwood proved inconclusive, and the sovereigns of both Khador and Cygnar ended their reigns

under mysterious and possibly supernatural circumstances. Queen Cherize vanished in 295 AR and no corpse was ever found to inter in the royal tombs. King Malagant suffered a number of personal tragedies during the course of the war, including betrayal by one of his champions and the death of his beloved queen. Two months after Cherize vanished, Malagant died of an unnatural wasting disease. Yet the deaths of these sovereigns did not end the Border Wars.

Given that Malagant's claim to the throne had been dubious and Woldred's terms had never been discovered, the Cygnaran court was once again left to debate the succession—and in the interim the military assumed control over the nation. The Khadoran transfer of power resolved itself more quickly; though too young to rule, the child queen Ayn Vanar V, daughter of Cherize, inherited the crown. Power thus fell to Lord Regent Velibor, who swore to serve in her stead until her majority. Seeing the weakness of the Cygnaran position and firmly believing in the destiny of his nation, Velibor launched the First Expansion War.

Rather than confronting Cygnar directly, Velibor moved against Ord with great success despite the heroic efforts of the Ordic Army. Ord sent envoys to ask for Cygnar's help, but that nation and its people were wary of war and proffered only token military support. Seeing little aid forthcoming for his enemies, Velibor sent a second, smaller, army into western Llael.

Neither Ord nor Llael proved capable of matching the might of the Khadoran armies; even divided, the northern forces were well equipped and backed by a steady supply of formidable warjacks. Llael and Ord had their own machines as well as stalwart soldiers, but these nations lacked Khador's military advances and their soldiers were poorly equipped. Llael's army supplemented their numbers with mercenaries and undertrained levies, while Ord's soldiers were chronically short of essential supplies. Thus, Khador managed to seize lands from both nations. In 301 AR the Ordic King Alvor Cathor I was killed in the Battle of the Broken Sword. A year later, the northmen seized the port city of Radahvo, considered their greatest victory of the war.

With an uprising of dozens of barbaric tribes from the northern mountains, events soon turned against Khador. In what seemed a masterful stroke of guile, the shrewd Lord Velibor turned potential disaster into opportunity by convincing these tribes to sack Ord. What he did not anticipate was that the involvement of savage forces would have unforeseen consequences for him, just as it had for Queen Cherize.

The Ordic defenders at Midfast proved their mettle against far superior numbers. Leading them was a humble captain named Markus Graza, a devout Morrowan who rose to the occasion to become a hero of his age. After a long and brutal siege, Markus is credited with single-handedly halting the barbarian horde outside Midfast by challenging its numerous chieftains to consecutive duels. While this gambit ultimately claimed his life, he ascended after death to become a blessed servant of Morrow. The sight of this miracle prompted the surrender and conversion of many of the gathered barbarians and resulted in the withdrawal of the Khadoran Army, as their pious senior officer had no stomach for fighting against those who had the favor of the Prophet.

This did not end the Border Wars but was a turning point in Khador's fortunes. The long conflict had become unpopular in Korsk, a sentiment that only increased as the war effort ground to a halt. Velibor, once the hero of the capital, became despised.

After more than twelve years without a sovereign, the Royal Assembly in Cygnar finally crowned Juliana, a cousin of King Malagant and niece of King Woldred who would become known as the Maiden Queen. She sent armies in support of both Ord and Llael, providing a fresh infusion of warjacks and soldiers. A cagey ruler, she sent soldiers to battle with tactical precision, careful to reserve Cygnar's strength. She saw to the defenses of the borders and established strong supply lines. The war would drag on for several more years, but Cygnar weathered it well.

In Khador, Queen Ayn Vanar V reached her majority in 307 AR, but it took some years before she escaped the sheltered environment Lord Velibor had crafted. By 313 AR she realized her regent and his military advisors had utterly bankrupted the Khadoran treasury and had brought the nation nearly to ruin. She ousted Velibor and ended the war, entering into peace negotiations with Queen Juliana. In later centuries, some would criticize Juliana for not pressing the advantage and gaining better terms in the peace treaty. As it was, however, Khador retained most of the lands it had seized from Ord, although it returned Llael's western holdings. Radahvo, now called Vladovar, would eventually become the home of the Khadoran fleet.

The end of the Border Wars marked the beginning of a formal alliance between Cygnar and Llael. The same offer of an alliance was made to King Alvor Cathor II of Ord, but he declined, reluctant to bind his fate to another nation despite clear evidence Ord could not endure against the northmen alone. The death of the well-loved Queen Juliana to illness a year later prompted great mourning across the nation. This was the end of the diminished House of Govant. In her last days, Juliana named as her successor the archduke of Westshore, who was crowned Bolton I.

King Bolton's reign is less remembered for his actions than for its peculiar end, although he served well. He did not interfere with the work of the Royal Assembly in peacefully governing the nation after the long wars, and he continued the work begun by Juliana to reinforce Cygnar's borders, including setting aside treasury funds for a massive fortress to be built at the northern extreme of the Thornwood in the region once contested by Queen Cherize.

Northguard would be completed in 326 AR, but King Bolton would not witness its final glory. Eager to add to the maps of the continent, King Bolton organized an expedition to explore the Bloodstone Marches. He ventured into the eastern wastes in 325 AR with a full regiment of soldiers and supplies. Soon all contact with the king was lost, and rangers sent along the trail of his expedition could find no trace of him. By ancient custom the Royal Assembly would rule in the missing king's place for four years before declaring him dead, but it was generally thought he had perished amid the desert sands.

Three years into this waiting period, in 328 AR Bolton unexpectedly returned alone, his body emaciated, his clothes in rags, and his mind completely gone. He was deemed unfit to rule and placed into private care until the end of his days. What transpired in those years and how the king survived are unknown. A host of artistic works have explored the topic, but Bolton's incoherent madness remains a mystery.

THE QUIET CENTURY

Historians refer to the next period as the Quiet Century. This was a time unmarred by major wars that saw a number of advancements across western Immoren—yet those who lived then know they were not free from conflict or tension, particularly in Cygnar. Religious strife between Morrowans and Menites escalated during these years, as did the constant political intrigue and countless proxy conflicts settled by mercenaries and small, covert agencies. Mercenary companies experienced a resurgence of fortune not seen since the Thousand Cities Era.

When King Bolton I traveled into the Bloodstone Marches he had left an accord that named his successor as Fergus of King's Vine, earl of the Southern Midlunds. Fergus I was crowned in 329 AR when Bolton I was declared unfit to rule. His reign was politically unremarkable, though he is noted for his temper and his passions. Having a romanticized notion of warfare he invested in military advancements, and under his rule the first warcaster armor was developed. The king had no technological or arcane expertise but opened his treasury to those who did.

Fergus ruled for seventeen years, but during the latter portion of his reign he became increasingly contentious, earning the epithet Fergus the Fervid. In 346 AR he lost his temper in an argument with Edgar Gately, Duke of Southpoint, going so far as to challenge the duke's courage and cast aspersions on the fidelity of his wife. Gately demanded satisfaction and challenged the king to a duel, which he accepted personally rather than choosing a champion to fight in his stead. The next morning the sovereign fell in combat; the wound festered, and King Fergus I died after suffering several days of agony. Duke Gately was judged to have acted honorably, but laws were passed against challenging the sovereign to prevent such duels in the future.

Fergus' terms of succession returned the throne to the grandson of Bolton I, crowned Bolton III in deference to his father, who had borne the same name despite having never sat as king of Cygnar. King Bolton III ruled the nation for an unprecedented forty-four years. His main achievement, aside from keeping the peace over four decades, was organizing a secret group called the Midnight Chamber. This cabal began to recruit and train former criminals for intelligence-gathering. The network would infiltrate the Khadoran government and industry as well as the courts of both Llael and Ord. Eventually, Bolton's agents would even keep watch on his own nobles.

The existence of this network came to light late in Bolton's reign, following the arrest of a key agent on charges of murder. While the extent of the organization never came to the public's attention, the resulting scandal curtailed the king's powers for his remaining days and set Cygnaran intelligence-gathering efforts back by decades.

Bolton III died of old age in 391 AR, and the crown passed to his son Fenwick, who was himself already advanced in years. King Fenwick has been deemed one of Cygnar's least impressive kings, albeit one who suffered no great tragedies or misfortunes. The fifteen years of his reign were noted for a strong and domineering Royal Assembly that bullied the king into a variety of concessions. Fenwick's only impressive decision was having the foresight to overlook his wastrel eldest son and name Earl Hector Sunbright III of the Western Midlunds as his heir instead.

After his crowning in 406 AR, King Hector III would go on to earn the epithet Hector the Golden. The realm saw prosperity under his able rule, with laws enacted to encourage the growth of industry. King Hector was most remembered for his extensive reforms of the Cygnaran military, which had previously been mired in feudal traditions. Whereas the quality of armed forces had previously varied wildly from region to region, depending on the largesse of local nobles to outfit their retainers, once King Hector created codes imposing standardization, he created a true professional standing army.

At his command, the Sunbright Strategic Academy was built in Caspia for the education of Cygnaran military officers. His reforms also included an overhaul of commissioned ranks and pay, including a clearer chain of command overseen by a Warmaster General to coordinate the often-contentious generals. He further implemented laws to provide specific distinctions between noble and military authority, necessary due to the extent to which noblemen occupied the higher ranks of the army. He also imposed strict limits on the scope of the private armies serving the nobility. The Strategic Academy would prove to be his greatest legacy, but King Hector is best remembered as having helped bring the nation, and particularly the army, into the modern age.

His death came unexpectedly in 426 AR while he was visiting the fortress of Northguard to review troops. In what is considered one of the luckiest shots in history, a Khadoran sniper hundreds of yards away in a watchtower fired on the Cygnaran king and struck him in the head, killing him instantly. This created a considerable uproar between the two nations, which were not at war at the time. King Ioann Groznata IV of Khador disavowed the actions of the sniper, who was arrested and executed.

The Sunbright family was not lacking for heirs, as Hector had sired a number of healthy children, but he had wished his family to resume control of their ancestral earldom instead. His accord named as his successor Godwin Blackwood, a stern Thurian general who had served him as a military advisor. Some in the Royal Assembly insisted the Blackwood family, inheritors of a small barony, were not esteemed enough to qualify for the throne per the conditions of Woldred's Covenant. These objections were overruled after Sancteum scholars found evidence of a Blackwood ancestor who had ruled Thuria in the decades before its ill-fated war with Tordor.

King Godwin went on to become the Iron King, a name he earned for his stern demeanor and his dedication to the realm's defense. It was Godwin's initiative that transformed Highgate from a lonely watchtower to a major southwestern port. In fact, the king spent considerable time in the southwest. He saw Cryx as a menace too long ignored, and he charged the army and fleet garrisoned in this region with clearing the nearest islands of unholy threats. He personally led several expeditions and was killed in 442 AR while investigating Morovan Island. As King Godwin had few friends in court and was unloved by the people, his death was not widely mourned. Still, his reign saw several military improvements, including the development of the first arcantrik relays, precursor to the modern arc node.

King Godwin passed the throne to Archduke Vinter Raelthorne of Caspia, who was reluctant to shoulder the responsibility. King Vinter I was deemed a thoughtful and sober king. Finding the treasury sorely strained from his predecessor's endeavors, he worked to rectify the kingdom's finances. This included imposing several unpopular taxes that impacted wealthy merchants in Mercir, Ceryl, Corvis, and Fharin as well as powerful groups like the Order of the Golden Crucible and the Fraternal Order of Wizardry.

Few tears were shed among these groups when King Vinter I died of a wasting illness in 456 AR. The throne passed to King Hector Sunbright IV, who ruled for only nine years before he was killed in 465 AR in a munitions incident while aboard the flagship of the Northern Fleet. His successor, King Fergus II, would have an even more abbreviated reign: he was assassinated by an unknown assailant in 472 AR after just seven years on the throne.

The period of transition between these two kings brought to an end the long era of tense peace as war erupted between Khador and Ord to the north. The Second Expansion War began in 464 AR after disputes about piracy escalated into full hostilities between the navies of both powers. This war saw some of the greatest naval confrontations in the history of western Immoren. After one of the largest clashes, Khador landed an invasion fleet on the Ordic shores near Corbhen, using ships to bypass Ord's formidable northern defenses.

Immediately after being crowned, King Fergus II declared he could not let this threat to regional stability go unanswered. Though Cygnar was not allied to Ord, he directed the Northern Fleet to lend its support and sent troops by land north to defend Berck, Ord's largest port. After two years of bitter fighting, the uncertain supply lines got the better of the Khadorans, and it became clear they were overextended.

Cygnar withdrew from the conflict in 467 AR, although the war dragged on for another year. Once more, Cygnar had proven willing to defend the southern kingdoms, although Ord gave no thanks for the sacrifices made by those who had come to their aid. King Mikhael of Khador died just weeks before the end of the war, and some believe it was his embittered agents who plotted and carried out the assassination of King Fergus II in 472 AR.

CYGNARAN CIVIL WAR

In 472 AR King Bolton V was crowned. While he and his contemporaries were aware of a rising tide of animosity toward them among the kingdom's Menite minority, no one guessed the lengths to which the Menites would go. Until this time, it was felt the priesthood of that ancient religion had largely lost its power and influence.

This changed when Visgoth Sulon of eastern Caspia declared himself hierarch in 475 AR and called upon Menites from across the nation to flock to the temples of the holy city. Sulon was a leader such as had not been seen among the Menites for centuries. As a man who could unite the faithful, his message struck a chord with the Menite masses. He spoke of the moral degradation of the Morrowan nations and how the Creator's people had been stripped of their ancient place in the natural order. He preached the most incendiary passages of the Canon of the True Law, including those reinforcing the authority of the priest caste to govern the faithful and to legitimize kings.

First hundreds and then thousands of pilgrims made their way to Caspia. Initially the Cygnaran government was lenient despite the disruption these adherents caused in the capital. The Church of Morrow advised King Bolton not to interfere. A devout Morrowan, the king did as was suggested, although his nobles and the city watch became increasingly alarmed as the population of the eastern city swelled.

Matters took a dramatic turn in 482 AR when Hierarch Sulon and his followers seized control of the city east of the Black River and forced out anyone who did not share their faith. Not realizing the extent of the situation, the Caspian Watch resisted and sought to disperse the armed pilgrims. This prompted a frenzied revolt as Menites rose up and fought back, killing dozens of guardsmen and forcing the rest to flee. The army moved to support the watch. Thus began the Cygnaran Civil War, a bitter struggle that would consume Caspia and spill out into the surrounding countryside for the next two years.

Hierarch Sulon and his fanatical zealots proved to be implacable and, strengthened by their faith, fought with conviction even when facing trained soldiers possessing far superior armament. As the docks and other districts of Caspia were set ablaze, the fighting grew so fierce that the Church of Morrow dispatched the Sancteum's military might to fight alongside Cygnaran soldiers. Word of this spread beyond Cygnar's borders, prompting indignation and protests in other Menite communities abroad.

Hierarch Sulon led a great push toward the heart of the Caspian capital but was eventually struck down by its defenders. His death dealt a tremendous blow to the morale of the Menites, costing them their will to fight. This opened the door for peace, and delegates were sent to meet with the remaining leaders. High Prelate Shevann of the Church of Morrow's treasury spoke for King Bolton and met with Sulon's successor, Visgoth Ozeall. After protracted discussions, both agreed peace was preferable, given the Menites were ceded the right to control their future destiny and to create a society rooted in the Canon of the True Law.

The year 484 AR brought the founding of the Protectorate of Menoth, and the Menites agreed to cease hostilities on several conditions. First, they would retain eastern Caspia, which was renamed Sul in honor of Hierarch Sulon. Second, they would be allowed to govern themselves as a theocracy, albeit still subject to Cygnaran taxes. Third, they agreed to raise no standing army and to maintain only those forces required for defense and the protection of their ancient temples. And finally, in addition to Sul, the Menites were given permission to settle and populate the region east of the Black River.

While this peace was not to last forever, it did hold for many decades, and High Prelate Shevann was remembered afterward as a great pacificator. She ascended to join Morrow's divine servants in 500 AR and has since been prayed to by many seeking honest dealings as well as those negotiating for an end to strife. Meanwhile, the Protectorate of Menoth expanded to the east and waged wars of conversion among the native Idrian tribes.

FIRST THORNWOOD WAR

For the king who had resolved the Cygnaran Civil War, it seemed a trivial matter to quash a small armed revolt in the Mansgrave Province in 489 AR. King Bolton V personally went to bring his quarreling barons back in line. Unfortunately, as he rode onto the field to confront the rebelling families, his horse was shot in the flanks and reared up, throwing the king to the ground and then collapsing on top of him. The fighting came to an immediate halt, but not soon enough to save the king. With his demise the crown passed to his lawfully adopted son, who became King Gregor Malfast.

Malfast quickly proved to be one of Cygnar's strongest kings, his reign eventually compared with that of Woldred the Diligent. He led his nation into an era of unprecedented growth. The royal treasury, nearly depleted after the rebuilding necessitated by the Civil War, soon filled with coin. On the advice of one of his closest advisors, the young Archduke Vinter Raelthorne II, Malfast reinvested much of this wealth into the nation, including expanding the Cygnaran Armory as well as encouraging mechanikal innovation in other cities abroad. Many of the measures implemented by Malfast have been credited to the influence of Vinter II, who became a prominent leader of the Royal Assembly and was later named warmaster general of the army.

Civil improvements were eclipsed by the threat of northern aggression that began with the rise of King Ruslan Vygor in Korsk, a fanatical Menite sovereign whose sanity was soon questioned. King Vygor did not hide his hatred of other kingdoms, particularly Cygnar, or his dreams of restoring old glories. He made it plain in his speeches that he saw himself as Khardovic reborn and felt it was his destiny to be the anvil upon which the Morrowan nations would be pounded into submission. He implemented numerous improvements to the Khadoran military, modernizing its structure, increasing conscriptions and training, and ordering warjack production on a scale never before attempted.

Mad though he might have been, King Vygor possessed a shrewd cunning. He launched the Thornwood War in 510 AR by initiating a bold gambit against western Llael, sending the bulk of his nation's famed cavalry to harass the border defenders there. Since ancient times, the horselords of the north had earned battle acclaim, and no war had ever been fought without them. As this cavalry was considered the vanguard of the Khadoran Army, the Llaelese believed its presence indicated a full invasion was about to hit their borders. Thus, they sent urgent missives to their longtime ally, and King Gregor Malfast responded at once, sending Vinter II to lead his army to intercede. Traveling by a flotilla up the Black River, the army was able to rush to Llael's defense.

While this overt threat had its intended effect, King Vygor and the bulk of his army, including his nation's vast arsenal of warjacks, entered the Thornwood. They began to carve a path straight through the forest toward Cygnaran territories beyond, making use of the strength of their warjacks to raze a path two hundred miles long that would later be called the Warjack Road. Meanwhile, King Vygor employed hundreds of expert forest fighters drawn from the Scarsfell to surround the city of Fellig and intercept all emerging patrols and messengers. Vygor hoped to delay Cygnar's awareness of the Khadoran Army's progress as long as possible.

Several brave members of the Cygnaran Reconnaissance Service (CRS) in Fellig escaped the murderous cordon around that town to discover Vygor's column. They risked their lives to get word of this to the nearest army garrisons while the

ranking ranger made haste to head off Cygnaran forces led by Vinter II that were converging on Llael. Desperate soldiers drawn from the nearest townships did what they could to stall the Khadoran Army's passage through the Thornwood while Vinter II committed his army to a forced march through the Bloodsmeath Marsh toward the Thornwood.

The outnumbered Cygnaran forces gave their lives at the Battles of Deep Gulch and Thornfall to slow Vygor's advance while others struck at his exposed supply lines. They employed all manner of desperate stratagems, including leading the Khadoran column into the midst of one of the largest trollkin villages in the southern forest. All of these gambles had the effect of turning the Khadoran column from its intended course, forcing the invaders to reach the Dragon's Tongue River nearer to Point Bourne than to their intended destination of Corvis.

The Battle of the Tongue in 511 AR was the key engagement in this short but brutal war. The vanguard of the Khadoran Army crashed into the smaller Cygnaran Army led by the warcaster Colonel Drake Cathmore as he defended the Stonebridge, the only sizable river crossing. During this battle, Koldun Kommander Karchev was drawn out of position by Colonel Cathmore, and his forces were annihilated by superior Cygnaran firepower. The dying Karchev in turn slew Cathmore with a burst of raw arcane power. This battle gave the defenders of the bridge time to move in their artillery, which they used to fire on the advancing Khadoran forces being led by Vygor himself.

The bridge held long enough for Vinter II and the main army to reach the engagement and strike the Khadoran column from the rear. Vinter II led the Cygnaran charge, and in the end Khadoran King Vygor fell to Vinter's blade, which was thereafter named Kingslayer. This earned Cygnar a hard-won victory, and the Khadorans retreated back along the Warjack Road. The senior Khadoran officers sued for peace and finished their withdrawal in shame, bearing the body of their king.

THE RAELTHORNE DYNASTY

A few short years later, King Malfast fell ill and from his deathbed drafted the terms of his succession. His choice was no surprise to those who knew him: he named Vinter Raelthorne II the next king of Cygnar. In 515 AR King Vinter II was crowned. Already a hero of the Thornwood War and held in high esteem by the Royal Assembly, the new king was warmly welcomed.

Vinter II ruled for twenty-three years with the same prudent hand he had used in managing the kingdom for Malfast. As his mind seldom moved from matters of state, he earned the epithet the Stone-Faced King. He made a number of lasting reforms to the Cygnaran Army, the first to do so since Hector the Golden. This included dividing the army into four distinct bodies: the First, Second, Third, and Fourth Armies.

Vinter II survived two assassination attempts, prompting him to broaden a secret network of spies and informants answering to him alone. He earned a reputation as an opponent of unregulated sorcery and as someone who was suspicious of leaders who relied on religious sentiment over rationality. In his letters, he expressed harsh criticism of the choices made by previous kings such as Malagant and Bolton IV, who he felt had allowed the Church of Morrow too much sway; he strongly believed Bolton IV had dealt with the Protectorate of Menoth too leniently at the end of the Cygnaran Civil War. Vinter II imposed far heavier taxes on the Menites, using this income to enact his extensive military reforms and to pay for the beginnings of the railways that would one day traverse the kingdom.

The crown passed in 539 AR to his son, Vinter Raelthorne III, who continued the work of his father but established his own distinct style of leadership over the thirty-three years of his rule. Vinter III would prove to be an even harsher man than his father. Not well loved but certainly feared and respected, he was known as the Stoneheart.

Vinter III imposed burdensome taxes on his nobles, which he used to bolster the navy to secure the western sea lanes and make them safer from piracy. He developed an adversarial relationship with the bureaucrats who surrounded him and insisted there was no one on the Royal Assembly worthy of his trust. He dismissed his court advisors, including priests of Morrow, preferring "the counsel of his own mind." One of his sterner measures was to increase the use of debtors' prisons for hard labor. Debtors were put to work in quarries and mines and worked for long, grueling hours. Many of these prisoners died before clearing their debts, but the kingdom prospered. This era saw the resumption of border skirmishes with Khador in the north as well as periodic difficulties with the increasingly belligerent Protectorate of Menoth. Most of these conflicts were small in scope, and none of them escalated to full hostilities.

Vinter III had two sons: his heir, also named Vinter, and a younger son named Leto. Both were raised on a strict regimen to prepare them for rulership and duty. The elder son was rigorously trained in statesmanship and swordplay. Leto's course had yet to be determined, and he was given greater leeway to pursue his own interests. Even a younger prince was expected to fight well and to know military tactics and strategy, so when Leto began to favor the Church of Morrow and investigate becoming an initiate of the clergy, his father commanded he take a commission in the Cygnaran Army instead. While this was not his preference, Prince Leto proved to be a skilled and insightful officer and a natural leader.

Vinter the Stoneheart died suddenly and suspiciously in 576 AR, but his passing was ultimately deemed a death by illness. There was no reason to suspect he wished anything but for his eldest son to take his place, yet some found it strange no terms of succession were found. Regardless, Vinter Raelthorne IV was crowned and immediately set about consolidating his authority. It soon became clear that whatever severity had existed in his father, Vinter IV was darker and crueler by far, and in time he would become known as a paranoid tyrant. Whereas his father and grandfather had been skeptical of religion and warned against such institutions meddling in politics, Vinter IV demonstrated outright hatred for organized religion, particularly the Church of Morrow. This topic is said to have prompted several heated arguments between Vinter and his brother. Only Leto was granted the luxury of such debate; all others who questioned the king were silenced.

The new king took charge of his father's network of spies and informants and broadened their purview. He recruited heavily from among those who had been dishonorably discharged from the military for violence and enlisted the aid of ruthless but skilled wizards from the Fraternal Order of Wizardry. The office he created became the Inquisition, a shadowy order that was not formally acknowledged as a branch of the Cygnaran government until 582 AR, with the passage of the Edict against Unlawful Sorcery and Witchcraft. This brought the agency into the open, but it had been prowling the halls of power for years.

The official purpose of the Inquisition was to root out sorcerers and witches, with the two considered synonymous. Vinter's actual beliefs concerning the threat represented by such arcane practitioners is unknown, but clearly he believed unregulated sorcery might be used as a weapon by his enemies. The Church of Morrow protested that the Order of Illumination was already tasked with such investigations, but King Vinter denied their mandate and insisted enforcement of the law was a matter for the state alone.

The Inquisition doggedly tracked downed and imprisoned hundreds of sorcerers, cultists, and alleged witches. Beginning with the public trial of seven suspected sorcerers in Corvis in 584 AR, public judgment became a frequent spectacle. Inquisitors proved just as effective in rooting out and disposing of vocal dissenters, even those only suspected of sedition. Vinter made sure agents of the Inquisition were seen throughout the realm; not even the smallest town or village was safe from their investigations. They established examples wherever they traveled, such that common citizens felt obliged to report any suspicious activities lest they themselves be deemed involved in treasonous plots. This created a palpable atmosphere of terror across the kingdom.

A sudden rash of violent attacks and raids along Cygnar's western coast beginning in 584 AR forestalled any public outcry concerning the excesses of the Inquisition. The Nightmare Empire of Cryx was no longer content to lurk among its outer islands while its pirates raided the Broken Coast. Terrifying blackships sailed against the fleets of Cygnar and emerged victorious. Hosts of the undead landed on the shores of Cygnar, joined by bloodthirsty Satyxis as well as blighted trollkin and ogrun. This escalated into a four-year war known as the Scharde Invasions, during which the mainland glimpsed the true strength of Cryx. Entire towns and villages along the coast were annihilated, and the corpses of the slain were dragged away to be transformed into the walking dead.

For all his paranoia, Vinter IV proved to be a formidable war king and personally led his armies against the Cryxian menace, fighting alongside his brother Leto, who had risen to the rank of general. Counterstrikes against Cryx cost much in lives and resources, yet King Vinter IV was not deterred. Both king and prince proved themselves with courage and valor in these battles. At great sacrifice Cygnar drove the armies of the dead from its shores.

Vinter's ferocity in battle made him a hero of the war, and it would be years before his tyranny overshadowed his legend. His paranoia only grew, as did his cruelty. In the aftermath of the Scharde Invasions, Prince Leto was named Warmaster General of Cygnar. Though the king believed his brother weak, he thought his own bloodline was less likely to betray him. This would soon prove to be a crucial error in judgment.

THE LION'S COUP

Prince Leto watched his brother and was appalled by the tattered state of Cygnaran law and justice. Leto served as best he could and attempted to mitigate his brother's excesses through his own good works. He turned to Primarch Arius, leader of the Church, for advice, and his struggle between his filial loyalty and his deep-seated Morrowan ethics came to a head in the winter of 594 AR. A decade after the brothers fought side-by-side in the Scharde Invasions, Prince Leto led a palace coup to remove Vinter from power.

Leto's position as Warmaster General put him in a unique position to organize the coup. He was able to take the measure of Vinter's senior officers to determine which were loyal to the king and which had troubles of conscience over the king's tyranny. He was also able to gauge the temperament of the Royal Guard in the palace, many of whom were suffering from similar doubts. Among those who joined Leto against their king were Magus Arland Calster of the Fraternal Order of Wizardry; Kielon Ebonhart IV, heir to the Northern Midlunds; Alain Runewood, heir to the Eastern Midlunds; a senior general named Olsen Turpin; and the warcaster Sebastian Nemo, a veteran leader from the Scharde Invasions. One of the young members of the Royal Guard who joined Leto was Coleman Stryker, who would eventually become one of the realm's most decorated commanders.

These men led a force that battled through Castle Raelthorne and conquered the east wing of the palace. Despite his failings as a king, however, Vinter was a swordsman without equal. His bloodthirst and honed skills made him practically invincible. All reports of the battle confirm Vinter himself cut down scores of Leto's men. Bearing his grandfather's sword Kingslayer, he carved his way through everyone in his path. Ultimately he stood alone, his own forces defeated, surrounded by the corpses of those who had stood against him. He refused all entreaties to surrender, and Leto was forced to confront him directly.

Though an esteemed general and an accomplished bladesman, Leto could not match the skills of his brother. After a short, brutal duel Vinter dealt Leto what seemed a mortal wound. Yet in the next moment, Primarch Arius stood beside Leto, and the prince's wound was whole. Vinter lay dazed, knocked to the marble floor. The king's sword was lifted from his numb fingers, and he was taken to the dungeons. This outcome of the battle has been interpreted as an act of divine intervention by Morrow, who stood by Prince Leto to preserve both Cygnar and the church.

Almost immediately after Vinter was hurled into his cell, his supporters began to move. Operatives of the Inquisition took hostage Lady Danae Cresswell, Leto's wife, and used her to leverage Vinter's release and the return of his familial sword. Leto consented, hoping to buy time to act. Instead of honoring his word, however, Vinter retreated to the upper reaches of the palace, seized an experimental airship stationed there, and

escaped where none could follow. He rose beyond the reach of his pursuers but fell mercy to the whims of the wind and drifted east over the arid and desolate Bloodstone Marches. Sadly, Danae Cresswell was never seen again.

The grief-stricken Leto was crowned king in a solemn ceremony before the Royal Assembly. That same assembly later conducted a trial for Vinter IV in absentia, stripping him of his titles for his crimes and reaffirming Leto the rightful heir of Vinter III.

In the years that followed, there was considerable work hunting down the remaining agents of the Inquisition and all those who had committed crimes in the former king's name. Vinter's supporters innocent of the most fiendish crimes were offered amnesty; this offer was also extended to many military officers found guilty of nothing more than obeying their king. Despite all the measures taken to root them out, remnants of the Inquisition and others still loyal to the ex-king and tyrant fester in Cygnar, both in hiding and in positions of trust and responsibility.

LETO'S GOLDEN DECADE

King Leto Raelthorne proved true to his word—he restored Cygnar and erased the legacy of fear left by his brother. The kingdom experienced almost ten years of growth, flourishing trade, and the harmony and efficiency seen as the hallmarks of a fair and just government. Leto fostered mechanikal innovation and advancement that brought his armies formidable new weapons. While he worked to better his people, though, other sovereigns were advancing more sinister plans. The dark clouds of war began to approach the kingdom.

CURRENT WARS

The first foreshadowing of what was to come arrived in 603 AR with an attack from an unexpected source. From across the Bloodstone Marches came a strange inhuman race called the skorne, bent on conquest and domination beginning with the northern city of Corvis. Witnesses identified Vinter Raelthorne IV leading them, and it became clear the former king had done the impossible: he had led an army across the impassable desert to strike at Cygnar. With new, cruel allies, he intended to seize back his throne, using Corvis as a staging point for a greater invasion. The threat was so great the very spirits of dead Cygnaran heroes rose up in defense of their nation, and the attackers were repelled.

King Leto began to consider a strike against one or more of his nation's enemies as early as 604 AR, after intelligence suggested threats from multiple quarters. The Protectorate of Menoth in particular had been flagrantly defying its treaties and had amassed an army just east of the Black River. Reports from the Broken Coast suggested the Cryxian Empire had recovered from its losses of the Scharde Invasions and its fleets were beginning to stir. The war drums of Khador's Queen Ayn Vanar XI were growing louder as a wave of nationalism swept the north. Leto hesitated, afraid any action against one enemy would leave Cygnar vulnerable to the others.

Even as King Leto and his war council debated their options, Khador sprang into action, sending the full strength of its army east into Llael. The Khadoran army led by Kommandant Gurvaldt Irusk quickly swept aside the border defenses, which included thousands of Cygnaran soldiers there to support their allies. This was the opening salvo in the Llaelese War, which would again redefine the borders of the Iron Kingdoms.

Cygnar rushed to Llael's defense and was quickly caught up in a series of increasingly desperate battles. With the collapse of Llael's western defenses, the soldiers sent to the northern front proved insufficient to blunt Khador's momentum. Through several months of fighting, the Khadorans pushed forward inexorably, seizing more and more territory. Soon they besieged Merywyn, the capital. Cygnarans fought bravely alongside their Llaelese allies but were forced to withdraw as Khador attacked the Thornwood, threatening to cut off vital Cygnaran supply lines and threatening the northern borders. After the Cygnarans withdrew, the Llaelese soon surrendered. To celebrate her great victory, Queen Ayn declared herself the first empress of a new Khadoran Empire.

Just as Leto had feared, the war emboldened Cygnar's enemies. To the east, the Protectorate of Menoth rose up in full defiance of Cygnar's laws. Claiming the Protectorate was divinely guided by the Creator, Hierarch Voyle declared a grand crusade against the Morrowan nations. The crusade began with a short-lived siege on the walls of Caspia before the Sul-Menites soon began raiding deep within Cygnar's borders, destroying the rail lines necessary to support the northern war.

In the wake of the wars gripping western Immoren, Cryxian forces picked clean the fields of battle like carrion birds fattening themselves on carnage. The Cygnaran Reconnaissance Service analyzed the causes behind a Cryxian presence so deep in the mainland and determined that previously inexplicable fleet movements and attacks during the Scharde Invasions might have been intended to occupy the Cygnaran Fleet while Cryx secretly landed forces elsewhere, and these had penetrated the interior to establish hidden bases on the mainland.

Cygnar had no choice but to wage war simultaneously in the north and the south. Only the careful planning of previous kings and Cygnar's tremendous wartime reserves prevented an immediate disaster. Thanks to the foresight of Vinter II, Cygnar's four armies were prepared to fight on separate fronts, and the vital railways served to hasten the movement of supplies, so long as the rails could be protected from saboteurs. Lord Commander Coleman Stryker was given special authority by King Leto to root out potential Menite insurgents hiding within the kingdom's own communities. He set a number of former inquisitors on the trail of the Menites, whom he gathered into barges and sent to be imprisoned on Bloodshore Island.

Several dramatic reversals occurred during the Caspia-Sul War that followed. First, Cygnaran forces led by Lord Commander Coleman Stryker breached the walls of Sul and initiated an invasion of the city, forcing the Sul-Menites to rally in defense of their most sacred holy sites. Religious fervor gave the enemy desperate strength, and a bitter year of street-to-street fighting followed. With Cygnar's army unable to seize a quick victory, the Menites regrouped and repelled them. The situation then became dire when Cygnar's Second Army was forced to make a hasty retreat back to Caspia.

The aftermath saw Caspia invaded by an army led by Hierarch Voyle. King Leto himself took up his blade in the fight and was nearly slain. In the end Lord Stryker, barely recovered from injuries sustained earlier in the war, halted the hierarch's advance. Like Sulon in the Civil War, Hierarch Voyle was struck down and killed, and the loss of the hierarch shattered Menite morale. Voyle had already carved a path of destruction through the ancient capital, however. A tentative cease-fire was arranged between Caspia and Sul as the Menites withdrew.

The war in the north would prove to be even more difficult than the one occupying the capital. Although the first siege of Northguard was lifted and the Khadorans were forced to withdraw, both sides endured losses. Fighting in the south took its toll and left Cygnar overextended. Meanwhile, the Khadorans hastily reinforced, diverting men and supplies from Llael.

After several months Gurvaldt Irusk mustered an army far better prepared to deal with the defenses of Northguard, which remained depleted. Simultaneously with a siege on the western city of Fellig, his forces attacked Northguard with renewed force and eventually toppled the fortress. Cygnar's First Army was forced to retreat from the Thornwood, which was then claimed by the Khadorans. Though the First Army took up positions along the fortifications lining the Dragon's Tongue River—including Point Bourne, Stonebridge Castle, and Corvis—it had lost the forest. Cygnar was in no position to refuse the cease-fire the Khadoran empress offered, even knowing Khador would not pause its advance for long.

UNCERTAIN TIMES

Cygnar presently stands in a bleak position with its borders tested on all sides. Even as wars raged in the north and south, the skorne returned from the east to test the defenses of Eastwall and Fort Falk. Trollkin have again stirred within the interior. Although Cryx appears to be more active on the mainland, its fleets still menace shipping along the Broken Coast. No one trusts the fragile calm between armed nations braced for the next onslaught of war.

Near each of the embattled borders, hospital tents desperately tend the injured, and many of Cygnar's cities are now host to refugees. Local militias stand ready to protect their citizens, but they know they are ill-equipped to deal with the horrors of true war. All of this strife and warfare has had an effect on the general stability of the realm and the strength of the crown.

King Leto's standing with the people and his nobles has suffered, despite awareness that he has thus far held the realm against threats on all sides. The loss of the Thornwood and the attack inside Caspia suggest the kingdom's defenses are crumbling. In dark taverns and particularly among the nobles of the north, the name Vinter IV is whispered again. Some wonder if the nation might not have fared better under the elder brother. It is an uncertain and dangerous time.

GOVERNMENT AND MILITARY

Among Cygnar's greatest assets are its adaptive government and the efficient organization of its vast military. While the realm operates as a monarchy with methods of governance similar to those employed by the other nations of the Iron Kingdoms, notable distinctions do exist. In some ways, Cygnar boasts the most progressive government in western Immoren—at least under the leadership of King Leto Raelthorne. Many laws have been enacted to foster industry and innovation as well as to create a high standard of living. King Leto has sought to share the burdens of governance with his nobles, investing in them even greater authority than his predecessors.

CYGNARAN GOVERNANCE

Cygnar follows a system of government rooted in traditions passed down from the Thousand Cities Era but with checks and balances that promote stability. Though the king theoretically wields absolute authority, in practice his actions require cooperation from the kingdom's body of nobles, collectively known as the Royal Assembly. Further, Cygnar's government relies upon an extensive bureaucracy that includes thousands of appointed officers.

Local government is managed by officers appointed by the ruling nobility according to the laws of each individual fiefdom. These laws are set either by the ruling noble or by councils established by the noble's consent. Low courts serving at the pleasure of the local nobility interpret and enforce these laws.

The governor of a city or town is usually either the ranking noble with claim to the municipality or an officer appointed in his name, such as a reeve. Matters of local law, jurisprudence, and governance can be overruled by high courts and by orders of higher-ranking nobles who enjoy claim over a region. A baron can overrule officers within his barony; an earl can overrule barons within his province; and a duke can overrule earls or lower-ranking nobles within his duchy. The king can overrule anyone. Complex higher laws describe the rights and obligations of each of these noble ranks.

One of the most important functions of a local government, in addition to enacting and enforcing laws and protecting its population, is collecting taxes and tariffs. Taxes flow up the chain of nobility, with a portion allocated to treasuries at each level, before the balance reaches Cygnar's national treasury in Caspia. In times of war or disaster taxes can be increased, and on some occasions the king makes even greater demands on his nobles.

Taxes, in fact, are perhaps the greatest contribution of the nobility, as such monies directly inform the kingdom's treasury and thus the scope of Cygnar's ventures. This area, unsurprisingly, remains exceptionally vulnerable to corruption and mismanagement. Withholding taxes is not only against the law, but it can also be considered an act of treason. Nevertheless, small adjustments and omissions are common and difficult to detect or prove. Lord Treasurer Lars Corumny oversees the

kingdom's treasury and the hundreds of tax collectors and clerks on his staff, each of whom strives to ensure accurate payments and records. When required, these agents can arrange for the arrest of individuals suspected of tax evasion, a charge even nobles cannot ignore.

THE SOVEREIGN

As the highest authority in Cygnar, the sovereign embodies vast power and responsibility. No law speaks to the gender of the nation's sovereign, though there has been only one queen. Wives of kings are known as queen consorts, and they do not possess the power of a sovereign. Queens regnant, however, are full sovereigns. The husband of a queen regnant is not a king but is known as either a prince consort or the queen's consort. Longstanding noble tradition is biased in favor of male heirs over female heirs at all levels. Accordingly, the ruler of Cygnar is usually referred to and presumed to be a king, though in all respects the authority and power of a queen regnant are identical.

Woldred's Accord-by-Hand Covenant defined a new system for succession. By these rules a king may choose his heir, but there are limits. A potential heir must be a worthy descendant of a sufficiently noble lineage—that is, a legitimate descendant of one of the ruling families of ancient Caspia, Thuria, or Midar. Proving this connection can be difficult, though, given the state of ancient records and the disruption caused by the Orgoth Occupation. Inevitably, complications and concessions to the qualifier have arisen. Benewic II, for example, was born illegitimately but recognized by a vote of the Royal Assembly.

By the literal terms of Woldred's Covenant, an accord-by-hand must be authorized and legitimized by the ranking Caspian priests of Menoth, though this stipulation was amended during the reign of King Malagant, who stripped the Menite priests of their legal authority. Since 289 AR it has fallen to the Church of Morrow to legitimize succession terms, a task overseen by an exarch assigned by the Exordeum.

Without a legitimate accord-by-hand, succession falls to primogeniture, with the eldest surviving son of the previous king ascending the throne. In the absence of a son, the crown passes to the eldest daughter. If a king dies without issue, the situation becomes a matter of precedence amongst the peerage, and it is at this point disputes begin. The Royal Assembly may intervene in weighing claims to the throne and can vote to authorize a new king, but its decision requires all dukes and earls to attend and to be unanimous in their approval. Barons can weigh in with opinions on claims but cannot vote on succession. The Royal Assembly rules in the absence of a king while succession is determined. On two occasions the crown has been seized via an armed coup, with the king subsequently legitimized by the Royal Assembly.

KING LETO RAELTHORNE

King Leto Raelthorne is regarded as a wise and just king, judged a better ruler than his elder brother in all respects except decisiveness and conviction. Duty and honor are his key principles. As the great wars have escalated, however, some of his virtues have become potential weaknesses, in particular his preference for mercy and negotiation. The highly educated king studied philosophy, history, and religion, and his ethics are guided by his affinity for the Church of Morrow. Many close to Leto believe he harbors guilt over the Lion's Coup and the potential illegitimacy of his reign.

Though Leto can and will make difficult decisions, he prefers to consult with experts and trusted advisors. This predilection is reflected in the War Council, which was created to advise him on defense, and his close work with the Royal Assembly, with which he confers more regularly than many of his predecessors. Indeed, he has traditionally proven reluctant to act when a majority of the Royal Assembly disagrees with him. The king gives particular weight to the opinions of Scout General Bolden Rebald, Primarch Arius, and Archduke Alain Runewood.

The sovereign possesses vast powers, including but not limited to the ability to declare war; to raise, organize, and command the kingdom's armies; to negotiate treaties with foreign powers; to remove or appoint high officers; to invest others with rank and station; to write and approve laws; to have his commands obeyed with the authority of law; to determine punishments for high crimes; to pardon those deemed guilty in high or low courts; to raise, amend, and collect taxes; and to allocate the kingdom's treasury. That said, the king is himself expected to obey certain laws and traditions, some of which pertain to the treatment of foreign dignitaries and others to the proper mechanisms by which he can exercise his authority.

Ultimately, the balance of power between the king and the Royal Assembly changes with each sovereign; in fact, some kings have preferred to let the assembly effectively rule in their stead. A king who acts entirely as he pleases and who earns the enmity of the Royal Assembly runs the risk of fomenting rebellion. Without the cooperation of the assembly, a king can find his power greatly diminished. While the Cygnaran Army technically answers to the king, many ranking officers are also nobles, and loyalty tends to be personal. Tyrants can be overthrown.

As a monarchy, Cygnar is greatly affected by the temperament of its current sovereign. Woldred's Covenant provides rules for succession, but how a king will actually perform once crowned is inherently uncertain.

CYGNARAN NOBILITY

Nobility in Cygnar is organized in a system of familial ranks essential to the social and political fabric of the nation. While the exact meaning and requirements of a given title have evolved over time, particularly over the last few generations, nobility confers considerable status in the kingdom.

The social status conveyed by a family's possession of a particular title is a measure of their relative importance. Each title also conveys ancient rights to land and governance and carries real authority over and responsibility for a territory, including its inhabitants, resources, and industry.

Barons oversee baronies, which are small but significant divisions of land that may include notable townships. Barons are vassals to earls, who oversee larger regions called provinces. Earls are vassals to dukes, who manage the major duchies that make up the largest territorial divisions of the realm. Dukes rule directly beneath the sovereign. Archdukes possess the same powers and authority as dukes but are descended of the most ancient and prestigious ruling dynasties of Caspia, Thuria, or Midar, strengthening a line's potential claim on the throne.

Nobility brings membership in the Royal Assembly, the kingdom's highest legislative body. The life of a noble is inherently political, though the degree to which each develops his potential varies greatly according to his inclinations and the time he spends at court.

The members of a great family are considered to be part of the aristocracy, though only the titled members of a family are actually nobles. Even those without title stand apart from common men and can rely upon the deference owed their class. The more ancient a family's claim to noble title, the higher it sits in the hierarchy of the realm. Strict guidelines within the aristocracy inform aspects of public behavior, marriage selection, occupations, and even the structure of duels. Breaking these rules can result in scandal and the loss of influence and status.

VINTER RAELTHORNE IV

King Vinter IV's style of rulership stands in stark contrast to his younger brother's. Taking the principles of their father to an extreme, Vinter IV did not accept any limits to his sovereign authority. He considered the Royal Assembly a subordinate body and expected it to enact his decrees and see to the mundane details of governance. The Elder did accept some individuals into his deliberations, relying in particular on Head Inquisitor Dexer Sirac to keep him informed about potential threats to his rule. He considered no one to be his peer, and he viewed his vassals not as advisors but as instruments of his will. Any who questioned his decisions were deemed an enemy.

The lowest land-owning rank of peerage are the knights, vassals sworn to serve the nobles granting their lands to them. Such knights are expected to be armed and capable liegemen, ready to answer their lord's call to war. Reforms imposed by King Hector Sunbright the Golden limit the size and disposition of a noble's household guard. Barons may retain only a small armed force to protect their lands, with proportionately larger forces being allowed to earls and dukes.

By those same reforms, the Cygnaran military no longer relies on the mustering of nobles and their households; instead, it leverages the power of a professional standing army. Many nobles of the realm also hold positions as officers in the Cygnaran Army or Navy. Such service is a matter of duty and honor, and strict covenants separate a noble's social standing and his duties as an officer. For example, nobles should not make use of the nation's forces to resolve disputes over their holdings, nor should they abuse their authority and commissions. Such matters are taken seriously, and violations of these laws can be deemed acts of high treason. That said, ranking nobles may use their household guards to enforce the peace and often work around other limits through hired mercenaries—something of a gray area in the law.

Cygnaran nobility follow a male-dominated primogeniture. Most of the noble lines of Cygnar are either extensions of ancient dynasties or more recent creations based on personal merit and service to the crown. Others have bought their titles directly from the crown. Such practices cause unrest among the aristocracy, who believe they devalue Cygnar's peerage system.

THE KNIGHTLY ORDERS OF CYGNAR

In addition to those knights serving the nobility, there are a variety of knightly orders operating within Cygnar, some sponsored by the state and others by the Church of Morrow. The members of these orders swear fealty to their order, the nation, and the king or else directly to the church. The knights of these orders are not typically considered landholders, though they may be granted some nominal token of land.

The king must weigh the merits of elevating "new men" into nobility against the negative reaction of the Royal Assembly. King Leto in particular has shown a strong preference for rewarding skill and service—an inclination that has not endeared him to many.

Social stature does not always correspond to political power or the value of land. Some of Leto's new men enjoy substantial appointments, most notably Duke Duggan of the Northforest, a Morridane of previously inferior familial standing. Though Khador occupies his holdings, the duke is considerably more powerful than dozens of more ancient families in Cygnar, particularly as he serves as Lord General of the First Army. Leto has endured considerable criticism for this and other elevations.

The power to create nobles, to adjust the bounds of familial holdings, and to create new territories and divisions rests with the king. Since dividing the Midlunds into four separate duchies, Leto has empowered the Royal Assembly to debate all further territorial divisions and noble creations, hoping to quell the unrest caused by such changes to ancient tradition. The opinions of those nobles most effected by such changes are weighed most heavily, and seldom does the king act against the advice of the assembly.

Cygnaran Peerage in Descending Order

Title	Method of Address
King/Queen	Your Majesty
Prince/Princess	Your Highness
Archduke/Archduchess	Your Grace
Duke/Duchess	Your Grace
Earl	Your Lordship
Baron/Baroness	Lord
Knight	Sir

THE ROYAL ASSEMBLY

The Royal Assembly operates as Cygnar's oldest governing council, having been created by King Benewic I shortly after the signing of the Corvis Treaties. The Royal Assembly fulfills several functions in the Cygnaran government. Most importantly, it initiates and submits high laws affecting the entire nation. It also serves as the primary political forum for the realm, with members meeting to discuss all manner of current issues, to air grievances, and to give advice to or make demands of the sovereign. Despite its importance, the Royal Assembly acts only with the king's consent. Its authority is an extension of the monarch's authority, and its laws have weight only if approved by the king.

When enacting laws, the Royal Assembly conducts public votes and debates by which its membership either approves or disapproves measures. Some votes are symbolic, but others carry real import, particularly in matters of disputes between nobility and when filling important posts such as judges, mayors, and similar offices. Certain government offices can be assigned by a single noble, while others require the approval of some segment of the assembly.

All nobles have the right to attend the Royal Assembly and have their say. The weight of a speaker's words is often directly proportionate to his social status. Other prestigious individuals enjoy open invitations to attend the Royal Assembly. These include ranking clergy of the Church of Morrow, leading members of major guilds and trade organizations in Caspia, and high magi of the Fraternal Order of Wizardry. Periodically experts in a given field or military officers are called to attend. The distinction between those invited to attend to speak and actual voting members is significant.

Voting members of the Royal Assembly include every duke, earl, baron, and high chancellor. Others include the primarch, exarchs, and vicars of the Church of Morrow. Though it is rare for more than a handful of these officials to attend, certain proposed laws that would affect the Church of Morrow have prompted every vicar in Cygnar to converge on Caspia and crowd the hall. Each voting member casts only a single vote, but higher-ranking nobles can create voting blocs using dedicated vassals—a tactic that creates an incentive to create new baronies.

In addition to the attendees themselves, learned retainers act as experts in Cygnaran law on behalf of their respective nobles. The act of voting itself makes up only a small portion of the assembly's time, with far more spent on debates and speeches—some impassioned and subject to riotous interjections. Fights are known to break out on the assembly floor, though the Royal Guard stands ready to enforce the peace. Clerks in service to the crown attend all meetings and compile daily notes for the king, which he uses to determine which laws he wishes to approve. It is not uncommon for the assembly to try to hide a controversial law amid a flurry of trivial ones.

The attending body of the Royal Assembly continually changes, as most measures upon which it votes do not stipulate a required attendance. Most matters brought before the assembly are handled by those present when the measures

are introduced. Though laws of procedure require voting notifications be posted in advance, frequently only a fraction of eligible voters attends. Nobles living closest to Caspia enjoy a distinct advantage in voting for their interests, because they can attend more regularly without compromising their duties. Indeed, several high-ranking nobles have negligible impact on realm politics in the capital due to sparse attendance.

The Royal Assembly can theoretically meet daily, as there is generally at least some business on any given day that involves a minority of its membership. Larger and more significant meetings and votes take place on a monthly basis, or they can be ordered by the king or dukes for the quick resolution of specific matters.

INTERNAL POLITICS

Cygnar is not a nation of one mind, particularly as the years of costly and difficult wars have dragged on and the realm has endured invasion and the loss of vital lands. Indeed, many internal factions and divisions pursue their individual agendas. The largest ones are described below.

King's Men—Many of Cygnar's nobles and citizens are devoted to King Leto. The King's Men believe Leto's intelligence, character, and ideals are vital to protecting the kingdom. Further, they believe that under a different leader the nation might have collapsed or spiraled more deeply into tyranny. This faction includes many higher-ranking members of the Church of Morrow, most notably Primarch Arius and Exarch Sebastian Dargule. It also includes Archduke Runewood of the Eastern Midlunds; Archduke Sparholm III of Caspia; Duke Duggan of the Northforest; Earl Gollan of Shieldpoint; members of Leto's War Council; and many ranking officers of the First, Second, and Third Armies. Though a nominal member of this group, Duke Ebonhart of the Northern Midlunds trains most of his attention on thwarting threats to his duchy. This lack of focus signifies a broader problem with most of Leto's military supporters: they are too busy with their own duties to attend the assembly, which means they rarely vote.

Loyalists—Loyalists present themselves as honest opponents of the king and his policies, all while hiding their treasonous plans to return Vinter IV to power. This growing faction is strongest in northern Cygnar, the region most affected by the wars and recent trollkin uprisings. The Loyalists see King Leto as ineffectual and weak. Leaders include Archduke Laddermore of the Southern Midlunds and Archduke Dergeral of Thuria as well as many of their subordinate vassals, senior officers of the Fourth Army, and a few supporters elsewhere. Loyalist ringleaders maintain infrequent contact with Vinter through his vassal, Saxon Orrik, a wanted criminal and ex-Cygnaran military officer.

Friends of the League—These individuals care less about who rules the kingdom and more about wealth, in particular about extending the interests of the Mercarian League. The Friends of the League find the major wars troublesome. King Leto has been helpful to the League by furthering commerce and industry in general, but any rival offering a swift end to the wars would be supported. This group believes too much of the treasury is spent on the military and too little on establishing colonies and new trade routes. Members of this faction lobby for laws or initiatives that would improve navigation, shipping, trade, and exploration. All the senior officers of the Mercarian League belong to this faction. Within the Royal Assembly, the Friends' interests are represented by Duke Waldron Gately of Southpoint. Other nobles sympathetic to their cause include Archduke Sparholm III, who could benefit from League discoveries of value to the navy.

OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

Though the Royal Assembly exists primarily to pass laws and to enact the will of the king, it also makes arrangements of vital interest to many third parties. The Church of Morrow, the Fraternal Order of Wizardry, the Mercarian League, Caspian Rail, Steelwater Rail, and the Steam & Iron Workers Union number among the groups who pay very close attention to the assembly and its decisions. Given the nature of the many clerks and other invited guests, it is also entirely likely foreign powers maintain contacts or spies in or around the legislative body.

The organizations whose livelihoods depend on the assembly's decisions rarely enjoy voting privileges, but they can arrange for their interests to be safeguarded through association, bribery, and coercion. In some cases, these arrangements are quite open and known. For example, Duke Waldron Gately of Southpoint also sits on the board of the Mercarian League, and he openly votes in the league's favor, as do most of his vassals.

CYGNARAN LAW

The kingdom has three levels of lawmaking and two levels of courts that interpret the law. High laws are drafted by the king or the Royal Assembly; laws drafted by the assembly require the king's approval. Such decrees reach every corner of Cygnar and supersede the laws of individual duchies, provinces, and baronies. Violations of high laws are judged by high courts appointed by the king, or by the Royal Assembly with the king's consent.

Below high laws are common law and the local laws affecting each fiefdom or city. Cygnaran common law is based on the principle that people have certain rights as citizens, a notion originating with Morrow's rulership of Caspia. Common law also emphasizes legal precedent; advocates and judges study past decisions and use them to determine fair punishments for routine indiscretions. Authorities look to common law when no applicable specific local or high law exists. Both high and local laws overrule ancient precedents.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

While there are exceptions, the local laws of Cygnar are remarkably consistent across the duchies and provinces, though their implementation can vary by region. By common law, any alleged criminal has the right to a trial, to hear from his accused, and to speak in his own defense. That said, no specific provision stipulates how quickly such a trial must take place. In fact, the absence of a strong advocate has occasionally been abused, resulting in lengthy incarcerations before trial and the application of harsh interrogation and even torture in order to secure a confession. Such occurrences were routine during the Inquisition of Vinter IV. King Leto has taken some steps to reduce this practice, but local laws remain vague and subject to the mercy of ruling nobles.

Common criminals are typically incarcerated by local authorities, such as the city watch, when they are caught red-handed. Because such local militias are often understaffed and overburdened, however, many crimes go uninvestigated. Further, many local officers lack the training to perform advanced inquiries. Only wealthy or influential victims wield enough clout to see that a crime is properly investigated.

A Cygnaran who stands accused of a crime is brought to trial before a single judge, usually a magistrate who oversees the application of justice within a single district or quarter of a large city. In smaller communities, the judge may be a local noble, mayor, or alderman. This judge has the authority to determine guilt and pronounce a sentence. If the accused was arrested by the authorities, he is presumed guilty unless he can prove his innocence. If the accused was apprehended by fellow citizens, the judge weighs evidence provided by both sides.

In most cases, judges will not hear accusations made by commoners against members of the aristocracy, though they will relent in the case of public outcry. The noble families are not subject to the same laws as commoners but instead are held to a different set of standards. Accusations against a noble for a minor crime are usually dismissed; if the offense is deemed too serious to be overlooked, the noble will be remanded to a higher court qualified to rule on the matter. Conversely, the word of a noble or other person of high standing is usually sufficient to convict a lower-stationed citizen without the need for even a brief trial. Nobles at certain levels have the power to pardon criminals deemed guilty or to overrule the punishments decided by a judge.

Reform among local courts began with decrees made in the late 400s AR by King Grigor Malfast. Some of these edicts were briefly overturned during the reign of Vinter the Elder but were then restored by King Leto Raelthorne in a move that helped solidify his popularity among the common people.

Punishments in Cygnar are relatively light compared with those of some neighboring kingdoms. A person convicted of a minor crime like drunkenness or improper speech usually endures only a night in the stocks. More serious crimes like assault or burglary are punishable by flogging, the intensity and duration of which depends on the severity of the offense and the foibles of the sentencing magistrate. Counterfeiting, arson, tax evasion, and the like typically carry penalties of imprisonment for ten years or more, or even life sentences at hard labor. All crimes may result in harsher penalties up to and including execution if the person has been convicted of prior offenses or if there are extenuating circumstances.

The most serious crimes in the nation include treason, piracy, and murder, all of which bear a penalty of death to be carried out in a manner commensurate to the type and severity of the crime. (It is worth noting that "treason" has a somewhat flexible definition, as many lesser crimes can be deemed treasonous if perpetrated against the sovereign.) Though the most common method of execution is hanging, members of the aristocracy may be given the honor of beheading by sword. More painful and gruesome forms of execution exist, though they are rarely used in the modern era.

CYGNARAN FREEDOMS

Though Cygnar's laws are continually changing, the nation's citizens always enjoy certain freedoms and rights, many of which have been expanded under King Leto.

For example, Cygnar does not limit religious freedom. Every citizen may follow whatever faith he chooses, so long as practicing it does not violate other laws. Certain provisos, however, do prohibit active participation in a cult that intends to undermine the kingdom or its governance. These exceptions allow for the persecution of some Thamarite and Devourer cults deemed a threat to the common good. The law does not prohibit those beliefs outright but instead forbids the congregation of believers. Cygnaran authorities used this distinction to justify recent imprisonment of Menites, whom they accused of colluding with a hostile foreign power—in this case, the Protectorate of Menoth. Though worshiping Menoth is perfectly legal, aiding Protectorate soldiers or priests is considered an act of treason.

Similarly, common law prevents the search and seizure of a citizen's goods or intrusion into homes without cause. This right quickly becomes blurred, however, in cases where authorities pursue a suspected criminal or encounter what they deem to be suspicious or dangerous behavior. In such instances, a judge will weigh the arguments of each side, including the apparent character of the accused and the watchman. Those known to have committed past crimes usually do not fair well in such evaluations; likewise, a watchman rarely prevails against the word of an aristocrat.

No Cygnaran law presently prohibits the practice of magic so long as the activity breaks no other laws. This was not the case during the Inquisition, which birthed many vague laws that allowed for the incarceration of anyone thought to be practicing unapproved magic. Black magic, however—necromancy, infernalism, and mesmerism—is illegal. The Church of Morrow has special dispensation to investigate and deal with those suspected to be guilty of practicing black magic or of belonging to certain dangerous cults. More often, charges against arcanists involve destruction of property or injuries resulting from reckless application of magic.

Speech is not specifically protected by law in Cygnar, but the general policy of the nation, particularly under its more

benevolent kings, is to allow criticisms and debate. Such thinking dates back to customs in both ancient Caspia and Thuria, where political discourse on policy was thought to be an essential part of oratory. Officials do consider there to be a right place and time for such debate, generally within assembly halls at various levels of government, where petitioners to nobles are encouraged to speak their grievances. Doing so generally leads to trouble only if the speaker is thought to be encouraging lawlessness in the form of violence, theft, or sedition. This long-valued tradition was damaged during the reign of Vinter IV, who interpreted criticism as an act of sedition. Survivors of the Inquisition are reluctant to speak out against the government even today, despite the fact that Leto has shown little inclination to adopt his brother's tactics or policies.

RELATIONS WITH THE OTHER KINGDOMS

Long motivated by interests in commerce and regional stability, Cygnar has historically enjoyed thriving trade both inside and outside its borders. Recent warfare and sharp lines of enmity, however, have complicated matters. In particular, Cygnar's geographical location and wealth of natural assets make it a target for would-be invaders. Though the last several years have not allowed for much in the way of diplomacy, King Leto nonetheless sends envoys and ambassadors to wherever they will find welcome.

CRYX

Because there has never been any diplomatic contact between Cygnar and Cryx, some Cygnarans find it difficult to acknowledge the collection of nightmarish horrors as a nation at all. It does not help that most Cryxians are encountered only when they are engaged in piracy or murder. In port cities, local authorities presume an unknown Scharde to be a pirate as a matter of course, and piracy carries severe punishments. Attitudes are even more hostile toward some of the other inhabitants of Cryx, such as the Satyxis, which are known to be a sadistic and exceptionally dangerous species. Viewed little differently than the undead horrors of the Nightmare Empire, Satyxis are likely to be killed on sight. Any ogrun or trollkin evidencing blighted features faces a similar violent reaction.

IOS

Iosan ambassadors were hosted in Caspia as recently as several decades ago, but those ties ended when Ios closed its borders in 581 AR. Cygnar enjoys neither diplomatic nor economic contact with the current Iosan government, but it also counts no standing grievances or animosity with the nation, which it now categorizes as a neutral foreign power. Every year, Cygnar sends another emissary to Ios' border, only to be turned away each time. Cygnar has not had major conflicts with the Retribution of Scyrah and is only beginning to become aware of the sect and its purposes. Though several arcanists from the realm have been killed in suspicious circumstances, the extent of their operations are unknown, and the CRS has had limited success uncovering more information. Iosan attacks on private citizens, including members of the Fraternal Order of Wizardry, have historically been investigated less thoroughly than the deaths of warcasters or other key military figures.

KHADORAN EMPIRE

Cygnar and Khador have been at war since the last month of 604 AR, when Llael's western border was attacked by Khador. The toll of dead and wounded on both sides has steadily escalated over the past four years, as has the bitterness between the kingdoms. Though the two nations have been locked in a heated rivalry for centuries, both accept envoys of the other and are in communication. Further, both adhere to certain shared codes of behavior, such as the respectful handling of the dead, honorable treatment of prisoners of war, and a willingness to negotiate terms for surrender.

There has been cessation of hostilities between the two nations since the fall of Northguard. Though no one on either side expects the peace to hold, it has been a welcome boon to the beleaguered Cygnaran forces.

FREE LLAEL

Cygnar has been an ally of Llael for nearly three centuries, and shed much of the blood of its own citizens to try to save that kingdom from its fate. The Llaelese Resistance and the fortified township of Rhydden are an inspiration to many Cygnarans, particularly those who fought in Llael. Many Llaelese have fled to Cygnar and are now trying to make their lives here. While there are bitter feelings among the remaining Llaelese about Cygnar's withdrawal during the Siege of Merywyn, ties between the people of these two kingdoms are still strong.

Cygnar continues to provide what little aid it can. Though the CRS still carries out some operations in Llael, the rest of the army has completely withdrawn to Cygnar's borders. There are a small number of former Cygnaran soldiers who remained behind and joined the Resistance. A number of private nobles and sympathetic wealthy citizens have contributed aid to the Resistance, sometimes indirectly or by assisting those smuggling goods or people into or out of the region, or by providing funds to secure mercenary forces to help defend the free city of Rhydden.

ORD

Cygnar's relationship with Ord is complex and layered, but it has historically been friendly and mutually supportive. The two nations have fought on the same side in numerous wars, albeit rarely as formal allies. Ord's staunch defense of its own neutrality has strained relations in recent years, and though Kings Leto and Baird enjoy considerable mutual respect, they employ entirely different methods of rulership and have seemingly incompatible ethics. Contact occurs frequently between these nations, either through embassies in Caspia and Merin or through other, less formal channels. King Baird's younger son has spent time in Caspia as a liaison between their respective navies, which have performed joint military expeditions against Cryx. In addition, Cygnar has sold weapons, warjack chassis, and advanced cortexes to Ord to help strengthen its army.

Trade between the nations has been ongoing and strong. However these dealings are strained by incidents of Ordic Navy ships or privateers with Ordic letters of marque attacking Cygnaran merchants. In response, the larger Cygnaran

merchant interests have employed mercenary fleets to prey upon their Ordic competitors. Some of this piracy, a portion of which is at least tacitly supported by the two nations' governments, has to do with an ongoing trade feud between the Mercarian League and House Mateu—organizations that are inextricably bound up in the national politics of Cygnar and Ord, respectively. Similarly, both nations have competed in their efforts to establish colonies abroad. Cygnar is not pleased that Ord harbors so many mercenary companies, particularly because many of them accept contracts against Cygnar.

Lastly, there remains the unresolved situation with the city of Fellig. Though the Ordic troops there unquestionably protect Cygnaran citizens, some Cygnar nobles are concerned about the sovereignty of the surrounding territories. King Leto has been reluctant to press the matter, however, given that his army is strained to the limits.

PROTECTORATE OF MENOTH

Relations with the Protectorate of Menoth have always been tense, even when the theocracy was nominally subject to Cygnaran law. There has never been a time when some underlying hostility has not influenced diplomatic contact between the two governments. For most of the Protectorate's history, its government has maintained envoys in Caspia, and Cygnar has had envoys in both Sul and Imer. This arrangement was necessary to manage the taxation of the Protectorate and to conduct periodic inspections regarding its state of armament. Since the time of Hierarch Ravonal, the Protectorate has clearly violated the treaties of its foundation, though to what degree has been historically underestimated.

From the beginning of the Protectorate, periodic violent conflict has erupted between it and members of the Cygnaran military—events generally blamed on fringe elements. Similarly, Cygnar has struck against arms caches, refineries, and other assets considered in breach of treaties. Still, a veneer of diplomatic contact remained until 605 AR when open warfare broke out. All formal ties between the Protectorate and Cygnar ended the following year, after which Cygnar regarded the Protectorate as an independent and hostile power. As of 608 AR, a tense cease-fire was called between Sul and Caspia. As with Khador, however, the tenuous peace is not expected to last.

RHUL

Relations between Rhul and Cygnar have been historically friendly and open. Cygnar has long counted Rhul among its greatest trade partners, with goods and materials flowing freely along the Black River from one nation to the other and fattening the coffers of Llaelese middlemen en route. Several large enclaves of Rhulic citizens have settled in the Wyrmwall Mountains and are considered by Cygnar to be tremendous assets. The various cities of the realm include thousands of Rhulfolk who have permanently settled in Cygnar, pay taxes, and are treated as equals by Cygnaran citizens—even if their ultimate loyalty belongs to Rhul.

Despite these strong ties, the Llaelese War has muddled matters between the two nations. Choosing to remain neutral, Rhul continues to conduct trade with Khador, a decision that has strained communications between King Leto and the Stone Lords. Trade has been made considerably more difficult by the Khadoran occupation of most of western Llael, including control over the northern Black River. Though Rhulic traders have demonstrated ingenuity in keeping trade lanes open, added costs have made mutual commerce with Rhul less profitable than it once was.

SKORNE EMPIRE

As with Cryx, all of Cygnar's contact with this enigmatic nation from eastern Immoren has been hostile. The skorne are clearly an aggressive military power intent on conquest. Finding Cygnar well defended, they have since withdrawn into the Bloodstone Marches. CRS rangers watch their activities closely, aware that they are fortifying and building in this region in a clear intention to stay. Very little communication has transpired between Cygnar and the Skorne Empire, a fact partly due to significant language barriers. In truth, however, the skorne appear to be more interested in bloodshed than they are in any pretense of trade or diplomatic contact with the west.

UNITED KRIELS OF THE TROLLKIN

While not recognized as a nation, the trollkin kriels of Cygnar have recently organized into a cohesive alliance referred to as the United Kriels. Less a formal name and more a description of an evolving confederation, the term "United Kriels" primarily refers to trollkin displaced from the Thornwood as well as the previously insular kriels of the Gnarls. Reports suggest this alliance has recently made overtures to kriels as far north as the Scarsfell Forest of Khador and as far south as the Southern Wyrmwall and the Fenn Marsh near Mercir. Several violent clashes have flared between the Cygnaran Army and well-armed bands of trollkin, though King Leto has thus far avoided escalating the situation.

The king once enjoyed a friendly relationship with a prominent leader of the alliance: Chief Madrak Ironhide of the Thornwood. When Leto was a young army officer, he had occasion to save Madrak's life. As part of the resulting mutual appreciation between the two, King Leto sent military aid and supplies to the kriels after their ancestral homes were overrun by Cryx. He even went so far as to promise lands to the trollkin based on ancient friendships that stretched back to Grindar, a member of the Council of Ten and signatory of the Corvis Treaties.

Unfortunately, because of the Llaelese War, the intended lands were given by Leto's vassals to Llaelese refugees instead. This broken promise created a rift that has led to violent uprisings in the Northern and Western Midlunds, including Ironhide's seizure of a farm community called Crael Valley in 607 AR. That region was violently reclaimed by the Fourth Army, which acted outside the scope of King Leto's commands at the behest of angry nobles in the area. The present state of affairs between Cygnar and the United Kriels could be characterized as tense, though the king has ordered his soldiers to engage only when required to defend Cygnaran citizens and lands. With so many trollkin displaced, well armed, and seeking new homes, there may be no simple solution to this problem.

THE CYGNARAN MILITARY

Cygnar's military prides itself on fielding the most-disciplined, best-trained, and best-armed soldiers in western Immoren. It has earned a reputation for defeating its enemies even while greatly outnumbered by emphasizing the quality rather than the quantity of its infantry and warjacks. The military has changed considerably in recent years to incorporate gains from industrialization and mechanika; indeed, it now stands at the cutting edge of technological ingenuity applied to the art of war.

Though occasional impressments have routinely occurred throughout the navy's history, enlistment in Cygnar's army has long been voluntary—aside from the occasional use of penal battalions under previous monarchs. King Leto adamantly refuses to impose conscription despite the urging of the Royal Assembly on the grounds that soldiers forced to fight can never match the resolve of those who freely choose to defend their nation. Most enlisted soldiers begin their military careers among the ranks of long gunners and trenchers. Career soldiers of notable merit may be singled out for advanced training within more specialized service branches.

Commissioned officers are no longer drawn exclusively from the ranks of the Cygnaran aristocracy, though military traditions still run strong in many noble houses. In the modern era, soldiers more easily rise through the ranks by merit and are frequently allowed to keep brevet ranks earned in the field. In practice, however, attending a military academy is the best way to ensure an officer's commission. The most prominent military school is the Strategic Academy, which maintains locations in Point Bourne and Caspia.

The Strategic Academy provides young officers with a thorough background in military history, tactics, engineering, and philosophy. Its instructors also train cadets to endure the physical rigors of war and to master the weapons of the modern battlefield. Above all, it creates great leaders by developing its cadets intellectually, physically, militarily, and ethically.

In addition to training officers, the academy staff coordinates arcane instruction and research. They are also tasked to locate, harness, and develop unique talents; for example, the institution oversees the Tempest Academy, which trains Cygnar's renowned gun mages. The Cygnaran Army's warcaster training program comprises the smallest but most vital branch of the Strategic Academy. The academy also oversees the training of other, less-prominent specialists. Military alchemists, who produce munitions, and field mechaniks, who master warjack repair and fabrication, number among these.

THE WAR COUNCIL

Initially instituted by King Leto in 595 AR as an advisory council but later transitioning to a full war body in 603 AR, the War Council keeps the king informed about the state of the realm. Since the start of the Llaelese War, they have been tasked primarily with coordinating and planning Cygnaran war efforts. The War Council meets daily in a room dedicated to its use. Maps of troop movements, supply chains, and enemy activities cover most surfaces, and when the council is in session, a steady stream of couriers and reporting officers comes and goes.

In addition to the sovereign himself, the main body of the War Council is composed of the king's high chancellors: Warmaster General Olson Turpin, supreme commander of the Cygnaran Army; Navarch Govan Trent, supreme commander of the Cygnaran Navy; High Magus Arland Calster, court wizard to King Leto and head of the Caspian branch of the Fraternal Order of Wizardry; Scout General Bolden Rebald, commander

PROFESSOR PENDRAKE AND THE CRS

Corvis University Professor Viktor Pendrake has become a unique asset to Cygnar as an expert in both the Skorne Empire and the kingdom's trollkin. The professor served in the Cygnaran Army as a ranger decades ago, but he accumulated most of his lore as a professor of extraordinary zoology for the university. His expertise on many of the nonhuman species dwelling in the wilds or on the fringes of the kingdom has been invaluable to the CRS, which retains him as a special consultant. He has published numerous volumes on trollkin and other intelligent species, and he maintains friendships with many Cygnaran kriel leaders as a sort of unofficial ambassador. He has performed similar services related to gatormen tribes, albeit with considerably less influence.

The professor's knowledge of the Skorne Empire arises from less-friendly contact. In 606 AR, he was captured by skorne forces in the Bloodstone Marches and dragged before Vinter Raelthorne IV in the Abyssal Fortress, where he was made to document Vinter's accomplishments in order to unify the skorne. This unexpected task gave him the opportunity to tour the foreign nation; in fact, he is the only other human besides Vinter IV ever to step east of the Abyss. In his months of captivity, Professor Pendrake learned the skorne language and history, and he charted the scope of their nation and its geography. He eventually escaped by sea and returned to Cygnar along with the knowledge he had gained. Any communication with the skorne would by necessity involve Professor Pendrake, not only for his linguistic expertise but also for his understanding of their society and its militant codes of etiquette.

WARMASTER GENERAL OLSON TURPIN

The current supreme commander of the Cygnaran Army is Warmaster General Olson Turpin. In theory, the warmaster has total authority over all arms and troops at the disposal of the Kingdom of Cygnar. In practice, however, he essentially fills the role of chief military bureaucrat—as Lord Commander Coleman Stryker has become King Leto's primary advisor in the field. Nonetheless, for anyone other than those soldiers serving in the lord commander's Storm Division, the warmaster general still occupies the top position in the army's chain of command.

Born to a wealthy merchant family that had bought into the aristocracy, Turpin began his career as a lieutenant among the long gunners of the Second Army. By the time of the Lion's Coup, he had attained the rank of general and grown disenchanted with then–King Vinter Raelthorne IV's policies. Turpin numbered among the first members of Leto's conspiracy, and he played a key role in the success of their coup by organizing efforts outside the capital to ensure the nearest garrisons did not rush to Vinter's defense. He also saw to it that officers loyal to Leto were installed in key positions throughout the far-flung army in order to promote a smooth transition. In the aftermath, King Leto rewarded Turpin for his loyalty and strategic mind by elevating him to the rank of warmaster. In the following years, Turpin was instrumental in reforming and modernizing the Cygnaran Army. Though his reputation has been diminished in recent years due to the loss of Cygnaran territory to Khador, he remains a loyal and steadfast member of the king's War Council.

of the Cygnaran Reconnaissance Service; and Lord Treasurer Lars Corumny. Primarch Arius of the Church of Morrow has an open invitation to attend the deliberations, and he occasionally sends Exarch Dargule in his stead. Council members are served by numerous adjutant officers and couriers. In addition, civilian specialists in mechanika, engineering, and other fields often brief the council on matters related to their areas of expertise. Frequent additional attendees include Master Mechanik Lassiter Polk of the Cygnaran Armory and Commander Adept Birk Kinbrace of the Strategic Academy.

At present, the War Council is primarily focused on the pending war with Khador on the northern front and preparations for the likely renewal of hostilities with the Protectorate along the eastern border. The council also regularly assesses skorne activity along the Black River, Cryxian fleet movements, news on trollkin uprisings, and the potential for treachery among certain restless Cygnaran nobles.

THE CYGNARAN NAVY

The Cygnaran Navy is a vital aspect of the kingdom's military, both because Cygnar boasts the longest stretch of continuous shoreline of any nation in the Iron Kingdoms, and because it has the dubious distinction of sharing the Broken Coast with Cryx. The responsibility for protecting these waters and the vital shipping between Cygnar's many ports falls to the navy, which is commanded by Navarch Govan Trent. Supervised from the Sentinel Point Naval Fortress south of Caspia, the Cygnaran Navy maintains officer training facilities separate from the army.

The navy is divided into three distinct fleets, each led by a lord admiral served by subordinate admirals: the Eastern Fleet (or "Caspian Fleet"), based in Caspia and charged with patrolling the Gulf of Cygnar; the Southern Fleet, based in Highgate and entrusted to defend the southern peninsula most directly threatened by Cryx; and the Northern Fleet, based in Ceryl and assigned to guard Cygnar's northern waters against all

NAVARCH GOVAN TRENT

The naval rank of navarch stands roughly equivalent to the Cygnaran Army's warmaster. The navarch is the ultimate authority on naval matters; indeed, fleet movements, requisitions, shipbuilding, and maritime troops all fall under the navarch's purview. He technically answers only to the king, though in reality his most serious decisions are reviewed by the War Council.

Navarch Govan Trent proved himself as an admiral of the Southern Fleet as well as in numerous engagements during the Scharde Invasions. Elevated to the rank of lord admiral of the Southern Fleet, he stayed neutral during the events of the Lion's Coup, but his exemplary record saw him eventually promoted to navarch. He has since served ably, though some on the War Council might use the term "adequately." In recent years, old age has begun to erode the navarch's motivation and capabilities, and he has frequently delegated his authority to the archduke of Caspia, Lord Admiral Galten Sparholm III. It is likely only a matter of time until the navarch dies of old age or is gently retired by the king to be replaced by the lord admiral.

threats, including the Khadoran Navy. The Southern Fleet, in particular, works closely with Cygnar's Third Army to protect the kingdom from Cryx.

Cygnar classes its warships according to a system of ratings. First-rate ships of the line are the largest naval vessels in all of western Immoren and typically used by fleet admirals as flagships. Second- and third-rate ships are somewhat smaller, but their superior maneuverability and still-considerable firepower make them masters of naval combat. A "lightly armed" third-rate ship of the line still bears three gun decks of more than 50 guns each on its port and starboard. Rated all the way down to sixth, smaller ships like schooners, frigates, and corvettes comprise the reconnaissance and supply ships of the Cygnaran Navy. Almost all naval ships, no matter their age or class, are equipped with both sails and steam engines.

Cygnar now boasts the most modern naval force to sail the Meredius. Its small but growing fleet of ironhull warships, which are heavily armored and driven purely by steam, signals a move away from sail and hybrid power. The Cygnaran Navy has even begun to commission highly advanced vessels such as the submersible *Intruder* and its sister, the *Reliant*. Though Ord still maintains a higher standard of training among its sailors, Cygnar's vessels are the wonders of their age.

FOUR ARMIES

Cygnar is a large nation in the unfortunate position of being surrounded by hostile powers. Each of the kingdom's four corners is isolated from the others as much by imposing geography as by distance, and many dedicated military personnel are required to defend the nation against immediate threats. In recognition of this fact, the overall Cygnaran Army is divided into four smaller armies, each tasked to defend a specific region.

THE FIRST ARMY, THE "NORTHERN ARMY"

The First Army (also called the "Thornwood Army," "Northwatch," or the "Northern Army") has traditionally shouldered the difficult responsibility of defending Cygnar's northernmost border against Khador. Since its establishment, this army has seen more combat than the other three armies combined. The fighting men and women of the First are rightfully proud of their singular expertise in battling Cygnar's northern rival.

After the surrender of Llael's capital in the summer of 605 AR, most Cygnaran forces withdrew to the extensive network of border defenses along the northern edge of the Thornwood. Proving it was not content with swallowing Llael, Khador assaulted Cygnar's border directly. The First Army stood strong for more than a year under the harshest conditions imaginable, reinforced continuously from the capital and elsewhere in Cygnar's interior.

The vast network of trenches and earthworks between Northguard and Khadoran fortress of Ravensgard saw frequent clashes. Northguard fought off a singularly massive assault orchestrated by Kommandant Gurvaldt Irusk in late 606 AR, a battle unequaled for its unremitting violence and the losses absorbed by both sides. Though Cygnar won the day, it was by the narrowest margin. Faced with war on three fronts, Cygnar was unable to fully restore this region's tattered defenses.

Khador's second assault on Northguard was crushing, remarkable for the surgical precision with which the Khadorans breached Northguard's walls and completely overran Cygnaran positions. As General Adept Nemo evacuated as many personnel as possible from the fortress, General Hagan Cathmore remained behind to fight the Khadorans to his last breath—a brave but ultimately futile gesture. The smaller northern border fortresses fell soon after Northguard, effectively moving Cygnar's northern border two hundred miles south.

With Northguard and the Thornwood lost, the First Army endured the bleakest days of its history. However, despite the heavy casualties suffered across the ranks in the past year, these hardened border defenders remain determined to regain what has been lost and prove they are neither cowed nor broken.

Lord General Duggan is stationed alongside the newly promoted General Shay Terswell at Point Bourne, where they oversee the First Army's western forces. The eastern portion of the army is under the capable direction of Generals Sebastian Nemo and Galt Langworth at Corvis. Another significant concentration of First Army soldiers operates out of Stonebridge Castle under the command of General Kierlan Krismoor, formerly stationed at Deepwood Tower. Several members of Lord Commander Stryker's restructured Storm

CYGNARAN MILITARY

King Leto Raelthorne

- **Cygnaran Army**
  Soldiers: 455,000
  4 Armies
  Warmaster General Olson Turpin
- **Cygnaran Navy**
  3 Fleets
  Navarch Govan Trent
- **Cygnaran Reconaissance Service**
  Scout General Bolden Rebald
- **Lord Commander Coleman Stryker**
- **Duke Mayhew Dergeral, Ceryl**

The 6th Division falls directly under Lord Commander Stryker's command but draws soldiers from the Second Army.

First Army
Khadoran Border
Soldiers: 195,000
5 Divisions
Lord General Olan Duggan, Duke

- **1st Division** — Northguard — Soldiers: 65,000 — 6 Brigades — General Hagen Cathmore Earl
- **3rd Division** — Deepwood Tower — Soldiers: 45,000 — 4 Brigades — General Kierlan Krismoor, Lord
- **4th Division** — Fellig Garrion — Soldiers: 40,000 — 4 Brigades — General Dargus Mathern, Reeve
- **5th Division** — Reinforements — Soldiers: 25,000 — 3 Brigades — General Galt Langworth, Earl
- **10th Division** — Training Reserves — Soldiers 20,000 — 2 Brigades — Sr. Commander Shay Terswell, Reeve
- **Storm Division (6th)** — Besieging Sul — Soldiers: 95,000 — 10 Brigades — General Artoris Halstead, Lord

Second Army
Eastern Border
Soldiers: 150,000
3 Divisions
Lord General Wiggin Heltser Viscount

- **7th Division** — Eastwall, Caspian Reserves — Soldiers: 25,000 — 3 Brigades — General Alain Runewood Archduke
- **12th Division** — Fort Falk, Corvis Division — Soldiers: 30,000 — 3 Brigades — General Keilon Ebonhart IV, Duke

Third Army
Cryxian Border
Soldiers: 80,000
2 Divisions
Lord General Vincent Gollan, Earl

- **9th Division** — Southern Coastal Defense — Soldiers: 55,000 — 4 Brigades — General Bors Gately, Marquis
- **14th Division** — Reserves, Wyrmwall Defense — Soldiers: 25,000 — 3 Brigades — Sr. Commander Evelyn Turpin

Fourth Army
Ordic Border (Ceryl)
Soldiers: 30,000
1 Divisions
General Gralen Deckley, Viscount

- **11th Division** — Ordic Border. Northern Coastal Defense — Soldiers: 30,000 — 3 Brigades — (Above)

- **18th Brigade** — Soldiers: 9,000 — 4 Regiments
- **21st Brigade** — Soldiers: 9,000 — 4 Regiments
- **22nd Brigade** — Soldiers: 10,000 — 4 Regiments
- **23rd Brigade** — Soldiers: 10,000 — 4 Regiments
- **25th Brigade** — Soldiers: 10,000 — 4 Regiments
- **26th Brigade** — Soldiers: 10,000 — 4 Regiments
- **29th Brigade** — Soldiers: 10,000 — 4 Regiments
- **30th Brigade** — Soldiers: 10,000 — 4 Regiments
- **32nd Brigade** — Soldiers: 8,500 — 4 Regiments
- **33rd Brigade** — Soldiers: 8,500 — 4 Regiments

Each brigade is led by a commander

- **77th Regiment** — Heavy Infantry — Soldiers: 2,700 — 3 Battalions
- **79th Regiment** — Heavy Infantry — Soldiers: 2,700 — 3 Battalions
- **80th Regiment** — Heavy Infantry Includes the "King's Hailstorm" — Soldiers: 3,000 — 3 Battalions
- **82nd Regiment** — Heavy Calvary — Soldiers: 600 — 2 Battalions

Each regiment is led by a colonel

- **16th Heavy Infantry Battalion** — Soldiers: 900 — 3 Companies
- **18th Heavy Infantry Battalion** — Soldiers: 900 — 3 Companies
- **19th Heavy Infantry Battalion** — Soldiers: 900 — 3 Companies

Each battalion is led by a major

- **31st Storm Knight Company "The Storm Chasers"** — Stormblades, Storm Lances, Stormclad — Soldiers: 250 — 6 Platoons
- **32nd Storm Knight Company "Storm Watch"** — Stormblades, Stormguard — Soldiers: 350 — 7 Platoons
- **21st Sword Knight Company "Ready Blades"** — Sword Knights, Centurion — Soldiers: 300 — 6 Platoons

Each company is led by a captain

- **1st Platoon** — Stormblades, Stormclad — Soldiers: 60 — 6 Squads
- **2nd Platoon** — Stormblades — Soldiers: 47 — 6 Squads
- **3rd Platoon** — Stormblades — Soldiers: 57 — 6 Squads
- **5th Platoon** — Stormblades — Soldiers: 56 — 6 Squads
- **6th Platoon** — Storm Lances — Soldiers: 30 — 6 Squads

Each platoon is led by a lieutenant

Division have joined the defenders in this region. The First Army numbers approximately 210,000 soldiers, the largest concentration of Cygnaran troops ever mustered.

The beleaguered state of the First Army has necessitated that reinforcements be sent from elsewhere. These include most notably and numerously a large contingent of the Fourth Army, once stationed farther west at Fort Balton, that now bolsters posts along the border. Not all officers of the First are happy with this arrangement, as the Fourth is suspected of numerous indiscretions, and its officers are not well trusted. Affording more hope than these Fourth Army additions is the presence of many of Cygnar's most esteemed and respected warcasters. This deployment may shift if fighting should arise elsewhere, but for the moment many of Cygnar's warcasters stand alongside the First Army.

THE SECOND ARMY, THE "ARMY OF THE BLACK RIVER"

The Second Army (also called the "Caspian Army," the "Eastern Army," or the "Army of the Black River") defends the eastern border and maintains a large garrison at the capital and smaller forces at Fort Falk and Eastwall. It has traditionally defended Corvis as well, but with the changes to the northern border, that city now hosts soldiers of the First Army. Several former Second Army battalions remained in the city but were transferred to the First in the aftermath of the fall of the Thornwood to help shore up defenses along the newly contested border.

Though relying on a foundation of long gunners and trenchers, the Second Army also includes the largest proportion of heavy infantry and cavalry in the Cygnaran Army, including veteran Storm and Sword Knights. Many ranking officers of these companies are the vassals of nobles sitting on the Royal Assembly. Because the Cygnaran Armory operates out of Caspia, the Second Army also boasts substantial warjack support and often serves as the testing ground for new chassis and weapon designs. Repair and resupply to these garrisons is considerably faster and easier than to Cygnar's other armies, thanks to the commercial and industrial might of the capital.

As with the kingdom's forces elsewhere, Cygnar's eastern border defenders have had to deal with constant strife and warfare over the last several years, a reality that has prompted widespread reorganization of personnel and continual recruitment to replace the fallen.

The Second Army saw protracted action during the Caspia-Sul War from 606–607 AR, a costly conflict that caused extensive damage to both cities. The Second Army has experienced a short but welcome reprieve in fighting since the death of Hierarch Voyle and Cygnaran intelligence suggests the Protectorate's leaders have shifted their focus to the Northern Crusade in eastern Llael. Clashes north of Sul and Caspia have flared periodically and seem likely to continue.

At present, Lord General Wiggin Heltser leads the Second Army from Caspia, where he maintains regular contact with the warmaster general. Lord Commander Stryker's Storm Division has been effectively removed from the Second Army's chain of command, and the new 8th Division that replaced Stryker's 6th is led by General Artoris Halstead. Now that the Storm Division operates as its own entity, the Second Army currently counts approximately 84,000 soldiers in its ranks. A sizable portion of the eastern border is watched by General Alain Runewood, whose 7th Division is garrisoned at Eastwall. The northern patrols of this border report to General Kielon Ebonhart IV, who commands the 12th Division from Fort Falk, having moved his headquarters there from Corvis.

STORM DIVISION

Though Lord Stryker remains a beloved hero of the Second Army, his Storm Division has been granted autonomy from the normal chain of command. As part of the restructuring following the Caspia-Sul War, the Storm Division was reduced in size to suit its new role as a mobile strike force apart from the Second Army. Some troops were deployed elsewhere, such as the northern border, while others remain in Caspia to defend the capital.

THE THIRD ARMY, THE "ARMY OF THE WYRMWALL"

Based out of Highgate, Cygnar's Third Army (also called the "Southern Army," the "Army of Highgate," or the "Army of the Wyrmwall") is responsible for protecting the southern shores, primarily from Cryxian attack. No soldiers in Cygnar are better versed in Cryxian fighting tactics than those in the Third, and it is from the officers of this army that Cygnaran generals seek advice on battling the horrors of the Nightmare Empire. Given the ability of Cryxian forces to strike and vanish without warning, defending the coastline has always proved a challenge, and in recent years the threat has escalated to unprecedented levels. Cygnar's entire population appreciates the brave warriors who fight the terrors of Cryx almost daily.

Operationally, the Third is quite different from the other armies of Cygnar, as no other works as closely with the Cygnaran Navy. In fact, army and navy personnel here are tightly integrated and accustomed to joint operations. The admirals of the Southern Fleet stationed at Highgate answer directly to Lord General Vincent Gollan in addition to obeying their lord admiral—an unusual but effective arrangement. At times, vessels from both the Northern and Eastern Fleets also join in these operations.

For 30 years, the Third Army has been led by Lord General Vincent Gollan, earl of Shieldpoint and senior knight of the Prophet. Though he is past his prime and suffers from poor health, Lord General Gollan is a living legend among the Third,

respected as both a servant of Morrow and a determined enemy of Cryx. Despite the esteem in which the venerable lord general is held, some are eager for younger blood and fresh ideas.

For now, Lord General Gollan supervises the army's complex fleet and land engagements from Highgate. Ancillary garrisons exist at numerous forts along the western coast, with concentrations at Westwatch and the southern port city of Mercir. General Bors Gately works closely with the lord general and supervises the large 9th Division, which includes a majority of the army's active service personnel, numbering approximately 73,000 troops and support staff. Senior Commander Evelyn Turpin, the granddaughter of the warmaster general, commands the 14th Division, which includes both the reserves and the battle-ready patrols that scour the Wyrmwall Mountains for threats to the realm. She has proved herself worthy of her responsibilities by demonstrating a shrewd logistical mind, through which she achieves more with less.

THE FOURTH ARMY, THE "ARMY OF THE DRAGON'S TONGUE"

Cygnar's Fourth Army (also called the "Western Army" or the "Army of the Dragon's Tongue") is the smallest and least esteemed of Cygnar's armies, having historically been a reserve force numbering only about 28,000 soldiers. Because Cygnar's kings have considered it important to watch all borders, the Fourth Army is charged with patrolling the land shared with Ord, a relatively friendly nation. Recent events have brought the Fourth Army out from the seclusion of Fort Balton, and they will certainly play a significant role in the days ahead.

As Cygnar's largest reserve force, the Fourth has inevitably been used as a dumping ground for undesirable and insubordinate soldiers who are branded troublesome but not incompetent enough to be booted from service. While such elements represent only a fraction of the army, the Fourth nonetheless counts more criminal behavior than the rest of the army as a whole, including incidences of extortion, graft, bribes, misallocation of military resources, looting, and violence against civilians. What is not known is that the ranking officers of the Fourth Army are involved in a potentially treasonous conspiracy with some of Cygnar's most powerful nobles.

After the fall of Northguard and the loss of the Thornwood, the bulk of the Fourth Army was ordered east to reinforce Point Bourne, Stonebridge Castle, Corvis, and locations in between. A smaller force remained at Fort Balton under the direct command of General Gralen Deckley to defend Ceryl. Though the added manpower is appreciated by the beleaguered First Army, tension between the soldiers of these two forces linger.

SERVICE BRANCHES

Taking a combined-arms approach to warfare, with an emphasis on ranged firepower, the Cygnaran Army delivers unrelenting fire at a distance by employing numerous long gunners and trenchers, soldiers who form the backbone of the army and comprise the bulk of its numbers. Cygnar also maintains an impressive array of heavy infantry, including its famed Storm Knights. These armored fighters use mechanikally augmented weaponry to unleash the power of lightning on the kingdom's enemies. Support units include specialized soldiers like field mechaniks, who maintain the nation's warjacks; gun mages, who marry firearms and the arcane arts to devastating effect; and the rangers of the Cygnaran Reconnaissance Service, who are versed in scouting, tracking enemy troop movements, and coordinating strikes.

LONG GUNNERS

Since the advent of the long gun, Cygnar has fielded skilled riflemen as part of its vast armies. The introduction of the repeating long gun with its ammo wheel has made the modern long gunner the undisputed backbone of the Cygnaran Army. Long gunners represent one of Cygnar's two primary infantry services—the other being the trenchers—and comprise the majority of Cygnar's rank-and-file soldiers.

TRENCHERS

The men and women of the trenchers comprise the hardcore of the enlisted soldiers of the Cygnaran Army. Informally called "gravediggers," they are the first onto the field and often the last to leave. Trenchers form the bulk of any Cygnaran vanguard. Spread across trench lines and hastily dug emplacements, they seize ground and hold it, enduring withering enemy fire and buying time for the rest of the army to advance.

The standard trencher weapon is a heavy rifle set with a bayonet and supplemented by smoke grenades that obscure their advance. Trencher regiments are supported by mobile light artillery teams and specialist units like commandos. In order to become a trencher commando, a soldier must complete a punishing training regimen taught by veteran instructors of the Cygnaran Reconnaissance Service. Such units specialize in irregular warfare and alternative weaponry.

The trenchers began as an experiment by Cygnaran generals, who wanted to see if harsh training might transform ordinary soldiers into hardened and more versatile fighters. The program's success has made trenchers the cornerstone of the Cygnaran Army. It is also the only service branch typically open to Cygnaran trollkin and ogrun who show patriotic inclinations.

STORM KNIGHTS

Selected from the ranks of enlisted and commissioned soldiers, Storm Knights are galvanic warriors trained to fight in heavy plate armor that insulates them against the lethal currents of the weaponry they wield. Though several Storm Knight branches exist, most begin their training as Stormblades, warriors marked by the crackling nimbus that surrounds them as they march to battle.

The Storm Knights were founded by Leto Raelthorne during his time as Vinter IV's warmaster general. Since then, they have earned a reputation as the most elite heavy infantry and cavalry at the service of the Cygnaran crown.

SWORD KNIGHTS

Among the oldest of the knightly orders in western Immoren, and exclusively drawn from noble Cygnaran families, the

Sword Knights have been a pillar of the Cygnaran military for centuries. Unlike some modern knightly orders, the Sword Knights fight with their traditional weapons—the Caspian battle blade and shield. Upon a knight's acceptance into this order, he also receives a ceremonial blade to be kept with him at all times. He is expected to maintain this ornamental weapon throughout his life. It is never to be drawn in battle, and upon a valiant knight's death, the blade is buried alongside him to keep him safe in the wilds of Urcaen.

CYGNARAN RECONNAISSANCE SERVICE

Traditionally the Cygnaran Reconnaissance Service (CRS) was tasked with overseeing Cygnar's military scouts and cartographers. This remains its acknowledged function, and the majority of its personnel are rangers working alongside the military. Picked from the toughest and brightest the military has to offer, rangers are trained in methods of survival, stealth, and secret communications. They function in a variety of roles, including as covert strike forces, guides, or forward observers, typically in self-contained teams no larger than a squad. Their swift sergeants represent the pinnacle of their fighting ranks.

Following the dissolution of the spy network formerly employed by King Vinter IV, which was dominated by the Inquisition, King Leto has broadened the purview of the CRS to also serve as Cygnar's intelligence-gathering body. Its officers supervise the nation's convoluted network of spies, contacts, and informants, including covert agents. The king determined the CRS would provide the bedrock upon which a new clandestine

SCOUT GENERAL BOLDEN REBALD

To all appearances, Bolden Rebald stepped back from active duty to take up the duties of scout general, a position that requires him to monitor Cygnar's rangers, scouts, and military chroniclers, as well as to collect and collate their reports. In fact, Rebald was immediately charged with developing a Cygnaran information-gathering network to replace Vinter IV's Inquisition. In the years since, the scout general has established a kingdom-wide organization capable of quickly relaying sensitive information to his offices in Caspia.

Though Rebald has amassed a sizeable intelligence network, his agents are spread thin. Even before the onset of the Llaelese War, the Reconnaissance Service was barely able to keep the scout general, and therefore the king, apprised of the latest happenings abroad. Rebald has one of the most difficult tasks in Cygnar, for he must not only bear the burden of controlling his nation's espionage and counter-espionage forces, but he must also do so in perfect secrecy.

CYGNARAN MILITARY RANKS

The basic rank structure of the Cygnaran Army has remained largely unchanged for 200 years, barring small adjustments to specific branches of service. Though the fundamental purpose of the rank structure is to provide a clear chain of command, the Cygnaran Army remains a large and complex organization.

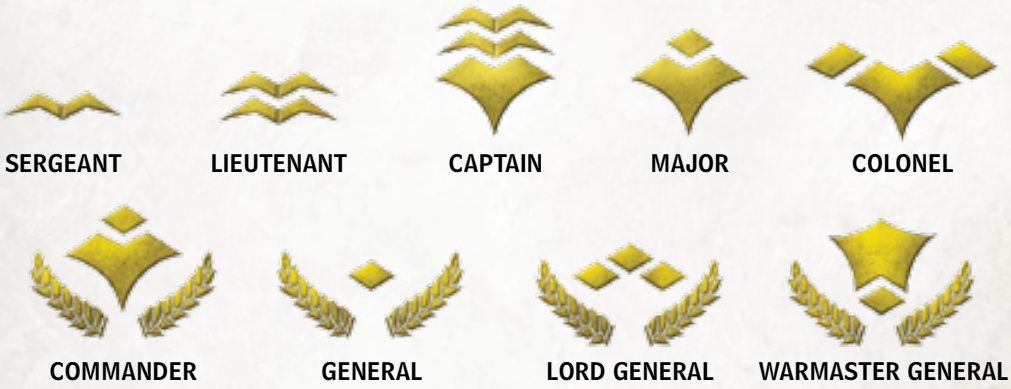
The army includes both enlisted soldiers and commissioned officers, with fraternization between the two strongly discouraged. Cygnarans who begin careers as commissioned officers must first complete courses at the Strategic Academy. Enlisted personnel promoted to officers are also technically required to attend the Strategic Academy, though this duty is often postponed indefinitely. Very few trencher officers who have risen through the ranks, for example, have ever attended courses at Point Bourne or Caspia.

An enlisted solider is referred to as a recruit before he earns the lowest rank of private at the end of his training. After a year of service, a private becomes a private first class, though this designation is primarily of interest only to payroll masters, as it conveys little additional authority. After proving competence, a private first class may earn promotion to corporal, the first grade of noncommissioned officer. Corporals direct small units of privates and are often entrusted to supervise fire teams.

Above corporals are sergeants, who lead squads formed from multiple fire teams and units. This highly respected rank encompasses several grades that vary by service and is the highest most soldiers can ever expect to climb—even for those who make the military their career.

Officers in training are called cadets and graduate as lieutenants. Promotion above this rank is based on performance and the availability of positions. The actual role of a lieutenant varies considerably from one branch of the army to the next. In larger infantry companies, such as that of trenchers and long gunners, lieutenants lead entire platoons.

Among the general infantry, captains lead companies, majors lead battalions, colonels lead regiments, commanders lead brigades, and generals lead army divisions. Lords generals command three of Cygnar's four armies. Providing a single voice of authority above these generals is the warmaster general, who enacts the king's will across the shared efforts of the entire Cygnaran Army.



organization would be built. To lead this organization, he created the rank of Scout General, a position that would report directly to the king and coordinate the activities of the rangers along with the office of the warmaster general. Bolden Rebald has held the post since its inception.

As Cygnar's premier spy agency, the CRS is interested in domestic and foreign affairs—anything that threatens the peace and welfare of the nation. It has succeeded in infiltrating trade, religious, and criminal organizations as well as compromising foreign governments and military structures. Due to the shifting loyalties of informants, the CRS takes pains to substantiate intelligence, sometimes delaying the release of information until it can be confirmed.

Agents in the field report to senior field agents or ranking CRS handlers and are supported by networks of safe houses and secret arms caches within and without Cygnar. Field agents are tasked with creating personal networks of contacts and informants, including recruiting those who can work and live on foreign soil. They often rely on complex coded messages and other clandestine means of contact, and most hold ranks between lieutenant and major.

Field agents are expected to report regularly to a liaison in order to keep information flowing and to receive orders. CRS colonels supervise the liaisons. CRS commissioned officers serve either as senior field agents or as leaders and analysts who coordinate the missions of junior field agents or military rangers.

WARCASTER BATTLEGROUPS

Cygnaran warcasters enjoy tremendous operational freedom regardless of rank, moving from one battlefield to another requisitioning warjacks and supplies. Warcasters are never permanently attached to any army division or company, though they frequently spend many months with the same units.

Managing warcasters can be difficult, but because they are irreplaceable military assets capable of ensuring victory against impossible odds, generals tend to handle them carefully and deliberately. Warcasters are accountable to the same code of honor and behavior as the rest of the military, but their superiors afford them much more flexibility in the pursuit of their duties. Some soldiers resent the standard, but most do not begrudge these battle masters their standing, particularly after witnessing their power firsthand.

Though warcaster talent manifests unexpectedly, tapping its true potential requires training and discipline. Individuals displaying such power train at the Strategic Academy. Upon graduation, they become journeymen and receive the rank of lieutenant, if they do not already carry that rank or higher. Journeymen must complete a tour of service under the supervision of a senior warcaster, a task that varies in length from six months to a year or longer depending on the assessment of the mentor. After this tour, a warcaster is promoted to captain and takes on the full authority and responsibility of his station.

A warcaster's latitude extends beyond his rank in several significant ways. Such soldiers frequently assume operational control in battle, even if that entails directing those who otherwise outrank them. Further, warcasters enjoy considerable liberty when requisitioning warjacks, soldiers, or supplies—an ability that increases proportionately with their rank. In theory, a warcaster commander can call on up to 10,000 soldiers and control an entire brigade. A warcaster captain might generally be limited to a company of several hundred men, but he will still be able to select more personnel and equipment than a comparable non-warcaster captain. It is also not uncommon for a warcaster of any rank to lead a small, customized strike force intended to achieve a specific objective. In such cases, the warcaster will rely heavily on his warjacks and his own personal abilities in order to achieve victory.

Upon entering active service, a warcaster receives a complement of warjacks, a supply train, and support staff, which includes several experienced field mechaniks and their assistants.

MILITANT ORDER OF THE ARCANE TEMPEST

For more than two decades, the gun mages of the Militant Order of the Arcane Tempest have trained in the art of harnessing the arcane through gun fighting. Whereas other gun mages may be dilettantes in war, members of the Militant Order of the Arcane Tempest are hardened fighters trained for battle.

The Militant Order grew out of the Tempest Academy, an adjunct of the Strategic Academy established by Warmaster General Carston Laddermore at the height of Vinter IV's reign, a perilous time for practitioners of magic. Once a cabal of arcanists who came together in the early days of the gun mage's craft, this organization was soon inducted as a true branch of the Cygnaran Army. Since then, the Militant Order of the Arcane Tempest has become an exceedingly professional and disciplined fighting force.

ARCANE RANKS

The Strategic Academy bestows an additional rank to soldiers who have undergone arcane training, including gun mages, stormsmiths, arcane mechaniks, and warcasters; treated as honorifics, these ranks do not convey military authority. In circumstances where same-rank arcane specialists cooperate on tasks related to their specialty, however, arcane rank might determine who receives oversight.

All military arcanists begin training as apprentices and end training as journeymen. Journeyman status denotes an important probationary period during which theory is put to the test and powers are applied in the field. An individual who has completed his journeymanship is promoted to magus and becomes an acknowledged member of that arcane specialty. Few receive arcane ranks higher than this.

Only those who have demonstrated exceptional power and control in a given field attain the rank of adept; the ultimate rank of prime is considerably more rare. The latter title signifies singular acts of unequivocal genius. Strategic Academy arcane instructors meet annually to determine whether any existing magi deserve adept status, a conferment that requires a majority vote. The rank of prime requires a unanimous vote from the arcane instructors of both Strategic Academy faculties. The stringent process has led to criticism that the standards for these appellations are unreasonably high; however, the academy board insists the ranks would lose their prestige if awarded more liberally.

APPRENTICE JOURNEYMAN MAGUS ADEPT PRIME

Initiates of the Arcane Tempest undergo strenuous training at the Strategic Academy. All graduates are lethal marksmen, having mastered a variety of gun-based sorceries and small-unit tactics before they earned the right to wield the magelock pistol and wear the distinctive uniform of the Arcane Tempest. These gun mages occasionally find themselves assigned as specialized support to other branches of the military, often as members of unorthodox engagement teams.

STORMSMITHS

Many of today's most brilliant mechanikal minds serve the Cygnaran Army. After being recruited for their aptitude and trained by the Strategic Academy, stormsmiths immerse in the fields of weather manipulation and galvanic thaumaturgy. Though many spend the bulk of their time engaged in theoretical research, the ultimate testing ground for their lethal work is the battlefield. Thus, most of them are only too happy to be summoned to march with the army, where they take pride in supporting both their research and their comrades with the practical application of galvanic force.

UNORTHODOX ENGAGEMENT TEAMS

The soldiers of the Cygnaran Army must often face bewildering and terrifying foes: Cryxian necromancers commanding legions of mechanically augmented thralls, elemental sorcerers, the mysterious skorne, and other unusual threats. When standard fighting forces are outmatched, it falls to unorthodox engagement teams to redress the imbalance.

UE teams are primarily composed of arcanists, veteran soldiers, and specialists—all drawn from multiple service branches. Some are standing teams constantly moved to confront threats, while others are assembled from their parent units in response to specific situations. Once activated, a UE team will respond rapidly, whether it is needed on a battlefield or far behind enemy lines. Such teams often tangle with the covert forces of the Greylords Covenant in battles over obscure ruins and forgotten artifacts.

PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES

In 608 AR, Cygnar finds itself in the unenviable position of facing war on multiple fronts. Though a temporary cessation in hostilities has allowed the kingdom a moment to catch its breath, the Cygnaran war effort has seen several setbacks in recent months. Not only did the kingdom lose its great fortress of Northguard and later all of the Thornwood, but it also suffered fighting in the streets of its capital as it fought off invasion by Protectorate forces. The four armies must cover too much ground, and only the patriotism of an unending stream of volunteers keeps Cygnar's armed forces running.

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

While there is no disputing the power of the Cygnaran nobles and other aristocrats, they are few and rely on the ordinary citizens of this diverse nation's burgeoning middle class. Skilled laborers, artisans, and merchants comprise this fastest-growing segment of the population, and they realize they wield considerable power as the means of production are in their hands. In recent centuries, powerful merchants have gathered wealth and influence to elevate their political power. Many of them earn or marry into titles, but those who do not still have the wealth to rub shoulders with the aristocracy. Those born into long-standing families of prestige never fully embrace them, but these merchants can become significant rivals and players in the political sphere just the same.

While Cygnar is a feudal society it has not enforced serfdom since the Restoration under King Woldred the Diligent. The freemen who make up the lowest rungs of Cygnar's society have limited options, as most make their livings through arduous jobs, working long hours and receiving low wages, sometimes barely enough to support their families. In rural regions freemen farm lands leased from the nobility or work in deep mines or dangerous quarries. In the cities there are more opportunities of greater variety, but for the lowest classes this is still grueling work as factory laborers, construction workers, porters, or domestic servants. In truth, being a servant of the wealthy middle class or the aristocracy is better work than many harder labor jobs, although servants are sometimes looked down upon by those who do not answer directly to Cygnar's upper crust.

For many, a career in the Cygnaran Army or Navy offers the best chance to better themselves, though at significant risk in this time of conflict. Choosing a military life purely for economic reasons is more common in times of peace; most who enlist today do so to protect their families and their nation. Life as a trencher on the front line in mud-soaked ditches under enemy fire is hardly less arduous than working as a farmer or a miner.

Joining the Church of Morrow is another way to improve one's station, although the Church prefers those with a genuine calling. Even those not destined for seminary education to become priests can be of service, as the Church's size merits its own servants, clerks, cooks, messengers, and guardians.

The Church of Morrow serves as a vital safety net in Cygnaran society for those who would otherwise be destroyed by adversity. Families too poor to feed their children, those born with severe disfigurements or mental incapacity, those maimed by accident or warfare, or those simply cast out can often find shelter with the Church. The Church does not impose the strict tithes of the old Temple of Menoth but does accept charitable donations. Most not living in poverty will donate funds to the Church, either from genuine benevolence, in hopes of improving their lot in the afterlife, or simply because it is expected of those with means. Some nobles contribute significant endowments to fund the construction of new temples, abbeys, church-run

schools, or other community projects. Working for the Church is respectable, and priests have considerable stature. Those who excel within the hierarchy to reach the upper ranks often have as much influence as members of the aristocracy; the Church may not be the best place for the ambitious, however, as those lacking genuine piety rarely last long. Priests who exploit or abuse their authority may even come under the Order of Illumination's scrutiny.

Cygnar is in flux as the industrial revolution transforms both city and countryside. Tremendous innovations affect even the lower classes. Trains and steamships allow quick travel across previously unfathomable distances. A new telegraph network allows quick communication, and even with the network frequently disrupted and commandeered for military use, news still travels faster than ever before, including through the distribution of broadsheets with wide readership. In more remote corners it may still take weeks or months for this same information to reach people, making them feel even less connected to the transformations sweeping the nation.

Leto's rule has increased freedoms and raised wages and standards of living despite the occasional hardships and shortages resulting from war. The wealthy landowners who own and control the largest farms and factories determine the living conditions of their workers, but some workers have begun to band together as a larger voice, and such labor movements cannot be ignored. As people leave the countryside for urban centers they find fewer jobs than anticipated, particularly in areas with an influx of refugees, which results in sprawling slums and a rise in crimes committed by the desperate.

BROADSHEETS

Cygnarans embraced the invention of the steam-powered printing press, and now numerous periodicals pass along information about everything from wars and economic conditions to social customs. The first widely printed, distributed, and read news periodical, *The Weekly Newes*, began in 572 AR. These broadsheets consist of a large one-sided poster, printed locally and reporting local news, with a few articles of national interest, though these are often weeks or months out of date. Promoters pay printers to use their broadsides for advertising, and throughout the larger cities tackers attach broadsides to advertising boards and on posts and walls along streets.

Various publishers throughout the southern kingdoms are releasing their own periodicals. In Caspia alone a half-dozen short-lived broadsides seem to crop up every year. Some of the more circulated publications include the gossipy and often sensational *Cerylian Centinel*, the conspiratorial *Corvis Chronicles*, and the *Mercir Messenger*, which focuses on trade and shipping.

MAJOR CULTURES

The people of Cygnar are the most sophisticated and cosmopolitan of western Immoren. Their society is far from homogeneous, however, and their nation is home to diverse groups, philosophies, and religions.

Cygnar welcomes outsiders and has opened its arms to refugees fleeing Llael and other communities disrupted by war. Khadorans and Menites are poorly trusted, though, especially in regions where people have been threatened or invaded by Khador or the Protectorate of Menoth. Many Khadorans live in Cygnar, particularly in communities along the Dragon's Tongue River, and they face increasing prejudice. Similarly, fewer Menite Cygnarans openly worship after the Caspia-Sul war. Ordinary citizens can find it difficult to separate the Protectorate as a nation from the unconnected Menite faiths with no ties to the theocracy.

Cygnarans' tolerance for those different from themselves stems in large part from the circumstances of their nation's founding. Three kingdoms and the remnants of a fourth comprised Cygnar, each a major power in the region before the coming of the Orgoth. Caspia, the Midlunds, and Thuria were all subjugated by the invaders for centuries, and it was only through cooperation that they rose up against the Orgoth. Each was ruled by its own sovereigns in ancient times, and during the Rebellion prominent leaders from those proud old families represented their nations. They all agreed to the terms of the Corvis Treaties, submitting to a single sovereign to rule from Caspia, the sole city that never fell to the Orgoth. Those who had once been the Midlunds and Thuria were not pleased to be subordinate to Caspia, but their noble bloodlines were promised they would retain power in Cygnar. The Morridane people constitute a small but significant minority, and most do not consider their exclusion from the royal succession a sleight as their proudest bloodlines can attain significant ranks.

While the descendants of all these peoples consider themselves Cygnarans now, cultural clashes and deeply ingrained prejudices still exist between them. Those of other regions expect Caspians to be arrogant and condescending; Caspians are traditionally disdainful of Morridanes. Thurians and Caspians view Midlunders as stubborn and lacking in imagination but are themselves more at ease with the Morridanes, whose rustic ways they respect. Thurians have a reputation in the east and south for being impractical, overly cerebral, and dishonest but have always been friendlier with Caspians than Midlunders. In most cases, however, social class is more important than regional culture—those who live in the city or the countryside understand others who do the same and similarly those of comparable wealth or station stick together.

Modern Cygnarans are no strangers to civil strife. Over the past two centuries they have witnessed a religious civil war, the deposing of a tyrant, the coronation of a new king, and the restructuring of the entire Midlunds province. Their monarchy is subject to a clause unheard of in any other nation's government: Woldred's Covenant. The legal authority of a king to choose his own successor has rarely been invoked. Although the law was meant to ensure stability by preventing the nation

from being ruled by thos unfit by dint of birth, in practice the populace finds such drastic shifts in dynasty unsettling and prefer the continuity of a prestigious family. For this reason, few kings have dared to name an heir of a lesser family lest they foment unrest.

For all the struggles the people of Cygnar have faced they are the most free of any in western Immoren. They enjoy greater technological benefits and better working conditions; they rely more and more on mechanika and steam power, and with so much of their population dwelling in the great cities, they have developed a cosmopolitan point of view. Arcanists are respected members of society and face little prejudice in urban centers, though rural peasants and clergy continue to take a dim view of all practitioners of the arcane arts, sorcerers in particular. Most Cygnarans are at least accommodating of trollkin, gobbers, and ogrun who live among them, though not without some bigotry. In fact, many members of these other races consider themselves Cygnarans first and members of their kriels and tribes second, which some prejudiced outsiders find difficult to reconcile.

For most Cygnarans, patriotism is considered a virtue, and they remain hopeful for a better future. Having recently cast off a tyrant, they are resolved to resist would-be foreign invaders and despots, which extends to widespread independence and occasional resistance to authority. With threats closing in, however, military enlistment is up and young people are putting aside personal comforts and aspirations to defend their families.

CASPIANS

As the kingdom's largest ethnic group, Caspians are varied but certain aspects of Cygnaran life—culture and practices drawn from this southern region and its long history—are distinctly Caspian. They form the majority of people living across the southern half of the kingdom, including the coastal communities along the Gulf of Cygnar and the Broken Coast. Most old-blood Caspians have fair skin but a great range of hair color, with brunette as common as blond.

Caspians are generally well educated, with high literacy rates even in the smaller and poorer fishing communities. Better educated Caspians speak multiple languages, depending on their work, although only historians and theologians bother to learn the archaic Caspian language itself. Caspians tend to have serious demeanors, even stern or judgmental attitudes, and are well suited to life in politics, the military, and religion. Caspians often have a keen understanding of the law and an intuitive grasp of social contracts, whether they choose to work with or around them. Caspian politicians and merchants know how to exploit loopholes as a result of imprecise language, for instance. Oration, philosophy, and logic are all political elements that often have greater impact than appeals to emotion.

Caspians have long been religious and in modern times have taken to heart the philosophy of Morrow and belief in the limitless potential of the human soul. Their spirit of innovation reflects this, leading to many great Caspian engineers and mechaniks as well as talented individuals in the fields of architecture, painting, sculpture, and other sciences and arts. Caspians compete in these arenas with Thurians; the cities of Ceryl and Caspia are rivals in more ways than one.

In art and entertainment Caspians prefer more somber, serious subjects and themes, with tragedies and historical tales favored over farces. Most Caspians believe art exists to elevate the mind and to pay homage to great thoughts and deeds. Caspian cuisine relies on fish and poultry cooked with lightly spiced sauces; beef is a luxury at least for the lower classes. Caspian tastes may vary by region with those living near Arjun communities in the southwest enjoying richer and spicier sauces. Caspians in the capital have access to a wide variety of both entertainment and cuisine as the city has a tremendous diversity of emigrants from other cultures. The region has all manner of liquors, wines, and ales; Caspians generally prefer the wine.

MIDLUNDERS

As the second largest ethnic group in the kingdom—taking up the large central and northern regions—Midlunders are defined by their diversity. With families here drawn from just about every ethnicity in western Immoren, it is impossible to determine a Midlunder from appearance alone, although on average they have darker skin and hair than most Caspians and Thurians, thicker features, and more solid frames. This region's culture is a conglomeration of elements drawn from elsewhere.

Northern Midlunders have more in common with the Llaelese than with some of their southern Caspian countrymen, as reflected in the elaborate architecture and statuary of Corvis and many of their preferred foods and entertainments. This has increased as thousands of Llaelese refugees have settled in northern Cygnar since the onset of war. Where Midlunders and the Ryn diverge is in temperament and problem solving. Midlunders pride themselves on being practical and pragmatic, and they prefer direct solutions to their woes. The people of this region are famous for their stubbornness: it is said a Midlunder set on a course is as unlikely to veer away as a train is to leave its rails.

As with the Caspians to the south, the Morrowan religion has deep roots with the Midlunders, although they emphasize a different side of the faith. Midlunders are drawn to ascendants like Gordenn, Sambert, Markus, and Solovin, who emphasize honest labor and self-sacrifice.

Many Midlunders, particularly those south of Corvis, prefer simple entertainments and hearty cuisine. Most of their foods combine sizable portions of meat with fresh baked breads and local produce, layered in thick gravies and sauces. Stews and roasts are common; ales are preferred over wines. People in Corvis tend to differ in their tastes, enjoying Llaelese-influenced cooking and more "refined" tastes. In music and other entertainments, even urbane Midlunders prefer hearing a small group play a rousing tune at the local tavern over attending a grand symphony or opera.

MORRIDANES

The Morridanes are a scattered people, living in small numbers throughout the Thurian and Midlunds regions. They are most comfortable in either rural or slightly wild regions and settle along waterways. Many live in the Northforest Duchy, which is now occupied primarily by Khadorans, and their communities persist in isolation despite the chaos of the region. Other Morridanes emigrated south, adding to the number of refugees seeking new homes south of the Dragon's Tongue River. Morridanes are sometimes recognizable by their short, wiry stature and their dark hair and eyes.

The descendants of the ancient and ominous kingdom of Morrdh, most modern Morridanes are a rustic people with no visible connection to that lost civilization. Two distinct groups live in northern Cygnar, loosely defined by whether they live in the heart of the Thornwood or in the vast swampy regions of the Bloodsmeath Marsh or around Blindwater Lake in the east. The latter have become accustomed to being referred to as "swampies," not always a respectful term but one which is now part of their self-identity.

Swampies have their own distinct dialect, a variation of Cygnaran that includes older Morridane terms. The uninitiated find it difficult to understand but most swampies can make themselves understood to outsiders if they speak slowly and carefully. Swampies are an insular group considered "backward" by many urban Cygnarans, but they also have lore about their home region and are better suited to exploring the dangerous marshes and bogs than anyone else in Cygnar. More so than most others, Swampies are comfortable negotiating with swamp gobbers, gatormen, and other inhabitants of the area. They have an adaptable diet that includes food many other Cygnarans would consider inedible or at least suspicious. They use all sorts of local meats, frog being a favorite, and they prefer complex soups or simple dishes roasted over an open flame.

The Morridanes of the greater forest are sometimes disparaging of the swampies; they have their own culture based from the city of Fellig. The forest Morridanes are similarly rustic but prefer to speak regular Cygnaran and are as skilled in the woods as their peers are in the swamps and on the rivers. They have a reputation for courage and cunning in defending their region, using traps, ambushes, and knowledge of the local terrain to fight off greater numbers of better armed enemies. As Khador occupies most of this region, those who remain keep a low profile and avoid trouble. Some have offered the Khadorans their services as guides but most avoid direct contact and grudgingly cooperate because to do otherwise would be to risk their lives.

Although both groups of Morridanes are predominantly Morrowan, their customs vary widely from those in other regions of Cygnar. Morridanes treat both the forest and the swamp with healthy respect, almost as if the lands were themselves alive, and they are prone to anthropomorphizing things such as plant life, streams and rivers, and even their own weapons. This is usually done in jest, but the custom is deeply ingrained. Despite these and other habits that southerners consider odd, Morridanes are valued as scouts and guides, and both the Cygnaran Reconnaissance Service and the armies safeguarding the border regions welcome them.

THURIANS

While third in population, the Thurians consider themselves as essential to Cygnar's unique spirit and historical accomplishments as Caspians are, if not more so. They occupy the bulk of the northwestern region and down the western coastline. Ceryl is considered the other axis of Cygnaran civilization, the heart of Thurian culture. While its people are not as diverse as the Midlunders, Thuria as an old kingdom embraced many other cultures and thus its people are varied in size and shape, though they are predominantly pale skinned with redheads common. Many former Sinari and Radiz families settled here in ancient times, leaving a legacy of dark-skinned and dark-haired peoples who are just as proud to be Thurian.

Even the many Thurians living in smaller, less sophisticated townships and villages appreciate their heritage and emulate Ceryl. More so than any other Cygnaran ethnic group, they see themselves as Thurians first and Cygnarans second, retaining their ancient language so that many of them are fluent in both Thurian and Cygnaran.

Thuria was an intellectual center during the Thousand Cities Era and with Caspia became known for its philosophers, orators, mathematicians, and other thinkers. It embraced the message of Morrow, though the words of Thamar may have penetrated just as deeply. The concept of questioning all things is seen as a Thurian trait. The region has long had a more permissive attitude toward different lifestyles and religions based on a more accepting interpretation of Morrowan doctrine. Locals insist they are as good natured and benevolent as Cygnarans everywhere but a strong undercurrent of corruption in Ceryl and elsewhere persists. Thuria's criminal circles and the Thamarite cults are well organized with real power, though they keep low profiles.

Thurians are also proud of their role in the origins of organized magic before the Rebellion. Those in these professions emphasize this more than others, who feel mystical practices are only a fraction of the region's history. Nonetheless this underscores the Thurian thirst for knowledge, which includes the latest gossip and news as well as plumbing the depths of history. They prize educational institutions and great libraries, and a Thurian can increase his social stature by attending the proper universities or socializing with the intelligentsia.

Thurians have a less serious and more diverse appreciation for art and entertainment than the sober-minded Caspians do. Thurians enjoy theater with a fondness for farce and comedy as well as parades, festivals, and other excuses for pageantry. Because Thuria extends into southern Ord, the people enjoy traditionally Ordic activities like sports and games of chance. They have incorporated many Ordic customs in general as well as Ordic goods, foods, alcohols, and other wares. Thurian cuisine favor ornate dishes and multiple courses with smaller portions; they enjoy a wide variety of fish and local game in addition to meats imported from the Midlunds or Ord. Most people in this region eat their largest meal at lunch followed by a smaller supper. Thurians appreciate alcohol, slightly preferring stronger liquors over ale and wine.

RELIGION

Cygnarans pride themselves on rationality and reason, but piety and morality are valued qualities and religion is pervasive across the realm. The Morrowan faith is dominant in Cygnar almost without exception, although there is considerable regional variance in worship.

In the east, Menites keep their beliefs to themselves, particularly since the Caspia-Sul War. In the north and west, Menites communities are common and generally accepted, with only occasional tension between the two faiths. Very few Menite townships exist in Cygnar, although some thrive in isolated regions of the Western Midlunds.

Wherever the Morrowan religion is practiced, it is said Thamar waits from the shadows. Thamarite cults exist in nearly every sizable town and city, although most are small and rarely associate with each other. Adherents of Thamar's philosophy who practice her teachings on their own are far more common. Most Thamarites tend to feign Morrowan faith and mingle with their communities while keeping their true beliefs private.

The Cult of Cyriss is similarly relegated to the fringes of society. Adherents practice in major urban centers and also in remote temples hidden from prying eyes. Anywhere mathematics and astronomy are appreciated, the cult has at least a few followers. Caspia boasts one of the first open and accepted temples of Cyriss in western Immoren, allowing worshipers of the goddess to present a friendly face to the outside world. This temple is seen as an oddity and a curiosity to most who visit its brightly lit halls.

The worshipers of the Devourer Wurm largely keep to remote wilderness regions such as the Wyrmwall, the deep Thornwood, and the Gnarls. They do not seek to blend in with others and do not openly declare their allegiance anywhere it might prompt retaliation, since this faith is greatly feared and shunned.

The Dhunian faith coexists considerably more easily alongside mankind. Nevertheless, shrines and statues to the goddess are common only among trollkin, ogrun, gobber, and bogrin populations. Although these are typically in wilderness locales, cities that host a significant number of these races may also see such shrines.

THE CHURCH OF MORROW

The center of the Church of Morrow is the Sancteum in Cygnar's capital, and the reach and influence of the faith is extensive and unavoidable. It is unquestionably the largest, wealthiest, and most powerful organization outside of the Cygnaran government. The Sancteum is a sovereign power. By ancient law and treaty it is allowed to raise its own armies and govern itself and its members by church law, as long as its members heed Cygnaran law when away from church lands. The Church of Morrow also extends to Khador, Llael, and Ord, with majority worship in each of these nations.

Primarch Arius, the head of the church, governs with the aid of the Exordeum. This council of the thirty-six exarchs (the highest ranking priests of the faith) is primarily concerned with overseeing the church in its entirety, though it also supervises the church's priesthood. The Exordeum occasionally hosts summits and publishes papers on matters of theology and church doctrine. The primarch and the exarchs are often asked to provide advice to sovereigns and nobles, which they do willingly.

The exarchs set aside limited time each day to listen to petitioners. Given the tremendous volume of people who pass through the Sancteum, attaining an audience with any of the exarchs is a difficult process. Most petitioners are directed to lesser priests. Those hoping to petition often seek miracles, and nearly all are politely turned away after an explanation about the limits of divine intervention. Attaining an audience with the entire Exordeum is nearly impossible without evidence of a grave matter affecting the entire church. The same is true for a petition to the primarch, although he occasionally meets with petitioners on his own time.

Beneath the Exordeum in the hierarchy are vicars, who oversee their vicarates in councils of seven. Each vicarate is a vast region with its council seated in a major city, often in a large and impressive cathedral. Caspia, Ceryl, Fharin, and Mercir all host vicarate Councils in Cygnar; they can also be found in Khador, Ord, and Llael. The Mercir Vicarate encompasses a large expanse of southern Cygnar; the Fharin Vicarate encompasses northeastern Cygnar; the Ceryl Vicarate encompasses northwestern Cygnar; and the Caspian Vicarate encompasses the region immediately surrounding Caspia, including its duchy and the Southern Midlunds. Individual vicars are appointed elsewhere to cover gaps in support. The vicarate councils are primarily involved with regional matters and the overall administration of the churches in their regions rather than with directly tending to the flock.

The faithful are looked after by the prelates and high prelates of their local churches as well as subordinate priests. Local priests are trusted and expected to see to a variety of necessary services, such as marriages and funerals. Should tragedy or war come to a region, priests aid the suffering and help protect their communities. The dead are properly tended so their souls can pass on. Churches organize charitable deeds and offer shelter and succor to those in need, providing the primary system of aid to the needy in most Morrowan nations.

PRIMARCH ARIUS

His Supreme Holiness, Primarch Arius, is a remarkably fit man in his mid-seventies. He has been the head of the Church of Morrow for over twenty years and served the church as a priest for most of his life, having turned to the priesthood after serving in the military. Arius never aspired to the position of primarch, but he felt obliged to accept the responsibility when the archons manifested before him. Even before he was chosen, Arius served as a mentor to Prince Leto Raelthorne. The Exordeum selected him to provide counsel to the young prince, who had expressed an interest in studying the faith despite the will of the king. Arius has been a close friend and advisor to King Leto for decades.

This relationship has been an asset to the church but is also a point of contention among Arius' peers. Although Arius has striven to be impartial, he is accused of strong Cygnaran bias. This causes tension with leaders of the church in other nations, a situation escalated by the war. Despite this, the primarch continues to support Cygnar and has criticized Khador's more belligerent actions. He has also endorsed certain church military assets to join and support the Cygnaran Army, primarily against Cryx and the Protectorate of Menoth. Although Arius was chosen by Morrow and therefore his piety is incontrovertible, many will be relieved when he passes on and is replaced.

All Morrow's ascendants have a place in Cygnaran society, but some are more popular than others. Ascendant Gordenn is widely worshiped in every rural region and farming community. Ascendant Doleth has many shrines along Cygnar's long coastline as well as large temples in major port cities. Ascendant Sambert is the patron of Caspia and the Sancteum itself. The martial trinity of Ascendants Katrena, Solovin, and Markus is popular among Cygnar's soldiers. Ascendant Corben is a major figure in Ceryl, Caspia, and Fharin. Humble priests of Ascendant Rowan can be found in nearly every slum, and she has shrines in the poorest villages. Ascendant Angellia's shrines and temples commonly appear near centers of higher learning, particularly in Corvis, Ceryl, and Caspia. Shrines to Ascendant Ellena dot the major roadways and can be found at way stops.

THE KNIGHTLY ORDER OF PRECURSORS

The Precursor Knights is a distinctly Cygnaran order first sanctified on the holy grounds of the Archcourt Cathedral. These knights now occupy a number of remote fortresses along Cygnar's barren western coastline, ready to assist the realm's defense against Cryx while upholding a strict code of morality. Precursor Knights most often fight alongside Cygnar's Third Army but have recently seen service elsewhere, including fighting in the defense of Caspia against the invading Sul-Menites as well as joining the northern war front. Whatever the battlefield, Precursor knights can be recognized by their burnished silver-plated armor, their stout shields adorned with the Radiance of Morrow, and their blessed maces.

Ranking leaders and battle chaplains of this knighthood carry into battle bound tomes of the *Prayers for Battle*, a book of sacred texts drawn from the martial trinity of ascendants. In addition to protecting Cygnar, these knights consider it their duty to attend to those slain in battle, lest the bodies of the dead be desecrated and animated through unholy rites.

KNIGHTS OF THE PROPHET

The Knights of the Prophet is one of several knightly orders serving the Church of Morrow, but it is significant as one of the most populous orders and the one most closely associated with the Sancteum. Other knightly orders, such as the Precursor Knights, serve the church but are strongly affiliated with their nation and its army. The Knights of the Prophet are not forbidden from defending their nation, but they take solemn oaths to protect and preserve the church itself. Most knights belonging to this order felt a calling to join its ranks, although the honor of inclusion has occasionally been granted to notable defenders of the faith and pious warriors who acted on their own initiative in times of great peril. These knights carry an obligation to answer the call to arms if need be. They are frequently dispatched to protect Morrowan temples in war-torn regions, where they might be required to otherwise remain neutral in the battles taking place around them. The central chapter house for the Knights of the Prophet is in the Sancteum, although Highgate and Ceryl also host major chapter houses.

ORDER OF ILLUMINATION

For the past 350 years, the Order of Illumination has been the weapon of the Morrowan faith wielded against the darkest forces of the occult. Born out of a scandal of infernalism among the arcanists of the Fraternal Order of Wizardry, the order has weathered centuries of war, oppression, and revolution, all while fighting a covert and thankless battle against the forces of necromancy and the infernal. Famously described by Primarch Kielor Malistave as "a sword that once drawn is not easily sheathed," the order is filled with ruthless, relentless, pitiless witch hunters. The Morrowan religion emphasizes charity and good works, but members of the Order of Illumination understand that hard decisions and actions are required to safeguard the faith from enemies within and without.

The members of the order, known as Illuminated Ones, are sworn soldiers, investigators, arcanists, and witch hunters in the service of the Sancteum. They have vowed to uphold the tenets of the Church of Morrow and to confront and destroy practitioners of the dark arts of necromancy, infernalism, and mesmerism wherever they are found. The Illuminated Ones are the uncompromising judges and executioners of the church.

At the head of the order sits High Vigilant Peer Venessari Marpethorne. A respected and once-fearsome witch hunter, Marpethorne has led the order through the reigns of both Vinter IV and Leto. Though advancing age keeps her from active service, her mind remains sharp as she guides the order through its mission and the intricacies of international politics.

The high vigilant peer is assisted by the eight vigilant peers of the order's court. These ranking Illuminated Ones are selected through a secret process subordinate to the will of the Exordeum. The Vigilant Court weighs evidence of infernalism and other dark arcane arts and assigns Illuminated Ones to investigate further or to dispatch the order's justice.

Illuminated Ones are punctilious in the performance of their duties. Once tasked with an investigation, agents of the order stop at nothing to determine the guilt of an individual or the nature of his transgressions. Most Illuminated Ones are adroit political manipulators, but they care nothing for the social status or influence of the object of their investigations. Members of the order have in the past uncovered sweeping political scandals in the course of their duties. Perhaps their greatest work involves policing the Church of Morrow itself, and Illuminated Ones have been instrumental in uncovering corruption among the clergy.

Agents of the order have significant leeway when conducting investigations and are legally empowered by the Cygnaran crown to execute any individual found guilty of practicing any of the three dark arts. Most agents display some discretion in acting upon this mandate, though overzealous members have been known to run afoul of sensitive situations by acting with overwhelming force against a politically influential individual. Death is the default penalty for any person found guilty by the order, but in practice well-connected malefactors guilty of minor infractions might have their sentences commuted to life in the order's dungeons.

The Order of Illumination has also shown a willingness to employ those of questionable background. A handful of exiled Iosans, former Cygnaran Inquisitors, and even less reputable characters enjoy its protection in return for their expertise in specialized areas of occult knowledge. Though the most despicable individuals are effectively prisoners of the order, kept from summary justice for as long as they provide valuable information, others are completely absolved of past transgressions and act as full agents of the order.

The enemies of the order include vicious and powerful occultists and more alien threats of tremendous, otherworldly power. In response, the order pioneered arcane and mechanikal means for combating these threats. Of particular note is its success in the crafting of mechanika capable of combating infernal and discarnate abominations. Still, even with these advances bolstering the peerless fighting skills of the order's devotees, each year several Illuminated Ones vanish or are killed in the pursuit of their duties.

The order possesses an extensive network of spies and informants mostly made up of the compromised or zealous members of other intelligence services. This network also includes watchful members of the Morrowan clergy who support the efforts of the order from the safety of their churches. Though a great deal of information is passed onto the order, the Illuminated Ones possess more direct means of extracting information from those individuals who fall into their hands. The order's dungeons contain numerous implements useful in the extraction of truth.

The Order of Illumination is never more than a few hundred strong. The order's internal affairs and external interests are managed from the Grand Illuminated Library within the Sancteum. From this headquarters, the order investigates the taint of the profane and forbidden across the Iron Kingdoms. In Cygnar, the order's hunters have the luxury of support from secular law, though they are largely unwelcome in the nations of Khador and the Protectorate of Menoth. Regardless, the agents of the order care little for borders and politics in their pursuit of the damned.

The Illuminated Ones have recently begun acting with greater haste. Some members of the order believe the debt owed by humanity for the Gift of Magic will soon come due, and they speak of an apocalypse of dire proportions.

ORDER OF KEEPING

The Order of Keeping is a largely reclusive monastic order dedicated first to the preservation of the church's holy relics, and second to the recovery of holy relics when they have been lost or stolen. The first and most revered site preserved by the Order of Keeping is the Divinium, which served as the spiritual center for the Church of Morrow in its earliest days and for centuries before the Sancteum was built. The archabbot of the order lives in the Divinium, but he makes

a yearly pilgrimage to the Archcourt Cathedral to personally verify the condition of the original Enkheiridion, which only he and the primarch are allowed to touch. The order maintains numerous monasteries in remote locations, including six scattered throughout the Wyrmwall Mountains, two in northern Llael, and three in the mountains of Khador. Each of these locations preserves significant relics as well as many holy tomes of the faith.

Individual monks of the order are sometimes assigned to watch over and protect specific relics elsewhere, such as in major cathedrals. In some cases this becomes a lifelong duty. The heavily armed and armored knights of the order are highly educated in spiritual lore. They train in one of several fighting regimens of the order so they can act to protect their charges if need be. This is deemed a necessary precaution, since relics are often targeted by enemies of the faith seeking to desecrate or destroy them. Priceless relics have been lost to the more destructive branches of the Thamarite faith as well as radical Menites. Some members of the order specialize in the recovery lost relics, whereas others specialize in their protection.

PRIMARCH KNIGHTS

As members of one of the smallest and most esteemed of the Morrowan knightly orders in Cygnar, these knights are assigned to protect the primarch as personal guards. By extension, they are also tasked to protect the Archcourt Cathedral and the Exordeum. Every exarch is assigned an escort of primarch knights when traveling abroad, although the bulk of the order remains in the Sancteum proximate to the primarch. These knights are often drawn from other knightly orders, and this duty is considered an honor, albeit one generally accepted as a knight enters his waning years. These older knights occasionally lack the strength or stamina of their younger counterparts, but they compensate for the deficit with experience and the patience and vigilance that comes with age.

THE MENITE FAITH

Menites have worshiped in Cygnar since the earliest days of the Hold of Calacia, a point of pride to those few who remain. When Sulon's call gathered most of the kingdom's Menite families to join the Cygnaren Civil War, the number of adherents of this faith greatly diminished in Cygnar. The majority of the nation's Menites formed the Protectorate of Menoth in 484 AR. Those who remained slowly flourished and continued to practice the religious rituals passed down to them from their ancestors. With a few exceptions, mostly found in the Western Midlunds and Westshore, few dedicated towns or villages were solely devoted to Menoth. Rather, the Menites formed their own slightly insular communities within larger Morrowan townships and cities.

Several recent events served to further reduce the Cygnaran Menite population. First, there was the emergence of a prophet called the Harbinger of Menoth in 603 AR. She is said to be so holy that her feet cannot touch the base earth, her eyes shrouded to rely solely on divine sight to see, and able to speak Menoth's will. Such reports were hardly believed at first, but further tales of her power spread. Soon thereafter, the Harbinger pronounced a great summons for Menites to join her in the Protectorate and learn of Menoth's plans for Caen. Thousands of devoted Menites converged on Imer from all over western Immoren, picking up their families and moving to the Protectorate. Cygnar saw its share of those who did the same, although in each community some Menites were too loyal to Cygnar, too dedicated to abandon their lives, or too skeptical and afraid of the Harbinger and what she portended.

Another blow took place in 606 AR when Lord Commander Stryker, with the assistance of men once bound to the Inquisition, was sent into the communities along the Black River to gather up all known Menites and imprison them. This was done on the grounds that Menite saboteurs had performed a number of treasonous acts, aided by Cygnaran citizens. The presence of Sul-Menite agents hiding in these communities was confirmed, yet Lord Stryker swept up every Menite he could find, not feeling he had the luxury of time to be discriminating. Thousands of formerly loyal Cygnaran citizens were gathered up, placed on barges, and sent to Bloodshore Island to be held indefinitely. Although these people would eventually be released, the damage had been done. Most of those interned relocated to the Protectorate.

This most recent exodus most affected the Menites living in eastern Cygnar, from the Northern Midlunds and Corvis, down through Fharin, King's Vine, and the region around Caspia. Menites elsewhere in Cygnar were largely unaffected, although they were shocked to hear of these actions and hundreds more were prompted to leave the kingdom. There has been no sign of similar purges, and King Leto sent word to reassure the Menite minorities that they are safe and protected. Despite these assurances, those who remained have been unsettled. Menites serving in the Cygnaran Army often do so secretly, and many choose not to speak of their beliefs.

Elsewhere, particularly in western Cygnar, life for these people continues largely as before. Yet even far from the war, increased tension and suspicion grows between Morrowans and Menites living in close proximity. No one can ignore stories of the Caspia-Sul War and the invasion of the capital, or stories of the destruction of the Market Line bridges.

While thousands of Menites still live in sparse communities within Cygnar, there is no organized or cohesive Temple of Menoth. Rather, worshipers gather in small shrines and modest temples, usually overseen by a single dedicated priest. A number of scattered sects of Menoth based on ancient traditions still exist, but none of these have a particularly large membership. The largest sect is the Children of Geth in northern Cygnar, whose members consider themselves part of a long line of worship dating back to the ancient sage-priest who went on an exodus from Icthier in the times after Cinot. Dozens of small villages in the Western Midlunds belong to this sect, and they attend several old temples in this region. The highest ranking priest of this sect is Sovereign Jeltior, whose temple was built into the foothills of the Upper Wyrmwall southwest of Bainsmarket.

CULTS OF CYRISS

The Cult of Cyriss has a variety of holdings in Cygnar, most secret and some known. The only entirely open and lawfully protected temple of this faith in Cygnar is the Temple of Concord in Caspia. This temple was erected after leaders of the cult entered into an arrangement with King Leto and offered an exchange of significant technologies. Very few know precisely what was given to Cygnar as part of this arrangement. Cyriss worshipers can worship openly without drawing suspicion in other enlightened facilities, such as the Royal Observatory in southern Cygnar and among most major university campuses.

Hidden temples are thought to exist in most of the major Cygnaran cities as well as in the wilds, such as the Temple of the Incomplete Axiom concealed within the Widower's Wood about seventy miles from Corvis. Most members of this cult are casual worshipers with an interest in the goddess' spheres of influence, and they are content to attend the nearest urban temple. Only the most dedicated and involved adherents, those accepted into the cult's inner mysteries, are allowed or invited into its more important and remote facilities.

THAMARITE CULTS

Since most Thamarites worship in secret it is difficult to gain any accurate gauge of their numbers and reach, but without question cults to Thamar exist in every major urban center and in smaller numbers among rural populations as well. No cohesive organization connects these groups, although Thamarites are generally well disposed toward other Thamarites if their shared belief becomes known, assuming they are not otherwise competing or at cross purposes.

Several large and organized septs of Thamar originated in Cygnar and might have members in other nations. The strongest arcane-oriented Thamarite septs have their origins in Ceryl, the very city that gave rise to modern wizardry. This includes both the Shroud, which is devoted to the study and practice of necromancy, and the Infernal Archive, which has accumulated an impressive library of otherwise-forbidden occult tomes and research related to infernalism. These groups share an interest in the preservation of knowledge and relics sacred to Thamarites, including possessions of Thamar as well as the scions and the writings of these same individuals. Caspia is also home to several far-reaching Thamarite cults.

The scions each have their own following in Cygnar, with several being particularly popular among the criminal circles in major cities. Among the gangs of both Corvis and Fharin, a tattoo bearing the mark of Scion Khorva is seen as a brand of distinction for blooded enforcers. Scions Drayce and Bolis have considerable followings among those earning a living from vice, extortion, or the exchange of promises. Scion Nivara is secretly admired by ambitious arcanists of the realm and has a particularly strong following in Ceryl and Mercir. Similarly, a small but dangerous cult devoted to Scion Stacia thrives in the southern city of Mercir. Opportunists who prowl fresh battlefields in search of spoils pray to Scion Aidan in the hopes of increasing their fortunes.

THE DUCHIES OF CYGNAR

Cygnar's lands occupy a vast region of the southwestern mainland of Immoren. This geographically diverse kingdom includes many of the most resource-rich regions of the continent, as well as several of the area's most hostile and impenetrable wildernesses. The coastline of Cygnar is long and convoluted, with countless bays and coves, stretching from the mouth of the Dragon's Tongue River at the shared border with Ord, down along the Broken Coast, around Cape Mercir, and up along the Gulf of Cygnar to the mouth of the Black River.

The largest single geographical feature of Cygnar's interior is the vast Wyrmwall Mountain range that occupies a tremendous sweep of the western kingdom. These mountains are both a formidable geographical obstacle and a source of riches, and centuries of mining has barely scratched the surface of the veins of ore, precious stones, and invaluable trace minerals extracted from them. While settlers have carved a number of cities and towns out of this wild region, large areas remain unexplored and are considered perilous to travel due to the savage creatures and monstrous beasts that occupy the area. Other geographical barriers exist, sometimes isolating certain townships or regions and presenting challenges to a unified government and economy. While modern ingenuity has made strides in connecting these regions by way of steamship and railroad, in some areas rail is difficult to lay or repair. Nonetheless, the roads, waterways, coasts, and railways are the arteries of the kingdom and are vital for connecting these diverse regions as a single nation.

Cygnar is divided into nine duchies (p. 9), several of which are further divided into provinces. Duchies are ruled by dukes or archdukes while provinces are ruled by earls. Provinces are further divided into baronies ruled by barons. These individuals play a major role in Cygnaran governance and each region has its distinct character and a role within the kingdom. The nobles governing each region have a significant impact on the lives of those living within their domains, for better or ill. While the king has ultimate authority, he has neither time nor inclination to scrutinize every barony and must rely on lesser nobles to work toward the common good, and for the politics between the nobles to serve as a check and balance against individual ambition. Many nobles also occupy key positions in the Cygnaran Army or Navy and are expected to defend the kingdom against threats both internal and external.

DUCHY OF CASPIA

The Duchy of Caspia includes the area immediately surrounding the capital city, but it also reaches inward along the flats, small forests, and lakes filling the lands before the Wyrmwall Mountains. The duchy includes several of the easternmost mountains of the far-ranging Wyrmwall, areas noted for an abundance of seemingly inexhaustible iron mines.

DIVINIUM

In the Wyrmwall mountains northwest of Clockers Cove, where the headwaters of the Murkham River still run fresh and clear from the snowy peaks above, lies the oldest structure still standing of the Morrowan faith: the Holy Place of Virtue, the First Church, the Divinium. Nolland Orellius established the Divinium as a monastery in 1866 BR to provide a permanent place to anchor his faith. His piety and selfless leadership was rewarded by Morrow, who chose Nolland to become the first Primarch. During the earliest days of the Church of Morrow, the Divinium was the center of the organized religion, as well as a sanctuary from Menite persecution.

The Divinium's original stone building is plain and unadorned except for the Radiance carved into a slab of white granite over the main entrance. Outer walls were added in later centuries to protect the monastery, and eventually its buildings were expanded to become a formidable fortress. The inner sanctuary is a small and humble room of simple marble pillars that has been the site of more miracles of ascension than any other spot in western Immoren. Eventually, the seat of the Church of Morrow was moved to the Sancteum in Caspia, but the Divinium remains one of the holiest sites of the Morrowan faith and is a site of frequent pilgrimage. The monks who dwell here consider it their sacred obligation to protect its grounds and the priceless holy relics preserved within, which include a number of former possessions of Morrow himself.

It is a temperate region with a mild climate and extremely fertile soil, enriched by the Black River and stabilized by the warm ocean currents of the gulf. This duchy is a center of trade and industry, with traffic and commerce flowing into the region from extensive railways, well-maintained highways, and a constant flow of both ocean- and river-based shipping. Archduke Galten Sparholm III, Lord Admiral of the Eastern Fleet, rules the duchy.

While Caspia is a relatively small duchy, it is the heart of Cygnar, containing the kingdom's thriving capital and many of the most wealthy and prosperous lands of the south. The commerce and industry taking place in the duchy are essential to the economic and military strength of the kingdom, and it is also the center of Cygnaran politics. Decisions made in Caspia spread outward in ripples that can affect every citizen in the nation.

The region is the home to Cygnar's Second Army and its major garrisons, including the great fortress of Eastwall. A major component of Cygnar's eastern border defenses, Eastwall sits opposite the Sul-Menite fortification Tower Judgment. Eastwall is the only major line of defense protecting the nearby town of King's Vine, and it provides important reserve garrisons for Caspia as well. The region is also home to the equally formidable Eastern Fleet, which protects Caspia and the Gulf and counts Sentinel Point as its home. Caspia also houses the Cygnaran Armory, the kingdom's largest industrial facilities dedicated to the production of weapons of war.

The Duchy of Caspia is densely populated, particularly within the City of Walls, and those who live here are proud of their ancient history. Before the Corvis Treaties and the birth of Cygnar, Caspia was the only major human city to endure the Orgoth invasion and remain free, though it cost them dearly. Many old families in the region, particularly among the noble bloodlines, track their lineages back to heroes of that era and the Rebellion. During the Thousand Cities Era, Caspia was among the greatest of the independent kingdoms and exercised tremendous influence over its neighbors and rivals. Nearly every royal dynasty that has sat on the Cygnaran throne traces their bloodline to rulers of the old kingdom of Caspia.

The roots of the capital city run even deeper, back to the early days of Menite civilization. The city was once Calacia, home to Priest King Golivant who conquered the Molgur and tamed the southern lands in the name of the Creator of Man. The region has long had special spiritual significance. In addition to its importance to the Menite faith, many of the key events in the lives of the Twins transpired here, including their ascensions. The city also encompasses the Sancteum, the administrative center of the Church of Morrow, and the seat of its ruling primarch. In every regard, this area is steeped in history and a legacy of great deeds.

Cygnarans of other regions ascribe a certain degree of arrogance and self-importance to those who dwell in the Duchy of Caspia, particularly those of wealth and power among its merchants and the aristocracy. In truth the area is populated by a diversity of cultures and peoples, including representatives of many races. That said, Caspians often turn a blind eye to events transpiring away from their cosmopolitan region, and many consider those from outlying duchies to be rustic, disconnected, and provincial.

DUCHY POLITICS

The Duchy of Caspia includes the provinces of Caspia and Mansgrave, the latter ruled by Earl Druce Halstead, who is also Lord Mayor of Steelwater Flats. Archduke Sparholm, Caspia's provincial ruler, is among the most esteemed and influential of Cygnar's nobles, although many believe he squanders his political potential by focusing on the Cygnaran Navy.

Sparholm's family line is closely related to the Raelthornes. The seat of the Raelthorne ancestral estates are within Sparholm's present domain as part of arrangements made between the two families when Vinter II took the throne, having previously been archduke of Caspia. Should the Raelthornes pass rulership of Cygnar to another family dynasty via Woldred's Covenant, the Sparholm holdings would revert to an earldom of the province, returning the Caspian duchy to the Raelthornes.

Galton Sparholm has long demonstrated loyalty to King Leto, but he was among those who once served Vinter IV. Sparholm is also on cordial—though not close—terms with his most

powerful vassal, Earl Halstead of Mansgrave province. They share few interests and there are no evident bonds of friendship between them, but they support one another against rivals. The barons subordinate to both these nobles are a sometimes difficult and scheming lot. Several aspire to higher rank and would see their families supplant Halstead or even Sparholm, in time.

While the duchy is rife with political schemes and financial plots, it is among the safest areas of Cygnar, being very civilized and well protected. The Wyrmwall enters into the region, but the nearest mountain areas have been explored and settled. While the threat of Cryx is a reality for those living along the western coast, the inner shores of the Gulf of Cygnar are safe in comparison to the Broken Coast, being heavily patrolled by warships and watched over by the looming guns of Sentinel Point.

PERILS

The largest threat to the safety and well-being of the duchy is the Protectorate of Menoth to the east of the Black River. Recent battles during the Caspia-Sul war were a reminder that even the City of Walls was not inviolable. Stability appears to have been restored, but small groups of hostile zealots occasionally bypass the capital and border defenses to penetrate the interior on missions of sabotage. While such incidents are rare, and more likely to affect provinces to the north, the citizens nearest the border fear renewed conflict erupting with the Menites.

Accordingly, very few Cygnaran Menites openly practice their religion in the duchy; anti-Menite sentiment is stronger here than anywhere else in the kingdom. The few Menite families in the area were detained during the recent war by Lord Commander Stryker and imprisoned under brutal conditions at Bloodshore Island. After the fighting between Sul and Caspia came to an end, the prisoners were released, but most opted to join the Protectorate when given the opportunity.

Despite this recent turmoil, life in the Duchy of Caspia is generally good, with many opportunities for all classes. Standards of living are higher than average, although no city or town is free of the poor or disadvantaged. The general benevolence of the king, as well as the strong local presence of the Church of Morrow, has resulted in a general equity before the law surpassing any previous sovereign's reign, and compassionate treatment of the poor and disabled. The highest concentration of the duchy's citizens live urban lives, but the area includes its share of large farms and ranches. Due to the population density, however, the duchy cannot sustain itself on local produce and relies heavily on the Southern Midlunds.

Stability in the duchy has brought some unique difficulties—nobles of the war-torn and famine-stricken northern provinces eye their southern neighbors with disdain. There is also a growing rift between north and south that could escalate into a threat to the security of the realm. Those affected by the northern wars accuse Caspians of getting fat on their suffering. Sometimes grain has rotted in Caspia while people in the north have been driven from their farms and starved. Efforts to distribute excess goods have not always been successful or prompt, and Leto's officials have found it impossible to eliminate internal corruption among both merchants and minor nobles of the region.

DUCHY OF CASPIA

Largest Ethnic Groups: Caspian majority with significant Midlunder and Thurian minorities and some Arjun

Predominant Religions: Almost exclusively Morrowan

Provinces: Caspia and Mansgrave (Earl Druce Halstead, Lord Mayor of Steelwater Flats)

Important Cities: Caspia, Clockers Cove, Ironhead Station, Steelwater Flats

Significant Towns (not on the map): Addlefirth, Ailsbury, Ashwyke, Baerhithe, Branstoke, Caenbrook, Catherholm, Ellsporth, Grimpool, Helswin, Langmere, Lionshope, Morhurst, Pitworth, Norminster, Rathing, Redham, Seawhel, Skarstoke, Valewick, Wyrthorpe, Wytholm

Lord: Archduke Galten Sparholm III of Caspia, Lord of Sentinel Point, Lord Admiral of the Eastern Fleet

In addition to his noble standing and close familial ties to the Raelthornes, the archduke is the most influential of the navy's lord admirals and is expected to become navarch when Govan Trent retires or dies. He has made Sentinel Point his seat of power and spends most of his time at the naval academy, overseeing affairs of the Eastern Fleet and ensuring Cygnar's Navy fields the best trained officers sailing the Meredius. Recent contact between the archduke and the second son of the king of Ord has led to greater cooperation and the sharing of knowledge and training techniques between the two great naval powers. Some of Sparholm's political rivals believe he spends too much time focused on the navy and not enough at court, and it is clear where his true passion lies. Similarly, he has a laissez-faire attitude toward ruling his duchy, which he feels is inextricably bound up with the throne.

Seat: Sentinel Point Naval Fortress

PROVINCE OF CASPIA

The province of Caspia includes the lands around the capital, including Salt Vale Lake. It stretches from the coastline south to Clockers Cove and north to Eastwall. The archduke rules the province, which includes the ancestral lands of the Raelthorne family. While the city of Caspia was the traditional seat of the duchy, its archduke moved his seat to the Sentinel Point Naval Fortress. Lord Mayor Dermot Throckmorton, a competent vassal of Lord Admiral and Archduke Galten Sparholm III, governs the capital.

The other nobles of the province are inextricably bound up in national politics, and it is easy for them to attend the Royal Assembly while seeing to local affairs, an advantage over more remote peers. Sparholm's barons are a diverse and contentious lot, and many of them have major financial stakes in various industries within Caspia or related to its trade abroad. The most esteemed families—not always the most influential—are those with ties to the Second Army or to the Eastern Fleet. Many heirs or second sons or daughters of these nobles have become naval ship captains or officers leading sword knights and storm knights, returning to family estates after distinguished service. It is widely acknowledged Sparholm favors nobles who have served and refuses to listen to petitioners who have used their influence to avoid this duty.

Overall, the standard of living is higher in this province, though the region has its share of the disenfranchised, particularly in the poorest districts of the capital. The people of the province can accurately boast to being better educated and better informed on average than most citizens of Cygnar. A number of major centers of learning are located in the region, most of them in the capital itself. Among those institutions are the southern Strategic Academy and the Sentinel Point Naval Academy, premiere centers for the education of army and naval officers, respectively. Both the Royal Cygnaran University and the Caspian Royal Academy are also in the province, and each competes over claims of being the most prestigious of the kingdom's centers of higher learning.

While the wealth and power of Caspia is undeniable, Clockers Cove represents something entirely different. It is little spoken about in the Royal Assembly. Despite the vital industries located in the town, it is viewed as an embarrassment by Archduke Sparholm but is also seen as a necessary pressure valve for sailors on shore leave. Rumors suggest Cygnar's spymasters prefer this city left as it is since so much useful information arrives by ship from ports abroad.

CASPIA, THE CITY OF WALLS

Ruler: Lord Mayor Dermot Throckmorton

Population: 1 million human (mostly Caspian, with a large number of Thurian and Midlunder); 8,000 gobber; 2,000 Rhulfolk; 2,000 ogrun; 1,000 trollkin

Military Presence: Caspia is garrisoned by the 35,000 soldiers of the 8th Division of the Second Army and is the homeport of Cygnar's Eastern Fleet. The city also boasts the massive Cygnaran Armory with its heavy contingent of warjacks. The Sword Knight headquarters is here, as is a large branch of the Order of the Arcane Tempest. In times of need, Leto can call upon the Fraternal Order of Wizardry and their arcanists will rally in force. Additionally, Caspia employs roughly 10,000 watchmen stationed throughout various precincts in the city.

Description: All the cities of western Immoren are judged against the standard set by Caspia. Situated where the Black River empties into the Gulf of Cygnar, it has been a center of power for thousands of years. Established in antiquity by the people of Calacia, its walls, fortresses, and temples have borne mute witness to the rise and fall of both kings and gods.

Currently home to over a million citizens, Caspia inspires awe and amazement in all who behold it. Behind its great walls stand both the seat of the Cygnaran government and the heart of the Church of Morrow.

It was from Caspia that Golivant marched when he broke the back of the of the Molgur hordes, that the Twins ascended to free humanity from the shackles of the Menite faith, and that, millennia later, that faith would rise in bloody civil war. Caspia is also the sole city of western Immoren never to fall to the Orgoth, and it is the place where the first colossals rose.

No matter how a traveler approaches Caspia, their first sight of the city is of its massive walls, rising high above the southern plains or looming over the Black River opposite the city's twin, the Menite city of Sul. Constructed millennia ago, the ancient walls bear wounds and stains left by an endless procession of sieges and warfare. Today, most visitors enter the city through the north gate, which opens onto the King's Highway, a major trade route leading to Fharin and points north. Like all entrances to the city, the north gate is heavily guarded by the city watch and supported by military forces, and all visitors must be prepared to answer questions about the nature of their business in Caspia.

Once within the city, new visitors are invariably impressed by the crush of the crowds and the great walls that enclose the capital's districts. Rising nearly two hundred feet, and over one hundred feet thick in some places, the massive city walls create an elaborate maze, and entire neighborhoods exist between and within these ancient stone bulwarks. Indeed, the dense city has actually grown into them, and nearly as much activity goes on within their winding tunnels and networks as on the streets outside. Commerce both legitimate and illicit takes place within the city, and countless thousands live their lives in the crowded warrens of the lower classes or the towering complexes of the wealthy, who enjoy spectacular views of the city from the heights of the walls. Some of the poor who dwell within the lower recesses may live their lives seldom setting foot above ground. Even those who inhabit the areas given to the middle classes sometimes spend months far below ground, moving through the tunnels and across dubiously crafted walkways and scaffolds that cling to the sides of the looming edifices.

To stand on the city's blue stone battlements is to be afforded a view without peer across western Immoren. The interior walls are covered by scaffolds, stairwells, and catwalks that spread out wherever people can find a niche to live or work. The sky above the city is punctuated by the high towers of Castle Raelthorne and the Archcourt Cathedral within the Sancteum, as well as by the enormous smokestacks of the Cygnaran Armory and the chimneys of countless other industrial factories. Winds sweeping off the gulf and through the streets keep the smoke from lingering or becoming too oppressive. Southeast of the city lies the great harbor, magnificent even in the shadows of Sul.

Few true slums exist in Caspia; even those districts inhabited by the less fortunate are relatively well-maintained by civic programs. There are exceptions, and some neighborhoods in the walled districts near the city's docks are seedy or dangerous to visit after nightfall. The Caspian City Watch does its best to patrol these areas, but there are a few rookeries even they hesitate to enter. Caspia is a city where wealth flows and exchanges hands at a dizzying pace, and so it is inevitable that crime also thrives here. But the criminal activity tends to be more subtle and less overt by and large, reflected in confidence games, bribes and corruption, and exchanges in illicit promises and deals. The large and proactive city watch cracks down swiftly on overt burglary or violence.

Caspia is marked by its history. Ruins from the time of Thrace linger in some corners of the city, as do depictions of heroes and battle, often in the form of bas-reliefs carved directly into the walls. Great statues of kings and priests and ascendants of old line promenades and stand on the walls high above well-manicured parks. Churches dedicated to Morrow, some of them millennia old, are scattered throughout the districts. There are also temples of ancient Menite worship, many preserved as relics of ancient times, though some have been sadly defaced in recent months by angry mobs lashing out in the wake of invasion. Indeed, signs of recent battle still mar the streets of the city's eastern district, although efforts are already underway to erase the path of destruction that follows a winding course from the eastern gate at the bridge across the Black River toward the Sancteum.

The only structure to loom higher than Caspia's great fortifications is the city's palace and fortress, Castle Raelthorne. Completed during the reign of Vinter II, the fortress has been the center of Cygnaran power since 532 AR. The concentric stone walls of the fortress rise far above the streets, and the eight round towers attached to the central keep make it impossible to mistake from a distance. Castle Raelthorne is not only home to the sovereign's household but also to the thousands of military personnel defending it. It is also where the Royal Assembly and the king's War Council are convened.

The central district surrounding Castle Raelthorne is home to much of the city's aristocracy. Most property in the district has been in the possession of the same families for generations and seldom change hands. The district also houses Caspia's most exclusive inns, theaters, and mercantile establishments.

Western Caspia is dominated by the Smoke District, which draws its name from the enormous factories of the Cygnaran Armory. This sprawling complex includes numerous foundries and refineries, and is the heart of Cygnar's war production. Built on the site of the factories that produced the first colossals, the armory was founded at the end of the Rebellion and has been expanded several times since. The Armory employs countless blacksmiths, engineers, and weaponsmiths, along with hundreds of top-notch mechaniks and arcanists. Most employees of the Armory are members of the Steam & Iron Workers Union headquartered nearby. Wealthy merchants and industrialists prefer to make their homes in the district south of the Smoke District to avoid the worst of the smog, while remaining in proximity to the sources of their fortunes.

The northern districts are home to the bulk of the city's populace. The people come and go to work in the Smoke District, in the nearby open-air markets, or within the walls of the city itself. One smaller neighboring district, commonly known as "The Slurries" for the pools of alchemical waste pooling in its streets, is home to the majority of the city's gobbers, who live alongside some of the poorer humans. Consequently, this area has become a competitive bazaar for the sale of low-priced and sometimes dangerous alchemical substances. A small number of trollkin also live here, mostly members of relatively traditional kriels who feel unwelcome among the more urbane kriels that have been established near the southern docks.

Caspia is a bustling port city with excavated channels allowing ships deep access into the city. Approached from the south by sea or from the north along the Black River, the walls of Caspia are visible from many miles away, as are those of the city of Sul to the east. Caspia is without doubt the greatest port in the south of Immoren, and its docks bustle with commerce. The northern docks are nearly as busy as those on the gulf. There is no one central market district in the city, but rather a dizzying variety of them wherever the major roadways cross or converge and also adjacent to the largest of the city's piers. Each of these markets has its own attractions and deals, with booths and shops offering imports from all across Immoren but also confidence men seeking to fleece the slack-jawed and ignorant tourists arriving in the city for the first time.

It is possible to enter the city from the great bridge that spans the Black River and connects Caspia with Sul on the eastern shore. Since the recent cessation of hostilities, however, Cygnaran and Sul-Menite troops have been heavily invested in guarding the gates to their respective cities at each end of the bridge. No commercial or recreational traffic is permitted across the bridge, which is empty of travelers save for occasional ambassadorial retinues, and the troops stationed there eye each other warily across their checkpoints.

Caspia is also a center for higher learning and is home to the Caspian Royal Academy, the rival Royal Cygnaran University, and the connected Strategic Academy. The Strategic Academy is the sole institute recognized for training Cygnaran warcasters, and the faculty is well known for its ability to spot prospective warcasters from the ranks of their trainees. The Academy works closely with the Fraternal Order of Wizardry to provide the best possible instructors, and in return the Order uses the Academy as a recruiting ground for Cygnar's best and brightest. The Strategic Academy building actually extrudes partially from the inside of the massive wall facing Sul, and almost half of its rooms are located entirely within the wall itself. All of these institutions perform services for the city in addition to abstract research and the training of fresh young minds. Specialists in both the Cygnaran University and the Strategic Academy loan their expertise to mechanikal and engineering innovations that aid the Cygnaran Armory, for example.

The people of Caspia do not boast idly of their city's marvels. To look upon Caspia is to behold the best hopes of the people of the Iron Kingdoms.

CLOCKERS COVE

Ruler: Captain Fariot Graccye

Population: 40,000 human (mostly Caspian); 4,000 gobber; small numbers of ogrun, trollkin, and Rhulfolk

Military Presence: Clockers Cove is garrisoned by a battalion of the Second Army. Additionally, 200 uniformed watchmen patrol the streets.

Description: Built on the clay banks at the mouth of the Murkham River, Clockers Cove is the leading haven of scoundrels and privateers on the Gulf of Cygnar. Nearly anything can be purchased by those who know where to look within the maze of narrow streets and watery canals. Barons of the region insist it benefits the realm for Clockers Cove to remain relatively unregulated, fostering ingenuity. This leniency has led the town to earn a reputation for corruption and crime, and some call it "Little Five Fingers." The navy performs periodic inspections, but the port city is thought to be a refuge for disreputable mercenaries, smugglers, and pirates.

The city is not without its legitimate commerce, however. Steam-powered paddleboats come downriver from deep within the Wyrmwall laden with miners and their crates of raw tin and copper for the many smelting forges in the town's industrial quarter. Some of the finest copper

THE SANCTEUM

Located southwest of Castle Raelthorne is the Sancteum, the base of power of the Church of Morrow and a sovereign nation protected by its own army. The Sancteum is a small, self-contained walled city with its own foundries, housing, and markets. It is home to thousands of priests, clerks, scribes, knights, illuminates, and pilgrims.

The heart of the Sancteum is the Archcourt Cathedral, the seat of the primarch, and the Exordeum, the senior governing body comprised of the church's thirty-six exarchs. The cathedral was designed by Ascendant Sambert and is the most esteemed house of worship ever built for the faith. Among its hundreds of relics, it houses the famous statue of Morrow shaped by Sambert's hands moments before he ascended. Priests and followers alike believe he still protects the building directly, because it has shown no signs of weathering over the last 1,200 years. Several significant relics are on display within the cathedral's various chapels and pulpits, including the original Enkheiridion written by Morrow and Thamar—only the Primarch and the Archabbot of the Order of Keeping are allowed to touch this invaluable tome. Along with its enormous nave and assorted vaulted chambers, the cathedral houses the meeting hall for the Exordeum and the religious residents' chapter house, which includes the Primarch's living quarters. Directly outside the west-facing great entry stand Amicus and Remeder, a pair of ancient colossals dating back to the Rebellion.

Adjacent to the Sancteum proper is the Sancteum Seminary College, the church's foremost religious university and training grounds for novice priests. Its campus grounds include several vast libraries, an extensive printing press operation, and living quarters for those working and enrolled here. The Seminary College campus and the Archcourt Cathedral are surrounded by a vibrant park that separates it from the more functional buildings and residences along the circular periphery of the Sancteum. Also located on the periphery is the large multi-floored edifice that serves as the central headquarters for the Order of Illumination.

and bronze goods found anywhere in the kingdoms come from smoke-belching foundries.

Clockers Cove is home to a pair of leading arms-producers: Clockwerk Arms and Black Anchor Heavy Industries. Clockwerk Arms specializes in repeating pistols and rifles and is a leading supplier for the Cygnaran military. Black Anchor Heavy Industries began as a shipwright company producing steam engines for maritime vessels for clients such as the Mercarian League and wealthy private individuals. In recent years, Black Anchor has grown to encompass much larger production facilities and has expanded the scope of its manufacturing to include steamjack parts and several highly secret projects.

SENTINEL POINT NAVAL FORTRESS

This impressive fortress academy perches atop the cliffs overlooking the Gulf of Cygnar; its walls are lined with some of the most accurate and powerful cannons ever made. At the base of the cliffs are walled and protected docks only approachable by authorized naval vessels. Sentinel Point is noted for producing Cygnar's finest sailors and officers, as well as the most accurate gunnery crews in the kingdoms. It is also where the kingdom's experimental new ship designs are developed and tested, including Cygnar's first ironhull ships and the submersible Intruder. The fortress is the home of Lord Admiral Galten Sparholm III, Archduke and Earl of Caspia, although he is periodically called away to the capital.

MANSGRAVE PROVINCE

This province encompasses the villages around Steelwater Lake, including Steelwater Flats, and extends south to the Wyrmwall, north to Ironhead Station, and east to the banks of the Salt Vale Lake. It is a rugged region inhabited by numerous mining communities, and it is a major hub of the Cygnaran railway. Mansgrave is ruled by Earl Druce Halstead, Lord Mayor of Steelwater Flats.

While Steelwater Lake may once have been a beautiful natural feature, the region has become among the most industrialized in Cygnar, and the impact of mining and the explosion of railway traffic is felt here more than anywhere in the kingdom. The vast majority of the iron and coal used in Cygnar is shipped from deeper in the interior through Steelwater Flats either to Caspia or up the Market Line to the northern cities. This commerce makes Steelwater a singularly vital artery, and one whose fortunes are inextricably tied to the railroad. Steelwater Rail is one of the two largest rail companies in the kingdom and has acquired lucrative contracts from the crown to connect the towns and cities of Cygnar with all due haste.

The pervasive reach of rail and mining executives is extensive. The barons of Mansgrave are highly competitive and have worked to connect their families to these industries. Many rising entrepreneurs of common stock have reached the upper echelons of power through cutthroat business practices, buying noble titles despite the indignation of their more established peers. There is stark contrast between those in power in Mansgrave and their neighbors in Caspia, where old blood and military ties are better indicators of influence.

Mansgrave is a region where mechanikal and industrial invention are rewarded, and many aspiring steamos flock to the area to take advantage of job opportunities. Laborjacks are in great demand and are as vital to the industry as living workers, generating employment for those who can control and repair them. Mines and railways also continually need fresh workers. The pay may be marginally better than farmwork, but there is always a cost in quality of life.

There is a large divide between the few wealthy and the far more numerous poor in Mansgrave. Although there is money to be made in this province, more often dreams are crushed as families move here seeking opportunities and get exploited for dangerous and back-breaking labor. It is difficult to gauge whether working in a coal mine or enduring endless hours laying track is the worst job in Cygnar, but both grind workers down in only a few short years. Amid this crucible, both trollkin

EARL DRUCE HALSTEAD OF MANSGRAVE, LORD MAYOR OF STEELWATER FLATS

Lord Halstead has walked the political tightrope for years now with considerable skill and aplomb in order to satisfy his industrial interests. While some of the blue bloods of Caspia disdain Halstead for some of his pragmatic ways, the prosperity of the region and the efficiency of the railways and mining efforts here are clearly due to his oversight. Halstead has been particularly accused of cheapening the kingdom's peerage system by encouraging wealthy commoners to buy baronies, though this has worked to the benefit of the Cygnaran treasury. Ultimately King Leto must approve the creation of new nobles, and so the blame is shared. The earl has been charged with keeping the peace between Steelwater Rail and Caspian Rail, a difficult challenge. He has managed to keep goods flowing by brokering solutions to countless disagreements over the past fifteen years. Sadly, the earl is getting on in years; while he is physically healthy, he has shown signs of losing his mental faculties, a fact that his rivals are certain to exploit.

and ogrun have thrived, taking advantage of their stamina and strength to endure jobs many humans would find too onerous for the long haul. Some few have risen to prominence, and they inspire others to emulate them. Beneath this lure of potential wealth is an underbelly of corruption and crime, as is the case anywhere commerce and industry thrive.

IRONHEAD STATION

Ruler: Baron Casner Rathleagh and the Ironhead Elder Council

Population: 35,000 Rhulfolk; 15,000 human; 2,000 gobber; 1,000 ogrun; 1,000 trollkin

Military Presence: In addition to several companies of voluntary militia, Ironhead Station is garrisoned by a long gunner company supported by dozens of railwardens. The dwarven enclave takes care of its own protection and has thousands of able-bodied warriors.

Description: Arriving at Ironhead Station is a peculiar experience, like being swallowed by a mountain, since the entire city is completely beneath the earth. The rail line curves through the Wyrmwall before entering an enormous gas-lit cavern housing Ironhead Station. Dozens of catwalks of varying heights, widths, and angles crisscross the buildings and tunnels built into the cavern walls. Massive steel girders secure the structures aloft, and enormous clockwork gears and pulleys raise and lower grillwork platforms throughout the area, conveying the folk of Ironhead to their destinations above and below.

Perhaps the most unique settlement in Cygnar, Ironhead is actually two towns in one. The small underground town and rail station most visitors see is peopled mainly by humans, but an older second community, the Ironhead Enclave, is less than a mile away, connected by tunnels and inhabited by thousands of dwarves. The Ironhead Enclave settlement evolved almost in isolation after being founded by ambitious clans that left Rhul to seek a new life after the defeat of the Orgoth. It served as an important connection between Orven and Steelwater Flats, but most travellers simply passed through during most of its early history. Outside commerce initially came from the regular merchant and supply caravans stopping for safe haven along the mountain roads, but things changed with the invention of the rail.

Since then, hundreds of families have moved to Ironhead Station hoping to find their fortunes in the deep mines or the related shipping and rail industries. Residents include enterprising ogrun, gobbers, and trollkin all willing to work for a share. "Miner Rhulic" is a common dialect spoken in Ironhead Station, but it uses an integrated half-Cygnaran, half-Rhulic vernacular quite unintelligible to outsiders. The saying goes that the inhabitants of Ironhead have "gravel in their pants and iron in their skulls," but there is no disputing the wealth that comes from its mines and quarries. Additionally, local fortunes increased when the rail line finished the connection to Orven through Ironhead Station, making it a crucial stop through the Wyrmwall Mountains.

Life in Ironhead Station is governed more by the necessities and politics of industry than elsewhere in Cygnar. The major rail and foundry companies are extremely competitive with one another, which leads to occasional strife between their employees. Industrial espionage is not uncommon and sometimes leads to actual violence. The companies of the town vary in how they treat their workers. Larger companies tend to pay at least livable wages, though some are infamous for forcing their laborers to work in poor conditions. Steelwater Rail has experienced several wildcat strikes in recent years by union steamos protesting dangerous working conditions.

STEELWATER FLATS

Ruler: Earl Druce Halstead, Lord Mayor of Steelwater Flats

Population: 114,000 human; 3,000 Rhulfolk; several hundred gobber, ogrun, and trollkin

Military Presence: Since it is located in the protected interior of the duchy, Steelwater Flats relies primarily on local militia for defense. In the case of more significant threats, soldiers from nearby army garrisons can be expedited here by rail. The city also employs 750 watchmen.

Description: Passengers on a train bound for Steelwater Flats out of Caspia often spend the last part of their trip trying to catch a glimpse of a panorama that is one of the marvels of the Iron Kingdoms: the mighty Wyrmwall looming as a towering backdrop above the graceful iron arches and squat blisters of brick and stone, and the lines of rising steam and smoke tousled by the mountain winds. This is the city of Steelwater Flats.

The indomitable Cygnaran spirit of progress and innovation has transformed this former farming town into the sprawling expanse of iron and smoke it is today, handling thousands of tons of trade goods daily. Roughly ninety percent of Caspia's coal and rock is shipped through Steelwater Flats, and the city is riddled by rail lines worming their way into the city's heart. The rails are linked by branch lines, turntables, and sidings that crisscross the city and cut it into a patchwork of districts, most of which are filled with motley, tumbledown buildings, coupled by bridges and tunnels.

The proud heart of Steelwater is its commercial district. Offices, civic buildings, and fine estates rise just out of reach of the smoke. Garrisons act as a buffer between this area and the industrial districts to the east, but a gradual deterioration toward the lakeside slums to the south is apparent. If the commercial district is the heart, the innumerable workshops and factories belonging to the Steam & Iron Workers Union are the city's lifeblood. All nature of mechanikal constructs can be found in and around the stations, loading or pulling, grinding or sorting, and a veritable army of machinists and mechaniks march to and fro applying their skills and either bellowing orders or following them as material is moved between the stations and the factories.

There are many rail yards scattered around the city, most owned by Steelwater Rail. They are strange places full of carriages and the occasional rusted engine but largely empty of people. A mixture of gobber scavengers, gangs, and outlaws occasionally prowl around the yards at night, attempting to find something useful to carry off while trying to avoid the town's notoriously vicious railwardens.

The industrial district clanks and belches forth smoke and steam at all hours as iron ore is refined into steel, cast into gears and pistons, and assembled into mechanikal marvels of the modern age. Steelwater Flats is a microcosm of industry and a visitor can see the entire gamut of mechanikal production one part at a time by simply moving from one factory, refinery, or workshop to another. Local water, wool, and leather are combined with iron, coal, and other materials delivered by rail to create everything from textiles to engines.

Although the town is nominally ruled by Earl Halstead, in reality, day-to-day operations are controlled by the board of Steelwater Rail. Led by Malachai Forsythe, Steelwater Rail is the indisputable power in the town. Earl Halstead delegates many details of governing the town to subordinates who cooperate closely with the company. The earl has spent considerable time in the Royal Assembly ensuring the passage of laws that will benefit Steelwater Rail, and he also sits on the board of directors, colluding with majority shareholder Forsythe. One of Forsythe's subordinates is tasked to ensure rail executives are not hassled by the local law and receive favorable treatment in the town's courts.

Steelwater Rail takes a substantial percentage of virtually all business conducted in Steelwater Flats, and it brooks no trouble from laborers or union agitators. The Steel & Iron Workers Union is present in the town but anemic in power. In the few instances laborers have attempted to protest, their strikes have been immediately and violently broken by the town's uniformed watchmen and company mercenaries, and on one occasion, Cygnaran Army regulars directed by Earl Halstead at Malachai Forsythe's request.

WYRMWALL TUNNEL

A fortune was spent paying the local chapter of the Steam & Iron Workers Union to undertake one of the most impressive feats of engineering in all the kingdoms: digging tunnels through the mountains to Ironhead Station. The rail line to Ironhead Station runs for sixty miles through the mountains and only ten of those miles are above ground. The rails penetrate the mountain through a series of six tunnels, the longest of which is fifteen miles long. The tunnels are twenty feet in diameter with support beams and posts placed as buttressing arches spaced depending on the needs of the material forming the tunnel at that point. At regular intervals there are large niches in the sides of the tunnel big enough for a group of men or a steamjack to take shelter from a passing train. Every few miles side passages lead to small rooms, ostensibly for the future storage of supplies for the engines.

DUCHY OF THE EASTERN MIDLUNDS

The Duchy of the Eastern Midlunds is a narrow strip of land along Cygnar's eastern interior that is bordered on all sides by the other Midlunds duchies. Both the northern and southern limits of the duchy were arbitrarily delineated by specific farms and streams. These delineations were subject to violent disputes in the early days after the Corvis Treaties but are now well established. The duchy is bounded definitively on the west by the rising slopes of the Upper Wyrmwall Mountains, which divide the Eastern and Western Midlunds. The duchy extends east to the Marchfells, a particularly marshy region of the Black River. The Eastern Midlunds is ruled by Archduke Alain Runewood, the general of the 7th Division of the Cygnaran Army. Because that division is stationed at Eastwall in the Duchy of Caspia, the archduke is usually away from his duchy.

While it is the smallest of the Midlunds, the duchy includes vast and sweeping farmlands absolutely vital to Cygnar's food supply. The countryside is dotted by countless small towns and villages dedicated to agriculture and ranching, and the farms of the region are efficiently run, with the largest holdings supported by dedicated laborjacks. The western extreme of the duchy extends into the mountains and includes numerous small but profitable mines, as well as smaller hill and mountain communities. There is a marked social divide between the isolated mountain people, the rural people populating the eastern farmlands, and the more urbane inhabitants of Fharin.

DIVIDING OF THE MIDLUNDS

One of the largest political changes King Leto made after seizing the throne in 594 AR was to break the vast Midlunds Duchy into smaller duchies. These duchies have yet to be divided into additional provinces, although this may happen over time should lesser nobles distinguish themselves enough to be elevated, particularly in the war. Before Leto's reign, the present Midlunds duchies were provinces, overseen by earls.

For centuries the Midlunds Duchy was controlled by the Laddermore family. Archduke Fergus Laddermore was a staunch supporter of King Vinter IV and is one of the few such nobles to retain his position, having been far too influential and powerful to easily supplant. Nonetheless, King Leto diminished his authority by reducing Laddermore's holdings to the heart of his ancestral lands in the Southern Midlunds and elevating several of Leto's most staunch supporters to equivalent standing by transforming the other Midlunds into duchies.

The history of the Eastern Midlunds is tied up with the rest of the Midlunds, which was once a proud and significant, if decentralized, power in the Thousand Cities Era. The Midlunds, and the Midar that predate them, were never united as a single kingdom, unlike several of its warlike neighbors but developed strong mutual solidarity and tight relations between its myriad petty lords and kings. The Midlunds are rightfully proud of having endured against the encroaching Kingdom of Morrdh and to have been responsible for the ultimate downfall of that once mighty and malignant nation.

DUCHY POLITICS

The noble families of the duchy trace their bloodlines back to the old lords who ruled the region since the time of Golivant. Farming and agriculture are rich and ancient traditions in the duchy, viewed with sacred solemnity, as is the case in the Southern Midlunds as well. Tilling the land was one of the great Gifts of Menoth, later associated with Ascendant Gordenn. The inhabitants of the region are now devout Morrowans, and Gordenn's following is pervasive, but the farmers in the region still retain respect for older Menite ways, even though the recent wars with the Protectorate tarnished that view somewhat. Still, some blending of Morrowan and Menite prayers is common in the duchy's simple chapels and shrines. A number of barons control the farmlands, and they are answerable to Duke Runewood. He has generally maintained strict and firm order over his vassals, with no patience for scheming and backbiting. They present a mostly united front in the Royal Assembly.

Things are different among the western mountain communities, and the few barons of that region have a reputation for stubbornness and independence, being less closely affiliated with Duke Runewood. Those communities are more isolated and clannish, protective of the mining claims that allow them to provide important resources to local industry.

Fharin is of tremendous importance to the duchy, being its only major urban center and also one of the largest and busiest cities in Cygnar. While often overlooked compared to Caspia, Ceryl, Corvis, and even Mercir, Fharin is a vital aspect of the Cygnaran economy as a major stop along the Market Line. Merchants rely increasingly on the railways for shipping goods across long distances, allowing the Market Line to eclipse the King's Highway for overland shipping. The King's Highway still sees continuous traffic from wagon caravans and foot traffic, particularly to Corvis, but a greater volume of commercial and military supplies passes through Fharin via rail, since it is the main stop between Steelwater Flats and Bainsmarket.

PERILS

There is no major eastern fortress in the duchy, and it must rely on patrols out of Fort Falk and Eastwall, although Archduke Runewood has ensured that a number of watchtowers along the river are well garrisoned. The inhabitants are wary of military incursions by zealous Sul-Menites. Raids and even more aggressive incursions are not uncommon, though any such intrusions are dealt with swiftly and decisively by Runewood and his vassals. In recent months there has been the added peril of the Skorne Empire, which has established military outposts across the Black River in the hills of the Bloodstone Marches.

DUCHY OF THE EASTERN MIDLUNDS

Largest Ethnic Groups: Midlunder majority with a significant Caspian minority

Predominant Religions: Almost exclusively Morrowan

Important Cities: Fharin

Significant Towns (not on the map): Anderwhel, Banhurst, Baronforth, Briargate, Broadmere, Drathcaster, Dunwyke, Gravehurst, Griffcott, Hollisden, Keldon, Lynchfield, Runebury, Scarrowstrath, Shadkirk, Targill, Tredford

Lord: Archduke Alain Runewood, Lord of Fharin and General of the 7th Division

A staunch supporter of King Leto, Archduke Runewood divides his time between Fharin, Eastwall, and Caspia. Runewood is of Leto's generation, just a few years younger than his king. He served as page to the prince decades ago, and the two have been friends as long as they can remember. Runewood played a key role in the Lion's Coup, supporting Leto, and for his loyalty was rewarded with the new duchy of the Eastern Midlunds. In the recent years of warfare, politics has taken a back seat to military matters and Runewood's role as General of Cygnar's 7th Division has taken priority. He and his soldiers fought in several significant engagements in the Caspia-Sul war and he has had first-hand experience against the implacable Menites.

Politically, the archduke gets along well with Duke Ebonhart of the Northern Midlunds, and he is also on favorable terms with Archduke Sparholm of Caspia. His main enemy in court is Archduke Fergus Laddermore of the Southern Midlunds, and tensions have escalated. Runewood's military obligations leave his lands vulnerable to Laddermore's schemes, and the situation has been a matter of grave concern, but one he has had no choice but to leave to his vassals. Feuding has led to bloodshed on a few occasions, although matters rarely become too overt. Runewood has the support of the king, but it would be beneath the sovereign to interfere in such matters until such time as Laddermore can be proven culpable of crimes in a high court, which is unlikely to occur.

Seat: Canterwell Estate, north of Fharin

Skorne intrusions into Cygnaran territory have been infrequent, but the extent of this new threat is not well understood and is particularly feared by the eastern farmers of the region.

FHARIN

Ruler: General Alain Runewood, Archduke of the Eastern Midlunds, Lord of Fharin

Population: 200,000 human (mostly Caspian, Thurian, and Midlunder); 5,000 gobber; 1,000 Rhulfolk; hundreds of ogrun and trollkin

Military Presence: Fharin is garrisoned by a small militia force, two reserve companies of the Second Army, and also armed retainers of the archduke. The Fharin Watch, numbering approximately 450 watchmen, is charged with local law enforcement.

Description: Fharin is a major trade hub at the center of several busy roadways and an important stop on the northern rail line to Bainsmarket. It is a compact city at the base of the Upper Wyrmwall Mountains, which dominate the western skyline, while tracts of fertile farmland lay to the east of it. Its houses are primarily made of red brick under black or red tiled pitched roofs and feature windows and balconies set in depressed arches. Unfortunately, the view of the mountains is often obscured by a thick haze caused by the choking smoke and strange vapors pouring from the city's engines, foundries, and alchemy shops at all hours, or from the rainbow-hued oils of peculiar odor spilling into the city's litter-strewn gutters.

Despite the haze, the residents generally appear in good spirits. Fharin is a city of motion filled with churning wheels from cargo-laden wagons to the Caspian Rail's great engines. The steel behemoths grind through the sprawling city exhaling plumes of smoke and steam while screeching along on their tracks. Fharin is viewed by many as a place of transience, seeing considerable traffic but with its residents frequently cycling through as better opportunities arise elsewhere in the realm. Every traveler arrives with news, goods, fresh coin, and a chance for profit and excitement, and the locals are eager to learn the latest rumors from Caspia, Corvis, or the frontlines. The people of Fharin remain proud of the part their ancestors took in the Rebellion. It was in Fharin, after all, that the first victory of the enslaved Immorese over the Orgoth occurred, an event that spurred the formation of the Iron Fellowship in the first years of the Rebellion.

Fharin is famed across Cygnar for its markets; major bazaars are located near every major gate. Great deals can be had by those who know how to haggle for goods such as the fresh produce of the nearby fields, choice silks and other fabrics, fine weapons, alchemical substances of every description, and much more. Alchemy in particular is a well established industry in Fharin. Ready access to supplies from across the kingdom encourages this work, as do lenient local laws.

The streets of Fharin are thick with more thieves and beggars than the Fharin Watch can handle. Dubious services are available for hire if sought discreetly, and thieves and assassins tend to prosper in the dark alleys. There are no less than four sizable gangs in the city that exercise an undue influence and whose battles over extortion rackets and smuggling sometimes result in violence that spills out onto the streets.

Fharin has been teeming with military traffic since the outbreak of war, which has at least forced the gangs to act more discreetly. The rail lines are constantly moving troops and military supplies back and forth to the front lines, causing disruption to many a civilian's scheduled transportation and mercantile shipping.

DUCHY OF THE NORTHERN MIDLUNDS

The Northern Midlunds is a large and geographically diverse region stretching west to Bainsmarket, south to Fort Falk, and some leagues north to Corvis, including portions of Widower's Wood. This duchy also includes the Dragonspine Peaks and an eastern run of the Dragon's Tongue River. Much of the Northern Midlunds' wealth comes from the bustling trade at Bainsmarket and Corvis, as well as from some mining in the peaks. The Northern Midlunds is ruled by Duke Kielon Ebonhart IV, who also serves as the general of the 12th Division of the Cygnaran Army. His seat and the headquarters for his division is Fort Falk.

The Duchy of the Northern Midlunds is a recent creation, having historically been part of the greater Midlunds Duchy. Even before the Corvis Treaties, the northern Midlunds had earned its own distinction thanks to the establishment of the city of Corvis, one of the few great cities to have been built during the Orgoth Occupation. There are many dark stories of life in those times as Corvis became the regional seat for a number of brutal Orgoth governors who felt at liberty to exercise their power against the hapless inhabitants. Darker still, many who lived in Corvis earned small fortunes in this era by collaborating with the occupiers. The swampy region around Corvis, called the Widower's Wood, has a long and sordid reputation. The forest has been subject to many inexplicable and dark supernatural manifestations. Even before the founding of Corvis, Scion Lukas made Widower's Wood his home, becoming a prodigious murderer who terrorized the people of the Thousand Cities Era and whose name now strikes fear even in Thamarites.

Despite these ominous legends, Corvis is a thriving and vibrant city with a unique character all its own. Being at the confluence of the Black River and the Dragon's Tongue River, the city sees considerable river traffic and its visitors come from across the Iron Kingdoms. The duchy is also graced with a second major hub of trade in Bainsmarket, which formed on its western border. Bainsmarket is a major stop on the Market Line from Caspia and Fharin, and it has some of the largest markets in the kingdom. This city serves as a central point of trade for much of the north, and the wealth from this commerce bolsters the duchy.

Diversity of inhabitants extends beyond these cities to the duchy itself, whose people are accustomed to dealing with people from Rhul, Llael, Ord, and occasionally from Khador, in addition to travelers from elsewhere in Cygnar. Over the centuries, many families from far abroad have settled down in the region and created lasting roots, adding to the general diversity of the Midlunder people.

PERILS

The varied geography of the region has not always benefitted its inhabitants. Though the region is larger than the eastern or southern Midlunds, it has less fertile soil and fewer areas amenable to farming. There are still many large farms in the region, but those toiling in these lands must work harder for more meager crops. The Dragonspine Peaks is a craggy and hostile region that has never been fully settled, and swarms of farrow and other hazards are abundant. While some mining exists in the area, it is limited and insufficient to meet local needs. The swampy and forested lands around Corvis are similarly difficult to exploit for useful resources.

As implacable as the Northern Midlunds have been historically, recent events have brought about great changes to the region. Until 603 AR, the Northern Midlunds were considered a largely safe and even somewhat provincial duchy, albeit its river traffic kept Corvis connected to the rest of the kingdom. While a variety of natural hazards and occasional monstrous perils kept its local garrisons and militia busy, none of these were large or organized enough to draw much attention. The region seemed quite well defended by Fort Falk, one of Cygnar's most formidable eastern border defenses and a major Storm Knight training facility, which is surrounded by a sizable town of its own.

The invasion of Corvis by skorne led by the exiled former king, Vinter Raelthorne IV, was the first of many grave threats to the security of the region. The arrival of the skorne demonstrated the vulnerability of Cygnar's eastern border, that there were unexpected threats lurking beyond the Bloodstone Marches. Escalation in troop movements by the Protectorate of Menoth along the Marches also accelerated efforts to fortify the eastern border. Yet it was the Llaelese War and its aftermath that truly brought the war front to the region, particularly after the fall of Northguard and the subsequent occupation of the Thornwood by the Khadoran Army. With conflict being pushed all the way south to the Dragon's Tongue River, the Northern Midlunds suddenly found itself threatened not only on the east but on the north as well. Cygnar's war front had moved to just outside the Corvis city gates, and the river was now the greatest geographical barrier to Khadoran invasion of Cygnar's heartland.

The largest change this aggression has prompted is the tremendous militarization of the region, with large numbers of troops being brought in to both Fort Falk and Corvis. After the fall of Northguard, Corvis has become one of the main garrisons for Cygnar's First Army, previously deployed in the Thornwood. Over a hundred thousand soldiers have moved into Corvis, joining tens of thousands of refugees from Llael and other war-torn regions. The city has almost tripled in size in only a few short years, and is struggling to contain this influx.

This flow of people has spilled to settlements outside the city walls and bolstered the numbers in other nearby towns and villages, many of whom are also finding ways to profit from the military presence in the region. At the same time, the overpopulation has placed a tremendous strain on the duchy

and its resources. The consequences of war are felt strongly in the Northern Midlunds, as the last few years have resulted in several incidents of desperate famine and other shortages. The military has generally taken care of its own, but the same is not always true for those in other walks of life. The perils in the region extend to horrors beyond warfare and incursions of soldiers, including outbreaks of the walking dead arisen from defiled graves, sudden attacks by savage Devourer-worshiping cannibals, and conflicts with wild trollkin and their dire trolls.

DUCHY POLITICS

Both commoners and nobles in the region feel a strain that also affects elsewhere in the north. This tension has prompted widespread unrest, most of it directed against King Leto and Caspia. Duke Ebonhart is known to be a loyal vassal of King Leto, having fought alongside Archduke Runewood and his king during the Lion's Coup. Even his resolve has been tested by recent events, including a trollkin uprising in Crael Valley seizing several significant farmlands. King Leto ordered his officers not to interfere with the trollkin unless he had no other choice, on the grounds that they had legitimate grievances. Ebonhart felt compelled by duty to defend his people, putting himself in a difficult political position. After Ebonhart's attempts to dislodge the trollkin using only his personal retainers failed, other disgruntled and angry northern nobles conspired to take matters in their own hands, which resulted in Cygnar's Fourth Army attacking the trollkin in force, and eventually dislodging them.

The incident highlights the growing dissatisfaction among the northern nobles who feel abandoned by King Leto. Duke Ebonhart has found his vassals to be increasingly unruly and defiant, although they have maintained at least a veneer of loyalty and have done nothing so overt as to allow the duke to lawfully act against them. Particularly with the Cygnaran Army present in such force in the duchy, it seems unlikely there will be open rebellion, but tremendous animosity and friction lies below the surface among the ruling elite in the vital border region. Rumors have begun to circulate that some in the region would welcome the return of Vinter Raelthorne IV, although most remember the dark days of his Inquisition with dread and have no desire to return to those times.

DUCHY OF THE NORTHERN MIDLUNDS

Largest Ethnic Groups: Midlunder majority with significant Morridane, Thurian, and Ryn minorities

Predominant Religions: Almost exclusively Morrowan

Important Cities: Bainsmarket, Corvis, Fort Falk (township)

Significant Towns (not on the map): Averton, Balcott, Barrington, Daleney, Dorshep, Drakesmere, Everstow, Hawkes Glen, Hexburn, Holsby, Houndslaw, Norbraith, Oldlow, Pyrwyke, Wrenmere, Wyndrum

Lord: Duke Kielon Ebonhart IV, Lord of Falk and General of the 12th Division

Duke Ebonhart is among a handful of prestigious individuals who played key roles in the Lion's coup, all of whom were rewarded with rank and responsibility. Even before the coup, Ebonhart was to inherit the earldom of the Northern Midlunds; the creation of his dukedom changed his fortunes little, but it cemented his ties to the king. In the last decade, he has spent little time in the capital and like Archduke Runewood, one of his old comrades-in-arms, he has continued his military career and risen to the rank of general. He distinguished himself early in his career as one of the earliest Stormblades, serving in Prince Leto's honor guard during the Scharde Invasions. He is the highest-ranking member of that fighting tradition and is seen as an inspiration to those who don the blue armor and take up the stormglaive at Fort Falk, his seat.

Ebonhart's friendship with the king has cooled over the years, strained by the difficulties of ruling his embattled duchy. He still considers himself the king's man but has little communication with his liege. His goals have changed little in the last fourteen years, being focused on duty, honor, and the well-being of his subjects. But times have taken a dark turn. Ebonhart suspects his vassals include seditious conspirators, yet the looming threat of the skorne to the east and the Khadoran Empire to the north have allowed no time to investigate these suspicions.

Seat: Fort Falk

BAINSMARKET

Ruler: Baron Wolfe Blackwood

Population: 21,000 (mostly human), increases to roughly 35,000 during harvest time

Military Presence: Bainsmarket is garrisoned by a battalion of the Second Army.

Description: Bainsmarket is the largest commercial hub in the north central region of the kingdom. Within its walls commerce is king, and merchants are among its chief citizens. The city is located in a huge fertile valley nestled in a divide within the Dragonspine Peaks. This area contrasts with the rest of the terrain just to the south and east, which is primarily a rain-shadow desert consisting of leagues of arid scrubland. In fact, scores of prospectors have begun flooding into Bainsmarket after gold deposits were discovered among the gravel basins at the base of the Dragonspines. The activity has in turn stirred up farrow and other unpleasant creatures in the mountains.

Once ruled by a council of commercial interests, incessant bickering led to the imposition of direct rule by agents of the crown six years ago. The Cygnaran Royal Assembly was concerned that a slowdown of Bainsmarket's agricultural production could jeopardize the war effort. Baron Blackwood was appointed to administrate the affairs of the city by the king with the consent of Duke Ebonhart. Certain private interests remain powerful in Bainsmarket. Caspian Rail enjoys much of its present success from control over the Market Line between Bainsmarket and Caspia, and therefore the lucrative trade of grain and livestock.

The military presence in the city has been increased in recent years due to the hostilities in the region and the importance of Bainsmarket's beleaguered production facilities. Drought and war have taken their toll on Cygnar, making this city even more essential for the continued survival of the nation. Cryx has proven all too aware of the vital importance of the region and has targeted farms and food stores, burned crops, and poisoned livestock. Cygnaran patrols have been stepped up in the outlands of Bainsmarket because of such atrocities, but they are sorely taxed. Indeed, adventurers and mercenary bands can find employment around Bainsmarket as scouts, escorts, and conveyers of information.

CORVIS, THE CITY OF GHOSTS

Ruler: Corvis Council working in concert with General Galt Langworth and General Adept Sebastian Nemo

Population: 280,000 human (mostly Morridane, Midlunder, and Thurian, with many Ryn); 30,000 gobber; 12,000 Rhulfolk; 6,000 trollkin; 4,000 ogrun

Military Presence: Since the fall of Northguard and the loss of Thornwood, Corvis has virtually become a fortress. Along with Point Bourne, the city is vital to Cygnar's defense in the north. Presently it is home to the 2nd and 5th Divisions of the First Army under the commands of General Adept Sebastian Nemo and General Galt Langworth, Earl of Bournworth (see p. 60), respectively. Over 100,000 Cygnaran soldiers are stationed in the vicinity of Corvis, accounting for nearly a third of the city's total population. In addition, 700 members of the Corvis City Watch also patrol the city's streets.

Description: Corvis is a dark and storied city straddling the waters where the Black River splits and continues south to Caspia while the Dragon's Tongue flows west to Five Fingers. It is a city of watery canals, riverfronts, and shadowy alleyways where one can easily disappear without a trace. The swampy ground and the nearby Widower's Wood seem a poor choice for the location of a major settlement, but Corvis has thrived, and as buildings collapse for lack of ground support or simply sink into the mire, the industrious engineers and laborers keep constructing anew atop the crumbling structures of past generations. Of late, the city has seen much new construction as it faces a staggering influx of refugees fleeing the wars to the north and east, as well as expansive fortifications hastily constructed by the engineers of the First Army.

Some like to say that despite the crowded conditions, the dead still outnumber the living in Corvis. The city graveyards are notoriously difficult to maintain due to the boggy grounds and near-constant rain. It is said the dead here are restless even in sanctified ground and sometimes rise to haunt the living—hence the appellation "City of Ghosts"—although this reputation is exaggerated by the locals. Rather, the dead are generally evoked through stories of the sordid misdeeds, criminal doings, and peculiar tragedies that pervade the city's history. Still, crowded with soldiers and refugees, Corvis' living population has begun to impose upon the city's graveyards and catacombs, occasionally stirring things otherwise forgotten. The local branch of Ceryl's Strangelight Workshop insists hauntings are on the rise, and their services are being called for with increasingly frequency.

Trade and commerce continue despite recent wars. Corvis remains an important nexus of trade between Cygnar and Rhul, making the city a hub of even greater import since the fall of Llael. River traffic remains the city's lifeblood, despite largely unsuccessful efforts to connect the city by short line rail to Bainsmarket. Efforts to lay track have been repeatedly interrupted either by engineering obstacles or hostile forces sabotaging the works.

Originally founded by the Orgoth as a regional capital, Corvis is a perpetually dreary place. Much of its oppressive architecture has survived into the modern era and lends to the city's gloomy air. The city endures chronic rain and mist ten months out of the year and only sees the sun during each brief summer for a few short weeks. The cobblestoned streets are typically slick with rain, and like much of the city must often be repaired as they sink into the damp earth. The two rivers roughly divide Corvis into three districts; an elbow of the Black River divides the eastern district from the north and south districts, which are in turn separated by the waters of the Dragon's Tongue.

Following the fall of Northguard, Corvis has become one of the primary hubs of the First Army. General Sebastian Nemo is in command of the tens of thousands of soldiers based here, and under his direction, the outer battlements of the city have been reinforced, transforming the city into a fortress. Visitors to the city find numerous checkpoints manned by members of the city watch and supplemented by regular soldiers. The watch is perhaps the most overworked group in the city, fighting as best they can against a rising wave of crime spurred by both the hordes of refugees and the lure of war profiteering. The watch is led by the honest, if hardnosed Watch Commander Julian Helstrom, who struggles to keep his men fighting for law and order. Relations between the watch and the garrisoned soldiers of the First Army are poor, with the watchmen viewing the soldiers as interlopers, and the soldiers believing the watch to be unprofessional. It does not help that rumors of corruption in the watch are growing.

Bridges connect the city's districts, but the populace ventures from their homes only when heading to work or to the weekly market. The southern district is the most common destination for merchants and traders, especially since the onset of war with Khador. The southern docks are used by the majority of river vessels bearing cargo for trade, as well as being home to scurrilous gangs and criminals. The southern district is

also host to the great open market known as the Quad in the Merchant's Bourg. While commerce in the Quad slows at night, different wares are offered for sale after sunset.

The eastern district is home to the city's wealthy and elite, as well as much of its middle class. Not even this district has remained free of the overcrowding that has overtaken the city. The district's huge city park, once a haven for the privileged, is now covered in tents and ramshackle shelters slowly sinking into mud, and famished refugees loiter in the streets. To the dismay of the district's wealthy inhabitants, the City Council ordered the watch not to interfere with the refugees outside the conduct of their normal duties. The eastern district is also home to one of Corvis' best known landmarks, Corvis University.

The city's center for learning is located in a massive but aged estate and is the home for many erudite individuals and their studies. Corvis University features an observatory and offers courses ranging from extraordinary zoology to astrometry to alchemical theory. The university has gained some fame for one of its most prolific professors, the High Chancellor of the Department of Extraordinary Zoology Professor Viktor Pendrake, an expert on Immoren's most dangerous creatures. Professor Pendrake's time has been divided from his studies so he can assist the Cygnaran Reconnaissance Service (CRS), which values his expertise on both wilderness trollkin and skorne. He is considered the foremost expert on both these dangerous species.

To the north and east of the Black River and the Dragon's Tongue is the center of Corvis' industrial neighborhoods The Cathedral of Morrow, overseen by High Prelate Pandor Dumas, is also located here, and the city's devout visit it weekly. The northern district has recently become the center of the First Army's headquarters, and its population has swelled. Workers heading to factories must push past squads drilling in the street and off-duty soldiers loafing on corners, heedless of the cold drizzle. The palace of the former Orgoth governor of Corvis where the Corvis Treaties were signed still stands, leering faces carved into its walls and gates, and it is now the primary headquarters of the military forces stationed in the city.

As refugees have flooded into the city, several large camps of tents and other temporary housing have cropped up outside the palace's walls in several directions, clustered in particular outside the western and southern gates. Combined with the military presence in the city, the population has risen well beyond its means. The crowding has reached unacceptable levels, particularly combined with the often-unpleasant local weather. Some refugees have found shelter amidst the docks of south Corvis. Countless thousands take shelter here within warehouses requisitioned from private owners by the military to serve as housing. The conditions are cramped and unsanitary, and the military governors of the city fear the spread of epidemics. In other parts of the city, refugees have taken shelter in the expansive catacombs and disused sewers beneath Corvis—poor living for anyone.

Beneath the city's streets is a cave system created by underground water erosion from the Black River's current. The erosion is one reason why the City of Ghosts has been sinking into the mire, needing constant rebuilding over the centuries, very likely from the city's beginning. Ever since the caverns were discovered, they have been periodically expanded, most notably by the Tradeway Union when thousands of people hid beneath the city for generations during the Orgoth Occupation. Certain underground sections have been stabilized over the centuries and kept clear of water, and entire city blocks exist below ground. Some of the more populated areas are lit by torches and gas lamps, but dozens of miles of caverns, natural, collapsed, or sunken, are dark and forgotten even by those who frequent the undercity. These areas in particular are rumored to be haunted by malevolent or forlorn apparitions or inhabited by denizens such as bogrin, gorax, thrullgs, gatormen, and Thamarite septs. Several sections of the undercity are entirely under the control of criminal gangs, where anything can be bought for a price.

As the location of the signing of the legendary Corvis Treaties, the city is regarded as the very birthplace of the Iron Kingdoms. In the centuries since, it has remained a place of significance in both politics and trade, and a melting pot of cultures and races of the nation of Cygnar.

In the following decades, Corvis' status declined and the fortunes of both Caspia and Ceryl rose. While Corvis remained an important center of trade, its isolation from the Cygnaran heartland made it something of a backwater. Provincial attitudes toward sorcery persisted even into the recent past, resulting in one of the most shocking abuses of authority committed by Vinter IV's Inquisition: the Corvis Witch Trials of 593 AR. Five women were convicted of witchcraft and summarily beheaded, an incident that embarrasses many of Corvis' more sophisticated citizenry. Locals believe bitter seeds were sown in those days, as Alexia Ciannor, the daughter of one of the executed witches, became central to portentous events in the years that followed.

On Longest Night of 602 AR, Alexia led a horde of undead against the city, seeking vengeance as they advanced on the Cathedral of Morrow with mysterious purpose. Although Alexia was thwarted and fled, the army of the dead left an indelible mark on the minds of Corvis' citizens, and the Longest Night is still a much dreaded occasion in the city.

In the following months, Corvis endured a second invasion. Aided by corrupt members of the city government, the deposed king Vinter Raelthorne IV returned from exile at the head of an army of skorne warriors and captured the city with little resistance. The people of Corvis were the first western Immorese to experience life under the lash of these cruel people of the eastern wastes. Vinter might have furthered his plan to retake all of his former kingdom had Alexia not returned to the city at the head of the legendary Legion of Lost Souls, undead soldiers of the Eternal Guard animated by the frightening power of the Witchfire, a blade of dark and ancient origin. The Legion proved victorious against Vinter, freeing the city from his grasp and sending him back into the Bloodstone Marches. Alexia vanished in the aftermath of the battle, and she has not since returned to Corvis.

GENERAL SEBASTIAN NEMO

General Sebastian Nemo is a soldier, inventor, and, as the commander of the 2nd Division of the First Army, the de facto governor of Corvis. Nemo is perhaps the greatest mind in western Immoren, and certainly one of the finest innovators in the fields of galvanic mechanika. His genius is matched by his bravery and keenly strategic mind, a fact proven in his decades of service to his nation. Nemo has given his life to Cygnar, and continues to do so even in the face of advancing age.

Nemo's forces have been stationed in Corvis since Cygnar's withdrawal from the Thornwood in the aftermath of the fall of Northguard. Nemo has worked tirelessly not only to see to the defense of the region, coordinating the movements of the First Army, but also at his theoretical labors. He is in constant communication with the Cygnaran Armory, overseeing projects of vast scope that will have incalculable impact on his nation's military success, even while seeing to the well-being of Corvis' swelling masses. A lesser man might be crushed beneath half of the responsibilities Nemo shoulders, but the implacable warcaster has risen to the occasion, though not from his bed, which he rarely has time to visit.

FORT FALK

Ruler: General Kielon Ebonhart IV, Duke of the Northern Midlunds, Lord of Falk

Population: 32,000 human (mostly Morridane, Midlunder, and Thurian)

Military Presence: Fort Falk is home to the 29,000 soldiers of the 12th Division of the Second Army under General Ebonhart.

Description: The largest and most impressive of the eastern border fortresses, Fort Falk was originally built in 281 AR during the reign of Woldred the Diligent to protect Cygnar's growing river trade from brigands. Over the years, Fort Falk has grown several times over and become the largest instruction facility of the Cygnaran army serving as the primary training ground for trenchers and elite Stormblades. Both veteran troops and trainees are stationed at Fort Falk. The fort has become so large it is practically a city in itself, but it is not entirely self-contained. The fort is the home of Duke Kielon Ebonhart IV and the seat of the Northern Midlunds duchy.

A small township of a several thousand civilians has accumulated outside the original fort's walls over the generations. Also named Fort Falk, the town sees to the needs of the soldiers stationed here. Most civilians make a living through trade or as smiths, carpenters, cooks, farriers, and the like.

The soldiers of Fort Falk have seen much combat in recent years. Notably, they successfully repelled the skorne from the region on several occasions, including a massive assault on their fortress that occurred shortly after the Fall of Northguard. Their victory was not without cost, and the 12th Division suffered significant casualties, as well as severe damage to the structural fortifications. Since then, the 12th has bolstered other forts along the Black River, combating not only probing assaults by skorne forces but also engaging in regular skirmishes with soldiers of the Protectorate of Menoth.

DUCHY OF THE SOUTHERN MIDLUNDS

The Southern Midlunds are comprised of the lush and fertile region south of Fharin to the Brenn Forest, including the town of King's Vine and a vast expanse of the Upper Wyrmwall. This territory boasts productive farmlands, plentiful silk farms, ample lumber, and numerous mines. It is an affluent duchy that supplies the bulk of the capital's grain and cattle. The Southern Midlunds is ruled by Archduke Fergus Laddermore, Lord of Durnkeep.

The region shares the same history as the other Midlunds, but it has certain cultural traits in common with Caspia due to proximity. There is a huge distinction between the western and eastern portions of the region, with fertile farmlands in the east and mountains in the west. The Upper Wyrmwall that is part of the region is only sparsely settled and includes some of the wildest untracked portions of the range. These lands are held by the Laddermore line by ancient accord in the hope that eventually the family would penetrate those mountains and unearth their riches.

The substantial wealth of this province is thought to be largely untapped. Surveys have suggested numerous rich veins of gold,

GENERAL GALT LANGWORTH, EARL OF BOURNWORTH, LORD OF POINT BOURNE

Prior to the recent wars, General Langworth spent much of his time at his estate in Caspia, leaving the day-to-day governance of Point Bourne to the city's mayor. During the Khadoran invasion of the Thornwood, General Langworth led the 5th Division from the front. While the general had become more at home at the court of the Royal Assembly than on the battlefield, he has proven he is still a more than competent commander. When Northguard fell, General Langworth moved the 5th to reinforce Corvis where he and the Division are currently headquartered. Langworth now works closely with General Nemo, providing the sometimes cantankerous warcaster with his keen strategic insight.

silver, iron, and other ores in as-yet unreachable regions. A number of plans have been set in motion to begin laying claim to this wealth, although it is a costly endeavor that will require massive engineering projects. Adding to the difficulty is the fact that while the region is not civilized, it is also not empty. These mountains are filled with the lairs of isolated trollkin kriels, bogrin tribes, long-lost communities of Devourer worshipers, and other perils. The tales of the horrors lurking in these mountains might be considered impossibly exaggerated, except among those brave few who have sought to venture into them to chart them.

Nonetheless, these lands are apportioned among a number of poor but hopeful barons whose seats lay in the east and who scheme ways to exploit their inhospitable holdings. Those fortunate few controlling areas that have been more thoroughly exploited have benefitted from a flood of riches, including the most productive gold mines in the kingdom. These mines contain other substances even more valuable than gold, and these finds are being carefully extracted and processed by skilled alchemists, including the trace minerals required for high-grade cortex production.

DUCHY POLITICS

Important as the mineral deposits are, it is the eastern farmlands and ranches that give Archduke Laddermore his real influence. Were it not for the vast and well-managed estates in the region, Caspia would starve. The archduke has proven to be a masterful manipulator and politician, choosing carefully among his vassals who to reward and who to punish. He has inspired as much fear as loyalty, and those beneath him speak in the Assembly as a unified block, not daring or willing to defy him. While Laddermore has been the most ardent and outspoken critic of King Leto and his policies, he has always maintained the appearance of being a patriotic Cygnaran. In the Cygnaran Assembly, he is considered the most important noble in Caspia other than King Leto. He has recently drawn into his circles a number of northern lords dissatisfied with the course of the wars.

Laddermore is confident enough in his power that he has recently initiated certain efforts against other powerful rivals, although he has done so with some discretion. Through his vassals and more remote intermediaries, he has begun to move against Archduke Runewood, his northern neighbor. These two duchies compete on several grounds and it is no secret Laddermore will only be content when the Midlunds are once again united under his family's rulership. Most of the nobles in the duchy express the opinion, at the least, that the Laddermore family was unfairly singled out after the Lion's Coup and subjected to royal vindictiveness.

For all the wealth of the duchy, it lacks any major cities except for King's Vine, being populated mostly by scattered townships in the eastern region, and a few isolated settlements in the west. The inhabitants of the western mountains are an aloof and hardened people who are comfortable with the extremes of the Wyrmwall. The mines of the duchy are better run than most, and conditions are reasonably good, but it is still dangerous labor. Those living in the east are mostly laborers on the various farms, most of whom are well cared for but poor.

DUCHY OF THE SOUTHERN MIDLUNDS

Largest Ethnic Groups: Midlunder majority with a large Caspian minority

Predominant Religions: Almost exclusively Morrowan

Important Cities: King's Vine

Significant Towns (not on the map): Bethly, Blyden, Borscott, Dexbury, Galecarden, Glenhurst, Halsgate, Ironbury, Kalbourne, Malden, Norham, Pennley, Rathelhope, Trinbeck, Wesfield, Wexmere, Whitgarth

Lord: Archduke Fergus Laddermore, Lord of Durnkeep

A cousin of the king, Archduke Laddermore is one of the most powerful nobles in Cygnar. The archduke and the king have never had a comfortable rapport, for it is no secret the Laddermores were supporters of Vinter the Elder. The archduke grudgingly swore allegiance to Leto but has been the cause of more than a few problems since. He has never forgiven the king for dividing his duchy, elevating men who he feels should be his vassals. The Laddermore estate and lands are a hundred miles north of Caspia, but the archduke spends the majority of his time in the capital and leaves the managing of his lands to his three sons Fergus II, Ambrose, and Yulian. His daughter Katherine is something of an embarrassment to him, despite having become a distinguished officer among the Storm Lances. She has become an outspoken advocate for King Leto, leading to estrangement with the rest of her family.

The division of the Midlunds served as a check against Laddermore's ambitions, but he remains a constant thorn in the king's side. Laddermore has always been careful that his words and actions fall short of treason, but he remains one of Leto's greatest political enemies. The crown is powerless to act directly against him, at least not without proof of criminal deeds, because Laddermore could use his influence to cripple Caspia and bring its vital commerce to a halt. Laddermore has never threatened to do so, but has made it quite clear he has that power. The truth is Laddermore remains secretly loyal to Vinter Raelthorne and has supported the criminal Asheth Magnus in the past, and through that link given aid to the skorne. These acts alone would be enough to ensure Laddermore's execution, were they to come to light.

Seat: Durnkeep

Those who own and run the farms live in greater comfort than the laborers, and above them are Laddermore's chosen vassals and a few prosperous middle-class merchants who have proven themselves invaluable.

King's Vine has carved a unique niche for itself as the kingdom's premiere wine country, exploiting the rich soil for this lucrative industry. A number of other luxury goods are made in the town, including fine goat, sheep, and cow cheeses. While this city seems precariously located so close to Cygnar's sometimes contentious eastern border, the nearby presence of Eastwall has kept this bucolic community reasonably safe and secure. The watchful patronage of the archduke, who appreciates the income from this quarter, has also helped its safety. Archduke Laddermore is known to spend some portion of his wealth hiring a number of large, and some might say disreputable, mercenary companies that protect his interests.

KING'S VINE

Ruler: Lady Mayor and Baroness Rohessa Rainecourt

Population: 15,000 (almost entirely Caspian and Midlunder)

Military Presence: King's Vine includes a small garrison of the Second Army but is primarily protected by patrols from the nearby border fortress of Eastwall. The city employs 100 watchmen to keep the peace. In the last few years, Archduke Laddermore has personally contracted two mercenary companies to help patrol the region—the Daggot Blades and the Black River Rovers.

Description: Situated among the rolling hills of a large river valley a few miles west of the Black River, the small town of King's Vine is known to most Cygnarans for its sole product: wine. Since before the founding of the kingdom, this valley region of hills and vales has been renowned for the fertility of its fields. The long valley stretches fifty miles from the base of the Wyrmwall to the Black River and the hills beyond, and it is home to many wineries that produce a broad range of excellent wines. The grapes grown here surpass those found anywhere else in Cygnar. Thanks to generations of cross-fertilization and grafting, the fields now boast dozens of varieties. The Avelot Vineyards are the largest and most impressive in all the surrounding countryside, owned by Archduke Laddermore of the Southern Midlunds.

King's Vine is an affluent community that caters to the rich and was once favored by kings of Cygnar for gatherings, giving it its namesake. That has not been as much the habit with the stern kings of the Raelthorne line. But many noblemen and wealthy merchants alike maintain summer estates here. With its hipped roofs, seven-story central tower, myriad arched windows, and lavish royal vineyards, the King's Castle is the grandest estate in town. The castle serves as the mayor's residence but is actually a property of Archduke Laddermore, who often visits. Some insist this town is favored by those of the archduke's inner circle for their plots and schemes.

There was a peculiar incident in the town in 606 AR that most locals will not speak about, when it was quarantined for an outbreak of fever. The locals were forced to seal their homes and shutter their windows for several days. Some who peeked outside their curtains during those days swore they saw inhuman soldiers walking their streets, but this speculation is dismissed as a product of the fever.

DUCHY OF THE WESTERN MIDLUNDS

The Western Midlunds is the largest duchy in Cygnar but is sparsely populated for its size, and much of it remains untamed. The region stretches east to the Upper Wyrmwall, south to Fort Whiterock, and west to encompass the Gnarls. Numerous villages and small towns are scattered across the region, and although there is some mining in the east, the bulk of its wealth comes from western lumber. Duke Mordrin Sunbright II, Lord of Whiterock, rules the Western Midlunds.

In ancient times the people of these lands were the hardest hit by the deprivations of the Kingdom of Morrdh, and it was here the bandit-king and Thamarite who would become Scion Roth waged his infamous last stand. During the Orgoth Occupation, many of the defiant peoples of the region were slaughtered or enslaved. Those that endured sought refuge in the wild places, particularly among the rugged mountains. Some fought on in small numbers and took measures to disrupt the roads paved by the conquering tyrants.

PERILS

Even in more recent centuries these wild lands have been caught up in conflicts, including both the Trollkin Wars and the Colossal Wars. During the Llaelese War, while many of the kingdom's youths were embroiled in battle against Khador, a sudden and unexpected army of Cryxians swept through the duchy to pillage farmlands and desecrate old graves, eventually taking root in the Thornwood to the north. The people endured,

THE GNARLS

Especially along the Dragon's Tongue River, many parts of this forest are blanketed by spreading kudzu vines. The vines have overtaken the vegetation and anything and everything else that is fixed in place for more than a few months, including abandoned buildings. The Gnarls also contain many thriving trollkin kriels and several bogrin communities, so venturing too deep can be a dangerous undertaking. For some the temptation is too hard to resist, however, since the massive forest features fine game hunting and superior lumber. Lumberjack camps dot the fringes along the Dragon's Tongue, from which they ferry supplies and raw materials to Five Fingers and Tarna or ship them to upriver communities and towns such as Point Bourne and Corvis. The trollkin of the Gnarls have become increasingly hostile and territorial of late, and they may be in collusion with those involved with some of the recent uprisings and violence, such as the invasion of Crael Valley.

having long become accustomed to hardship and peculiar occult doings.

Western Midlunders disdain large cities, finding they invite trouble, and instead prefer fortified holds and townships. They have long been an insular, independent, and suspicious people, maintaining old traditions of guest-right and feast-hall. The Menites in the region were not swept up in Lord Commander Stryker's recent purge—a number of isolated towns worship the Creator as they have for centuries, as oblivious to Sulon's call that kicked off the Cygnaran Civil War as they have been to more recent calls to crusade or to missionaries bringing the message of Morrow. Others follow splinter sects of Morrowan worship with rites all their own, or have taken up with unsavory local cults. Even in areas where religion is strong, superstition follows close behind. The wild places are unavoidable in those areas—blackclads walk the hills, trollkin kriels outnumber Cygnaran soldiers, and more inexplicable things stalk the night.

DUCHY POLITICS

As with their neighbors in the Northern Midlunds, many of the nobles in the duchy have grown disaffected by King Leto and some have been persuaded by seditious whisperings. Thuria has long had an influence on the people of the region; Ceryl is the nearest great city, and Caspia might as well be in another kingdom entirely. Those living near or in the proximity of the Gnarls have lived for generations within earshot of powerful trollkin kriels. Trade and commerce with these communities was once common, but such relations are strained of late, with the kriels more likely to arrive for pillage than barter.

The center of the Western Midlunds includes fertile soil south of the Dragon's Tongue River, making it the region's most prosperous farmland. Nonetheless, the agriculture here has never been consolidated into massive industrial farms. Smaller family efforts are more common, with the valleys divided into patchworks of plots. Tenants pay their taxes and dues to their local barons, who arm liegemen sworn to protect them as best they can. The barons maintain fortified keeps that can endure occasional raids by trolls or the undead, but the farmers are exposed and vulnerable.

The faith of the locals in the courage of their nobles has improved since those barons joined in on the attack to the east to reclaim Crael Valley from a recent trollkin uprising in the Northern Midlunds. Some have been urging for similar actions to purge the Gnarls, although as yet no one has been willing to initiate such a bold plan. The fact remains that there are very few sizable army garrisons in the region and most of the armed manpower tasked to defense are voluntary militia or groups of better-trained liegemen serving local nobles.

Despite the apparent lawlessness of the duchy, Duke Mordrin Sunbright II is held in esteem. His family has a storied history and a legacy of once having sat the throne in Caspia. There seems little chance of that ever happening again, but the Sunbright name is spoken of with reverential respect. Sunbright's seat is Fort Whiterock, a squat but imposing mountain keep in the Upper Wyrmwall. While his armed forces are few in number for a man of his rank and station, they travel the duchy in armed patrols and do their part to intercept trouble, to reassure the locals, and to bring grievances back to their lord. Those who

DUCHY OF THE WESTERN MIDLUNDS

Largest Ethnic Groups: Midlunder majority with Morridane and Thurian minorities

Predominant Religions: Morrowan majority with a Menite minority

Significant Towns (not on the map): Ashbourgh, Auchminster, Bryden, Calbeck, Dencott, Galbraiton, Ironfield, Kellerbrad, Lonford, Monthurst, Mosely, Norswin, Rennyden, Rosaleen, Shadwych, Skalfirth, Wyndale, Wyrmlaw

Lord: Duke Mordrin Sunbright II, Lord of Whiterock, Lord Commander of the Sunbright Yeomen

The Royal Assembly considers Duke Sunbright an eccentric and recluse but he is respected in some circles, particularly among senior military. He is an aging ranger who maintains a devoted following of woodsmen called the Sunbright Yeomen, who patrol the scattered villages of the Gnarls, the northern Wyrmwall, and the other far-flung communities of the duchy. The Sunbright family has a storied history of long service to Cygnar, including among their ancestors several revered kings who have sat the throne, such as Hector Sunbright III. Their legacy traces back to lords of the Midlands before the Orgoth. Mordrin is considered a relic now, with little relevance. Whether he will play a role in the friction between the northern and southern nobles remains to be seen. Leto's supporters have sought to persuade him to calm his vassals, but he has shown no signs of reining them in.

Seat: Fort Whiterock

Sometimes called "Castle Forgotten," Fort Whiterock is an old, crumbling mountain fortress that looks to be in worse repair than it actually is. The ancient edifice has been regularly rebuilt and fortified, but the centuries have not been kind and it shows evidence of long years of weathering. Whiterock is the home of Duke Mordrin Sunbright II and his family, who watch over the expanse of the Western Midlunds. A small village has grown at the base of Whiterock Hill below the fortress along the banks of the Banwick River. There is some river trade from Lake Rimmocksdale, but the current is swift and the rapids dissuade all but the most courageous boatmen. No major roads come into the region, although a number of old cart tracks and mountain trails connect some of the nearby villages. Even the "reliable" old trading road to Point Bourne is frequently washed away during flood season.

serve in this capacity are the Sunbright Yeomen, and they are tenacious warriors.

It is difficult to gauge Sunbright's standing politically, since he is one of the least involved of the kingdom's dukes, spending little time in Caspia or among the halls of power of his peers. He remains in contact with his vassals but seems content to allow them to speak their minds, even when talk verges on treason. Sunbright has never said a word against his liege, but neither has he said anything in his favor. Sunbright is disinclined to push for action against the trollkin of the Gnarls, and in the past was on good terms with some of the elders of the dominant kriels. The duke is disregarded by the active nobles east of the Wyrmwall, and attempts to recruit his support by the Archduke of Thuria have met with no success.

The only peers Sunbright has shown any interest in befriending are Lord Generals Olan Duggan and Vincent Gollan, the Duke of the Northforest and the Earl of Shieldpoint, respectively, known better as the commanders of Cygnar's First and Third Armies. These two great military leaders have his respect, but interactions between them involve news of the wars abroad and not politics. By tacit agreement of the duke, many in Sunbright's employ also serve the Cygnaran Reconnaissance Service. Sunbright was himself a ranger before he retired and returned to his family seat.

There have been recent changes that may disrupt the isolation of the townships in the duchy. The crown has been expending considerable resources to expand the rail lines, needed for both commerce and military traffic. As soon as the rail companies can solve the problem of laying rail through or bypassing the hostile Gnarls, they intend to connect Bainsmarket to Ceryl. This project is well underway, with track having been laid through much of the area's central farmlands.

A stable railway to Ceryl would help connect the farthest reaches of the kingdom. It may also have the effect of growing towns along the line into proper cities and increasing commerce with the Western Midlunds, a notion embraced by some of the region's barons, while loathed by others. Sunbright has expressed the opinion there is no stopping change, but he has shown no inclination to fund a branch line to Fort Whiterock, which he prefers secluded.

DUCHY OF NORTHFOREST

Once made up of the "forest and swamp provinces" of the north, Bloodsbane, Bournworth, and Thornwood, the free territory in the duchy is now only those lands in the vicinity of Point Bourne and Stonebridge Castle. The Duke of Northforest, Lord General Olan Duggan, was forced to fall back to Point Bourne. Fellig, his seat of power in the north of the Thornwood, remains free of Khadoran rule but only because it has been occupied by Ordic and mercenary forces, making its future uncertain and leaving it entirely cut off from the rest of Cygnar. General Hagan Cathmore, the former Earl of Bloodsbane, perished in the fall of Northguard.

After Northguard's fall, most of the Northforest Duchy was overrun by Khadoran forces. However, Northforest was under siege long before Irusk stormed the walls of Northguard. Cryxian forces had long been gathering strength in secret beneath the Thornwood. It is only now, with Khador attempting to solidify its own hold over the forest, that the Cryxians have revealed themselves. The full extent of their numbers, their subterranean lairs, and their necrofactoriums remains unknown. They emerge at unexpected times and places to prey upon the living armies struggling above, making resupply for Khador's new border fortresses a constant challenge. But that is of little consolation to the Cygnarans who were pushed from their ancestral homes. A good number remain behind, trying to live their lives while being forced to turn over what little sustenance they can gather to the soldiers in their midst.

Even before Khador pushed Cygnar's First Army from the Thornwood, the region had seen tragedy. The southern community of Fisherbrook was burned to ground by the Protectorate's Northern Crusade under the command of then Grand Scrutator Severius early in the Llaelese War. This same crusade briefly laid siege to Fellig before being driven off, but not before they laid waste to the nearby Morrowan Abbey of Ascendant Angellia, an irreplaceable sacred site and repository of holy lore.

The situation with the locals still living in this duchy can be confusing, as is often the case in occupied territory anywhere amid a time of war. The bulk of the nobles, liegemen, and anyone with wealth and influence outside of the city of Fellig have either fled south or perished in the fighting. The toll of the dead is still uncertain and some families are thought to be simply missing, possibly having taken refuge in eastern Ord or elsewhere. Nonetheless, thousands of Cygnaran citizens still remain in the area, living in small isolated wooded and swamp communities that have largely been unaffected by the change in the borders due to the dense and impenetrable nature of the Thornwood and its swamps.

Few of these little villages can offer respite for even a small Khadoran garrison, and they don't have much in the way of food or other supplies, and so they have largely been left alone. Some individuals have sought to improve their lot by offering their services as guides to Khadoran officers, although this is seen as collaboration by those who despise the occupiers. Most of the swampies and other Morridanes left behind in the Thornwood are patriotic, albeit unwilling to get themselves killed by fighting futile battles against the well-armed Khadorans tromping through the region. The Morridanes serve enthusiastically in the Cygnaran Army and many of the youths of those townships already signed on to the First Army, leaving behind the old or the very young. It was the custom for isolated townships to make arrangements with the less violent tribes of gatormen and swamp gobbers living nearby. Given that the Khadorans prefer to avoid confronting the gatormen in the swamps, particularly around Blindwater Lake, some of the local villages have remained sheltered.

The forest is a dark and dangerous place even for the cagey swampies who know it well. There are few more sinister places in western Immoren, a fact that has not changed with recent events. The Thornwood has long been home to wild kriels of trollkin as well as the most numerous tribes of the bloodthirsty Tharn. Blackclads of the Circle Orboros maintain

places of power in the deep woods, and sometimes enter into Thornwood's towns and villages on inscrutable errands. The history of this place is steeped in ancient occult rites and rituals, stretching back to the lost and nearly forgotten Kingdom of Morrdh, of which the western Thornwood was once the heart. Those old ruins have long since been buried or overgrown, and yet haunted places remain.

The forest seems to have its own malevolence and power, and the locals view it with awed superstition. The undergrowth and trees grow back more quickly than is natural, quickly consuming abandoned trollkin villages and erasing signs of recent battles. Countless overgrown warjack wrecks rust beneath the vegetation, including some old colossals dating back to the Rebellion or to the earliest wars between the Iron Kingdoms. Even the infestation of Cryx seems to have been unable to brunt the regenerative strength of these thorny and knotted trees.

BLOODSBANE PROVINCE

Prior to the Khadoran occupation, Bloodsbane included the lands surrounding Bloodsmeath Marsh and the Blindwater Lake and was bounded by the greater Thornwood to the west, the Dragon's Tongue to the south, and the ruined fortress complex and abandoned trenchworks of Northguard to the north. The province is the ancestral land of the Cathmores, and Earl Hagan Cathmore gave his life defending his seat. His wife and heir fled south and are still alive.

Bloodsbane has been the province the most directly impacted by the wars. What remains of Northguard has fallen into Khadoran hands. Its buildings have been reinforced by Khador's engineers and occupied by Khadoran soldiers. Given the difficulty the Khadorans have had taming the intervening geography between Northguard and the Dragon's Tongue River, the half-destroyed fortification has proven surprisingly useful. There has been some talk of additional reconstruction, although the cost would be prohibitive.

The northern section of the province is dominated by Bloodsmeath Marsh, which once served as a geographical barrier around Northguard. It is comprised of hundreds of tiny peat moss islands afloat in a sea of murky water, cat-tailed reeds, water locusts, and black mangroves. Difficult to traverse, travelers avoid the marsh, preferring the safety of the Black River to the east. Bloodsmeath is thick with biting insects and poisonous snakes, and is home to gatormen, bog trogs, and gobber settlements. Most Cygnarans who lived in that region have fled or perished.

The southern limits of the province, on the other hand, are still nominally inhabited by lingering swampies. Most of them have had to make arrangements with the gatormen who increasingly dominate the Blindwater Lake and surrounding bogs. The power vacuum left by the departing Cygnaran Army has

DUCHY OF NORTHFOREST

Largest Ethnic Groups: Morridane majority with a large Midlunder minority and a Thurian minority

Predominant Religions: Morrowan majority with a small Menite minority and some Devourer cults

Provinces: Bloodsbane (Connor Cathmore, a minor), Bournworth (General Galt Langworth, Earl of Bournworth), and Thornwood

Important Cities: Fellig, Point Bourne

Significant Towns (not on the map): Aberbex, Baenhurst, Banshep, Blackham, Blathmere, Branweald, Bronbally, Colmbury, Conleth, Duncul, Felblaen, Galharrow, Grimcarden, Kearneigh, Kethkyle, Malhythe, Morleigh, Northwold, Old Barrow, Wesroane

Lord: Lord General Olan Duggan, Duke of Northforest, Lord of Fellig (in absentia)

Seat: Fellig (presently occupied by Ordic forces)

Olan Duggan was the military governor of Fellig and remains the Lord General of the First Army, held responsible for the northern defenses of Cygnar. He is the highest ranking Morridane in Cygnar, a point of some pride. His circumstances have changed in a drastic way, and he now endures being the only Cygnaran duke whose duchy has been invaded and occupied. While he sees this as a major defeat, and one for which he takes full responsibility, neither King Leto nor any of the ranking generals hold him to blame. The loss of the Thornwood has been deemed unavoidable.

This fact has not assuaged many members of the Royal Assembly, particularly those with no military training. They claim the loss was a consequence of his low birth and insist his titles should be stripped and someone else placed at the head of the army. King Leto has refused to consider these demands.

Several of the other dukes and the Warmaster General stand behind Duggan, whom they consider uniquely qualified for his post, having been a lifelong soldier who fought in countless battles. Until the fall of the Thornwood, he spent decades fighting Khador to a standstill. Olan Duggan was granted the Northforest by King Leto, much to the astonishment of the Royal Assembly. Before that time, his family was one of many minor northern noble bloodlines, having little wealth or reputation, yet he is a proven leader of men. King Leto believed a trustworthy northern general, not a statesman, was required for the northern region. Leto does not regret his decision and insists Duggan has performed admirably amid impossibly difficult circumstances.

prompted changes among the gatormen, and they are united as never before under a single ancient and legendary leader known as Bloody Barnabas. The swampies who live nearby refuse to speak the name aloud and talk of the gatorman as if he were either a ghost or some kind of living god of the swamps.

BOURNWORTH PROVINCE

Bournworth Province was a small but important province of lush farmlands around the Thornmere. Now it has the dubious distinction of being the smallest Cygnaran province and the last remnant of the Northforest duchy still under Cygnaran control. The area north of that lake and the Dragon's Tongue River was abandoned, although some few holdouts remain in otherwise empty villages. The razed town of Fisherbrook was once a part of this province but was obliterated in a ruthless attack by the Northern Crusade during the Llaelese War. Since the cease-fire with Khador, soldiers and engineers have been busily at work north of the river building watch towers and fortifications. There has been similar entrenchment along the southern banks.

The area south of the river includes many established villages and small towns, most now crowded with Cygnaran Army hospital tents tending to the wounded. Farming in the region continues, though with difficulties since the farmers have suffered occasional raiding. The locals are nonetheless mostly safe from large-scale incursions due to the proximity of the large military garrisons at Stonebridge Castle and the fortified city of Point Bourne.

Though Bournworth is technically ruled by Earl Galt Langworth, he was relocated to defend Corvis as the general of the 5th Division. Langworth has been entirely occupied with military matters and his place has been subsumed by his superior, Duke Olan Duggan, Lord General of the First Army, who has made Point Bourne his headquarters. Langworth's vassals have been tasked to assisting the army and seeing to the defense of the people of the region, and most of them have had to give up much of their wealth and comforts to assist the war efforts. Many are also enlisted in the Cygnaran Army and are occupied by their military responsibilities.

The other major holding in the region is Stonebridge Castle, which has become Cygnar's greatest northern fortification since the fall of Northguard. This edifice has also been tremendously bolstered by elements of Cygnar's First Army, including the 3rd Division led by General Kierlan Krismoor. It also serves as the headquarters for Lord Commander Stryker's Storm Division (the army's 6th Division). This force was designed to be highly mobile and to move where its services are required, but it brings a formidable arsenal to the northern defenses, because Lord Stryker commands a number of the kingdom's most formidable warcasters, a large division of veteran storm knights, and many battle-ready warjacks.

The castle is an impressive fortified complex that exists on both sides of the Dragon's Tongue, serving as the gateway to the only bridge across the river for several days travel in each direction. Its southern elements are set into the high rocky hills south of the river and it looms over the river, allowing a commanding view of the forest to the north and displaying battlements bristling with powerful long-range cannons. As well as being an impressive, high-walled bastion in its own right, Stonebridge is also a civilian haven, and many refugees displaced by war crowd its chambers. Where possible, those with any skills have been tasked to aiding the Cygnaran Army in a support capacity.

POINT BOURNE

Ruler: Lord General Olan Duggan, Duke of Northforest

Population: 135,000 human (mostly Midlunder and Thurian); 2,000 gobber; 600 Rhulfolk; 300 trollkin

Military Presence: Point Bourne is the current headquarters of the First Army under the command of Lord General Olan Duggan. The 63,000 soldiers of 10th Division are stationed there directly under General Shay Terswell.

Description: Visitors to Point Bourne are liable to remark first on the immense locks that dominate the city, but once they overcome their awe of the mechanical marvels, they cannot help but hear the great roar of the nearby waterfalls that pervades the neighborhoods near the river and overwhelms even the noise of the city's industry. Point Bourne was built at the most turbulent point on the Dragon's Tongue River where a narrow gorge caused the backflow to spill over and eventually become Lake Thornmere. The Dragon's Tongue is bolstered here by the mountain flow from the Banwick River coming down out of the mountains to the south. These factors combined to create a powerful current rushing down treacherous rocks in a series of falls. The city was first built during the Clockwork Renaissance before the arrival of the Orgoth and demonstrated the ingenuity of the Midlunders. Its mechanisms have been substantially repaired and rebuilt in the modern era.

Serving as the very bones of the city, the locks are a marvel of engineering. The mechanisms that operate the cyclopean gates of the locks are all fairly simple in design. Steam engines provide power for the gears that open and close the gates, and the water is allowed to flow from lock to lock by gravity alone. Steam-powered water pumps are connected to the locks in case of emergency, but they are no more complex than the first Rothbal pumps made to drain water out of mines.

What makes the locks impressive is not the complexity of the mechanisms but their sheer size. One section of gate can measure a hundred or more yards long and several yards thick. Made of dense oak and wrought iron plating, just one panel weighs several thousand tons. The cogs on the axles of the gates are so large that if one were turned upright, a heavy steamjack could stand between the teeth of the gear and not be able to reach their tips. The upper edges of the gates are paved with cobbles and used as streets while the gate is closed and the lock is cycling. Numerous walkways and bridges span the locks connecting the northern and southern portions of the city, with stairs and ramps connecting the terraces around the different levels of the locks.

Although the process is tedious, the system of locks allows commerce to travel both directions on the Dragon's Tongue and opens markets between Corvis, Five Fingers, and Ceryl. The locks also allow traffic from the Thornmere to the Dragon's Tongue, which makes river trade on the Banwick River between Orven and Point Bourne viable. It takes several hours for a ship

to traverse the locks, and the time between is often exploited by the city's merchants, taverns, and restaurants to lure passengers and crews into spending their funds.

The town is terraced along four elevations corresponding to the major levels of the lock system with wide stairways and sloping roadways connecting each terrace and grand bridges and walkways spanning the locks. Nearly identical to the public transit system in Ceryl, Omnibus rail coaches constantly shuttle citizens from one end of the city to the other. The long steam-and-cable-driven carriages are famous for traversing the terraces that divide the city into quarters, especially the steep inclines of Garden Hill and the various grand bridges throughout the city.

The High Quarter is easternmost and upriver, and despite its name, it is the poorest district of Point Bourne. It is home to many fishermen who cast their nets on the lake and river. The Cygnaran Army dominates the Falls Quarter, which has the largest section of level ground in town. Any land not claimed by the military in that quarter is fairly cheap because the falls roar loudest here. The Garden Quarter lies below the falls and is known for its markets and craftsmen. It was so named because it is perpetually sprayed with mist from the falls above, keeping its greens lush and vibrant (but also damp and cold). Westernmost and at the lowest elevation is Downbelow, where the city's best taverns, inns, and restaurants can be found along with the most expensive homes and the Point Bourne City Hall.

Along with the vital river trade, Point Bourne is a training ground for the Cygnaran Army and home to a small branch of the Strategic Academy. Most northern officers and soldiers receive their formal training at Point Bourne and they are a common sight on its streets. Since the loss of the Thornwood, Point Bourne has become one of the most important strategic assets in Cygnar's possession. The defense of the north is carried out by the Second Army from Point Bourne, bolstered by reserves from the Fourth. Almost half of Point Bourne's population is now comprised of soldiery and its support. The portion of the city north of the river is entirely occupied by the military in anticipation of defense against Khador.

The city has become a major mustering point for reinforcements; soldiers, warjacks, horses, supplies of food, ammunition, weapons, coal, and water are all shipped here from as far away as Highgate. Unfortunately, non-military river traffic has slowed considerably since Khador seized the Thornwood, as the risk of interception along those waters has increased. This shift has had a commensurate impact on the city's normal economy, and many of its merchants have opted to move elsewhere, such as Ceryl.

THORNWOOD PROVINCE

The largest portion of the great forest, excluding the more swampy eastern regions, dominates the province. It was also the heart of the Kingdom of Morrdh in ancient days and ever since it has been overgrown by massive poplars, oaks, and ironwoods, while also being choked by thick, knotted, thorny vines. In the past it served as a major geographical barrier separating Khador from Cygnar, but no more. Technically these lands are the holdings of Duke Duggan, but he was pushed from his lands and forced to abandon his seat in Fellig. He "rules" in absentia from Point Bourne but has only tenuous contact with the Cygnarans who remained behind, including those in Fellig. Some few brave rangers carry coded messages between Fellig and Point Bourne, but these missions are perilous and time-consuming.

Even when the region was held by Cygnar, it remained largely an untamed wilderness, and countless trollkin kriels and their ravenous trolls, Tharn villages, and savage beasts lived

beneath its canopy. Beneath the undergrowth are remnants of the infamous Warjack Road constructed during the First Thornwood War, where dozens of destroyed and half buried warjacks still litter the earth. Countless skirmishes have been waged in the province between Khador, Cygnar, and Ord. More recently, Cryxian incursions have increased in frequency and no one can discern from where those horrors are originating.

There are still a number of small wooded communities in the Thornwood, and those nearest the border with Ord have survived largely intact. These towns are used to being self-governing and rarely had much contact with outsiders even before the wars. Other communities in the Khadoran invaders' path have had to endure having their largest structures turned into supply depots for the northerners.

Tens of thousands of Khadoran soldiers have been moving through the region and are now concentrated in the south, with sizable forces gathered near Point Bourne, Stonebridge Castle, and Corvis to the east. Khador claims it is content with what it has seized, but no Cygnaran believes these words, particularly as they watch fortifications built to house Khadoran soldiers. Life has been difficult for the Khadorans, however, since they have had little success establishing their supply lines. The only road maintained through the Thornwood was the Bramblerut from Fellig to Corvis. This trail has always been of dubious use for large caravans, and so it has only marginally assisted the Khadorans.

Cygnaran intelligence suggests the exposed Khadoran garrison near Point Bourne is increasingly desperate. Nonetheless, the Cygnaran Army is licking its wounds and Lord General Duggan is reluctant to reignite the war. For now, the tense cease-fire holds.

FELLIG

Ruler: Nominally the Fellig City Council, although Commander Caralo Allesari of the Ordic Army and General Dargus Mathern are the real authority figures.

Population: 36,000 human (mostly Morridane, with a significant number of Khard, Midlunder, and Thurian); 2,000 gobber; 600 Rhulfolk; 300 trollkin

Military Presence: Since Khador's invasion of the Thornwood, Fellig's survival as a Cygnaran city has rested largely in the hands of the Ordic army. Two battalions of the Cygnaran First Army remain under the command of General Dargus Mathern. These two battalions are comprised of the surviving trencher, long gunner, and specialist elements of the 4th Division, and are perhaps the most battle-hardened troops in the service of Cygnar. That said, these Cygnaran survivors are few in number and suffered greatly during the final siege by Khador, with a number of them being maimed and even more carrying mental scars. The defense of Fellig has been remanded to the Ordic Army with the support of the Cygnaran War Council. Commander Caralo Allesari of the Ordic Army coordinates a full brigade of the Shield Division, who fight alongside the Cygnaran troops of the 4th Division.

Description: Cut off from the rest of its country, garrisoned by the soldiers of a foreign power, and partially surrounded by the conquering forces of Khador, no city in Cygnar faces a future as uncertain as that of Fellig. Made up of the stranded citizens of three nations along with the agents of every intelligence gathering power in the Iron Kingdoms, it is a volatile and dangerous place on the precipice of disaster.

Fellig has endured more sieges than almost any other city in western Immoren. Following the Corvis Treaties, Fellig's geographic proximity to Khador placed it frequently on the frontlines in the border wars and skirmishes. Accordingly, Fellig's citizens are known for their practical, some would say jaded, philosophical outlook. Their homes and commercial structures are built plainly, even cheaply. Only their fortifications are built to last, but last they do. In recent years, Fellig has endured assaults considered severe even by the standards of its tumultuous history. Only four years ago a force of Sul-Menites succeeded in razing the ancient Monastery of Angellia, destroying countless tomes of precious lore before being forced to retreat. Still more brutal was the Khadoran siege led by the notorious Butcher of Khardov, which coincided with the second successful attack on Northguard far to the east. Although the city was able to weather the siege, the cost of life was incredible and left the city nearly defenseless. The city's population was exhausted and near starvation when the last remnants of the siege were driven off by the arrival of the Ordic Army and a force of mercenaries hired by it to protect Fellig's civilians.

In the months since, the people of Fellig have become used to the presence of Ordic troops. They have far greater numbers than the surviving Cygnaran regulars. The citizens of the city find themselves in the unique situation of being Cygnaran nationals in a city under the protection and effectively the dominion of Ord. Although Ord has made no moves to absorb Fellig as part of its territories, and works with the Cygnaran government and military in the city's defense, the fact remains that Ordic soldiers are basically in control. If the rest of the Thornwood Province is not restored to Cygnar's control, Fellig's future as an Ordic city may be a forgone conclusion.

While the majority of Fellig's residents consider themselves Cygnaran, many would not be unhappy to see Ordic rule made a reality. Most of the residents are of Morridane blood, but a fair amount of them are Thurian, Midlunder, and even Tordoran. This city has long been isolated from the major Cygnaran cities and in greater contact with the nearby Ordic town of Armandor. For many reasons, the locals feel sympathy toward their neighbors to the west.

A number of Khadoran tradesmen and a few kayazy merchants were stranded in Fellig at the outbreak of war and now view the city as a de facto prison. As their situation grows more desperate daily, the Khadorans find themselves shunned by their former business partners and left stranded to wait out the war or find a means to escape across enemy lines. Some of the more resourceful have dedicated themselves to any opportunity to continue business even if it means smuggling goods through Ord into both Khador and Cygnar. The complex trade interests in Fellig are compounded by the

city's volatile political situation and the fact that its location makes it a powder keg in the present truce between Cygnar and Khador.

This atmosphere of uncertainty has resulted in Fellig being the center of a clandestine war between Khadoran intelligence agents, the Cygnaran Reconnaissance Service, and King Baird's own spies. The city has a number of safe houses, arms caches, and dead drops, and whispered conversations are conducted in every language of western Immoren and beyond in taverns, alleys, and sewers. Every night desperate actions are committed by men and women who kill and die for their countries without the hope of recognition, let alone medals and honors. The futures of Cygnar, Khador, and Ord may well be determined by the lies, covert deals, and murders being committed in the shadowed corners of Fellig.

GENERAL DARGUS MATHERN

General Mathern has earned a reputation as a reliable commander and one of the most innovative strategists among the ranking officers of the First Army. It is largely due to his resolve and planning that Fellig survived the final siege, and he is the only General of the First Army to be able to claim an undisputed victory in the recent Khadoran invasion of the Thornwood Province.

However, this victory has not come without a heavy price. Wounded in the final engagements of the recent invasion, Mathern lost both his left eye and left arm to Khadoran irregulars, and the tremendous loss of life among his subordinates weighs heavily on his mind. The formerly unflappable general seems somewhat unhinged to those who know him well. He has begun to drink heavily and speaks grimly of seeking a personal reckoning with the Khadoran warcaster, Orsus Zoktavir, the Butcher of Khardov.

DUCHY OF SOUTHPOINT

This duchy includes the Shieldpoint and Fennmar provinces that occupy the entirety of the southern peninsula of Cygnar. The impressive and impassable Wyrmwall mountains take up much of the land within the duchy, making its regions geographically difficult to navigate. The duchy's geography also gives it tremendous strategic importance, since it serves as the primary barrier against the Cryxian Empire. Much of this duchy is wild and untamed, but it also includes such vital communities as Highgate and Mercir. The area around Mercir is the most populous region in southern Cygnar and has developed its own culture, as well as being a vital shipping trade route. Southpoint is ruled by Duke Waldron Gately, although many consider Lord General Vincent Golan, the Earl of Shieldpoint, the true leader of the region.

Southpoint is absolutely dominated by the southern Wyrmwall Mountains, where the rolling foothills leap dramatically toward the skyline to become the jagged peaks that seem to scrape the sky itself. Every decade or so, tales surface of a huge shape seen flying from mountaintop to mountaintop. It is believed to be the dragon Blighterghast ranging across the Wyrmwall and peering toward Cryx, perhaps anticipating the impending arrival of its father Toruk come to finish what he started millennia ago.

PERILS

A number of mountain communities exist amid the peaks and valleys, clustering near Highgate. Several thriving mining communities have laid prosperous claims, particularly in the north. All who live in the region know of and speak in hushed tones of Blighterghast, who has been a surprisingly quiet neighbor. While the dragon has never unleashed its wrath, the locals never forget its presence and a number of superstitions have cropped up among them in the hopes of keeping its attention averted. Dragonspawn thought to be birthed of that creature occasionally come down out of the mountains before they are hunted down either by locally hired mercenaries or patrols from Cygnar's Third Army, which is headquartered at Highgate. There are other creatures lurking amid the unexplored Wyrmwall, including a variety of fierce troll breeds, territorial bands of satyrs, and bloodthirsty tribes of feral bogrin.

Near the eastern shores on the far side of the mountains, shale valleys and sandy-bottomed caverns twist and turn through the area called the Ditches, a result of the centuries of strip mining and careless excavation by Orgoth slavers. Limestone blocks were cut from the ground and surrounding mountains for centuries and the landscape suffered terribly. It is said that after the Scourge when the Orgoth were pushed out, Dhunian shamans arrived and wept at the scar left behind.

The Fenn Marsh, one of the largest natural wetlands in Cygnar, surrounds this area, and it is a major barrier to land traffic to the port city of Mercir. All attempts to connect Mercir by road or rail have met with mixed and impermanent results, although local nobles insist ingenuity can overcome these travails. Amid this marsh live a large number of gatormen as well as several prominent trollkin kriels. At present, most who need to travel past this desolate region prefer to do so by ship or to cross the northern interior by road through Highgate.

The Sand Narrows is an inland beach three miles wide at its thickest point, and the natural anomaly of the enormous sand bar has baffled Cygnaran scholars for generations. Some claim it is the site where Toruk slew one of his children; others say it is the place where Menoth battled the Devourer Wurm. An area useless for farming, it has been largely ignored by the locals except to spawn a variety of legends.

DUCHY POLITICS

Given the geographical challenges, it is not surprising the nobles of Southpoint are a divided lot, each looking to the interests of his immediate community. Duke Gately seems to

have limited control over his vassals and focuses most of his attention on the port city of Mercir. Gately is one of the key players in the vastly powerful Mercarian League, and the interests of this organization seem at times to trump political considerations, except where they overlap.

While Gately has drawn criticism, there is no question the Mercarian League is a powerful ally, and by association, Gately cannot be ignored. His wealth and influence will only grow as the League extends efforts to discover new lands and trade routes, expanding its permanent holdings on the southern continent of Zu. Several other interested parties have launched expeditions to explore this unknown continent and to find other untapped resources on Immoren, including the Alchiere subcontinent to the southeast.

These regions were difficult to access before improvements to steam engines and nautical navigation. Playing a role in the exploration is the Great Cygnaran Observatory, a center of learning for astronomy that has also innovated advances in navigation. Some say this institution has been infiltrated by the Cult of Cyriss, but so long as they continue to innovate, those rumors do not trouble Duke Gately or the senior officers of Cygnar's Southern Fleet, who also benefit from the advances.

DUCHY OF SOUTHPOINT

Largest Ethnic Groups: Caspian majority with Thurian and Midlunder minorities and some Arjun, Gnasir

Predominant Religions: Morrowan majority with a small Menite minority

Provinces: Fennmar and Shieldpoint (Earl Vincent Gollan, Lord General of the Third Army)

Important Cities: Highgate, Mercir

Significant Towns (not on the map): Blackhope, Borcrest, Cosgrave, Densport, Dunmantle, Fitchlow, Glyston, Kirkton, Murkhythe, Portminster, Seagate, Stanporth, Sutstoke, Wainport, Whelstow, Witherstone

Lord: Duke Waldron Gately, Lord of Mercir

Although frequently away in Caspia attending Leto's court, Duke Gately is the wealthiest and most powerful noble on the Mercarian peninsula. He is a stern man who brooks no outside interference with the shipping trade—the lifeblood of the region. His estate is a restored keep atop a low hill overlooking an apple orchard and is located just north of Mercir. Despite his enormous influence, the duke leaves the administration of Mercir to the mayor and city council, but he expects his requests to be heeded when asked. The Gately family has been inextricably linked with the Mercarian League since its founding and remains one of their most influential backers. The duke is a member of their ruling board and in frequent contact with Lord Ethan Starke, the chief alderman. He is the League's key advocate in the Royal Assembly.

Seat: Mercir

The influence of the Mercarian League is omnipresent in the duchy, pervading all aspects of local politics and economics, and even military matters. There is considerable overlap between the Southern Fleet and the naval might of the Mercarian League, with military officers often retiring to serve the League, and vice versa. Gately's detractors insist this link has led to widespread corruption and conflicts of interest, but little has been done to rectify the situation.

One individual who has proven utterly incorruptible and unaffected by the League is the Lord General of Cygnar's Third Army, the Earl of Shieldpoint and Lord of Highgate: Gollan. Not only is he one of Cygnar's highest-ranking military officers, he is closely allied to the Church of Morrow and credited with being a senior Knight of the Prophet. Lord General Gollan is a legend in the south, a foreboding presence who intimidates nearly every other noble in the region. He is said to be one of the few men even Vinter Raelthorne IV preferred not to antagonize. There is a persistent if unproven rumor that Vinter appointed Gollan to the west to banish him from the capital. A military man of uncompromising principles now utterly devoted to fighting the Nightmare Empire of Cryx, Gollan is empowered with special military authority from his seat at Highgate.

Not only is he in charge of the Third Army, Gollan has strategic supervision over the Southern Fleet as well. This degree of military authority eclipses Gollan's political clout, and he is often in a position to give orders to those of higher social stature. While Gollan defers to Duke Gately on matters of duchy governance, in all other respects Gollan is answerable only to King Leto and Warmaster General Turpin.

Gollan's vassals step carefully around the earl and are quick to obey his commands. It is to their own best interests that Highgate remains strong and that the military is ready to answer Cryxian raids. While individual nobles may be self-serving, there are few opportunities for corruption in Gollan's inhospitable province.

Because of the tangible threat of Cryx to the west, members of the army and navy are well respected in the duchy. Indeed, its citizens have become increasingly apprehensive as the wars on other fronts have necessitated troop movements out of Southpoint. The Third Army and the Southern Fleet have had to endure reductions in ready personnel. Many nobles, Gollan among them, believe the region's garrisons are inadequately equipped to defend southern Cygnar should Cryx unleash its fleet or launch anything resembling a full-scale invasion.

FENNMAR PROVINCE

A swampy and difficult coastal region of southern Cygnar, Fennmar includes the lake of the same name, the Fenn Marsh, the Ditches, Murkham River, and the great port city of Mercir. Much of the region is considered impassible, although ongoing attempts have been made to create both roads and a rail line through the Fenn Marsh. The region has many scattered villages and townships but little major industry outside of Mercir itself. The northern mountains of the province include a number of marginally successful mines, and there is also some useful farmland on the cape, though not enough to support Mercir, which relies heavily on shipped imports. Duke Waldron Gately rules Fennmar.

It is worth noting this area has a relatively high concentration of trollkin kriels, and the city of Mercir has a sizable trollkin presence. Compared to certain other regions in Cygnar, more of these trollkin have integrated into human society and consider themselves to be Cygnaran citizens. This integration has also made the city a fertile recruitment ground for trollkin to be encouraged to take up arms to defend their nation. The Third Army and the Southern Fleet have successfully integrated trollkin into many of their companies, because these combatants fit in well among both the trenchers and the Cygnaran marine forces.

MERCIR

Ruler: Duke Waldron Gately, Lord Mayor Smeaton Bolder, the Mercarian League

Population: 185,000 human (mostly Caspian); 10,000 trollkin; 400 Rhulfolk; 300 gobber; 200 ogrun

Military Presence: Mercir is a major Cygnaran naval base and is the home port of the Mercarian Fleet. Additionally, a regiment of the Third Army is stationed here to defend the city. The safety of the citizens is entrusted to the local watch and several mercenary companies hired by the Mercarian League and other trading enterprises.

Description: All ships rounding the southern cape stop in Mercir. Although remote and difficult to reach by land, it has become one of the busiest ports in Cygnar and serves as a hub for commerce between Caspia and all points beyond. As the home of the continent-spanning merchants of the Mercarian League, Mercir's bustling waterfront is always crowded. The ground rises gently as it moves away from the docks and warehouses, from which the rest of the town has grown. To the west and south, stone battlements guard against potential attacks by reavers or hostile powers. Any ships entering Mercir's bay are vulnerable to cannon fire from encircling positions.

Mercir began as an obscure fishing village and grew into a major city during the Orgoth Occupation. Later much of the old city was burned to the ground in the great fire started by the city's most notorious historical figure, Scion Stacia, in 415 AR. Great cost and effort went into rebuilding, and thousands of trollkin, drawn from independent bog villages from the Ditches, answered the call for cheap labor. For this reason, Mercir has a very large population of trollkin who have mostly settled in a southern neighborhood named Fornby, sometimes called "Trolltown" by locals.

The eastern half of the city is known as Waterbourg and is devoted largely to the docks, warehouses, shipping companies, and the many taverns, inns, and dens of ill repute that service those working and passing through the district. This part of the city is busy and has lively neighborhoods, but it is also dangerous for the unwary, filled with cutthroats and the occasional press gang looking to find fresh recruits. The Mercarian League's main offices sprawl across several blocks in Waterbourg. These offices form an imposing compound of stone edifices, surrounded by well-guarded walls. The compound includes the barracks for the League's permanently contracted mercenary forces, as well as warehouses used to store the most precious commodities in the League's possession. Particularly valuable cargoes are sometimes notable for being escorted by well-armed soldiers as they are transported to and from the docks.

The western half of the city is more sedate and upscale with large estates belonging to the city's wealthiest citizens. Many visiting nobles who have frequent dealings with the Mercarian League also maintain villas in the city for use when they come to discuss business. The affluent directors of the Mercarian League make their homes in this area. Many of their houses face the docks and are adorned with widow's walks from which the owners can watch the bay with long brass telescopes invariably pointed at their holdings along the waterfront. Notably, the stronghold of the Fraternal Order of Wizardry in Mercir is located among these stately homes. As a sideline to their efforts in commercial cortex production and the idiosyncratic projects of their members, the Mercir order receives significant grants from the Mercarian League toward arcane research that benefits navigation and sailing practices. Although few major breakthroughs have been made, the arcanists of the order in Mercir are well versed in weather magic and possess some unique and powerful mechanically augmented spyglasses, sextants, and other tools of navigation.

Mercir serves as the gateway to the southern continent of Zu, and newcomers to the city may be bewildered by the large

GREAT CYGNARAN OBSERVATORY

The most powerful telescopes in Cygnar have been built on the Mercarian peninsula northwest of Mercir and up in the foothills south of the Wyrmwall. This large observatory has been expanded considerably since it was first constructed and now includes the living quarters for a number of esteemed astronomers, stormsmiths, scientists, and professors, some of whom live here permanently. The lower reaches of the observatory are built like a fortress and a small staff of soldiers out of Mercir are stationed here. Vital work is being conducted at the observatory under the direction of Royal Astronomer Ennis Baskworth.

number of foreigners and the assortment of exotic wares and goods. Since the Mercarian League established its foothold in Zu, the sailors and investors of Mercir have been increasingly swept up in the excitement of unique trade opportunities. There are even whispered suggestions that emissaries from Zu have visited league offices to discuss the expansion of Immorese settlements on that continent.

SHIELDPOINT PROVINCE

Shieldpoint is a mountainous and rugged province that includes Highgate, the Steeltongue River up to Steelwater Lake, and the western coastline along the Gulf of Middlebank. This province is traditionally ruled by the commander of Highgate due to its strategic importance. Shieldpoint is ruled by Lord General Vincent Gollan, Earl of Shieldpoint, Supreme Knight of the Highgate Vigil, and Senior Knight of the Prophet. The province can rightfully be thought to exist in a state of perpetual vigilance and sporadic warfare against the Nightmare Empire of Cryx.

Mercir is the home port for the Southern Fleet that protects southern Cygnar, although many of the ships in the fleet consider Highgate their home port and others regularly rotate between. The Southern Fleet patrols as far north as the Gulf of Middlebank, but their primary focus is the region south of Highgate and Cape Mercir. Engagements with pirates are a regular occurrence in those waters, and small squadrons of vessels are regularly assigned to escort trade vessels, particularly those of the Mercarian League, which has its own fully armed warships.

Most of the pirates active in those waters are Cryxian, although some are unaffiliated rogues operating out of Clockers Cove, Five Fingers, or other hidden coves and landings. Occasionally combined naval and army forces will make proactive strikes into the outer Scharde Islands, seeking to destroy Cryxian supply points or havens, but those forays are always weighed against the risks of overextending, as Cryx's Black Fleet is unpredictable and capable of engaging with little forewarning. The Southern Fleet has a solid track record fighting Cryx in those waters but prefers only to engage blackships if they can outnumber and outgun the enemy by a substantial margin. By a similar token, Cygnaran vessels avoid engaging Cryxian ghost ships such as the infamous *Atramentous* at all costs except to defend vital assets.

Highgate is the greatest bastion of the Third Army and is considered the guardian of southern Cygnar, but it is the most significant of a long chain of coastal defenses. Many of the small holds and towers maintained by the army are watch stations intended primarily to get word of potential raids back to Highgate. Southshield is one such hold, perched on an inaccessible spire rising from an oceanside cliff as more of a glorified stone watchtower than a proper fortress. It is located fifty miles down the coast from Highgate and serves primarily as a lighthouse for Cygnaran shipping and as a warning post to spot Cryxian raiders and privateers. The weather at Southshield is abysmal, and the tower frequently bears the brunt of storms and keening wind along with occasional fog so thick even the great lighthouse light is smothered. It has a small dock at the cliff's base accessible by a narrow winding tunnel to allow access by naval ships.

The Third Army has found it generally inadvisable to divide its forces along the coast, although a number of smaller forts do exist. Most are designed to be able to seal themselves off and hold tight against superior numbers until relief can arrive. A system of signals has been implemented to quickly pass word of trouble along the coast, and many civilian ships and lighthouses also aid in relaying messages. King Leto hopes to eventually implement a telegraph system in the region, but the plan has practical difficulties, particularly since such a wired system is so easy to disrupt. For now the defenders in the region must rely on more mundane means, although much can be accomplished with properly situated mirrors, lenses, and beacons.

KNIGHTS OF THE HIGHGATE VIGIL

The most unorthodox of Cygnar's orders, the Knights of the Vigil are hand-picked rangers and soldiers who serve special duty for Lord General Gollan. They do not wear heavy armor or in any other way resemble the common perception of knights. Rather, they are an elite and specially trained group outfitted for mobility and stealth. They conduct patrols along the coast and in the Wyrmwall Mountains looking for evidence of Cryxian incursions or loose dragonspawn. They also work with other elements of the Third Army, such as coordinating with the long gunners of the Dead Line to conduct strikes against Cryxian concentrations found on the mainland.

The Knights of the Vigil send regular scouting reports to the CRS, although they are commanded by Gollan directly. Indeed, Scout General Bolden Rebald served as a Knight of the Vigil before becoming the Scout General of the CRS. Gollan is directly responsible for his promotion to spymaster of Cygnar.

Knights of the Vigil are tasked to gather any and all information about Cryxian movements in the region, which requires fostering contacts and informants among coastal dwellers. They have also spent coin to buy informants in nearby ports, including Mercir, and even among certain disreputable privateer ships. Gollan knew such information would arise from unlikely places and among unsavory individuals, and so he empowered these knights to make such associations as necessary. Because of the unique demands of this order and the Scout General's familiarity with their work, it has served as a useful recruiting pool for CRS spies.

It seems inconceivable to those who live inland, but thousands of regular citizens do live in scattered fishing villages along the western coast. Dozens of villages have been wiped from existence over the decades by sporadic Cryxian raids, and yet they persist and new ones crop up to replace the old, populated by stubborn individuals who refuse to give up the lands of their ancestors. The people who live in these regions have a fatalistic and morbid pragmatism, preferring large families with the expectation that not all children will live to adulthood. The most persistent villages are located close enough to be shielded by the soldiers of Highgate. There are hidden caves and other shelters built inland that villagers retreat to in times of trouble, and this fallback has sufficed to let some survivors return to their lives after raiders have pillaged and sailed away.

HIGHGATE

Ruler: Lord General Vincent Gollan, Earl of Shieldpoint, Supreme Knight of the Highgate Vigil, and Senior Knight of the Prophet

Population: 110,000 human (mostly Caspian); 300 Rhulfolk; 300 gobber

Military Presence: Highgate is the headquarters of the Third Army under the command of Lord General Vincent Gollan. The city is home to four brigades of General Bors Gately's 9th Division and Senior Commander Evelyn Turpin's 14th Division. Additionally Highgate is the home of the admirals of the Southern Fleet.

Description: Highgate is a military post first and a city second. It is the nerve center of Cygnar's ongoing war against Cryx. Lord General Gollan coordinates the efforts of both the Third Army and the Eastern Fleet from the city. Gollan is assisted in his planning by General Bors Gately and Senior Commander Evelyn Turpin.

Originally founded as a lookout along the Broken Coast where soldiers could watch for pirates or Cryxian blackships, Highgate quickly grew into a major port city wholly due to the passing merchant ships that arrived at the well-situated locale to resupply. For generations since, Highgate's commerce has relied upon that trade. The city also occupies the only viable land pass through the southern Wyrmwall Mountains, giving it a twofold strategic significance. The difficult land route into Cygnar's interior is only used lightly by caravans, since most visitors come to the city by sea.

Highgate offers unique protection from the pirate-infested waters around it. It actually hoists ships out of the water and suspends them from massive cranes jutting from the high cliffs above. The city is built atop these heights nearly a thousand feet above the

GENERAL BORS GATELY

The brother of Duke Waldron Gately of Southport, General Bors Gately is effectively the second in command of Highgate's military forces. The General works closely with the commanders of the Third Fleet and has a reputation for professional bearing and seriousness. However, his family's connections to the Mercarian League are not a secret, and most believe that if pressed, General Gately would utilize his authority on the behalf of both his family and the League.

sea, and travelers must either endure the myriad flights of stairs or brave one of the rickety mechanikal elevators to reach the city proper. With dozens of ships hanging along the sheer sea cliffs at any given time, Highgate is an incredible site to behold.

The city above conveys great natural strength and remarkable beauty. It is actually carved into the stony mountain named, appropriately enough, Highgate Rock. Blocky buildings built from the local porous stone—a warm reddish-brown color full of fossil shells and easily corroded when exposed to the air—are situated layer upon layer with tiered avenues crisscrossing along rock faces or atop various crags and overhangs. At one point the city abuts a ravine that drops straight down into the sea, but a single massive stone bridge spans the 350-foot ravine and another third of the city is seated row upon row on the other side.

DUCHY OF THURIA

The Duchy of Thuria is a small but extremely important region occupying northwestern Cygnar. This duchy is removed from Caspia and the throne in all respects, its physical distance exacerbated by intervening geography but also by tradition and deliberate politics. In some respects, the Duchy of Thuria can be looked upon as almost a different nation from eastern Cygnar, having far more in common with southern Ord than Caspia or even Corvis. Certainly its inhabitants and its nobles prefer things this way, and in no way desire to draw greater attention from the Royal Assembly. The small but wealthy duchy includes the Cloutsdowns and Oxmeath provinces, and is ruled by Duke Mayhew Dergeral, Earl of Oxmeath and Lord Mayor of Ceryl.

Before the Orgoth, in the Thousand Cities Era, Thuria was among the great coastal kingdoms, widely admired and respected for the intelligence and cunning of its rulers as well as the pervasive reach of its culture. Now Thuria stands divided, with a sizable portion of its former lands making up southern Ord, and the rest located in northwestern Cygnar. Despite this national boundary, the Thurians have held fast to many cultural traditions and particularly to a sense of shared identity. Ties between the Thurians of southern Ord and those of northwestern Cygnar are impossible to untangle, with families split between both nations. Most Cygnarans in this region also speak Thurian, and often Ordic as well.

There are a number of Thurians on both sides of the border who long for actual independence, or wish the region was entirely Ordic or entirely Cygnaran, but most have accepted the state of things. While Cygnaran Thurians are proud of their home nation they also feel filial affection for Ord, and vice versa. These connections likely helped strengthen relations between Ord and Cygnar in general, but they have also led to strong regionalism.

Adding to their sense of identity is the significance of the great city of Ceryl, the capital of Thuria in ancient times. It is the second largest city in Cygnar and certainly the most impressive outside the City of Walls. Ceryl stands proudly amid the other great western coastal cities such as Berck and Ohk. It is the center of commerce in western Cygnar and is a major player along the western coast in general, conducting considerable international trade, particularly with Ord. The long shipping trade run between Ceryl and Mercir is one of the most profitable routes for any trade company, well worth the risk of piracy. Smugglers from Khador also trade in Ceryl, although this has become risky since the outbreak of war.

Ceryl is the home of Cygnar's formidable Northern Fleet, charged with defending the city and the northern coast from all enemies. Under the command of Lord Admiral Tucker Luptine, these ships have had periodic engagements with both the Cryx Navy and the Khadoran Navy, and patrol as far south as Giant's Head Island. The Northern Fleet is in periodic contact with the Ordic Navy, and the two forces have conducted shared operations against Cryx. At present, both Khador and Cygnar have been holding their fleets back in defense, but both are also prone to sending fast ships on probing missions into enemy waters.

Considerable goodwill exists between the Cygnaran and Ordic fleets and it is not uncommon for naval vessels from each nation to intrude into the waters of the other. Historically, Cygnar has sent its navy to assist Ord, such as during the Second Expansion War with Khador. Still, sailing into foreign waters with warships is always dangerous and there have been unfortunate incidents of fire between Ordic and Cygnaran ships. These are usually ascribed to mistaken identity, but the situation becomes trickier when involving privateers and ships of the Mercarian League. Mercarian ships are regularly attacked by Ordic privateers, and

SENIOR COMMANDER EVELYN TURPIN

Senior Commander Turpin is the granddaughter of the Warmaster General. She commands the 14th Division of the Third Army, which includes both the reserves and the battle-ready patrols that scour the Wyrmwall Mountains. She has proven worthy of her command and demonstrates a shrewd logistical mind, making more with less.

when the ships targeted are escorted by the Cygnaran Navy, things become complicated quickly. For all these reasons, the Sea of a Thousand Souls to the west of Ceryl and Ord has become the most hostile waters in western Immoren, with more naval battles between multiple ships than along the Broken Coast.

The area around Ceryl also boasts the largest number of highly productive farms, and this region does much to provide stability to the food stores of the western seaboard. Fishing remains a staple as well, but it is considerably less predictable or reliable than the Thurian farms. The people of this region are involved in many of the same tasks and labors as elsewhere in the kingdom, although those who live outside the city often envy those within. Many of the sons and daughters of farmers seeking to improve their lot move to Ceryl to do ship work, the industry that offers the largest turn-around on jobs. Whether fishing ships, merchant vessels, or joining the navy, there are many opportunities for work to those willing to go to sea.

PERILS

There is also a major lumber industry that takes advantage of the closeness of the western fringes of the Gnarls. Those logging camp workers are careful of watching for certain markings, because the Gnarls is infested with belligerent and territorial trollkin kriels. These kriels have by necessity allowed harvesting along the western edge of the forest, but they react violently to any deeper intrusion. Another growing industry in the region involves textile mills along the Dragon's Tongue River, although this is largely thankless and low paying work.

Thuria is disconnected from the rest of the kingdom. Most regular traffic to it is by ship, coming from New Larkholm, Ramarck, or distant Mercir. It used to be that the Dragon's Tongue River was a reliable source of river traffic from Corvis, but the route has become more difficult since the Thornwood was seized by Khador. River ships still ply the river, though in fewer numbers and with crews aware of the risk of interception.

The major road out of Ceryl going east is the Twelve Day Road, which forks at Demonhead Pass toward Point Bourne to the north and Orven in the south. Named after a peculiar natural stone archway formed by wind erosion, Demonhead Pass looks like a monstrous, brooding visage. It marks one end of the mountainous leg of the Twelve Day Road that takes travelers through the valleys of the eastern Watcher Peaks. The region is the subject of much local superstition and legend telling of malevolent spirits that watch the road, jealous of those who pass. It is said the jingling of bells and chimes keeps these spirits at bay, and the pass echoes with the soft tinkling sounds with each caravan that travels through—even the most rational travelers find little harm in buying a cheap bell or two as a souvenir from one of the many thriving villages along the Twelve Day Road.

Efforts are underway to connect Bainsmarket to Ceryl by rail, but the Gnarls has proven to be an obstacle. Debates are underway among local barons and other nobles as to the best

DUCHY OF THURIA

Largest Ethnic Groups: Thurian majority with significant Midlunder and Morridane minorities and some Sinari and Radiz

Predominant Religions: Morrowan majority with several significant Thamarite cults

Provinces: Cloutsdowns (Earl Harlan Mosely, Lord of New Larkholm) and Oxmeath

Important Cities: Ceryl, New Larkholm

Significant Towns (not on the map): Barnthorpe, Blodswin, Brancully, Bridewell, Bronkirk, Carrden, Darhythe, Darkeld, Duffock, Eilishport, Farweald, Fellbrooke, Fellsmere, Glysbeck, Kallister, Kileigh, Kilmantle Marstow, Newport, Seahold, Stromport, Tamworthy, Wychmere

Lord: Duke Mayhew Dergeral, Earl of Oxmeath and Lord Mayor of Ceryl

Duke Dergeral is unquestionably the most influential noble in the region, and he conducts his court in Ceryl as if he were a king in all but name. However, the duke is deferential to the Fraternal Order and rules in their favor for any dispute brought before him.

There is some truth to the fact that his remote status allows him to operate akin to an independent sovereign, and he very rarely travels to Caspia to pay homage to his cousin, King Leto. The duke puts on airs of being somewhat wasteful and indolent, a man more interested in social affairs than serious matters, but this is largely a facade.

Dergeral is a shrewd politician and has great sway over his vassals. What's more, he secretly has undue influence over Cygnar's Fourth Army, ostensibly positioned to guard the border with Ord. Dergeral is in collusion with General Gralen Deckley of the Fourth Army, who is basically on his payroll. The duke is also secretly in communication with other northern nobles who are unhappy with King Leto and has entered into several conspiracies that could have him charged with treason if discovered. These plots include secret communications with the exiled ranger Saxon Orrik, who some say still serves Vinter Raelthorne IV. At least one of these conspiracies involved convincing the Fourth Army to drive off the trollkin uprising in Crael Valley. That act served to demonstrate to seditious northern nobles that he could solve problems Leto had ignored.

Seat: Ceryl

EARL HARLAN MOSLEY, LORD OF NEW LARKHOLM

Earl Mosley governs the entire Cloutsdowns province. He is a former captain in the Cygnaran Navy and his missing right arm is evidence of how much he is willing to give in defense of king and country. He retains a distinctly military bearing and many of his intimates still address him as "captain" rather than "lord." Unfortunately, Mosley is not much of a politician and some view him as harsh and dogmatic, particularly those allied to the Mercarian League. He sees himself as a king's man, but he is also loyal to his liege and does not understand how far apart the aims of Duke Dergeral are from King Leto. He would never willingly participate in seditious activity. The same cannot be said for many of his barons, most of whom are in Dergeral's pocket.

course for the rail. The obvious course would be to follow the Gnarlwood Trail that cuts through the forest from Point Bourne, but there are real concerns that this would provoke the trollkin kriels in a way the road has not. Duke Dergeral is in favor of completing the rail line and has used his own funds to sponsor this construction, which may speed the process.

CLOUTSDOWNS PROVINCE

One of the poorer provinces, the Cloutsdowns, or simply "The Downs," include the noxious Cloutsdown Fen, the Helmsreach Mountains, and the fertile lands around Haltshire Lake, as well as a short stretch of coastline including New Larkholm. This region is sparsely populated, but its inhabitants are industrious and tough-spirited bog folk and lake men. Cloutsdown is ruled by Earl Harlan Mosley, Lord of New Larkholm.

There is a social divide between the people of Oxmeath and those of the Downs, with the latter being dismissed as rural and backward. The region has a number of former Morridanes who settled here centuries ago after the fall of Morrdh. Deep in the fens, some of these villages have a culture resembling that of the "swampies" of the Widower's Wood and Thornwood, although they have their own distinct traditions. The area is poor and some have survived and prospered by becoming skilled at hunting local fare and finding ways to make what others consider inedible into edible food.

The provincial militia is professional, and the area has its share of skilled trackers due to some of the hazards of the Fen and its environs. Haltshire Lake is known to be inhabited by a particularly fierce breed of bog trogs that have become inured to the cold of their mountainous environment. Trolls are also a common hazard in the region. Along the coastal areas, there is always the risk of Cryxian raids, and there are no sizable fortresses in the area. The Northern Fleet keeps those waters safe most of the time, but their patrols cannot be everywhere. Garlghast Island is only forty miles away at some points, and is thought to be infested with malevolent creatures.

NEW LARKHOLM, GATEWAY TO THE SEAS

Ruler: Earl Harlan Mosley, Lord of New Larkholm

Population: 55,000 human (mostly Thurian); 4,000 gobber; 2,500 trollkin

Military Presence: New Larkholm is garrisoned by a long gunner company of the Fourth Army. It is also an important Mercarian League port and is home to many warships. White Bay is regularly patrolled by vessels out of New Larkholm. The Mercarian League also maintains a large mercenary force in the city.

Description: The city of New Larkholm has been the site of more than one terrible tragedy. The town of Larkholm was burned to the ground in the same location during the Orgoth invasion. In time, the wreckage was cleared away and a new city arose on the site of the previous settlement. In 242 AR, Cryxian reavers sacked the place and set fires that ravaged the waterfront. Again Larkholm burned. By royal decree, construction began on a new city in 277 AR on the remains of the old, this time with a massive hill fortress overlooking the sea.

Before the onset of the recent wars, the Mercarian League had adopted the fortified and well-placed city as one of its main ports. As a matter of course, the League worked to push smaller merchant companies to the sidelines. Mercarian influence in the city was checked by Earl Mosley, who saw the League as a threat to his ancestral claim. The situation came to a boil over a matter of property rights, resulting in almost open warfare between members of the New Larkholm City Watch and mercenaries in the employ of the Mercarian League.

The resulting crackdown against the Mercarian League's agents came at an inopportune time. Ordic interests had already begun to establish footholds in the city's trade, several acting as fronts for House Mateu. In recent months, New Larkholm has become a secondary port for Ordic naval vessels aiding the Cygnaran Third Fleet against Cryxian actions, further flooding the city with Ordic citizens. The Mercarian League remains a power in the commerce and politics of the city, but their every move is matched by agents of House Mateu and other rivals.

OXMEATH PROVINCE

The large and wealthy peninsular province of Oxmeath includes the city of Ceryl and is bounded on the east by the Gnarls and to the south by the Cloutsdown Fen. It is a highly populated region with many coastal villages and rich farmland. Duke Mayhew Dergeral is also the Earl of Oxmeath.

In comparison to Cloutsdowns, Oxmeath is a pastoral and peaceful paradise, although the weather is harsh in some seasons, particularly if there are heavy storms at sea. The port of Ceryl is protected from all but the worst of such weather by its bay, but the fishing fleets along the coast sometimes do not fare as well. Even the poor in Oxmeath are generally living more comfortably than some of the lower middle class in Cloutsdowns, although Ceryl has its share of slums and twisted alleyways filled with criminals. Farm work is generally as

difficult as anywhere, but it can be rewarding and many families make a good living at it. The threat of Cryx is considerably reduced in the region, thanks to the formidable Northern Fleet. While the Gnarls to the east is seen as a foreboding problem by many, particularly those working in the logging industry, there has been little violence from that quarter in recent months.

The Fourth Army is stationed in Oxmeath, headquartered at Fort Balton just northeast of Ceryl. The Fourth is the smallest and least prestigious of Cygnar's armies, but it has enough manpower to keep the region safe. Nominally slated to defend the border with Ord, it is considered among the easiest of duties in the Cygnaran Army since there has never once been a war or even major border skirmish between Ord and Cygnar. These forces do occasionally deploy to hunt down gangs of bandits or highwaymen preying on the lucrative river trade or traffic along the Twelve Day Road. Five Fingers, the so-called "Port of Deceit" is situated just to the north occupying the mouth of the Dragon's Tongue River. It is a largely lawless Ordic city and its villainy sometimes spills into the southern region. It is also a haven for mercenaries, and there have sometimes been problems from overeager sell-swords who have been taking dubious contracts in the nearby environs.

Things have changed for the locals in recent months, however, as the war to the east has required the Fourth Army to fulfill its duty as reserves. A large number of soldiers have been sent east to bolster forces elsewhere, and they were recently involved in fighting against trollkin east of the Gnarls. Some in the province worry that the local garrison is now too small and weak to properly defend them. Recruitment efforts have been ramped up, but the locals of this province have always been more reluctant to enter into military service than their countrymen elsewhere. The citizens of Ceryl seem unconcerned, convinced their city is inviolable and well protected by the likes of the Fraternal Order of Wizardry.

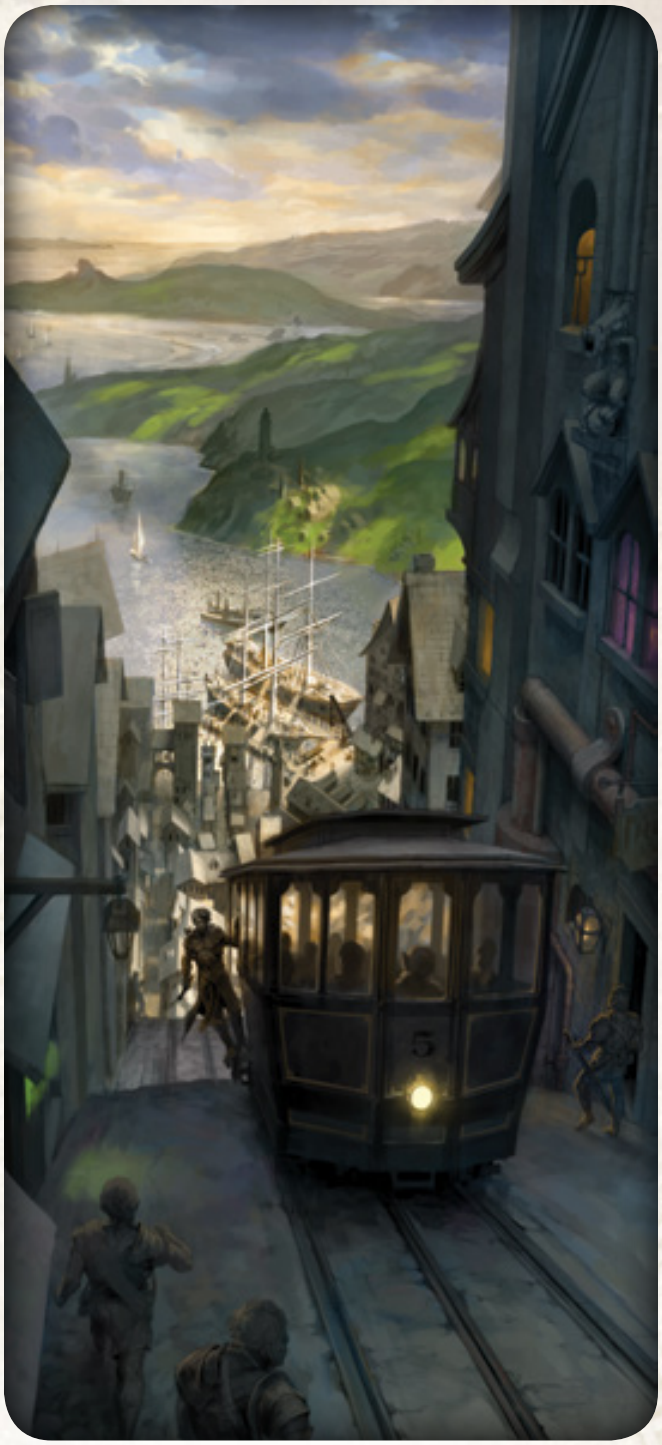
CERYL, THE CITY OF WIZARDS

Ruler: Duke Mayhew Dergeral, Earl of Oxmeath and Lord Mayor of Ceryl

Population: 340,000 human (mostly Thurian, with a large number of Caspian and Midlunder); 5,000 gobber; 1,000 trollkin; small Iosan community

Military Presence: Ceryl itself is lightly garrisoned but can call upon the Fourth Army soldiers stationed at Fort Balton when in need. Ceryl is also the home of the Cygnaran Navy's Northern Fleet and hosts many warships, including the great ironhull the *Merciful Boon*. The city employs 1,000 watchmen with access to warjacks. Ceryl is also protected by the arcanists of the Fraternal Order and the mercenaries under their employ.

Description: Perched on the far western tip of Cygnar, the great port city of Ceryl is known for its long tradition as a center for the arcane arts. It is a huge city with all the appearances of a mountain built row upon row and street upon busy street upward from the crowded waterfront. Here and there the spires of churches and towers rise above the rust-colored tile roofs of humbler dwellings, and among them are the blocky white stone structures encircled by palisades of dark iron, homes



of prosperous merchants and powerful magi. Just along the wharfs, the smoke of the sprawling factories is quickly swept away by strong ocean winds while everywhere whitewashed buildings gleam in the sun whenever the clouds break.

The extensive Cerylian waterfront is every bit as busy as those of Cygnar's two other great port cities, Caspia and Mercir. Steamjacks labor among the docks conveying endless supplies and crated goods along the thoroughfares and down to the paddlewheel steamships and heavily laden galleons with their broad flapping standards and sails. Vessels of every tonnage, rig, and calling populate the bay that also serves as one of the

THE STRANGELIGHT WORKSHOP

Despite a reputation for unconventional and somewhat questionable research, the employees of the Strangelight Workshop are the Iron Kingdom's leading freelance supernatural researchers. The Workshop employs open-minded operatives with keen minds for both occult and scientific observation, and they are armed with specialized mechanikal apparatuses designed to aid in their investigations. Headquartered in Ceryl, the Workshop has opened offices in Caspia, Corvis, Leryn, and Merin. With no shortage of hauntings and habitations in western Immoren, the employees of the Strangelight Workshop should remain busy for years to come.

Cygnaran Navy's major shipyards. Hence the masts, spars, and stacks of many great warships are seen here at any given time.

Ceryl is known for its innovative cable cars. For three crowns, anyone in Ceryl can purchase a "day ticket" on an Omnibus Rail coach to be taken from practically one end of the city to the other for the entire day. These long cars are fixed upon rails and are moved along by metal cables propelled through a series of steam-driven shafts in various powerhouses throughout the city. Horse-drawn carriages are still plentiful throughout Ceryl, but the masses have quickly taken to "hopping the rail" to move about the city.

Ceryl is also noted as a city of wizards, many of whom wield a disproportionate amount of influence. Ceryl houses the Stronghold, the headquarters for the Fraternal Order of Wizardry, said to be the true masters of the city, and all of the major arcane orders have a presence in the city as well. Ceryl was once home to the legendary Sebastien Kerwin whose writings and teachings were paramount in the understanding and application of magic and who established the Arcanist's Acadame and the Circle of the Oath, both of which aided in the overthrow of the Orgoth.

The Stronghold is a grim and impressive structure constructed as a bastion for the Fraternal Order in darker times, and its defenses are legendary. It is one of the few Order lodges that make no pretense at being inconspicuous; it is a fortress made of whitewashed stone, draped with golden banners, and topped by leering gargoyles. Although there is only a single massive set of doors through which outsiders are allowed to enter, it is rumored the Stronghold is riddled with underground tunnels and bolt-holes connecting it to the rest of the city. In addition to visiting arcanists studying at the Stronghold, the fortress is home to the six High Magi who rule the Order and their servants. At the center of the Stronghold is its most valued and well-guarded treasure: the Anthaneum—a library filled with singular rare tomes and ancient manuscripts.

The only structure to match the imposing edifice of the Fraternal Order's lodge is the great Thurian Palace. One of the few buildings of that empire to survive both a fall from power and the subsequent Orgoth Occupation, it has never been totally destroyed, though often it has suffered great damage only to be repaired and restored to glory. Its primary structure is a great rectangular building, open through the middle and affording a view of its wide, gardened courtyard. Various wings, bridges, and polygonal towers have been added during reconstruction, though the palace retains much of its symmetrical shape. It is, like any ancient palace of this enormity, riddled with hidden chambers, many of which are unknown to its present inhabitants. For generations upon generations, the Thurian Palace has served as the ostentatious living quarters of Thuria's rulers, and it hosts frequent parties and feasts where crucial political arrangements are made and unmade.

Both the Order of Illumination and the Order of the Golden Crucible have substantial branches in Ceryl. The city has a reputation for dark and insidious dealings beneath its bright and clean exterior, with rumors of dark cabals, infernalism, and other practitioners of black magic. Certainly this is one reason the Order of Illumination has moved into the region in such numbers, eager to root out any such corruption. Nonetheless, the Fraternal Order of Wizardry is a major player in regional politics and has considerably more clout than the local Church of Morrow.

Ceryl is also home to the Smokehouse, one of the largest commercial markets for high quality blasting powder and firearms on the western coast. It sits at one corner of Ceryl's arena-like market adjacent to the local Golden Crucible guild hall and workshops. Mercenary companies travel here from far and wide to pick up arms, ammo, and blasting powder for the campaign season. Although the relocation of the headquarters of the Order of the Golden Crucible to Ord has opened up new markets, the Smokehouse remains an important destination for powder speculators and a vital branch of the order in northwestern Cygnar. After sunset the market arena is sometimes chosen as the backdrop for deadly duels for both sport and honor.

At present, the politics of the city are primarily concerned with seeing a rail connection laid between Ceryl and Point Bourne. The aristocracy of the city and the arcanists of the Fraternal Order are in full agreement that a rail line would dramatically increase trade to Ceryl and allow them to circumvent the dangers of piracy and weather that threaten trade by sea along the Broken Coast. However, the cost of laying track through the Gnarls, to say nothing of the dangers presented to rail engines by the barbarous tribes of that region, present a serious challenge to the project. Further, shipping concerns in the city oppose the idea, recognizing the potential loss of profit.

The bright surface facade of Ceryl with its white stone, clean streets, and thriving docks and markets conceal a dark underbelly. The city has its share of organized crime, and some say the corruption extends to the highest levels. But such petty crimes pale in comparison to the occult matters

transpiring here. The thirst for lore and knowledge in this city has occasionally resulted in severe transgressions. It is said the Fraternal Order is rife with conspiratorial cabals, some of whom are too power hungry to temper their research with considerations for morality. Disappearances at night sometimes result in corpses appearing days later bearing the evidence of ritual murder. Several well-organized septs of Thamar have strong memberships in the city, including those who encourage research into necromancy, and others who those who have chosen to practice infernalism.

The Vicarate Council of Ceryl has done what it can to stamp out these cults, but it has not been effective. The Order of Illumination has a small branch in the city to investigate allegations of black magic, but they are far less influential than the Fraternal Order, which takes care of its own and does not appreciate outsiders prying into their affairs. A subtle shadow war is being fought in the dark alleys and sewers of Ceryl, and the Morrowans fear they are losing the fight.

DUCHY OF WESTSHORE

The remote Westshore Duchy includes the provinces of Rimmocksdale and Westinmarsh. It includes a long section of the central western seaboard, bounded on the north by the Haltshire River and on the south by the Foxbridge River. It stretches east well into the Upper Wyrmwall encompassing Helmsreach and the Watcher Peaks, as well as the prosperous mountain city of Orven. Its other major township is Ramarck, the so-called "City of Stilts," which thrives despite the peculiarity of its waterlogged surroundings. The duchy is ruled by Duke Brandel Foxbridge, Earl of Westinmarsh.

While a somewhat dreary and cold land whose people are as quiet and unforthcoming as its summers, Westshore has the relative good fortune of being largely removed from the strife elsewhere in the realm. It is nowhere near any of the fighting or disputed borders, and most of its shoreline has seen a reduction in raids from Cryx, which seems to prefer preying on easier targets to the southeast. While much of this region is wild and undeveloped, the duchy includes a number of profitable mines and quarries, and its cities engage in active commerce. Its inhabitants have had reason to count their blessings as they hear of the depredations taking place elsewhere in the realm, particularly in the Northforest.

Westwatch is the largest coastal fortress in the region and serves as the primary defensive structure along the lengthy coast between Ceryl and Highgate. The fortress was first created to watch against the return of the Orgoth, thus its name. But very quickly it became more important as a necessary defense against the pirate raiders and other horrors from Cryx.

THE RUINS OF WESTSHORE

Several of Westshore's prominent features are ruins that dot its coast, some ancient and some of newer manufacture. This area was among the first hit by the Orgoth, who took to the mystical qualities of the area's geography, thereafter enslaving as many of the locals as they could gather and ritually slaughtering them. Since that time, some historians have seen the act as something akin to a ship baptism, as the Orgoth sought to please their dark gods at the outset of their endeavor with a glut of souls. The most famous of the region's ruins are Henge Hold, Ingrane, and Nine Stone.

Few records remain of the once great hall and surrounding town that perched at Henge Hold overlooking the waters of the Wailing Sea. It is said to have been the home of more than one legendary warlord but it had fallen into decline by the time the Orgoth landed. Henge Hold was sacked in 593 BR, its villagers spitted and thrown into the waves, and the cyclopean "hanging stones" that gave Henge Hold its name were used to build one of the first Orgoth strongholds. It was also one of the last strongholds to fall during the Scourge as the Orgoth fled west in 201 AR. Some say the dark stones burn the flesh of those who touch them and that the large, now-toppled henge stones weep blood. Regardless of the truth of this claim, after the eight centuries of dark rites performed here, no one has rebuilt Henge Hold.

Time has washed away the blood of Ingrane, but the ruins remain a silent reminder. Where a thriving fishing village once stood, only blackened remains of fire-gutted houses poke from the bluffs. Neither graves to mark the resting places of the former inhabitants nor bleached bones are left; dark hands took them all away. A Cryxian raiding party mercilessly set upon the village with sword and torch in 584 AR. The few survivors fled to Ramarck and never looked back. Locals avoid the ruins, convinced they are haunted. On some fog-shrouded evenings "Ingrane's Keening" can be heard coming from the bluffs. Locals describe it as an unnatural wind that produces a haunting sound akin to hundreds of pain-stricken voices wailing in anguish.

The origin of the place called Nine Stone is unknown, yet it has been linked to many dark acts throughout its history. The ruin consists of several crumbled walls, ramped earthworks, and collapsed tunnels but is named for its most striking feature: nine enormous, sharpened stones that protrude from the earth like claws. It is believed—and circumstantial evidence in the Enkheiridion supports this—that the stones are older than the Twins. The stones have been linked to Devourer rites and to blackclad practices. The Orgoth were fascinated by the thirty-foot-high stones, which resembled their own architecture. Warwitches and priests frequented the area, but the Orgoth never built a permanent structure closer to Nine Stone than their fortress at Henge Hold. Occasionally, small councils of druids still gather at Nine Stone, ignored by the soldiers of nearby Westwatch as long as they do not cause trouble for Ramarck or Orven.

Westwatch has a large dock capacity and serves as a secondary station for the Northern Fleet, as well as offering shelter to vessels from the Southern Fleet. Combined actions of the two fleets are often coordinated from the fortress.

Westwatch has its own military training facilities, although the tactical and strategic training it offers is less esteemed than that at Sentinel Point or the Strategic Academy. Those who earned their commissions at Westwatch insist they learn far more valuable lessons at this remote and perilous post. The soldiers stationed here belong to the Third Army and are regularly rotated with those at Highgate. There is tremendous prestige associated with the warriors of Westwatch, but they will be the first to admit they are far too few to adequately protect the seaboard. The slaughter of Ingrane, though it happened fifteen years ago, is still taken as a black mark by these sentinels, some of the older of whom still wear a black sash in remembrance.

DUCHY POLITICS

Duke Brandal Foxbridge rules the duchy, but he has been considered a weak heir to a far superior father, who died a decade ago. He is still young and seems an uncertain lord, a fact his vassals have used to their advantage. Foxbridge finds the western coast bleak and dismal, and avoids spending time there, having apparently little stomach for the drafty halls of Westwatch as well. While his seat is nominally in Ramarck, he has been spending more time inland at the more lively city of Orven and has also made trips to Caspia to attend the Royal Assembly. Since he participates little in the debates, these trips are more of an escape than tending to duty. Recently Foxbridge has been invited to enjoy the hospitality of Duke Dergeral of Ceryl, who seems eager to bring him into his circle.

DUCHY OF WESTSHORE

Provinces: Rimmocksdale (Earl Quinlan Rathleagh, Lord of Banwick Manor) and Westinmarsh

Largest Ethnic Groups: Thurian majority with small Midlunder, Caspian, and Morridane minorities and some Arjun and Radiz

Predominant Religions: Morrowan majority with a Menite minority

Important Cities: Orven, Ramarck

Significant Towns (not on the map): Aberwych, Ainscott, Bryleigh, Hollisporth, Karrcarden, Krisdale, Lorfield, Millbeck, Norhope, Ravenport, Vainlow, Winterborough

Lord: Duke Brandel Foxbridge, Earl of Westinmarsh

Duke Brandel Foxbridge is the ruler of this duchy and has ancestral lands in Westinmarsh but does little in the way of actual governance. He prefers to leave the stewardship of Ramarck, Westinmarsh's largest city, to Baroness Arken. Similarly, he has delegated many of his other obligations to vassals and appointed officials. Foxbridge's father was a well-respected leader and a man who had served at Westwatch and had the respect of both the army and navy, but his son has not fared as well. It remains to be seen if the young duke simply needs to grow into his position or has absolutely no aptitude for governance. He presently seeks to travel abroad to gain a deeper understanding of the realm and its complexities, and he has been considering attending the Royal Cygnaran University to sharpen his mind. His father's chamberlain has advised him to undertake military training at Westwatch instead, but he seems reluctant to do so.

Seat: Ramarck

RIMMOCKSDALE PROVINCE

Rimmocksdale is a small mountain province including Rimmocksdale Lake, the mining city of Orven, and numerous villages along the lakeshore and nearby valleys. Rimmocksdale is ruled by Earl Quinlan Rathleagh, Lord of Banwick Manor.

The province is a cold and windy region high up in the Wyrmwall, and its population is largely concentrated in the city of Orven. Several other towns and villages are scattered through the nearby valleys and particularly along the shores of the lake. The people living here are generally devoutly Morrowan, and religion is a larger part of their lives than in many provinces. Mining and quarry work make up a substantial portion of the labor industry in this district, and the work has been a niche that has drawn a number of ogrun into the region, along with the sizable dwarven community in Orven.

ORVEN

Ruler: Lord Mayor Laura Montewick and Clan Lord Horud Lakestone of the Orven Enclave

Population: 38,000 human (mostly Thurian and Caspian); 25,000 Rhulfolk; a few hundred gobber, ogrun, and trollkin

Military Presence: Orven employs 400 watchmen to enforce the order of law in the city, which has become more important with the influx of miners in recent years. The dwarven enclave sees to its own protection and can call upon hundreds of veteran warriors. The various mining companies that operate around Orven contract mercenaries to maintain the peace.

Description: With a wealth of natural resources, Orven's importance to Cygnar grows with each passing year. The environs around Orven are rich in coal and silver deposits, pure water flows to the city from the Wyrmwall Mountains, and its natural hot springs are fed by underground volcanism. With the completion of the Orven Rail in 603 AR, the city experienced a boom further fueled by pilgrims coming to see

the birthplace of Orven's favorite native son, Primarch Arius. As a result, the Church of Morrow has exercised a great deal of influence on the town, and its coffers have grown increasingly flush with pious donations.

Orven is also home of the second largest dwarven enclave in Cygnar. The enclave takes up a sizable portion of the northern district of Orven and extends below ground. Those areas are considered Rhulic territory and are not subject to Cygnaran law. Its robust multi-storied buildings bear more resemblance to Ghordic construction than the southern neighborhoods. Recent decades have brought more mixing of the two communities and there are now thousands of dwarves moving into the traditionally human quarters of the city along with some human families moving into the dwarven district. These ties have worked to strengthen the community and create lasting bonds between the races. Nonetheless, there are periodic disagreements, particularly where Cygnaran and Rhulic laws do not agree. Criminals of both races make for the human quarter as fast as their legs will carry them rather than facing the harsh punishments codified under Rhulic law.

Orven's prosperity has drawn thousands of miners, mechaniks, and supporting industries from across the kingdoms. The mines extend deep into the Upper Wyrmwall, extracting seemingly endless supplies of coal, sulfur, and silver. The camps outside Orven almost double again its population. Ordic mercenaries patrol mining camps full of Caspian, Midlunder, and Thurian laborers working beside Rynnish refugees and even a handful of treasure-seeking Khards and Idrians.

WESTINMARSH PROVINCE

Large but sparsely populated, Westinmarsh is the region north of the Foxbridge River and west of the Upper Wyrmwall, extending north to Westwatch Tower. It includes Ramarck, several small towns, and a number of abandoned Orgoth ruins avoided by locals. Sentinels remain on duty at Westwatch Tower watching for Cryxian raiders. The province has a sizable gobber population, including several gobber communities living in stilt towns akin to Ramarck. Westinmarsh is ruled by Duke Brandel Foxbridge.

RAMARCK

Ruler: Baroness Maya Arken

Population: 35,000 human (mostly Caspian and Thurian, some Arjun); 7,000 gobber; around 200 trollkin

Military Presence: Ramarck has a small garrison of the Third Army and also relies on local militia. The city employs 200 city watchmen.

Description: Ramarck is a port city on the western coast of Cygnar nestled miles within a forest of mangrove and bald cypress that reaches to the ocean. Although situated within the marshes known as the Marck, it is a beehive of activity. Because it is below sea level, many of Ramarck's buildings are built upon a series of metal and wooden stilts that suspend them above the murky waters of the swamp. Steamboats carry goods to and from the city on a daily basis. The bayous surrounding Ramarck are rich in coal, oil, and rare woods, and the marshy ground makes a rich seedbed for certain crops adapted to that soil. The crops are shipped to many other locales, including Westwatch and New Larkholm, both of which maintain steady trade relations with the city.

Ramarck has a haunted reputation partly due to its age and partly to its environment—the city has existed in the misty shade of the bayou since before the Orgoth invasion. Likewise the humid, misty environment and the hanging moss covering the city lend a decrepit air that does little to discourage dark rumors about the place. The bayous and waterways are home to giant turtles, serpents, swamp shamblers, and many other dangerous creatures. In addition, the mysterious Arjun, sometimes also called "swampies," have lived in the bayous for untold generations. Until recently they had only occasional contact with Ramarck and are reputed to be witches and cannibals. True or not, the Arjun do make excellent guides if they can be convinced to assist outsiders, and if one has the wherewithal to endure their strange language and behavior.

EARL QUINLAN RATHLEAGH, LORD OF BANWICK MANOR

The Earl of Rimmocksdale is a serious-minded noble and pious Morrowan who has proven to be an able ruler of the province, focusing most of his attention on Orven and the mining and quarry work facilitated by the city. Rathleagh recently spent some time with his duke and was frankly appalled at the youth's negligence to his duties. Rathleagh has struggled with his sense of propriety, wondering how to best rectify the situation in the duchy.

Increasingly, Rathleagh believes the only solution is for him to rule the duchy in Rathleagh's stead. He does not consider himself overly ambitious or power-hungry but seeks authority out of genuine concern for the region and its fate under Foxbridge. Nonetheless, the situation has forced him to become a more serious player in the games of politics than was previously the case. Rathleagh has been currying favor among the nobles of the region, including his own vassals as well as those in Westinmarsh, and also making certain enquiries at the Royal Assembly. It may well erupt into a significant political conflict once Duke Dergeral of Thuria becomes involved on the side of Foxbridge, whom he will undoubtedly wish to control. Such action could very well result in significant and quite illegal intrigues—Rathleagh is not the sort to initiate such matters, but some of his barons would have no similar qualms and would act in his defense.

The isolated location of Ramarck and the difficulty in reaching it with larger vessels makes it a popular port for pirates and privateers who utilize smaller, shallower vessels and who prefer to avoid direct confrontations with the navy's clippers. Much to the chagrin of its more respectable, hard-working inhabitants, Ramarck has become a bustling center of black market trade, and the local watch is either too corrupt or too busy fending off dangers from the swamp to do much about it.

The city is governed by Baroness Arken, a vassal of Duke Foxbridge who is as formidable as she is rotund. She is the daughter of one of Ramarck's oldest families, the Arkens, who have ruled the region around Ramarck since at least the Thousand Cities era. Currently the baroness' greatest concern is the increased presence of Cryxian raiders on the coast. She has begun working with Arjun communities to survey the coastline for signs of attack. The plan has not met with universal support from Ramarck's citizens, who are largely suspicious of the swamp folk.

Ramarck is also notable for being home to the Ramarck Royal Special Health Institution. This hospital was the brainchild of Navarch Govan Trent in the aftermath of the Scharde Invasions. Many sailors and soldiers who fought against the horrors of Cryx came out of those battles bearing deep mental scars. Previously, these men and women would have been discharged from the military, the lucky remanded to the care of Morrowan clergy, and the unlucky left to fend for themselves in the street. The Royal Special Health Institution was founded to both treat and study these mentally damaged individuals. Today, both veterans of war and otherwise traumatized minds are sent from across Cygnar to the institute. Gently damaged individuals are treated with some care and enjoy relatively clean, if austere accommodations. Violent and crazed patients are manacled in the Great Vault below ground, where they are more imprisoned than treated.

THE ISLANDS

Cygnar is in possession of several islands off her coast.

BLOODSHORE ISLAND

Originally named for the deep red of its iron-rich soil, this foreboding prison island far to the southeast in the Gulf of Cygnar has been washed with its share of human blood and is a place no one visits voluntarily. Navigation is hazardous near Bloodshore—swift, powerful currents and constantly shifting sand bars surround the island, and scores of shallow, razor-sharp reefs lurk just under the waves. The island looms over the sea with imposing cliffs on all sides making landfall difficult, except for a single dock where all ships must land to offload.

King Woldred the Diligent had the prison itself built in the year 260 AR. Since that day it has been restored several times and serves as the home for the kingdom's most troublesome inmates. Cygnaran magistrates have no compunctions about sentencing deserving prisoners to death, so the prisoners at Bloodshore are those who either have information that may someday be useful or powerful connections who were able to keep them from the death sentence. The island prison currently houses almost one hundred hardened criminals, including many of the top officers of Vinter IV's Inquisition, several Cryxian pirate captains, and a handful of disgraced nobles. The current warden of the island is Captain Josef Binwilliams, formerly a scout lieutenant out of Highgate.

In addition to the geographical challenge of approaching the island, it has several layers of outer walls. The prisoners are locked away in individual cells of thick stone when they are not working or being summoned for interrogation. Prisoners with arcane abilities are held in magically warded cells watched over by arcanists and specially trained gun mages. Those who are deemed physically fit are put to work in the island's quarry. The work there is more suited to crushing spirits through grueling labor than for any truly constructive purpose.

CULLENROCK

This craggy and inhospitable island largely devoid of flora or fauna is noted primarily for its two major lighthouses, one on the eastern extreme and the other on the west. The waters around the island are heavily patrolled by the Cygnaran Navy from both Mercir and Highgate, and the lighthouses are essential points of reference. Smaller ships prefer to take the inner route around Sandbottom Point, but larger vessels must navigate around the outside of the island due to the shallow waters of the channel. Each lighthouse is manned by a small staff of isolated and eccentric operators who have had to evade Cryxian raiders on several occasions.

GIANT'S HEAD

Giant's Head is named after the immense stony mountain that dominates the island's center. On clear days the mountain can be seen from as far as the mainland coast, and it serves as a familiar landmark for sailors. Giant's Head is sparsely populated by a

WESTWATCH

Situated on the western coast equidistant from New Larkholm and Ramarck, Westwatch is the most remote of Cygnar's coastal fortresses. The keep was built immediately after the Scourge near the site of the exodus of the last Orgoth longboats. It was one of many such forts constructed at great cost along the western seaboard to watch for the feared return of the Orgoth. As generations passed without a sign of the hated enemy's return, most of these keeps fell into disrepair and were eventually abandoned until the predations of Cryx reinforced the importance of Cygnar's vigil over her western shoreline.

Westwatch is home to a full brigade of General Bors Gately's 9th Division of the Third Army under the command of Commander Kiel Jarvinson. In addition to its fortifications, the fortress boasts extensive docks that regularly host vessels from both the Northern and Southern Fleets.

couple hundred tough-as-nails Cygnaran settlers who refuse to leave the island despite the occasional pirate threat. The waters around Giant's Head have been contested by Cygnar and Cryx for centuries, and the waters just off the Head have been the site of many vicious naval battles.

RAELTHORNE ISLAND

Raelthorne Island is the exclusive palatial retreat of the Cygnaran monarchy. The great stone manor that sits on the island's northern shore was built during the reign of Raelthorne II. With some of the best hunting grounds in the whole kingdom, the island is blessed with a large population of wild game. Its well-manicured lawns and ample gardens are renowned throughout the kingdoms.

The Island has fallen into disuse since the reign of Vinter Raelthorne IV; the Elder had little use for island retreats. Leto fondly recalls the days of his youth spent on the Island but cannot bear the thought of visiting the place without his beloved wife. The place is maintained by a skeleton crew of caretakers who dwell on the Island. Since its construction, visitors have sworn the manor is haunted, though the caretakers claim this is mere superstition.

ORGANIZATIONS

Many notable organizations across Cygnar exert considerable influence over their surroundings. Certain caravaner's guilds may dominate portage in a city while craft and trade guilds might play an important role in local politics. As factories and shipping yards increasingly rely on large numbers of low-paid workers, organized labor groups have begun to apply negotiating leverage. Yet most of these groups are only significant in their home regions with little widespread influence. The organizations described here are players on a much larger scale. They impact Cygnar itself and in some cases have a reach that extends to other nations as well. Their major officers and decision makers can stand with members of the aristocracy and even influence the actions of the Royal Assembly or the king himself.

FRATERNAL ORDER OF WIZARDRY

The Fraternal Order of Wizardry has been at the heart of many great historical events in the Iron Kingdoms; over the centuries its members have been responsible for key inventions, without which modern mechanika would not exist. Yet at times internal politics has consumed the order, and it has been obsessed with empty adherence to tradition, rent by schism, and guilty of impeding advancements in the mystical science it helped define. The order's masters control an unsurpassed trove of lore and arcane techniques, yet some question the applications of this knowledge. Rumors persist of dark cabals mastering forbidden arts beneath the facade of socially responsible scholars, theorists, and arcane practitioners.

The successor to the Arcanist's Academe, the order was established in 111 AR and was instrumental in the defeat of the Orgoth. The order's luminaries such as Victor Baerd and Maximillian Nivin were key to the creation of the rune plate and the cerebral matrixes. The order's wizards controlled the colossals that were vital in driving the Orgoth from western Immoren. In the following centuries, Fraternal Order arcanists perfected their early designs and developed the first modern steamjack cortexes. At the height of the Fraternal Order's power and influence—in the decades following the Corvis Treaties—it maintained a tight control on cortex fabrication, unchallenged by any rivals.

The Fraternal Order built lodges in all major cities; at one time it had members in all of the nations of the Iron Kingdoms, including strong lodges in Ord and Llael and in most of the urban centers of Cygnar. Gaining inroads in Khador was more difficult, but a number of gifted Khadoran arcanists were eventually brought into the order.

The Fraternal Order enjoyed its near-monopoly on the manufacture of cortexes until 243 AR, when a cabal of its arcanists with ties to Khador fled to the Motherland, absconding with the secrets of the cortex fabrication process. This group, along with collaborators formerly of the Order of the Golden Crucible, became the founding members of the Greylords Covenant. The Greylords and the Fraternal Order have been antagonistic rivals ever since. Unlike the Greylords, the Fraternal Order is a civilian organization and cannot rely on the backing of a national army or treasury. Instead it maintains strong ties to the Cygnaran government as well as to highly placed nobles, military officers, and merchants in several nations. Most of the conflict between the two organizations has been subtle, but the Greylords have seized opportunities for violence, such as when the Khadorans obliterated the Merywyn Fraternal Order's stronghold in 605 AR.

Despite this loss of its monopolies and occasional scandals involving infernal corruption, the order has managed to maintain a high degree of respectability. No group is more responsible for enlightening the population in the differences between the wild and unpredictable potencies of sorcery and learned craft of arcanists. While other groups have mastered the fabrication of cortexes, including Cygnar's own great armory, the Fraternal Order still makes tremendous wealth on these much-needed devices. They have standing contracts with both the Cygnaran and Ordic Armies to make high-grade cortexes, and their cortexes are used by many laborjack factories.

Many members of the order are highly placed in local politics and maintain friends among the nobility. In Ceryl the order maintains the Stronghold, its central headquarters where it exercises powerful influence over Cygnar's second-largest city. The six high magi who supervise the order here coordinate the activities of their far-flung lodges. In addition to those in Ceryl, the order appointed a high magus in Berck, Caspia, Corvis, Five Fingers, Mercir, Merin, and Point Bourne for a total of thirteen high magi, and they meet periodically to discuss order business at a biannual convocation. The high magus of the Caspian Lodge is Arland Calster, the court wizard of Cygnar and a member of Leto's War Council.

In theory the Fraternal Order will accept an application for membership from any human arcanist or arcane mechanik who shows aptitude and serious dedication to the formal study of magic and who is granted sponsorship by a magus of the order. In reality, unless a sponsor is particularly well connected with the order, an applicant is given serious consideration only if he comes from a respectable background in the merchant class or nobility. The order places such a high value on its image that it will absolutely refuse membership to those deemed uncouth or vulgar.

One whose application is accepted undergoes rigorous testing monitored by one of the order's several proctors, senior magi who supervise the admittance procedure. Besides tests of knowledge, each potential member undergoes demanding practical exams in which he must demonstrate an understanding of basic magical principles. Once accepted, a magus can wear the colors and symbol of the order and make use of the order's lodges wherever they are found, including room and board and access to ordinary libraries. Special collections may require specific permissions.

Whereas the Fraternal Order once feigned neutrality in the conflicts between the nations of western Immoren, war has forced it to become more involved. The order and its lodges are tied closely to Cygnar and Ord. It is certainly within its interests to oppose expansion of the Khadoran Empire, as that nation and its Greylords seek the Fraternal Order's destruction. Similarly, the order has every reason to oppose the theocracy of the Protectorate of Menoth, as the government there has kidnapped order members, enslaving them to join the Vassals of Menoth. In other respects, though, the political and religious views of its members are considered private so long as they do not compromise the reputation or security of the order.

The cabals that secret themselves among the membership persist, each devoted to some obscure branch of arcane lore and jealous of the advancement of rivals. Because much of the order's voluminous collections of lore are sequestered in private libraries or locked away in vaults like the Anthaneum in Ceryl, gaining access to the order's deeper knowledge requires moving in the proper circles.

HIGH MAGUS ARLAND CALSTER

As court wizard to King Leto, High Magus Arland Calster is the most politically powerful member of the Fraternal Order of Wizardry. A veteran of the Lion's Coup, Calster is one of the king's closest confidants, and despite his position as a High Magus of the Order and leader of the Caspian Lodge, his interests lie more in the court and War Council than in the politics of the order. He reports to the Stronghold in Ceryl and is technically subordinate to the council of high magi, but they rarely call on him, knowing he bears obligations to the king.

MERCARIAN LEAGUE

Founded in the city of Mercir as a confederation of traders with ties to the nobility, the Mercarian League is an influential and powerful organization. While it has existed in one form or another for hundreds of years, its formal, legal consolidation under Cygnaran law occurred only in 526 AR. Originally a loose organization for mutual trade between merchant cities, the league has become an entity that affects almost all walks of life, yet most people of western Immoren know very little about it.

The league has its humble roots in a confederation of merchants who banded together for mutual protection and to promote their interests. In the beginning the Mercarian League included coastal traders and an organized distribution network based out of Mercir. Over time it has grown through shrewd management, and its membership has expanded into the aristocracy. The league has consolidated its power, expanded its network of influential contacts, and established some control over Cygnar's major trade routes. It has even begun trading in shares to acquire investment capital for its extended voyages. Since its inception, the league has opened regional offices in Caspia, New Larkholm, and Ceryl as well as in Ordic port cities such as Berck and Carre Dova, where it attempts to recruit skilled ship captains and pilots in spite of the rancor of the castellans. The hub of the Mercarian League, however, remains where it all began: Mercir.

The Mercarian Trade Alliance oversees the league. Comprised of leading shareholders and their proxies, the Trade Alliance is led by an executive member, the chief alderman Baron Ethan Starke, perhaps the most influential man in trade throughout the kingdoms. He is also the chairman of the Caspian Merchant's Guild and owns several commercial and mercantile interests. While the league has its fingers in virtually every minor trading house in one way or another, it no longer concerns itself with flounder, timber, or turnips; the modern Mercarian League is concerned with commerce, the flow of monies, and the exchange of precious commodities throughout western Immoren. The choices Starke makes affect everything from the price of bread in Corvis and the cost of coal in Korsk.

The Trade Alliance holds an annual summit in Caspia attended by most of the influential members of the league. During this review of the previous year's business, the members make decisions about how trade and commerce will profit the league in the coming year. All manner of politicking, espionage, and diplomacy occur during these summits, in whose discussions fortunes can be won—or stolen.

The league's influence extends to every hall of power in Cygnar and beyond. It even maintains connections within the Sancteum, the sovereign city of the Church of Morrow. Agents from the Order of Illumination and several of the key noble families of Cygnar, including the Raelthornes, are also

considered allies of the Mercarian League. Indeed, Duke Waldron Gately of Southport, Earl of Fennmar, is not only a member of the league's governing board but also the ruler of Mercir and a member of the Royal Assembly. With such friends the league is powerful beyond appearances. The Eye of Mercir, its intelligence-gathering arm, is a name whispered in thieves' dens and Cygnaran Reconnaissance Service briefings alike.

The league is not without its opponents. Since the league's inception the castellans of Ord and especially those affiliated with House Mateu have refused to recognize Mercarian claims upon trade routes and certain protected commodities. This has led to hostilities between the league's vessels and the ships of House Mateu, clashes in which even the Ordic Navy has been involved. Consequently most ships in the employ of the Mercarian League are more heavily armed than standard merchant vessels. This is in part because of the league's political enemies and in part to deal with the piracy that endangers shipping along the western coast of Cygnar. The league has posted substantial bounties on those who raid their ships and has even hired privateers to deal bloody retribution to those who have wronged them. The pirates of the Broken Coast know this, so only the best prepared or desperate of crews will attack a ship flying Mercarian colors.

The league is understandably protective of its ships, for they are critical to its expansion beyond western Immoren. In recent years the league has succeeded in establishing a fortified stronghold in the port of Konesta on the distant continent of Zu. From Konesta it has built the beachhead of a trade empire that will span both continents. Both House Mateu and kayazy interests in Khador have established lesser outposts in Zu, and it is only a matter of time before a proxy war begins between Ord, Khador, and Cygnar through the Mercarian League for control of the wealth of the southern continent.

STEAM & IRON WORKERS UNION

The Steam & Iron Workers Union started as a labor union during the post-Rebellion reconstruction period. Its membership, known colloquially as "union steamos," includes many of the most reliable, skilled engineers and craftsmen of the southern kingdoms. The union has done much to refine the steam engines essential to several important industries, particularly the manufacture of steamjacks, steamships, and rail engines. Its workers do not actually lay tracks but accept contracts from those groups that do, such as Steelwater Rail and the Caspia Railway Society. The union is committed to looking after the interests of its members, landing lucrative contracts, and ensuring its people receive consistent wages for their work.

The Steam & Iron Workers Union has a strong presence in most major cities of Cygnar and Ord but is nominally headquartered in Caspia, where it works with the Cygnaran Armory to produce warjacks and the like. Local branches have enormous leeway in handling their affairs, a fact that allows for some amount of corruption and grafting due to the lack of central leadership. Yet workers prefer this localized approach to organization. The headquarters in Caspia serves as the union's main branch; its board of directors supervises changes in rules and procedures, which union agents ensure are distributed to every local branch. Though its agents also collect dues for the Caspian branch from each local branch to maintain the semblance of a central staff, each city's union largely does as it sees fit. Smaller regional headquarters exist in Ceryl, Fharin, and Mercir, and these are active in resolving contract disputes between branches in their regions.

One notable aspect of the union is its racial diversity: numerous dwarves, gobbers, ogrun, and trollkin comprise its membership because skill and talent, not race, are the measures of a true craftsman. Prospective members must possess a skill set or trade knowledge relevant to the organization and then undergo a semi-formal sponsorship by a union member in good standing. Bosses within nearly every union workshop have the authority to sponsor and approve prospective members and collect yearly dues for the headquarters in Caspia. Upon acceptance a new member must pay a one-time entrance fee of 50 gc and yearly dues of 25 gc, deliverable to a local boss or the union's offices in Caspia.

The union has contracts with the Fraternal Order of Wizardry and the Order of the Golden Crucible in Ord. Such affiliations lead some arcane mechaniks to join the union. Similarly union contractors are often able to land lucrative deals with the governments of both Cygnar and Ord, where warjack production is heavily dependent upon shops owned and operated by union members. In Khador the union never gained a foothold due to the monolithic presence of the government-sponsored Khadoran Mechaniks Assembly. The union once had influence in Llael, but since the onset of war those connections have withered. Former steamos in Llael have found themselves supplanted by members of the Khadoran Mechaniks Assembly, which their comrades in Cygnar and Ord take personally. The Llaelese Resistance has found a surprising ally in members of the Steam & Iron Workers Union who wish to aid their brothers in Llael.

Membership is considered a mark of quality, so most professionals who work on steam engines or in related industries keep up on their dues. For a nominal fee, larger branches provide training in smithing, engineering, and other crafts. Local union organizers take their reputation very seriously and frown upon anyone who does shoddy work while profiting from the perks of membership. Shops whose members are in good standing are rarely inspected, allowing dishonest bosses to extort applicants for hefty "approval fees."

Along with their regular contracts, union branches are sometimes called upon to protect members working in dangerous environments such as war zones or wilderness; they employ a mercenary group called the Ironhands both for this and for the defense of striking union members.

PLAYER SECTION

CYGNARAN CHARACTERS

A number of options are available only to characters of Cygnaran origin. These options include a new career, modifications to existing careers, a new skill, and kingdom-specific spell lists.

CYGNARAN CAREER OPTIONS

The options available to Cygnaran characters are described below. A player can choose to use as many career options as he wishes during character creation and can take some or all of the options his character meets the requirements for. For example, a player creating a Cygnaran Gun Mage/Warcaster can decide to take the Arcane Tempest option but decide not to take the Cygnaran Warcaster option for his character.

ARCANE TEMPEST GUN MAGE (GUN MAGE)

The Militant Order of the Arcane Tempest is a branch of the Cygnaran military made up exclusively of gun mages trained to serve their nation. Arcane Tempest members serve alongside the other service branches of the army, providing fire support on the battlefields of Immoren.

Only Cygnaran humans can be Arcane Tempest Gun Mages. A character cannot have both the Arcane Tempest Gun Mage and the standard Gun Mage careers. A character starting the game as a member of the Arcane Tempest must choose Aristocrat, Horseman (p. 179), Military Officer, Pistoleer, Ranger, Rifleman, Soldier, Spy, or Warcaster for his second career.

A character taking this option:

- Begins with an armored great coat.
- Begins with Connections (Cygnaran military).
- Can gain the Runesmith ability (p. 90) as a career ability.
- Can gain the Rune Shot: Disruption spell (p. 91) as if it were on his career spell list.

CYGNARAN WARCASTER (WARCASTER)

Heavily trained and mentored, Cygnaran warcasters are the pride of the nation. In addition to any former military training, each member has graduated from the Strategic Academy and completed a tour as a journeyman warcaster assigned to serve under a senior warcaster in the field.

Only Cygnaran humans can be Cygnaran Warcasters. This option must be taken at character creation. A character cannot be a Cygnaran Warcaster and a standard Warcaster. A character starting the game as Cygnaran Warcaster must choose Arcane Mechanik, Arcanist, Aristocrat, Field Mechanik, Gun Mage, Horseman (p. 179), Knight, Man-at-Arms, Military Officer, Pistoleer, Ranger, Rifleman, Soldier, Sorcerer, Stormblade, or Trencher for his second career.

A character taking this option:

- Begins with Connections (Cygnaran military).
- Uses the spell list below instead of the Warcaster spell list in *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules.*
- Begins with Arcane Bolt and Blur. If the character gains Arcane Bolt from both of his starting careers, select one additional Cost 2 spell from either of the character's spell lists.

COST 1	Arcane Strike, Jump Start, Return Fire
COST 2	Arcane Bolt, Aura of Protection, Blur (p. 91), Dead Eye (p. 91), Disruptor (p. 91), Electrify, Fortify, Foxhole, Heightened Reflexes, Lightning Shroud (p. 91), Positive Charge, Refuge, Snipe
COST 3	Arcane Blast (p. 91), Chain Lightning, Deceleration, Earthquake, Electrical Blast, Fail Safe, Force Field, Guided Fire
COST 4	Force Hammer, Tide of Steel, Voltaic Lock

ILLUMINATED ARCANIST (ARCANIST)

The arcanists of the Order of Illumination have devoted their lives to combating the practitioners of black magic wherever they are found. Many of the order's arcanists are former members of the Fraternal Order who were stirred to action by the perceived corruption among their peers. Possessing holy magic fueled by faith, the Illuminated Arcanists are among the Church of Morrow's foremost soldiers in its war against the infernal.

Only a human of the Morrowan faith can be an Illuminated Arcanist. A character cannot be an Illuminated Arcanist and a standard Arcanist.

A character taking this option:

- Begins with Connections (Order of Illumination).
- Uses the spell list below instead of the Arcanist spell list in *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*.
- Begins with Eyes of Truth, Guided Blade, and Occultation.

COST 1	Arcane Strike, Guided Blade, Light in the Darkness
COST 2	Banishing Ward, Blade of Radiance, Blessings of War, Eyes of Truth, Exorcism (p. 91), Occultation, Shield of Faith, True Sight
COST 3	Daylight, Hex Blast, Lamentation, Purification, Sunburst
COST 4	Force Hammer, Force of Faith, Star Fire

STORMGUARD (MAN-AT-ARMS/STORMBLADE)

The Stormguard are a division of Cygnar's legendary Storm Knights. Armed wtih advanced voltaic halberds, the men and women of the Stormguard serve on the battlefields as well as in palaces of Cygnar, acting as the elite defenders of the king.

Only a character who begins the game with the Man-at-Arms and Stormblade careers can be a Stormguard.

A character taking this option:

- Starts the game with the Set Defense and Specialization (Voltaic Halberd) abilities but does not start with Blaster, Defensive Line, or Specialization (Storm Glaive).
- Begins with a voltaic halberd (p. 94) instead of a storm glaive.

STORM LANCE (KNIGHT/STORMBLADE)

The Storm Lances are Cygnar's awe-inspiring, electrically charged heavy cavalry. With both rider and steed encased in layers of galvanically insulated blue steel, the Storm Lances thunder across the battlefields of western Immoren to the roar of sky-splitting thunder.

Only a character who begins the game with the Knight and Stormblade careers can be a Storm Lance.

A character taking this option:

- Starts the game with Riding 1 and the Cavalry Charge ability but does not start with Cleave or Defender.
- Begins with an electro lance (p. 92), shield, and a warhorse with tack and Storm Knight barding (p. 92) but does not begin with a storm glaive.

TRENCHER COMMANDO (RANGER/TRENCHER)

The commandos are an elite branch of the toughest soldiers in Cygnar's formidable army. Extensively trained in the techniques of the Cygnaran Reconnaissance Service (CRS), the Trencher Commandos are accustomed to operating behind enemy lines where their skills in stealth and wetwork can be put to the greatest use.

Only a character who begins the game with the Ranger and Trencher careers can be a Trencher Commando.

A character taking this option:

- Starts the game with the Anatomical Precision and Prowl abilities but does not start with Bayonet Charge or Dig In.
- Begins with a carbine, a trench knife, and three explosive grenades but does not begin with a bayonet, entrenching spade, or military rifle.

EXISTING OPTIONS

Along with these new options for Cygnaran characters, a number of existing options can be modified for a specifically Cygnaran origin. A player familiar with WARMACHINE and wishing to play a Long Gunner character could create a Rifleman/Soldier and start with the repeating long rifle option. A player wishing to be a Sword Knight might consider playing a Knight/Man-at-Arms. A player who wants to play a Precursor Knight may choose to make a Knight/Priest (Morrowan).

STORMSMITH

PREREQUISITES: HUMAN (CYGNARAN)

STARTING ABILITIES, CONNECTIONS, AND SKILLS	Abilities: Specialization (Stormcaller and Lightning Rod), Weatherman, Weather Vane Connections: Connections (Cygnaran military) Military Skills: Great Weapon 1 Occupational Skills: Mechanikal Engineering 1 and Stormsmithing 1 (p. 90)
STARTING ASSETS	Stormsmith armor (p. 92), stormcaller and lightning rod (p. 93)

STORMSMITH ABILITIES	Electromancer (p. 90), Eye of the Storm (p. 90), Hit the Deck!, Maestro (p. 90), Specialization (Stormcaller and Lightning Rod), Storm Booster (p. 90), Weatherman (p. 90), Weather Vane (p. 90)
STORMSMITH CONNECTIONS	Connections (Cygnaran military)
STORMSMITH MILITARY SKILLS	Great Weapon 2, Hand Weapon 2
STORMSMITH OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS	General Skills 4, Mechanikal Engineering 3, Stormsmithing 4 (p. 90)

A stormsmith is an undisputed master of the elements. With barely contained exhilaration he marches alongside the Cygnaran army using sophisticated mechanika to call down thunder and lightning to consume the enemies of his nation or to manipulate the temper of the skies. Recruited for his mechanical aptitude and keen scientific mind, the stormsmith uses the battlefield as a laboratory in which he manifests the full strength of his knowledge and skill in the form of fire from the heavens.

Most stormsmiths begin their training by mastering the mighty stormcaller, a device capable of harnessing the wrath of the storm with remarkable precision. Holding the lightning rod aloft and working the complex dials of the caller, a stormsmith can summon storms from the clearest skies to scorch the earth with raw voltaic power.

Playing a Stormsmith: The Stormsmithing skill and its myriad uses hold the key to this career. Not only can the unpredictable stormsmith call down bolts of lightning to blast apart his enemies, he can also manipulate weather. The stormsmith has the capacity to summon pounding rains to hinder his enemy's pursuit or to snuff out fires. He can call up winds to fill a sail or to hammer nearby buildings, and he never wants for a dramatic rumble of thunder. Although stormsmiths begin play with a powerful set of mechanikal weaponry, they are not by necessity Arcanists or Arcane Mechaniks, though this career pairs thematically with either of those careers. A stormsmith could also benefit from a second career of Soldier to pick up some defensive battlefield tactics that help keep him alive while he works his manipulations. The spectacular nature of stormcalling, however, does not lend itself particularly well to careers who rely on stealth, such as Spy or Thief. Stormsmiths can choose any archetype during character creation.

An experienced stormsmith has access to a number of ways to deal death via the heavens. Upon reaching the Veteran level, the character gains access to the Electromancer ability that grants boosted damage on all his lightning strikes as well as access to the Eye of the Storm ability, which allows him to unleash the full fury of the storm without fear of harming his allies.

NEW ABILITIES

ELECTROMANCER

Prerequisite: Stormsmithing 3

The character's Stormsmithing lightning strike damage rolls are boosted.

EYE OF THE STORM

Prerequisite: Stormsmithing 3

The character's command over elements is such that he can now protect those around him from the fury of the storm. While operating a stormcaller and lightning rod, this character and friendly characters in his command range gain Immunity: Electricity.

MAESTRO

Prerequisite: Stormsmithing 1

The character has a refined mastery over electrical storms and can tailor the effects of his lightning strikes to his needs. When the character makes a Stormsmithing lightning strike skill roll, he can choose one of the following effects. Using a Maestro effect increases the character's target number for the lightning strike by +2.

- Ball Lightning: On a direct hit, the lightning strike gains AOE 3.
- Big One: Increase the POW of the lightning strike electrical damage roll to 13.
- Lightning Generator: On a direct hit, lightning arcs from the target to d3 consecutive additional characters. The lightning arcs to the nearest character it has not already arced to within 4" of the last character it arced to, ignoring this character. Each character the lightning arcs to suffers a POW 10 electrical damage roll.

RUNESMITH

Prerequisite: 'Jack Marshal

Members of the Arcane Tempest have developed means of channeling a gun mage's arcane power into the ammunition fired by the steamjacks they command. Harnessing these forces is not without risks, however, and unlike magelocks, steamjack weapons can seldom handle such power for long.

Only a steamjack armed with a ranged weapon whose ammunition can be rune-etched can be affected by this ability, and then only when it is firing a pre-etched shot. Flamethrowers and weapons that generate blasts of voltaic energy do not have ammunition that can be etched. Etching a single round of steamjack ammunition takes one hour. Because a steamjack cannot be loaded with ammunition in the heat of battle, its controlling gun mage must either make sure all of its rounds are rune etched or be sure he has a system for determining which rounds are etched, such as if the steamjack's first and last rounds are always etched.

During his turn, the gun mage can empower the next rune-etched round fired by each steamjack he controls with a single Rune Shot spell. The gun mage empowers these rounds by casting the Rune Shot spell as if he were casting it on himself. To be empowered, a steamjack must be within 24 feet (4") of the gun mage and the next round loaded in its ranged weapon must have been rune-etched.

When a steamjack fires a round empowered by a Rune Shot spell, roll a d6. On the roll of 1, the shot has damaged the ranged weapon. The first time a 1 is rolled the weapon permanently suffers –1 to its attack rolls. The second time a 1 is rolled the weapon is ruined. This damage cannot be repaired.

STORM BOOSTER

Prerequisite: Stormsmithing 2

The character is able to call upon his manipulation of the storm to supercharge nearby steamjacks. While outdoors and exposed to the elements, this character can spend a full action to give a power token to each friendly steamjack in his command range. During each steamjack's Control Phase, allocate it 1 focus point per power token it has, then remove its power tokens.

WEATHERMAN

Prerequisite: Stormsmithing 1

The character can reroll failed Stormsmithing skill rolls. Each roll can only be rerolled once as a result of Weatherman.

WEATHER VANE

Prerequisite: None

A character with this ability has the uncanny ability to read atmospheric conditions and predict the weather. With a successful PER check against a target number of 12 this character can predict how the weather will act for the next twenty-four hours with uncanny accuracy and can tell if the weather is being artificially manipulated.

NEW SKILL

STORMSMITHING (PERCEPTION)

The character is adept at using mechanika to manipulate the weather and call down the wrath of storms. Stormsmithing is a science that requires the use of advanced mechanika in the form of a stormcaller and lightning rod (p. 93).

To use this skill, the character must have a stormcaller and lightning rod and be outdoors, exposed to the elements.

Untrained Stormsmithing: Characters untrained in Stormsmithing cannot make Stormsmithing rolls. Weather manipulation is a complex science best left to the professionals.

Stormsmithing Rolls: Weather Manipulation. A character with this skill can use a quick action to manipulate local weather conditions with a stormcaller and lightning rod. It is a relatively simple matter to summon a small electrical storm, call up a gust of wind, or cause rain to stop. More extreme applications of this skill require a great deal of proficiency.

Weather manipulation affects a 60-foot radius around the character. The character can increase the radius, adding +2 to the target number for every 30 feet added to the radius. Increasing the radius of an effect once it has been initiated requires an additional die roll.

Once the effect is generated, the character can spend a quick action during each of his turns to maintain the effect without a die roll. The effects of the character's manipulation linger for an additional d3 rounds after he has stopped maintaining the effect.

To manipulate the weather, make a PER + Stormsmithing roll against a target number set by the Game Master.

The following chart offers a sample range of target numbers.

TARGET NUMBER	RESULTING EFFECT
11	Summon storm clouds, cause storm clouds to crack with thunder, produce light rain, or cause a mild rain to stop
14	Summon heavy winds to blow in the direction the character chooses, or cause or halt an immediate downpour
17	Call up an obscuring mist; characters in the affected area gain concealment
20	Summon hurricane-force winds, forcing all characters other than the stormsmith in the affected area to make an AGL roll against a target number of 12 or be knocked down

Stormsmithing Rolls: Lightning Strikes. A character with this skill can use a stormcaller to call down and direct lightning strikes. To call down lightning strikes, there must be electrical storms in the area, either naturally occurring or as a result of weather manipulation (see above). The target of a lightning strike must be outdoors.

Calling down a lightning strike requires a full action. Calling down a strike, whether successful or not, automatically maintains any electrical storms created through weather manipulation.

When a character makes a lightning strike full action, he can choose one of the following options:

- Single Strike: The character calls down a single strike targeting one character within 10″ (60 feet). Make one roll to determine if the strike hits.
- Surge: If the character is within 20″ (120 feet) of another friendly stormsmith operating a stormcaller and lightning rod, he can target up to two characters on a line between himself and the other stormsmith. Make a separate roll to hit each target.
- Triangulation: If a character is within 20″ (120 feet) of two other stormsmiths operating stormcallers and lightning rods that are within 20″ (120 feet) of each other, he can target up to three characters within the triangular area between all three stormsmiths. Make a separate roll to hit each target.

To make a lightning strike, make a PER + Stormsmithing roll against a target number equal to the DEF of the target. If the roll succeeds, the target is hit by the lightning strike; otherwise, nothing happens. Lightning strikes are not ranged attacks and so are not affected by abilities like stealth and do not suffer ranged attack roll penalties.

A character hit by a lightning strike suffers a POW 10 electrical damage roll. Additionally, a steamjack hit by a lightning strike suffers Disruption. (A steamjack suffering Disruption loses its focus points and cannot be allocated focus or channel spells for one round).

Assisted Stormsmithing Rolls: In addition to being able to triangulate their strikes off one another, teams of stormsmiths can act in concert to greater effect. The characters operating together nominate one character to lead the attempt. Each character makes his own PER + Stormsmithing roll. For each character who had a result of 15 or higher, add 1 to the result of the character who led the attempt.

NEW SPELLS

	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
ARCANE BLAST	3	10	3	13	NO	YES
A magical energy blast radiates from a single point to strike all characters in the AOE.						
ARCANE BOLT	2	12	—	11	NO	YES
Magical bolts of energy streak toward the target.						
BLUR	2	6	–	–	YES	NO
Target character gains +3 DEF against ranged and magic attack rolls.						
DEADEYE	2	6	–	–	NO	NO
Target character gains an additional die on his first ranged attack roll during his next turn.						
DISRUPTOR	2	10	–	–	NO	YES
Target steamjack hit loses its focus points and cannot be allocated focus or channel spells for one round.						
EXORCISM	2	SELF	CTRL	–	YES	NO
Characters in the spellcaster's control area lose Incorporeal.						
LIGHTNING SHROUD	2	6	–	–	YES	NO
Target warjack in this character's battlegroup gains +2 STR and its melee weapons gain Electro Leap. (When a character is hit by a weapon with Electro Leap, you can choose to have lightning arc to the nearest character within 4″ of the character hit, ignoring the attacking character. The character the lightning arcs to suffers an unboostable POW 10 electrical damage roll.)						
RUNE SHOT: DISRUPTION	2	SELF	–	–	NO	NO
If the spellcaster's next rune shot ranged attack this turn hits a steamjack, the steamjack suffers Disruption. (A steamjack suffering Disruption loses its focus points and cannot be allocated focus or channel spells for one round).						

ADVENTURING COMPANIES

ILLUMINATED ONES

The characters are a band of Illuminated Ones, witch hunters of the Order of Illumination. They are tasked with investigating cases of infernalism, mesmerism (mind control), and necromancy for the Church of Morrow. Illuminated Ones take their work very seriously and have the legal authority to act as judge, jury, and executioners.

Requirements: Each member of the company must be a devout human Morrowan and must have at least one of the following careers: Illuminated Arcanist (p. 88), Investigator, Knight, or Priest (Morrowan).

Benefits: The characters in the company are regularly dispatched to investigate cases of black magic. Though they have broad powers to conduct their investigations and enforce punishments (up to summary execution), they are still expected to act as law-abiding citizens and faithful members of the Church of Morrow.

Each character created as a member of the company begins with the Iron Will ability and either a Blessed melee weapon (flail, mace, maul, spear, or sword) or an Execrator pistol (p. 95). Blessed weapons are magical weapons and have the Blessed ability. (When making an attack with a weapon with the Blessed ability, ignore spell effects that add to a character's ARM or DEF.)

UNORTHODOX ENGAGEMENT TEAM

The battlefields of the Iron Kingdoms are unpredictable and dangerous places in which modern science intermingles destructively with ancient arcane rites, and even the best planning, training, and equipment cannot support every situation. Drawn from a variety of service branches, Cygnar's unorthodox engagement teams are sent in wherever they are required, bringing with them a variety of expertise beyond the ken of more conventional military units. Gun mages and military arcanists provide support to trencher demolitions experts and Stormblade 'jack marshals. Rather than fighting exclusively on the front lines, UE teams are often tasked with the trickiest, most dangerous, and sometimes strangest missions imaginable, which test their varied skills to the limits.

Requirements: Each member of the company must be Cygnaran and must have at least one of the following careers: Arcane Mechanik, Arcane Tempest Gun Mage (p. 87), Field Mechanik, Ranger (CRS), Rifleman (Long Gunner), Stormblade, Stormsmith (p. 89), Trencher, or Cygnaran Warcaster (p. 87). The players in the group should designate one member of the company to be the lieutenant. The lieutenant then designates a sergeant.

Benefits: The characters in the company receive regular assignments and information of military significance. In addition to any mission-specific gear required, the characters can also expect to be resupplied with ammunition, grenades, and alchemical accumulators.

The lieutenant gains the Natural Leader ability whether or not he meets the prerequisites.

Each character created as a member of the company gains the Find Cover ability.

CYGNARAN GEAR

ARMOR

STORM KNIGHT BARDING

Cost: 675 gc

Description: Storm Knight barding consists of heavy metal plates and layers of insulated padding that protects the knight's steed from his galvanic weapons.

Storm Knight barding cannot be worn by riding horses.

A horse wearing Storm Knight barding gains the Immunity: Electricity ability.

Storm Knight barding adds +8 to a horse's ARM.

STORMSMITH ARMOR

Cost: 80 gc
SPD Modifier: 0
DEF Modifier: –1
ARM Modifier: +5

Description: This is effectively an insulated armored great coat that protects the wearer from the galvanic fury of the storm.

Special Rules: A character wearing stormsmith armor gains the Immunity: Electricity ability.

MELEE WEAPONS

ELECTRO LANCE

Cost: 1,760 gc
Skill: Great Weapon
Attack Modifier: –4 (on foot), 0 (mounted)
POW: 7

Description: The signature weapon of the Storm Lances, this is a galvanically charged mechanikal lance. Though the weapon is balanced for charges from horseback, it also features a shorter blade above the pommel for close in fighting. The electro lance is powered by a storm chamber.

Rune Points: 4

Special Rules: A character must have at least STR 5 to use this weapon.

This weapon can be used two-handed only while on foot.

The electro lance has Reach.

A character armed with this weapon gains +2 POW to charge attack damage rolls while mounted.

A character armed with an electro lance can use it to make electrical bolt ranged attacks. Electro lance bolts are RNG 8, AOE –, POW 12 ranged attacks that cause electrical damage. When making an electro lance ranged attack, the character makes the attack roll using his POI.

When a character is hit with a melee or ranged attack made with this weapon, the wielder can cause lightning to arc to the nearest character within 4″ of the character hit, ignoring the attacking character. The character the lightning arcs to suffers an unboostable POW 10 electrical damage roll.

Each time a character makes an attack with this weapon, he suffers a POW 12 electrical damage roll. For this reason it is advised that a character wielding an electro lance wears electricity resistant Storm Knight armor (see *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*).

Fabrication: The material cost of the electro lance housing is 270 gc. It takes three weeks to construct the device. The pertinent Craft skill for construction is Craft (metal working).

The electro lance's runeplates require four weeks to scribe and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 16.

STORMCALLER AND LIGHTNING ROD

Cost: 1,160 gc
Skill: Great Weapon
Attack Modifier: –2 (one-hand), (–1 two-handed)
POW: 3

Description: Not a true melee weapon, the stormcaller is a complex mechanikal device that enables its wielder to generate and manipulate electrical storms. Though stout enough to deliver a blow in combat, the lightning rod is intended for use as an amplifier for a stormcaller. The rod is powered by a storm chamber.

The stormcaller is a handheld device roughly the size of a large pocket watch and is powered by the ambient energy of the rod.

Rune Points: 4

Special Rules: The lightning rod has Reach.

A character must have a stormcaller in one hand and the lightning rod in the other to use the Stormsmithing skill to manipulate weather or to call down lightning strikes (p. 90).

Fabrication: The material cost of the lightning rod housing is 90 gc. It takes three weeks to construct the device. The pertinent Craft skill for construction is Craft (metal working).

The stormcaller and lightning rod's runeplates require four weeks to scribe and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering or Stormsmithing (whichever is lower) roll against a target number of 16.

Voltaic Halberd

VOLTAIC HALBERD

Cost: 1,110 gc
Skill: Great Weapon
Attack Modifier: 1 (two-handed)
POW: 6

Description: The voltaic halberd is the weapon of the Cygnaran Stormguard. It is an electrically charged mechanikal halberd powered by a storm chamber.

Rune Points: 3

Special Rules: This weapon can only be used two-handed.

When a character is hit with a melee attack made with this weapon, the wielder can cause lightning to arc to the nearest character within 4″ of the character hit, ignoring the attacking character. The character the lightning arcs to suffers an unboostable POW 10 electrical damage roll.

Each time a character makes an attack with this weapon, he suffers a POW 10 electrical damage roll. For this reason it is advised that a character wielding a storm glaive wears electricity-resistant Storm Knight armor.

Fabrication: The material cost of the voltaic halberd housing is 120 gc. It takes three weeks to construct the device. The pertinent Craft skill for construction is Craft (metal working).

The voltaic halberd's runeplates require three weeks to scribe and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 15.

RANGED WEAPONS

CHAIN GUN

Cost: 180 gc
Ammo: 30 (metal-cased light rounds)
Effective Range: 60 feet (10″)
Extreme Range: 300 feet
Skill: Light Artillery
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 10
AOE: —

Description: The chain gun is a multi-barreled, man-portable belt-fed support weapon used extensively by trenchers. The chain gun is generally operated by a crew in the field with a gunner manning the weapon and a loader who supplies ammo and manages the feed. The loader is also tasked with hauling the chain gun's folding tripod when on the move.

Special Rules: This weapon requires two hands.

Once during each of his turns, a gunner firing this weapon can use Burst Fire instead of making a standard ranged attack. When the character uses Burst Fire, he makes d3 attacks but expends six rounds of ammunition. His attacks that turn must target a primary target and any number of secondary targets within 2″ of the primary target. Ignore intervening characters when declaring secondary targets. A secondary target cannot be targeted by more attacks than the primary target.

Chain Gun

Though the chain gun is capable of laying down impressive covering fire, the belt movement is slightly fiddly and can be sped by a gunner managing the feed while the gun is in operation. Managing the feed requires a full action. If another character spends a full action to manage the feed and the gunner makes a Burst Fire attack, the gunner can make three additional attacks during his turn.

Instead of attacking with the weapon, the gunner can instead use a full action to lay down covering fire. When the character uses covering fire, place a 3″ AOE anywhere completely within this weapon's RNG. The center point of the AOE must be in the gunner's LOS, ignoring intervening characters. A character entering or ending his turn in the AOE suffers an unboostable POW 10 damage roll. The AOE remains in play for one round or until the gunner is incapacitated or destroyed. Using covering fire expends ten rounds of ammunition.

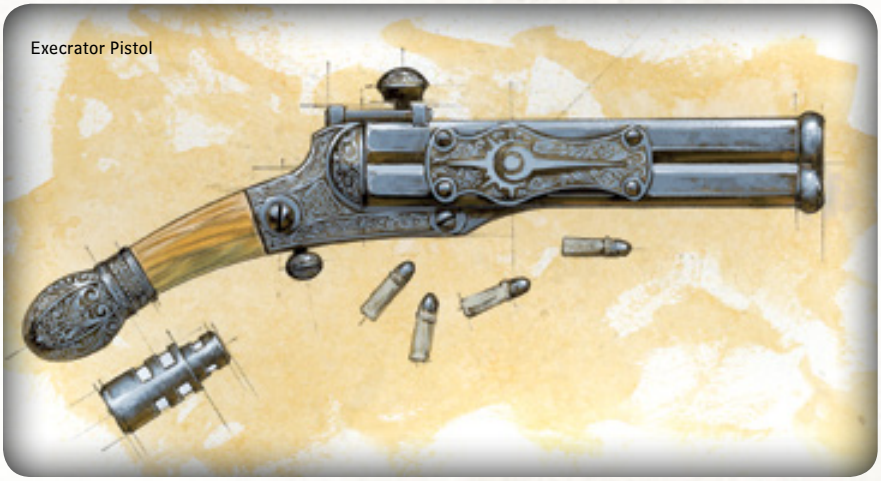
The weapon can only be fired while supported by its tripod. Folding or unfolding the tripod takes a quick action. Mounting the chain gun on the tripod takes a full action. A character moving the tripod while it is folded suffers –2 SPD and DEF, or –3 SPD and DEF while it is open. A character moving the chain gun suffers –2 SPD and DEF. A character attempting to move the chain gun while it is mounted on the tripod suffers –4 SPD and DEF. Reduce SPD and DEF penalties by 1 for characters with STR 6 or greater. The weapon cannot be moved for three rounds after being fired, while it cools down.

Replacing this weapon's ammo belt requires a quick action. Reloading each round into a belt takes one quick action.

It costs 3 gc for blasting powder, bullets, and metal casings for five light rounds. An extra ammo belt costs 10 gc.

EXECRATOR PISTOL

Cost: 1,270 gc
Ammo: 2 (heavy round)
Effective Range: 48 feet (8″)
Extreme Range: 240 feet
Skill: Pistol
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 11
AOE: —


Execrator Pistol

Description: The signature weapon of the Order of Illumination, the Execrator is a silver plated, dual-barrel heavy mechanikal pistol. The weapon's runeplate charges rounds fired from the pistol with holy power that is proof against infernals and the undead. The Execrator's alchemical capacitor is housed within its white oak grip.

These ornate weapons are masterpieces of craftsmanship. They are produced exclusively by the Sancteum's armory and generally are available only to members of the Order of Illumination, though some have made their way into the hands of wealthy collectors.

Rune Points: 3

Special Rules: Attacks made with this weapon are magical.

Add an additional die to Execrator damage rolls against infernal and undead characters.

It takes a quick action to load each of the Execrator's two barrels.

It costs 4 gc for blasting powder, bullets, and metal casings for five heavy rounds.

Fabrication: The material cost of the Execrator housing is 240 gc. It takes five weeks to smith the weapon. The pertinent Craft skill for construction is Craft (metalworking).

The Execrator pistol's runeplates require three weeks to inscribe and require a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering or Lore (Morrowan faith) roll, whichever is lower, against a target number of 14.

LIGHT CANNON

Cost: 170 gc
Ammo: 1
Effective Range: 90 feet (15″)
Extreme Range: 450 feet
Skill: Light Artillery
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 13
AOE: 3

Description: This is a standard light artillery weapon used by trenchers. It is fairly light and easily maneuverable by teams of three men. However, when possible, trenchers prefer to construct temporary earthwork firing positions that offer some degree of protection from incoming fire.

Special Rules: This weapon requires two hands to operate and fire.

Reloading this weapon takes a full action. Generally one crewman assists in reloading the cannon and the gunner fires it.

A character moving the cannon suffers –2 SPD and DEF. Reduce this penalty by 1 for each additional character aiding in the movement of the weapon.

It costs 5 gc for a charge and one round of ammunition.

MINI-SLUGGER

Cost: 250 gc
Ammo: 30 (metal-cased heavy rounds)
Effective Range: 60 feet (10″)
Extreme Range: 300 feet
Skill: Light Artillery
Attack Modifier: 0 (on stand), –1 (fired standing)
POW: 11
AOE: —

Description: The mini-slugger is an early rapid-fire assault weapon. Smaller and more portable than the chain gun, it is sometimes issued as a trencher platoon support weapon.

Special Rules: This weapon can be carried by any character with STR 5 or greater. However, the weapon can be fired from a standing position only by a character with STR 6 or greater. A character with a lower STR must fire it from a seated or prone position with its stand unfolded. Folding or unfolding the stand takes a quick action.

This weapon requires two hands.

Once during each of his turns, a character firing this weapon can use Burst Fire. When the character uses Burst Fire, he makes d3 attacks but expends six rounds of ammunition. His attacks that turn must target a primary target and any number of secondary targets within 2″ of the primary target. Ignore intervening characters when declaring secondary targets. A secondary target cannot be targeted by more attacks than the primary target.

Replacing this weapon's ammo belt requires a quick action. Reloading each round into a belt takes one quick action.

It costs 4 gc for blasting powder, bullets, and metal casings for five heavy rounds.

An extra ammo belt costs 10 gc.

Radcliffe Firestorm

RADCLIFFE FIRESTORM

Cost: 240 gc
Ammo: 5 (metal-cased heavy round)
Effective Range: 48 feet (8″)
Extreme Range: 240 feet
Skill: Pistol
Attack Modifier: –1
POW: 12
AOE: —

Description: Produced in very small numbers, the Firestorm is a repeating heavy pistol that fires metal-cased rounds. Their high cost has ensured that these weapons are found only in the hands of senior military officers and wealthy nobles with a taste for rare and exquisite firearms. The weapon utilizes a five-chambered ammo wheel that can be replaced in the heat of combat instead of reloading each cylinder separately.

Special Rules: Replacing this weapon's ammo wheel requires a quick action. Reloading each cylinder of the ammo wheel takes one quick action.

It costs 4 gc for blasting powder, bullets, and metal casings for five heavy rounds.

An extra ammo wheel costs 15 gc.

SLUGGER

Cost: 310 gc
Ammo: 30 (metal-cased heavy rounds)
Effective Range: 60 feet (10″)
Extreme Range: 300 feet
Skill: Light Artillery
Attack Modifier: –1
POW: 13
AOE: —

Description: The slugger is a heavy rapid-fire cannon. It is not a mobile support weapon and can be fired only from a fixed position.

Special Rules: This weapon can be carried by any character with STR 6 or greater. While carrying this weapon, a character suffers –2 SPD and DEF and cannot make any attacks or other actions.

The weapon can only be fired from a fixed position, such a folding tripod or swivel mount.

This weapon requires two hands.

Once during each of his turns, a character firing this weapon can use Burst Fire. When the character uses Burst Fire, he makes d3 attacks but expends six rounds of ammunition. His attacks that turn must target a primary target and any number of secondary targets within 2″ of the primary target. Ignore intervening characters when declaring secondary targets. A secondary target cannot be targeted by more attacks than the primary target.

Replacing this weapon's ammo belt requires a quick action. Reloading each round into a belt takes one quick action.

It costs 4 gc for blasting powder, bullets, and metal casings for five heavy rounds.

An extra ammo belt cost 10 gc.

THE COST OF STEAM POWER

The logistics of operating steamjacks can be daunting, but the actual costs of fuel are fairly manageable. When purchased in bulk, coal is relatively cheap. In most populated regions of western Immoren, a ton of coal can be purchased for 100 gc. Forward-thinking mechaniks and warcasters stock surplus coal in whichever city or outpost serves as their base of operations. Ready access to water can actually be a greater limiting factor in areas such as the Bloodstone Marches and the deserts of southern Immoren. Most steamjacks carry a load of fuel to allow many hours of exploration, but all steamjacks burn fuel at a much faster rate when engaged in combat. It is worth noting that outside of the battlefield few fights last more than a handful of minutes, so a fully fueled steamjack can be counted on to perform in several brief engagements each day.

The fuel load of a steamjack is typically several hundred pounds of water and coal. A typical fuel load ratio is five pounds of water for every pound of coal. A warjack with a 660-pound fuel load would carry 110 pounds of coal and 550 pounds of water.

Coal is available throughout the Iron Kingdoms and becomes cheaper when purchased in bulk. The following prices are standard throughout the Iron Kingdoms:

Coal, 20-pound bag: 3 gc

Coal, 50-pound bag: 5 gc

Coal, delivery of 1,000 pounds: 60 gc

Coal, delivery of 2,000 pounds: 100 gc

CYGNARAN STEAMJACKS

The Cygnaran Armory has the singular distinction of being able to call itself the birthplace of all steamjacks, since its factories assembled the great colossals for the Rebellion against the Orgoth. In the years that followed, Cygnar led all the other nations of western Immoren in the production and design of new steamjacks. Cygnar pioneered the production of the first true cortexes, created the first arc nodes, and has even experimented with new sources of power.

Cygnaran warjacks are the pinnacle of steamjack technology, built for speed, strength, and performance. The Cygnaran Armory, assisted by private contractors including Engines East and the Fraternal Order of Wizardry, constantly improves upon the designs to meet emerging wartime needs.

CHASSIS AND WEAPON SYSTEMS

The armies of the Iron Kingdoms approach their warjacks as integrated weapon systems. Each chassis has a host of weapons developed specifically for it, most designed for use only in specific configurations. Mounting these weapons on a chassis they were not designed to work with can be quite expensive and labor-intensive.

RULES

The following attributes define each steamjack chassis in the game.

Cost: This is the cost of the cost of the chassis in Cygnaran gold crowns.

Description: This is a description of the chassis.

Height/Weight: These are the chassis' technical specs.

Fuel Load/Burn Usage: This describes the chassis' standard fuel load and burn rate.

Initial Service Date: This is the date the chassis first entered service.

Original Chassis Design: This is the original manufacturer or designer of the chassis.

Stock Cortex: This is the cortex that comes stock with the steamjack chassis. The cost of this cortex is included in the cost of the chassis. It is assumed the cortex has been wiped and has no lingering personality at the time of purchase. The cortex can be replaced, but the original personality of the steamjack will be lost as a result. For cortex descriptions, see *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*.

Stats: These are the chassis' stats. The steamjack's INT and PER are determined by its cortex. The stats listed below assume a stock cortex.

Special Rules: These are the special rules that apply to the chassis.

Damage Grid: This is the chassis' damage grid.

CHARGER CHASSIS AND WEAPONS SYSTEMS

CHARGER LIGHT WARJACK CHASSIS

Cost: 7,500 gc (with a stock cortex), 5,000 gc (chassis only)

Description: The Charger is Cygnar's mainstay light warjack chassis. Its variants include the Firefly, Lancer, and Sentinel, each with a unique weapon configuration.

Height/Weight: 8′7″ / 2.1 tons

Fuel Burn/Load Usage: 297 lbs / 6.5 hrs general, 75 mins combat

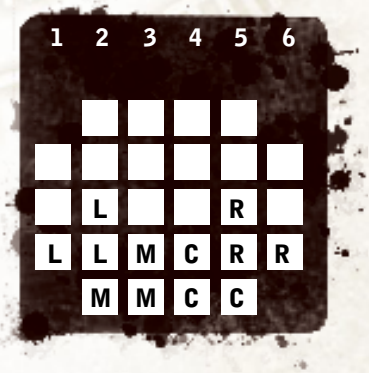
Initial Service Date: 567 AR

Original Chassis Design: Cygnaran Armory

Stock Cortex: Aurum-grade

PHY	**8**
STR	**8**
SPD	**6**
AGL	**5**
PRW	**5**
POI	**5**
INT	**2**
PER	**2**
Initiative	**13**
MAT	**6**
RAT	**6**
DEF	**13**
ARM	**16**

DAMAGE GRID



Special Rules: Initiative is rolled only in the case of an uncontrolled steamjack. Otherwise, the 'jack activates on its controller's initiative.

Initiative MAT, RAT, DEF, and ARM assume a stock cortex.

CHARGER WARJACK

The Charger comes stock with a dual cannon mounted on the left arm and a fist for its right. It is armed with a battle hammer.

BATTLE HAMMER (LIGHT STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 120 gc
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 4

Description: This is a light warjack-sized hammer.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the battle hammer. While wielding the battle hammer, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the battle hammer is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

DUAL CANNON (LIGHT STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 300 gc
Type: Ranged
Location: Left Arm
Ammo: 10
Effective Range: 72 feet (12″)
Extreme Range: 360 feet
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 12
AOE: —

Description: The dual cannon is an advanced, twin-barreled light gun. The dual cannon has been designed to harness the arcane power invested in a warjack armed with the weapon for maximum effect. The dual cannon harnesses the recoil action of the gun to reload the second barrel automatically with every shot.

Special Rules: Generally this weapon can be fired only once per round. However, a bonded steamjack with this weapon can spend a focus point to make one additional attack with this weapon during its activation, or a 'jack marshal with the Drive: Ancillary Attack ability can use the drive to make one immediate attack in addition to the steamjack being able to use the cannon once per round.

When attacking with this weapon, the steamjack can spend 1 focus point to boost both its attack and damage roll for the attack.

Reloading the cannon outside of combat takes five minutes and can be accomplished by any character with the Mechanikal Engineering skill without a die roll.

The dual cannon fires light artillery rounds in metal casings. Light artillery rounds cost 5 gc each.

Mounting this weapon on a steamjack chassis requires the mechanik to remove the steamjack's old arm and replace it with the dual cannon (see "Removing or Replacing Arms" in the Steamjacks section of *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*). Mounting a dual cannon on a light steamjack chassis other than a Charger chassis takes double the normal amount of time and increases the target number to 16. A character who wishes to pay to have a dual cannon integrated into a light steamjack chassis other than a Charger must pay double the normal rate.

Replacing a Charger arm system with a dual cannon costs an additional 60 gc unless the character does the job himself. Having an arm system replaced with a dual cannon on a chassis other than a Charger chassis costs an additional 100 gc.

FIREFLY WARJACK

The Firefly is a highly advanced warjack with a very specific role on the battlefield: the support of Cygnar's electrified infantry. These warjacks are built in small numbers and at high cost. The Firefly comes stock with a storm blaster mounted on the left arm and a fist for its right. It is armed with an electro glaive. Additionally, Fireflies integrate electrical shielding (p. 110) and storm relay upgrades (p. 111).

WATER, WAGONS, AND INCIDENTALS

In addition to the cost of coal, a 'jack marshal must also consider the logistics of getting fuel to the machine. Unless he limits himself to working an area in the close vicinity of his coal supply, at some point he will need to invest in water tanks, coal wagons, and a team of horses to get his 'jack from place to place.

Wagon, small: 50 gc

Wagon, large: 85 gc

Water pump, hand: 10 gc

Water tank, 5 gallon (holds about 42 pounds of water): 2 gc

Water tank, 10 gallon (holds about 83 pounds of water): 3 gc

Water tank, 50 gallon (holds about 420 pounds of water): 5 gc

Wagons designed to carry steamjacks are heavily reinforced constructions of wood and steel. They are generally uncovered and have separate locations for fuel and other cargo. Steamjacks are lashed or chained down for transportation to limit the chance of shifting while on the move.

A typical small wagon is large enough to accommodate a single light steamjack and a modest load of fuel or other cargo. The wagon has room for a driver and single passenger. Small wagons are usually pulled by a pair of draft horses (sold separately).

A typical large wagon is large enough to accommodate a single heavy steamjack or a pair of light steamjacks along with a heavier load of fuel or other cargo. The wagon has room for a driver and up to two passengers. Large wagons must be pulled by a team of at least two draft horses (sold separately).

ELECTRO GLAIVE (LIGHT STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 1,410 gc
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 5
Rune Points: 1

Description: This is an electrified mechanikal glaive. The weapon harnesses galvanic power to increase the damage it deals. It is powered by a dedicated storm chamber.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the electro glaive. While wielding the electro glaive, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the electro glaive is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

The electro glaive has Reach.

If this weapon does not have a functional accumulator, its POW is reduced to 3 and it gains an attack modifier of –1.

Fabrication: The material cost of the electro glaive housing is 300 gc. It takes three weeks to construct the device. The pertinent Craft skill for construction is Craft (metal working).

The electro glaive's runeplates require one week to scribe and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 13.

STORM BLASTER (LIGHT STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 2,960 gc
Type: Ranged
Location: Left Arm
Ammo: N/A
Effective Range: 60 feet (10″)
Extreme Range: —
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 10
AOE: —
Rune Points: 4

Description: The storm blaster is a mechanikal ranged weapon that generates bolts of electrical power. It is powered by a dedicated storm chamber.

Special Rules: This weapon can be fired only once per round.

The storm blaster causes electrical damage.

When a character is hit with this weapon, the steamjack can cause lightning to arc to the nearest character within 4″ of the character hit, ignoring the attacking steamjack. The character the lightning arcs to suffers an unboostable POW 10 electrical damage roll.

Generally this weapon is integrated only into steamjacks with Immunity: Electricity. Each time a steamjack without Immunity: Electricity makes an attack with this weapon, it suffers a POW 10 electrical damage roll.

Mounting this weapon on steamjack chassis requires the mechanik to remove the steamjack's old arm and replace it with the storm blaster (see "Removing or Replacing Arms" in the Steamjacks section of *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*). Mounting a storm blaster on a light steamjack chassis other than a Charger chassis takes double the normal amount of time and increases the target number to 16. A character who wishes to pay to have a storm blaster integrated into a light steamjack chassis other than a Charger must pay double the normal rate.

Replacing a Charger's arm system with a storm blaster costs an additional 60 gc unless the character does the job himself. Having an arm system replaced with a storm blaster on a chassis other than a Charger chassis costs an additional 100 gc.

This weapon cannot be used without a functional accumulator.

Fabrication: The material cost of the storm blaster housing is 630 gc. It takes four weeks to construct the device. The pertinent Craft skill for construction is Craft (metal working).

The storm blaster's runeplates require four weeks to scribe and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 16.

LANCER WARJACK

The Lancer comes stock with a pair of fists and an arc node. It is armed with a shock shield and war spear.

SHOCK SHIELD (LIGHT STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 2,470 gc
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 1
Rune Points: 3

Description: The shock shield is a mechanikal shield designed to unleash electrical charges to disabled the cortexes of enemy warjacks. It is powered by an integral alchemical capacitor.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the shock shield. While wielding the shock shield, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the shock shield is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with its weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

A steamjack gains +2 ARM against attacks originating in its front arc.

When a steamjack is hit with this weapon, it suffers 1 damage point to its first available cortex system box. If a steamjack in this steamjack's front arc hits it with a melee attack, immediately after the attack is resolved the attacker suffers 1 damage point to its first available cortex system box. This steamjack loses this ability while this weapon system is crippled or locked. If this weapon does not have a functional accumulator, it loses this ability and gains an attack modifier of –1.

Fabrication: The material cost of the shock shield housing is 600 gc. It takes three weeks to construct the device. The pertinent Craft skill for construction is Craft (metal working).

The shock shield's runeplates require three weeks to scribe and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 15.

WAR SPEAR

Cost: 200 gc (light steamjack), 300 gc (heavy steamjack)
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 4

Description: The war spear is a heavy reinforced spear designed for defense as well as attacking.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the war spear. While wielding the war spear, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the war spear is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

The war spear has Reach.

A character in the front arc of a steamjack with a war spear suffers –2 on charge, slam power attack, and impact attack rolls against the steamjack armed with the war spear.

SENTINEL WARJACK

The Sentinel comes stock with a chain gun mounted on the right arm and a fist for its left. It is armed with an assault shield. Additionally, Sentinels integrate defensive reflex array upgrades (p. 110).

ASSAULT SHIELD

Cost: 500 gc
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 2

Description: This is a heavy reinforced steamjack-sized shield with spikes and ram plates for inflicting additional damage in combat.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the assault shield. While wielding the assault shield, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the assault shield is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

A steamjack gains +2 ARM against attacks originating in its front arc.

SENTINEL CHAIN GUN (LIGHT STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 250 gc
Type: Ranged
Location: Right Arm
Ammo: 30 (metal-cased light round)
Effective Range: 60 feet (10″)
Extreme Range: 300 feet
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 10
AOE: —

Description: This is a multi-barreled chain gun designed specifically for the Charger chassis.

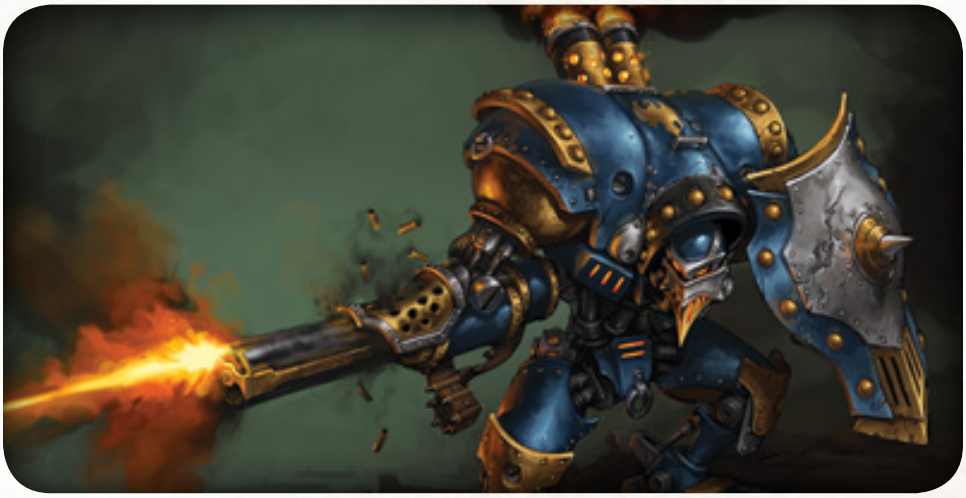
Special Rules: This weapon can only be fired once per round. However, when the weapon is fired, the steamjack can use Burst Fire. When the steamjack uses Burst Fire, it makes d3 attacks but expends six rounds of ammunition. These attacks must target a primary target and any number of secondary targets within 2″ of the primary target. Ignore intervening characters when declaring secondary targets. A secondary target cannot be targeted by more attacks than the primary target.

Reloading the chain gun outside of combat takes five minutes and can be accomplished by any character with the Mechanikal Engineering skill without a die roll.

The chain gun fires metal-cased light infantry rounds. It costs 3 gc for blasting powder, bullets, and metal casings for five light rounds.

Mounting this weapon on steamjack chassis requires the mechanik to remove the steamjack's old arm and replace it with the chain gun (see "Removing or Replacing Arms" in the Steamjacks section of *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*). Mounting a chain gun on a light steamjack chassis other than a Charger chassis takes double the normal amount of time and increases the target number to 16. A character who wishes to pay to have a chain gun integrated into a light steamjack chassis other than a Charger must pay double the normal rate.

Replacing a Charger arm system with a chain gun costs an additional 60 gc unless the character does the job himself. Having an arm system replaced with a chain gun on a chassis other than a Charger chassis costs an additional 100 gc.



HUNTER CHASSIS AND WEAPON SYSTEMS

HUNTER LIGHT WARJACK CHASSIS

Cost: 8,500 gc (with a stock cortex), 6,000 gc (chassis only)

Description: The Hunter is among the most advanced and versatile light warjacks ever developed. Its variants include the Grenadier and the Minuteman.

Height/Weight: 8´5˝ / 2 tons

Fuel Burn/Load Usage: 400 lbs / 8.5 hrs general, 90 mins combat

Initial Service Date: 603 AR

Original Chassis Design: Cygnaran Armory

Stock Cortex: Aurum-grade

PHY	**7**
STR	**7**
SPD	**6**
AGL	**6**
PRW	**5**
POI	**5**
INT	**2**
PER	**2**
Initiative	**13**
MAT	**6**
RAT	**6**
DEF	**14**
ARM	**15**

DAMAGE GRID

Special Rules: Initiative is rolled only in the case of an uncontrolled steamjack. Otherwise, the 'jack activates on its controller's initiative.

Initiative MAT, RAT, DEF, and ARM assume a stock cortex.

HUNTER WARJACK

The Hunter was designed to seek out and destroy enemy warjacks on the battlefield. It comes stock with a long arm cannon mounted on the left arm and a fist for its right. It is armed with a battle axe. Additionally, Hunters integrate an all-terrain compensator and augmented cortex receiver upgrades (p. 110).

BATTLE AXE

Cost: 120 gc (light steamjack), 180 gc (heavy steamjack)
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 4

Description: This is a heavy, reinforced steamjack-sized axe.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the battle axe. While wielding the battle axe, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the battle axe is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

LONG ARM (LIGHT STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 400 gc
Type: Ranged
Location: Left Arm
Ammo: 6
Effective Range: 84 feet (14˝)
Extreme Range: 420 feet
Attack Modifier: +1
POW: 6
AOE: —

Description: This precision, long-barreled cannon fires a hardened round designed to penetrate heavy armor.

Special Rules: Due to the slow rate of its auto loading mechanism, this weapon can be fired only once per round.

When calculating damage from this weapon, halve the ARM of characters hit who have medium or larger bases. This weapon gains +2 to damage rolls against characters with small bases.

Reloading the long arm outside of combat takes five minutes and can be accomplished by any character with the Mechanikal Engineering skill without a die roll.

The long arm uses ammunition unique to its design. Each round costs 8 gc.

Mounting this weapon on a steamjack chassis requires the mechanik to remove the steamjack's old arm and replace it with the long arm (see "Removing or Replacing Arms" in the Steamjacks section of *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*). Mounting a long arm on a light steamjack chassis other than a Hunter chassis takes double the normal amount of time and increases the target number to 16. A character who wishes to pay to have a long arm integrated into a light steamjack chassis other than a Hunter must pay double the normal rate.

Replacing a Hunter's arm system with a long arm costs an additional 60 gc unless the character does the job himself. Having an arm system replaced with a long arm on a chassis other than a Hunter chassis costs an additional 100 gc.

GRENADIER WARJACK

The Grenadier was designed to support trencher forces in the field. It comes stock with a grenade launcher mounted on the left arm and a fist for its right. It is armed with a mattock.

GRENADE LAUNCHER (LIGHT STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 350 gc
Type: Ranged
Location: Left Arm
Ammo: 5
Effective Range: 60 feet (10″)
Extreme Range: 300 feet
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 12
AOE: 3

Description: This weapon is designed to lob shells rapidly across the battlefield. In addition to its internal ammunition supply, the weapon also has an integral ammo port that can be manually reloaded by assisting soldiers in the field.

Special Rules: Due to the slow rate of its auto loading mechanism, this weapon can be fired only once per round. However, a steamjack armed with this weapon can make one additional attack with this weapon during its turn for each assisting character B2B with it who spent a full action to load this weapon in the past round.

When attacking with this weapon, the steamjack can ignore intervening characters except those within 1″ of the target.

Reloading the grenade launcher's internal ammo supply outside of combat takes five minutes and can be accomplished by any character with the Mechanikal Engineering skill without a die roll.

The grenade launcher uses ammunition unique to its design. Each round costs 6 gc.

Mounting this weapon on a steamjack chassis requires the mechanik to remove the steamjack's old arm and replace it with the grenade launcher (see "Removing or Replacing Arms" in the Steamjacks section of *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*). Mounting a grenade launcher on a light steamjack chassis other than a Hunter chassis takes double the normal amount of time and increases the target number to 16. A character who wishes to have a long arm integrated into a light steamjack chassis other than a Hunter must pay double the normal rate.

Replacing a Hunter arm system with a grenade launcher costs an additional 60 gc unless the character does the job himself. Having an arm system replaced with a grenade launcher on a chassis other than a Hunter chassis costs an additional 100 gc.

MATTOCK (LIGHT STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 200 gc
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 5

Description: This is a heavy, reinforced steamjack-sized axe.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the mattock. While wielding the mattock, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the mattock is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

A steamjack armed with this weapon can make a full action to dig an improvised foxhole. Until it moves, is placed, goes prone, or is engaged, the steamjack gains cover, does not suffer blast damage, and does not block line of sight.

MINUTEMAN WARJACK

The Minuteman is a rapid assault warjack bristling with sophisticated weapon systems. It comes stock with a pair of fists that integrate underarm slug guns. These warjacks also integrate a unique advanced propulsion pack (p. 104) and a grenade field (p. 111) upgrade.

UNDERARM SLUG GUN (LIGHT STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 220 gc
Type: Ranged
Location: Arm
Ammo: 5 (slug round)
Effective Range: 24 feet (4″)
Extreme Range: —
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 14
AOE: —

Description: This is an underarm slug gun intended to be mounted into the forearm of a steamjack with Open Fists. The weapon integrates storage for five rounds of ammunition.

Special Rules: Due to the slow rate of its auto loading mechanism, this weapon can be fired only once per round.

Reloading the slug gun's internal ammo supply outside of combat takes twenty minutes and can be accomplished by any character with the Mechanikal Engineering skill without a die roll.

Each turn, a steamjack with an underarm slug gun can attack with either the slug gun or the fist it is mounted under, not both.

This weapon uses standard infantry solid slug rounds. Each round costs 1 gc.

This weapon was designed especially for the Hunter chassis but can be integrated into any light steamjack arm with an Open Fist. Integrating an underarm slug gun into a Hunter's arm system requires the proper tools, four hours of labor, and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 14. Increase the target number to 16 if the steamjack does not have a Hunter chassis. If the roll fails, it can be repeated after another hour of labor.

PROPULSION PACK (UPGRADE)

Cost: 400 gc

Description: Utilizing an exactingly designed series of compression chambers, a Minuteman can vent its heartfire through an arcane turbine that powers a special propulsion system in order to briefly launch itself into the air.

Special Rules: Once per turn, after making a full advance but before performing any attacks, a steamjack with this upgrade can spend 1 focus point to be placed completely within 5″ of its current location.

This upgrade can be integrated only into the Hunter chassis. Integrating this upgrade into a Hunter chassis requires the proper tools, six hours of labor, and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 16. If the roll fails, it can be repeated after another hour of labor. Having a propulsion pack integrated into a steamjack costs an additional 80 gc.

CENTURION CHASSIS AND WEAPONS SYSTEMS

CENTURION HEAVY WARJACK CHASSIS

Cost: 10,000 gc (with a stock cortex), 7,500 gc (chassis only)

Description: The Centurion is a heavy chassis designed to go toe-to-toe with Khador's heaviest warjacks. Though it lacks some of the sophistication of Cygnar's more advanced designs, it is a testament of durability. Its variants include the Avenger and the Hammersmith, each with a unique weapon configuration.

Height/Weight: 12′7″ / 7 tons

Fuel Burn/Load Usage: 700 lbs / 4.5 hrs general, 50 mins combat

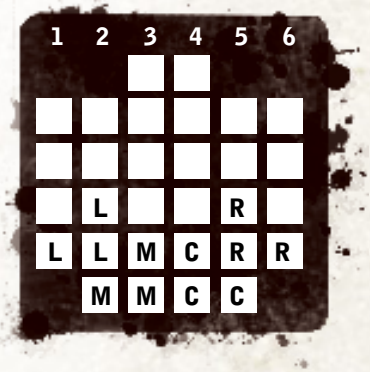
Initial Service Date: 599 AR

Original Chassis Design: Cygnaran Armory

Stock Cortex: Aurum-grade

PHY	**12**
STR	**12**
SPD	**4**
AGL	**5**
PRW	**5**
POI	**3**
INT	**2**
PER	**2**
Initiative	**11**
MAT	**6**
RAT	**4**
DEF	**11**
ARM	**19**

DAMAGE GRID



Special Rules: Initiative is rolled only in the case of an uncontrolled steamjack. Otherwise, the 'jack activates on its controller's initiative.

Initiative MAT, RAT, DEF, and ARM assume a stock cortex.

CENTURION WARJACK

The Centurion comes stock with a pair of fists. It is armed with a magno shield and piston spear.

MAGNO SHIELD (HEAVY STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 3,470 gc
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 1

Rune Points: 3

Description: The magno shield is a mechanikal shield designed to generate a kinetic field to protect the steamjack armed with the weapon from enemy charges. It is powered by an integral alchemical capacitor.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the magno shield. While wielding the magno shield, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the magno shield is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

A steamjack gains +2 ARM against attacks originating in its front arc.

A steamjack armed with this weapon can use a full action to activate the kinetic field. For one round after activating the field, the steamjack cannot be charged or slammed by a character beginning his charge in the steamjack's front arc. If this weapon does not have a functional accumulator, it loses this ability and gains an attack modifier of –1.

Fabrication: The material cost of the magno shield housing is 900 gc. It takes four weeks to construct the device. The pertinent Craft skill for construction is Craft (metal working).

The magno shield's runeplates require three weeks to scribe and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 15.

PISTON SPEAR (HEAVY STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 550 gc
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 6

Description: The piston spear is a mechanical, rather than mechanikal, weapon powered by an alchemical capacitor. The weapon features a hydraulic spear head that is driven into the target.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the piston spear. While wielding the piston spear, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the piston spear is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

The piston spear has Reach.

On a critical hit with this weapon during the steamjack's activation, attacks made with this weapon against the character critically hit by this weapon automatically hit it. If the steamjack attacks another character with this weapon this activation, attacks against the last character critically hit with this weapon no longer automatically hit it.

If this weapon does not have a functional accumulator, its POW is reduced to 4 and it loses its critical effect.

AVENGER WARJACK

The Avenger comes stock with a seismic cannon mounted on the left arm and a fist for its right. It is armed with a stun blade.

SEISMIC CANNON (HEAVY STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 450 gc
Type: Ranged
Location: Left Arm
Ammo: 3
Effective Range: 60 feet (10″)
Extreme Range: 300 feet
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 14
AOE: 4

Description: The seismic cannon fires sophisticated mechanikal projectiles that unleash a localized earthquake. Roughly the size of a man's head, each of these shells contains a complex arcanodynamic generator, a series of intricate and precisely arranged runeplates, and a small alchemical detonator. Upon impact the detonator initiates an astonishing eruption of arcane force.

Special Rules: Due to the slow rate of its auto loading mechanism, this weapon can be fired only once per round.

On a direct hit, all characters hit by the AOE are knocked down.

Reloading the cannon outside of combat takes ten minutes and can be accomplished by any character with the Mechanikal Engineering skill without a die roll.

Mounting this weapon on steamjack chassis requires the mechanik to remove the steamjack's old arm and replace it with the seismic cannon (see "Removing or Replacing Arms" in the Steamjacks section of *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*). Mounting a seismic cannon on a heavy steamjack chassis other than a Centurion chassis takes double the normal amount of time and increases the target number to 16. A character who wishes to have a seismic cannon integrated into a heavy steamjack chassis other than a Centurion must pay double the normal rate.

Replacing a Centurion's arm system with a seismic cannon costs an additional 60 gc unless the character does the job himself. Having an arm system replaced with a seismic cannon on a chassis other than a Centurion chassis costs an additional 100 gc.

Only the Cygnaran Armory produces the ammunition for the seismic cannon. The ammunition is highly complex and expensive to produce. As a result, it can seldom be found for sale at any price. A potential buyer should expect to pay in excess of 100 gc per round.

STUN BLADE (HEAVY STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 1,670 gc
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 6
Rune Points: 3

Description: The stun blade is a mechanikal weapon that generates a negatively tuned field of energy that sends conflicting signals into the cortex of a steamjack it strikes. The weapon is powered by an alchemical capacitor.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the stun blade. While wielding the stun blade, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the stun blade is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

A steamjack hit by this weapon suffers the Stall continuous effect. While a steamjack is suffering Stall, its base DEF becomes 7 and it cannot run or charge.

If this weapon does not have a functional accumulator, its POW is reduced to 5, it gains an attack modifier of –1, and it cannot inflict the Stall continuous effect.

Fabrication: The material cost of the stun blade housing is 360 gc. It takes four weeks to construct the device. The pertinent Craft skill for construction is Craft (metal working).

The stun blade's runeplates require three weeks to scribe and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 15.

HAMMERSMITH WARJACK

The Hammersmith comes stock with a pair of fists. It is armed with a pair of smith hammers.

SMITH HAMMERS (HEAVY STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 700 gc (pair)
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 5

Description: These are a pair of incredibly heavy hammers designed to batter a foe backward with the power of their blows.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up a smith hammer. While wielding the smith hammer, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the smith hammer is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

On a hit with an attack with a smith hammer, the steamjack can immediately push its target 1" directly away. After the target is pushed, the steamjack can advance up to 1".

If a steamjack armed with a pair of smith hammers hits the same target with both its initial smith hammer attacks, after resolving the attacks it can immediately make one additional melee attack against its target. If the additional attack hits, the target is slammed d6" directly away from the steamjack. The POW of the slam damage roll is equal to the STR of the steamjack + 5 (the POW of this weapon). The POW of collateral damage is equal to the STR of the steamjack. The steamjack cannot make this additional attack while either of its arms are crippled.

When a steamjack armed with a pair of smith hammers slams a target, immediately after the slam is resolved the steamjack can advance directly toward the slammed character up to the distance the slammed character was moved.

IRONCLAD CHASSIS AND WEAPONS SYSTEMS

IRONCLAD HEAVY WARJACK CHASSIS

Cost: 10,500 gc (with stock arcanum-grade cortex), 6,000 gc (chassis only)

Description: The Ironclad has been Cygnar's standard heavy warjack design since 556 AR. Its variants include the Cyclone, Defender, and Stormclad.

Height/Weight: 12′3″ / 5.7 tons

Fuel Burn/Load Usage: 582 lbs / 5.5 hrs general, 60 mins combat

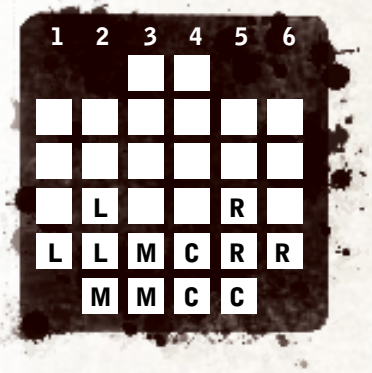
Initial Service Date: 556 AR

Original Chassis Design: Cygnaran Armory

Stock Cortex: Arcanum-grade

PHY	**11**
STR	**11**
SPD	**5**
AGL	**4**
PRW	**5**
POI	**4**
INT	**3**
PER	**3**
Initiative	**13**
MAT	**7**
RAT	**6**
DEF	**12**
ARM	**18**

DAMAGE GRID



Special Rules: Initiative is rolled only in the case of an uncontrolled steamjack; otherwise the 'jack activates on its controller's initiative.

Initiative, MAT, RAT, DEF, and ARM assume a stock cortex.

IRONCLAD WARJACK

The Ironclad comes stock with a pair of fists. It is armed with a single quake hammer and typically fights with its other fist.

QUAKE HAMMER (HEAVY STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 2,110 gc
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 7
Rune Points: 4

Description: The quake hammer is a mechanikal weapon that generates seismic tremors to throw foes off-balance and knock them down. This weapon is powered by an arcanodynamic accumulator.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the quake hammer. While wielding the quake hammer, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the quake hammer is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

On a critical hit, the character hit is knocked down.

The steamjack armed with the quake hammer can forfeit both of its initial arm attacks to make a tremor attack. The tremor affects every character within 2″ of the steamjack and does not require a target. Make one melee attack roll. If the roll equals or exceeds the DEF of a character in the area of effect, it is knocked down. This attack roll cannot be rerolled. The steamjack can make a tremor special attack if it charges.

If this weapon does not have a functional accumulator, its POW is reduced to 5, it gains an attack modifier of –1, it loses its critical effect, and it cannot make tremor attacks.

Fabrication: The material cost of the quake hammer housing is 435 gc. It takes four weeks to construct the device. The pertinent Craft skill for construction is Craft (metal working).

The quake hammer's runeplates require four weeks to scribe and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 16.

CYCLONE WARJACK

The Cyclone comes stock with a pair of fists that integrate underarm metal storm cannons.

METAL STORM (HEAVY STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 350 gc
Type: Ranged
Location: Arm
Ammo: 30
Effective Range: 60 feet (10″)
Extreme Range: 300 feet
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 12
AOE: —

Description: The metal storm is a rapid-fire heavy chain gun designed to be fixed to the underside of heavy steamjack's forearm. The weapon integrates storage for thirty rounds of ammunition.

Special Rules: This weapon can only be fired once per round. However, when this weapon is fired, the steamjack can use Burst Fire. When the steamjack uses Burst Fire, it makes d3 attacks but expends six rounds of ammunition. These attacks must target a primary target and any number of secondary targets within 2″ of the primary target. Ignore intervening characters when declaring secondary targets. A secondary target cannot be targeted by more attacks than the primary target.

A steamjack can lay down covering fire with its metal storm instead of attacking with it during its turn. A steamjack armed with a pair of metal storms could lay down covering fire with one and attack with the other. When the steamjack uses covering fire, place a 3″ AOE anywhere completely within this weapon's RNG. The center point of the AOE must be in the steamjack's LOS, ignoring intervening characters. A character entering or ending his turn in the AOE suffers an unboostable POW 12 damage roll. The AOE remains in play for one round or until the steamjack is destroyed. Using covering fire expends ten rounds of ammunition.

Reloading the chain gun outside of combat takes ten minutes and can be accomplished by any character with the Mechanikal Engineering skill without a die roll.

The metal storm fires metal-cased heavy infantry rounds. It costs 4 gc for blasting powder, bullets, and metal casings for five heavy rounds.

This weapon was designed especially for the Ironclad chassis but can be integrated into any heavy steamjack arm with an Open Fist. Integrating an underarm metal storm into an Ironclad chassis' arm system requires the proper tools, four hours of labor, and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering

roll against a target number of 14. Increase the target number to 16 if the steamjack does not have an Ironclad chassis. If the roll fails, it can be repeated after another hour of labor.

DEFENDER WARJACK

The Defender comes stock with a heavy barrel cannon mounted on the left arm and a fist for its right. It is armed with a shock hammer.

HEAVY BARREL (HEAVY STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 500 gc
Type: Ranged
Location: Left Arm
Ammo: 5
Effective Range: 96 feet (16″)
Extreme Range: 480 feet
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 15
AOE: —

Description: The heavy barrel is a precision, rapid-reloading cannon developed specifically for the Cygnaran military.

Special Rules: Due to the slow rate of its auto loading mechanism, this weapon can be fired only once per round.

Reloading the cannon outside of combat takes five minutes and can be accomplished by any character with the Mechanikal Engineering skill without a die roll.

The dual cannon fires standard artillery rounds in metal casings. Standard artillery rounds cost 15 gc each.

Mounting this weapon on a steamjack chassis requires the mechanik to remove the steamjack's old arm and replace it with the heavy barrel (see "Removing or Replacing Arms" in the Steamjacks section of *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*). Mounting a heavy barrel on a heavy steamjack chassis other than an Ironclad chassis takes double the normal amount of time and increases the target number to 16. A character who wishes to have a heavy barrel integrated into a heavy steamjack chassis other than an Ironclad must pay double the normal rate.

Replacing an Ironclad's arm system with a heavy barrel costs an additional 60 gc unless the character does the job himself. Having an arm system replaced with a heavy barrel on a chassis other than an Ironclad chassis costs an additional 100 gc.

SHOCK HAMMER (HEAVY STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 1,670 gc
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 5
Rune Points: 3

Description: The shock hammer is a mechanikal weapon designed to send an electrical charge through the cortex of an enemy warjack on contact. The weapon was developed by the Cygnaran Armory especially for the Defender. The shock hammer is powered by an alchemical capacitor.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the shock hammer. While wielding the shock hammer, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the shock hammer is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

When a steamjack is hit with this weapon, it suffers 1 damage point to its first available cortex system box. If this weapon does not have a functional accumulator, it gains an attack modifier of –1 and cannot inflict cortex damage.

Fabrication: The material cost of the shock hammer housing is 360 gc. It takes four weeks to construct the device. The pertinent Craft skill for construction is Craft (metal working).

The shock hammer's runeplates require four weeks to scribe and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 16.

STORMCLAD WARJACK

The Stormclad was developed to support Cygnar's Storm Knights on the battlefield. The Stormclad comes stock with a pair of fists and is armed with a generator blade in its right fist. Its left fist is set with an affixed buckler. Stormclads also have the electrical shielding and storm accumulator upgrades (p. 111).

GENERATOR BLADE (HEAVY STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 2,660 gc
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 8
Rune Points: 4

Description: The generator blade is a mechanikal sword capable of firing powerful blasts of electrical energy. It is powered by a storm chamber.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the generator blade. While wielding the generator blade, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the generator blade is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

The generator blade has Reach.

When a character is hit with a melee attack made with this weapon, the steamjack can cause lightning to arc to the nearest character within 4″ of the character hit, ignoring the attacking steamjack. The character the lightning arcs to suffers an unboostable POW 10 electrical damage roll.

A steamjack armed with a generator blade can also use it to make electrical blast ranged attacks. Generator blade blasts are RNG 8, AOE —, POW 14 ranged attacks that cause electrical damage. A warjack armed with this weapon can only make one electrical blast ranged attack each round.

Each time a steamjack makes an attack with this weapon, it suffers a POW 14 electrical damage roll. For this reason, the Stormclad has electrical shielding.

If this weapon does not have a functional accumulator, its POW is reduced to 6, it gains an attack modifier of –1, it loses the ability to cause lightning arcs, and it cannot make ranged attacks.

Fabrication: The material cost of the generator blade housing is 540 gc. It takes four weeks to construct the device. The pertinent Craft skill for construction is Craft (metal working).

The generator blade's runeplates require four weeks to scribe and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 16.

CYGNARAN GEAR AND UPGRADES

ALL-TERRAIN COMPENSATOR

Cost: 400 gc

Description: All-terrain compensators take many forms, but all exist for one purpose: to enhance a steamjack's ability to traverse rough terrain. Compensators involve any combination of sophisticated leg designs, increased articulation, gyroscopic components, or enhanced treading.

All-terrain compensators are not unique to Cygnar, though the Cygnaran military does integrate this hardware into some warjacks.

Special Rules: A steamjack with an all-terrain compensator can move over rough terrain without penalty.

Integrating an all-terrain compensator into a steamjack requires the proper tools, six hours of labor, and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 14. If the roll fails, it can be repeated after another hour of labor.

Having an all-terrain compensator integrated into a steamjack costs an additional 80 gc.

AUGMENTED CORTEX RECEIVER (ACR)

Cost: 300 gc

Description: The augmented cortex receiver, or ACR, is a device that extends a steamjack's cortex signature, enabling a warcaster to keep control of his 'jack over a greater area. This device enables a steamjack to scout in advance of its warcaster to provide vital information pertaining to the battlefield and send it back to the warcaster.

The ACR is not unique to Cygnar, though the Cygnaran military does integrate this hardware into some warjacks.

Special Rules: When checking to see if a steamjack with an ACR is in its warcaster's control area, double the area.

Integrating an ACR into a steamjack requires the proper tools, six hours of labor, and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 14. If the roll fails, it can be repeated after another hour of labor.

Having an ACR integrated into a steamjack costs an additional 80 gc.

DEFENSIVE REFLEX ARRAY (DRA)

Cost: 450 gc

Description: The defensive reflex array, or DRA, is a set of improved reflex triggers, optical enhancements, and cortex grafts that enable a steamjack to act as a protective guardian of those around it. A steamjack with a DRA moves to block attacks against its controller or those it is instructed to defend.

The DRA is not unique to Cygnar, though the Cygnaran military does integrate this hardware into some warjacks.

Special Rules: A steamjack with a DRA gains Shield Guard. (Once per turn, when a friendly character is directly hit by an attack while within 2″ of a character with Shield Guard, the character with Shield Guard can choose to be directly hit instead. A character cannot use Shield Guard if he is incorporeal, knocked down, prone, or stationary.)

Integrating a DRA into a steamjack requires the proper tools, six hours of labor, and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 14. If the roll fails, it can be repeated after another hour of labor.

Having a DRA integrated into a steamjack costs an additional 80 gc.

ELECTRICAL SHIELDING

Cost: 300 gc (light warjack), 500 gc (heavy warjack)

Description: Cygnar's extensive use of galvanic weapons has resulted in the development of effective countermeasures against these forms of attacks. Some Cygnaran warjacks even require this insulation for protection against the weapons they wield. Electrical shielding is added insulation to ground, nullify, and otherwise protect a steamjack from electrical discharges.

Special Rules: A steamjack with electrical shielding gains Immunity: Electricity.

Adding electrical shielding to a steamjack requires the proper tools, six hours of labor, and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 14. If the roll fails, it can be repeated after another hour of labor.

Having electrical shielding integrated into a steamjack costs an additional 80 gc.

GRENADE FIELD

Cost: 400 gc

Description: The grenade field upgrade is an array of short-ranged grenade launchers that blanket the area around the steamjack without damaging the 'jack itself.

Special Rules: A steamjack with this upgrade can use it once per turn at any time during its activation but cannot interrupt its normal movement to do so. When the steamjack uses grenade field, characters B2B with it suffer an unboostable POW 12 blast damage roll and other characters within 2″ of it suffer an unboostable POW 6 blast damage roll.

A grenade field cannot be added to a steamjack with existing shoulder hard points, such as the Devastator chassis (p. 192).

The steamjack can carry enough grenades for three uses. Reloading the grenade launcher's internal ammo supply outside of combat takes twenty minutes and can be accomplished by any character with the Mechanikal Engineering skill without a die roll. Each use expends 16 gc in mini-grenades.

Integrating a grenade field into a steamjack requires the proper tools, four hours of labor, and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 14. If the roll fails, it can be repeated after another hour of labor.

Having a grenade field integrated into a steamjack costs an additional 60 gc.

STORM ACCUMULATOR

Cost: 500 gc

Description: The storm accumulator is a device that draws on the excessive galvanic energies emitted by storm glaives. The accumulator processes the charge through a modified storm chamber connected directly to the steamjack's cortex to give it an extra jolt of power in combat.

Special Rules: When the steamjack with a storm accumulator begins its turn within 3″ of one or more friendly characters armed with activated storm glaives, it is allocated 1 focus point.

Integrating a storm accumulator into a steamjack requires the proper tools, eight hours of labor, and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 16. If the roll fails, it can be repeated after another hour of labor.

Having a storm accumulator integrated into a steamjack costs an additional 120 gc.

STORM RELAY

Cost: 250 gc

Description: The storm relay is a device used for triangulating storm caller electrical strikes. This device was developed for the Firefly warjack to enable stormsmiths to use the 'jack in their stormcalling.

Special Rules: When a friendly character makes a Surge or Triangulation stormcall, a steamjack with a functional storm relay is considered to be another friendly character armed with a lightning rod. This device can be made functional *only* when integrated into a steamjack with Immunity: Electricity.

Integrating a storm relay into a steamjack requires the proper tools, two hours of labor, and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 14. If the roll fails, it can be repeated after another hour of labor.

Having a storm relay integrated into a steamjack costs an additional 30 gc.

KHADOR

INTRODUCTION

The newly forged Khadoran Empire is flush with recent victories, and its diverse people stand united with nationalist fervor under the leadership of an empress whose grasp appears to be without limit. To its enemies Khador seems a monolithic force of conquest, but in truth it is not without its fractures.

As the inheritors of the Khardic Empire, the Khadoran people are spread across a vast region divided into a number of territories. Khards, Skirov, Umbreans, Kossites, and others make up its people, sharing little in common but a pride in the greater glory of their empire. The nation's northern reaches hold a wealth of resources but are relentlessly cold and inhabited by savage tribes and vicious creatures. Without ready means to access much of its own natural riches, Khador prefers to take what it needs from its enemies.

In the nation's southern reaches, modernization has been embraced with no consideration of the consequences, and a pall of coal smoke hangs over even its greatest cities. A vast network of rail connects these bastions of industry with the conquered territories and creates new opportunities for the nation's relentless merchant princes. The common people of Khador take pride in the accomplishments wrought by their betters in such a short time even when they must pay a price in difficult labor and occasional scarcity of the comforts of life. The faith of Morrow unites the Khadoran people, though a substantial number follow the ancient ways of the Menite Old Faith.

If there is one common experience that binds all Khadorans and helps stir their patriotic spirit, it is military duty. Although it is mandatory, service in the army is considered a fundamental value of society, not a burden. Each citizen pays his dues to the empire by fighting to share in its glory. It is for this reason that so many Khadorans are unswervingly loyal not just to their nation but to the empress herself. She has given them victories over the soft people of the south and furthered the ancient legacy of Khador. Life is hard for many Khadorans, but they endure, strong in the knowledge that they are part of something greater.

HISTORY

Modern Khador's history begins with the Corvis Treaties, but its roots stretch back into ancient times when the followers of the great Menite missionary Geth brought his faith to the northern regions. Khador is the direct successor of the Khardic Empire that rose during the Thousand Cities Era; in recent years the Khadoran people established a new empire to continue their long-standing glory.

FOUNDING OF KHARD

Khador's origins are attributed to the rise of Priest King Khardovic, the most esteemed of the inheritors of Geth's legacy. Alongside his followers Khardovic vanquished the Wurm-worshiping tribes of the northern region and laid the foundation for civilization. His wars of conversion were bloody and struck at the heart of the enemy, eliminating their shamans to prove that the blessings of the Creator were superior in every respect.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF KHADOR

Ruler: Empress Ayn Vanar

Government Type: Absolute Monarchy

Capital: Korsk

Ethnic Groups & Approx. Population: 3,090,000 Khard; 1,518,000 Skirov; 930,000 Kossite; 435,000 Umbrean; 175,000 gobber; 140,000 bogrin; 90,000 Tordoran; 75,000 ogrun; 45,000 Rhulfolk; 30,000 Midlunder; 25,000 trollkin; 16,000 Ryn; 15,000 Thurian; 10,000 Morridane; 14,000 Nyss; 7,000 Scharde; 2,000 Caspian; 2,000 Iosan;1,000 Idrian

Languages: Khadoran (primary), Cygnaran

Climate: Southern to central Khador are cool temperate, while northern Khador quickly becomes subarctic beyond the Nyschatha mountain and tundra in the polar north. Winters vary from cool along the southern coast to frigid in the north; summers vary from warm in the steppes to cold in the north, with thunderstorms or light snowstorms throughout spring and late autumn.

Terrain: The south includes a number of broad steppes broken up by smaller forests and riverlands and the most temperate region around the Shield Lakes. Vast coniferous forest and tundra are found in the north, along with uplands and extensive mountains.

Natural Resources: Major deposits of coal, silver, iron ore, and many strategic minerals (north), along with significant timber and arable land (south). The formidable obstacles posed by climate, terrain, and distance hinder exploitation of a great deal of Khador's natural resources.

Legend says that Khardovic converted over a million savages to the Menite faith before his death in 2045 BR. The exact scope of his kingdom at its height is disputed, but it stretched across a broad area of what is now southwestern Khador. The Kossites and the Skirov still tell stories of his crusades, suggesting his campaigns took him far across the northern wilderness.

Khardovic is believed to have had eight wives and fathered over thirty children. Like him, his descendants continued to fight tenaciously to claim the best, most fertile lands of the region, making the kingdom of Khard the foundation of northern civilization. As the Khards developed a culture based on the martial supremacy afforded them by mastery of the horse, their ruling warrior-elite became known as the horselords. Domesticating their breeds of powerful fighting horses gave them advantage over their rivals. Many outlying tribes envisioned the fierce, implacable Menite horselord crushing everything that stood in his way beneath the hooves of his steed.

A split between the direct blood descendants of Khardovic around 1900 BR is said to have begun the separation of the Khards and Umbreans, leading to one of the greatest of the horselord tribes breaking away. This tribe settled in a region to the east, where their leaders would eventually rise to become formidable rivals of their western kin.

THE OLD EMPIRE

Even as the message of the Twins spread and led to religious purges in the south, the Khards were at war in the north, led by their legendary horselords. The tribes neighboring Khard were eager to expand their own lands, proving their own martial prowess. By 1690 BR battles broke out south of the Nyschatha Mountains between warlords of the Kos, Skirov, and Khards. These battles marked a long era of struggle between these people, and decades passed without any appreciable gains by any side.

Fortune favored the Khards when a great plague swept the region, laying low hundreds and then thousands of Kossites and Skirov while leaving the Khards miraculously untouched. Seizing upon seemingly divine providence, the Khards claimed many lands; by 1443 BR the city of Khardov had become the greatest city of the north, the seat of Khardic dominance over neighboring territories. In 1421 BR the Khardic king Sveynod Skelvoro declared himself emperor.

The Khardic Empire finally conquered the Kos in 1382 BR, but the Umbrean horselords in the east refused to bow. Instead, they were persuaded to enter into an alliance with the Khards and were honored as princes of the empire. With Umbrean strength added to its own, the Khardic Empire began to make substantial gains against the difficult mountain holds of the Skirov, who at last surrendered in 1263 BR. For a time the Umbreans sought to retain their independence, uniting under the strong rulership of the Tzepescis, Umbreykos, and Chardovosks and establishing the independent Kingdom of Umbrey with Korska as its capital in 1169 BR. This kingdom maintained an uneasy peace with its powerful, hostile neighbor for several centuries. By then, the Khardic Empire had become a sophisticated nation with a complex government backed by considerable industrialization and scholarship. The years of peace allowed the Khardic Empire to tap into the extensive resources of the northern region to pave roads and develop sophisticated mining techniques.

This peace came to an end after the Time of the Long Sun, a drought that brought about unrest, suffering, and starvation. Desperately needing more fertile lands, the Khardic Empire initiated the Horselord Wars in 821 BR, seeking to fully subjugate Umbrey. This would turn into a grueling century-long campaign of intermittent battle between them until 716 BR, when the council of Umbrean princes, known as the Black Ring, was finally forced to surrender and swear fealty to the emperor.

Over the centuries, the Khardic Empire became a beacon of civilization and progress in the north, growing more sophisticated to meet the needs of its far-flung territories and tackling difficult issues of infrastructure and commerce. Its military had to adapt to the changing face of warfare in order to protect its now-considerable borders. Rival powers rose across the region, each growing as the myriad fiefdoms of the Thousand Cities Era were consolidated. Yet these smaller kingdoms feared the Khardic Empire—and rightfully so, as no southern civilization could match its might, its scope, or the determination of its people.

As it unified the north, the empire also brought together the greatest minds to spark an era of innovation and advancement. By 1000 BR the Khards had devised a method of using rail carts and horse-drawn wagons to haul ore across long distances,

ZEVANNA AGHA, THE OLD WITCH OF KHADOR

One legend out of Khador's past still walks among its people today: the enigmatic crone Zevanna Agha, known as the Old Witch of Khador. She is said to be as old as the great northlands themselves and to have been waiting for Menoth as he first walked Caen. Like all folktales, her legend blurs truth and fantasy, but records describe her appearing before the first Khardic emperor two thousand years ago. Some consider her the spirit of the Motherland itself, an embodiment of the Khadoran nation. Others say she is a wholly unnatural, unholy thing, a creature that steals children and devours souls.

Since ancient times, the Old Witch has guided the monarchs of the northern lands to their destinies—sometimes to greatness, sometimes to ruin. Her lowly form, that of a hunched, aged woman with metal-clawed fingers, draped in layers of old furs and patched cloth, conveys a palpable sense of menace and power. In her wake come innumerable crows and her towering Scrapjack, a steam-driven construction tasked to bear her load. Now she leads the Motherland's armies and machines to war, and her active intervention is viewed with apprehension by both her allies and her enemies.

KHADOR
CAPITOL
CITY
FORTRESS
FEATURE OF INTEREST
RAILROAD
ROAD
VOLOZKYA
MOUNTAINS
HILLS
FOREST (temperate)
FOREST (boreal)
SWAMP
SCALE (in miles)
25 50 100 200 250
Blackice Mountains
Sea of Blackice
Burningfrost Plains
Lake Nyereck
Winterborn Lake
Tapping River
VARDENSKA
FEODOSKA
Icebrand
Targoss Lakes
Forest
ULDENFROST
Helvongen River
TAMANSKAIA
Neve River
Beladal the Maid
Beladal the Crone
The Rimeshaws
Shard Spires
Inkes River
Searsfell Forest
Falconstream
SARGETSTEA
DUWURKYN
Iceblade River
Borokuhn Mountains
GRIDDENGUARD
GHORD
DROTUHN
NORGRUHNDE
Malgur Forest
NOVESKYEV
TVERKUTSK
Nyselhatha Mountains
Helvongen Bay
The Khardic Sea
GORZYTSKA
HELLSPASS
ATHO-SHIEL
Villkhan Bluffs
Wolveswood
SKIROVNYA
Gravewater
SKIROV
PORSK
Severed Reach
Ice Watch
KOS
OHK
TVERKATKA
Thundercliff Peaks
HANOGHOR
Bitterrock
CHEROV-ON-DRON
Fort Brunzig
Castle Tzepesci
Vescheneg Headlands
RAZOKOV
KHADORSTRED
Kovosk Hills
Old Korska
RYNYR
Riversmet
LAEDRY
NEW VROGGEN
Shattered Shield
KORSK
Great Zerutsk
KHADORAN LLAEL
Brone's Point
Palace of Khazomir
KHARDOSKA
Redwall
ELSINBERG
SKROVENBERG
Lothpool
KHARDOV
Willow Barrens
RORSCHIK
Lake Volningrad
MERYWYN
FREE LLAEL
MEREDIUS
Kulvorn Hills
Blackroot Wood
Rustok Castle
VOLNINGRAD
UMBREY
BORSTOI
Moskrad
RUSTOKNIA
Lake Moskrad
DOROGNIA
Broken Sword
Gallowswood
Ravensgard
Northguard
Glimmerwood
Borstov Landing
Kulvorn Bay
Shadoweald
Lord Khazarak's Tomb
Searswall
MIDFAST
Boarsgate
Murata Hills
Bloodsmeath Marsh
BLOODSBANE
Deepwood Tower
PORT VLADOVAR
MURIO
Lake Vannorgar
Fort Baird
CORBHEN
Sailor's Lament
FELLIG
NORTHFOREST
Thornwood Forest
Blindwater Lake
Widower Wood
Mere Doron
Mere Tagao
ALMARE
COSETIO
Almare Woods
ARMANDOR
CORVIS
Fort Rhyker
North Berck Moors
TORDORO
The Warrens
THORNWOOD
BERCK
HEARTHSTONE
Torre Torcail
BOURNWORTH
Fisherbrook
HETHA
WYTHMOOR
Berck Harbor
Olgunholt
Stonebridge
CARRE DOVA
TARNA
Torre Wythmoor
Lake Thornmere
Tomb of Lost Souls
Shearwater Narrows
Bay of Stone
FIVE FINGERS
Dragon's Tongue River
PT. BOURNE
BAINSMARKET
Serpent's Gorge
Dragonspine Peaks
Sea of a Thousand Souls
Fort Ballon
OXMEATH
The Gnarls
WESTERN MIDLUNDS
THURIA
Cruel Valley
CERYL
CLOUDSDOWNS
Watcher Peaks
Fort Whiterock
Demonhead Pass
Upper Wyrmwall
FHARIN
NEW LARKHOLM
RIMMOCKSDALE
SOUTHERN MIDLUNDS
ORVEN
WESTSHORE
Deer Drakkerung
Westwatch
Rimmockdale Lake
IRONHEAD STATION
Nine Stone
Ghorlghast Island
Henge Hold
RAMARCK
MANSGRAVE
STEELWATER

tremendously increasing mining efficiency. During the Horselord Wars in 743 AR, a brilliant engineer named Drago Salvoro invented the steam engine, which would soon be used in a myriad of applications, from haulers to mining drills, ore sifters, steamships, and eventually the colossals.

THE ORGOTH INVASION

As the Khardic Empire reached its height in 600 BR, Orgoth invaders landed on its western shores. The empire's garrisons were caught off guard but rallied quickly, marching legions to avenge the first townships conquered by the Orgoth. Still, the invaders poured from their blackships in ever greater numbers.

The northerners called for help, but their neighbors did nothing, leaving the people of the empire to fight alone. Soon the blackships landed in the south, assailing Tordor and eventually Caspia before the Orgoth marched east. It would be a conquest of decades. Rarely were Orgoth conquests reclaimed by those who lost them.

The Orgoth reached Korska in 569 BR and after an extended siege destroyed what was left of the Khardic Empire. The northlands were put to the lash and their people enslaved, set to work building temples and fortresses. In time the rest of the kingdoms fell, and by 433 BR no human army remained on Immoren to fight them.

Few records detail the next four centuries of occupation before the first stirrings of rebellion. Perhaps this is for the best, as it was a long, dark age of misery, suffering, and death. Except for those distant tribes in the farthest reaches of the frozen mountains, all northerners suffered under the Orgoth. Some Skirov and Kossite communities eluded enslavement but lived arguably worse lives, descending into barbarity and all but giving up the gifts of civilization.

REBELLION AND BETRAYAL

The deprivations of the northerners under Orgoth rule were beyond anything the other kingdoms experienced, as Khards were the first to be enslaved, the first to be sent back across the ocean as cargo, and the first to be slaughtered in unholy rituals that deprived victims of their very souls. In the south, many of those conquered collaborated with the Orgoth to ease their own lives; the north was largely free of such traitors and therefore suffered worse. Periodic northern slave uprisings marred Orgoth control in that region, making it the least desirable to govern. Fearing the unbreakable will of the Khardic people, the Orgoth in Korsk and Khardov remained vigilant and inhumanly cruel.

In a dreadful historical irony, Orgoth indulgences in the south opened the crack in their dominion that allowed the first seeds of the Rebellion to take root. In many southern cities, people lived lives that were almost normal, conducting business and trade under the slothful dominion of the Orgoth governors, who had grown fat on their spoils. Taking too free rein with their slaves, the Orgoth were surprised when the conquered people began to fight back.

The details of the Rebellion are documented elsewhere, as is the rise of the arcane organizations following the Gift of Sorcery. Less remembered is the role the northerners played in these clashes. Word of the growing resistance prompted considerable unrest in the north, enough that the Orgoth could never empty their northern garrisons to reinforce other regions. Many gave their lives unremembered in these early acts of defiance. The descendants of the Khardic and Umbrean horselords took up arms and rode into the mountainous terrain near Rhul. There they organized raids on the Orgoth, first nipping at their heels before finally facing them in battle.

It would not be until late in the Rebellion, after numerous bravely fought but ultimately futile battles in the south, that the north would organize in greater numbers. A series of natural plagues and hostile uprisings in Rynyr and Thuria left the Orgoth armies in disarray, allowing Umbrean horselords and their army of nomads gathered from the hills to liberate both Korsk and Rorschik in 147 AR. The Rynnish city of Leryn had managed to hold out against the Orgoth since 86 AR, and together with Caspia these free cities would form the Iron Alliance in 164 AR, a key event in the Rebellion. The leaders of the alliance were called the Council of Ten, and northerners took strategic leadership over their military efforts.

This spirit of fellowship and cooperation did not last long, though the people of the north entered into the alliance in good faith. Caspia secretly began to build its greatest weapons, the colossals, which relied heavily on the steam engines first designed by Khardic engineers. Learning of this duplicity, Khardic agents copied the colossal construction plans and carried them north to a production facility in Korsk that complemented the one in Caspia. While the exact details of what followed remain shrouded in mystery, the Iron Alliance clearly betrayed their own when the existence of the great foundries in Korsk was revealed to the Orgoth. Khadoran historians believe this treachery was not pure spite but was instead intended to distract the Orgoth from construction in Caspia.

Thus, the Khardic people were intentionally sacrificed in 188 AR when the Orgoth suddenly turned the full fury of their significant might on the city of Korsk. The gates of Korsk did not fall quickly or easily, and much blood was shed before the Orgoth stormed the city and set its great factories ablaze.

Caspia finished its colossals by 191 AR, marking the beginning of the end for the Orgoth, though ten years of warfare followed before the allied armies cast out the tyrants. In the north the celebration was muted by suspicions of betrayal and by the deep scars the Orgoth left in the Scourge they inflicted upon the land as they departed. The Council of Ten gathered in the southern city of Corvis to discuss the establishment of the new Iron Kingdoms.

FOUNDING OF KHADOR

Makaros Taranovi would be the leading signatory of the northerners and would be crowned Makaros the Oath-Maker, first king of Khador. He had been a brilliant general during the Rebellion and had achieved many victories. He was descended from one of the old lines that had held the throne of the Khardic Empire, yet he entered into negotiations in a weakened position. The northern armies had been savaged in the defense of Korsk

and subsequent battles, and they had nothing equivalent to the colossals of Caspia. Makaros' best efforts to reestablish the borders of the Khardic Empire for Khador were denied by the other members of the council.

The southerners preferred what they perceived as the more equitable division of territories established by the Orgoth tyrants themselves in their system of provinces. These borders gave large sections of the Khardic Empire's eastern and southern lands to Llael and Ord, respectively. Additionally, Cygnar took the entirety of the Thornwood forest for its own despite a Khadoran claim on its northern portion. Makaros eventually agreed to these diminished borders, desiring peace too strongly to press his demands.

Khador immediately set about the work of rebuilding. Many cities lay in rubble, and much work needed to be done to lay the foundations of the new kingdom. Unfortunately there was to be no tranquil period of peace and recovery. Only six years after the Corvis Treaties, King Makaros was assassinated. The identity of his killer was never discovered, though theories about his murder continue to abound to this day.

THE TZEPESCI DYNASTY

Makaros' assassination worked to the immediate advantage of the Tzepesci family, among the most esteemed of the eastern horselords. While no evidence ever linked them to the murder, they quickly profited from it, usurping the throne and crowning Vladin Tzepesci the second king of Khador. Vladin ruled for nearly two decades, focusing his energy and resources on the east. It was clear he sought nothing less than the unification of old Umbrey under the Khadoran crown.

While war was never declared between Khador and Llael in this era, there was considerable fighting, and Vladin sought to convince Umbreans across the border to join him. The weary eastern Umbreans were not eager for conflict as they tried to rebuild their war-torn lands, however; Umbrey contained some of the bloodiest battlefields of the Rebellion. It was said that across the whole of the land, one could not take a step without either landing in a grave or stumbling over a corpse. Vladin met his end at the hands of his own countrymen in 229 AR, killed by Llaelese Umbreans who would not consent to his rule.

The region remained in turmoil as Vladin's heir Geza took the throne. Like his father, King Geza focused on the lands of Umbrey. The rest of Khador remained largely undeveloped, and it fell to each great prince to rebuild his *volozk*, the sizable territory under his direct authority, and to establish commerce and trade once again. The city of Korsk rose to prominence then, largely under the direction of the Vanar great princes in Khadorstred.

Rather than uniting them, Geza's efforts succeeded only in further dividing the Umbreans on either side of the border. Unwilling to risk escalating the conflict with Khador, Llael's capital did not send soldiers to help its Umbreans and dismissed Geza's invasion of their western region as a purely Umbrean civil conflict. Unfortunately for Geza, the great princes did likewise, sending no support to their king. Llaelese Umbreans fought stalwartly against King Geza's limited forces, and the fighting went against him. He saw his father's few gains reversed before he fell in battle. The throne passed to his younger brother Levash Tzepesci, who proved as effective, fierce, and formidable as Geza had been weak and impotent.

Levash would reshape Khador and ready its industrial might for war. A visionary and a tyrant, he established court in Korsk and brought the great princes to heel, killing several in personal duels when they did not obey him quickly enough. Levash dreamed of the restoration of the Tzepesci lands, including the ruined grounds of Old Korska. More than this, he wished to see colossals built in Khador and witness them striding from Korsk, as had been their intended destiny during the Rebellion. King Levash dreamed of open war.

COLOSSAL WAR

Key to Levash's plans was calling back to Khador those sons and daughters of the Motherland who were skilled and trained in the knowledge of modern industry. For generations, Khador's best and brightest had sought their fortunes in the south because they saw little promise or potential for advancement

in the backward northern kingdom. The arcane orders of Llael and Cygnar shared their secrets with the scores of expatriates they sheltered. The Fraternal Order of Wizardry and the Order of the Golden Crucible sought to open the markets of Khador to their goods, their virtual monopolies already extending across the southern kingdoms. Levash pretended to humor their aspirations, all the while sending his agents among them, entering into a conspiracy with gifted Khadoran arcanists who agreed to assist their king.

Both Cygnar and Ord were preoccupied with trollkin uprisings that spread across the Thornwood, the Gnarls, and the Olgunholt. They hardly noticed as schism rocked the Fraternal Order when much of the lore of that organization was plundered by Khadoran-born arcanists, who also took the alchemical formulas of the Order of the Golden Crucible. Returning to the Motherland with this vital intelligence and their new training, these arcanists formed the Greylords Covenant in 243 AR. This would become an exclusively Khadoran arcane order, one capable of serving Khador's armies by producing refined cortexes for a new generation of colossals as well as blasting powder and mechanikal weaponry.

With this support and renewed industrial might, Levash succeeded at last in producing the first Khadoran colossals. Cygnar responded by moving its own machines north, creating the Colossal Guard in hopes that its presence in the Thornwood would act as a deterrent to Khadoran aggression. But Levash had no intention of backing down; in 250 AR he attacked Ord and Llael simultaneously. This began the Colossal War, seven years of brutal conflict that would rage across a great region between Ord and Llael as Khador battled against all the southern kingdoms.

Levash seemed capable of doing the unthinkable by crushing all three kingdoms at once. The nation rallied behind him, inspired by the notion of avenging the injustices of the Corvis Treaties and the betrayals of the Rebellion. Conscripts were trained in vast numbers, and the great factories of Korsk and Khardov continued to produce Immoren's most modern colossals. In early battles of the war, northern colossals demonstrated their clear superiority over the older machines of the southerners.

As the war dragged on, however, it became clear that Khadoran war industries were overextended. The nation had not developed the capacity or the material resources to keep pace with its aspirations. The southerners soon completed their own modern colossal, and the Khadoran Army lost its initiative and faltered.

Khador's eventual defeat was all the more humbling as the Cygnarans pushed Levash's tired and battered army nearly to the gates of Korsk. Bankrupt, Levash surrendered and was forced to give up his new military might in the negotiations of terms. The Fraternal Order of Wizardry's arcanists oversaw the dismantling of Khador's remaining colossals as well as the foundries that produced them. While Levash held onto the throne for many more years before dying of old age in 272 AR, he had lost much of his influence, and once again the kingdom was governed largely by the great princes.

RECOVERY AND THE ONSET OF WAR

Following the death of King Levash, Dmitry Dopatevik quietly usurped the throne with the backing of those great princes who had grown tired of Tzepesci rule. Although Levash had inspired the Khadoran people with his dreams of conquest, he had brought those dreams crashing down in a defeat that had ushered in lingering hardship. King Dmitry's rule, benevolent by comparison, focused on restoring and expanding Khador's industrial capacity.

Cygnar had more troubles with trollkin in the south and soon discovered that its own colossals were too costly and outmoded to maintain on the evolving battlefield. The great machines were retired to be replaced by the smaller and more flexible warjacks. In response, Dmitry established new foundries of his own to produce uniquely Khadoran warjacks.

A statesman and diplomat, King Dmitry entered into a friendship with Cygnar's King Woldred, which caused a scandal in his court and was likely a contributing factor to his abbreviated reign. Many nobles still bore scars from their recent humiliating defeat to the southerners. Dmitry's wife Cherize capitalized on this widespread dissatisfaction by turning on her husband, becoming one of his harshest critics. A woman of great persuasion and viciousness, it is all but certain she was involved in his assassination in 286 AR after Dmitry suggested their own daughter might marry into the Cygnaran royal line to cement peace between the two nations. Cherize did not wait to mourn his passing before seizing the throne as queen.

Queen Cherize consolidated her power in the early years of her reign and began to expand Khador's armies. She carefully watched the political landscape of the Iron Kingdoms for an opportunity to move against the southern kingdoms; more clever than Levash Tzepesci, she did not intend to open up her kingdom to a war on multiple fronts. When the death of Cygnar's King Malfast in 289 AR led to a palace coup and the rise of Malagant, who turned on the Menites and allied himself with the Church of Morrow, Queen Cherize struck.

Cherize hoped Cygnar would be too caught up in its religious strife to react as she moved to seize the northern Thornwood and cut off the Black River, a vital source of trade for her southern rivals. To minimize her own losses, she made an arrangement with the barbaric Tharn for them to terrorize Cygnar's northern border. This had the unintended consequence of alarming the Cygnarans so greatly that Menites and Morrowans put aside their differences and both rallied to join the war. This launched the Border Wars, a clash that would last for almost twenty years and outlast both Cherize and Malagant. The story of this conflict is detailed elsewhere, but in the end Queen Cherize paid a price for the dark bargains she made. She vanished in 295 AR and was never seen again.

VELIBOR'S BORDER WARS

As Cherize's daughter had died from pestilence early in the queen's reign, the throne passed to Cherize's niece, the six-year-old Ayn Vanar V. The warlike great princes appointed Cherize's great vizier to serve as Ayn's regent. Because the Khadoran

Army had not suffered heavy casualties during the war against Malagant—the brunt of that fighting had fallen on the Tharn—Lord Regent Velibor decided to see if he could succeed where Levash Tzepesci had failed against Cygnar.

The Khadoran Army gladly answered his call and in 295 AR launched the First Expansion War against Ord. Velibor did not attack Cygnar directly, anticipating the lack of central leadership would leave the nation rudderless. This prediction quickly proved to be accurate: Cygnar looked to its own interests and did not rouse its armies in defense of Ord. Lord Velibor then struck Llael as well. Though both Ord and Llael put up a stalwart resistance and slowed Khadoran gains, the armies of the north would not be denied and pressed on with victory after victory.

In hindsight, Velibor's conquests clearly would have been far more successful had he concentrated on either Ord or Llael, yet the lord regent was determined to regain all the lands once held by the Khardic Empire. Nonetheless, he had numerous victories. Following the death of Ord's king Alvor Cathor I in the Battle of the Broken Sword, Khador went on to take the port city of Radahvo and its surrounding environ, extending its holdings to the fortified hills of Midfast. The campaign in Llael had won back many of the Umbrean territories not held since the early reigns of the Tzepescis.

By 304 AR, after nearly a decade of fighting, the Khadoran reserves were nearing exhaustion, including many interior garrisons depleted as men were rushed to shore up the front lines. Yet Lord Velibor insisted that even greater victories would soon be at hand. Internal strife threatened to consume the heartland when a great alliance of northern barbarians came from the mountains and forests to plunder central Khador.

Lord Velibor proved his political acumen by interceding with this horde and turning them from the capital toward Ord instead. Based on his promise that they would find far greater riches should they break through the fortified city of Midfast, they laid siege to it while the Khadoran Army lay ready to sweep in behind them and march on Merin, Ord's capital. Here the Border Wars turned against Khador. The extended siege was brutal on the defenders of Midfast, who soon exhausted their supplies, yet the Ordic soldiers proved too stalwart to be quickly undone by a poorly equipped barbarian horde, whatever its numbers.

Before the guns of Midfast were silenced by lack of powder, the officer in charge of the city's defense, Markus Graza, stepped forth in a mad gambit to delay the besiegers: he challenged each of the horde's chieftains to individual duels, two a day for seven consecutive days. Believing the Ordic officer little more than a day's sport and not realizing an Ordic relief army was on the way from Merin, the chieftains agreed. Markus amazed enemy and ally alike as he slew chieftain after chieftain over six days before finally succumbing to his many wounds on the seventh day. When at this point he ascended in a visible miracle to join Morrow, the sight sent a shockwave through the gathered savages, many of whom laid down their arms and converted on the spot. At the same time came the arrival of fresh Ordic troops, who tore through the remaining barbarians with ease. The miraculous nature of these events convinced the Khadorans to withdraw, unwilling to press the attack in the face of Morrow's favor for the courage of the southerners.

The Border Wars would grind on as Velibor refused to acknowledge he had won his last meaningful victory. Queen Ayn V reached her majority in 307 AR but was intentionally kept from the affairs of her nation. A year later, Queen Juliana was crowned in Cygnar and immediately sent Cygnaran armies to support both Ord and Llael. It would not be until 313 AR that Ayn would realize the extent to which Lord Velibor's wars had bankrupted Khador.

The lord regent was removed from power and Khador negotiated terms of peace with the three southern kingdoms. During these negotiations, Queen Ayn V agreed to cede back some of the lands of western Llael, including Laedry, but kept considerable territories seized from Ord, including Radahvo, which became Port Vladovar. Khador regained a number of fertile farmlands once held by the Khardic Empire, but it had cost the blood of a generation over nearly twenty years of warfare.

HUNDRED-YEAR PEACE

For the next century, recovery from the wars and internal growth and development prevailed. Queen Ayn Vanar V ruled until 320 AR, when she abdicated to her cousin Ioann. Despite the peace, it remained a tense time with considerable intrigue between the powers of western Immoren.

King Ioann Groznata III ruled from 320–352 AR, a reign largely devoted to reversing the damage done to the respectability of the monarchy during the Border Wars. Ioann's position was weak, however, as the great princes had grown strong in the aftermath of Velibor's excesses. Queen Ayn had been unable to rectify this situation, and Ioann found no easy solution; he was forced to wage political war against numerous adversaries, particularly with the houses of the Khardic and Umbrean horselords. The shadow wars of this era are not well documented, but it is believed a rash of "coincidental" deaths among the aristocracy were a result of King Ioann's efforts and the aid he received from the Greylords.

The monarchy had recovered much of its power by the time Ioann died of old age. The throne would have passed to his son Hegvig, but he declined to rule, having no aspirations for power and preferring instead to join the Morrowan clergy. After much debate regarding ancient precedence, the crown passed to Yeken Vladykin in 352 AR.

As Ioann had restored the monarchy, King Yeken did much to restore the economy and infrastructure of Khador, including restoring roads and opening mines and quarries to facilitate expanded construction of the nation's major cities. He did all this while under constant threat from the southern nations and their mercenary proxies. Further, King Yeken is remembered as a devout champion of the Church of Morrow, and he constructed many great abbeys, monuments, and cathedrals, most notably a substantial expansion to the Katrinksa Cathedral in Korsk, which became grand enough to rival the greatest houses of worship in Merywyn and Caspia. Toward the end of his reign in 393 AR, he approved the founding of the Khadoran Mechaniks

Assembly. This would prove a great boon to the Khadoran military, as it consolidated the efforts of its mechaniks and engineers and tremendously aided technological advancement.

King Ioann Groznata IV, grandson of Ioann III, took the throne at the age of seventeen in 394 AR, his claim judged better than that of the Vladykin family's next claimant. Ioann IV's thirty-seven–year reign is notable for many progressive reforms, including the creation of the Ministry of the Judiciary and the Royal Law Court. These and other measures were threatened late in his reign when, after the death of his beloved wife in 425 AR, Ioann IV suddenly turned tyrannical, a reversal that caught many in the capital by surprise. His courts turned into instruments of terror as draconian punishments were handed out for even the most minor offenses. When his justice was challenged, he had his critics arrested and executed for treason. This marked the beginning of the Dark Times.

THE DARK TIMES

The Dark Times are remembered as an era of contested rule, when the throne of the Motherland was wrenched back and forth by pretenders and discourse was replaced by assassination and civil conflict. Ioann IV's son Dobrynia succeeded him in 431 AR, but he was a weak, feeble man who suffered from palsy. Having inherited much of the hostility engendered by his father during the last years of his reign, Dobrynia was unable to adapt to politics in the capital and was murdered by his own guards in 445 AR.

The throne then passed to King Dobrynia's eldest daughter Nastasia, who was still too young to rule. Lord Regent Borim Golchin was appointed to watch over her minority, but he proved to have a weak heart. He perished from shock when he witnessed what appeared to be King Dobrynia returning from the grave in 452 AR to take back his throne. This apparent miracle caused confusion and chaos in the capital until the supposed king was exposed a year later as a pretender named Grigor Otilpaev, who had apparently murdered the young queen and Dobrynia's other children for fear they would expose him. Upon his discovery Otilpaev fled the capital and disappeared.

Various factions briefly seized power until King Barak Shumov succeeded in holding the throne for four years beginning in 453 AR. He accomplished little before he was slain at the Battle of the Barrens while fighting an uprising of southeastern nobles. The throne then remained in contention for several years At last Ivan Vladykin, known as Ivan the Frenzied, seized power in 457 AR.

One of the most reviled kings ever to sit on the Khadoran throne, Ivan was revealed to be a practitioner of the black arts and a prodigious necromancer. He conducted depravities in the capital to fuel his forbidden research, including the desecration of the royal crypts. Once word of this spread, the Church of Morrow loaned their support to Great Prince Mikhail Vanar to overthrow the unholy king in 459 AR.

THE VANAR DYNASTY

By all accounts, Mikhail Vanar had no intention of taking the crown for himself; he acted only to remove an unholy tyrant who had desecrated the throne. Once crowned Mikhail Vanar I, however, he worked to rectify the consequences of long years of misrule, though he suffered from a wasting disease thought to be Vladykin's last curse upon him.

Despite his illness, King Mikhail clashed with Ord in an escalating series of naval battles along the western coast that began with a sequence of unprovoked attacks on Khadoran vessels by privateers in the employ of the Ordic crown. King Mikhail's retaliation for these acts was the Second Expansion War, which took place from 464–468 AR. This war began with a daring Khadoran ocean landing near Corbhen as its main army laid siege to Midfast and the kingdoms' navies clashed along Ord's coastline. The war would prove inconclusive, however, with Cygnar moving to Ord's defense and Khador ultimately unable to capture Midfast. King Mikhael succumbed to Vladykin's Curse in 468 AR, and his death brought an end to the conflict. While this war resulted in few appreciable gains for Khador, the Khadoran Navy was expanded and improved as the nation spent tremendous funds to build new warships.

Mikhail was succeeded by his only child, a young widow with two small children of her own, who was crowned Queen Ayn VI. During Ayn's rule, Khador saw the first major efforts to unite its cities by rail. Queen Ayn ruled well but chose poorly in her second husband, Dragash Vygor, who clearly had designs on the throne. He instilled this same desire in his son, Ruslan, from his previous marriage.

Queen Ayn VI was assassinated in 482 AR, but her killer was slain before he could reveal who was responsible for the conspiracy. Dragash Vygor put forth a claim to the throne but was refused by the great princes, and the crown passed to Ayn's sixteen-year-old son Sagriv. King Sagriv Vanar was an intemperate young man and too easily swayed into foolish misadventure by Ruslan Vygor, whom he viewed as his elder brother.

When the Cygnaran Civil War began in the south, Ruslan persuaded King Sagriv to initiate hostilities against Llael. In what would become known as the Coin War, the battling nations conducted much of their fighting through mercenary forces. King Sagriv, Ruslan, and many of their armed retainers also joined in the war and were emboldened by early successes. King Sagriv also took satisfaction in seeing the Man-O-War soldiers, the first of their kind, demonstrate their capabilities in battle. Ultimately, the Coin War proved too costly to both sides, and the king reluctantly withdrew his forces.

His taste for battle not yet satisfied, the young king immediately began to plan more ambitious campaigns. Ruslan Vygor, already a zealous Menite, urged the king to move against some of the remote townships of the far north that were suspected of harboring worshipers of the Devourer Wurm. In 486 AR an expedition into the Malgur Forest resulted in an ambush of the king's escort by a large group of hostile Vindol tribesmen. They managed to slay King Sagriv, although Ruslan and the other survivors were able to return to the capital with the king's body for burial.

Sagriv's younger brother Jozef ascended to the throne and proved to be a weak, ineffectual king during his thirteen years of rule. Meanwhile, Ruslan Vygor's sanity began to slip and he started to believe he was receiving visions directly from the Creator. Aside from his fervency, Ruslan seemed driven and intelligent as he created alliances with many of the great princes, particularly those of the Menite faith. These allies plotted to overthrow King Jozef, however, and fabricated evidence that he had been involved in the assassination of his own mother, Queen Ayn VI.

While the information against him was not sufficient to prove his guilt, the scandal convinced Jozef he could no longer rule, and he abdicated in 499 AR, allowing Ruslan Vygor to seize the throne with the support of his allies. King Ruslan soon signed a proclamation that Menoth was the only true god of the nation and that he himself was the Priest King Khardovic reborn. He promised to lead Khador to victories over the Morrowan kingdoms, starting with Cygnar. It seems unlikely the great princes who had supported Vygor believed this wild claim, yet they still hungered for conquest in the name of Menoth.

FIRST THORNWOOD WAR

Once he claimed the throne, King Ruslan Vygor took swift control of the capital and began implementing plans for conquest. While some among the nobility began to feel unease concerning his sanity, they eagerly embraced his drive to bolster and strengthen the army. Vygor set every foundry and forge in the kingdom to the work of creating warjacks and weaponry for his soldiers and tremendously expanded the Iron Fangs and the Winter Guard.

His religious rhetoric disquieted many of his rivals; the Vanars went into hiding after the former king Jozef mysteriously disappeared from the remote estate where he had been living in seclusion since his abdication. Yet Vygor saved his most inflammatory denunciations for the Morrowan nation of Cygnar, and it was clear that his aims were less about seizing territory and more about delivering a crushing blow to that hated enemy.

Despite his reputation for dark tempers and the uncertain mandate of his cause, Vygor possessed a cunning mind for strategy and a brazen will to do the unexpected. As Llael and Cygnar had entered into an alliance for mutual protection after the Border Wars, Vygor decided to use a threat to Llael to lure away the Cygnaran Army in 510 AR. To make this threat compelling, he sent a great invasion army, including virtually all of Khador's formidable cavalry, to the Llaelese border. Meanwhile, he sent the bulk of his infantry and warjacks to march on the Thornwood. Never before had Khador conducted a major war without the support of its cavalry. King Malfast of Cygnar fell for the ruse and sent his finest general, Archduke Vinter Raelthorne II, to lead the Cygnaran Army in support of the panicked Llaelese.

Vygor's army carved a path straight through the Thornwood using their warjacks to clear what would become known as the Warjack Road. Because such a massive troop movement could not proceed undetected, Vygor bottled up the nearby Cygnaran city of Fellig in hopes of preventing word of this force being deep within Cygnaran borders from reaching that nation's generals.

This bold move nearly succeeded; Vygor's forces swiftly destroyed Cygnar's garrison at Deepwood Tower and continued to advance through the dense and previously impenetrable woods. Unfortunately for Vygor, he was unable to keep his actions hidden, and scouts slipped through his cordon to alert the Cygnaran Army en route to Llael. Had Vygor's forces remained undetected a little longer, the main Cygnaran force in Llael would likely have been pinned down and entirely unable to respond, leaving the northern heartland vulnerable. As it was, Cygnaran defenders and the mercenaries hired to assist them managed to slow Vygor's advance toward the Dragon's Tongue River. Knowledge of the local geography greatly benefited them, and Vygor's army was steered away from its intended target.

The greatest clash of the war was the Battle of the Tongue where a smaller Cygnaran force from Point Bourne sought to hold the Stonebridge against the far mightier Khadoran Army, using chokepoints to limit engagement. Khador's vanguard, led by Alexander Karchev, was ambushed by the Cygnarans and his forces picked apart. The commanding Cygnaran officer confronted Karchev personally in an engagement that left him dead and Karchev near death. The defenders leveraged their superior firepower against the incoming Khadoran Army, stalling them.

This delay sufficed to allow the arrival of the larger Cygnaran army led by Vinter Raelthorne II which threw Vygor's forces into disarray. The Ironbears mercenary company, which had been hired by Vygor to protect his supply lines, contributed to the chaos by betraying him, against all mercenary laws and their own contract. Vinter and Vygor ultimately clashed in personal combat, and King Ruslan Vygor was bested and slain. The morale of the Khadoran Army broke at the sight of this and they were routed, thus ending the war.

The defeat of Vygor's army was a blow to all of Khador, and it would be decades before the army recovered. More warjacks were destroyed in this short conflict than in all previous wars combined. The war also sparked ongoing hostility between the border defenders on both sides. Yet many in the capital were relieved by Vygor's death. The Menite king's supporters quickly fled the capital and returned to their estates.

THE MODERN ERA

The Vanars returned to the capital soon after the war, and Jozef's son Sagriv Vanar II was crowned in Korsk in 511 AR, resuming the Vanar dynasty to the relief of the people. One of Sagriv's first acts was to reverse the religious proclamation of King Ruslan Vygor, a move even the nation's Menites did not raise a significant objection to, having been humbled and embarrassed by Vygor's excesses. The rule of King Sagriv II was a time of healing and recovery but also of modernization and reform that would continue for decades.

While the Thornwood War had ended in Khador's defeat, it served as an invaluable lesson in how warfare had changed

in the modern era. Vygor's unconventional tactics had shown that heavy cavalry was no longer essential to victory and that long-range artillery could be decisive. With this knowledge, Khadoran engineers designed the next generation of warjacks. Sagriv II died of illness in 534 AR, and the crown passed to his son Ivad, who continued the work of his father.

Although both of the previous kings had performed ably, the Khadoran spirit was not entirely restored until the great work of "the People's King," as King Ivad would come to be known. His long reign marked the official end of the Dark Times that had plagued the Khadoran monarchy. He experienced a massive swell of popularity when he abolished serfdom in 546 AR and led the Motherland into a new and prosperous era, instilling his people with a sense of pride and confidence by reminding them of their storied lineage and promising them a bright future. Further, King Ivad also introduced tremendous military reforms, pursuits that would be continued by his successors. He placed an increasing importance on mechanikal innovation and the development of new weapons of war.

One of King Ivad's closest friends from his youth in the military was a soldier named Simonyev Blaustavya, a talented mechanik and great thinker with whom King Ivad stayed in close contact. The fortunes of Khador and Blaustavya seemed linked after the formation in 551 AR of Blaustavya Rail, a company that would innovate newer and more powerful locomotives while greatly expanding the Khadoran rail lines, including extending the Iron Highway from Khardov to the great northwestern port city of Ohk. Blaustavya became one of the wealthiest and most influential of the merchant-princes, or *kayazy*, and consistently leveraged his power for the good of Khador.

King Ivad ruled for thirty-eight years before age and illness finally caught up with him; he outlived his own son and left the throne to his infant granddaughter Ayn XI. On his deathbed. King Ivad asked for Blaustavya to rule as regent and to watch over Ayn until she reached her majority. In 572 AR rulership passed to Lord Regent Blaustavya, who would continue King Ivad's work of improving the Khadoran economy and industrial capacity.

Queen Ayn Vanar XI was crowned in 587 AR. Having taught her all he could, Blaustavya stayed on to serve as her great vizier. Many historians have called the transition between Ivad to Blaustavya to Ayn XI the smoothest extended transition of royal power in Khadoran history, and there is no question their combined efforts resulted in a golden era of power and prosperity for the nation. While some feared that Queen Ayn would be a puppet of Blaustavya, she was a strong, intelligent, and independent ruler. One of her earliest acts displayed her intolerance of any hint of treason when she pardoned the warcaster Orsus Zoktavir for his part in the Boarsgate Massacre, a slaughter incited by a town near the Ordic border whose citizens had threatened to secede from Khador. Though Zoktavir had gone so far as to execute his own soldiers when they questioned his violence against the traitors, his pardon sent the message that disloyalty would not be tolerated.

From the beginning, Queen Ayn expressed a keen desire to return Khador to the greatness of the former Khardic Empire, a notion inherited from her grandfather and a dream of Blaustavya's. She militarized the nation as never before, investing in better arms and armament not only for the elite forces but for the Winter Guard as well, and insisted that higher standards of military training be implemented throughout the army. She was aided in these endeavors by the great military genius Gurvaldt Irusk, who in time revolutionized modern warfare, and she instituted the High Kommand as a governing council and advisory board to oversee the military. Over the course of the first sixteen years of Queen Ayn's reign, the Khadoran Army became the greatest fighting force in western Immoren.

THE LLAELESE WAR

In the final month of 604 AR, Queen Ayn Vanar gave the order for her armies to invade Llael. While this attack would shock the southern kingdoms with its bold suddenness, it was carefully orchestrated and meticulously planned for years by Kommandant Gurvaldt Irusk under the authority of the High Kommand.

Agents working under the direction of Great Vizier Blaustavya infiltrated the Llaelese government, which was already weakened by the death of its last king in 595 AR. Those agents pulled strings to further destabilize the region, including their eventual pressure on Llaelese Prime Minister Deyar Glabryn, who became their pawn. While the Llaelese military had long been relatively small and weak, the prime minister was encouraged to disrupt them further, allowing military production and armament to languish and moving key personnel away from vital defenses. The nation became highly reliant on profit-motivated mercenary forces as well as the largesse of its long-standing ally Cygnar. The weaker the Llaelese garrisons became, the more the Cygnaran crown felt compelled to send in its own soldiers to compensate for that weakness.

Khador's three-pronged attack in the winter of 604 AR allowed its army to play to all of its strengths while leaving its ancient enemies bewildered and ill prepared to respond. Committing to such an extensive campaign in the dead of winter would have previously been thought impossible. Yet the organizational genius of Gurvaldt Irusk and his subordinate Kommandant Mikhail Ivdanovich enabled Khador to supply its armies despite heavy snows and nearly impassable roads.

Khadoran forces struck the three major lynchpins of Llael's western defenses simultaneously: Elsinberg in the south, Laedry in the north, and Redwall Fortress between them. The western border collapsed quickly under the onslaught, and the Khadoran Army marched inexorably into the Llaelese interior. Despite Cygnaran forces that poured into the region from the south, Khador's armies pushed relentlessly eastward. Rynyr and Riversmet would soon become bloodied battlegrounds leading to the surrender of Leryn.

The longest and most bitter fighting of the war took place during the lengthy siege of Merywyn, Llael's capital. To expedite the city's fall, Irusk dispatched a portion of his army south to threaten the fortress of Northguard and the Cygnaran

supply lines into Llael. Cygnaran troops were forced to withdraw from Merywyn to protect their own border, ensuring the subsequent capitulation of the capital and the surrender of Llael's government. The kingdom had been conquered, its assets seized by the Motherland.

NEW EMPIRE

Though the war with Cygnar had only begun, the conquest of Llael was celebrated across the breadth of Khador. Queen Ayn Vanar called the Motherland's elite to Korsk as she prepared to usher in a new age. Military officers, heads of noble families, and religious leaders of both the Menite and Morrowan religions bore witness as she declared herself empress of the new Khadoran Empire on the 16th of Tempen in 606 AR. Empress Ayn Vanar thus publicly reaffirmed her commitment to defeat every enemy that threatened her great nation and to crush any that would stand in the way of its rightful claims.

For Khador to secure its newly conquered lands, it needed to immediately press its advantage against Cygnar, for the southern nation would undoubtedly retaliate if given time and opportunity to gather its strength after the defeat in Llael. Khador also capitalized on the fighting that broke out between Caspia and Sul. That war in the south would keep much of Cygnar's best-armed soldiers and most sophisticated weapons engaged in the capital's defense.

Khador initiated the Second Thornwood War in late 606 AR with attacks on Cygnar's northern border. The forces of the Motherland marched on Fellig and Deepwood Tower as well as on the great bastion of Northguard, whose defeat was deemed crucial to any successful campaign.

The arrival of additional enemy forces complicated the fighting. The Northern Crusade of the Protectorate of Menoth marched north from its homeland to wage war, penetrating deep into the Thornwood and laying its own failed siege against Fellig before moving into Llael to lend its strength to the Resistance forces in the southeast. The Nightmare Empire of Cryx revealed itself there, albeit primarily as an opportunistic jackal feeding on the remains of battle: they stole corpses to be transformed into thralls, the walking dead that serve as Cryx's disposable soldiers.

Toppling Northguard was one of the most difficult challenges in the war. Irusk's first large-scale assault failed, resulting in tremendous Khadoran casualties. Though the Cygnarans had suffered as well, this costly defeat provoked Empress Vanar to order her nation's greatest general to take the fortress or be forgotten by history. Irusk responded by reinforcing his own army from the occupying forces left in Llael. He then struck with overwhelming numbers as Cygnar struggled to resupply its embattled fortress.

This time, Irusk was victorious; Cygnar's First Army was forced to retreat south from their strategically vital bastion. With the Cygnarans routed across the Dragon's Tongue River, the Second Thornwood War ended with a resounding victory for the new empire. Khador began at once to fortify the river against Cygnaran counterattacks.

The northwestern city of Fellig survived the Khadoran siege but was left isolated, and the Ordic Army and their mercenaries moved in to secure the city once the siege was lifted. They took care to maintain their neutrality, however, by not interfering with Khadoran military movements.

Satisfied with her gains from Khador's victories, the empress sent emissaries to King Leto of Cygnar to offer a temporary cessation of hostilities. The Cygnaran king was grateful to consent to a cease-fire after a long chain of defeats, even as the armed forces on both sides of the river stood ready for battle.

Tensions continued as the Northern Crusade penetrated deep into Llael and took the city of Leryn from its Khadoran occupiers. This has become the seat of the Protectorate of Menoth's new hierarch, who is expected to bring his armies to bear and challenge Khador over its newly conquered lands. The people of Khador are not troubled by this new adversary; they know their empress will respond with characteristic strength and ferocity and that her army will ultimately prevail.

GOVERNMENT AND MILITARY

The Khadoran Empire operates the most efficient centralized government in western Immoren. It also maintains one of the most powerful armies in the region. The absolute power of the empress ensures that despite the tremendous size and scope of the empire, key decisions can be made quickly. Once the empress sets her nation on a course, every agency at her disposal launches into motion to see her will done.

Nonetheless, Khador's far-flung territory, which includes vast swathes of harsh terrain, does not lend itself to swift communication—though modern inventions like rail lines have helped tremendously. Government functions require a considerable bureaucratic structure to implement imperial decrees as well as relying on the leadership of a large noble class. Such an extensive system inevitably presents considerable opportunity for corruption, delay, and misinterpretation. Empress Ayn Vanar has proven to be extremely popular with the people, but she is also a ruthless sovereign with no tolerance for treachery. Those who facilitate her rule are well motivated to perform to her standards, whether in the governance of the realm or in the execution of its military objectives.

KHADORAN GOVERNANCE

Khador is ruled by a strong centralized government under the direct authority of the empress. Individual regions, or *volozkya*, are entrusted to powerful vassals called great princes. This feudal system is unique to Khador, as each of the great princes is treated as a sovereign within his domain. A lawful claim to the Khadoran throne comes with each such position, though the strength of the Vanar dynasty has kept most rivals in check for the last century.

The great princes wield considerable power within their territories, but the modern age has brought a system of wealth generation that lies outside their direct purview.

Wealth is its own form of power, and because few princes or their subordinates directly control the flow of trade and vital industry within the empire, they are beholden to those who dominate finance—namely, merchant princes called the *kayazy*. Theoretically, the kayazy have no political power except as given to them via special appointments. In practice, however, it is quite common for members of the kayazy to purchase title and position or for nobles to elevate them to stations of governance in their name and then take advantage of their skills and wealth for mutual benefit.

A similar equilibrium exists within the government's extensive bureaucracy. In the years since the Corvis Treaties, successive monarchs have vested some of their power into various agencies in an effort to relinquish some of the tedium of rulership and to see their wills more easily enacted. Though such agencies exist only at the sufferance of the monarch, the oldest of them are now indispensable to running the empire's vital business.

No monarch wishes to spend all her hours writing the banal laws required for modern commerce and industry, collecting taxes and overseeing the treasury, or arbitrating countless grievances. Lawmaking bodies have therefore arisen in each region to regulate the arcane, educate young minds, and ensure an aggressive pace of war manufacturing. Some of these agencies are more prone to corruption than others, though in most cases they run greater risk of mismanaging their time or becoming bloated with functionaries devoted only to preserving themselves rather than serving the government.

Khador experienced considerable modernization in the last century as its economic machine transitioned to the industrial era. Though the empire's government has adapted, its underlying structure remains little different from the days of the ancient Khardic Empire. Overall, Khador's bureaucracy is resistant to change. Were it not for the intelligence, charisma, and political acumen of Empress Vanar, this embedded reticence would likely result in problems for the empire. Under a weak sovereign, many of the nation's governmental functions would certainly fall into chaotic bickering and self-destructive territorial disputes.

THE EMPRESS

In Khador, all power ultimately trickles down from the monarch. Since the Corvis Treaties, this individual has been either a king or a queen—until Ayn Vanar declared herself empress in 606 AR.

The empress' powers are vast and all-encompassing, including but not limited to the ability to declare war; to command the empire's armies in battle; to negotiate treaties with foreign powers; to remove or appoint high officers; to invest others with rank and station; to write and approve laws; to have commands obeyed with the authority of law; to determine punishments for high crimes; to pardon those judged guilty by any court; to raise and command the army and navy; to levy taxes; and to allocate the empire's treasury. All the powers and authorities of other nobles are subordinate to the empress.

But even the empress must heed specific laws and traditions, such as the laws of succession. The family lines of the great princes are tied into succession and are considered inviolate. Succession is based on primogeniture with no written stipulations for gender preference, though in some circumstances the eldest male heir has ascended to the throne despite the existence of an elder daughter.

Tradition dictates that Khadoran monarchs shall not be crowned until reaching their majority, or eighteen years of age. Before such time an appointed regent, usually the sitting great vizier or someone chosen by the great princes, rules in the monarch's stead. Individuals with a claim to the throne are never chosen to be regents. Should a monarch die without issue, the matter of succession becomes considerably more complicated, as claims to the throne must be determined by a complex order of precedence based on sovereign lineage, which defines the family lines of the great princes.

All families claiming sovereign lineage can be traced back to the rulers of the volozkya during the Khardic Empire in the Thousand Cities Era. The number of families with sovereign lineage outnumbers volozkya in modern Khador, as several counts belong to families with this distinction and are now vassals to great princes.

EMPRESS AYN VANAR

Ayn Vanar XI, formerly queen of Khador, currently rules as empress. Believing her to personify their nation, her people call her the *pervichyi rodinovna*, or "prime daughter," of the Motherland. The empress is a shrewd and powerful politician with ambitions deeper than the Khardic Sea.

Intent on expanding her empire, Ayn created a new and formidable army trained for a singular purpose: the conquest of western Immoren. Convinced her destiny is to rule all the Iron Kingdoms, she will go to any length and use any means to realize her ambition. This army has already had great successes, having seized Llael's most important and industrious cities and driving the Cygnarans out of the Thornwood.

Empress Ayn Vanar has solidified her esteem in the eyes of the people through careful displays of political acumen and benevolence. She possesses a fearsome reputation not only for dealing harshly with nobles who abuse their people but also for tirelessly rooting out treachery. In addition, she deftly handles matters of religious differences in her vast nation. Though openly Morrowan, she pays considerable respect to the ranking visgoths of the Khadoran Temple of Menoth. Her inclusion of both religions is viewed favorably by many, and she is beloved by Menite and Morrowan faithful alike. This perception has been aided by acts of considerable charity, through which she supports the efforts of both religions to tend to Khador's poor or disenfranchised.

THE GREAT VIZIER

Second to the empress stands the great vizier, her personal advisor and primary chancellor. The great vizier holds the highest appointed office in Khador and is the only individual not possessing a sovereign lineage who can make demands of the great princes. Charged with enacting the will of the empress, when bearing a royal writ he speaks with the empress' authority and must be obeyed. Indeed, the exact duties and powers of this office are both vast and vague. The great vizier enjoys great latitude as he goes about creating offices and appointments in the course of his duties.

The ruling monarch appoints the great vizier, usually for life, but he serves at the monarch's pleasure and can be replaced or dismissed at any time. The great vizier of a previous monarch commonly continues in his office after a new sovereign is crowned, a tradition intended to aid a smooth transition. After a young monarch becomes comfortable with rulership, she may retire the old vizier and appoint a new one.

As advisor to the empress, the great vizier is expected to be well informed of the status of the empire and of any matters that might affect the realm, including the disposition of foreign nations. This position is responsible not only for overseeing the intelligence-gathering arms of the nation, most prominently the Ministry of the Great Vizier and the Greylords Prikaz Chancellery, but also for analyzing and presenting pertinent information to the High Kommand and to the empress herself. Further, the great vizier determines who is granted an audience with the empress.

MINISTRY OF THE GREAT VIZIER

The ministry leverages its substantial bureaucratic resources to help the great vizier coordinate the empire and to keep him informed about the current status of the realm. Though most of its officials work within narrow purviews and with limited authority, refusing a request for information from the ministry can incur the wrath of the great vizier himself. So motivated, most Khadoran government officials go to great lengths to cooperate with its officers.

The ministry grew from a small council into a full arm of the government during the reign of King Jozef Vanar, who restored the Vanar dynasty in 511 AR, after the First Thornwood War. It was again transformed by Simonyev Blaustavya, who greatly expanded its scope during his regency, changes which were then continued to facilitate passage of power to Queen Ayn Vanar XI after her majority. The ministry is divided into eight discrete sections, each with a specific function, as follows:

SIMONYEV BLAUSTAVYA, GREAT VIZIER OF KHADOR

Simonyev Blaustavya is one of Khador's most beloved figures, his reputation and esteem exceeded only by those of the empress herself. The former kayaz industrialist and close friend of King Ivad Vanar, Blaustavya enjoyed an impressive record of achievements by the time of the king's death. As King Ivad lay dying, one of his final acts was to appoint Blaustavya to serve as regent and to watch over his baby granddaughter, who was to be the next queen of Khador.

Blaustavya ruled for eighteen years until Ayn Vanar's majority, during which time he managed the nation as ably as his industrial interests. He is the only father figure Ayn has ever known. Were it not for her obvious independence and intelligence, some might think Blaustavya rules Khador still, with the empress as a mere figurehead. Nothing could be further from the truth, yet the great vizier still fills a crucial role within the Khadoran government. Throughout his lifetime of loyal service, he has been of tremendous aid to both the Vanar family and Khador itself.

Section One: Sovereign Office—Collects the decrees of the great princes.

Section Two: Legislative Office—Maintains a record of all laws and legal hearings.

Section Three: Intelligence Kommand—Gathers information on foreign powers, monitors threats both internal and external, and acts to preserve the realm.

Section Four: Sustenance Board—Inventories essentials like food, water, and coal and prioritizes distribution during shortages.

Section Five: Commerce Board—Monitors the status of industry and commerce and ensures proper tax collection.

Section Six: War Acquisitions Board—Oversees the management of occupied territories.

Section Seven: Prisons Office—Assesses the realm's prisons and tracks the status of important prisoners.

Section Eight: Census Office—Tracks the population of Khador primarily to ensure proper military enlistment.

Though all sections of the ministry serve a vital role in Blaustavya's information network, the Intelligence Kommand carries a particularly sinister reputation. These personal agents of the great vizier work closely with the Prikaz Chancellery of the Greylords Covenant on matters of intelligence and analysis. Unlike the Prikaz, agents of Section Three possess no arcane training or aptitude, but they are nevertheless extraordinary intelligence professionals. Agents embark on espionage missions either alone or in small groups, sometimes with Prikaz members. This section is led by Kommander Myrra Starov, one of the most feared officers in the Khadoran government, who has served Section Three for more than two decades.

THE GREAT PRINCES

In the centuries when the old Khardic Empire united the northern tribes by sword, lance, and fire, Khador's lands were divided into territories called *volozkya*. The volozkya were once sovereign kingdoms that only reluctantly bowed to their Khardic conquerors. Even after the powerful lords governing these regions surrendered their authority, they clung to ancestral claims of royal blood. By the final years of the Khardic Empire, they were known as the great princes, a title chosen to demonstrate their vassalage to the empire; indeed, they were subordinate only to the monarchy. The rights of these lines were reaffirmed following the Corvis Treaties, when Khador was established as a new nation.

After long centuries of Orgoth occupation, Khador's ruling elite had to confront a storm of disruption and uncertainty, as commoner and noble alike sought to embrace symbols of past glories. Unfortunately, records detailing the governance of the old Khardic Empire were incomplete and in disarray. It was clear all the great princes had claim to the throne, but not whose claim was strongest.

The ensuing chaos prompted innumerable feuds and decades of strife, starting almost immediately after the founding of Khador. Umbrean Great Prince Vladin Tzepesci seized power from the first monarch of Khador in 209 AR, just six years after the Corvis Treaties. The Tzepesci line clung tenaciously to rulership for sixty years, but their rule remained contested. The decades under the rule of Vladin, Geza, and Levash Tzepesci were marked by continual discontent.

After ousting the Tzepescis in 272 AR, Dmitry Dopatevik instituted formal laws that defined an order of succession distinct from the sovereigns of the old empire. Despite his efforts, it was not until centuries later that a stable dynasty took control of the Khadoran throne. King Mikhail Vanar reluctantly accepted the crown after casting down Levash Tzepesci, an alleged necromancer and confirmed tyrant. Common belief across Khador holds that the Vanars have ushered in an era of unparalleled prosperity. Because the family's mystique is so strong, it seems unlikely the Khadoran people would ever accept another dynasty, making future claims by other great princes unlikely to succeed except in the case of the complete extinction of the Vanar line.

Regardless of the realities of succession, the great princes of the volozkya remain powerful. Though their role in government has changed over the centuries, they are regarded as royalty in Khador. The crown has bestowed upon these great nobles military honors and ranks befitting their station. In fact, many great princes and their highest-ranking vassals currently serve as kommandants and kommanders in the Khadoran Army, though few participate directly in military actions. Several hold these ranks in name only and choose handpicked subordinates to lead their forces in the field.

The great princes wield tremendous power over the citizens of their volozkya. Their authority nearly matches that of the empress, with two important exceptions: it is applicable only within the bounds of their volozkya, and it cannot countermand any law imposed by the empress or the central government. Each volozk has a governing council called a *duma* that is composed of influential inhabitants of the volozk, appointed officers, and nobles subordinate to the ruling great prince. The duma attends to the needs of the great prince and oversees other government offices, such as the system of law courts. In less-populous volozkya, dumas are usually small bodies that meet at their great princes' ancestral seats. Dumas in larger volozkya maintain their own offices, which house complex bureaucracies that coordinate with representatives from the volozk's cities and towns as well as agents of the central government.

Mandatory military enlistment and taxation represent the most prominent impositions of the central government upon the great princes. Each volozk must put forth able-bodied youths to join the Khadoran Army. Though this directive was once loosely interpreted, with distant regions qualifying by enrolling recruits into local garrisons, the Ministry of the Great Vizier now ensures that conscripts continue to fill the ranks of the Khadoran Army. Individual regions may still maintain private military forces, but the national quota must be met. Tax collection is likewise closely monitored by agents of the ministry, with the great princes retaining the right to levy additional taxes on the inhabitants of their territories.

The accumulation of wealth represents the main area in which the great princes have fallen behind the kayazy. Taxes gathered from the volozkya are generally far less significant than revenue gained through commerce and industry, which the great princes rarely control. Laws imposed by Khador's sovereigns forbid great princes or other nobles from interfering with matters of national commerce, and most of the major industries qualify for protection. Empress Vanar has strengthened these laws, seeing the kayazy as essential to modernizing and maintaining the empire's strength against powerful rivals like Cygnar. As a result, the great princes of the least-populous and poorest volozkya enjoy little political clout in the capital, regardless of the storied grandeur of their lineages.

THE KAYAZY

In addition to the sovereign and the great princes, another force has arisen in recent decades to play a significant role in Khador's political schemes: the kayazy (see p. 140). The influence of this class of wealthy commoners increased significantly after King Ivad abolished serfdom. Particularly in Korsk, the kayazy include influential men of wealth, both those with legitimate business dealings and those who control criminal enterprises. Their wealth has funded any number of vital industrial endeavors valued by the crown and the army, and this in turn gives them political power.

The kayazy resent the influence of the great princes and other nobles in Khador and have worked to elevate their own positions while marginalizing individuals they see as relics of a bygone age. This class-based tension has only worsened as the strain of war increasingly burdens the kayazy, who intend to reap the benefits. Empress Ayn Vanar adeptly maneuvers both groups to her advantage, sometimes pitting one against the other. More often than not, she has reason to side with the kayazy against families who might otherwise threaten her rule.

LESSER NOBLES

The great princes unquestionably comprise the most powerful of Khador's nobility, but they do not stand alone. The feudal system of peerage still has significance in Khador, with titled, land-owning families bound to the great princes through vassalage. Each volozk is divided into three to six counties, each further subdivided into four to eight viscounties. Counts rule the former territories; viscounts, who serve as vassals to counts, rule the latter. The title of viscount may also be extended to the heir of a count, who does not govern a territory but who will inherit his father's county. Subordinate nobles see to the productive use of their lands for the great prince, maintain local peace and justice, and gather taxes from those who lease the land. Should threats arise in the region, lesser nobles coordinate with armed retainers to protect their lands and inform garrisons of the Khadoran Army should their interventions prove insufficient.

In theory, the great princes can create lesser nobles at will. Because of the territory required to invest in a new vassal, however, this right is generally invoked only upon the extinction or ruin of a noble line. Several counts are of sovereign lineage, while others are descended from less significant, yet still notable, stock.

Both the empress and the great princes may bestow the title of *posadnik* upon their common subjects. This title may come with a nominal tract of land, but its powers are largely symbolic and limited to specific authority granted by the investing sovereign. Among the kayazy, the honor is almost considered a rite of passage. Because the title can be revoked at will, and is often retained only so long as the recipient carries out his duties, posadniks rank among a noble's most trusted vassals.

Peerage of Khador in Descending Order

Title	Method of Address
Empress	Your Imperial Majesty, Your Majesty
Great Vizier	Your Honorable Excellency
Great Prince/Princess	Your Royal Highness
Heir to Great Prince/Princess	Your Highness
Count/Countess	Your Excellency
Viscount/Viscountess	Lord
Posadnik	Master

NOBLE OBLIGATIONS

Though the highest-ranking nobles in Khador are in some respects above local law and rarely answer for their actions so long as they do not clash with the central government, the concept of "noble obligation" is nevertheless taken seriously. By ancient tradition, nobles are expected to protect their vassals and subjects and to treat them with honor and respect. Those guilty of violating this code are to be dealt with swiftly within the bounds of justice.

The degree to which this obligation is honored varies considerably from one sovereign to the next. Empress Vanar, a notable defender of the Khadoran people, has been known to intervene personally in cases of noble corruption rather than delegate them to the great vizier. The empress routinely consults with ranking members of the clergy throughout the realm in order to remain abreast of conditions in the volozkya. Consequently, the Morrowan and Menite leaders in these regions enjoy considerable indirect influence, which they generally use to improve their communities.

COURT POLITICS

Empress Ayn Vanar reigns as one of the strongest and most beloved monarchs in Khadoran history. She has cemented her renown through military victories and by her deft navigation of national politics. The strength of her position has done much to limit the scope of political intrigue in Korsk, though it has not eliminated the existence of enemies and rivals. Nonetheless, those who chaff under her rule have no desire to be branded traitors. They are terrified by the watchful eye of Great Vizier Blaustavya, who has effectively eliminated numerous potential conspiracies against the empress. His agents appear to be everywhere and to hear everything.

Accordingly, Khador's court is relatively weak in that there are no specific government functions requiring or obliging the gathering of the empire's nobles. They receive no votes on national matters and have little say in the implementation of laws not directly pertinent to the volozkya or their counties.

A host of government offices and ministries exists to execute the decrees of the empress and to see to the state's bureaucracy. Certain nobles do participate in these functions, but they have limited ability to affect the government outside the specific purview of their offices, all of which are subject to oversight by the great vizier's ministry.

Nobles and other members of the aristocracy can freely visit the capital and request meetings with the empress in order to deliver petitions. The likelihood of attaining audience is largely a matter of the esteem in which the empress holds the petitioner. Great princes have a much better chance of securing a private audience than all but the wealthiest kayazy. Groups of nobles will sometimes assemble to seek shared audience, a generally effective tactic. In most cases, petitioners are intercepted by the great vizier, who can see to their pleas without troubling the empress.

LAW

The legal atmosphere in Khador could be considered antiquated when compared with that of its rival, Cygnar, as all laws spring from the authority of the monarchy or are based on ancient precedents and tradition. Khadoran commoners possess no specific inherent rights. In fact, the government is at considerable liberty to deprive its citizens of their freedom, possessions, or their very lives. Members of the aristocracy, however, enjoy a number of privileges, including being exempt from certain petty laws. Generally, only a higher-ranking noble can pass judgment on a lower-ranking noble, meaning that great princes are effectively subject only to the will of the empress.

Courts exist at several levels to manage trials and to serve sentences, freeing the nobility from that responsibility. Nobles are at liberty to intervene where their interests require it, but most judgments take place in a court designated for that purpose. The highest of these is the Imperial Law Court in Korsk. The highest government office dedicated to overseeing the legislative and legal processes of the empire, in addition to the Imperial Law Court itself, is the attached Ministry of the Judiciary. The judges and clerks of the ministry work closely with the great princes. They implement laws as decreed by the empress and maintain a vast repository of legal texts dating back to the Thousand Cities Era. The ministry's legal experts possess an encyclopedic knowledge of recent amendments and modern precedents as well as historical law.

The Imperial Law Court hears only trials of interest to the whole of the empire. Imperial judges are appointed by the empress herself. In cases where local laws appear to contradict imperial laws or judgments passed by the imperial court, the Imperial Law Court has the power to strike down or amend those laws. Such laws must come to the attention of the court first, however, and it is not uncommon for contradictory laws to go unnoticed indefinitely. Such oversight can lead to extreme differences in regional laws across the empire. Even dedicated legal professionals can remain ignorant of local variances, as numerous and poorly compiled as they are. A scholar of the law in Korsk, for example, may find himself utterly perplexed by the laws of Uldenfrost.

Over recent decades Khadoran law has been most progressive in matters related to internal commerce and industry as the monarchy has prioritized strengthening the economy and the nation's industrial production capacities. These measures have encouraged engineering breakthroughs and innovations.

CHURCH AND TEMPLE LAW

In Khador, as elsewhere in the Iron Kingdoms, ancient traditions allow the major religious institutions some liberty in overseeing the behavior of their adherents, particularly their clergy. Should a priest be deemed to be acting contrary to the tenets of his faith, the matter is almost always handled internally. Both the Church of Morrow and the Temple of Menoth have processes for handling such transgressions. In some cases, however, the reach of church and temple law extends to their congregations as well. The degree of separation between secular and religious law varies but is particularly prevalent in exclusively Menite towns and villages. In these communities, the ancient scrutator caste maintains specialized priests who traditionally oversee matters of justice. According to the dictates of the Canon of the True Law, it is the duty of the scrutators to punish malefactors. In all cases the secular authorities of a region, including the nobility, could intervene in cases where they felt obliged to do so.

LOCAL LAW

Nobles are responsible for interpreting and implementing laws over the lands they rule, but this authority is commonly deferred to councils or individuals who act in a lord's name. Such power often rests with a volozk's duma, local courts, posadniks, or, in some cases, the leading religious institutions. Because of the ad hoc nature of these institutions, their competence and actual legal knowledge can vary widely. Some volozkya pride themselves on their professional and knowledgeable courts, while others prefer to settle legal matters according to local tradition or simply public opinion. It is not uncommon for lawbreakers in some remote communities to be summarily punished or executed in lieu of anything approximating a trial.

Law enforcement is handled differently in every region of the empire. The ruling nobility and their posadniks can call upon a combination of local Winter Guard garrisons and liegemen to apprehend wanted criminals. The Winter Guard, however, does not maintain a presence in every town and settlement throughout the empire, and because its ranks are filled with conscripts drawn from across Khador, forces stationed in a given volozk might be completely ignorant of its local laws. Hence, it generally falls to local liegemen to find lawbreakers or investigate wrongdoing. Guardsmen can, of course, intervene in cases of obvious transgression, such as robbery and assault.

Actual criminal investigation and the serving of summons to court are left to agents of the local nobility, the ranking

posadnik, or some other governing official. Because these few officers are generally overworked, they must prioritize criminal matters under their purview. This means that crimes may go uninvestigated unless the perpetrator is caught in the act or the victim is notable. Once a suspected criminal is captured, he must wait to be tried by the nearest court—and in Khador, the accused are presumed guilty until proven innocent.

Punishment for crimes also varies considerably from region to region, and local courts have broad authority in sentencing. Wary of overstepping their bounds, however, they generally rule according to the inclinations of the authority who appointed them. A ruling noble can freely interfere with local trials, including dismissing or reversing the outcome of a trial, pardoning guilty parties, changing the terms of punishment, or personally judging a trial.

Khadoran justice is traditionally harsher than that of any other nation in the Iron Kingdoms except the Protectorate of Menoth. The smallest crimes may require the payment of fines commensurate with the offense, but measures such as being placed in public stocks and lashing are also common. For more serious crimes, Khador rarely employs lengthy imprisonment, finding it to be costly and wasteful. Assigning stints of hard labor at a *khardstadt*, a prison created for just that purpose, is considerably more common. In practice such sentences are equal to death in many cases, given the dangerous nature of work in mines or similar locations.

Those found guilty of capital crimes are executed. No universally accepted definition of "capital crime" exists, though transgressions like treason, murder, and arson are almost always deemed as such. In some volozkya, even theft or poaching carries a penalty of death. Decapitation by headsman's axe is the most common form of execution, but other means are used. Death by flogging, for example, is a common punishment for convicted criminals in northern volozkya. Most executioners are themselves criminals who were convicted to die for relatively minor crimes but who had their sentences commuted in exchange for serving this grim function.

Civil suits and criminal cases alike are heard by local courts. Though these judicial bodies possess the same latitude in determining outcome in both types of cases, in practice the state of justice is relative to the means of the parties at odds in the suit. The wealthy are able to hire advocates, often clerks from the Ministry of the Judiciary, to ensure the case is judged according to imperial law. The attention such cases draw nearly guarantees they will be heard by the most senior court in the region, usually the duma itself, as lower courts are too easily intimidated by the presence of imperial officers. After a case is decided, it can be appealed to the Imperial Law Court, even if such a proposition is expensive and time consuming. The Imperial Law Court seldom hears appeals, however, unless a clear bias in the lower court is suspected or it has reason to believe imperial law was violated. The kayazy see such appeals as their truest check on the power of the great princes.

Less prominent parties involved in a civil case and those lacking the means to hire an advocate are left to the whims of the court and have little hope for appeal.

ADVOCATES

Advocates are a relatively modern addition to the Khadoran legal system. With the rise of the kayazy, commoners had the means to see to their own legal defense for the first time. Rather than limiting themselves to the decisions of the courts, which were often biased, the wealthy began hiring learned clerks from the Ministry of the Judiciary to represent them in far-flung volozkya generally thought beyond the reach of the Imperial Law Court. These advocates would speak on the behalf of their employers, cite legal precedence, and attempt to sway or intimidate the court. Ultimately, their greatest advantage was that they would report not only the outcome of the trial to the Ministry of the Judiciary, but also the details of how it was conducted. In that way, the eyes and ears of the advocate were also the eyes and ears of the state.

Today, citizens of means commonly hire advocates to represent them in civil and criminal trials alike. An entire professional class of advocates has arisen throughout the empire, though the most prominent have backgrounds as current or former clerks of the Ministry of the Judiciary. The second tier of advocates comprises those who have extensively studied at one of the law schools throughout the empire. The bottom rung is made up of untrained, but quite knowledgeable, experts on local law who practice in smaller Khadoran communities. In some areas, well-educated priests may also serve as advocates.

It is worth noting that Khadoran citizens are not actually guaranteed the right to an advocate. Courts can bar such professionals from entry or simply bring a case to trial without giving the accused time to even hire an advocate, let alone prepare a defense. This practice is becoming less common, however, due to mounting political pressure, recent legal precedent, and lobbying by the kayazy and their subordinates.

RELATIONS WITH THE OTHER KINGDOMS

Khador's most recent victories have not come without consequence. Khadoran diplomacy is spoken of by other kingdoms with black humor at best. Despite the cease-fire with Cygnar, that enemy state still seethes from the loss of the Thornwood. Khadoran ambassadors are met with chilly politeness in Ord and elsewhere. Empress Vanar is little concerned with the sensibilities of lesser nations, however, as she knows victory in war to be the best form of diplomacy—and terms of surrender the most meaningful form of international negotiation.

CRYX

Like other nations of the Iron Kingdoms, Khador does not engage in any diplomatic contact with Cryx. Though Khador has long held this "nation" in contempt, Cryx's attack on Port Vladovar in 606 AR escalated affairs to open war. The naval incursion was followed by several significant attacks on Khadoran soil, including the defilement of tombs and even a small raid on the capital. The significance of these attacks remains a matter of speculation and has prompted considerable efforts to gain intelligence on this enemy.

Cryxian forces are universally confronted and destroyed when encountered by the Khadoran military. In particular, they have become a menace in the Thornwood, though the full extent of Cryx's operations there is unknown.

IOS

Khador has not hosted Iosan ambassadors since the elves closed their borders in 581 AR. Since then, Khador has had almost no contact with the nation. In recent years, arcanists of the Greylords Covenant have suggested that splinter agents of certain Iosan extremist sects may be carrying out a violent agenda within Khador, but this opinion has not been shared by the High Kommand until very recently. The High Kommand has recommended against pressing into southeastern Llael to capture Rhydden so as to avoid provoking Iosan border forces, which lurk in the forests just east of the city. Khador has no interest in antagonizing such an ancient and xenophobic power at this time.

CYGNAR

Nearly immediately after signing the Corvis Treaties, Khadoran monarchs began calling for the restoration of the Khardic Empire's full territories—a cause that has only grown in the intervening centuries. Cygnar has historically interfered with Khador's attempts to expand its borders, and as a result, these nations have engaged in multiple wars over the centuries.

Khador has been in a nearly perpetual state of war against the nation of Cygnar since the final days of 604 AR, but at present there is a tense cease-fire. Fighting recently came to a pause after the Khadoran Army seized the Thornwood, and the empress sent emissaries to Cygnar to declare her nation's current satisfaction with its gains after capturing the Thornwood. It seems unlikely Cygnar will concede the forest without additional conflict, but at the moment each side is warily fortifying along the Dragon's Tongue and watching for the other to make a move.

FREE LLAEL

Khador does not recognize the claims of the Llaelese Resistance, which it brands a criminal organization. For now, the empire is far more interested in securing territories in the Thornwood rather than seizing the remaining free Llaelese stronghold of Rhydden.

ORD

Khador's relationship with Ord is complex. Officially, the two nations are neutral trading partners. Ord is one of the few remaining markets in western Immoren open to Khadoran trade. Khador depends upon foreign trade to fill its coffers, and despite the tense atmosphere, Ordic merchants are more than willing to continue trading. The empire is, however, nervous of Cygnaran attempts to form an alliance with Ord.

Additionally, Ord's relatively weak military makes the nation an appealing target for later conquest, though its defenses are strong enough that this might not be accomplished as swiftly as was the case with Llael. Khador considers its traditional imperial claims to include a sizable portion of Ord's heartlands—a well-known fact that colors all political interactions between the two nations. Nonetheless, Khador maintains an ambassadorial estate in Merin, Ord's capital, as well as numerous intelligence agents who operate within the Ordic interior.

PROTECTORATE OF MENOTH

As recently as five years ago, Khador enjoyed neutral—if not marginally friendly—relations with the Protectorate of Menoth. Sympathies from the empire's large Menite population coupled with the Motherland's interest in weakening Cygnaran stability resulted in Khador actually aiding the Protectorate in building up its armed forces, if indirectly.

This climate changed after the Harbinger of Menoth sounded the call that prompted thousands of Khadoran citizens to relocate to the Protectorate—an event that preceded the religious nation's wave of crusades. Possibly recalling the defection of its own Greylords centuries earlier, Khador immediately halted all aid to the Protectorate and made actions such as cortex smuggling a capital offense.

Relations further deteriorated after the Llaelese War, when the Protectorate's Northern Crusade seized Leryn and the surrounding territory. The Crusade not only allied itself with the Llaelese Resistance, but it also made war with Khadoran forces remaining in the region. In response, the High Kommand ordered its garrisons to defend Llaelese holdings from the Northern Crusade and is still determining the best strategy for reclaiming the region. No official envoys are presently in contact with Protectorate leadership.

RHUL

Khador enjoyed excellent trading relations with Rhul until the Llaelese War, a conflict that jeopardized Rhul's trade routes with Cygnar and resulted in loss of life among Llaelese considered friends and allies by certain Rhulic clans. In addition, the Rhulfolk suffered casualties in war-torn cities like Riversmet, an unavoidable consequence of war but one that angered some of the stone lords who govern Rhul. Though Rhulic envoys have continued to communicate with Khadoran ambassadors, agents of Khador are less welcome in Rhul than they once were, and negotiations over trade terms have become more cutthroat. Rhul has also worked hard to maintain trade with Cygnar—a fact that has not pleased the kayazy.

THE MILITARY

OVERVIEW

The Khadoran Empire is the inheritor of an ancient legacy of proud warriors. The nation's hardy men and women stand united and inspired by the ambition of their empress. Its citizens' enthusiasm for battle, coupled with mandatory service and the

esteem bestowed upon soldiers, has enabled Khador to mobilize a substantial portion of its population. With ongoing efforts to modernize the military and optimize its industrial capacity, Khador represents one of the great powers of western Immoren. Victories in the last several years, including the invasions of Llael and northern Cygnar, have increased the fear and respect the Khadoran Army inspires throughout the region.

The Khadoran military has made tremendous strides in developing longer-ranged artillery and more advanced warjacks as well as leveraging the military genius and organizational skills of singular leaders like Gurvaldt Irusk. The invasion of Llael proved to be a boon to the army by bringing vital industry, raw materials, and technological developments to Khador. Plundering the holdings of the Order of the Golden Crucible delivered stockpiles of alchemical substances and other useful weapons into the hands of the Motherland's forces. Even more importantly, seizing the mines of Rynyr yielded components needed to manufacture blasting powder. Nearly all of Llael's industry, focused primarily in Laedry and the former capital, Merywyn, now works to satisfy Khador's ravenous military appetite. As a bonus, appropriating these assets has deprived the empire's longtime enemy, Cygnar, of its oldest ally and inspired many Khadorans to believe nothing can stop their march to further conquest.

In truth, however, Khador's armies are overextended. Though the present cease-fire is helping the nation's beleaguered forces consolidate their position after the victory in the Thornwood, Khadoran supply lines to new border garrisons remain poorly secured and interior garrisons have been reduced to reinforce the southern forces. Many Khadoran towns and villages are now more vulnerable to predations by the natural and unnatural creatures that prowl the wilderness, forcing locals to turn to mercenaries or organize their own militias.

HIGH KOMMAND

One of the strengths of the Khadoran Army is its centralized leadership, embodied in the High Kommand, an influential council serving the empress by overseeing the military. The High Kommand is made up of Khador's ruling military elite led by Premier Mhikol Horscze, absolute commander of Khador's military forces. Beneath Horscze are the three supreme kommandants who have authority over each of Khador's three great armies. The High Kommand also includes a large body open to all retired officers ranked kommander or higher in the army and kapitan or higher in the navy. These inestimable men and women draw upon decades of experience to analyze current engagements and evaluate possible strategies. Although these retired officers serve solely as advisors without any actual field authority, their recommendations carry considerable weight and can affect the decisions of the supreme kommandants and premier.

In 607 AR, following Khador's first attempt to take Northguard, the empress named Gurvaldt Irusk as the fourth supreme kommandant. Though the supreme kommandants in the capital remain responsible for overseeing and directing their individual armies, Irusk's proximity to the front lines places him in a unique position to coordinate Khador's forces in the field. This single voice of authority has proven invaluable in recent months, as Khador's armies continue to operate at great distances from the capital.

Many senior officers are uneasy about having a supreme kommandant set apart from the High Kommand. They argue that Irusk's ability to countermand their orders critically compromises their authority. Empress Vanar, however, maintains the High Kommand exists primarily to advise the sovereign and to formulate top-level strategies—not to lead soldiers fighting hundreds of miles away.

PREMIER MHIKOL HORSCZE

Horscze is an ancient, giant of a man with stark white hair and piercing gray eyes. Despite his great age, the premier remains sharp of mind. As head of the Khadoran High Kommand, he uses his intimidating presence to steer the supreme kommandants efficiently and without question. Premier Horscze once tutored the renowned Gurvaldt Irusk in the art of war, and he takes great pride in the many successes of his former pupil. Some among the High Kommand resent Irusk's rapid rise to prominence, but the premier is quick to silence them.

As important to the High Kommand as its veteran officers is the extensive hive of clerks and supply workers who maintain vital military correspondence and an ever-increasing vault of military records. A high volume of traffic passes through the High Kommand on a daily basis, including a constant stream of incoming requests and outgoing orders. Military payroll is one of the most important tasks handled by this bureaucratic staff, as many Khadoran soldiers defer significant portions of their wages to their families. The bureaucracy allows the Motherland's soldiers to feel confident their loved ones are being taken care of.

RANK AND FILE

Citizens of other nations might consider compulsory military service an unpleasant burden, but Khadorans accept such duty as a basic part of life. A single term of service is required of all men, with the exception of those with extreme physical disfigurement. Women are not required to enlist, but those without children are encouraged to serve either in the active military or among myriad support units. Enlistment can begin as early as fifteen years of age, and every male citizen must have enlisted by his eighteenth year or risk imprisonment and forced service. Those rare few who attempt to evade conscription serve their tours without pay and receive the most grueling duties available, such as in the isolated bases of the far north or in the freezing mountains along the Rhulic border.

After receiving their initial training, most conscripts enter the Winter Guard. Those who demonstrate exceptional qualities or special aptitudes may be singled out for the officer corps or for more prestigious branches of the Khadoran military. It is

also possible, if rare, for distinguished veterans of the Winter Guard to move into other service branches later in their careers. Each force has its own requirements, some extremely stringent. The Man-O-War and Iron Fang branches, for example, require recruits of particular height and sufficient strength to bear their heavy armor. Soldiers accepted into these specialized forces must endure protracted training that is far more difficult than what is required of the Winter Guard.

A newly conscripted soldier holds the rank of privat. Privats who serve out their time and re-enlist might rise to the rank of korporal. Korporals lead small fire teams of privats. The toughest and most successful korporals may in time lead units comprised of several fire teams as sergeants, the highest rank most guardsmen are likely to achieve. Different grades of sergeant reflect pay and time served, as is the case with other ranks in the Khadoran Army. Typically commanding units of six to twelve soldiers, sergeants are in turn subordinate to lieutenants, the lowest rank of commissioned officer, who lead forces composed of six units.

Commissioned officers have additional responsibilities and authority requiring specialized training. In some cases soldiers will be promoted to this rank for exceptional service in the field, but most are trained at the Druzhina military academy or another similar facility. Field promoted officers must also attend training at an officer's academy when their duties allow. Lieutenants report to kapitans, who lead kompanies, which generally comprise six forces. Kompanies are one of the most fundamental unit divisions in the army, requiring kapitans to have considerable experience.

Above the rank of kapitan is kovnik, roughly analogous to a major or colonel in the Cygnaran military. Each kovnik typically oversees a battalion of troops. In some cases, a particularly respected and battletested senior kovnik may command an entire legion in excess of 10,000 soldiers. Above the kovniks are kommanders; junior kommanders also lead legions, while veteran kommanders lead kommands. Khadoran warcasters receive the latter rank upon completion of their training, and great princes enjoy equivalent standing. Kommanders report to the kommandants leading the army divisions, who in turn answer to senior kommandants leading each of Khador's three armies, who report to the supreme kommandants at the High Kommand.

As the Khadoran Army marches to war, every citizen is called to play his part. The army eagerly takes advantage of the specialized skills possessed by its more remote and rustic kinsmen, like the reclusive Kossites of the northwest. Though these men and women have sometimes remained aloof from the affairs of the capital, they remain patriotic and are often willing to travel hundreds of miles from the Scarsfell Forest to assist on the front. Their familiarity with difficult terrain, for example, has proven invaluable as Khador continues its operations against Cygnar through the densely forested Thornwood.

Certain classes of citizens are exempt from joining the military but are still expected to undergo military training and to stand ready to serve if called upon. Among these are vassals and heirs of the great princes. Though the ancient Khadoran aristocracy maintains its own martial traditions, scions of the great families may still join one of the more prestigious branches of the army, such as the Iron Fang uhlans. Each great prince is expected to equip and train his closest vassals as well as members of his household. Such training is far more extensive and rigorous than that employed by most service branches, but some people nevertheless accuse the princes of ignoring modern battlefield tactics in favor of more archaic and ritualized forms of combat. Nobles receive automatic entry into the Druzhina military academy as officers, while lesser stock must demonstrate exceptional service to earn the same. Nobles also tend to rise through the ranks more quickly than their peers, although skill and ability play a significant role.

THREE ARMIES

Khadoran forces are divided into three armies, each overseen by a supreme kommandant of the High Kommand and commanded in the field by a subordinate kommandant. The supreme kommandants focus on long-term strategy and logistics, and they remain at the capital except in unusual circumstances. This system has traditionally served to keep the Khadoran Army functioning smoothly and to prevent top-level miscommunications.

Departing from tradition, current Khadoran military doctrine is most concisely explained in Gurvaldt Irusk's definitive tome, *On Conquest,* which outlines the concepts of the Anvil, Hammer, and Forge. Khador's 1st Army corresponds to the Anvil; the 2nd Army, to the Hammer; and the 3rd Army, to the Forge. The Anvil creates fixed positions that are impossible to rout; the Hammer strikes where it is needed; and the Forge protects the heartland and trains capable soldiers. The Winter Guard serves as the backbone of the three armies. Redressing any shortcomings of conscripted soldiers are several highly specialized services, including powerful heavy infantry like the Man-O-War, Iron Fangs, and Assault Kommandos; skilled cavalry; and sniper and reconnaissance forces.

SUPREME KOMMANDANT GURVALDT IRUSK

Widely considered to be the leading military mind of the age, Supreme Kommandant Gurvaldt Irusk commands the armies of Khador and orchestrates the empire's wars of expansion. His treatise on tactical warfare has become required reading at military academies throughout the Iron Kingdoms, and his maneuvers are now imitated by militaries across the region. Irusk's reputation as one of the greatest martial innovators in history was cemented with the empire's conquest of Llael, while his subsequent attacks on Cygnar have reaped even greater territorial gains for Khador.

Despite jealous rivals in the High Kommand, Irusk enjoys the support of both the empress and Premier Mhikol Horscze. Provided he continues to secure victories for the Motherland, his star will only rise.

KHADORAN MILITARY

Empress Ayn Vanar

Khadoran High Kommand
3 Armies, 1 fleet - Soldiers: 601,000
Premier Mhikol Horscze

- 1st Army Supreme Kommandant Ivon Krasnovich, Count
- 2nd Army Supreme Kommandant Alex Gorchakoff, Count
- 3rd Army Supreme Kommandant Menshik Sergevich, Count

Certain great princes serve directly as military officers.

Great Princes (18)
Rulers of the Volozkya

Vassals and Liegemen

KHADORAN SECURITY
Great Vizier Simonyev Blaustavya

Supreme Kommandant Gurvaldt Irusk

1st Army "The Anvil"
Llael Occupation, Northern Thornwood
Soldiers: 162,000
Kommandant Mikhail Ivdanovich, Count

1st Division
Northern Thornwood
Soldiers: 92,000
3 Kommands
Kommandant Yegoruv Ilyevich, Viscount

6th Kommand
Dragon's Tongue Assault Legions
Soldiers: 48,000
3 Legions

21st Standing Legion
Infantry
Soldiers: 15,500
6 Battalions

22nd Assault Battalion
Iron Fangs
Soldiers: 2,700
6 Kompanies

- 83rd Iron Fang Pikeman Kompany — Soldiers: 520 — 6 Forces
- 90th Iron Fang Pikeman Kompany — Soldiers: 500 — 6 Forces

24th Assault Battalion
Iron Fangs
Soldiers: 2,600
6 Kompanies

- 31st Man-O-War Kompany — Soldiers: 210 — 6 Forces
- 33rd Man-O-War Kompany — Soldiers: 210 — 6 Forces

27th Assault Battalion
Iron Fangs, Man-O-War
Soldiers: 1,900
6 Kompanies

- 12th Iron Fang Uhlan Kompany — Cavalry: 180
- 15th Iron Fang Uhlan Kompany — Cavalry: 180 — 6 Forces

28th Assault Battalion
Assault Kommandos, Man-O-War, Winter Guard
Soldiers: 3,000
7 Kompanies

- 1st Force — Iron Fang Uhlans, Man-O-War Drakhuns — Soldiers: 31 — 6 Units
- 2nd Force — Iron Fang Uhlans — Soldiers: 30 — 6 Units
- 3rd Force — Iron Fang Uhlans — Soldiers: 30 — 6 Units
- 4th Force — Iron Fang Uhlans — Soldiers: 30 — 6 Units

29th Assault Battalion
Iron Fangs, Man-O-War, Uhlans
Soldiers: 1,800

- 6th Force — Iron Fang Uhlans — Soldiers: 30 — 6 Units
- 7th Force — Iron Fang Uhlans — Soldiers: 29 — 6 Units

Each battalion is led by a kovnik.
Each kompany is led by a kapitan.
Each force is led by a lieutenant.

8th Kommand
Supply and Fortress Preservation
Soldiers: 45,000
3 legions

23rd Standing Legion
Infantry
Soldiers: 14,500
6 Battalions

9th Kommand
Dragon's Tongue Assault Legions
Soldiers: 42,000

4th Assault Legion
Heavy Armor
Soldiers: 12,000

Each kommand is led by a kommander.

Each legion is led by a lieutenant kommander or a kovnik.

2nd Army "The Hammer"
Offensives v. Cygnar, Southern Thornwood
Soldiers: 288,000
Kommandant Boris Makarov, Count

2nd Division
Llaelese Occupation
Soldiers: 70,000
3 Kommands
Kommandant Voroshilov Klimovich, Viscount

3rd Army "The Forge"
Border Legions, Training Reserves
Soldiers: 151,000
Kommandant Karl Szvette, Great Prince of Dorognia

3rd Division
Southwestern Thornwood Patrols
Soldiers: 135,000
Kommandant Jhrom Holcheski, Great Prince of Rustoknia

Khadoran Fleet
Port Vladovar
Fleet Admiral Jasek Donekev, Viscount

4th Division
Southeastern Thornwood Patrols
Soldiers: 153,000
3 Kommands
Kommandant Servei Marvor, Great Prince of Borstoi

Greylords Prikaz
Koldun Fedor Rachlavsky

5th Division
1st-5th Border Legions
Soldiers: 62,000
3 Kommands
Kommandant Konstan Zhukovy, Count

The Prikaz is a secret chancellery for investigating domestic threats.

Greylords Covenant
High Obavnik Arbiter Vasily Dmitirilosk

6th Division
Training and Reserves
Soldiers: 89,000
3 Kommands
Kommandant Grezko Antonovich, Viscount

THE 1ST ARMY: THE ANVIL

Boasting soldiers conditioned for stamina, the Anvil is called upon for protracted engagements. In theory, the 1st Army engages and ties up enemy forces across large areas until the Hammer is ready to strike at full strength from the flank. The officers of the Anvil consider themselves to be Khador's foremost experts on extended siege warfare. The 1st also provides an active reserve through which veteran soldiers can be rotated off the front line to recuperate close to the battlefield.

Since the conquest of Llael, the 1st Army has been charged with garrisoning the Llaelese territories, subjugating its population, and quashing insurrection. None of these soldiers take the occupation of Llael for granted, as they have had to endure many unexpected ambushes and sometimes surprisingly well-organized attacks from rebel forces. The 1st was not particularly well suited to this role, though it has succeeded in virtually pacifying Llael. As the war front moved south, soldiers of the 1st Division have been moved out of Llael, leaving protection of this territory to the 2nd Division.

Llaelese cities have increasingly become productive sources of ancillary Khadoran industry, a fact the 1st Army views with no small measure of pride. Likewise, active resistance within the conquered territories has greatly diminished. Despite these encouraging signs, the recent drastic reduction in the number of soldiers allocated to garrison Llael concerns 2nd Division officers, especially as the Northern Crusade strengthens its hold on the east. A major confrontation between the crusade and the 2nd is considered a practically foregone conclusion.

Holding the northern Thornwood has fallen primarily to the 1st Division, under Kommandant Yegoruv Ilyevich. Operations in the forest are complicated by a lack of adequate maps, a general dearth of cleared land for construction, and constant ambushes along Khadoran supply lines. Morale in this division has plummeted, but the recent establishment of several sizable and fortified supply bases helped its battalions feel more secure.

The 1st Army is nominally commanded by Supreme Kommandant Ivon Krasnovich from the High Kommand, but Kommandant Mikhail Ivdanovich, who controls the army from Merywyn, has operational command. Ivdanovich was credited by Supreme Kommandant Irusk as being instrumental in the swift and successful conquest of Llael, so critical was his oversight of supply lines during the rapid invasion. Despite recent setbacks in the Thornwood, it is generally believed that if any man can tame that forest, it is Ivdanovich.

THE 2ND ARMY, THE HAMMER

The Hammer focuses on delivering crushing offensives and therefore includes the largest number of assault legions, warjacks, and heavy infantry of the three armies. During the invasion of Llael, the Hammer initiated sieges against Redwall Fortress, Elsinberg, and Laedry. And it remains at the forefront of all major operations against Cygnar, including the toppling of Northguard. For these reasons, the 2nd currently reigns as the most esteemed of Khador's armies; indeed, most recruits seeking action ask to be assigned to the Hammer.

Though Supreme Kommandant Irusk commands all Khadoran forces in the field, he is most strongly associated with the 2nd—in particular, with the 4th Assault Legion of the 3rd Division. These soldiers have fought under Irusk longer than any others and are frequently ordered to serve as his vanguard.

Presently occupying the Thornwood, the 2nd Army is in a somewhat precarious situation due to the lack of an established support infrastructure. It has been trying to position itself as a counter to Cygnaran forces on the other side of the Dragon's Tongue, but practical considerations have made this difficult. The construction of new fortresses has proceeded as quickly as possible, but none of them are completed to satisfaction, and supply lines remain unsecured. The enemy has the advantage of possessing major fortified cities such as Point Bourne and Corvis to support its own forces, putting the 2nd at a distinct

disadvantage. The army has had to contend with woefully inadequate facilities and sporadic resupply. The men are hungry, they sleep in leaking tents, and they lack sufficient ammunition. In addition, the manpower allocated to the unfinished fortresses is insufficient to see to their defense.

Overcoming such hardships is the chief concern of the army's leadership, which rushes to remedy the situation while the cease-fire lasts; both sides recognize the present pause in hostilities for the diplomatic stalling tactic it is. Forces on either side of the river remain in a heightened state of alert, with Cygnaran rangers regularly testing Khador's patrols.

The 2nd Army falls under the purview of Supreme Kommandant Alex Gorchakoff at the High Kommand, but his influence on the army is almost imperceptible due to the proximity and active involvement of Supreme Kommandant Irusk. Rumor suggests considerable tension between Irusk and Gorchakoff, as the former has accused the latter of insufficient efforts to expedite delivery of materials for fortress construction. Irusk enjoys a far-better working relationship with Kommandant Boris Makarov, the army's field commander. The two divisions of this army are led by Great Princes Jhrom Holcheski and Servei Marvor. Holcheski leads the 3rd Division out of the southwestern Thornwood opposite Point Bourne. Marvor commands the 4th Division, which is stationed in the southeastern Thornwood across the river from Corvis.

THE 3RD ARMY, THE FORGE

Responsible for training and arming new conscripts, the 3rd Army also maintains garrisons in Khadoran cities and oversees the five border legions that safeguard Khador's vast perimeter. The Forge makes use of numerous training facilities; in fact, the city of Volningrad is entirely dedicated to military preparedness.

By some measures, the Forge is not a single fighting force. Along with the border legions, it comprises six distinct elements that enjoy little contact one another. The 3rd retains the dubious distinction of being the most far-flung army in the nation. Its soldiers operate as far northwest as Uldenfrost and as far south as the Dragon's Tongue River—more than 600 miles apart.

Garrisoning Khador's interior is by and large the easiest and least dangerous assignment in the army. Such a posting bestows very little prestige, yet it is highly desired by those with strong ties to family, such as young fathers. Recent years, however, have seen many unexpected threats challenge the Khadoran interior, making the defense of cities both more vital and more dangerous than ever before. Among the most dreaded are the horrors of rampant dragonspawn and their blighted minions. The High Kommand, by way of the Greylords Covenant, still lacks adequate intelligence on this menace and therefore has been unable to predict attacks or likely targets. Only a few northern and eastern towns have been plagued by these creatures, but rumors of the resulting bloodshed have spread throughout the empire.

Other sporadic internal threats include unrest among the trollkin kriels, particularly in the northwest, and attacks led by the enigmatic blackclads. Though such troubles are primarily limited to remote regions, the High Kommand must consider them as it decides how to allocate its forces. In addition to protecting its citizens, the 3rd Army must secure vital industries like logging and mining.

The Forge benefits from the authority of Supreme Kommandant Menshik Sergevich. Field command falls to Great Prince Karl Szvette, who also administers the Druzhina. Kommandant Konstan Zhukovy commands the 5th Division, which includes all five border legions. He is responsible for the safety of Khador's borders and interior. The larger 6th Division, which oversees training and reserves, is commanded by Kommandant Grezko Antonovich.

Historically, each of the border legions operates with tremendous autonomy, more so than any other aspect of the Khadoran Army. They are often tasked to work closely with other forces in the field and in those circumstances may answer to officers outside their regular chain of command.

The most active soldiers in the 3rd Army serve in the 1st and 5th Border Legions. The 1st was originally assigned to the Llaelese border but steadily shifted its operations south as conflict with Cygnar intensified. Until the fall of Northguard, this legion was headquartered in Ravensgard and still considers that fortress its primary home. Several kompanies from the 1st remain at Ravensgard, but most marched alongside the 2nd Army deeper into the Thornwood and have integrated their operations with Irusk's other assets in the vicinity of Corvis.

The much-esteemed 5th Border Legion earned its fame during the First Thornwood War. This fighting force never gave up the battle against Cygnar, even in times of apparent peace; they were subsequently sent south to hold the new border. The 5th waits eagerly for orders to move on Point Bourne.

The 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Border Legions are considerably smaller and generally less distinguished than either the 1st or the 5th. They are assigned to watch the less active borders—including the eastern border shared with Rhul, the southern region along Ord's eastern border, and Ord's northern border, respectively. Each of these less prominent legions has its own reputation.

The 2nd Border Legion is dreaded by some due to the harsh nature of the weather in these far northern mountain posts. The 3rd Border Legion has a dark legacy, as it is rumored to be affiliated with Zevanna Agha, the Old Witch of Khador. While its activities were rarely discussed in past decades, this legion has come to greater prominence in recent years due to its efforts to battle inexplicable internal threats plaguing Khadoran towns in the remote regions, such as dragonspawn and blackclads. The presence of the 3rd Border Legion, appearing unexpectedly and without warning, has become synonymous with disaster. Members of the 4th Border Legion endure the least hardship but also the least glory of these fighting forces. The weather is relatively pleasant in its southern patrol region and Ord rarely musters any force that would be considered a threat. Any violence along this border is initiated on Khadoran initiative, such as small skirmishes to test Ordic border defenders and to train new Khadoran warcasters.

THE ARMIES OF THE GREAT PRINCES

The great princes retain special liberties, including the right to raise and equip armies of liegemen for war. Many nobles have voluntarily abandoned this privilege to concede their vassals to the sovereign and the High Kommand, encouraging them to serve as officers in the Khadoran Army. Others have preserved their martial traditions as a matter of family pride.

VISCOUNT JASEK DONEKEV, ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET

The recently appointed admiral of the Khadoran fleet is relatively young by the standards of the admiralty, a fact that might end up being one of his greatest strengths. The fifty-year-old naval veteran has done more to revitalize and modernize Khador's navy than any individual in its history. Donekev coordinates his efforts from Port Vladovar, the only interruption being time spent aboard his flagship, the newly commissioned *IKVNV Great Prince*.

KHADORAN NAVY

In recent years, no branch of the Khadoran military has suffered such defeat, or experienced such revitalization, as the Khadoran Navy. The navy unquestionably lacks the honor lavished upon the army by the nation's citizens and rulers; indeed, throughout its history, this military branch has been underfunded and underappreciated. Nevertheless, the High Kommand is acutely aware of the strength at sea possessed by its southern rival, Cygnar, as well as the sizable and highly trained fleet of the nation of Ord.

More recently, the relative weakness of the Khadoran Navy was made evident by a massive Cryxian attack that destroyed much of its fleet at Port Vladovar. Fleet Admiral Pahvel Nahimov took his own life shortly after this disgrace and was replaced by Jasek Donekev, the new fleet admiral.

In the two years since that disaster, Donekev has worked tirelessly to restore Khador's naval might. His first battle was not at sea, but in the halls of bureaucracy, as he strived to get the funding necessary not only to replace ships lost during the attack, but also to modernize his forces with ironhulls and steam-sail hybrids.

Donekev has worked hard to institute better discipline among enlisted sailors. In addition to raising standards, the fleet admiral has been forced to look for able seamen wherever he can find them. Several khardstadts have been emptied of prisoners to fill the crews of the fleet, and many of the conscripts have been surprised by the harsh discipline now employed by the Khadoran Navy.

Officers are also feeling the heat of Donekev's attention. The fleet admiral has singled out the most aggressive kapitans for rapid rise through the ranks, while those who have lost their taste for war are forcibly retired. Donekev intends to do nothing less than revolutionize the whole of the Khadoran Navy.

SERVICE BRANCHES

The core of the Khadoran military is composed of Winter Guard troops supplemented by specialist forces. In most cases, the Guard supplies the bulk of soldiers used for both offense and defense. True specialist forces that fall outside the usual training of guardsmen are integrated as needed by divisional kommandants and their superiors. A degree of fluidity exists within these arrangements.

WARCASTER BATTLEGROUPS

The Khadoran military has become more regimented by modern reforms, but enormous liberty is still afforded to those rare few who manifest the mental ability to mentally control warjacks. Such individuals, once identified, are extensively trained and advanced rapidly through the ranks.

Empress Ayn and her predecessors have demonstrated a willingness to adapt to the needs of these men and women and even to indulge them. Preferential treatment includes virtual immunity to criminal prosecution and tremendous leeway when conducting missions against the enemy. Though warcasters are technically obligated to obey the dictates of the High Kommand, they tend to operate outside the ordinary chain of command, including being given operational control over the battlefields on which they ply their talents.

Most warcasters emerge from the ranks of the military, their innate talents revealed by the stress of combat. Others arise from prominent sorcerous lines or are discovered through the diligent recruiting efforts of the Greylords Covenant. Scholars in Khador insist certain family lines possess higher potential for this aptitude, and each manifestation of power is carefully documented and examined.

GREYLORDS COVENANT

The arcanists of the Greylords Covenant engage in obscure and dangerous occult research that furthers efforts in military applications, cortex production, and internal Khadoran security matters. Following a distinct internal hierarchy, the Greylords enjoy a unique relationship with the High Kommand. Individual Greylords are integrated into the army and serve among the rank and file, but their leader, the high obavnik arbiter, answers to Great Vizier Simonyev Blaustavya, not the High Kommand. For more on the Greylords, see p. 171.

KOMMANDER OLEG STRAKHOV

Few soldiers of the Motherland are as hated and feared as Kommander Oleg Strakhov. Strakhov has served Khador for nearly two decades, but the details of his service were largely unknown except to a select few within the High Kommand until the invasion of Llael, where his reputation could no longer be contained. Strakhov spent the opening weeks of the invasion systematically eradicating Llael's most competent commanders and warcasters, including Archduke Alreg Vladirov of the former Duchy of New Umbrey and his entire command in a single, well-orchestrated ambush. The archduke's disappearance early in the war was a major blow to Llaelese forces, and his fate remained unknown until years later, when Resistance operatives found his signet ring among the remains in a mass grave outside Leryn.

Once the invasion of Llael had transitioned from war to occupation, Strakhov was assigned to help further modernize the Khadoran Army. His suggestions led to the formation of the Assault Kommandos, whom he would lead. Since then, Strakhov and his kommandos have executed the High Kommand's most dangerous missions, and they proved pivotal in the Khadoran victory at Northguard.

The Greylords Covenant oversees the initial training of those not yet versed in arcane theory. Apprentices are assigned to senior warcasters for mentoring after completing officer training at the Druzhina. Few Greylord warcasters advance beyond the rank of magziev, as their duties require them to focus on military matters over the arcane.

As a rule, warcasters are rarely permanently attached to a specific kompany, division, or even army. Because they are too strategically important to be limited in this regard, they are freely reassigned by the High Kommand as required. It is not uncommon, however, for a particular warcaster to serve for a set period of time with a given battalion and form close ties with its officers. In some cases, the warcaster may be allowed to reallocate key personnel in order to retain them during a reassignment. Unusually high-ranking warcaster officers may be given greater responsibilities and duties.

Upon completing their training, warcasters enter the military with the rank of kommander.

WINTER GUARD

Comprising the majority of the Khadoran military, the men and women of the Winter Guard provide the foundation for nearly every substantial combat force fielded by the nation. Service in the Winter Guard is a common denominator for Khadorans, as all conscripts enter the military as part of the Guard unless they are accepted into a more prominent military branch. Winter Guard soldiers are trained in the use of small arms, and exceptional individuals may be singled out for advanced training in the use of specialist equipment like portable rockets and field artillery. Guardsmen who serve in Khador's city garrisons receive additional training in urban combat and pacification.

ASSAULT KOMMANDOS

The existence of assault kommandos is the result of years of trench warfare between Khador and Cygnar. Cygnar had long enjoyed an advantage in this type of conflict because of its trained trencher units, an imbalance that has been leveled since the first assault kommandos took to the field. Only the hardiest new recruits ever make it into the ranks of the kommandos. Heavily armed and armored, these troops augment their battle training with advanced alchemical weaponry. They advance on enemy trenches and fortifications behind a wall of shields before opening fire with carbines and short-range grenade launchers that poison the air with choking gas. The assault kommandos are led by the warcaster Kommander Oleg Strakhov.

Virtually all the armament carried by kommandos resulted from alchemical knowledge seized from the Order of the Golden Crucible in Llael. The strangle gas emitted by their grenades is alchemically refined to be heavier than air so that it will settle into trenches where it is not easily dispersed by wind, and their armor is treated to resist fire and acid.

IRON FANGS

Serving as an elite cadre within the Khadoran military, the Iron Fangs are the inheritors of an ancient tradition of Khardic pikemen. With mechanical precision they flow as a single wall of steel bristling with devastating blasting pikes, weapons designed to fell warjacks on the battlefield. Their training allows them to ignore the weight of their heavy armor on the field, wearing it as if it were a second skin. A soldier accepted into this brotherhood swears a blood oath to his fellow soldiers, his country, and the art of war. From then on, an Iron Fang knows that he will fight in the heart of every battle in which he takes part and that his shared duty will be to find the most dangerous enemies and destroy them—or die trying.

Advancing ahead of Iron Fang formations are the uhlans, peerless horsemen steeped in the legendary traditions of their forebears. Many descend from the horselords of old, scions of Khador's great and noble lines. Their lances bear similar blasting charges as those of the pikemen, lending even greater impact to their powerful charges.

BLACK DRAGONS

The Black Dragons are a distinguished force of Iron Fang pikemen who have refused to retire from service despite advancing age. Their signature black-and-gold armor and dragon-emblazoned heraldry stand apart from the crimson and steel of other Iron Fangs—a bold testament to their skill, ferocity, and perseverance.

Black Dragon tactics mirror those of standard pikemen, but the soldiers' age, experience, and precision allow them to excel in particular areas. Survivors of countless battlefield injuries, these warriors are all but inured to pain. With unquestionable resolve, the Black Dragons stand fearlessly against overwhelming odds or even supernatural horrors that would send lesser men fleeing for their lives.

MAN-O-WAR

The Man-O-War soldiers are Khador's heaviest infantry, men encased in mechanical armor that grants them the strength of steamjacks. Instead of relying on expensive but relatively fragile light warjacks, Khador turns its greatest resource—its people—into steam-powered engines of destruction. Slow and ponderous yet able to weather the storm of battle, Man-O-War troops both hold battle lines and advance on the heaviest enemy positions.

Despite the obvious strength and nigh-invulnerability granted by this armor, drawbacks do exist. The steam boiler integrated into the armor's metal shell makes Man-O-War troops susceptible to heat stroke and exhaustion; worse, the occasional steam leak can cook a soldier alive. Man-O-War soldiers never complain or ask for comfort, though, for they are proud of their tradition and willingly embrace the risks in order to serve their country as men and women of living iron.

WIDOWMAKERS

Widowmakers form the elite scout-sniper division of the Khadoran military, which has embraced and elevated them to the status of national heroes. The standards to join this force are among the most stringent of all Khador's specialist branches, and only those riflemen who demonstrate peerless skill are accepted. Because the Widowmakers are first and foremost a merit-based corps, membership is open to any who possess the requisite skills, whether peasant-born, rural hunter, or of noble blood.

A Widowmaker's primary role is to foment chaos among the enemy by neutralizing key officers. They frequently advance ahead of the main force, their arrival indicated by enemy officers abruptly falling dead before the report of rifle fire can be heard. They also support withdrawals by ensuring their own wounded avoid capture. If a downed officer cannot be retrieved, Widowmakers will deny him to the enemy.

IRREGULARS

Khadoran law requires all its citizens to serve in the military, even those who live at the farthest edges of the empire. Because these rugged individualists and clannish people usually do not integrate well into the strict hierarchies of the military, the High Kommand allows them to encamp separately from the regular army and follow commanders promoted from within their own clans, tribes, or villages. Such "irregulars" are often drawn from the Kossite clans and other rural people of the far north. Operating in tight bands, irregulars benefit from lifetimes of familiarity with their comrades. Given general orders from their superiors, they stage devastating ambushes before melting back into the forest.

The most dangerous irregulars are the murderous hunters and trappers who prowl the backwoods of Khador alone, pitting their skills against the savage denizens of the wild. Irregulars may also serve alongside regular soldiers who are acting as scouts or advance forces. Their familiarity with the deep woods of the north allows them to navigate terrain otherwise impassable to normal foot soldiers.

DOOM REAVERS

The Khadoran commitment to victory at any cost is evident in their use of the dreaded doom reaver swordsmen. Commanded by arcanists of the Greylords Covenant, doom reavers are conscripted from the ranks of convicted criminals, most often soldiers found guilty of gross insubordination. The Greylords then chain these men to the nightmarish fellblades, relic weapons of the Orgoth—a fate some argue is worse than execution.

The first known fellblades were unearthed among a cache of Orgoth artifacts that lay beneath the haunted city of Khardov. Saturated with dark magic, the swords are adorned with howling faces that shift eerily at the fringes of vision and seem to come alive when wielded.

The first swordsmen unfortunate enough to pick up these powerful weapons descended into savage and homicidal madness due to incomprehensible whispering in their minds. Even during sleep, the swordsmen heard foreign babbling that urged them to acts of bloodshed. These men lashed out with berserk abandon and doubled strength, killing anyone who crossed their path.

Since then, the Greylords have studied the blades and found ways to restrain the bloody impulses of those who wield the fellblades—at least off the battlefield. Set loose in war, doom reavers exhibit only minimal control and may strike down anyone, friend or foe, as their bloodlust grows. Inexplicably, some wielders can maintain their sense of self, while others are driven irrevocably mad. Even those who maintain their sanity, however, are forever changed.

For the regular soldiers of the army, the doom reavers serve as a dire warning against dereliction of duty. Such soldiers are typically confined to the outskirts of Khadoran camps by Greylord attendants, where their unnerving lunacy can disturb neither man nor beast.

THE DRUZHINA

The Druzhina operates as Khador's most prestigious military academy, the first step toward a prominent military career. It is the forge for Khador's finest officers where the most promising conscripts can become professional officers versed in advanced tactics and battlefield command. Entrance to the Druzhina is merit-based for most Khadoran citizens, though those of sufficient noble standing or who are wealthy enough to pay a substantial entrance fee are accepted automatically. Even for those born into privilege, graduation is a difficult task. Successful graduates are offered an officer's commission and can begin their rise within the military elite.

Training at the Druzhina comes at considerable expense to the Khadoran treasury. Accordingly, it brings certain obligations. Graduates are pressured into making the military their life's profession, and early retirement is severely frowned upon. The High Kommand goes to great lengths to discourage the practice by offering pay-grade incentives to those who remain in service. In a time of war, the High Kommand may reactivate any former officer and enforce a resumption of duties.

KHADORAN MECHANIKS ASSEMBLY

Based out of the Rigevnya Complex in Korsk, the Khadoran Mechaniks Assembly (KMA) has partnered with the Khadoran military since it was founded in 393 AR. The mechaniks, smiths, and engineers of this august organization are the undisputed mechanikal experts of the nation, responsible for fabricating and designing all Khadoran warjacks as well as Man-O-War armor. The brotherhood's engineering philosophies inevitably also trickle down to private industry; for example, Khadoran laborjack designs are largely inspired by the work of the KMA.

The KMA wields considerable influence in Khador, in no small part because Great Vizier Simonyev Blaustavya began his rise to power in Korsk as director of munitions at the Rigevnya Complex. The KMA has recently expanded its operations to create a sizable secondary foundry in Merywyn, and other occupied cities may eventually add additional production capacity.

PRESENT DEPLOYMENTS

Flush with recent successes and the seeming inevitability of victory, Khador has stretched its forces dangerously thin. The High Kommand is eager to reduce the number of soldiers tied up in rear areas and involved with policing conquered populations. Accordingly, many Khadoran soldiers formerly stationed in Llael have been moved south to protect supply lines through the Thornwood Forest or to help maintain pressure against Cygnar along the Dragon's Tongue River. This was seen as a necessary measure despite the recent loss of Leryn to the forces of the Protectorate's Northern Crusade. Nearly a quarter of Llael's former territory is now under the control of the zealous Sul-Menites, and it seems certain they will try to expand their reach.

The conquest of the Thornwood has opened up its own share of problems, far more than were anticipated before the fall of Northguard. The wilderness region is sparsely inhabited, with challenging terrain and a lack of adequate roads. In addition, supply lines through the forest frequently come under unpredictable attack. Though the architect of these strikes has been difficult to identify, let alone prevent, Cryx is believed to be primarily responsible. Evidence also points to persistent Cygnaran interference as well as brutal attacks by less organized savages such as Tharn and trollkin bandits.

Almost immediately after pushing Cygnar's army out of this region, Khador began constructing fortifications to defend its new acquisitions, including an ambitious chain of fortresses along the Dragon's Tongue River as well as supply forts and road construction passing through the forest. These efforts have been costlier than expected, and construction has proceeded slowly.

Further, Khador's navy is still recovering from its staggering loss at Port Vladovar two years ago. Though new ships have been commissioned, militarily Khador lags behind its rivals at sea—a situation that could have dire consequences in the future.

Despite these setbacks, Khador's military remains resolute as it seeks to restore the glory its territories once enjoyed under the Khardic Empire.

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

The people of Khador are as varied and distinct as the cold, unforgiving, and awe-inspiring landscape of their nation. Khador's natural conditions are very different from the easier climates that gave rise to the southerners—the old tribes of Khador survived biting winter storms while fighting off beasts of the wilds to create thriving cities. The Khadoran people labored twice as hard to eke out crops from frugal soils in an environment destined to either crush them or forge them into greatness. In ancient days war and strife were a constant as each tribe competed for limited resources and for the right to settle the most fertile lands. There was no room for the stupid, the weak, or the timid.

Khador is now a modern kingdom as advanced as any in western Immoren, benefiting from the gains of an ongoing industrial revolution. But its civilization grew from blood and toil; the people of Khador have risen to endure and prospered despite sometimes bleak prospects. Their stoicism and fatalistic resolve drives them to make the beloved Motherland a better place for their sons and daughters despite the suffering they have endured. The nation modernized not for comfort or luxury but for the strength to regain its place as the most feared and respected nation on Immoren.

A LAND OF CONTRADICTIONS

Khadoran life encompasses tremendous differences from region to region, from rural to urban areas, and from south to north. The tamer southern volozkya are more settled and have more temperate weather than those in the north. North of the Bitterock River the population density plummets and the living conditions become hazardous. The people of these regions have adapted well to local dangers and may take for granted threats that would paralyze city dwellers in the capital.

A traveler taking the train from Khardov through Ohk and on to Tverkutsk will see drastic transformations in the landscape and in the townships and people. Remote northern mountain townships that seem frozen in an earlier era are accessible only by sometimes unreliable roads and trails. Many in the great north take pride in their simple lives and in securing hearth and home, some of whom are the kingdom's fiercest and most loyal citizens.

Bustling, lively Khadoran cities with people from all walks of life hurrying about their business stand in stark contrast to remote rural villages, Horse-drawn wagons share roadways with crowds of pedestrians who occasionally make room for a horseman or a massive laborjack hauling heavy goods from a truck into a warehouse. Factory smokestacks send dense plumes of soot and ashy smoke into the air; steam-powered trains do the same as they barrel through the city, coming to a screeching halt at their stations to offload ore, timber, and other supplies.

In both the cities and the countryside, the classes are rigidly divided and Khadorans have a keen sense of station, generally only initiating conversation with their friends and associates while deferring to their betters.

THE KAYAZY

The kayazy are a special class of commoners with no exact parallel in other kingdoms. It represents the middle class who dominate industry and commerce. Kayazy is loosely translated as "merchant princes"; each individual member is a kayaz. Members of this exclusive group are highly competitive and territorial, though they recognize they share many common objectives. They are loosely allied to present a unified front to the rest of Khadoran society and government, pooling their resources and favors to affect positive change.

This social class has its own customs and traditions. Its members are equals according to their own definitions, although actual status is based on wealth and influence. They are loath to recognize leaders among them; in some cases several kayazy have conspired to arrange the downfall of a rival who has grown too powerful. Open strife is discouraged to avoid interference by the central government or the great princes, with whom the kayazy are often at odds.

Simonyev Blaustavya rose to power from the ranks of the kayazy to become the great vizier and knows well the inner workings of this class. Empress Ayn Vanar is also favorably disposed toward the kayazy, seeing their work as essential to Khador's strength and their wealth as a resource for the nation. The clandestine scheming of the kayazy, however, can still put them at cross purposes with the government.

The truth is the kayazy is, with few exceptions, a two-faced organization. By tradition its members are leaders of both legitimate commercial industry and the criminal underworld, something they perceive as a natural, inevitable extension of their role in commerce. Conducting mercantile or industrial business in Khador is almost impossible without some dealings with criminal circles, including large organized bratyas as well as corrupt or at least morally flexible government officials who require bribes to authorize construction. Smuggling and extortion are as vital to the incomes of many kayaz as mining and factory output. The central government, while not endorsing these criminal activities, largely accepts their inevitability.

IMPACT OF CONSCRIPTION

Military enlistment can be the first exposure young Khadorans from isolated rural regions get to broaden their horizons in the bigger world. Most Khadorans remember their mandatory service fondly as the time they served their nation, created lasting bonds of fellowship, and learned of the possibilities beyond the townships of their birth. Some return to their home villages after their service, but many more settle elsewhere like the great cities Korsk, Khardov, Ohk, or Volningrad where they must find work to support themselves or their families.

The sight of the Winter Guard uniform gives many citizens a sense of connection because of their own service or because they have immediate family who have served. Khadorans of all classes and regions share great pride in their nation. Every Khadoran town and village is filled with former veterans and trained military personnel, many of whom store their old uniforms and weapons in a place of honor. These veterans can quickly mobilize a highly effective militia defense if necessary.

In the current era, military activity is a common sight in the cities. Warjacks and squads of newly trained young Winter Guard march down the main thoroughfares to reach trains that will take them to the front lines. Meanwhile those disembarking include dark-eyed men with harrowed demeanors and injuries sent back to recuperate. Those permanently crippled may not be able to return to old vocations and instead rely on the charity of the Church of Morrow to survive.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Khador lags behind its rivals in education and literacy. Though this has begun to improve in the cities, where state-sponsored schools teach youths to read and write, the education of many rural citizens is dependent on knowledge and skills passed on through apprenticeships.

The higher one's standing in society, the more likely one is to receive a reasonable education, often by hired tutors. Children of the aristocracy and wealthy kayazy may receive instruction in a wide variety of fields. Indeed, being a reputable tutor is an excellent profession for Khador's intelligentsia, who can make a good living selling their knowledge. This is part of an older northern Khadoran tradition of the *tazchloi*, traveling scholars and lorekeepers once esteemed among the Kos and Skirov. These solitary individuals were invaluable repositories of information and would travel from city to city expanding their knowledge and teaching those willing to listen and to pay a few coins. Few of these old sages remain, but the tradition evolved into private tutors who live on the patronage of their clients, traveling from one estate to another to teach the sons and daughters of the wealthy.

Khador lacks institutes of higher learning and has nothing equivalent to the great universities of Cygnar, though a few great libraries exist in major cities like Korsk, Khardov, Skirov, and Ohk. These libraries exist due primarily to private nobility collections that were bequeathed to an institute of learning. Many of the most learned Khadorans have traveled to other nations to attend foreign universities.

Some government offices in the capital have begun training and education programs for their officers, but these often have narrow focuses like the study of the law. Most law clerks working in a regional duma or even in the Ministry of the Judiciary undergo specialized training, leaving them ignorant about history, philosophy, or the natural sciences.

Both the Temple of Menoth and the Church of Morrow provide another avenue to gain an education. These religions offer well-respected programs to train their priests, who study ancient texts to learn history and archaic languages as well as the tenets of the faith.

While Khador lacks formal universities, it has institutions for learning trade skills like the Khadoran Institute of Engineering, established in 295 AR. Khador's forges and factories thrive and expand as war escalates; the need for engineers keeps growing. Whether repairing the great railway engines, taking to the battlefield as a combat mechanik, or being one of the lucky few gifted with becoming a full arcane mechanik, these careers are ways the poor or low born can dramatically increase their fortunes. Great vizier Simonyev Blaustavya is a prime example of this hope.

Another broader institute of trade learning is the Kollegii (see p. 149) in Skrovenberg. This is closest to a traditional university in Khador, offering diversity in education. Each field of endeavor taught here is narrow and specific, however, and attendees rarely pursue more than one.

Finally the Druzhina, Khador's officer training academy, boasts an exceptional training regimen. While focused on military tactics and strategy, the education it gives to officers is more comprehensive than that in most other institutes of learning in Khador, with training in history, mathematics, engineering, law, and even narrow aspects of philosophy. Khadoran officers are among the best educated of their countrymen, particularly those aristocrats who were also tutored during their upbringing.

ATTITUDES

While arcane mechaniks are highly valued, it is one of the few roles where magic is trusted and appreciated. Khadorans have accepted the arcane arts slowly, particularly in the remote rural areas where magic is seen as unnatural and sometimes as a sign of unholy corruption. The people of these rural regions view even the Greylords Covenant, vital to the military and the security of the empire, as a sinister organization. While anyone suspected of having the Gift of Magic will be reported to the Greylords to be trained and have their power controlled, most Khadorans feel it would be better if such powers did not exist at all. They embrace the great boon of warcasters and their warjacks, but this is separate from the suspicion of those who wield such powers.

Much of this is due to the pervasive influence of the Temple of Menoth across Khador, which has maintained a far less accepting attitude toward magic than the Church of Morrow. While the Khadoran religious landscape is complicated by the sometimes contentious but largely successful coexistence of these major faiths, each has distinct and striking differences; tensions always simmer below the surface between them. Morrowans are the majority, albeit a narrow one, and Menites are prominent in nearly every large community and retain many of their own distinct townships and villages. These communities do not mingle; each looks to its own and tries to avoid situations that would result in conflict between them. When religious strife erupts, the Winter Guard or other authorities separate the participants and haul them away until they can restore order.

Most formal state functions deliberately involve clergy of both faiths with carefully selected litanies demonstrating respect for each. The empress is particularly careful to honor and include the Menite priesthood despite her own Morrowan beliefs, and others in the government follow her example. Neither faith is allowed to stand in the way of the agents of the empire, as matters of state always take priority.

Khadorans have been accused of not accepting the other races that live among them. While true in part, the matter is also complicated: thousands of individuals of other races live across Khador in the larger cities or in the vast, untamed wildernesses. Khadorans are by and large accepting of the Rhulfolk, trollkin, ogrun, elves, and gobbers who are willing to join communities and contribute to them. Those who are willing to give up other allegiances and declare themselves Khadoran citizens are fully trusted and embraced.

This is a difficult process: citizenship for other races is not guaranteed at birth and the central government or the local bureaucracy of a great prince must approve a petition for citizenship. This process requires revoking all other ties and allegiances. Most Rhulfolk will never give up their citizenship. Trollkin are also reluctant to renounce loyalties or ties to the kriel of their birth. Those who are not citizens are marked as outsiders and will never find full acceptance. Iosans and Nyss seldom consider full participation in human society; ogrun and gobbers, however, often lobby for citizenship once they settle in an area.

Lack of citizenship does not prevent friendships, fair dealings, or amiable contact with members of these races but they still have difficulty becoming a true part of the community. Most members of other races prefer to live in segregated neighborhoods and burgs where possible. Beyond this there is little difference in the treatment of trollkin, ogrun, gobbers, dwarves, Iosans, or Nyss, all of whom are viewed as foreigners and are treated better or worse depending on their wealth and stature as well as their ability to speak Khadoran and understand Khadoran customs. A number of these races have secured work as laborers, skilled craftsmen, traders, or mercenaries.

MAJOR CULTURES

While the influence of the old Khardic Empire on the imaginations of modern Khadorans is pronounced, the peoples are still affected by the distinct cultures of the Motherland that predate that empire. Four strong peoples rose to prominence among the numerous smaller tribes of the north. Their wars of conquest and eventual unification shaped Khadoran history and the ways of its diverse peoples.

The Khards of the south were the most dominant and numerous, eventually uniting and ruling the others. The Umbreans lived to the east; their horse lords fought the Khards for control of the south. Meanwhile the Kossites in the northwest and the Skirov in the northeast dominated the wilder and more untamed northern lands. These distinct cultures united to forge Khador, yet each remains proud of its own heritage and customs.

KHARDS

The Khards are the dominant culture of Khador and people of Khardic descent make up the largest populations in the south of the empire, particularly in major urban centers such as the capital Korsk and the city of Khardov. Khards are not necessarily identifiable based solely on appearance, particularly to foreigners, and an individual may be more easily recognized as

not looking like an Umbrean, Kossite, or Skirov. Like other Khadorans they are generally physically robust and larger than most southerners, mostly with pale skin and either brown or black hair. Among other Khadorans, Khards can sometimes be identified by habits of grooming and style of dress with men being clean-shaven and short-haired and women often wearing their hair long but braided or kept back. Khards wear closely tailored attire with simple patterns and occasionally more vibrant colors than other Khadorans. These distinctions are clearer in the aristocracy than in the lower classes.

Khards enjoy a storied lineage tracing back to the great Priest-King Khardovic's conquests that consolidated early civilization in the north. They are as proud of having descended from Khardovic as the Caspians are of their lineage from Golivant, for these two figures are often cited as the paragons who gave rise to all civilization in western Immoren.

While all Khadorans are proud of their nation and will defend it to the death against outsiders, there are still deep-seated animosities and prejudices. Khards are seen as bearing an attitude of superiority and condescension little appreciated by the other peoples of Khador. In turn Khards tend to dismiss Kossites and Skirov as the ignorant forest folk of the frozen northwest and the ignorant mountain folk of the frozen northeast, respectively.

The Khards and the Umbreans hold bitter, longstanding grudges against one another dating back to the Khardic unification of the north. Khards often expect the worst of Umbreans until proven otherwise, and the feeling is mutual.

Though descended from warlike southern horselords, the Khards are more urbane and sophisticated than in the days of the old empire and have assimilated many aspects of other cultures they encountered through conquest or trade. The Khards are Morrowan by a narrow majority, and their views on morality and ethics derive from both Menite and Morrowan teachings. They believe in honor and duty, both to family and to nation.

The finer arts appreciated by other nations have never taken root in Khador, though some painting and music has achieved a degree of popularity, particularly that featuring martial or historical themes. Khardic music emphasizes layered drums and horns with limited string instruments. Khards have never had much interest in theater, whether drama or comedy, although some in the capital have a fondness for tragic opera. Khardic food is traditionally heavy on meats cooked with oils, garlic, and herbs over hot flames, but the nation has integrated the cuisines of several neighboring cultures; those in the south favor Tordoran dishes. Like most Khadorans, the Khards prefer strong drink over mild, particularly malt and grain-based *uiske* that exist in a variety of subtly different flavors. There is also the clear potato-based vyatka, some distilled to such high purity as to be dangerous to drink undiluted. In the ancient days the horselords enjoyed fermented milk and spiced blood, but this drink has vanished except among cattle ranchers who credit it with unlikely qualities such as increasing virility and strength.

KOSSITES

Kossites are the insular and clannish people of northwestern Khador, scattered across a large but sparsely populated region that includes the Scarsfell Forest and the Rimeshaws. Their greatest city, the esteemed northern port of Ohk, is where their culture is most strongly felt. Kossites have a more distinct ethnicity than the diverse Khards. They are tall and lean with ruddy skin and hair that ranges from light to dark brown or black. Male Kossites usually wear thick beards, and both men and women prefer their hair long.

They are descendants of the ancient kingdom of Kos, which once ruled the harsh wilderness region and terrified the southern people with its frequent raids and unmatched cunning of its warriors when fighting in the forest. Entire expeditions of Khards sent to conquer these people were sometimes swallowed by the Scarsfell Forest and never heard from again. But the Kossites lacked numbers and were primarily skirmish fighters; they could not match the Khards in massed engagements, particularly in the open against the Khardic heavy cavalry. The Khards conquered the Kossites and brought them into the Khardic Empire, but the Kossites' greatest bloodlines were allowed to govern their former lands. Kossites generally get along with other Khadorans but prefer the company of their own, respecting Skirov more than the rest for being northern people accustomed to a similarly harsh environment. Most Kossites hear little of the events shaping the rest of the world; they are a people apart.

The Kossites favor simple entertainments with their largest, most festive gatherings centered on significant ceremonies such as weddings. Kossites consider such gatherings to hold great significance and observe customs handed down from ancient times. The hosting family will vouch for the safety of guests, with rituals for gift-giving and renewing homage between liege and subjects or ties of kinship for extended families, declared in ceremonies involving considerable drinking, dancing, music, and food. Kossite music is simple and usually involves only a handful of performers playing string and simple percussion instruments. Kossite food traditionally uses both small and large locally hunted game including rabbit, pheasant, squirrel, deer, and elk, as well as a variety of river fish. Stews and meat pies are common. Kossites like a wide variety of drink and have a greater fondness for ale and mead than most Khadorans.

SKIROV

The Skirov are populous in the northeastern region, which includes the most mountainous and difficult lands in the empire. The imposing nature of these hills and mountains, many of which are impassable at certain times of the year, has led to this area still not being fully charted by government authorities. There are townships and villages deep in remote valleys that are missed by the tax census and have very little contact with outsiders, some of which are barely civilized and only tangentially connected to the nation of Khador. These become fewer with each passing decade as civilization reaches the farthest corners and an increasing number of the Skirov move to larger towns and cities. Other Khadorans can recognize the Skirov by their shorter statures—only by Khadoran standards,

as Skirov are still tall to southerners—and thick builds. They generally have lighter hair and fairer skin.

The Skirov were the second of the great northern tribes to fall to the Khardic Empire. The Kos and Skirov were both allied against the Khards in those days, creating a bond between these peoples that still remains.

Devourer worship was deeply rooted in the northern mountains before recorded history, and in many of the volozkya it continues, albeit with smaller numbers and across more scattered townships. Still, the last great barbarian horde swept down out of the mountains only three centuries ago to make demands of Lord Regent Velibor and to lay siege to Midfast. Thus the struggle between the Beast of All Shapes and the Creator of Man has greater immediacy to the Skirov than it does to many others.

However, most Skirov take religion very seriously, as they have a reputation spanning centuries as a pious and even zealous people. The region's Menite and Morrowans can generally coexist and occasionally even cooperate, although most small towns and villages exclusively worship one or the other. Skirov members of the Menite Old Faith are among the most driven and fervent to be found outside the Protectorate, but also firmly devoted to the empress and have no interest in heeding the call of the Harbinger. These Menites are hard workers and some approach their labors with a religious intensity. Most Skirov Morrowans are similarly intense and unbending compared to those who heed the faith elsewhere. They prefer the examples of those ascendants who sacrificed themselves for their beliefs over those who ascended purely by good works or philosophical enlightenment.

The Skirov have long been serious minded without much appreciation for art or entertainment beyond the simplest music and religious celebrations. They prefer basic, plain rustic foods like flavorless slabs of boiled meat cooked amid chunks of potatoes and onions. Their artistic endeavors center on the fine working of wood, stone, and metal, including the goldsmith and silversmith arts, both of which the Skirov practice with particular excellence. They also appreciate carpentry and building, favoring pragmatic designs. Rhulfolk moving into this region or into cities like Hellspass have received a warm welcome from the Skirov as both people appreciate these practical crafts and share a pragmatic approach to building. They came to this affinity only after overcoming old animosities—not long ago the barbarian Skirov along the Rhulic border would make bloody raids on clans in neighboring valleys.

UMBREANS

Prevalent in southeastern Khador, the Umbreans are the least numerous of the Khadoran peoples, although the recent unification of Umbrey brought many more into the empire. The strength of this union is still new and untested; many in the capital wonder if former Llaelese will ever fully join the Khadoran Empire. After being divided for centuries, western and eastern Umbreans are encountering the differences in their cultures, and only time will tell if they can be reconciled. Both would have preferred Umbrey as an independent kingdom rather than a subject-state of the Khadoran Empire.

Although similar in height and build to Khards, Umbreans are more recognizable because of their darker skin, certain shared facial features, and pervasively black hair. Most Umbreans let their hair grow long, and males often maintain well-groomed facial hair.

The Umbreans' history has been one of tremendous reversals in their longstanding rivalry with the Khards, making it impossible to understand them without appreciating their struggles. With their own heritage of horselords, the Umbreans once contested the Khards for domination of what would become southern Khador. After centuries of bitter strife and warfare, they were the last of the northern peoples to finally yield to the Khardic Empire. They played a significant role in the politics of the old empire's later years, and a number of their noble bloodlines would eventually sit on the throne as emperors, or kings.

The Umbreans were divided by the Orgoth during their organization of the occupied territories and this divide was reinforced during the Corvis Treaties. Those in the west remained with Khador, though not entirely happily. Indeed, only six years after the formation of Khador its first sovereign, Makaros Taranovi the Oath-Maker, was assassinated and the throne usurped by Vladin Tzepesci, an Umbrean whose dynasty went on to hold the throne for sixty-three years before being ousted. The Tzepesci kings had a poor reputation and were much despised, an attitude directed at the Umbreans themselves, ensuring more centuries of distrust between these peoples.

While most of these events are now remote and far removed from daily life, the Umbreans still remember. Their sense of shared suffering and the desire to be united has been strong in them for decades, coming to head during the Llaelese War. The road to Umbrey's restoration has been long and difficult.

Initially many of the eastern Umbreans happily joined the Llaelese Resistance, proudly calling themselves Llaelese and adding voices of defiance to the cause. Those voices were silenced when western Umbreans came to take control of the lands and speak of unification. Great Prince Vladimir Tzepesci brought a number of his most loyal vassals, each a hero of the Umbrean people, and they convinced the eastern Umbreans they would have better lives under the empress and banded together as one people.

Western and eastern Umbreans see the world differently, and those of the east have been changed by being Llaelese. They prefer richer and more varied foods, enjoy different music, and have greater appreciation for fine art, wine, and literature. Most of the eastern Umbreans are well educated and urbane, and they see politics as a public spectacle of debate and criticism. The western Umbreans are a dourer and more sober people of the southeastern plains of Khador, proud of their martial traditions, old fashioned, and steeped in the culture of their ancestors.

They do, however, share some areas of commonality. The eastern Umbreans faced prejudice by the Ryn, who never counted them as equals, just as the western Umbreans endure the Khards' condescending treatment. In the east, the best recourse an

Umbrean had to a better life was in the Llaelese Army; in the west, Umbreans were less likely to earn officer commissions but still earned reasonable wages in the army. For now these people have focused on their similarities instead of their differences. Records of old family connections provide reasons to celebrate across the groups. In the end, they hope to carve out a new nation for themselves, even if it can only exist under the Anvil of Khador.

RELIGION

Unlike the other Iron Kingdoms, there is no official state religion in Khador, because its people are too evenly divided between the Church of Morrow and the Old Faith sects of the Temple of Menoth. The Menite religion took deep root in Khador after the descendants of Belcor and Geth brought it north at the dawn of recorded history. The word of the Twins spread quickly in Khador as well, and the faith eventually attained a narrow majority, but it never eclipsed the Menite religion during the Orgoth Occupation as thoroughly as was the case elsewhere.

The prevalence of both religions has not prevented some kings from attempting to elevate one above the other. King Yeken Vladykin came close to declaring the Church of Morrow the state religion in 391 AR, late in his forty-two year reign, but his advisors convinced him that doing so would create needless discord. King Ruslan Vygor went so far as to proclaim Menoth the undisputed god of Khador in 510 AR, shortly before he launched the First Thornwood War. This proclamation was quietly negated immediately after his death, just a few months later. Even the clergy of the Old Faith did not object, knowing King Ruslan Vygor was possibly insane—his proclamation included language that seemed to confirm this.

Strife between adherents of these faiths has risen and fallen in cycles over time, but even at its worst, it has never reached anything similar to the Cygnaran Civil War in the south. It is said the people of Khador value their nation and their empress above religion. This aphorism is not always true—certainly there are individuals who are more intensely devout.

Some warn that this tendency to turn a blind eye to the faith of one's neighbors is not always a positive thing. In certain volozkya, cults of the Devourer Wurm have quietly endured, while Thamarites persist in sizable towns. Certainly the underworld circles of Korsk and Khardov have many enforcers and assassins who bear Telgesh glyphs among the other coded sigils on their bodies that are only understood by the members of the bratyas. These are considered unusual exceptions, as the majority follow the accepted faiths.

THE KHADORAN CHURCH OF MORROW

While it lacks the overwhelming dominance in Khador that it has in Cygnar, Llael, and Ord, the Church of Morrow is nonetheless the largest and most pervasive religion in Khador. The Khadoran branch of the faith has been a vital aspect of the church hierarchy for almost two thousand years, and there are many ancient and beloved cathedrals, abbeys, monasteries, and churches scattered across Khador. While the Khadoran clergy are as patriotic as any of their countrymen, their ranking priests are aware they are part of a larger organization that transcends national boundaries.

This affiliation does not generally lead to conflicts of interest, since the Morrowan faith allows for and expects loyalty to family and kingdom. There is also no stipulation preventing the faithful of different embattled nations from fighting one another, should they believe their causes to be just and so long as they behave honorably. The highest-ranking priests, however, are expected to stand aloof from these conflicts so they can retain the perspective to lead and to eventually advocate for peace, once fighting has exhausted its purpose.

For this reason, the hierarchy of the Khadoran Church is still answerable to the Sancteum in Caspia, and to Primarch Arius and the Exordeum. Ten of the thirty-six exarchs seated in that council are of Khadoran birth and lend their voices in support of their nation in its deliberations. Three of the most influential, Exarchs Jovrashin Makesh, Hedrovsk Valtorskov, and Kasia Fodorovna, speak regularly with Primarch Arius on matters directly related to their homeland.

Nonetheless, the Sancteum is far away and its dictates are infrequent and removed. For most of its regular governance, the Khadoran Church is guided by the Vicarate Councils of Korsk, Ohk, and Skirov. The Vicarate Council of Korsk governs the church across all of the southern lands, while the council in Ohk governs the northwest region and the one in Skirov oversees the northeast. The twenty-one vicars of these councils are in most respects the leaders of the faith in the nation. It is rare for the Exordeum to interfere with their decisions, but this distribution of power also means there is no single voice that governs the Khadoran Church. One of the most influential vicars is Igan Skoval, who is the senior vicar of the Katrinksa Cathedral in Korsk, as well as the personal priest of the empress.

While the hierarchy is clear, there has also been a growing tension of late between the ranking Khadoran clergy and others in the Sancteum regarding perceived favoritism toward Cygnar's interests. While this friction is unlikely to escalate into a schism, there is no question the war and its related issues have led to many heated debates. The majority of the exarchs have been vocal in their criticism regarding the imperial mandate of the Khadoran Empire and its effect on the Church as a whole. In response, the various Khadoran Vicarate Councils have been increasingly slow to send their regular reports to the Sancteum.

Morrowans look to their priests for similar comforts and ceremonies, and attend services to be reminded of the message of the divine and the promise of protection in the afterlife. Many of the poor and destitute rely on the charity of the Church, which in turn relies on donations from congregations.

Many Morrowans also pay heed to the example set by the ascendants in Khador, although some of them are emphasized to greater or lesser degree. Ascendants Doleth, Ellena, Gordenn, Katrena, and Sambert have the largest followings and the most churches and monasteries devoted to spreading their respective messages.

THE MENITE OLD FAITH

Well over a third of Khador's population are faithful Menites, most belonging to the Old Faith though other sects persist, each with its own rituals, priestly raiment, and other customs. Even within the Old Faith there are regional variances in worship. Although differences in the faith persist, these differences are generally superficial. There have been repeated attempts to enforce orthodoxy, but they have never succeeded.

These differences have been a significant factor in preventing the Old Faith Temple of Menoth from unifying under a single leader. In fact, no priest of the Old Faith has ever successfully claimed the title of hierarch. Indeed, most Menite clergy consider the use of that term by the leader of the Protectorate of Menoth to be both presumptive and inaccurate. Rather, the Old Faith is loosely led by a collection of visgoths and sovereigns, each of whom is focused on the faithful within his respective territory. They gather infrequently as a synod in Korsk to debate issues of faith. In theory any visgoth can summon a synod, but in practice, they happen only every few years. Smaller gatherings of the ranking priests in a given region take place more regularly.

While both the Old Faith and the Sul-Menite religion of the Protectorate are based upon the Canon of the True Law as was revealed in Ancient Icthier, there are many differences in interpretation and practice. The largest distinction has to do with passages related to the role of the clergy in society. As a theocracy, the Protectorate has emphasized all texts reinforcing the priest as ruler, drawing particular inspiration from the great priest-kings of old who combined secular and religious authority. To the Old Faith, these figures were exceptional and unusual examples of singularly great leaders who were seen less as priests and more as kings whose mandate was clearly blessed by Menoth. According to the Old Faith, most Menite priests exist to guide and provide counsel to kings and the nobility, not to become them.

This interpretation has guided the organization of the Old Faith in Khador, where the kingdom is divided by volozkya. Because the great princes are akin to kings, a properly high-ranking advisor of the Menite clergy is expected to serve each one, chosen by the great prince from his community. This advisor is usually a visgoth, but in the less populous volozkya this may be a sovereign instead; they are expected to be among the most senior and respected of the clergy of the region. At present there are twelve visgoths of the Old Faith. The ranks of priests of the Old Faith are otherwise similar to those employed by the Protectorate, in descending order: visgoth, sovereign, potentate, and initiate.

SCRUTATORS OF THE OLD FAITH

The adherents of the Old Faith believe it is the responsibility of the priesthood to provide justice and judgment for their communities. If the local nobility is overburdened, the Temple is more than willing to pick up the mantle of the enforcement of the law. The scrutator caste exists for this purpose; they are specialized priests who accept the responsibility of extracting truth, judging transgressions of the law, and enacting punishment. In doing so, the scrutator accepts those often unpleasant and difficult tasks so that no ordinary citizen is burdened in his stead. Among the Old Faith, this duty is considered a sacrifice and a burden, because the scrutator becomes a person apart from the community, faceless behind a mask.

Scrutators take special vows and undertake intensive training beyond that of an ordinary priest. Once they don the mask of a scrutator, it is no longer their function to conduct worship ceremonies.

There are far fewer scrutators in Khador than in the Protectorate, each serving a specific Menite community. There is no hierarchy of scrutators, only a recognition of seniority based on years of experience. They otherwise fall under the authority of ranking priests.

Scrutators are not only versed in matters of law and justice, but also interrogation and torture. While this practice is employed less in the modern era than it once was, scrutators still prefer to secure confessions from those accused of crimes. Once a criminal has confessed, even if they are executed, the scrutator will conduct rites to facilitate forgiveness in the eyes of Menoth. Whether mercy will actually be granted in Urcaen is ultimately beyond mortal reckoning.

In the execution of their duty, scrutators are generally assisted by other members of the faith. In small villages, such assistants may be selected from among the congregation, but more often they are drawn from the Knights of the Old Faith. Scrutators are given considerable leeway in pursuing their duties. In all cases, the Old Faith is subject to Khadoran law. Even as other local trials can be brought to the attention of the Ministry of the Judiciary, it is also true for the actions of scrutators.

VISGOTH RUSKIN BORGA

Visgoth Ruskin Borga sees to the Khadorstred volozk from his seat at the Temple of the True Law in Korsk. He attends to the needs of the capital and advises the empress. That he shares this role with the Morrowan Vicar Skoval does not diminish his importance in the Old Faith. The visgoth is a hearty and charismatic older man who has the bearing of a statesman. He enjoys touring the temples of his region and meeting with subordinate priests. Borga is also extremely well educated and an expert on Khadoran law, being an honorary member of the Ministry of the Judiciary and occasionally attending the Imperial Law Court as a consulting judge. He considers it a personal obligation to fight any signs of corruption in the Khadoran government. This pursuit has occasionally put him at odds with members of the kayazy. He has been the target of several failed assassination attempts.

KNIGHTS OF THE OLD FAITH

There are many small regional Menite knightly orders across Khador. These orders serve the sects of the Old Faith in the same capacity the Knights Exemplar served the Temple in ancient times, lending their armed support and absolute obedience to the priests and scrutators of the Temple of Menoth.

The Knights of the Old Faith have their own traditions, armament, and iconography, which vary from region to region. These orders are often supported by Khador's Menite aristocracy, and the knights of these orders may even be liegemen in a noble's own household.

THE ORDER OF THE WALL

The most ancient order of Menite knights, the Order of the Wall is arguably stronger and more welcome in Khador than it is in the Protectorate of Menoth. The principles of this order have survived more easily there due to the nature of the Old Faith, as well as the societal role of religion in Khador as a source of protection and charity.

The Khadoran Order of the Wall is based in a great monastery in the heart of Korsk. From here, the paladins of the order spread across the breadth of Khador, serving as the defenders of the Menite people. The paladins are few in number and the order does not recruit. Joining the order is seen as a true calling. Training for the Order of the Wall is intensive, and it ideally begins at a very young age, requiring many years of privation and separation from one's family.

THE VOLOZKYA OF KHADOR

Khador is the largest of the Iron Kingdoms, occupying a vast northern region including all lands west of Rhul and north of Ord. After the Corvis Treaties, the southeastern region of the kingdom also included borders with Llael and Cygnar. Recent conquests have added both western Llael and the Thornwood to its territories. Some of these areas are still contested, but with each passing month Khador solidifies its grasp. Khador has secured the western Llaelese region to the Black River, including its capital. Vast railways and roads cross its breadth, connecting crowded industrialized cities across a pristine but imposing landscape.

While Khador is a vast kingdom, it contains large regions of difficult wilderness and many resources remain untapped, particularly amid the northern mountains and the great Scarsfell Forest. The character of the nation changes drastically from north to south, moving from towering frozen peaks and hostile, dense forests to a varied and fertile middle region crossed by significant rivers and occupied by the three great lakes surrounding its capital. Its southern extreme is crossed by forests and several large plains, and the weather in the region is considerably more temperate. Khador's western coastline is dotted with port cities conducting vital trade.

The density of settled lands also changes drastically across these regions, with the southern area supporting large if scattered populations outside several dense urban centers, such as the capital of Korsk and the smoke-choked streets of Khardov. Another relatively well-settled and populated region lines the Bitterock River, from Ohk in the west at the mouth of the river to Skirov in the east at the source, and numerous cities and townships between. North of that region, the river settlements become increasingly sparse, with the far north being all but empty of human habitation.

Khador is divided into seventeen volozkya (p. 115), the primary political and geographical divisions of the empire. Save only one, each volozk is ruled over by a great prince. These leaders form the heart of the Khadoran aristocracy, each a sovereign within his fiefdom, albeit answerable to the empress in Korsk. In the modern era there has also been a rise of mercantile interests and families, the most powerful of which, the kayazy, are starting to eclipse the aristocracy in their reach and influence, particularly their hold over industry and commerce.

Each volozk and its great prince are described below, organized alphabetically by region, along with associated cities and major townships. Each volozk is also divided into several counties, the next administrative division. The newly conquered regions of eastern Umbrey and the Thornwood are described in the Llael and Cygnar chapters, respectively.

BORSTOI

Borstoi occupies the southwest corner of Khador. It is a western coastal territory that includes Port Vladovar and Skrovenberg and is bounded on the east by the Shadoweald. Kulvorn Bay makes Port Vladovar one of the best natural harbors in Khador. A long line of rocky hills occupy a large portion of the volozk's interior. While scenic, the terrain limits the useful farmland in the volozk, with the region southeast of Skrovenberg boasting the largest and most successful farms. There are also many farms in the region around Port Vladovar, and countless small fishing villages line Kulvorn Bay and the rest of the coast. Great Prince Sergei Marvor rules Borstoi.

Port Vladovar, the bay, and a stretch of land just north of them were once part of Ord. Before that, the area was a vital section of the ancient kingdom of Tordor, along with a sizable piece of Rustoknia, the volozk to the east. The region still includes many families of Tordoran stock, although this area has been a part of Khador for almost three centuries and the vast majority of these people see themselves as loyal Khadorans.

About ten miles north of Port Vladovar, the fringes of the woods called the Shadoweald begin. Deep in the woods lies an ancient blackclad meeting circle where the order has dwelled for centuries. Locals are constantly harassed by argus and a local breed of fiercely territorial brown bears, thought to be spurred on by the druids. Fatalities are uncommon, as long as outsiders keep their distance. Similarly, while blackclads are not tolerated by local Menites, there have been no organized attempts to root them out of the forest depths. In recent years this situation has become more uncertain and frightening, due to the tales of titanic clashes in the depths of the wood. Witnesses report having seen Zevanna Agha there alongside hardened soldiers of the 3rd Border Legion fighting against the blackclads. Locals find the Old Witch even more frightening than the druids and so keep out of the forest.

North of the forbidden Shadoweald is the Blackroot Wood, a highly harvested and traveled stretch of prolific conifer trees rooted deeply in black, fertile soil—hence the name. The woods are harvested for lumber, and some farming communities send wagons to bring back heaps of the fertile soil for use in their fields. Occasionally, blackclads are also seen in this forest, albeit in fewer numbers than the Shadoweald. Both the Shadoweald and Blackroot Wood are home to several small trollkin kriels, the members of which generally keep to themselves but occasionally barter with nearby human villages.

Great Prince Marvor's duties as ruler are slightly complicated by being the kommandant of the 4th Division of the 3rd Army presently stationed in the southeastern Thornwood. Like his peers, he sees his standing in the army as symbolic, lending the prestige of his bloodline to the division. Marvor spends more time in his volozk and in Korsk than he does with his embattled division, which he entrusts to senior officers.

Almost all the significant commercial endeavors in the region have to do with shipping and trade, centered on Skrovenberg and Port Vladovar. Port Vladovar gets the lion's share of this activity, but Skrovenberg benefits from access to the mouth of the Lothpool River, which connects to several other major arteries inland.

BORSTOI VOLOZK

Largest Ethnic Groups: Khardic majority, Tordoran and Kossite minorities

Predominant Religions: Morrowan majority, Menite minority

Important Cities: Port Vladovar and Skrovenberg

Significant Towns (not on the map): Blizberg, Csaborov, Devora, Durga, Halminsk, Kigirov, Krasnov, Ladimirsk, Marosk, Ravostok, Ruskinberg, Viliskov, Vojin, Zorsk

Lord: Great Prince Sergei Marvor (Kommandant of the 4th Division, 2nd Army)

The Marvor family extends back to the Khardic Empire but was never a prominent great family, its holdings considered meager. Its stature increased substantially during the Border Wars. Sergei's immediate ancestors fought in the battles to seize lands from Ord. Taking Port Vladovar was their greatest victory, and the city has become vital to Khador and hence to the Marvors. The great prince is heavily reliant on the prosperity of Port Vladovar and, to a lesser extent, Skrovenberg. Nevertheless, Port Vladovar is nominally ruled by the Khadoran Navy and other military bodies rather than by the great prince, and it relies on the navy and army garrisons for its defense.

Marvor has kept abreast of news of Ordic and Cygnaran expeditions to Zu, and he has been one of the foremost advocates for Khadoran exploration. Currently, Khador has only limited access to valued goods from the southern continent, like spices, bought at great expense through trade with Ord. The great prince has begun to use his family's wealth to fund Khadoran exploration abroad.

Seat: Borstov Landing

Borstov Landing is a towering castle town that overlooks Kulvorn Bay. There has been a fortress there since Ordic times. The fortress is in a heavily reinforced and geographically defensible position situated on a high, rocky hill overlooking the bay. Dozens of heavy cannons point toward the open water to protect against incoming vessels. In addition to the great prince's household guard, there is a full Winter Guard battalion stationed there to assist with the defense of the region. The battalion is nominally part of the 3rd Border Legion, but its senior officers are inclined to work closely with Great Prince Markov and his personal guard. Borstov is now the primary watch point for Ordic or Cryxian naval attacks, and it keeps a stable of extremely fast stallions to send word elsewhere if a war fleet should appear on the horizon. There are roads around the bay between Borstov Landing and Port Vladovar, but it is generally faster to take a boat from the castle's piers.

PORT VLADOVAR

Ruler: Posadnik Ysak Smyvalov

Population: 250,000 humans (mostly Khard); 2,000 trollkin; 1,000 gobbers; a few hundred ogrun

Military Presence: Port Vladovar is home to the Khadoran Fleet. The city is garrisoned by a Winter Guard battalion. In times of need, reinforcements can be called in from nearby Borstov Landing.

Description: Port Vladovar is first and foremost a naval fortress. The city sprawls around the rocky shore of Kulvorn Bay, and the massive artillery batteries of Borstov Landing set an endless watch over the city. The rusted, barnacle-encrusted wreck of a colossal—a relic of the final days of the Rebellion—looms a couple hundred yards out from the docks of Port Vladovar. According to the borders established by the Corvis Treaties, the city, once known as Radahvo, and its surrounding environs were defined as Ordic holdings. The port was formally ceded to Khador in 313 AR at the end of the Border Wars.

The heavy naval presence at Vladovar provides the city with significant defenses. The batteries at Borstov Landing can quickly move to any position along Kulvorn Bay thanks to a set of rail lines specially built for this purpose. If the threat of these hull-splitting guns does not dissuade a seaborne threat, dozens of armored warships are always present in the bay. By land, the port is no more susceptible. Winter Guard forces supported by warjacks are always prepared to meet any adversary, while a dozen heavy mortar emplacements on the city's walls can pound enemy forces as they advance.

Impressive though these defenses are, recent history proved they could be overwhelmed. This fact weighs heavily upon not only the soldiers and sailors of the port, but also the civilians, many of whom are haunted by terrible memories of what their people endured during the Cryxian assault only two years past. Much of the city's docks were razed, both military and commercial, and the port still bears the scars of that attack. The Khadoran Navy has spared no effort to rebuild and refortify the port since then, and the docks hum with the activity of construction. More recently, Port Vladovar has become a center for shipbuilding as the navy struggles to rebuild its beleaguered fleet.

For marine trade, Port Vladovar is second only to Ohk. Activity at the port never ceases, and naval sloops direct the heavy ship traffic to avoid messy collisions or clogged seaways. A series of wharfs, docks, and sheltered marinas sprawl from the city for a league along the coastline. Steam cranes load and unload crates of merchandise as hundreds of dockworkers and steamjacks scramble about processing cargo.

Besides the normal trade and military ships flowing in and out of the quays, a number of whaling vessels operate out of the port. Whale meat and oil is processed at the farthest end of the docks and is a very lucrative business. Among the whalers is a kriel of trollkin who consider the hunting and harvesting of whales as an almost holy undertaking.

Vladovar has direct ties to Ord and sees heavy traffic from the infamous city of Five Fingers. Ordic crime families have attempted to take footholds in Vladovar, but the bratyas of the city's commercial docks have met them with overwhelming violence. To date, no Ordic criminals have gained any notable control, although individual agents may linger in the city under the cover of being merchants. Khador has far too strong a military presence to harbor the kind of flagrantly criminal organizations that plague Five Fingers, but cutthroats and pirates still frequent the seaside and other rundown quarters, and the bratyas that do thrive there do so through connections with a handful of dubiously honest naval officers.

SKROVENBERG, THE ANCIENT PORT

Ruler: Posadnik Dmitri Meshik

Population: 70,000 humans (mostly Khard and some Kossite), a few hundred gobbers, trollkin, and ogrun

Military Presence: Skrovenberg is garrisoned by two Winter Guard battalions.

Description: Skrovenberg, sometimes referred to simply as the "Ancient Port," has borne the brunt of a great number of calamities. It was a busy port in the days of the Khardic Empire and saw many ships in its time, including the Orgoth longboats whose savage crews razed the city. Under Orgoth subjugation, it grew back into a sizeable town until the start of the Rebellion, when a local liberation force set the city ablaze. Again the city was ruined. Later, after the locals had rebuilt much of the town, the Scourge struck. Yet again smoke billowed up from Skrovenberg's ashes. While Skrovenberg was being rebuilt for the third time, the other port cities of Ohk and Vladovar surpassed it in importance. Nevertheless, much of Khardov's river trade begins in Skrovenberg.

Bisected by the Lothpool River as it empties into the sea, Skrovenberg is divided into northern and southern districts, connected by many bridges. A small benefit of having been razed numerous times is the relatively recent construction of much of the city. All Skrovenberg's bridges are mechanical affairs of iron and steel. The bridges can be temporarily elevated to clear the tall stacks and sails of ocean-going ships, allowing them access to the river.

As Skrovenberg's importance as a port has waned, the city has reinvented itself as a center of learning. The Nine Boards, a complex consisting of nine red-and-white buildings houses part of the Skrovenberg Kollegii, where the city's renowned schools of learning educate the masses. The schools are: Foreign Affairs, War, Admiralty, Revenues, Justice, Commerce, Mining, Estates, and Expenses. A tenth building is currently under construction to house the center for mathematics. Although the Kollegii does not have the same prestige as the Druzhina or the Khadoran Institute of Engineering, academics across the Iron Kingdoms consider it a highly respectable institution. Before the onset of war, Skrovenberg's professors were sometimes invited to speak or teach at Corvis University in Cygnar and other colleges. Some professors still correspond with their colleagues in Cygnar and Ord at some risk, as Section Three is suspicious of Khadoran citizens with any connections to the enemies of the Motherland.

DOROGNIA

A productive region, Dorognia includes Rorschik, Volningrad, Lake Volningrad, and the lands south of the lake to the border of Ord, including the Gallowswood. Most of the region's inhabitants are clustered around the great lake. Some logging occurs in the northern Gallowswood, although most of the forest is still in the process of being tamed. Great Prince Levanid Trevanik rules Dorognia.

Dorognia expanded considerably during the Border Wars and particularly during the First Expansion War. The region saw a number of the key battles between Khador and Ord, and it was at the Battle of the Broken Sword that the Ordic King, Alvor Cathor I, was killed in a brave but futile charge. There are numerous other famous battlefield sites in the region. Several extensive graveyards were established to honor the dead killed on both sides, and the Khadorans in the region have carefully tended the graves of their former enemies. A number of families of Ordic descent live in the region, although most are careful not to talk in romantic terms about their heritage lest they be seen as disloyal.

The village of Deshevek, less than a half-hour's ride north from Boarsgate, was the site of the infamous Boarsgate Massacre committed by the Khadoran warcaster Orsus Zoktavir, "the Butcher of Khardov," in 587 AR. A small village on the southern outskirts of the Gallowswood, Deshevek frequently traded with Ord and was isolated from the Motherland. When the village attempted to secede and join Ord, Zoktavir flew into a rage at their treachery and cut down over a hundred villagers and all fifty of his own soldiers, who had tried to stop him. Visions of the aftermath still haunt the dreams of the Winter Guard troops who arrived soon thereafter.

The region between the Gallowswood and the Ordic border once contained a number of thriving villages and towns, but most of these have been abandoned due to conflicts in the region. Although Ord and Khador are not at war, skirmishes between their militaries or mercenaries are common, and the patrols from Boarsgate are prepared to fire on anyone they perceive as suspicious. The 3rd Border Legion also maintains several small watchtowers and garrisons on the Khadoran side of the border.

As much as the southern part of the region is steeped in blood, the northern area is among Khador's more idyllic and desirable, particularly along the shores of the lake. Rorschik serves as a trade route for the farmlands to the east, which are technically part of Umbrey but are a significant breadbasket of Khador. The area produces ample grain and cattle, which are used to feed the two great cities, with the excess traded abroad. Much of the industry and wealth of the volozk is centered on the two northern cities, with Volningrad being the largest and the center of local government. This city is most famous as the location of the largest training facilities for the Khadoran military, but it is also a vibrant city and the seat of Great Prince Levanid Trevanik. Being young and connected to a scandal associated with his father, Trevanik does not have much political sway over his vassals, who largely do as they please.

Count Marshal and Kommandant Karl Svette is actually the most prominent figure in the region. Svette is the commander of Khador's 3rd Army, which has oversight over all the border legions and the Khadoran Army's reserves. His attention is largely focused on training new soldiers for the army, and he spends most of his time in Volningrad. While interactions between the great prince and kommandant were initially chilly, a rapport has slowly grown between them.

RORSCHIK

Ruler: Posadnik Khleb Spesitev

Population: 70,000 humans (mostly Khard and Umbrean); 3,500 trollkin; hundreds of ogrun

Military Presence: Rorschik is garrisoned by a Winter Guard battalion of six full kompanies.

Description: Rorschik is a small city with a rich history situated at the center of an important region. Located on the eastern shore of Lake Volningrad, Rorschik is well known for its Menite temples and lake shipping and serves as a hub for the transport of much of Khador's grain and beef. The city also has a sizable trollkin community that lives in a northern neighborhood and largely keeps to themselves. Many of the trollkin find work as a ready labor force for shipping, while some work with the lake fishing industry or labor in the farms immediately surrounding the city.

The oldest known town on Lake Volningrad, Rorschik was founded by Umbrean horselords for the purpose of trading with the people of Rynyr and has since served as an important center of merchant transit. Trading diminished to a trickle during the Occupation Era, but during the reign of Ioann IV the town was once again established as a trading center on the route between Korsk and Laedry. With its enviable location on the shores of Lake Volningrad and its open, fertile plains, Rorschik and its outlands are major exporters of food throughout the Motherland.

Rorschik has long been a gathering place for adherents of the Old Faith. For countless generations these people have followed the tenets of Menoth, and with the recent controversy between Khador and the Protectorate, many citizens feel torn. This divide has grown since the execution of Great Prince Boris Trevanik for treason and the subsequent loss of faith by citizens who feel more loyalty to their nation than to the Old Faith. That said, some of these citizens are reassured by the restoration of the Trevanik heir to his position as great prince, which has provided them with a much-needed sense of stability.

The city is also home to the Vrestya Facility, an imposing tower near the city's center that is one of the Greylords Covenant's five

DOROGNIA VOLOZK

Largest Ethnic Groups: Khardic majority, Tordoran and Skirov minorities

Predominant Religions: Menite majority, Morrowan minority

Important Cities: Rorschik and Volningrad

Significant Towns (not on the map): Alekstrovsk, Androv, Churik, Csabor, Deshevek, Doreskov, Kaslov, Manaro, Novoarabella, Ovalho, Padorov, Padrysk, Slovo, Statia, Tareyov, Trevansk, Ushk, Verona, Versalo, Vjera

Lord: Great Prince Levanid Trevanik

The former ruler, Great Prince Boris Trevanik, was arrested and executed for treason in 605 AR. A devout adherent of the Old Faith, Trevanik had been directly involved in smuggling Khadoran cortexes to the Protectorate of Menoth and paid the price. For a time the region was overseen by Kommandant Szvette, Count Martial of Volningrad, but rulership passed back to Levanid, the son and heir of Boris. When his father was executed, Levanid had completed his officer training at the Druzhina and was serving as a kapitan in the 3rd Border Legion.

Levanid is still young and new to his duties, and he knows he must tread carefully given the scrutiny placed on his family and the shame brought by his father's execution. Levanid is also a Menite and has a private fascination with the stories of the Harbinger of Menoth, but he considers it a vital priority to prove his patriotism and devotion to the empress. He is eager to transfer to a more active military post and has made his wishes known to the kommandant, who may be willing to send him into the field, albeit with a retinue of suitable bodyguards to ensure the great prince's safety.

Seat: Volningrad

strongholds and a center for cortex production and mechanikal training. The people of Rorschik are more comfortable with the Greylords than most citizens in Dorognia and beyond, because the various mechanical industries that have grown from the Greylords' work now employ many laborers.

VOLNINGRAD

Ruler: Great Prince Levanid Trevanik and Count Martial Szvette

Population: 145,000 humans (mostly Khard with some Kossite, Skirov, and Umbrean); 2,000 ogrun; hundreds of gobbers and trollkin

Military Presence: Volningrad is home to Khador's 3rd Army. There are tens of thousands of soldiers and recruits in the city at any given time.

Description: Visitors to Volningrad are often overwhelmed by the Khadoran military presence here. The misconception of outsiders that Khador is a nation of unbridled patriotic fervor may seem well founded to someone observing Volningrad for the first time. The city is one dedicated to training Khador's military forces, and the sounds of cadence, marksmanship, and melee drills are constantly in the air.

Volningrad is an open city without walls but with wide streets to accommodate soldiers on the march. It is kept incredibly clean and operates with military precision. While the city is inarguably controlled by the Khadoran Army, matters of civic governance are left to the young Great Prince Levanid. The true power here, however, rests with Count Martial Szvette.

Volningrad's soldiers—almost half the population of the city—are housed in a large expanse of barracks-like tenements stacked one upon another and filled with humble quarters for the tens of thousands of temporary residents. Volningrad is home to several lesser military schools that train the empire's officers who did not make the cut to enter the Druzhina in Korsk. These schools lack the prestige of the Druzhina but put officers through a similar training regimen and in all respects make them ready for their duties.

Aside from training Khador's armies, the city's chief industry is the production of arms for the military. Thousands work in Volningrad's steel mills, iron forges, or the Khadoran Mechaniks Assembly warjack foundry, and the city's ogrun and trollkin have likewise found work in the mills, forges, and foundries. Although cortexes are shipped in from Korsk, the vast majority of Khador's warjacks are assembled in Volningrad, and it is here that the majority of the nation's Man-O-War armor is manufactured.

DUWURKYN

This mountainous region holds the Shard Spires, including innumerous valleys and hills and the forest known as the Rimeshaws. Dangerous and deadly for the unprepared, the jagged, snow-capped Shards are prone to avalanche and sudden freezing storms. Entire caravans and villages have vanished under a single storm's snowfall. The most accommodating southern valleys and plateaus are home to dozens of small mountain villages, fortified halls, old keeps, and walled townships. Great Prince Ryczek Torinskyev rules the unforgiving region.

The Shards were the ancestral home of the Nyss, who dominated the northern reaches of the volozk for over a thousand years. Some unfathomable disaster recently struck these people, annihilating their traditional nomadic culture and sending them fleeing from their tribal homes. The nature of this calamity is not well understood, but it has prompted many outlandish rumors among the neighboring inhabitants. It is generally thought a dragon was the root of the calamity, since dragonspawn were seen terrorizing the surrounding areas in great numbers afterward.

Several human villages and settlements were also obliterated by these horrific creatures, with possibly hundreds of casualties, though it is hard to say since the people in the region have long been insular and independent, and the full scope of the attacks is still unclear. The great prince's well-armed liegemen and vassals eventually organized investigations, but the delay made it difficult to find the creatures responsible. Patrols in the mountains persist, ready to confront any lingering dragonspawn or other blighted creatures, such as remnants of the Nyss themselves—blighted versions of whom were reported fighting alongside the dragonspawn.

In the wake of this disaster, thousands of Nyss refugees moved south. They were so scarred by the event that they hardly spoke of it, even as they passed through Khadoran villages where they had once conducted limited trade. The great prince and his people have long grown accustomed to living almost exclusively in the southern half of the volozk, but since the Nyss abandoned their traditional homes, talk has begun of settlements expanding northward.

Northern Count Jaegur Kelshevich insists there are likely valuable mineral resources ripe for the taking in the northern region, and explorers and investors have mounted cautious expeditions to reclaim the area for the Motherland, with mercenaries hired for protection. Even if the Nyss are gone, the vast wilderness region has many perils, including winter trolls, argus, griffons, and other threats. Across the myriad valleys and woods are some of the last barbarian tribes of Khador, including dozens of old families whose houses bear sigils conveying their allegiance to the blackclads. When these inhabitants engage in trading, they continue to avoid the winter stones that mark Nyss territory.

Duwurkyn has a strong Menite following, most of Skirov descent, that slightly outnumbers their Morrowan neighbors. The western region also includes several towns of Kossite ancestry; they seem to be remnants of a more ancient time, including the rustic nobles who live in the mountains. They occupy their halls and keeps like lords of old, tending large hearth fires and taking pride in their prowess as hunters and leaders of brave warriors. The politics of the region are also slightly archaic, with occasional duels or feuds.

Great Prince Torinskyev is admired and well respected across the region, but this does not prevent his vassals from quarreling and otherwise occasionally testing the limits of his patience. With the region's heavy snows and difficult passes, each community has considerable autonomy, and gatherings between leaders are infrequent. The great prince does not spend much time in the capital, traveling there once or twice a year to ensure his name is not forgotten. The empress has demanded the region's nobles loosen their purse strings to improve roads and expand mines for the good of the nation, but such efforts have been slow in coming to fruition.

DUWURKYN VOLOZK

Largest Ethnic Groups: Skirov majority, Kossite minority, some Rustov

Predominant Religions: Menite majority, Morrowan minority, some Devourer worship

Significant Towns (not on the map): Antonovo, Bolekh, Broniskov, Daliskov, Darsk, Grynsk, Holek, Kosk, Kosnovo, Kigirgrad, Kirgorod, Malko, Nynsk, Pariskoy, Ravaskov, Skroven, Stoyansk, Strasberg, Taborisk, Tatsk, Tevek, Tyminsk

Lord: Great Prince Ryczek Torinskyev

Ryczek Torinskyev is a still robust great prince for his age, although the years have begun to take their toll, adding a limp to his step and slightly dimming his sight. He is of an ancient Skirov bloodline that has proudly remained Menite and dates their conversion to the time of Priest-King Khardovic. He is intelligent and well spoken, although his manners are rustic and his views based on the clannish nature of his harsh northern region. He seems uncomfortable in the capital during his infrequent visits but flinches before no one, even the empress. He pays his taxes and encourages his vassals to send youths to join the Khadoran Army, but beyond these tokens of loyalty he dislikes Korsk meddling in his lands. His favorite sport is hunting, preferring the bow over the rifle, and he has preserved the skeletons of several dragonspawn in his great hall, despite how unsettling they are to his wife and advisors.

Seat: Hoarstone Keep

FEODOSKA

This northern forest territory is bounded on the east by the Irkes and Tapping Rivers and on the west by the arctic bogs surrounding Icebrand Lakes. To the north is the frozen plain of Winterborn Lake, beyond which might as well be the edge of the world. The region also includes the Helvongen River along with a section of the western Scarsfell Forest. A beautiful but cold and difficult landscape, Feodoska and Vardenska to the west are largely removed from events elsewhere in Khador. The region supports no major cities, only numerous villages and several small towns. Most of the population is clustered along the coast and the major rivers. Although Great Prince Forovi Descra rules Feodoska, he spends little of his time in these lands and has largely left their governance to his vassals.

The old Kossite families of the region have sunk roots deep into this frozen land and could not imagine living anywhere else, eschewing the comforts of the soft southerners of their own nation. In the ancient days of the Khardic Empire, when Khards fought the great warriors of Kos, the people of Feodoska were largely left alone; they learned of the surrender of Kos to the Khardic Empire by rumor. The change in governance did not change their lives much, since they knew the empire's officers would never be willing to settle among them. Many living in the region, particularly within the forest, hearken back to ancient ways before the imposition of the civilization of Khardovic. Some say they run with wolves. Even in the civilized townships, animal totems are common, with many families asserting they are the traditional iconography of their ancestors.

The region has many legends, including stories of the dragon Halfaug from the frozen north, who in some eras flew south to cause chaos and destruction. The great prince's hold is situated amid a long and peculiar gorge south of Helvongen that locals say was carved from the earth by Halfaug during a clash with the prince's family. The four counts ruling the region are a stubborn and contentious lot who agree on little except disdain of their great prince, who they say lacks the fortitude to live there. Were he to return, he would likely face rebellion from one or all of them as soon as he attempted to dictate to them.

What little wealth exists in the region is largely tied up in trade goods procured by hunting, fishing, and logging.

GORZYTSKA

Other than Duwurkyn, Gorzytska is the most rugged mountainous volozk in Khador, as it includes the Thundercliff Peaks up to the border of Rhul. Although the western mountains are slowly being conquered by hardy Skirov mining towns and settlements, much of the area is impassable. The trickle of trade between Khador and Rhul is conducted along a difficult road from Hellspass that extends southwest through the lowest valleys and then circles south around the mountains before finally meeting the Orlovsk Highway. In the northern and eastern valleys, a few dwindling barbarian tribes still exist. Gorzytska is ruled by Great Princess Regna Gravnoy, who has earned a formidable reputation among her people.

While there have been no openly declared wars between modern Khador and Rhul, conflict in the region between Rhulfolk and humans was common as recently as three hundred years ago. Some of the volozk's mountains and passes are contested by both kingdoms. The western Rhulic clans have occasionally expanded operations and seized unoccupied territory, and the same is true for Khadoran mountain settlers, particularly those descended from the barbaric tribes that never viewed themselves as Khadoran. Those tribes joined together with the horde that flooded the lowlands during the Border Wars and were subsequently destroyed or dispersed after the Siege of Midfast in 305 AR, with only remnants surviving.

Tensions persist along the shared border and skirmishes happen from time to time. Rhul has taken a page from human history and written off these battles as "mercenary clashes" beyond the purview of their ruling stone lords, just as Khadoran officials insist they cannot control every well-armed mountain village. The trade between Rhul and Khador is important to both nations, and neither is interested in jeopardizing it with inconsequential battles.

In recent months the Khadorans have even begun to hire Rhulic mercenaries to help maintain the safety of mines and quarries in the region. The extra security became necessary after a sudden appearance of dragonspawn attacks among the Thundercliff Peaks, where those blighted creatures infested several valuable mines. Many large mercenary expeditions traveled into the hills to clear out those hazards, a risky proposition amid dank caverns and unstable shafts. These actions were deemed worth the cost, because mining is the region's primary source of wealth. In fact, the area has been more exploited than some of Khador's other mountainous areas, and the demands of the nation's war industry require the ore unearthed here.

Recently several gold mines have also been established on the treacherous slopes of the Thundercliffs. The best known is the infamous Khaga Rusk, a mine historically plagued with

FEODOSKA VOLOZK

Largest Ethnic Groups: Kossite majority, Skirov minority, some Vindol and Rustov

Predominant Religions: Menite majority, Morrowan minority, Devourer worship more widespread than is widely admitted

Significant Towns (not on the map): Borga, Gorysk, Helgovo, Ivansk, Karlsgrad, Oborosk, Scarsgrad, Volkov, Zmeya

Lord: Great Prince and Koldun Lord Forovi Descra

Great Prince Forovi Descra descends from an ancient and esteemed lineage but has lost the respect of his vassals by spending all his time elsewhere. The great prince is a formidable individual and has reason for his journeys abroad—he is an elite member of the Greylords Covenant and a ranking koldun lord. He is secretly part of the Prikaz Chancellery and makes use of his rank and position to gain access to places other Greylords could not. He divides his time between the capital and journeys to the halls of the great princes of the southern volozkya with his ear always to the ground listening for hints of conspiracy against the empress.

Forovi comes across as a neutral and insightful listener who makes no judgments of those seeking his counsel. He is always insulated from any traceable connection to the consequences of his reports. This work keeps the great prince too busy to worry about neglecting his lands, which he intends to pass to his son.

Seat: Dragovich Hall

mishaps. The mine was abandoned for a time after the main shaft collapsed, though the miners are sure it was adequately reinforced. Eventually it was discovered that bogrin raiders were responsible. The mine has been reopened, but the workers and the mercenaries hired to protect them remain wary of attacks, as the bogrin persist in the region.

Much of the ore claimed from the mines here is sent west to be processed in Skirov and then shipped elsewhere in Khador by rail. Smaller branch rail lines extend up into the hills. Efforts to expand the rail lines to the major mines are a priority of the great princess and her vassals. The region has been relatively unmarred by major political struggles since Regna has cowed her counts and other vassals.

GORZYTSKA VOLOZK

Largest Ethnic Groups: Skirov majority; Khardic, Kossite, and small Umbrean minorities; Hellspass includes the largest population of ogrun in Khador

Predominant Religions: Morrowan majority, Menite minority, sizable community of Dhunian ogrun in Hellspass

Important Cities: Hellspass

Significant Towns (not on the map): Borosk, Brogangrad, Gorvina, Gravosk, Gubinsk, Hamminsk, Gorgolgrad, Jarosk, Kinisk, Padorsk, Skivoy, Theldor, Ugar, Ushk

Lord: Great Princess Regna Gravnoy

Princess Regna rules the entirety of Gorzytska through her father's seemingly endless political ties. She is presently the only woman among the great princes, and she has chosen no husband to produce an heir. She is still reasonably young and many have sought to court her, but she prefers to use her unattached status to her political advantage, at least until the need to have children becomes urgent.

Seat: Hellspass

HELLSPASS

Ruler: Great Princess Regna Gravnoy

Population: 8,000 humans (mostly Khard, with some Skirov and Umbrean); 4,000 ogrun; a few hundred Rhulfolk

Military Presence: Hellspass is garrisoned by three Winter Guard kompanies.

Description: The simple stone buildings inhabited by the few thousand residents of Hellspass mark the location of vast catacombs and a site sacred to the ogrun people. The town was built by the dwarves of Rhul in ages past as a gesture of honor to the ogrun, and its original name, long forgotten by men, is forbidden to be spoken by ogrun.

The construction of the settlement began in 1308 BR, and the ogrun long used Hellspass as both a fortress and a tomb for their dead; they buried thousands of their kind in the catacombs beneath the stone city. When the Khardic Empire discovered the ogrun enclave on their eastern border in 1141 BR, they immediately sought to subjugate its inhabitants. For twenty years, the Thundercliffs were the site of bloody clashes that cost the lives of many thousand men, ogrun, and Rhulfolk. Eventually the dwarves relinquished their claim on the region and advised their ogrun allies to do the same. The ogrun were powerful warriors, but they could not withstand the sustained onslaught of the innumerable legions of the Khardic Empire. The ogrun forces yielded in 1118 BR with the condition that the catacombs remained sacred and undefiled. The Khards agreed. The ogrun stayed in the city to protect their ancient fortress and the tombs of their ancestors.

Today, Hellspass remains an important mining town that sends hundreds of tons of ore back to Skirov and Khardov for processing. The majority of Khadoran buildings are sited on the outskirts of the small ogrun settlement at the center of the city. By and large, the Khadorans avoided interfering with the original structures out of respect for the ogrun, a tradition that has endured.

Hellspass is built atop a complex of sturdy bedrock tunnels that twist and turn under the city. These are large enough in diameter to hold two adult ogrun shoulder to shoulder with a dwarf's worth of room to spare. A great number of ogrun remains are buried in the catacombs, along with the riches they took with them. Only ogrun are allowed access to the secret entrances to these revered tunnels.

KHADORSTRED

Without question, Khadorstred is the most prosperous and prestigious region in Khador and the heart of the empire. It includes the capital Korsk, New Vroggen, Cherov-on-Dron, the Great Zerutsk, and the Shattered Shield Lakes. The territory stretches north to Fort Brunzig and the Bitterock River, and there is ample, if sometimes difficult, farmland north of the great lakes. Interspersed among the farms are numerous profitable ranches with sizable herds of livestock. The people of the region are largely Khardic, although the cosmopolitan capital includes Khadorans of all ethnicities.

The political makeup of Khadorstred was irrevocably altered on 602 AR when Great Vizier Blaustavya unearthed a conspiracy to manipulate trade in the capital. The conspirators, led by Great Prince Yrkovna, sought to enrich themselves at the cost of the nation. The Yrkovna family had long been supporters of the Vanar dynasty, governing the whole of Khadorstred in partnership with the monarchs of Khador. Ayn Vanar, then queen, demonstrated her wrath in a series of public arrests and executions—including that of Yrkovna, who thought himself above the law. She also stripped his surviving family of their noble title and seized their wealth, using a portion of it to redress

wrongs done by the family. Empress Ayn Vanar has reclaimed the volozk for her family and now governs it personally. Word of this action did much to magnify the queen's considerable popularity among the masses.

Even in ancient times the volozk was prized as having the most fertile lands of the great southern region where the Khardic horselords ruled. The lake environs saw considerable fighting as each strong leader sought to enforce his dominion on the rest. After the message of Menoth reached those lands, the area between the three lakes where Korsk now stands was among the first places settled. Multiple cities were built and razed on that site until the Khards were able to unite their empire, Stasikov being the most recent. When Korska became the eastern capital and Khardov remained the primary seat of power in the west, Stasikov lay between them and became a gathering place for both Khardic and Umbrean horselords. As a middle point between the two capitals, it served both as a favored meeting ground and as a hub for the grain stores of the central empire. Eventually the city rivaled Khardov, and after the Rebellion it became the hub of Khadoran nation. Now it is the heart of the empire's politics, economics, and military might.

The great Iron Highway that crosses through Khadorstred is central to Korsk's economic dominance. Its rails link the capital to Ohk, to Skirov, to Khardov, and outward to most of the major cities in Khador. It has recently been expanded to reach the formerly Llaelese cities of Laedry and on to Merywyn, which has enabled the empire to maintain supply lines toward the war front. The Iron Highway serves as an information network and military transport, ensuring troops can react swiftly to any threat. The trains traveling these routes are of great size and power, and each is escorted, heavily armed, and capable of dealing with significant threats.

CHEROV-ON-DRON

Ruler: Posadnik Liubun Onopinskaia

Population: 37,000 humans (mostly Khard), 3,000 ogrun

Military Presence: Cherov-on-Dron is garrisoned by three Winter Guard kompanies.

Description: Cherov-on-Dron is a prosperous port town situated on the banks of the Bitterock River halfway between Ohk and Porsk. The city is the center of a healthy lumber industry supplying lumberyards both up- and downriver. Since the rail line was completed, Cherov-on-Dron has experienced a slight lull in traffic, but nonetheless remains a popular and industrious river town. Given its centralized location and the fact that the region south of the city and the river are among Khador's most productive farmlands, this city also hosts a significant food market. Many of the small townships across the region travel to the city to gain access to goods or services not otherwise found in their own communities. The thriving markets have also brought a small but pervasive criminal element, with agents working in the city in the employ of kayazy from both Ohk and Korsk. They earn profit for their masters by extortion, river smuggling, and imposing false tariffs.

KHADORSTRED VOLOZK

Largest Ethnic Groups: Khardic majority; Skirov, Umbrean, and Kossite minorities; includes largest concentration of Nyss refugees from Shard Spires, numbering around two thousand

Predominant Religions: Morrowan majority, large Menite minority

Important Cities: Cherov-on-Dron, Korsk, New Vroggen

Significant Towns (not on the map): Balsnochberg, Dalmansk, Fedorgrad, Fusik, Geza, Ivadberg, Khardsk, Khadingrad, Krasnovo, Makaros, Nagorsk, Orlovo, Radomirsk, Stalgorod, Taranosk, Vanersk, Vladykingrad

Lord: Empress Ayn Vanar

The empress has ruled this volozk directly since 602 AR and has shown no interest in creating a new great prince. Because her attention is required to govern the entire empire, however, she has little time or inclination to scrutinize the affairs of the region. She relies on the nine counts of Khadorstred to keep the peace and ensure the prosperity of its cities, farmlands, and ranches. All the while, Great Vizier Blaustavya watches the counts closely. As yet none of them seems willing to risk a repeat of the trials of 602 AR, and they have kept their promises.

Seat: Stasikov Palace, Korsk

KORSK

Ruler: Empress Ayn Vanar

Population: 790,000 humans (mostly Khard, Kossite, Skirov, and Umbrean); 30,000 gobbers; 25,000 Rhulfolk; 20,000 ogrun

Military Presence: Korsk is garrisoned by a full kommand of the 3rd Army. Stasikov Palace maintains the Empress' Guard of 2,000 elite troops. Thousands of additional troops may be moving through Korsk by rail at any time. Additionally, the Greylords Covenant has a substantial presence in the capital.

Description: Korsk is the vital heart of the Khadoran Empire, and the nation's history, ambition, and power are plain to see across the face of the capital. With its great factories, schools of higher learning, and cathedrals, Korsk demonstrates its ingenuity and culture in every edifice, street, and fortification. Korsk is a city brimming with national pride. Flags fly from nearly every tower, bearing the gold and crimson insignia of the Motherland.

Standing at the city's center is the imperial Stasikov Palace, the most renowned structure in all of Khador. Constructed from massive stone blocks left behind in the wake of the Orgoth Scourge, the massive structure is one of the largest fortresses ever constructed. The palace was built between 276

and 304 AR according to the vision of King Dmitry. The shape of the foreboding stone building is repeated in Khador's state seal—a triangle with a tower at each vertex—to show his god the strength and power of Khador. Even the imposing walls dominating Korsk's skyline cannot conceal the majesty of the palace's pointed domes that soar above them. It is a city-within-the-city—a walled fortification that encompasses the empress' center of power.

The great Cathedral of Katrinska stands just outside the walls surrounding Stasikov Palace. Built to impress, the gilded cathedral is visible from almost everywhere in the capital and is an obvious sign of the favor in which the ruling dynasty of Khador holds the Church of Morrow. Recently, the Vicarate Council of Korsk opened the doors of the cathedral to the refugee Nyss that poured in from Duwurkyn. A number of Nyss tribes accepted the offer and moved into the cathedral. Only a few months ago the cathedral, and the Nyss within it, were inexplicably attacked by Cryxian agents. Investigations into the matter have unearthed very little.

After the palace, the largest building of the district is the Strikoya, headquarters of the Greylords Covenant and home of High Obavnik Arbiter Vasily Dmitirilosk. The Strikoya is a low, sprawling edifice of dark stone that serves as the administrative hub of the Greylords Covenant. Officers of the Khadoran Army are also regular visitors to the Strikoya, coordinating with the Greylords on countless matters, but they are always escorted by members of the order. Occasionally, even the empress has been a guest of the High Obavnik, and the Strikoya is without a doubt one of the greatest halls of power in western Immoren.

Surrounding the palace's walls are dozens of opulent estates owned by both the kayazy and the aristocracy of Khador. It is a longstanding tradition of the great princes to maintain a home in the capital even if their true seat of power is elsewhere. This part of the city is well patrolled by the Winter Guard, and they closely question anyone who seems out of place in the affluent neighborhood. Vagrants are not permitted to loiter in the district.

Korsk boasts well-maintained roads and grand promenades that regularly ring out with the pomp of military parades. Its aqueducts bring a plentiful supply of fresh water to the city, and gas lamps light the streets every fifty feet in all but the poorest neighborhoods. Large marketplaces split up the monotony of brickwork housing, and barter goes almost as far as raw coin. Most citizens live near or in the places they work, because winter in the city is a harsh mistress that can seal the streets for days at a time.

The business district known as the Gotskij Dvor is Korsk's permanent commerce center. Covering nearly a square mile of city and kept polished and clean despite neighboring factories and lumbering steamjacks, the Dvor is where the elite and wealthy of Korsk go to trade on a massive scale. Servants of the crown, *kayazy*, and military contractors travel to the center to place orders with the many businesses and industries that have offices there. Czavyana Trading Posts has its headquarters located in this district, as does Falgora Arms and Armor, Salvoro Forge, Vislovski Gunwerks, and Gevenorsk Mercantile.

Forges and factories are commonplace in the Zerutsk quarter—named for the enormous lake that borders it. Smoke clings to the air and soot dusts the streets lightly from the district's many chimneys and from the steamships that stop at the public wharf. Living in the district is a sizable self-contained Rhulic community, called simply the Korsk Enclave, which was established by agreements made with Rhul during the Corvis Treaties. Many of the city's ogrun and trollkin live and work in this quarter, finding jobs as cheap labor or dockhands, while the dwarves and some ogrun make better wages as skilled workers in the city's forges, 'jack factories, and metalworking shops. The wealthiest Rhulfolk, such as merchants importing Rhulic goods, work in the Gotskij Dvor but live in the enclave. The truly poor neighborhoods of Korsk have grown on the outskirts of the Zerutsk quarter, and these slums are home to the most notorious *bratyas* in Khador. Several bosses sit at the center of webs of criminal power in the tenements and rookeries of the area's dark streets.

Korsk is also home to the Rigevnya Complex, the birthplace and headquarters of the Khadoran Mechaniks Assembly. The complex is a sprawling network of factories and warehouses surrounded by heavy iron walls topped with rolls of serrated wire. Originally designed as a wartime foundry, the complex was perfect for the Assembly after its founding in 393 AR. It has become a testament to the power of steam and mechanika, producing titanic warjacks, steamships capable of grinding through the ice of the Windless Waste, and even mechanized armor that transforms a man into a powerhouse. Nearly all of Khador's greatest designs were birthed from the sprawling Rigevnya workshops. The complex is a work of organized chaos as foremen dictate to frantic assistants what needs to be done, walking briskly amidst the work yards and labor lines.

Khador is an enormous and diverse place, but all of its people think of Korsk when they think of their nation's power. The shadow of Korsk's towers, factories, and agencies casts a long shadow across western Immoren—a shadow that now falls on the Thornwood and the former nation of Llael.

NEW VROGGEN

Ruler: Posadnik Ladon Prasetik

Population: 8,000 humans (mostly Khard), small numbers of gobbers and trollkin

Military Presence: New Vroggen is garrisoned by a single Winter Guard kompany.

Description: New Vroggen is a city desperate to move out of the shadow of the past. Having grown out of a fishing village named after the former Orgoth capital of the north, New Vroggen is centered on its ever-growing fishing docks. The wharf takes up half of the city and is the focus of New Vroggen's activity from before sunrise when the fishermen board their boats until well past sundown when they return and unpack by lamplight. Several canning and raw-processing plants have risen up over the houses and trade stands, some of them sprawling out over multiple docks. These factories have quickly become the renewed lifeblood of the town, and visitors may take some time getting accustomed to the powerful smells of New Vroggen.

KHARDOSKA

This vital territory is centered on the great industrial city of Khardov and its surrounding lands. It stretches north almost to Ohk and east most of the way to the Great Zerutsk Lake. An industrial juggernaut, Khardov is the source of a vast majority of Khador's forged metalwork, coal, and ore. Great Prince Aeniv Rolonovik, an Obavnik of the Greylords Covenant, rules Khardoska.

The ruins in the region are a grim reminder of the Orgoth Occupation. The Scourge was less thorough there than elsewhere, and the city of Khardov had once been one of the Orgoth's most imposing strongholds. While the sight of these structures is unbearably foreboding to some, many of the inhabitants of the region feel some pride in the region's history, knowing the suffering of their ancestors. They look at the ruins and black stones as buildings reclaimed for the glory of Khador. These feelings are particularly true among the members of the Greylords Covenant, who have made a study of these places and sought to recover valuable relics from the Orgoth halls and catacombs.

ULD VROGGEN

Once a large village, Uld Vroggen was shattered and rebuilt as the capital of the Orgoth Empire. Terrible acts of torture and sacrifice were committed there by the Orgoth, the very lands stained from generations of evil acts that seeped into the environs. With the Orgoth defeat, Uld Vroggen was devastated by the Scourge. So many corpses rotted in the streets that the sun above the city is said to have been blackened by the cloud of carrion flies. The site remains a dangerous ruin, and several miles of land around it are scarred by the unnatural fires of the Scourge, punctuated with the black stone ruins, and fallen, leering statues of the Orgoth.

Increasingly, travel through Khardoska relies on the Iron Highway, the rail line connecting the great cities of Khador. The Vroggen Tradeway also runs through the region and connects to New Vroggen on the northern shore of Great Zerutsk Lake, but the caravans along that roadway haul only a fraction of the goods that pass between Korsk and Khardov by train. The Lothpool River has historically also been well traveled, but these days it is overcrowded and choked with vessels. It did not take long before the constant travel turned the river inky black and undrinkable without lengthy distillation. Several years ago a massive steamer named *Regent Pride* crashed into the Ironbridge crossing the river, taking all eight hundred passengers down with it. The immobile rotting hulk of the vessel and its hundreds of corpses attracted vicious water beasts, and now the whole area beneath the bridge serves as a lair for dracodiles.

FORT BRUNZIG

Fort Brunzig is a major interior garrison of the 3rd Army and home to two Winter Guard battalions, as well as a large contingent of Widowmakers charged with stopping and inspecting each train that passes through the great tunnel. The soldiers keep watch for contraband, illegal passengers, or evidence of sabotage. The delay adds nearly two hours to every trip down the Skirov Line. Fort Brunzig is also home to a large team of mechaniks constantly on call in case a train breaks down or suffers an accident. Adjacent to Fort Brunzig is a heavily secured underground complex of the Greylords Covenant, set aside for special projects.

KHARDOSKA VOLOZK

Largest Ethnic Groups: Khardic majority, Kossite minority

Predominant Religions: Morrowan majority, large Menite minority

Important Cities: Khardov

Significant Towns (not on the map): Cazlaus, Danchburg, Gubinsk, Igomorsk, Kossogrov, Molgastrov, Ondrovo, Orgrad, Padorovo, Poroskov, Rolvsk, Tabolsk, Taiminov, Vislosk, Vroggenov

Lord: Great Prince Aeniv Rolonovik, Obavnik of the Greylords Covenant

Aeniv hails from a long line of noble arcanists serving Khador since the earliest days of the order. He is unwavering in his dedication to the Greylords Covenant and serves as one of its highest politically ranking members. He is nearing his fiftieth year and graying at the temples, but his body remains strong and healthy despite continued exposure to alchemical agents and Khardov's deadly fogs. Aeniv spends a great deal of his time in the Orgoth keep at Khardov, uncovering and studying the Orgoth secrets and trying to put them to use for the Motherland. It is whispered Rolonovik has mastered the creation of the dreaded fellblades. Aeniv's fascination with and tireless work on Orgoth relics verges on the obsessive, and some of his peers have started to believe his exposure to the relics may have affected his mind.

Seat: Khardov

The region once had its fair share of political struggles between the counts and the ruling great prince, but these conflicts have diminished since the rise of Aeniv Rolonovik. He has consolidated power under the Greylords Covenant and that organization has unequaled power in the region, having largely marginalized the efforts of other nobles. The arcanists of that order have a fearsome reputation in the region, and ordinary citizens make haste to get out of their way. In the dark corners of the realm, some accuse the great prince of being a tyrant, but as long as his work is seen as valuable to the empress, it seems unlikely anything will change. The only ray of hope for these nobles is a rumor that Rolonovik's operations have come under investigation by the Prikaz.

KHARDOV

Ruler: Great Prince Aeniv Rolonovik and Posadnik Korab Tishnikov

Population: 410,000 humans (mostly Khard and Skirov), 5,000 gobbers, 3,000 trollkin, 2,000 ogrun

Military Presence: Khardov was once garrisoned by a full Winter Guard legion, but only a single battalion remains. The local kayazy maintain a 500-member private police force called the *olcheniy*. Kompanies of Winter Guard troops are on the move by rail through Khardov at almost any given time. The Greylords Covenant also maintains a considerable armed presence in the city.

Description: Shrouded beneath a miasma of choking fog billowing from hundreds of mines, forges, and refineries, Khardov is a dark blotch on the Khadoran heartland. Smoke fouls the air; soot coats every surface. At all hours of the day and night, workers move through the darkened streets to and from Khardov's factories.

What began as a trading community called Molga during the Thousand Cities Era has become the great city of Khardov, named in honor of the legendary King Khardovic whose descendants conquered the city around 1670 BR. Through the blood of generations, Khardov became the capital of the Khardic Empire and remained so for nearly a millennia. With the advent of modern industry, Khardov's convenient geographical location transformed it into a perfect hub for Khadoran trade. The Iron Highway runs straight through the center of Khardov. Factories, textile mills, and vyatka distilleries dominate this industrial city, many of which are owned by Big Iron (see p. 171).

When the Orgoth descended upon the north, they demolished much of Khardov's original structures and replaced them with constructions of black basalt. They discovered heavy deposits of coal and raw iron beneath the city and the surrounding hills, which the Orgoth immediately began to mine. Hundreds of thousands of slaves bent under the lash to dig out the precious materials. Whenever a mine collapsed—sometimes burying hundreds of laborers—the Orgoth would move on. When the Orgoth were eventually driven out, Khardov was not spared the Scourge. Nearly all the mines were collapsed or otherwise sealed—with slaves alongside their taskmasters left inside. Following the Rebellion, Khardov's hellish mines made it an economic powerhouse of the newly established kingdom of Khador. The Orgoth chose their sites well, and the deeper areas still contain precious materials. Over centuries of continuous operation, many of the original tunnels and chambers have been excavated, and new mines sunk to better exploit the veins of ore.

It is rumored enormous torture chambers and reliquaries lie hidden just a few feet beyond the walls of many such mine shafts, waiting to be opened and investigated while even darker horrors await release elsewhere. Some documented discoveries have ranged from mass graves to weapon caches filled with savage implements. Indeed, it was in the Khardov mines that the first fellblades were discovered. When an old Orgoth chamber is discovered, that portion of the mine is sealed off and left under guard; only members of the Greylords Covenant are allowed in until their work is completed. Some segments of the mines have been sealed for decades. While it has not happened in years, the city has occasionally been plagued by the tormented dead rising from these subterranean vaults to seek vengeance on the living. The Greylords and the high prelate in charge of the Church of Morrow within the city insist this problem has

been solved, but the residents still fear the possibility. Stories of previous outbreaks circulate through the streets.

Dominating the city's skyline far above the mines is a grand keep constructed of the basalt favored by Orgoth architects. Although the keep is located in the midst of an industrial district, it is set apart from more recently erected structures, as if the builders dared not interfere with the Orgoth's work. Its walls are sheer in some places and carved with ominous faces in others, and its sole gate is sealed with imposing iron doors unopened since the days of the Scourge. It is said the building contains chambers used by the Orgoth for their most terrible rites, and travelers on the streets late at night sometimes claim to hear echoing screams reverberating from the dark rock.

The Greylords built their stronghold in the shadow of the nameless keep. It is a stout and thick-walled fortification, its once-pristine marble walls now blackened from smog. The place is a hive of occult research. The chancelleries of Khardov, though secretive in the extreme, are well known to devote their energies toward the exploration of the artifacts and ruins of western Immoren's lost civilizations. Although the Greylords have exhaustively studied the arcane weaponry retrieved from the mines of Khardov, their reach extends across the continent. From this city, agents are dispatched throughout the Iron Kingdoms.

Great Prince Rolonovik divides his time between research and tending to the matters of his volozk. He has made it clear to his liegemen and vassals that the Greylords are to be extended every courtesy and assistance in the execution of their duties. The Greylords are a foreboding presence in the city and are protected by every instrument of the state. Nowhere is their authority more complete.

The Hlebnaya is a large marketplace known to regulars as "Bread Square," where the majority of trade takes place in Khardov. When it is peaceful, Hlebnaya is a thriving site for railroad traders to sell and barter, being near the Khardov Railway Station. It is heavily policed by olcheniy, who often oversee the distribution of bread to the lower-class citizens—the wheat crops surrounding Khardov are so covered in dust that the cheapest bread is actually gray in color. Occasionally, food shortages occur, and citizen riots often follow.

Between their toils and the poisons they are exposed to daily, the people of Khardov endure conditions unthinkable in most other parts of the Iron Kingdoms. On days when the wind is weak, the air becomes heavy with filth. The fog ranges from a dull gray or tan to sickening oranges and yellows, stinging eyes and forcing all of the city's inhabitants and visitors to invest in goggles. Most people also wear cheesecloth masks to keep the soot and dust from their mouths and lungs, but after prolonged exposure it permeates everything. Visibility becomes particularly bad on such days, and crime rates soar; the small trollkin populace often takes advantage of their natural resilience to the fog by hiring themselves out to thinner-skinned folk for exorbitant fees. More of these days occur during fall and winter when the river breezes mix with the smog to create a blanket of toxins that turns even snowflakes a dirty gray color and causes them to irritate the skin. Few Khardovites live past the age of fifty, and many perish as adolescents. Consequently, few people of means live in the city, and those that do tend to dwell in towers with living quarters above the worst of the heavy smog.

Law and order in Khardov is a tenuous thing, and the Winter Guard stationed there have little interest in even paying lip service to the justice they are supposed to enforce. Accordingly, the city is patrolled by the *olcheniy*, sometimes supplemented by bratya thugs. Without this force the common people of Khardov would likely riot with even greater regularity, perhaps endangering the critical production of the city. The olcheniy are charged with breaking up strikes, quelling food riots, and generally protecting the interests of their employers. They patrol the mines and industrial districts in small units, enforcing order at the end of a truncheon—though they are far more interested with protecting the interests of their employers than actually enforcing the law. The city's bratyas operate brazenly, so long as they do not interfere with industrial concerns. The working people of Khardov loath the olcheniy with shocking venom. Only fear for retribution against their families keeps labor unions from forming and fomenting anarchy in the city. Even so, particularly brutal olcheniy occasionally vanish in the night, and it may only be a matter of time before the people take to the streets.

KOS

At its height in ancient days, Kos stretched north to Feodoska, and included Helvongen, Tamanskaia, Sargetstea, and all of the Rimeshaws, but it was most closely associated with the Scarsfell Forest. The large region includes the great port city of Ohk, the Vilkhan Bluffs, and the lands between the Wolveswood River and Falconstream along with a long stretch of northern coastline. The Kossites of the region are a proud but insular people, and these lands are equally as fertile as they are dangerous to outsiders—giving the local Kossite communities an edge when negotiating with such folk. Recent mining of the Vilkhan Bluffs has proven profitable in spite of some resistance by the few remaining barbarian tribes there. The area also has a Devourer cult presence. Great Prince Heron Castiliov rules Kos.

Kos was one of the greatest of the northern kingdoms in ancient days, and there is a certain mystique and reputation to the region and its people even today. Despite being conquered by the Khards, the Kossites retained their traditions, and the great frozen regions to the northwest have always been a land apart. The people of the region consider themselves forged by the hostile weather, the vast and largely untamed forest, and the cold ocean off Helvongen Bay and the Severed Reach. Warriors of Kos are still renowned for their woodland skills and are often utilized by the Khadoran Army as skirmishers and trackers. Kossite manhunters are among the nation's most feared killers, and are experts with the large axes that have long been employed in their home region.

Loggers harvest portions of the Scarsfell Forest for their thick, strong oak trees. The forest has been used for lumber for several generations, and most of it is still unexplored due to the high number of predators in its depths. Trolls, bears, great mountain cats, and even deadly spinerippers are

commonplace. Every logging season, several camps, along with their armed escorts, simply disappear in the Scarsfell. This forest is also one of the great bastions of the trollkin kriels, with the largest concentration of these people living north of Cygnar. The trollkin kriels generally keep to the deeper forests and have come to tentative arrangements with most of their neighboring human communities, but they can still be dangerous if roused. They have periodically clashed with some of the wilder and untamed peoples of this northern expanse, particularly the savage Vindol tribes that once sprawled along the northern waterways.

While the beautiful and imposing Scarsfell Forest dominates the harsh landscape, the city of Ohk is the center of civilization in the region and the one great bastion of higher Kossite culture. The Severed Reach is a long channel that serves as a bay for the port city, and the populace has ensured its shipping remains safe even in times of harsh weather. Through ocean-going ships and smaller riverboats plying the Bitterock River, Ohk has remained connected to the rest of the empire. This connection became even stronger when the Iron Highway finally reached the city, and the trains began roaring into the city on a regular basis. These three arteries of commerce are mutually supportive, although many of the more traditional Kossites prefer their boats to the trains. Of all the peoples of Khador, the western Kossites are the most comfortable at sea, and it is said there is a distinct divide between those of the region who feel the summons to enter the forest, and others who hear the siren call of the sea.

Religion is a sometimes contentious topic in the volozk. The region has developed its own distinct sects and rituals, and people of different faiths are less mixed than elsewhere in Khador, except where they mingle in Ohk. The lack of integration has also had an effect on local politics, which are often divided along religious lines. The Menites have a slight majority in the region and are pervasive across the southern areas and in many of the isolated forest towns. The Morrowans are most numerous along the coast, and also have sizable populations in the city. But rumors also suggest there are many within the forest who worship totems and secretly revere the Devourer. This worship is the case throughout northern Khador, a fact of life more accepted in Khador than elsewhere. Menites sometimes talk of organizing to root the cultists out, but such efforts have never succeeded. Most have accepted that the deep wilds are home to the Beast of All Shapes.

KOS VOLOZK

Largest Ethnic Groups: Kossite majority, small Khardic and Skirov minorities

Predominant Religions: Menite majority, large Morrowan minority, some alleged Devourer worship

Important Cities: Ohk

Significant Towns (not on the map): Castilisk, Gorokosk, Gubina, Kossavar, Kosnovo, Krynsk, Obelgrad, Petrsk, Pershtoy, Radimnsk, Ravistroy, Starovo, Urstov, Vasknovo, Volgorod, Zeldnsk

Lord: Great Prince Heron Castiliov

Great Prince Castiliov has had some difficulties with his region, but some would say no more so than any of his ancestors. The counts and viscounts of Kos are stubborn, competitive, and unwilling to compromise. One difference with this great prince is that he is Morrowan, whereas most of his ancestors were traditionally of the Old Faith, and this has led to unrest. The great prince spent some years of his youth in Korsk, where he converted to the Morrowan faith. While his conversion has brought him support from the Morrowans of the volozk, even they do not seem convinced he has put behind the older ties of his ancestors. Thus the great prince is partially alienated from both communities. Fortunately, commerce in Ohk has always been more important than religion. So far the great prince has proven to be an able administrator despite the obstacles thrown in his path by his less-devoted vassals.

Seat: Hall of White Ash, just north of Ohk

OHK, THE WHITE CITY

Ruler: Count Ubisch Obelzov

Population: 330,000 humans (mostly Kossite, Khard, and Tordoran); 10,000 gobbers

Military Presence: Ohk is garrisoned by two Winter Guard battalions. Ohk is also the homeport to a number of warships.

Description: Known as the "White City" for the color of the fine stone nearly all of its buildings, walls, and gates are constructed from, Ohk's intricate churches and glittering domes reinforce its claim to fame as the most opulent city in all Khador. Ohk was founded originally by the northern tribes as a place to come southward during the harsh winters. As the years progressed, Ohk became the traditional gathering place for the nobility, and their coin and attentions evolved the settlement into a powerful city of trade and political import.

Ohk is surrounded by walls twelve feet thick and forty feet high. Enormous longhouses carved from the trees of the Scarsfell dominate the city, as do gigantic port docks where even the largest ships can shelter in times of uneasy weather. The streets are kept clean, and the glass-globed oil lamps drive back the shadows at night to make the city's inhabitants feel safe. Looming over the skyline is the great Cathedral Ohkskaya, the home to the Vicarate Council of Ohk, which oversees all the Morrowan churches in the northwest. The myriad alcoves and recesses of this cathedral house over 1,500 sculptures in white stone, each a figure of importance in the history of the faith.

The Greylords Covenant maintains a significant stronghold and library in Ohk. Most apprentices travel there to undergo their training and indoctrination into the organization. The campus of the stronghold's academy is secluded behind dense gardens

and natural barriers that isolate the grounds from the eyes of the public. It is also from here that the Greylords launch many of their expeditions into the expanses of the north. In general, the Greylords of the city keep to their own business and their presence is little felt in Ohk.

The railway, heavily guarded at all times, is the primary transfer point for vessels to unload their wares for transportation inland. Ohk sends tons of whale oil, much of it from Port Vladovar, to Cherov-on-Dron, Tverkutsk, Porsk, Skirov, and hundreds of other communities. Nearer to the docks, countless layers of small gambling dens and alehouses are dedicated to keeping the unwashed and undesirable—sailors all too often—from heading too far ashore where they might mar the image of the White City. Ohk has retained some of its reputation as a retreat of the wealthy and powerful. Many kayazy aspire to own residences in, or just outside, the city. Some local industries have sprung up around these wealthy visitors, and Ohk is home to a number of expensive spas.

NOVESKYEV

Noveskyev is another remote and lightly populated mountain region east of the Shard Spires, and it extends south to encompass the Malgur Forest. It is a dark and troubled area rumored to be rich in untapped resources. Although there are no roads into the mountains and many dark and foul things lurk in the Malgur Forest, Korsk has put pressure on Skirov to begin more mining and forestry work in the region. The last of the great barbarian tribes of Skirov descent prowl the northern portions of the forest and mountain valleys and hold their more civilized kin in contempt. Great Prince Igor Noveskyev rules the volozk.

Nearly every geographical feature of the region has an ominous reputation, a fact the locals view with no small pride as they relate the various legends. The stories suggest the Nyschatha Mountains to the west are haunted by howling spirits from the old purges of Priest King Khardovic, and many desolate and some would say profane burial sites are found there, bearing the totemic markings of the Wurm. Gravewater Lake, the northern half of which is in that territory, earned its name from being a repository for the corpses of those who lived along its shores for centuries before Menite crusaders reached the secluded region. While both the Menite religion and the Morrowan faith reached the towns and villages of the area, some insist they have a tenuous hold there and provide minimal protection against older horrors.

In general, the people of the region are less sinister than these old tales might suggest, but without question the soil of that land has nurtured many great and formidable warriors. Several of the townships along Iceblade River have long traditions of joining the Iron Fangs, and certain kompanies actively recruit from this region. Many old ways are preserved among the hills, including contests of brawn and skill with weapons that likely predate conversion to Menoth. While it is not spoken about with outsiders, the blackclads are a common sight in these townships and are said to look after many of the old families of the region.

All of the Menite and Morrowan sects in the area have prayers not found elsewhere, and their sacred artwork includes disturbing imagery such as glowing eyes and slavering fangs of beasts lurking between the shadowed trees. Traveling sages called *tazchloi* go from village to village, earning their keep by relating old tales passed by word of mouth from prehistory. Among the favored tales are those of the grymkin, such as the seductive rusalka waiting to drown the unwary, or the sinister twilight sisters, who grant wishes but extract a terrible price, or the trapperkin, who are known for stealing children in the dead of night.

NOVESKYEV VOLOZK

Largest Ethnic Groups: Skirov majority, Khardic and Umbrean minorities

Predominant Religions: Almost equally mixed between Menite and Morrowan, some Devourer worship and other fringe sects

Significant Towns (not on the map): Borga, Binsk, Cinotsk, Gravnoigrad, Holsk, Malgursk, Rovo, Skiringrad, Tolsgrad, Vargistoy

Lord: Great Prince Igor Noveskyev

The great prince is respected and feared by those who dwell within his domain, having a reputation as a formidable warrior in his youth, although his prime was decades past. He has twelve sons but seems in no hurry to pass on and leave the region to his increasingly impatient heir. Old oaths bind the region by tithe-right to the great prince of Skirovnya to the south, but Igor has long ignored the demands from the city and prefers to keep his lands unspoiled and isolated. Several of his sons and the counts are more eager to modernize the region and expand its mines and rail lines. There is considerable friction between the conservative nobles and those ready for modernity. When the great prince dies, much will probably change. Some have even begun to whisper about expediting that change.

Seat: Iceblade Fastness

RAZOKOV

This territory includes the entire coastline north of the Lothpool delta past Brone's Point and up through Severed Reach toward the Wolveswood and Bitterock river deltas. It is bounded on the east by the road between Ohk and Skrovenberg but does not include any major towns or cities—only the fortress Icewatch and the old ruins of Khazomir's Palace stand in the territory. That palace was once the capital of a proud fiefdom in the region that dared to defy the Kossites and suffered for it. Like many other places in the desolate region, those ruins are believed to

be haunted and are generally avoided. Across the Severed Reach sprawls the northern territory of Kos, once a rival and enemy of the people of the region, but now it entirely overshadows them. Great Prince Kulver Drohzsk rules Razokov.

There are many villages and small towns along the coast, but most of their inhabitants steer clear of the Vescheneg Headlands, which legends say were cursed by a giant who was subsequently entombed there. Several unexplored caverns twist and turn through the headlands, the majority of which were last investigated by the Orgoth. It is rumored none of those explorers returned. Smoke that occasionally trickles up from the cavern entrances likely comes from underground volcanic activity. Some folk claim the Orgoth who refused to die exist below the headlands in a deep, underground fortress where they live on the souls of those who intrude upon them.

RAZOKOV VOLOZK

Largest Ethnic Groups: Slight Kossite majority, large Khardic minority

Predominant Religions: Morrowan majority, Menite minority

Significant Towns (not on the map): Alekstoy, Ark, Drohzsk, Grishkoye, Kharvsk, Kodinsk, Madarovo, Marakya, Seversk, Sivashka, Vechenburg, Voisingrad

Lord: Great Prince Kulver Drohzsk

Great Prince Kulver Drohzsk is an enigma outside his lands, being a rare visitor to the capital and viewed as more than a little eccentric. In his youth he served with the Khadoran Navy and still enjoys sailing on occasion, heading out onto the Khardic Sea in his ship *Frostcutter*. While his vassals would never dare to question his sanity, some of his peers among the great houses of Khador believe his bloodline has withered amid the cold halls of his castle. Whether his demeanor is a deliberate ruse or sincere, he is an unpredictable man, being at times a respectful and gracious host, yet also prone to sullen tempers and paranoia on other occasions. His vassals step carefully around him and rely on his patient and keen-minded wife, Kalvena, to serve as a liaison and to assist in seeing to the needs of the volozk.

Seat: Icewatch

Overlooking a remote and bitterly cold coastline off the Khardic Sea, Icewatch is the northernmost great coastal fortress of Khador. Built originally to aid in naval navigation through the Severed Reach to Ohk, the fortress has a huge lighthouse that burns ten gallons of whale oil every day and uses immense mirrors to reflect powerful beams of light over the waves. In more recent decades, sentries have claimed dragon sightings. A thriving town has sprung up around the base of the castle, and the fortress is also home to a small but resolute garrison of Winter Guard, as well as the armed retainers of the great prince. It also hosts ships from the Khadoran Navy when they are patrolling the area's waters, and the captains are expected to visit the prince's large and drafty hall to pay their respects.

RUSTOKNIA

Rustoknia contains the large southern border marches bounded on the east by the road to Midfast and on the west by the Shadoweald River, and it stretches north as far as Rustok Castle and the Moskrad River. The region includes Lake Moskrad, the Blackroot Wood, most of the Shadoweald Forest, and a short stretch of coastline between Sailor's Lament and the Ordic border. An area with diverse terrain dotted with numerous towns and villages, it includes fertile farmland west of Lake Moskrad, which plays a significant role in feeding the navy forces at Port Vladovar. Although lacking any larger cities, Rustoknia is a prosperous region ruled by Great Prince Jhrom Holcheski.

As with the other southern volozkya, Rustoknia expanded during the Border Wars. While this expansion didn't significantly increase the wealth of the inhabitants of the region, it did secure an expanse of fertile farmlands for Khador. With the area's slightly different climate and seasons from the farmlands to the north, it serves Khador well. Unfortunately, its proximity to Ord has also left it vulnerable to raids by southerners, including mercenaries presumably hired by the Ordic crown to stir up trouble. The 3rd Border Legion maintains a number of garrisons there, but it is stretched thin and its patrols cannot be everywhere at once.

Rustoknia's most famous legendary feature is Lord Khazarak's Tomb, which is situated southeast of the Shadoweald. A horselord of the old Empire, Khazarak beat back tides of barbarians with his axe and his faith. Legends describe him as a giant of a man who always rode a powerful black steed. Khazarak helped conquer the Skirov, drove the trollkin from Khardic lands, and pushed his forces deep into Tordor. During a campaign against the Tordorans, Khazarak eventually succumbed to wounds that would have felled a lesser man on the spot. Following his death, the Khardic Empire demanded Tordor erect a tomb in his honor. They did so, erecting a massive tomb of gray marble where the horselord and his steed were laid to rest.

The tomb fell into neglect during the long intervening centuries, but it continued to hold an ominous mystique, and even the Orgoth steered clear of it. After the region was recovered by Khador, the tomb was restored by Menite and Morrowan pilgrims working together, both of whom revered Khazarak for his deeds. Recently, it was plundered by Cryxians at the same time Port Vladovar was attacked. Several priceless relics were stolen, including a great metal torch that the horselord bore with him during his later campaigns. Several local groups, including the great prince, have contributed funds toward a reward for its return, but that seems increasingly unlikely.

RUSTOKNIA VOLOZK

Largest Ethnic Groups: Khardic majority, Umbrean and Tordoran minorities

Predominant Religions: Slight Menite majority, large Morrowan minority

Significant Towns (not on the map): Agrovo, Belchior, Borzsk, Golchina, Khazrsk, Kirsk, Lenkovstroy, Mascalgrad, Mosk, Novograd, Osoyro, Palario, Petrusk, Ravoy, Rostov-on-Mosk, Tversk, Tydnsk, Uzhur, Volkh

Lord: Great Prince Jhrom Holcheski (Kommandant of the 3rd Division, 2nd Army)

Like the great prince of Borstoi, Jhrom Holcheski has been given the honor of commanding of a forward division of the Khadoran Army. The great prince, however, is more of a patron of these military forces than their active leader in the field. He spends most of his time in his volozk or on trips to Korsk. Most of his forces are under the direct supervision of Supreme Kommandant Irusk and Kommandant Boris Makarov. The great prince cares for the men under his charge and spends a portion of his time writing letters to families of the deceased and attending funerals for the fallen, as well as speaking on the army's behalf in Korsk. Of the great princes serving in a military capacity, Great Prince Holcheski has earned greater respect from the High Kommand for the work he does on the army's behalf, even if he fights his battles in the empress' court rather than on the front lines.

Seat: Rustok Castle

As ancestral seat of the Holcheski family, the imposing Rustok Castle looms over the Iron Highway that passes through the region. While it is a stout bastion of dark gray granite built in the style of Khardic princes of old, the castle shows signs of more recent construction amid the large buildings outside the inner keep. These structures hold dozens of smokestacks that extend into the sky belching smoke plumes to match the haze of Khardov to the west. Starting with Jhrom's grandfather, the castle has been employed as a factory complex in addition to being their family's ancestral seat, providing arms and armament to the Khadoran Army; work there includes the creation of firearms slated for the Winter Guard, as well as warjack components. The Holcheski family has ties to the Khadoran Mechaniks Assembly, sponsoring mechanikal innovations, and many of the more prestigious members of that brotherhood have made Rustok Castle their home. The castle also boasts a formidable arsenal of its own and serves as a base for the Rail Korps assigned to escort and protect the great trains traversing the Iron Highway. Many of the turrets and other defences affixed to those trains were built at Rustok.

SARGETSTEA

One of the northernmost territories, this harsh, difficult-to-navigate region is noted for its seemingly endless winters. It includes all of the Rimeshaws and the frozen tundra and lakes to the north, along with the foothills west of the Shard Spires and the Neves River, a glacier-fed waterway that extends south into the center of the volozk. Being "sent to the Rimeshaws" is synonymous in Khador with being exiled from civilization. Several hardy breeds of trolls and tundra bogrin inhabit the Rimeshaws. Groups of Skirov and Kossites live in the region, but they are outnumbered by a tribal people called the Ruscar. Great Prince Achar Greyvan rules Sargetstea.

The Skirov and Kossite townships are mostly found along the southern region, but they have been slowly spreading north into territory traditionally held by the Ruscar. Historically, the Ruscar have had a difficult relationship with the surrounding Khadorans, and it has been strained by a combination of territorial conflicts and religious strife. Many of the Ruscar are nominally Devourer worshipers, although the variant of this worship is quite mild, primarily involving certain totemic symbols and an appreciation for hunting. The tribes in the region have never been guilty of the violence and atrocities seen elsewhere among adherents of the Wurm, but that fact did not prevent violent clashes with Menites seeking to tame those lands. The bad relations have been alleviated in recent generations and it seems these peoples have begun to accept they are part of Khador and subject to its laws. Much of the credit for this change goes to the current great prince and his father, who learned the ways of the Ruscar and dealt with them honorably and politely rather than making demands at sword point.

The Ruscar have a bewildering array of chiefs, with seemingly every sizable family led by its own self-proclaimed potentate, and their notions of governance tend toward the democratic. Their lack of a central leader has made them less than cooperative toward the demands of Skirov and Kossite nobles. Securing their cooperation requires building consensus and allowing for debate, both foreign concepts to most Khadoran rulers.

With relations improving, the great prince has begun the difficult work of employing the Ruscar to expand civilization in the area to secure the region's assets. At present, it is one of the poorest volozkya in Khador, relying primarily on lumber for income. Local fortunes might improve since a branch line of the railway has been extended into the region from Tverkutsk to the town of Hochesked, the great prince's seat.

SARGETSTEA VOLOZK

Largest Ethnic Groups: Ruscar majority, large Skirov and Kossite minorities

Predominant Religions: Morrowan majority, Menite minority, considerable Devourer worship, although efforts are underway to peacefully convert these families to Morrow

Significant Towns (not on the map): Boringrad, Dobrynsk, Gorod, Greyvsk, Hochesked, Ladoga, Lutsk, Nevesgrad, Rimeskoy, Ruschen, Ruscarovo, Tovarov, Wursk

Lord: Great Prince Achar Greyvan

Achar Greyvan has done an admirable job ruling this difficult territory, carrying on the work of his father toward integrating the Ruscar and bringing them to modernity. The Greyvan family is devoutly Morrowan and adherents of Ascendant Katrena, and their beliefs have informed their approach with the often restless local majority. Achar has been great prince for ten years and has assisted priests of the local church in slowly converting a number of Ruscar tribes, although they have retained some of their customs and symbols as family right.

Seat: Grey Keep in Hochesked

SKIROVNYA

One of the wealthiest northern regions, Skirovnya includes the city of Skirov and its nearby foothills, Porsk, the southern half of Gravewater Lake, and the forested lands north of the Bitterock River stretching almost to Cherov-on-Dron. The Skirov were another great people subjugated by the Khardic Empire, and their disparate tribal lands have long stretched far into the northern mountains. Despite savage roots, the Skirov took quickly to the word of Menoth, and the city of Skirov is one of the finest examples of Khadoran civilization. Profits from mining in the eastern hills, harvesting the lush farmlands around the lake, and the crucial rail line to the capital have made the area an important asset for the empress. Most of the region's inhabitants dwell around Gravewater Lake, although there are scattered villages north of Bitterock River. The Iron Prince Neplakh Vanar rules Skirovnya.

Ore processing is a major industry in Skirovnya. Following the conquest of the Skirov, the first Khardic settlers were drawn to the volozk and the mountains to the east by the rich copper and iron deposits discovered at the foothills west of the Thundercliffs. The construction of the first copper-smelting works led to the first permanent settlement in the region. Later, after Skirov was established on the shores of the Bitterock River, the older settlement vanished as people moved to the city. The Malgur Forest provides the charcoal necessary for copper smelting. In addition to exploiting its own ores, Skirov processes much of the ore coming out of the Thundercliff Peaks in the Gorzytska volozk to the east. It remains an ideal location for ore processing, since there's a scarcity of running water and timber in the mines' vicinity.

Silver, scarce throughout Khador, was discovered in the Thundercliffs following the Rebellion and Skirov soon became the center for silver processing in the kingdom. Controlled by royal decree, almost ninety percent of Khadoran silver is mined to the east and processed in Skirovnya before being shipped to the mint in Korsk or elsewhere.

SKIROVNYA VOLOZK

Largest Ethnic Groups: Skirov majority, Khardic minority

Predominant Religions: Nearly evenly divided between Morrowan and Menites

Important Cities: Skirov

Significant Towns (not on the map): Denyansk, Durga, Dragastroy, Krasnoscaya, Kirov, Lovsk, Naransk, Nikolsk, Norkosk, Ost, Pytorberg, Targrad, Tulsk, Tymir, Vasanovo

Lord: Great Prince Neplakh Vanar, The Iron Prince

Neplakh Vanar is determined to make himself as influential as his cousin, Empress Ayn, but without the weight of the crown. Using his family's powerful political influence, he managed to wrest the Skirovnya volozk away from its longstanding hereditary rulers, the family Denyana, and it did not take him long to begin blackmailing and bribing the kayazy into granting him control of the railway industry in Skirov. The first true rail baron of Khador, he is called the Iron Prince for many reasons, the least of which are his ambitious pride and malicious methods of doing business. Some suspect he eyes the Khadoran throne covetously, although he has never spoken against the empress in public.

Seat: Porsk

PORSK

Ruler: Great Prince Neplakh Vanar, The Iron Prince

Population: 40,000 humans (mostly Khard and Skirov)

Military Presence: Porsk is garrisoned by a Winter Guard battalion.

Description: Once a seat of Skirovite power, Porsk was razed by the horselords during the expansion of the Khardic Empire. It was rebuilt and destroyed again during the Orgoth invasion. Generations later it was rebuilt again and now stands as a

symbol of Khadoran perseverance. Today Porsk is dominated by the will of one man, the empress' first cousin, Neplakh Vanar, the Iron Prince.

Neplakh Vanar maintains a stranglehold over the city, and since the expansion of the rail line reached Skirov, his power has become absolute. The inhabitants of the city are ruthlessly taxed to pay for the upkeep of the railway and the great prince charges a heavy toll on all cargo passing through Porsk from Skirov to Korsk. Between the power of his family and his rights as the lord of the volozk, the local kayazy have been beaten into utter subordination. Prince Vanar takes little effort to conceal the fact those kayazy who serve his needs find their business interests furthered, and those who have earned his displeasure have all doors closed to them.

Porsk's chief industries include agriculture, hunting and trapping for fur, fishing, and the production of a wide range of trade goods. The city also claims control of the local waterways via the Porsk Canal, a series of locks through which all river traffic must pass.

Porsk is an unimpressive city at the foot of two towering edifices: the great prince's fortress and the titanic Pruskin Citadel. The great prince's fortress was a former *dron*, or hill fortress, that has overgrown its hill. The citadel dates back to the old empire and was restored in the years following the Rebellion. The enormous flags flying above these great buildings can be seen from the surrounding hills in every direction.

SKIROV, THE CITY OF CHAINS

Ruler: Posadnik Nikolei Mikolovich

Population: 108,000 humans (mostly Skirov, some Khard), 10,000 Rhulfolk, 2,500 ogrun, 5,000 prisoners

Military Presence: Skirov is garrisoned by a Winter Guard battalion. An additional three kompanies are stationed at the Skirov Khardstadt, including a large contingent of Widowmakers. In times of need, reinforcements can be called in from Fort Brunzig.

Description: Skirov is a city that evolved from an ancient settlement named for the people who controlled the region before they submitted to the rule of the old empire. Caught between the cold, grey Gravewater and the dark, brooding menace of the Thundercliffs, the city sits at the terminus of the Iron Highway. Sequestered just beyond the edge of town is the dreaded Skirov Khardstadt, the largest prison in Khador.

The Skirov surrendered to the Khards in 1277 BR and many converted to the Menite faith at that time. The city remained a backwater for centuries; even the Orgoth paid it little notice. But in the last centuries, major deposits of iron, silver, and gold were discovered in the nearby Thundercliff Mountains, and Skirov's importance as a mining center quickly grew. Now with iron ore coming out of the mountains and steel pouring from its foundries, the city has grown substantially. The trains of Skirov constantly carry precious cargo from the mines to the refineries in Korsk. These trains present tempting targets to bandits and shipments are well guarded by Winter Guard troops that patrol both the cars and the grounds of the Skirov Station. An influx of citizens from the outlying areas have come to the city to take advantage of the opportunities for wealth, but most find back-breaking labor instead of a quick fortune.

Located on the outskirts of the city, the mines of Skirov are their own rundown town. Most of the mining buildings are less than three stories tall and the great walls of the Khardstadt can be seen from almost anywhere in town. Only those facilities vital to mining industry are well maintained, and the city's affluent citizens often prefer to make their homes on estates outside of the town. Many of Skirov's inhabitants make their living in the mines, often alongside prisoners sentenced to hard labor. Others work in associated industries, laboring at the massive smelting furnaces, forges, and metal shops.

SKIROV KHARDSTADT

Khador's largest labor prison, the Skirov Khardstadt, stands beyond Skirov's walls not far from the mines. The large complex of stone buildings is home to over five thousand prisoners. Citizens are prohibited from interacting with the prisoners if they happen to cross paths on the way to or even inside the Thundercliff mines. Prisoners receive inadequate rations and sparse clothing, making it extremely difficult for them to endure the bitterly cold winters and the long working hours. A single day typically includes about twelve hours of work with the prisoners working the mines in rotating shifts. If prisoners are not killed in the mines, they usually die of sickness, cold, or starvation within little more than a year. Escape from the Khardstadt is rarely attempted due to the imposing walls, constant patrols, weakness of the prisoners, and their fear of the local Greylords.

The overcrowded prison and its forced laborers have given rise to some of the most ruthless bratyas in Khador. The leaders of these criminal gangs have influence and power that extends far from their prison cells. Through threat and bribery, they control many aspects of life within the prison and beyond. Their guards treat them with respect, even deference, for they know the most influential bosses have connections in the halls of power across Khador.

Kovnik Jan Vyshkovich has commanded the Khardsadt for the past twelve years. Under his watch, only three prisoners have escaped and more than forty have died in the attempt.

Skirov is also home to a large population of Rhulfolk, who settled into an enclave in an eastern neighborhood of the city when immigrants from Rhul with expertise in mining, metalworking, and masonry were encouraged to settle in Skirov to aid in the city's growth. Dwarven stone masons have influenced the city's ponderous stone buildings, including the Grace of Katrena Cathedral. The cathedral is the home of the Skirov Vicarate Council, which supervises the northeastern Morrowans. An unorthodox-looking white stone structure boasting an unusually tall central tower, it was designed by a Rhulic architect shortly after the Corvis Treaties and has become a site of pilgrimage. Its tower provides a singular view of the sun rising over the lake in the west and setting behind the mountains in the east.

In recent years, Stonedelve Mining, a concern founded by Rhulic immigrants, has had trouble competing with the cheap labor provided by the prison population. These prisoners provide an endless source of ready, disposable labor with which the Rhulfolk cannot compete on a level economic basis. Dwarven smelting and metalworking operations have fared better.

The city's governmental district is dominated by the intimidating Nagorska Manse, stronghold of the Prikaz Chancellery of the Greylords Covenant. From this location, the agents of the Prikaz spin their web across western Immoren. The Greylords are a chilling presence in the city and all avert their eyes when the arcanists pass by. The inhabitants of Skirov have learned to ignore the secret trains conveying hooded human cargo not to the prison but to the depths of the stronghold. The fortified manse is commanded by Obavnik Ivanya Kaminsk, the official face of the Greylords of Skirov.

TAMANSKAIA

This region includes the northern Scarsfell Forest and is bounded on the south by the Falconstream River and on the east by the Neves River. It includes a short stretch of coastline on the Helvongen Bay between the Irkes River and Falconstream, where its largest fishing villages are situated. Aside from the river villages and a few communities of Kossite woodsmen and Vorgoi savages, this area is sparsely populated and dangerous. The territory is generally a poor one, bringing in little wealth aside from some earnings from lumber, fishing, and trade in hides. Few modern amenities are found in its villages. Great Prince Kretiman Volgh rules Tamanskaia.

The strife and conflict of the region has deep roots but is more than a historical footnote, because contentious groups vying for control still wage battles in the area. Of the wilder peoples still inhabiting the northern wilderness, the Vorgoi are among the most violent; they have consistently refused to enter into negotiations with more civilized neighbors. They are also Devourer worshipers of the sort described in ancient stories, guilty of savagery, cannibalism, and ritual murder. While they are relatively primitive and cannot match the modern weaponry of the Khadorans, the armed forces at the disposal of the great prince have generally lacked the numbers to deal with them decisively.

Adding to the complications of the region are the groups of similarly warlike trollkin kriels. The two forces clashed head-to-head in recent decades, with the trollkin emerging the victors, led by a now infamous Dhunian shaman and warlock named Borka Kegslayer. This brute earned great acclaim among his peers for victories over the Vorgoi and other tribes in the region, driving them back into the frozen hills. While not done for Khadoran benefit, Borka's actions have benefited the great prince and his vassals, who have been able to take over those lands. Generally, the trollkin have proven to be more amenable to negotiations, particularly now that Borka has moved on to the south, along with his most violent warriors. Still, settlers in the area are eager to expand, and violations of trollkin territory might erupt into additional hostilities. There is also word that the Vorgoi are growing more bold once again, perhaps aware their hated foe has departed.

TVERKATKA

This territory includes the city of Tverkutsk and the ancient Nyschatha Mountains, along with many small woods and plains between. Cold and bitter, the lofty mountains were once home to several ancestral Nyss strongholds. A large

TAMANSKAIA VOLOZK

Largest Ethnic Groups: Kossite majority, Vorgoi, Ruscar, and Skirov minorities, large trollkin populations in the forested region

Predominant Religions: Menite majority, large Morrowan minority, sizable trollkin populations worshiping Dhunia, most Vorgoi worship the Devourer Wurm

Significant Towns (not on the map): Helvosk, Dragada, Ikstensgrad, Kosingrad, Luz, Norvoneves, Rusk, Satusk, Vjera, Vladyngrad, Volgsk, Vorghosk

Lord: Great Prince Kretiman Volgh

The Volgh have been a great family since the time when the Kossites ruled the north, and they have had to fight continuously to preserve their holdings in this difficult region. Like his forebears, Kretiman is an impressive warrior and shrewd leader, and his fierce visage, armor, and ancestral axe give him the appearance of a king of ancient times. He rarely travels south or involves himself in the politics of the capital, but when he does he seems out of place and is viewed by some of his peers as barely above a savage himself. He enjoys telling stories of battles waged against the Vorgoi and trollkin, although in recent years he has managed to largely retain peace with the latter.

Seat: The Ironhall of Stoat

TVERKATKA VOLOZK

Largest Ethnic Groups: Slight Khardic majority, large Kossite minority, some Skirov

Predominant Religions: Morrowan majority, Menite minority

Important Cities: Tverkutsk

Significant Towns (not on the map): Aerusk, Dakhov, Gurikovo, Kutzov, Grzatgrad, Grzastnovo, Insk, Oryev, Pravsk, Ubovo, Voyarosk

Lord: Great Prince Aleksandr Voyari

More politically minded than some of the northern nobles, Voyari has worked with his neighboring great princes to coordinate efforts in the region, particularly related to logging and hunting territories as well as efforts to extend roads and branches of the rail lines to increase growth. The mining boom has tremendous potential to put the volozk on the map. Despite his efforts, the region is plagued not only by trolls but also by particularly large wolves; Voyari himself was maimed in a recent attack, losing his left hand. His household guard is inadequate to the task of keeping the region safe, and he has begun seeking affordable mercenary options.

Seat: Haus Prinkov

number of winter trolls lurk in the mountainside caverns and near freshwater springs, always ready to make meals out of anything foolish enough to venture near. The Nyschatha Mountains are more weathered and less imposing than the Shard Spires to the north, and therefore are also more settled with mountain communities of mixed Skirov and Kossite descent. Tverkatka is ruled by Great Prince Aleksandr Voyari, who stays in regular contact with the other northern princes, often hosting them at Tverkutsk.

The mining in the region has recently expanded as funding was provided to connect Tverkutsk to Ohk by rail, although that secondary line is smaller and less robust than the main lines used by the Iron Highway. The mining boom has resulted in an improvement to local fortunes and prompted many settlers to venture into the region looking to stake claims. Overall, the volozk is going through a transformation, and its nobles hope it will become a major competitor with better established outfits in Gorzytska. Before true change can happen, however, many of the area's threats will have to be tamed, in particular the prevalence of trolls amid the hills.

TVERKUTSK

Ruler: Posadnik Anton Voyt

Population: 22,000 humans (mostly Kossite)

Military Presence: Tverkutsk is garrisoned by a single Winter Guard kompany.

Description: Tverkutsk is an old settlement high in the northern taiga forests that was founded ages ago by tribes of Kos. The town was virtually ignored by invading Orgoth until well into the occupation. Once little more than a far-flung logging station, Tverkutsk saw a swell in its population as it became known as a safe place to weather the relentless Khadoran winter—"safe" in this case being a relative term, since the town's outskirts have occasionally been plagued by unusually large and fierce packs of wolves during times when other hunting is lean. Attempts have been made to clear the region of these creatures have met with limited success.

The town's economy is based on logging and hunting, and a steady supply of timber and furs flows down the Wolveswood. Great Princes Castiliov, Greyvan, Volgh, and Voyari maintain winter homes in Tverkutsk and come either to get away or to discuss issues of common interest to their respective domains.

Due to frequent clashes with local trollkin kriels and other dangers over the years, Tverkutsk has a permanent Winter Guard garrison. Today the Chaktokol barracks sits at the northern edge of town, with dozens of troll skulls displayed along the palisade walls.

UMBREY

Umbrey is by far the largest volozk in Khador, having been consolidated from two smaller volozkya and a substantial portion of what was once western Llael. It stretches west to the shores of Lake Volningrad, including the city of Rorschik, north to encompass the Kovosk Hills, and east to include Laedry and a sizable portion of the surrounding mountains and farmlands. The western half of the territory is covered by the famed Khadoran plains, once the domain of the Umbrean horselords, and the dense Ravenswood. Great Prince Vladimir Tzepesci rules the volozk from his ancestral seat.

The volozk now includes what was once the Korskovny volozk, held by the Tzepesci family; the former Umbresk volozk, once ruled by Count Rolav Mulesci; the former Llaelese duchy of New Umbrey; and certain portions of the former Llaelese duchies of Northryne and Wessina. The consolidation of Umbrey is a recent development, and the people of the region are still acclimating to to the notion of Umbrey being united after more than a thousand years of division. Rolav Mulesci was a great prince in his own right before the unification but long ago he swore himself as vassal to Vladimir Tzepesci. To pave the way for the unification and appease the empress, he renounced his princely claim, although he was allowed to keep control of his ancestral lands.

Before the unification of Umbrey, the people in western Llael had become increasingly disruptive and unruly. Large pockets of the Llaelese Resistance fighters cropped up in the region and plotted against the Khadorans in their midst. Many of their issues were solved by their acceptance of Great Prince Tzepesci, who they see less as a Khadoran and more as a great Umbrean king. This transition did not stamp out the Llaelese Resistance entirely from those lands, but it deprived that group of most of its Umbrean followers. The dream of a united Umbrey was too powerful for them to deny, and no one exemplifies that dream more than Vladimir Tzepesci. With Tzepesci leading, the people of the region were able to unite and began concentrating on other significant threats to the region, including the Resistance, as well as opportunistic Cryxian despoilers and the Northern Crusade.

The Tzepesci family maintains an ancient castle estate in the Kovosk Hills overlooking the Khardic Empire's former eastern capital of Old Korska. An enormous ruin from the days when Umbrey was a true kingdom, the ancient capital is a maze of broken buildings and cracked streets that are home to swarms of bogrin. Beneath the city in the long-dry sewers and burial catacombs, savage dregg rule the darkness. There has been talk of trying to clear out the region to make use of the stone at the very least, but other troubles threatening eastern Umbrey have taken priority.

Many old estates of the ancient horselords, several of them long forgotten, are nestled in the nooks and crannies of the rocky hills known as the Kovosks. The hills contain vast amounts of copper and iron ore, but Great Prince Tzepesci and his people have discouraged most mining efforts. The Yhari-Umbreans, a pastoral nomadic people of herdsmen and horsemen, dwell in the Kovosks, while the more settled towns of the region are of primarily Umbrean descent. The lands east of Rorschik include many fertile farmlands and ranches. Since most of the grain and meat produced there are sold through Rorschik, many Umbreans who work these farms believe believe the city profits too much from their labors, while they themselves sometimes see little return. There have been times when drought has diminished their crops and Umbreans have starved while grain sat rotting in Rorschik silos.

Once, a number of trollkin kriels also inhabited Umbrey's eastern region. These kriels were famous for their fighting prowess from atop the bison that were numerous across the

RAVENSGARD

The massive fortification at Ravensgard is located in southern Umbrey and has long been central to the Khadoran war effort. Its role has changed as the borders have shifted and the front has moved on. Built in 268 AR after the Colossal War, this fortress complex and its outlying towers and battlements became the counterpart to Cygnar's Northguard, built in 326 AR. These great edifices faced one another like brooding giants across a deadly no-man's-land of crater-pocked fields strewn with barbed wire. With the fall of Northguard, Ravensgard is no longer a front-line fortress and most of its soldiers have been sent to the southern Thornwood. Northguard has also been partially occupied, but it remains extensively damaged. Although Ravensgard's garrisons are much reduced, thousands of soldiers still regularly cycle through the fortress, and it is a vital hub of the Khadoran Army. A common jest is that Ravensgard now contains more military clerks than soldiers and more paperwork than bullets.

southern plains at that time and used to vie with the horselords in great battles. Some of these kriels and bison herds remain, although many have moved or been driven south.

Umbreans have long faced some degree of prejudice and suspicion in Khador. Some of this stems from the ancient rivalry between the Khardic and Umbrean horselords who once vied for control over the Khardic Empire. In the modern era these feelings have been reinforced by the rivalry between the Vanar and Tzepesci dynasties, both of which have occupied the Khadoran throne. The Vanar dynasty is firmly established, and most do not see the Tzepescis as a threat to the throne, but the fact remains that they have the next-strongest claim. Between the rumors of powerful sorcery flowing through the Tzepescis' bloodline and the legacy of tyrannical and even corrupt former kings of that family, the Umbrean nobles have gained a sinister reputation.

Despite having long been divided by a national border, the Umbreans of east and west have always shared a sense of fidelity and kinship. That bond has been enough to make other Khadorans deeply suspicious of the loyalties of their countrymen in the southeastern region.

Just before the Llaelese War, sentiments in Korsk had taken a particularly dark turn against the eastern Umbreans, especially Vladimir Tzepesci. Some nobles and kayazy lobbied for him to be imprisoned on suspicion of sedition, particularly after reports suggested the great prince was arming for war. Vladimir had never shown any inclination to threaten the crown, however, and the empress wisely heeded her own council. During the conquest of Llael, Vladimir proved his intentions by joining the invasion, lending the support of his warjacks and vassals to the

UMBREY VOLOZK

Largest Ethnic Groups: Umbrean majority, small Khardic minority in the west, sizable Ryn minority in the east

Predominant Religions: Morrowan majority, large Menite minority

Important Cities: Elsinberg, Laedry, Riversmet, and Rynyr—formerly Llaelese cities (see Chapter 3)—along with the eastern territory

Significant Towns (not on the map): Beloresk, Bray, Faltenesti, Fedorgrad, Gorj, Kovos, Maldo, Martysk, Mrovka, Novokorska, Padorska, Rachnesti, Umbresk, Varnesti, Vihor, Vlasgrad, Vulcanesti, Wulfingrad, Yharvos

Note on Llaelese Umbrey: Although a sizable portion of the former territories of Llael along with several of its great cities have been claimed by this volozk, see Chapter 3 for descriptions of those lands, as they retain their characteristically Llaelese flavor.

Lord: Great Prince Vladimir Tzepesci, the Dark Prince of Umbrey

Vladimir Tzepesci has proven to be an exceptional military commander as well as a strong leader of the Umbrean people. He has not shirked from waging battle for the Motherland and has earned grudging respect even from his political rivals. His family line is steeped equally in legend and infamy, and it seems as though Vladimir is a worthy successor who will carve his own destiny. He was born with the sorcery and warcaster power that runs strongly in his bloodline and quickly showed himself to be peerless in the arts of battle. He is known to be visited by the Old Witch, who has advised and fought alongside him. According to an ancient prophecy, a great doom will befall Khador should the Tzepesci line expire. As yet, Vladimir remains unmarried and is disinclined to settle while the battlefield calls to him. Rumors suggest a former romantic involvement with Forward Kommander Sorscha Kratikoff, a high-ranking warcaster in the Khadoran Army, but for reasons of propriety this relationship seems to have been severed.

Seat: Castle Tzepesci in the Kovosk Hills

efforts of Supreme Kommandant Irusk during the siege on the city of Laedry, which had a significant Umbrean population. While some might argue Vladimir had an interest in protecting his eastern kinsmen living in the city, he went on to fight in many battles of the war, and later suffered grievous injuries fighting Cryx to defend his countrymen. Those who served alongside him in those battles feel no doubts about his loyalties.

Still, many nobles in the capital were shocked and dismayed at the empress' decision to unify Umbrey under his rulership. Astute observers, however, understood the broader implications and considered the unification to be a shrewd move. While the empress granted a large portion of the Llaelese territories won in the war to Tzepesci, she also began withdrawing Khadoran forces to the Cygnaran front. Protecting Khador's eastern holdings while the army engages Cygnar along the Dragon's Tongue will fall largely to Great Prince Tzepesci and his vassals. This strategy also ensures the Tzepesci family is kept compliant, having now turned to the task of governing the region rather than plotting to gain influence over it. The unification of Umbrey strengthens Khador even as it elevates one great prince above his peers.

VARDENSKA

This volozk is a harsh and unforgiving region in the northwest that includes Uldenfrost, Uldenstream, and Lake Nyereck and is bounded on the east by the Icebrand Lakes and their tributaries. The most remote region of Khador, Vardenska is sparsely populated outside of Uldenfrost. Villages of hardy Kossites are scattered along the coast and around the Icebrand Lakes. Isolated tribes live in the old ways and practice forgotten rites shunned in the south. Some inhabitants of the volozk do not even consider themselves Khadorans but rather Kossites. Great Prince Hasz Bolovric rules Vardenska with very little contact with the rest of Khador. The realm has been isolated so long it is almost its own kingdom, connected to the rest Khador primarily by the ships that travel to Uldenfrost.

ULDENFROST

Ruler: Posadnik Barak Afonos

Population: 9,000 humans (mostly Kossite)

Military Presence: Uldenfrost is garrisoned by a single Winter Guard force.

Description: Founded after the Rebellion by fur traders called *promyshlenniki,* this glorified trapping post is perfectly situated to exploit the prevalent supply of furred mammals in the area. After conflicts with Nyss that resulted in the deaths of both men and elves—as well as the theft of thousands of pelts—it became evident the trappers and traders needed a more fortified base of operations.

The buildings and walls of Uldenfrost are built of pine from nearby Targoss Forest using the joinery techniques of maritime carpentry. The wooden palisade includes two blockhouses, one to the north and one to the south, stocked with crossbows and hunting spears for the local populace in case of emergency—not that most do not already have their own.

VARDENSKA VOLOZK

Largest Ethnic Groups: Almost exclusively Kossite

Predominant Religions: Evenly split between Menite and Morrowan, some Devourer worship on the fringes

Important Cities: Uldenfrost

Significant Towns (not on the map): Bolosk, Drotsk, Kolinsk, Novoy, Nyesk, Straskaya, Targsk, Vardov, Volgorgrad

Lord: Great Prince Hasz Bolovric

Great Prince Bolovric comes from a long line of great hunters and warriors and spends much of his time prowling the wastes alongside his closest liegemen. He does this in part from a sense of duty and honor and in part because he enjoys the thrill of the hunt and testing his limits against the beasts of the wild frozen region. He is the first great prince in centuries to take up the great bow of his ancestors, which at first was deemed almost sacrilegious among his nobles who admire the stories of his forebears. In their hearts, the great prince and his counts feel no kinship to Khador and see themselves as the inheritors of Kos.

Seat: Bolovric Hall in Uldenfrost

Great Prince Bolovric rules here from Bolovric Hall, his large longhouse. He is one of the few members of the Khadoran aristocracy who makes himself regularly accessible to those he rules. Indeed, Bolovric rarely bothers to visit the capital, preferring to stay among his people. He often hunts in Targoss Forest, accompanied by his most trusted vassals. The Kossites of the area respect Bolorvric greatly.

The town contains the Czavyana trade manager's two-story house, the posadnik's quarters, barracks, and various stores and skinning houses. A large stonework well in the town center provides fresh water warmed by an underground sulfur spring that makes the water smell and taste bad but keeps it from freezing. Uldenfrost also contains a counting house, brickyards, tanneries, barns, a foundry, a smithy, a carpenter shop, and the bright red flag of the kingdom, which serves as a beacon for wayward hunters. To most visitors, Uldenfrost is an inhospitable place; the frost claims many lives, and for a long stretch during the winter the sun is barely seen at all. Its stoic citizens, however, value the harsh environment for the strength and will it requires of its inhabitants.

ORGANIZATIONS

BLAUSTAVYA SHIPPING & RAIL

Blaustavya Shipping & Rail, or Big Iron as it is more commonly known, began as a conglomerate of shipping and railroad interests. Founded by Kayaz Simonyev in 551 AR, the company has become the foremost mercantile power in the Motherland. It moves goods, food, and coal across the entire breadth of Khador. As well, BS&R has a substantial interest in commercial fishing, canning, and merchant security out of Ohk, dealings with heavy industry in Korsk, and a massive distribution center based out of Khardov. Most other merchant companies and guilds live in the shadow of Big Iron.

With rail stations in Ohk, Khardov, Korsk, Skirov, Laedry, and Merywyn, BS&R moves goods rapidly, effectively, and inexpensively. It is the largest commercial user of steam engines and steamjacks in all of western Immoren, and it has acquired several companies that produce the mechanical parts it needs to maintain its equipment. In fact, through Simonyev, BS&R controls the contracts to repair steamjacks and warjacks for the Khadoran military. Big Iron's sister company, Troykyev Iron & Steam, benefits immensely from these contracts.

Immediately after the Llaelese War, the government contracted Big Iron to extend rail to Laedry and then to Merywyn as quickly as possible. The company spent a small fortune on this effort, which required several cities to participate in forging rails. BS&R was given access to thousands of prisoners from various khardstadts to assist in the effort, and work proceeded twenty-four hours a day. Many lives were lost during construction, but in the end the High Kommand judged the effort worth it, because the military trains can now reach deep into occupied Llael.

The identifying symbol on all Big Iron trade trains, steamjacks, and vessels is "the stack," a stylized steam stack billowing plumes of smoke. It is stamped on cars and engines of their armored trains, displayed on placards on their warehouses, and emblazoned on the sails or steam stacks of their ships. Since the creation of the first rail line in Khador, Blaustavya has become a household name in the nation's metropolitan centers.

Although Big Iron is primarily a shipping concern, it also encompasses numerous subsidiary companies and merchant organizations, due primarily to Simonyev's powerful influence (see p. 122). Big Iron controls the contracts for most military arms manufacturing, mercantile distribution, and organized heavy labor in Khador's cities. A popular slogan in the royal court is that the interests of Blaustavya are the interests of Khador. While this may not be true for the less developed portions of Khador, it is a fact in the royal court and the major cities of this nation of iron.

THE BRATYAS

The dark underworld of Khador is dominated by the vicious *bratyas*, criminal fraternities whose influence extends throughout every level of society. The bratyas began as prison gangs in Korsk and Skirov but have become some of the most powerful criminal organizations in the Iron Kingdoms. These brothers are known for their ruthlessness and dedication to severely violent methods that give pause to even battle-hardened mercenaries.

Bratyas operate in every major Khadoran city and town, and men and women with connections do business even among remote communities. Individual bratyas range in membership from less than ten individuals to collections of dozens of thugs, or even gangs numbering to hundreds of hardened criminals. The hierarchies of these gangs are complex and sometimes vague. Although each claims some neighborhood or region as its territory, allegiances often shift and clash. There is no central organization of these criminals outside of their adherence to the so called *Vorz Nakon*, or "thief's law."

The Vorz Nakon has few tenets, but all bratyas at least pay its rules lip service. A member must never steal from or kill a fellow member, for example, though this is largely ignored in practice. Additionally, members must show respect to their elders and must never serve another authority. This final tenet is applied very literally, and bratya members are forbidden to serve in the Winter Guard as conscripts or to collaborate with guards when imprisoned. Even the impression of being overly compliant in prison is viewed in a dim light by the bratyas. The only punishment for violating the thief's law is death.

Most criminals in a bratya join as adolescents and go to great lengths to avoid conscription evading officers sent into the slums to collect youths for the Winter Guard. Others become connected to a gang while imprisoned or join after completing their military service instead of seeking gainful employment.

Those who survive years of street war and murder may rise to the nebulous rank of "underboss" and rule over their own bratya in service to a greater boss. The most powerful bosses are wealthy as a result of their criminal activities and are often politically powerful, having curried favor with kayazy and government officials by performing acts too questionable for the elite. Even the Greylords Covenant is not above utilizing the services of the bratyas, and it is said the Prikaz Chancellery has subtle but profound influence in the Khadoran underworld, although they generally work through kayazy intermediaries.

GREYLORDS COVENANT

The Greylords Covenant is the premier occult order in service to the Motherland and is effectively the arcane branch of the Khadoran Army and government. Accomplished arcanists, patriots, and soldiers together form one of the most formidable organizations in western Immoren.

The Greylords Covenant was founded by the arcanists who answered King Levash Tzepesci's call to return to the Motherland in 243 AR and were rewarded with noble titles and substantial estates. Soon thereafter, in the city of Korsk, they formalized their new allegiance and swore oaths to both the throne of Khador and to one another, founding the Greylords Covenant.

The order provides Khador with cortexes and complex mechanika, offers arcane expertise, supplies trained battle arcanists to the military, assists in the identification and training of warcasters, and sees to the internal security of the nation. By the laws of its founding, all Khadoran arcanists and sorcerers are expected to submit themselves to the authority of the Covenant. Any lesser arcane orders that exist in Khador do so only with the sufferance and allowance of the Covenant.

Initiates enter the organization with the rank of uchenik. These neophytes come from a wide variety of backgrounds, their only commonality being an aptitude for the arcane. The Greylords are a meritocracy, and peasants can be found apprenticing alongside the sons and daughters of kayazy and nobles. Khadoran youth who manifest sorcerous powers are required by law to be sent to the nearest Greylords chapter house to be mentored and thereafter serve the state. Uchenik spend years as menial servants while learning the fundamentals of arcane theory and military history before promotion to rastovik.

A rastovik is a full member of the Greylords Covenant, though still a junior member who has yet to fully prove his or her worth. Greylords often spend five years or longer at this rank, although faster promotion may come with exceptional service or accomplishments. Other members of the military are required to treat a Greylord rastovik with the same respect and deference as a lieutenant. It is rare for a rastovik to hold command authority, but in some cases they may be given oversight of a Winter Guard force. While most rastoviks serve in active military duty, a good number are assigned as research assistants to higher-ranking Greylords.

GREYLORDS COVENANT RANKS

Only warcasters directly affiliated with the Covenant are afforded arcane ranks, which recognize their aptitude and power as arcanists. Due to the wide scope of their responsibilities and the fact that warcasters are preferred on the battlefield, it is rare for these individuals to rise above the rank of magziev. This rank conveys authority only with regard to other members of the Covenant. For this reason, a warcaster's military rank is a far more significant measure of actual authority.

UCHENIK | RASTOVIK | MAGZIEV | KOLDUN | KOLDUN LORD | OBAVNIK | HIGH OBAVNIK ARBITER

Most Greylords are eventually promoted to the rank of magziev and remain there for the rest of their careers. Commonly, Greylords of this rank continue in active military duty, often as part of a ternion, a trio of arcanists specializing in the application of battle magic who train and fight together. Most ternions include two magzievs and a commanding koldun. Situational command authority is common at this rank, which is equivalent to that of a kapitan or junior kovnik. In some cases, these commands are only military in the broadest sense, being more involved in archaeological excavations in search of historical occult items of interest to the Covenant. Greylord magzievs who make a career of military service often attend the Druzhina. When not on active military duty, a magziev is expected to contribute to the Covenant in research, intelligence gathering, or cortex production.

Promotion to koldun is reserved for senior magzievs with impeccable service records and solid connections with influential members of the Covenant. While virtually all kolduns have some military experience, many choose more prestigious postings later in life supervising training, production, and research facilities. When interacting with the military, a koldun wields the same authority as a senior kovnik or kommander.

Those recognized by the empress may have the honorary rank of koldun lord bestowed upon them. The rank brings honors and privileges loosely equivalent to knighthood. A great honor, this elevation in rank is bestowed only upon individuals who have displayed a combination of exceptional arcane skill and proven service. It includes the receipt of token lands, minor titles, and possibly other honors. Such gifts have become simpler and more symbolic in the modern era.

The obavniks are the ranking officers of the order. Although there is no fixed number of obavniks, there are rarely more than nine at any time. This rank is typically reserved for Greylords who command strongholds or chapter houses or who oversee large numbers of kolduns. An obavnik has a rank equivalent to a kommandant in the Khadoran Army.

The Covenant is controlled by the High Obavnik, who exercises absolute authority over the entire order from its central stronghold in Korsk, the Strikoya. The empress appoints the High Obavnik under the advisement of the Prikaz Chancellery and the great vizier. Without fail, each obavnik promoted to the position is an arcanist of superior skill, military insight, and unquestionable patriotism. The rank carries with it the title of count and substantial lands on the shore of Shattered Shield Lake in the Khadorstred Volozk as well as the military rank of kommandant. In practice, however, the High Obavnik enjoys authority only slightly less than that of a supreme kommandant and is essentially the High Kommand's expert on the occult.

All Greylords of rastovik rank and higher are members of one of the Covenant's chancelleries. The chancelleries are the generalized departments by which the Covenant governs its research, membership, and industry. Chancelleries may be devoted to practical work such as cortex production or to more obscure theoretical research conducted by the Chancellery of Analytical Occult Studies. Each chancellery is overseen by one or more senior koldun and occasionally, as in the case of the Prikaz Chancellery, by members of higher rank.

The Greylords Covenant maintains five great strongholds, the foremost being their main headquarters, the Strikoya, in the city of Korsk. Lesser strongholds exist in Khardov, Ohk, Rorschik, and Skirov. All of them are formidable fortresses, nearly impervious to attack or infiltration. The strongholds provide workshops, laboratories, libraries, and living quarters for members of the Covenant and theoretically will admit any member of the organization. Some strongholds are tightly controlled, however, and may not be open to Greylords not involved in the specific duties performed there. This restricted admittance is especially true of the Skirov stronghold, headquarters to the Prikaz Chancellery, and to the Khardov stronghold, whose ranking obavnik, Great Prince Aeniv Rolonovik, discourages visitors due to the sensitive nature of the research into Orgoth weaponry underway in the facility.

The Covenant also maintains lesser holdings, called chapter houses, in certain cities and towns with a significant Greylord presence.

The recently established chapter house in Merywyn has grown tremendously and may soon be afforded status as a stronghold. Similarly, the Covenant is extremely active in Laedry, where Greylords oversee captured assets of the Order of the Golden

HIGH OBAVNIK VASILY DMITRILOSK

The current High Obavnik of the Greylords Covenant, Vasily Dmitrilosk, has ruled the organization for over twenty years. Although a man of advanced age, he has a sharp mind and a formidable practical knowledge of the arcane. His appointment to the position was unanimously endorsed by both the High Kommand and the Prikaz Chancellery, largely due to the direct influence of Simonyev Blaustavya, who had worked closely with Dmitrilosk on matters of internal security for many years. The High Obavnik is deeply loyal to the regent, the empress, and the ideals of Khadoran supremacy.

The High Obavnik is a great supporter of chancelleries involved in theoretical and historical research. He has been particularly supportive of the work being done by Great Prince Aeniv Rolonovik in Khardov focusing on the understanding and replication of Orgoth sorceries. He has authorized lines of inquiry deemed unsound by some obavniks as well as funded expeditions in search of certain lost artifacts believed to have been crafted by Morrdh, Cryx, and the Orgoth. Koldun Kommander Aleksandra Zerkova is one of his favorite field researchers, having returned to Khardov with a number of powerful and unique artifacts.

OBAVNIK FEDOR RACHLAVSKY

Obavnik Rachlavsky, the senior obavnik of the Prikaz Chancellery, has been described as a great bear of a man. Fat, crude, and given to heavy drink, he works hard to cultivate that reputation. In truth, Rachlavsky possesses a keenly brilliant and coldly calculating mind and prefers to be thought a buffoon by the kayazy, kommandants, and even fellow Greylords who are the subjects of his chancellery's constant investigations. He answers directly to Blaustavya and commands the total respect of all within the Prikaz. A weaker man would be crushed beneath the heavy secrets he holds, but Rachlavsky knows someone must carry the sins of his nation.

Crucible extracted from Leryn before the city was overtaken by the Northern Crusade.

The fate of the Greylords in Leryn is something of a taboo topic in the halls of power. They were led by Koldun Lord Volkh Lazar, a highly esteemed arcanist who governed the city for Khador. While not talked about openly, it is known that Lord Volkh was bound to a Menofix and burned alive when the city was captured by Hierarch Severius. Rumors suggest he was betrayed by his closest subordinates after they converted to the Sul-Menite faith and colluded with Severius to open the gates of the city to him.

Under the reign of Empress Vanar, the Covenant has become an increasingly pervasive tool of the government. High-ranking Greylords lead significant military efforts, including the governance of captured cities, the direction of mechanikal and arcane innovation, and the coordination of the nation's internal security apparatus.

PRIKAZ CHANCELLERY

Tasked with tending to the internal security of the Khadoran Empire, the Greylords of the Prikaz Chancellery are among the most politically powerful individuals of their nation. In many ways, the Prikaz is the ruling body of the Covenant, since its members have tremendous sway in the appointment of the High Obavnik. Once a High Obavnik is appointed, the Prikaz's officers are technically subordinate to him, but in practice it is rare for the leader of the Covenant to interfere directly in Prikaz decisions; allowing the Prikaz to operate independently is advantageous to the Covenant's work.

The existence of the Prikaz as a chancellery is no secret, but the organization takes great pains to guard the identities of its agents. Because they are promoted from within other chancelleries, any Greylord can be recruited into the Prikaz, a fact that lends to the air of paranoia within the Covenant. Ranking members of the Prikaz report to Great Vizier Simonyev Blaustavya on matters of security, espionage, and counter-espionage and coordinate with Blaustavya's Section Three on matters of external intelligence gathering.

Prikaz operations are commanded by the chancellery's kolduns. Agents may be tasked with performing surveillance of any citizen suspected of treason, including members of the nobility, kayazy, government or military officers, potential agitators in Umbrey and Llael, and even fellow Greylords. All agents of the Prikaz maintain extensive networks of informants through payment, coercion, and blackmail.

Khadoran citizens are justly paranoid of the arcane spies in their midst, since any among them might be a spy in the employ of the Prikaz. The chancellery keeps a vast and comprehensive library containing information on every individual to come to their attention. Stored in a massive vault beneath their stronghold in Skirov, this library is a trove of centuries of state secrets and personal details on virtually every influential person to live in Khador since the fourth century AR. Like all facilities controlled by the Greylords, the Skirov stronghold is protected by powerful and lethal arcane wards. The physical security of these locations is immense and is supplemented by mundane weaponry and fortifications.

PLAYER SECTION

KHADORAN CHARACTERS

A number of options are available only to characters of Khadoran origin. These options include modifications to existing careers, new careers, new abilities, and kingdom-specific spell lists.

KHADORAN CAREER OPTIONS

The options available to Khadoran characters are described below. A player can choose to use as many career options as he wishes during character creation and can take some or all of the options for which his character meets the requirements. For example, a player creating a Khadoran Arcanist/Warcaster can decide to take the Greylord option but not to take the Khadoran Warcaster option for his character.

GREYLORD (ARCANIST)

The Greylords Covenant is the most prominent arcane order in Khador. The empire relies on the organization's knowledge and talents so completely that it is virtually considered part of the state, its tendrils reaching out across Khadoran government, industry, and military. Members of the Covenant comprise a class of their own as potent arcanists invested with power and authority that sets them apart from the common citizens of the empire.

Only Khadoran human Arcanists can belong to the Greylords Covenant. A character cannot have both the Greylord and standard Arcanist careers. A character starting the game as a member of the Greylords must choose Alchemist, Arcane Mechanik, Aristocrat, Explorer, Horseman (p. 179), Investigator, Military Officer, Sorcerer, Spy, or Warcaster for his second career.

With the Game Master's approval, a character who begins the game as a Greylord Arcanist-Investigator or Spy might secretly be a member of the Prikaz Chancellery. Such a character could gain additional information from the chancellery but is expected to conduct secret missions from time to time, the details of which he cannot share with the other members of his adventuring party.

A character taking this option:

- Begins with Connections (Greylords Covenant).
- Uses the spell list below instead of the Arcanist spell list in *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*.
- Begins with Blizzard, Frostbite, and Protection from Cold.

COST 1	Blizzard, Guided Blade, Influence, Light in the Darkness, Power Booster, Protection from Cold, Storm Tossed
COST 2	Banishing Ward, Chiller, Frostbite, Hand of Fate, Ice Bolt, Icy Grip, Iron Flesh (p. 182), Shatter Storm, True Sight, Wind Blast
COST 3	Battle Rage (p. 182), Deep Freeze, Fog of War, Gallows (p. 182), Hoarfrost, Inhospitable Ground, Rift, Winter Storm, Zephyr
COST 4	Freezing Grip, Overmind, Tempest

KHADORAN WARCASTER (WARCASTER)

Among the most renowned soldiers in the service to the empire, Khadoran Warcasters are true heroes of their people. Upon completing an apprenticeship to a senior warcaster, each new warcaster undergoes officer training at the Druzhina. Upon completing his training, a Khadoran Warcaster enters active military service as a kommander in the Khadoran Army.

Only Khadoran humans can be Khadoran Warcasters. This option must be taken at character creation. A character cannot be a Khadoran warcaster and a standard warcaster. A character starting the game as a Khadoran Warcaster must choose Arcane Mechanik, Arcanist, Aristocrat, Assault Kommando (p. 177), Horseman (p. 179), Investigator, Iron Fang, Military Officer, Pistoleer, Ranger, Rifleman, Soldier, Sorcerer, or Spy for his second career.

A character taking this option:

- Begins with Connections (Khadoran military).
- Uses the spell list below instead of the Warcaster spell list in *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*.
- Begins with Boundless Charge, Jump Start, and Razor Wind.

COST 1	Guided Blade, Jump Start, Locomotion
COST 2	Battering Ram, Boundless Charge, Infernal Machine (p. 182), Iron Flesh (p. 182), Ravager (p. 182), Razor Wind, Redline, Shatter Storm, Transference, Wind Blast
COST 3	Battle Rage (p. 182), Eliminator, Fog of War, Gallows (p. 182), Grind, Inhospitable Ground, Rift, Superiority, Watcher (p. 182)
COST 4	Freezing Grip, Tempest, Tide of Steel

IRON FANG UHLAN (HORSEMAN/IRON FANG)

The uhlans are hardened Iron Fang horsemen, modern inheritors of a tradition stretching back to the horselords of old, some of them descended directly from ancient kings and emperors of the north. On the battlefield, the Iron Fang Uhlans serve alongside their brothers as the heavy cavalry of the Khadoran Army. Outside the Iron Fang legions, an uhlan and his steed remain a singularly powerful fighting force, working together to deliver crippling impacts with the horseman's blasting lance.

Only a character who begins the game with the Horseman (p. 179) and Iron Fang careers can be an Iron Fang Uhlan.

A character taking this option:

- Starts the game with the Fast Rearm (Blasting Lance) ability instead of Fast Rearm (Blasting Pike).
- Begins with a blasting lance (p. 184), ten blasting heads, and a Pozdyov warhorse (p. 189) but does not begin with a blasting pike or standard warhorse.

MAN-O-WAR DRAKHUN (HORSEMAN/MAN-O-WAR)

The Man-O-War Drakhun rides to battle astride the towering Karpathan destrier. Only the most powerful warriors—gifted with uhlan blood and raised in the saddle—have any hope of becoming drakhuns. These horsemen are among the most powerful liegemen and cavalry soldiers serving the great princes and the armies of Khador.

Only a character who begins the game with the Horseman (p. 179) and Man-O-War (p. 180) careers can be a Man-O-War Drakhun.

A character taking this option:

- Starts the game with the Trained Rider (Karpathan Destrier) ability (p. 181) instead of Combat Rider.
- Begins with a Karpathan Destrier warhorse (p. 189) instead of a standard warhorse.

EXISTING OPTIONS

Along with these new options for Khadoran characters, a number of existing options can be modified for a specifically Khadoran origin. A player familiar with WARMACHINE wishing to play a Widowmaker character could create a Ranger/Rifleman and start with the heavy rifle option. A player who wants to play a Winter Guard can create a Soldier character with the appropriate gear. A player who wishes to play a vassal in service to a great prince or a member of the Knights of the Old Faith could consider some combination of the Horseman, Knight, and Man-at-Arms careers. A Mighty Cutthroat/Ranger is a good approximation of a Manhunter.

ASSAULT KOMMANDO

PREREQUISITES: HUMAN (KHADORAN)

STARTING ABILITIES, CONNECTIONS, AND SKILLS	Special: A character starting with the Assault Kommando career must choose Military Officer, Ranger, Rifleman, Soldier, or Warcaster for his other career. Abilities: Defensive Line and Onslaught (p. 181) Connections: Connections (Khadoran Military) Military Skills: Hand Weapon 1, Rifle 1, and Shield 1 Occupational Skills: Command 1 and Detection 1
STARTING ASSETS	Assault kommando armor (p. 182), Vislovski carbine (with powder and ten rounds of ammunition) (p. 188), assault shield, and three strangle gas grenade launcher rounds

ASSAULT KOMMANDO ABILITIES	Battle Plan: Reconnaissance, Defensive Line, Gunfighter, Load Bearing, Onslaught (p. 181), Quick Work, Relentless Charge, Signal Language, Two-Weapon Fighting
ASSAULT KOMMANDO CONNECTIONS	Connections (Khadoran Military)
ASSAULT KOMMANDO MILITARY SKILLS	Hand Weapon 3, Light Artillery 3, Rifle 4, Shield 3, Unarmed Combat 3
ASSAULT KOMMANDO OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS	Command 3, Cryptography 2, General Skills 4, Interrogation 3, Medicine 3, Survival 3

An assault kommando is a member of one of the best trained and most highly armed fighting forces in western Immoren. These soldiers form the leading edge of the Khadoran sword of conquest and serve on the front lines of battle, driving the enemy from their trenches and breaking their will with cold, calculated efficiency. Each assault kommando receives specialized training in urban and trench warfare and packs a small arsenal of advanced armament and alchemical weaponry.

Assault kommandos are armed with the latest Vislovski carbine complete with a gun blade and underslung grenade launcher loaded with debilitating strangle gas. Each kommando wears alchemically treated armor designed for complete protection from all hazards of the battlefield. Although the assault commandos are a relatively new force, Khador's recent conquests have given these soldiers many opportunities to become notorious across the Iron Kingdoms. Marching to war in lockstep behind their impenetrable shields, they are the face of warfare to come.

Playing an Assault Kommando: The Assault Kommando career offers an interesting set of skills, abilities, and equipment that allows a character to enjoy the advantage of ranged combat without being notably disadvantaged in melee. Well armored for a ranged combatant, the kommando can weather returning fire with great confidence while throwing down choking strangle gas to lower the defense of his opponents and allowing his allies to position themselves to inflict maximum damage.

As an Assault Kommando gains experience, he will likely want to gain the Gunfighter and Two-Weapon Fighting abilities at the earliest opportunity. Once these abilities are mastered, the character should be equally at home in ranged and melee combat and can adapt to virtually any battlefield situation. At Veteran level, most Assault Kommandos pick up Battle Plan: Reconnaissance, making them a true asset to their adventuring parties.

DOOM REAVER

PREREQUISITES: HUMAN (KHADORAN), MIGHTY, STARTING CAREER

STARTING ABILITIES AND SKILLS	Special: A character starting with the Doom Reaver career must choose Cutthroat, Horseman, Pirate, Ranger, Soldier, or Thief for his other career. Abilities: Abomination (p. 181), Berserk (p. 181), Bloodlust (p. 181), Fearless (p. 181) Military Skills: Great Weapon 1 Occupational Skills: Detection 1, Intimidation 1
STARTING ASSETS	Fellblade (p. 184)

DOOM REAVER ABILITIES	Abomination (p. 181), Berserk (p. 181), Bloodlust (p. 181), Fearless (p. 181), Fearsome Howl (p. 181), Iron Will, Language (Orgoth), Precision Strike, Relentless Charge, Silence (p. 181)
DOOM REAVER CONNECTIONS	—
DOOM REAVER MILITARY SKILLS	Great Weapon 4, Unarmed Combat 3
DOOM REAVER OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS	General Skills 4, Survival 3, Tracking 3

Khador has developed an insidious punishment for its most craven deserters, murderers, and war criminals. Rather than being sentenced to death or soul-crushing prison terms, these malefactors are instead transformed into the accursed doom reavers. Driven utterly mad by the insatiable call to slaughter emanating from their unholy blades, these lunatics are set upon the enemies of the Motherland. Here there is no redemption, just a rich harvest of blood.

Although those who bear the fellblades are irrevocably twisted in mind and spirit, not all are completely lost. A very few doom reavers possess the strength of will to resist the secret whispers of their blades, whispers that encourage them to slide into bottomless madness and depravity. These few are able to maintain some fragile essence of their humanity, or, lacking that, a sliver of control.

Playing a Doom Reaver: Restricted to the Mighty archetype, the Doom Reaver career is most effective when paired with another melee career such as Cutthroat or Horseman (p. 179). It can also complement more well-rounded careers such as the Ranger, allowing the character a greater breadth of available skills. Abilities such as Abomination and Berserk make the character exceedingly deadly in close combat but also a danger to his own allies.

The Relentless Charge ability is likely to be a Doom Reaver's first choice for a new ability as he advances in experience. With Relentless Charge the character need no longer worry about terrain penalties and can get into combat as soon as possible. Doom Reavers might also optimize their ability to cause psychological havoc among enemies by learning the Fearsome Howl ability as they gain experience. Veteran-level Doom Reavers can pick up the Silence ability to dramatically increase their self-control.

HORSEMAN

PREREQUISITES: NONE

STARTING ABILITIES AND SKILLS	Special: A character starting with the Iron Fang career can choose Horseman for his other career. Since horses are uncomfortable in the presence of trollkin, trollkin characters cannot take this career. Abilities: Cavalry Charge and Combat Rider Military Skills: Choose three of the following: Great Weapon 1, Hand Weapon 1, Lance 1, or Pistol 1 Occupational Skills: Riding 1
STARTING ASSETS	25 gc, warhorse with tack and heavy barding

HORSEMAN ABILITIES	Cavalry Charge, Combat Rider, Expert Rider, Mounted: Counter Charge (p. 181), Ride-By Attack, Saddle Shot, Swift Rider, Trained Rider (Any) (p. 181)
HORSEMAN CONNECTIONS	—
HORSEMAN MILITARY SKILLS	Great Weapon 4, Hand Weapon 2, Lance 4, Pistol 2, Unarmed Combat 2
HORSEMAN OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS	Command 3, General Skills 4, Navigation 3

It is a common saying among the soldiers of the Iron Kingdoms that a warrior on horseback is worth a dozen footmen. Horsemen of western Immoren come from scores of ancient traditions, including the knights of Cygnar, the Idrian riders of the Bloodstone Marches, and the swift scouts of Ord. The most renowned are the uhlans descended of the horselords of Khador. All are fearsome combatants trained not only in the use of their arms but also in the skill of utilizing their mounts as fearsome weapons of war.

Whether fighting singly or among a mass of troops, a horseman is a dangerous foe. The speed of a rider on horseback and the devastating power of his weaponry makes him both unpredictable and fearsome. Even in the age of the warjack, skilled horsemen remain in great demand.

Playing a Horseman: The Horseman career can add an extremely useful skill set to a wide range of other careers. Martial careers such as Doom Reaver (p. 178), Knight, Military Officer, and Warcaster can easily be paired with the Horseman career to create characters with unique and potent fighting styles. Horseman can be paired with careers such as Iron Fang (p. 176), Man-O-War (p. 180), and Stormblade to gain additional options.

An experienced horseman should carefully consider which new abilities will best complement his other capabilities and chosen fighting style. Abilities like Ride-By Attack can be useful to any character, allowing the horseman to reposition himself as necessary. Veteran-level Horsemen can make great use of the Mounted: Counter Charge ability.

MAN-O-WAR

PREREQUISITES: HUMAN (KHADORAN)

STARTING ABILITIES AND SKILLS	Special: A character starting with the Man-O-War career must choose Aristocrat, Field Mechanik, Horseman (p. 179). Man-at-Arms, Military Officer, or Soldier for his other career. Abilities: Ironhead (p. 181) and Load Bearing Connections: Connections (Khadoran Military) Military Skills: Great Weapon 1, Light Artillery 1, and Shield 1 Occupational Skills: Command 1 and Mechanikal Engineering 1
STARTING ASSETS	Man-O-War armor (p. 183) and one of the following options: • Annihilator blade (p. 184) and Man-O-War shield cannon (with powder and ammunition for ten shots) (p. 187) • Bombardier grenade cannon (p. 186), Man-O-War ammo bandolier (p. 189), four cannon grenades • Ice maul (p. 185)

MAN-O-WAR ABILITIES	Cleave, Defensive Line, Girded, Head-Butt, Ironhead (p. 181), Load Bearing, Man of Iron (p. 181), Shield Slam, Steady, Steam Jockey (p. 181)
MAN-O-WAR CONNECTIONS	Connections (Khadoran Military)
MAN-O-WAR MILITARY SKILLS	Great Weapon 4, Light Artillery 4, Shield 3, Unarmed Combat 3
MAN-O-WAR OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS	Command 3, General Skills 4, Mechanikal Engineering 2

Encased in a steam-powered suit of armor, the Man-O-War is imbued with almost the same strength, durability, and resilience as a warjack. Such soldiers must endure harsh physical regimens and extensive training to prepare themselves to operate their powerful armor. The interiors of these suits become almost unbearably hot in the midst of battle, requiring courage and fortitude. Armed with weapons too massive for any ordinary man to bear, the Man-O-War becomes a living engine of battle.

Within the Khadoran military there are three general branches of service for the Man-O-War: the earth pounding bombardiers with their grenade cannons, the stone crushing demolition corps, and the unstoppable shock troopers. In addition to Khador's heavy infantry, officers stride the battlefields of western Immoren in their powerful armor and servants of the great princes make war for their masters encased in mechanized suits of iron. Man-O-War armor has captured the imagination of Khador since its creation, for it grants the average man with the strength of legends.

Playing a Man-O-War: This career suggests that the character is a highly trained Khadoran veteran who is not just a skilled combatant, but a patriot trusted with some of the most valuable military armaments of his nation's army. The Man-O-War career offers the chance to not only wield brutal mechanikal weapons but to endure damage that would cripple a lesser combatant. Unquestionably, the chief draw of this career is the opportunity to play a character encased in some of the most powerful armor ever developed on Caen. The Man-O-War career is easily paired with Horseman (to play a Man-O-War Drakhun, see p. 176), Man-at-Arms, or Soldier, or a character can take the role of a commanding officer with the Aristocrat or Military Officer career. Pairing this career with Field Mechanik provides an interesting opportunity to portray a Man-O-War who fights at the front lines alongside warjacks and can repair the damage they suffer.

The abilities available to a Man-O-War should be considered carefully in the context of the character's other career and the weapon he has chosen as a specialization. Shield Slam is tremendously useful to a character wielding a shield cannon, but one with an ice maul would do better to choose Cleave. A Veteran-level Man-O-War can look forward to the Man of Iron ability for even greater influence over the limitations of his armor in the heat of combat.

NEW ABILITIES

ABOMINATION

Prerequisite: None

The character is a terrifying entity and gains Terror [this character's Willpower +4] in battle. This terror affects friendly characters as well as enemies. Additionally, the character can reroll failed Intimidation skill rolls. Each failed roll can be rerolled only once as a result of Abomination.

BERSERK

Prerequisite: None

When this character incapacitates or destroys one or more other characters with a melee attack during his turn, immediately after the attack is resolved he must make one additional melee attack against another character in his melee range.

BLOODLUST

Prerequisite: None

The character is an exceptional doom reaver. Though the whispers of his fellblade still penetrate his troubled mind, he retains his reason rather than losing himself completely to madness. The character's Willpower is not reduced as a result of wielding a fellblade, and he never becomes a slave to the weapon.

FEARLESS

Prerequisite: None

The character is utterly fearless and automatically passes Willpower rolls to resist Terror.

FEARSOME HOWL

Prerequisite: Abomination

Once during each of his turns, the character can spend a quick action to unleash a terrifying howl. That turn he gains Terror [this character's Willpower +6].

IRONHEAD

Prerequisite: None

The character knows how to use and control mechanically enhanced steam-powered armor, such as Man-O-War armor (p. 183).

MAN OF IRON

Prerequisite: Ironhead, PHY 8

The character has learned to push his body to the limit to compensate for any failing of his steam-powered armor's internal systems. While wearing steam-powered armor, the character never suffers the effects of internal damage. For example, though the character's Man-O-War armor could suffer damage to movement or boiler leaks, the character's sheer determination and raw physical prowess keep these failures from affecting his performance (or boiling him alive).

MOUNTED: COUNTER CHARGE

Prerequisite: Cavalry Charge, Ride 3

While this character is riding a mount designated as a warhorse, when an enemy advances and ends its movement within 36 feet (6″) of this character and in his line of sight, this character can immediately spend 1 feat point to charge the enemy. The character cannot make a counter charge while engaged.

ONSLAUGHT

Prerequisite: None

At the start of this character's turn before moving or taking any action, the character can make one ranged attack. After the attack has been resolved, the character must charge or run. The ranged attack is made before declaring a charge target.

SILENCE

Prerequisite: Berserk, Great Weapon 3

When this character is forced to make an attack as a result of Berserk, he can choose to make a Willpower roll against a target number of 15 to resist the influence of his fellblade. If the roll succeeds, he does not make the attack. If the roll fails, he must make the attack normally.

STEAM JOCKEY

Prerequisite: Ironhead

The character can put on or remove mechanically enhanced steam-powered armor as a full action.

TRAINED RIDER

Prerequisite: Ride 1

The character has been trained to ride a mount that is otherwise impossible to ride, such as the mighty Karpathan destrier. A character can have this ability several times, each time choosing a different mount type.

IRONHEAD

Any Arcane Mechanik or Field Mechanik can gain the Ironhead ability as if it were a career ability.

NEW SPELLS

	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
BATTLE RAGE	3	6	—	—	NO	NO

Target friendly living character gains +2 to his melee attack rolls and becomes Fearless. Battle Rage lasts for one round.

GALLOWS	3	10	—	13	NO	YES

When an enemy is hit by this attack, he can be pushed d6″ directly toward Gallows' point of origin.

INFERNAL MACHINE	2	6	—	—	YES	NO

Target steamjack in the spellcaster's battlegroup gains Terror [14] against enemy characters and +2 MAT and SPD.

IRON FLESH	2	6	—	—	YES	NO

Target friendly living character gains +3 DEF but suffers –1 SPD.

RAVAGER	2	6	—	—	NO	NO

Target steamjack in the spellcaster's battlegroup gains Berserk for one turn. While affected by Ravager, a steamjack cannot make Chain Attacks. (When a steamjack with Berserk incapacitates or destroys one or more characters with a melee attack during its turn, immediately after the attack is resolved it must make one additional melee attack against another character in its melee range.)

WATCHER	3	SELF	—	—	YES	NO

When an enemy character advances and ends its movement within 6″ of the spellcaster, choose a steamjack in this character's battlegroup that is in his control area. That steamjack can immediately make a full advance and then can make one normal melee or ranged attack targeting the enemy character. The attack and damage rolls against that character are boosted. After the attack is resolved, Watcher expires.

NEW ADVENTURING COMPANIES

GREYLORDS

The characters are members and agents of the Greylords Covenant. Depending on their specializations, the characters might be sent to plumb the depths of ancient ruins in search of arcane artifacts of value to the Motherland's war effort, uncover and eliminate traitors, see to the safety and protection of a great prince, annihilate representatives of a rival arcane organization, or steal occult secrets—anything to further the cause of the Khadoran Empire. The characters must answer to their superiors within the organization but have broad freedom in accomplishing the tasks assigned to them.

Requirements: Each member of the company must be a human Khadoran and have at least one of the following careers: Arcane Mechanik, Greylord Arcanist (p. 175), Doom Reaver (p. 178), Explorer, Investigator, Man-at-Arms, Military Officer, Soldier, Spy, or Khadoran Warcaster (p. 176). The company must include at least one Arcane Mechanik, Greylord Arcanist, or Khadoran Warcaster.

Players in the group should designate one Arcane Mechanik, Greylord Arcanist, or Khadoran Warcaster to be the *magziev*, the leader of the company. Any other Arcane Mechaniks, Arcanists, and Warcasters in the company hold the rank of *rastovik* and as such are full members of the Greylords Covenant. Other characters in the company are considered to be agents in the employ of the Greylords Covenant or military personnel assigned to the command of the Greylords.

Benefits: Each Gifted character begins the game with one additional Cost 2 spell.

Each non-Gifted character begins with the Iron Will ability.

Additionally, if there are any Doom Reavers in the company, the magziev begins the game with an Orgoth staff (p. 185).

KHADORAN MILITARY DETAIL

The characters are members of a special detail drawn from various branches of the Khadoran military. The group could include a Widowmaker sharpshooter, a Kossite scout, and a Man-O-War mechanik, all led by an Iron Fang officer. Rather than fighting on the front lines, the group is tasked with various missions of a more subtle nature appropriate to the characters' mix of skills, such as infiltration, reconnaissance, and sabotage. The detail might include subterfuge behind enemy lines, conducting prisoner transfers, or tracking down dangerous criminals. All in a day's work!

Requirements: Each member of the company must be a human Khadoran and have at least one of the following careers: Greylord Arcanist (p. 175), Assault Kommando (p. 177), Field Mechanik, Iron Fang, Man-O-War (p. 180), Ranger (woodland scout), Rifleman (Widowmaker), Soldier (Winter Guard), or Khadoran Warcaster (p. 176). The players in the group should designate one member of the company to be the lieutenant. The lieutenant then designates a sergeant.

Benefits: The characters in the company receive regular assignments and information of military significance along with the equipment necessary to carry out the mission. Additionally, the group can requisition up to 100 gc in Khadoran arms, ammunition, and gear each month.

The lieutenant gains the Natural Leader ability whether or not he meets the prerequisites.

Additionally, Field Mechaniks in the company can begin the game with a Kolstot laborjack (p. 191) with up to 200 gc in weapons instead of starting with a light laborjack.

KHADORAN GEAR

ARMOR

ASSAULT KOMMANDO ARMOR

Cost: 350 gc
SPD Modifier: 0
DEF Modifier: –2**ARM Modifier:** +7

Description: The sealed and alchemically treated infantry armor of the assault kommandos is made up of layers of plate, chain, leather, and insulation. The armor is not only proof

against flame and corrosives, it also integrates a gas mask to protect the wearer from noxious fumes.

Special Rules: A character wearing assault kommando armor gains an additional +3 ARM against corrosion and fire damage and never suffers the Corrosion or Fire continuous effects. Because this armor integrates a gas mask, a character wearing it is also immune to gas effects but suffers –1 on sight and hearing-based PER rolls.

MAN-O-WAR ARMOR

Cost: 1,500 gc
SPD Modifier: –3
DEF Modifier: –3
ARM Modifier: +9

Description: Created to enable mere men to go toe-to-toe with warjacks on the battlefield, Man-O-War armor is miraculous steam-powered armor that imbues its wearer with incredible strength, durability, and protection. There are drawbacks to wearing heavy battle armor powered by a steam boiler, however. Those who wear suits of Man-O-War armor are susceptible to heat stroke, exhaustion, and the occasional steam leak that can cook them alive in minutes. A wearer must be extensively trained in the use of the armor merely to walk in it, let alone learn to control the incredible strength invested by the armor.

Man-O-War armor can carry a full fuel load of 33 pounds of coal and 165 pounds of water. It will burn a full load of fuel in 8 hours of general operation or in 1.5 hours of combat operation. Every day a suit of Man-O-War armor is in operation, whether in combat or not, it should be refueled and refilled with water.

Special Rules: A character must have the Ironhead ability to use Man-O-War armor. It can be worn only by characters with human-like proportions and is optimized for wearers approximately six and a half feet tall.

Putting on or removing Man-O-War armor takes five minutes. A character receiving assistance in taking off the armor can do so one minute faster for each other character assisting him, to a minimum of two minutes to put on or remove the armor.

A character wearing Man-O-War armor gains +3 STR.

A character wearing Man-O-War armor gains ten additional damage boxes that must be lost before the character starts losing vitality on his life spiral. These boxes represent additional protection granted by the armor. After these boxes are gone, the wearer suffers damage to his life spiral normally.

Despite being incredibly durable and resilient, Man-O-War armor also houses extremely complex and sophisticated machinery that is subject to damage and wear. Whether the damage is applied to the armor's damage boxes or the wearer's life spiral, when a character wearing Man-O-War armor suffers 5 or more points of damage as a result of a damage roll, a roll must be made on the Man-O-War Armor Internal Damage Table to determine if any internal systems are also damaged.

Repairing damage to Man-O-War armor requires access to sheet metal, scrap, and a full repair kit. Every hour a mechanik labors over a damaged suit of Man-O-War armor, he can repair an amount of damage equal to his Mechanical Engineering skill level. If the character has access to a full machinist's shop and/or a ready supply of replacement parts, he can remove an additional d3 damage points each hour. A mechanik who is assisted in his repairs by additional characters with the Mechanical Engineering skill can remove one additional damage point for each other character assisting him. Paying to have non-internal damage to a suit of Man-O-War armor repaired costs 10 gc per hour per mechanik working on it.

MAN-O-WAR ARMOR INTERNAL DAMAGE TABLE

When a character wearing Man-O-War armor suffers 5 or more points of damage as a result of a damage roll, a roll must be made on the Man-O-War Armor Internal Damage Table to determine if any internal systems are also damaged. If the armor suffers the same effect on a subsequent roll before the previous effect has been repaired, the armor suffers no additional internal damage.

TARGET NUMBER	ALCHEMICAL SUBSTANCE BEING IDENTIFIED
1–2	Nothing Happens – No internal systems are damaged
3	Arm Damaged – One of the Man-O-War arms is crippled as a result of the damage suffered. Randomize which arm is damaged. Until the damage is repaired, the character suffers –3 to attack rolls made with the damaged arm
4	Loss of Power – The armor's steam pressure has been compromised, resulting in a severe loss of power to the armor. Until repaired, the character loses the armor's +3 STR bonus.
5	Movement Damaged – The armor's movement systems have been damaged. Until repaired, the character suffers an additional –1 SPD and DEF and cannot run or charge
6	Boiler Leak – The armor's boiler has been damaged, resulting in steam being dangerously vented into the suit itself. Until the armor is removed, the character wearing the armor suffers d3 damage points at the end of each of his turns. Outside of combat he suffers this damage once per minute.

Repairing internal damage to a suit of Man-O-War armor requires two hours of labor with the proper tools and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering skill roll against a target number of 14. If the roll fails, the character can attempt it again after another hour of labor. A successful repair removes the effects of one internal damage roll.

Paying to have internal system damage to a suit of Man-O-War repaired costs 75 gc per effect removed.

Fellblade

WINTER GUARD ARMOR

Cost: 100 gc
SPD Modifier: 0
DEF Modifier: –2
ARM Modifier: +7

Description: Winter Guard armor is made up of heavy armored plates over an insulated and lightly armored great coat. The armor prominently features heavy shoulder plates and an armored breastplate. It is typically worn with a fur hat issued with the armor (and included in its cost).

Special Rules: A character wearing Winter Guard armor gains +3 ARM against cold damage.

MELEE WEAPONS

ANNIHILATOR BLADE

Cost: 30 gc
Skill: Great Weapon
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 5

Description: The primary weapon of the Man-O-War shocktroopers, the annihilator blade is effectively a heavy steel and brass halberd balanced for use one-handed.

Special Rules: A character must have at least STR 7 to use this weapon.

The annihilator blade has Reach.

BLASTING LANCE

Cost: 125 gc
Skill: Lance
Attack Modifier: 0 (charging), –2 (not charging)
POW: 10 (charging), 4 (not charging)

Description: The blasting lance is the signature weapon of the Iron Fang Uhlans. In addition to the speed and crushing weight of a rider and his steed driving the lance point forward, the weapon is further enhanced with an explosive spear point designed to rip through the armored hull of a warjack. The haft of the weapon is designed to retract for rearming the explosive head weapon without a rider ever leaving the saddle.

The blasting lance is also features a thrusting spear-tip set into the pommel of the weapon for close-quarters fighting once the blasting head has been detonated. It is an awkward way to fight with the weapon but can make the difference between life and death in the field.

Special Rules: A character must have at least STR 5 to use this weapon. This weapon can be used only while mounted.

This weapon can make charge attacks only while its blasting head is armed and then only with its blasting head. When used to make a charge, a blasting lance has Reach. On a critical hit on a charge, the target is knocked down.

Explosive blasting lance heads must be replaced after every charge attack.

It takes a quick action to replace the blasting lance's head. Explosive blasting lance head replacements each cost 1 gc.

FELLBLADE

Cost: These weapons are unavailable at any price and are closely guarded by the Greylords Covenant and its agents.
Skill: Great Weapon
Attack Modifier: –2 (one-handed), 0 (two-handed)
POW: 6

Description: These fearsome arcane weapons are relics left behind by the Orgoth. Gibbering, whispering, and murderous, fellblades literally speak to their wielders. Virtually all who wield a fellblade go mad but are invested with tireless and terrifying reserves of strength and fortitude. Over time these weapons wear down the sanity of their wielders, driving them to murderous rages while stripping them of the last shreds of their humanity. Though the Greylords are said to have knowledge of their creation, such lore is among the order's greatest secrets.

Special Rules: A character must have at least STR 5 to use this weapon.

The fellblade has Reach and is a magical weapon.

While carrying a fellblade a character cannot cast spells, cannot be targeted by spells, and never suffers the effects of Terror.

A living character in possession of a fellblade must make a Willpower roll against a target number of 16 once per day. If he succeeds, nothing happens. If he fails, his Willpower is reduced by 1. The character must make an additional roll immediately after any encounter in which he destroyed one or more characters.

Additionally, any time a living character in possession of a fellblade attempts to spare the life of an enemy, he must make a Willpower roll against a target number of 16. If he fails, he must attempt to kill the enemy character.

If a character's Willpower is reduced to 0 as a result of his fellblade possession, he becomes a slave to the weapon and becomes an NPC under the Game Master's control. The character becomes a living monster that exists to hunt and kill. The character loses all non-Mighty archetype benefits, quickly drops all other weapons and gear except for his fellblade, and gains the Abomination and Berserk abilities (p. 181).

If a character that has not yet become a slave to a fellblade is separated from the weapon, he regains 1 Willpower point for every full twenty-four hours he is separated from the weapon.

TRAGIC DEVICE

Fellblades are powerful and cursed artifacts. Their wielders are certain to live short and incredibly violent lives. If you are not playing a Doom Reaver and do not wish your character's arc to take a drastic turn toward the tragic, for Morrow's sake, do not pick up swords covered in leering, gibbering faces.

ICE MAUL

Cost: 910 gc
Skill: Great Weapon
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 5

Description: The ice maul is a mechanikal weapon that flash-freezes any surface on contact, causing it shatter from the force of the blow. Ice mauls are carried by the Khadoran Demolition Corps. The ice maul is powered by an arcanodynamic capacitor.

Rune Points: 4

Special Rules: A character must have at least STR 7 to use this weapon.

This weapon can only be used two-handed.

The ice maul has Reach.

This weapon gains boosted damage rolls against characters without Immunity: Cold.

Fabrication: The material cost of the ice maul housing is 75 gc. It takes three weeks to construct the device. The pertinent Craft skill for construction is Craft (metal working).

The ice maul's runeplates require four weeks to scribe and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 16.

ORGOTH STAFF

Cost: These weapons are unavailable at any price and are closely guarded by the Greylords Covenant and its agents.
Skill: Great Weapon
Attack Modifier: –2 (one-handed), 0 (two-handed)
POW: 6

Description: These dark artifacts are enchanted to give their wielder a degree of control over the gibbering, mad bearers of the fellblades. A relic of the Orgoth, these weapons are ancient and none alive know the secrets of their manufacture.

Carved from a strange, deep-green stone or alien mineral, these staves are covered in howling and distorted faces that repeat their bearer's words in a voice that resonates deeply with the bearers of fellblades.

The Greylords Covenant takes great pains to secure all Orgoth staves, which are rare in the extreme. The majority were found in the mines beneath Khardov along with stashes of fellblades. These weapons exist virtually only in the hands of senior members of that order, who use them to control the Doom Reavers. Should a staff be discovered outside the order, it will be considered an imperative of the state that it be returned or otherwise secured.

Special Rules: The Orgoth staff has Reach and is a magical weapon.

While carrying an Orgoth staff, a character cannot be targeted by spells (even if he is the caster and the spell's target is Self) and never suffers the effects of Terror.

A bearer of an Orgoth staff cannot be attacked by a character armed with a fellblade for any reason. Additionally, while within the command range of a character wielding an Orgoth staff, a character armed with a fellblade gains the Mighty archetype benefit Tough and the Silence ability (p. 181).

A character wielding an Orgoth staff can compel a character armed with a fellblade to follow any order with a successful STR + Command roll against a target number equal to the fellblade bearer's Willpower. The fellblade bearer must follow the order to his best ability as long as he remains within the Orgoth staff wielder's command range. If the fellblade bearer leaves the staff wielder's command range, the effects of the order end.

RANGED WEAPONS

ASSAULT KOMMANDO FLAMETHROWER

Cost: 50 gc
Ammo: 10
Effective Range: SP8
Extreme Range:—
Skill: Light Artillery
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 12
AOE: —

Description: This weapon is made up of a handheld spray nozzle and an immense tank of explosive alchemical agent. The weapon produces gouts of flame that are devastating in the confined earthworks where the kommandos typically operate.

Special Rules: A character armed with this weapon suffers –1 SPD and DEF.

Flamethrowers cause fire damage. A character hit by a flamethrower suffers the Fire continuous effect.

Refueling a flamethrower requires removing the spent tank and strapping on a replacement tank. Removing or replacing a tank each requires a full action.

It costs 30 gc for a fresh tank of flamethrower fuel.

When a character armed with an assault kommando flamethrower suffers 5 or more damage points from an attack or effect, roll a d6. On the roll of a 1, the tank explodes. If the tank explodes, center a 5″ AOE on the character armed with the flamethrower. That character suffers a POW 14 damage roll, all characters in the AOE suffer the Fire continuous effect, and this weapon is completely destroyed.

BOMBARDIER GRENADE CANNON

Cost: 300 gc
Ammo: 1
Effective Range: 60 feet (10″)
Extreme Range: 300 feet
Skill: Light Artillery
Attack Modifier: –1
POW: 14
AOE: 3

Description: This is a breach-loading heavy grenade launcher fit with a steam-driven chain blade for close combat. Grenade cannons are the weapons of the Man-O-War bombardiers. The chain blade's motor must be refilled with five pounds of coal and water after every thirty minutes of use.

Special Rules: A character must have at least STR 7 to use this weapon.

This weapon requires two hands.

When making a ranged attack with this weapon, a character armed with the grenade cannon can ignore intervening characters except those within 1″ of the target.

It costs 5 gc for each grenade cannon round.

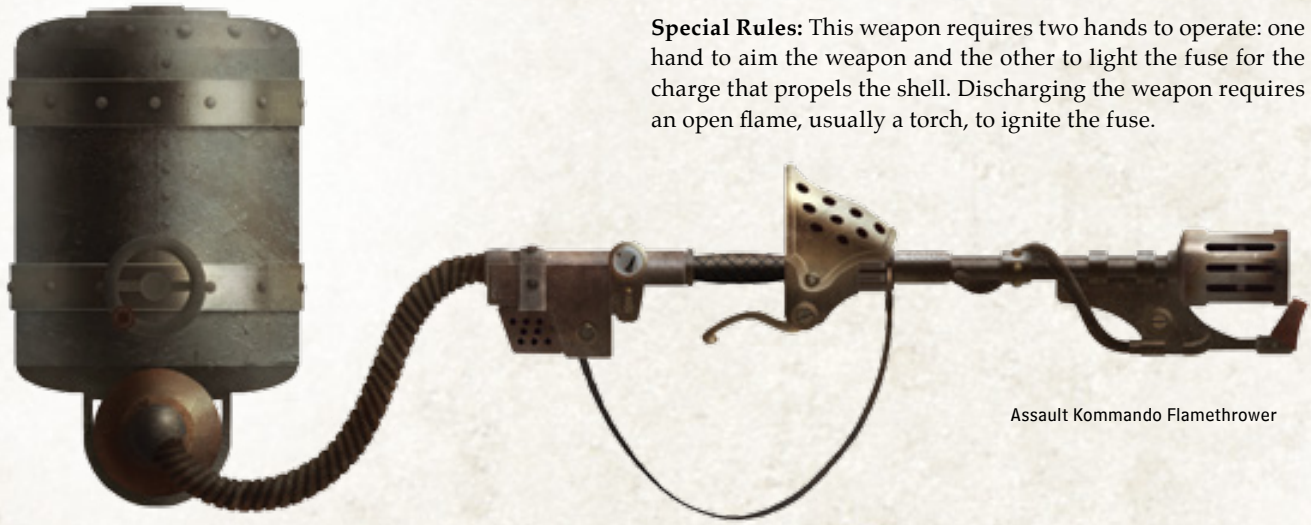
When used as a melee weapon, this weapon has an attack modifier of –1, is POW 4, and uses the Great Weapon skill.

FIELD GUN

Cost: 120 gc
Ammo: 1
Effective Range: 96 feet (16″)
Extreme Range: 480 feet
Skill: Light Artillery
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 14
AOE: —

Description: The field gun is a relatively light, man-portable cannon. A staple of the Khadoran military, the weapon is generally operated by a crew of three Winter Guard.

Special Rules: This weapon requires two hands to operate: one hand to aim the weapon and the other to light the fuse for the charge that propels the shell. Discharging the weapon requires an open flame, usually a torch, to ignite the fuse.



Assault Kommando Flamethrower

Field Gun

The weapon can be fired only while supported by its tripod. Mounting the field gun on the tripod takes a full action. The weapon cannot be moved while sitting on the tripod. A character moving the field gun or its tripod suffers –2 SPD and DEF. The weapon cannot be moved for three rounds after being fired, while it cools down.

Reloading this weapon takes a full action. Generally one crewman will assist in reloading the gun and the gunner fires it.

It costs 3 gc for a charge and one round of ammunition.

MORTAR

Cost: 120 gc
Ammo: 1
Effective Range: 120 feet (20″)
Extreme Range: 600 feet
Skill: Light Artillery
Attack Modifier: –4
POW: 16
AOE: 4

Description: This is the standard-issue light mortar utilized by Winter Guard forces. These weapons first saw use in the Llaelese War and have since become a standard of the Khadoran arsenal. Captured and surplus mortars have even made their way onto the black market where they are scooped up by eager mercenary companies, although ammunition for these weapons is ever in short supply.

Light mortars are simple to operate, easy to maintain, and devastating to the enemy. Although quite heavy, these weapons are far lighter than traditional artillery. They are not terribly accurate but can be used in numbers to great effect.

Special Rules: This weapon requires two hands to operate: one hand to aim the weapon and the other to light the fuse for the charge that propels the shell. Discharging the weapon requires an open flame, usually a torch, to ignite the fuse.

Attacks made with this weapon cannot target anything within 24 feet (8″) of the mortar.

When attacking with this weapon, the character can ignore intervening characters except those within 1″ of the target.

Reloading this weapon takes a full action. Generally one crewman will assist in reloading the mortar and the gunner fires it.

A character moving the mortar suffers –2 SPD and DEF. Reduce move and DEF penalties by 1 for characters with STR 6 or greater.

It costs 5 gc for a charge and one round of ammunition.

MAN-O-WAR SHIELD CANNON

Cost: 110 gc
Ammo: 1 (slug round)
Effective Range: 36 feet (6″)
Extreme Range: —
Skill: Light Artillery
Attack Modifier: –1
POW: 14
AOE: —

Description: This heavy shield is set with an integral, single shot cannon. These weapons are carried by the Man-O-War shocktroopers.

Special Rules: A character must have at least STR 7 to use this weapon.

It costs 1 gc for blasting powder, slug, and casing for one slug round.

When used as a melee weapon, this weapon has an attack modifier of –1, is POW 1, and uses the Shield skill.

A character armed with a shield gains +1 ARM for each level of the Shield skill he has against attacks originating in his front arc. This bonus is not cumulative with additional shields.

Axe Cannon

MAN-O-WAR AXE CANNON

Cost: 300 gc
Ammo: 1 (slug round)
Effective Range: 48 feet (8″)
Extreme Range: 240 feet
Skill: Light Artillery
Attack Modifier: –1
POW: 14
AOE: —

Description: The weapon of the Man-O-War officer corps, this heavy cannon is set with a stout axe blade. It packs an impressive amount of firepower in a single package and is intended to be paired with an assault shield.

Special Rules: A character must have at least STR 7 to use this weapon.

It costs 1 gc for blasting powder, slug, and casing for one slug round.

When used as a melee weapon, this weapon has an attack modifier of 0, is POW 6, and uses the Great Weapon skill.

ROCKET TUBE

Cost: 30 gc
Ammo: 1
Effective Range: 84 feet (14″)
Extreme Range: 420 feet
Skill: Light Artillery
Attack Modifier: 0 (crouching), –2 (not crouching)
POW: 12
AOE: 3

Description: Developed from a wealth of alchemical knowledge plundered from the Order of the Golden Crucible, Khador's man-portable rocket launchers place incredible firepower in the hands of its infantry. The weapon consists of a reusable launching tube and the rocket itself. The rocket slides into the tube so that only its bulbous head protrudes. It is then fired from a trigger set into the tube. The weapon is designed to be fired while crouching so that the rocketeer can brace the rocket tube with his own weight to steady his aim.

The rockets are typically carried in heavy quivers slung over the shoulder of Winter Guard rocketeers. Seldom does a rocketeer carry more than three rockets at a time due to their great weight.

Special Rules: A character must have at least STR 6 to use this weapon.

A character carrying more than three rockets suffers –1 SPD and DEF for each rocket he carries after the third.

It takes a quick action to reload the rocket tube.

Rockets cost 15 gc each.

VISLOVSKI CARBINE

Cost: 110 gc
Ammo: 5 (metal cased light round)
Effective Range: 60 feet (10″)
Extreme Range: 300 feet
Skill: Rifle
Attack Modifier: 0 (carbine), –2 (grenade launcher)
POW: 10
AOE: —

Description: The signature weapon of the assault kommandos, this carbine integrates a small gas grenade launcher and a gun blade mounted under the barrel. The grenade launcher is used to fire custom strangle gas grenade rounds.

Special Rules: Replacing this weapon's ammo wheel requires a quick action. Reloading each chamber of the ammo wheel takes one quick action.

The grenade launcher can hold one round of ammunition. It is RNG 10 with no extreme range. Strangle gas grenades cause no damage. The weapon's AOE is a cloud effect, gas effect that remains in play for one round. While in the AOE, living characters suffer –2 DEF and –2 to attack rolls.

The underblade is considered to be a bayonet. When used as a melee weapon, this weapon has an attack modifier of –1, is POW 3, and uses the Hand Weapon skill.

Vislovski Carbine

It costs 3 gc for blasting powder, bullets, and metal casings for five light carbine rounds.

An ammo wheels cost 15 gc. Grenade launcher strangle gas ammunition costs 25 gc per round.

GEAR

BLUNDERBUSS AMMUNITION, GRAPESHOT

Cost: 1 gc for blasting powder, shot, and casing for one shot round

Description: Occasionally used by Winter Guard forces, grapeshot rounds are used to pepper enemies in close quarters. A blunderbuss firing a grapeshot round becomes RNG SP 8, has no extreme range, and is POW 10.

Grapeshot Ammunition

MAN-O-WAR AMMO BANDOLIER

Cost: 20 gc

Description: This is a mechanism for strapping grenade cannon ammunition to the armor of Man-O-War bombardiers. The bandolier holds three rounds of grenade cannon ammunition.

A character with an ammo bandolier can draw and reload a round into a firearm as part of the same quick action.

Only characters with STR 7 or more can wear this bandolier.

WARHORSE, KARPATHAN DESTRIER

PHY	14	SPD	7	STR	14

Cost: 500 gc

Description: The terrifying Karpathan warhorse is a mammoth breed, the largest bred by the horselords of Khador. These legendary steeds are the only warhorses capable of bearing the weight of a rider in Man-O-War armor. These steeds are designated as warhorses and can make cavalry charges when ridden by a skilled rider.

Only a character with the Trained Rider (Karpathan Destrier) ability can ride a Karpathan destrier.

A Karpathan warhorse has ARM 14 and 14 vitality points. Unmounted, a Karpathan warhorse has DEF 10.

A perturbed Karpathan warhorse without a rider can kick with MAT 5. The animal can also make impact attacks. Anyone hit by a warhorse attack suffers a damage roll with a POW equal to the Karpathan warhorse's STR. On a critical hit, the target is knocked down.

WARHORSE, POZDYOV

PHY	12	SPD	8	STR	12

Cost: 250 gc

Description: The Pozdyov is a powerful breed of warhorse once bred by the horselords of old. These steeds are designated as warhorses and can make cavalry charges when ridden by a skilled rider.

A Pozdyov warhorse has ARM 12 and 12 vitality points. Unmounted, a Pozdyov warhorse has DEF 12.

A perturbed Pozdyov warhorse without a rider can kick with MAT 5. The animal can also make impact attacks. Anyone hit by a warhorse attack suffers a damage roll with a POW equal to the Pozdyov warhorse's STR. On a critical hit, the target is knocked down.

KHADORAN STEAMJACKS

Within Khador, the needs of the military have taken priority over all commercial uses of this technology, but laborjacks still perform a vital role in heavy industries such as mining, logging, and cargo shipment. All of these 'jacks are built for maximum durability and extremely long service life. Cortexes are relatively scare in Khador and, as a result, are always in high demand.

Even with the captured resources of Llael and the Thornwood, the empire still lacks the precious metals and trace minerals for specialized alloys necessary for the fabrication of the higher-grade warjack cortexes in large quantities. Because of this, the Khadoran Mechaniks Assembly continues to allocate most of its resources to creating robust and heavily armored 'jacks with medium-grade cortexes intended to be as survivable as possible. Other nations have created more maneuverable and reactive light warjacks to fill a variety of battlefield roles, but Khador addresses those needs differently, primarily by the use of Man-O-War soldiers. The empire's heavy warjacks are capable of carrying out multiple battle functions, and their durable chassis and great strength allow them to wield staggeringly effective weapons. Khador's approach to mechanikal weapon design is similarly pragmatic, emphasizing reliability under combat stresses and therefore avoiding overly complicated or delicate systems that might fail in battle.

CHASSIS AND WEAPON SYSTEMS

The armies of the Iron Kingdoms approach their warjacks as integrated weapon systems. Each chassis has a host of weapons developed specifically for it, most designed for use only in specific configurations. Mounting these weapons on chassis they were not designed to work with can be quite expensive and labor-intensive.

RULES

The following attributes define different steamjack chassis in the game.

Cost: This is the cost of the cost of the chassis in Cygnaran gold crowns.

Description: This is a description of the chassis.

Height/Weight: The chassis' technical specs.

Fuel Load/Burn Usage: This describes the chassis' standard fuel load and burn rate.

Initial Service Date: This is the date the chassis first entered service.

Original Chassis Design: This is the original manufacturer or designer of the chassis.

Stock Cortex: This is the cortex that comes stock with the steamjack chassis. The cost of this cortex is included in the cost of the chassis. It is assumed the cortex has been wiped and has no lingering personality at the time of purchase. The cortex can be replaced, but the original personality of the steamjack will be lost as a result. For cortex descriptions, see *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*.

Stats: These are the chassis' stats. The steamjack's INT and PER are determined by its cortex. The stats listed below assume a stock cortex.

Special Rules: These are the special rules that apply to the chassis.

Damage Grid: This is the chassis' damage grid.

KHADORAN LABORJACKS

The Motherland produces western Immoren's most rugged and powerful steamjacks, and the design philosophies that shade Khador's warjacks extend to her laborjacks as well. Though produced in relatively small numbers, Khadoran laborjacks are used in all manner of heavy industry, from the dockyards of Port Vladovar to the mines of Skirov. The lowest-grade cortexes do not require some of the more difficult-to-acquire materials required of military-grade cortexes and thus can be produced without diminishing the needs of the Khadoran Army.

Khadoran laborjacks are as strong as warjacks but lack the heavy armor and consequently do not require such massive steam engines to move them. The machines are relatively simple-minded, generally possessing only cupernum-grade cortexes, and are relegated to tasks in which great strength rather than finesse is required.

LAIKA CHASSIS

LAIKA HEAVY LABORJACK CHASSIS

Cost: 2,950 GC (WITH STOCK CORTEX), 2,850 GC (CHASSIS ONLY)

Description: THE LAIKA MODEL CREATED LONG AGO BY THE HORVOSKO BROTHERS IN KORSK BLAZED A TRAIL FOR ALL KHADORAN LABORJACKS TO FOLLOW: BIG, STRONG, AND RELIABLE. THOUGH NO NEW LAIKA MODELS HAVE COME OFF THE ASSEMBLY LINE IN OVER 100 YEARS, MANY OF THESE MACHINES ARE STILL IN SERVICE THROUGHOUT THE MOTHERLAND AND BEYOND. THE 'JACKS ARE EASILY AND INEXPENSIVELY MAINTAINED; THEIR MECHANIKS SIMPLY REPLACE THE CORTEXES EVERY GENERATION OR SO, WHENEVER THE OLD CORTEX BEGINS TO SHOW SIGNS OF AGE-INDUCED DEGRADATION. CUPERNUM-GRADE CORTEXES, BEING RELATIVELY CHEAP AND SIMPLY MADE, SHOW SIGNS OF WEAR FAR IN ADVANCE OF BETTER-MADE, MORE COMPLEX CORTEXES.

Height/Weight: 10´5˝ / 5.2 TONS

Fuel Burn/Load Usage: 550 LBS / 3.5 HRS GENERAL, 25 MINS COMBAT

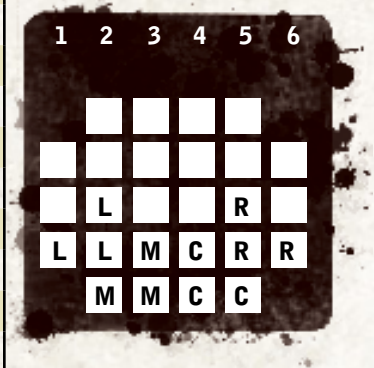
Initial Service Date: 392 AR

Original Chassis Design: HORVOSKO BROTHERS

Stock Cortex: CUPERNUM-GRADE

PHY	11
STR	11
SPD	4
AGL	2
PRW	3
POI	2
INT	1
PER	1
Initiative	8
MAT	3
RAT	2
DEF	7
ARM	17

DAMAGE GRID



Special Rules: Initiative is rolled only in the case of an uncontrolled steamjack; otherwise the 'jack activates on its controller's initiative.

Initiative MAT, RAT, and DEF assume a stock cortex. A steamjack with a cupernum-grade cortex can be allocated up to 1 focus point. Furthermore, a steamjack with a cupernum-grade cortex can be affected by only one 'jack marshal drive each turn.

LAIKA STEAMJACK

The Laika comes stock with a pair of fists.

KOLSTOT CHASSIS

KOLSTOT HEAVY LABORJACK CHASSIS

Cost: 3,700 GC (with stock cortex), 3,600 GC (chassis only)

Description: The Kolstot heavy laborjack is produced by the great Zerutsk Foundry in Korsk, the largest producer of laborjacks in Khador. The machine is typical of Khador's modern industrial steamjacks.

Height/Weight: 10'8" / 6 tons

Fuel Burn/Load Usage: 650 lbs / 5 hrs general, 45 mins combat

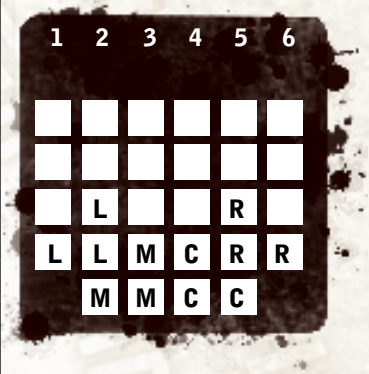
Initial Service Date: 571 AR

Original Chassis Design: Zerutsk Foundry

Stock Cortex: Cupernum-grade

PHY	**12**
STR	**12**
SPD	**4**
AGL	**3**
PRW	**3**
POI	**2**
INT	**1**
PER	**1**
Initiative	**8**
MAT	**3**
RAT	**2**
DEF	**8**
ARM	**17**

DAMAGE GRID



Special Rules: Initiative is rolled only in the case of an uncontrolled steamjack; otherwise the 'jack activates on its controller's initiative.

Initiative MAT, RAT, and DEF assume a stock cortex. A steamjack with a cupernum-grade cortex can be allocated up to 1 focus point. Furthermore, a steamjack with a cupernum-grade cortex can be affected by only one 'jack marshal drive each turn.

KOLSTOT STEAMJACK

The Kolstot comes stock with a pair of fists.

BERSERKER CHASSIS

BERSERKER HEAVY WARJACK CHASSIS

Cost: 6,000 GC (with stock cortex), 4,500 GC (chassis only)

Description: The Berserker is Khador's oldest warjack chassis still in service. It is the mark of Khadoran engineering that these machines continue to fight for the Motherland despite their age and considerable wear. These warjacks have a reputation for instability and cantankerousness resulting from the deterioration of their cortexes. For some, these traits are benefits to be exploited. For others they are signs of 'jacks past their prime and fit only for the scrap yard.

Height/Weight: 10'11" / 8.4 tons

Fuel Burn/Load Usage: 715 lbs / 5 hrs general, 55 mins combat

Initial Service Date: 430 AR

Original Chassis Design: Khadoran Mechaniks Assembly

Stock Cortex: Berserkers have the equivalent to aurum-grade cortexes. Virtually all of these warjacks have been in operation for so long that their antiquated stock cortexes have degraded considerably.

Stock Berserker cortexes have only two damage boxes instead of the normal three (reflected on the Berserker's damage grid).

If a stock Berserker cortex suffers catastrophic cortex damage, the damage cannot be repaired. Furthermore, all stock Berserker cortexes suffer the Unstable catastrophic damage effects. (Unstable – Extensive damage to the steamjack's cortex has weakened its integrity. Until repaired, at the end of any activation in which the steamjack spent 1 or more focus points, roll a d6. If the roll is equal to or less than the number of focus points spent, the steamjack explodes and characters within 3" of it suffer an unboostable POW 14 blast damage roll. The steamjack is completely destroyed in the explosion.)

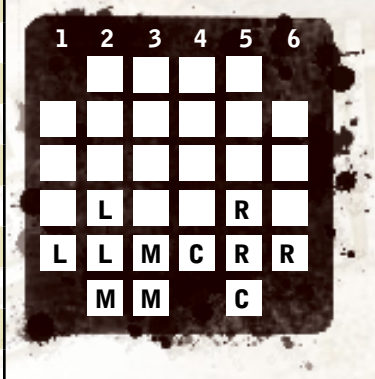
As a result of their cantankerous dispositions, Berserker warjacks with a stock cortex can run or charge without spending a focus point or being 'jack marshaled.

Additionally, a Berserker warjack with a stock cortex gains Chain Attack: Brutality. (Chain Attack: Brutality – If a steamjack fighting with two melee hand weapons hits the same target with both of its initial attacks, after resolving the attacks it can immediately make one head-butt power attack against that character. A steamjack with a crippled weapon system cannot make a chain attack.)

Berserker

PHY	10
STR	11
SPD	4
AGL	5
PRW	4
POI	2
INT	2
PER	2
Initiative	10
MAT	5
RAT	3
DEF	11
ARM	18

DAMAGE GRID



Special Rules: Initiative is rolled only in the case of an uncontrolled steamjack; otherwise the 'jack activates on its controller's initiative.

Initiative MAT, RAT, and DEF assume a stock cortex.

BERSERKER WARJACK

The Berserker comes stock with a pair of fists. It is armed with a pair of war axes equivalent to heavy steamjack hand weapons (see *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*).

DEVASTATOR CHASSIS AND WEAPONS SYSTEMS

DEVASTATOR HEAVY WARJACK CHASSIS

Cost: 11,500 GC (WITH STOCK CORTEX), 9,000 GC (CHASSIS ONLY)

Description: THE DEVASTATOR CHASSIS IS TRULY IN A CLASS OF ITS OWN AS A MASTERPIECE OF KHADORAN ENGINEERING. THE ULTRA-HEAVY WARJACK FIRST ENTERED SERVICE IN 598 AR, AND ITS VARIANTS INCLUDE THE DEMOLISHER AND THE SPRIGGAN.

Height/Weight: 11′5″ / 16 TONS

Fuel Burn/Load Usage: 1,125 LBS / 4 HRS GENERAL, 45 MINS COMBAT

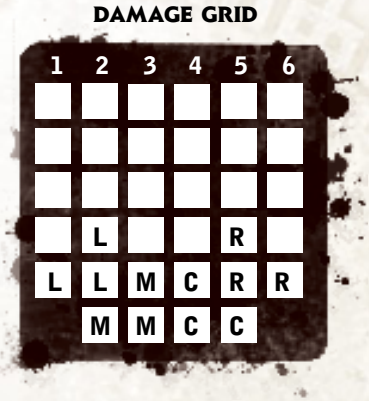
Initial Service Date: 598 AR

Original Chassis Design: KHADORAN MECHANIKS ASSEMBLY

Stock Cortex: AURUM-GRADE

PHY	14
STR	12
SPD	4
AGL	4
PRW	5
POI	3
INT	2
PER	2
Initiative	11
MAT	6
RAT	4
DEF	10
ARM	19

DAMAGE GRID



Special Rules: Due to the incredible weight and sheer power of its chassis, when a Devastator advances into B2B contact with an enemy during its activation, it can push the enemy up to 2″ directly away from it. A character can be pushed by the steamjack only once per activation. This special rule has no effect when the steamjack makes a trample power attack.

Initiative is rolled only in the case of an uncontrolled steamjack; otherwise the 'jack activates on its controller's initiative.

Initiative MAT, RAT, and DEF assume a stock cortex.

Special Weapon System: The Devastator chassis is designed to house one of several impressive weapons developed especially for the chassis. A Devastator can have only one of these weapon systems.

Removing or replacing one of these weapon systems requires five hours of labor and access to a crane and a mechanik's tool kit. After the time has passed, the mechanik must make an INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 14. If the roll succeeds, the character has successfully removed or installed the weapon system. If the roll fails, the weapon system either cannot be removed without additional labor or was improperly installed and will not function. Either way, the character must spend an additional hour of labor before attempting the roll again.

Having one of these weapon systems installed or removed costs 75 gc in labor.

GRENADE LAUNCHERS (DEVASTATOR CHASSIS ONLY)

Cost: 550 gc (per pair)
Type: Ranged
Location: Devastator chassis' shoulders
Ammo: 3 anti-personnel grenades and 3 flares in each shoulder
Effective Range: 60 feet (10″)
Extreme Range: 300 feet
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 10
AOE: 3

Description: This is a pair of tri-barreled grenade launchers set into the shoulders of a Devastator warjack. These grenade launchers are designed to fire anti-personnel grenades or flares. The steamjack can carry a small supply of each.

These weapons cannot be used in conjunction with shield fists; because the launcher barrels stick out so far beyond the warjack's shoulders, shield fists cannot close up around them.

Special Rules: Each grenade launcher can be fired only once per round.

When attacking with this weapon, the steamjack can ignore intervening characters except those within 1″ of the target.

Instead of making an attack with one of these weapons, the steamjack can fire a flare. When it fires a flare, place a 3″ AOE anywhere completely within 10″ of the steamjack, with a center point in its LOS, ignoring intervening characters. While a character is within the AOE, he loses Camouflage and Stealth and other characters can ignore cloud effects when determining LOS to him. The AOE remains in play for one round.

Reloading a grenade launcher outside of combat takes twenty minutes and can be accomplished by any character with the Mechanikal Engineering skill without a die roll. Grenade launchers fire anti-personnel grenades and flares. Either costs 5 gc each.

RAIN OF DEATH (DEVASTATOR CHASSIS ONLY)

Cost: 500 gc
Location: Devastator chassis' shoulders

Description: The Rain of Death is an array of powerful, short-range grenade launchers built into a Devastator warjack's shoulders. The grenades are timed to explode in rapid succession, filling the air around the 'jack with deadly shrapnel for a few protracted seconds.

Special Rules: A warjack can use the Rain of Death only once during each of its turns, and using it takes a quick action. When a warjack with shield fists (below) uses Rain of Death, it must open its shield fist, thereby reducing its ARM to 17.

Characters B2B with the warjack when it uses Rain of Death suffer a boostable POW 18 blast damage roll. Other characters within eighteen feet (3″) of the warjack suffer a boostable POW 9 blast damage roll.

Rain of Death grenade launchers hold enough ammunition to use the weapon five times before reloading it. Each use of the Rain of Death uses 40 gc in mini-grenades. Reloading the Rain of Death outside of combat takes thirty minutes and can be accomplished by any character with the Mechanikal Engineering skill without a die roll.

SHOULDER CANNONS (DEVASTATOR CHASSIS ONLY)

Cost: 700 gc (per pair)
Type: Ranged
Location: Devastator chassis' shoulders
Ammo: 5 each
Effective Range: 48 feet (8″)
Extreme Range: 240 feet
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 15
AOE: 4

Description: These cannons are a pair of heavy, short-range guns set into the shoulders of a Devastator warjack. They are designed to retract behind the 'jack's shield fist–armored shell when they are not being fired.

Special Rules: Each of these cannons can be fired only once per round.

Reloading a shoulder cannon outside of combat takes twenty minutes and can be accomplished by any character with the Mechanikal Engineering skill without a die roll. Shoulder cannons fire standard artillery rounds in metal casings. Standard artillery rounds cost 15 gc each.

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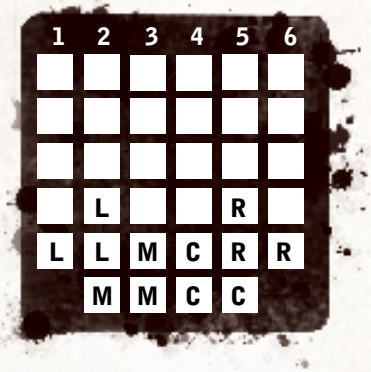

DEVASTATOR WARJACK

The Devastator comes stock with a pair of shield fists and Rain of Death grenade launchers (above) set into its shoulders.

SHIELD FIST (DEVASTATOR CHASSIS ONLY)

Cost: 800 gc (pair)
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 4

Description: These incredibly heavy warjack limbs have plates designed to fully close around the front of the machine to provide unparalleled protection. Always sold in pairs, the fists are not only capable of delivering metal buckling blows but also turn the Devastator into an impregnable bastion on the battlefield.

Devastator

Special Rules: Shield fists have the Open Fist rule and can be used to make Arm/Head Lock, Push, Throw, and Two-Handed Throw power attacks. They cannot be used to pick up other weapons.

Due to the vulnerabilities in the mechanisms that enable the shield fists to close around a warjack armed with this weapon system, a Devastator chassis armed with shield fists has its ARM reduced to 17. While the shield fists are closed around the warjack, it gains +4 ARM for each of its non-crippled arm systems. This bonus is not ignored by attacks that ignore shields. If the warjack makes an attack, it loses this bonus until the start of its next turn. These arm systems cannot be locked.

Mounting a shield fist on a steamjack chassis requires the mechanik to remove the steamjack's old arm and replace it with the armored shield (see "Removing or Replacing Arms," p. 320 of *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*).

Replacing an arm system with a shield fist costs an additional 60 gc unless the character does the job himself.

DEMOLISHER WARJACK

The Demolisher comes stock with a pair of shield fists and a pair of shoulder cannons (p. 193). Additionally, the Demolisher utilizes the hardened armor (p. 199) upgrade.

SPRIGGAN WARJACK

The Spriggan comes stock with a pair of fists. It is typically armed with an assault shield and a war lance. Additionally, it has a pair of grenade launchers (p. 193) set into its shoulders.

WAR LANCE (HEAVY STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 350 gc
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 6

Description: The standard weapon of the Spriggan, the war lance is a truly massive implement of steel too heavy for any but the strongest steamjacks to wield.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the war lance. To wield the war lance, a steamjack must have STR 12 or greater. While wielding the war lance, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the war lance is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

The war lance has Reach.

A steamjack armed with a war lance gains +2 to charge attack rolls with the weapon.

JUGGERNAUT CHASSIS AND WEAPONS SYSTEMS

JUGGERNAUT HEAVY WARJACK CHASSIS

Cost: 9,250 gc (with stock cortex), 6,750 gc (chassis only)

Description: The Juggernaut has been the Khadoran standard for heavy warjacks since its initial service date 516 AR. The heavily armored chassis features incredible strength and durability at the cost of some speed and mobility. Its variants include the Decimator, Destroyer, Kodiak, and Marauder.

Height/Weight: 11′7″ / 9 tons

Fuel Burn/Load Usage: 798 lbs / 4.5 hrs general, 50 mins combat

Initial Service Date: 516 AR

Original Chassis Design: Khadoran Mechaniks Assembly

Stock Cortex: Aurum-grade

PHY	**12**
STR	**12**
SPD	**4**
AGL	**4**
PRW	**5**
POI	**3**
INT	**2**
PER	**2**
Initiative	**11**
MAT	**6**
RAT	**4**
DEF	**10**
ARM	**20**

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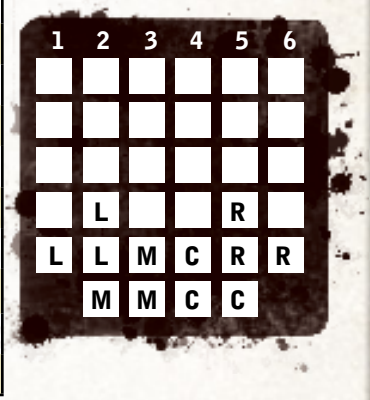


Special Rules: Initiative is rolled only in the case of an uncontrolled steamjack; otherwise the 'jack activates on its controller's initiative.

Initiative MAT, RAT, and DEF assume a stock cortex.

JUGGERNAUT WARJACK

The Juggernaut comes stock with a pair of fists. It is armed with a single ice axe and typically fights with its other fist.

ICE AXE (HEAVY STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 1,860 gc
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 7
Rune Points: 4

Description: The ice axe is a powerful mechanika weapon capable of encasing a target in ice. Even a glancing blow can freeze an enemy warjack dead in its tracks, leaving its strained engine screeching in futility. This weapon is powered by an arcanodynamic accumulator

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the ice axe. While wielding the ice axe, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist

Juggernaut

that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the ice axe is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

On a critical hit, the character hit becomes stationary for one round unless he has Immunity: Cold.

If this weapon does not does not have a functional accumulator, its POW is reduced to 5, it suffers –1 on attack rolls, and it loses its critical effect.

Fabrication: The material cost of the ice axe housing is 360 gc. It takes four weeks to construct the device. The pertinent Craft skill for construction is Craft (metal working).

The ice axe's runeplates require four weeks to scribe and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 16.

DECIMATOR WARJACK

The Decimator comes stock with a dozer cannon mounted on the left arm and a rip saw mounted on its right.

DOZER (HEAVY STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 450 gc
Type: Ranged
Location: Left Arm
Ammo: 8
Effective Range: 60 feet (10″)
Extreme Range: 300 feet
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 15
AOE: —

Description: The dozer is a massive repeating cannon of staggering power that features a revolving cylinder that allows for rapid firing. Though relatively short range, the weapon's heavy projectiles batter back any targets they do not destroy outright.

Special Rules: Generally this weapon can be fired only once per round. A bonded steamjack with this weapon can spend a focus point to make one additional attack with this weapon during its activation, or a 'jack marshal with the Drive: Ancillary Attack ability can use the drive to make one immediate attack in addition to the steamjack being able to use the cannon once per round.

On a hit, the target is pushed 1″ directly away from the steamjack. After the target is pushed, the steamjack can advance up to 1″.

Reloading the dozer outside of combat takes five minutes and can be accomplished by any character with the Mechanikal Engineering skill without a die roll. The dozer fires standard artillery rounds in metal casings. Standard artillery rounds cost 15 gc each.

Mounting this weapon on a steamjack chassis requires the mechanik to remove the steamjack's old arm and replace it with the dozer (see the "Removing or Replacing Arms" section of the Steamjack chapter of *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*). Mounting a dozer on a heavy steamjack chassis other than a Juggernaut chassis takes double the normal amount of time and increases the target number to 16. A character who wishes to have a dozer integrated into a heavy steamjack chassis other than a Juggernaut must pay double the normal rate.

Replacing an arm system with a dozer costs an additional 60 gc unless the character does the job himself. Having an arm system replaced with a dozer on a chassis other than a Juggernaut chassis costs an additional 100 gc.

Decimator

RIP SAW (HEAVY STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 375 gc
Type: Melee
Location: Right Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 6

Description: The rip saw is a massive steam-driven weapon designed to cut through the heaviest armor to reduce enemy warjacks to scrap.

Special Rules: During the steamjack's turn, when it makes an attack with this weapon against the last character hit by the weapon this activation, the attack automatically hits.

Mounting this weapon on steamjack chassis requires the mechanik to remove the steamjack's old arm and replace it with the rip saw (see the "Removing or Replacing Arms" section of the Steamjack chapter of *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*). Mounting a rip saw on a heavy steamjack chassis other than a Juggernaut chassis takes double the normal amount of time and increases the target number to 16. A character who wishes to have a rip saw integrated into a heavy steamjack chassis other than a Juggernaut must pay double the normal rate.

Replacing an arm system with a rip saw costs an additional 60 gc unless the character does the job himself. Having an arm system replaced with a rip saw on a chassis other than a Juggernaut chassis costs an additional 100 gc.

DESTROYER WARJACK

The Destroyer comes stock with a bombard cannon mounted on the left arm and a fist for its right. It is armed with an executioner axe.

BOMBARD (HEAVY STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 350 gc
Type: Ranged
Location: Left Arm
Ammo: 6
Effective Range: 84 feet (14″)
Extreme Range: 420 feet
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 14
AOE: 3

Description: The bombard is essentially a short range cannon designed to arc shells into enemy lines on the battlefield.

Special Rules: Due to the slow rate of its auto loading mechanism, this weapon can be fired only once per round.

When attacking with this weapon, the steamjack can ignore intervening characters except those within 1″ of the target.

Reloading the cannon outside of combat takes five minutes and can be accomplished by any character with the Mechanikal Engineering skill without a die roll. The bombard fires standard artillery rounds in metal casings. Standard artillery rounds cost 15 gc each.

Mounting this weapon on a steamjack chassis requires the mechanik to remove the steamjack's old arm and replace it with the bombard (see the "Removing or Replacing Arms" section of the Steamjack chapter of *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*). Mounting a bombard on a heavy steamjack chassis other than a Juggernaut chassis takes double the normal amount of time and increases the target number to 16. A character who wishes to have a bombard integrated into a heavy steamjack chassis other than a Juggernaut must pay double the normal rate.

Replacing an arm system with a bombard costs an additional 60 gc unless the character does the job himself. Having an arm system replaced with a bombard on a chassis other than a Juggernaut chassis costs an additional 100 gc.

EXECUTIONER AXE (HEAVY STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 1,320 gc
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 5
Rune Points: 2

Description: This vicious mechanikal axe is empowered to maim and eviscerate enemy warjacks. Unnaturally keen, the blade can easily sever the limbs of any steamjack it cleaves into. This weapon is powered by an alchemical capacitor.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the executioner axe. While wielding the executioner axe, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the executioner axe is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

On a critical hit, steamjack arms and weapon systems that suffer damage from this attack are crippled.

If this weapon does not does not have a functional accumulator, its POW is reduced to 4, it suffers –1 on attack rolls, and it loses its critical effect.

Fabrication: The material cost of the executioner axe housing is 300 gc. It takes two weeks to construct the device. The pertinent Craft skill for construction is Craft (metal working).

The executioner axe's runeplates require two weeks to scribe and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 14.

KODIAK WARJACK

Though the Kodiak was originally built on the Juggernaut chassis, it features a number of upgrades that make it a true all-terrain warjack. The Kodiak comes stock with a pair of armored fists. Additionally, Kodiaks integrate the all-terrain compensator (p. 110), combat reflex array (p. 199), and massive boiler (p. 199) upgrades.

ARMORED FIST (HEAVY STEAMJACK)

Cost: 200 gc
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 4

Description: This is a powerful reinforced fist designed to unleash metal-buckling blows in combat.

Special Rules: An armored fist has the Open Fist rule and can be used to make Arm/Head Lock, Push, Throw, and Two-Handed Throw power attacks. It cannot be used to pick up other weapons.

Mounting an armored fist on a steamjack chassis requires the mechanik to remove the steamjack's old arm and replace it with the armored fist (see the "Removing or Replacing Arms" section of the Steamjack chapter of *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*).

Replacing an arm system with an armored fist costs an additional 60 gc unless the character does the job himself.

MARAUDER WARJACK

The Marauder comes stock with a pair of ram pistons.

RAM PISTON (HEAVY STEAMJACK)

Cost: 350 gc (pair)
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 4

Description: The pneumatically driven ram pistons are designed to pulverize buildings and enemy warjacks. The weapons are always sold in pairs, since they are intended to work in tandem.

Special Rules: A steamjack with a pair of non-crippled ram pistons can make a combo attack with both of its ram pistons simultaneously, using both of the warjack's initial attacks to make a single devastating strike. Make a melee attack. On a hit, instead of making a normal damage roll the target is slammed d6″ directly away from the steamjack armed with the ram pistons and suffers a damage roll with POW equal to the STR of the steamjack plus twice the POW of this weapon. The POW of collateral damage is equal to the steamjack's STR.

Mounting a ram piston on a steamjack chassis requires the mechanik to remove the steamjack's old arm and replace it with the ram piston (see the "Removing or Replacing Arms" section of the Steamjack chapter of *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*).

Marauder

Replacing an arm system with a ram piston costs an additional 60 gc unless the character does the job himself.

KHADORAN GEAR AND UPGRADES

COMBAT REFLEX ARRAY

Cost: 450 gc

Description: The combat reflex array is a set of improved reflex triggers, piston upgrades, and cortex grafts that enable a steamjack to enact a number of preset combat maneuvers to devastate an enemy in melee combat. Using its weight, the force of its blows, and sudden manipulations of internal steam pressure, a steamjack armed with a combat reflex array can instinctively batter aside any opponent in its path.

The combat reflex array is not unique to Khador, though the Khador military does integrate this hardware into its Kodiak warjacks.

Special Rules: A steamjack with a combat reflex array gains Chain Attack: Grab & Smash. (Chain Attack: Grab & Smash – If a steamjack with Chain Attack: Grab & Smash fighting with a pair of arms with the Open Fist rule hits the same target with both its initial attacks, it can immediately make a double-hand throw, head-butt, headlock/weapon lock, push, or throw power attack against that target. A steamjack with a crippled weapon system cannot make a chain attack.)

Integrating a combat reflex array into a steamjack requires the proper tools, six hours of labor, and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 14. If the roll fails, it can be repeated after another hour of labor.

Having a combat reflex array integrated into a steamjack costs an additional 80 gc.

HARDENED ARMOR

Cost: 200 gc

Description: Hardened armor represents additional protection gained from some combination of additional armor or thickened or alchemically hardened armor plates. Hardened armor grants the steamjack and those around it additional protection from blast damage.

Hardened armor is not unique to Khador, though the Khador military does integrate this hardware into some of its warjacks.

Special Rules: A steamjack with hardened armor gains Girded. (A warjack with Girded does not suffer blast damage. Friendly characters B2B with the girded steamjack also do not suffer blast damage.)

Integrating hardened into a steamjack requires the proper tools, four hours of labor, and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 14. If the roll fails, it can be repeated after another hour of labor.

Having hardened armor integrated into a steamjack costs an additional 60 gc.

MASSIVE BOILER (JUGGERNAUT CHASSIS ONLY)

Cost: 950 gc

Description: This is an extremely heavy boiler developed by the Khadoran military specifically for the Juggernaut chassis. This modification replaces the heavy warjack's standard boiler with a much more powerful boiler that enables it to build much greater steam pressure. The extra pressure is routed directly to its movement system, which grants it the ability to run greater distances. The steam can also be vented in flesh-boiling clouds.

Special Rules: A steamjack with a massive boiler can run without spending a focus point or being marshaled. It burns fuel twenty percent faster than a steamjack with a stock boiler for its chassis.

A steamjack with a massive boiler can make a quick action to vent steam once during each of its turns. When a steamjack vents steam, center a 3″ AOE cloud effect on it. Living characters in the AOE when it is placed suffer a boostable POW 12 damage roll. The AOE remains in play for one round.

The boiler is part of the movement system. Replacing a boiler requires a mechanik to remove the old boiler and replace it with the new one (see "Removing or Replacing the Boiler" section of the Steamjack chapter of *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*).

Having a boiler replaced costs an additional 50 gc.

DIVIDED LLAEL

INTRODUCTION

The nation of Llael has been conquered and divided, its people forced to either pursue an increasingly bitter and futile resistance or come to terms with the realities of occupation and assimilation. In 608 AR, free Llael is a fading dream.

Corruption from within hastened the Khadoran invasion and occupation of the small country only a few years past. Llael's last king had died a decade before, and his heirs had all fallen prey to murderous conspiracies or fled in exile. The nobles who came after allowed their small army to languish, relying increasingly on foreign aid and unreliable sell-swords. The Llaelese people suffer the consequences of this neglect in the form of not just one but two invading armies. Within these occupied lands a beleaguered Llaelese Resistance remains determined to regain the nation's freedom, but their cause seems desperate and futile to many Llaelese. Only a handful of the nation's towns remain free of foreign influence.

The cities of western Llael have been fully occupied by the forces of Khador, rail lines laid to the heart of the empire, and their people slowly but surely becoming largely resigned to their new masters. Indeed, these cities have been born again under the banner of New Umbrey, and the Umbreans of the region have more than happily embraced their status as a vassal state of the Khadoran Empire. Much of the rest of Llael has come under foreign control as well, for following the capture of the capital by Khadoran forces, the Northern Crusade of the Protectorate of Menoth moved in to seize territories in the northeast, dividing the nation still further.

The Llaelese Resistance has now lost all but the most tenuous hold outside the southeast, where the dream of Free Llael languishes. Only the city of Rhydden remains free. What little is left of Llael's history of prideful duels, alchemical innovation, and noblesse oblige fades each day in light of the grim realities faced by the courageous and desperate men and women of the dwindling Resistance.

HISTORY

Llael was created by the Corvis Treaties, but the history of the region's people stretches back much further. The citizens of Llael originate from two distinctly different peoples whose kingdoms developed during the Thousand Cities Era: the Ryn and the Umbreans.

BRINGERS OF THE TRUE LAW

Little remains of the civilizations that predate them, but the oldest records suggest the Ryn were descended from the followers of the ancient Menite sage-priest Geth. While some of Geth's descendants settled to create Morrdh, the more orthodox continued north and east to the fertile valleys beyond the Black River but south of the mountains that form Rhul's southern perimeter. Many Menite townships were established here, though centuries would pass before they formed a single kingdom. No one knows what they called themselves, but they are referred to now as the people of Oldwick River Valley, or simply the Oldwick.

More has been documented about the horselords of the plains west of the Black River, particularly after their fates became joined to that of the Khardic Empire. Primal people descended from dozens of separate tribes, the horselords were originally worshipers of the Wurm and were most prevalent in the western plains, where the Khards arose. The horselords ranged

DEMOGRAPHICS OF LLAEL

Ruler: Llael is divided into territories held by Khador, the Northern Crusade, and the Llaelese Resistance.

Government Type: Varies by territory.

Capital: The traditional capital of Llael is Merywyn.

Ethnic Groups & Approx. Population: 1,320,000 Ryn; 435,000 Umbrean; 130,000 Khard; 78,000 Caspian/Sulese; 42,000 Midlunder; 34,000 bogrin; 15,000 Idrian; 10,000 gobber; 9,000 Rhulfolk; 8,000 ogrun; 8,000 Thurian; 7,000 Tordoran; 4,000 trollkin; 3,000 Iosan; 2,000 Morridane

Languages: Llaelese (primary), Khadoran, Cygnaran (including Sulese)

Climate: Temperate. Cold, cloudy winters with frequent snow and fog; warm summers with frequent showers and thunderstorms.

Terrain: Mountains and hills to the north; rich, fertile plains and limestone ranges and basins to the west; deciduous woodlands, hillocks, and highlands to the south; lowlands and coniferous woodlands to the east.

Natural Resources: Coal, sulfur, aluminum ore, low-grade iron ore, silica, clays, salt, timber, arable land

their steeds over hundreds of miles in search of spoils and prey, but they rarely ventured far enough to encounter the Oldwick, who were secure behind their walls east of the Black River.

By 2107 BR Khardovic brought the word of the Creator to the horselords, who slowly began to settle, invigorated by the Gifts of Menoth. Two hundred years later, however, a split between the eastern and western chieftains divided the plains. While the tribes of the east learned of the True Law from Khardovic, they held onto their own customs and beliefs, including many old tales of the wilder north. These people became the Umbreans, who would grow to challenge the Khards in the west.

The Oldwick and the kingdoms in the south established trade. Some think the teachings of the Twins, Morrow and Thamar, reached this region via contact with the Midar and Caspians, who traded by river. These teachings would quickly take root in the northeastern towns, although the faith of the Lawgiver was never entirely abandoned. The Morrowan Oldwick spread across the region, establishing larger townships along the Oldwick and Black Rivers. The message of the Twins would eventually reach the Umbreans, but it never took root in those communities as thoroughly.

FOUNDING OF THE TWO KINGDOMS

For centuries the Khardic Empire battled its rivals in the north, the Kossites and the Skirov, until it conquered most of the northern lands except those to the southeast, but those living in the shadow of that empire expected their turn would likely come in due time. The Umbreans did not succeed in unifying until 1169 AR, when the Tzepesci, Umbreyko, and Chardovosk families created the kingdom of Umbrey. The Black Ring, their ruling council, was a triumvirate of kings who knew the vast empire to the west possessed larger armies, a threat they could not ignore. Umbrey did what it could in fortifying its capital, Korska, and prepared for the eventuality of war.

Umbrey's unification deterred the Khardic Empire for centuries, though throughout the early Thousand Cities Era relations between the nations were tense and skirmishes common. These conflicts and Umbrey's increased militarization did not go unnoticed east of the Black River; for decades the lowland Oldwick peoples talked of uniting in self-preservation. The kingdom of Rynyr, with Leryn as its capital, was founded in 1073 BR. These united townships then fortified their border and prepared to defend the river crossings.

The people of Rynyr understood they could not stand long against either Umbrey or the Khardic Empire. Instead their survival came from their intelligence, political instincts, and willingness to negotiate; they established trade with Umbrey as they had with the Midlunds, Caspia, and eventually Rhul and Ios.

Historians deem the early Rynnish scholars the equal of Thuria's and Caspia's brightest minds, largely because they penned several treatises on early alchemy and applied systematic approaches to herbal remedies and other mixtures. The Umbreans welcomed the Ryn into their midst, valuing their architects and engineers. It was Ryn in the employ of the Umbrean court who planned and largely constructed the city of Elsinberg, the first community settled by citizens of both kingdoms. In 1033 AR this city founded the great Library of Elsinberg, now a prestigious repository of lore. Additionally, Ascendant Angellia, who would recover and translate the original Enkheiridion of Morrow, came from this same township and is interred here.

HORSELORD WARS

War did not erupt between the western and eastern horselords for centuries. The Khards finally pressed their claims against the Umbreans in 821 BR when a great drought across the southern region left them desperate for fertile farmlands. The Horselord Wars spanned nearly a century of intermittent battles. Throughout, the Umbreans relied on their knowledge of local terrain and strongholds high in the northern hills where their armies could retreat and fortify. Strong trade ties with the Ryn helped sustain them amid several sieges, as Rynnish smugglers brought supplies to the beleaguered Umbrean forces. The Khardic Empire could not engage Rynyr directly as long as the intervening Umbreans remained a threat, so it was in the best interests of Rynyr to support Umbrey.

Nonetheless the size and power of the Khardic Empire could not be denied. The Horselord Wars stretched on so long in part because the empire had its own internal struggles and other conflicts abroad, such as clashes with the united kingdoms of Tordor and Thuria. After ninety years of bloodshed, the empire committed more of its legions to the east and finally forced the surrender of the Black Ring in 716 BR. The Umbreans were brought into the empire at last, with Korska as the eastern capital and Khardov as the primary seat of power in the west.

The Khardic Empire next looked east to Rynyr, and though it never declared war, the empire seized outlying lands and pushed against the Black River. The Ryn defended their lands, hiring mercenaries to bolster their small armies, but when these were overwhelmed they simply vacated territories to avoid direct conflict. The Ryn's relations with Umbreans were strained, but they continued to negotiate with the powers of the west to ease tensions, slowing Khardic expansion. Most historians believe, however, that if not for the Orgoth invasion, the empire would have eventually swallowed Rynyr.

THE ORGOTH INVASION

The Orgoth invasion had a tremendous impact on western Immoren. Umbrey and Rynyr were initially spared the Orgoth lash due to their distance from the invader's western landing sites; instead, the invasion hit the Khardic Empire first and hardest. The Ryn briefly celebrated the Orgoth arrival, as it forced the Khardic Empire to withdraw its garrisons and redeploy them to the fighting in the west. Many who had feared the looming shadow of the northern empire hoped this new enemy would continue to occupy the Khardic lands. No one yet understood yet the magnitude of the Orgoth threat. As the decades wore on, Rynyr received reports of fighting in Tordor and even Caspia, but more shocking was word of the collapse of the Khardic Empire in 569 BR.

GHORD
ULGAR
WROTHEMOOT
Borokuhn Mountains
DROTUHN
NORGRUHNDE
Armsdeep
Fleetsfill
Lakeforge
Hammerfall
BRUNDER
Malgur Forest
NOVESKYEV
GORZYTSKA
HELLSPASS
ATHO-SHIEL
Gravewater
SKIROV
PORSK
Rangercliffe Run
Black River
Silvertip Peaks
URGOSH-SHIEL
Thundercliff Peaks
HANOGHOR
Castle Tzepesci
Kovosk Hills
Horgenhold
Oldwick
Mount Borgio
LERYN
Old Korska
RYNYR
Riversmet
LAEDRY
NORTHERN CRUSADE
SCYRATHYL
IRYSS
Shattered Shield
KHADORAN LLAEL
RHYDDEN
Redwall
ELSINBERG
Greywind Tower
Issyrah
Willow Barrens
Lake Volningrad
RORSCHIK
FREE LLAEL
AYISTHYL
Mistbough
MERYWYN
Gate of Mists
UMBREY
DOROGNIA
Drek Lake
Ravensgard
Gallowswood
Northguard
Glimmerwood
Hawksmire
Boarsgate
Murata Hills
Bloodsmeath Marsh
BLOODSBANE
Black River
Scarleforth
fort Baird
Deepwood Tower
Widower's Wood
Klokhor Fortress
FELLIG
NORTHFOREST
ALMARE
Thornwood forest
Blindwater Lake
fort Rhyker
CORVIS
TERNON CRAG
Comb's Beacon
Almare Woods
ARMANDOR
THORNWOOD
Torre Torcail
BOURNWORTH
LLAEL
CAPITOL
CITY
FORTRESS
FEATURE OF INTEREST
RAILROAD
ROAD
TERRITORIES
MOUNTAINS
HILLS
FOREST (temperate)
FOREST (boreal)
SWAMP
SCALE (in miles)
5 15 25 50 100 150
Greybranch Gap
Tomb of Lost Souls
INSMARKET
NORTHERN MIDLUNDS
Ironspine Peaks
fort falk
The Gnarls
WESTERN

Umbrey lost an entire generation fighting in the Khardic armies against the Orgoth. Their rugged mountain holds proved fortuitous in later centuries as some of these remote areas evaded the yoke of the tyrants, who was unwilling to chase every petty lord through treacherous passes. Korska resisted valiantly for several years before being razed and its people being put to the sword. Umbrey was crushed soon after, and the Orgoth then fell upon Rynyr. The Rynnish defenses failed to halt the invaders' advance across the river.

The fortified city of Leryn held out until its food stores were exhausted, forcing it to surrender in 542 BR. The Orgoth, who considered the Ryn poor slave stock, consolidated eastern Umbrey and Rynyr into a single province. The bitter tyrants who governed these lands inflicted cruel torments upon the populace. Like the other human kingdoms, the region endured a long dark age in which all progress and intellectual advancement was lost. The Ryn are an adaptable people, however, and found ways to endure.

THE REBELLION

By the time the first hints of rebellion spread in the south, the Ryn and Umbreans had already begun to plot their freedom. Because the Orgoth disdained alchemy and did not consider its practitioners a threat, a hidden community of Ryn physicians and apothecaries formed. Those in Leryn maintained contact with others abroad via couriers who risked their lives to pass coded messages from one region to another. Ceryl and Leryn became two of the main centers of revolutionary thought working with counterparts in the free city of Caspia. Alchemists in Leryn corresponded with the members of the Arcanist's Academe and the Circle of the Oath in Ceryl, who told them how to identify and train arcanists among their own people in the wake of the Gift of Magic.

Unfortunately this nascent arcane order was not to endure for long, and from 69 BR to 54 BR the Orgoth managed to destroy them, killing hundreds of arcanists in the process. Many of the orders' surviving remnants fled with their lore to Leryn, where they took shelter among Rynnish allies. By 25 BR this gave rise to the Order of the Golden Crucible, whose alchemists and arcanists were instrumental in numerous advancements based on the seminal work of Sebastian Kerwin. Many of the mechanikal advances of subsequent decades were based on this order's foundations, as they sought to combine engineering, alchemy, and runic power. Because of this vital work, Leryn became one of the most important cities to the Rebellion as well as one of the first to achieve lasting victories against the Orgoth.

Tordor was briefly liberated from the Orgoth in the aftermath of the Battle of the Hundred Wizards in 32 AR. The Orgoth recaptured it eight years later, however, and hunted down the surviving arcanists for execution. Many fled to Leryn and were admitted into the ranks of the Golden Crucible, which still operated in secret but had begun to successfully develop alchemical weapons, including the first firearm in 28 AR.

It would take decades to perfect this invention; the order finally began to produce firearms in large numbers in 80 AR. The people of Leryn mustered and armed themselves with these new weapons to become the Army of Thunder, which was unleashed in 84 AR, gunning down the Orgoth and leaving the streets slick with blood. When the Orgoth counterattacked to reclaim the city in 86 AR, the Army of Thunder relied on Leryn's defenses and their new weapons to repel an army of over ten thousand Orgoth with a display of battle magic, alchemical grenades, and massed volleys of rifle fire in the Battle of the Thunderhead. Leryn became a bastion of hope for having defied the Orgoth, and although it could not prevent them from retaking the other lands of Rynyr it would itself remain free throughout the Rebellion.

The Umbreans played a role in some of the most heroic battles of the Rebellion. The horselords of the remote mountains joined a ragtag force of nomads who had evaded the Orgoth to liberate Korsk and Rorschik in 147 AR. Two years later Umbreans and Khards endured a siege at Korsk and once again held firm, this time supported by Leryn and Caspia. These four free cities joined together as the Iron Alliance in 164 AR, their efforts directed by a body called the Council of Ten. It was this group which implemented the complex plan to create the great colossals that would serve as the ultimate weapon against the Orgoth.

Caspia's efforts in the final decades of the Rebellion overshadowed the contributions of other nations, but the Rynnish people played a role facilitating communication with Rhul. After that northern nation agreed to assist in the construction of the colossals, the Ryn helped smuggle metal, ore, and crafted components from Rhul to Caspia. The colossals were eventually unveiled and launched against the Orgoth during the final great push. Many Umbreans and Ryn sacrificed their lives joining the armies marching alongside these machines, and it was in these battles that the Orgoth were driven from Immoren's shores. Rynnish leaders met with the other Rebellion leaders of the Council of Ten at the Corvis Treaties, which would define the Iron Kingdoms.

THE CORVIS TREATIES AND THE FOUNDING OF LLAEL

The heated disputes of the Corvis Treaties had tremendous impact on the shape of the kingdom that would become Llael. Northern representatives suggested restoring the Khardic Empire to its former glory, which would include all of Umbrey and some of Rynyr's old western holdings. Fortunately the southern representatives were united in opposition, remembering the role the Ryn had played in arming the Rebellion and providing arcanists with a safe haven.

Umbrean representatives also wished to be free of the Khardic Empire and eventually agreed to a compromise whereby Llael retained the lands within the borders set by the Orgoth, including much of eastern Umbrey, but ceded the western plains to Khador. Though this divided the Umbrean people, the inhabitants of these regions had already grown apart during the Occupation. By joining with the Ryn, eastern Umbreans would become part of a stronger whole, and the skills of their two peoples would complement one another as they had in ancient times. The Ryn promised to help rebuild some of the Umbrean cities that had been particularly devastated.

Lyle Kyrvin I, eldest of the Council of Ten and known as "the Wise," ruled Llael as its first king during its early reconstruction from 203 to 214 AR before succumbing to old age. Under King Lyle I, the southern city of Merywyn, which had been built during the early years of the Occupation and was a thriving center of commerce even under the oppressive tyrants, became the capital.

On Lyle I's death the throne passed to his fifty-one-year-old son, Lyle II, who was more interested in politics abroad than the rebuilding efforts at home. He believed, perhaps with reason, that the success of the nation required political alliances above all else. Midway through his reign, King Lyle II saw fit to meddle in the Cygnaran succession, entering into a convoluted plot with Harald of Bloodsbane, a noble of the Thornwood. Loaning Harald both wealth and armed support, Lyle II helped him seize the Cygnaran throne in 223 AR.

To ensure his own nation benefited, Lyle II sent a number of Llaelese envoys to infiltrate the Cygnaran court. Soon thereafter he came down with an illness that affected his heart and caused him great agony until his death in 228 AR. The throne passed to his adult son, Lyle III, who lacked the wit to advance the plots and schemes of his father, and the arrangements between Cygnar and Llael fell apart.

Only five years after King Lyle III was crowned, Cygnar's King Harald fell to assassins. Days later, Lyle III was also killed. It seemed impossible that these deaths were not related, but the perpetrators were never found or brought to justice. Cygnar suspected conspirators within Llael and directed blame at the Llaelese visitors in the Cygnaran court, many of whom were arrested and executed despite a lack of proof.

In western Llael, far from the capital, there was considerable civil strife among the Umbreans. Bloodshed and attempts to unify western and eastern Umbreans were ongoing during the reign of King Levash Tzepesci of Khador from 209 to 229 AR. In Merywyn, Llael's capital, most chose to ignore this unrest rather than risk a direct conflict with Khador. In fact, the Llaelese Umbreans refused to follow Levash and took up arms to resist his rule. Nonetheless, the people of western Llael felt their troubles were ignored in the capital.

Because Lyle III had died without issue, Llael experienced its first crisis of succession. The Council of Nobles held contentious meetings attempting to formalize their previously ill-defined order of succession. For four years several competing families pressed claims on the throne as the Council of Nobles gained power and passed laws to weaken the monarchy, most notably the Charter of Ministries. This charter created a system of government offices to see to the continuation and governance of the kingdom. These ministries retained powers apart from those of the king, including control over taxation and the treasury.

GOLDEN AGE

Eventually the Council of Nobles acknowledged the claim of a blood-cousin to the Kyrvins, Artys di la Martyn, who was crowned king in 237 AR. He ruled quite ably and earned the epithet "Artys the Enlightened" for his efforts to restore the nation's intellectual standing. He worked with the new ministries to construct universities, libraries, and cathedrals and established the Morrowan faith as the state religion during his reign. This marked the beginning of a golden age in Llael, albeit one interrupted by at least one bloody conflict and a pretender to the throne.

Meanwhile the Order of the Golden Crucible gained tremendous reach and prosperity by seizing a near-monopoly on the commercial production of blasting powder, although it was not to last. The order's Khadoran-born membership quit the ranks and returned home to found the Greylords Covenant in 243 AR, plundering a number of the Golden Crucible's greatest secrets in the process. While the Order of the Golden Crucible no longer existed in Khador, it continued to dominate the field of alchemy in Llael, Ord, and Cygnar.

The creation of the Greylords Covenant in Khador was not done solely to steal a few alchemical secrets, however. Their greater coup was a similar theft of lore from the Fraternal Order of Wizardry in Ceryl, by which Khador's King Levash was able to complete his own colossals. With these weapons in his arsenal, in 250 AR he sent formidable armies against both Llael and Ord. Unwilling to risk his people while he remained safe, King Artys rode into battle alongside his troops and was slain. Llael grieved for a king better suited to peace than war.

Artys' thirty-five-year-old son was crowned Artys II, eventually called "the Glorious" and considered perhaps Llael's finest king. The grueling Colossal War consumed the region for the first seven years of his reign; both Llael and Ord lacked colossals of their own and relied heavily on Cygnar for their defense. King Artys II proved to be an able wartime king, aiding his allies by using his small army wisely. When the Khadoran Army surrendered, he was there to help negotiate the terms forcing the enemy to dismantle its colossal factories.

At the end of the war, the king took lessons from the recent fighting and restructured the Llaelese Army to improve it. The gradual shift from colossals to warjacks as the predominant weapon of war allowed Llael to begin tentative attempts at making its own machines in the hope of achieving greater parity with other modern armies. The king also ordered the construction of border forts to protect the outlying regions and worked with the ministries to restore the treasury by encouraging trade and tariffs on trade crossing through Llael on the Black River.

The Royal High Guard was founded in 274 AR as an elite force to protect the king, and it served him well until he died of old age in 278 AR. Artys II left Llael stronger than when he had taken the throne, but his son Artys III, called "the Ashen King," had a weaker constitution and suffered from an incurable wasting disease. His untimely death in 287 AR inspired the romantic imaginations of poets and artists, but he accomplished little else of note.

Bryna di la Martyn, wife of Artys the Glorious and mother of the Ashen King, was involved in a conspiracy to fake the death of her second son, fearing his assassination. In truth she arranged for him to be sent to Cygnar, there to await a more stable situation before his return. Apparently lacking a blood

heir, the ranking nobles advanced a man named Camdyn who claimed to be an inheritor of the Kyrvin dynasty. When he was revealed as an imposter, he and several conspirators were executed for treason.

Eventually Bryna herself was crowned in 288 AR. While some on the Council of Nobles viewed her ascension with dissatisfaction, Queen Bryna was beloved by the people and served well for seven years amid political infighting in the court that resulted in her abdication in 295 AR. She accepted exile and went to Cygnar to secretly join her son just weeks before the start of the First Expansion War. A century would pass before the Martyn family would reassert itself in Llaelese politics.

THE BORDER WARS

The First Expansion War lasted from 295 to 304 AR, but though it was long and brutal, it was only part of the ongoing Border Wars. These began in 289 AR with battles instigated by Queen Cherize of Khador against King Malagant of Cygnar. After the deaths of both Cherize and Malagant, the Border Wars expanded to encompass Llael.

When Queen Bryna abdicated, the Council of Nobles' leading faction put forward Gadsyn Lymos due to his ancestral ties to the Kyrvin family. He was crowned in 295 AR, founding the long Lymos dynasty. In Khador, Queen Cherize was succeeded by her young daughter, and so a regent was named to rule in her stead; in Cygnar, however, the succession had not yet been decided.

Ambitious and warlike, Khador's Lord Regent Velibor seized the opportunity offered by Cygnar's lack of leadership and sent an army to assault Ord, beginning the First Expansion War. When, within weeks of Gadsyn's coronation, Cygnar failed to support Ord, Lord Velibor launched attacks across western Llael as well.

In its first real test since the Colossal Wars, the Llaelese Army struggled for several years to do more than blunt the Khadoran advance. Even with its armies divided, Khador's military might and numerical advantage let it drive into both Ord and Llael, forcing Llael to give up its westernmost territories. Eventually Khador's advance halted as it armies focused on claiming Ordic soil and stalled at the Siege of Midfast in 304 AR.

King Gadsyn was assassinated in 306 AR after ruling for eleven years of bloody conflict. While his killers' affiliations are uncertain, his passing marked the start of a long period of difficulties for the Lymos kings, none of whom died naturally. The crown passed to Gadsyn's son Malyk, who struggled to keep Llael from bankruptcy as the conflicts with Khador continued in the west. Queen Juliana ascended to the Cygnaran throne in 308 AR and joined the fight; by then Khador's people were tired of the war, its forces in Llael seemingly unwilling to engage in major offensives.

By 313 AR, with their treasury emptied, the Khadorans had had enough. Queen Ayn Vanar V, now in her majority, stripped Lord Velibor of his authority and began peace talks. Khador made out well in these talks, retaining a sliver of western Llael and greater territories claimed from Ord.

A CENTURY OF PEACE AND TRAGEDY

Following the war King Malyk cemented a formal alliance with Queen Juliana of Cygnar that would last for centuries. Cygnar sought not only to provide a bulwark against Khadoran expansion but also to ensure its river trade with Rhul was uninterrupted. Malyk earned the goodwill of his nation for this alliance and for his part in ending the war, but he did not live long enough to accomplish more. He was poisoned in 315 AR by an assassin believed to be in the employ of Khador. His death was widely grieved, and many Llaelese credit him with the century of peace and prosperity that followed.

His young son was crowned King Malyk II, one of the better rulers of the Lymos dynasty. This king earned the epithet "the Builder" for his efforts to restore the war-torn region of eastern Umbrey in the wake of the Border Wars and is remembered most for gaining the lasting loyalty of the Umbreans by establishing the city of Laedry on the ruins of Old Korska. For many this fulfilled the promise the Ryn had made to the Umbreans at the signing of the Corvis Treaties.

King Malyk II ruled for twenty years before he suffered the same fate as his father and grandfather: he was struck down by an assassin in 335 AR, the result of a plot by one of his disgruntled barons who bore a grudge over the king's perceived favoritism toward a rival. The chase to bring the culprit to justice crossed half of Llael and into Cygnar and was later immortalized in poems and plays.

The king was childless, and so the throne passed to his younger brother, Casner, who had never had any interest in being king. As a prince, Casner had taken up the study of alchemy, for which he had great capacity, and had provided patronage for the Order of the Golden Crucible. King Casner, dubbed "the Alchemist," gave preferential treatment to the order, including arranging for tax breaks to the city of Leryn, where it was headquartered.

King Casner created the Ministry of Standards, which instituted accurate weights and measures across Llael. This had longstanding effects on the advancement of the sciences in Llael and led to similar standardization in other nations. An important patron of the sciences, King Casner pursued interests that led him to attempt the improvement of alchemical blasting powder; this ended with an explosion that took out a substantial portion of a tower of the palace. The king's body was not recovered, and an empty coffin was buried under his name in 352 AR.

Casner's son, crowned King Malyk III, squandered any goodwill garnered by his line in a series of extravagant excesses. Called King Malyk the Jovial, he transformed the court into a place of unending revelry while corruption flourished in the capital. Eliminating his less sage advisors, he had the Minister of Taxation inflict crushing taxes to fund his great feasts. After fourteen years of this debauchery he choked to death in 366 AR, leaving an expansion of the royal palace in Merywyn as his only legacy.

The nobles hatched several plots to eliminate Malyk III's heir but each one failed, thwarted by the Royal High Guard. While

many feared Malyk IV would follow in his father's footsteps, he was instead a fine ruler. Malyk the Merchant King bolstered trade with Ios, Rhul, Cygnar, and even Khador, cementing Llael's reputation as brokers, middlemen, and facilitators for markets across the Iron Kingdoms. Working with his ministries the king established tithes on all trade, achieving a balance that allowed commerce to grow while filling Llael's treasury. After eighteen years of prosperous rule, King Malyk IV drowned when his ship capsized on the Black River in 384 AR.

Malyk IV was succeeded by his son King Malyk V, but the twenty-three-year-old king was weak and ill-suited to rule; this might not have been an issue, given that the Council of Nobles felt no need for a strong king, but Malyk V was also meddlesome and overly interested in council business. After several years of making enemies among the nobility, the king sealed his doom in 390 AR when he began to speak of abolishing Llael's system of ministries. He was suffocated in his sleep by unknown assassins, and no one invested much effort in tracking down his killer.

The crown passed to the brother of Malyk IV, uncle of Malyk V, the last male of the Lymos dynasty and its only hope of continuance. He was crowned King Gadsyn Lymos II and immediately sought to bring the Council of Nobles to task. In the first few years he began to unravel the plot that had led to his nephew's demise. The Council of Nobles itself began to fragment into factions with no clear majority as each minister advanced his own conspiracies.

Building his own coalition, in 394 AR King Gadsyn II prepared to strike against those he blamed for his nephew's murder, but those elements of the council moved against him first. After poison failed, the king was shot down as he left the palace's inner courtyard. He lived just long enough to see his killer caught; the assassin named those who had employed him, including a man linked to the Duke of Wessina. The king's death and word of these conspiracies sparked violent feuds that consumed the Council of Nobles for two years. Nobles, regents, and potential heirs were slain in rapid succession, some by duels, others by assassination.

RESTORATION OF THE MARTYN DYNASTY

In this chaotic climate the descendants of the Martyn family returned to Llael. Nearly forgotten in the century since Queen Bryna abdicated the throne, the Martyns had for generations given up on reclaiming the throne, but Lyan di la Martyn took up this cause with zeal. Supported by a faction of the Llaelese aristocracy discontent with its lot, Lyan and his allies marched into Merywyn and took the capitol by force in 396 AR. The family's meticulous records proved Lyan was the direct descendant of King Artys the Glorious, so the Merywyn Vicarate Council authorized his claim, as did the Council of Nobles with greater reluctance.

King Lyan was not content simply to be crowned; he desired justice. Lyan the Judge brought down several of Llael's most prominent families for treason. The Council of Nobles, already in disarray from years of feuding, found itself at the mercy of the most brutal king in Llael's history. He disbanded the Ministries of Taxation and the Treasury and levied his own taxes against those he saw as his adversaries. To expand the Llaelese Army, Lyan imposed conscription that, while bolstering the might of Llael, came at a great cost in the morale and discipline of his people.

In the years that followed, King Lyan personally thwarted no fewer than three assassination attempts. After conducting thorough investigations and persecutions of those responsible, he suffered no further attempts on his life. He kept the court firmly under his thumb until his quiet death in 436 AR, having ruled for thirty years.

The court was relieved to discover that his son Lyan II was an entirely different sort of king, one who disapproved of his father's methods. Known as Lyan the Merciful for his quiet and peaceful reign, he worked with the Church of Morrow on public works. He reversed his father's crippling taxes, ended conscription, restored the power of the ministries, and granted amnesty to many state prisoners. While he would die of illness in 447 AR, only eleven years after taking the throne, he reversed nearly every policy his father had implemented.

Because Lyan II's son Artys was only fourteen years old, the boy's mother, Queen Wren di la Martyn, became regent for the next four years, using her political prowess to pave the way for her son. King Artys IV was crowned at his majority in 451 AR and would achieve the longest continuous reign in Llael's history, earning him the epithet "Artys the Ageless." He was an able monarch, popular with the people and supported by the Council of Nobles, though the goodwill he achieved was not linked to any great initiatives or achievements. Some of his success was rooted in the impotence of the office; most of the control of the government had passed to the ministries. The people blamed nobles and their ministries for any hardships they endured, sparing their likable king, who spent his time touring the countryside.

Though they would shift their operations to Ord a century later, mercenary companies saw Llael as a haven early in King Artys IV's reign, as its geographical and economic position as a hub between the major kingdoms made it appealing to those offering blades for hire. This was particularly true during the Second Expansion War, which began with naval clashes but soon escalated to a Khadoran invasion of Ord. Llael was able to stay out of this conflict, as Cygnar intervened on Ord's behalf.

The latter half of this war filled the coffers of large mercenary organizations based in Llael, so the Ministry of Taxation imposed greater taxes on their income. They ran into difficulties, however, with the mercenary companies' strong allies in the Council of Nobles, particularly the Ministry of Defense of the Realm. These allies claimed the presence of highly trained, self-supporting companies contributed to the national defense. In time mercenaries became pervasive across Llael, as towns and cities relied on them for defense rather than raising local militias. Major financial interests such as trade and craft guilds employed their own mercenary companies, and the Crucible Guard was established to protect the interests of the Order of the Golden Crucible. The Llaelese Army shrank as the nation became increasingly reliant on their Cygnaran allies and paid mercenaries.

THE COIN WAR

The consequences of Llael's reliance on mercenaries would not be felt until the start of the Cygnaran Civil War in 482 AR, when Cygnar withdrew its soldiers from western Llael as fighting erupted in Caspia. King Artys IV anticipated the Khadorans would try to take advantage of Llael's weakness, so he hired every available mercenary company in the realm. This was a sage measure; the very next year Khador sent its own mercenaries to test Llael's defenses. The following series of battles, which became known as the Coin War, stands out as one of the most unusual conflicts in the history of the Iron Kingdoms. While mercenaries had been used to support regular military engagements, the Coin War was the first to be fought almost exclusively by proxy armies.

The war ended inconclusively near the end of the Cygnaran Civil War in 484 AR, but not before almost bankrupting Llael. With Cygnar once again ready to defend its ally, Khador withdrew its forces. King Artys IV declared a Llaelese victory, though the sorry state of the kingdom made this a dubious claim at best. Still, the people celebrated their king once again, throwing parades and festivals in his honor.

THE LONG DECLINE

The emptying of the treasury forced King Artys to reduce the size of the army even further, and Cygnar returned its soldiers to the Llaelese border in a show of support that has lasted until the current era. King Artys IV did what he could to restore the realm and its finances, but despite his popularity he left the nation weaker than he had inherited it. After forty-seven years of rule, he died in 498 AR. None of the kings who came after him gained any appreciable ground in restoring the power of the monarchy. At the same time the Council of Nobles grew increasingly notorious for the rancor of its internal politics. The divide between the rich and the poor in Llael increased amid a climate of corruption.

Already in his forties when he inherited the throne in 498 AR, King Lyan III chafed at the limits imposed on his office yet lacked the temperament and intelligence to reverse them. He was a vocal advocate for the Church of Morrow and was called "Lyan the Intemperate" for his adversarial relationship with the Menite nobles of northeastern Llael. After he instituted a law forbidding the construction of Menite temples, the king marched alongside his soldiers to suppress the resultant uprising in southern Llael in 507 AR. He was shot and killed in the ensuing skirmish.

Lyan was followed by King Artys V, a puppet of the Council of Nobles. At the start of the First Thornwood War early in his reign, when Llael's western border was unexpectedly attacked by a sizable Khadoran army, the king proved incapable of decisive action beyond pleading with Cygnar for aid. Though the Umbreans along the border bravely rode against the massive Khadoran cavalry force, their blood was spilled for naught; the advance proved to be a ruse to draw out Cygnar's armies as Khador attacked its northern border. King Artys V declared a victory for Llael after Khador's defeat in the Thornwood War in 511 AR, but the claim availed him little, and he continued to be seen as inept. When he drowned in 520 AR, the crown passed to his son, Artys VI.

Artys the Stubborn developed a contentious relationship with the Council of Nobles. He used his authority to veto popular laws and turned every council gathering into a heated dispute. In 541 AR he was strangled to death on the council floor by the enraged Archduke Guy Kylvse, who was cut down by the Royal High Guard.

His son Artys VII, "Artys the Eloquent," managed a more harmonious relationship with the council by avoiding politics entirely. While admired for his intelligence, his moving speeches, and his insightful essays on philosophy and history, King Artys VII accomplished little of note and died of a respiratory illness in 559 AR.

The next monarch, Artys VII's son Rynnard, seemed comfortable with the diminished stature of the crown. A robust man of tremendous appetites, King Rynnard the Fruitful enjoyed his station most for the easy access to the pleasures of the flesh. While not as extravagant as Malyk the Jovial, Rynnard freely focused on his own enjoyment, including siring no less than sixteen offspring from his four wives and at least six mistresses. The full extent of his progeny has never been firmly established, and the count may well be much higher.

For all his personal excesses, King Rynnard was popular with the people, and he quietly brokered deals that partially restored the power of the crown. He was also diligent in honoring his arrangements and refusing to exploit this power, generating cooperation between the king and the council.

Governance functioned smoothly as the ministries saw to the realm, which experienced a surge in trade and commerce after the Scharde Invasions in 588 AR. This four-year conflict did not touch Llael but fully occupied Cygnar and, to a lesser extent, Ord. The end of this era resulted in opportunities from abroad as Cygnar rebuilt its fleet and coastal defenses. Merchants in Llael profited tremendously from deals brokering sales of raw materials to aid Cygnar's efforts.

COLLAPSE OF THE MONARCHY

Trouble began to brew in the early 590s as disputes within the Council of Nobles became entrenched and political factions waged a shadow war over lucrative trade contracts and tariff income. These plots involved covert dealings with foreign powers, including between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and agents of King Baird Cathor II of Ord as well as those of the newly crowned King Leto Raelthorne of Cygnar. The latter had seized control of his throne in a bloody coup and scrambled to control his realm. The extent of these arrangements is still not well understood, but the Llaelese ministries had set themselves up as a powder keg of intrigues by 595 AR when King Rynnard suddenly passed away, apparently a casualty of his own lifestyle.

Each faction of the Council of Nobles realized the threat they faced with the rise of an uncertain monarch amid their ongoing conspiracies, so each sought to secure and preserve a claimant to the throne. King Rynnard's undefined succession caused chaos as the validity of his marriages and the dates of his offspring's births were called into question. Soon the council abandoned debate and turned to murder. In a few short months of duplicity and carnage most of the king's heirs were killed as were a great number of nobles. Surviving members of the Martyn line went into hiding.

In this vacuum of power, Archduke Deyar Glabryn of the Southryne emerged as the clear victor and moved to secure the peace. As Minister of the Treasury, Glabryn had support on the council and became prime minister with the backing of the Ministry of Internal Security, the Ministry of Trade and Commerce, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Most other nobles fell in line; those who did not support him suffered calamities and reprisals.

While Prime Minister Glabryn claimed he was acting as regent until the succession could be determined, he steadily broadened his power and neutralized potential rivals. As the years passed he showed no signs of abdicating control, nor did the Council of Nobles make any serious efforts to establish a new king. Glabryn utterly dominated the council, having strengthened his position better than any king since King Lyle Kyrvin at the founding of Llael.

INVASION

Any hopes that Glabryn would end corruption and the intrigues of the Council of Nobles were quickly dashed. The prime minister showed little interest in the security or prosperity of the realm but was instead focused on filling his own pockets and those of his closest followers at the cost of the Llaelese people. He expanded the Ministry of Internal Security to spy on his rivals and silence any opposition.

Unbeknownst then, the prime minister was either coerced or willingly entered into collusion with Khadoran agents. He secretly worked to undermine his own nation by intentionally weakening Llaelese Army garrisons, gutting military spending, and feeding the kingdom's defense intelligence to Khador. With these secrets Khador launched a brutal, overwhelming invasion of Llael in the winter of 604 AR, a three-pronged attack on Laedry, Redwall Fortress, and Elsinberg.

Though Cygnar had a sizable garrison alongside the Llaelese Army at Redwall Fortress, the fort easily fell to Khadoran forces led by the notorious warcaster Orsus Zoktavir, the Butcher of Khardov. He saw to the slaughter of even those soldiers who surrendered or were otherwise captured.

The Khadoran attacks on Laedry and Elsinberg were more civilized but no less decisive. Kommandant Gurvaldt Irusk and Great Prince Vladimir Tzepesci led their forces to crush the mercenary forces defending Laedry in a devastating test of Khador's new long-range mortars, taking the city primarily intact. In Elsinberg, the greatly reduced garrison stood little chance against the professional Khadoran Army led by Kommanders Kratikoff and Harkevich, who seized the weakly defended town with little harm to its civilian population and major structures.

Llael's defenses were in shambles following these crippling losses. Even as Cygnar raced reinforcements northward, the Khadoran Army marched against mercenary soldiers that provided little more than token resistance in defense of small townships. Meanwhile the Llaelese Army gave ground as its priority shifted to the defense of the capital.

Once Cygnaran reinforcements arrived in Llael, the battle lines became more entrenched and the Khadoran advance stalled. Several major battles raged in the northern city of Riversmet, whose Black River bridges were strategically important. The Khadoran cavalry took advantage of the open ground of Llael's heartland, beating back the Cygnarans and Llaelese before finally being halted at the Black River. Khador was able to seize Riversmet and its bridges, granting its soldiers greater access to the east. Irusk's armies then pressed on to besiege the heavily fortified city of Leryn.

The war entered its most grueling months as Khador besieged both Merywyn and Leryn. It seemed the Khadorans might be held indefinitely out of Leryn in particular, giving the Cygnarans a chance to intervene and lift the siege. This might have been a turning point in the war if not for Khador's next action.

The Khadorans resolved to raze Riversmet as an example to other cities. Nearly every building in the city was blasted to rubble, including its churches, and doom reavers were let loose to slaughter its citizens. Never had the Llaelese known such carnage and cruelty against their civilians.

Khadoran forces then sent an ultimatum to Leryn to say it would suffer the same fate should it resist: the city would be taken and no quarter given. Leryn's leadership was shaken, and the Order of the Golden Crucible faltered, but many of the city's defenders remained willing to fight. Nevertheless, when the Khadoran Army marched on Leryn the gates were thrown open from within by a senior alchemist, and Khadoran forces poured into its streets. True to their word, they did not abuse the conquered population, but their victory still dealt a crippling blow to Llael's fortunes.

Merywyn was the last great city to stand against the invaders. The siege there lasted months as both the Llaelese and Cygnaran Armies fought valiantly. Many Llaelese nobles had fled Merywyn at the beginning of the invasion and more slipped out of the city during the siege, a number relocating to northern Cygnar or Ord. The more patriotic fled to southeastern Llael, which the Khadorans had yet to attack.

Unfortunately the Cygnarans were forced to withdraw following a Khadoran attack on their own borders, leaving Llael to its fate. Prime Minister Glabryn announced Llael's surrender on Rowan 12th, 605 AR. The small number of Llael's most patriotic nobles who refused to bow to their conquerors and give up the fight were publicly executed and their heads displayed on the walls. Though some elements of the Llaelese Army managed to retreat to Rhydden in the southeast, the rest of the nation fell.

With the conquest of Llael, Queen Ayn Vanar declared herself Empress of the Khadoran Empire. Prime Minister Glabryn was tasked with smoothly transitioning control of the government from the ministries of Llael to the Khadoran occupation force. The Khadoran Army established garrisons throughout Llael even as it turned its attention to Cygnar.

LLAELESE RESISTANCE AND THE NORTHERN CRUSADE

By the end of the Llaelese War, Khador faced the dilemma of providing sufficient forces to occupy Llael while needing ever more troops to wage war against Cygnar. Further complicating matters, an evolving resistance movement began to organize an effective insurgency.

The exact origins of the Resistance are muddled, as defiant citizens organized spontaneously in each occupied city almost as soon as the Khadorans seized control. The most effective

NIGHT OF HOWLING WOLVES

Just one night before the Khadoran Army began its siege on Merywyn, the Greylords Covenant launched one of the most chillingly effective operations in its history. The Fraternal Order of Wizardry headquarters in Merywyn boasted access to Llael's most accomplished arcanists, including those specializing in combat magic. They not only aided the Llaelese Army in several battles near the capital but were also responsible for cortex fabrication and the repair of warjacks for both the Llaelese and Cygnaran Armies. On this night, a Greylord strike force penetrated the Fraternal Order's lodge undetected and murdered its entire membership present in the city. Not a sound escaped to indicate what was happening, but the tremendous arcane battle severely scarred the interior of the lodge; entire floors were reduced to ash, and the walls were cracked and frozen. By morning the Fraternal Order in Merywyn was no more, and there were no corpses left to bury. This became known as the Night of Howling Wolves, as all anyone who lived in the region could remember hearing was distant howling from beyond the city walls.

groups came together in Laedry, Leryn, and Merywyn; the Umbreans of western Llael formed a key component of the Resistance, fiercely loyal to Llael and resentful of the Khadorans. They met in secret to oppose the occupation by organizing safe houses and hidden weapons caches, risking arrest, torture, and death by hanging. The leaders of these groups eventually established tenuous contact with one another.

Surviving elements of the Llaelese military, the Royal High Guard, and the Order of the Golden Crucible joined with the retinues of exiled nobles, Cygnaran stragglers, and any who would not give up the cause in southeastern Llael, the only portion of the kingdom still free. This area included Greywind Tower and the town of Rhydden, which quickly became the heart of the Llaelese Resistance and served as a base from which to coordinate with the hidden cells of patriots in the occupied territory.

Delryv's liege, Archduke Balen di Voxsauny, had once ruled the southeastern duchy but had been executed in Merywyn, leaving Delryv the highest-ranking member of the Council of Nobles who was not dead, captured, exiled, or collaborating with the enemy. Had the Khadorans invested in an extended campaign and committed several legions to the task, Rhydden would quickly have fallen. Particularly in the weeks after the surrender of Merywyn, this region was a refugee camp and ill prepared for defense. To their good fortune, Khador was unwilling to send more than a few kompanies, however, and those were defeated by Resistance forces led by Llaelese Army veterans such as the warcaster Ashlynn d'Elyse.

As the war with Cygnar dragged on in the area between Northguard and Ravensgard, the Khadorans refocused on securing Llael's major population centers. The southeastern region was too scarce in resources to be worth the cost to attack; Duke Delryv and the Llaelese and Cygnaran soldiers used this reprieve to transform the township of Rhydden and its environs into a fortified base and to turn the fertile lands once used for vineyards to grow desperately needed crops.

While most of this region's inhabitants were Llaelese by birth, the Resistance was supported by hundreds of Cygnaran soldiers who had been unable to join their countrymen in the retreat from the capital. Many became full members of the Resistance, and once they finally made contact with the Cygnar Reconnaissance Service, weapons, supplies, and personnel began to flow sporadically into southeastern Llael. Those Llaelese who had fled to Cygnar sent what support they could.

Even as the Llaelese War ended, other forces were on the move. Led by Grand Scrutator Severius, the Protectorate's Northern Crusade boldly marched into eastern Llael, bypassing the largest Khadoran garrisons. Severius and his armies met with Resistance leaders outside Rhydden in late 606 AR. Bringing thousands of fresh, well-trained soldiers along with the formidable power of Protectorate warcasters and dozens of warjacks, the Northern Crusade possessed far more military might than the Resistance did. Rather than simply seizing the territory for the Protectorate, however, Severius offered an alliance. In exchange for raising temples to the Creator in Rhydden, Severius would join the fight against Khador. Sharing a common foe, the Resistance and the Northern Crusade agreed to join forces to liberate Leryn, a northeastern city so well fortified the Resistance could never have hoped to take it alone.

This combined force encountered stiff resistance when it was intercepted by a smaller Khadoran army led by Great Prince Tzepesci. Severius defeated these foes by manifesting terrifying divine powers and forcing the Khadorans to retreat. When the Northern Crusade arrived at the walls of Leryn, the grand scrutator did not besiege the city but acted on Resistance intelligence that among the ranking Greylords controlling Leryn were a number raised as Menites among Khador's Old Faith. He arranged a secret meeting with these individuals and persuaded them with the great truth of his cause to turn against Khador. The next day, when the Northern Crusade and its allies approached, Leryn's gates were flung open to them. Thus in the third month of 607 AR Leryn was seized once more without a battle, once more betrayed from within.

While the Resistance rejoiced by killing or imprisoning what remained of the Khadoran garrison, the celebration was short-lived. Grand Scrutator Severius declared Leryn the seat of the Northern Crusade and imposed Temple law, making a grisly example of the koldun lord who governed the city by burning him alive in the town square. Though the city had been liberated from the Khadorans, it became a territory of the Protectorate of Menoth. While this did not terminate the alliance between the Resistance and the Northern Crusade, it strained their interactions; the Resistance had no choice, however, but to accept the cooperation of the Sul-Menites. Without them the Resistance stood little chance of victory against the Khadorans who held all of western Llael.

PRIME MINISTER AND ARCHDUKE DEYAR GLABRYN

The exact fate of Prime Minister Deyar Glabryn is unknown, though he is presumed dead. Glabryn weathered the first two years of Khadoran occupation smoothing the transition to military rule but wore out his welcome among the senior Khadoran officers. An inveterate schemer unaccustomed to obeying the dictates of others, he continually sought to leverage his limited influence.

Early in 608 AR Glabryn vanished, and shortly thereafter Khadoran authorities seized his residence and turned it into an ancillary file storage and war correspondence office. Whether the Khadorans killed him or he managed to flee is unknown. His wife and daughter were sent to the safety of Caspia just before the invasion, and Glabryn had often spoken of finding a way to join them. Members of the Llaelese Resistance believe he is still alive. They would pay well for information on his whereabouts, as many Llaelese patriots would wait in line to take revenge on this traitor.

UNIFICATION OF UMBREY

As the months of occupation stretched on, many in western Llael looking to the east concluded that life was better under Khadoran rule than it would be under the rule of the Protectorate, and this cooled public opinion toward the Resistance. After two years with no sign of change, the people of western Llael accepted that they were now part of the Khadoran Empire. Certainly this attitude was not helped by the widespread corruption and self-interest of the Llaelese court in the years before the invasion.

With Winter Guard patrolling the streets and the Anvil of Khador replacing Llaelese flags, the new occupying government was in many respects more responsive and responsible than the government it supplanted. Khadoran rule actually improved the lot of many in the lower classes, with greater care paid to the infrastructure after an influx of funds from kayazy investment. The empress ordered a rail line built from central Khador to Laedry and from Laedry south to Elsinberg and Merywyn. While created to accelerate supply movement to the front lines, this railway proved a boon to commerce as well.

Great Prince Vladimir Tzepesci, a Khadoran noble of Umbrean descent, began to rally the western people. The Llaelese Umbreans were drawn to support the great prince, who came from an ancient prestigious family remembered as part of the Black Ring that had long ago ruled the kingdom of Umbrey. Many who had once been patriots of Llael began to see the appeal of a united Umbrey. In early 608 AR Empress Vanar allowed western Llael to join with two of the eastern volozkya in Khador, all ceded to Tzepesci as a single province. While Umbrey would remain part of Khador, locals embraced this change with optimism.

In recent years the Resistance attacks and other threats in the occupied territories have been costly to the Khadoran treasury. Following like jackals on the heels of war, Cryxian incursions into Llael became more common, with undead rising from hidden bases likely secreted in the Thornwood. The seizure of Leryn and the increased belligerence of the Northern Crusade only added to the area's instability. Despite this, the empress has opted to take advantage of the recent adjustments to the governance of this territory as an excuse to withdraw more troops from Umbrey and reallocate them toward the war effort against Cygnar. This has left the defense of Umbrey to Tzepesci and his private army.

The Khadoran Army has not completely withdrawn from Umbrey, however; tens of thousands of soldiers are scattered throughout what was once western Llael, and Merywyn is indispensible for resupply and local governance. But large areas of the occupied territory are now the responsibility of the Tzepesci family and the Umbreans, who organize and arm themselves accordingly. The old tradition of Umbrean horselords has been renewed with the cavalry serving Great Prince Tzepesci, and the sight of them brings pride to many who live in this region.

LLAEL DIVIDED

Llael as a kingdom no longer exists, yet its people and much of its culture persist. No one can predict how ongoing conflicts will reshape the region; it is in a state of flux and its people have accepted that life offers limited stability. Survival and adaptation are the rule. Llael is divided into three distinct political territories, though the exact borders of these areas shift as fighting continues. It seems unlikely all three will endure, with those Llaelese who consider themselves "free" being the most at risk of extinction.

Free Llael occupies the southeastern corner of the kingdom, around the fortified township of Rhydden and the lands east of the Black River. The Territory of the Northern Crusade occupies the kingdom's northeast around the city of Leryn to the river. All of Llael west of the Black River, including the old capital of Merywyn, is Khadoran-controlled Llael, most of which is now eastern Umbrey. Life in each of these three regions is distinctly different, but before considering those differences, it is important to understand the Llaelese way of life before the war.

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

The Llaelese War irrevocably altered life in this kingdom through the heavy loss of life, the uprooting of families, and the flight of refugees to other nations. Those who remain must adapt to violent change beyond their control and thus find comfort in the familiar. Many look back fondly on their lives before the Khadorans invaded, and some dream of returning to those ways. They express this hope by retaining old family titles and claims to lands they may never see again.

City-dwelling Llaelese try to carry on as before as much as possible. Naturally, this is easiest for those whose livelihoods were not as impacted by the war. Llael still needs its bakers, its carpenters, its laborers. Some have managed to return to a semblance of normalcy amid constant reminders of the war. Whatever flags fly over the town hall, the Llaelese still retain the language, the food, the rites of worship, and many other traditions of their people.

THE SOCIAL CLASSES

Throughout pre-war Llael, class had tremendous impact on one's place in society. At the top were the monarch and those nobles most closely tied to the crown. Next came the aristocracy, a class that possessed far greater power in Llael than anywhere else in western Immoren and which in the final years dominated the kingdom's politics. Before the invasion by Khador, the Council of Nobles had entirely usurped the powers once reserved for the king.

Below the aristocracy was the small but influential middle class, including many common-born merchants and traders who had accumulated enough wealth and prestige to elevate themselves above their stations. The upper and middle classes of Llael clashed often, as the aristocracy frequently sought control and leverage over the commerce of the realm. Similarly, wealthy merchants could use their fortunes to marry into the upper classes and extort the nobility.

Those commoners who elevated themselves through intelligence and hard work rarely look back and go to great lengths to distance themselves from their humble origins. This huge gulf between the wealthy middle class and the poor created three distinct classes in Llael.

The divide between the quality of life of the wealthy and the poor was more pronounced in Llael than anywhere else in the Iron Kingdoms. While Ord has long been the poorer nation, Llael's lower classes often endured worse conditions; they were ruthlessly exploited by the middle class and the aristocracy and given very little protection except that afforded by the mercy of the Church of Morrow. Llael was a kingdom where industrialization had not yet benefitted the masses and where very few monopolized industry's wealth. Most Llaelese citizens, whether working on farms in the countryside or performing backbreaking labor in the city, worked long, thankless hours for very little gain. Meanwhile the upper classes led lives of extravagant wealth and excess.

THE ROYAL HIGH GUARD

The Royal High Guard was established in 274 AR after several royal assassinations. Llaelese custom was for each monarch to choose 101 personal protectors of the varied traditions—from trained swordsmen and duelists to arcanists and alchemists—all across Llael. These select guardians were the last line of defense for the royal family. Over time many gun mages of the Amethyst Rose earned fame and reputation as the most adept of these guards.

Given the number of kings assassinated or otherwise killed, it may seem the Royal High Guard lacked skill or dedication; instead, those deaths exemplify the treacherous nature of politics in Llael and among the Council of Nobles in particular. For every king assassinated, the Royal High Guard thwarted dozens of failed attempts. That most kings of Llael lived long enough to sire legitimate heirs is largely a credit to the tireless efforts of this organization.

The Royal High Guard was disbanded following the death of Rynnard di la Martyn and the rise of Prime Minister Glabryn. Though the prime minister kept them on the payroll, once it became clear he had no intention of stepping aside for a new king, the guard was dissolved to seek employment as mercenaries and bodyguards for lesser nobles. Most never gave up their loyalties, and many lost their lives defending the kingdom during the war. What few remain have joined the Resistance's ragtag army and maintain close ties to the surviving members among of the Loyal Order of the Amethyst Rose.

That sharp divide between the wealthy and the poor persists, but in many respects it is less significant than the greater divide between the aristocracy and the lowborn. No wealth can erase a common birth—even the wealthiest, most influential middle-class merchants can never attain the social stature of the poorest aristocrat. Class divides are deeply ingrained in the Llaelese and endure even after the war, when title and familial distinction are all a displaced nobleman might possess. Commoners accept this divide as well and willingly defer to those they genuinely perceive as their betters.

Even the most destitute among the Llaelese have a bearing and sense of value that sets them apart from the downtrodden of the other kingdoms. They still take pride in their cultural heritage, knowledge of ancestry, and greater appreciation for many aspects of life.

War has proven to be a great leveler for the Llaelese. Fortunes, lands, and ancestral power have all been lost in its wake, forcing the aristocracy to eke out an existence alongside the lowest laborers. Without adequate survival skills, only those aristocrats with foresight to hide their wealth have retained anything of their accustomed privilege. Such wealth provides the upper classes a means to improve their position either through bribery or negotiation for favors from their new masters. A good name has also retained its standing among the Llaelese and may carry ties to those abroad with influence, including foreign aristocrats and exiled family members.

THE ROYAL LINE

The Llaelese royal line was rooted in the Kyrvin family, descended directly from the last king of Rynyr before the Orgoth invasion. Following the reigns of the first three Llaelese kings, the Kyrvin line divided into two closely related branches: the Lymos and Martyn dynasties.

Over the years intrigue and misfortune decimated these lines. All those with a close connection to them either disappeared or went into hiding after 595 AR following the rise of Prime Minister Glabryn. At least one potential heir was allegedly secreted in Five Fingers in Ord, while other possible remnants of the royal line may have sought sanctuary in Cygnar. Though it is unlikely any pretender to the throne of Llael will rise to attempt to retake the nation, Khador has a vested interest in exterminating even the most distant claimants.

Traditionally the king in Llael had far less authority than the monarchs of the other Iron Kingdoms. Only a few strong kings managed to transcend limits imposed by the Charter of Ministries in 236 AR, yet the royal line still has symbolic power among the Llaelese, even more so since the last king's death.

Peerage of Llael in Descending Order

Title	Method of Address
King/Queen	Your Majesty
Prince/Princess	Your Highness
Archduke/Archduchess	Your Illustrious Grace
Duke/Duchess	Your Grace
Earl	Your Lordship
Baron/Baroness	Lord

PEERAGE AND THE COUNCIL OF NOBLES

The noble families of Llael trace their lineage back to the prominent bloodlines of the old kingdoms of Umbrey and Rynyr. The archdukes who once ruled the seven provinces of Llael were at the top of the nobility. Below them were approximately forty dukes, each a significant landholder owing fealty to an archduke. Earls and barons were in turn subordinate to the dukes, each holding smaller lands.

The Council of Nobles, which served as a legislative and governing body, was entirely comprised of nobles, but only earls, dukes, and archdukes had voting privileges. While barons could attend the council, they could not vote. The government was divided into ministries to oversee individual aspects of governance, each controlled by a minister appointed by the Council of Nobles, generally from among their own ranks.

Because of the ministries' power, rarely was anyone of lower rank than a duke elected to control one. One of those ministers, generally an archduke, would also be elected to serve as the prime minister of Llael. In addition to setting the agenda for the Council of Nobles and acting as the head of state in the absence of a king, the prime minister was afforded special privileges such as deciding tied votes in council and having powers of appointment over lesser government offices.

THE LLAELESE DUELING CODE

Over generations the rituals of Llaelese dueling became codified into a set of rules called the Duello. These rules were expected to be stringently obeyed lest a duel be considered illegal and the violating participant's honor called into question. Some aspects of the code were practiced more stringently than others—the widespread use of professional duelists as seconds, for example. Titles and appointments could be given to bodyguards to provide a modicum of propriety.

The traditional Llaelese dueling weapons were matched pistols, rapiers, or sabers. Duels most often resulted in injury or death, sometimes of both participants. In many duels between Llaelese aristocrats, however, neither party suffered injury, as both participants chose to "delope," or purposefully discharge their weapons at the ground. This allowed both duelists to retain their honor but was a risky proposition: should only one noble delope, his opponent would have a significant advantage.

While the system of ministries allowed for robust governance, the Court of Nobles itself was a pit of vipers. The aristocracy was filled with ambitious, ruthless individuals constantly vying for power. Those on top were never seated comfortably, aware that any slip could bring dishonor, disgrace, and a plunge to the bottom. Conspiracies among the nobles never ceased, sometimes being overt and even deadly. The heads of the ministries in particular leveraged their offices for personal gain, increasing their fortunes through bribes, blackmail, and embezzlement from the state. Such graft and corruption was widespread and systemic.

The nobles of Llael also participated in a system of patronage whereby they gathered retinues of loyal supporters from among the commoners, who in turn expected protection and assistance from their patron. A nobleman's most prominent supporters often were appointed to local government, received the most lucrative government contracts, and seldom had to wait long for licenses and permits. In turn, they were expected to rally additional supporters to their patron's cause in times of need.

ATTITUDES

The Llaelese are accommodating and cosmopolitan, having predicated their existence and prosperity on commerce and politics instead of military might. Llael has both profited and ultimately suffered from its centralized location between virtually every major power in western Immoren. The Llaelese are generally open-minded about peoples of different cultures and races, though they consider themselves superior in many respects.

Culturally the Llaelese place value on maintaining an awareness of their neighbors' habits, prejudices, traditions, and etiquette. There is always a right way and a wrong way to approach any given social exchange. In fact, etiquette has long been of utmost importance to Llaelese of all classes. The thriving merchant class has always considered it essential to learn the tongues and customs of other nations, and many have spent their lives traveling abroad.

Even while learning other languages and customs, the Llaelese have held fast to their own. Though the Cygnaran language dominates trade, the Llaelese speak their own with fierce pride, considering it to have refined nuance and meaning that cannot be expressed in other tongues. Art, education, and culture are Llaelese priorities, even among the lower classes, and they considered their kingdom a sometimes solitary beacon of refined aesthetics.

Though otherwise welcoming, the Llaelese can be disdainful of groups they believe lack their own superior qualities. For example, they have always demonstrated antipathy toward the wild trollkin kriels, which are few and far between in this region. Trollkin living in the cities are more generally accepted, though they are still relegated to the lower class. Similarly, the Llaelese have long treated gobbers as inferior citizens; in rural areas this disregard sometimes became violent, perhaps because Llael's northern mountains were once plagued by vicious bogrin, and some citizens cannot tell the two species apart. Most aggressive impulses of this sort have faded in the modern era, particularly within the cities.

Despite the poverty in Llael, the kingdom boasted a high rate of literacy and general education, thanks to the Ministry of Arts and Letters, which funded schools in smaller communities. Among many villages and smaller towns, demonstrating intellectual capability was one of the few ways to rise above poverty. Talented youths might join the clergy or attain the sponsorship of a noble to attend university, thereafter seeking careers as professors or scholars or in related fields such as the arts. The prospects for talented painters, musicians, architects, and poets were better in Llael than in other kingdoms due to a proliferation of aristocrats and wealthy merchants providing patronage. Much of that has changed now; such patrons are rare, leaving many well-educated, skilled individuals destitute or in search of ways to exploit their talents.

Llael's emphasis on education, combined with the pervasiveness of the Morrowan faith, contributed to a widespread acceptance of arcane magic and the positive impact of both alchemy and mechanika. As Llael was the birthplace of the Order of the Golden Crucible, alchemy has long been an interest of the Llaelese people and viewed with national pride. Similarly, the Llaelese take great pride in having invented the firearm; many families retain pistols and rifles as heirlooms from earlier days.

DUELING

Llaelese of all social levels embrace the custom of dueling, a deeply ingrained practice dating back to the ancient kingdom of Rynyr. While initially prominent among Llael's Ryn, it was eventually adopted by the kingdom's Umbreans as well. The traditions governing duels are well defined, though the lower classes follow rules and practices that are looser than the rigid dueling code of the aristocracy and those who look to them for patronage. For most of Llael's history, as long as these codes were obeyed, dueling was an entirely legal method to resolve serious disputes.

THE DUELLO

A challenge to duel must be issued publicly and chance given for an apology to be proffered. If the challenged gives no apology, the challenge is accepted. A challenge may be ignored should it be of a trivial nature or from a trivial person.

Challenges are never delivered at night, for it is desirable to proceed with grace and allow sufficient time for apology.

The challenged and the challenger must choose seconds of equal station to their own.

The challenged chooses the ground; the challenger chooses the distance; the seconds fix the time and terms of firing.

The challenged and the challenger decide upon the terms of victory, which are assumed to be the drawing of first blood unless otherwise specified.

Upon meeting at the ground, if the cause of the challenge is such that no apology or explanation can or will be received, the challenged takes his ground and calls on the challenger to proceed.

No apology can be received after the parties have taken the ground until there has been an exchange of fire or an engagement with blades.

The seconds load pistols or inspect blades in the presence of each other.

Firing may be regulated—first by signal; second by word of command; or third at pleasure, as is agreeable to the parties.

In all cases a misfire is equivalent to a shot.

Where seconds disagree and resolve to exchange shots themselves, it must be at the same time as the principals.

Once the terms of victory are met or if both principals can or will no longer continue, the seconds must attempt reconciliation. If the challenged will not accept reconciliation at this point, a second meeting must be arranged.

Dueling not only reinforces the underpinnings of Llaelese society, it also establishes the boundaries of personal honor. Some insults demand satisfaction lest others believe them to be true or, worse yet, reveal the disparaged to be a coward. The Ryn's complex system of etiquette allows a proper means to back down or withdraw from almost any confrontation without loss of face and status, but only for those who acquit themselves properly.

The practice also gave rise to a professional class of skilled duelists who would be employed by nobles to serve as bodyguards, provocateurs, and seconds in struggles with rivals. Given the societal significance of dueling as well as its perils, there grew a need to instruct the next generation, which gave rise to a number of prominent Llaelese dueling schools, each teaching a variety of fighting styles. Widely attended by members of the aristocracy, these formed an essential aspect of a young nobleman's education while establishing his early social sphere. Dueling schools varied in their esteem, techniques, and cost, with some emphasizing pistol or blades while others focused on the ritualistic side of the tradition. Many were so vaunted that the nation's army officers and warcasters were encouraged to join them. Several of these schools survived the war by moving elsewhere, taking Llael's fighting traditions abroad.

Though dueling is outlawed in both the Khadoran and Protectorate regions of the divided nation, the practice persists secretly in all three Llaelese territories. Neither Khador nor the Sul-Menites have had luck in stamping it out in the occupied regions, and a number of Khardic officers have even embraced it among their own ranks, much to the consternation of the High Kommand. The desperate circumstances of the Llaelese have dampened public enthusiasm for the outcomes of such engagements, but dueling remains a means to resolve irreconcilable differences or heated arguments.

ATTITUDES TOWARD OTHER KINGDOMS

While Llael no longer exists as a political entity, its people nonetheless retain certain attitudes toward outsiders. These attitudes may change over time in the wake of new realities shaped by the Llaelese War; the interests of survival can make for unusual friendships or at least a willingness to forget old enmities.

CRYX

Being a landlocked kingdom has a few advantages—historically Llael had limited contact with the Nightmare Empire. Unfortunately one of the unexpected consequences of the Llaelese War was the sudden emergence of aggressive Cryxian forces, which had exploited the chaos of war to penetrate deep into the mainland. These raiders often appear after a battle to prey upon the survivors and to make off with the dead.

Opportunistic Cryxian forces have given the Llaelese reason to appreciate the Khadoran and Protectorate garrisons in the occupied territories. In the southeast, Resistance patrols occasionally engage isolated Cryxian forces to exterminate them, but outlying villages and townships are exposed and have been attacked.

IOS

Llael is geographically the closest of the Iron Kingdoms to Ios and shares the only easily approachable route into that isolated nation; in the past Llael even helped facilitate limited trade between Ios and the other nations. Yet when Ios banished all foreign representatives and withdrew its envoys, it treated Llael as it did all other nations, and the Llaelese are no more familiar with what has transpired beyond the Gate of Mists than anyone else. The citizens of Rhydden, the closest city to the Llaelese border, tell tales of people who ventured too close to those trees vanishing. A generally held belief among those here is that one reason Khador never sought to secure Rhydden was fear of antagonizing Ios with troop movements too close to its border.

CYGNAR

Llael and Cygnar have had amicable relations for centuries, since entering into a permanent alliance in 313 AR after the Border Wars. In all that time there has been exceptional commerce and a steady flow of travelers between these two nations, but the people of these kingdoms have certainly had their disagreements. The Cygnarans have resented the need to defend this ally and have chafed at the tariffs and trade fees leveled on all traffic passing through Llael, including vital commerce from Rhul. The Llaelese have viewed Cygnarans as overly serious and lacking appreciation of the finer things in life. More recently, the withdrawal of Cygnaran soldiers during the Siege of Merywyn left a bitter taste in the mouths of most Llaelese, even those who believed their kingdom's defeat was inevitable.

Despite certain prejudices and lingering resentments, most Llaelese remain positively inclined toward the Cygnarans. In what remains of Free Llael, hundreds of Cygnaran soldiers remained behind to fight alongside the Resistance. Additionally the CRS still regularly bypasses Khadoran blockades to smuggle arms and vital supplies into Free Llael.

KHADOR

Most Llaelese feel tremendous antipathy and resentment toward Khador and its military forces. Even as many in western Llael come to terms with their fate as subjects of the Khadoran Empire, the wounds remain fresh. Suffering during the war was widespread; everyone lost friends and family to the fighting and starvation of the first winter. Even those who think life might actually be better under Khadoran rule still harbor hatred for their conquerors. Among the Llaelese Resistance, Khador and its conspirators will remain the primary enemy as long as the will to resist endures.

The Umbreans' attitudes toward the Khadorans have changed the most. Though the Umbreans were as stalwart as the patriotic Ryn in their defense of the kingdom, the collapse of Llael followed by the promise of a united Umbrey inspired new hope for an ancient dream. While the Llaelese Umbreans are not collaborators, they are willing to take up arms alongside Umbrean nobles to defend their homes and families. Most have been persuaded that Great Prince Vladimir Tzepesci in particular is worthy of their loyalty and respect and are inclined to give membership in the Khadoran Empire a chance, largely abandoning interest in active resistance.

ORD

The Llaelese and Ordic people have much in common. As the citizens of the two smallest Iron Kingdoms, they have frequently been subject to the whims of the greater powers, particularly Khador. Khador's wars of expansion have threatened Ord as often as Llael, and before the Llaelese War Ord had already lost territories to that northern power. Both Ord and Llael have also served as havens for mercenary companies exploiting the historical rivalry between Khador and Cygnar, and both have been useful as hubs for international trade and intrigue.

Aside from these political affinities, the Ordic and Llaelese people have very different cultures and outlooks. Some Llaelese view Ordfolk as crude, or at least lacking in refinement, while the Ordic see the Llaelese as condescending and conceited. The two also harbor quite different attitudes toward notions such as honor and courage. The Llaelese see pragmatism and a knack for survival as virtues, while those in Ord romanticize self-sacrifice and dying for one's beliefs, traits that before the war most Llaelese considered foolish.

While some Llaelese resent Ord for its neutrality in the recent war, in general the two peoples get along relatively well. As in many societies, common bonds are easiest to come by among the lower and middle classes.

PROTECTORATE OF MENOTH

Until recently Llael did not have much contact with the Protectorate of Menoth. While ambitious Llaelese merchants worked in the past to establish trade with the Protectorate, there was little formal contact between these nations until the arrival of the Northern Crusade. The Protectorate is now a major political player in the region, and the people of Llael are being given more insight into the faith of the theocracy and its ruling caste of priests than they might ever have expected.

The imposing of the Sul-Menite culture and beliefs on the city of Leryn was a shock to many living there. That said, the proximity of the Harbinger—a holy manifestation of Menoth—and the words of Hierarch Severius as well as the recent horrors of war rapidly converted many people in the northeast. Those who were already worshipers of Menoth accepted the Protectorate interpretations of the Creator's law. Morrowans still living in Leryn have had a more difficult time adapting and live in fear of the scrutators' wrath.

Beyond the lands held by the Northern Crusade attitudes toward the Protectorate vary. Among the remaining free Llaelese, the Northern Crusade is considered the best hope for the Resistance to achieve vengeance against the Khadorans and secure their own territories. The presence of the Sul-Menites is a lightning rod for Khadoran military action, drawing the battle lines away from Free Llaelese territories. West of the Black River in the area occupied by Khador, most Llaelese view the Northern Crusade with alarm. Families just starting to adjust to life under the Khadoran Anvil fear that the Protectorate will throw the region into chaos once again.

RHUL

Llael has long traded with the clans of Rhul, particularly those dwelling closest to its northern border. While some Rhulic merchants resented the tariffs levied on trade goods passing down the Black River to the Cygnaran markets, most recognized it as another expense of international trade. Rhulfolk have long been a common sight in the Llaelese cities, and some Rhulic families settled permanently in the north. As a result, Rhulic citizens also suffered losses during the war, particularly in Riversmet. Those Rhulfolk who had longstanding friendships with the Llaelese take a dim view of the Khadoran Empire.

Many southern Rhulic mercenaries have offered deep discounts for their services to the Resistance, and it is not uncommon to see units of professional Rhulic soldiers fighting side-by-side with the Free Llaelese. These are still commercial endeavors, however, and follow the laws of the mercenary charter, so they are not seen as endorsed by the government of Rhul. This veneer is particularly thin with members of Great Clan Udo, one of the thirteen ruling clans of Rhul, which seems to have a personal bone to pick with the Khadorans in Llael. In general the Llaelese approve of Rhulic intervention; many even find employment as agents of Rhulic interests, smuggling goods to market and keeping the nation appraised of Khadoran troop movements and other vital intelligence.

MAJOR CULTURES

Llael is primarily comprised of the remnants of two ancient kingdoms: Rynyr and Umbrey. The people of these two kingdoms never thoroughly integrated; each maintained its own identity, though the Umbreans drew more influence from Rynnish culture than the Ryn ever took from Umbrey. It could therefore be argued that Rynnish became the dominant culture of Llael. Umbrean influences can still be seen in some aspects of Rynnish culture, and the western portion of the kingdom has been heavily influenced by the Umbrean people.

Llael has long been a capital of trade and a center for the arts. Its geographical location and its status as a trade hub resulted in the emigration of peoples from a variety of backgrounds and races. For centuries merchants, students, and artists flocked to Llael from other kingdoms, and its major cities had a thoroughly cosmopolitan and international feel, with a dozen languages spoken on their streets.

Now, of course, there are also more Khadorans living here than ever before. While many soldiers stationed here anticipate eventually returning home, some are here to stay. The war has created many opportunities for Khador's kayazy merchants as well as for lesser members of the aristocracy and others with ambition. Similarly, the Northern Crusade's presence has brought tens of thousands of Sulese into the region. As with the Khadorans, most of them expect to return south eventually but undoubtedly some will remain behind to make homes for themselves here.

RYN

The dominant ethnic group of Llael were the Ryn, whose population is concentrated in the east and in the capital. The Ryn are a proud people who have traditionally been disinclined to intermarry into other cultures. As a result the Ryn remain among the most easily recognized ethnic groups in the Iron Kingdoms. They are shorter in stature and more slender in

build than the northerners and most southerners, and they tend to have pale skin and light-colored hair. The Ryn consider themselves the keepers of Llaelese culture and tradition and have never fully accepted their Umbrean countrymen, a divide that has become more pronounced since the war.

The desperate straits the Llaelese find themselves in have transformed the priorities of the Ryn. Nobles facing the extinction of their family lines are now prepared to intermarry with foreign families and have surrendered many of their prejudices and the conceit of superiority. One of the most deeply ingrained traits of the Ryn that has risen to the fore is survivability. The vicious nature of Llaelese politics and the cutthroat competitiveness of the kingdom's merchants come from similar roots—enduring by rising above one's peers through intelligence and wit. While the definition of "survival" has changed amid an occupied nation, the need for discernment and quick thinking has not.

The Ryn have always valued command of the language (or several languages), giving them a strong appreciation of both poetry and literature. Politeness is an art among them, and subtle degrees of deference can convey quite different meanings. Observing a seemingly ordinary conversation between two Ryn, a foreigner could easily miss the verbal sparring, implied threats, and scathing insults. For this reason, at least the appearance of wit, eloquence, and an even demeanor have long been essential survival skills among the Ryn.

The Ryn of all classes enjoy their diversions and entertainments, although these have suffered in the climate of war. The aristocracy once enjoyed operas, symphonies, museums, and salons. At the top of the Rynnish working class skilled craftsmen, painters, sculptors, architects, and composers relied on noble patronage for their livelihoods, sometimes drawing foreign nobles to Llael to seek artisans for their own needs. The Sancteum in Caspia, for example, includes countless murals and frescos created by Rynnish masters in addition to those done by Cygnarans. Painting and music in particular reached heights here not replicated elsewhere, and the Ryn invented dozens of stringed and reed instruments. In the culinary arts, the Ryn are almost peerless—although the Tordorans might disagree. Rynnish food is noted for its variety of wine-based sauces, its assortment of breads and pastries, and the complexity of its dishes and multiple-course feasts.

The lower classes also have an appreciation for the finer things in life. Street theater and small house theater are extremely popular distractions, as is public music. Unaccustomed to the same excesses in cuisine as the wealthy, the poor prefer simpler, more rustic foods. Nevertheless, both bread and wine remain important staples, and "simple" by Ryn standards often requires a certain degree of culinary finesse.

Llael's vineyards were hard hit by the war, particularly since the region around Rhydden has had to convert many fields to food production. A small amount of wine production has been restored where possible, such as in southern Umbrey, but some Llaelese must still resort to smuggled and inferior Cygnaran vintages. This turn has been a boon for those who retain well-stocked cellars, as the prices for Llaelese wine have shot up abroad. Some nobles have slowly sold off their collections to maintain their lifestyles. In Rhydden and elsewhere among supporters of the Llaelese Resistance, quality wine can be bartered for weapons and ammunition.

UMBREANS

Despite the unification of Umbrey, significant differences remain between the eastern and western people, the legacy of more than a thousand years of separation. Like the Ryn, the Umbreans preferred to marry among their own and are therefore a distinct and recognizable ethnic group. They are taller and stouter in frame than their Rynnish countrymen, more similar to the Khards with whom they share a common ancestry. In stark contrast to the Ryn, Umbreans have dark skin and almost universally raven-black hair. Male eastern Umbreans prefer shorter hair and more cleanly groomed facial hair than the western Umbreans of Khador. In general the Khadoran Umbreans favor more traditional clothing and style of dress than those of the east, who have picked up aesthetic preferences from the Ryn, including a larger variety of colors and other Llaelese fashions.

The Umbreans of Llael are concentrated in the west, with Laedry and Elsinberg as their primary cities. After the unification of Umbrey, some Umbreans from either side of this divide have moved to the other, creating a more generally mixed community. Llaelese Umbreans benefited from better education in Llael and are thus more likely to be literate and possess a wider range of knowledge than those of Khador. This also applies to their general appreciation for the arts as well as the sciences. While Umbreans have never taken to alchemy as strongly as the Ryn, some of them have followed that path.

By and large western Llael was poorer than the east of the nation, and the Umbreans often had lower standing than the Ryn. This was particularly true in politics, where the Umbreans were treated almost as second-class citizens. Umbrean nobles ruled the far western lands but were always a small minority on the Council of Nobles and had no claim to the throne. Similarly, there were far fewer wealthy Umbrean merchants or traders, although some carved out a place for themselves in Laedry and Elsinberg. Umbreans fared better as skilled craftsmen, particularly in trades such as smithing and stonemasonry, yet many were relegated to unskilled labor. For the Umbreans, often the best course to distinguish themselves and escape poverty was in service to the Llaelese Army. Umbreans represented a high proportion of the voluntary army, where their abilities were highly valued.

This also meant the Umbreans suffered the worst casualties at the start of the Khadoran invasion. The people here have not forgotten this, and they blame the Khadoran empress and her army for these tragedies. Those veterans who returned home safely retain their military skills and, often with no other vocation, have either taken up mercenary work or joined their kinsmen in defense of Umbrey by joining the great prince's armies.

Llaelese Umbreans differ from their western kin in their appreciation of the arts and cuisine. Khadoran Umbreans tend to have simpler preferences, with limited tolerance for what they

see as needless excesses. Most Llaelese Umbreans see no need to lead completely austere existences. While they appreciate art, music, poetry, and other cultural endeavors, however, they prefer martial themes and tragedy over comedy, giving them a reputation as being a somewhat dour and bleak people by the more carefree Ryn. Of course, in modern Llael no one is truly carefree, and darker themes now dominate both cultures.

RELIGION

While the ancient peoples who gave rise to both Umbrey and Rynyr had their origins in Menite civilization, the Morrowan faith spread quickly in this region. More than anywhere except Cygnar itself, Rynyr rapidly converted to Morrowan worship; the faith gained dominance here well before the Orgoth Occupation, although small Menite communities persisted, particularly in Leryn and the Umbrean towns. These Menites got along well with their Morrowan neighbors and were not considered zealous by Sul-Menite standards. Llael has a relaxed attitude toward both religions, with fewer people seeing themselves as rigidly orthodox.

This is not to say that piety is lacking in Llael, as many Llaelese citizens consider themselves faithful Morrowans or Menites. The people of this kingdom embrace the generally Morrowan notion that religious belief requires individual interpretation, and they are less inclined to accept doctrinal dictates. They think it logical that the message preached might be different from town to town and even from one house of worship to another. Llaelese vicars and exarchs have been both criticized and lauded in Caspia for their unconventional ideas. How well these attitudes will survive the political forces controlling the region remains to be seen; to the Sul-Menite scrutators, lack of orthodoxy is synonymous with heresy.

In either religion the Llaelese never embraced the notion that faith requires privation and suffering. They believe religious sentiment is to be expressed and celebrated, and they appreciate a sense of grandeur and ceremony. In any sizable town or city the central cathedrals and churches are large and awe-inspiring, festooned with myriad sculptures, frescos, gilded engravings, and similar splendor. While the Menite temples are slightly less ostentatious, they are still far more intricately decorated than their counterparts in Khador, Ord, Cygnar, or the Protectorate. Morrowan ceremonies are accompanied by swelling organ music, and major holidays come with grand processions involving entire townships.

Unfortunately, there is little doubt the Thamarite religion also has deep roots here, and several major septs exist in Llael. Of the other "fringe" faiths, the worship of Cyriss has undeniable momentum among the educated circles of the Llaelese, particularly those attending university. Cults to the Wurm are less common here and are thought to be all but eradicated except among the most remote towns in the northern mountains.

THE CHURCH OF MORROW

The heart of the Llaelese Church of Morrow is the Vicarate Council of Merywyn, which oversees church bureaucracy across all of Llael. It is a prestigious branch of the faith; the Great Cathedral of Ascendant Rowan in Merywyn has long been deemed second only to the Archcourt Cathedral in the Sancteum. Although the Church of Morrow in Llael has had many successes, many regret that its religious sentiments never penetrated very deeply into the Council of Nobles. The Llaelese Church of Morrow has been a nonpolitical entity, seeing almost entirely to spiritual matters, tending to the poor, and spreading the message of Morrow to the people.

The Merywyn Vicarate Council has faced many challenges since the onset of the Llaelese War. The Church here could do little in defense of the kingdom beyond offering its halls as hospitals for the wounded. However, throughout the war the Church scrutinized the Khadoran Army and sent priests to lodge formal protests against what they saw as breaches of proper conduct. Khador was lauded for its efforts during the attacks on Elsinberg and Laedry to limit civilian casualties and the destruction of holy places. Other attacks, however, showed an appalling disregard for life or sacred ground. The slaughter at Redwall Fortress was the first of many such excesses, culminating in the razing of Riversmet, which included the destruction of numerous historical churches. Morrowans throughout western Immoren view this event as a black mark against the empire. The Llaelese clergy believe the Khadorans have behaved deplorably during their conquests, and this has colored their interactions with Khadoran nobles and officers in the occupied region.

The Khadorans have accepted this criticism with aplomb and have allowed the Church of Morrow to continue its traditional functions on the orders of Empress Ayn, who commanded her officers to not interfere with the clergy so long as they are not actively encouraging sedition. Tense confrontations in both Merywyn and Laedry have seen officers raising allegations against priests for working in conjunction with the Llaelese Resistance. The Vicarate Council recently offered sanctuary to alleged Resistance figures fleeing Khadoran justice. The Church asserts this is its ancient right, and as yet the Khadorans have not forced the issue, although they stand ready to arrest any who leave holy ground. The situation remains delicate, as Empress Vanar is a devout Morrowan and does not wish to inflame religious strife.

Interactions with the Khadoran Army are the least of the Church of Morrow's present concerns. The Northern Crusade is considered a far larger threat to the well-being of the Church in Llael. The disposition of the Morrowans in Leryn is a matter of grave concern to the Vicarate Council, although reports indicate Morrowans have been largely left in peace as long as they attend mandatory Menite services and do not openly bear Morrowan sigils on their persons.

Another serious matter is the increase in reports of Cryxian attacks in outlying regions. The Vicarate Council has asked the Sancteum to send additional soldiers of the faith to the region to help deal with the Cryxian threat. It seems unlikely the Exordeum will send a large armed force, as this could be seen as overly provocative. With necromancy steadily on the rise in the aftermath of the war, though, members of the Order of Illumination are eager to root out Cryxian forces in the region.

Most of the Llaelese Church's religious traditions are in line with those of the Sancteum, except that services are held in Llaelese rather than Cygnaran. Certain ascendants are also more prominent here than elsewhere, although all have their place. Ascendants Ellena, Angellia, and Rowan all arose from Llael and have particularly strong followings. These three women are sometimes regarded as the "Enlightened Trinity," an intellectual counterpart to the "Martial Trinity." Ascendant Angellia's remains are kept in Elsinberg with one of the largest repositories of sacred documents in Llael, and though Ascendant Corben was from the Cygnaran Midlunds, he was a patron of the Order of the Golden Crucible and has a strong following in Llael's remaining alchemy community.

THE MENITE TEMPLE

Until the Llaelese War and its aftermath, Menites comprised a small but significant minority in Llael. Menite communities existed in all the large cities and most large towns, with a few isolated Menite townships where the faith was the exclusive form of worship. The Menite faith was strongest in the city of Leryn and in the west due to the region's larger population of Umbreans, who had a greater portion of Menite adherents.

With no single hierarchy to the Menite faith in Llael, each temple operated autonomously and tended to its own faithful. For example, the Temple of the Lawgiver in Leryn was overseen by the self-appointed Visgoth Zayiv Ryledor, an Umbrean who preached a variant of the True Law unique to his own beliefs. This faith was quite different from that of the Temple of Wrath in Laedry supervised by Sovereign Misha Rudovna, also of Umbrean descent, and there was little to no contact between them.

Circumstances in both Free Llael and the Territory of the Northern Crusade have changed radically since the arrival of the Sul-Menites and the Harbinger. Her presence and that of Hierarch Severius have reinvigorated the faithful while terrifying many others. For the region in general, the worship of Menoth has gone from being an ancient tradition practiced by a minority to a force that threatens to transform northeastern Llael into an arm of the southern theocracy.

THE TERRITORIES OF LLAEL

Llael is divided into three territories (p. 203), with the Khadoran Empire holding the greatest portion. The Protectorate's Northern Crusade claims Leryn and its surrounding environs up to the convergence of Rangercliffe Run and the Black River in the west and nearly to Rhydden in the south. The Resistance holds Rhydden itself and has a tenuous hold on southeastern Llael through half of the old Southryne Province to the west. The rest of Llael is in the hands of Khador. This territory recently joined with the Khadoran Korskovny and the Umbresk volozkya to form a united Umbrey.

The old duchies of Llael no longer have any meaning except to those families who once ruled these lands. Certain exiled nobles may make futile claims to ancestral lands, but the Llaelese people are beholden to new masters.

FREE LLAEL

"Free Llael" refers to those last remnants of the kingdom not occupied by foreign powers. The borders of this region are contested and could change at any time; where the territory controlled by the Northern Crusade begins is particularly hazy. The area called Free Llael includes the old duchy of Voxsauny and a small portion of what used to be the Southryne, including Greywind Tower. This strip of mostly fertile lands lies east of the Black River and adjacent to the border of Ios. Free Llael is governed by the Resistance Council led by Duke Gregore Delryv IV.

The people here live with the constant apprehension of knowing either the Northern Crusade or the Khadoran Empire could seize the free territories at any time. The Resistance is allied with the Northern Crusade but relations have been tense since the Sul-Menites took Leryn, transforming it into a Protectorate stronghold. The people of Rhydden believe they may have entered into an untenable arrangement that will lead to the seizure of their old kingdom by either the Khadorans or the southern theocracy. They have already made concessions, as several new Menite temples have been built in Rhydden to appease the Protectorate. These temples are regularly visited by bands of Knights Exemplar and other agents of the Protectorate.

For many the notion of liberating Llael is a faded dream, more unlikely with each passing month. Yet animosity toward Khador is undiminished in the hearts of the Resistance fighters, and most consider vengeance their only recourse. They believe they have no choice but to work alongside the zealous Menites of the Northern Crusade, who possess the military strength to contend with the Khadorans. Meanwhile, they hold onto Rhydden and its surroundings with desperate tenacity.

There are several towns and cities in this region, although most of their former inhabitants have fled the area or moved to Rhydden for greater safety. Stubborn villagers who remain do what they can to defend their homes and protect their lands. While the Llaelese War never fully impacted this region, opportunistic raids by Khadoran patrols have looted several towns nearest to the Black River, a threat that persists although the Resistance confronts enemy soldiers who enter the free territory wherever possible.

Rhydden was transformed completely after the Llaelese War, becoming the walled and fortified compound of the Llaelese Resistance. The Resistance maintains its primary garrison and armory here and has converted and expanded forges for the purpose of arming its soldiery, including a large numbers of professionals supported by volunteer militias. Cannons taken from the battlefields in the east or from the armories of the Llaelese Army line the outer walls; sentries stand at constant alert. Warjacks and armed laborjacks are at the ready, though the most capable are often sent with Resistance forces on operations outside the free territory.

Aside from the sick, the infirm, the very young, and the very old, the population of the territories is prepared to take up arms to defend the region. Life here is communal, with daily activities centered on defense, survival, and support of

FREE LLAEL

Government Type: Paramilitary Council

Rulers: Duke Gregore Delryv IV and the Resistance Council

Capital: Rhydden

Ethnic Groups & Approx. Population: 112,000 Ryn; 38,000 Umbrean; 14,500 Midlunder; 5,000 Rhulfolk; 4,300 Caspian/Sulese; 4,000 ogrun; 3,000 Thurian; 2,600 Tordoran; 2,200 Khard; 1,800 gobber; 1,300 Morridane; 1,200 trollkin; 900 Iosan

Languages: Llaelese (primary), Khadoran, Cygnaran (including Sulese)

Predominant Religions: Morrowan majority, small Menite minority

Important Cities: Rhydden

Significant Towns (not on the map): Aberwyn, Auldcaster, Brydon, Grymaldi, Lynster

DUKE GREGORE DELRYV IV

Duke Gregore Delryv IV is a leader of the Resistance and a living symbol of the old Llaelese government and social order. He is a middle-aged gentleman, short in stature, physically fit, with salt-and-pepper hair and a neatly trimmed beard and moustache. While he has abandoned some of the ostentatious trappings of nobility and has become approachable, his aristocratic upbringing and bearing are obvious to all Llaelese.

Delryv is one of a number of nobles who supports the Llaelese Resistance and who are collectively known as the Highborn Covenant. The covenant is a pact made by those nobles who escaped the Khadoran purges during the war they vowed would never surrender the dream of restoring their lands and the government of Llael to its people. The Highborn Covenant is a loosely organized confederation of aristocrats, many of whom fled Llael and are now living in Ord and Cygnar. Duke Delryv is their primary point of contact inside the Resistance and the person to whom they send their aid. In addition to paying for supplies and arms, Delryv also negotiates mercenary contracts to bolster the defenses of the free territory.

the Resistance. To provide for the people, many of the lands once used to grow wine grapes have been converted to grow food crops. This is challenging, as some of the lands ideal for vineyards have inadequate soil for other crops. The most fertile lands are farther to the west and southwest in unsecured areas.

In addition to the Khadoran military threat, other dangers plague the region. Small bands of Cryxian forces prey on the outlying communities and raid the battlefields for the dead. In response to these threats, watchtowers have been built to help protect those working farmlands beyond Rhydden, including those near several of the region's war-torn towns.

LLAELESE RESISTANCE

The Resistance is a confederation of the most dedicated, hardened survivors of the Llaelese War who refuse to surrender. Its members are scattered across Llael and beyond, wherever individuals chose to fight against the Khadoran Empire and its unlawful invasion of this kingdom. Many refugees who fled Llael still support the Resistance, whose agents journey abroad to find recruits, gather weapons and other vital supplies, and strike at Khadoran interests. The organization is based in the city of Rhydden within the free territory of southeastern Llael. Here they assist in governing those last Llaelese who are not under the dominion of foreign powers as well as in coordinating the actions of its membership across the Iron Kingdoms.

Even at the heart of their strength, in Free Llael, the Resistance is in a decidedly difficult situation. They do not have sufficient numbers or arms to defend the territory from either the forces of Khador or the Northern Crusade. Rhydden itself is relatively secure, but even that city is unlikely to withstand a full siege by a true army. Their freedom has been predicated on making the region so costly to seize that Khador will think twice before committing to its suppression, a tactic that has seemed effective thus far. The Llaelese Resistance is keenly aware that this will only last as long as the Khadoran Army is focused on Cygnar.

Meanwhile, the Resistance continues to make strikes across Llael. Resistance cells exist in all the large cities and major townships of western Llael, and while there is limited direct control over these groups—their daily actions are coordinated by local leaders—messages and reports still make their way back to Rhydden. The nature of the struggle demands individual groups to function independently for extended periods of time and for different members to operate at a variety of levels within the organization. Specific agents see to the preservation of safe houses while others funnel information to Resistance cells. Couriers move back and forth across Llael constantly, but the lines of communication are irregular and subject to disruption. There is also considerable traffic from smugglers bringing arms and food to Resistance forces in Llael. For many, news from abroad is as precious as supplies.

While the Resistance can mobilize in force, such as when it joined the Northern Crusade in the march to Leryn, smaller cells undertake most of its covert actions. Its more regular military elements see to the defense of the free territory

while solo agents and small groups carry out actions against the Khadoran occupation. These groups have limited contact with the rest of the organization, receiving their instructions in coded messages. These tactics make the Resistance unpredictable and difficult to counter; captured agents can divulge little information. And even if an entire cell is wiped out, the Resistance has little trouble finding new volunteers to join the cause against Khador.

The Resistance draws its membership from across the Llaelese population. While some members have formal military training, others are civilians who have become veteran insurgents. The movement has drawn a large number of Llaelese patriots, including warcasters, former members of the Royal High Guard, Amethyst Rose gun mages, and even alchemists of the Golden Crucible who devote their time and energy to supplying the organization with blasting powder and alchemical weapons. Soldiers already serving at the time of the war are now respected leaders training the next generation of Resistance fighters. In all regards, however, the Resistance is a less cohesive force than any of the professional militaries of the Iron Kingdoms. It is well prepared for ambushes, skirmish fighting, assassination, and clandestine operations but not for open battle. The one thing its members share is a commitment to the cause, giving the Resistance high morale. Most members are willing to give their lives for the cause.

The Resistance has no clearly defined chain of command. Recruits follow the orders of more senior members. Within the free territory, militia forces use a rank structure based on the old Llaelese Army, while cells outside this region are led by "captains" with little authority beyond their small teams. Several cities have multiple cells, but there is always a single coordinating point of contact for Rhydden. Anonymous operatives are called "sleepers." The most senior officers in the organization are the field commanders, who serve on the Resistance Council.

Though an irregular volunteer force, the Resistance is not undisciplined. The grim realities of daily life that the members of the Resistance face have forced desperate measures. Commanding officers expect their orders to be followed, and recruits who do not fall in line are severely reprimanded. Deserters, traitors, and collaborators are shot, as are any who jeopardize Resistance operations. In this war there is no room for forgiveness or sentimentality—the price is simply too high.

Khador does not recognize the authority or legitimacy of the Resistance, hanging the members it captures without trial regardless of rank within the organization. Khador also targets the families of known Resistance members for retaliation. Furthermore, Khador's Section 3 has become bitterly involved in rooting out Resistance cells within the held territories in the west, making the clandestine warfare all the more dire.

THE RESISTANCE COUNCIL

Based in Rhydden, the Resistance Council is the administrative and decision-making body of the organization. In addition to seeing to the needs of the free territory, the council also coordinates the activities of the Resistance at home and abroad. When an important issue comes before it, the council makes decisions by simple vote among the members present. All field commanders of the Resistance are members of the council.

Duke Gregore Delryv IV serves as a bedrock leader for the council; he is the ranking noble of Rhydden and is most responsible for transforming the town into a fortified encampment. Though he sometimes fights alongside Resistance forces in the field, he spends most of his time in the city seeing to the needs of its people and consulting with military officers on improving its defenses.

Key council members in Rhydden include Earl Bytyn Feryse, once an esteemed vintner; the Umbrean Baroness Ivona Antonidka; Vicar Paelyne Dyvarc of the Church of Morrow, also known as "the Sparrow"; and Nolyn Gylbert, an esteemed poet and writer who is the voice of the Resistance through leaflets and essays. While Duke Delryv is the recognized leader of the council, he is aware of his limited military experience. Those with experience and formal military training handle operational oversight. Foremost of these is Ashlynn d'Elyse, often referred to by soldiers of the Resistance as Marshal d'Elyse. This rank is an honorific but represents that she is the highest military authority in the Resistance. Prominent military leaders include Colonel Jarov of Greywind Tower; Fynch di Lamsyn, senior gun mage of the Loyal Order of the Amethyst Rose; Major Owens of the Cygnaran Army; and the field commanders of the occupied cities, including Rashel Ganelyn (Elsinberg), Kylan Gyrart (Laedry), Camdyn Tadiri (Leryn), Dyra Alyr (Merywyn), and Bryson Weyne (Rynyr).

While frequently away from Rhydden overseeing the operations of the cells in their territories, these senior commanders are valued voices who return to Rhydden for significant votes. They are at constant risk of assassination due to the dangers inherent in their duties and in frequent travel, making turnover among their ranks all too common.

The Resistance Council has access to an exhaustive intelligence network via agents both within Llael and abroad. This network is nominally overseen by former Llaelese intelligence operative Anastasia di Bray, who works closely with Duke Delryv and Marshal d'Elyse. She was recently named a member of the Council after proving herself an able advisor. Several key contacts include Captain Culamir Camryn in Five Fingers and Baron Roget di Vyaros, a refugee of the old Order of the Golden Crucible who assists from Corvis. Both of these foreign cities have extensive Llaelese refugee populations.

Ashlynn d'Elyse is considered the Resistance's strongest military asset with her personal combat expertise and power as a warcaster. She served in the Llaelese Army and fought throughout the Llaelese War, distinguishing herself during the Siege of Merywyn. Due to her importance she is called upon to aid only the Resistance's largest strikes; otherwise she is a primary facet in the defense of the free territory and serves as an important voice on the council.

GREYWIND LEADERSHIP

There are a number of distinguished leaders commanding the Resistance forces at Greywind Tower. The most prominent are Colonel Stoyan Jarov, Fynch di Lamsyn, and Major Laskin Owens.

Colonel Stoyan Jarov did not distinguish himself in the war. By his own admission, he was a poor officer and a drunk, but he has turned himself around to become a highly respected Resistance field commander. An aging Umbrean with thinning gray hair, Jarov had a longer service record than any of Llael's ranking generals. He has a gruff manner but also a clear concern for the well-being of his people. Jarov enjoys Greywind's remoteness but regularly attends council meetings in Rhydden to discuss major operations. He has a knack for planning guerilla operations.

Fynch di Lamsyn is the most senior surviving member of the Amethyst Rose and a former member of the Royal High Guard. Other members of his order admire his daring exploits and his tremendous skill. Some say Fynch has a death wish while others insist this is simply pure Llaelese courage. His younger brother Artys was also a member of the order and is now in Five Fingers looking for recruits and mercenaries to join the cause.

Major Laskin Owens of the Cygnaran Army is a heavily scarred trencher officer and the senior of his countrymen who joined the Resistance. He is fluent in Llaelese and hasn't stepped on Cygnaran soil in over eight years, having been stationed at Redwall Fortress during the war. He was one of the few lucky survivors of that harrowing attack and prefers not to speak of that day. He has taken it upon himself to expand the tower's outer defenses by adding trenchworks and crude bunkers.

LOYAL ORDER OF THE AMETHYST ROSE

The Loyal Order of the Amethyst Rose remains the most renowned fighting order in Llaelese history. Its surviving members are now part of the Llaelese Resistance. Given their special talents they are often asked to undertake the most difficult missions, including assassinations on foreign soil and escorting key assets.

The order began as an informal and secretive association of Llaelese arcanely talented pistoleers. Formed in 218 AR, it is the longest-standing gun mage organization in western Immoren. Early on its membership was embroiled in foreign intrigue such as the plot to put Harald of Bloodbane on the Cygnaran throne. The group served as a hidden weapon of the Llaelese crown for decades, and its members were among the first to be inducted into the Royal High Guard when it was instituted in 274 AR.

Public awareness of the order rose as its members earned widespread esteem, yet most of the order remained discreet and served at the king's pleasure, undertaking clandestine operations suited to its members' abilities. Some circulated among the Council of Nobles as duelists, serving as the king's eyes and ears in the complex games of the Llaelese court. The order's numbers have always been small and its fortunes linked to those of the king; those numbers diminished and the order's reputation suffered during the Lymos dynasty in particular, but it returned to prominence with the restoration of the Martyns. The order became increasingly tied to the Royal High Guard, at times making up more than half its membership. When not actively serving as the king's protectors, members of the order collected sensitive information needed to root out conspiracies against the king.

Unfortunately, with King Rynnard's death in 595 AR this close relationship put the order in peril. When Prime Minister Glabryn made it clear that he had no intention of reinstituting the monarchy, the leaders of the Amethyst Rose spoke out against him. In response the prime minister disbanded the Royal High Guard, which meant that the Loyal Order of the Amethyst Rose lost its funding, housing, and purpose. Nonetheless, members refused to give up their vows. The gun mages adopted black attire to mourn the royal line and began secretly searching for potential heirs. Over time many became destitute and desperate, while others earned their keep as mercenaries and hired assassins alongside other former members of the Royal High Guard.

The start of the Llaelese War restored to the members of the Amethyst Rose their sense of purpose. They began a private war against Khadorans, striking down officers and others in prominent posts at every opportunity. The Amethyst Rose fought with distinction throughout the Llaelese War; the sight of them with their funereal garb and rune-inscribed pistols inspired civilians and soldiers alike, who saw them as courageous representatives of the last kings of Llael. Many senior Amethyst Rose members gave their lives to suicide missions, particularly during the Siege of Merywyn. After the city's surrender, survivors fled alongside other patriots to Rhydden to become an essential part of the Llaelese Resistance.

Never a large order, the Amethyst Rose now has fewer than fifty gun mages in its ranks. A ruthless and fatalistic lot, they operate from makeshift headquarters in Greywind Tower. Their former esprit de corps has become resigned bitterness among assassins serving a lost king and a fallen nation. Most operate alone, but some follow the model of the old Royal High Guard by gathering small groups with diverse skills for dangerous missions.

RESISTANCE HOLDINGS

GREYWIND TOWER

Ruler: Colonel Stoyan Jarov

Population: 3,000 humans (mostly Ryn and Umbrean but with some Midlunder, Caspian, Morridane, and Thurian), with a regular influx of a few dozen Rhulfolk and ogrun mercenaries

Military Presence: Several hundred Resistance fighters garrison the tower at any time. Additionally, enough weapons are stockpiled here to arm a large number of civilian refugees if necessary.

Description: Approximately eighty miles to the southwest of Rhydden rise the old battlements of Greywind Tower. As the only significant holding of the Resistance other than Rhydden, it is a base of operations for forces patrolling the western reaches of the free territory. A small township has grown around the battlements as refugees have sought protection here after fleeing townships outside Free Llael. These families have begun to build homes and find ways to support the Resistance in many necessary tasks.

This tower was originally constructed in 263 AR to watch the Iosan border, but as no threat ever came from that quarter the Llaelese never thought of the tower as vital to their defenses. It fell into disuse and disrepair during the rule of Prime Minister Glabryn. Its crumbling walls and barracks can hold a greater number of soldiers than were ever stationed here, and this has proved useful to the Resistance.

The Resistance has done considerable work to restore the outer walls and the living quarters. Several hundred Resistance soldiers are permanently stationed here, including many former Cygnaran troops who were stranded here after the withdrawal from Merywyn and who opted to remain and fight.

Greywind is a convenient place to maintain a cadre of the Resistance's warjacks, acting as a secondary refueling and repair point after Rhydden. Its small smithy has been expanded to serve as a mechanik's shop and continually keeps battered and refurbished Resistance warjacks in fighting shape, including a few Cygnaran machines.

The Loyal Order of the Amethyst Rose uses the tower as its primary meeting place and has converted the abandoned outer chapel for its needs. A handful of gun mages are usually here at any given time, including those recuperating from wounds sustained in operations elsewhere.

Colonel Stoyan Jarov, a former officer of the Llaelese Army and one of the few Llaelese warcasters who did not perish in the war, commands the forces at Greywind Tower. Duke Delryv and the rest of the Resistance Council place great value on his military opinions.

RHYDDEN

Ruler: Duke Gregore Delryv IV and the Resistance Council

Population: 72,000 humans (mostly Ryn and Umbrean)

Military Presence: Rhydden is the primary bastion of the Llaelese Resistance. It is home to roughly six thousand fighters, mercenaries, patriots, and both Llaelese and Cygnaran regular soldiers. Resistance fighters have several warcasters among their number and employ additional mercenary warcasters through the Highborn Covenant to bolster their forces. Rhydden maintains a contingent of aging Llaelese and Cygnaran warjacks.

Description: Once a scenic town renowned for its vineyards, Rhydden is now the last free city in Llael. While its dirty and overcrowded conditions are miserable, its people have learned to value different priorities from their old lives; their freedom is beyond price.

Well away from regular trade routes and a safe distance from Khador, Rhydden was once a secluded, peaceful town noted for logging and its fine wines. Before the war it was a popular destination for Cygnaran and Llaelese nobles, and aristocrats of all nations maintained summer homes here. But the Khadoran invasion changed Rhydden overnight.

Over the course of just a few months refugees flooded the city, which became the last hope of Llaelese loyalists. The vestiges of Llael's armies retreated here in the final days of the war, hastily fortifying the city. Duke Gregore Delryv, the last Llaelese nobleman to maintain his holdings, welcomed the Resistance and the thousands of homeless victims who came before it. Life in Rhydden has become increasingly communal as people look to the Resistance Council for salvation, keenly aware of how each person contributes to the common good. As a result the people are willing to follow orders and take on tasks they might once have deemed beneath their station. In return the leaders of the Resistance have done their best to ensure the town can see to necessities. Feeding the city, fabricating new clothes and tools, and educating the young while also training and arming soldiers are all vital.

Despite the best efforts of the Resistance Council and Duke Delryv, who spent his personal fortune buying food for the hungry, hiring mercenary forces, and improving the city's defenses, Rhydden's future is uncertain. Although the city remains free, it lies under a cloud of impending doom.

Its people know they live on borrowed time and lack the soldiers, weapons, and fortifications to defend themselves against Khador's might.

Fortifications ring the city's outer limits. Originally built during the frenzied days of the invasion, these walls and palisades have been reinforced over the years with pillbox fortresses, serrated wire, trenches, and other earthworks. Rhydden has found that good stone is hard to come by, however, leaving these walls inadequate to resist a major assault. The Resistance Council refuses to barter for stone with the Northern Crusade for fear of what will be asked of them in return. At the heart of Rhydden's city center, the town hall has been transformed into a fortified keep. It is here that the Resistance would make its last stand.

While the Resistance coordinates its operations from Rhydden, it also oversees the well-being of every citizen in the city who would starve if not for organization. This is an unenviable task—the soil nearest Rhydden is less than ideal for growing food crops. What good farmland exists here lies to the west of the city, and is insufficient to feed the vast influx of humanity. Efforts are underway to increase production in the outlying regions, and many of the inhabitants of Rhydden are being put to work on newly established farms. Still, some of Rhydden's food must be smuggled from Cygnar at great cost and risk.

Rhydden's wines are esteemed as far away as Ceryl and Ohk; the wine trade is one of the few valuable commodities left for the Resistance to use in its desperate bargains. Formerly deep wine reserves have been steadily plundered for trade abroad, although Duke Delryv keeps a close eye on the town's supply, which is used not unlike a treasury to fund Resistance efforts. Stockpiles of wine are the city's most lucrative assets and are locked away and guarded around the clock.

Though logging was once an important industry here, Resistance scouts have found indications of Iosan troop movements in the forest, and all logging in this area has been suspended. The last thing the Resistance needs is another enemy to its east.

Initially Rhydden opened its doors to the masses fleeing the war. As the flood of refugees continued, however, city authorities were forced to become more organized. Private lodgings became dormitories, and when these filled up the city established camps for displaced Llaelese. Nevertheless conditions are growing squalid. Priests of Morrow have suggested to the Resistance Council that unless something is done soon, there may be severe plague outbreaks. New sources of fresh water are also a concern, necessitating the effort to establish wells.

Rhydden is also home to a number of Sul-Menites who arrived with the Northern Crusade when it stopped here before proceeding on to Leryn. More pass through the city because it is now a way station for reinforcements and supply trains traveling between the Protectorate of Menoth and Leryn. Rhydden has benefited greatly from this, as these Protectorate convoys bring with them nominal goods that are left behind as payment.

Per agreements with Hierarch Severius, the locals erected three new temples to the Creator in Rhydden, and agents of the Northern Crusade remain behind to protect and tend to them. All were built directly across from Morrowan churches. While the people of Rhydden are grateful for the military aid from the Sul-Menites, they distrust their long-term motives. Some among the Resistance, however, recently converted to the worship of Menoth, either persuaded by the clergy or in response to witnessing the Harbinger during her passage through the region.

KHADORAN TERRITORY

There is no question that Khador decisively won the Llaelese War, expanding its borders and seizing assets to bolster its ongoing war efforts. Permanently securing the region has proven to be more complicated than was anticipated, however. Despite setbacks, the Khadoran-controlled territory is the largest of the three political divisions of Llael and includes the entirety of the western kingdom to the Black River and also the lands surrounding Merywyn. This encompasses the bulk of the most fertile and valuable lands and the largest industrialized cities. The majority of the western region joined with the old Umbrean lands to form Khador's largest volozk, Umbrey (see p. 168). The territory is jointly ruled by Great Prince Vladimir Tzepesci, who controls Umbrey, and Kommandant Mikhail Ivdanovich in Merywyn, who commands the Khadoran Army stationed in Llael.

Though this territory is not as diverse as Khador itself, there are several marked changes in climate and geography from north to south. The northernmost region is marked by a chain of high, imposing mountains and here the weather can be quite harsh and cold, particularly in winter. Known as the Oldwick Ridge in Llael, these are the southernmost reaches of one of the largest continuous mountain chains in western Immoren, which extends to the Borokuhn Mountains in northern Rhul. The mountainous region becomes milder and more pleasant during the summer, although the spring thaw can result in extensive snowmelt and flooding. These mountains are rich in mineral resources, and a number of mines have resumed operations under Khadoran rule.

The Llaelese mountains are considered the formidable bastion of the eastern Umbreans and shelter many remote townships, castles, and keeps. Many Umbreans fled here during the Orgoth Occupation to escape enslavement. Old Korska once sat at the base of these mountains but was razed and is now a significant historical ruin. The city of Laedry was later established as a new home for the Umbrean people.

One of the greatest cities in Llael, Laedry has only increased in prominence since the end of the Llaelese War, as it is now the administrative heart of united Umbrey. The city has grown as more citizens have come here, and its prosperity is assured with the completion of a railroad to Korsk, the Khadoran

capital. This railroad, which reaches through Elsinberg and Merywyn, facilitates the shipment of goods through the region, although it was primarily intended to expedite the movement of military supplies.

South of the mountains, western Llael becomes a fertile flatland, an area once ruled by the Umbrean horselords. Their holds were in the mountains, but they spent most of the year with their great herds in this southern region. The plains here provide better farmlands than the lands to the west in Khador proper, and careful Llaelese management has improved the extremely rich soil here. The climate is generally warmer in this region than to the north, but winter here can be almost as harsh as in southern Khador, with heavy snowfalls that can paralyze the region. The area comes to life, however, during its pleasant, warm spring and summer. The southern region also includes several flood plains that can be treacherous at times, but the locals know how to cope.

This region is the breadbasket of Llael, providing food to the large populations of Laedry and Merywyn as well as to the city of Elsinberg. While Merywyn and Elsinberg are the main population centers, this area has historically included numerous farming villages and townships. During the war many inhabitants of these rural areas abandoned their homes and fled to Merywyn or left the kingdom entirely. The Khadorans offered incentives to rebuild these towns, and the farms are returning to full operation, often with new owners. Significant numbers of Khadorans, particularly Khadoran Umbreans, emigrated into this region to exploit these opportunities. Many southern farms once owned by Rynnish farmers are now run by Umbreans who do not even speak Llaelese.

The influx of Khadoran emigrants has impacted the cities as well, notably in government and industry. Khadorans of influence and means who moved here have secured important appointments. The kayazy, the merchant princes of Khador, followed on the heels of the Khadoran Army and have made their presence known. Many of the governing posadniks are either kayazy or military officers being rewarded for exceptional service. These two camps do not always get along, leading to friction as the region transitions from military rule to full integration into the Khadoran Empire. The kayazy have strong influence in Merywyn and Rynyr and control the reconstruction taking place in Riversmet. They have begun to gain a controlling influence over the central farmlands and Llael's limited heavy industry.

The surviving Rynnish aristocrats who remain in this region have sought to ensure their own prosperity. While many defiant Llaelese nobles were executed after the surrender of Merywyn and others fled entirely, some remained behind and tried to make the best of their circumstances. Many became collaborators, securing their futures by cooperating with the Khadorans. These nobles are despised by their countrymen, but they survived the transition, retaining and sometimes even expanding their wealth as well as limited control over their lands. They remain an important factor in local politics, although the arrangements they made with the Khadoran Army might not survive the transitions in Umbrey. Further, they are prime targets for the wrath of the Resistance.

KHADORAN TERRITORY

Government Type: Volozk of the Khadoran Empire

Rulers: Great Prince Vladimir Tzepesci of Umbrey (see p. 169) and Kommandant Mikhail Ivdanovich

Seat: While Great Prince Tzepesci's ancestral seat is Castle Tzepesci in the Kovosk Hills, the administrative center for Umbrey is the Lord's Hall in Laedry, which is being rebuilt to house the central Umbrean government. Kommandant Ivdanovich commands the Khadoran Army forces in Llael from Merywyn.

Ethnic Groups & Approx. Population: 920,000 Ryn; 31,5000 Umbrean; 7,7000 Khard; 23,000 Midlunder; 21,000 bogrin; 18,000 Skirov; 8,000 gobber; 4,000 Thurian; 3,800 ogrun; 3,500 Rhulfolk; 3,300 Tordoran; 3,100 trollkin; 1,900 Iosan; 700 Caspian/Sulese; 500 Morridane

Languages: Llaelese (primary), Khadoran, Cygnaran

Predominant Religions: Morrowan majority, significant Menite minority

Important Cities: Elsinberg, Laedry, Merywyn, Riversmet (being rebuilt), Rynyr

Significant Towns (not on the map): Albyn, Balcourt, Borwyke, Boudfield, Dunlyfe, Gustyn Magna, Gylhurst, Lymsby, Lyanbeck, Mynydd Ghelt, Norpyll, Peryth, Sudstrath, Whelworth, Wythlow

For the most part, the locals accept Khadoran rule and are slowly grasping their place in the empire, although this has not been easy or painless. The Umbreans have accepted this transition more readily since the unification with their western kinsfolk in part because they were at times treated as second-class citizens by the Ryn and seeing their own people rise to positions of authority has been empowering to many. Nonetheless, most Umbreans in significant positions of power are Khadoran born, a fact not lost on Llaelese Umbreans. After rebuilding damage from the war, many Umbreans see their lives starting to improve.

The largest change many have had to come to grips with is the degree of bureaucratic control the empire exercises. The old Council of Nobles took a light hand in its approach to governance, so by comparison western Llael now feels to many like a police state. There is far greater scrutiny of the populace, with movements between regions being carefully regulated and controlled. The Llaelese Resistance persists, however, despite efforts to eradicate them. Those attempting to adapt to imperial rule resent the Resistance for making life more complicated. The Khadorans see every Llaelese citizen as a potential Resistance collaborator. Arrests,

interrogations, and hangings occur daily, but the Resistance cells are cautious and operate despite intensifying pressure from Khadoran authorities.

Merywyn is the most rigidly controlled of western Llael's cities, firmly under the Khadoran Army's direction. United Umbrey maintains less continuous scrutiny of the populace, although even here the laws are strictly enforced and Khadoran punishments for transgressors are universally harsher than under Llaelese law. Justice is swift and brutal.

Nonetheless the Llaelese are adaptable and politically minded and are learning the complexities of Khadoran etiquette. They are reassured by the fact that corruption exists under Khadoran rule just as it did under the old aristocracy—there are simply different pockets to fill. The presence of the kayazy is almost reassuring to the merchants and silver-tongued aristocrats of western Llael, as these are a people they understand.

While life in the west is arguably more stable than anywhere else in Llael, it is not without its perils and difficulties. The Khadoran Empire is still reeling from the humiliating setbacks it suffered in Leryn after the city was seized by the Northern Crusade. None of Khador's plans prepared it for this, and now the Northern Crusade is a significant threat to the eastern border of the Khadoran territory. Khadoran leaders know that the Protectorate will push on to claim other lands. At the same time, Khador has diverted the bulk of its forces to the Thornwood, reducing the Motherland's garrisons in Llael. Great Prince Tzepesci is expected to compensate for this lack of manpower, but his army is small and cannot patrol the entire territory. Tensions continue along the Black River, where armed encampments watch for threats from the east.

While Khador wishes to secure its hold on the rest of Llael, the cost and difficulty is too great as long as the Thornwood remains unsecured. Khador preferred to avoid a direct assault on Leryn even when the bulk of its forces were in Llael; doing so now is untenable. Instead, its policy focuses on containment and defense of their extensive holdings in the region. Khadoran forces have begun rebuilding the northeastern town of Riversmet as part of the fortification of the eastern border. Priority is also given to the defense of Rynyr, as its mining production is a strategic boon.

Similarly, Khador has given no serious consideration to launching a major offensive against the deeply entrenched Resistance in Rhydden. Resistance forces continue to plague army garrisons, but the Khadorans focus on rooting out cells in Khadoran-held cities rather than assaulting Free Llael. Still, patrols along the southeastern border engage smaller Resistance units wherever they can be isolated and destroyed. The Khadoran Army also regularly raids free towns and farms to keep the Resistance off balance and prevent them from entirely exploiting the free territories.

One of the most troublesome threats to the Khadoran region, as is also the case elsewhere in Llael, is a rise in Cryxian activity. Since Cryx swept into the region with the war, there has been little progress in rooting them out. Great Prince Tzepesci was seriously injured late in the war fighting against Cryx and believes them to be the greatest threat to Umbrey. For now Khador's need to counter the movements of the Northern Crusade has prevented it from focusing on Cryx except as threats arise. Cryxian raids against outlying towns and villages in recent months have made it difficult for the locals to recover from the war.

MARCH OF THE DEAD

Elsinberg is rich in history; each century has left its mark on the very fabric of the city. Marble statues and stone markers commemorate battles, glorify great heroes, and vilify old enemies. The people celebrate numerous holidays and festivals to acknowledge their history, none as portentous as the yearly March of the Dead.

Early on a cold autumn morning generations ago, spectral soldiers appeared in the fog and began to march through the city's main street. They formed into lines and marched through town before fading from sight as they passed through Elsinberg's Eastern Gate. The first manifestation of this spectacle caused panic and confusion, but over the decades it has become an expected and even anticipated event among the locals.

Scholars agree this is the army of the baron General Ghan Gallowey, whose forces mysteriously disappeared in 183 AR while marching to reinforce a fortress against the Orgoth in the southwest. They were never found, and the fortress fell that winter. Not until years after the Orgoth had gone from the shores of Immoren was it rebuilt, as Ravensgard.

Each year the people of Elsinberg gather to watch this procession in a curious atmosphere evoking both the pomp of a military parade and the solemnity of a funeral. In years past, the observers carried flags of Llael as they watched the spectral phenomenon, but under Khadoran governance this custom is no longer permitted.

The Black River is the single most important geographical feature of this territory, even more so than the Llaelese Mountains, which is why Khador made every effort to secure the western region around the river. The Khadorans consider controlling the river vital to controlling Llael and worked to secure the few bridges and river crossings, which are of vital strategic importance. The most significant crossings are at Riversmet and at Merywyn itself. The Black River presents a natural barrier to large-scale operations by the Northern Crusade; by contrast, it impacts the Llaelese Resistance less because the Resistance can move in small numbers relatively unnoticed.

The remaining Llaelese merchants and traders well know that river trade has suffered since the war. All trade with Cygnar has been outlawed; smugglers risk execution. Some opportunistic Llaelese still conduct this dangerous business, but land routes are required for any significant cargo. Khador has absolute control over the waterways at Merywyn, and moving traffic south of here without the cooperation of the army is nearly impossible. The Khadoran military uses the river itself to resupply its own forces closer to Corvis, but even they do not have complete control south of Merywyn. The Llaelese Resistance sometimes raids the shipping lanes, as do trollkin and others striking from the Glimmerwood east of the Thornwood.

Tight control over this river has also complicated Khador's relationship with Rhul, which conducts much of its trade along this route. The situation is delicate; the empress has ordered her officials to avoid antagonizing Rhul, requiring Khadorans to bend their own rules to do so. Trade with Rhul is too vital to the empire to risk an incident. At the same time, the Khadorans cannot openly allow Rhul to trade with Cygnar, Khador's enemy.

The Khadorans prohibit any civilian traffic south of Merywyn, but they do not actively interfere with Rhulic merchant caravans journeying south by other means. Rhulfolk have also taken to smuggling to continue their trade and have found that Khadoran inspectors are less stringent about their vessels than they are about those of the native Llaelese.

Rhulic trade outfits like the powerful Searforge Commission have also stepped up efforts to arm and protect their caravans. Trade expeditions march from Rhul with small armies of professional soldiers as escorts, all officially chartered mercenaries. Additionally, the Llaelese Resistance frequently employs Rhulic mercenaries that join in attacks against Khadoran garrisons. These engagements are on more stable political ground, as Khadoran soldiers can freely engage and destroy such forces without broader ramifications.

MINISTRIES OF LLAEL

Though the government of Llael surrendered to Khador, some of its bureaucracy was preserved to assist the transition to imperial rule. The Khadoran Army and Great Prince Tzepesci both find it easier to allow these offices to continue their work rather than entirely replacing the government to match that of other Khadoran volozkya. Thus, many of the old ministries continue operating in Merywyn, and the clerks and officers continue their work as before, albeit now under the watchful eye of Khadoran taskmasters. Though there are ministries, there are no ministers; the Khadorans have replaced them with posadniks and supply officers chosen by Kommandant Mikhail Ivdanovich.

Ivdanovich, the kommandant controlling Merywyn, is renowned for his perfectly managed supply chains and efficient bureaucracy. His best administrators and clerks now control many of the ministries, where their first task was to root out the corruption in the old Llaelese government. This has effectively cut off many collaborating Llaelese from their previous sources of revenue, as graft provided a substantial income for many.

The following ministries still operate in Merywyn: the Ministry of the Treasury and Taxation (once two separate ministries, now combined); the Ministry of Trade and Commerce; the Ministry of Law and Records; the Ministry of Roads, Rivers, and Sewage; the Ministry of Agriculture, Mines, and Quarries; the Ministry of Standards and Measures; and the Ministry of Arts and Letters. The former Ministries of Internal Security, Defense of the Realm, and Foreign Affairs were abolished and their most capable staff reassigned. Some remnants of Internal Security were allowed to continue criminal investigations within Merywyn, specifically to root out the Llaelese Resistance.

Section Three of the Ministry of the Great Vizier, which has agents in Merywyn and Laedry, supervises these efforts.

There has been some disagreements and shuffling of responsibilities between the old central government in Merywyn and new offices being established in Laedry. Eventually it is expected that the government center will be moved entirely to Laedry, where Umbrey's ruling elite gather, but for now the bureaucracy of the realm remains in Merywyn. Given the ongoing significant threats to the region, Great Prince Tzepesci has kept his nobles arming for war instead of governing.

THE KHADORAN ARMY IN LLAEL

An overview of the Khadoran Army in Llael is described in chapter 2 (see "The 1st Army: The Anvil," p. 134). Initially the task of holding this territory occupied the entirety of the 1st Army. The war against Cygnar, however, required reallocation of many elements of the 1st Army to the Thornwood. At present only the 2nd Division of the 1st Army under the command of Kommandant Voroshilov Klimovich remains in Llael.

Klimovich oversees the approximately 70,000 soldiers in Llael and works closely with his commanding officer, Kommandant Mikhail Ivdanovich, who is in charge of the entire 1st Army. Ivdanovich is one of Supreme Kommandant Irusk's favored officers and has considerable responsibility in this region, including military governance of the Khadoran territory.

Both leaders are still acclimating to the unification of Umbrey under Great Prince Vladimir Tzepesci. Tension exists between the military and the great prince, whose petitions for additional troops to protect the people of the territory have been refused by Supreme Kommandant Irusk. Ivdanovich is seen as Irusk's man here, and as far as Great Prince Tzepesci is concerned, the kommandant has been powerless to protect the outlying townships. In truth, Ivdanovich's priority is to safeguard the region's most important military assets. For now this includes the substantial industries of both Laedry and Merywyn, the vital powder mining in Rynyr, and the new border fortress at Riversmet. All other considerations are secondary.

One of the objectives of the 1st Army here is to transform as much of the territory's industrial capacity to military production as possible. These efforts are well underway in the city of Merywyn; Laedry has undergone a slower transformation but is building foundries and shops capable of both repairing Khadoran warjacks and producing new ones.

CITIES OF THE KHADORAN TERRITORY

ELSINBERG

Ruler: Countess Stacia Kepetch

Population: 90,000 humans (mostly Ryn and Umbrean with a recent influx of Khard), a few hundred gobbers

Military Presence: Elsinberg is garrisoned by three Winter Guard kompanies of the 1st Army. Additionally both the Tzepegci and Kepetch families have large private forces in the city.

Description: Elsinberg is a resource-rich city on the edge of the Umbrean heartland. Renowned for its fine stone buildings and impressive white marble outer walls, Elsinberg was an ancient trade city inhabited by both Umbreans and Ryn. Over time it became a significant bastion of higher thought; from here Ascendant Angellia completed her most lasting work. She is regarded as a patron of the city, and the monastery here dedicated to her remains is a significant pilgrimage site. Most of Elsinberg's people make their livings working the nearby stone quarries, raising sheep, or working in the city's textile industry.

Elsinberg was one of the first cities to fall in the initial Khadoran assault. The fighting lasted only few short days and resulted in relatively little damage to the town itself. It is said that Archduke Cherydwyn surrendered as soon as soldiers stepped foot on his estate before the remaining Llaelese soldiery had even been fully engaged.

The people of Elsinberg have adjusted well to Khadoran rule. With the unification of Umbrey, provisional control of the city was removed from Kommander Negomir Tarovic and Great Prince Tzepesci assigned his faithful vassal Alena Kepetch to oversee it, elevating her to Countess of Elsinberg. The countess' bloodline is ancient and well respected in Umbrey, both east and west, and she is judged a fair ruler. As a gesture of good faith toward her citizens, she even allowed the former Baroness of Elsinberg, Rashel Ganelyn, to continue living in the city, though under guard.

Ganelyn is secretly the top agent of the Resistance in Elsinberg, though her activities have been curtailed by her house arrest. She retains some freedom via hidden passageways under her estate that are unknown to her guards, whom she has charmed with her charisma and wit.

Elsinberg's library contains one of the most comprehensive collections of written histories in the Iron Kingdoms, but the building itself is also a historical monument. Ascendant Angellia founded the original library in 1033 BR, six years before her ascension. The oldest part of the building is a simple stone vault in the library's heart that houses its most valuable tomes. With each century, the library's collection has grown and new rooms have been added. During the Orgoth Occupation, the library was used as a barracks by the invaders, but monks preserved the collection by hiding it away in hundreds of secret caches.

Since the Occupation the library has remained under the purview of the Church of Morrow despite attempts by the Greylords Covenant to gain control of it. It remains staffed by erudite monks and priests who have chosen Angellia as their patron. The Greylords are regular visitors to the library, performing research related to their occult studies.

The adjacent Monastery of Ascendant Angellia preserves important relics of the ascendant, particularly her physical remains. Several knights of the Order of Keeping are always here to protect the grounds. Lately these knights have taken to patrolling the library, giving the monks much-needed support to keep prying Greylords from forbidden tombs.

LAEDRY

Ruler: Viscount Barak Ushka

Population: 210,000 humans (mostly Umbrean)

Military Presence: Laedry is a city vital to both the great prince and the Khadoran Army. Although its garrison has been reduced, several thousand Khadoran soldiers remain stationed here. They serve the great prince and fight alongside his vassals charged with defense of the region. Great Prince Tzepesci has gathered many of his liegemen and their household soldiers, forming an army tens of thousands strong that includes thousands of heavy horse. While it is an impressive force of Umbreans, it is still thought to be inadequate to defend Umbrey against the Northern Crusade, the most significant threat to the region.

Description: Laedry sits at the heart of the newly united Umbrey and has rapidly become a major power center in the volozk, soon to become its capital. Great Prince Tzepesci himself spends much of his time here under the hospitality of his most loyal liegeman, Viscount Barak Ushka. The local people here enthusiastically embrace the idea of a unified Umbrey, proud to see the dawning of a new day for their once-divided people.

Laedry is built near the site of Korska, the Umbrean capital razed by the Orgoth in 542 BR. King Malyk Lymos II founded the new city here in 328 AR and had it built in the old Umbrean style to honor the people of this region. The Umbrean buildings bear more resemblance to Khadoran architecture than Llaelese, but many neighborhoods reflect the influence of Ryn culture.

While the people of Laedry are stern and less willing to mince words than their countrymen to the east, they are arguably more cultured and refined than their rustic Khadoran kin. This has become more pronounced with the influx of thousands of Umbreans from Khador who have moved to the city seeking greater opportunities. The mixing of the distinct western and eastern Umbrean cultures is ongoing but has not been easy.

In the immediate aftermath of the Khadoran invasion, Laedry was a hotbed of Resistance activity, and its independently minded people were hostile to the occupying forces. The dominant Umbrean population did not wish to become citizens of Khador, having long yearned for the reestablishment of their ancient kingdom. The first years of occupation were marked by civil disorder and the assassinations of several Khadoran military officers. Yet Great Prince Tzepesci, whom the Umbrean people view as the rightful ruler of their ancestral lands, embraced the growing movement for a united Umbrey. When he convinced the empress to recognize his claims, most of the people of Laedry greeted the unification of Umbrey with relief and joy. In the months since then, Laedry has become a stronghold of Khadoran, if not Umbrean, power.

The citizenry have repaired most of the damage done during the invasion, and Khadoran rule has improved the lives of the city's citizens. Laedry is now connected to the rail line that extends from Rorschik to Elsinberg and Merywyn, increasing trade. Even so, competition is stiff for local merchants, who now must compete with predatory kayazy. Further, the city's Rynnish population has not yet embraced life as citizens of the Umbrean volozk. Significant Llaelese Resistance cells still exist here; Great Prince Tzepesci and his subordinates are well aware of this, though they have had little success in rooting them out.

One of the most curious and macabre features of Laedry, yet one prized by the locals is the ring of burial grounds surrounding the city walls. The locals never refer to the Honor Fields as "graveyards," as the term is considered disrespectful. Some of these old tombs predate the city's founding and are connected by bewildering narrow paths through spiked iron fences. Many new graves were dug here in the aftermath of the Llaelese War.

The city's center of government is the Lord's Hall, which has been entirely taken over by the great prince and his household. New construction has already commenced to expand these grounds, and in time this grand complex will house the bureaucracy of Umbrey, including those ministries the great prince chooses to preserve.

Another area of rapid expansion has been the city's forges, smithies, and foundries, many of which are used to create weapons and armament for Vladimir's army as well as to produce warjacks. This growth has attracted many aspiring engineers and mechaniks, particularly from Khador, who have a chance here to make their mark early in the great prince's reign.

MERYWYN

Ruler: Kommandant Mikhail Ivdanovich

Population: 240,000 humans (mostly Ryn, Umbrean, and Khard); 6,000 gobbers; 1,500 Rhulfolk; 800 ogrun

Military Presence: Kommandant Ivdanovich's 2nd Division of the 1st Army is headquartered in Merywyn.

Description: Once the shining capital and bastion of Llaelese culture, Merywyn is a city of tall spires, soaring buttresses, and baroque architecture. Formerly the center of the Llaelese economy, Merywyn relied on the traffic along the Black River for its trade, scrupulously recording and tithing all merchant ships it allows past its chained watch stations. The kingdom's most influential families spent much of the year in the city attending the Council of Nobles in the Immaculate Chamber. Recently, however, Merywyn's royal palace has become the headquarters and central barracks for the 2nd Division of Khador's First Army.

The Siege of Merywyn was one of the longest, most protracted incidents of the Khadoran invasion; the capital held out for almost three months before surrendering on the 12th of Cinten, 605 AR. It was a bloody, brutal battle, and the inhabitants suffered greatly, cut off from food and outside supplies. Artillery fire took a heavy toll on the city's buildings, and it seemed it might take a generation to restore Merywyn to its former beauty. Regular attacks and bombings by Resistance cells targeting occupation forces only compounded the damage from the war, and the assassination of high-profile Khadoran officers and collaborators by Llaelese agents added further paranoia and uncertainty.

Merywyn

The city is now governed by bureaucrats who answer to Kommandant Mikhail Ivdanovich. While Great Prince Tzepesci rules the Umbrean volozk, the army controls Merywyn. From here Kommandant Ivdanovich coordinates the supply trains and logistics of the Khadoran war machine in the Thornwood, and much of the city's population works to support those efforts. Accordingly, many kayazy flocked to Merywyn for new markets that let them profit from the war. The kayazy have become significant here, bringing much-needed capital to assist in transforming the industry but complicating the military control of the city.

Surprisingly the Khadoran government spared no expense to repair and restore Merywyn with shocking speed. Only three years after the invasion Merywyn shows few signs of the terrible damage it suffered and has become a thriving metropolis, the eastern bastion of the Khadoran Empire. Merywyn is also the eastern terminus of the Iron Highway that extends from Rorschik through Laedry and Elsinberg to the former capital.

Merywyn was designed to exalt wealth and conceal poverty. Its main promenades, concourses, and riverfronts pass sprawling gardens, ancient libraries, art galleries, music halls, and theaters. The estates of Llaelese nobles killed or driven off during the war are now the homes of Khadoran officers and prominent kayazy. By contrast the city's industry as well as the cramped homes of the lower classes are hidden from the main thoroughfares behind tall walls overgrown with ivy. An influx of refugees and newcomers, however, has forced new housing to be constructed elsewhere, causing chaos in old residential districts. This has been exacerbated by the Khadoran Army having seized certain historical buildings for its own needs, converting several with little regard for aesthetics. Many Llaelese lament that the city will never be the same.

The Resistance still maintains cells in Merywyn, but they are constantly hounded by agents of the Prikaz Chancellery and Section Three, which has an office in the city. Resistance fighters here are increasingly desperate. This is without question the most dangerous place for them to operate; Merywyn is a crucible that only the most effective agents can survive. Leadership has changed seven times since the end of the war due to arrests, executions, and assassinations by Khadoran intelligence agents.

RIVERSMET

Ruler: Lord Vasko Durga

Population: 12,000 humans (mostly Ryn, Umbrean, and Khard)

Military Presence: Riversmet is garrisoned by two battalions of the 1st Army. These are supported by hundreds of Khadoran Mechaniks Assembly engineers overseeing the reconstruction and fortification of the city.

Description: Built where the Black and Oldwick Rivers join, Riversmet was a thriving city of 60,000 before the war. Since ancient times the city prospered on river trade and boat building and possessed excellent farmlands. Riversmet enjoyed a quiet history until the Khadoran invasion, when it suffered more than any city in Llael.

As a warning to the Llaelese people of the cost of resistance, in early 605 AR Khadoran forces unleashed doom reavers to slay thousands of Riversmet's citizens and razed the city, completely destroying its ancient buildings. Riversmet had been the site of pitched warfare between the Khadorans and entrenched Cygnaran forces; had this fighting not already driven tens of thousands from their homes, the slaughter would have been even more horrifying. As it was, many of the survivors fleeing to Rhydden died from hunger and disease trying to get there. The ruins of their abandoned home smoldered for weeks.

Rynyr

Since the war Riversmet has been a sore point for the conquered Llaelese. The memory of its destruction has fueled the Resistance and made it harder for the Llaelese to accept Khadoran rule. To ease these tensions, Great Prince Vladimir Tzepesci initiated a plan to invest in rebuilding the city and provide homes and work for those people whose lives were shattered by war. The High Kommand agreed to this, provided that a substantial fortification was established here. Contributions from the Tzepesci treasure were insufficient to cover the costs, so the great prince enticed a number of kayazy to invest in the city.

Once Riversmet is rebuilt it will hopefully become a hub of trade with Rhul and the cities of Khadoran Llael. Because it is at the far edge of Khadoran territory in an area newly contested by the forces of the Northern Crusade, it is also of strategic importance. The High Kommand intends for its newly built hilltop fortress to discourage the Sul-Menites from further incursions westward.

RYNYR

Ruler: Posadnik Palyn di Myr

Population: 26,000 humans (mostly Ryn, Skirov, and Umbrean), several hundred gobbers and Rhulfolk

Military Presence: Rynyr is garrisoned by two battalions of the 1st Army.

Description: Possibly the most inhospitable excuse for civilization in the Iron Kingdoms, Rynyr is a bustling mining town at the base of the Thundercliff Peaks in a highly volcanic area. The locals here mine the red powder that is a major component in blasting powder, but it is a pungent substance that thinly coats everything and everyone in Rynyr. Exposure to the powder can cause an itchy rash; prolonged exposure can cause skin burns and lung irritation. Inhabitants of Rynyr always wear water-soaked leathers from head to toe as well as goggles, and few venture outside without a breather or at least a damp cloth to cover the face. The city has become a melting pot of Llael's most desperate peoples, including destitute Khadorans, impoverished Umbreans, and disenfranchised Ryn.

The town is built into the walls of the chasm above the volcanic depths, which emanate intense heat. Soaring catwalks and gantries connect large clusters of buildings, and a web of cables transports buckets of ore. The buildings are constructed entirely of stone and brick—no wood can be used here for fear of fire—and every door and window must be well sealed to keep out the powder. It is an awful place to live, but those who can tolerate it and work hard can make a good living here. Khadoran industrialists

see tremendous opportunity in Rynyr, and the city's mining operations have expanded dramatically since the occupation. Nearly a dozen new mining companies have started here, including operations controlled by Blaustavya Shipping & Rail.

Posadnik Palyn di Myr rules this place; a Llaelese nobleman and the former baron of Rynyr, he has a knack for survival and shifting alliances. The "Powder Tyrant" not only endured the war but kept his grip on Rynyr, opening up its production to Khador's markets. With many powerful allies throughout the empire, di Myr has virtually reinvented himself as a Rynnish kayaz and now works closely with the Khadoran military to ensure the work in the mines never stops.

TERRITORY OF THE NORTHERN CRUSADE

The smallest of the three territories of Llael, the region seized by the Northern Crusade is nonetheless strategically vital and includes all the resources and attributes necessary to make it an ideal stronghold for the faith. The Northern Crusade is the most recent faction to contest the war-torn land as it settles into the fortress-city of Leryn. Currently this territory includes most of the northeastern region from the Oldwick River, including the northeastern mountains, as well as a stretch of the flatter farmlands south of Leryn almost to Rhydden and west to the Black River. Hierarch Severius, ruler of the Protectorate of Menoth, has absolute control over this territory, delegating command of the forces of the Northern Crusade to Grand Exemplar Kreoss and the governance of Leryn to Vice Scrutator Vindictus.

The arrival of the Northern Crusade took the other powers in the region completely by surprise. No one would have predicted the Protectorate would be so brazen as to send such a sizable portion of its military strength so far from its own borders. The crusade's goals here are of singular spiritual importance and are vital to the theocracy's Great Crusade (see p. 328). At the center of their plans is the conversion of the Menite sects of Immoren to the Sul-Menite faith, especially the masses of Khadorans who seem particularly likely to convert if exposed to the glory of the Harbinger of Menoth.

In this regard the crusade has had great successes, as many Llaelese Menites have reaffirmed their faith in the Creator. Severius chose Leryn as the Northern Crusade's headquarters not just for its formidable fortifications but also for its substantial Menite population. Since the arrival of the Sul-Menite forces, many formerly perfunctory worshipers have renewed their zeal and enthusiasm, inspired by the sight of the Harbinger and by the words of the hierarch. Even Morrowans in the territory have converted, either from desperation or after being persuaded the hardships and ills of the Llaelese people represent divine punishment for abandoning the Creator.

Nevertheless, most of the territory's inhabitants remain at least loosely devoted to Morrow, and their lives have been greatly disrupted by the Northern Crusade. Most live in fear of what will befall them under the notoriously harsh rule of the Protectorate's theocracy.

TERRITORY OF THE NORTHERN CRUSADE

Government Type: Theocracy

Ruler: Hierarch Severius

Seat: Leryn; the hierarch's true seat is Imer, the capital of the Protectorate of Menoth, but Leryn serves as his regional seat and headquarters of the Northern Crusade.

Ethnic Groups & Approx. Population: 288,000 Ryn; 118,000 Sulese; 52,000 Umbrean; 33,000 Idrian; 13,000 bogrin; 4,500 Midlunder; 2,000 Skirov; 1,100 Tordoran; 1,000 Thurian; 800 Khard; 500 Rhulfolk; 200 ogrun; 700 trollkin; 200 gobber; 200 Iosan; 200 Morridane

Languages: Llaelese (primary), Cygnaran/Sulese

Predominant Religions: Morrowan majority, large Menite minority; Morrowans here must obey dictates of Sul-Menite priests and can worship only with the consent of the theocracy.

Important Cities: Leryn

Significant Towns (not on the map): Alwyr, Bexlyfe, Gylbert, Lysgarth, Strathweald, Vanhurst

Such fears were validated when Hierarch Severius burned alive Koldun Lord Volkh Lazar of the Greylords Covenant, who had previously held Leryn for Khador. Since the Northern Crusade's imposing army marched through the streets to claim the Thunderhead Fortress, however, there have been few displays of harsh Sul-Menite law. Severius is, by Protectorate standards, quite accommodating and gracious with the people. The scrutators here enforce the old codes from before the arrival of the Orgoth—Morrowans can worship openly as long as they attend Temple services, pay their tithes, and acknowledge the supremacy of the Creator.

To the Sul-Menites this is extreme benevolence, but the people here are still adjusting to these impositions and to the requirement that all their labor contribute to the Temple. Compared to their former freedom, life has become rigid with curfews, harsh punishments for even trivial crimes, and an awareness of being watched at all times while in public. Most of the Northern Crusade is still focused on preparing for battles to come while converting the city's industrial capacity to create arms. The Sul-Menites also prioritize the construction of new temples.

There is zero tolerance for behavior among the locals that seems to threaten the work of the crusade even slightly. While people feel secure in their homes, where their thoughts and speech are their own, the omnipresence of the crusading forces on the streets of cities and towns causes widespread fear. Shortly after the arrival of this army a rash of arrests and executions vividly

demonstrated the stringency by which the Temple's agents would enforce their unbending laws. Since then the civilian population has been cowed; even the most foul-tongued laborers have learned to bite their tongues if knights march by, and many taverns and restaurants have either closed or enforced limits on the excesses of their patrons.

All professions and trades useful to the Northern Crusade have been assigned constant labor. Lower-ranking priests and monks of the Order of the Fist scour the region, particularly the alleys of Leryn, for anyone guilty of indolence or sloth. Individuals thus identified are forcibly apprehended and put to work, often set to difficult and dangerous tasks in the northern mines and quarries. Former musicians, painters, poets, tavern keepers, and actors now struggle to appear productive and busy in capacities beneficial to the crusade. Some citizens have left Leryn to work on nearby farms, finding this preferable to laboring in the mines.

The former nobles of the region who remained behind are perhaps the most unsettled by these changes. A number of them had reached comfortable arrangements with the Greylords who first ruled Leryn after the war. By cooperating and assisting in the plunder of the Golden Crucible's former holdings, these noblemen had hoped to retain their estates and continue to live in relative comfort. They have no accord with the Northern Crusade, though; the Protectorate army has seized the larger estates for barracks and forced the nobles to join the masses in seeking a useful vocation. This forced equality has endeared the Northern Crusade to some people of the lower classes, while others are horrified at this upset of the natural order.

The northeastern territory has suffered less than other parts of Llael, but perils remain beyond the walls of Leryn. Cryxian forces are rare in this remote region but still occasionally prey on isolated villages on the outskirts. Thus far Protectorate patrols have kept them from mounting a broader attack. In addition to frequent skirmishes with Khadorans across the Black River, some senior leaders of the Northern Crusade have debated conducting a more decisive attack against the fortress being constructed at Riversmet. While Hierarch Severius is focused on rebuilding and reforming Leryn itself, he is expected to turn his attention outward soon.

The Northern Crusade is allied with the Resistance to the south, although their relations have been strained since the imposition of Protectorate rule in Leryn. Members of the Resistance here ostensibly maintain communication between the Northern Crusade and the Resistance Council as well as serving to provide news to Rhydden on the circumstances of the region. The scrutators are aware of the hidden presence of Resistance agents in the city but choose not to act against them for the time being. Should the Resistance interfere with the Temple in any way, this will swiftly change. Currently the Northern Crusade considers the Resistance useful for providing intelligence related to their shared enemies as well as for facilitating mercenary support. Rhydden serves as a way station between Leryn and the Protectorate. If the time comes when the priesthood feels the need to take direct charge of Rhydden and the free territory, it is ready to do so.

LEADERS OF THE NORTHERN CRUSADE

The forces of the Northern Crusade are a microcosm of the military of the Protectorate of Menoth, as it has access to all the forces and assets of the Temple. Hierarch Severius has made the Thunderhead Fortress in Leryn the seat of his power, and from here he commands its strategic priorities while providing direction for the entire Protectorate of Menoth. His awareness of day-to-day events in the south is limited, so he relies on the scrutators and other agents of the Temple who travel between Imer and Leryn to bring news and dispense his orders. Given the distance, he must leave governance of the Protectorate heartland to the Synod in Imer. Similarly, Severius relies on key subordinates in Leryn to oversee operational details of the Northern Crusade.

The priesthood serves the hierarch, with the scrutators being his most trusted agents. They see to the administration of the northern territories and ensure that Leryn's population and those living in the outlying region are kept busy with tasks in support of the Crusade and that any hints of insurrection are ruthlessly quashed. The senior scrutators stay alert for plotting or scheming, as the Llaelese may be subdued but are far from compliant. Most are impious or faithless and therefore not to be trusted. The freshly converted are also subject to scrutiny, and many lower-ranking priests work to ensure such individuals are educated in the proper interpretation of the True Law in addition to Sul-Menite doctrine and tradition.

Vice Scrutator Vindictus is charged with the well-being and governance of the population while overseeing the garrisons of Leryn. As a skilled and powerful warcaster, he is a key military asset. Should he be needed for active military duty, he has subordinates ready to fulfill his responsibilities in Leryn.

Hierarch Severius' most trusted and reliable military leader is Grand Exemplar Kreoss, master of the Knights Exemplar and a knight much beloved by the Sul-Menite people. When the hierarch chooses not to lead the Northern Crusade personally, he hands its command to the grand exemplar, who holds unwavering loyalty and dedication to the Creator and the Great Crusade.

The Northern Crusade includes a substantial number of the Protectorate's Knights Exemplar, who make up a large part of its armed force. Many of these elite forces served in the Caspia-Sul War, and others fought as part of the Northern Crusade as it moved north through Cygnar.

While these are the ranking leaders of the Northern Crusade several other prominent individuals hold stations and status that place them in a special echelon. Above all is the Harbinger, who recently rejoined the crusade after playing a crucial role in the close of the Caspia-Sul War alongside the grand exemplar and others. The Harbinger is the personal advisor to the hierarch, but she is far more than that to all pious Menites, whether Sulese or recently converted. She is a reminder of the Creator's constant presence. She has the gift of prophecy by which she can advise the crusade toward its holy objectives, and at times Menoth speaks directly through her. While the hierarch will always interpret these words and transform them into actions, no figure in the Protectorate is held in greater awe and reverence than she is. Wherever the Harbinger travels, she transforms the hearts

and minds of those who see her, and they would gladly lay down their lives to aid her, even as she has in turn saved many from destruction by invoking the power of the divine.

The Testament of Menoth is nearly as formidable and awe-inspiring, although his demeanor provokes more fear and dread than adoration. This masked and voiceless master of the Reclaimant Order also receives direct communion from the Lawgiver. The nature of his visions is quite different, however, as they are focused on souls to be reclaimed and specific enemies of the faith to be laid low. The Testament is perhaps the only member of the Northern Crusade who acts with absolute autonomy. Armies rise around him unbidden, and when he marches forth no priest questions him or objects if he seizes the nearest warjacks to join him. The bureaucracy of the crusade simply accommodates him, as his every action is inherently holy. Yet the Testament does not speak or deliver orders, nor does he govern or dictate policy, even by proxy. He stands outside the crusade even as he is a part of it.

High Executioner Reznik is the last major authority figure of the Northern Crusade. The high executioner and his forces answer directly to Hierarch Severius. This interdiction, over a thousand strong, can deal with a wide variety of threats, and the high executioner has access to a formidable number of heavy warjacks that answer to his will. Reznik is often sent afield among the outlying communities beyond Leryn to destroy reputed enemies of the faith—those deemed guilty of heresy or insurrection—and for a host of other tasks. Reznik's force is a political convenience for the hierarch, because its most severe actions are attributed to the high executioner rather than to the Northern Crusade, supporting Severius' aura of watchful benevolence. Transgressors force him to withdraw his protective hand and leave them at the mercy of the high executioner.

LERYN

Ruler: Hierarch Severius

Population: 310,000 humans (mostly Ryn, Sulese, and Umbrean, with a large number of Idrian)

Military Presence: Leryn is the seat of the Northern Crusade. In addition to the 70,000 crusaders under Grand Exemplar Kreoss, Vice Scrutator Vindictus commands an additional garrison of 65,000 troops in reserve to defend the city and police its populace. A strong contingent of allegiants of the Order of the Fist has joined the crusade to keep an eye on Leryn's population. A city watch commanded by Temple priests now patrols Leryn, but the Order of the Fist is the more significant enforcer of the peace.

Description: Leryn is among the most heavily fortified cities in western Immoren, famously described by King Artys di la Martyn I as "the best-fortified city no one shall ever attack." Set into the foothills of Mount Borgio on the banks of the Oldwick River, this entrenched city is a grand sight. In ancient days it was the capital of the kingdom of Rynyr, and though few of its first buildings remain, the city is still steeped in history. Several eras of newer construction have had the effect of building upon layers of sediment in some neighborhoods where newer facades

and spires were constructed to conceal older, sometimes crumbling, foundations. All but the poorest quarters are graced with impressive fortifications and keeps, and visitors often remark that from a distance the city appears to be a great, continuous castle ascending into the rocky hillside.

The city is best known for the part it played in the Rebellion when it was one of the first to cast out the Orgoth and retain its freedom. Well situated geographically to withstand a siege, it meticulously maintained its defenses as a matter of civic pride. Most Llaelese and Cygnarans alike expected the great city to hold out against the Khadoran invasion and once again become a bastion of resistance. The Khadorans had calculated the high cost of a siege, however, and instead made an quick example of Riversmet. The message was clear: surrender or face total destruction. While many were prepared to resist, certain leaders of the Order of the Golden Crucible chose to open the gates to the invaders, and Leryn was taken without bloodshed.

The city was briefly held by the Khadoran Empire, its wealth and the secrets of the Golden Crucible plundered for the Greylords Covenant. Leryn might have become one of Khador's greatest fortresses had it not again opened its gates to foreign invaders, this time to Grand Scrutator Severius of the Protectorate of Menoth. Menites among the Khadorans felt compelled by the hierarch's holy presence to betray their own nation and surrender the city to him. The ranking Greylord koldun lord remained defiant, refusing to convert, and so was publicly executed in the central town square, once called the King's Plaza. Menite priests call this square the Place of Judgment and continue to carry out executions here.

Leryn

Leryn has grown much since its founding, with districts separated by their concentric defensive walls. An ancient wall preserved exactly as it was during the Rebellion protects the small, central "Old Town" where the ranking clergy and scrutators of the Northern Crusade established their headquarters. Once the most esteemed neighborhood in Leryn, the government center was here alongside the great brooding Thunderhead Fortress that served as headquarters for the Order of the Golden Crucible. The fortress grew over time to become a campus of connected buildings. While this complex lacked the splendor of the archduke's palace that faced it, its larger size and scope befit an organization so vital to the economy of the kingdom.

The "New Town" comprises the middle band and is surrounded by a wall completed in 510 AR. Although briefly vibrant and

prosperous, the area was hardest hit by an earthquake in 530 AR; the wealthy abandoned it, and it soon fell into disrepair. Leryn's less fortunate took it over until it became more commonly known as "the Dregs." Over the years it transformed into a slum circling the city, home to the city's poor and the site of unkempt graveyards.

After the earthquake, merchants, craftsmen, and tavern keepers flocked to the city's outer region and transformed it into a thriving third ring and home to the middle class. An even greater wall was completed around this neighborhood in 572 AR. Called the Outer Ward, this new section is the largest region of the city and contains the bulk of its entertainments, taverns, markets, craft districts, and inns as well as housing for people who can afford to escape the Dregs. Two tunnels connect the Outer Ward directly to Old Town, allowing traffic and commerce to bypass the Dregs. The most storied roadway in the city is the ancient gateway called Traitor's Gate that connects the Dregs to Old Town. Skulls fill the walls between the gate's inner and outer portcullises—skulls said to be of the Orgoth who ruled here and the collaborators who aided them. The Menites leave this grisly monument intact, perhaps out of respect for the struggles endured here under the lash of tyrants. Few agents of the Temple use this route; instead it has become a favored meeting place for members of the Resistance.

Since their arrival, the Northern Crusade has erected new Menite temples in every region of the city. Many taverns closed down, and the largest quarters of the wealthy were taken by the clergy. Allegiants of the Order of the Fist walk the streets to keep the peace, though the presence of thousands of Exemplar knights and other Menite warriors is generally enough incentive to keep most citizens in line.

Towering over the western portion of the Outer Ward is the old Temple of the Lawgiver, the center of worship for the city's original Menite population, who worked mostly in the local copper mines. This is an impressive step pyramid that has had its surface washed clean and its bronze burnished since the arrival of the Sul-Menites. Yet new priests attend to the faithful here. It is whispered that the scrutators escorted away the old self-proclaimed Visgoth Zayiv Ryledor who saw to this congregation to determine his orthodoxy, and he has not been seen since.

That temple, while impressive, is no longer the greatest Menite structure of the city. Hierarch Severius eschewed the archduke's palace and chose to inhabit the Thunderhead Fortress instead. The original stronghold of the Army of Thunder, the fortress was the birthplace of the firearm and the foremost site for alchemical production since the Rebellion. When Severius claimed it for his audience hall and the center for the Northern Crusade's administration, he had the upper levels transformed and its exterior adorned with the Menofix. These upper levels include housing and offices for the clergy administering the theocracy's governance. The former fortress' grounds are sanctified, and construction is underway to transform its exterior into a proper temple.

The lower levels, with their extensive workshops and laboratories, were turned over to the Vassals of Menoth and the Sul-Menite Artificers to begin production of cortexes and alchemical and mechanikal weaponry for the Northern Crusade. Though the Greylords had raided these laboratories after seizing them from the Order of the Golden Crucible, the facilities had eventually turned to the work of the Khadoran Army, and much of the apparatus and supplies the Vassals needed for their work was already in place.

The people of Leryn once yearned for freedom from Khador but are now even more unsure about their future. The city is no longer ruled according to the laws of Llael but by the strict Sul-Menite interpretations of True Law. Agents of the Resistance can still walk openly here, but the scrutators consider them no more than useful pawns of the crusade. With the exception of envoys on Temple business and Menite converts seeking to join the crusade, visitors are discouraged. Most are kept to the Outer Ward and the Dregs.

Hierarch Severius receives few petitioners, and most are dealt with by lesser priests. Vice Scrutator Vindictus is the final guardian of the hierarch's precious time, so any who would see Severius must pass through a gauntlet of priests and ultimately convince Vindictus of their need.

PLAYER SECTION

LLAELESE CHARACTERS

The Llaelese are a people with a rich and tragic history that offers enormous potential for player characters. Though some of the strongest concepts for Llaelese characters are covered in *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*, they take on new life in the context of this war-torn kingdom. Additionally, there are a few specifically Llael-only character options that appear below.

Though Llael is no longer the capital of alchemy in the Iron Kingdoms, the proud roots of the Order of the Golden Crucible run deep. Many Llaelese alchemists fled the war to resettle abroad or were forced to serve new masters, but some remained free and joined the Resistance. These alchemists command the respect of the people not only as manufacturers of the weapons used to sustain the Resistance but also as patriots of an ancient Llaelese tradition.

Llael also had its own chapters of the Fraternal Order of Wizardry, and arcanists of all stripes can be found throughout the war-torn nation, albeit under the close scrutiny of the Greylords and scrutators or carefully protected by the Resistance. Some serve as living weapons operating as part of hidden Resistance cells within Khadoran-controlled cities.

Llael's shattered nobility was forced to capitulate, flee into exile, or fight to the bitter end. The Aristocrat career is most compelling here, with nobles playing a more dynamic role than in any of the other kingdoms. Instead of living a life of leisure or sparring with political rivals in the forums of the Iron Kingdoms, the Llaelese Aristocrat is a military leader looked to by the desperate masses as a guiding light in an age of darkness. Alternatively, he might be a villain of the darkest stripe, selling out his homeland to the vicious invaders who enslave his countrymen to their industrial machine.

This nation is a hotbed of intrigue and old scores that turn deadly. The fighting arts became a national obsession in Llael, which has a rich tradition of assasination and courtly duels and is home to the finest dueling schools in the Iron Kingdoms. Cutthroats, Duelists, Pistoleers, and Spies can all be viewed as following traditionally Llaelese occupations. These former agents of the aristocracy have found renewed purpose among the soldiers of the Resistance.

The war has brought many hardships upon the Llaelese people, and crime runs rampant in some quarters. Highwaymen have become particularly common along the trade roads from Khador and Rhul. Though these desperate men are sometimes employed by the Resistance as scouts, they most often keep their ill-gotten gains for themselves.

LLAELESE CAREER OPTIONS

The options available to Llaelese characters are described below. A player can choose to use as many career options as he wishes during character creation and can take some or all of the options for which his character meets the requirements. For example, a player creating a Llaelese Gun Mage/Warcaster might decide to take the Amethyst Rose option but decide not to take the Llaelese Warcaster option for his character.

GUN MAGE OF THE AMETHYST ROSE (GUN MAGE)

The Gun Mages of the Order of the Amethyst Rose are patriots who once swore an oath to the Llaelese crown to defend the monarchs of Llael in times of peace and war. Dressed in black to mourn the passing of their last king, members of the Amethyst Rose are master arcane duelists and skilled gunfighters. The funereal aspect of their attire plays into a general attitude of reckless fatalism, as they feel devoted to a king who is dead, a royal line that is extinct, a nation that has been shattered, and a people who have been thrown into chaos. Gun Mages of this order are among the most ruthless, courageous, and deadly agents of the Resistance.

Only Llaelese humans can belong to the Order of the Amethyst Rose. A Gun Mage character starting the game as a member of the Amethyst Rose must choose Duelist, Highwayman, Horseman (p. 179), Military Officer, Pistoleer, Spy, or Warcaster for his second career. A character cannot be a Gun Mage of the Amethyst Rose and a standard Gun Mage.

A character taking this option:

- Begins with Connections (Loyal Order of the Amethyst Rose).
- Uses the spell list below instead of the Gun Mage spell list in *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*.
- Starts with a dual magelock (with powder and ten rounds of ammunition) instead of a standard magelock pistol or rifle.
- Begins with Occultation, Rune Shot: Accuracy, and Rune Shot: Brutal.

COST 1	Return Fire, Rune Shot: Accuracy, Rune Shot: Black Penny, Rune Shot: Brutal, Rune Shot: Iron Rot, Rune Shot: Silencer, Rune Shot: Spontaneous Combustion
COST 2	Celerity, Heightened Reflexes, Occultation, Refuge, Rune Shot: Piercer (p. 240), Rune Shot: Shadow Fire, Rune Shot: Trick Shot, Vision
COST 3	Mirage, Rune Shot: Detonator, Rune Shot: Phantom Seeker, Rune Shot: Spell Cracker, Zephyr
COST 4	Quickened (p. 240), Rune Shot: Freeze Fire, Rune Shot: Heart Stopper

LLAELESE WARCASTER (WARCASTER)

Always few in number, most Llaelese Warcasters perished during the early days of the fighting with Khador. Those who survived invariably settled in to work as mercenaries, remained in the employ of exiled Llaelese nobles, or have become heroes of the Resistance. Llaelese Warcasters were always seen as a resource of the nation and were given special training at the Royal Arcane Academe. Llaelese Warcasters are likely to have received additional martial training, particularly from the kingdom's leading duelist schools. Llaelese Warcasters value grace and movement over sheer force, a preference reflected in their training as well as their spell selections.

Only Llaelese humans can be Llaelese Warcasters. This option must be taken at character creation. A character cannot be a Llaelese warcaster and a standard warcaster. A character starting the game as a Llaelese Warcaster must choose Aristocrat, Duelist, Field Mechanik, Gun Mage, Highwayman, Horseman (p. 179), Military Officer, Pistoleer, Sorcerer, or Spy for his second career.

A character taking this option:

- Uses the spell list below instead of the Warcaster spell list in *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*.
- Begins with Blur and Twister.

COST 1	Entangle, Fair Winds, Jump Start
COST 2	Admonition (p. 240), Arcane Bolt, Battering Ram, Blur (p. 91), Boundless Charge, Celerity, Deadeye (p. 91), Positive Charge, Redline, Refuge,Twister (p. 240), Wind Blast
COST 3	Awareness, Eliminator, Fail Safe, Force Field, Gallows (p. 182), Grind, Guided Fire, Rift, Winter Storm
COST 4	Quickened (p. 240), Tide of Steel, Tornado

NEW ABILITY

STRANGLER

Prerequisite: None (Add to the Cutthroat, Ranger, and Spy career abilities)

When using a garrote on a victim, this character adds +3 to his STR rolls.

NEW SPELLS

	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
ADMONITION	2	6	—	—	YES	NO

When an enemy advances and ends its movement within 6″ of target character in spellcaster's battlegroup, the affected character can immediately advance up to 3″, then Admonition expires. The affected character cannot be targeted by free strikes during this movement.

	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
QUICKENED	4	SELF	—	—	YES	NO

The spellcaster can make one attack or quick action at the start of any other character's turn, then Quickened expires.

	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
RUNE SHOT: PIERCER	2	SELF	—	—	NO	NO

The spellcaster's next rune shot ranged attack this turn ignores spell effects that add to the target's ARM or DEF.

	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
TWISTER	2	10	3	10	NO	YES

The AOE is a cloud effect that remains in play for one round.

ADVENTURING COMPANIES

HEROES OF THE RESISTANCE

The characters are members of the tattered remnants of the Llaelese Resistance. They might be part of a heavily armed strike force operating out of Rhydden or members of a sleeper cell operating in a city under Khadoran control. Whatever their situation, they are desperate patriots serving a fallen nation. They might no longer believe that their country can be restored, but they know for certain that it can be avenged.

Requirements: Resistance fighters can be of any background provided they are dedicated to the cause of Llaelese freedom. Resistance companies even include mercenaries in the employ of the exiled Llaelese aristocracy.

The players in the group should designate one human Llaelese member of the group to be the leader of the company. In addition to leading his team, this character has the closest contact with the rest of the Resistance. He often needs to attend clandestine meetings and report back to his team to pass on orders and vital equipment. The exact nature of this communication depends on the specifics of the campaign. For example, the leader could be part of a larger Resistance group based in Rhydden, or he might have a single handler tasked with keeping in contact with his cell. The team leader should designate a second-in-command who can take over in case of his capture or execution.

Benefits: The company begins the game with a safe house somewhere in occupied Llael, either within a city such as Merywyn or in the occupied countryside. The safe house includes at least one secret passage providing an entrance and exit.

Each character created as a member of the company gains Connections: Llaelese Resistance. The characters can expect to be tasked with difficult or seemingly suicidal missions by their superiors within the Resistance. Since the characters represent the leading edge of the dwindling Resistance, they are unlikely to receive further intelligence related to their targets or significant material support in the form of weapons or supplies. The characters are granted broad latitude to plan and conduct missions of their own devising as long as they do not countermand standing orders or endanger other members of the Resistance or collaborating civilians. They might even be asked to conduct joint operations with the Northern Crusade from time to time.

Each character created as a member of the company gains one

additional occupational skill level in one of the following skills: Bribery, Cryptography, Deception, Detection, Disguise, Escape Artist, Forgery, Interrogation, Intimidation, or Sneak.

NOBLE EXILES

After the invasion of Llael, numerous nobles were left bereft of their wealth and ancestral homes and forced to flee south to friendly nations. Attended by the few retainers that survived and remained loyal, these fallen aristocrats must find patrons at foreign courts or other means of filling their dwindling coffers. Some members of the Llaelese nobility harbor sympathies for the Resistance and seek the return of their rightful lands, but others might have committed treasonous deeds during the bloody days of the invasion and now hope to avoid those who know of their transgressions. The characters in this company are likely to interact with a broad range of individuals as they seek a means to improve their fortunes and return to some semblance of the life they left behind.

Requirements: Any character can belong to the company. The company must include at least one Llaelese character with the Aristocrat career. Aristocrat characters in the group should choose one among their number to be a baron of Llael, the highest-ranking noble in their company. Non-Aristocrat characters are assumed to be bodyguards, mercenaries, distant family members, servants, hangers on, or close allies of the exiled aristocrats.

Benefits: The baron gains the Natural Leader ability as well as +2 on all social skill rolls against other members of the company.

Llaelese characters in the group begin with an extra 50 gc to spend on weapons and equipment. All characters in the group also begin with Connections (exiled Llaelese aristocracy).

LLAELESE GEAR

Llael has been a wellspring of intrigue since its founding. Combining a cultural obsession with dueling and a love of political conspiracy, the Llaelese developed a vast array of discreet yet deadly weapons for personal protection and defense. In addition, Llaelese spycraft achieved a degree of sophistication unknown in the other Iron Kingdoms.

MELEE WEAPONS

DAGGER, POISONER'S

Cost: 20 gc
Skill: Hand Weapon
Attack Modifier: +1
POW: 1

Description: The poisoner's dagger is a hollow-bladed weapon with a poison reservoir concealed in its handle. A would-be assassin can prepare his blade with a touch of a button, causing poison to flow slowly from the reservoir in preparation for a strike.

Special Rules: Triggering the flow of poison takes a quick action. Once triggered, the blade is prepared and the next character damaged by the weapon suffers the effects of the poison.

The dagger can hold up to three doses of poison.

Refilling the reservoir takes five minutes of careful labor.

The dagger can be used to deliver somnolence elixir as well as poisons.

GARROTE

Cost: 2 gc
Skill: Unarmed
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: —

Description: A garrote is a device designed to strangle a victim from behind, regardless of the form it takes. Purpose-built garrotes consist of a length of wire with a handle on each end. The garrote is not a battlefield weapon and can be used only from behind a target with the element of surprise.

Special Rules: This weapon causes no damage. Instead, it is used to choke the life out of a victim.

To use this weapon, the attacking character must succeed in hitting his target with a back strike with the garrote. If the attack hits, the attacker can begin strangling his victim. The attacker and victim immediately each roll a d6. The attacker adds his STR to his roll and the victim adds his PHY. If the attacker's total is higher, the victim suffers –1 PHY. If the victim wins, he breaks free. If the totals are equal, he does not.

The attacker can take no other actions while strangling his victim, but he can release the victim at any time. At the start of each of the attacker's subsequent turns, the two characters roll again to determine the effect of the strangulation.

While being garroted, a victim cannot speak, yell, or use his voice to make any sound. The victim can use his turns to attempt to fight his attacker off as a full action (triggering another strangulation roll that might result in further PHY loss), fight through his terror with a successful Willpower roll to take another action, or fight to get a mouthful of air (no effect, but does not force another strangulation roll). If the victim attempts to take any action other than fighting his attacker off, he must make a Willpower roll against a target number of 14. If he succeeds, he can take any action he is physically capable of but suffers a –3 penalty on skill and attack rolls and cannot move away from his attacker. If he fails, he must forfeit his turn.

If a victim is reduced to 0 PHY, he is knocked out. If he is strangled beyond 0 PHY, he dies. A character recovers PHY lost as a result of strangulation at a rate of 1 point per hour of rest.

GARROTE, CLOCKWORK

Cost: 15 gc
Skill: Unarmed
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: —

Description: The clockwork garrote is disguised within a common pocket watch. The user slips his finger into a ring at the top of the watch and twists it. He can then unwind the attached garrote cord. After the garrote has been used, the ring is simply released and the cord automatically winds back into the watch.

Special Rules: The weapon uses the rules of the garrote described above.

A character can discern a clockwork garrote from a normal pocket watch only by handling it and making a successful PER + Detection roll against a target number of 15.

PEN, BLADE

Cost: 15 gc
Skill: Hand Weapon
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 1

Description: The blade pen is a very small knife disguised as a common fountain pen. With the press of a button the pen extends a needle-like blade, making it a favorite implement of spies, assassins, and anyone else wishing to carry a weapon undetected.

Special Rules: A character can discern a blade pen from a normal pen only by handling it and making a successful PER + Detection roll against a target number of 14. A roll of all 1s indicates the character accidentally tripped the mechanism deploying the blade and injured himself in some way determined by the Game Master.

PEN, POISON

Cost: 25 gc
Skill: Hand Weapon
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: –2

Description: This weapon is an alchemical injector disguised as a common fountain pen. The weapon contains two small reservoirs, one for ink and the other for a poison. An assassin must unscrew the weapon and rotate the reservoirs to prepare the pen to deliver a dose of poison. The tip of the pen is then used to pierce the victim's skin, and the contents of the poison reservoir are injected into the victim's bloodstream. Most would-be assassins carry clean nibs that can be swapped out to replace those stained with blood, making identification that much harder for criminal investigators.

Special Rules: A character damaged by a poison pen is injected with the substance it contains. The pen holds one dose of poison.

Refilling the pen's poison reservoir takes five minutes of careful labor. Rotating the pen's reservoirs takes a full action.

The pen can be used to deliver somnolence elixir as well as poisons.

A character can discern a poison pen from a normal pen only by handling it and making a successful PER + Detection roll against a target number of 15. A roll of all 1s indicates the character accidentally nicked himself with the sharpened tip of the pen. He then suffers the effect of the poison contained within.

RYNNISH FAN

Cost: 20 gc
Skill: Hand Weapon
Attack Modifier: +1
POW: 1

Description: The courts of Llael featured intrigue, literal and figurative backstabbing, and occasional bloodshed. The ladies of the court, ever on the lookout for any advantage, took to carrying all manner of concealed arms for protection as well as to punctuate their dramatic points. The Rynnish fan is one such tool. Favored by courtesans, assassins, and Llaelese noblewomen, the fan conceals a number of hidden blades that can be exposed with an easy flick of the wrist and concealed again just as easily.

Special Rules: The blades of a Rynnish fan are obvious to anyone who handles it. An observant character can discern a Rynnish fan from a normal fan without handling it with a successful PER + Detection roll against a target number of 17.

SWORD, DRESS

Cost: 35+ gc
Skill: Hand Weapon
Attack Modifier: +1
POW: 1

Description: Like its larger cousin the rapier, the dress sword is a slender, sharply pointed dueling sword developed in the courts of Llael. Kept polished to a bright sheen and accompanied by a fine sheath, which is sometimes ornamented, most dress swords have no edge and can be used only for thrusting attacks. This weapon is almost never seen on the battlefields of western Immoren and is usually worn as a fashion accessory or status symbol by Cygnaran and Llaelese nobles or others trying to fit into high society. Nonetheless, these finely made swords are well balanced and deadly in the hands of a duelist.

Special Rules: A character can spend 1 feat point to boost both his attack and damage roll with this weapon.

RANGED WEAPONS

DUELING PISTOLS

Cost: 100+ gc per pair
Effective Range: 60 feet (10″)
Extreme Range: 300 feet
Ammo: 1 (light round)
Skill: Pistol
Attack Modifier: +1 (firing a custom bullet), 0 (firing a standard light round)
POW: 10

Description: These typically exquisite firearms are sold as a pair in an ornate box along with fine powder horns and a custom gunsmith's kit for casting bullets for the pistols. The design of these weapons has changed little for hundreds of years, as they are intended as instruments for highly ritualized aristocratic duels rather than as weapons of war.

Special Rules: Antiquated as they are, dueling pistols are very difficult to load, taking a full action rather than a standard quick action.

A dueling pistol firing a bullet manufactured with the casting kit that comes with the weapon gains a +1 to its attack roll. A dueling pistol firing any other round does not gain this bonus.

DUAL MAGELOCK

Cost: 280 gc
Ammo: 2 (metal-cased rune shot)
Effective Range: 60 feet (10″)
Extreme Range: 300 feet
Skill: Pistol
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 10
AOE: —

Description: This double-barreled magelock pistol is the signature weapon of the Order of the Amethyst Rose. Each pistol is a carefully crafted work of art. Barrels can be discharged independently or together in a single blast. This weapon fires metal-cased rune shot rounds in which both the bullet and its casing have been inscribed with runes.

Special Rules: Discharging both barrels together is treated as a single attack, and the weapon suffers –2 on the attack roll. If the attack hits, add +3 to the damage roll. Discharging both barrels is considered one shot when casting rune shot spells.

Reloading each barrel takes one quick action.

It costs 5 gc for blasting powder, rune-scribed bullet, and the metal casing for one round of rune shot ammunition. Due to the high cost of ammunition, most gun mages pour their own rune shots (see the "Craft Rune Shot" section in *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*).

IMPERFECT INSTRUMENTS

Although the magelock is the standard weapon of Gun Mages, these arcanists can also work their magic through mundane arms. Given ample time, however, a Gun Mage can craft rune-scribed bullets for virtually any weapon. Firearms that have not been designed to harness the awesome power of rune shots rapidly deteriorate as the Gun Mage's magic scorches their barrels and tears at their fine rifling.

When a Gun Mage fires a rune shot empowered with a spell from a non-magelock firearm, roll a d6. On a roll of 1, the shot has damaged the weapon. The first time a 1 is rolled, the firearm permanently suffers –1 to its attack rolls. The second time a 1 is rolled, the weapon is ruined. This damage cannot be repaired.

Additionally, magelocks are capable of firing light metal-cased ammunition in times of need, but Gun Mages seldom deign to do so. It is impossible to empower non-rune shot ammunition with spells, no matter what sort of firearm it is fired from.

PEN, GRENADE

Cost: See Special Rules, below.
Ammo: —
Effective Range: 30 feet (5″)
Extreme Range: —
Skill: Thrown
Attack Modifier: –2
POW: See below
AOE: —

Description: The grenade pen is a small, covert explosive device disguised as a common fountain pen and was developed by the Golden Crucible for agents of the Llaelese crown. Though less effective than conventional grenades, these weapons are much easier to conceal.

Special Rules: Grenade pens are small explosive devices and as a result do not have an AOE. They can only damage or affect a target on a direct hit.

Once it is in hand, using a pen grenade requires both a quick action and an attack. The quick action activates the weapon's miniature clockwork detonator, and the attack is for throwing the grenade.

Types of pen grenades include the following:

- **Acid Pen –** The acid pen is filled with alchemical acid. The grenade causes a POW 8 corrosion damage roll and the Corrosion continuous effect. These weapons cost 25 gc each.
- **Explosive Pen –** The pen is filled with alchemical explosive. A character hit by the grenade suffers a POW 10 blast damage roll. These weapons cost 20 gc each.
- **Knockout Pen –** The knockout pen is filled with somnolence elixir. A character hit by the knockout pen must make a PHY roll against a target number of 14. If the character succeeds, he shakes off the effects. If he fails, he is knocked down and falls unconscious. The character awakens when he suffers damage or is roused as a quick action by a character in B2B contact with him. The knockout pen is a gas effect. Knockout pens cost 35 gc each.

A character can discern a pen grenade from a normal pen only by handling it and making a successful PER + Detection roll against a target number of 15. A roll of all 1s indicates the character accidentally tripped the mechanism and set off the grenade.

PEN, SHOT

Cost: 25 gc
Ammo: 1 (light round)
Effective Range: 12 feet (2″)
Extreme Range: —
Skill: Pistol
Attack Modifier: –2
POW: 8
AOE: —

Description: More of a novelty than a true weapon, the shot pen is a very small firearm disguised as a fountain pen. Though only effective at extremely close range, the shot pen is sometimes used by spies, assassins, and anyone else not wishing to be discovered carrying a weapon.

Special Rules: A character can discern a shot pen from a normal pen only by handling it and making a successful PER + Detection roll against a target number of 15. A roll of all 1s indicates the character accidentally tripped the mechanism firing the gun and might have injured himself or a bystander, as determined by the Game Master.

It costs 2 gc for blasting powder, bullets, and casings for five light rounds.

GEAR

CLOAK, WEIGHTED

Cost: 10 gc

Description: A traditional tool of defense developed in the dueling schools of Llael, the weighted cloak is used by combatants across the Iron Kingdoms. It resembles a common cloak, but a series of weights has been sewn into the bottom hem. A skilled duelist can use the cloak to tangle an enemy's weapon, making it harder for an opponent to strike him.

To use a weighted cloak, a character must spend a quick action to take it up and wrap it around his off hand. A character cannot make attacks with that hand while using the cloak. Anyone in the front arc of a character using a weighted cloak suffers –1 on melee attack rolls targeting that character.

CLOCKWORK DETONATOR

Cost: 10 gc

Description: This is a small clockwork timer set with a mechanical striker intended to detonate an alchemical explosive. The simple detonator can be set for up to twelve hours in advance. When the timer winds down, the flint strikers affixed to a bomb's fuse snap to life and detonate the explosive.

POISON RING

Cost: 15+ gc

Description: This ring conceals a secret compartment. The ring can be plain or studded with jewels, but it must be large enough to conceal the poison compartment. The manufacture of poison rings is something of an art form in Llael. These items are incredibly well made and are always set with sturdy latches and fine releases. The ring holds a single dose of poison.

Opening the latch and pouring out the poison takes a quick action.

ALCHEMICAL SUBSTANCES

ALCHEMICAL EXPLOSIVE

Cost: 27 gc per dose

Description: Cheaply made but dangerous to handle, alchemical explosives can be made from any of several unstable compounds used for industrial applications, such as mining. These substances are also extremely popular with Llaelese Resistance members who rely on alchemical explosives for assassination and sabotage.

Special Rules: This substance is a powerful explosive that can be used to make bombs. One dose is enough to produce a small bomb (p. 246) with another 2 gc in materials (fuse and casing). Three doses are enough to create a large bomb (p. 246) with another 3 gc in materials.

With the Game Master's approval, even larger bombs can be manufactured. It is up to the Game Master to decide how large a bomb or how many it would take to destroy a particular structure. Planting a bomb and lighting the fuse takes a full action. Bombs can also be set off with a clockwork detonator (above).

Alchemical explosives are unstable, and a sharp blow or fall could prematurely detonate a bomb. Likewise, because these weapons are meant to be detonated by fuse, anyone carrying a bomb should be particularly wary of fire damage that might ignite the bomb. The Game Master determines when a bomb has the chance to be accidentally detonated. At such a time, roll a d6. On a roll of 1, the bomb detonates.

Brewing Requirements: Alchemy

Ingredients: 1 unit of alchemical stone, 2 units of mineral crystal, 2 units of organic acid

Total Material Cost: 9 gc

Alchemical Formula: Brewing an alchemical explosive requires an alchemy lab and eight hours of labor spent combining, cooking, and stabilizing the ingredients. At the end of this time, the alchemist makes an INT + Alchemy roll against a target number of 12. If the roll succeeds, the character creates one batch. If the roll fails, he makes a second roll to see if the failure was explosive or not. If the second roll is also a failure, the ingredients detonate with a result determined by the Game Master. If the second roll succeeds, the alchemist creates one unit of alchemical waste (crystal).

BOMB, LARGE

Cost: 84 gc (These weapons are generally manufactured for personal use rather than for sale.)

Description: A bomb can take on many shapes and sizes. Fundamentally, a bomb consists of an amount of alchemical explosive housed in a metal or ceramic container with an attached fuse. Once the fuse burns down, the bomb detonates. Large bombs are so heavy that they cannot be easily handled or used as thrown weapons. They are commonly used to destroy buildings, bridges, or other large structures.

It is up to the Game Master to decide how large a bomb or how many it would take to destroy a particular structure.

Large bombs can be carried only by characters with STR 5 or more. A character carrying a large bomb suffers –1 SPD and DEF.

Setting a large bomb into position and lighting the fuse requires a full action. The fuse is generally long enough to give the igniting character two or three full rounds to move away from the bomb before it explodes. The bomb can also be set off by a clockwork detonator (p. 245).

Large bombs are AOE 8. Characters within twelve feet (2″) of the epicenter of the blast are thrown d6″ directly away from the epicenter and suffer a POW 16 damage roll. Collateral damage from this throw is POW 12. Characters outside twelve feet (2″) of the epicenter of the blast who are still caught within the AOE suffer a POW 12 blast damage roll. Characters who are damaged by the blast at this range are also knocked down.

These weapons are somewhat unstable, and a sharp blow or fall could prematurely detonate one. Likewise, because these weapons are meant to be detonated by fuse, anyone carrying a bomb should be particularly wary of fire damage that might ignite it. The Game Master determines when a bomb has the chance to be accidentally detonated. At such a time, roll a d6. On a roll of 1, the bomb detonates.

BOMB, SMALL

Cost: 29 gc (These weapons are generally manufactured for personal use rather than for sale.)
Ammo: —
Effective Range: 48 feet (8″)
Extreme Range: —
Skill: Thrown
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 12
AOE: 3

Description: A bomb can take on many shapes and sizes. Fundamentally, a bomb consists of an amount of alchemical explosive housed in a metal or ceramic container with an attached fuse. Once the fuse burns down, the bomb detonates. Small bombs can be easily handled and used as thrown weapons.

Special Rules: Once a small bomb is in hand, using the bomb requires both a quick action and an attack. The quick action is spent lighting the fuse, and the attack is to throw the bomb. Unlike a grenade, a bomb must be thrown the turn it is lit or it explodes in the user's hand. A character holding a bomb when it detonates is directly hit.

The bomb can also be set off by a clockwork detonator (p. 245).

These weapons are somewhat unstable, and a sharp blow or fall could detonate one. Likewise, because these weapons are meant to be detonated by fuse, anyone carrying a bomb should be particularly wary of fire damage that might ignite it. The Game Master determines when a bomb has the chance to be accidentally detonated. At such a time, roll a d6. On a roll of 1, the bomb detonates.

KHORVA'S KISS

Cost: 90 gc per dose

Description: Khorva's Kiss is a fast-acting alchemical poison designed to kill its victim in a matter of moments. An odorless clear oil, the poison must be administered directly into the victim's bloodstream.

Special Rules: A dose of Khorva's Kiss can be applied to a weapon as a quick action. If a living character takes damage from a poisoned weapon or the substance is otherwise injected into his bloodstream, the character is affected by the poison. During each of his Maintenance Phases, the affected character must make a PHY roll against a target number of 16. Outside combat, the character makes this PHY roll after every five minutes. If he

fails, his PHY is reduced by 1. If the character's PHY is reduced to 0 as a result of Khorva's Kiss, he dies. If a character succeeds on three PHY rolls, the poison has run its course and no longer affects the character. A character recovers PHY lost as a result of Khorva's Kiss at a rate of 1 point per hour of rest.

A dose of Khorva's Kiss applied to a weapon must be delivered to a target within one hour or the poison loses its potency.

Brewing Requirements: Alchemy

Ingredients: 1 unit of mutagenic extract, 2 units of organic oil, 4 units of organic toxin

Total Material Cost: 30 gc

Alchemical Formula: Brewing Khorva's kiss requires an alchemy lab and three hours of labor spent combining, cooking, and stabilizing the ingredients. At the end of this time, the alchemist makes an INT + Alchemy roll against a target number of 16. If the roll succeeds, the character creates one dose. If the roll fails, he creates one unit of alchemical waste (liquid).

REMEL'S EMBRACE

Cost: 48 gc per dose

Description: Remel's Embrace is an alchemical sleeping poison that renders a victim insensate for a period of time. The vicious dark liquid can either be injected into the bloodstream or used to poison a victim's food. Due to the strong smell of the poison, it is best administered to pungent foods.

Special Rules: To be affected by this poison a character must ingest it, take damage from a weapon poisoned with it, or must otherwise have the substance injected into his bloodstream.

A dose of Remel's Embrace can be applied to a weapon as a quick action.

If a character ingests the poison, it takes effect in d6+5 minutes. If the poison otherwise enters a character's bloodstream, the effects are instantaneous.

After being affected, at the start each of his Maintenance Phases the character must make a PHY roll against a target number of 14. Outside combat, the character makes this PHY roll after every five minutes. If the character succeeds, nothing happens. If he fails, he suffers d3 damage. If the character is disabled as a result of Remel's Embrace, he regains 1 vitality point and is no longer disabled but instead falls into a deep sleep. The poison runs its course either after the character succumbs to it or two hours elapse. The character sleeps for d3 hours and cannot be awakened. After this length of time, the character can make a PHY roll against a target number of 14 every thirty minutes to determine if he wakes up. If he succeeds, he awakens. If he fails, he stays asleep.

A dose of Remel's Embrace applied to a weapon must be delivered to a target within thirty minutes or it loses its potency. A dose applied to a drink or dish of food loses its potency after three hours.

Brewing Requirements: Alchemy

Ingredients: 1 unit of alchemical stone, 1 unit of ectoplasm, 1 unit of organic toxin

Total Material Cost: 16 gc

Alchemical Formula: Brewing Remel's Embrace requires an alchemy lab and four hours of labor spent combining, cooking, and stabilizing the ingredients. At the end of this time, the alchemist makes an INT + Alchemy roll against a target number of 17. If the roll succeeds, the character creates one dose. If the roll fails, he creates one unit of alchemical waste (crystal).

WHISPERS OF LUKAS

Cost: 69 gc per dose

Description: Whispers of Lukas is a slow-acting alchemical poison designed to destroy its victim's mind. An odorless brown oil, this substance can either be injected into the bloodstream or used to poison a victim's food.

Special Rules: To be affected by this poison a character must ingest it or take damage from a weapon poisoned with it or the substance must otherwise be injected into his bloodstream.

A dose of Whispers of Lukas can be applied to a weapon as a quick action.

If a character ingests the poison, it takes effect in d6+5 minutes. If the poison otherwise reaches a character's bloodstream, the effects are instantaneous.

After being affected, the character begins hearing voices and suffers from mild visual hallucinations for d3 hours. During this time, the character suffers –1 on skill and attack rolls. After the time rolled has elapsed, the more sinister results of the poison take effect.

The victim no longer suffers from the effects of hallucinations but must make a Willpower roll against a target number of 16. If the character succeeds, he successfully fights off the poison and no longer suffers its effects. If he fails, he suffers –1 INT. At the beginning of each day, the character must make an additional Willpower roll until he either fights off the effects of the poison or his INT is reduced to 0. If a character's INT is reduced to 0, he permanently loses his mind along with the capacity to move, speak, or act.

A character recovers INT lost as a result of Whispers of Lukas at a rate of 1 point per day once the poison has run its course.

A dose of Whispers of Lukas applied to a weapon must be delivered to a target within thirty minutes or the poison loses its potency. A dose applied to a drink or dish of food loses its potency after two hours.

Brewing Requirements: Alchemy

Ingredients: 1 unit of arcane extract, 1 unit of heavy metals, 2 units of mutagenic extract

Total Material Cost: 23 gc

Alchemical Formula: Brewing Whispers of Lukas requires an alchemy lab and four hours of labor spent combining, cooking, and stabilizing the ingredients. At the end of this time, the alchemist makes an INT + Alchemy roll against a target number of 17. If the roll succeeds, the character creates one dose. If the roll fails, he creates one unit of alchemical waste (liquid).

LLAELESE STEAMJACKS

Compared to the other Iron Kingdoms, Llael has always had the smallest steamjack production industry, primarily as a matter of priorities, resources, and its size as a nation. Nonetheless laborjacks were produced in Llael by a number of small scale mechaniks shops, most of them found in Merywyn, Leryn, and Laedry. Llael was never particularly noted for its innovation in steamjacks, and its designers borrowed liberally from both Cygnar and Ord. Similarly, in some cases it became more affordable for companies with industrial needs to purchase refurbished laborjacks from these kingdoms on the open market rather than buying newly built ones. The mechaniks of Llael became quite versed in tending to a wide variety of chassis types, both domestic and foreign. Modifications to existing chassis for specific applications were more common than complete redesigns.

The same was also true for the small arsenal of military warjacks Llael kept before the Llaelese War. While several Llael-built chassis saw service over the centuries, few of these were viewed as particularly notable or successful designs. The Llaelese nobility was rarely willing to invest heavily in this sort of military development and preferred to save coin by purchasing older Cygnaran models.

Starting in 566 AR there was an ill-fated attempt to modernize the Llaelese Army by innovating new warjack designs created with greater craft and care than had previously been the case. After the treasury refused to back these plans, the designs were handed over to the Order of the Golden Crucible and eventually resulted in the Vanguard, one of the finest light warjacks ever designed. Unfortunately this success was not followed by other innovative designs, and Llaelese warcasters suffered during the war when pitting many antiquated and cheaply built 'jacks against superior machines from Khador. The Vanguard proved itself, however, and held up quite well in its intended role and enough were produced that they are still found in use by mercenaries and Resistance forces.

CHASSIS AND WEAPON SYSTEMS

The armies of the Iron Kingdoms approach their warjacks as integrated weapon systems. Each chassis has a host of weapons developed specifically for it and then generally for use only in specific configurations. Mounting these weapons on chassis they were not designed to work with can be quite expensive and labor intensive.

RULES

The following attributes define different steamjack chassis in the game.

Cost: This is the cost of the chassis in Cygnaran gold crowns.

Description: This is a description of the chassis.

Height/Weight: The chassis' technical specs.

Fuel Load/Burn Usage: This describes the chassis' standard fuel load and burn rate.

Initial Service Date: This is the date the chassis first entered service.

Original Chassis Design: This is the original manufacturer or designer of the chassis.

Stock Cortex: This is the cortex that comes stock with the steamjack chassis. The cost of this cortex is included in the cost of the chassis. It is assumed the cortex has been wiped and has no lingering personality at the time of purchase. The cortex can be replaced, but the original personality of the steamjack will be lost as a result. For cortex descriptions, see *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*.

Stats: These are the chassis' stats. The steamjack's INT and PER are determined by its cortex. The stats listed below assume a stock cortex.

Special Rules: These are the special rules that apply to the chassis.

Damage Grid: This is the chassis' damage grid.

VANGUARD CHASSIS

VANGUARD LIGHT WARJACK CHASSIS

Cost: 8,200 GC (with a stock cortex), 5,700 GC (chassis only)

Description: Vanguards were produced by the Order of the Golden Crucible at the forges of Thunderhead Fortress especially for the Llaelese Army. One of the few Llaelese warjack designs to be put into general production, it is widely regarded as an exceptional example of fine engineering and uncompromising standards.

Although the 'jacks were never produced in great numbers because of the expense, Llael's warcasters fielded Vanguards effectively throughout the Llaelese War. The swiftness of the Khadoran invasion limited the defending army's access to their arsenal, however, and many Vanguards remained in storage. Recovering these later became a priority of the Llaelese Resistance. After the collapse of Merywyn a number of Vanguards were smuggled out of the country by exiled nobility, and some of the 'jacks have been sold on the black market by those individuals or by the Resistance itself. This in an effective way to raise funds, for mercenary companies across western Immoren seek out this warjack design.

Vanguards are effective mechanikal bodyguards as well as offensive weapons. Able to keep up with the fleetest warcaster and shield him from danger, a Vanguard is highly prized by those who can afford to keep one.

Height/Weight: 8′7″ / 3.8 tons

Fuel Burn/Load Usage: 365 lbs / 6.5 hrs general, 70 mins combat

Initial Service Date: 566 AR

Original Chassis Design: Crucible Arms

Stock Cortex: Aurum-grade

PHY	9
STR	9
SPD	6
AGL	5
PRW	5
POI	5
INT	2
PER	2
Initiative	13
MAT	6
RAT	6
DEF	13
ARM	17

DAMAGE GRID

Special Rules: Initiative is rolled only in the case of an uncontrolled steamjack; otherwise the 'jack activates on its controller's initiative.

Initiative MAT, RAT, DEF, and ARM assume a stock cortex.

VANGUARD WARJACK

The Vanguard comes stock with a pair of fists. It is armed with a guisarme (a pole arm equivalent to a spear) and a tower shield cannon. Additionally, Vanguards integrate the defensive reflex array upgrade (p. 110).

TOWER SHIELD-CANNON

Cost: 500 gc
Type: Ranged
Location: Arm
Ammo: 5
Effective Range: 48 feet (8″)
Extreme Range: 240 feet
Attack Modifier: 0 (Vanguard), –2 (non-Vanguard)
POW: 12
AOE: —

Description: The Vanguard's shield cannon was designed specifically for this machine. Its arms and cortex design allow for precise aiming of the cannon that is impossible for other steamjacks to achieve.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the shield cannon. While wielding the shield cannon, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the shield cannon is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

This weapon can be fired only once per round.

When a steamjack armed with this weapon charges, after moving but before making its charge attack, it can make one ranged attack targeting the character charged unless they were in melee with each other at the start of the steamjack's activation. When resolving this ranged attack, the steamjack does not suffer the target in melee penalty. If the target is not in melee range after moving, the steamjack can make the ranged attack before its activation ends.

Reloading the cannon outside of combat takes twenty minutes and can be accomplished by any character with the Mechanikal Engineering skill without a die roll.

The cannon fires light artillery rounds in metal casings. Light artillery rounds cost 5 gc each.

When used as a melee weapon, this weapon has an attack modifier of 0 and is POW 1.

A steamjack armed with a shield gains +2 ARM against attacks originating in its front arc.

ORD

INTRODUCTION

The kingdom of Ord has stood stalwart for centuries despite recurring threats from wealthier nations. Its people are proud of their heritage and the courage of their soldiers and sailors despite the poverty and hardship so many endure. Every difficulty they have overcome has made them more resolute and implacable, and adds to the way they savor the simpler joys in life. In recent decades while the rest of the Iron Kingdoms have become embroiled in escalating war, Ord has maintained neutrality. Ruled by a clever king, Ord survives and has even prospered at a time when rival nations have suffered or fallen.

King Baird Cathor II rules his nation with cunning and guile, having earned a reputation as an unconventional king whose actions his adversaries can never predict. Eschewing the capital to spend his time in ports of ill repute like Five Fingers, King Baird has spies everywhere and his influence is as pervasive as it is subtle. He keenly understands that maintaining power in Ord requires a careful balancing act between the land-owning Tordoran castellans who dominate the aristocracy and the often overshadowed Thurian nobles who grease the gears of trade. The king has secured his position by appealing to the common man while turning the rivalries of his enemies to his advantage, setting them at one another's throats.

The common people of Ord must eke what living they can from the kingdom's bogs, fishing villages, difficult farms or labor at grueling jobs on cattle ranches owned by their betters. The interior of Ord is a moody, fog-shrouded land of rolling hills, rugged heaths, haunted moors, and the dangerous Olgunholt forest. It is a frugal land that has no bounty of resources beyond the peat used locally for fuel and the grazing land for its scattered herds of livestock. Despite this its people are proud of being Ordic and feel strong attachment to the rustic villages and towns of their birth.

Ord is rightfully famed for its people's deep relationship with the sea, and life is generally better for those who make their living along the coast or on the water. Those people who are fortunate enough to live on the coasts rely on the ocean for their livelihood, whether that involves fishing, serving as a deck hand on a merchant or privateer's ship, or joining the navy. Even those who stay on land know that much of Ord's wealth and its strength rests in its ports and the navy that protects them. Each city along Ord's western coast has its own unique character and appeal, and each thrives on its own industry, whether legal or illegal. Often the lines between criminal organizations and legitimate merchant houses becomes blurry in Ord. However, both offer solid employment for the clever and courageous.

HISTORY

Ord was created by the Corvis Treaties in 203 AR, but the history of the region's people stretches back to the early Thousand Cities Era. Ord's people came from two kingdoms that once dominated the myriad townships of the central western coast of Immoren—Thuria and Tordor. Though established first, Thuria was eventually eclipsed and then conquered by Tordor. The peoples descended from those ancient kingdoms later united as Ord but have remained distinct.

ORD FACTS

Ruler: King Baird Cathor II, The Bandit King

Government Type: Absolute Monarchy

Capital: Merin

Ethnic Groups & Approx. Population: 2,100,000 Tordoran; 1,240,000 Thurian; 100,000 Midlunder; 50,000 Caspian; 40,000 gobbers; 25,000 Ryn; 23,000 Rhulfolk; 20,000 bogrin; 18,000 Sharde; 12,000 Khard; 12,000 trollkin; 4,000 Morridane; 4,000 Umbreans; 3,000 Kossite; 3,000 Skirov; 500 Iosan

Languages: Ordic (primary), Cygnaran, Khadoran, Scharde

Climate: Temperate; cool and rainy in the north, warmer and drier in the south though the summers are typically cool, moist, and consistently humid; overcast about half the time.

Terrain: Rugged hills north of the Rohannor River; rolling plains, lowlands, and marshes in the south and central areas; thick woodlands and peat bogs north of the Dragon's Tongue River; sea cliffs along the west coast.

Natural Resources: Fish, deepwater ports, forests (mainly cork), amber, peat deposits, lignite, limestone, marble, with some copper, coal, and arable land.

RISE AND FALL OF THURIA

During the Thousand Cities Era independent city-states were scattered across western Immoren, the successors of the fiefdoms established by the great warlords of the previous era. The struggles and wars between these civilizations resulted in their gradual consolidation as the mightier sought to conquer the weaker.

Some historians believe no other great kingdom could have risen to prominence in the central region of western Immoren as long as the kingdom of Morrdh retained its strength. Caspia and Khard were the first kingdoms to emerge from the dark time of the Warlord Era, bolstered by their priest-kings' leadership. As Morrdh declined, its weakness allowed additional outlying communities to band together and thrive. One of the earliest was the collective townships that became Midar, south of Morrdh. These two powers became locked in deadly strife. Thuria rose next when a number of western clans holding lands around the Bay of Stone united under a single banner in 1612 BR.

While treated as a single kingdom, Thuria was a land of numerous proud city-states, each of which prospered thanks to the cooperation of their ruling moorgraves and armies led by battle-ready thanes. By establishing strong borders and a fleet of galleys to protect its harbors, Thuria fostered a great civilization that embraced freedom of thought inspired by the message of the Twins. Its urban centers eclipsed all others north of Caspia. Undermined by internal division, Morrdh suffered its final defeat at the hands of the Midar in 1500 BR. With the dark and hated kingdom vanquished, Thuria and Midar entered a golden era.

Though well defended, Thuria was less noted for its army than for its philosophers, artists, writers, architects, and engineers. It sought to dominate not by conquest but by spreading its culture, which persuaded many settlements west of the Gnarls to give up autonomy and swear fealty to the Thurian king, who made moorgraves and thanes of their leaders. Some Thurian philosophers suggested that oration itself would replace warfare in statecraft. This optimism was reinforced when a Thurian fisherman and sailor named Doleth ascended in 1411 BR, seen as proof the benevolent hand of Morrow guided the people of the coastal townships.

Thuria experienced a time of extended peace despite the savagery elsewhere during the Thousand Cities Era. For two centuries after Thuria's founding, no substantial power rose to threaten its security. By contrast, the surrounding region was embroiled in conflict and petty wars, and farther north the Kingdom of Khard advanced its bloody conquests against the Kossites and Skirov.

EMERGENCE OF TORDOR

The greatest warlords of the townships near Lake Vannogear, along the Rohannor River, in the Murata Hills, and along the coastline north of Thuria came together in 1370 BR to establish Tordor. Within this land of a hundred castellans, each a lord of his own castle, the people did not quickly embrace a single king. Only after decades of internal conflicts were the Tordorans truly unified.

Records from ancient Thuria suggest it initially dismissed its northern neighbor as inconsequential. Not having been seriously challenged in hundreds of years and possessing a civilization that was the envy of the western seaboard, the Thurians did not believe Tordor could imperil their great cities. The threat of Tordor came not by land but by sea: in 1322 BR Thuria was forced to reckon with an invasion of Tordoran warships, each a great war galley powered by sail and oar and manned by hundreds of archers. These mighty ships drove back the smaller, antiquated Thurian fleet, whose ships they captured, torched, or sent to the depths. Thuria's greatest port cities were exposed to attack and plunder.

This became known as the Tordoran Conquest. However, despite its early losses, Thuria did not fall quickly. The Thurian cities could sustain sieges but lacked forces sufficient to muster effective counteroffensives. After nine long years of difficult battle, King Ian Dergeral V surrendered during the siege of Ceryl, the Thurian capital. Given the generous terms offered to Thuria, historians believe King Montador Corazo of Tordor admired Thuria's cities and hoped to enrich his nation by preserving them largely intact. Thuria became a vassal state of Tordor, its king abdicating and its nobility swearing fealty to the Tordoran king and his castellans.

The Thurians became an underclass in a new Tordoran empire. Tordor stripped uncooperative nobles of their lands while requiring heavy taxes of those who swore oaths to their new masters. The Thurians learned to live with their secondary status over time but never entirely forgot their proud history.

THE TORDORAN ARMADA

Following the annexation of Thuria, Tordor's influence in western Immoren grew. Tordor eventually vied with the other great powers of the Thousand Cities Era, including Caspia and the Khardic Empire. Drawing on Thuria's resources, Tordor established the greatest ports on the western seaboard and with these created an even more formidable navy and by it cemented its preeminence at sea.

In this era the Tordoran galley was still in heavy use, but the nation's shipwrights were mastering more refined vessels by integrating extensive sails and complex rigging and relying more on wind than oar. Most of their ships still hugged the coasts for safety, but increasingly ships supplemented with sails proved they could brave deeper ocean voyages and extend Tordoran power over the seas.

Though their land conquests were modest following the domination of Thuria , Tordor's ships terrorized coastal waters, challenged the pirate kings of the Scharde Islands and preyed upon the ships of the Khardic Empire. Until the arrival of the Orgoth, the Dirgenmast Fleet of Tordor was the mightiest force on the Meredius.

While droughts and food shortages were common in the Thousand Cities Era, the Time of the Long Sun that began in 822 BR was worse than all others. The rainless years produced a famine that left no inhabitants of western Immoren unaffected, from the Idrians of the eastern Marches to the citizens of the Khardic Empire. Tens of thousands died from starvation.

RAZOKOV
KHADORSTRED
Uld Vroggen
Fort Brunzig
Castle Tzepesci
Kovosk Hills
NEW VROGGEN
Old Korska
RYNYR
LAEDRY
Shattered Shield
KORSK
Great Zerutsk
Palace of Khazomir
KHARDOSKA
KHADO
Redwall
KHARDOV
Willow Barrens
Lothpool
Lake Volningrad
RORSCHIK
Rustok Castle
Blackroot Wood
VOLNINGRAD
UMBREY
DOROGNIA
Moskrad
Lake Moskrad
Broken Sword
RUSTOKNIA
Gallowswood
Ravensgard
Northguard
Scarswall
MIDFAST
Boarsgate
Murata Hills
Shadoweald
Kulvorn Bay
Lord Khazarak's Tomb
MURIO
Lake Vannogear
fort Baird
Deepwood Tower
CORBHEN
PORT VLADOVAR
FELLIG
NORTHFOREST
Mere Dorou
Mere Tagao
MERIN
ALMARE
Thornwood forest
COSETIO
Almare Woods
Rohannor
North Berck Moors
TORDORO
ARMANDOR
THORNWOOD
The Warrens
Torre Torcail
BERCK
HEARTHSTONE
BOURNWORT
HETHA
Olgunholt
Mollyado
WYTHMOOR
fisherbrook
Berck Harbor
Torre Wythmoor
CARRE DOVA
TARNA
Lake Thornmere
Bay of Stone
FIVE FINGERS
Dragon's Tongue River
PT. BOURNE
Shearwater Narrows
Serpent's Gorge
Fort Balton
Sea of a Thousand Souls
OXMEATH
The Gnarls
WESTERN MIDLUNDS
THURIA
Guilder's Run
Barwick
CERYL
CLOUTSDOWNS
Watcher Peaks
Demonhead Pass
NEW LARKHOLM
RIMMOCKSDALE
ORVEN
WESTSHORE
Westwatch
Rimmocksdale Lake
Nine Stone
Henge Hold
RAMARCK
WESTINMARSH
Foxbridge River
ORD
CAPITOL
CITY
FORTRESS
FEATURE OF INTEREST
RAILROAD
ROAD
GRAYS
MOUNTAINS
HILLS
FOREST (temperate)
FOREST (boreal)
SWAMP
SCALE (in miles)
5 15 25 50 100 150

It is generally held that both Thuria and Tordor were saved from the worst ravages thanks to the work of the Morrowan priest Gordenn, who would ascend in 812 BR. Gordenn saved countless lives through a combination of miraculous intervention and the careful coordination of farmers and cattle ranchers across the region, which enabled relief to reach the most afflicted areas. Even after the worst of the drought subsided, many of Ascendant Gordenn's communal practices were maintained to serve the people of this western region in the long dark age to come.

DIRGENMAST SHIPS AND CAPTAINS

One of the most ancient of Tordoran traditions was the Dirgenmast ships, great funerary vessels once used to honor the passing of their lords and kings. This tradition stretched back to before recorded history, predating the Morrowan religion.

Upon a lord's death, a great festival was held in his honor, culminating in a unique rite. The lord's body was placed on a specially built Dirgenmast ship and its deck heaped with fuel. This pyre would then be set afire as the ship sailed west at sunset. By tradition these ships were captained by the lord's most loyal retainer, his shield-bearer, who volunteered to join his master in death by piloting the vessel to ensure its arrival in Urcaen. The greatest lords were sent forth with an entire crew. As the ship headed into the Black, the Dirgenmast captain would sound a doleful horn to bid farewell to the living and announce the lord's coming to Urcaen.

This tradition continued into the Tordoran period, although it was eventually denounced by the Church of Morrow for both the sacrifice of the Dirgenmast captain and the ritual of cremation, which Morrowans believe hinders rather than facilitates the soul's passage to Urcaen. Nevertheless, the custom persisted until 910 BR when it was formally replaced by sea burials in which the honored dead were sent into the depths after a more orthodox ceremony.

The long legacy of the Dirgenmast captains and their ships influenced many traditions of the Tordoran Navy. The distinct look of the ancient funeral ships and pyres became common in the iconography of the Tordoran Armada, whose galleons were called Dirgenmasts in honor of this tradition. Mighty horns on these ships sounded upon leaving their homeports and when entering battle, a sound dreaded by Tordor's enemies.

THE ORGOTH LASH

The Orgoth landed in 600 BR and immediately set about conquering the Khardic Empire; once it had fallen, they turned their attention to Tordor. The Tordoran Armada was at the height of its power, with more than a thousand Dirgenmast captains sailing the Meredius. The king of Tordor had heard tales of the Orgoth's strength but believed that his fleet could keep his nation's shores free of Orgoth blackships.

The Tordorans achieved several minor victories during their initial naval conflicts against the invaders, but that changed once the Orgoth unleashed their full might. The two nations' mighty ships clashed headlong in what still stands as the bloodiest naval battle in the history of Immoren. The Tordorans put up a gallant fight and destroyed many enemy ships but eventually fell to the superior numbers and terrifying weapons of the invaders. This was the Battle of a Thousand Sails, from which the Sea of a Thousand Souls would take its name. The bravery of the Dirgenmast captains would be memorialized in song and story, for they never turned from their foe and fought to the very last. In the end, however, their efforts proved futile—their ships were shattered and sent into the depths. The last Dirgenmast captain ordered his burning ship to ram the Orgoth flagship and take it to the bottom of the sea with him. The Tordoran Armada was no more.

In the years that followed, the Orgoth did their best to destroy the maritime traditions of the Tordoran people. Every port was put to the torch and its population slaughtered. Shipwrights were burned alive, and for generations the Tordorans were forbidden to use any but the smallest river-going vessels. The people of Thuria tried to resist the Orgoth after the fall of Tordor for a handful of years, but the Orgoth crushed them as well and marched inland. Centuries of oppression followed and left a profound impact on the people of these two once great kingdoms, but eventually they would join with the other Immorese to play a major role in the Rebellion.

ARCANISTS OF THE REBELLION

Although each nation of the Iron Kingdoms holds that the Rebellion began with its ancestors, the citizens of Ord enjoy a unique distinction: the Gift of Magic first manifested among them in 137 BR, just outside the town of Tarna. A young Thurian girl, Madruva Dagra, witnessed Orgoth soldiers assaulting her two sisters. Fire sprang unbidden from her hands in an arcane manifestation of rage and engulfed the soldiers. Their bodies were burned and fell to the marshy ground as Madruva and her siblings fled into the woods.

The Orgoth reprisal was swift and vicious—Madruva and her bloodline were hunted to extinction. The Orgoth had acted in fear, but it was too late. The seeds of rebellion were sown across western Immoren; the number of those practicing magic grew and the first secret arcane fellowships were founded in Thuria. The works of Sebastian Kerwin and his Arcanist's Academe as well as the Circle of the Oath in Ceryl would pave the way for all the arcanists, alchemists, and arcane mechaniks who followed. The contributions of the Thurian people to the field of arcane study are indisputable, as is their importance to the

Rebellion. Had the unique relationship between Tordor and Thuria in ancient times not allowed Ceryl to remain a bastion of higher thought, it is unlikely these great thinkers could have emerged to lay the foundation for the war to come.

When the Iron Fellowship arose in 1 AR, the people of Thuria were foremost among the members of the alliance. One of their earliest victories came in 32 AR, during the Battle of the Hundred Wizards at the city of Tordor where Merin stands today. With the support of local nobles and commoners both, one hundred arcanists succeeded in freeing the city. It remained free for eight years before being razed by the Orgoth, who executed hundreds of arcanists and collaborators along with their families. Still, many Thurian and Tordoran arcanists and alchemists fled south and east, some founding the Order of the Golden Crucible and others aiding in the construction of the first colossals in Caspia. The sons and daughters of Ceryl and Tordor played key roles in these momentous events.

The people of Tordor and Thuria suffered badly in the final years of the Rebellion before the liberating armies of Caspia could reach them. The Orgoth were particularly ruthless and thorough in their scourging of this region and eradicated many of their holdings, including the great port fortress where Five Fingers now stands. The great atrocities they committed in these final days against towns and villages that have since sunk into the lonely marshes are the root of many haunted legends of the region.

THE FOUNDING OF ORD

When the Council of Ten convened in Corvis in 202 AR there was general accord between Thuria and Tordor to establish a new unified nation, giving birth to Ord. To the lasting grief of the Thurian people, southern Thuria, including the great city of Ceryl, was ceded to Cygnar. This underscored the power of Caspia and its allies in these negotiations but was in line with territorial divisions established by the Orgoth during the long centuries of their oppression. The nobles of northern Thuria and Tordor were in no position to contest this division. Representatives of the newly formed nation of Khador claimed parts of northern Tordor once held by their northern empire, but their claims were dismissed as the southern kingdoms united against any restoration of the old Khardic borders.

One of the greatest generals among the Council of Ten was Merin Cathor, a hero of the Rebellion and the descendent of an ancient castellan bloodline. He ably represented the people of Tordor in the negotiation of the Corvis Treaties and was quickly accepted as Ord's first monarch. In 203 AR he was ceremonially crowned King Merin Cathor I in front of the gathered castellans. It fell to him to create a new government to guide the war-ravaged people of this kingdom, who dubbed him "the Valiant."

Among King Merin's first acts was to reinstitute and legitimize the traditional relationship between Tordoran and Thurian nobility, though with some notable changes. He divided Ord into gravs, with Tordoran nobles ruling the north as lord castellans and Thurian nobles ruling the south as moorgraves.

By the time of Merin's coronation, construction had already begun on a new capital at the site where the ancient city of Tordor had once stood. The new city was built with the aid of Rhulic architects and laborers and named Merin to honor the man who had overseen the birth of the Ordic nation. One of the king's most vital restoration efforts was funding a new navy to protect Ord, drawing on the seafaring pride and traditions of the people of this region. Despite efforts by the Orgoth, such lore had not been entirely lost, preserved in some cases by Morrowan monks of Asc. Doleth. The Ordic Royal Navy began humbly in Berck but would grow in time to become one of the most respected fleets in western Immoren. The king ruled from Merin until his death in 243 AR. He was succeeded by his eldest son, Merin Cathor II.

Because his father had led a long life and ruled for forty years, King Merin II was already aging when he ascended to the throne. He came to power in an increasingly more volatile political atmosphere than had existed during most of his father's peaceful reign. With the reconstruction complete, the new Iron Kingdoms had begun to fester with plots and schemes as each raised armies, ostensibly for defense. King Levash Tzepesci of Khador did not hide his desire to expand his nation's borders, and several skirmishes between his forces and Ordic defenders broke out in the late 240s. With the foundation of the Greylords Covenant and the creation of the first Khadoran colossals, the balance of power in western Immoren began to shift as Levash eyed the lands of his neighbors.

THE COLOSSAL WAR

Unwilling to let his colossals stand idle, King Levash launched the first attacks of the Colossal War in 250 AR, sending his forces against both Ord and Llael. Though Ord's fleet repelled Levash's ships, the Ordic and Llaelese armies could only slow but not stop the Khadoran advance on land. Khadoran victory seemed inevitable until Cygnar entered into an alliance with the besieged kingdoms and sent its armies and colossals north to face the Khadorans. The outdated Cygnaran colossals built during the Rebellion proved inferior to the more advanced Khadoran machines, but the tide of war changed when Cygnar developed its own modern colossals several years into the conflict.

The cost of the war was great for all involved, but it proved ruinous for the Khadorans, who were pushed back to Volningrad. King Merin II himself was killed in action in 257 AR. In his shining armor, "the Bright King" had been an inspiration to his nation, which now mourned his passing. The Khadorans eventually surrendered and were forced both to dismantle their colossals and destroy the foundries that had produced them.

RISE OF THE GREAT PORTS

King Merin Cathor III succeeded his father to rule a nation scarred by seven years of brutal war that had transformed many of its northern lands into ruined battlefields. Much of the work completed in the reign of King Merin I had been undone during the conflict, and Ord lacked the resources to recover quickly. Merin III spent his reign maneuvering the political aftermath of the Colossal War and rebuilding his nation. This period saw several Ordic port cities rise to prominence, with Berck exceeding its significance from the time of the Tordoran Armada. It endured the Colossal Wars better than

other northern cities thanks to the protection of its navy. King Merin III pushed spending to increase the strength of the fleet while several growing merchant houses worked to attract shipping to Berck's harbor.

As Berck dominated legitimate trade and profited from the expansion of the Ordic Royal Navy, another port city farther to the south experienced an even greater economic boom. The island town of Five Fingers, which had earned a dark reputation as an Orgoth stronghold during the Occupation, had since transformed into a pirate haven. The prosperity of this settlement, made possible by the rise of a powerful criminal fraternity, took Ord's capital by surprise. A man named Bolis Turgon would be credited with the growth of Five Fingers on the back of vice, piracy, and smuggling.

The sudden wealth flowing through Five Fingers, combined with its strategically significant location at the mouth of the Dragon's Tongue River, drew the attention of the Cygnaran crown. Caspia saw an opportunity to solidify its control of the Dragon's Tongue River from Corvis to the Bay of Stone by pressing its claim on Five Fingers—ostensibly a city that had begun on the Cygnaran shore. Cygnar moved its northern fleet into the Bay of Stone on the premise of retaliating against pirates taking haven in the city. In response, Ordic naval ships also entered the bay, each of the two fleets on high alert. For a time, violence between the two kingdoms seemed assured.

Confrontation was avoided through diplomacy between King Merin III and King Woldred of Cygnar. As a fervent Morrowan, Merin III was not initially inclined to fight for Five Fingers, which he felt embodied the worst aspects of Ordic culture just as Berck embodied its virtues and strengths. Accounts suggest advisors who were themselves pressured by criminal elements in Five Fingers led by Bolis persuaded King Merin to intervene. When the Ordic king insisted the city was, for all its flaws, Ordic, Cygnar withdrew its claim.

Any embarrassment Merin felt over the reputation of Five Fingers was magnified in 271 AR. A black cloud formed over the port, and unnaturally cold rain poured upon the city as strange lightning danced along the waterways and a thundering wind blew through town with a sound like mocking laughter. Bolis Turgon had died, and he had been brought into the Dark Twin's embrace as one of her chosen scions. Bolis' dark ascension was met with horror by the Morrowans of southern Ord. Seeking to reassure them, the king called a High Gathering at the Hall of Castellans for a vote to declare the Church of Morrow the state religion of Ord. He spent the rest of his reign battling corruption, endorsing the Church, and committing to charitable causes, earning the moniker "Merin the Pious."

The cities of Berck and Five Fingers would continue to grow and prosper while maintaining a strong rivalry, each with a character distinct from and opposed to the other. King Merin III, who ruled until his death by illness in 279 AR, would be remembered for his faith and his contributions to the restoration of his kingdom. He was succeeded by his eldest daughter, Tadea.

CRISIS OF LEADERSHIP

Though Queen Tadea Cathor hoped to continue the work of her father, her unhappy reign was marred by unrest and further Khadoran aggression. Early in her rulership, Tadea's efforts at reform were limited by a depleted treasury. When she increased taxes on the castellans, she created powerful enemies. She enacted several charitable programs to assist the poor, which made her popular among the commoners but at the expense of her relations with the nobility. With the queen at odds with the Hall of Castellans, the government of Ord was divided and ineffective, planting the seeds for sedition.

Meanwhile troubles were brewing in the north. For once not casting their hungry gaze on Ord, the Khadorans moved against Cygnar in 289 AR in an attempt to seize the northern Thornwood. This peculiar war ended with the mysterious deaths of the sovereigns of both Cygnar and Khador in 295 AR. Although no one knew it at the time, this was the opening salvo of the Border Wars, which would rage for nearly a quarter-century.

Queen Tadea was kept occupied battling her embittered castellans; earlier that same year, a gathering of those castellans and their retainers near Carre Dova took up arms to blockade goods to the capital and make demands in what seemed an imminent rebellion. The Ordic Army was readied in case force was required to quell the uprising, but the queen insisted on seeking a peaceful resolution. The insurrection was interrupted by a sudden Khadoran assault on Ord's northern border.

With Khador's new queen too young to rule, the nation was led by the warlike Lord Regent Velibor. The Khadoran lord dreamt of restoring the old borders of the Khardic Empire and so struck both Ord and Llael, igniting the First Expansion War. He hoped to take advantage of the muddled state of Cygnar's succession, which he predicted would keep that kingdom occupied while he attacked its smaller neighbors.

The Ordic Army was ill-prepared and suffered much in the first months of battles. Queen Tadea convinced the rebellious castellans to put aside their grievances and contribute to Ord's mutual defense. Just as Ord began to shore up its border defenses in the spring of 296 AR, Tadea was assassinated. This

prompted a public outcry and widespread accusations. Initially blame was aimed at Khador, with rumors of foreign assassins in the capital. Then accusations shifted to the queen's most vocal enemies among the castellans. Evidence at the time suggested the plot originated within the palace itself, implicating the queen's younger brother Alvor, who had inherited the throne. With the army embattled, a storm of unrest swept the kingdom. While no direct proof demonstrated the king's involvement, rumors circulated and some began to refer to him privately as "Alvor the Usurper."

In the face of the Khadoran threat these rumors were hushed and whatever evidence may have existed destroyed. King Alvor would become a controversial figure in Ordic history, initially reviled but subsequently remembered as a great hero of the war. Soon after ascending to the throne, he rallied the people, urging them to join together and focus on the war consuming the north.

THE BATTLE OF THE BROKEN SWORD

While Queen Tadea was widely beloved among the citizenry, she was not an effective wartime leader. In stark contrast to his sister, Alvor reacted quickly and decisively to the Khadoran threat. He personally took up arms and joined his generals in the field, proving to be a brave and formidable warrior. His courage earned him the respect and admiration of the castellans, the officers he served with, and the common people.

Rallied to his banner, the Ordic Army won several engagements north of Scarswall and inflicted heavy losses on the Khadorans in the Gallowswood and Shadoweald forests. Unfortunately the Khadoran numbers, strength of arms, and superior warjacks proved more than a match for Ord's armies and the defenders were driven back from their northern townships and farmlands. Late in 300 AR, the king returned south to the capital to gather reinforcements while the Ordic Army fortified along the Murata Hills, transforming Midfast into a heavily armed bastion.

In early 301 AR the king marched with fresh forces to relieve troops fighting north of Midfast. The king arrived to discover that the Ordic position had been overrun and his soldiers routed. Without hesitation Alvor launched a counterattack. Several battalions rallied to him, buying time for the organized retreat of the Ordic forces back to Midfast. However, in the chaotic melee that followed, Alvor was isolated and killed. Though his body was never recovered, his shattered sword was found and brought back to Merin. It would become an important symbol of Ordic defiance and pride, immortalized on the nation's flag. The Battle of the Broken Sword is remembered as a significant day in Ord's history, one when the kingdom suffered loss but refused to yield. Stewardship of Ord passed to Lord Castellan Agnolo Caetan, who ruled briefly during the minority of Alvor Cathor II.

Khador pressed on and eventually captured the port of Radhavo, formerly the second largest city in northern Ord. Though Lord Castellan Caetan served ably and his armies fought Khador to a standstill outside Corbhen and Midfast, soon no Ordic defenders remained north of the formidable walls of Midfast. Unable to press further into Ord, Khador negotiated for peace in 304 AR.

THE SIEGE OF MIDFAST

Unknown to the Ordic government, Khador only ended hostilities to buy Lord Regent Velibor time to resolve an internal crisis. A great barbarian horde from Khador's frozen mountains and forests assembled late in 304 AR to pillage the farmlands of the interior, left vulnerable by the departure of garrisons sent to the war front. Velibor convinced the horde to strike further south instead, insisting Ordic lands were ripe for pillage and possessed far greater wealth.

The barbarians took the bait and marched south to besiege the heavily fortified city of Midfast, attacking with a tremendous numerical advantage. Seeing Midfast as the lynchpin of Ordic defenses, Velibor hoped to crush the city beneath the horde and then bypass it with his own army to march on the Ordic capital. With its formidable defenses, Midfast held for weeks, but its defenders dwindled.

The Siege of Midfast became one of the most famous battles in western Immoren's history, notable for the heroism of Markus Graza, an Ordic Army officer and devout Morrowan who saved his nation from ruin. With Midfast's ammunition stores depleted and its wounded defenders exhausted, Markus went alone from the city under a banner of truce. Drawing on his knowledge of the beliefs of the northern tribes, Markus offered a ritual challenge to the chiefs of the horde. By their terms Markus was required to fight all fourteen chiefs, each in turn. It was a seemingly impossible task. As the barbarians and the Ordsmen on the wall watched, the siege stalled for a week as Markus faced two of the barbarian chiefs each day in single combat. Markus won victory after victory, suffering grave injuries on the fifth and sixth days. By the final day even the barbarians of the horde cheered for him over their own kinsmen. In the last battle Markus found the inner reserves to endure by calling on his faith. Ascendant Katrena manifested in the sky above as Markus defeated the last chief and collapsed.

The light of Markus's ascension to join both Katrena and Morrow awed all who witnessed it, transpiring even as reinforcements arrived from the Ordic capital. Thousands of barbarians were so stunned they surrendered at once, casting their weapons aside. Those who fought were swept from the field by the fresh Ordic cavalry forces. The Khadoran Army had been camped to the north of the barbarians and witnessed the miracle of ascension; knowing Morrow stood against them, their ranking kommandant ordered them to quit the field. Against all odds, Ord stood victorious. The northern barbarian tribes never regained their strength, while Markus became a revered figure among Morrowan soldiers.

The defense of Midfast marks the end of the First Expansion War, the period during which Khador achieved all of its significant gains during the lengthy Border Wars. In the aftermath of the siege of Midfast, the Ordic Army had time to fortify. Their greatest work stands to this day; the Markus Wall. Constructed over the span of the eight war-torn years following the Siege of Midfast in 305 AR, this stone and turf fortification ran the entire range of northern hills of Ord from the Windwater Lakes near Corbhen to Zerkova's Hill near Fellig.

Despite the reprieve, Lord Regent Velibor refused to give up his aspirations for the conquest of Ord. Over the objections of many Khadoran nobles and senior army officers, the

lord regent sent his forces into battle again in early 306 AR. Khadoran legions assailed Ord's fortifications at Boarsgate, Scarsfell, and Midfast, but the attacks lacked the numbers to topple any of these fortifications. Velibor had divided his forces to continue the ongoing assault against western Llael, and both efforts suffered.

THE BATTLE PRINCE

Alvor Cathor II took the throne at age 14 in 305 AR, claiming inspiration by Markus' deeds and fervor to bring glory to Morrow's name for Ord. Ordinarily he would have been too young to be accepted as king, but the ongoing strife made the people desperate for a new leader. The boy-king also had the support of Lord Castellan Caetan himself, who declared him fit to rule. With Caetan at his side, King Alvor II commanded the army personally and took part in almost every major battle until the end of the Border Wars eight years later. He is described in Ordic legend as possessed of tireless stamina and a peerless sense of duty, enduring sleepless nights and weary days as he and his royal escort traveled from one border fortress to the next, wherever the fighting was fiercest. Some said the very spirit of Ascendant Markus spoke through him. Repeatedly the Khadorans facing him were undone.

While the Battle Prince is considered the greatest hero of the end of the Border Wars, the contributions of the Kingdom of Cygnar at this late hour should not be dismissed. The war stretched on long enough for Cygnar to resolve its own succession troubles and in 308 AR their new queen Juliana sent support to both Llael and Ord, reinvigorating those beleaguered kingdoms even as the Khadoran Army reached its limits. Khador had seen the crowning of Queen Ayn Vanar V in 307 AR, but she remained secluded and had not taken up the reins of rulership. It would be some years before she discovered Velibor's excesses and, with her treasury nearly bankrupt, exiled the lord regent. With the nation under her control, she called an end to the Border Wars in 313 AR. Despite decades of warfare, Khador was unwilling to surrender any territories it had gained. King Alvor II felt compelled to accept Queen Ayn's terms for his own nation was overtaxed and eager for peace.

King Alvor II ruled for over forty years, remembered for his heroics in battle but proving even more adroit at overseeing the reconstruction for Ord. He faced considerable difficulties in restoring the realm's stability given the expenses and loss of life incurred during the wars as well as the loss of major territories. One of the challenges he faced was resettling a large number of northern castellans displaced by Khadoran conquest. Many were descended from proud and ancient lines with considerable political clout, and King Alvor II could not ignore them. To preserve the political stability of the Hall of Castellans, he forced the castellans and moorgraves who remained to divide their holdings, granting lands to the dispossessed. This forced some castellans to move into southern regions traditionally held by Thurian nobles, increasing resentment between these two peoples. Nonetheless, the king ably handled his nobles and preserved the peace. On the king's death in 346 AR, the crown passed to his son, Alvor III.

COLONIAL ASPIRATIONS

King Alvor Cathor III was known as "the Admiral" and is notable for rebuilding the Ordic Royal Navy and founding the Trident School. The visionary king went beyond these initiatives by sponsoring more ambitious nautical endeavors, for he was convinced other lands lay beyond Immoren awaiting discovery, exploration, and exploitation. If successful, he hoped to improve Ord's position by establishing colonies on distant shores. The king created the Naval Advancement Board to improve navigation and to chart the seas as well as offer financial rewards far any captain who discovered previously unknown land masses.

He was reassured after examining written accounts from the kingdom's most adventurous pilots and navigators. These included sailors blown off course in storms who claimed to have landed on undiscovered shores. On several occasions, implausible tales were given credence by the return of unusual and previous unseen plants and caged animals. It is now thought that some of these ships may have unknowingly stumbled upon the southern continent of Zu or its outlying islands. After ten years of successful rule, the king felt he had found a navigator capable of reaching this mysterious continent. So confident was he that he both funded and volunteered to lead the expedition himself. In 356 AR his squadron of vessels sailed south hoping to return laden with riches but was never heard from again. His fate remains a mystery, though his disappearance confirmed for many the folly of venturing from Immoren, undermining efforts the king had spent his lifetime trying to foster. From the strength of her political standing, his wife Rosa Cathor convinced the Hall of Castellans to declare her queen regnant rather than queen consort, giving her the power of a sovereign, and she held the throne for the Cathors.

Young at the time of her husband's disappearance, Queen Rosa had her share of detractors. Nonetheless she is remembered as an effective ruler during her twenty-five year reign, with keen insight and an ability to negotiate with the realm's castellans. This was the beginning of the Quiet Century, an era of relative peace but with considerable underlying tensions and intrigue across the Iron Kingdoms.

Despite Queen Rosa's even-handed governance, she was blind to conspiracies within her realm and did not take proper measures to ensure the continuation of the Cathor dynasty. When she died in 381 AR the succession was uncertain. Though the House of Cathor had many branches, none moved swiftly to secure its claim.

THE MATEU DYNASTY

Vasparez Mateu, supported by an alliance of castellans, seized control in Merin following Queen Rosa's death. His forces murdered any Cathors they could get their hands on, sending the rest of the great family into hiding. After forcing his rivals from the capital, Vasparez declared himself king. Remembered as "Vasparez the Cruel," he was a tyrant. He rewarded his vassals with the spoils of the nation and ignored the ancient laws of Ord, including rights held sacred by the castellans. When the Hall of Castellans spoke out against him he imprisoned

his critics and disbanded the High Gathering, an extreme act that led to his downfall. Vasparez was assassinated in 394 AR while en route to his ancestral lands in Berck, possibly killed by members of his own family.

With the Cathors still on the run, the Mateus saw to it that the crown passed to Duret, Vasparez's son. King Duret was young and eager to please his family, so he was perfectly suited to their needs. Remembered as "Duret the Impotent," he was a figurehead while senior members of the Mateu family ruled. To appease the castellans, the High Gatherings were restored, but it was clear that Mateu interests would dominate.

The twenty-seven years of Duret's rule were quite profitable for the Mateus, who considerably expanded their holdings and influence. However, the house's rising fortunes did not translate to gains for the kingdom itself. The other castellans resented the pretender and his overbearing family. The Cathors were not idle during these years; they continued to meet with discontented nobles to drum up support for their restoration.

WAR OF THE CASTELLANS

Those opposed to the Mateus but who were unwilling to risk open defiance of the crown saw their chance to act when King Duret died of illness in 421 AR, as he had no direct heir. The castellans gathered in Merin to debate the succession, but the assembly became heated when words escalated to violence. This ignited the War of the Castellans, lasting from 421–425 AR. The great houses of Ord withdrew from the capital, gathered their liegemen and prepared for the bloodshed to come.

Battle lines were quickly drawn amidst a chaotic grab for power. In the early years a number of lesser houses used the disputes as an excuse to settle old scores with rivals, and bloody feuds spilled across the moors. Both the Cathors and Mateus had their hands in these clashes from the beginning, manipulating allies and enemies alike into battles that would serve their ends. Once the field had been winnowed of lesser pretenders, these two houses engaged in a more overt and vicious struggle. Corpses soon littered the streets of Berck, Merin, and any place the supporters of the Mateus and Cathors met.

Mateu assassins killed several Cathor claimants and their allies, going so far as to murder Lord Governor Klinior of Five Fingers in 423 AR, who had secured safe havens for the Cathor family. Though House Mateu initially had the upper hand, it underestimated the degree to which the Cathors had been preparing. Greater numbers of castellans began to rally to Baird Cathor, remembered as "the Headsman." He was heroic and bloodthirsty in battle, a terror for the Mateus and their allies. Fearing for their very survival after the executions of a number of their kinsmen, the Mateus retreated to their stronghold in Berck, withdrew all claims to the throne, and offered public apologies and pledges of support to Baird Cathor. His crowning was treated as a resumption of the proper house of Ordic royalty.

Baird Cathor I, while admired for his victory in the War of the Castellans, was a poor king. He indulged in baser appetites and became infamous for his obesity in his latter years, requiring assistance to leave his chambers. After ruling for twenty-four years and accomplishing little of note, he died in 449 AR.

THE SECOND EXPANSION WAR

King Baird's eldest son was crowned King Stagier in 450 AR. Unlike his father, Stagier was a natural leader and was immediately active in the affairs of state. In the early years of his rule he focused admirably on strengthening the realm, including efforts to eliminate corruption within the Ordic Royal Navy. His concerns were warranted, if insufficient to prevent the troubles that consumed the latter half of his reign.

For years Ordic pirates had preyed upon Khadoran shipping lanes with the tacit approval of the crown. King Stagier ignored Khador's demands that Ord reign in its criminals and respect the ocean going trade of its neighbors; he did not believe his nation should be held accountable for the actions of lawless criminals. King Stagier's failure to intercede incensed Khador. In 464 AR King Mikhail Vanar ordered his navy to clear the way for Khadoran shipping, violating Ordic waters and firing on any foreign ships deemed suspicious. The Ordic Royal Navy responded by sinking several Khadoran ships. These clashes were followed by others as the conflict escalated to open war. Soon thereafter King Mikhail ordered the invasion of Ord.

Given the difficulty of assailing Ord's northern border, King Mikhail employed a different stratagem. During the largest naval engagements since the Battle of the Thousand Sails, the Khadorans managed to land an invasion force south of Corbhen. This army marched on that Ordic city and seized control, intending to use it as a staging ground for marching on Berck to cripple the vital Ordic port by land.

The full scope of the Khadoran threat was revealed when a smaller army from Volningrad laid siege to Midfast, tying up its garrison and effectively isolating the capital. The force at Midfast was obviously diversionary, as it was clearly insufficient to seize the city. Yet as long as it applied pressure, the Ordic Army could not risk repositioning Midfast's soldiers. Corbhen was temporarily abandoned while the king and his generals debated their options.

Meanwhile the Ordic Royal Navy clashed with Khadoran warships, hoping to cut off Khador's supply lines. The occupation of Corbhen, while alarming, was not a crippling blow to Ord; the city was isolated and not one with essential industry. The threat to Berck, however, was more perilous. King Stagier faced the unenviable choice of protecting either Berck or Merin but not both. He sent a small army down the Rohannor River to blockade the road between Corbhen and Berck, knowing these forces were insufficient to hold out for long against the Khadoran army.

By this time Cygnar's King Hector Sunbright II learned of the conflict and, in the interest of his own kingdom, ordered his forces to join the conflict in support of Ord. He sent his northern fleet from Ceryl to fight alongside the Ordic Navy, further disrupting Khadoran supply lines. The bloodiest fighting was left to the Ordic ships, yet the arrival of the Cygnaran forces was a boon to Ordic admirals and enabled them to push back the Khadoran fleet.

Cygnaran soldiers landed at Berck and aided the Ordic Army in securing the river before these combined forces intercepted the Khadorans on their march toward the great port. The battle north of the river was hard fought. Unable to gain ground and harassed by Ordic and Cygnaran forces, the Khadorans withdrew to Corbhen to sit out the winter and await reinforcements from the north.

Midfast remained under siege, which continued to divide the Ordic Army. With the coming of spring a large number of mercenary companies entered the war on both sides of the conflict.

Cygnaran nobles who disapproved of King Sunbright's intervention had been applying great pressure on him. Having "done enough" by helping push the Khadorans back to Corbhen, Cygnar abruptly withdrew its support with little coordination with Ordic admirals or generals, thereby imperiling the war effort. This left King Stagier in a difficult position with a rapidly depleted treasury and insufficient manpower, thus extending the war for another long year. He succeeded in surrounding Corbhen, however, and forced the occupying Khadorans to endure considerable suffering. Ordic Navy ships fought bravely to keep supplies from the city, and their blockade was the undoing of the Khadorans, who sued for peace in 468 AR and promised to withdraw. Corbhen was liberated, and the starving Khadorans were sent limping back to their capital.

It was a costly and difficult victory, and public sentiment had turned against the king. This was exasperated when King Stagier sought to restore his bankrupted treasury by imposing arduous taxes on the common man. The end of his rule was marked by considerable unrest. He passed in 485 AR.

THE SOLITARY KING

Stagier's son was crowned King Stagier II—an ill–fated sovereign whose ineffectiveness led to concessions reinforcing the rights of the castellans and limiting the power of the monarchy. Stagier himself suffered from periodic bouts of madness and hysteria that his family hushed by keeping him out of the public eye. These reclusive habits earned him the epithet "the Solitary King."

It was left to the castellans and the merchant houses of Berck to restore the kingdom's finances. Though they succeeded in growing industry and restoring trade and commerce in the major cities, they did so while lining their own pockets and those of their supporters. Graft and corruption became widespread, as many of the checks and balances of Ord's government were thrown into disarray. The great divide between Ord's rich and poor reached its height in this era, with poverty afflicting many of Ord's cities while the greatest merchants and most powerful nobles became even wealthier. The Thornwood War of 510–511 AR between Cygnar and Khador had little impact on Ord beyond fattening the coffers of several Ordic mercenary companies who joined in some of the later battles.

King Stagier II was frail in his final years—he feared poisoning and ate little—and died emaciated in 513 AR. The realm's nobles were relieved to discover that his son King Merin IV, who was crowned that same year, appeared to have none of his father's eccentricities and was willing to leave governance to the Hall of Castellans. The politics of the capital and the great houses continued unabated; the king had limited impact on the kingdom although he did not embarrass himself or his family. His reign was uneventful—a blessing according to most of the nobles, who were content to have an amiable and harmless head of state.

THE MENITE KING

When King Merin IV was inexplicably assassinated in 531 AR, it caused quite a stir. His death seemed to benefit no one except his brother Fardini. While King Stagier II had sons, Fardini insisted the eldest was too young to rule and seized the throne. Fardini's actions provoked considerable apprehension in the capital. He was quite different from his older brother, having converted to the Menite faith with tremendous fanaticism. Immediately King Fardini spoke of sweeping reforms and his intent to purge the kingdom of wickedness. "The Menite King" did not focus his attention on enemies abroad but within, beginning with a crackdown on Five Fingers. Both the Ordic Army and the Ordic Navy were sent in to root out crime and vice in a city that had been built on both.

This move had little popular support, particularly as such a flagrant attack on the criminal circles of Five Fingers was akin to striking a hornets' nest. While hundreds were made to answer for their crimes, the city's high captains employed their considerable wealth to fund covert investigations of the king himself, aided by Thurian nobles who did not appreciate this intrusion.

In the Hall of Castellans, King Fardini found his efforts blocked on multiple fronts as castellans found ways to deny tax revenue to fund his government. In 536 AR definitive proof was discovered linking King Fardini to the assassination of his brother. In an unprecedented turn of events the king himself was tried before the High Assembly, found guilty, and executed for breaking the fundamental laws of Ord. A brief tide of anti-Menite sentiment swept Ord in the wake of Fardini's execution but quickly faded after the Menite priesthood and communities disavowed any connection with him and publicly condemned his actions.

ENTERING MODERNITY

After Fardini's execution, Stagier II's eldest son was crowned King Alvor Cathor IV. Eventually known as "Alvor the Stout," he was adroit at politics and inspired confidence in the castellans. King Alvor restored dignity and gravitas to the Ordic throne during his long thirty-eight year reign. He was known for his stirring speeches, his private meetings with the monarchs of other kingdoms, and his willingness to negotiate compromises between rival castellans.

For all his merits, the king was neglectful of the masses, showing little concern for the poor, whose living conditions had not improved in the last century. Nor was Alvor receptive to his Thurian subjects, whom he clearly considered beneath him. The nation at large did not demonstrate much in the way of genuine grief at his passing in 574 AR. Despite his long rule the king died relatively young when his heart failed him. His legacy seemed secure, as he had raised three sons to manhood.

King Alvor IV had not capitalized on many of the opportunities during his reign, most particularly the declining fortunes of House Mateu. This once powerful trading house fell into disarray and heavy debt by 550 AR due to a variety of financial losses and failed investments. Rather than ensuring this old rival was quashed conclusively, the king endorsed laws that came to House Mateu's rescue by imposing heavy tariffs on foreign competitors. Castellans who supported House Mateu as a necessary counter against the rising power of Cygnar's Mercarian League persuaded King Alvor IV to this course. While concerns about the League were well founded, these tariffs paved the way for Izabella Mateu's restoration of her house after she assumed control in 570 AR.

The king's eldest son was crowned King Alvor V in late 574 AR with considerable pomp and ceremony. Alvor V had been groomed to take the throne and had long waited to prove his mettle. As a prince, he had earned considerable respect among Ord's armed forces, and his reign was expected to be fortuitous and long. He made it immediately clear that he intended to make the strengthening of the navy his first priority. Just three months into his reign he joined the flagship in a tour of the western seaboard to survey the state of the fleet and coastal fortresses. A fluke storm struck the royal squadron and swept them out to sea. The flagship floundered and sank, resulting in the loss of all aboard.

So it came to pass that King Brogan was crowned while the nation was still stunned by the deaths of his father and brother. Brogan, a learned and eloquent speaker, was a man of serious demeanor and hoped to be a worthy representative of the Cathor line. But two months into his reign a section of the royal palace collapsed during a torrential and unseasonable storm and buried King Brogan. For the third time in less than half a year, Ord's king was dead.

THE BANDIT KING

The third son of Alvor IV, crowned King Baird Cathor II, was met with less enthusiasm. As a young prince, he had already been associated with scandal; it was well known that he had led an intemperate youth of excess and debauchery, spending his formative years in the seedy alleys of Five Fingers in the company of commoners and criminals. As the third son, Baird neither expected nor anticipated taking the throne, and all who knew his history considered him unsuited to the role. Expectations of enduring an embarrassing king pervaded the capital when Baird refused to abandon his old ways.

With willful disdain he ignored his advisors and frequently left the capital to carouse in the Port of Deceit. In doing so, he left his family behind, as Baird II had entered an arranged marriage in 562 AR at the age of twenty. He already had three children by the time he took the throne: his first son Baird III was born in 565 AR, his first daughter Carlutia in 569 AR, and his second son Brogan in 570 AR. His last daughter Sandrea was born in 576 AR, two years after he was crowned. His wife died of consumption in 580 AR, though rumors alleged he had a number of illegitimate children outside of wedlock. In the absence of the king, oversight of his family fell to his eldest son and heir, Baird III. Despite his vices, Baird II was a doting father when present, and over time he cemented the loyalty of all his children.

The rivals of House Cathor took years to understand they had misjudged their new king and that he could not be dismissed so easily. In the first decade of his rule the king showed a strange knack for knowing what plots were being hatched in his absence. Allies and agents representing his interests had an uncanny ability to arrive at just the right moment to speak in his stead, well informed and equipped with the necessary information to steer matters in the king's favor. Those in the capital began to realize they had inherited a king well suited to the subtleties of the Ordic court.

King Baird Cathor II is sometimes an inscrutable sovereign, preferring to act through intermediaries and misdirection. He rebelled against the tactics of his father, showing no fondness for the castellans and instead favoring the common man. Some of his political techniques are decidedly Ordic, including arranging the marriages of his offspring to broaden or solidify his power. He married his heir to the daughter of one of his most contentious northern castellans whose family had historically supported the Mateus. He married his eldest daughter to the heir of the lord castellan of Murio, whom he subsequently groomed to lead the Shield Division of the Ordic Army. In a controversial move, the king married his youngest daughter Sandrea to the moorgrave of Almare, a Thurian. While this incensed the castellans and created scandal, it spread goodwill for King Baird II among the southern Thurians, who proved to be useful allies.

Baird II demonstrated his willingness to take risks in 588 AR when he enacted extensive changes to the kingdom's system of tax collections. While working within the budget approved by the Hall of Castellans, the king exerted his power over tax collection to target the wealthiest castellans, including House Mateu, and reduce the burden on the poor. This earned King Baird the epithet "the Bandit King," as the nobles immediately decried these measures as theft. Alienating the castellans was a polarizing act, one that might have been political suicide for any other sovereign.

King Baird II endured despite the rifts prompted by these actions, even as he saw House Mateu rise in influence. Castellans enraged by the higher taxes joined with Izabella Mateu to block the king's causes in the capital. The king responded by repealing the tariffs on foreign interests imposed by his father that weakened House Mateu against the Mercarian League.

The clandestine war between the Cathors and the Mateus has heated up ever since. While most of the struggles between the two houses have been limited to the political arena, occasional assassinations and eruptions of violence between armed retainers on either side are not unknown. While charges have never been levied or definitive proof unearthed, the Mateus believe one of the king's staunchest supporters, Castellan Stagier Salvestro, was responsible for the murders of three members of their family, including Izabella's brother Angello. Retaliatory strikes have claimed lives on both sides.

THE MERCHANT WARS

Even as House Mateu battled politically with the Cathors, it also engaged in an escalating trade war with the Mercarian League. These conflicts periodically resulted in confrontations on the open sea. Both the Mercarian League and House Mateu created sizable shipping fleets, ostensibly cargo ships but protected by heavily armed escorts.

These merchant vessels and their trade routes have become so vital to the economies of both Ord and Cygnar that their respective flotillas are sometimes escorted by navy vessels. This has led to isolated incidents of hostility between ships of each navy protecting their respective merchants. Generally each government has turned a blind eye to these clashes, accepting thin justifications of piracy or Cryxian attacks. These conflicts have in turn increased the animosity between House Mateu and the Cathors; King Baird II views such clashes with the Cygnaran Navy as a direct threat to Ord's national interests.

The Mateu-Mercarian rivalry escalated in the early 590s AR when House Mateu failed to prevent the League from securing holdings in major Ordic ports. The greatest coup for the League came in 592 AR when it leveraged debts and applied financial pressure to gain controlling ownership of the Berck Imports House. The castellans keenly felt the loss of this proud and ancient Ordic shipping concern to foreign owners. House Mateu saw this as a personal affront and expanded their efforts in markets across Ord and Cygnar.

The stakes were raised in 596 AR when a Berck Imports House ship, the *Seacutter,* became the first to return from the southern continent of Zu. The Mercarian League was able to secure the first and primary access to exotic goods from Zu and made use of Berck Imports House to sell the goods in Ord. Though Ord receives considerable income from taxing this trade, the fact that it is controlled by a foreign company is seen as a major failing among the castellans. House Mateu has spared no expense to gain access to Zu by any means, legal or not.

In the decade since the discovery of Zu, clashes at sea and increasingly aggressive attempts to establish permanent outposts there have increased. All involved, including the governments of each nation, know the potential wealth of such an endeavor is tremendous. Khadoran concerns have begun to fund similar expeditions, and bloodshed and strife seem destined to follow attempts to open new markets and exploit resources on as-yet-uncharted shores.

TURMOIL ABROAD AND OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN

King Baird II has maintained a generally positive relationship with Cygnar throughout his reign, a considerable feat given the different natures of the kings who have come and gone in that southern kingdom. Baird took the throne during the last two years of Vinter III's reign, but the two sovereigns had minimal contact. During Vinter IV's reign, Ord and Cygnar maintained cordial but cool relations.

Continuing a long tradition of Ordic neutrality, King Baird II politely declined to involve his military beyond defending his own shores and townships during the Scharde Invasions, which actually profited some in Ord; several of the larger Ordic mercenary companies sold their services to Cygnar. These mercenaries were hired to defend local townships as well as to join in several of the larger operations of the war.

Ord's exposure to Cryx during these conflicts demonstrated to ranking officers of both branches of the military that their armed forces were antiquated. Attempts to bargain with King Vinter IV regarding the sale of weapons or warjacks were only marginally successful. Cygnar continued its policy of selling decommissioned chassis to Ord, but it was not until Leto Raelthorne took the Cygnaran throne that more meaningful exchanges between the two kingdoms were arranged.

King Baird II has never made public his thoughts on the Lion's Coup of 594 AR when Leto seized the throne, but it is thought he prefers Leto over Vinter. Baird and Leto have never met in person but communicate through envoys. In recent years this distance has been reduced largely thanks to the efforts of Prince Brogan, the Ordic king's second son, who has risen through the ranks of the Ordic Navy. The prince has developed a rapport with Cygnaran admirals in the interest of modernization, and he frequently travels between Berck and Caspia.

The Llaelese War brought pressure from Cygnaran ambassadors entreating Ord to lend its might against Khador, but the king politely expressed his sympathies and declined. Even after the Llaelese War, the battles between Cygnar and Khador continued, becoming a more protracted, grueling engagement known as the Second Thornwood War. Even this was not sufficient to persuade the Ordic sovereign to risk joining the war against Khador. After learning of conspiracies in Five Fingers in 606 AR that allowed Cryxian forces to penetrate the mainland, King Baird agreed with his younger son to engage in limited fleet actions alongside the Cygnaran Navy against the Nightmare Empire. Ord's king was still careful not to overcommit and leave his kingdom vulnerable.

King Baird II has walked a delicate tightrope. The kingdom has entered into an unexpected period of prosperity, finding ways to profit from the time of turmoil. Not only has Ord become the de facto center for trade between Iron Kingdoms it is also the home of many well paid mercenary companies. The Order of the Golden Crucible formally relocated its headquarters to Ord in 607 AR, largely as a result of negotiations initiated by King Baird II with key leaders of the formerly fractured organization. In conjunction with successful negotiations with Cygnar, this resulted in Ord strengthening and modernizing its armed forces even as it revitalized its internal economy.

Ord entered into the current era in a stronger position than ever, though its situation is perilous. Being poorer and less well armed than its neighbors, Ord is the least powerful of the remaining Iron Kingdoms. Only time will tell if it can continue to prosper despite its shortcomings or if it will fall prey to the conflicts around it, as did the ill-fated Kingdom of Llael. Much may depend on the success of its efforts to establish colonies abroad.

GOVERNMENT & MILITARY

Ord is a small, resource poor nation governed by compromise and ancient tradition. The kingdom is ruled by a monarch under the consent of the most powerful noble families of the realm. Though each sees to its own interests and ambitions, all are guided by the desire to ensure their nation prospers. In Ord, boisterous diplomacy and deal making have been elevated to art forms in which the whole nation is beholden. The laws of Ord have been tailored to encourage commerce and industry, in part as an outgrowth of the nation's poverty and because its treasury is dependent on the taxation of foreign merchants drawn to Ord's markets. Ord has become the preferred place to broker the sale of goods and services between the inhabitants of hostile nations as well as a haven for mercenaries and privateers, something which the government wholly encourages.

Ord's Army has shouldered the difficult task of preserving Ord's liberty against aggression from the north. This has been a challenge as this army is among the smallest and most poorly equipped in western Immoren. Despite its shortcomings, the army has maintained a reputation for courage, tenacity, and discipline that has spanned generations, earning it the grudging respect of the other kingdoms.

No one in western Immoren holds either Ord's government or its military as examples to emulate, but Ord has managed to thrive amidst the chaos and warfare of the region.

THE ORDIC GOVERNMENT

Power in Ord is split between the bureaucracy in the capital, representing the authority of the king, and the powerful and disparate noble interests that dominate national politics. The king of Ord is the head of state, a powerful royal who has control over the military, diplomacy, and the approval of the laws of the realm, but his power is far from absolute. The king governs only in partnership with the Ordic nobility represented by the Hall of Castellans, which is the chief lawmaking body of Ord. Though the king does not make the laws, he alone has the right to ratify them. Governance requires a careful balance of negotiation and cooperation between the king and the nobility to reach consensus.

The work of the government is complicated by the relationship between the kingdom's two major ethnicities who do not share equally in governing the kingdom. Just as ancient Tordor controlled the subject-state of Thuria, in modern Ord the king as well as the majority of the highest ranking nobles are Tordoran, with the Thurian nobility occupying an inferior status. These two ethnicities remain distinct, with the nobility of each carrying its own titles and having different standing in the kingdom's peerage.

The bedrock of Ordic nobility are the major landholders descended of high Tordoran stock, known as castellans. Castellans retain a number of special entitlements and powers dating back to the Thousand Cities Era. There are hundreds of castellans and so individually their influence is diluted. In the aggregate, the castellans hold the best lands of the kingdom by ancestral right. The central government and its offices can enforce taxation on the castellans, and individual castellans are expected to obey the kingdom's laws, but in practice castellans have numerous strategies to diminish the king's authority and retain considerable influence and power within their respective lands. The king is personally the most powerful castellan, but must rely on his alliances and bargains to see his will enacted.

Ord is divided into six gravs. The three northern gravs are ruled by lord castellans, Tordoran noblemen elevated above all others. The three southern gravs are ruled by Thurian moorgraves. Below these six nobles are myriad castellans and thanes, each controlling smaller territorial divisions. The three moorgraves are the highest ranking members of the Thurian nobility. However, they lack the traditional privileges of the Tordoran nobility and are more directly subject to the power of the king.

Ord has endured a number of minor rebellions among the nobility in its history, sometimes requiring the army to be mobilized to restore order. It is rare for groups of castellans to go this far, as more commonly they simply delay and prevaricate, promising compliance in exchange for small concessions. This sort of obstinacy is less common among Thurian nobles who do not feel the same degree of privilege as the castellans.

Though Ordic politics can confound onlookers and there is much corruption throughout the central government, the system in place has served the people of Ord since ancient times. It is a reflection of values and traditions of the people it has come to serve, such as the right for individuals to voice grievances and the expectation that every person will seek to improve his lot in life. In some cases what would be considered corruption or insurrection in another kingdom is just a part of normal negotiations in Ord.

THE SOVEREIGN

Ord is ruled by the weak central government under the authority of its king, which must contend with a strong and vocal nobility, an evolution of an ancient feudal system that has not changed substantially since the days of Old Tordor. The king's authority is checked by the collective power of the castellans.

Heirs to the throne are traditionally selected by male-preferred primogeniture, but gender is not an absolute barrier and an eldest daughter can claim precedence. Tordor was ruled by several queens and there have been two queens regnant in Ord's history. The present sovereign is King Baird Cathor II. Ord's sovereign must be a direct descendant of one of few great houses that ruled ancient Tordor, with the Cathor dynasty ruling uninterrupted since the Corvis Treaties excepting a forty-year period when the throne was usurped by the Mateus.

While his power is not absolute, the king possesses vast authority, including but not limited to the ability to declare war; to raise, organize, and command the kingdom's armies; to negotiate treaties with foreign powers; to remove or appoint high officers; to ratify laws; to determine punishments for high crimes; to pardon those found guilty in high or low courts; to collect taxes; and to allocate the kingdom's treasury. The power to levy taxes and to create laws rests with the Hall of Castellans.

However, no law can take effect without the king's consent and the king's central government retains the broad authority to determine how laws are enforced and taxes collected. Allies of the king may find their burdens reduced or debts forgiven, while his rivals can expect to pay their due in full at the reckoning of the royal tax collectors.

Where the king has the greatest influence is as head of state—he alone has the authority to negotiate treaties and alliances with foreign powers and he commands the army and navy. It is the king who determines when the nation goes to war. In times of strife the king's influence increases, while in times of peace his power diminishes. As a result, Ord's longstanding neutrality has further reduced the power of the king.

A king who acts in opposition to the castellans risks fomenting defiance and even rebellion. The best kings of Ord have managed to create momentum behind their policies and to guide the castellans toward their goals. Those who failed have seen the nation divided into quarreling and bickering factions that can accomplish little in the way of governance. Even in the best of circumstances the king is regularly presented with impossible dilemmas whereby every decision is likely to alienate or antagonize some segment of the castellans.

THE KING'S AGENTS

King Baird II sits at the center of one of the most expansive and well informed spy networks in western Immoren. This network is not a formal organization in service to the nation, but rather a collection of cunning and determined investigators and operatives handpicked by the King, together with their own contacts and informants. Internally Baird relies upon a reserve of "special investigators" to deal with counter surveillance against foreign spies and assassins. For intelligence gathering abroad, he relies on dedicated agents

KING BAIRD CATHOR II, THE BANDIT KING

King Baird II has sat on the throne of Ord for over three decades. As the third son of a long-lived father, he never expected to be king and showed little inclination toward leadership. Baird spent most of his youth indulging heavily in gambling, drinking, and women. It is likely he would have spent the rest of his life as a wastrel prince had tragedy not claimed the lives of his brothers. He was only crowned after the passing of his father and two brothers in 574 AR, amid general fears that he would be unsuited to the role.

Against all expectations, Baird has proven to be one of the most capable and unconventional kings in Ord's history. He is a master of subterfuge who is regularly underestimated by his enemies. Acting subtly through proxies or in person at the bargaining table, the king is a shrewd negotiator with keen insight into the motivations of his nobles as well as the character of his people. Beloved by the poor, he is known as "The Bandit King" amongst the wealthy against whom he levies his harshest taxes. Indeed, King Baird has shown a willingness to risk the displeasure of his castellans, who see him as rude, inscrutable, and scandalous. He seems to prefer the company of notorious criminals over his highborn peers, spending the majority of his time away from the capital in the smuggler's den of Five Fingers.

In the main, the king is content to leave the governance of his kingdom to Ord's bureaucracy and its nobility, only directly involving himself in matters pertaining to the national interests of his people, his house, or his enemies. Taxation is the primary matter where the king has demonstrated no tolerance for disobedience. So long as taxes are collected and paid, nobles are granted considerable autonomy. The king's most dangerous enemy is Izabella Mateu (see pg. 297) whose family has plagued the Cathor line for centuries. King Baird would relish any opportunity to lay the family low, but the machinations of House Mateu's network of allies has kept them secure in Berck.

with well established covers as well as the services of a number of less reliable agencies including criminal elements such as privateers, smugglers, and sympathetic mercenaries. He has made extensive use of the infamous Unseen Hand, whose mercenary agents tackle specific intelligence jobs. Once centered in Merywyn, many of these agents relocated to Ord after the Llaelese War.

THE KING'S PROGENY

King Baird is a widower but his lineage is secure with his four children, all grown and most with families of their own, including multiple grandchildren. Rumors suggest a number of illegitimate offspring sired with mistresses in Merin, Berck, Ceryl, Midfast, and Five Fingers. King Baird has proven to be a caring patriarch with genuine affection for his progeny, whether legitimate or not. On a more pragmatic level he has made effective use of his offspring to extend his influence, including several political marriages.

Baird's first son and heir is Prince Baird Cathor III (see p. 293), General of the Ordic Army, Lord Castellan of Tordoro, and a disciplined and honorable military officer. Baird III is in many ways his father's opposite, but despite their differences, there is considerable respect between them.

Princess Carlutia, his eldest daughter, is as stubborn and irreverent as her father. Married to Lord Castellan Ostal Vascar (see p. 290) and living in Midfast, Carlutia has helped cement the loyalty of the lord castellan and is beloved by the Shield Division of the Ordic Army.

The king's second son is Prince Brogan, Engineer-Admiral of the Ordic Royal Navy and castellan of Westcliffe Manor. Brogan has met extensively with Cygnaran military officers and spends much of his time in Ceryl and Caspia. His work has helped improve ties between the Cygnaran and Ordic Navies.

His second daughter, Princess Sandrea, is married to Moorgrave Rogan Torcail (see p. 280), the ruler of Almare. While this marriage to a Thurian incensed the castellans, it endeared Baird to his southern subjects. Sandrea has become one of the most influential nobles in Almare grav. She is in frequent contact with her father, serving as a lynchpin in his information network.

King Baird's use of his family has not always gone smoothly. His grandson Alvor, eldest son of his heir, has proven to be brash and impertinent. Spending much of his time in Five Fingers, Alvor became enamored by Eliana Mateu, youngest daughter of Izabella Mateu. That he might be compromised against his family is a problem the Cathors have yet to solve.

Among the Bandit King's special investigators are several members of his family. King Baird finds the loyalty of blood to be invaluable in those who deal with sensitive matters of espionage and security. In addition to his daughter Sandrea, who helps coordinate his network in eastern Ord, he makes use of a number of nieces, nephews, and more distant relatives. The king himself uses his regular trips to Five Fingers to meet covertly with his agents. The unique nature of the city has enabled him to ensure the security of his communications. Five Fingers has its own perils and intrigues, but King Baird considers them to be known quantities mitigated by his influence with the high captains, particularly Banek Hurley.

Serving the king in the capital is Castellan Stagier Salvestro. Scion of a powerful Tordoran family allied closely to the Cathors, Salvestro is a man who is not afraid to get his hands dirty, and he bears the scars to prove it. In his time he has uncovered conspiracies, foiled assassination attempts, and removed obstacles from Baird's court. The Mateus suspect Salvestro has been personally responsible for eliminating at least three members of their family, including Izabella's brother Angello. Attempts to have him removed in turn have failed thus far.

ORDIC NOBILITY

The nobility of Ord is organized in a feudal system of familial ranks essential to the social and political fabric of the nation. Nobility in Ord is inextricably tied to ownership of the land and titles carry real authority over and responsibility for specific territories, including the inhabitants, resources, and industry located there. Ord's peerage has two separate noble traditions based on ethnicity: one for Tordorans and the other for Thurians.

The roots of the Ordic nobility can be traced back to the time when ancient Thuria was conquered by Tordor and forced into vassalage. Thuria had been divided into gravs, each ruled by a moorgrave who was in turn served by thanes. At the time of the conquest, the Thurian nobles became the subjects of the king of Tordor. That kingdom itself was divided into myriad territories each overseen by a castellan, all equal in rank but possessing power proportionate to their holdings.

The castellans had arisen from among those leading houses that could afford to construct and defend a keep during the early Thousand Cities Era. A castellan is literally a lord of a *castelo*, or castle. The smallest of these are simple tower fortresses, while the grandest are elaborate fortified manor houses. Though the surviving castellan families have rebuilt their ancestral homes, Ord is dotted with the ruins of ancient fortifications destroyed in ages past.

After the Corvis Treaties, King Merin Cathor I organized Ord into sizable gravs, after the Thurian fashion. Moorgraves were named from the most prestigious Thurian families to rule the southern gravs, while lord castellans were elevated above the Tordoran nobility to rule the northern gravs. From the outset this was controversial, as castellans resisted bowing to their rivals. The preeminence of lord castellans over other castellans is still contentious, and various families have sought to assert their superiority over the centuries, resulting in struggles between major houses. On occasions when such feuding becomes too overt, the king's army can be dispatched to restore order.

Ord's peerage is a thorny issue. Lord castellans are higher in peerage than moorgraves, who are above ordinary castellans. Despite this, nearly all castellans—even those possessed of the most frugal lands—consider themselves socially superior to moorgraves by dint of high Tordoran blood. Adding oil to this flame, after the Border Wars in the early 300's, the loss of northern lands displaced a number of prominent castellan families. To appease them, southern territories were divided to create new holdings, and the transplanted castellans were forced to swear fealty to the Thurian moorgraves ruling these lands. Even after three centuries, the southern castellans remain obstinate and slow to heed the dictates of their Thurian lords.

Below the castellans in noble peerage are thanes, most of whom are of ancient Thurian blood. While traditionally a Thurian title, in modern Ord there are a number of lesser Tordoran aristocrats who have been made thanes. Thanes occupy loosely the same standing in Ord as barons do in Cygnar and viscounts in Khador. Most Thanes rule small territories in the southern gravs and swear fealty to a moorgrave. Many have holdings equivalent to or better than the poorer castellans in the northern gravs. Whatever the size of their holdings, a thane will always be of lower social standing than even the most destitute castellan. Thanes are not allowed to vote in the Hall of Castellans and have little impact on politics in the capital. They are nonetheless responsible for governing their lands by Ordic law and within these lands are influential figures.

Below thanes are knights, who are not part of the nobility but are members of the aristocracy, both Tordoran and Thurian. These individuals serve as honored liegemen of the noble who knighted them and are expected to take up arms to defend their liege. Most knights are expected to obey their lord and are not sworn to the sovereign directly. A knight is not held responsible for actions taken while obeying orders from his lord, who bears the burden of culpability.

Traditionally, all nobles are expected to be capable leaders of men. However, in the modern era not every noble is a skilled soldier or knight, though they are expected to have a at least some martial training. Service in the Ordic Army or Navy is considered an honorable and respectable pursuit for any aristocrat of the proper age, where they are able to purchase officer commissions commensurate with their status.

There have been numerous cases of titles passing to the eldest or only daughter instead of a son. By ancient tradition, while the king can elevate a Thurian of noble blood to moorgrave, he cannot create castellans and only a castellan can be elevated to the rank of high castellan. Ord has not suffered dilution of its higher nobility by the selling of titles, a fact castellans view with pride.

New castellans are created by a two-thirds majority vote of the Hall of Castellans. Each castellan is tied closely to his land holdings. Though the title will be passed to his heirs along with his estate, a nobleman who has lost or surrendered his lands is disgraced and loses the right to call himself a castellan. There have been times when dispossessed castellans have been bestowed new lands to preserve the balance of power in Ord.

New castellans are drawn from ancient and powerful families and their close allies and are not created lightly. Each castellan has a vote in the Hall, and adding votes to one faction or another can change the political landscape of Ord. For this reason, when they are created, new castellans are most often either added in pairs, each representing the most powerful political factions of the time, or are added as the result of major concessions in a bargain of national importance. It is by this process that certain influential houses, such as the Cathors and the Mateus, are represented by several castellans, each with estates and holdings.

In practice, once a castellan has been created, he and his heirs are expected to support his family or faction patron in subsequent votes of the Hall of Castellans. Breaking ranks, even after generations of loyalty and even for the most minor votes, risks bitter feuds and lasting enmity.

Many powerful Tordoran landholders, especially among the merchant classes, can never hope to become castellans despite the scope of their holdings due to either the political realities of the era or because they lack properly distinguished blood.

Castellans also have special immunities under the law beyond those enjoyed by other nobles—certain special formalities and a high burden of proof are required to arrest and punish a castellan for even the most heinous crimes. There are few limits on the right of castellans to maintain armed retainers, allowing them to keep household armies of whatever size they can afford. The only stipulation on this right is that the castellan is obliged to deploy them in the service of the king when called. By contrast, Ordic law delineates specific limits on the small armed forces available to a thane or a moorgrave or to other private interests. Wealthy landholders get around these laws by employing private mercenary companies, which are not considered equivalent to armed vassals so long as they obey the laws of Charter.

Peerage of Ord in Descending Order

Title	Method of Address
King/Queen	Your Majesty
Prince/Princess	Your Highness
Lord Castellan	Your Grace
Moorgrav	Your Honored Lordship
Castellan*	Your Lordship
Thane	Your Excellency

*Castellans consider themselves to have higher status than moorgraves despite official standing.

THE HALL OF CASTELLANS

The ranking nobility of Ord meets at the end of each summer at the Hall of Castellans in Merin (see p. 294) for a High Gathering to debate matters of national governance, air regional disputes, levy taxes, revise existing laws, and draft new ones. Every able-bodied castellan and the three moorgraves have the right to speak and vote on measures before the Hall. While the High Gathering is the only annual meeting of the lords of the realm,

the king has the right to summon the nobility of Ord to the Hall of Castellans as often as required, though in practice Baird has seldom done so. Nobles periodically meet with one another to discuss other matters of mutual importance and may seek to petition the king individually, but such matters do not enter into the public record or affect the law.

High Gatherings rarely draw all of Ord's ranking nobles, as any number of them may offer excuses to absent themselves. While most try to attend any High Gatherings in which petitions or proposed laws could affect their lands or interests, it is somewhat common for castellans to absent themselves from a gathering to avoid taking sides in a politically charged debate. Those who do not personally attend regularly send representatives to observe and potentially to speak in their stead, but such proxies cannot vote.

Traditionally the Ordic king only attends a High Gathering if he either wishes to present business personally before the castellans or believes his presence is required to marshal support for an issue of great importance. Officially the king has only one vote in the hall, the same as any other castellan, but in effect his presence bears great symbolic power. Since new legislation requires the king's ratification, he can undermine rivals by denying their motions, although he is seldom so blunt.

As King Baird II rarely attends the High Gathering in person, he relies on his son to rally support for matters affecting the Cathor family. When the king does attend, he takes charge of closed door negotiations that take place after the day's public debating. While Baird is a renowned public speaker capable of passion, eloquence, and fury, he is also a master of manipulating the shadowy forces that play out behind the scenes. He relies on subtle threats, cajoling, and by appealing to the greed, pride, honor, enmity, and sentimentality of his subjects.

The king's interests are also looked after by his primary officer in the capital, Viceroy Raul Costa. The viceroy officiates the gatherings, sets the agenda, maintains the records of the Hall of Castellans, and works with the noblemen to finalize the language of every law and measure. Viceroy Costa coordinates closely with Baird on all matters of interest to the crown. Attempts to bribe or otherwise influence him have never succeeded. Although he presents an approachable demeanor, he has demonstrated absolute loyal to his king.

Once gathered, the Hall of the Castellans is occupied for as many days or weeks as is required to work through the agenda. The king, the lord castellans, and the moorgraves can submit topics for discussion, and once the agenda is set it cannot change. Lower ranking nobles must petition a patron to include matters of interest to them. The most important issues are generally discussed first with lower priorities relegated to the end of the gathering. However, the viceroy is not above gerrymandering the agenda to suit the interests of the king. High Gatherings generally last at least two weeks with attendance dwindling with each passing day. The patience of nobles is usually quickly exhausted, but any that leave early risk surrendering the right to debate or vote on potentially vital pieces of business.

In practice the High Gatherings are an exercise in organized chaos held in the open air of the Hall of Castellans in which every ranking nobleman is allowed his say. Whenever a law, revision, or petition is introduced, a debate ensues regarding its merits, implementation, implications, and verbiage. Matters of taxation, commerce, land division, and the creation of new castellans are among the most contentious subjects. It is not uncommon for vocal nobles to interrupt the proceedings with tangents, and the viceroy has the right to silence anyone deemed disruptive, but as a matter of tradition he rarely intervenes. This is a time when the castellans are expected to speak their minds, no doubt contributing to the king's preference to remain absent.

Once debating is done and compromises have been reached, the assembled castellans and moorgraves vote to approve or deny. As castellans greatly outnumber the three moorgraves, votes invariably benefit Tordoran over Thurian interests, though the castellans are a quarrelsome lot and rarely agree. Baird has fostered a relationship with his Thurian nobles; he can generally count on their votes and they his continuing patronage. While lesser nobles and ordinary citizens cannot vote, they can attend to watch the proceedings. The outer hall is often packed with a noisy gathering of those with stakes in the legislation at hand.

Gatherings at the Hall of Castellans are boisterous and sometimes violent, and for this reason none of the participants can enter armed. These are heated debates with shouted arguments, frequent interruptions, and the exchange of colorful insults. Tempers can flare, escalating arguments into all-out brawls on the floor or challenges resulting in duels. It is rare for a year to pass without at least one riot in the streets of Merin following a day of debates at the Hall of Castellans, when the hot-blooded liegemen of rival houses confront one another. The city watch and royal guard of Merin are accustomed to these outbursts and have experience in quelling them. Given the status of those involved this is often a delicate matter.

INTERNAL POLITICS

Ord is rife with internal politics and factiousness. Traditionally grievances between Ordic nobles have been more public than is the case in other courts. While bloody feuds and duels transpire between rival castellan families, outright assassinations are uncommon. Most nobles see themselves as passionate and honorable sons and daughters of Ord.

Few of the minor factions and alliances impact the kingdom at large. Standing in stark contrast to petty interests is the oldest and most bitter rivalry in the kingdom, one occupying two of the most powerful houses—the Cathors and the Mateus. While these two families have been enemies for centuries, recent struggles involve a clash of wills between the two aging but fiercely intelligent leaders of their respective houses: Castellan Izabella Mateu and King Baird Cathor II.

The goals of House Mateu appear to be more financial than political, but Izabella has planted members of her family and other agents throughout Ord and beyond, giving her singular reach. The Mateus are among the most powerful merchant concerns in western Immoren and are well placed to dominate markets at home and abroad. As Ord's most powerful merchant house, the Mateus have tremendous influence and sway in

the powerful city of Berck and also among the northern and western castellans who resent the heavy taxes imposed on them by the king. Izabella's power in Berck extends to the navy and many ranking officers owe her favors. Though all manner of accusations have been leveled against the Mateus, suggesting they are capable of any manner of underhanded and despicable deeds—including extortion, bribery, assassination, and even black magic—none of these allegations have been proven.

Izabella Mateu's primary competitor in the world of commerce is Cygnar's Mercarian League, but politically she opposes the Cathors, who have often stood in the way of Mateu efforts to consolidate mercantile power under their matriarch's control. House Mateu has begun looking beyond Ord, competing to establish a presence on the continent of Zu resulting in Ord's first colonial efforts. The prospect of exploiting untapped resources is quite exciting to many of the more commerce-minded nobles in the kingdom.

There has been little proof that House Mateu is willing go so far as to commit treason or seek control of the Ordic throne, but the specter of the coup in 381 AR has not been forgotten by the Cathors, who see this entire house and its bloodline as poisonous. King Baird holds them in open contempt, disdaining the principles they espouse and describing Izabella as a self-indulgent hoarder of wealth who has no interest in helping Ord as a nation to achieve lasting prosperity. Wherever possible the Cathors have worked to thwart the Mateu's efforts. King Baird would like nothing more than to seize the Mateu's tremendous wealth to be used for the improvement of vital industries, Ord's infrastructure, and its military. The king is not opposed to establishing Ordic colonies, but would not choose Izabella or her treacherous progeny to supervise these endeavors. Nonetheless, House Mateu is too pervasive, too wealthy, and has the support of too many castellans to be ignored or easily eliminated.

The intrigues between these two leaders has been ongoing for decades. This appears to be a struggle the Cathors are slowly losing, and it is not thought that the king's son will be able to match Izabella's wits or cunning when he inherits the throne. Nonetheless the king has significant allies, including Lord Castellan Vascar of Murio and Moorgrave Torcail of Almare, both tied to his family through marriage. The king is popular with most of the kingdom's Thurian nobles as well as with the masses, and he has many friends in unlikely places, such as the criminal circles of Five Fingers.

Regardless of other political factions, every noble in Ord has to decide on which side of this line they fall. Allying to either the Cathors or the Mateus invites interference and retaliation by agents of the other side.

RELATIONS WITH THE OTHER KINGDOMS

Ord has managed to maintain neutrality despite escalating wars on the mainland. This is viewed as admirable by some and despicable by others. While neutrality has benefitted Ord economically, it means Ord's soldiers have stood idly while bloodshed and atrocity take place elsewhere. This has served to give Ordfolk a reputation as callous mercenaries, pirates, and war-profiteers, labels some of its citizens do not dispute.

CRYXIAN INFILTRATORS

Several of Ord's coastal cities harbor an insidious threat: agents of the Nightmare Empire. Ord's laissez-faire trade policies and politically volatile climate have made it a point of entry for the Dragonfather's minions. Its ports are excellent places for Cryxians to sneak onto the mainland, aided by sympathizers, cultists, and smugglers. Five Fingers is at the center of Cryxian infiltration in Ord; the city's criminal element is easily influenced by coin and its location at the mouth of the Dragon's Tongue grants the Cryxians access to the interior of Ord, Cygnar, Khador, and Llael.

Foremost among their agents in Five Fingers is Asenath Scarrow. A mysterious manipulator, she has served Cryx in Five Fingers for years. Scarrow operates in the highest levels of Five Fingers society, insinuating herself into the circles of lesser nobles who flock to the city. Her specialty is attracting young gentlemen who would do anything to gain her favor and then using them for all they have to offer. In recent years, her work was critical in securing safe passage for Cryxians in preparation for their operations in Thornwood. Asenath's actions have not gone unnoticed; the king's agents have begun to piece together the conspiracy surrounding her but do not yet recognize its full scope.

CYGNAR

Ord has historically had amicable relations with Cygnar, and the two kingdoms have fought together as allies in several wars, most notably the Colossal Wars and the Second Expansion War. Each kingdom maintains an embassy and ambassadors in their respective capitals and there is regular communication and contact between King Leto and King Baird. Cygnar has periodically sold arms and military hardware to Ord, and there is considerable commerce between the ports of each nation. Relations became more strained after King Baird declined to give military assistance during the Llaelese War and its aftermath.

Treaties exist whereby the Cygnaran treasury pays fees in exchange for agreements related to joint fleet actions, mutual defense, and limited rights for Cygnaran Navy vessels to be serviced in Ordic ports. While Ord staunchly refused to become involved in the war against Khador, the Ordic and Cygnaran navies have performed joint operations against Cryx in recent years, strengthening bonds between these kingdoms. King Baird's second son Brogan has been instrumental in this, negotiating for access to Cygnaran mechanikal components and schematics in exchange for naval support. These actions have not been without cost, as the presence of Cygnaran vessels in Ordic waters has occasionally drawn the Khadoran Navy into conflict. Several naval clashes have transpired involving Ordic and Khadoran ships, and this has made Ord's admirals reluctant to continue these operations.

IOS

There is little to no contact between Ord and Ios, and each nation is neutral to the other, so far as Ord is aware.

KHADOR

Ord's neutrality with Khador is tense and strained. Ord's border defenders regularly suffer small-scale but intense probing attacks by Khadoran Army forces. This could easily be used to justify a declaration of war if Ord had the will to do so. Khadoran ambassadors regularly apologize for "unauthorized" border incursions, blaming them on ill-informed junior officers. The Ordic government chooses to tolerate these actions so long as they do not escalate, learning what they can of Khadoran tactics and weaponry in the process while Ord reinforces its own borders.

Merchants of both nations are able to secure passage to the other, albeit under close scrutiny. The commerce generated between Ord and Khador is considered important to both nations and worth preserving. Khador imports both foreign made goods easily available on the Ordic market as well as exotic luxuries from as far away as Zu, while Ord imports both ore and coal from Khador. Additionally, Ord's ongoing trade with Rhul requires the passage of cargo through Khadoran held territories. Beyond these financial incentives, Ordfolk are suspicious of Khadorans and inclined to be at least marginally hostile toward them. Most Ordfolk who live in the north are keenly aware of the strength of the Khadoran Army and have no interest in provoking a conflict they would likely lose.

FREE LLAEL

The Ordic government has no official contact with Free Llael. Unofficially, many Ordic citizens and nobles are sympathetic to the Llaelese Resistance and some have offered financial support to that cause. Additionally a sizable number of Llaelese refugees have moved to Ord and have made the kingdom their home, and many of these maintain contact with those left behind. The headquarters of the Order of the Golden Crucible has been relocated to Ord, and many of its veteran masters are Llaelese. Ordic cities have been prioritized by the Llaelese Resistance for recruiting and fund-raising campaigns, prompting a number of Resistance agents to spend time in Ord. The Resistance also makes much use of Ord-based mercenary companies.

PROTECTORATE

Ord is neutral to the Protectorate of Menoth and maintains only limited contact with Imer. Ord has a small but healthy Menite minority and Ordic nobles are understandably apprehensive about the potential influence of Sul-Menite teachings on its citizens. As yet the Harbinger of Menoth has made no pilgrimages to the kingdom, but other missionaries have occasionally ventured into Ord's Menite villages and townships in search of recruits and converts. As a predominantly Morrowan nation, Ord is aware that it might eventually be targeted by the Great Crusade. Until that time, Ord maintains its neutrality. There is some commerce and trade between these nations, although the long distances and intervening complications makes this difficult. Some Ordic merchants include the port of Sul in their ocean-based trade routes, stopping there after Caspia despite warnings against this practice by Cygnaran authorities.

RHUL

Ord and Rhul are on marginally friendly terms, maintaining long-standing and well-established trade arrangements. Additionally, several small dwarven enclaves have been established in Ord, including one in the capital city of Merin. Those Rhulfolk who consent to travel to and work in Ord are welcomed and treated well. They are valued for their commerce and contributions to the workforce. Merin in particular owes a great deal to Rhulfolk, who helped reconstruct the city after the Rebellion. Ord relies on trade with Rhul to acquire ore and other raw materials scarce within its own borders, including expensive trace minerals required for cortex production. Ord would like to make use of Rhulic coal as well, but there is no economically feasible way to ship sufficient quantities of coal through Khador.

OTHERS

Ord has an ongoing undeclared war with Cryx. Shortly after the Llaelese War, King Baird received word that some Cryxian forces on the mainland received aid and reinforcements smuggled through Five Fingers and up the river. Since that time he has made it a priority to intercept and put an end to any Cryxian plots taking place on Ordic soil. The king has also deployed naval forces to intercept any Cryxian vessels moving through Ordic waters. However, wary of Khadoran fleet movements, Ord has been careful not to overcommit.

THE ORDIC MILITARY

Though Ord's army lacks the numbers and sophisticated weaponry of its neighbors, it compensates through determination, professionalism, and *esprit de corps*. The men and women of the Ordic Army have defended their nation from the depredations of Khador and Cryx for generations, and they take considerable pride in having accomplished such feats of arms with sometimes inadequate support. The Ordic Navy has historically received greater allocations of funds from the treasury than the army; indeed, it is counted as one of the great powers sailing the Meredius. The sailors of Ord enjoy renown as unparalleled masters of the sea, and Ordic-crewed ships are a match for any on the Meredius.

DOCTRINE OF DEFENSE

The Ordic Army has a proud history of stalwart defense of the realm. Relying on a potent combination of training, discipline, and courage, the nation's soldiers have earned the grudging respect of their enemies. Nonetheless, Ord has never been able to boast the numbers, technology, or specialized forces needed to stand on equal footing with its neighboring kingdoms. To offset the challenge of keeping the kingdom's border intact, Ord has relied on other factors, particularly the land itself.

During the First Expansion War, Ord lost its most vulnerable northern territories when its forces were driven back to the security of the Murata Hills. This extensive line of rugged terrain extends from the bogs near Corbhen all the way to the Thornwood Forest, with the fortified city of Midfast guarding its only easily accessible pass. From here, the Ordic Army has several times held superior numbers at bay. The fortresses of Scarswall and Boarsgate host sizable garrisons of Ordic veterans who, together with the garrisons at Corbhen and Midfast, stand ready to respond to any threat along the northern border.

Ord's soldiers are far more adept at holding ground than taking it. They are trained to endure long sieges, and their border forts boast heavy armaments such as long-range cannons. Designed to hinder any advance, Ordic fortifications rely on natural obstructions to force enemies into narrow choke points through which they must endure heavy fire. When well-supplied with food and essentials and ready to withdraw to points of strength to weather protracted fighting, Ordic defenders have proven to be remarkably resilient. Though these defenses are unquestionably effective, they were shaped by necessity: Ord's arsenal is well-equipped with small arms and heavy guns, but it lacks an adequate supply of warjacks and other mechanikal weaponry.

Unfortunately, Ord's traditional defenses face new challenges in the wake of Khador's occupation of the Thornwood, a development that has revealed the vulnerability of its eastern border. The Thornwood, along with the Cygnaran soldiers long stationed there, once served as a formidable geographical barrier to foreign incursion. Khador's seizure of the forest removed this obstacle. Reevaluating its defenses, Ord has hastened to establish fortified positions along the forest's edge. However, even with these new strongholds the Ordic Army does not believe it could do more than slow a Khadoran advance on Armandor and the vulnerable heartlands.

Ord's generals have been left hoping that the vulnerability of Khador's supply lines through the Thornwood coupled with the knowledge that any substantial invasion force would be open to flanking attacks by Cygnar are sufficient deterrents to Khadoran invasion. Ord's best strategy in case of an attack on its eastern border would be to stall as long as possible by variously holding fortified positions and giving up ground elsewhere, buying time for reinforcement and for Cygnaran forces to take their toll. Though Khador has fortunately shown little interest in opening another front in the war, the Ordic Army must nevertheless prepare for such an eventuality.

THE ORDIC ARMY

Relying on voluntary enlistment, the Ordic Army has never had difficulty with recruitment, particularly in the years since the start of the Llaelese War. Soldiers are paid a small wage and receive room and board by the state—a considerable improvement over the living conditions of most poorer Ordfolk. Career soldiers can eventually earn quite a decent living as well as a great deal of respect. Most volunteers join from a sense of patriotism and duty, knowing that their kingdom may be attacked at any time and hoping to contribute to the defense of family and friends. Ord's culture values the stoic sacrifices of its soldiers, who are honored in story and song.

Ord's approximately 140,000 soldiers are divided into three divisions, each subsequently divided into smaller brigades, regiments, battalions, companies, and platoons. Divisions are commanded by generals, brigades by commanders, regiments by colonels, battalions by majors, companies by captains, and platoons by lieutenants. Sergeants and corporals lead smaller units. The generals of each division report to the commanding general of the Ordic Army, Prince Baird Cathor III.

The majority of Ord's soldiers garrison the cities and fortifications along the northern and eastern borders with smaller garrisons stationed in the interior to see to the protection of significant cities and towns. Most of these townships can muster sizable volunteer militias in times of need, led by former Ordic Army officers. Were it ever to go to war, Ord's army could be bolstered substantially by the reenlistment of many veteran soldiers.

Most Ordic warjacks are older models purchased after they were decommissioned by the Cygnaran Army. Newer warjacks of Ordic design continue to be built but at a slow and uneven rate due to the vagaries of the treasury and a paucity of materials. Because the nation's small army is insufficient to face the forces of other kingdoms on an open battlefield, its generals take care to know their strengths and work to ensure that they fight battles on their terms.

SHIELD DIVISION

First in importance and esteem among the army's three divisions is the Shield Division, commanded by General Ostal Vascar, lord castellan of Murio. The Shield Division maintains headquarters at Midfast as well as multiple fortresses along the northern border, with the largest at Scarswall, Boarsgate, Fort Bairdon, and the isolated Cygnaran city of Fellig. The Shield Division has seen considerable action against Khador over the last few centuries, both in countless minor skirmishes and in several major wars. The Shield Division boasts the most hardened and dedicated of Ord's soldiery; indeed, its men and women take pride in the reputation of Ord's inviolable northern border. Looking to Ascendant Markus as their patron, they never willingly give ground without a fight—despite Ord's generally defensive posture. The division's history includes numerous instances of soldiers holding their ground and fighting to the last man, preferring death before surrender.

As Ord's historically largest military branch, the Shield Division has received the lion's share of the kingdom's admittedly meager army budget. The bulk of the nation's warjacks and warcasters have been assigned to this division as well. Recently, this allocation has shifted to cope with developments on Ord's eastern border, but the Shield Division retains primacy of budget, personnel, and prestige. Yet to be completed, Fort Bairdon is intended to permanently house many of the forces presently stationed in Fellig. Military leaders continue to debate about whether this region falls under the purview of the Shield or Thorn Division, but it is presently held by soldiers of the former.

THORN DIVISION

The Thorn Division defends Ord's eastern border and interior, and it is commanded by General Gervasio Cabral, castellan of Glendrago. The division principally concerns itself with the defense of Armandor, Hearthstone, and Tarna. Before Khador invaded the Thornwood, Thorn soldiers did not see much action beyond the occasional skirmish with elements of that nation's Fifth Border Legion while patrolling the northeastern region. Nonetheless, regular patrols along and within the Thornwood have earned the Thorn Division a reputation for effective small-unit tactics and guerilla fighting.

ORDIC MILITARY

King Baird Cathor II

Ordic Army
Soldiers: 140,000
3 Divisions
General of the Ordic Army, Prince Baird Cathor III, Lord Castellan of Tordoro

Shield Division
Northern Border
HQ: Midfast
Soldiers: 60,000
6 Brigades
General Ostal Vascar, Lord Castellan of Murio

Thorn Division
Eastern Border & Interior
HQ: Torre Torcail
Soldiers: 50,000
5 Brigades
General Gervasio Cabral, Castellan of Glendrago

Stone Division
Southern Border, Includes Ordic Marines
HQ: Berck
Soldiers: 30,000
3 Brigades
General Dialta Mascal, Castellan of Portalgo

1st Brigade
Soldiers: 10,000
4 Regiments

2nd Brigade
Soldiers: 10,000
4 Regiments

3rd Brigade
Soldiers: 10,000
4 Regiments

4th Brigade
Soldiers: 10,000
4 Regiments

5th Brigade
Soldiers: 10,000
4 Regiments

6th Brigade
Soldiers: 10,000
4 Regiments

Each brigade is led by a commander.

1st Regiment of Foot
Mixed Infantry
Soldiers: 3000
3 Battalions

2nd Regiment of Foot
Mixed Infantry
Soldiers: 3000
3 Battalions

3rd Regiment of Foot
Mixed Infantry
Soldiers: 3000
3 Battalions

1st Dragoons
Light Cavalry (Mounted Infantry)
Soldiers: 1000
2 Battalions

Each regiment is led by a colonel.

1st Infantry Battalion
Soldiers: 1000
5 Companies

2nd Infantry Battalion
Soldiers: 1000
5 Companies

3rd Infantry Battalion
Soldiers: 1000
5 Companies

Each battalion is led by a major.

####### 1st Rifleman Company
"Tusks of the Boar"
Soldiers: 200
4 Platoons

####### 2nd Rifleman Company
"Northhill Goats"
Soldiers: 200
4 Platoons

####### 1st Halbardier Company
"First and Last Pickets"
Soldiers: 250
5 Platoons

####### 1st Grenadier Company
"The Boarsgate Guard"
Soldiers: 200
4 Platoons

####### 1st Reconaissance Company
"Murata Bordermen"
Soldiers: 150
3 Platoons

Each company is led by a captain.

######## 1st Platoon
Soldiers: 50
5 Squads

######## 2nd Platoon
Soldiers: 50
5 Squads

######## 3rd Platoon
Soldiers: 50
5 Squads

######## 4th Platoon
Soldiers: 50
5 Squads

Each platoon is led by a lieutenant.

Each squad is led by a sergeant.

Ordic Royal Navy
Warships: 270; of the Line: 90
2 Fleets
Admiral of the Fleet Gil Craveiro, Castellan

1000 Souls Fleet
Primary Fleet, Sea of a Thousand Souls
HQ: Berck
Warships: 180; line: 70
9 Flotillas
Admiral Renato Evora, Castellan

Stone Fleet
Southern Fleet, Shearwater Narrows & Bay of Stone
HQ: Berck
Warships: 90; line: 20
4 Flotillas
Admiral Marisa Valentino, Thane

The King's Agents
Intelligence Gathering Operations
Number of Agents: Unknown

General Cabral has seen his division triple in size as forces have been reallocated from elsewhere. Tasked with the challenge of reinforcing the eastern border, he has focused primarily on building large fortifications near the most vulnerable Ordic cities and creating a chain of watch towers and regular patrols meant to observe Khadoran troop movements. Recently erected fortifications include Torre Torcail near Armandor and Torre Wythmoor east of Tarna. Myriad smaller supply posts and lookouts dot the border.

Having prepared primarily for fighting against Khador, the soldiers stationed on the eastern border have been surprised and unnerved by opportunistic Cryxian assaults. Ordic spies are aware that Cryx has been active in the Thornwood and is reputed to be disrupting Khadoran supply lines. The forces of the Nightmare Empire seem indiscriminate about whether they strike against Khadoran or Ordic patrols and caravans.

STONE DIVISION

General Dialta Mascal, castellan of Portalgo, commands her forces from the port city of Berck. The Stone Division is tasked with protecting Ord's heartland, which includes the capital and the nation's crucially important coastline, as well as with training and maintaining reserve forces. It also falls to the Stone Division to defend the border shared with Cygnar, but because there has never been any strife between the two nations, fortifications along the Dragon's Tongue are small and almost perfunctory, their primary purpose to keep a lookout for smugglers and bandits and to guard against any actions made by the trollkin of the Gnarls.

The Ordic Marines serve as the largest and most important aspect of the Stone Division; in fact, marine brigades work closely with and accompany the Ordic Navy on joint operations. These soldiers are critical to maintaining the nation's maritime power.

THE ORDIC ROYAL NAVY

The people of Ord are rightfully proud of their great navy; indeed, the kingdom considers itself the inheritor of the oldest and greatest nautical tradition in western Immoren. Since ancient times Tordor's strength rested with its navy, which was only defeated by the Orgoth. After the Corvis Treaties, the new kingdom of Ord acted quickly to restore its naval might, investing in shipbuilding even to the detriment of other vital aspects of reconstruction. Once considerably larger, the Olgunholt forest was substantially depleted for the construction of Ordic ships. Concurrently, a disproportionate volume of Ord's metalworking was allocated to create great guns to arm these formidable vessels. These priorities have continued into the present, with the Ordic Royal Navy receiving a sizable portion of the kingdom's treasury.

The nation's naval officers are well-versed in fleet tactics. Ord's ships are crewed by peerless and seasoned sailors and captained by tenacious and skilled fighting men. Based in Berck, the navy is primarily charged with controlling Ordic waters, protecting its ports, and seeing to the defense of the nation. Vessels of the fleet often escort Ordic merchant vessels through hostile waters and are accustomed to defending against pirates and Cryxian raiders.

While it has lagged behind its neighbors in some military sciences, Ord has established itself as an innovator of naval technologies. Its sheer production capabilities are limited, but Ord's finest ships are more than a match for any on the Meredius. In fact, the first heavily armored ironhull was an Ordic design, the *Sprightly*, which remains one of the navy's most formidable vessels.

To make up for its shortcoming in sheer ship building output, Ord has long been a pioneer in retrofitting older vessels with modern arms and technologies. Its tradition of fine shipbuilding has enabled even its most venerable vessels to remain in service for generations.

Unsurprisingly given its importance to Ord, the navy is a politically charged organization, a fact well known to its upper officers. House Mateu enjoys tremendous reach in Berck, the navy's home port, and it is well known that many upper officers are aligned with Mateu interests. Accordingly, King Baird II appointed Admiral of the Fleet Gil Craveiro more for his steadfast loyalty than for his grasp of naval strategy. The king has charged Craveiro with keeping an eye on those he suspects in being in collusion with the Mateus. This includes the most esteemed of Craveiro's subordinates, Admiral Renato Evora, a naval officer of impeccable reputation as a tactician and leader. Admiral Evora is a political creature of great influence among the upper crust of Berck.

PERSONNEL AND RANKS

As significant as the ships themselves might be, it can be argued that the true strength of the Ordic Royal Navy rests with its seamen, regular sailors and officers alike. Tordorans insist that nautical skill is born of the blood as part of their ancient tradition, but natural aptitude is nothing without training. Ordic naval careers are typically long, and attaining high rank might require a lifetime of service.

Though most Ordic sailors join the navy voluntarily, impressment remains a time-honored tradition. Those hapless youths treated to drinks in dockside taverns in Berck or other port cities might find themselves waking aboard a naval vessel on the high seas, where they are given the option to work or swim. Those whose chose the former are thereafter considered members of the navy.

The crew of a naval vessel will often be joined by a complement of the Ordic Marines, a branch of the Ordic Army that works closely with the Royal Navy. While there is a good-natured rivalry between them, in battle each group knows their lives are in the hands of the other. Each has its own officers who see to their respective men. The naval captain of a ship is always in charge of his vessel, regardless of the rank of the commanding marine, though the two coordinate closely. While navy sailors are trained in the use of arms, they are expected to focus on the operation of the vessel and its guns during battle while the marines see to close quarters fighting.

Though naval officers receive superb training at the Ordic Royal Naval Academy in Berck, they must learn a great deal on the

job. Supplementing these sailors are the graduates of Ord's Trident School, an attached academy open only to arcanists. Aside from training to fight in concert with marines, Trident arcanists learn how to manipulate weather in combat. The Trident School also trains Ord's warcasters, who gain competence in fighting on both land and sea.

Though Ordic military warcasters are quite rare, a small number serve alongside the marines and can provide a powerful force multiplier at sea. A warcaster serving alongside the Ordic Navy will always be accompanied by one or more warjacks, a personal armorer, and a cadre of mechaniks to see to his machines.

The navy employs a sometimes-bewildering array of ranks and positions. Some posts hold significance only while aboard ship, while others relate to naval pay grades. General ranks in ascending order include: ship's boy (a servant, age 10-13), landsman (a sailor with less than one year of experience), ordinary seaman, able seaman (requiring three years' experience), junior petty officer (including mates to the senior petty officers), petty officer (quartermaster, coxswain,

ropemaker, sailmaker, armorer, master-at-arms, etc.), standing officer (gunner, boatswain, carpenter, etc.), cockpit mate, cockpit officer or midshipman (an officer candidate), warrant officer (chaplain, surgeon, purser, master, etc.), lieutenant, commander, captain, commodore, admiral, and admiral of the fleet. Ranks below midshipman are noncommissioned ranks.

Constituting their own department, rank structure, and chain of command are the ship's engineers commanded by the chief engineer. The chief engineer answers only to the captain and has an equivalent pay grade, however he is never responsible for the action of the ship as the command of a ship always rests with its deck crew. Subordinate to the chief are two or more assistant engineers (depending on the size of the ship), and a number of qualified junior engineers. The first assistant engineer directly oversees the engine room. The second assistant engineer is in charge of the boilers, auxiliary engines, feed systems, and fuel supply. Regardless of rank, all ship's engineers are talented mechaniks accustomed to performing minor miracles in the isolation of the high sea.

Ships are commanded by commissioned officers of the wardroom, which most often consist of the captain or a commander, his lieutenants, the chief engineer, and any marine officers on board. Captain is a significant and coveted rank in the navy, representing for most the pinnacle of a lengthy career—aboard a ship no one gainsays the captain and he has nearly absolute control. Smaller secondary vessels, however, are sometimes led by a commander; individuals with this rank possess all the authority of a captain but are of lower standing and pay grade than a full captain. Because of the limited number of vessels, officers must sometimes endure considerable waits before promotion, which generally occur only due to the retirement, death, or reallocation of an existing captain. In many respects, officers in the navy have fewer chances for advancement than their counterparts in the army.

The distinction between a captain and a commodore is marginal and rarely permanent, as any captain can become a commodore of a small squadron of multiple vessels, such as during an escort or a major patrol. A commodore basically operates as the senior-most captain, to whom other captains of a squadron must answer. Some individuals find themselves in this position so often that the designation becomes customary. Admirals are permanently in charge of larger flotillas of the Ordic Royal Navy. Six of them presently serve in addition to the commanding admiral of the fleet and the engineer-admiral, a position unique to Prince Brogan Cathor that designates his authority over ship design, nautical engineering advancements, and fleet modernization.

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

The people of Ord have persevered against considerable adversity to preserve a rich and distinct culture. Perhaps as a result of the difficulties of life amid the fog-shrouded and boggy lands, Ordfolk have fought fiercely to retain their heritage. Most are deeply traditional people who take to heart the legacy of past glories. Even the humblest farmers feel a strong connection to the tales of the accomplishments of their forebears. Family is of great importance to Ordfolk; large families are common, even for those struggling to feed their children. Gatherings of extended families are frequent and are occasions for feasting, celebration, and inevitable arguments.

Most who live here have a strong connection to both the land and the sea, and the sense that family lines are forever rooted in places where the blood of their ancestors was spilled. While this attachment to the land is most obvious among the nobility even commoners feel a deep affinity for their places of birth, proud of even the arduous aspects of their environment. Those enduring hard lives amid the heaths and moors would live nowhere else, finding austere, rugged beauty in the difficult soil where they struggle to produce meager crops. Those along the coast feel a similar connection to the great Meredius, to the siren's call of its dangerous depths and the urge to sail its waves.

These sometimes bleak but romantic ideals are deeply ingrained in Tordorans and Thurians alike, uniting them despite differences in tradition, class, and wealth. Moodiness can itself be a characteristic of Ordfolk, who are passionate and emotional, particularly compared to the austere peoples of the north. There is no doubting the emotions of a proper Ordsman, who does not convey meaning in subtle glances or unspoken words. In grief he is despondent, in joy ebullient, in anger wrathful. The people of Ord value oration, and one who is both passionate and well spoken will gather friends and allies while one who is quiet will be mistrusted. Subtlety is not unknown to them, particularly among Thurians, but most Ordfolk prefer to see naked emotion over stoic detachment.

Religion plays a significant part in the lives of the people of Ord, and the faithful here are dedicated and earnest. Even those who eschew public worship are often quietly pious in their own ways. This can manifest as either belief or superstition, and they often blend. The lower classes do not expect to ever earn the attention of the divine—the gods have better things to do than hear their pleas—but this does not stop their prayers, as there is always the chance of an unexpected miracle.

Indeed the notion of fortune and chance are intrinsic in Ordic society. Ordfolk can find excuses to gamble on almost anything, which translates to attempting to predict the outcome of any conflict. The people of Ord know that fortunes can turn on the smallest and most unlikely of circumstances. Hard work has its place, but after a grueling day of labor many seek relief in diversions, whether through games of chance or by raising one's voice in song or by drowning one's troubles in ale. Music is something enjoyed by Ordfolk of all classes, whether in the form of bawdy tavern songs or grand operas and symphonies.

Other diversions include a variety of sports and displays of prowess, which take place at festivals, fairs, or local drinking holes. Some sports are martial in nature, and Ordfolk enjoy a good brawl or even a formal duel if the occasion presents itself. Other challenges include knife-throwing, axe-hurling, darts, the lifting of heavy stones, and both horse and footraces. Even the poorest and hardest working of Ordsman will often set aside at least some time during the week for such entertainments, as either a participant or an observer, and preferably while betting on the outcome. In addition to entertainment, these gatherings provide an excuse for people of different social classes to mingle.

EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING

Most people in Ord will either enter into the professions of their parents or become apprentices to tradesmen within their local communities. Ord has many poor citizens engaged in grueling and difficult work such as laboring on farms or on cattle ranches. A greater diversity of opportunity exists in the larger towns and cities, but one's class still determines the scope of one's prospects. Factory work in a textile mill is just as grueling and often more dangerous than working on a farm.

Those eager to improve their lot by seeking new opportunities may consider service in either the army or navy. Ordfolk see such service as exceptionally honorable and worthy. A military career also provides many with their best chance to earn a regular income and send money home. The appeal of military service extends to the aristocracy, who can seek officers' commissions appropriate to their stations. Able-bodied adults who have not served in either the army or the navy are sometimes looked down upon by those who have and are considered either cowardly or lacking honor. Simply having served in the army or navy affords an Ordic citizen better odds at securing employment afterward.

Becoming a successful merchant or craftsman in one of the larger cities requires hard work and good fortune. Family connections are more important than native aptitude. Nepotism is pervasive in Ord and is widely accepted and even expected. The great houses take care of their own, and arranged marriages are common even among the lower classes to improve their prospects by connecting to a prominent family.

Ord has a few centers of higher learning like the Merin School of Learned Sciences, but this university is poorly funded and has relatively small enrollment compared to the academies of other nations. The nobility are generally much better educated than the lower classes, relying on hired tutors or the opportunity to seek an education abroad. The Church of Morrow seeks to improve literacy by encouraging priests in every community to teach letters and simple mathematics to their flocks, which, though a boon, rarely translates into much beyond basic literacy and the ability to do simple sums.

ATTITUDES

While soldiers, merchants, and craftsmen are highly respected in Ord, scholars and intellectuals have more often been viewed askance. The kingdom places less value on these occupations, although it respects the clergy and expects them to be learned. Beyond the temples and churches, Ord has never had much of a reputation for its intellectual prowess. The kingdom has similarly had difficulty fostering arcanists and mechaniks, though in this the Ordic Royal Navy's engineers are an exception. Beyond the navy, the libraries and mechaniks' shops of Berck, Merin, Midfast, or Five Fingers, few opportunities to refine one's craft exist. Those who master these obscure, specialized trades are respected and admired but are viewed with suspicion.

Thurians have had better luck developing these skills than Tordorans, as their culture places greater emphasis on the pursuit of knowledge. Unfortunately there is no Ordic equivalent to the center of knowledge found in Ceryl, and even among the wealthier Thurians in Carre Dova there has been no push to create universities or to support organized instruction in mechanika.

Those interested in bringing Ord into the modern era take hope from the establishment of the Order of the Golden Crucible in Midfast, which should foster true alchemical and mechanikal industry in the nation. While the Fraternal Order of Wizardry has existed in Ord for centuries, it remains insular and exclusive selecting most of its membership from gifted individuals of the aristocracy. Accordingly, it has not fostered a climate for arcane and scientific study in Ord.

Aside from an innate suspicion of intellectuals, Ordfolk are welcoming of outsiders, particularly in towns and cities that rely on foreign trade. Visitors from other kingdoms are vital to Ord's struggling economy, especially in cities like Midfast, Berck, and Five Fingers. Many citizens in these locales speak multiple languages and have a facility for and familiarity with customs from abroad. Some deeply ingrained prejudices exist: Ordfolk are mistrustful of Khadorans, even those in Midfast who rely on their trade. They more warmly welcome Cygnarans, albeit often in the hopes of fleecing them of their excess wealth.

A sizable influx of Llaelese refugees has entered Ord since the Llaelese War, and in general the Ordfolk have welcomed them. The sheer number of immigrants has created tension, however, and in some quarters they are accused of stealing jobs that could go to Ordfolk. Many Llaelese refugees possess refined skills that genuinely make them more appealing hires than local workers in the major cities.

Ordfolk have no strong prejudices toward or attitudes about other races. The nation has its share of Rhulic visitors, including thousands who have settled in Ord permanently, together with hard-working ogrun. Dwarves and Ordfolk share many cultural sympathies that allow them to understand one another. Gobbers and even bogrin have thrived in southern cities and towns. Thurians and gobbers are comfortable with each other, but gobbers are less warmly welcomed in predominantly Tordoran townships.

Trollkin are less prevalent in Ord than in either Khador or Cygnar, but several coastal towns have self-contained trollkin communities, and trollkin usually find work easy to come by. Of the various races of the realm, the elves are the least common here; both Iosans and Nyss are rare and unusual. The jovial, gregarious nature of Ordfolk clashes with the reserved nature of these races, who are viewed as stand-offish and secretive.

Class remains a major divide in Ord, more important than nationality, race, or even wealth. Ordfolk are keenly aware of station—it is readily apparent in an individual's bearing, clothes, and speech patterns. Common Ordfolk have no more interest in sharing space with the upper classes than the upper classes do with them.

It is important to note that class and wealth do not always go hand in hand. Some members of the highest echelon of Ord's social strata are quite poor, although they are generally better groomed than commoners. Yet the social divide between the lowest castellan and the wealthiest common-born merchant is enormous.

Indeed, Ord's middle class occupies an uncomfortable position in Ord's tradition-bound society, possessing much wealth but shut out of the halls of power. For middle class individuals to be truly successful they must attach themselves to a noble house. Such partnerships have become common, sometimes sealed by marriage.

MAJOR CULTURES

Ord has been directly shaped by the influences of its two dominant ethnicities and their complex interactions. Both Tordorans and Thurians have preserved their identities and cultures despite centuries of coexistence. This distinction arises from a cultural pride together with obstinacy and prejudice. Tordorans refuse to blend with Thurians; Thurians in turn have no desire to become Tordorans. Both ethnicities consider themselves to be representative of what it means to be truly Ordic. Yet the nation would not have its distinct character if one or the other did not exist. Despite their patriotism, these two groups possess unequal standing in the nation. Tordorans view this as natural and just while Thurians lack the power to change the status quo.

THURIANS

Thurians in Ord are recognizable primarily because they do not look like Tordorans, who have a more distinct appearance. In ancient times Thuria was a cosmopolitan kingdom that welcomed a diversity of people. The "typical" Thurian is slender but tall, fair of skin and hair, and a disproportionate number have red hair. Many self-identified Thurians, however, could pass for Midlunders, Caspians, Morridanes, or Sinari if not for their accents and other cues. Thurians prefer shorter hair and less ornate clothing fashions than do their Tordoran countrymen, favoring rustic and pragmatic styles, though some aristocrats have varying tastes.

Thurians represent only a third of the kingdom's total population, are concentrated in the south, and have an even smaller influence over its government. However, the Thurian people take pride in their ancestry and share solidarity in the face of Todoran prejudice. Whatever the differences among them, they see each other as kin who have suffered but endured, refusing to be cowed.

The idea of ancient Thuria resonates with these people, although few actually know anything about Thuria's past. This kingdom has become idealized such that its factual history is almost irrelevant. What is important is that once all Thurians were united, masters of their own fates, and were ruled by their own king. Knowledgeable Thurians look back to ancient times and enjoy tales of the intellectual splendor of the Thurian city-states and how their people once competed with Caspia as the brightest minds in western Immoren.

Thurian solidarity crosses national boundaries—there is considerable contact between Cygnaran and Ordic Thurians. Ord's southern border is relatively porous and hardly regulated, allowing the nearest communities on each side to travel freely between the nations. Marriages between Thurian families on opposite sides of the border are common. Many of these people still speak the Thurian language, preferring it at home over Ordic. Most Thurians can speak Thurian, Ordic, and Cygnaran.

A streak of nationalism has spread among some Thurians who talk of restoring a Thurian kingdom separate from Ord or Cygnar, although for most this is mere flight of fancy. A very small number of militant Thurians, however, would be willing to take up arms toward this end, but they are not well organized and rarely take action beyond railing against Tordoran or Cygnaran injustice. The vast majority of Ord's Thurians aspire to equal treatment and greater representation in the government but remain proud citizens. In general Ordic Thurians believe too much was given to Cygnar in the Corvis Treaties, and they frequently lament the loss of Ceryl. Certainly Ord would be a considerably wealthier kingdom if it included this city.

In addition to their language and the literature, poems, and songs written in that tongue, Thurians retain other aspects of their culture. Most Thurians share a love of theater, particularly farce and comedy. They embrace any excuse for festivals, parades, and fairs. Thurians take credit for most of the sports and games of chance enjoyed by Ordfolk, although this is sometimes disputed. They also appreciate a wide variety of music, most notably for stringed instruments that can be played by a performer who also sings or recites verse—Thurian epic poetry is highly regarded in many educated circles. Also, while Tordorans like to claim primacy in certain practical crafts like carpentry, many of the most respected Ordic shipwrights are Thurian, such as those in Carre Dova.

The cuisine of Thuria was once more distinct from Tordor, but over time those lines have blurred. Fish makes up a substantial portion of their diet, and beef is a luxury. Thurians enjoy a wide variety of alcoholic beverages, slightly preferring stronger liquors over ale and wine, and they appreciate both rum and uiske. Communities with limited access to clean water like Five Fingers regularly drink sangre as a staple, a mild wine mixed with fruit and honey.

TORDORANS

Tordorans make up the majority of Ord's population by a sizable margin, and are most pervasive and politically powerful in the north, Tordorans live in every corner of the kingdom. Because they are loathe to marry outside their ethnicity, they have retained a distinct appearance with black hair and olive or darker skin tones with middling height and a variety of builds. Tordorans believe in the importance of presenting a prosperous appearance, so they dress as well as their income and station will allow. While not inclined toward garish colors, they enjoy quality leatherwork, well-tailored garments, and sumptuous fabrics like silk when they are affordable. Among men, facial hair is usually kept well groomed and short.

The separation between Tordor and Thuria was once greater, but since the Orgoth Occupation these two communities have become more intermingled. This has not done much to reduce the distinction between them, as each culture prefers to remain separate. Though marriages between Tordorans and Thurians are not unknown—King Baird's second daughter is a prominent example—these unions are frowned upon, particularly among the high Tordorans. The marriage of Baird's daughter was only slightly less than scandalous because she married a moorgrave, which is as close as a Thurian can come to being of a proper

bloodline in the eyes of Tordorans. The pride high Tordorans take in their bloodlines is considered extreme even by other nobles in western Immoren and has occasionally interfered with potential political alliances.

Tordorans take slights to their families as grave insults and these often result in brawls, duels, and feuding. Issues of both personal and family honor can be seen as matters of life and death—such matters can influence one's status in the community. Given the knife's edge between prosperity and poverty in Ord, a successful family can easily fall into ruin because of a tarnished reputation with neighbors and associates. All Tordorans are expected to stand up for their family honor.

A love of the sea is said to be a fundamental part of being Tordoran, even among landowning families of the eastern gravs who spend a lifetime away from the ocean. Ancient Tordor was famed for its great Dirgenmast fleet, and nautical traditions pervade Tordoran culture. To Tordorans living along the coast whose livelihoods come from the sea, this connection is more palpable. Tordorans have a reputation for producing fine sailors, pilots, and navigators, as well as shipwrights, fishermen, and merchant captains. Even in other kingdoms many seek Tordorans to serve as pilots and navigators in their merchant fleets, and Tordoran crews are prized enough to demand higher wages on occasion.

While less romanticized than their attachment to the sea, Tordorans have an equally long and esteemed reputation as cattle drovers and herdsmen. A substantial portion of the Ord's wealth, especially among the Tordorans, is tied up in cattle, such as cows, goats, and sheep. Large tracts of Ordic land support the grazing of these herds, particularly where those lands are unsuitable for crops. A strong tradition of horse breeding is another significant source of income for some castellans.

Tordorans are considered serious minded and intense, but most still enjoy diversions such as games of chance. The idea of working hard but then periodically indulging in unrestrained revelries is part of the Tordoran culture. Those serving at sea express this through the longstanding tradition of shore leave—after months isolated on a vessel, sailors are given liberty for several days or even weeks to indulge in a variety of pleasures and excesses. This habit is mirrored by land-working Tordorans who will interrupt months of intense and difficult labor with a trip to the nearest city to indulge in drink, song, and spending on luxuries. To support such habits, Ord has an uncommon diversity and multitude of fairs, holidays, and parades, all excuses for gathering and revelry.

The Tordorans' reputation for the finer arts is only slightly exceeded by the Ryn of Llael. Many esteemed Tordoran painters have arisen over the centuries, with the art of Ordic masters generally noted for dark and somber colors with strong plays on light and darkness. Tordoran music is distinct; much of it has not caught on beyond Ord's borders, particularly the great bagpipes with their haunting and droning tones, passed down from Tordoran herdsmen. Nonetheless, some widely respected Tordoran composers are known for their symphonies and operas.

One tradition available even to the common man is Tordoran cuisine, admired across western Immoren and held alongside Rynnish fare as an art form in its own right. This cuisine is rustic and requires less exotic ingredients than Rynnish dishes, with simpler sauces that rely on ample garlic and herbs. A huge variety of so-called "hunter's feasts" can be found across Ord, each variant a hearty stew including different vegetables and meats common to the area. Tordoran cuisine is also famed for high-quality beef, although such fare is generally only available to the castellans and the wealthy. The distribution of cattle is carefully managed, including a substantial portion reserved for export to Cygnar and Khador. Dishes using lamb, hogget, mutton, and cabrito (goat meat) are more pervasively enjoyed across class lines, and a bewildering variety have developed over the centuries in Ord, many blending Thurian and Tordoran techniques. Tordorans are slightly more discriminating about alcohol than Thurians, preferring aged uiske but are usually willing to drink whatever is available.

RELIGION

Religion is a vital aspect of life for most of the people of Ord, particularly the more traditional Tordorans. The Church of Morrow is the official state religion, and Ordic people have been stalwart supporters of the Morrowan faith since the days of Old Tordor. The kingdom also has several vital and significant Menite communities that have persisted since ancient times. There has been little religious strife in Ord, primarily because worship is considered a private affair. Only a few Ordic sects spend their days proselytizing or worrying about the religious habits of their neighbors.

Both of the major religions play a less significant role in affairs of state in Ord than they do elsewhere. This is not to say that priests are uninterested in the political arena; rather, their influence is more indirect. Many of the castellans receive counsel from priests loyal to their families, but the effect of this influence varies. The Church of Morrow has had a greater impact on previous Ordic kings, but King Baird II seems uninterested in spiritual advisors, although he is cordial to representatives of both faiths.

Of the other faiths, there is no doubt that Thamar's influence in Ord is as pervasive outside of conventional society as Morrow's is within it. The peculiar mazelike hive called the Warrens in the Olgunholt is also thought to be crawling with Thamarites. Further, the most notorious Thurian city, Five Fingers, is considered a haven for Thamarite worship. While the Church of Morrow exists in Five Fingers, its grasp is weak and that city has given itself over to crime and vice. Its reputation is further darkened by having been so strongly shaped by Scion Bolis, one of the Dark Twin's most popular ascended figures. Many pious Tordorans have charged that that the Thurians are steeped in corruption and worship the dark twin, but Thamar's tendrils can be found in the north as well as the south.

Other fringe faiths have not had as easy of a time penetrating into Ord. The kingdom has a relatively small number of Cyriss worshipers, focused in the most populous cities, as this has not been a fruitful place for them due to its dearth of institutions of higher learning. Outside of the ominous Olgunholt Forest the kingdom lacks large wilderness expanses, and so cults of the Devourer Wurm are not thought to exist in number here.

THE ORDIC CHURCH OF MORROW

The teachings of the Twins quickly gained influence in ancient Thuria and Tordor and spread further during the Orgoth Occupation. By the time of the Corvis Treaties, the Church of Morrow was well ensconced in the nascent Ordic society, with the kingdom home to hundreds of notable churches, shrines, and monasteries. The custom of castellans had long been to establish prominent chapels on their estates or to integrate them into the walls of their keeps. The Church of Morrow was officially declared the state religion of Ord in 271 AR, in large part due to public pressure over the scandal of the dark ascension of Scion Bolis in Five Fingers. This formalized the fact that the population was already overwhelmingly Morrowan. The Church has remained an integral aspect of the social fabric in Ord ever since. Its traditional duties include administering marriages and funerals, sanctifying births, and providing charitable aid to those in need.

The Ordic Church of Morrow is led by the Vicarate Council of Merin, which oversees the Grand Cathedral of the Harvest in the capital. The seven vicars are well respected and democratic in their oversight of the nation's clergy but defer to the wisdom of Vicar Pasario Casini, the eldest among them. The vicars try to focus on spiritual rather than temporal matters; rarely do they interfere with or participate in debates at the Hall of Castellans except in rare instances when a proposed law would affect the clergy or church property. Ord is also well represented in the Sancteum in Caspia, where six Ordic exarchs currently sit on the Exordeum.

The Church in Ord's top priority is the preservation and glorification of the sites of holy pilgrimage, as several ascendants have arisen and joined Morrow in Ord. These ascendants' relics are major attractions for religious travelers from across western Immoren. Such sites are not only significant to the faithful but bring much-needed income to both the Church and local communities.

The faithful of Ord are strongly attached to the holy figures who have arisen from these lands, including Ascendant Gordenn, who is worshiped by farmers and by those who tend cattle; the almost equally important Doleth, an ancient ascendant looked to by all who sail the sea; and Ascendant Markus, the hero of Midfast and patron of the Ordic Army. The establishment of the Order of the Golden Crucible headquarters in Midfast increased the following of Ascendant Corben in that region, although Markus remains the city's primary ascendant. Ascendant Rowan has a large following among Ord's urban poor, and many of the smaller churches and shrines are dedicated in her name.

THE ORDIC TEMPLES OF MENOTH

Despite the pervasive reach of the Church of Morrow, Ord has retained an unwavering minority of Menite worshipers, including several nearly exclusive Menite communities. The bulk of the kingdom's Menites are Tordoran, although several Thurian Menite villages exist in the south. All of the major Ordic cities include small Menite communities, usually concentrated in a single district. Still, there is no cohesive hierarchy uniting the Menites of Ord. Each city and township has its own traditions for worship and communication between them is limited. The priesthood employs ranks similar to those used in ancient times, but these are only bestowed within a given temple and therefore are only meaningful within a given city or town. The Menites of one town are accepting of Menites from elsewhere, however, and they expect minor differences in doctrine. This goes well with the more private nature of religious worship in Ord.

Ord has not been immune to the influence of the Harbinger of Menoth or the Great Crusade. During the initial frenzy as word of the Harbinger's appearance spread across western Immoren, Ord experienced a Menite exodus. Thousands of citizens from across the kingdom's Menite communities gave up their lives to join the Protectorate and the crusade. After this initial wave of enthusiasm, these communities stabilized and distanced themselves from the crusading Sul-Menites. The Protectorate still periodically sends missionaries into this region, however, in the hopes of enticing more Ordfolk to move to Sul or Imer or to join the Northern Crusade in Llael.

The kingdom hosts several notable temples, first among them the Temple of the Ocean's Wall in Berck. This impressive fortress temple stands atop the cliffs northwest of the city. The temple is a superlative example of ancient stonemasonry, admired even by non-Menites. Its ranking priest is Sovereign Biagio Benzo, one of the most respected Ordic Menites. He oversees the Menites of Berck, the kingdom's largest community of the faith.

THE GRAVS OF ORD

Ord's borders encompass a region along the western coast of Immoren between the considerably larger kingdoms of Khador to the north and Cygnar to the south. The nation is ruled by the descendants of Tordor and Thuria, brought together under the Corvis Treaties. After being diminished by war, its borders stretch from the Murata Hills in the north to the Dragon's Tongue River in the south. It is bound on the east by the Thornwood and on the west by a length of shoreline facing the great Meredius. Its interior includes Lake Vannogear, the Olgunholt Forest, and several boggy expanses, including the region encompassing Mere Dorou and Mere Tagao as well as the Wythmoor in the southeast. Marked by rolling hills and gentle valleys, Ord includes lush farmlands and expansive grazing lands but lacks for natural resources.

Ord is divided into six large political regions called gravs (p. 253). The blending of Tordoran and Thurian traditions has created a political environment unique to Ord that has impacted the governance of the gravs. Lord castellans, the highest ranking Tordoran nobles, rule the three wealthiest, while moorgraves, the highest ranking Thurian nobles, rule the three poorest. Each of these lands is further divided into regions governed by individual castellans and thanes.

ALMARE

The largest grav in Ord, Almare is considered an important heartland region and the most prestigious of the three gravs traditionally ruled by a Thurian. The sizable region includes the significant Ordic cities of Hearthstone and Armandor along with the major farmlands and pastures east of Merin. Almare is ruled by Moorgrave Rogan Torcail, an influential noble whose family maintains strong ties to the throne.

A GRAV MATTER

The use of the Thurian term *grav* for Ord's major regional divisions may seem unusual, given that Tordorans control the government and arguably comprise the dominant culture. Yet only Thuria was divided into provinces; Tordor never had anything equivalent to the duchies or volozkya of other kingdoms. The castellans of Ord were all equals, with holdings varied by their fortunes. After the Corvis Treaties the government saw the need to divide the kingdom into several sizable regions and created the rank of lord castellan to accommodate a revised system of governance. Within each grav there are a multitude of small holdings belonging to lesser nobles, and these vary wildly in size and scope.

Recently the region has been affected by greater contact with the isolated Cygnaran city of Fellig, which was cut off from its nation by the Khadoran occupation of the Thornwood. The residents of Fellig remain Cygnaran citizens, but their freedom now depends entirely on the presence of the Ordic Army. Travel and trade between this city and nearby Ordic towns and villages has increased in recent years. Even before the invasion, Fellig and Armandor were connected by a rail spur built to facilitate trade. This extension of the line from Merin has been useful to maintain resupply for the soldiers stationed in Fellig. The fruits of Fellig's commerce and labor are already being integrated into the Ordic economy, including fees the city pays to keep Ordic soldiers protecting its walls, a tax in all but name.

Almare has the distinction of being the only grav bordering both Cygnar and Khador. Its southern lands include a narrow territory along the Dragon's Tongue River where several small townships support massive textile mills that generate significant revenue. Part of the Olgunholt Forest spills into the northern part of the region and is known to the locals as the Almare Woods. This land provides vital commercial logging, some of which is diverted for construction in Hearthstone, Armandor, and Fellig. The pines, cedar, and oak trees of the region provide superior lumber for both construction and furniture.

As significant as these assets are, the bulk of Almare's wealth lies in its prized farmlands and pastures. The grav includes the grazing lands preferred for large breeds of livestock, such as the Braenna cattle raised near Armandor, as well as certain breeds of horses. Agricultural goods from the region provide food for its cities and towns as well as income from sale to the capital, to Berck, or to Ceryl and beyond.

Because of the relative prosperity of these lands, Almare saw the largest influx of Tordoran castellans after the Border Wars. King Alvor II came under significant political pressure to find lands for those families, displacing or reducing the lands of a number of the Thurian nobles. Over the centuries Tordoran families have steadily increased their grasp on the northern sections of the grav, creating lasting grievances that sometimes erupt into open violence.

Moorgrav Rogan Torcail has a solid reputation and has earned the grudging respect of even his castellan rivals. He is a shrewd and commerce-minded noble, and the Torcails are the wealthiest house in the region. Nonetheless, he has had to deal with the schemes of three powerful and ambitious rivals—Castellans Giotto Casazza, Larenz Aragona, and Samuele Olza, all allies of House Mateu. Castellan Olza in particular has been encouraged by Izabella Mateu to seize the seat of the Almare. Moorgrav Torcail enjoys the king's unmitigated support and the plotting castellans believe they will have to wait for Baird's son to take the throne to advance their plans. Toward this end, they have sought to find ways to earn the heir's friendship.

Despite Torcail's efforts, there has been periodic feuding amid the hills and moors between Tordoran and Thurian nobles, exacerbated by mercenaries hired by both sides. Not all conflict here involves overt fighting, as theft of cattle or horses is one of the oldest and most provocative methods for either side to take vengeance against their rivals. This is a crime that is treated with utmost severity in Ord. As an Almare axiom states, "Even murder can be forgiven, but the only solace allowed cattle rustlers is the hangman's noose."

Until the Llaelese War, the region was generally considered sedate and secure from outside threats, its inhabitants provincial and out of touch compared to those living on the seaboard. This opinion has changed with the turmoil of recent warfare and tensions along the northern and eastern borders. The Thornwood has always had a grim reputation even in the best of times, and those living in the east have reason to fear not only Khadoran soldiers but also Cryxian elements and more bestial threats, like the Tharn and the warpwolves stirred up by recent conflicts. Particularly in Armandor, news of the war and its grim toll occupy the attention of many.

The Ordic crown has invested in fortifying and expanding the defenses along the border. Among its new additions are Fort Bairdon and Torre Torcail. Recently completed, Torre Torcail is situated near the middle of the eastern border not far from the city of Armandor. It is named for its high central tower which is intended to provide a vantage on the Thornwood to the east. Spotters with telescopes atop its heights look for movement in the forest as well as coordinating signals with other lesser watchtowers along the border. Additional fortifications and administrative buildings radiate from the tower and are surrounded by high walls. Torre Torcail serves as the central headquarters and primary garrison for the Thorn Division of the Ordic Army. However, it lacks the geographical advantages of the northern fortresses and was not intended to withstand extended siege. General Gervasio Cabral commands both the fortress and Thorn Division.

Fort Bairdon is a major fortification being erected along the northern border close to Fellig. While yet incomplete, the impressive structure has been engineered to take advantage of the Murata Hills to provide an imposing bastion with a clear view of any approach from the north. Only the main towers and heavily reinforced northern face of the fortress have been finished, but the fortress will eventually house an extensive network of barracks and warehouses intended to support a sizable garrison. Once the fort is complete it will house the

soldiers presently occupying Fellig to the east. The soldiers stationed here are commanded by Major Fraedo Corsone, who reports to Commander Caralo Allesari in Fellig.

With all of the recent military activity, the region has experienced an influx of soldiers, including both Ordic Army personnel and mercenaries. The soldiers' presence has reassured the locals somewhat, although they remain considerably apprehensive about the overall state of affairs. Their presence has also had an impact on the local economy, encouraging many to seek profit by offering services to support them.

ALMARE GRAV

Largest Ethnic Groups: Thurian majority, large Tordoran minority

Predominant Religions: Morrowan majority, Menite minority

Important Cities: Armandor, Hearthstone; Also see Fellig, p. 68, which is under the protection of the Ordic Army.

Significant Towns (not on the map): Awel, Ballybane, Claghvaish, Doarlish, Durrath, Echbri, The Garey, Glendrago, Goayr, Luwbriga, Meaylbre, Moainslogh

Lord: Moorgrave Rogan Torcail

The Torcails are rich landowners and the rulers of Almare. Rogan's family has possessed most of their holdings for generations, causing some consternation among their rivals who mutter darkly of the Torcails once having collaborated with the Orgoth. Moorgrave Torcail is a former army officer, a man with refined tastes and a penchant for politics. He governs with a focus on keeping the wheels of commerce turning and is particularly interested in the fortunes of Armandor, his seat. Dividing his time between Armandor and the capital and focusing on larger political matters, he leaves much of the small details of day-to-day management of his lands to his extremely capable wife, who is the king's youngest daughter, Princess Sandrea Torcail. Rogan is a relatively progressive aristocrat and regularly meets with individuals of all classes, but he is prone to overthinking matters and rarely acts quickly. Some of his subjects have taken to seeking quicker redress to their troubles by petitioning his wife instead. This course of action is particularly true for the Tordorans, who find Rogan has little patience for their concerns.

Seat: Arman Hall, Armandor

ARMANDOR

Ruler: Moorgrave Rogan Torcail

Population: 40,000 Thurians, 12,000 Tordorans, 8,000 Morridanes, 2,000 trollkin, 1,000 gobbers

Military Presence: Since the start of the Second Thornwood War, Armandor has been home to a garrison of 1,200 Ordic soldiers. Additionally, the city employs 600 watchmen. The local nobility maintain their own household guards. The town can also call upon the forces stationed at Torre Torcail when in need.

Description: Armandor is the largest city on the Arman Moors, from which it takes its name. These moors are covered with heather, peat, and bogs, possessing a beauty that many Armandorans feel has no equal. The city is connected to Hearthstone by both road and rail, and the rail line was extended to Fellig in 606 AR. The city has become a significant supply hub for Ordic Army outposts along the eastern border. The shipments have occasionally caused disruption to local industry, although the overall gains from connecting Armandor and Fellig by rail has worked to the benefit of regional trade.

Armandor sits uneasily at the edge of the Khador-occupied territory, and its people watch the new and potentially hostile border with great anxiety. While Khador has shown no signs of preparing for an invasion, they have historically used the Ordic border to test their new officers and warcasters in live engagements. Additionally, there are rumors of other horrors emerging from the Thornwood, with sightings of Cryxians on the rise.

The city is situated on a gently sloping hill at the edge of the looming Thornwood Forest to the east, while the moors spread out to the west and north. Atop the hill at its highest elevation are the town's largest estates held by the moorgrave, the Thurian gentry, and a few Tordoran castellans. Carved into the hillside below the estates is the central town square, an open market surrounded by city buildings, including the courts, jails, the town's largest church, and other offices. The rest of the town spills out below the square and around the base of the hill into reclaimed marshland with unreliable soil. Many of the better outlying buildings stand on deeply sunken wooden posts to prevent settling. The winding paved streets on the hill are clean and well maintained, but the outer town is noted for its muddy uneven paths requiring wagons to proceed with caution. This area boasts its own market for the sale of produce and the auctioning of cattle. Armandor's residents can usually be recognized by their mud-spattered boots and trousers.

The town's perimeter is fortified with extensive earthworks surrounded by a minefield laid east of the city proper. Recently the army has begun to expand a thick wooden palisade over the earthworks to provide a proper wall to the city. The residents would prefer a wall of stone, but the cost of such an endeavor has been deemed too high, particularly given the difficulties of erecting battlements on the swampy ground around Armandor. Local defenses are intended primarily to stall an invading army long enough for forces from Torcail Tower to relieve the city.

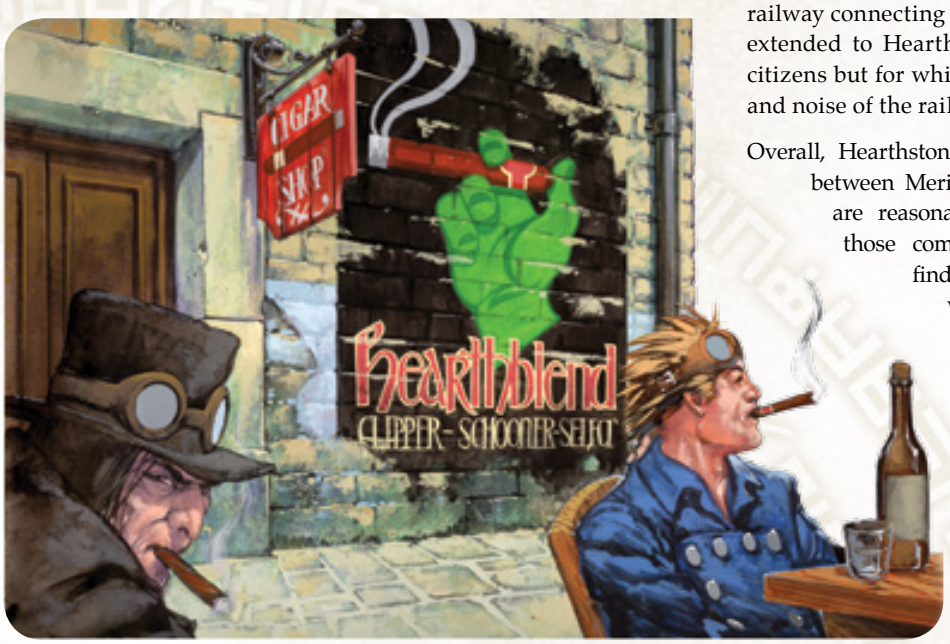
The massive Olza Slaughter Yard is just outside of town to the south and employs many laborers. While the yard is efficient and profitable, to most who near its charnel pen it is a place

of horror. The smell stretches for miles, particularly for those downwind, with a stench of death, blood, and filth. Those who work here are inured to it and simply go about their business with brutal efficiency. The yard includes an extensive warehouse with mechanikal systems for cooling carcasses, which are hung on hooks in long rows until they can be loaded onto trains and shipped to the capital.

Armandor's grasslands are sufficient to support the herds of Braenna cattle (large and long-haired longhorns) that form an integral part of Armandor's economy. Horses are also bred there, including Almare steeds favored by the horse soldiers of the region and renowned for their hardiness, swiftness, and lively temperaments. The remainder of the city's business is divided between amber mining and the collection of cork and peat from the moors.

HOOAGA

Originally popular with gobbers before spreading to trollkin and humans, hooaga is a plant that is dried and smoked in tightly rolled bundles. Hooaga cigars have become a common sight from Khador to southern Cygnar and all points between. While the crop is raised in many regions throughout the Iron Kingdoms, Ord has established a reputation for the finest hooaga with recognized names including Hearthblend and Regency Gold. The hooaga trade has become an increasingly important part of the Ordic economy, recently threatening to surpass the nation's textile business. The industry is centered around the towns of Tarna and Hearthstone.



Armandorans are primarily Thurian with a mix of lower and middle class Tordorans and a recent influx of Morridane immigrants from Fellig and other townships in the Thornwood. Most of Armandor's civic positions are held by Thurians appointed by the moorgrave, who is the undisputed ruler of Armandor.

The city has also recently had an influx of small mercenary companies, including several buying old warehouses and other structures to use as barracks. The proximity of the town to land contested between Cygnar and Khador is expected to offer many lucrative opportunities for sell-swords. The locals are not particularly enthused by the arrival of the crude and well-armed outsiders, and laws have been passed to discourage walking the streets of Armandor openly armed. Others have seen the rise of soldiers, both Ordic and mercenary, as an opportunity—several new taverns and gunwerks have opened to cater to them.

HEARTHSTONE

Ruler: Thane Ross Kaddock

Population: 14,500 Thurians, 13,000 Tordorans, 1,500 Morridanes, 400 gobbers, 300 trollkin

Military Presence: Hearthstone maintains a reserve garrison of 500 soldiers from the Thorn Division. They regularly rotate between Armandor and the border forts, returning to the city to rest after active duty. For this reason, the garrison includes a larger number of maimed and battle-fatigued soldiers than is the case elsewhere. Hearthstone employs 100 watchmen and can call upon a citizen militia three times that size. Local nobility maintain their own household guards.

Description: Hearthstone is a remote, often overlooked community of steep, muddy farm tracks and earth-sheltered homes surrounded by lowlands covered in heather, sheep leaf, and wildflowers. The herdsmen of Ord's heartland raise mostly sheep and cattle while the farmers—human and gobber alike—deal mainly in hooaga. The thane of Hearthstone's fortunes are tied directly to the cattle and hooaga trades, as are those of many other merchants in eastern Ord. The railway connecting several other eastern cities has not been extended to Hearthstone, a fact lamented by some of its citizens but for which others are grateful, given the smoke and noise of the rail engines.

Overall, Hearthstone benefits from being centrally located between Merin, Armandor, and Tarna, and its roads are reasonably busy with healthy trade between those communities. Goods from farther abroad find their way to Hearthstone through trade with the capital. There is a particularly close relationship between Tarna and Hearthstone due to their connected hooaga industries. Most of the profitable crop is grown near Hearthstone, while Tarna is more heavily involved in its packing and exportation by way of the Dragon's Tongue River.

Although Hearthstone seems quiet and bucolic to the outside world, its inhabitants allege that the restless

dead wander the lowlands after dark. The city's elders speak darkly of the fate of the Blathmac family, who were the thanes of the city for centuries before the entire line suffered a terrible tragedy only a few decades ago. No one knows precisely what happened to the Blathmacs except that, one-by-one, they all died under mysterious circumstances. When the last of the Blathmacs died, the thanes of Almare vied for the right to seize the family's territories, which were eventually claimed by the Kaddocks; distant relatives of the Blathmacs. In the years since, shepherds and travelers in the moors have reported mysterious figures shambling in and around the moldering ruins of the Blathmac manor.

COSETIO

The northwestern grav of Cosetio includes Ord's northern coastline stretching from Berck Harbor at the mouth of the Rohannor River to the Khadoran border. Its bleak and boggy interior is notable primarily for the North Berck Moors and the Windwater Lakes, individually known as Mere Dorou and Mere Tagao. While these lands are the least productive of the three northern gravs, Cosetio is nonetheless a wealthy and powerful region thanks primarily to Berck, which is the largest city in Ord, headquarters of the Ordic Navy, and home to many of the kingdom's greatest merchant families, including House Mateu. The northern city of Corbhen is another significant city in this grav, although its fortunes and influence are a dim shadow compared to Berck. Several sizable towns and smaller villages line the western coast, where the majority of the population of the grav lives and earns a living. These settlements are the homeports for countless ships that, along with those from Berck, make up Ord's northern fishing fleets. These fishing vessels bring in considerable income and help to feed the nation. Lord Castellan Heiro Mascal rules Cosetio.

The North Berck Moors extend from the Rohannor River to Corbhen. The northern edge of the moors is extremely marshy and the area south of Corbhen is covered with bogs and swampy forests of stunted trees. These bogs are a rich source of peat, which is cut into slabs and left to dry. The dried peat is used as fuel and, while it does not burn as efficiently as coal, there is a ready local supply. Throughout Ord, commoners are expected to burn peat for warmth, leaving the nation's meager coal supply—supplemented by imports—for vital industry or for the operation of laborjacks. Unfortunately, an abundance of coal in other nations means that peat is not a useful export commodity, but there is always demand for it in other parts of Ord.

The region southwest of Corbhen quickly becomes impassable amid the swampy land surrounding the Windwater Lakes. Mere Tagao, the nearest to the city, is a freshwater lake fed by hot springs, making it relatively warm year-round. Ice only forms along the shoreline during the worst winter months. At all times a warm moist breeze blows over it eastward, and the cool air flowing down from the northern hills causes thick fog to collect south of the mountains on all but the warmest summer days. The warm shores of Mere Tagao also provide fertile ground for thick forests of cork oak, the bark of which is a primary source of cork. Considerable fishing also takes place on the lake. The larger and colder Mere Dorou is exploited less due to the dangerous creatures rumored to live in its uncertain depths. Descriptions of the nature of these creatures varies considerably from one moor village to the next, but without question some of the fishermen who risk their lives taking their boats out on the lake vanish every year. Several small tribes of insular but territorial bog trogs live amid the moors, but some greater beasts are thought to live in the lake itself.

The swampy ground around the lakes does not make for good farmland, but narrow terraces of arable land exist north of Corbhen in the foothills of the mountains. Corbhen's few farmers use these terraces to grow barley, which is roasted, mashed with water, and distilled into a heady drink called *uiske*. The uiske produced in the grav is distributed throughout western Ord and Cygnar, as well as southern Khador, and is considered a distinctive and very potent liquor.

COSETIO GRAV

Largest Ethnic Groups: Tordoran majority, Thurian minority

Predominant Religions: Morrowan majority, Menite minority

Important Cities: Berck, Corbhen

Significant Towns (not on the map): Alagoa, Argonto, Carthagos, Corovo, Nevoeiro, Ormano, Portalgo, Porto Salvo, Torre Loga

Lord: Castellan Heiro Mascal

Heiro Mascal is a tall, gaunt man with a hawk-like nose and an indomitable gaze. As the lord castellan of Cosetio, he is one of the highest placed nobles in the Hall of Castellans. His family has ancient roots in Berck that can be traced directly back to the famed captains of the ancient Dirgenmast fleet and they have controlled the region since before the invasion of the Orgoth. Mascal is popular with the citizens and with many of the older castellans who respect his traditional values and allegiance to an older, simpler way of life. The Mascal family has a long-standing alliance with the Mateus through generations of intermarriage. The lord castellan himself has married directly into the Mateu family, having taken Izabella's niece Stiata as his wife. This arrangement has served both families well, and since the union, a number of long-term Mascal enemies have disappeared and Izabella has gained an influential voice in the Hall of Castellans.

Seat: The Azure Keep, Berck

BERCK, THE GOLDEN PORT

Ruler: Lord Castellan Heiro Mascal, although many would say Izabella Mateu is the true power in Berck.

Population: 352,000 Tordorans, 62,000 Thurians, 10,000 Ryn, 5,000 Morridanes, 4,000 Midlunders, 3,000 gobbers, 2,500 trollkin, 1,500 Caspians, 500 Rhulfolk, several hundred Khards, Kossites, and ogrun

Military Presence: Berck is the home of the Royal Navy, with 40,000 sailors. The city is also the headquarters of the Stone Division of the Ordic Army, and 20,000 marines and regular soldiers are garrisoned there when not at sea. Berck also employs 1,000 city guards. The local nobility also maintain their own household guards.

Description: The name Berck derives from the old Tordor word "baire," meaning an oak grove surrounded by water. The grove that inspired the city's name is located on a small hill of the forested Berck Island in the mouth of the Rohannor River nestled beneath the cliffs of a steep gorge. Berck is the largest and most important city in Ord, eclipsing Merin, the capital. It is considered to be an exemplar of Ordic culture featuring both its highest and lowest forms. It is a city where military and financial interests intersect, and where those in the halls of power are daily affecting the lives of citizens across the kingdom. Amid the bustle of the city, fortunes are won and lost, and livelihoods are made and ruined, by those controlling the heartblood of the Ordic economy as well as the security of the realm by sea.

Called the Golden Port, Berck was the historic home of the fabled Tordoran Armada, and many of the city's first families trace their lineage back to the Dirgenmast captains of old. The city is well protected from conventional siege thanks to the north face of the spectacular narrow gorge of the Rohannor River with its sheer walls over 300 feet high which limit approaches to the city. Today its port is the home of the Ordic Royal Navy, including the ironhull *Sprightly*. Hundreds of Ordic Navy ships are berthed at the city's docks or are regularly entering and leaving the harbor, often serving as escort to equally formidable merchant ships of Ord's great houses. Matters of the sea are all-important to everyone who lives in Berck, with news of piracy, Cryxian raids, and any notable storms from Ohk to Mercir dominating local conversation. The crowded docks are always swarming with those attending to both navy and merchant ships, while new quays and dry dock facilities are always under construction as old ones are torn down and replaced.

From this bustling harbor, goods are easily transported into the heart of Ord and parts beyond via smaller boats travelling the Rohannor. Every arrival and departure is monitored by the Board of Imports and Exports working together with the vigilant city watch and the Bercktown Committee. Tremendous commerce flows through Berck, but scrutiny is far greater here than in the lawless southern city of Five Fingers. Crime is far from eliminated, however, and there is a thriving if low profile underworld in Berck. Ships from as far away as Zu make landings here, and their cargoes require heavy guard as they command premium prices in markets across western Immoren. Those responsible for importing such commodities have become among the wealthiest people in Ord.

A portion of the waterfront is dominated by the extensive facilities of the Ordic Royal Naval Academy, one of the finest naval military institutions of western Immoren. The academy's compound includes the Trident School, which specializes in training arcanists for the royal navy. Ordic warcasters also receive their training at the Trident. The school is located in an impressive stone tower on a spit of rock extending from the shoreline. It is naturally cut off from the mainland at high tide,

during which time cadets can be seen exercising arcane control over the turbulent waves of the rocky coast.

The city was built at the terminus of a long stretch of cliffs towering over the beach to the north and west in a bowl formed by the Rohannor River delta. Past its crowded piers and docks, the city sprawls landward into this fertile area, and its roads and buildings twist up into and atop the nearby cliffs. Berck's four main streets radiate from a central diamond to four gateways—Markus Gate, Ferryquay Gate, Shipquay Gate, and Butcher's Gate—all of which are carefully patrolled and scrutinized by the watch for suspicious activities.

The cliffs of Berck are home to the gleaming estates of the city's Tordoran castellans where they command a magnificent view of the harbor and the Sea of a Thousand Souls. The most powerful of these castellans are the Mateu family, who maintain a stranglehold on local politics with the open support of Lord Castellan Mascal. These ancestral cliff-side estates feature glazed roof tiles that sparkle in the sun, a style mimicked throughout Berck. While the castellans sit at the top of the city's aristocracy, they are joined by a number of powerful and

influential merchants, the ranking officers of the Ordic Royal Navy, and the officers of the army's Stone Division. Ranking military officers, many of whom are also of noble blood, are every bit as involved in city politics as they are in military affairs, and the cliffs are home to a number of elite officer's clubs.

House Mateu's control of Berck is not entirely uncontested. Agents of the Cathors, as well as several lesser houses, constantly test Mateu's influence. But the greatest counter to House Mateu comes from the Mercarian League, a powerful Cygnaran merchant concern that has deep tendrils in Ord. Their victory over House Mateu for control of Berck Imports House in 593 AR granted the League a strong foothold in the city. Since then, House Mateu has found itself outmaneuvered in a number of important financial battles. It is widely believed that the Berck Imports House enjoys not only the resources of the Mercarian League but also the influence of the Bandit King, who sees it as a foil against his rival. House Mateu also faces competition from several Khadoran kayazy who operate through proxies in Ord, some more legitimate and law-abiding than others.

Berck may appear to be a respectable port, a jewel of the Ordic nation, but vicious feuding occurs behind closed doors, in its halls of power, and in shuttered warehouses. The city operates according to a system of patronage and the supporters of each faction are fiercely loyal to their leaders. Those supporters sometimes go out into the streets in great numbers to show their strength and make their influence felt. At such times, these groups take on the character of armed mobs that can rival the strength of the city watch, and only the presence of the military can reinforce order.

It is common to see well-armed bands walking the streets to protect the various high-ranking members of the city's significant houses, each proudly wearing the colors and sigils of their families and ready to shed the blood of rivals. So too do naval and army officers often travel with an armed retinue as they have their own bitter rivalries. The local watch only interferes in such struggles when they threaten to create too much collateral damage or to escalate beyond smaller-scale duels and skirmishes. Some visitors have remarked that these battles only differ from gang wars in Five Fingers because of better-dressed participants and the refined language of their insults.

CORBHEN, THE CITY OF MIST

Ruler: Castellan Olyado Caetan

Population: 45,000 Tordorans, 9,000 Thurians, 700 gobbers, 500 trollkin

Military Presence: A single battalion of the Shield Division protects Corbhen, and the city employs a force of 300 city guards. The local nobility also maintain their own household guards. In the case of a serious threat from the north, Corbhen can send for aid from the nearby garrison at Scarswall Fortress.

Description: It is no wonder that Corbhen is said to be among the loneliest places in western Immoren. The ancient stone towers and walls of the City of Mist are shrouded in the perpetual fogs that roll off Mere Tagao to the west and down from the northern hills. Upon seeing the stone walls rising above the mist, more than one visitor has remarked on Corbhen's similarity to a ship adrift on a still sea.

Despite a reconstruction effort spanning generations, Corbhen still bears many scars from the Orgoth Occupation. The outskirts are pocked with crumbling ruins, some razed to their foundations—evidence after six centuries that Corbhen was one of the first and last cities to suffer destruction at the hands of the invaders. Corbhen was again occupied during the Second Expansion War from 464–468 AR when Khador invaded western Ord and captured the city. The town square includes a number of monuments and statues dedicated to the Ordic heroes who fought and lost their lives in that war.

Even though Corbhen has a respectable population, it feels strangely lifeless. Something harrowing seems to fester in the heart of Corbhen; it pulls at the souls of its inhabitants. Visitors have noted a distant, haunted look in the eyes of longtime residents as well as a hollow timbre to their voices. This strange continence is often dismissed as a natural reaction to years spent among the dense mists.

The two largest and most ancient structures, Castle Deiridh to the southwest and the Swords of Faith Cathedral to the northeast, serve as anchors for the city. The central area is called Amidships by locals, and it is dominated by the decayed coliseum built in crueler days. The coliseum is not used today. It merely looms over the thoroughfare that connects the two inhabited districts, since most of the buildings in Amidships are dilapidated and empty.

The remains of the ancient Castle Deiridh serve as the headquarters of the city guard, while troops of the Shield Division are housed in recently constructed barracks just outside. These troops remain on high alert, and Corbhen's impressive cannons are manned at all times against Khadoran forces testing the northern border. Morale among the soldiers is low, especially among those who were not born in Corbhen. The veterans claim there is no escape from the mists, saying: "Once you come to know them, they will haunt you to your dying day."

CASTELLAN OLYADO CAETAN

Castellan Caetan is a man driven by inner demons. A few years ago his beloved wife Isbet drowned herself and her unborn child in the peat bogs. Since that time, Caetan has secluded himself on his family estate where he drinks heavily and rarely ventures into town. Those close to him fear for his sanity and claim that in his more somber moments the castellan swears he hears Isbet calling to him from the bogs. He is not the only resident with such tales, and many believe the bog and its mists have a strange life of their own, and that the souls of the dead are preserved there against their will, unable to pass to Urcaen.

HETHA

Hetha is an expansive and largely untamed territory that includes most of the Olgunholt Forest, the cities of Five Fingers and Carre Dova, and countless smaller towns and villages. It is bounded on the north by the Warrens and on the east by the Western Tradeway. Historically it has been one of the least prestigious gravs, valued just slightly more than Wythmoor to the southeast. It is home to the nation's largest concentration of impoverished Thurians, which is no coincidence. Moorgrave Conor Lochlan rules Hetha from his estate near Carre Dova.

From the perspective of most of Ord, Hetha has historically existed outside both the nation's economy and its politics. With Five Fingers being all but independent, the only meaningful income and commerce from the region has arisen from the shipwrights at Carre Dova and the limited logging of the Olgunholt.

The reputation of Five Fingers as a depraved city filled with vice, crime, and corruption has tainted the region, as have rumors of powerful and hostile forces lurking in the deep Olgunholt, which is said to be one of the primary domains of the blackclads. Hetha's dark reputation started with the Orgoth Occupation when the area of Five Fingers was a major stronghold for the tyrants. The site housed several of their extensive slave camps and vast burial pits.

Despite its past, Hetha has grown in prominence under King Baird II who prefers to conduct his vital business in Five Fingers rather than the capital. Most castellans believe the city was chosen by the king specifically to allow him to ignore the counsel of his peers. Whatever his reasons, Baird made Five Fingers a vital source of revenue through arrangements with the high captains. Because these funds are unregulated and therefore not taxed, they fall outside the purview of the Ordic treasury, meaning no one except King Baird knows how they are spent.

Hetha is utterly dominated by the Olgunholt, a deep and overgrown forest whose depths have never been fully charted or explored. While logging takes place on its edges, most civilized Ordfolk avoid its depths. A few villages, however, have cropped up along its perimeter and deeper into its interior, many of them isolated and inhabited by people considered peculiar by their neighbors outside the forest. The Olgunholt is also home to a number of trollkin kriels, although they are considerably less numerous than in the Gnarls, the Thornwood, or the Scarsfell Forest.

Other than the Olgunholt, the other most notable aspect of Hetha is its long and winding shoreline. A number of small towns and villages dot the shores, with the most successful existing inside the shelter of the Bay of Stone. Fishing is the main trade of many of these villages, but this is difficult, dangerous, and not particularly rewarding work. The youths of these villages regularly flee their dull lives to enlist in the Ordic Navy, a dream of many along the coast. They serve as long as they are able before being forced out by age or infirmity.

While the Bay of Stone is nominally shared by Cygnar and Ord, with the southern shore populated by Cygnaran villages, control of the Shearwater Narrows leading into the bay is firmly in the control of the Ordic Navy. There are no major Cygnaran townships on the bay, although the region benefits from the vigilance of Cygnar's Northern Fleet, based in Ceryl.

The same is true for the mouth of the Dragon's Tongue River, a route of significant river shipping for both Ord and Cygnar. Cygnar maintains soldiers on the border, with a guard station watching all foot traffic leaving Five Fingers for Southshore, but otherwise control of shipping is entirely the purview of Five Fingers. The myriad piers and docks of the city combined with its rampant crime make it all but impossible to regulate the goods and people passing through the region, including the movements of well-armed mercenaries and privateers.

THE WARRENS

One of the most unusual settlements on the fringes of the Olgunholt is the Warrens. This location was once the site of endless crowded slave pens built in a narrow gorge as part of a stone quarry. The buildings were hollowed out and constructed in tight quarters as the quarry was excavated. Although the pens were abandoned and largely destroyed during the Scourge, a bewildering maze of alleyways remained and were repopulated in subsequent years by Ord's outcasts. Today the Warrens host desperate gangs of bandits that regularly fight for dominance over the ruins. The Warrens are a popular hideout for those wanted by the law, and the Warrens have attracted some of Ord's most dangerous and notorious criminals despite their proximity to the capital. Warrenfolk speak a dialect of Ordic called "hoveltongue." They consider themselves independent of the Ordic throne and have been left to their own governance. The settlement is noted for producing fierce knife-fighters, rogues, and stealthy assassins, as well as the occasional sorcerer. A number of Thamarite cults are said to favor its byways and interconnected underground cellars.

The section of the Dragon's Tongue stretching from just west of Tarna to the Bay of Stone is called the Serpent Gorge, an area where the river widens considerably before it empties into the sea. This waterway can accommodate surprisingly large ships, although most ocean-based shipping berths at Five Fingers and transfers cargo to smaller and shallower-bottomed river boats. Locals living in small towns north of the gorge are grateful for the width of the river at that point, because across the bay on the southern shore is the looming forest called the Gnarls, one of Cygnar's most formidable wilderness regions. Nonetheless, it is not unknown for hostile creatures from that forest to venture into southern Ord to menace the nearest townships. Several large and belligerent trollkin kriels inhabit the northern Gnarls and occasionally intercept smaller riverboats demanding tithes for safe passage.

While Moorgrav Conor Lochlan rules Hetha, he has shown little ability to exercise power and the lesser nobles of the grav do as they please. This disregard has been exacerbated by the heavy hand played by the king in local affairs. Some fear that Lochlan's recent marriage into the Mateu family could have unpredictable and dangerous repercussions, bringing greater influence from the great houses into the region.

It is worth noting that while there is limited Ordic Army presence in the grav, and only a token force of the Ordic Navy in Carre Dova, the city of Five Fingers is a mercenary haven without equal. While such forces have never been properly catalogued or registered, some outside observers believe there is a greater concentration of independent armed might in the city than anywhere in western Immoren. Those forces include multiple sizable and extremely well-armed mercenary companies as well as several significant privateer and pirate fleets, and the countless gang members and skilled enforcers making up the criminal empires of the high captains.

HETHA GRAV

Largest Ethnic Groups: Thurian majority, small Tordoran minority

Predominant Religions: Morrowan majority, Menite minority, suspected Devourer worship in the Olgunholt

Important Cities: Carre Dova, Five Fingers

Significant Towns (not on the map): Broghmor, Caarnloch, Gleannbri, Iniscrag, Kilmare, Laglogh, Lagullen, Lhen, Mooragh, Narey, Raadmor, Tamaris

Lord: Moorgrave Conor Lochlan

The moorgrave of Hetha inherited a desolate and drafty castle, called a "tower house," on the peninsula east of Carre Dova from which his family has long governed the region. Lochlan belongs to an unusually austere sect of Morrowans heeding the teachings of Ascendant Rowan. He donated much of his wealth to charity and is convinced his ancestral lands have grown corrupt and evil. He shuns his familial wealth, while also feeling it is his duty to make use of his power and position to make amends. Lochlan is utterly scandalized by the state of Five Fingers, which he blames on the Cathors. He has been an outspoken critic of King Baird II, who seems to tolerate his diatribes with good humor.

Lochlan recently entered into a political marriage with Malatesta of House Mateu, a land owner and former widow as apparently concerned with the state of Hetha as he. Despite the reputation of her family, she has proven to be an ardent ally and has recommended her relatives for posts in local government to assist in reform. He has a troubled relationship with Lupo Silva, castellan of Carre Dova, who, while technically subordinate to him, pretends the moorgrave does not exist. Lochlan is a grim and taciturn man who dresses plainly in blacks and grays and is in the habit of quoting passages from the Enkheiridion to elucidate his points.

Seat: Sowagh Tower House, southeast of Carre Dova

CARRE DOVA

Ruler: Castellan Lupo Silva

Population: 68,000 Thurians, 7,000 Tordorans, 1,500 gobbers, 1,000 trollkin

Military Presence: Carre Dova has a garrison of nearly 1,000 marines and maintains a watch of 350 city guards. The Royal Navy conducts regular patrols of the Bay of Stone from Carre Dova, while additional naval forces from Berck watch the Shearwater Narrows.

Description: Carre Dova is a city of architectural contrasts. Many of its buildings have black stone foundations dating back to the Orgoth Occupation, but are topped by recent construction of smooth, whitewashed brick or age-silvered cedar. The city is protected from the sea by the Meredesco, an enormous, beautifully built stone seawall over two thousand years old. Along the docks of its port are long lines of ships, although Carre Dova's waterfront lacks the frenzied bustle of other cities along the coast. It is not a city frequented as heavily by those conducting commerce with cargo-laden vessels; such merchants prefer the markets of Five Fingers or Berck. Rather, it is favored by wealthy Thurians interested in purchasing customized sailing vessel or purebred horses. For this reason, merchants in the city conduct trade in the sorts of luxuries its inhabitants prefer.

Carre Dova has a long maritime history and is noted for some of the region's finest shipwrights, most practicing older traditions passed down through the generations. The sleek and swift sailing ships of Carre Dova serve well as interception vessels, appreciated by the more discriminating privateers and pirate-hunters who prefer speed and quality over sheer size and raw firepower. The city's other claim to fame is for horses renowned for their speed that are bred north of the city and sold at its markets.

In general, those who live in Carre Dova consider themselves refined examples of what it means to be Thurian, a stark contrast to the poor folk elsewhere in Hetha grav or the criminals of Five Fingers. Carre Dova's streets are kept clean, and its estates are well built and maintained with pride. Its residents generally enjoy a higher standard of living than that of most of their countrymen, and they prefer to keep things that way, discouraging the poor from settling in the city. Such standards have a price, however, and the goods and services acquired at Carre Dova come at a premium.

Carre Dova is located on the shores of the Bay of Stone behind a series of sand bars that have accumulated against the harbor's great seawall; in more ancient times it was a thriving port town and a great center of learning. Since the invention of the steam engine revolutionized maritime travel, trade has diminished in Carre Dova as the harbor has become shallower from sediment collecting inside the wall's periphery with each passing year. Larger deeper-drafting ships cannot navigate Carre Dova's harbor without running aground, and steamships that do not have to rely on the wind can simply travel between Five Fingers and Berck or Ceryl without landing at Carre Dova. Larger ships must now land at crude new docks attached to the outside of the seawall, and their crews must carry any cargo to the city's markets by wagon down a road built on top of the wall. The upper surface of the Meredesco is paved with brick,

and the inner structure is riddled with passages and hidden rooms. Rebels used these rooms as meeting places during the Occupation, and the inner walls bear markings from that time.

Years of harvesting trees for shipbuilding has left modern Carre Dova in the midst of open plains with only a few thin copses of trees scattered miles apart. Most of the city's wood now comes from the Olgunholt. Carre Dova's surrounding plains are home to herds of Cardovar horses; the steeds, prized throughout the west for their speed and spirit, love to run and do so without complaint for as long as their riders spur them onward. Many tell tales of messengers carrying urgent news riding their Cardovars swiftly for so long that—when they reached their destinations and stopped urging their mount onward—the steeds' hearts gave out.

FIVE FINGERS, PORT OF DECEIT

Ruler: Lord Governor Eilish Doyle

Population: 120,000 Thurians, 22,000 Tordorans, 6,000 gobbers, 4,000 Midlunders, 3,500 Scharde, 3,000 Radiz, 2,500 Caspians, 2,500 Ryn, 2,000 trollkin, 1,500 Sinari, 1,000 Morridane, 1,000 Umbreans, 500 Khards

Military Presence: Five Fingers has a small Royal Navy presence, although the city is a favorite port for military personnel on leave. There are 860 members of the Fingers Watch, who are possessed of varying degrees of morale, loyalty, and training.

Description: Five Fingers is the infamous Port of Deceit, a city of intrigue and industry scattered across several rocky islands where the Dragon's Tongue River spills out into the Bay of Stone. The city earned its name from the five channels or "fingers" of the river's mouth that empty into the bay, creating channels between the islands. Five Fingers is a bastion of corruption, a mercenary haven, a pirates' den, and a gambler's paradise without equal. It is a city offering all manner of pleasures for those with the coin to spend, and a place where any commodity can be bought or sold.

The city is dominated by the criminal underworld and governed by a labyrinthine bureaucracy, brutal street laws, and a complex system of graft. Lord Governor Eilish Doyle is the titular ruler of the city but he must maintain an uneasy relationship with the high captains, the crime lords of Five Fingers, to allow the city to prosper.

While the lord governor sees to the legitimate administration of the city, the high captains keep the criminal elements in line, providing authority to which gang leaders, privateers, and smugglers must answer, allowing the steady flow of illicit commerce. Working together, they are able to solve most problems facing the city, and between the governor's control over the city's legal processes and the high captains' influence outside the law, little escapes their grasp.

It is something of an open secret that the crime bosses operating in Five Fingers pay a handsome tithe directly into the Bandit King's coffers. So long as coin continues to flow, the king has turned a blind eye to much of the illegal activity taking place in the city.

The struggles between the high captains define many aspects of life in Five Fingers. The high captains sometimes work together on shared interests, but more often are at odds as they struggle for control over specific districts where the extortion racket makes up a substantial portion of their income.

Dozens of islands make up Five Fingers, but the city is primarily built upon five main channel islands and bordered to the north by the high, steep cliffs of the Bold Shore. Atop those cliffs and near the roadway is housing that is still counted nominally as part of the city. The Bold Channel sweeps north of Bellicose Island, and along with its southern counterpart, the Heir's Channel, the waterways are the deepest inlets to the Dragon's Tongue River. Larger ships that ply both the ocean and the river come through these channels, which are kept clear of debris.

King's Channel is the central finger, sweeping south of Doleth Island and Chaser Island and north of Captain's Isle. It is deep but its currents are treacherous and known for dangerous eddies and tidal whirlpools. Only expert pilots attempt to navigate the channel when the tide is on the move, but it is safe at other times.

Last are the Broken Finger and Choked Finger Channels. Both are tight and difficult to navigate but also lead to several populous islands. A series of rocky strips and sandbars wait to wreck or bottom out any vessel that tries them. Smugglers favor Choked Finger to the south with their smaller and nimbler ships. By contrast, larger warehouses and trade groups are located in the northern and central islands, given the easier access to the larger ships that ply the northern fingers.

Bellicose Island is the northernmost island, commonly called Bull Island. It is the best laid out and most easily-traversed of the islands, since it was rebuilt after the great fire of 458 AR. A wide stone bridge connects it to the Bold Shore and the Western Tradeway. Originally established by the Orgoth, the road provides the most direct route for land caravans heading elsewhere in Ord. West of Bellicose is Squall Isle, which is known mostly for its lighthouse that marks the division of the northern channels for incoming ships at night or in thick fog. The rocky island is largely uninhabited. In the midst of the Heir's Finger channel that runs south of Squall and Bellicose rest the sparsely populated Three Maidens islands. They are used primarily as waypoints for the bridges between the major islands, though the western Maiden is a coal resupply point for steamships.

Between the Heir's and King's Fingers Channels are several significant islands. Headmost and Blackstone Islands are the westernmost of them. Doleth Island is the westward of a pair of islands called the "Twins," linked closely by bridge and rigging. Chaser Island is the eastern twin. Connected to Chaser by a small island called the Hump is Bellow's Isle. Despite its size, Blackstone is sparsely settled, except for the quarry and labor prison maintained there. Headmost Island dips below the ocean's surface at high tide, so buildings upon it are erected atop stilts. Perhaps the most famous island is Doleth, also called "Dicer's Isle" or "Bolis Isle." It is the location where Scion Bolis ascended to Thamar in 271 AR.

Chaser Island is noted for its markets, which sell produce and locally made goods such as tools and weapons forged on neighboring Bellows Isle. Unfortunately, the high captains' turf wars spill over into the streets here and disrupt the lives of regular citizens.

Captain's Isle is the largest and most populous island, and the center of government in Five Fingers. The offices of the lord governor and his bureaucrats and the Fingers Watch headquarters are located there. Nearly sixty thousand live on the island, and ten thousand or more come in daily for work. The high captains struggle among themselves for control of various districts, but do so carefully and subtly, since the island's trade and business are essential to the city. The island is also home to the largest and most popular entertainment districts.

The last major island is Hospice Island, named after its function during the Beggar's Plague of 536 AR. Even today it is crowded with the sick and the poor, who live in squalid conditions and suffer from outbreaks of disease. Most of the city's population avoids Hospice Island, save for the brave priests who live thereupon and try to improve health conditions.

There are many other small islands that lack the prominence of the larger islands but still help make up the whole of Five Fingers. Some of them exist only as hazards to navigation, like Hullgrinder Island and the Drowned Isle. Others are claimed by various interests, such as Crane Island, which is an artificial island that caters to a number of mercenary companies. Blackstone Island is both a prison and a quarry, while Bellows Island hosts many smithies and machine shops. Most of the remaining small islands are the homes of fishermen, particularly those less successful than the fishers of Headmost, or they hold distilleries, smithies, or small fortresses.

Five Fingers sprung up without planning during several bursts of growth over the years, and its streets and alleyways meander without purpose, dead-end into cul-de-sacs, or narrow until the road vanishes between leaning buildings. The city was a stronghold for the Orgoth during the Occupation and a number of their old structures still exist below the street level of the largest islands, connected by dark passages. Walkways, gangways, and bridges connect the buildings; many of the upper-level walkways and rope bridges are made from old salvage from ships' rigging. Entire networks of such precarious structures have been connected over the larger islands to form "the Rigs," lurching neighborhoods that tower above the streets of almost every island. The Rigs are favored havens for the city's numerous gobbers and bogrin.

The city is policed by the Fingers Watch, an organization that is overwhelmed at the best of times but which is vital to the health of the city. Underpaid, under-trained, and overworked, most of its watchmen lack for necessary equipment and discipline due to insufficient funding. Most of the funding for the watch comes

THE FOUR HIGH CAPTAINS

The high captains are the criminal overlords of Five Fingers. Each one commands a vast syndicate of gangs, corrupt business ventures, and allied organizations. The high captains have a piece of virtually all the criminal rackets in Five Fingers and are responsible for order among their kind. No matter how big or small the operation, everyone pays a tithe to the Captains. They form a de facto city council that sets policy for the criminals operating in the Fingers, but they are also perpetually at odds with one another. The Captains are always working to increase their own power in the city while diminishing the strength of their rivals. The current high captains are Banek Hurley, Durgan Kilbride, Jannish Riordan, and Velter Waernuk.

Banek Hurley is the most influential high captain, in large part due to his connection to King Baird. Hurley is a former pirate captain notorious for leading his crew to mutiny during his stint in the Royal Navy. King Baird pardoned Hurley in 594 AR, which earned the king much mistrust among the navy. It was no coincidence, however, that Hurley seized power from High Captain Wortun, an outspoken enemy of the king. Passionate and cunning, Hurley retains his natural ability to charm and persuade. With age has come wisdom and an ability to restrain his rashness, making him more formidable than ever. The man is capable and quick to seize opportunities, a consummate gambler who knows the odds and rarely loses a bet. Hurley is in charge of collecting and delivering the king's tithe from the other high captains. His territories include the Emerald District and much of Captain's Isle, and he also controls the Rivergravs, the city's most important arteries of trade.

Durgan Kilbride is a bristling, bearded, red-haired mountain of a man. Born to wealth in Carre Dova, Kilbride served time in the Royal Navy before moving on to Five Fingers, where he became a sea captain and a privateer. Having amassed a great price on his head, Kilbride retired from the sea and laid claim to Anchor Island, which he turned into his own private fortress. Kilbride still has influence over the sea trade, an area in which he competes with Captain Riordan. Although he has nowhere near the amount of manpower as Riordan, Kilbride and his people are all highly dangerous and it's likely that warfare will soon erupt between his forces and Riordan's.

Jannish Riordan began his career as a mercenary working for companies across western Immoren. Moving to Five Fingers while in the employ of High Captain Nielson, Riordan murdered him and took over his organization, quickly rising to become the second most influential crime lord in the city. High Captain Riordan has managed to cultivate a reputation as a mild mannered man of good breeding. He blends well into high society and maintains a number of legitimate businesses. Riordan has a controlling interest on Bull's Island and the Dockgrav district that dominates ocean-based shipping. He has also earned the friendship of Lord Governor Doyle and uses that connection to push against Hurley's influence in Chaser's market district, the North Rivergrav, and Hundred Smokes. A gifted schemer and manipulator, Riordan challenges Hurley in ways that no other high captain can.

A black-hearted old man, High Captain Velter Waernuk is a thoroughly dangerous and disreputable cutthroat. A former pirate captain, Waernuk sailed into Five Fingers in 589 AR and seized the Wake Isles with the aid of his crew. He has since proven to be the bloodiest of the high captains and has clashed with his rivals ever since. Waernuk nurses a particular hatred for Banek Hurley, and it seems likely with the years wearing on him that he will attempt to take down Hurley before age or treachery claims him first. Waernuk, a Scharde, still maintains close connections with his old crew and periodically threatens his rivals with their return. What is certain is that Waernuk trades in bodies and may also have contacts in Cryx through Blackwater.

from levies on the residences in each district, but the funding is not shared across the islands and so the watch in the poorer districts is underfunded and prone to corruption. Accordingly, more than half of the watch is confined to Bull's Island and Captain's Isle. A nominal watch presence is maintained in every district, but in the poorer areas it consists of little more than a few volunteers watching for local fires or answering specific requests for help if they can. Most of Hospice Isle, Squall Isle, and the Wake Isles, as well as a large portion of Dicer's Isle, go without patrols entirely. The watch's job is to maintain public order, but the volunteers are reluctant to confront dangerous or well-armed troublemakers.

If one thing ties the disparate islands and people of the city together it is the web of conspiracy that permeates every level of Five Fingers society. Fingers is a favored city of King Baird, who finds its atmosphere convenient for conducting the clandestine negotiations by which he rules his nation. The gambling hall and tavern known as the Laden Galleon has become King Baird's home away from the capital, and the quiet meetings in its depths can affect the political landscape of the kingdom. His agents lurk in the shadows of the city, keeping the king safe and his plots secure while unraveling those of his rivals. Both the Greylords and Khador's Section Three are known to use Five Fingers to stage operations in Cygnar, and each group maintains safe houses throughout the city. Cryx conducts business in Five Fingers through Scharde smugglers and pirates, using the port to quietly move goods and agents onto the mainland.

But no clandestine groups hold more power in the city than the Thamarite cults that have penetrated almost every aspect of Five Finger's society. Like the criminal element, the cults find Five Fingers more accommodating than most cities in western Immoren. Among the most influential of septs active in Five Fingers is the Shroud, a group of powerful necromancers who work to hunt down lost Thamarite relics, such as the remains of Scion Bolis, one of the most important figures in the city's history.

MURIO

Murio is a rugged northern grav governed from Midfast, the region's largest city. Murio also encompasses the Scarswall and Boarsgate fortresses along with most of the Murata Hills demarking the northern border of Ord. It is a crucial strategic region well defended by the Ordic Army, but is generally considered the poorest of the three Tordoran-held gravs. Murio is ruled by Lord Castellan Ostal Vascar, General of the Shield Division and Commander of Midfast.

One of the most impressive and obvious features of the Murata Hills is the Markuswall, a great span of defensive fortifications built into the naturally imposing geography of the region. These stone and earthworks battlements were constructed over the span of eight years following the Siege of Midfast in 305 AR and once ran the entire length of the Murata Hills, from the Windwater Lakes in the west almost to Fellig in the east. The wall was once over eight feet thick and twelve feet tall for its entire length, with a glacis and a deep ditch filled with rows of pointed stakes. Supported by the primary fortresses of Scarswall and Boarsgate, the wall hosted a score of smaller fortifications and watchtowers along its length. Unfortunately, the Markuswall was never adequately garrisoned and by the late 400s much of it fell into disrepair. The condition of the wall worsened when its stone was scavenged by northern locals for other construction. Today the Markuswall remains the most formidable near Midfast and the major fortifications. The onset of the Llaelese War prompted the Ordic Army to invest in restoring some portions of the wall, but it remains a patchwork affair. The hills in the region still form the best barrier against northern invasion.

The Murata Hills are dotted with numerous small townships and villages. The standard of living in these settlements is meager and hard. The castellans who control these lands are likewise poor, albeit no less proud. Several quarries operating in the region have profited from the need for fresh stone to erect new Ordic fortresses on the eastern border. Otherwise, a number of small and struggling mining operations labor in the hills, producing a trickle of ore essential for Ordic industry. It is thought by many that there are untapped resources here, but such finds have proven elusive. Several lesser merchant houses have gambled on establishing new mines only to go bankrupt. Some of these abandoned mines have been inhabited by wild bogrin or other opportunistic creatures.

Despite these failures, the Ordic crown remains eager to expand mining operations in the grav and has invested in surveying for more reliable supplies of iron in particular. The last major iron mines in Murio were depleted during the development and expansion of Ord's railway network. These endeavors were deemed worthy investments but left other industries lacking and forced Ord to import materials from abroad.

Other efforts have been more successful. Surveyors hired by the Order of the Golden Crucible have discovered useful deposits of minerals required for producing blasting powder. The Crucible, now based in Midfast, is expected to bring additional wealth to the region, including money from locally produced alchemical products, military contracts, and taxes on dues gathered from the larger organization, which has many thriving branches in Cygnar.

While most of Murio is made up of the northern hills, the grav also contains the sheltered lands south of them, including several large and profitable farmlands and pastures held by prestigious castellans. The best farmlands are north of Lake Vannogear, although even those are a mix of useful soil and boggy regions unfit for planting. Those areas do contain peat, but only in amounts sufficient to meet local needs.

MURIO GRAV

Largest Ethnic Groups: Tordoran majority, sizable Thurian minority (mostly soldiers)

Predominant Religions: Morrowan majority, Menite minority

Important Cities: Midfast

Significant Towns (not on the map): Borrasco, Cardrona, Colina, Gatoa, Matos, Mendo, Nementra, Stuggado, Vargo

Lord: Lord Castellan Ostal Vascar, General of the Shield Division and Commander of Midfast

Usually referred to simply as "the General," Vascar is a veteran campaigner and a military man through and through. He has earned enormous respect among the men and is a natural born leader. His aptitude for drawing loyal soldiers to him has made him enemies among jealous castellans who covet his lands. The General is forty-six years old and is considered by some too young for such an important station—Commander of Midfast is the most prestigious post in the army next to the General of the Ordic Army, presently held by Prince Baird Cathor III. Before his promotion, Vascar spent time with a special battalion assigned to protect coastal villages from Cryxian raiders, and he saw his share of bloodshed and horrors on those patrols. Not only does Vascar have Prince Baird III as a friend and the king's oldest daughter Princess Carlutia as a wife, but he also has the king's implicit trust.

Seat: Keep of Shields, Midfast

MIDFAST

Ruler: Lord Castellan Ostal Vascar, General of the Shield Division and Commander of Midfast

Population: 105,000 Tordorans, 78,000 Thurians, 6,000 Ryn, 1,000 Morridane, hundreds of ogrun, dwarves, gobbers, Midlunders, Morridane, Caspians, Khards, Kossites, and Umbreans

Military Presence: Midfast is the regional headquarters of the Ordic Army's shield division and is home to 75,000 soldiers.

Description: Midfast, the renowned Shield of Ord, is considered essential to the integrity of Ord's northern border and is the headquarters of the largest garrison of the Ordic Army. The city has experienced a booming revitalization in the last few years, enjoying a burst of prosperity directly proportional to the strife affecting the region beyond Ord's borders. As military readiness has increased, so has Ordic treasury spending here to bolster defenses, bringing engineers to modernize its fortifications and alchemists to expand its arsenal. The recent establishment of the Order of the Golden Crucible in the city combined with its status as the gateway to trade with Khador and Rhul has brought commerce and new people flowing into Midfast like never before.

Over the centuries Midfast has withstood the brunt of multiple Khadoran sieges, each time forcing back the armies of the Motherland and keeping Ord free of invasion. The city occupies one of the few large canyon passes through the difficult and craggy Murata Hills. The Markuswall, which extends both west and east for many miles, enhances this natural barrier. The nearest sections of the wall are well maintained and regularly patrolled. The west side of the city is built against high cliffs, and massive walls surround it. The Orlovsk Highway passes the city, exposing any who would traverse the road to Midfast's great fortifications and vast cannon batteries. A large eastern ravelin offers additional firepower, and together these defenses ensure that none may pass unless Midfast wills it. The walls of Midfast proudly bear countless scars from centuries of siege.

While Midfast has become a bustling city, the army dominates much of the activity and industry here. A sizable portion of the city's civilian population makes its living in support of the garrison. Although the nation is not currently at war, Ord is in a state of high alert to ensure that the fighting between Cygnar and Khador does not spill across its own borders. Lord Castellan Ostal Vascar oversees the defense of the northern border and coordinates the troops from Midfast, and he has also extended the protection of the army to the Cygnaran city of Fellig. Military couriers and supply caravans pass through the city continuously, adding to Midfast's martial air.

Contributing to the traffic through the city is a steady stream of pilgrims coming to Midfast to visit the Cathedral of the Valiant Martyrs and the Tomb of Ascendant Markus, both dedicated to the Ordic hero who ascended here during the

Border Wars. Pious Morrowan soldiers of all nations regularly visit the relatively rustic and subdued cathedral and solemn tomb to pay their respects. Markus is an extremely important figure to the defenders of Midfast, who see him as the divinely appointed protector of Ord.

Midfast is also the main thoroughfare employed by those profiting from trade with Khador and Rhul. Ord has become a hub for goods from these nations which can be sold from here to markets across western Immoren. All Khadoran travelers are scrutinized closely while in the city, and locals who are not reliant on the visitors' coin treat them with minimal courtesy. Indeed, since the onset of the recent wars, relations between Ordic and Khadoran merchants have become even more strained. Still, the new market possibilities have offered opportunities for those who can put aside their distaste, and a growing number of Ordic merchants are willing to accept Khadoran coin and goods.

A major recent boon to the city was the relocation of headquarters of the Order of the Golden Crucible to Midfast. King Baird negotiated to establish the main offices of the powerful organization in Ord, offering longstanding contracts for blasting powder and munitions to help modernize the Ordic Army. The Midfast Weapons Foundry was expanded and transformed into the new headquarters of the Golden Crucible, a walled and heavily guarded complex of laboratories, warehouses, and smithies. Alchemical research and the production of weapons based on those discoveries both occur at the foundry.

The order's presence has brought new jobs and attracted hundreds of foreign-born members of the order and their families to the city. It also prompted the rise of secondary businesses and gunwerks. It is expected that in short order Midfast will become the destination of choice for private buyers seeking quality firearms, ammunition, artillery, and other modern weapons. Several of the large mercenary outfits based in Ord have come calling to negotiate contracts.

Despite the military air of the city, and the racket of firearm and cannon testing from the nearby hills, the people of Midfast believe in living a full life. While soldiers are grim and serious while manning the walls, they cut loose when off-duty. The city has a large number of establishments to facilitate this, including taverns, gambling halls, bordellos, and small underground arenas for pit fighting. These businesses are more discrete than the establishments in cities like Five Fingers, but suffice to provide both citizens and soldiers ample diversion.

TORDORO

Tordoro is the heart of Ord, the most prestigious and prosperous of its territories, which includes the capital city of Merin and Lake Vannogear. It is a fertile region, noted for its productive farmlands, numerous grazing pastures, and useful woods. Ord's most influential castellans own lands in this region and maintain their extensive cattle herds, long a source of wealth for the Tordorans. Along the river near Merin are the kingdom's richest coal beds, stripped and mined to support industry. Tordoro includes the ancestral lands of the Cathors, and is governed by Prince Baird Cathor III.

BOARSGATE AND SCARSWALL

Boarsgate—This rough-hewn stone fastness was built to reinforce the most vulnerable tract of low ground within the rugged Murata Hills that define most of Ord's northern border. A fortress has stood at the site as long as Ordfolk can remember. Constructed from turf and timber in ancient times, it was rebuilt after the Corvis Treaties into an imposing squat keep with sloping walls engineered to deflect cannon fire. Being relatively close to Midfast, the fortress is expected to hold its own if attacked and to send advance warning to the city of approaching forces. Historically the soldiers of Midfast have refused to be drawn out of their position by assaults on Boarsgate, and the fortress has fallen more than once to Khador only to be retaken at great cost in lives. As a result, soldiers have nicknamed it "Bloodgate." The soldiers who guard Boarsgate realize that they would face insurmountable odds if ever seriously challenged, so they train for every contingency, fortifying and manning the fastness with seasoned scouts, expert riflemen, swift horsemen, and veteran hill fighters.

Scarswall—This fortress stands watch on the western half of the Murata Hills just as Boarsgate guards the east. Scarswall is in better repair than Boarsgate, since its battlements have been less tested by attacks from the north. The hills near Corbhen are difficult to traverse, especially undetected, but Khador's troops have invaded the region before. Scarswall, however, has never fallen. The soldiers of the fortress are more vigilant than ever in the current climate. Those versed in Ordic history know Khador does not fear fighting a war on two fronts. Recently several advanced telescopes have been installed at Scarswall as an experiment by the Ordic Naval Engineers in the hopes of helping watch over lakes Vannogear and Moskrad, as well as the long stretch of plains to the north. Several prominent Ordic astronomers have been given permission by the Ordic Army to borrow these telescopes for celestial observations.

While the capital of Merin was first built in the years following the Corvis Treaties, Tordoro has a rich and ancient history. The original Kingdom of Tordor encompassed Lake Vannogear and the Rohannor River, with the keeps of the ancient Tordorans built along the banks and stretching to the sea. Most castles were lost during the Orgoth Occupation, but the families that descended from those early castellans remember, and have rebuilt their estates in the style of old Tordor. Merin is an unusual capital in that it is a relatively small city with a limited permanent population, yet built to support the large gatherings that periodically happen here. The region around Merin is home to many outlying townships and villages centered around the

fortified holdings of the kingdom's most prestigious castellans. Each has its own character and local specialties. These towns are home to most of Tordoro's population and its people frequently come together in Merin for that city's numerous festivals and gatherings.

More than elsewhere in Ord, the people here have long memories, and the rivalries between the powerful families of Tordoro are deeply ingrained. Generally their conflicts play out in the politics of the capital, but armed duels and generational feuds are not uncommon. The streets of Merin, where these sometimes bitter enemies must come into close proximity, are occasionally disrupted by this violence, while at other times skirmishes take place more discretely among the hills and pastures of the grav.

Standing serenely and calmly aloof from the strife and politics of its neighbors is the Monastery of Ascendant Gordenn which is situated on a choice piece of land northwest of the capital and to the southwest of the lake. This most popular and beloved of Morrowan figures is said to have ascended here, and to have worked from this region to provide relief to the great drought which afflicted much of western Immoren during his lifetime. This site is often visited by pilgrims, and a large majority of Ordic farmers pay regular respects to this ascendant. The monastery is noted for its well-reputed vineyard and brewery, producing wine and ales that are favored far and wide. The monks have innovated new strains of crops that are resistant to the vagaries of the weather. On occasion its priests are called upon to provide agricultural advice, but also to intervene as peaceful emissaries amid the feuding castellans.

The region includes a small stretch bordering Khador, but is otherwise bound on the north by the great inland lake, Vannogear. A number of towns line the southern edge of the lake, and also the river that winds southwest toward Cosetio. As much as the castellans here might clash among themselves, they feel some solidarity in their loathing of the castellans of that grav. There has long been bad blood between the great houses of Berck and those rooted near Merin, drawn in part from the conflicts between the Cathors and the Mateus. The southern edge of the grav includes a small strip of the Olgunholt, an area that is tamer and more amenable to logging than the deeper woods.

The coal deposits along the Rohannor River are among the grav's most important but also most controversial assets. The disposition of these deposits makes them difficult to mine by conventional means, requiring more destructive techniques which tear up the land and leave deep and lasting scars. Several areas have been exploited this way, but what is produced is insufficient to meet the needs of the industry in Merin and Berck, as well as the demands of the nation's rail network. Individual land holders have been reluctant to allow the expansion of these operations and blood has been shed between the retainers of castellans and those serving the coal industry for intrusions on lands where surveyors are not welcome. A variety of ingenious engineers are working on techniques to solve this problem, as the Ordic crown has offered a prize to whomever can develop a practical means to mine these deposits without destroying important pastures and farmland.

TORDORO GRAV

Largest Ethnic Groups: Tordoran majority, Thurian minority

Predominant Religions: Morrowan majority, Menite minority

Important Cities: Merin

Significant Towns (not on the map): Aranha, Argento, Bergisamo, Briallos, Cabrala, Castelo Barros, Castelo Cathor, Castelo Sombra, Desolado, Monte Novo, Paredes, Rios, Tristeza, Torrerato

Lord: Prince Baird Cathor III, Lord Castellan of Tordoro, Commanding General of the Ordic Army, Heir to the Throne of Ord

The eldest son of the king, Baird III is arguably the second most powerful and important individual in the realm, although many would suggest that Izabella Mateu has that distinction. In some eras the lord castellan of this grav has been overshadowed by the power of the king in the capital. But under Baird II, this has not come to pass. The king spends little time in Merin or attending to the noise and furor of his castellans. This has left governance of Tordoro firmly in the hands of his capable son. Baird III is widely respected and has made a positive impression on most nobles, in particular for his capable command of the Ordic Army. There are many who see in his son the refined qualities and a dignified demeanor they found lacking in the father.

For the same reasons, the king and the prince are constantly at odds over the best way to rule the realm—they have entirely dissimilar temperaments. Baird III is a sober-minded and forthright man more comfortable with the strict and well-defined rules of castellan society and the military chain of command than the deceptions and uneasy alliances of his father's politics. Those allies of the Cathors who respect the subtle and devious mind of Baird II worry that his son may not be suited for the deadly game of court intrigue. Baird II has tried to accustom his heir to the pragmatic needs of the office, but finds his son has developed a stubborn sense of honor out of keeping with the needs of the modern era. Where the two do agree is on the need to modernize the Ordic Army, and efforts toward this end have gone well, particularly with convincing the Order of the Golden Crucible to relocate to Midfast, an accomplishment Baird III helped facilitate.

Seat: Castelo Cathor, on the south shore of Lake Vannogear Merin, although the prince spends much of his time in Merin.

MERIN

Ruler: Viceroy Raul Costa, in service to King Baird Cathor II

Population: 46,000 Tordorans, 15,000 Thurians, 5,000 Rhulfolk, 2,500 Ryn, 2,000 ogrun, 1,000 Gobbers, hundreds of trollkin, Midlunders, Morridane, Caspians, Khards, Kossites, and Umbreans.

Military Presence: Merin is garrisoned by a brigade of the Stone Division. The Royal Palace is defended by 200 elite royal guards. The Merin Watch numbers around 300, sufficient for normal peacekeeping but utterly inadequate during festivals and the High Gathering.

Description: Despite being the capital, Merin is often overshadowed by Ord's more populous cities such as Midfast, Berck, and even Five Fingers. A strong rivalry is evident between the residents of Berck and Merin—most citizens of Berck believe their city should be the capital instead. Merin thrives nonetheless, situated as it is in the epicenter of the kingdom's most fertile farmland along the Rohannor River and having first access to its coal deposits. The relatively small city is centrally located within a region that includes hundreds of thousands of Ordfolk living in outlying townships nearer the lake and along the river.

Located geographically at the center of all of Ord's major cities, Merin profits as a trade hub. All roads and railways lead to Merin, and this flow of people and goods is supplemented by river trade between Lake Vannogear and Berck. The population of the city regularly quadruples or more for major seasonal festivals and holidays, as well as for gatherings when the nobles of Ord meet at the Hall of Castellans to debate matters of national interest. The contrast in the city between its usual calm and sedate demeanor and the chaos during these great gatherings is stark. Some of the local aristocracy avoid the festivals altogether, instead retreating from the city to remote estates to avoid the crush of the crowds together with the inevitable drunken revelry and violence between rival factions. The climate for political gatherings is different but no less volatile, with the well-armed retinues of the great families housed in close proximity.

Having been the location of Old Tordor and subsequently a major Orgoth stronghold, the city that once stood here was hit hard during the Rebellion. The foundations for modern Merin were laid after the Corvis Treaties with assistance from thousands of Rhulfolk who enjoyed the challenge of essentially building an entire city from scratch. The most important among them was Master Builder Dogen Orm who helped plan the city's layout. A statue of this dwarf stands in the Town Square next to one of King Merin Cathor I, and a tradition of Ordic stonemasonry and architecture persists in the city called the Dogen School.

For these reasons Merin is a well-plotted city, so well laid out that it unnerves those who come here after becoming accustomed to other, more haphazard urban centers of Ord. It is very easy to find one's way as the streets follow a series of grids, shifting at the river intersection. The government buildings around the town square are of solid construction and have survived the last four hundred years with little sign of wear. Here can be found the Grand Cathedral of the Harvest, which is home to the Vicarate Council in charge of administering to the Church of Morrow in Ord.

The adjacent Riverfront district is famed for its diverse shops, restaurants, playhouses, and the Tordoran Amphitheater. Not far from the city's center is the market district, where much of Merin's commerce occurs. The parade grounds around the government and market districts are generally pleasant and open to visitors during the day, but become packed and muddy lanes during major gatherings. The Fraternal Order of Wizardry maintains a stronghold adjacent to the market district. Led by High Magus and Castellan Lorcan Dromore, the Fraternal Order is an unobtrusive but influential group consulted by the king himself from time to time. In addition to creating the bulk of the steamjack cortexes required by the capital, the order's primary interest seems to be funding digs to unearth Orgoth relics from the nearby environs.

Looking down over the parade grounds is the Central District, home to the Royal Palace and a number of affluent estates. The palace is the official residence of the king and his household while in Merin, although the Cathors' ancestral lands are closer to Lake Vannogear. The palace is smaller and less impressive than those of the other capitals in the Iron Kingdoms, but is notable for the massive hedge maze that dominates the rear gardens. The maze is thought to be haunted since the daughter of Merin Cathor III became lost in the labyrinth and died in the winter in 270 AR. Numerous castellans maintain small local estates in this district for when duty calls them to the capital.

For Ord's nobility, the most important structure in the city is the Hall of Castellans located opposite the parade grounds from the Royal Palace. This large chamber features a domed ceiling supported by rows of thick fluted columns. Otherwise the chamber is open to the air, with no enclosing walls between the columns and thus making it subject to the vagaries of the weather. The central area includes a number of uncomfortable stone benches reserved for the castellans, thanes, and moorgraves of Ord, and it is here that issues of governance are debated. The outer regions of this chamber are open to the public, and it is common for citizens, lesser nobles, and others with an interest in the proceedings to gather to witness the spectacle of Ordic jurisprudence in action.

The business of governance in Ord is a messy and contentious affair, a fact that serves as entertainment for some who gather to witness. It is rare for any law to come to pass without vehement voices raised in opposition. In the case of controversial proposals, the hall fills with passionate and enraged castellans and thanes shouting to drown out the objections of their adversaries. Actual brawls and duels in the Hall of Castellans are not unknown, and in some cases have erupted into full riots as armed factions take their grievances to the streets. The city watch and royal guard of the palace will tolerate such disorder only briefly before quashing it, arresting any who refuse to surrender their arms. Given the social standing of the participants, there are rarely lasting repercussions from these arrests as combatants are held only long enough for tempers to cool.

While Merin is not a large city, its position at the center of Ord's commerce and government has drawn a diversity of people. Both Cygnar and Khador have embassies in the Central District, and there are small offices for many powerful groups that have business in Ord, including the Order of the Golden Crucible and

the Mercarian League. The city also supports sizable populations of many ethnicities and races. The Downriver District is a cramped region of twisty streets and small houses bewildering to humans, home to the majority of the city's gobbers. The city's thriving Rhulfolk and ogrun live in a northern neighborhood known as New Brunder. This is treated as a Rhulic enclave, where its citizens are allowed to self-govern.

WYTHMOOR

The least prestigious region in Ord, southeastern Wythmoor is a swampy and unpleasant stretch of land. It includes various small lowland communities, the Wythmoor for which it is named, the Dogwood (as the Olgunholt in known east of the Western Tradeway), the Molhado River, and the town of Tarna. Aside from logging for cork, this area has meager resources. Nearly all of its significant commerce comes from river trade passing through Tarna, together with the work of textile mills along the river. Moorgrave Caitlin Turlough rules Wythmoor, having recently inherited the grav following the accidental death of her father.

The Wythmoor has a reputation as a haunted and accursed place, a boggy swamp where strangers are unwelcome. All manner of unholy creatures are rumored to prowl the bog, particularly grymkin with malicious and cruel habits. The locals enjoy tales of rusalka, glowmoths, and other creatures that lure the witless to their deaths. Despite this, the Thurians who dwell here take rustic pride in the region and enjoy the discomfort outsiders feel here. This area also is also home to a relatively large number of gobbers, including both those living in the townships and small tribes of swamp gobbers comfortably dwelling in the moor itself. Gobbers are well integrated into communities and are treated with more friendliness by the bogfolk than they greet strangers among their own countrymen.

Living close to the Thornwood, and with the nearest large township being the Cygnaran city of Point Bourne, the locals are insular. Outside the smoking halls of Tarna where rumor-mongering is common, most of the people of Wythmoor do not pay much heed to what is happening elsewhere in Ord. Indeed they do not appear to have a clear idea of whether they are Cygnaran or Ordic citizens. In some cases confusion is understandable as there is considerable mixing between Wythmoor townships and woodsfolk living across the border in the Thornwood. A number of these individuals are reputed to participate in clandestine meetings during the dark or full moon, joining unsavory ceremonies led by the blackclads. As with all tales told by the people of Wythmoor, these should be taken with a grain of salt.

The region has been home to an abnormally high number of individuals born with the Gift. It is a matter of pride that during the Orgoth Occupation the first known sorcerer was born here. The inhabitants of Wythmoor refer to those touched by this legacy as having been born with "Thamar's Kiss." The people of Tarna in particular frequently inherit either the blessing or the curse of unusual powers.

While most of the people of Wythmoor claim to be Morrowans, the locals here prefer to see to their own spiritual needs. What priests pass through usually find themselves marked as outsiders and rarely stay for more than a few years before requesting transfer.

Recently awareness of the outside world has been imposed on the people here due to the Khadoran occupation of the Thornwood. While it is unlikely that Khadoran troops would march on Wythmoor, apprehension runs high among local militias across the grav. One reassurance has been additional Ordic Army presence in the region. Army engineers just completed Torre Wythmoor on the border, where a substantial garrison is maintained.

WYTHMOOR GRAV

Largest Ethnic Groups: Tordoran majority, Thurian minority

Predominant Religions: Large Morrowan majority, with suspected Thamarites and Devourer Wurm worshippers among the bogfolk.

Important Cities: Tarna

Significant Towns (not on the map): Athainne, Balachbane, Crithlach, Crommag, Currach, Doinionn, Drochmor, Dunmire, Garron, Kilinnis, Lodain, Moinbri, Raghan, Taummor, Whitnag

Lord: Moorgrave Caitlin Turlough

The Turlough family has ruled this land along the Dragon's Tongue River for many generations, though Caitlin only just inherited the grav from her father Gralan in late 607 AR. Gralan had a reputation for frivolous excesses, being more fond of hosting lavish parties and carousing with other nobles than governing. After one such night of excess he apparently fell off his horse and drowned in the bog between Torres Wythmoor and Tarna.

Most people of the grav were glad to see him buried, and they have rallied behind the young moorgrave. She is rumored to have a knack for the arcane; this has slightly darkened her reputation among the pious, but added a certain appeal with the locals in Tarna. Caitlin is a proud Thurian and has proven to be an effective advocate for her people in the Hall of Castellans. King Baird has voiced approval for her unflinching courage and allegedly attended the last High Gathering just to watch her lambast his pompous Tordoran rivals. Some of her subjects worry she is making enemies too quickly, while others insist it is past time Thurians had a strong presence in the capital.

Seat: Riverlord's Keep, an old fortress on an isolated hill along the river just northeast of Tarna.

While it is the smallest of Ord's major fortifications, Torre Wythmoor is situated to take advantage of the local terrain, built atop an artificial motte amid the moor and surrounded by swampy terrain. The only easy approach to the fortified tower is from the west. The regiment at Wythmoor is part of the Thorn Division; many of its soldiers are recruited from Wythmoor locals and thus knowledgeable in the vagaries of the local terrain. Colonel Sancia Durante is commanding officer here, a woman who is respected despite her Tordoran heritage by the predominantly Thurian soldiers making up her command. However, her forces are clearly insufficient to stand against the powerful Khadoran Army massed just east of the border. The hope remains that Khadoran forces will concentrate on their Cygnaran rivals rather than turning west.

TARNA

Ruler: Moorgrave Caitlan Turlough

Population: 21,000 Thurians, 3,500 Tordorans, 3,000 Ryn, 2,600 Gobbers, 1,400 Morridane, 1,100 Midlunders, 600 Arjun

Military Presence: Tarna is garrisoned by a single company of the Thorn Division and can call upon the garrison at Torre Wythmoor in times of need. It also maintains a force of 120 city guards and could muster a militia of a thousand volunteers.

Description: This ancient township has existed for nearly a thousand years at the place where the sluggish Molhado River flows from the moor into the Dragon's Tongue. A sprawling riverfront town, Tarna has an air of decay, with many seedy homes and storefronts showing years of ill-use and neglect. The busiest area of town is along the riverbank, with a dizzying assortment of small piers and docks. Set back from these are sagging warehouses and businesses tending to the cargo passing through. Tarna is not connected to the railway that unites the other major cities of the realm, requiring goods shipped overland to be sent by wagon along poorly maintained roads to Hearthstone and beyond. The area around the city receives high annual rainfall and its muddy streets are often drenched, its establishments accustomed to dealing with perpetually leaking roofs. Along the riverfront are also several huge factory-like textile mills, with stacks sending plumes of greasy smoke into the air.

After summer the heat and humidity leaves everything in a state of rot, although the more prosperous businesses make regular repairs to keep up appearances. The town is filled with dead-end alleys, dark corners, and smoky cigar shops where people gather to talk in whispers. The smoking halls are generally the most welcoming of Tarna's businesses, and it is here that people gather to hear rumors from abroad and to enjoy one of Tarna's most famous exports, its hooaga cigars. Tarna's nicest homes are farthest from the river, away from the tight alleyways and stacks of crowded housing nearer the waterfront. River trade is still an important part of the local economy, although it has suffered with the war bringing the eastern Dragon's Tongue into disputed hands.

After the Rebellion, Tarna became a center of textile manufacture. The heavy machinery needed to drive Tarna's industry attracted a number of engineers needed to service them. Among those engineers are many gobbers who brought with them their fondness for hooaga, which now grows in the fields surrounding Tarna. The city exports significant quantities of hooaga and the industry has grown to rival that of the city's textile mills. A number of gobbers have risen to prominence in Tarna working in the hooaga trade, giving them the chance to rise above their usual lot in life.

ORGANIZATIONS

HOUSE MATEU

House Mateu is one of the most powerful and influential castellan families. Its bloodline has twice held the throne of Ord, and among the Tordoran nobility, only House Cathor inspires more respect. This respect is tainted by fear, for the Mateus are well known for duplicity and treachery. House Mateu is Ord's largest, wealthiest merchant's house, a direct rival of Cygnar's powerful Mercarian League.

At present, the widow Castellan Izabella Mateu rules the family. A brilliant and vicious woman, she seeks to restore her family to preeminence by any means necessary. Her hatred of the Cathors and King Baird II in particular is well known among the Ordic court, though she is careful neither she nor her family ever commit demonstrably treasonous behavior. Before Izabella's rise to matriarch, poor decision making and outstanding debts had nearly presaged the demise of the Mateu trading empire, but her ruthlessness and genius rescued her house from the brink. Over the years she has spread her influence and ingratiated her family into every industry, merchant house, and trading partnership in Ord through threats, coercion, and coin.

Izabella's power is magnified by the alliances she forged between her kin and those of allies and potential rivals. To this end, she has used her four sons and five daughters as well as her extended family across the realm. Her influence is strongest in Berck, where her family and its mercantile empire are centered, but she also has direct family representatives in Carre Dova, Merin, and Five Fingers. Castellan Vaspar Mateu, her oldest living son, supervises Mateu interests in the capital as Izabella rarely leaves the family estate in Berck. In addition to representing the family in the Hall of Castellans, Vaspar holds council with Mateu allies in the region. He believes the king is an uncouth fool, and does not understand his mother's caution regarding him.

Stiata Mateu, Izabella's niece, is married to Lord Castellan Heiro Mascal, ruler of the Cosetio and the port city of Berck. As House Mateu has been embroiled in a mercantile struggle with the Cygnaran Mercarian League, control of Berck is one of its most important weapons in that battle. Similarly, Izabella recently encouraged her younger niece, Malatesta Mateu, to enter into marriage with the Moorgrav of Hetha.

CASTELLAN IZABELLA MATEU, MATRON OF HOUSE MATEU

Deceitful and cunning, Izabella is a gaunt woman of over seventy years. Having survived countless assassination attempts has done little but reinforce her cruel disposition, and she seems to grow more cold and calculating every year. Though at the center of an intricate web of plots and conspiracies, Izabella manages to keep the Mateu name clear of scandal through careful manipulation, veiled threats, and strategic displays of force. It is well known that to directly oppose House Mateu without the backing of powerful allies is akin to signing one's own death warrant. Izabella cares for nothing except the growth and prosperity of her family. Though her efforts have expanded the Mateus' influence in nearly every industry in Ord, she is not satisfied. Not so long ago the Mateus claimed the throne of Ord, and the Cathors have been hated rivals ever since. Izabella's ultimate goal is the destruction of their entire line.

Izabella has even succeeded in romantically entangling the king's grandson with her youngest daughter, Eliana Mateu. The young Alvor Cathor has taken an interest in her, and rumors abound that he is in love with her and is contemplating marrying her despite stern admonitions from his father and grandfather.

The power of House Mateu is not solely in its political machinations; it also has a grip on Ord's criminal community, particularly in Berck and Merin. The leadership of the family make liberal use of these connections to terrorize those who get in their way, protected from legal repercussions by layers of intermediaries.

ORDER OF THE GOLDEN CRUCIBLE

The largest and most respected alchemical trade guild in the Iron Kingdoms, the Order of the Golden Crucible is currently headquartered in Midfast. Once centered in Llael, the order has endured much in the past few years. From its former base in the Thunderhead Fortress in the city of Leryn, the order has been a powerful player in the markets of the Iron Kingdoms for centuries.

The order was founded in 25 BR as a conspiracy of arcanists and alchemists who sought to combat the Orgoth. Over the course of the Rebellion, members developed numerous innovations that aided in the overthrow of their oppressors. Amid its successes, the order is best known for the invention of blasting powder and firearms. It long enjoyed a near-monopoly in the production and sale of commercially-sold blasting powder, its largest single source of income.

The fall of Llael was devastating to the Golden Crucible, but the order had already spread across western Immoren with semi-autonomous branches throughout Cygnar and Ord. While the order had always left its far flung guild houses to their own devices, the loss of its central leadership was a blow to the integrity of the organization. The aurum magnus, the head of the order, along with much of its senior members, were either killed in the war or were captured by the Khadorans and put to work producing munitions for that nation. Lacking a central authority, the standards of the order were compromised as individual members began to compete and cut corners, jeopardizing a legacy that spanned generations. The splintering of the OGC also had the effect of reducing the price of blasting powder and ammunition as the remnants of the organization no longer adhered to the order's fixed pricing.

While communication between some guild houses remained strong, especially between those linked by rail, others were left more isolated. In this climate of uncertainty, many competing factions within the order claimed the mantle of leadership over the OGC. Operating under names like the "Free Crucible", the "Independent Order of the Golden Crucible" and the "Sovereign Cygnaran Order of the Golden Crucible", these splinter groups held regional sway and fought bitterly among themselves for legitimacy as the order's *true* successor.

In the aftermath of the Llaelese War the most credible and legitimate branches of the Order were those in Caspia, Ceryl, Corvis, Fharin, Mercir, and Midfast. Corvis became an important destination for Llaelese refugees escaping the war and much of the order's membership fleeing that region passed through the City of Ghosts, but the order here lacked a unified voice of authority. The demand for alchemists and arcane mechaniks

enabled many to leave behind the overcrowding of the refugee camps for places like Ceryl, Fharin, and Caspia, each already a city with an established alchemist community. This resettlement coupled with strong local organizations in regular contact increased the influence of Cygnar's most prominent guild houses. Particularly noteworthy, well respected, and ambitious leaders rose to prominence in Ceryl, Caspia, and Mercir.

Ord's members remained relatively cohesive in comparison, with branches in multiple cities but the strongest in Midfast, where they were granted exclusive contracts with the Ordic Army. Unlike Cygnar or Khador, the Ordic Army never established its own internal munitions production, and relied heavily on the OGC to meet its needs. It was based on this relationship that in autumn of 606 AR, King Baird II approached the leaders of Midfast's guild house. He offered to support the construction of a headquarters for the order should it relocate to Ord and expand its contracts with the Ordic Army. This would set in motion a chain of events that would eventually lead to the reconsolidation of the order.

THE CERYL ASSEMBLY

The leaders of the order in Midfast, including the senior-most Creena Torcail, and the brothers Ian and Hagan Cronan, were aware that they were in no position to speak for the entirety of the now fragmented organization. Stalling the king on the grounds of contacting their peers, these alchemists sent word to the various branches to arrange for a formal gathering. After several months of bickering and debate, the representatives of the most prominent guild houses met in Ceryl in the spring of 607 AR, hosted by Master Alchemist Lyesse Pyllus. Among the most influential attendees were the charismatic Lord Roget d'Vyaros, a former Llaelese master now representing the Corvis branch, and the greatly esteemed Helt Langworth, leader of the large and prosperous Caspian branch and a notable figure with allies in the Mercarian League. Notably absent were representatives of the branches in Fharin and Mercir, who refused to attend.

This was the first attempt at an Assembly of Masters since the fall of Thunderhead Fortress. After several days of discussion the Assembly agreed to reform as a single cohesive organization and to put aside their fractious quarrels and competition. Caspia's Helt Langworth proved instrumental in achieving consensus. His clear voice of reason combined with his extensive alchemical expertise and reputation lent weight to his words and helped convince the other regional leaders to unite for the good of the order. The gathered masters officially recognized the order's aurum lucanum, the leaders of major guild houses and those with oversight over various aspects of the entire organization.

Langworth and Creena Torcail quickly came to a consensus on the matter of King Baird's offer, urging for acceptance, but the other aurum lucanum proved reluctant. Leading the dissenting opinion was Lyesse Pyllus, who expressed concerns of the order losing its autonomy and becoming absorbed by the Ordic Army. The matter was not quickly put to rest, but eventually Langworth persuaded the masters of the wisdom of accepting the Ordic king's offer—the savings from constructing the headquarters combined with military contracts provided a solid foundation that would see them through the unification of the order across Cygnar and Ord.

On the heels of this agreement, Creena Torcail proposed that Helt Langworth be named as aurum magnus, leader of the order. This passed with considerable support, although clearly disappointing other masters who had aspired to this title. In recognition for her work in bringing King Baird's offer to their attention as well as recognizing the role that the Midfast Foundry would serve in the reinvigorated order, Aurum Lucanum Creena Torcail was named as the primary liaison with the Ordic government and was tasked to see to the fulfillment of any Ordic Army contracts. Beyond her considerable alchemical expertise and connections with the army, Creena was the niece of the Moorgrave of Almare, giving her political clout.

The Assembly concluded its business with the discussion of standardizing several of the order's more important alchemical commodities and the collection of membership dues. Prices were fixed, terms were set, and membership dues not collected since the Llaelese War were officially forgiven. When the Assembly dispersed, the membership of the OGC did so with the sense that they were once more members of a legitimate and powerful trade guild.

RECONSTRUCTION

Creena Torcail returned to meet with Baird and hammer out the particulars of their arrangement. In exchange for reduced rates on services provided to the Ordic Army and Navy, the order was promised exclusive contracts with Ord, including monopolies on the sale of certain alchemical products within the kingdom. The treasury would fund the construction of a new headquarters, built to the order's specifications.

AURUM MAGNUS HELT LANGWORTH

Helt Langworth is one of the most respected alchemists of his generation and possessed of a keen and forward thinking mind. The Aurum Magnus began his career as an alchemist and junior arcane mechanik in the Cygnaran Armory, where he was involved in research and design. After a decade of service he left his post to pursue a career as a theoretical researcher in Leryn, where he attained the rank of aurum lucanum. Langworth oversaw much of the more esoteric research and alchemical experimentation at Thunderhead Fortress until the Llaelese War. Langworth anticipated the fall of the kingdom and fled Leryn before it was besieged, returning to Caspia where he spent the last few years strengthening his ties to the Cygnaran Armory and securing important alchemical contracts on behalf of the Caspian guild house.

Langworth is credited with reuniting the order's factions after the war and achieving consensus in regard to King Baird's offer to move to Ord. As the master of the order, Langworth is dedicated to revitalizing the OGC and returning it to its former glory as one of western Immoren's most powerful trade organizations. While his success in these endeavors has been unquestionable, many members have come to question the authoritarian reach of the new OGC.

King Baird offered as well that the Ordic government would take action against any party claiming the name of the Order of the Golden Crucible outside the purview of the branches officially recognized by the Ceryl Assembly. This return to protected trade would allow the reconstituted OGC to expand its authority across rogue guilds in Ord, and lay groundwork for the consolidation of their power across western Immoren. With this in hand, construction soon commenced on the new headquarters of the Golden Crucible in Midfast, expanding on the Midfast Weapons Foundry and drawing on the expertise of former Llaelese masters who had detailed knowledge of the facilities at Thunderhead Fortress. By the end of 607 AR, the completed Midfast guild house had become a small fortress complex containing some of the most advanced alchemical labs and foundries in western Immoren. The Ordic treasury was severely impacted by this investment, but King Baird clearly expected a tremendous return, bringing valuable revenues into his kingdom.

Installed in its new headquarters, the order began concerted efforts to expand its influence. With regular correspondence and frequent meetings, the Assembly of Masters added additional aurum lucanum to take charge of general fields of research and of bureaucracy important to the order, including financial administration, mechanikal research, trade negotiation, legal counsel, security, and of course, alchemical research. Aurum lucanum overseeing these briefs were empowered to negotiate and conduct business on the order's behalf on an international scale, above and beyond the authority of local branches.

With business practices reestablished, the Assembly of Masters, at Langworth's direction, made bold moves to assimilate and curtail competitors wrongly using the name of the Golden Crucible. In the months that followed much of the splintered organization was returned to the fold. Those that refused to pay their dues or acknowledge the authority of Midfast were carefully noted so that the order could eventually deal with them, once its strength had been properly restored.

THE PRESENT

Midfast has become the unquestionable heart of the order. It has begun to assert its authority over its membership with a more forceful and direct hand than ever before. Very few significant rogue branches have remained outside the new order, although the Independent Order of the Golden Crucible in Fharin has refused to acknowledge leadership and sterner measures may be required to bring them in line. Mercir has likewise been slow to comply, calling itself the Sovereign Cygnaran Order of the Golden Crucible. This branch has made its own overtures to the Mercarian League, which is leveraging this divide to negotiate for better terms with Aurum Magnus Langworth regarding rates to make use of their fleet for shipping. Langworth considers it a top priority to bring this wayward branch into the fold, knowing that sealing arrangements with the Mercarian League could bring a powerful ally and access to exotic reagents from Zu.

The order has dispatched agents to every branch house in western Immoren supported by the Crucible Guard to nudge them into compliance and to assess the adherence to the dictates of the Assembly of Masters. The preference of the order is to operate within the boundaries of the law, using threats to reputation and economic coercion to force renegade members into compliance. These tactics have even been applied to intimidate independent alchemists who are competing with guild members. In some cases these visits are only a pretense to openly display the power of the restored order to those unwilling to acknowledge the authority of Midfast. Such reach was unknown in the days of the old order, which allowed its members to govern their guild houses as they saw fit, and not all members are pleased by these recent developments.

The order has also sought to diversify its offerings. It is the opinion of the new aurum magnus that the old OGC overly relied upon its monopoly on blasting powder to secure its fortunes and that they have only themselves to blame for the troubles that followed in the loss of that control. The masters of the order have begun work to expand the order's manufacturing into a broader range of alchemical and mechanikal products to ensure that the order is never again left vulnerable to the fluctuations of a single market. As well, the order has instituted stricter control of approved methodologies for the production of any goods bearing its seal.

THE CRUCIBLE GUARD

For centuries, the Crucible Guard has served as the OGC's private security force. Members of the guard protect important Crucible facilities and personnel, routinely act as escorts for Crucible inspectors and tithe collectors, and defend important shipments abroad. Before Leryn fell to the Khadorans, the Crucible Guard protected Thunderhead Fortress and other important city facilities, including government buildings, bridges, and public gatherings. The guard disbanded after the Llaelese War, and most of its members dispersed. The Golden Crucible has recently reestablished and expanded the Crucible Guard.

Those chosen to join the ranks of the guard are peerless soldiers armed with cutting edge arms and armor provided by the OGC's workshops. While the Crucible Guard is dedicated to protecting Crucible property and personnel, there has been talk of expanding their responsibilities to include covert operations against rogue chapters and alchemists, as well as those who persist in unauthorized use of the order's seal.

MEMBERSHIP, RANK, AND AUTHORITY

Most members of the order have little contact with the broader organization outside of those part of their local branch. Their days are spent producing saleable goods for their local market. The main interaction between the OGC's membership and its central headquarters in Midfast relates to paying dues and receiving accreditations required to produce goods bearing the seal of the Golden Crucible.

While the OGC is most known for its alchemists, the organization also engages in considerable arcane and mechanikal research and is open to both arcanists and arcane mechaniks. At this time, membership is only open to humans and gobbers from Cygnar, Ord, and the former territories of Llael. However, the order is not fundamentally opposed to admitting Rhulfolk and Iosans into its ranks should either of those nations allow the OGC to establish chapters within their cities, a remote likelihood at best with Rhul and utterly impossible with Ios.

Members of the order must become accredited in their field before they are allowed to produce work bearing the order's seal, and, from the moment they are admitted into the organization, are only allowed to produce accredited work. Those who seek to forge the seal of the order or feign accreditations quickly earn the enmity of the order. The unlawful use of the order's seal is taken quite seriously, as the OGC seal is a well-regarded mark of quality and an asset to the organization in expanding its membership.

One wishing to join the order must be sponsored by a recognized member in good standing. Once sponsored, the candidate apprentices to a senior member of the order until such a time as he can demonstrate basic aptitude in his field of expertise. A student of alchemy must then pass a general examination establishing his mastery of the basic principles of alchemy. An arcane mechanik must pass a similar test relating to the construction of complex mechanika. Those who pass are initiated into the order and swear oaths of loyalty to the order and to protect its secrets. In the past the rituals of initiation were taken more lightly, but in the wake of the Llaelese War the rite is considered a serious and binding oath not to be entered or enacted trivially.

Upon admittance, a new member is granted the title "aurum ominus alchemist," receives a signet ring bearing the order's symbol, and is granted all the privileges and responsibilities that accompany membership in the OGC. The title is universal; arcane mechaniks and arcanists are still given the honorific of "alchemist". This is the rank of held by the vast majority of members.

The rank of "aurum lucanum alchemist" is reserved for those chosen to participate in the administration of the order, whether at the Midfast headquarters or overseeing a separate branch or an area of interest to the entire order. Lucanum who oversee branch houses are empowered to set minor policies and negotiate on behalf of the order locally. The lucanum make up the body of the Assembly of Masters, as convened several times a year or by the aurum magnus, and represent the general governing body of the order. Elevation to the rank of lucanum requires the individual to be a master of his discipline in good standing with the order, and a majority vote of the Assembly.

The head of the order bears the singular rank of "aurum magnus." The aurum magnus must be a true master of alchemy and, invariably, a master of both the internal politics of the order and the delicate web of power between the order and its trade partners. The title is held for life, and when the position is empty any lucanum may be nominated by one of his peers or put himself forward for it. It is also the aurum magnus' privilege to convene meetings of the Assembly of Masters, for matters requiring the approval of a majority of the order's senior members.

PLAYER SECTION

ORDIC CHARACTERS

A number of options are available only to characters of Ordic origin. These options include modifications to existing careers, a new career, new abilities, a new skill, and kingdom-specific spell lists.

ORDIC CAREER OPTIONS

The options available to Ordic characters are described below. A player can choose to use as many career options as he wishes during character creation and can take some or all of the options his character meets the requirements for. For example, a player creating an Ordic Soldier/Warcaster can decide to take the Ordic Warcaster option but decide not to take the Marine option for his character.

CRUCIBLE GUARD (SOLDIER)

The Crucible Guard is the private mercenary force employed by the Order of the Golden Crucible to ensure the protection of its interests, membership, and property. In any city with a significant branch office of the order, at least a nominal force of Crucible Guards is employed to protect its guild houses, labs, and warehouses. Order alchemists frequently arrange to be escorted by one or more members of the Guard when on business abroad.

Only a Cygnaran, Llaelese, or Ordic human character can be a Crucible Guard. A character cannot have both the Crucible Guard and the standard Soldier career. A character starting the game as a Crucible Guard must choose Artillerist (p. 304), Field Mechanik, Horseman (p. 179), Investigator, Man-at-Arms, Military Officer, Rifleman, or Warcaster for his second career.

A character taking this option:

- Begins with Rifle 1 and Thrown Weapon 1 but does not start with the Crossbow, Great Weapon, Hand Weapon, or Pistol military skills.
- Begins with Connections (Golden Crucible).
- Begins with Crucible armor (p. 307), 250 gc worth of grenades, and Crucible Arms weapons and ammunition instead of the Soldier's 100 gc.

MARINE (SOLDIER)

Marines are specialized soldiers positioned on navy ships of Ord and Cygnar. Their primary role is to defend their ships and engage in the capture of enemy vessels. These professional soldiers stand out in a crew, since they are among the few to wear armor on ship. Many marines choose to wear lighter armor so that if they do take a plunge, they can stay afloat. A marine's weapons of choice include the cutlass, pistol, and gaff spear.

Any character can be a Marine. A character cannot have both the Marine and standard Soldier careers.

A character taking this option:

- Begins with the Boarding Action (p. 305) ability and either Specialization (Cutlass) or Specialization (Gaff Spear) but does not begin with Find Cover or Sentry.
- Begins with Jumping 1, Sailing 1, and Swimming 1 but does not begin with Driving 1 or Survival 1.
- Can gain Specialization (Cutlass) and Specialization (Gaff Spear) as career abilities.
- Adds Sailing 3 to the Soldier career's list of potential occupational skills.

MARITIME ORDER OF THE TRIDENT ARCANIST (ARCANIST)

The arcanists of the Maritime Order of the Trident train extensively to work in concert with the Ordic Royal Navy. As living military assets, they learn both combat and pragmatic magic that can save lives and change fortunes on the high seas. Though these arcanists are expected to serve for a time as part of the Ordic Navy, many go on to barter their services to large shipping concerns or mercenary forces. A small number join the pirate crews that call Ord home.

Only Ordic humans can be Maritime Order of the Trident Arcanists. A character cannot have both the Maritime Order of the Trident Arcanist and standard Arcanist careers. A character starting the game as a Maritime Order of the Trident Arcanist must choose Arcane Mechanik, Aristocrat, Explorer, Marine (Soldier), Military Officer, Ordic Warcaster (Warcaster), Pirate, Priest (Morrow), or Sorcerer for his second career.

A character taking this option:

- Begins with Connections (Ordic Military).
- Begins with the Hand Weapon 1 and Pistol 1 military skills.
- Does not begin with Lore (Arcane) or Research occupational skills.
- Begins with the Deadeye, Extinguisher, and Triage spells.
- Add Hand Weapon 3 and Pistol 3 to the Arcanist career's list of potential military skills.
- Uses the spell list below instead of the Arcanist spell list in *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules.*

COST 1	Blizzard, Buoyancy (p. 305), Fair Winds, Protection from Cold, Protection from Fire, Storm Tossed, Wind Strike
COST 2	Celerity, Deadeye (p. 91), Deadweight (p. 305), Extinguisher, Fortune (p. 305), Howling Flames, Icy Grip, Phantasm (p. 305), Razor Wind, Sea Legs (p. 305), Shatter Storm, Triage, Wind Blast, Wings of Air
COST 3	Broadside, Fog of War, Force Field, Gallows (p. 182), Guided Fire, Mirage, Rift, Winter Storm
COST 4	Powder Keg (p. 305), Shock Wave, Tempest

ORDIC WARCASTER (WARCASTER)

Ord has traditionally had a difficult time locating and securing those with the warcaster talent, but once discovered they are all the more invaluable to the army and navy. The only dedicated warcaster training program in Ord is at the Trident School, where warcasters learn alongside dedicated arcanists of the Maritime Order. This program instructs warcasters intended for both service branches.

Only Ordic humans can be Ordic Warcasters. This option can only be taken at character creation. A character cannot be an Ordic Warcaster and a standard Warcaster. A character starting the game as an Ordic Warcaster must choose Arcane Mechanik, Arcanist, Aristocrat, Artillerist (p. 304), Duelist, Explorer, Field Mechanik, Horseman (p. 179), Man-at-Arms, Military Officer, Pirate, Priest (Morrowan), Soldier, or Sorcerer for his second career.

A character taking this option:

- Begins with Connections (Ordic military).
- Can begin with naval warcaster armor (p. 307) instead of standard warcaster armor (light or medium) or a mechanika hand weapon or hand cannon.
- Begins with the Convection and Fortune spells.
- Uses the spell list below instead of the Warcaster spell list in *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules.*

COST 1	Jump Start, Locomotion, Storm Tossed
COST 2	Bullet Dodger (p. 305), Battering Ram, Convection, Deadweight (p. 305), Fire Group, Fortune (p. 305), Hot Shot (p. 305), Redline, Sea Legs (p. 305), Temper Metal
COST 3	Batten Down the Hatches, Blow the Man Down (p. 305), Broadside, Eliminator, Fail Safe, Full Throttle, Gallows (p. 182), Iron Aggression, Rift
COST 4	Force Hammer, Obliteration, Powder Keg (p. 305)

ARTILLERIST

PREREQUISITES: NONE

STARTING ABILITIES, CONNECTIONS, AND SKILLS	Special: A character starting the game with the Trencher career can choose Artillerist for his other career. Abilities: Battle Plan: Close Fire and Scorched Earth Military Skills: Heavy Artillery (p. 305) 1, Light Artillery 1, Pistol 1, Rifle 1 Occupational Skills: Command 1, Detection 1, Driving 1
STARTING ASSETS	75 gc, deck gun (p. 309) (with powder and ten rounds of ammunition)

ARTILLERIST ABILITIES	Advisor, Battle Plan: Close Fire (p. 305), Battle Plan: Orchestrate Fire (p. 305), Bomber, Double Powder Ration (p. 305), Grenadier, Hit the Deck!, Scorched Earth (p. 305), Test the Wind (p. 305)
ARTILLERIST CONNECTIONS	Connections (kingdom military or mercenary company)
ARTILLERIST MILITARY SKILLS	Hand Weapon 3, Heavy Artillery 4, Light Artillery 4, Pistol 3, Rifle 3, Thrown Weapon 3
ARTILLERIST OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS	Craft (ordnance) 4, Command 3, General Skills 4, Rope Use 4, Survival 3

The artillerist is a highly skilled specialist in siege warfare. He is an expert in the construction, maintenance, and application of the engines of war. Whether on land or sea, he is most at home around big guns and comes to life in the roar of battle. Though he is a peerless addition to any cannon crew, his true strength lies in orchestrating the fire of whole artillery batteries.

Most artillerists either learn their trade in the classrooms of western Immoren's elite military academies or through first-hand experience in battle. Those who attain this degree of expertise find their skills in high demand and can easily find employment with their kingdom's military, any number of mercenary companies, or as part of a merchant vessel or pirate crew.

Playing an Artillerist: The Artillerist career, much like the Pistoleer or Rifleman, is focused on the use of a specific weapon group. Although other careers have access to the Light Artillery skill, the Artillerist has the most tools to use this class of weapon to its full extent. Artillerist is also the only career to have access to the Heavy Artillery skill.

Experienced Artillerists can gain a number of abilities that increase their effectiveness with all sorts of engines of war. Veteran-level Artillerists with the Double Powder Ration ability are incredible assets to their parties and can expect to spend plenty of time carefully preparing the firearms of their friends and associates before big battles.

NEW ABILITIES

BATTLE PLAN: CLOSE FIRE

Prerequisite: Command 1, Heavy Artillery 1

The character can spend 1 feat point to use Battle Plan: Close Fire. Using a battle plan is a quick action. When a character uses this battle plan, friendly characters do not suffer blast damage from ranged attacks made by this character or by friendly characters beginning their activations in his command range. Battle Plan: Close Fire lasts for one round.

BATTLE PLAN: ORCHESTRATE FIRE

Prerequisite: Command 2, Heavy Artillery 2

The character can spend 1 feat point to use Battle Plan: Orchestrate Fire. Using a battle plan is a quick action. When a character uses this battle plan, friendly characters in his command range gain +2 on artillery ranged attack rolls. Battle Plan: Orchestrate Fire lasts for one round.

BOARDING ACTION

Prerequisite: Jumping 1

A character with Boarding Action can use the Jumping skill to make a long jump as a quick action instead of a full action after making a full advance.

DOUBLE POWDER RATION

Prerequisite: Heavy Artillery 3

This character can use this ability only when loading a ranged weapon with an Effective Range that does not use metal cartridges. Using this ability takes a full action and an extra measure of powder, using two rounds of ammo instead of one. When a weapon loaded with a double powder ration is fired, the Effective Range of the attack is increased by 24 feet (4″) and the Extreme Range is increased by 120 feet (20″).

SCORCHED EARTH

Prerequisite: Heavy Artillery 1

This character gains +2 on ranged attack blast damage rolls.

TEST THE WIND

Prerequisite: Heavy Artillery 3

When this character's artillery ranged attacks miss their targets, he can reroll the direction and/or distance of deviation. Each roll can be rerolled only once as a result of Test the Wind.

NEW MILITARY SKILL

HEAVY ARTILLERY (POISE)

The character is knowledgeable in the operation, loading, and transport of heavy artillery weapons. Each level of this skill adds to the character's POI when making attacks with heavy artillery.

NEW SPELLS

	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
BLOW THE MAN DOWN	3	8	—	15	NO	YES

A character hit by Blow the Man Down is knocked down. On a critical hit, instead of suffering a normal damage roll, a non-incorporeal character is slammed d6″ directly away from the spell's point of origin regardless of his base size. Collateral damage from this slam is POW 15. Incorporeal characters are not slammed; they are just knocked down and suffer a damage roll.

BULLET DODGER	2	6	—	—	YES	NO

Target friendly character gains +2 DEF against ranged attack rolls and Dodger. (A character with Dodger can advance up to 2″ immediately after an enemy attack that missed him is resolved unless he was missed while advancing. He cannot be targeted by free strikes during this movement.)

BUOYANCY	1	6	—	—	YES	NO

Target friendly character gains +5 on Swimming skill rolls.

DEADWEIGHT	2	8	—	12	NO	YES

When Deadweight destroys an enemy living or undead character, choose a character within 2″ of the destroyed character. The chosen character must forfeit either his movement or his action during his next turn.

FORTUNE	2	6	—	—	YES	NO

Target friendly character can reroll his missed attack rolls. Each attack roll can be rerolled only once as a result of Fortune.

HOT SHOT	2	6	—	—	YES	NO

Target friendly character in the spellcaster's battlegroup gains boosted ranged attack damage rolls.

PHANTASM	2	6	—	—	YES	NO

When friendly target character is targeted by a ranged attack, the Effective Range of the attack is reduced by 30 feet (5″).

POWDER KEG	4	10	5	14	NO	YES

On a critical hit, characters hit lose one attack during their next activation.

SEA LEGS	2	6	—	—	YES	NO

Target friendly character cannot be knocked down.

ADVENTURING COMPANIES

AGENTS OF THE CRUCIBLE

The characters are members of the Order of the Golden Crucible. They might represent a local guild house by conducting secret arcane research or providing alchemical products to the local population. They could also be traveling agents of the OGC carrying out order business abroad. Occasionally the company may barter their services as mercenaries, especially if they are accompanied by members of the Crucible Guard.

Requirements: Each member of the company must have at least one of the following careers: Alchemist, Arcane Mechanik, Arcanist, Crucible Guard (Soldier), or Field Mechanik, or Warcaster. The company must include at least one character with the Alchemist career. The Alchemists should choose one character among themselves to lead the company. Characters with the Alchemist, Arcane Mechanik, and Arcanist careers are members of the Golden Crucible. The non-Golden Crucible members are assumed to be mercenaries in their employ.

Benefits: The characters begin the game with a small guild house or three large wagons (p. 99) with teams of draft horses. In addition, the company begins with an alchemical lab (see *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*), either set up in their guild house or dismantled and stored on their wagons.

Each character earns 25 gc per month from the regular sale of alchemical goods.

ORDIC NAVAL EXPEDITION

The characters are the bridge crew of an Ordic naval fighting ship. In service to the Broken Sword, these characters are expected to operate within the code of their nation's laws. They might conduct raids against pirates along the coast of Ord or engage in exploration of new territories for their nation, but wherever they go, they do so as the fighting edge of the Royal Ordic Navy.

Requirements: Each member of the company must be a human and have at least one of the following careers: Artillerist (p. 304), Explorer, Marine (Soldier), Maritime Order of the Trident Arcanist (Arcanist), or Ordic Warcaster (Warcaster). At least one character must have the Military Officer career. The players in the group should designate one member of the company with the Military Officer career to be the captain. The captain then designates a first mate and other officers as appropriate.

Benefits: The characters in the company receive regular orders and information of military significance. The characters can also expect to be resupplied with coal, food and water, ammunition, grenades, alchemical accumulators, and other supplies.

The company begins the game with a small Ordic fighting ship crewed by able-bodied sailors. The ship can find a safe harbor in any Ordic port.

Each character created as a member of the company gains Climbing 1, Rope Use 1, Sailing 1, and Swimming 1.

ORDIC GEAR
ARMOR

CRUCIBLE ARMOR

Cost: 145 gc
SPD Modifier: –1
DEF Modifier: –3
ARM Modifier: +8

Description: This is the heavy armor of the Crucible Guard, a suit of all-encompassing plate armor alchemically treated to resist the effects of acids and other alchemical agents.

Special Rules: While wearing Crucible armor, a character gains the Immunity: Corrosion ability.

NAVAL WARCASTER ARMOR

Cost: 3,260 gc
DEF Modifier: –1
ARM Modifier: +6

Description: This is a suit of warcaster armor specifically engineered for the naval warcasters of Ord. The armor is designed to be watertight and to give its wearer a degree of freedom of action underwater. Not only does it contain enough air for a few minutes of underwater movement, but it can also seal its furnace venting to keep the armor's coals from being extinguished in water. Such capabilities require both extensive modification to the housing of the armor and complex additions to its mechanika runes. This armor is generally produced only for the Ordic military and then only in small numbers.

Rune Points: 5

Special Rules: Naval warcaster armor incorporates an arcane turbine that provides 8 rune points of power. It has a power draw of 5 rune points for the bond plate and the power field's mechanikal devices. Additional devices can be connected to the turbine as described in the arcane turbine rules.

While it has power, a character wearing this armor gains +3 on Swim rolls. The armor can function even in deep water without its furnace being extinguished. Additionally, the armor's power field can hold up to five minutes of breathable air, allowing the wearer to function underwater for short periods of time. Once the character surfaces, the field recaptures another five minutes of air.

While completely in deep water, a character wearing this armor cannot be targeted by ranged or magic attacks, cannot make ranged attacks, and can only make melee attacks targeting other characters in deep water. While completely in deep water, the character does not block LOS.

If the armor does not have power, the DEF modifier increases to –4, and the wearer suffers –1 SPD.

Fabrication: The material cost of naval warcaster housing is 600 gc. It takes two months to construct the armor. The pertinent Craft skill for construction is Craft (metal working).

The armor's runeplates require five weeks to scribe and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 18.

ORDIC ROYAL MARINE ARMOR

Cost: 90 gc
SPD Modifier: 0
DEF Modifier: –1
ARM Modifier: +6

Description: Royal Marine armor is made up of layers of treated leather and thin steel plates. Most of the protection provided by the armor comes from lightweight, hardened leather. The armor is ingeniously shaped to provide a wearer with maximum freedom of movement, granting protection without inhibiting the Marine's range of motion in combat.

Special Rules: Characters do not suffer a Swimming roll penalty while wearing Royal Marine armor.

MELEE WEAPONS

GAFF SPEAR

Cost: 20 gc
Skill: Great Weapon
Attack Modifier: –1
POW: 3 (one-Handed), 4 (two-Handed)

Description: The gaff spear is a sturdy spear with a large hook mounted at the base of the spearhead. It can be used as a spear, but the weapon also offers the user the ability to perform a trip attack using the hook.

Special Rules: The Gaff spear has Reach.

A character can spend 1 feat point to make a trip attack instead of a normal attack with his gaff spear. If the attack hits, the target is knocked down but does not suffer any damage.

RANGED WEAPONS

CANNON, ROYAL WEIGHT

Cost: 700 gc
Ammo: 1
Effective Range: 120 feet (20″)
Extreme Range: 600 feet
Skill: Heavy Artillery
Attack Modifier: See below
POW: See below
AOE: See below

Description: This massive gun is generally found only on first class ships of the line or as part of large fortifications. Though some mercenary forces utilize them in the field, these cannons are extremely heavy and difficult to maneuver. They are generally crewed by five to seven men.

A number of specialty ammunitions have been developed for these heavy guns.

Special Rules: The royal weight cannon itself should be represented as a large-based model in play.

The operation of the cannon requires a specific sequence of tasks and each task requires a full action. These tasks include the following:

1. Aiming the cannon.
2. Loading a powder charge into the cannon.
3. Loading the ball or canister into the cannon and ramming it tightly against the powder.
4. Priming and igniting the primer to fire the cannon.
5. Swabbing the barrel of the cannon clean. The cannon is now ready to fire another volley.

Having so many crewmen on hand to operate the cannon allows each of them to perform one of the tasks described above during their turns each round.

Moving a royal weight cannon requires a full action by a character with at least STR 5 who is B2B with the cannon. Up to five characters can help to move a cannon at a time. When a character spends a full action moving the cannon, he can move it 6 feet (1″). When he does so, he and any other characters B2B with the cannon who helped move it in the last round can advance 6 feet (1″).

The specialty ammunitions developed for these heavy guns include the following:

Canister Shot: Canister shot is made up of a tin case filled with small, heavy balls. When the cannon is fired, the balls spread out from the muzzle with deadly force, causing an effect similar to a giant scattergun. Canister shot has RNG SP 10, an Attack Modifier of 0, POW 14, and AOE —. It costs 20 gc for charge, primer, and canister for one shot.

Cannonball: The cannonball is a round, solid shot of iron. A cannonball has an Attack Modifier of –2, POW 18, and AOE —. Regardless of his base size, a character hit by a cannonball is slammed d6″ directly away from the cannon. Collateral damage from this slam is POW 18. It costs 15 gc for charge, primer, and cannonball for one shot.

Chain-shot: Chain-shot is made up of two half-balls connected by a chain. When fired the two half-balls tumble through the air connected by the fully extended chain. Because this ammunition is extremely inaccurate, chain-shot is generally used only in naval warfare to cut down ships' masts or to foul their rigging. It is not generally considered to be an anti-personnel weapon. Chain-shot has an Effective Range of 84 feet (14″), no Extreme Range, Attack Modifier of –4, and AOE 4. All characters hit suffer a POW 14 damage roll and are knocked down. It costs 20 gc for charge, primer, and chain-shot for one shot.

Incendiary Shot: The incendiary shot is a hollow shell filled with a highly flammable mixture. The shell is designed to shatter on impact, spreading its incendiary cargo around the target struck. An incendiary shell has an Attack Modifier of –2, POW 14, and AOE 4. The incendiary shell causes fire damage and those characters hit suffer the Fire continuous effect. It costs 25 gc for charge, primer, and shell for one shot.

CRUCIBLE ARMS MODEL 603

Cost: 225 gc
Ammo: 8 (Crucible rounds)
Effective Range: 60 feet (10″)
Extreme Range: 300 feet
Skill: Rifle
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 11
AOE: —

Description: Known affectionately as the "Thunderer," the Crucible Arms Model 603 is a heavy carbine produced by the weaponsmiths of the Golden Crucible. The 603 was designed to fire an array of metal-cased Crucible rounds, specialty alchemical ammunition that can carry a variety of effects. Though most 603s can be found in the hands of the Crucible Guard, the weapon has also become immensely popular with some mercenary companies.

Special Rules: A character must have at least STR 6 to use this weapon one-handed.

These weapons only fire Crucible rounds (p. 310).

Replacing this weapon's ammo wheel requires a quick action. Reloading each cylinder of the ammo wheel takes one quick action.

An extra ammo wheel costs 20 gc.

DECK GUN

Cost: 150 gc
Ammo: 1
Effective Range: 84 feet (14″)
Extreme Range: 420 feet
Skill: Light Artillery
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 13
AOE: 3

Description: Deck guns are small, portable cannons used aboard ships. They are light enough that they can be quickly repositioned, unlike a ship's main guns that rely on orientation. The maneuverability of these weapons has made them popular with some mercenary companies who use them on the battlefield.

Special Rules: This weapon requires two hands to operate and fire the weapon.

Reloading this weapon takes a full action. Generally one crewman assists in reloading the cannon and the gunner fires it.

A character moving the deck gun suffers –2 SPD and DEF. Reduce this penalty by 1 for each additional character aiding in the movement of the weapon.

It costs 5 gc for a charge and one round of ammunition.

GEAR

RIDING HORSE, CARDOVAR

PHY	12	SPD	9	STR	8

Cost: 300 gc

Description: Bred for generations along the Carre Dova's plains, these steeds are prized for their beauty, speed, and spirit. Cardovar steeds are among the most prominent of the Iron Kingdom's racing steeds.

A Cardovar riding horse has ARM 11 and 12 vitality points. Unmounted, a Cardovar has DEF 15. A character riding a Cardovar gains +1 DEF.

A perturbed Cardovar without a rider can kick with MAT 5. Anyone hit by this attack suffers a damage roll with a POW equal to the horse's STR. Cardovar's do not attack while mounted.

ALCHEMICAL SUBSTANCES

CRUCIBLE ROUNDS

Cost: See below

Description: Crucible rounds are the heavy, metal-cased alchemical ammunition fired by a number of Crucible Arms weapons. The oversized rounds were developed especially for these weapons and cannot be used with other firearms. Crucible rounds have a number of variations, each with a unique effect.

Standard: These are standard, metal rounds with no additional special effects. It costs 3 gc for blasting powder, bullets, and metal casings for five standard rounds.

Blazers: Blazers are self-igniting alchemical rounds. A character hit by a blazer round suffers 1 additional point of fire damage. It costs 10 gc for five blazer rounds.

An alchemist with at least a 2 in Craft (Gunsmith) and access to a gunsmith's kit and an alchemy lab can attempt to produce blazer rounds. Blazer rounds require 1 unit of alchemist's stone, 1 unit of heavy metals, and 1 unit of mineral crystals. After three hours of labor, the alchemist makes an INT + Alchemy roll against a target number of 14. If the roll succeeds, the character creates the alchemical component for ten blazer rounds. Powder and casings for these rounds costs an additional 2 gc. If the roll fails, he creates one unit of alchemical waste (crystal).

Explosive Rounds: These high-explosive rounds explode on impact with a target. A weapon firing an explosive Crucible round gains AOE 3 but suffers –1 POW. It costs 22 gc for five explosive rounds.

An alchemist with at least a 2 in Craft (Gunsmith) and access to a gunsmith's kit and an alchemy lab can attempt to produce explosive rounds. Explosive rounds require 1 unit of alchemist's stone and 2 units of mineral crystals. After three hours of labor, the alchemist makes an INT + Alchemy roll against a target number of 15. If the roll succeeds, the character creates the alchemical component for five explosive rounds. Powder and casings for these rounds costs an additional 1 gc. If the roll fails, he creates one unit of alchemical waste (crystal).

Rust Rounds: These alchemical rounds contain a concentrated rust agent that temporarily weakens metal they strike. A weapon firing a rust round suffers –3 POW, but any steamjack or character wearing primarily metal armor that is hit suffers –1 ARM for one round. Characters and steamjacks with Immunity: Corrosion are not affected. This effect is not cumulative with the Rust Agent alchemical compound. It costs 10 gc for five rust rounds.

An alchemist with at least a 2 in Craft (Gunsmith) and access to a gunsmith's kit and an alchemy lab can attempt to produce rust rounds. Rust rounds require 1 unit of alchemist's stone, 1 unit of alchemical waste (crystal), 1 unit of heavy metals, and 1 unit of mineral acid. After three hours of labor, the alchemist makes an INT + Alchemy roll against a target number of 14. If the roll succeeds, the character creates the alchemical component for ten rust rounds. Powder and casings for these rounds costs an additional 2 gc. If the roll fails, the ingredients are wasted.

ORDIC STEAMJACKS

Ord produces notably fewer steamjacks in comparison to its neighbors due to a scarcity of raw materials, particularly iron. Historically, the Ordic crown has preferred to invest the bulk of its coin and resources on ships and heavy guns rather than on warjack technologies. Over time, steamjacks have become vital to many industries nevertheless, though generally only the wealthier merchant houses can afford to maintain these machines.

The refined alloys and scarcer materials required to produce steamjacks are rare in Ord and often must be imported at high cost from both Rhul and Cygnar. As a result, cortex producers in the kingdom have been forced to manufacture lower grades almost exclusively. By necessity, these factors influence Ordic steamjacks to be relatively simple in design and function, although also hardy and adaptable enough to serve a variety of roles. However, Ordic mechanikal engineers have excelled in the development of steamjacks for naval and dock work. This variation has created a special niche market unique to Ord and earned considerable income for 'jack shops such as Rohannor Steamworks in Berck.

The Ordic military's relatively few warjack designs rely on robust but simple engineering and emphasize 'jacks that can be adapted to various roles. Ordic warjacks do not employ complex integral armament, depending on handheld weaponry instead. Although Ordic warjacks are not as technologically advanced as the warjacks of their neighbors, this modification does allow these machines greater flexibility.

In addition to the few Ordic models presently in production, the kingdom also relies extensively on older Cygnaran designs. Ord still produces parts and weaponry for the venerable Nomad and Talon chassis to fulfill both its own needs and to sell to the mercenary market.

Since the Llaelese War, King Baird II has invested in producing and acquiring more dedicated warjacks, including making arrangements with the Cygnaran Armory in Caspia. Recently, the Castellan Ironworks in Merin has increased production of the versatile and powerful Toro warjack. Other new chassis in the design and testing phases are expected to see production in the years ahead.

RULES

The following attributes define different steamjack chassis in the game.

Cost: This is the cost of the cost of the chassis in Cygnaran gold crowns.

Description: This is a description of the chassis.

Height/Weight: The chassis' technical specs.

Fuel Load/Burn Usage: This describes the chassis' standard fuel load and burn rate.

Initial Service Date: This is the date the chassis first entered service.

Original Chassis Design: This is the original manufacturer or designer of the chassis.

Stock Cortex: This is the cortex that comes stock with the steamjack chassis. The cost of this cortex is included in the cost of the chassis. It is assumed the cortex has been wiped and has no lingering personality at the time of purchase. The cortex can be replaced, but the original personality of the steamjack will be lost as a result. For cortex descriptions, see *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*.

Stats: These are the chassis' stats. The steamjack's INT and PER are determined by its cortex. The stats listed below assume a stock cortex.

Special Rules: These are the special rules that apply to the chassis.

Damage Grid: This is the chassis' damage grid.

SEAFARER CHASSIS AND WEAPONS SYSTEMS

SEAFARER LIGHT LABORJACK CHASSIS

Cost: 4,000gc (with stock cortex), 3,000gc (chassis only)

Description: The Seafarer is a light laborjack developed by the Rohannor Steamworks in Berck for use on Ordic merchant ships. The machine features pneumatic pistons set into its feet and legs that are designed to compensate for the heaving of decks and ships at sea. The resulting steamjack is surprising spry and a favorite among the mercenary companies that outfit it for combat. The Buccaneer is the warjack variant favored by the Privateers of Ord.

Height/Weight: 9'8" / 3.15 tons

Fuel Burn/Load Usage: 300 lbs / 8 hrs general, 1.4 hrs combat

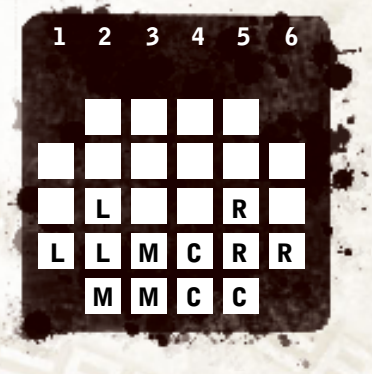
Initial Service Date: 528 AR

Original Chassis Design: Rohannor Steamworks

Stock Cortex: Ferrum-grade

PHY	**8**
STR	**8**
SPD	**6**
AGL	**5**
PRW	**5**
POI	**3**
INT	**1**
PER	**1**
Initiative	**12**
MAT	**5**
RAT	**3**
DEF	**12**
ARM	**15**

DAMAGE GRID



Special Rules: Initiative is rolled only in the case of an uncontrolled steamjack; otherwise the 'jack activates on its controller's initiative.

Initiative MAT, RAT, and DEF assume a stock cortex.

SEAFARER LABORJACK

The Seafarer comes stock with a pair of fists.

BUCCANEER WARJACK

The Buccaneer is a Seafarer with an aurum-grade cortex. Like the Seafarer, the Buccaneer comes stock with a pair of fists. It is typically armed with nets and a gaff.

With an aurum-grade cortex, a Buccaneer has the following stats:

PHY	**8**
STR	**8**
SPD	**6**
AGL	**5**
PRW	**5**
POI	**3**
INT	**2**
PER	**2**
Initiative	**13**
MAT	**6**
RAT	**4**
DEF	**13**
ARM	**15**

GAFF (LIGHT STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 120 gc
Type: Ranged
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 4

Description: The gaff is a heavy steel pole weapon with a hooked end. It is based on a tool used by laborjacks to snag, haul, and manipulate cargo. This version retains its industrial uses and is reinforced for combat.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the gaff. While wielding the gaff, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the gaff is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

The gaff has Reach.

NET (LIGHT STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 40 gc
Type: Ranged
Location: Arm
Ammo: 1
Effective Range: 48 feet (8″)
Extreme Range: —
Attack Modifier: +1
POW: —
AOE: —

Description: This is a weighted net of heavy mesh. The nets are kept in bundles chained to the back of the steamjack. Before a net can be thrown it must be grabbed and unwound. Although the net causes no damage, it renders the target helpless against the steamjack's attacks.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up a net. While holding a net, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding a net is crippled, the steamjack can still throw the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

A steamjack can have up to five nets chained to its back at any time.

Pulling a net takes a quick action. Once pulled, a net must be unwound before it can be thrown, which takes an additional quick action.

The net causes no damage. However, a character hit by the net is knocked down.

When a steamjack armed with a net charges, it can throw the net as part of its charge. After moving but before making its charge attack, it can make one ranged attack targeting the character charged unless they were in melee with each other at the start of the steamjack's activation. When resolving this ranged attack, the steamjack does not suffer the target in melee penalty. If the target is not in melee range after moving, the steamjack can make the ranged attack before its activation ends.

Any character with STR 6 or greater can rewind the net and strap it back onto the steamjack in five minutes.

MARINER CHASSIS AND WEAPONS SYSTEMS

MARINER HEAVY WARJACK CHASSIS

Cost: 9,500 gc (with stock cortex), 7,000 gc (chassis only)

Description: The quintessential Ordic warjack, the Mariner is an Ordic take on a highly specialized laborjack originally designed by Engines West in Ceryl. Among the heaviest warjacks built for nautical warfare, the Mariner is perfectly adapted to its role at sea. Able to function for a short time while completely submerged, its chassis includes watertight seals, exhaust valves, and a special boiler and piping system that cycles air into the engine while immersed. Its ingenious stabilization compensator enables it to endure the roughest seas without toppling over. In fact, the Mariner is so reliable in difficult waters that crews often strap themselves to its chassis during storms.

The Freebooter is a common variant on the Mariner.

Height/Weight: 13'1" / 5.89 tons

Fuel Burn/Load Usage: 300 lbs / 6 hrs general, 60 mins combat

Initial Service Date: 590 AR

Original Chassis Design: Engines West

Stock Cortex: Aurum-grade

PHY	**11**
STR	**11**
SPD	**5**
AGL	**5**
PRW	**5**
POI	**4**
INT	**2**
PER	**2**
Initiative	**12**
MAT	**6**
RAT	**5**
DEF	**12**
ARM	**17**

DAMAGE GRID

Special Rules: Initiative is rolled only in the case of an uncontrolled steamjack; otherwise the 'jack activates on its controller's initiative.

Initiative MAT, RAT, and DEF assume a stock cortex.

The Mariner cannot be knocked down. Additionally, friendly characters B2B with the Mariner can take hold of the chains and ropes hanging from the machine as a quick action. Those who lash themselves to a Mariner cannot be knocked down for one round.

The Mariner's furnace is not extinguished if it is knocked down in shallow water or enters deep water. A Mariner can operate in deep water for up to 30 minutes at a time. While completely in deep water, the Mariner cannot be targeted by ranged or magic attacks, cannot make ranged attacks, and can only make melee attacks targeting other characters in deep water. While completely in deep water, the Mariner does not block LOS.

Mariner

MARINER WARJACK

The Mariner comes stock with pair of fists and is armed with a ship's gun and an anchor.

ANCHOR (HEAVY STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 160 gc
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 6

Description: This is a massive anchor wielded as a weapon by a heavy steamjack. Anchors are generally kept on chains that can be swung about to hit multiple enemies simultaneously.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the anchor. While wielding the anchor, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the anchor is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

A steamjack armed with an anchor can perform a thresher attack instead of making its initial melee attacks. A steamjack making a thresher attack makes one melee attack with this weapon against each character in its LOS and this weapon's melee range.

SHIP'S GUN (HEAVY STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 300 gc
Type: Ranged
Location: Arm
Ammo: 1
Effective Range: 90 feet (15")
Extreme Range: 450 feet
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 14
AOE: 3

Description: This is a medium weight ship's gun modified for use by a steamjack. It is intended to be carried and fired with one hand. The weapon must be reloaded by crewmen who accompany the steamjack into battle.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the ship's gun. While holding the ship's gun, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the ship's gun is crippled, the steamjack can fire the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

Reloading the weapon takes a full action and steamjacks lack the necessary dexterity to do so.

It costs 15 gc for charge, primer, and shell for one shot.

FREEBOOTER WARJACK

The Freebooter comes stock with a pair of clamps. Freebooters also integrate the combat reflex array (p. 199) and jury-rigged boiler (p. 315) upgrades.

CLAMPS (HEAVY STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 450 gc (pair)
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 3

Description: Though these massive cargo clamps are more commonly fitted on laborjacks, they are also popular with mercenary outfits and merchant marine forces who mount them on warjacks for added versatility.

Special Rules: These weapons are always used in pairs.

Clamps have the Open Fist rule and can be used to make Headlock/Weapon Lock, Push, Throw, and Two-Handed Throw power attacks. Clamps cannot be used to pick up other weapons.

Clamps gain an additional die of damage against knocked down targets.

Mounting this weapon on a heavy steamjack chassis requires the mechanik to remove the steamjack's old arm and replace it with the clamp (see "Removing or Replacing Arms" in *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*).

TORO CHASSIS

TORO HEAVY WARJACK CHASSIS

Cost: 9,000 gc (with custom cortex), 6,000 gc (chassis only)

Description: The Toro chassis is the powerful workhorse warjack of Ord. Though produced in very small numbers, the tenacious warjack has been embraced by the Ordic soldiery for its strength, resilience, and fighting spirit. The Ordic treasury has recently allocated funds to increase the production of Toro cortexes, drawing on trade arrangements with Cygnar for essential materials and enabling more of these machines to walk off the production line than ever before. In recent years, some mercenary companies have come to embrace the Toro over the venerable and much more numerous Nomads.

Height/Weight: 11'8" / 7.2 tons

Fuel Burn/Load Usage: 660 lbs / 5.2 hrs general, 70 mins combat

Initial Service Date: 586 AR

Original Chassis Design: Castellan Ironworks in Merin

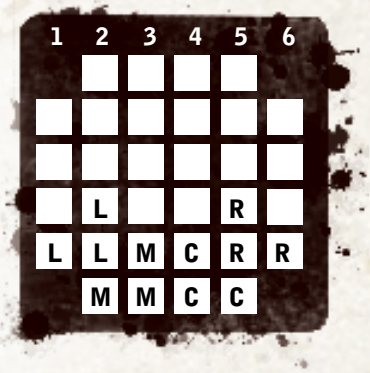
Stock Cortex: Toros have a custom cortex equivalent to an aurum-grade cortex. These cortexes have been intentionally designed to impart the Toro with a heightened sense of aggression in combat. As a result, these machines are as famed as they are notorious for charging headlong into combat. The warcasters who control them constantly struggle to keep their control over these warjacks. For the soldiers who fight alongside the warjacks, they have come to symbolize the indomitable spirit and dogged persistence of the Ordic people.

As a result of this increased aggression, Toro warjacks with a stock cortex can run or charge without spending a focus point or being 'jack marshaled.

Additionally, a Toro warjack with a stock cortex gains Counter Charge – When an enemy advances and ends its movement within 36 feet (6") of the warjack and in its line of sight, this warjack can immediately charge the enemy. The warjack cannot make a counter charge while engaged.

PHY	**11**
STR	**11**
SPD	**5**
AGL	**4**
PRW	**5**
POI	**4**
INT	**2**
PER	**2**
Initiative	**12**
MAT	**6**
RAT	**5**
DEF	**11**
ARM	**19**

DAMAGE GRID



Berserker

Special Rules: Initiative is rolled only in the case of an uncontrolled steamjack; otherwise the 'jack activates on its controller's initiative.

Initiative MAT, RAT, and DEF assume a stock cortex.

TORO WARJACK

The Toro comes stock with a pair of fists. It is generally armed with a single hand-weapon and fights with its other fist.

ORDIC UPGRADE

JURY-RIGGED BOILER

Cost: 250 gc

Description: Desperate mercenary warcasters make substantial modifications to their steamjacks' boilers and pressure valve systems in hopes of increasing the speed of their machines. The jury-rigged boiler helps to overcome the shortcoming of having to adapt industrial machines to wartime applications. When engaged, this modification enables the steamjack to force pressure through the 'jacks pistons, allowing it lurch forward with a sudden burst of steam. This modification can damage the steamjack's internal systems, but as long as the damage is reparable, it is considered worth the risk by some.

Special Rules: At the start of its turn, a steamjack with a jury-rigged boiler can spend 1 focus point to gains +2 SPD that turn. At the end of its turn, the steamjack suffers 1 damage point to its first available M system box. A steamjack cannot use this ability if its M system is crippled. A jury-rigged boiler can be used only once per turn.

Integrating a jury-rigged boiler into a steamjack requires the proper tools, eight hours of labor, and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 14. If the roll fails, it can be repeated after another hour of labor.

Having a jury-rigged boiler integrated into a steamjack costs an additional 120 gc.

Toro Warjack

PROTECTORATE OF MENOTH

INTRODUCTION

The Protectorate of Menoth is the youngest of the Iron Kingdoms, forged in the fires of the Cygnaran Civil War. Having emancipated itself from Cygnar in recent years to pursue its own divinely inspired destiny, the Protectorate has launched the Great Crusade to achieve new heights of glory in the name of Menoth, the Creator of Man. Its people are united as no other, drawing power and inspiration from their zealous faith and fervent beliefs.

The Sul-Menites' theocracy practices a strict form of worship, which they believe must be restored to primacy across all the kingdoms of man. The laws of the Protectorate are inseparably linked to the unyielding tenets of the Canon of the True Law. The priests and scrutators who make up the ruling clergy instill both awe and terror in a population that knows the eye of their Creator is upon them and weighing their souls both in life and death. The holy lands of the Protectorate are hard, carved from the wastes by much blood, sweat, and toil. Those who live here see it as a crucible for their faith.

The leader of the Protectorate is the hierarch, the greatest of Menoth's priests. Rather than remaining in the nation's capital of Imer, the current hierarch commands the Northern Crusade, which has plunged deep into the lands of the faithless. In his absence, daily tasks of governance fall to the Synod of Visgoths, a ruling council of senior priests.

The necessity of the Great Crusade is felt by all who live within the Protectorate. The Harbinger of Menoth moves among them as prophet and tangible proof of their god's favor. The Sul-Menites who carved out this nation have been joined in their cause by descendants of the tribes of the Idrian people, stalwart warriors who were among the first to convert upon the establishment of this nation in the wake of the civil war. Converts continue to flow into the Protectorate as its soldiers spread the word of their faith abroad, and victories in the north seem assured. Struggle is its own reward for the people of the Protectorate, and they do not lack for opportunities to prove their faith.

HISTORY

Throughout the Iron Kingdoms, the most widely believed story about the origins of the world is that Menoth the Lawgiver arose from the formless chaos that predated Creation. He shaped Caen and its sun as an extension of his imperative to bring lasting order.

Menoth adopted a form that pleased him, one echoed in his greatest creation: mankind. He is depicted in art as a towering, masked figure, his sublime visage concealed from mortal eyes to protect them from his naked wrath. When he strode Caen in the primal days, mankind arose from his shadow as it fell upon the still-forming waters of the world that withdrew from the land. He imposed his order upon the turning of the seasons and the cycles of life and death while humanity began to gather into tribes. Yet Menoth paid humanity little mind for a long age to test their ingenuity and fortitude. Instead, his primary concern was battling the Devourer Wurm, a primal beast of destruction and chaos that sought to undo all Menoth's works—a battle that continues to this day.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE PROTECTORATE OF MENOTH

Ruler: Hierarch Severius

Government Type: Theocracy

Capital: Imer

Ethnic Groups & Approx. Population: 510,000 Sulese; 380,000 Idrian; 100,000 Midlunder; 28,000 Ryn; 25,000 Khard; 10,000 Thurian; 10,000 Umbrean; 5,000 Morridane; 5,000 bogrin; 2,000 Kossite; 2,000 gobber; 500 ogrun

Languages: Sulese (Cygnaran dialect), Idrian

Climate: Mostly arid or semiarid; hot and humid along the coast; harsh desert in the east.

Terrain: Narrow coastal plain backed by mesa, buttes, and rugged mountains; small, discontinuous plains along coastline; high deserts in the north and south.

Natural Resources: Natural gas, fish, salt, sulfur, marble, and limestone, with minor deposits of coal, gold, lead, nickel, tin, and copper and an abundance of diamonds and oil.

THE GIFTS OF MENOTH

Humanity might have continued in barbarity indefinitely if not for the Gifts of Menoth. Tens of thousands of years are said to have passed before the Creator put aside his battle with the Wurm to consider humanity's perpetual turmoil. Menoth's wrath was fierce when he discovered he had been forgotten by those he had created, but the harsh indignities of human life tempered his rage. Those who begged his forgiveness he treated with mercy and benevolence, bestowing upon them gifts that formed the foundation for Menite civilization: the Flame, the Wall, the Sheaf, and the Law.

The Flame embodies faith and the temple's legacy to preserve and teach, but it also represents fire to drive back the darkness, forge weapons, and help people survive harsh winters. The Wall represents masonry and engineering, the creation of the first permanent structures as shelter, and the means to divide settled lands from the wilderness, there to domesticate wild beasts and foster civilization. The Sheaf is the knowledge of agriculture whereby the tribes began to till the earth, sow seeds, irrigate the land, and harvest grain to grow the population.

The Law is deemed the Creator's greatest gift, representing the compact between Menoth and humanity, the agreements by which mankind settled into castes and tribes joined together to create the first cities. It defined how righteous rulers were to be legitimized and sanctified by the priest caste. To the priests fell the responsibility of conducting burial rites to speed souls of the dead to Menoth's side in Urcaen, there to join the Creator in the War of Souls.

Some scholars believe early Menite tribes established now forgotten communities, though if such settlements existed they were swallowed by the eastern sands long ago. The largest tribe of Menites undertook a pilgrimage west, following their priests and battling the godless until they reached the shores of Meredius. Around 6500 BR, they founded the first great city of man, Icthier, a holy site where the words of the True Law were made manifest on stone, inscribed by the very hand of Menoth.

The study of these words brought reading and writing to humanity. Over the centuries, the True Law would be copied and translated countless times, although there are conflicting versions and some of the original stone inscriptions have since crumbled to dust. Passages in the True Law speak of holy kings who will be chosen by Menoth to serve as conduits for the divine. These priest-kings remain the most revered leaders in the Menite faith, each capable of awe-inspiring miracles in the name of the Creator of Man.

Cinot, the first great priest-king of Icthier, was said to be able to turn ash into grain and salt into nectar. Through him Menoth delivered the gift of the Sheaf to his people, his teachings allowing Icthier to flourish and its growing numbers to be fed. Cinot established aqueducts and irrigation and organized the city's laborers to quarry stone used to build both homes and walls. By his guiding hand the Menites were exalted above the warring tribes surrounding them.

EXODUS AND THE MOLGUR

As the early cradle of civilization grew, the priesthood needed to organize. Cinot established the first hierarchy of the Menite faith and its clergy, and his priests led zealous warriors in to battle against both the godless savages that surrounded Icthier and the beasts of the wild. For four centuries Cinot guided his people, his long life another of the Creator's miracles.

In 5500 BR a warrior of the faith named Belcor and a sage-priest named Geth led an exodus northward, seeking to spread civilization to hostile lands. Much knowledge of this age has been lost to history, as not all of Belcor and Geth's followers survived. Entire Menite tribes perished in the wilderness in the maws of beasts or through exposure to harsh climes. The descendants of the surviving tribes became the peoples of Calacia, Morrdh, Thrace, and other powers of the ancient world.

Some of these people turned from Menoth, choosing to traffic with dark powers, as the people of Morrdh had done. Eventually these groups would be punished for their transgressions, but for many centuries they endured as a thorn in the side of the faithful. Others remained true, like those of Thrace, who under the guidance of Priest-King Valent established a mighty line of fortifications against the enemies of civilization.

The savage tribes of the wild, the Molgur, fought mightily against the people of Thrace for generations, until the coming of Priest-King Golivant. Golivant stood atop the Wall of Thrace and weathered the invading tide of the Molgur in one of the defining battles of early civilization. By his leadership the Menites stood victorious, driving the barbarians back into the mountains and in subsequent years chasing them from the south. By the time he passed on to Urcaen, the power of the Molgur was forever shattered.

In this era the True Law reached the people of the north as well. The great warrior Khardovic looked to Golivant's successes as he tried to unite his own people, bringing the sword to those who had turned from the Creator and converting much of the domain to the worship of Menoth.

With the Molgur defeated, civilization spread across western Immoren and soon cities grew as their people tilled fields and built walls. Though many of these cities warred with one another, for a time the people and their rulers kept their covenant with the Creator and his priests. Unfortunately, this era is remembered more for the rise of the Twins, who would undermine the true faith.

FALSE PROPHETS

The faithful had become lax and allowed the twins Morrow and Thamar to usurp the rule of the priest-kings before ascending. In response the Menites sought to expunge this heresy as vigorously as they had once challenged the Molgur. Entire communities were eradicated and the fledgling Morrowans were driven into exile as they continued to worship the god they referred to as the Prophet.

The Purging of the Morrowans by the Menites was at its most brutal in the early centuries of the Thousand Cities Era. Early Morrowans were forced to worship in secret anywhere the

fort falk
Caerly's Crag
EASTERN MIDLUNDS
Marchfells
Whiterock
FHARIN
Kortar Fastness
Rotterhorn
Pillars of Rotterhorn
KING'S VINE
Black River
Tower Judgment
Boar Hills
Eastwall
SULONMARCH
IMER
STEELWATER FLATS
Erud Hills
Gelis
CASPIA
Salt Vale
SUL
CASPIA
GEDORRA
Sentinel Point Naval fortress
The Guardians
CLOCKERS COVE
Acrennia
Gulf of Cygnar
VARHDAN
FENNMAR
fenn Swamp
Monastery of the Order of the fist
Deadsands Bay
Sithney
MERCIR
Harber River
Eyewall Bay
RAELTHORNE
ANCIENT ICTHIER
Aclenius
ICTHOSA
Bloodshore Prison
Verbote
PROTECTORATE OF MENOTH
CAPITOL
CITY
FORTRESS
FEATURE OF INTEREST
RAILROAD
ROAD
PROVINCES
MOUNTAINS
HILLS
FOREST (temperate)
FOREST (boreal)
SWAMP
SCALE (in miles)
5 15 25 50 100 150 175

scrutators held sway. Morrowan shrines and churches were hidden or disguised; Menite temples were filled with secret worshipers of the Twins. The rise of other ascendants and scions continued to draw converts. Morrowan numbers in some regions made it difficult for the scrutators to repress the Prophet's followers from a fear of widespread unrest. This was particularly true where the new faith took root among the sons and daughters of ruling families.

Peace between the two religions was made possible through an unlikely event—the assassination of the Morrowan Primarch Loriachas during a meeting with Menite leaders. The woman responsible was a Thamarite who had deceived the Menites and who was promptly struck down by a manifestation of a Morrowan ascendant. The assassin then ascended to become a Thamarite scion, and this combination of clearly divine apparitions provided irrefutable proof to the Menite witnesses that the Twins existed and had transcended mortality. This forced the Menite Temple to reexamine its doctrine to reconcile these seemingly inexplicable events.

Meeting in 1247 BR to determine a proper response, the leading visgoths of the Menite temples came to a grudging accord with the Morrowan faith. They determined that Menoth must have consented to allow Morrow's divinity as an accommodation once he knelt to Menoth as his Creator. Morrow was thus given limited sanction to shepherd those who worshiped him, so long as he stood as guardian against the perfidy of his sister and acknowledged Menoth as his Creator. And as Morrow bowed to Menoth, so should Morrowans bow to the Menite priesthood. They were required to attend Menite services, pay tithes to the Temple, and in all respects pay homage to their Creator. This theological accommodation allowed Morrowans to build churches and worship openly, a generous compromise the Morrowans would exploit in future generations.

TRIALS OF THE ORGOTH

The Menites viewed the arrival of the Orgoth as a test of faith—one some say the people of Immoren failed. Within a generation virtually all of the Thousand Cities had fallen beneath the Orgoth lash, and the priests of Menoth seemed powerless to resist. Indeed, Orgoth tyrants seeking to intimidate the faithful made gruesome spectacles of Menite priests. These failings caused many to question their faith, and thus the ranks of Morrow's and Thamar's followers grew.

Thamar's Gift of Magic was even worse for the scrutators and priests. The occult had long been considered unholy, outside the Gifts of Menoth, but proved instrumental in the success of the Rebellion. In the aftermath of those battles, the Rebellion arcanists were lauded as heroes and their societies flourished, while most Menite priests continued to describe them as heretics. This exacerbated a widening divide between the righteous clergy and the inheritors of the Rebellion, both noble and commoner alike. In the years that followed, the Iron Kingdoms would slowly but inexorably move away from the True Law.

THE NEW KINGDOMS

The signing of the Corvis Treaties marked the first time in the history of western Immoren that the Menite faith was not the cornerstone of political power. As a small concession to the traditional rights of the Temple, each of the new kingdoms agreed that Menite priests would bear witness and legitimize the coronation of kings. Beyond this ceremonial role, however, the power of the clergy was tremendously reduced from what it had been during the Thousand Cities Era. As the worship of Menoth continued to diminish over the centuries, kings of the Morrowan faith ruled openly and without shame. Menite priests were increasingly excluded from the halls of power while their influence and traditional place in society diminished. Nobles and kings began to seek counsel among the Morrowan priests, whose answers they preferred.

In 286 AR when Cygnar's Woldred the Diligent created the Accord-by-Hand Covenant, a document that allowed the monarch to appoint a successor, he preserved the right of the Menite clergy to oversee the proceedings. But even as the covenant was made law, Morrowan agents sought to subvert it. Menite priests attended Woldred when he fell ill and died, but the usurper Malagant toppled the rightful order by removing those priests from the halls of power and replacing them with Morrowans more amenable to his designs.

Public outcry was immense. In order to placate the masses, Malagant demanded that both the Church of Morrow and the Temple of Menoth endorse his claim. The Church of Morrow did so without qualms, but the Menites refused, inciting the usurper to act violently against them. Many of the Menite clergy were unlawfully arrested for treason and executed. By the end of 290 AR, over two hundred Menite priests had been sent to the gallows.

Two attempts were made to remove Malagant from the throne, though both failed. With civil unrest threatening the nation, King Malagant declared the Church of Morrow the state religion of Cygnar on Cinten the 8th, 293 AR. It became clear that the old accords ensuring peace between Menites and Morrowans no longer applied in Cygnar under this illegitimate king.

For generations, Menites fought in the Cygnaran courts to reconcile the True Law with the corrupted influence of a Royal Assembly bereft of the guiding hand of the Temple. The faithful had not yet realized the courts had lost all legitimacy and only violence could restore divine order.

This state persisted for almost two centuries, though the worst persecutions ended with the death of Malagant. Still, the role of the Creator in the rule of Cygnar became peripheral at best, and with each generation fewer people heeded the words of the True Law.

SULON'S CALL

Sulon, the first Hierarch of the new era, was born in these bleak times. A visionary, he proved to be the greatest leader of the Menite faith since Khardovic, quickly rising through the ranks of the priesthood to eventually become the visgoth of Caspia, known across all of Cygnar. He called for all Menites to join in a great pilgrimage to hear his words in Caspia.

A vast number of the faithful journeyed to the slums of the eastern city, where Sulon was laying the foundation for a resurgence of the Menite faith. The Morrowan crown allowed the Menites here to dwell in appalling conditions, but they found comfort in the sight of the ancient Great Temple of the Creator.

In 482 AR Visgoth Sulon stood atop the Great Temple. His vision had become reality. From the elevated altar he looked out over a sea of pilgrims preparing for the great trials to come. Eastern Caspia had become the largest congregation of Menites in the world as hundreds of thousands joined in prayer. On that holy day, Sulon became the first priest to adopt the title of hierarch since the Thousand Cities Era, and the masses wept with joy.

That same year, Sulon banished any unbelievers still in eastern Caspia to the west of the bridge to make room for the faithful in the district's crowded streets. The evicted were shown mercy and allowed to depart in peace, taking those possessions they could carry. This mercy was not to be reciprocated in the days to come.

The Cygnaran king sent soldiers to the bridges to interfere with the holy gathering, and when the faithful were beset, Sulon ordered them to send the enemy to Urcaen for their transgressions. The Menites flooded across the Black River into western Caspia, igniting fires in which a new nation would be forged. All but one of the bridges spanning the Black River fell, and soon this last road joining the two halves of the city was barricaded on either side. Caspia was a city besieged from within.

For two years Cygnaran fought Cygnaran in the names of Menoth and Morrow. On Calder's first full moon of 484 AR, Morrowan reinforcements entered Caspia from the north, and Sulon fell in battle against the faithless under the shadow of the Sancteum. But he had accomplished enough; it was Menoth's will that his hierarch should join him in Urcaen. To commemorate Sulon's valor and vision, every year on the first full moon—Sulonsphar—the devout are forbidden to utter a word or lift a hand at labor.

FOUNDING OF THE PROTECTORATE

Shortly after Sulon's death, King Bolton V sent an emissary to Visgoth Ozeall I, the hierarch's most trusted subordinate, to end the conflict and reach an accord. A long stretch of land in the southeastern corner of Cygnar, including the district of Caspia east of the Black River, was ceded to the Menites. Visgoth Ozeall declared eastern Caspia to be named henceforth the city of Sul in honor of the first hierarch of the new age. The Menites of the eastern city were no longer Caspians but Sulese.

Being so close to the Bloodstone Marches, the lands granted them were barren and inhospitable, but the faithful saw this as simply another test. Within the borders of this new protectorate the people could realize Sulon's vision: a Menite theocracy living by the True Law and utterly dedicated to Menoth the Creator and Lawgiver. The people of western Immoren had not seen such a pure theocracy since ancient times. Unhindered by secular distractions, they were able to re-create the prescribed castes of the ancient faith and forge a new society driven solely by worship.

The Cygnaran authorities naturally enforced terms. The Protectorate of Menoth would remain part of Cygnar in title and taxes, if not in law or religion. A tithe of coin, Ozeall reminded his followers, was a small cost to pay for control over their destiny as a people.

Another term prohibited them from maintaining a standing army, but Ozeall's foresight ensured they could raise the necessary defenders to protect their temples and preserve their borders from the hostile tribes to the east. This land became the seed from which the might of the new nation would slowly grow. A stream of humanity ventured out from the walls of Sul to claim farmland from the difficult soils east of the Black River. The land was not easily worked, but increasingly the people realized the fruits of providence. Ancient lost temples awaited rediscovery amid the southeastern sands, the recovery of which was deemed worthy of the dangers of the Bloodstone Marches.

Though many expected Ozeall to take up the mantle of hierarch, he thought such a measure would be disrespectful to the memory of Sulon and never sought that authority. The early years of the new theocracy were difficult, and thousands perished trying to civilize these hostile lands.

CRUSADES OF EXPANSION

After the death of Ozeall I, Luctine became hierarch, having achieved consensus among the other visgoths. Hierarch Luctine immediately set about expanding the Protectorate's borders in search of resources and arable land. Sulese settlers had to fight for these lands with the tribes of the Idrian people who had long lived nomadic lives in this region.

While settlers erected temples amid brambles and worked to carve homes from the red sandstone from which the Marches take their name, the howling Idrian tribes descended upon them time and again. The Menites had traded the oppression of the Cygnarans for the savagery of tribes in thrall to the Devourer Wurm. Luctine showed foresight and wisdom by enacting the first crusades to convert the people of the wastes, offering them mercy should they submit and slaying those who would not accept the True Law.

The greatest clash came in 504 AR to the east of Sul when the hosts of the Protectorate attacked the crude huts and hovels of the largest Idrian city, Imer. Here the hand of Menoth struck the earth, causing a tremendous quake that struck down the Idrians but left the faithful standing. The Idrians recognized the intervention of the divine; the majority of the tribes, particularly those of Imer, immediately converted to the true faith.

The battles against the Idrians did not end in Imer, however. Only decades of strife and bloodshed would fully bring the southern tribes into the faith. Luctine himself was slain in battle against the Idrians at the edge of the Bloodstone Marches, but even in the aftermath of this, the Sulese and Idrians continued to unite. The Idrians brought much-needed numbers to the young nation as capable warriors and zealous citizens. Imer benefitted from Sulese knowledge to become a modern city with true walls and temples.

Without the Idrians' knowledge of the land, the Protectorate might never have discovered the great wealth of diamonds beneath the Marches. Harvested gems trickled into the hands of Cygnaran officials as gifts and bribes, allowing the Menites to pursue their interests in secrecy. As long as they were paid with shining stones, the Cygnarans paid little attention to the Menites strengthening their new nation.

STRIFE WITHIN

Following the death of Hierarch Luctine in 521 AR the Temple lacked clear leadership. The two most influential visgoths, Dorvol Pholt and Lurvon Meshnir, each had a significant following and rallied great crowds on the streets of Sul. Riots broke out as supporters of each faction attacked their rivals. This situation persisted until 525 AR when both visgoths were mysteriously struck dead while denouncing one another amid throngs of their followers.

Without a candidate to take up the mantle of hierarch, the surviving visgoths convened to determine a more effective manner of governance. They created the Synod, a council of visgoths that would set policy and declare a new hierarch when a priest was deemed unanimously worthy. The Synod ruled from 526 AR to 531 AR before Vice Scrutator Moriv Ozeall, the grandson of Ozeall I, staged a bloody coup with the intention of assassinating all six visgoths as they slept or knelt in prayer. Two escaped and went into hiding, quietly spreading the word of Ozeall's betrayal through their followers.

Ozeall the Wicked, as he became known, ruled the Protectorate for less than a year. He caused much damage to the young nation—he even colluded with Cygnaran officials who provided him guards in return for additional taxes. As Ozeall was about to appoint himself hierarch in 532 AR, a conspiracy of scrutators supported by the Knights Exemplar stormed his palace in Sul. Ozeall was dragged into the streets for a hasty trial at the Great Temple of the Creator, where he was pronounced guilty of heresy and summarily burned to death before cheering mobs.

New visgoths were appointed to replace those slain by Ozeall. However, the Synod ruled for only a few months before its members fell to irreconcilable quarrels. This divide resulted in riots worse than those that had occurred under Visgoths Pholt and Meshnir, and the future of the Protectorate itself became uncertain. Some Sulese openly questioned if they had not enjoyed less corrupt governance under Cygnaran rule.

In 535 AR Vice Scrutator Caltor Turgis overthrew the Synod with the support of the rest of the priesthood. Turgis oversaw the trials and executions of four members of the Synod before declaring himself hierarch.

RENEWAL OF PURPOSE

Chastened by their predecessors' actions and inspired by the new hierarch, the clergy labored to implement Turgis' reforms. He ushered in a new era of stability and expanded the Protectorate's borders when the ancient city of Icthier was returned to Menite dominion. Further, Turgis commanded the construction of the great fortress of Tower Judgment, a visible sign of the scrutators' growing power.

During this period the Menites began making use of the abundant oil under the cracked soil of the wastes. In its natural form this oil can fuel forge fires and keep temple hearths blazing. Through refinement, however, it became so volatile it could ignite the instant it was exposed to air, roaring like the manifest wrath of Menoth, thus earning it the name "Menoth's Fury." With this discovery, the Sulese possessed a powerful new weapon against their enemies.

Before his death in 549 AR Turgis' greatest gift to the Sulese was a return to confidence in their leadership. After his death a triumvirate of visgoths—Leventine, Nestor, and Wort—rose to prominence by continuing Turgis' work. The three worked to further codify the True Law into a system of governance for the Protectorate, to stabilize the nation's borders, and to further assimilate the Idrian tribes into the greater population.

The triumvirate largely succeeded in these efforts until the death of Visgoth Wort in 559 AR. Leventine and Nestor's political positions weakened, and they were forced to make numerous concessions to other visgoths. When Nestor was assassinated in 562 AR, Leventine and the Synod ruled until the prominent Visgoth Ravonal became hierarch in 568 AR.

RAVONAL'S DOCTRINE

Almost from the start, Hierarch Ravonal prevailed upon the faithful to secede entirely from Cygnar. He assured them that freedom for the faithful was Menoth's will and that Cygnaran taxation amounted to theft from the Temple. While Ravonal was careful not to speak of open warfare against Cygnar, in secret he steadily expanded the Protectorate's military forces. Ravonal also consecrated the Incendium, an order of priests dedicated specifically to the Flameguard who would live and fight alongside them and ensure they did not forget their sacred charge. He created the clerical office of Priest of the Flame to command the entire Flameguard.

Seeing that if the faithful were to overthrow the shackles of Cygnaran tyranny they would need warjacks to meet those that would be brought against them, Hierarch Ravonal ensured the Protectorate greatly expanded its production of steamjacks and other weapons of war. As distasteful as it was, the Protectorate turned to foreign smugglers and to the kingdom of Khador to acquire vital warjack parts, such as cortexes.

Ravonal further extended the power of the scrutators and entrusted the order to the leadership of the young Vice Scrutator Garrick Voyle, who had already proven his capabilities through founding the Order of the Fist and swiftly joined the hierarch's inner circle of advisors. Ravonal began grooming Voyle to become his successor and made him a visgoth in 575 AR.

In the summer of 580 AR Ravonal and his entourage were inspecting new fortifications along the Black River north of Eastwall when they were ambushed by a large force of mercenaries and the hierarch was killed. Although the identities of the attackers were never officially determined, Protectorate leadership had no doubts they had acted for the ruthless Cygnaran king, Vinter Raelthorne IV.

Ravonal was interred in the Great Temple of the Creator before one of the most massive gatherings of the Sulese since the days of the civil war. He is still remembered for laying the foundation for the Protectorate's modernization and the advancement of the Menite faith across western Immoren.

HIERARCH GARRICK VOYLE

Following Ravonal's death internecine feuding divided the Synod, undoubtedly the intended effect of the murder. Yet the faithful believe a peerless leader arising amid strife is better than simply allowing one who is unworthy to claim the title of hierarch. Given the longer periods of turmoil following the deaths of previous hierarchs, the span of eight years that followed Ravonal's death was not a great burden.

Many claimants to the hierarchy arose from the Temple's higher ranks as visgoths and senior scrutators vied for power, each seeking to rally the priesthood to his cause. Consensus remained elusive, and the bitter and violent disputes continued for years. Visgoth Garrick Voyle bided his time as his rivals exposed their vulnerabilities and were destroyed by their enemies.

Finally Voyle acted. First, he silenced all opposition, calling upon the allegiants of the Order of the Fist and many of the most feared scrutators to assist him. Making his movements known lured out would-be assassins, each of whom was destroyed once they had revealed those who had sent them. By 588 AR Voyle had taken absolute control of the Protectorate and had proclaimed himself hierarch. Those present at this proclamation saw the text of the Canon of the True Law manifest on his flesh as an unprecedented visible miracle confirming Menoth's favor, and so all bowed before him.

In 589 AR Voyle moved the capital from Sul to Imer, giving rise to the nation's third great city, one that soon grew to rival Sul itself. Thousands of workers were sent to labor in quarries amid the Erud Hills to gather the stone that thousands more would use to construct the great temples of Imer. In a few short years the city was transformed into the capital Hierarch Voyle had envisioned.

Voyle knew the coming holy war would require his people to control their own means of manufacture. Accordingly, he instituted the Vassals of Menoth and greatly expanded the Protectorate's military industries. Scrutators secretly dispatched Exemplar knights abroad to capture foreign arcanists so that their unholy skills might be bent to sacred purpose through persuasion and torment. These became the first Vassals, but this organization soon also welcomed Sulese and Idrians who had been cursed with the gift of sorcery, and who were charged with the creation of warjack cortexes for the Protectorate's growing army. Where once these unfortunate souls would have been wracked, now they found redemption in strengthening the Protectorate's growing army.

THE COMING OF THE HARBINGER

By 603 AR the Protectorate was better armed and more ready for war than ever before. Such efforts could not be conducted entirely in secret, and Cygnar began concerted efforts to sabotage the Protectorate's growing industry. Voyle maintained a modicum of contact with the Cygnaran crown so King Leto would believe diplomacy was still a viable option. All the while, Voyle prepared his people for the inevitable crusade.

The Creator showed his favor in the midst of these preparations by sending the Harbinger of Menoth, embodied in a young woman from a town north of Icthier who channeled the god's will. Though great prophets had been known in ancient times, none had appeared for many centuries. Those who saw her knew immediately the veracity of the power and responsibility with which she had been blessed; she floated serenely above Caen, her feet too holy to touch unclean earth. She willingly blindfolded herself so the visions bestowed upon her by the Creator would be all her eyes would see.

The appearance of the Harbinger was met with skepticism in Imer until she presented herself before the Synod and the hierarch. A series of miracles combined with her own testimony convinced them she was indeed a true prophet. At once Voyle took her into his counsel and bade her reveal to him all she had seen. The two kept the exact nature of their conversations to themselves, but Voyle later revealed that the Harbinger had foreseen the war between Cygnar and Khador which would soon consume Llael and that this was the time to initiate the Great Crusade. With renewed urgency, the Protectorate made preparations.

As prophesized, Khador struck Llael in the last month of 604 AR, and Cygnar responded by rushing most of its military might north to defend its doomed ally. Once the Llaelese War was underway and Cygnar was battling Khador, Hierarch Voyle declared the emancipation of the Sul-Menites and the independence of the Protectorate. He then initiated the Great Crusade to reunite humanity in worship of the Lawbringer beginning with a siege of the walls of Caspia and strikes deep inside Cygnar. While this initial siege of Caspia was soon repulsed, it required Cygnar to further divide its armies, sending forces to the capital and reinforcing its garrison.

THE NORTHERN CRUSADE

As events unfolded in the south, the Protectorate launched the Northern Crusade. This force marched north to take the message of Menoth deep into the lands of the faithless, led by Grand Scrutator Severius, the greatest war leader of the priest caste, and would be eventually joined by the Harbinger.

After crossing the Bloodstone Marches into Cygnaran territory, the Northern Crusade proved its willingness to put the faithless to the sword at Fisherbrook, which Severius set ablaze. The Morrowan monastery outside Fellig suffered the same fate. As the crusade continued north, the Harbinger ventured into the Thornwood with a smaller force. There she confronted Lich Lord Asphyxious at the ruins of an ancient Orgoth temple where he hoped to use the souls of the thousands of Menite souls trapped there to fuel his own apotheosis.

The Harbinger and the greatest member of the Reclaimant Order, the Testament, became Menoth's instruments to halt this atrocity. She chose to sacrifice herself to free the souls trapped there, sending them onward to Urcaen even as she died on the blade of the Khadoran great prince and sorcerer Vladimir Tzepesci. The Testament preserved the soul of the Harbinger and suffered great peril to return her body back to Imer. There, before hundreds of thousands of witnesses, Hierarch Voyle presided over a miracle as Menoth reunited her soul and flesh and the Harbinger woke from death.

Severius continued the Northern Crusade into Llael. After fighting through the Khadorans guarding the border, he allied with the Llaelese Resistance and marched on the city of Leryn. The gates of the city opened to him without battle as senior Khadoran officers converted to the Sul-Menite faith on the spot. With this victory, Severius consecrated Leryn to the Creator.

INVASION OF SUL

War continued in the south as Cygnar, having secured its own borders, turned on its Menite population. Thousands of Cygnaran Menites were arrested and transported to a squalid island prison for no crime other than the lawful worship of the Creator. Even as the prison barges steamed down the Black River toward the Gulf of Cygnar, the armies in Sul prepared to renew the siege on Caspia.

Then the Cygnarans turned the tables on the Sul-Menites, accomplishing what seemed impossible. For weeks the Cygnarans had futilely bombarded Sul's walls, blessed structures that the faithful had always considered inviolable. In an act of desecration to these holy structures even beyond the accomplishments of the Orgoth, the faithless Cygnarans breached the walls and poured into the holy city.

The Knights Exemplar and Temple Flameguard clashed with the invaders, and citizens came in droves to defend their city in a battle that would rage in the city streets for over a year. At great length the Cygnarans were finally driven from Sul. Menite soldiers then surged into Caspia, where the fighting became entrenched amid blockades and heavily defended gates. Like Sul, its western counterpart had been built to be eminently defensible, with a maze of walls and towering fortifications.

Knowing victory depended on his personal intervention, Hierarch Voyle took command of the armies of Imer and marched on Caspia. This assault broke through the defenders, crushing them at every turn. Despite the Harbinger's warning that no hierarch could claim Caspia before it was made whole with Sul, Voyle marched on, and like Sulon before him, he fell in battle. Their morale shattered, the faithful withdrew.

The Harbinger, healed of the wounds she had taken in the siege on Caspia, reminded the grieving people of the Protectorate that as the crusades continued every great battle would incur sacrifice and loss. Sul had been liberated and was now stronger for their courage and the blood spilled to restore it. Furthermore, Cygnar had witnessed the power of the Creator, and no small number of its citizens had converted to the true faith. With her support Grand Scrutator Severius succeeded Voyle to continue his work.

Following a cease-fire in the south, the Northern Crusade now grows strong in the well-fortified city of Leryn. Having secured this mighty bastion, Hierarch Severius readies his armies to press west and take the Creator's message to the Khadorans and the millions of Menites among them.

THE SUL-MENITE TEMPLE

The Protectorate of Menoth is unique among the Iron Kingdoms for being an absolute theocracy, eschewing the feudal governance preferred by the other nations. All aspects of the Protectorate are devoted to the glorification of Menoth, the Creator of Man. Religious and secular authority are indivisible, and all state functions are steeped in ceremony, ancient tradition, and faith.

While Menoth is worshiped across western Immoren in every human kingdom, not all Menites belong to the same sect. Most Menites in Ord, Llael, Cygnar, and Khador do not acknowledge the authority of the Protectorate's hierarch and look instead to their own priests. The Great Crusade is intended to rectify this division by uniting the faithful under the dominion of the Protectorate of Menoth. It is a nation at war, and every industry is directed toward the Great Crusade. There is no separation between the government and the military: both are aspects of the Temple, overseen by the clergy and supported by much of the population.

HIERARCHY OF THE TEMPLE

The priesthood has a strictly defined, inflexible hierarchy that has endured for thousands of years. While its ranks are nearly identical to those used by other Menite sects due to their shared ancient roots, without exception the Temple's priests wield more power than those of equivalent rank outside the Protectorate.

While the priesthood focuses on theological matters and is mindful of its duty to the Lawgiver, governance requires compromises and involves a host of mundane duties. Governing the Protectorate requires a vast bureaucracy. By necessity a large number of lower-ranking clergy serve as clerks and scribes, others tend to the needs of the faithful, and while some rare few are destined to rule. These roles are often a matter of ambition, temperament, and aptitude. Regardless of their roles, even the lowest-ranking priests learn the Canon of the True Law and embody the authority of the Temple. Each higher priestly rank conveys greater responsibility and power, and this is evident in the priest's raiment, mask, and staff.

MANIFESTING THE DIVINE

While being a true priest requires one to be gifted, not all initiates of the Temple of Menoth are capable of wielding divine magic. Presbyters, the lowest rank of the Menite Temple, includes clerks, scribes, librarians, clergymen, and scholars who lack the ability to manifest Menoth's power through prayer. Only priests who demonstrate the capacity to evoke minor miracles through divine magic can ascend to the upper echelons.

Each member of the clergy begins as an initiate, most trained at the Lyceum of the True Law in Imer, before becoming a junior priest, or presbyter, once his training is complete. Initiates of the Sul-Menite Temple begin their training between the ages of eleven and thirteen and are seldom ordained before the age of nineteen. Presbyters serve in a variety of capacities depending on their capabilities, disposition, and interests.

A junior priest who can successfully invoke prayers as divine magic and who draws the attention of a superior may be promoted to the rank of potentate with authority over presbyters and initiates. Potentates supervise either a single significant temple or several smaller temples and lesser shrines. This is the highest rank most priests can ever aspire to; even a potentate who has proven to be devout, loyal, and exceptionally dedicated will be promoted higher only if a need arises to replace a senior priest.

Above potentates are sovereigns. A sovereign is an influential and highly respected member of the clergy with considerable autonomy responsible for watching over potentially dozens of temples, their potentates, and hundreds of subordinate priests. Some sovereigns are assigned oversight of a sizable town or even a lesser city. This is generally the highest rank of priest most citizens will ever interact with personally; it is considered a tremendous honor to be addressed by a sovereign.

Visgoth is a rank of considerable power existing above sovereigns. Currently nine in number, these governing principals of the Protectorate are each tasked with responsibilities over major aspects of the government, industry, or territorial domains. Together the visgoths comprise the Synod, a body that serves as the highest advisors to the hierarch, if one exists, or otherwise as the highest authority in the theocracy. Visgoths are appointed by a hierarch or by a unanimous vote of the Synod. Their number is not fixed but rather determined by the needs of the theocracy. A visgoth's influence depends on his area of governance, responsibilities, and political alliances. As visgoths seldom possess equivalent power and may have competing agendas, strife among them is not uncommon.

Drawn from the tradition of the ancient priest-kings, the hierarch is a singular office of peerless authority and theoretically unlimited power. One is named and recognized only when he can command the absolute obedience of the priesthood and by the unanimous endorsement of the Synod. For this reason, dissenting voices are often silenced in the struggles for unification. If the Synod is divided, a hierarch might not emerge for years, during which time the visgoths struggle to govern. Furthermore, the standards for a hierarch are almost impossibly high: he must be a priest of superlative faith, ambition, political acumen, and individual power.

This system ensures that the greatest, most visionary priests emerge to lead the Protectorate to its rightful destiny. In the 133 years the Protectorate has existed, there have been only six hierarchs: Sulon, Luctine, Turgis, Ravonal, Voyle, and lastly Severius. Each of these figures is vaunted as a paragon of the faith and champion of the Lawgiver. Even after death, they are above criticism and beyond rebuke.

SCRUTATORS

Traditionally the scrutators were special priests who served as the arbiters, judges, and executioners of the Menite faith. In the Protectorate they comprise a feared inner circle whose power is wielded to preserve the Temple. Scrutators are selected from the ranks of the priesthood and undergo extensive training and indoctrination to join the order.

Scrutators follow a different code of behavior and are freed from some of the restraints of ordinary priests. They do what must be done to protect and preserve the faith, and nothing is more important than this. Further, they must sacrifice aspects of their humanity and excise emotions such as compassion, mercy, and forgiveness, for their office requires them to deal harshly with enemies of the faith.

Some threats to the faith come from within, and scrutators bear the ultimate authority to enforce Temple doctrine and the True Law. All citizens are subject to their authority, including the clergy themselves—they ensure that the priests and other high-ranking officers of the Temple do not fall prey to corruption or heresy. The scrutators are therefore the intelligence-gathering arm of the Protectorate Temple, its internal police, and the ultimate court of law. This is their responsibility and their burden.

Scrutator Masks

Scrutators hold regular clerical ranks, which signify seniority within the hierarchy of the Temple. In addition to their ordinary responsibilities, they are often called upon to undertake specific tasks, as the hierarch and visgoths rely upon the scrutators to enact their will. Because of this unique function of their caste and their duties, scrutators are treated with deference by ordinary priests.

In theory the authority of a scrutator is limited by his priestly rank; in practice, however, his words are often heeded regardless of rank. Such is the fear and respect scrutators command. While it may seem this should open this caste to corruption, higher-ranking scrutators deal severely with abuses of authority by subordinates. A scrutator must never be allowed to put their own interests ahead of the Temple.

As a group, scrutators are more likely to work closely together and to share values and opinions than is the priesthood as a whole. As part of the Protectorate's governing inner circle, scrutators are both more aware of and more devoted to achieving the hierarch's goals in presenting a unified front to those outside their caste. This does not preclude conspiracies within the scrutator caste as elements vie against one another, but given the degree of their

indoctrination and oversight this almost never rises to the level of sedition. When scrutators conspire it is generally to outdo some other faction within their caste to impress the hierarch or the vice scrutators. Each believes in his own way that he is more intelligent and dedicated than his peers.

At the head of this order are the vice scrutators and the grand scrutator. At present there are four vice scrutators, three of whom are visgoths and the fourth of whom, Vice Scrutator Vindictus, is in the personal service of Hierarch Severius. The grand scrutator is ostensibly the supreme leader of the order and answers directly to the hierarch, though the position has been vacant since Severius was proclaimed hierarch. This position was created specifically for Severius and it is unknown whether it will be reinstated.

RECLAIMERS

Since the dawn of the Protectorate an unusual group of priests have stood apart from the rest—the Reclaimers. They are unquestionably a part of the Temple, yet their placement within the hierarchy is not precisely codified, nor are they trained at the Lyceum. Members of the Reclaimant Order feel a unique calling to give up their identities and become extensions of Menoth's will. Their responsibilities relate solely to the passage of Menite souls between Caen and Urcaen, in special funerary rites.

Reclaimers give up their connection to humanity in an even more extreme and marked fashion than the scrutators. Each dons an iron mask said to be a tomb for their thoughts that allows them to hear the voice of Menoth. They further swear a vow of absolute silence after speaking the Oath of the Reclaimer's Last Breath, a promise to send the souls chosen by the Lawgiver to Urcaen on wings of flame and ash. Reclaimers surrender their names, divorce themselves from any contact with family, and have no true friends, although they will work alongside others of the Temple. They appear to be utterly devoid of human emotion, as both a matter of discipline and as an unavoidable consequence of their calling.

Becoming a reclaimer is not a choice, but a true divine calling. The role requires absolute sacrifice of the self, abandonment of the comforts of the world, and acceptance of a life of ascetic simplicity and duty. Reclaimers can manifest at any time, including among regular clergy, who relinquish their rank and previous duties. All other considerations are abandoned as the individual hearing the call seeks out the nearest member of this order and makes himself known. The mark of this change is obvious to any who have gone through it, and those answering the call are recognized and initiated in ceremonies known only to the members of the Reclaimant Order.

Because reclaimers are touched by the hand of Menoth, they are outside the hierarchy and structure of the Temple. Those in the order do not answer to superiors or command subordinates as all are guided directly by the Creator. The clergy does not interfere with their work, nor are they asked to execute additional duties, though they sometimes lend their skills to the Protectorate's military forces to enact Menoth's will on the battlefield. They see to the needs of the slain, ensuring souls are swiftly guided to the City of Man.

On rare occasions a reclaimer will hear the Creator's voice commanding him to strike down another and usher his soul to Urcaen. Such direct commandments are usually interpreted as Menoth claiming a soul for his own inscrutable reasons. However, the Creator has also been known to call for the death of an enemy of the faith. Reclaimers are sometimes tasked to reclaim the souls of the clergy or others of great faith, and as long as they are clearly acting on Menoth's will, little can be done to gainsay them.

Reclaimers are completely steeped in mystery. As they do not speak and usually refrain from writing, communication with them can be difficult, though some convey meaning by gesture. There are also times when the faithful have felt compelled to aid a reclaimer for reasons they do not themselves fully understand. In battle, reclaimers are often joined by disordered but united mobs of the zealots who take up arms to assist them. Further, reclaimers sometimes possess the ability to control warjacks on the battlefield through gesture and bearing. How they make their instructions known is not always clear, yet the 'jacks heed them.

THE TESTAMENT OF MENOTH

Long recognized as the high reclaimer of the order, the individual known as the Testament of Menoth is a figure who has already become legend. He is believed to hear the voice of the Creator with greater clarity than all other reclaimers, and certainly his deeds suggest this is true. Possessed of the talent of a warcaster, for decades he has silently marched to battle against enemies of the faith.

Soon after Hierarch Voyle issued his call igniting the Great Crusade, the Testament walked alone into the desert wastelands and bodily stepped into Urcaen. He returned with the Omegus, a holy stone brought back from the City of Man in Urcaen and inscribed with the words of Menoth. In the months that followed the Testament joined the Harbinger in battle and protected her soul before witnessing her resurrection.

GOVERNANCE

The Temple of Menoth is controlled from the top down by the clergy, from the hierarch to the Synod and through the ranks of the subordinate priests. Internally the clergy are watched over by the scrutators, who are the most well-informed and active agents of the Temple. In addition to the priest caste are the Temple's martial orders, each of which has its own internal hierarchy and whose individual leaders possess considerable influence and command great respect.

When a ranking priest issues an order, it is the responsibility of those beneath his station to see it comes to pass. A considerable bureaucracy of lesser priests exists to see to the smallest details of every decree. Because of the Protectorate's rigid hierarchy and the tremendous respect afforded its highest-ranking priests, the theocracy can quickly execute sweeping changes with little internal debate or resistance.

Priests and particularly scrutators have considerable authority to take charge of aspects of the Protectorate government or military as they see fit. If a ranking priest decides to intervene, he has authority to supersede any authority except that of a more senior priest. Scrutators are more likely to usurp control than ordinary priests. For example, a scrutator potentate on a vital mission could enter a Menite town and assume authority from its local priest, taking charge of both its garrison and the populace.

The people of the Protectorate must obey every member of the clergy, seeking clarification from higher authorities when they have contradictory obligations to different equivalently ranked priests. Scrutators can arbitrate disagreements between priests of the same rank, which is often more expedient than seeking a regular priest of higher rank. Scrutators are pervasive and can be found in every significant Protectorate settlement.

THE GREAT CRUSADE

The Great Crusade is a sweeping doctrine set forth by Hierarch Voyle in 605 AR that has transformed the Protectorate of Menoth. The goal of the Great Crusade is as simple as it is monumental: to unite humanity in worship of the Creator. To achieve this, humanity must bow to the Creator's mortal agents on Caen, the Sul-Menite priesthood. Secular governments that presently endorse the Morrowan religion must repent and acknowledge the primacy of Menoth, welcoming the Sul-Menite priests back into the halls of governance. Once humanity is united, lesser faiths may be allowed to exist as they did in the Thousand Cities Era so long as they heed Temple doctrine.

The Great Crusade did not die with Hierarch Voyle but was immediately reaffirmed by the Harbinger of Menoth and continued by Hierarch Severius. Considered the greatest and most vital work of any Menite living on Caen, the Great Crusade touches every Protectorate citizen; all are expected to participate, whether by taking up arms or by laboring to support its endeavors. Every Menite must be prepared to lay down his life for the Great Crusade if called upon.

THE HIERARCH

The office of the hierarch is the formalized extention of the priest-kings of old, a position of absolute power within the Protectorate of Menoth. The hierarch bears similar powers to a monarch of a kingdom: he is both head of state and the highest priest of the Temple, thus combining both secular and religious authority. While the process of becoming a hierarch is contentious, all dissent ends once one is declared. The hierarch's commands are law, and the scrutator caste is devoted to preserving him and removing any potential threats to his rule.

The hierarch can appoint or dismiss the leaders of any of the Temple's orders including the Synod, which is to advise the hierarch, follow his orders, and ease his burden by overseeing tasks of governance. The hierarch, however, is not obliged to heed their counsel.

The hierarch generally learns the state of his realm through reports of the Synod and the highest-ranking scrutators, and so they can influence him by how they choose to present this information. Historically, attempts to manipulate the hierarch have not been effective, often resulting in bad ends for those doing so.

With the current hierarch occupied leading the Northern Crusade far from the capital, it falls to the Synod to handle day-to-day governance of the Protectorate, a complication that all members of the clergy are learning to accommodate. The Synod knows every decision and decree it makes in Hierarch Severius' absence has the potential to invoke his wrath.

HIERARCH SEVERIUS

Severius is the newest head of state in the Iron Kingdoms, having arisen hierarch following the death of Hierarch Garrick Voyle in late 607 AR, less than a year ago. This transition was the easiest, least fractious in the history of the Protectorate, likely due to the unexpected nature of Voyle's passing, the support of the Harbinger, and the respect commanded by Severius.

Traditionally the hierarch has come from among the ranking visgoths, making Severius a departure. During Hierarch Voyle's reign, Severius was made grand scrutator, placing him at the pinnacle of his order. Being in his mid-eighties, he had been a tireless and dedicated servant of the Temple for six decades. He had served under Hierarchs Turgis, Ravonal, and Voyle and had been instrumental to the Great Crusade since its inception. On Voyle's death, none of the visgoths were in a position of strength, and the Harbinger immediately and unexpectedly endorsed Severius for the mantle of hierarch. The Synod readily acquiesced.

Severius is an extremely well-respected figure both at home and abroad, known to all the powers of western Immoren as a legendary battlefield general and priest. In past decades he earned a reputation for traveling as an ambassador and missionary abroad, during which he converted thousands to the Sul-Menite faith. Indeed, he was banned from Khador due to the strong response he elicited from members of the Old Faith. More recently his persuasive ability opened the gates of Leryn to the Northern Crusade. While every passing year is a reminder of his mortality and the weakening of his frail flesh, while encased in his warcaster armor and the vestments of his office he is the most formidable, awe-inspiring figure in the Protectorate with the sole exception of the Harbinger herself.

Severius is a natural warrior and is far more interested in commanding the Great Crusade than in governing his nation. His will has turned every aspect of Protectorate society toward the industry of war. Despite straining the theocracy and the Sul-Menite people to their limits, he maintains both Menoth's favor and complete mastery of his nation.

The hierarch relies on the scrutators to watch the visgoths and inform him of their actions as well as report on the state of the Protectorate's heartlands. Scrutators travel between Imer and Leryn with their retinues; this has sufficed to keep Hierarch Severius well informed, but delays are unavoidable and the risk of important information or dignitaries being intercepted is high. The vice scrutators coordinate these missions to ensure vital intelligence is not lost.

THE SYNOD OF VISGOTHS

The visgoths are the ranking leaders of the Temple entrusted with the day-to-day rule of the Protectorate, equivalent to the highest echelons of nobility in other kingdoms. All visgoths are members of the Synod, a governing council directly serving the hierarch, and in the case of an absence of a hierarch, the theocracy is overseen by this council.

The Synod meets infrequently, although it gathers at least once annually and often one or more times a season as matters require their attention. At present the Six Visgoths of Imer meet daily in the capital that is their charge and by dint of their position serve as the central governing body, while the remaining three visgoths focus on their individual territories and responsibilities.

The standing Synod has not had occasion to seek audience with their new superior, as Hierarch Severius remains with the Northern Crusade in Leryn. This effectively nullifies the council's advisory power, which has been waning since the arrival of the Harbinger. The Synod retains control over governance in the southern region, however, and this has allowed the southern and northern regions to operate virtually independently of one another. While not personally present, the hierarch closely watches southern affairs through his agents, a fact well known to the Synod. The Northern Crusade relies on resupply and reinforcements from the south, but such convoys are infrequent and highly irregular, a fact that the hierarch has demanded his visgoths rectify. There are some among them who consider this an impossible order and this has created an atmosphere of tension and anxiety in Imer.

THE NINE VISGOTHS

VAR BODALIN
First Visgoth of Imer, Vice Scrutator,
Prime Curate over Scrutator Initiation

LARS ELIMON
Fourth Visgoth of Imer, Scrutator,
Overseer of Temple Defense and Armament

MORGIMER JASRUN
Sixth Visgoth of Imer, Overseer of Mines, Quarries, and Wells

MISHIVA NESTORE
Third Visgoth of Imer, Scrutator, Overseer of the Vassals of Menoth

ARK RAZEK
Fifth Visgoth of Imer, Overseer of the Sul-Menite Artificers

JUVIAH RHOVEN
Visgoth and Overseer of Sul, Vice Scrutator

BRONE SCARREL
Visgoth of the South, Overseer of Ancient Icthier

ENJORRAN SOLLERS
Visgoth and Overseer of Tower Judgment, Scrutator

DELCON VESHER
Second Visgoth of Imer, Vice Scrutator,
Head of the Lyceum of the True Law

The authority of the current visgoths was established by Hierarch Voyle and has remained unchanged since his death. There is some speculation that a tenth visgoth might be promoted to govern the lands claimed by the Northern Crusade, but for now the hierarch is ruling those territories personally.

THE HARBINGER OF MENOTH

Emerging from a small town north of Icthier in 603 AR, the Harbinger changed the face of Menite worship in western Immoren and has become one of the most important figures in the Protectorate of Menoth. One of her first acts was to travel to Imer and prove her holiness and her divinely granted gift of prophecy to the Synod and to Hierarch Voyle. Since that time she has taken up arms to join in the Protectorate's wars. Following the death of Garrik Voyle she joined the Northern Crusade to bestow her counsel and the benefit of her visions on Hierarch Severius.

The Harbinger occupies a unique place in the theocracy. She has no official authority or governing power nor holds any rank or position among the clergy. Like every Sul-Menite, she is subject to the dictates of the hierarch. Yet she holds tremendous sway, having largely replaced the Synod as advisor to the leader of the faith. When she receives direct communion from Menoth, she literally channels the divine and speaks the words of the Creator, which must be obeyed even by the hierarch. In these circumstances the hierarch is not thought to be heeding the dictates of a mortal prophet, but rather Menoth the Lawgiver manifested on Caen.

INTERNAL POLITICS

The very structure of the Protectorate prevents significant internal schisms, and the nation is currently unified as never before under the banner of the Great Crusade. Nonetheless, there are political factions representing different opinions on the best course to achieve the long-term goals of the crusade.

THE PRIESTESS OF THE FLAME

The most significant figure who stands outside the Synod is Feora, the Priestess and Protector of the Flame. This charismatic and ambitious woman is the leader of the Temple Flameguard and reached a position of tremendous power and influence due to the unusual climate of the crusades and her own political machinations. The Temple Flameguard is the largest and most pervasive of the martial orders serving the Temple, and its soldiery and priesthood are fiercely loyal to Feora.

The Priestess of the Flame has never concealed her ambitions to rule the Protectorate and to become hierarch eventually. Though she has done nothing to violate Temple law or conspire to bring about his downfall, Feora has nonetheless worked to increase her own power and has formed powerful alliances.

Hierarch Severius' absence from the capital, along with that of several of the heads of the martial orders, leaves Feora as the most significant military leader in the south, a situation allowing her to gain influence over a number of the visgoths. This includes most notably Visgoths Ark Razek, Morgimer Jasrun, Mishiva Nestore, Brone Scarrel, and to a lesser extent Lars Elimon. All of these individuals, particularly the scrutators, are loyal to Hierarch Severius but have been convinced to provide considerable support to the garrisons under Feora's control.

Feora is now responsible for the defense of the Protectorate's heartlands at a time when the Synod feels vulnerable to external threats, which gives her singular influence. This has worked to her advantage, enabling her to requisition new war assets and armament constructed particularly for her use. Given the tremendous difficulties in getting equipment to the Northern Crusade, this means Feora has access to better resupply and steady sources of warjacks and other weapons than does the hierarch himself.

FACTIONS OF THE SYNOD

Each of the members of the Synod has become adroit at overseeing an individual domain, and the operation of the council runs smoothly as a result. Hierarch Voyle was a stern taskmaster who brooked no insubordination, and his methods and reputation quashed most conspiratorial ambitions. The Synod was thus in excellent condition when it passed to Hierarch Severius, though not all its members get along equally well. Each visgoth lobbies for the preeminence of his specific area of oversight, and they do not agree on all aspects of the future of the Protectorate.

Visgoth Enjorran Sollers, who keeps a close watch on deliberations in Imer from Tower Judgment, is wary of Feora's schemes. Some scrutators believe Sollers is looking for any excuse to bring the Priestess of the Flame to his tower for questioning.

Brone Scarrel, who dwells in Icthier, is the most remote of the visgoths and has his own agenda, including the expansion of the Protectorate's borders by annexing the uncharted lands to the southeast. He has little support from the capital for these efforts but may take it upon himself to sponsor explorations in that direction.

Every member of the Synod is worried about the continuance of government after Hierarch Severius passes to Urcaen. This was not such a concern under Hierarch Voyle, who was seemingly blessed with tremendous health and vitality. The visgoths expected him to rule unchallenged for decades. Circumstances are quite different with Severius, however, who is showing the ravages of old age. The Synod feels it is imperative to prevent any troubles following his inevitable passing.

The majority of the Synod believe they should rule as a united council should Severius perish. They have sworn oaths to avoid the internecine feuding that plagued the council in the past. They do not believe a single one of their number or any other potential candidate possesses the vision or strength to rule as hierarch.

Visgoths Ark Razek and Morgimer Jasrun secretly would support Feora for hierarch. They believe they can eventually convince Brone Scarrel as well, and possibly Mishiva Nestore, although her status as scrutator makes broaching the topic inherently dangerous. Deliberations on this topic while Severius lives could be seen as treason.

The six scrutators form a significant political block within the Synod and generally vote together to claim a majority. The three vice scrutators lead this block, although Delcon Vesher defers to Var Bodalin, giving him primacy over Juviah Rhoven. Var Bodalin, while arguably the most esteemed of the visgoths, is too old to aspire to the hierarchy. Some wonder if Juviah Rhoven secretly wishes to follow in Voyle's footsteps. His personal standing increased after he took to the streets during the Caspia-Sul War and led forces in numerous battles there.

Visgoth Lars Elimon, who is in charge of Temple Defense and Armament, has distinguished himself as the conservative voice of the Synod. He appears to be the one member of the council with serious reservations and deep-seated doubts about the Great Crusade and particularly the Northern Crusade. Elimon works closely with War Counselor Bron Scisson to support the Northern Crusade, and he knows from logistical analysis how strained the Protectorate's unsecured supply lines are by its overextended military forces. Having a full third of the population assisting the war effort is ultimately unsustainable, as it creates potentially crippling stresses on the working caste. He has advised Hierarch Severius to make the Northern Crusade self-sufficient if possible.

Elimon's concerns have not fallen on deaf ears among the Synod, where some privately hope the Northern Crusade will fade away or be forced to return home after the death of Hierarch Severius. The Harbinger makes this unlikely, as her very existence throws all potential plans and schemes of the Synod into question.

The war hawks of the Synod—Visgoths Delcon Vesher, Var Bodalin, and Juviah Rhoven—oppose Elimon's pragmatic warnings. As the most orthodox and extreme of the visgoths, they believe in absolute doctrinal purity and strongly endorse the Great Crusade. They insist the Protectorate and its citizens cannot rest so long as humanity in western Immoren fails to bow to the Creator. To their thinking, a period of hardship and difficulty is an acceptable price to pay to achieve this holy goal.

THE MISSIONARIES

While they comprise less of a political faction than a theological movement, some in powerful positions within the Protectorate have dissenting opinions concerning the priorities of the Great Crusade. They believe the Protectorate has spent too much time putting enemies to the sword and not enough time encouraging conversion. Further, they are more accepting of variations in doctrinal purity, so long as the worship of Menoth comes first.

The most vocal and ardent advocates of this approach are the members of the Order of the Wall, although they are not alone—many other ordinary priests share this opinion. Some have risked life and limb to travel abroad and spread the Sul-Menite faith, a dangerous activity when missionaries are invariably suspected of being foreign spies for a hostile government due to the warlike stance of the Protectorate of Menoth. These missionaries' courage is undisputed, even if detractors consider them too soft on unbelievers.

An unpredictable factor in the politics of the Protectorate, the Harbinger of Menoth lends strength and conviction to this movement even if she is not a member. She is emblematic of its central purpose, having made it a priority to seek conversion, although she focuses more on uniting the Menite faithful than persuading those of other faiths.

Hierarch Severius himself is sometimes presented as an Exemplar of this cause. Missionaries draw inspiration from tales of his past, when his travels into Khador resulted in thousands of northerners converting to the orthodoxy of the Sul-Menite Temple. Similarly, Severius willingly endures the proximity of Morrowans in Llael so long as they heed ancient Temple doctrine and attend obligatory Menite services. Detractors argue there are just as many examples of Severius putting entire towns and villages to the torch as an embodiment of the Creator's wrath; his mercy toward the citizens of Leryn and the Llaelese Resistance might simply be a pragmatic expedient and not a doctrinal shift.

RELATIONS WITH THE OTHER KINGDOMS

The Protectorate has maintained contact with the other Iron Kingdoms for most of its history, although its isolated geographical position combined with its paucity of resources made it an infrequent trade partner in the regional economy. Due to its location and the circumstances of its founding, its primary interactions were with Cygnar, and these were generally tense at best.

The crusades have put the Protectorate on hostile, or at least wary, footing with its neighboring kingdoms. At the same time, the Northern Crusade's successes mean the Protectorate is no longer isolated nor considered irrelevant in the conflicts of western Immoren. While Hierarch Severius is willing to entertain foreign envoys, they invariably leave his hall unwilling to accommodate his demands. Until these other kingdoms are willing to pay proper respect to the Creator, there is little to discuss.

CIRCLE ORBOROS

The blackclad druids and their enthralled tribes of savages are perhaps the most ancient and deeply rooted enemy of the Sul-Menite Temple. With the Great Crusade focused on uniting humanity under Menoth it may seem that the Protectorate is focused solely on battling the Morrowan faith, yet historically Menites and Morrowans have peacefully coexisted, provided the latter obey Temple law. The two faiths have even united to battle mutual enemies like the Orgoth and barbaric tribes on the fringes of civilization. No such accord is possible with the blackclads, who are willing emissaries of the Devourer Wurm, Menoth's first and greatest foe. The Protectorate views these druids as insidious and dangerous cultists of the Wurm.

Most Sul-Menites do not understand the philosophies of the Circle, nor do they care to learn these blasphemous teachings. They do know that the blackclads are enemies of civilization who would tear down all the Menites build. Any children in the Protectorate born with the wilding are turned over to the priesthood to be mercifully put to death. Blackclads operating in Protectorate territories are hunted down and destroyed.

CRYX

The Protectorate has no direct contact with Cryx, for Lord Toruk and his minions are an absolute anathema to the Temple of Menoth that must be exterminated. On this the Sul-Menites and the Morrowans can agree.

Aside from infrequent Cryxian raids, the Protectorate has historically had only limited contact with Cryx. Before the start of the crusades, however, Cryx attacked the Harbinger directly, and though she escaped, Grand Exemplar Baine Hurst was killed defending her. More recently the Harbinger joined the Northern Crusade to end a plot by one of Cryx's lich lords who threatened Menoth's domain in Urcaen. Since then the forces of the Northern Crusade have clashed with Cryxian raiders in eastern Llael. Llaelese refugees have fled the depredations of the Nightmare Empire to seek safety in the Protectorate's dominion.

CYGNAR

While there is presently a cessation of hostilities, Cygnar and the Protectorate of Menoth have been at war since 605 AR. Though neither side wishes to resume bitter street-to-street fighting between Sul and Caspia, the Protectorate is unwilling to abandon its grievances or to promise peace. As long as Cygnar is the heart of the Church of Morrow and has the fewest practicing Menites, these two powers may never reach an accord.

Before the Protectorate declared its independence and initiated the Great Crusade, it paid taxes to Cygnar and both sides maintained ambassadorial contact. In more recent years this diplomacy has broken down, although Cygnaran envoys are allowed to deliver specific messages to Visgoth Rhoven of Sul. Small open skirmishes between Protectorate and Cygnaran forces continue along the borders and within the lands proximate to the Black River. Both the Protectorate and Cygnar are more focused on the north, so they keep southern garrisons on high alert but maintain defensive postures.

IOS

Even before the xenophobic nation of Ios closed its borders, the Protectorate never had formal contact with it. The Sul-Menites have little knowledge of or interest in Ios.

With the successes of the Northern Crusade, the Protectorate is now in a better geographical position to have contact with this nation. Hierarch Severius has sent envoys to the Gate of Mists in the interest of establishing trade, but they were refused. Iosan patrols have appeared along the shared border of Protectorate-held positions in Llael, although there has been no open violence. Leaders of the Northern Crusade would prefer to know this nation's intentions in the Llaelese region, so the lack of communication is troubling.

KHADOR

The relationship between the Protectorate and Khador has shifted drastically in the last five years. As the only other major nation of the Iron Kingdoms with a sizable Menite population, Khador has had a longstanding tradition of friendly contact with the Protectorate. Sul-Menite missionaries made periodic journeys to meet representatives of the Old Faith, and Khadoran sympathizers aided in cortex smuggling operations intended to aid the Protectorate in its warjack production. While the Khadoran government never formalized any of these arrangements, it tacitly ignored them.

This changed after the start of the Llaelese War when Khador began to crack down on cortex smuggling. Relations became more overtly hostile once the Northern Crusade reached Llael and the Protectorate began to claim territory there. Open conflict between the Northern Crusade and the Khadorans in Llael began in late 606 AR after a Protectorate column was intercepted by Khadoran cavalry forces. The Protectorate chose to ally with the Llaelese Resistance against Khador, leading to major conflicts south of Leryn before that city was seized by Severius shortly before his ascension to hierarch.

The Protectorate and Khador are now in a state of open war; the Protectorate intends to liberate Khadoran-held lands in Llael. One of the Northern Crusade's highest priorities is to deliver the Harbinger into Khador to bring her message to the millions of Menites there who may well feel compelled to join the Protectorate's cause. It is expected the Khadorans will do everything in their power to prevent this.

FREE LLAEL

The Protectorate has found it useful and convenient to provide assistance and aid to the Resistance in Llael, although this has not been an entirely friendly relationship. In the interests of eventually converting the Llaelese to the worship of the Creator, the hierarch has been tolerant of Morrowans in the region, given they heed Temple law. The Northern Crusade has also brought its substantial military assets to bear in the defense of free Llaelese communities. So long as the Resistance remains respectful of the Sul-Menite cause, the Northern Crusade is willing to provide protection and coordinate strikes against occupying Khadoran forces.

Despite these generous terms, some members of the Llaelese Resistance resent the Protectorate's involvement in the region, particularly its control over the northeastern city of Leryn. This is a non-negotiable point, however, as the Northern Crusade requires this city as its central bastion and the Resistance is in no position to make demands.

ORD

The Protectorate has limited dealings with Ord. Ostensibly a Morrowan nation, in time it will need to reckon with the Great Crusade, for the Protectorate intends to unite Ord's small but vibrant Menite minority with the Sulese Temple. There are more pressing matters to deal with first. In the meantime, the Protectorate trades with representatives from Ord in the port city of Sul. While Ordic merchants consider local currency worthless, they barter for the diamonds and other precious gems that are plentiful in the region. This trickle of trade has been invaluable to the Protectorate, allowing it to secure goods and raw materials that are otherwise scarce or nonexistent here.

RHUL

The Protectorate is on neutral terms with Rhul. As with Ios, these people did not arise from the Creator and thus are free to worship as they wish. The Protectorate has occasional dealings with Rhulfolk and has employed the services of Rhulic mercenaries, but it has never engaged in substantial trade with their homeland. This may change in the near future, as Hierarch Severius has sent emissaries to Ghord to negotiate trade.

SKORNE EMPIRE

The newly arrived armies of the Skorne Empire have begun to establish themselves in the Bloodstone Marches north of Tower Judgment. Periodic skirmishes occur between the Sul-Menites and skorne forces, although the skorne have shown little inclination to intrude into Protectorate territory and, until recently, the Protectorate was able to send reinforcing forces through the Bloodstone Marches to reach the Northern Crusade without the expectation of interference. Lately this has become more problematic, likely because the skorne have expanded their desert holdings and have erected fortifications in the hills north of the Protectorate. While neither side seems interested in direct engagement, travel across this region is perilous and opportunistic attacks are a risk.

MILITARY OF THE PROTECTORATE OF MENOTH

A staggeringly high percentage of the Protectorate's population serves in the defense of the theocracy, considerably more than the citizens of its rivals. While its professional soldiers make up the ranks of the martial orders, the Protectorate's fighting forces also include vast conscripted citizen levies that serve as part of auxiliary militias or in support of the martial orders.

The citizen-soldier Temple Flameguard comprise the core of the Protectorate's military. The Flameguard are joined on the battlefield by the elite warriors of the Knights Exemplar and the Protectorate's smaller martial orders, which include the Order of the Wall and the Order of the Fist. The leaders of the Exemplars, in particular, have served as the preeminent military commanders and advisors of the Protectorate's military forces since the founding of the theocracy.

The recent call to war has created the need to define a clear chain of command among the Protectorate's military orders. Traditionally, as long as the leaders of each order demonstrate their loyalty to the Synod or hierarch, they had autonomy over their organizations. Though some degree of this independence remains, Hierarch Voyle realized that his nation's ability to conduct war on a larger scale would require the integration of the Protectorate's various military arms. This task of restructuring the Protectorate's military forces was entrusted to Grand Scrutator Severius.

Understanding that reorganizing the Protectorate's military structure to support its crusades would require careful attention to logistics and planning, Severius created the office of War Counselor. He appointed Bron Scisson to this post as the senior-most secular officer in the Protectorate military to oversee auxiliary forces and to coordinate with the leaders of the various martial orders. War Counselor Scisson has no command authority, but all elements of the Protectorate military are expected to cooperate with his staff in regards to supply, logistics, and personnel. When high-ranking priests require an armed force for a specific objective, they petition the war counselor to provide them with a force of the proper size and composition.

Scisson works from the Chambers of the War Counselor, which adjoin the Sovereign Temple in Imer. From here, he leverages innumerable military scribes, clerks, and couriers to maintain communication with all of the nation's garrisons and crusading armies. Scisson answers to Hierarch Severius but interacts regularly with both Grand Exemplar Kreoss and Feora, Priestess of the Flame.

Severius retained direct control over the Protectorate's military forces after becoming hierarch though he has increasingly relied upon the grand Exemplar to lead the Northern Crusade in the field. It is no secret that the hierarch favors Kreoss over Feora.

MILITARY STRUCTURE

The Protectorate's forces are organized into garrisons and armies on crusade. Garrisons include the defenders of the Protectorate's cities, towns, and facilities as well as its reserve forces. Garrisons generally include large numbers of Temple Flameguard supported by smaller numbers of troops from the other martial orders; crusading armies require more integrated forces. A crusading army is subdivided into interdictions, which are large strike forces usually composed of units from a single martial order.

Priests serve as military commanders at all levels of organization. They command troops in the field and oversee logistics and supply lines. Experienced lay soldiers can be promoted to positions of authority within their martial orders, but they are expected to treat priests with respect regardless of their rank. In situations that present an unclear chain of command, ranking priests are obeyed before secular commanders.

THE NORTHERN CRUSADE

The Northern Crusade is presently the Protectorate's only actively crusading army. It was sent into the war-torn lands of Llael to establish a permanent Protectorate holding there. This crusade's specific goals have changed over time, but it is an essential element of the Great Crusade. Having seized Leryn, the Northern Crusade has been rededicated to freeing new territories under Sul-Menite dominion, defending the Protectorate's lands in the north, and spreading the Sul-Menite interpretation of the True Law to Khador.

Leryn has become the headquarters for the Northern Crusade. Its impressive battlements, near impregnability, and self-sufficiency make it ideal for Hierarch Severius' needs. Further, he was able to seize Leryn without directly assaulting its walls, meaning that the city remains completely intact. Though some of its wealth and resources were plundered by Khador, its industrial facilities and defenses are in pristine condition and ready to facilitate the hierarch's war efforts. Leryn's citizenry has been convinced to heed the Protectorate's priests, and many converted to the Sul-Menite faith when Severius entered the city with his procession.

The Northern Crusade has been greatly reinforced since the conclusion of the Caspia-Sul War and the rise of Severius as hierarch. In addition, many of the Protectorate's warcasters have joined the Northern Crusade, including the Harbinger of Menoth, the Testament, and Grand Exemplar Kreoss, who took with him a sizable contingent of handpicked Exemplar knights at the end of the war to reclaim Sul. The grand Exemplar oversees the day-to-day organization of the crusade and reports directly to Hierarch Severius on all matters. Leryn's massive garrison is commanded by Vice Scrutator Vindictus, who, like Severius, is blessed with the warcaster talent. The garrison supplies troops and material aid to the Northern Crusade throughout its ongoing battles.

THE SOUTHERN GARRISONS

The southern garrisons include the forces stationed at Sul, Imer, Icthier, and Tower Judgment. Though visgoths and scrutators maintain top-level oversight of these regions, their commanding officers are drawn from among Feora's loyal subordinates. The Priestess of the Flame has established a protocol whereby members of the Flameguard's Incendium serve as intermediaries between high-ranking priests and the officers commanding the garrisons. These measures were established in the name of military efficiency, but they also allow Feora to control the flow of information and resource allocation to the bulk of the Protectorate's southern military.

These garrisons represent a sizable force that could form the core of new crusading armies, but they primarily serve the essential function of defending the Protectorate's borders and cities. Protecting Sul and Imer, in particular, is absolutely vital, especially with the home territory left potentially vulnerable with so many military assets contributing to the Northern Crusade. Some among the Synod remain especially uneasy with this arrangement and would prefer that elements of the crusade return home.

MARTIAL ORDERS

Though the majority of its standing armies are made up of minimally trained citizens compelled to serve, the Protectorate's military relies heavily upon elite forces drawn from the Menite orders allied with the Temple and its priesthood. The most prominent martial orders are the Temple Flameguard and the Knights Exemplar.

By tradition, the martial orders have autonomy over their membership and the heads of the orders answer only the hierarch and the Synod. Upon receiving the dictates of the hierarch and the Synod, it falls to the leadership of the order to convey these instructions throughout the ranks. However, forces drawn from these orders often directly serve individual priests or are assigned to the garrison of a city or town under the authority of the priesthood. In such cases, the priests convey their orders to the senior-most officer who then commands his subordinates.

TEMPLE FLAMEGUARD

Once solely charged with protecting temples and holy places, the Flameguard has been transformed in the last generation into the standing professional army of the Protectorate of Menoth. With shield and smoldering spear in hand, they march to battle in unprecedented numbers, forming the core of the theocracy's armies. Commanding absolute loyalty from her soldiers is Feora, Priestess of the Flame and head of the Incendium, the priestly order charged with the administration and spiritual needs of the Flameguard. The capital of Imer hosts the Incendium's central headquarters, but the order's priests operate throughout the command structure of the Flameguard.

PROTECTORATE MILITARY

Menoth

Hierarch Severius
(Priest King)

The Harbinger
(Prophet)

Reclaimant Order
(Vessels)
The Testament

TEMPLE OF MENOTH
Synod of Visgoths

Scrutators
Grand scrutator (position vacant) and vice scrutators serve the hierarch.
High scrutators serve vice scrutators.
Senior scrutators serve high scrutators.
Scrutators serve senior scrutators.

Priesthood
Sovereigns serve visgoths.
Potentates serve sovereigns.
Priests serve potentates.
Fledges are initiates seeking elevation to priest.

Knights Exemplar
Knights (incl. Errants): 14,000
Heavy Knights (inc. Bastions, Cinerators): 2,000
Vengers: 3,500
Grand Exemplar Mikhael Kreoss

Flameguard
Numbers: 88,050
Feora, Priestess of the Flame

Order of the Fist
Numbers: 9,000
Holy High Allegiant Haveron Grayden

War Priests
War Sovereign Holven Marguile

Order of the Wall
Numbers: 800
Grand Paladin Trenton Boridor

Temple Flameguard
Numbers: 78,000
Flameguard Sovereign Olaf Izdain

Flameguard Cleansers
Numbers: 8,200
Cleanser Preceptor Duharos Sek Nathri

Daughters of the Flame
Numbers: 1,850
Daughter Preceptor Seshen Mavise

Choir
Numbers: 3,650
Hierophant Sovereign Gramm Parvon

Zealots
Numbers: 160,500

Lesser Martial Orders
Numbers: 35,000
Deliverer Preceptor Ezekiel Martvine

Active Crusades and Garrisons
Soldiers: 316,000 (not including support)
War Counselor Bron Scisson

Grand Exemplar Kreoss

Vice Scrutator Vindictus

Feora, Priestess of the Flame

High Executioner Reznik

Northern Crusade
Hierarch Severius' Conquest
Numbers: 70,000
Preceptor Gorran Mejers

Leryn Garrison
Defense of Leryn, Supporting the Crusade
Numbers: 65,000
Preceptor Kantis Loron

Sul Garrison
Defense of Sul
Numbers: 69,000
Visgoth Juviah Rhoven

Imer Garrison
Defense of Imer
Numbers: 42,000
Six Visgoths of Imer

Icthier Garrison
Southern Defense, Reserves
Numbers: 19,000
Scrutator Sovereign Jarok Shaw

Tower Judgment Garrison
Protectorate Northern Border
Numbers: 50,400
Visgoth Enjorran Sollers

Executioner Interdiction
Public Relations for Hierarch Severius
Numbers: 1,100
Senior Scrutator Kraslin Mazeer

Crusade Knights Exemplar
Numbers: 8,200
High Exemplar Sarvan Gravus

Crusade Militia
(w/ Deliverers)
Numbers: 10,700
Senior Arms Master Pike Vassenial

Crusade Flameguard
Numbers: 20,100
Vice Preceptor Kelesh Vane

Choir
Numbers: 1,800
Sovereign Rana Keht

Crusade Order of the Wall
Numbers: 200
High Paladin Dartan Vilmon

First Exemplar Interdiction
Numbers: 1,200
Senior Seneschal Pelon Sarmoth

Interdictions are led by seneschals, preceptors, senior allegiants, or senior arms masters.

Warjacks, Vassals, Mechaniks, Other Support
Numbers: 2,000

Crusade Zealots
Numbers: 29,000

Knights Exemplar Phalanxes
Numbers: 600
20 Phalanxes

Knights Errant Phalanxes
Numbers: 400
8 Phalanxes

Heavy Knights Exemplar Phalanxes
(Bastions, Cinerators)
Numbers: 100
4 Phalanxes

Knights Exemplar Venger Phalanxes
Numbers: 100
4 Phalanxes

A phalanx of foot knights is 5 detachments of 6 knights (30). A phalanx of knights errant is 5 detachments of 10 knights (50). A phalanx of heavy knights or vengers is 5 detachments of 5 knights (25).

Any citizen of the Protectorate may apply for induction into the Flameguard, but not all pass the rigorous training regimen. Life for members of the Flameguard resembles that of most professional soldiers in the Iron Kingdoms, except that they must serve until priests of the Incendium give them dispensation to return to their normal lives. In some cases, service may be required for a decade or more, though it rarely exceeds five or six years. Particularly valued soldiers may be retained until they reach an age when they can no longer perform their duties—or more likely, are killed or severely wounded in battle.

Each soldier earns a modest wage, typically enough to support a family. In the event of a Flameguard's death, his family receives a small stipend. Orphaned children become wards of the state. Several families have become closely associated with the Temple over the years, and service has come to be expected of their children. Such individuals are often groomed from childhood to become preceptors or members of the Incendium.

Incendium priests form the highest tier of the Flameguard. They hold ranks identical to other priests but are not eligible to become scrutators. Some of the hierarch's agents believe that members of the Incendium have become more loyal to Feora than to him, but they have not yet acted against these individuals.

Members of the Temple Flameguard begin as novitiates and devote six months to their grounding, during which they rigorously drill in the use of their armor and weapons as well as receive training in maneuvers and formations. Afterward they become full Flameguard and are assigned to a garrison or crusading force. An experienced Flameguard may be promoted to arms master and given command of his own unit. A veteran arms master may in turn be promoted to preceptor and given charge of a detachment of scores of spearmen; secular officers seldom see promotion beyond the rank of preceptor. Next come captains, who each command a phalanx composed of hundreds of Flameguards. Commanders oversee large garrisons of multiple phalanxes and answer directly to the Priestess of the Flame.

CLEANSERS

Merciless and unyielding, the cleansers are the disciplinary arm of the Flameguard. It is their job to sanctify the land from the touch of heresy, their sacred duty to purify those guilty of blasphemy by scouring them in holy fire. Members of this order inspire fear even among the faithful. Armed with purifier flamethrowers, they march through the streets executing the orders of the scrutators and visiting ruin upon the houses of any deemed guilty of breaking the True Law. Though their primary duty is to ensure the purity of the people of the Protectorate, the cleansers are increasingly called upon to serve on the field of battle.

Cleansers employ the same rank structure as the Temple Flameguard, but their smaller numbers mean that they have considerably fewer captains. Proportionately more Incendium priests serve among the cleansers than any other branch of the Flameguard.

DAUGHTERS OF THE FLAME

The Daughters of the Flame comprise the Flameguard's covert strike force. They stalk the enemies of the faith with single-minded devotion, and the Priestess of the Flame wields them like a scalpel. Instituted by Feora with the consent of Hierarch Voyle, the Daughters were originally charged with the covert security of Menite holy places. Over time Feora has begun to call upon the Daughters to eliminate threats to the Protectorate, both internal and external. Some might claim that Feora overstepped her authority by expanding the role of the order, but none would say that the Daughters have been anything but a boon to the Protectorate's war effort.

Members are chosen for their raw potential and total dedication. Nearly all count husbands among the thousands of Menite

FEORA, PROTECTOR AND PRIESTESS OF THE FLAME

Feora is the undisputed master of the Flameguard. She possesses great influence within the Protectorate's southern heartland, as most of the theocracy's elite forces have marched north alongside the hierarch. Feora courts close alliances with several leading visgoths and is believed by some scrutators to be attempting to position herself as the next hierarch.

Feora can call upon the absolute loyalty of the Flameguard as well as the priests of the Incendium. Among the Menite population, the sight of her dreaded cleansers is generally enough to clear the streets of any insurrection. The Daughters of the Flame act as her eyes and ears and, when required, her knife. Feora's renown hit its peak during the defense of Sul, the success of which both she and Grand Exemplar Kreoss are largely credited.

soldiers who have died defending their faith; others grieve fallen parents, siblings, or betrothed. Though considered part of the Flameguard, Daughters receive separate training, which entails an exhausting regimen of physical and mental conditioning.

The Daughters are organized into small strike forces called hands, each led by a veteran captain. Though the Daughters employ a number of solo operatives, they lack any additional structure. The order is commanded by Thyra, Flame of Sorrow, who answers directly to Feora. Thyra personally carries out Feora's most sensitive and dangerous operations.

KNIGHTS EXEMPLAR

Devoted to carrying out the will of the scrutators, the ancient Knights Exemplar first rose to prominence during the Thousand Cities Era. The order, defined by its code of absolute obedience, now comprises the preeminent warriors of the Sul-Menite Temple.

Prospective knights must prove their devotion to Menoth while enduring grueling training. Many initiates are incapable of completing this preparation and never earn the right to bear the Exemplar arms and armor. Those who weather the instruction dedicate themselves to act as Menoth's living weapons on Caen. Their sacred oaths absolve them of any evil done in the pursuance of their orders, which allows them to serve the scrutators of the Protectorate without question. Newly invested Exemplar Knights are honored with blessed weapons such as ancient relic blades and sacred armor, these relics being passed down through the generations. Putting aside considerations of their pasts, including any family, theirs is a brotherhood bound by the strongest of bonds. For a knight, the order becomes his true family.

The majority of the Exemplar knights are trained to fight on foot, focusing on expertise with the blade. The order is quite large, however, and has several smaller disciplines which have distinct roles.

Those initiates who complete the years of harsh training required become full knights. Veteran knights may be promoted to sergeants and charged with leading a cadre of knights. The most accomplished and fanatical sergeants rise through the ranks, first to warders, then seneschals, then high Exemplars, commanding a greater portion of the army at each level. A warder commands a detachment of dozens of knights, a seneschal commands a phalanx of hundreds, and a high Exemplar commands an interdiction of multiple phalanxes. The master of the order, the grand Exemplar, reports directly to the hierarch.

Life as a member of the Knights Exemplar can be grueling and unyielding, but loyalty is eventually rewarded. Initiate knights are instructed to set aside all family bonds, but veterans who have served for decades and proven their mettle across multiple engagements are given dispensation to step back from active duty to marry and establish families. Exemplar veterans are given preferential treatment for housing and continue to serve the order by training new initiates, and should the need arise they will be asked to fight once more alongside their brothers.

GRAND EXEMPLAR MIKAEL KREOSS

A man of great faith and few words, the grand Exemplar lives his life in perfect accordance with his oath; indeed, he is the living embodiment of every knight's ideals. Mikael Kreoss is an enigma to other leaders of the Protectorate, for though he does his duty without hesitation, he is not above questioning the doctrine of the Temple. Kreoss is an accomplished warrior and brilliant commander. In just a handful of years, he saw to the liberation of Sul from its Cygnaran invaders and now leads the Northern Crusade in the hierarch's name against the enemies of the faith.

BASTIONS

Bastions are the heavy shock troops of the Exemplar Order. They are knights who demonstrate the peak of human physical endurance, strength, and faith. Indeed they must, as this discipline requires the use of impossibly heavy armor. Joining the bastions is considered a true calling, because merely bearing the armor's weight is something of a minor miracle. Initiates attempting to follow the bastion path must spend two days and nights without food and water standing in the temple courtyard as weights are loaded upon them. At the end, they must overcome their pain to march across the grounds. Those who succeed learn to fight in bastion armor, which is composed of ancient steel plates borne by past brothers and inscribed with holy script taken from the True Law.

The bastions wield arms different from those employed by regular Knights Exemplar. A consecrated halberd serves as the standard, though the most vengeful among them take up the blazing swords of the Cinerators, a sect that considers itself to be the living flame of the Creator's will.

EXEMPLAR ERRANTS

Errants form the long-reaching arm of the Exemplar order. They are relied upon to carry out the Synod's will across Immoren, which sometimes includes finding traitors and other heretics who have sought to flee Temple justice. They have become a crucial aspect of the recent crusades, where they serve as advance scouts. Errants do not wield relic blades, which are thought too precious to risk falling into enemy hands on missions abroad. They are still required to master the sword but also employ heavy crossbows fortified with blessings intended to pierce arcane wards and sigils.

VENGERS

Among the most esteemed of the Exemplar knights are the vengers, which make up the order's heavy cavalry. They fight atop the Protectorate's swift, powerful steeds and wield lances blessed by Temple priests. The vengers often serve at the vanguard of major assaults, where they are used to drive a wedge through enemy ranks.

Several breeds of horse see use by the vengers, including those specifically bred to blend the speed of Idrian herds with the strength of Khadoran stock. Many vengers come from converts acquired from the north, descendants of the old horselords who take particular pride in the care of their mounts.

The vengers have a number of purification rituals unique to their discipline, such as the cleansing of horses, weapons, and armor after battle. Clothes soaked in the blood of the enemy are burned in flaming braziers set aside for that purpose, while the vengers recite prayers to the Creator.

ORDER OF THE FIST

The Order of the Fist is a group of monastic warriors who undergo a particularly exacting and extensive ascetic regimen meant to refine their bodies and minds. They seek to internalize the message of the True Law and to become an empty vessel for the will of Menoth. Over the course of their training, they become living weapons who can perform seemingly miraculous feats of strength and physical control. While they are deadly with their bare hands, allegiants of this order employ a variety of weapons in battle, especially if engaging heavily armed enemies of the faith.

Since it began, the Order of the Fist has served to maintain order within the population of the Protectorate. With their emphasis on unarmed fighting, and requiring no special armor or vestments, allegiants easily blend in with the general population. In this way they serve as an unobtrusive secret police force in towns and cities. They complement the efforts of both the scrutators and the Exemplars in rooting out heresy and sedition.

Garrick Voyle founded the Order of the Fist in the decade before he became hierarch with the aid of Haveron Grayden, a scholar of the True Law in Ancient Icthier. Grayden spent considerable time studying the walls of Icthier, drawing inspiration from some of the most ancient passages and reading old texts that described a harsh training and fighting regimen thought to have existed in the time of Cinot. He was later joined in these studies by Voyle, and the two of them began to recreate this holy and ancient discipline. They deciphered the lost secrets of the ancient priest-kings and their guardians and blended them with the martial skills of the Idrian people to create techniques meant to unite a mortal body with the eternal will of Menoth.

Grayden and Voyle foresaw soldiers so filled with spiritual zeal and armored by conviction that they would require neither weapons nor armor to battle the enemies of the faith. With the permission of Hierarch Ravonal, Voyle and Grayden saw their great work come to pass: the Order of the Fist. As Voyle went on to become a visgoth and eventually to seize power as hierarch, he left Grayden in charge of the order's monastery. Grayden continued to recruit and train monks capable of combining physical prowess and spiritual might.

Allegiants study the strength of stone and the fluidity of sand until the application of deadly force becomes as natural to them as breathing. Though belonging to a relatively new order, allegiants consider their fighting style to be an evolution of ancient teachings gleaned from the first city of antiquity. They learn their techniques at the order's secluded monastery in the Vardhan province.

Members begin as initiates and generally endure nearly a decade of training and immersion in the order's philosophies before being recognized as allegiants. Those who become particularly skilled may eventually become senior allegiants, then high allegiants. The leader of the order is the grand high allegiant; Haveron Grayden has held this post since the order's inception.

ORDER OF THE WALL

The Order of the Wall is the oldest of Menite knighthoods, an organization dedicated to preserving the faithful from the perils found outside of civilization. Its philosophies and fighting style are thought to embody one of the most vital of Menoth's earliest gifts: the Wall itself, which stood between the light and the darkness. The Order of the Wall stands alongside other martial orders in battle against enemies of the faith, but its paladins prefer to defend the faithful rather than marching to war. However, the order recognizes that protection sometimes requires the fire of faith to be wielded against those who embody destruction and chaos.

The origins of the Order of the Wall stretch back so far they are difficult to pin down. Not only is it the most ancient Menite martial order, but it is also perhaps the oldest Menite organization besides the priesthood itself. The order does not appear in the histories of Ancient Icthier or Cinot, and most paladins believe its origins can be traced to Valent of Thrace. This priest-king created the great wall called the Shield of Thrace and founded Calacia in 2800 BR. Though this ancient wall has long since fallen to ruin, Caspia and Sul endure, and the order considers these cities to be their most sacred places, and the walls themselves to be relics of the faith.

Due to its ancient origins, there are several unconnected branches of the order across western Immoren. Paladins from different Menite sects generally get along and respect one another, though warfare might see them fight on opposing sides. A particularly strong branch persists among adherents of the Old Faith of Khador, which engages in ongoing communication with its Sul-Menite brothers. Regardless of where the order has arisen or now operates, it universally dedicates itself to protecting the innocent and battling minions of Menoth's ancient foe, the Devourer Wurm.

Paladins of the order have long been heroes to the common people, seen to embody the protective aspects of Menoth sometimes neglected by clergy. Indeed, the order has endured a difficult relationship with the priesthood in the Protectorate because it is one of the few martial arms that answers to a code not rooted in obedience to the priest caste. The Knights Exemplar have been seen as the more useful tool of the scrutator caste, prompting the Order of the Wall to suffer a long decline. Its role is often limited to serving as an honor guard for high-ranking priests, but even in this capacity it has been put aside in favor of certain warjacks like the Devout.

The Order of the Wall believes that initiates should experience a genuine call to join, which combined with its less prominent role in the Protectorate has at times seen its numbers dwindle to near extinction, only to surge back again in periods of turmoil. Relatively few young Protectorate warriors can temper their rage with the mercy required of those who would wield the order's blessed Firebrand blades. Paladins prioritize forbearance and protection of the innocent, which can put them at odds with the scrutators. But so long as they do not openly interfere with or defy the hierarch or his agents, they are left to their ancient code. The order experienced a recent revival in popularity and widespread support after Cygnar invaded Sul in 606 AR. The paladins of the order performed many heroic deeds in defense of the holy city and subsequently saw many youths petitioning to become initiates.

GRAND PALADIN TRENTON BOURIDOR

Trenton Bouridor is a Sulese paladin who is now well past his prime. Long ago he dedicated his life to the people of the Protectorate and has served as head of the order for the past decade. Despite his advancing age, Bouridor remains an able warrior who fought alongside his brothers and helped defend the Great Temple of the Creator during the invasion of Sul.

The grand paladin has attempted to steer clear of the Protectorate's internal politics, though he has at times debated Temple law with senior scrutators. He had very little direct contact with Hierarch Voyle, who openly disfavored the Order of the Wall. He is on better terms with Juviah Rhoven, the visgoth of Sul; in fact, the two share a degree of mutual respect that was forged during the long year of fighting in the Sulese streets. Thus far, Bouridor has expressed guarded approval for the leadership demonstrated by Hierarch Severius. The grand paladin strongly believes in converting the faithless by persuasion rather than crusade by fire, and he has maintained a friendship with his counterpart in the Khadoran Old Faith. The scrutators are aware of this relationship and have allowed it, considering it to be a potentially useful point of contact.

Because paladins usually train for six years, the order prefers to accept initiates at the age of ten, making entry a lasting commitment. The Order of the Wall counts among its number many of the finest swordsmen in western Immoren. The order has a limited rank structure and its members are not organized into military units; instead, each knight is prepared to stand alone against the darkness. An exceptional knight may be recognized as a high paladin, the senior-most officers of the order. The master of the order is the grand paladin who oversees its membership from Sul. The current grand paladin is Trenton Bouridor.

AUXILIARY MILITIAS

Other than the martial orders, nearly a full third of the Protectorate's population is armed and stands ready to fight as members of auxiliary militias. In most cases, they are trained in the use of simple weapons such as staves, maces, and simple swords. Zealot mobs are drawn from the most fanatical citizens, and like other auxiliaries are led by priests who inspire and lead them in battle.

Service in a time of crusade is compulsory, and the clergy are issued quotas for able-bodied men and women required to fill the ranks of the auxiliary fighting forces. Initiates of the Order of the Fist have proven adept at rounding up and enlisting those who have not demonstrated the devotion and piety expected of a citizen. Nonetheless, the continual immersion of the populace in religious doctrine makes it easy to gather large numbers of willing zealots and soldiers of all ages and press them into service.

Orders are not to be questioned but obeyed, accepted with the same faith that ensures each Menite's place in the afterlife. The Protectorate's military demonstrates that faith possesses tangible power. Most Menites feel protected and reassured by their faith, knowing that should they fall in battle, their sacrifice will aid their souls' journey to the City of Man.

NAVY OF THE PROTECTORATE

The Protectorate of Menoth is not a naval power, though it does maintain a small number of armed fighting vessels to defend a coastline that stretches from Sul to Ancient Icthier. The majority of the Protectorate's ocean-faring vessels are working ships, including a fishing fleet based in Sul. Any of these could be rigged for battle if required, but the theocracy has largely surrendered control of the gulf to the Cygnaran Navy. The visgoths know that they would lose in any substantial engagement against Cygnar's formidable Eastern Fleet.

This acknowledged weakness in the Protectorate's defenses has not proved to be important enough to address. Most of the military clashes between the Protectorate and its enemies take place on land, and the Cygnaran Navy has made no substantial attempts to strike at the smaller settlements that dot the Protectorate's coastline. Cryxian vessels occasionally raid settlements on the nation's shores, but such incidents are rare. The Protectorate finds it more effective to allow Cygnar's navy to intercept Cryxian raiders rather than expend its limited resources toward shipbuilding. In any case, Sul's docks are well defended by imposing walls, and the capital of Imer and its vital industry and mines are a hundred miles inland. The most vulnerable Protectorate city is the blessed city of Ancient Icthier, whose relative isolation has thus far preserved it from attack.

PROTECTORATE WARCASTERS

The Protectorate military possesses significant strength despite being outnumbered by its enemies, due in large part to its remarkable ability to recognize and foster warcaster talent. It is no small frustration to its enemies, particularly Cygnar, that this fanatical nation with its small population can maintain such a strong and diverse retinue of powerful warcasters.

Many priests credit this achievement as a sign of Menoth's favor, but it seems more likely that the focused meditations and training undertaken by Sul-Menite priests open their minds to the possibility of contact with a cortex. The tremendous force of will required to channel their holy powers only reinforces this potential. Many priests, even those who do not possess the warcaster talent, can successfully recognize that power in others before it manifests.

The Protectorate's final advantage in discovering potential warcasters derives from its unique culture. The priesthood keeps itself well informed about the activities of its people; indeed, no other nation in the Iron Kingdoms polices its citizenry as closely. With supernatural manifestations viewed as potential heresy, many parents willingly give up children who demonstrate unexpected gifts. Those who harbor the warcaster talent might be fortunate enough to benefit from the tutelage of the masters of the Lyceum, who instruct them in the use of prayer as a means to control their burgeoning talents.

Warcaster development in the Protectorate is as much a matter of martial training as it is theological indoctrination and purification. All warcasters are taught to channel the divine magic of the Creator, but each possesses a unique set of abilities and affinities.

Warcasters who manifest their aptitude while serving with one of the Protectorate's martial orders remain with that order; in fact, several orders are presently led by warcasters. An individual warcaster must ascend through these ranks just as any other member must. Given their unique powers and responsibilities, it is natural for warcasters to attain higher ranks quickly, so long as they remain true to their orders' codes—and loyal to the priesthood.

VASSALS OF MENOTH

Among Hierarch Voyle's greatest accomplishments are the Vassals of Menoth, which were established to free the Protectorate from reliance on foreign cortexes for warjack production. The foundation of this order was timely and necessary, as sources for smuggled cortexes have dried up in recent years. The Vassals are the only organization sanctioned to practice arcane magic within the Protectorate, and they can only wield this power to the furtherance of the Temple. The tightly controlled and closely watched order exists primarily to make cortexes for Protectorate warjacks, but it is also involved in constructing other necessary mechanika.

Several doctrinal and theological considerations complicated the creation of this order when it was proposed, first and foremost that the Protectorate considers arcane magic to be inherently unholy. This belief has led to sometimes harsh measures being taken against those who manifest sorcery or other arcane gifts within the nation's borders, including death by fire. Accordingly, when the scrutators were told by Hierarch Voyle that they must acquire individuals with the skill to craft cortexes, extreme measures were required. Chief among these was the capture of foreign-born arcanists, who after enduring the ministrations of scrutators decided to cooperate in the production of cortexes. In exchange, they were offered reasonably comfortable lifestyles as permanent guests. These became the first Vassals of Menoth.

Because the early Vassals were formidable specialists working under duress, measures were implemented to ensure ongoing compliance. When outside their guarded homes they were chained to inhibit movements. Each was also placed under constant supervision, generally by allegiants of the Order of the Fist specifically trained to deal with them. Though foreign arcanists continued to be abducted to bolster the Vassals' numbers, Hierarch Voyle ordered his scrutators to seek out and induct gifted nationals.

The organization is now capable of training subsequent generations of arcanists in the fabrication of cortexes and mechanika and most of the vassals presently in service are Protectorate-born. While surviving foreign-born arcanists who were forced to join the Vassals remain in captivity and are valued for their experience, they are no longer as vital to the order as they once were. The chains and restrictive garments worn by the members of the order have become emblematic symbols of submission to Menoth and are willingly endured by Menites who join the Vassals. These individuals believe that the power they possess is an unfortunate legacy which requires continual vigilance to employ properly in Menoth's name. They have put those powers to use of the Great Crusade.

The Vassals of Menoth are based out of the House of Truth in Imer, a walled complex where initiates are brought and closely watched during training. Fully indoctrinated Vassals are frequently sent elsewhere; common destinations include the city of Leryn, where they join the Northern Crusade, and the Factorium near Tower Judgment, where they help the Sul-Menite Artificers produce vital weapons of war. The Factorium has the largest facilities dedicated to cortex production in the Protectorate, though the facilities in Leryn are becoming increasingly vital to the Northern Crusade. The Vassals at Leryn make use of seized laboratories once employed by the Order of the Golden Crucible and later expanded by the Greylords while they held the city.

Some of the most orthodox Menites consider this entire program to be of dubious morality, but the majority have come to accept it as a pragmatic necessity. The weapons of war created by the Vassals have tremendously augmented the Protectorate's ability to stand on equal footing with the other powers of the Iron Kingdoms.

Visgoth and Senior Scrutator Mishiva Nestore leads the Vassals of Menoth. The group does not employ internal ranks, and no individual Vassal has authority over any other. They must all heed the dictates of their supervising priests and other officers of the Temple.

SUL-MENITE ARTIFICERS

The Sul-Menite Artificers see to the Protectorate's war industry, including warjack foundries and forges for weapons and armor. Indeed, creating and arming warjacks stand among this organization's highest priorities. The Artificers include thousands of individual workers, from unskilled laborers involved in simple tasks to exceptionally talented and specialized craftsmen. Due to their substantial body of engineering knowledge and many skilled metalworkers, the

Artificers often consult on matters beyond their main purview, including helping to draft plans for building new factories or other complex structures.

The acknowledged master craftsmen among the Artificers may be chosen to work alongside dedicated priests at the Great Temple in Sul or the Sovereign Temple in Imer, where they fabricate weapons and armor to be anointed and blessed in holy ceremonies and prepared for the crusades. Priceless armaments such as relic blades and bastion armor are preserved to be passed down whenever possible, but every year some small number of new ones are created—a necessary endeavor as the knightly orders expand and these treasured implements are irreparably and inevitably destroyed.

The Artificers perform all of the fabrication tasks for mundane industries, but they also work closely with the Vassals of Menoth to create mechanika and other specialized weapons. Some of the most skilled members of this organization have been summoned north to Leryn, where they are helping to transform the industrial capacity of that city for the use of the Northern Crusade. Visgoth Ark Razek directs the Sul-Menite Artificers, coordinating closely with Visgoths Lars Elimon and Mishiva Nestore.

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

The Protectorate has a reputation for oppression and extremism that makes many loathe to visit its cities, even briefly, due to religious intolerance, strict policies, and harsh punishments. Despite this reputation, the Protectorate is generally welcoming to those who worship Menoth regardless of their national origin. Its people strive to extend greetings to those from abroad who may potentially join their cause. First-time visitors may be surprised by how friendly the common Sul-Menite citizens are.

Even outsiders who are not Menites can visit without incident if they have proper business with Temple authorities or are otherwise bringing services or goods the people of the Protectorate need. The Protectorate itself is the smallest of the Iron Kingdoms and the need to ensure its people's safety while waging its crusades has put a strain on its citizens. Accordingly, merchants bringing valued goods are well received. Further, the Protectorate appreciates the services of skilled and professional mercenaries; Temple priests are excellent employers who always heed the terms of their contracts. Reliable, respectful mercenary companies can earn substantial coin from Temple paymasters.

How an outsider is received in the theocracy is mostly based on his awareness of local etiquette and his ability to demonstrate proper respect. Impiety toward Menoth is not seen as rude but as heresy, and it can result in immediate incarceration and even execution. Those who understand the strict Sul-Menite interpretation of the law can make their way through the streets of Sul and Imer without fear of being accosted. Outsiders should always presume they are being watched closely, not only by ordinary citizens but potentially by disguised agents of the Order of the Fist.

To say that religion dominates the lives of the Protectorate's people is an understatement. The agents of the Temple are pervasive, prayer is integrated into daily chores, and citizens are reminded how all of their efforts either contribute to or detract from the Great Crusade. Most Menites have a strong work ethic that is reinforced by recent wars in which one's labors might have a real impact on the life or death of those serving on the front lines. A harvest's failure might result in a remote garrison starving, and the delivery of a vital load of coal might make the difference between victory or defeat. The Protectorate does not need to resort to penal labor to man its mines and quarries—the faithful will take on these grueling tasks as a matter of course.

The streets and markets of Protectorate cities are often more sober and sedate than in other kingdoms. While this does not prevent bustling activity in urban centers, people go about their business with an economy of action and language that might unsettle those unaccustomed to it. Lower-class workers scrub the streets and walls so Protectorate cities are clean and orderly even in the tightly packed slums where the poor live. Nightly curfews are enforced to ensure no citizens wandering or carousing after sunset, leaving only the armored Temple Flameguard or Knights Exemplar to patrol the well-lit lanes.

While friends and family meet in gathering places, they are under social pressure not to be seen as indulging in excess, which suggests impiety. One social tradition adopted from the Idrians is the bathhouse where families and friends soak in steaming hot water to wash away grime and relax after hard work. Common citizens might speak more freely after dark in such places, but even here they presume they are being watched and that their words could be overheard.

No matter where people gather, recognizable Temple agents are treated with deference and respect. This includes members of the major martial orders but particularly applies to the priest caste and most of all to the scrutators. People make way for them, bowing and offering prayers while hoping they have not been singled out for attention. While junior priests might be greeted warmly, particularly those who tend local congregations, scrutators are almost universally feared as much as they are respected. They are the ultimate authorities of the law, and even the lowest ranking scrutators are the eyes and ears of the theocracy.

The streets of the Protectorate have an air of watchfulness and vigilance. While the task of policing the citizenry is often relegated to the Order of the Fist, the Knights Exemplar and Temple Flameguard man checkpoints and patrol the streets where they consider it their duty to scrutinize outsiders. Visitors to Protectorate cities are frequently stopped and questioned to ensure "guests" are in the right place on legitimate business. When moving within the Protectorate, outsiders are often required to carry documents attesting to their purpose; these must be proffered at checkpoints. Those whose papers do not match their movements may be arrested and brought before the scrutators.

EDUCATION AND ATTITUDES

Literacy is widespread throughout the Protectorate, as the Sul-Menites believe that comprehension of the True Law is the right and responsibility of all faithful citizens. Every Menite is expected to be able to read prayer books and other religious texts as well as the public edicts of the Temple. Most citizens have little exposure to any other writing; only the priesthood

have a broader scope of knowledge and then only to understand subjects like ancient history and oratory. Outside the clergy, apprenticeships are more common than formal education.

This narrow focus is intended to direct impressionable minds down the path of righteousness, ensuring worship of the Creator is foremost in the thoughts of the faithful. Knowing their subversive appeal, the theocracy takes great pains to insulate its people from the teachings of the Twins; in fact, most Protectorate citizens are unaware of what life is like in other nations. Few citizens even speak languages other than Sulese, which is a slightly formalized dialect of Cygnaran, and Idrian.

The people of the Protectorate are antagonistic toward magic that is not practiced by priests; they have been taught to believe other arcane manifestations are blasphemous. The Protectorate makes exceptions for the Vassals of Menoth, who are closely watched by the priesthood but whose work is vital to the crusades and ritualized within the context of the Sul-Menite Temple to ensure its purity. Though known to be arcane in nature, the mechanika produced by the Vassals is also seen as uniquely Menite. Furthermore, when in public the Vassals are always accompanied by agents of the Temple, particularly allegiants of the Order of the Fist, and are not to be seen practicing their magic in towns or cities. The citizens of the Protectorate are alarmed by magic performed by anyone besides a priest and will report it to the authorities.

Sorcery in particular is feared in the Protectorate and is often associated with the Devourer Wurm, the ancient foe of Menoth. Youths in rural areas who manifest these abilities are commonly put to death by being burned alive, a practice that has been discontinued in the cities. In recent years the priesthood has intervened by bringing these individuals into the Vassals of Menoth where they can learn the proper use of their unholy powers.

One common misconception among outsiders is that the Menites of the Protectorate hate races other than human. This is not entirely true, although there are fewer individuals of other races living in the Protectorate than in other nations. Most Menites have no objection to Rhulfolk or Iosans, for example, as neither are part of Menoth's plans, so trading with them isn't inherently dangerous or problematical—less so than dealing with Morrowan humans, in fact.

Menite attitudes toward the Dhunian races, such as gobbers, trollkin, and ogrun, are more complicated. Historically Menites have had difficulty differentiating Dhunian practices from rites of Devourer worshipers; this is aggravated by the Dhunian creation myth that links their origins to the Wurm. In ancient times this incited violence, and while that has mostly passed, suspicions linger on both sides. For their part Menites are not hostile toward the Dhunian races as long as their people are respectful and civilized and show no indications of being servants of the Wurm. Worldly and better educated Menite priests with a limited understanding of Dhunia may view this goddess as they do the gods of Rhul or Ios: as irrelevant to Menoth.

ECONOMY OF THE PROTECTORATE

Wealth is tightly controlled by the Protectorate's upper echelons and has little in common with the market economies of the other nations of the Iron Kingdoms. The Protectorate's coinage, called staves, is made of baked clay and is worthless beyond its borders. Further, its dominant ideology does not value material wealth and shuns displays of personal affluence. Splendor is reserved for that which venerates the Creator.

The Protectorate's economy comes from agriculture, skilled labor, and the mining of precious gems. Virtually all arable land within its borders is owned and managed by the Synod's agents. The products of farming communities are considered the collective property of the Sul-Menite people and are apportioned and distributed by bureaucratic organizations within the Temple priesthood.

Food and clothing are allocated to the citizenry based upon caste. The highest ranking clergy, including visgoths and scrutators, receive the best goods, though some choose to reject all but the simplest sustenance and garments. In accordance with the True Law's emphasis on respecting warriors of the faith, members of the Protectorate's martial orders are well

provided for. Both clergy and soldiers also earn regular income from the nation's treasury, usually paid in a set amount of staves each month.

There is a small but vital caste of Protectorate citizens who do not toil as common laborers as they possess highly valued skills of use to the nation. Smiths, carpenters, masons, certain highly skilled tailors, and other craftsmen as well as the Temple's authorized merchants enjoy an elevated status akin to the middle class of other kingdoms. The craft and merchant castes are valued above unskilled laborers and farmers and are compensated as such. The nature of their work allows them to earn additional income, sometimes exceeding that of low ranking soldiers, which allows them to buy better food, clothing, and tools, though they will go hungry before the soldiery in a time of famine.

Members of these privileged castes are recognized within their local communities but also carry documents bearing the seal of the Temple bureaucracy identifying them when they travel elsewhere. Identity papers borne by merchants will also include authorization for travel that reduces scrutiny when entering towns where they are not known to the local garrison.

The vast majority of the Sul-Menites work as manual laborers, either as farmers or in construction, quarry work, or mining. They receive only minimal payment in staves each month, but also receive food on a daily or weekly basis, and simple garments and the tools required for their work. Their sustenance comes from distribution centers in major cities and villages or at their work sites; in Sul and Imer workers' family members might spend much of a day waiting for their ration of bread, meat, and vegetables. Generally these rations amount to little more than subsistence, though farm workers enjoy better fresh food than the common people of the Protectorate's cities as farm workers are allowed to keep a portion of their harvests.

Citizens use the Protectorate's unique coinage to purchase items such as additional food, higher quality tools or clothing, bedding, or other furnishings. It may take a regular laborer many months to save up for better tools or furniture. These are crafted by skilled laborers, but due to a scarcity of quality materials even these are pragmatic and simple compared to those in other nations.

The Protectorate's minimal trade with foreigners occurs primarily in Sul. Merchants from Ord, Rhul, and even enterprising kayazy from Khador, as well as less scrupulous Cygnaran traders willing to risk the embargo do a brisk business in luxury goods and spices with the Menite clergy, as well as their more legitimate dealings in resources. These traders have no interest in the worthless clay coins of the Sulese but instead covet the diamonds mined within the nation's interior. Virtually all major resource trading is bartered in diamonds, other precious stones, or similarly valuable barter.

MAJOR CULTURES

When Sulon issued his call to the faithful before the start of the Civil War, those who answered came from across Cygnar—Midlunders, Thurians, even some Morridane, but Caspians more than any others. After the founding of the Protectorate they became its first citizens and called themselves Sulese, a zealous and fervent people who believed they were chosen by the Creator.

Within the first decades of the Protectorate's existence the Sulese expanded into the east and into conflict with the Idrian tribes native to this region. Crusades of conversion followed, as the Idrians practiced heathen rituals heretical to the Menites, remnants of old Devourer rites combined with ancestor worship. Despite the bloodshed, Menite priests manifested miracles that converted the Idrians to the True Faith.

By the modern era most of the Idrian people have joined with the Sulese, bolstering the population of the theocracy and enriching its culture, sometimes in ways the Sulese majority have been slow to acknowledge. Nonetheless the Sulese value the Idrians as an essential element of the Protectorate, calling their conversion one of the hidden gifts of these lands left by Menoth to strengthen the faithful.

A diverse assortment of pilgrims and converts from the other nations constantly arrive in the Protectorate. The historically slow trickle of Menite migration to the Protectorate has grown since the coming of the Harbinger—her presence has brought tens of thousands of Menites of every ethnicity to the Protectorate.

Newcomers congregate together with others who speak the same languages and share the same traditions, though local priests try to integrate them. Many live in Sul or Imer, but others have settled in the countryside of the northern Protectorate in the Gedorra province, putting a strain on its towns and villages. Wherever possible newcomers are encouraged to join the Temple Flameguard so their housing and food become the responsibility of that order. More often local militias recruit them, and eventually they are recognized as part of their communities. The priesthood endeavors to strip these newcomers of unorthodox prayers or beliefs brought from other Menite traditions and reinforce the Sul-Menite interpretation of the True Law.

IDRIANS

While the converted Idrians have become a recognized culture, their roots are varied because they were once made up of dozens of distinct tribes. They can be distinguished from the Sulese and other ethnicities by their darker skin and hair and broad features. They look most like the nomadic Radiz, and there may be an ancient connection between these peoples. Both male and female Idrians prefer to let their hair grow long, although men tend to keep their faces clean shaven. Idrians in Sul and Imer and those who join the priesthood or the Order of the Fist keep their hair shorn shorter; some males even shave their heads.

Even among those who are fully embraced as citizens, tensions persist between the Idrians and the Sulese. Idrians make up the bulk of the poorer castes and live in conditions worse than most Sulese. Idrians find it difficult to rise above their caste although some have done so by joining the priesthood or the military. Most skilled craftsmen and members of the priesthood are Sulese, however, as are the majority of the Exemplars; laborers and farmers are primarily Idrian. Nonetheless, the visgoths feel it is imperative to fully integrate Idrians into society, and those who are loyal can advance as far as piety, ambition, and capability allow.

Idrian citizens may resent the Sulese for their wealth and opportunities, but do not consider themselves oppressed. They praise the crusades that brought them out of barbarity and shun the practices of their ancestors, who were separated too long from the Creator. These Idrians desire an equal voice in the clergy and to serve the crusades, though their piety can cause hostility between devout Idrians of the cities and unorthodox kinfolk on the fringes, some of whom hold the priest caste in contempt.

The nature of Idrian tribes beyond the Protectorate's borders is a bit more complicated. Many of these have also converted to the Menite worship, having been influenced by trade and contact with the nearby cities. But they usually have a less formal understanding of the Menite faith and may retain their ancient beliefs, such as using animal totems connected to tribal identity. Such totems are concealed when interacting with agents of the Sul-Menite Temple.

The ancient Idrian tribes were made up of semi-nomadic people who adapted to the difficult conditions of the Bloodstone Marches. They wandered from season to season, seeking the best shelter, hunting grounds, and watering holes. They maintained herds of swift horses as well as other animals upon which their lives relied. Now most Idrian tribes, even those in the fringes, have adopted habits from the Sulese by settling to work farms or ranches. Raising horses is still considered a worthy occupation and many Idrians pride themselves on their horsemanship.

Of Protectorate citizens living outside the walls of Sul or Imer, the majority are Idrians who generally know these regions well, as their survival depends on it. Many are skilled hunters and trackers even if their primary focus is farming; wild game is an important supplemental food source amid unpredictable harvests. And while ancestor "worship" is taboo, Idrians still respect their forebears and most know their family lineage far better than the Sulese. There is still an awareness of "tribe" even for those who have settled in the cities or on their own lands. Funerals for loved ones are often large gatherings and an occasion for feasting and the telling of tales, sometimes gathering distant kin. Traditionally the Idrians have enjoyed drinking wine, and this is a part of certain celebrations, although the most zealous Menites frown on this practice.

SULESE

The Sulese are a fanatically devoted people whose name comes from Hierarch Sulon and the ancient city named after him. The Sulese are not a distinct ethnicity but a culture descended from all Cygnar's peoples and thus are not recognizable as Sulese by physical features, although most have superficial similarities to Caspians. They can be identified by their style of dress, austere and pragmatic outside the priest caste and without ornamentation other than the Menofix. Most Sulese are well groomed with short hair and little to no facial hair for the males.

Since the time of King Malagant, long before the Civil War, the Menites of Caspia had been segregated into the eastern city where they began to develop their own distinct culture. The Menites shared a bond based on the ancient rites and rituals of the times before the Orgoth when their temples stood for the rule of law. They found common ground in forging a new nation east of the Black River; the hardships they endured made them closer still. Most Sulese long to reunite Caspia and Sul under the Menite faith, but the eastern city has a significance all its own.

Sulese mark the arrival of the Orgoth as the end of the glorious age of Menite rule that characterized the Thousand Cities Era; once the Orgoth enslaved western Immoren the Menite priest caste lost its power and authority. The Sulese draw inspiration and cultural identity more from the priest-kings of the Thousand Cities Era and before than from the heroes of the Rebellion. They believe they are the rightful inheritors of the legacy of Golivant, not the Morrowan usurper-kings.

Sul-Menite teachings are so widespread that every citizen of the Protectorate can recite passages of the Canon and knows his place in society. The teachings of the Temple have also instilled obedience and an awareness of the importance of ritual. The Sulese both fear and respect the Creator believing they are on Caen to serve him and that this shall continue in Urcaen after death. To the Sulese the purest state is a life spent in willing service to the Lawgiver.

This reverence extends to the priest caste, which controls all aspects of Sulese life. Attendance at Temple services is mandatory, and citizens know that to shirk this duty would be to manifest a failing before Menoth. Most Sulese obey the priest caste automatically and unthinkingly, knowing them to be servants of the Creator. There is an implicit trust in the priesthood to guide the faithful, and most Sulese accept that any action they are guided to undertake by the clergy will be for the good of the Temple regardless of its personal implications and repercussions. For the Sulese, death is simply a transition from service on Caen to service in the City of Man.

Some Sulese aspire to do more than obey but to serve the Temple directly, and in this regard they have great opportunity to better themselves. Sulese occupy most of the highest echelons of the Temple and its martial orders. Becoming a priest is difficult, requiring true dedication and passing tests of faith, but can elevate a Sulese of any background to the ruling class. In this respect the Protectorate is the most egalitarian of the Iron Kingdoms; it has nearly no hereditary aristocracy. The only exceptions are among the Knights Exemplar and the Temple Flameguard, where priority is given to the sons and daughters of veterans. Yet even here climbing the ranks is based on skill and dedication than rather than ancestry.

Compared to most cultures outside the Protectorate or even to the Idrians they live alongside, the Sulese are an intense and humorless people of ascetic inclinations. They do not see the value in diversions or entertainments, which detract from service to the Creator. Food and drink exist to sustain the body, providing strength for hard work and the trials and tribulations of life. Music is austere and intended for worship. Most Sulese are uncomfortable with the energetic celebrations and feasts of the Idrians, even when accompanied by prayer. Menite teachings suggest such diversions helped seduce the Morrowans away from the proper path.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

While one might expect the Protectorate's law and jurisprudence to be complicated, legal matters are usually settled efficiently and expediently. The Protectorate does not maintain extensive legal precedents and operates instead in terms of absolutes. Ancient tradition has been codified into law by the scrutators. These laws are few in number and are stated as simply and directly as possible. A small number of decrees and dictates have been passed down to add to an unwritten legal foundation that is inextricably bound up in religious custom and well known to every priest.

In theory all law in the Protectorate relates back to the Canon of the True Law. Being a religious document, however, the Canon focuses on the worship of Menoth and neither relate to daily life nor enshrine any specific rights or freedoms. Instead, they reinforce that everything a Menite is and owns, including his flesh, ultimately belongs to the Creator. The same is true for all of the products of his time and labor.

CORE TENETS OF THE TRUE LAW

There is no god above Menoth.

There is no labor unendurable in the name of Menoth.

There is no pain unbearable in the name of Menoth.

There is no fear unassailable with faith in Menoth.

There is no object that cannot be given up for Menoth.

There is no word other than the word of Menoth.

There is no end. There is a place for us all at the feet of Menoth.

Jurisprudence in the Protectorate weighs transgressions by evaluating harm done to the Temple and its clergy—who embody the authority of Menoth. Disobedience to a priest is therefore one of the most fundamental and unacceptable violations. Theft is defined as a wrongdoer depriving another citizen of the tools and possessions he requires for his labors in the name of Menoth. Murder is an extreme extension of this, seen as the act of stealing from the Temple the remaining labors of the victim's lifetime. Souls are not to be sent to Menoth until their labors on Caen are ended. Only the priesthood, specifically the Reclaimant Order, is allowed to determine when a soul should be returned to Menoth.

In establishing the theocracy, the Sul-Menites broadly expanded the authority of the priesthood. Though historically priests existed to support, legitimize, and advise the ruling caste, in the Protectorate the priestly and ruling classes were united. The hierarch is a priest-king whose word is law. Subordinate priests are vested with correspondingly lesser degrees of power, with even the lowest having tremendous jurisdiction over the lives of ordinary citizens. In practice the faithful need little prodding to follow the laws of the Protectorate beyond their own piety, the weight of societal expectation, and fear of failing the Creator.

The Protectorate has no courts other than the temples themselves. The handling of specific judgments is the province of the priest or scrutator an alleged wrongdoer is brought before. Those who violate the laws of the Protectorate will be apprehended by agents of the Temple, such as Exemplar knights or monks of the Order of the Fist, who then take offenders before the nearest ranking authority and state the nature of the transgression. Minor matters involving trivial violations of the peace can be quickly handled by any ranking priest. Priests always defer greater offenses or judgments with unusual complications to a scrutator, if one is available.

Scrutators have tremendous leeway to investigate crimes, conspiracy, and heresy; they may arrest and interrogate any citizen at will, requiring nothing more than suspicion. Only higher ranking priests are exempt from lower ranking scrutators, but even these individuals can be arrested and interrogated by vice scrutators. In most cases a scrutator will swiftly make a decision and pronounce judgment. On rare occasions where additional investigation or evaluation is required, offenders may find themselves sent to prisons and interrogation chambers such as those at Tower Judgment.

Menite religious tradition includes a number of behaviors expected of all citizens as matters of unwritten law. First is mandatory participation in religious services. Only the very ill or those unable to attend due to Temple business elsewhere are exempt. All citizens are expected to donate a tithe—tenth of the product of their goods and services—to the Temple. Further, all citizens are expected to respond to a call to arms, taking up weapons in defense of the faith. There are other expectations of the community, such as reporting any heresy, unholy magic, blasphemy, or any suspected wrongdoing to the nearest agent of the Temple.

Some laws result from the dictates from the Synod and past and present hierarchs. One of the oldest, dating back to Hierarch Luctine, is that Protectorate citizens outside the martial orders are not allowed to carry weapons except when called to arms. The Protectorate has the strictest policies against the armament of the civilian population of any of the Iron Kingdoms. At other times hierarchs have revised laws in the face of changing circumstances, such as the execution of citizens manifesting arcane power which was discontinued by Hierarch Voyle after establishing the Vassals of Menoth.

Punishments for criminals are generally harsh in the Protectorate. In passing judgment, a scrutator determines whether the guilty party is worthy of redemption. If so, they may be released after being flogged or maimed. Habitual lawbreakers, those guilty of the gravest sins, or those whose punishment might serve as a deterrent, are executed. The Protectorate's most common form of capital punishment is death by burning, which is expedient and considered a mercy compared to the slow agony of execution upon the wrack.

THE PROVINCES OF THE PROTECTORATE

The Protectorate of Menoth was the smallest of the Iron Kingdoms at its founding. Since that time, it has expanded considerably and now occupies a geographical area larger than Ord or pre-invasion Llael, albeit a much less densely populated one. Starting from the territories immediately surrounding Sul, the Protectorate quickly expanded into the harsh lands of the nearest Bloodstone Marches, moving southeast until it eventually claimed the long abandoned ruins of Icthier, one of the holiest sites to the Menite faith.

The Protectorate's heartland occupies a long strip of territory southeast of Cygnar following the coast along the Gulf of Cygnar and inland a hundred miles. Additionally, the Northern Crusade recently claimed a sizable portion of northeastern Llael, which has become a self-sufficient province of the Protectorate separated from the southern territories by hundreds of miles.

In theory the Protectorate is bound by neighboring kingdoms only in the west and could expand farther. Practical considerations have not encouraged such expansion, because the lands to the east and north become increasingly arid and inhospitable. The Sul-Menites have not shown much inclination to push farther south past Icthier, although the southern visgoth has expressed an interest in exploring this territory. The central focus of the Protectorate is on its Great Crusade to return the people of western Immoren to the worship of the Creator. Recent immigration may provide an impetus for expansion, however, as both Imer and Sul have become crowded and there are reports that more fertile soil may exist to the southeast.

The Protectorate of Menoth is divided into four provinces: Gedorra, Icthosa, Sulonmarch, and Varhdan (p. 319). These geographical regions have little political or cultural significance and exist primarily as bureaucratic divisions to aid in the governance of the Protectorate.

LANDS OF THE NORTHERN CRUSADE

The lands that have been seized from northeastern Llael are described in Chapter 3 (p. 233). The city of Leryn has become the headquarters of the Northern Crusade and is presently the seat of Hierarch Severius, who has remained with the crusade rather than returning to Imer, the capital. Severius' decision to stay has left the governance of the Protectorate's heartlands to the Synod of the Visgoths, who rule in his absence.

GEDORRA

The large central province encompasses the capital of Imer and stretches south to Acrennia, including a lengthy stretch of coastline, and east to the Erud Hills. Although mostly arid, there is abundant if difficult farmland along the Gelis River south of Imer and several small fishing villages along the coast. The region's greatest resources are the crowded mines east of Imer, one of the Protectorate's best sources of iron and other vital metals. Gedorra is ruled by the Six Visgoths of Imer: Var Bodalin, Delcon Vesher, Mishva Nestore, Lars Elimon, Ark Razek, and Morgimer Jasrun.

Until the last century much of this area remained in the possession of the Idrian tribes. The Idrians would winter in holds carved out of the Erud Hills and return to the valleys and river basin during the warmer months, subsisting on fishing and hunting as well as limited agriculture. The region was among the first conquered by Hierarch Luctine's crusades.

Once the Idrians of Gedorra succumbed to conversion, Imer remained one of the largest gathering places for the native tribes but remained underdeveloped. It was a crowded township of hovels and red-clay brick houses until Hierarch Voyle moved the capital there in 589 AR. The tremendous transformation and rebuilding of the city had no parallel anywhere in the Iron Kingdoms—within a few short years, Imer became a massive city of great stone buildings and thriving industry. Now all roads in the Protectorate lead to Imer, and it is truly a bastion of the faith.

Imer's location had a number of advantages, including being separated from the prying eyes of Caspia, whose attention was always upon Sul. Over time, an even greater advantage has been Imer's proximity to the abundant quarries and mines of the Erud Hills. The ore veins there have proven to be considerably richer and to run deeper than Cygnaran assessors ever anticipated.

ACRENNIA

Weather-beaten ruins overlooking the sea at Acrennia are but a diminished echo of the great city that once stood there. It is believed that in antiquity Acrennia was the center of Menite settlement second only to Icthier in its magnificence. The people of Acrennia turned their back on the Creator, however, and legend has it that the Acrennians made war against Icthier. Decades of battles resulted in a stalemate before the Acrennians mysteriously vanished overnight, as if the city had been swept clean of its inhabitants. Millennia later, the ruins became a remote Orgoth outpost where warwitches convened and dabbled in dark arts. Now Acrennia lies mostly buried beneath the sands and is thought to be accursed.

The two major roads through Gedorra are the Imer Highway, connecting the capital to Sul, and the Burning Road, a lengthy and well-maintained roadway stretching from Imer to Ancient Icthier and frequented by caravans and pilgrims. Small patrols of Exemplar Vengers and Idrian scouts atop swift steeds watch the roads.

While farming along the Gelis River is difficult, certain improvements to agricultural techniques such as crop rotation and irrigation have helped provide essential food to the capital. The success of the crops is highly dependent on the delicate knife's edge of annual rainfall. In dry years the visgoths and subordinate sovereigns must ration food.

The largest towns are situated along the Gelis River, but there are also myriad smaller villages along the lengthy gulf coastline, which is marked by the Guardians, a series of peninsulas and inlets. Many of these villages subsist on fishing and the inlets provide havens for the Protectorate's working fleets. A number of watch towers along the outer peninsulas keep lookout for enemy ship movement, including raiding vessels from Cryx. Such ships rarely cross the Gulf of Cygnar due to the threat from the Cygnaran fleets, but such incursions are not entirely unknown.

While Imer dominates the region and the Six Visgoths are the unquestioned rulers, there is also considerable deference paid to the ranking officers of the Temple Flameguard. The leader of this martial order, Feora, the Priestess of the Flame, is as significant to the politics of the region as any of the visgoths. She frequently meets with members of the Synod and is on good terms with several of them, in addition to having the absolute loyalty of the many thousands of Flameguard who constitute Gedorra's garrisons. The largest garrison is in Imer, but there are smaller garrisons throughout the province. Gedorra is large and sparsely populated; crossing its interior can bring occasional dangers, and some areas are infrequently patrolled, particularly in the southeast. Farrow, tatzylwurms, and trolls native to the Bloodstone Marches have been known to venture into the region to menace small groups or solitary travelers.

IMER

Ruler: The Visgoths of Imer

Population: 110,000 Sulese; 72,000 Idrian; 10,000 Midlunder; 7,000 Thurian; 4,500 Ryn; 4,000 Skirov; 3,000 Khard; 2,000 Morridane; 2,000 Umbrean; 1,000 Tordoran; 500 Kossite

Military Presence: Imer is garrisoned by 39,000 Temple Flameguard and 3,000 Knights Exemplar.

Description: Nowhere else on Caen is the power of the Protectorate as visible as in the capital city of Imer. From here, the will of Menoth is interpreted by the ranking clergy of the Sul-Menite Temple and then made manifest in law and decree to be carried throughout the nation. Imer thrums with fanatic energy as the faithful manufacture arms and train for the Great Crusade. A low haze of forge smoke, burning incense, and warjack exhaust clings to the buildings and streets from the churning of holy forces. Flameguard and Knights Exemplar march through the streets. Teeming masses listen to street-corner litanies before returning to toil in the service of their faith. The air is thick with anxious preparation, and prayer echoes through every street and alley, punctuated by the staccato rhythm

PROVINCE OF GEDORRA

Largest Ethnic Groups: Idrian majority, large Sulese minority

Important Cities: Imer

Significant Towns (not on the map): Almair, Ashod, Durga, Marthythe, Qar, Rana, Septun, Taarek

Rulers: The Visgoths of Imer: Var Bodalin, Lars Elimon, Morgimer Jasrun, Mishva Nestore, Ark Razek, and Delcon Vesher

The Six Visgoths of Imer are those most directly concerned with overseeing the industry of the theocracy and its necessary bureaucracy.

Visgoth Var Bodalin is a vice scrutator and the Prime Curate for Scrutator Initiation. This formidable but aged priest, who entered the clergy during the reign of Hierarch Turgis, is the senior-most visgoth. As the effective head of the scrutator caste, he has access to considerable intelligence and is unquestionably the best-informed priest in Imer.

Visgoth Lars Elimon is charged with command of Temple Defense and Armament. He works closely with the Protectorate's military forces to ensure they have the weapons and armor they require. This relationship has placed him in frequent communication with the Priestess of the Flame, and it has been in his best interests to ensure she is satisfied.

Visgoth Morgimer Jasrun is responsible for the efficient and smooth running of the Protectorate's mines, quarries, reservoirs, wells, and food distribution. They are all indispensable assets within the nation and he has been known to make personal visits to facilities that fail to meet quotas.

Visgoth Mishva Nestore is a senior scrutator with authority over the Vassals of Menoth as well as the theocracy's arcane mechaniks. Mishva's most important duties are the production of warjack cortexes and the fabrication of other mechanika needed by the military.

Visgoth Ark Razek is the overseer of the Sul-Menite Artificers, who work at the Protectorate's foundries and forges. Hierarch Ravonal assigned Razek to his post at the start of the Protectorate's military expansion.

Visgoth Delcon Vesher is the vice scrutator in charge of the Lyceum of the True Law, which is the Protectorate's seminary college for the education and training of new priests. Vesher is only tangentially involved in the politics of the capital, primarily focused on doctrinal purity.

Seat: The Sovereign Temple of the One Faith, Imer

of courtyard war foundries and the tolling of dozens of bells ringing from the towers of the Sovereign Temple.

Before its great walls and stone facades proclaiming it the capital of the Protectorate of Menoth were erected, Imer was little more than a dusty backwater populated by the converted Idrian masses. Transformed by Garrick Voyle's vision, the city was rebuilt to his exacting specifications. The heart of Imer is the Sovereign Temple, the largest Menite temple in recorded history. Together with the Hierarch's Palace, the vast complex of buildings is referred to as the Holy See. The Temple complex dominates Imer and is the center of the theocracy.

The city's massive gates straddle the entrances from the Burning Road and the Imer Highway. Knights Exemplar and scrutators guard these as well as the capital's lesser gates, at all hours of the day. The faithful can see the many towers of the Temple from almost any vantage point in Imer, and they are a constant reminder of the city's true purpose: to bring the will of Menoth to Caen. Most of the buildings in the central complex were designed to be both practical and reverent. Religious ceremonies take place beside the great halls of the bureaucracy. The only traces of old Imer are in the outlying slums where hovels in the old style persist.

The Sovereign Temple is simple in design yet massive in scale and constructed from enormous blocks of red stone. Atop its central staircase is a large plaza lined with marble columns inscribed with passages from the *Canon of the True Law*. Inside, a massive statue of Menoth the Creator towers behind an elevated altar. Both statue and altar are open to the sky, but the rest is cast in smoky darkness lit by torches and braziers. This central temple is reserved for special offerings and high ceremonies. It also includes the great Chamber of the Synod, where the Six Visgoths of Imer convene. The chamber is adjacent to numerous offices for the subordinates who attend to the visgoths and execute their directives. It is also connected to the Hierarch's Palace for his convenience when he is in residence.

The Hierarch's Palace has been left unoccupied since the death of Voyle, because Severius rules from Leryn at the head of the Northern Crusade. In his absence, the palace is protected by Severius' own guard, drawn from the ranks of the Knights Exemplar and kept ready for his return as a matter of proper formality.

Like a beacon to the heavens, the Flameguard Temple sits near the center of Imer. It is part of the central complex and is easily recognized by the sextet of looming towers that rise above its walls. The towers are topped by blazing censers that roar with golden flames and billow dark smoke into the sky. The temple is home to hundreds of seasoned Flameguard and scores of initiates, and is the center of power and authority for Feora, the Priestess of Flame. The Incendium is based there, and a large clerical bureaucracy serves the priests, allowing them to supervise the numerous and far-flung Flameguard garrisons. Feora and her considerable retinue travels from the city frequently, but it is from Imer that her efforts are coordinated.

The teeming hordes of Imer dwell in the shadows of the Temple complex, leading simple lives of prayer and labor. The needs of the Great Crusade drive virtually every industry in Imer, and its citizens are employed in the myriad tasks needed to conduct their holy war. The vast majority toil in the foundries and munitions depots of the city, or travel to and from Tower Judgment to the north, returning to the city every few weeks to visit their families. Others work as adjuncts and bureaucrats, aiding the clergy of the Temple in the minutia of their duties.

Warehouses set aside to distribute essentials like food and clothing are located in every district, and long lines of people wait to receive their meager sustenance. Allegiants of the Order of the Fist stand at the ready to protect those distributing these necessities in the uncommon event of a disturbance, particularly during times of famine.

Imer does not tolerate the idle, and aside from the slums on the outskirts of the city, there are no beggars or homeless to be seen. The great work of the Crusade begins in Imer and all of its people must pull their weight. Those guilty of indolence are sent to work the nearby mines in Erud Hills.

ICTHOSA

Icthosa is the southernmost region of the Protectorate. It includes the Harber River, Ancient Icthier, and a long stretch of coast. Considerable mineral deposits are mined in the region, particularly along the ancient riverbeds, and Icthosa is home to most of the Protectorate's diamond mines. Imer's hand is felt less strongly here, prompting some outsiders to make it their home, as have several Idrian tribes. A steady flow of pilgrims travels along the Burning Road toward Icthier. Visgoth Brone Scarrel rules Icthosa.

The region was until modernity abandoned and all but forgotten by man. It was not until Hierarch Turgis expanded the borders of the Protectorate that the ruins of Icthier were rediscovered. At first the significance of the discovery was not recognized, since the ancient legends of the city did not seem to match what had been unearthed. Priests sent to excavate the buildings that lay beneath the sands at first thought it some lesser settlement, one of many old ruins in the region. It was when they uncovered the stones of the old temple, upon which were inscribed the Canon of the True Law, that they realized what they had found—Icthier, the legacy of Cinot, where Menoth had first revealed his truth and bestowed his gifts on mankind.

It is no wonder the region was not recognized; in the ancient tales, the lands around Icthier had rich soil that became fertile fields providing an ample harvest. But that was before the Time of the Long Sun when the great cataclysm in the east utterly changed the region into an arid desert and forced the Menites to abandon Icthier. Records of those times were sparse and many had presumed the city of Cinot to be much more distant, if it existed outside of legend at all. The decades that followed its discovery resulted in considerable interest in the site by the priesthood as the excavation of the ruins continued. In time the great ancient statue of Menoth was restored to once again loom over Icthier's central courtyard.

Given the inhospitable nature of Icthosa, it is possible Ancient Icthier may have remained a curiosity for scholars and priests if rich deposits of gemstones had not been discovered along the

Harber River and elsewhere in the region. The mining of those resources gave the Protectorate an influx of wealth allowing trade with other nations.

Icthosa is still populated by nomadic Idrian tribes that have accepted Protectorate rule and are largely compliant with its holy laws. Many of these tribesmen regularly go to the temple and pay a tithe, but they do not consider themselves believers, privately holding to the older traditions of their people.

There are numerous villages and townships along the Harber River and the coastline, although most are small and meager. The city of Icthier has seen a resurgence of growth and is the center of commercial activity in the region. The farmlands of Icthosa, however, are frugal and barely sufficient to feed the local population. Outside of the priesthood, the people of the region are considered among the Protectorate's poorest citizens.

Jahalin, a poor village just north of Icthier, has come to considerable fame as the place that the Harbinger first manifested and made herself known in 603 AR. Since that event, Jahalin has also become a favored site of pilgrimage.

Ancient Icthier is home to a large garrison that patrols both the mines and the Burning Road. Little effort is expended to protect the outlying communities. The wilderness regions to the east are close by, and beasts or other horrors occasionally venture into the area from the deeper wastes. Armed bands of Idrian villagers can usually deal with these threats, but sometimes get overwhelmed and disappear.

PROVINCE OF ICTHOSA

Largest Ethnic Groups: Idrian majority, large Sulese minority

Important Cities: Ancient Icthier

Significant Towns (not on the map): Durkar, Harbarden, Jahalin, Leven, Naz, Pholtstead, Retek, Zuhrul

Ruler: Visgoth Brone Scarrel

Visgoth Brone Scarrel governs Icthosa, but his attentions are focused on Ancient Icthier, ensuring its pilgrims are safe and the wealth derived from the region reaches Imer. Nonetheless, Scarrel has made efforts to expand Menite teachings deeper into the local Idrian communities, not being content with perfunctory worship. Additionally, the visgoth has expressed an interest in trying to expand the Protectorate's borders, or at least to send expeditions into the southeast to search for other worthwhile resources to exploit. He leaves management of the city to Scrutator Sovereign Jarok Shaw, an ambitious priest who serves him ably.

Seat: Ancient Icthier

ANCIENT ICTHIER

Ruler: Scrutator Sovereign Jarok Shaw, under Visgoth Brone Scarrel

Population: 47,000 Sulese; 17,500 Idrian; 2,500 Khard; 2,500 Midlunder; 1,500 Thurian; 500 Ryn

Military Presence: Icthier is garrisoned by 18,500 Temple Flameguard and 500 Exemplars.

Description: In the far-removed southeast of the Icthosa, at the mouth of the Harber River, stands Ancient Icthier, the first city of Immoren and holiest of Menite cities. Although Icthier served as the cradle of human civilization, most Menites left to seek more fertile lands during the Exodus. Today it is packed with Menite pilgrims, who overcrowd its streets and residences.

Each year countless numbers of these pilgrims journey from across the Iron Kingdoms to pray among the red clay buildings of the birthplace of the Menite faith. Icthier's most notable feature is the awe-inspiring statue of the Creator that rises from the midst of the town's Plaza of Justice and is visible from a great distance. Those who approach the city can harbor no doubts as to the population's devotion.

It was in Icthier that humanity established its first civilization and Menoth the Creator first revealed himself to man. It was here that humanity discovered the Canon of the True Law, oldest and most sacred of Menite texts, engraved upon the pillars and walls of these ruins. The priest Cinot deciphered the Canon and was compelled to deliver its truth to all men. He explained the gift of agriculture and passed down the Law to his people.

Following Cinot's teachings, early Menites transformed the lands around Icthier into fields. In fact, many of the ancient irrigation ditches and aqueducts that moved water from the Harber River into the city are still in use today. The fields surrounding the city were once the most abundant in southern Immoren before the cataclysmic events of antiquity that blasted the region into a desert wasteland. Today, the city consists of faded, pockmarked buildings and ruins intermingled with more recent architecture, most of which was built by the Sulese within the last century. Visitors are always fascinated by the red hue of the structures. The crumbling columns, lintels, and ancient circular temple are all constructed from baked bricks made from red clay, and for this reason it is sometimes called the Red City. In stark contrast are the domes, buttresses, and spires of carved alabaster and polished limestone adorning the newer additions to the city, which come from the quarries along the Harber River. It should be noted that the ancient city is forbidden to those not of the Menite faith; indeed, heathens stepping foot within the city have been accosted by fanatic mobs and literally torn limb from limb.

Icthier's proximity to the desert serves as both a blessing and a curse. It would be unlikely that an invading army could easily traverse such a natural barrier to attack the city. Unfortunately for the locals, dust storms frequently blow in from the east during the dry season. Locals typically wear scarves over their faces while those who have the means protect their eyes with dark goggles. Nearly everything in the city is coated with grit, which has contributed to the degeneration of its most

ancient buildings. Two towers sit at the city's edges to alert the population when rolling dust clouds are spotted on the horizon. When the bells sound, Icthier's inhabitants know to seek safety indoors away from the huge clouds that will soon billow through the streets.

The High Temple is the oldest and among the most grand of all Menite worship sites. It was at the ruins at the center of the temple that men laid the foundation for their first recorded civilization and came to know the word of the Lawgiver. The busy temple is a haven for Menite pilgrims and scholars. It serves as the site of constant Menite devotional services, and a vast number of priests give fiery sermons throughout the Temple's many great halls. The heart of the temple, accessible only to the most senior priests, is the sacred Temple Wall of Cinot.

Due to the city's isolation from Imer and Sul, and its lack of ready resources, poverty is a greater issue for the citizenry of Icthier than almost anywhere else in the Protectorate. Despite the proximity of the Harber River, food and water shortages are major problems facing Icthier's leaders, and those difficulties are compounded by the presence of an increasing number of pilgrims. The revitalization that has swept the nation in the past few years, however, has caused some improvement in the city, and what little grain can be spared from the northern communities of Icthosa is shipped to Icthier. The grain is made into unleavened bread by workers in the employ of the clergy and distributed to the needy.

SCRUTATOR SOVEREIGN JAROK SHAW

Scrutator Sovereign Shaw is the overseer of Icthier. Not only is he an iron-fisted servant of the Lawgiver, but he is also the most senior historian in Icthier and a renowned expert on the Canon of the True Law. He has been called before the Synod for his expert opinion on obscure matters of Temple law. Shaw spends considerable time in silent contemplation secluded within the High Temple. He has occasionally been called to task by the vice scrutators for his strict adherence to the ancient texts over the more pragmatic interpretations preferred by the Temple theocracy. He walks a dangerous line in this peculiar form of ancient orthodoxy, but has yet to cross over into actual heresy. Visgoth Scarrel finds him very useful for governing the city but prefers that Shaw remember his duties as a scrutator and avoid the obsessions of higher study.

SULONMARCH

The province of Sulonmarch stretches north from Sul to Tower Judgment, east toward Imer, and includes a section of the coastline north of the Guardians. Its western region includes some fertile farmland, although there is a marked change in climate 50 miles east of the Black River. A number of small farming villages dot the plains between Sul and Imer, and several mining communities occupy the northern hills. Sulonmarch is jointly ruled by Visgoth Juviah Rhoven of Sul and Visgoth Enjorran Sollers of Tower Judgment.

The province includes the first lands ceded to the Protectorate under the terms of peace at the end of the Cygnaran Civil War. Sulonmarch was expanded as hierarchs claimed new territories from the Idrians and the wastes. Historically, the people of Sul kept close to the Black River, and the outlying farmlands became poorer and more frugal the farther east one ventured. Beyond the last farmlands is arid desert, home to the myriad Idrian tribes that have occupied the region since before they were converted to worship Menoth. As recently as two hundred years ago, these tribes were a significant menace to the farms east of Sul and conducted frequent raids against villages in this area.

That all changed when the tribes were converted and the great northern fortress of Tower Judgment was erected. After 540 AR, Sulonmarch became the most stable and safest province of the Protectorate, watched over by both Sul and the looming tower of the scrutators to the north.

Tower Judgment is a massive fortress that serves as both barracks and prison. The large garrison stationed here protects the region from threats from the north, including heavily armed bands of skorne. Tower Judgment is also the central meeting place for the scrutator caste when they choose to gather somewhere other than the capital. Oppressive in its sheer magnitude, the tower was built from immense stones quarried from the surrounding mountains. While the exact number of prisoners held in the dungeons that sprawl beneath the tower will never be known outside the clerks of the theocracy, it certainly extends into the hundreds. Most of the captives brought to the tower are never heard from again.

In the shadow of Tower Judgment is the Factorium, a massive complex that serves as the central compound of the Sul-Menite Artificers. The sprawling metalworks is part temple and part war foundry, and houses dozens of iron and bronze forges, smelting furnaces, and all the apparatus required for war. Hundreds of faithful Menites labor within, their efforts guided by priests subordinate to Visgoth Ark Razek. The Factorium is the largest single manufacturing facility ever constructed by the Protectorate, and its operations are aided by lesser facilities producing machined parts in Imer. Many of the Protectorate's newly developed and most-sophisticated warjacks are assembled here.

The province was the epicenter of the war between Caspia and Sul that only recently concluded. While a tense and unfriendly truce holds between these two sister cities, fighting still takes place along both sides of the river. While these skirmishes are generally limited to military forces, conflicts have occasionally spilled over into nearby villages and townships. As it is expected that any township will take up arms and lend aid to Protectorate soldiers as needed, these battles can quickly escalate and result in civilian casualties.

The citizens of the region are rightfully proud of their history and are among the most zealous and devoted of Sul-Menites. The people of Sulonmarch believe the invasion of Sul was a crime against divine order, and a violation of one of the greatest relics of the faith: the very walls whose foundations were laid by Priest King Golivant. They are firm believers in the crusades and most have sent their sons and daughters to join the martial orders of the Protectorate's army.

Those who live here include many recent immigrants from other kingdoms who flocked to the Protectorate after hearing of the Harbinger's call. This influx of people has resulted in a greater mix of nationalities and languages than in previous generations. One such group includes hundreds of former Cygnaran Menites who immigrated to the Protectorate after being imprisoned on Bloodshore Island.

PROVINCE OF SULONMARCH

Largest Ethnic Groups: Sulese Majority, Idrian minority

Significant Towns (not on the map): Brenwhel, Brone, Galtun, Grath, Parva, Tarnthorpe, Turgisburn, Vahnham

Rulers: Visgoths and Vice Scrutators Enjorran Sollers and Juviah Rhoven

Visgoth Enjorran Sollers holds dominion over Tower Judgment and is one of the most feared rulers in the entire Protectorate of Menoth. He works closely with scrutators abroad to keep the hierarch informed at all times. He is a ruthless protector of the Temple, willing to go to any length to see it preserved.

Visgoth Juviah Rhoven has spent a lifetime upholding the True Law in Sul and preparing its garrison for the Great Crusade. Rhoven played a key role in Hierarch Voyle's consolidation of power, aiding in the elimination of several of the hierarch's rivals, and recently proved himself in battle during the defense of his city. The silence in Sul's streets after curfew and the pristine condition of its freshly repaired streets are signs of the obedience he inspires. The honor guard that accompanies him stands ready to strike down any who would cause him affront.

Seat: Tower Judgment (Enjorran Sollers) and Sul (Juviah Rhoven)

SUL

Ruler: Visgoth Juviah Rhoven

Population: 225,000 Sulese; 107,000 Idrian; 9,000 Midlunder; 6,000 Thurian; 1,200 Tordoran; 1,000 Khard; 500 Ryn

Military Presence: Sul is garrisoned by 67,000 Temple Flameguard, 2,000 Exemplar, and just under 200 paladins of the Order of the Wall. The city could quickly muster a vast auxiliary force on short notice.

Description: Towering over the eastern shore of the Black River, Sul is the sister city of Caspia. Until the Cygnaran Civil War threw the city into bloody chaos, Sul was nothing more than the easternmost district of Caspia. When war erupted, the slums of east Caspia served as Hierarch Sulon's fortress as well as the gathering point for Menite forces. Eventually, eastern Caspia was ceded to the newly established Protectorate of Menoth as part of the peace settlement and became the fledgling nation's most important city. Since that time, Sul's walls have been painted a shining white and capped with gold crenellations. Sul was the capital of the Protectorate until Hierarch Voyle moved the capital to Imer. Despite its reduced political import, Sul remains a significant bastion of the Sul-Menite people.

In recent years Sul once more became a place of strife and bloodshed when its great walls were breached and it streets occupied by the invading armies of Cygnar. The city was almost lost, and the Great Temple was preserved only through the providence of the Creator and the courage of the Flameguard and Knights Exemplar.

One cannot take a step in Sul without observing monuments, temples, and statues erected by generations of Menites. Like Caspia, Sul is divided by walls and arched gates. Temple towers and minarets rise above the walls in some places, but no

structure draws the eye as does the tower of the Great Temple of the Creator. The central point of this structure looms over even the highest internal walls and is only slightly shorter than the tall exterior walls of the city. It was here that the tide of invaders was turned back.

The Great Temple is indisputably the heart of Sul, and the people of the city come here not only for temple services but also to look upon a tangible reminder that they and their city are free of heathen oppression. This is still one of the most impressive places of worship in western Immoren. The exterior of the building is a large step pyramid of stone in the old style; however, its architects used modern techniques to arch and buttress the high ceilings, providing a cathedral-like atmosphere inside. The Great Temple houses a sacred crypt dedicated to Menite kings and includes some of the relics of leaders stretching back to the time of Calacia. Visgoth Rhoven oversees great ceremonies to the Creator here and has chambers in the upper levels to conduct the business of governing the city. He actually dwells in the visgoth's palace to the northwest of the temple. The impressive monument that stands before the palace—Sulon's Remembrance, the tomb of the first hierarch of the Protectorate—makes the palace easy to find.

Before the war, visitors to Sul remarked upon how clean the city's streets and buildings were kept and that it showed no sign of its history as a Caspian slum. This fastidiousness is still observed in the eastern districts of the city, but much of western Sul was badly damaged in the fighting. The breach in the western wall through which the Cygnaran army poured is still being mended, a sight that strikes unease in the hearts of Menites, who saw the walls of Sul as a physical symbol of the Creator's promised covenant with his worshippers. It will take time for the damage to be repaired, although Visgoth Rhoven ordered thousands of citizens to labor at the task of fixing both the wall and numerous internal structures—under his stern leadership progress has been swift.

The people of Sul have largely returned to the lives they led before the invasion, but an even greater number of them have sought to join the Temple Flameguard, and few citizens of the city did not lose a relative or close friend in the vicious street fighting. Another group that has seen its number rise is the Order of the Wall, whose central chapter house is set into the northwestern battlements. Members of this order have undertaken charitable efforts in the city to facilitate reconstruction of homes and to see to the needs of surviving citizens whose lives were shattered by the war, including many orphans.

The bridge across the Black River to Caspia remains heavily guarded, and the Sulese look across the river and wonder when the fragile peace will be broken and war will once more come to their homes.

VARHDAN

The most desolate and barren province of the Protectorate is Varhdan, a region southeast of Acrennia that includes the Monastery of the Order of the Fist, the Sithney River, and a long stretch of the Burning Road. Small, scattered villages have arisen in this difficult region, mostly along the riverbanks and the shore of Deadsands Bay. Varhdan tests the faithful under the crucible of the unforgiving sun, and these communities are policed by fervent young allegiants eager to prove their worth. The Burning Road is patrolled by Knights Exemplar, but they prefer not to linger in the region.

Varhdan was secured under Hierarch Turgis on his way to greater glory to the southeast with the recovery of Icthier. The region only came to prominence when Garrick Voyle was given dispensation to found the Order of the Fist here. Voyle deliberately chose a desolate location for his monastery, believing the sun and sands would serve to forge his followers into the weapon he hoped them to become. In the establishment of this order, Voyle worked closely with Haveron Grayden, who became the master of the order. Grand High Allegiant Haveron Grayden remains in charge of Varhdan, although his primary focus is on overseeing the monastery and the Order of the Fist.

PROVINCE OF VARHDAN

Largest Ethnic Groups: Idrian majority, small Sulese minority

Significant Towns (not on the map): Durgos, Hala, Kur, Ranha, Tyr

Rulers: Grand High Allegiant Haveron Grayden

The grand high allegiant is described by others as an unyielding rock, a man who can sit in silent and still meditation for days on end as if carved in stone. When he consents to step into the practice ring to bestow his wisdom to the senior allegiants, he moves like flowing sand in the wind, a figure of grace and power. He is an ascetic who wears no visible sign of rank and sleeps in an identical cell to all others in the monastery. He needs no more to sustain him than his own thoughts and the scrolls transcribing the Canon of the True Law from the walls of Icthier.

Grayden is esteemed as one of the most learned and accomplished theologians in the Protectorate, and he occasionally receives Sovereign Shaw of Icthier to debate ancient texts. Grayden has helped uncover formerly lost writings from the time of Icthier. He encourages all members of his order as well visitors from outside to utilize the reclusive monastery to ponder the Lawgiver. Amid its silent halls, many visitors claim to feel closer to the Creator and to hear echoes of his will.

Seat: Monastery of the Order of the Fist

PLAYER SECTION

PROTECTORATE CHARACTERS

A number of options are available only to characters of Protectorate origin. These options include modifications to existing careers, new careers, new abilities, and kingdom-specific spell lists.

PROTECTORATE CAREER OPTIONS

The options available to Protectorate characters are described below.

VASSAL OF MENOTH (ARCANE MECHANIK)

The Vassals of Menoth are the arcane slaves of the Protectorate. Though well treated, they are closely watched and expected to produce arms and mechanika for their masters. A small number serve alongside the Protectorate's armies in times of war, adding their power to the might of the crusades. Though once the Vassals were exclusively arcanists and arcane mechaniks captured from foreign lands, today they are mostly made up of Sul-Menites seeking to purify themselves of the taint of spiritual corruption, cleansing their magic with prayers to the Creator.

Only Menite humans can be Vassals of Menoth. This option can only be taken at character creation. A character starting the game as a Vassal of Menoth must choose Alchemist, Arcanist, Field Mechanik, Priest (Menite), or Sorcerer for his second career. A character cannot have both the Vassal of Menoth and standard Arcane Mechanik careers.

A character taking this option:

- Begins with Connections (Vassals of Menoth).
- Begins with Arcane Bolt, Ashen Veil, and Short Out instead of the starting Arcane Mechanik spells listed in *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*. If the character gains Arcane Bolt from both of his starting careers, select one additional Cost 2 spell from either of the character's spell lists.
- Begins with Vassal Armor (p. 365) but does not begin with a mechanikal weapon or suit of mechanika armor.
- A Vassal of Menoth/Field Mechanik character can start with a Protectorate light warjack with a stock cortex and up to 200 gc in weapons instead of a light laborjack.
- Uses the spell list below instead of the Arcane Mechanik spell list in *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*.

COST 1	Arcane Strike, Fire Starter, Jackhammer, Jump Start, Power Booster, Protection from Fire, Short Out
COST 2	Arcane Bolt, Ashen Veil (p. 363), Fortify, Immolation, Positive Charge, Redline, Refuge, Temper Metal
COST 3	Broadside, Cleansing Fire, Fail Safe, Grind, Guided Fire, Hex Blast, Hex Hammer (p. 363), Iron Aggression, Superiority
COST 4	Black Out, Blazing Effigy, Voltaic Lock

EXEMPLAR ERRANT (EXEMPLAR/RANGER)

If the Knights Exemplar are the swords of Menoth, the Exemplar Errants are the deadly quarrels that strike deep into the hearts of his enemies. Foregoing the use of the sacred relic blades lest they fall into the hands of covetous heathens, Exemplar Errants are the elite scouts and far-ranging warriors of the Protectorate's armies. Exemplar Errants are dispatched to carry out the will of the Creator's priesthood across Immoren.

Only a character who begins the game with the Exemplar (p. 357) and Ranger careers can be an Exemplar Errant.

A character taking this option:

- Starts the game with the Sanguine Bond and Specialization (Lawbringer Crossbow) abilities but does not start with the Righteous Anger Mighty archetype benefit.
- Starts the game with the Crossbow 1, Hand Weapon 2, and Shield 1 skills but does not start with any other military skills.
- Begins with a Lawbringer Crossbow (with ten blessed bolts), a shield, and a sword but does not begin with a relic blade.

EXEMPLAR VENGER (EXEMPLAR/HORSEMAN)

The Exemplar Vengers are the Protectorate's heavy cavalry. These knights are consumed with boundless faith and have long been seen as paragons of holy wrath and the true instruments of Menoth's will. Today, the Vengers are the spearhead of the Protectorate's holy wars. Some Vengers are Umbreans and Khards descended from adherents of Khador's Old Faith, more are proud Sulese who can trace their lineage back to old Caspia, and a growing number are fierce Idrians of the horse tribes who have given up their old ways for the worship of the Creator.

Only a character who begins the game with the Exemplar (p. 357) and Horseman (p. 179) careers can be an Exemplar Venger.

A character taking this option:

- Starts the game with Hand Weapon 2, Lance 2, and Shield 1 but does not start with any other military skills.
- Begins with a blessed lance (p. 365), shield, and sword but does not begin with a relic blade.

EXISTING OPTIONS

Along with these new options for Protectorate characters, a number of existing options can be modified for a specifically Protectorate origin. A player familiar with WARMACHINE wishing to play a Daughter of the Flame character could create a Cutthroat/Duelist. A Deliverer or Flameguard Cleanser could be created by making a Soldier character and selecting the necessary equipment. Likewise, a Temple Flameguard character is a Man-at-Arms with the appropriate armament.

PROTECTORATE WARCASTER (WARCASTER)

The divinely sanctioned warcasters of the Protectorate are among the most valued weapons in the army of the faithful. Most realize their power through prayer and absolute faith in the Creator, although a small number come to this talent through the unclean gifts of sorcery. Those born to this power are vigorously purified and indoctrinated in the Temple to cleanse their spirits of the taint of the arcane. Having devoted themselves utterly to the True Law, these warcasters lead armies in Menoth's name and give over their entire lives to his service.

Only Menite humans can be Protectorate Warcasters. This option can only be taken at character creation. A character starting the game as a Protectorate Warcaster must choose Allegiant of the Order of the Fist (p. 356), Cutthroat, Duelist, Exemplar (p. 357), Field Mechanik, Paladin of the Order of the Wall (p. 358), Priest (Menite), Reclaimer (p. 359), or Scrutator (p. 360) for his second career. A character cannot have both the Protectorate Warcaster and standard Warcaster careers.

A character taking this option:

- Begins with Connections (Protectorate military).
- Begins with Ashen Veil and Immolation instead of the starting Warcaster spells listed in *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*. If the character gains Immolation from both of his starting careers, select one additional Cost 2 spell from either of the character's spell lists.
- Uses the spell list below instead of the Warcaster spell list in *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*.

COST 1	Flames of Wrath, Guided Blade, Stone Stance
COST 2	Ashen Veil (p. 363), Blaze of Glory (p. 363), Convection, Hallowed Avenger (p. 363), Hand of Fate, Howling Flames, Immolation, Perdition (p. 363), Righteous Flames, Shield of Faith, Synergy (p. 363), Wall of Fire
COST 3	Awareness, Cleansing Fire, Crevasse, Crusader's Call, Eliminator, Hex Blast, Hex Hammer (p. 363), Iron Aggression, Rift
COST 4	Ashes to Ashes, Blazing Effigy, Force Hammer

ALLEGIANT OF THE ORDER OF THE FIST

PREREQUISITES: HUMAN (MENITE), STARTING CAREER

STARTING ABILITIES, CONNECTIONS, AND SKILLS	Special: A character starting with the Allegiant of the Order of the Fist career must choose Cutthroat, Investigator, Priest (Menoth), Ranger, Scrutator (p. 360), Spy, or Warcaster for his other career. Abilities: Flesh of Steel (p. 361), Hardened Strike (p. 361), Shifting Sands Stance (p. 362) Connections: Connections (Order of the Fist) Military Skills: Unarmed Combat 1 Occupational Skills: Detection 1, Jump 1, and Sneak 1
STARTING ASSETS	None

ALLEGIANT ABILITIES	Acrobatics, Chain Attack: Body Slam (p. 361), Circular Vision (p. 361), Fist of God (p. 361), Fleet Foot, Flesh of Steel (p. 361), Flying Fists (p. 361), Hardened Strike (p. 361), Iron Will, Precision Strike, Reed in the Wind (p. 362), Serpent Strike (p. 362), Shifting Sands Stance (p. 362), Steady, Trip (p. 362), Waylay, Whirlwind (p. 362)
ALLEGIANT CONNECTIONS	Connections (Order of the Fist)
ALLEGIANT MILITARY SKILLS	Hand Weapon 3, Unarmed Combat 4
ALLEGIANT OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS	General Skills 4, Interrogation 3, Law 3, Sneak 4, Survival 4

No warrior looks more unassuming at rest or is more devastating in motion than an allegiant of the Order of the Fist. An allegiant fuses his faith with unwavering discipline and absolute self-control. Disdaining weapons and wearing little armor, these expert pugilists effortlessly evade rifle fire, deflect enemy blades, and counterattack with rapid kicks and punches.

The order was founded by Garrick Voyle a decade before he seized rule of the Protectorate. Voyle deciphered the lost secrets of the ancient priest-kings and their guardians and melded them with the martial skills of the Idrian people to create techniques that unite a mortal body with the eternal will of Menoth. Allegiants study the strength of stone and the fluidity of sand until the application of deadly force becomes as natural to them as breathing.

Playing an Allegiant of the Order of the Fist: An Allegiant of the Order of the Fist is a rare character in the Iron Kingdoms, a hardened combatant who does not rely on any weaponry but his own fists. Abilities like Flesh of Steel and Shifting Sands Stance allow the character to forego all but the lightest armor yet still be capable of mixing it up in close combat. This career works well with other purely combat-oriented careers, granting the character access to a wide variety of fighting skills. It can also be used to make a very effective Investigator or Spy, who need not worry about carrying weapons when working undercover or in disguise.

Allegiants of the Order of the Fist can be found among every archetype but typically lean toward Mighty or Skilled. Mighty Allegiants with Flying Fists can make an additional attack each round to take advantage of Mighty characters' renowned damage output, and Skilled Allegiants can become virtually untouchable thanks to Shifting Sands Stance.

An experienced Allegiant has the potential to move with great ease across even a cluttered battlefield. Reed in the Wind allows the character to ignore free strikes, a powerful ability when coupled with Chain Attack: Body Slam or Whirlwind.

EXEMPLAR

PREREQUISITES: HUMAN (MENITE), STARTING CAREER

STARTING ABILITIES AND SKILLS	Special: A character starting with the Exemplar career must choose Horseman (p. 179), Man-at-Arms, Military Officer, Ranger, Soldier, or Warcaster for his other career. Abilities: Aegis (p. 361) Connections: Connections (Exemplar Order) Military Skills: Great Weapon 1 and Hand Weapon 1 Occupational Skills: Command 1 and Lore (Menite faith) Special: A character who chooses Exemplar as one of his two starting careers gains the Righteous Anger Mighty archetype benefit.
STARTING ASSETS	Exemplar plate (p. 364) and one weapon: blazing sword (p. 365), consecrated halberd (p. 365), or relic blade (p. 366)

EXEMPLAR ABILITIES	Aegis (p. 361), Chain Attack: Smite (p. 361), Divine Fortitude (p. 361), Imperishable Conviction (p. 361), Iron Will, Load Bearing, Precision Strike, Relentless Advance, Restoration (p. 362), Sanguine Bond (p. 362), Two-Weapon Fighting
EXEMPLAR CONNECTIONS	Connections (Exemplar Order)
EXEMPLAR MILITARY SKILLS	Crossbow 3, Great Weapon 4, Hand Weapon 4, Lance 4, Shield 3, Unarmed Combat 3
EXEMPLAR OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS	Command 4, General Skills 4, Medicine 2, Navigation 2, Survival 2

The Exemplars are the elite armored warriors of the Menite faith. They live by a strict code of absolute obedience to the priests of the Menite Temple, particularly the scrutator caste, and follow every order without question or hesitation. Exemplars are fanatics who fight with a faith that borders on the inhuman. Able to withstand punishment that would cripple lesser men, these formidable knights are made nearly unstoppable by the divine gifts they receive from the Creator.

Armed with sacred relic blades forged for this purpose and encased in blessed and warded armor, the Exemplars serve as the arm of the scrutators' edicts, enforcing Temple law throughout the Protectorate and at the vanguard of the Sul-Menite Crusades. Unsheathing an Exemplar's blade in war is an act of prayer and a promise to the Creator that the blood of the faithless will be shed in his name.

Playing an Exemplar: As the epitome of a dedicated knight of the Protectorate, Exemplar is an excellent choice of career for a player who wishes to portray a ruthless and powerful melee combatant with some supernatural capabilities. An Exemplar's second career can open up even more options for the character. An Exemplar/Man-at-Arms is capable of enduring staggering damage in combat, an Exemplar/Horseman can take the Venger option described above (p. 355), and an Exemplar/Ranger can become an Errant (p. 355).

In addition to their access to formidable combat abilities, the Exemplar career variants each come with an impressive array of equipment including magical weapons, a very rare and powerful boon. The basic Exemplar career can also be a great way for a Gifted, Intellectual, or Skilled character to get a taste of the Mighty Archetype with the impressive Righteous Anger archetype bonus.

As an Exemplar gains experience points and advances, a number of powerful options become available to him. A player wishing to play a nigh-invulnerable warrior of the Menite faith might wish to pick up the Divine Fortitude ability so that his character can don Bastion armor. To further increase a character's ability to shrug off even the heaviest blows, look into abilities like Imperishable Conviction and Restoration. If you see your character as a harbinger of death, pick up the Two-Weapon Fighting and Chain Attack: Smite abilities.

PALADIN OF THE ORDER OF THE WALL

PREREQUISITES: HUMAN (MENITE), STARTING CAREER

STARTING ABILITIES AND SKILLS	Special: A character starting with the Paladin of the Order of the Wall career must choose Aristocrat, Horseman (p. 179), Investigator, Man-at-Arms, Military Officer, Priest (Menite), Ranger, Soldier, or Warcaster for his other career. Abilities: Specialization (Firebrand) (p. 365) and Stone-and-Mortar Stance (p. 362) Connections: Connections (Order of the Wall) Military Skills: Great Weapon 1 and Shield 1 Occupational Skills: Command 1, Etiquette 1, and Lore (Menite faith) 1
STARTING ASSETS	Firebrand (p. 365), full plate, and shield

PALADIN ABILITIES	Fearless (p. 181), Iron Will, Load Bearing, Impervious Wall Stance (p. 361), Natural Leader, Precision Strike, Retaliatory Strike, Specialization (Firebrand), Stone-and-Mortar Stance (p. 362)
PALADIN CONNECTIONS	Connections (Order of the Wall)
PALADIN MILITARY SKILLS	Great Weapon 4, Hand Weapon 4, Shield 4, Unarmed Combat 3
PALADIN OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS	Command 4, Etiquette 2, General Skills 4

The Order of the Wall is an ancient Menite order that prioritizes the protection of the faithful over obedience to the clergy. Unlike the Exemplars, who are bound to serve the will of the scrutators, the paladins of the Order of the Wall are guided by their own consciences and faith. Although their independence often puts them at odds with the fanatical theocracy of the Protectorate, the paladins are viewed as the true heroes of the people. No other Menite order is as warmly welcomed outside the Protectorate as within.

The paladins hone their bodies into unbreakable living weapons. Few combatants can move, let alone fell, a paladin of the Order of the Wall once he is prepared behind his shield. Each paladin stands armed with a Firebrand, a sacred Menite sword that burns with the power of the Creator. Most of these weapons have been passed down through the order for generations.

Playing a Paladin of the Order of the Wall: Paladins of the Order of the Wall are built to take damage and win fights by outlasting their opponents. Clad in heavy armor, the paladin is made all the more invulnerable through the use of the Stone-and-Mortar Stance. Although a Paladin is an excellent melee fighter when paired with another combat-oriented career, he can also be a very strong party leader through combination with the Military Officer career and the Intellectual archetype.

Though Paladins of the Order of the Wall lean toward melee combat, nothing stops them from developing ranged prowess. When armed with a cannon shield, for example, a Paladin can be a bastion of defense while still providing a viable threat before enemies close to melee range.

As a Paladin develops, the addition of Retaliatory Strike gives him some much-needed offensive power that greatly offsets the requirements of using his stances. A Veteran-level Paladin will most likely want to pick up Impervious Wall Stance to make him that much more resistant to harm.

RECLAIMER

PREREQUISITES: HUMAN (MENITE), STARTING CAREER

STARTING ABILITIES AND SKILLS	Special: A character starting with the Reclaimer career must choose Arcanist, Field Mechanik, Investigator, Priest (Menite), Soldier, or Warcaster for his other career. Abilities: Oath of Silence (p. 362), Reclaim (p. 362), Signal Language, Whispers of the Creator (p. 362) Connections: Connections (Reclaimant Order) Military Skills: Great Weapon 1 Occupational Skills: Cryptography 1, Lore (Menite faith) 1, and Lore (Urcaen) 1
STARTING ASSETS	Reclaimant's mask, ten grave markers, and a Reclaimant torch (p. 366)

RECLAIMER ABILITIES	Communion (p. 361), Fearless (p. 181), Gatekeeper (p. 361), Immunity: Fire, Oath of Silence (p. 362), Reclaim (p. 362), Signal Language, Soulstorm (p. 362), Urcaen's Gate (p. 362), Whispers of the Creator (p. 362)
RECLAIMER CONNECTIONS	Connections (Reclaimant Order)
RECLAIMER MILITARY SKILLS	Great Weapon 3, Hand Weapon 3
RECLAIMER OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS	Cryptography 3, General Skills 4

The Reclaimant Order speeds the passage of Menite souls to the Creator in the City of Man. The priests of this order are charged with conducting funeral rights as well as acting as living conduits to usher souls to Urcaen. After hearing the voice of Menoth calling him to serve, each of these priests takes an Oath of Silence, the words of the Oath of the Reclaimer's Last Breath being the last words he will ever speak. He knows neither pain nor emotion, and he is driven only by the will to serve.

The Reclaimer is not merely a vessel for the divine but also an instrument of the Creator's will. The War of Souls rages on, and Menoth constantly requires fresh souls to fill the ranks of his armies in Urcaen. Hearing the voice of the Creator, the Reclaimer is often called to dispatch the living on wings of flame and ash according to Menoth's sacred plan.

Playing a Reclaimer: Playing a Reclaimer is not for everyone. Reclaimers are silent, ominous presences who follow the dictates of a wrathful god. They are soul collectors who possess many powers that activate only when their allies are perishing around them. This combination often amounts to a character concept more suitable for NPCs under the Game Master's control than a player character. Still, some players will want to take on the grim work of the Reclaimer.

Reclaimers also have the singular distinction of being the one career that regularly receives orders directly from Menoth. If you decide to play a Reclaimer, embrace the idea of carrying out directives whose purpose you can never hope to understand. And though there are no hard and fast penalties for not doing what the Creator tells you, if you ignore Menoth long enough the Game Master will invariably find a way to visit a final reckoning upon you.

Working closely with your Game Master to play a Reclaimer can be a rewarding give-and-take. Since the strength of this career is in its ability to collect souls, Game Masters should allow Reclaimers to enact last rites (whether natural or hastened) while in regions with Menite populations. Recognize your soul tokens for the treasure they are—not everyone worships Menoth! Once you accumulate a soul token you retain it until it is spent, so hoard them until you need them.

SCRUTATOR

PREREQUISITES: HUMAN (MENITE), GIFTED, STARTING CAREER

STARTING ABILITIES AND SKILLS	Special: A character starting with the Scrutator career must choose Allegiant of the Order of the Fist (p. 356), Investigator, Military Officer, Priest (Menite), or Warcaster for his other career. Abilities: Authority (p. 361), Torture (p. 362) Connections: Connections (Temple of Menoth) Military Skills: Great Weapon 1 and Hand Weapon 1 Occupational Skills: Detection 1, Interrogation 1, Intimidation 1, Law 1, and Lore (Menite Faith) 1 Spells: Chasten (p. 363) and Influence
COST 1	**Influence, Light in the Darkness, Protection from Fire, Short Out**
COST 2	**Banishing Ward, Chasten (p. 363), Cloak of Fear (p. 363), Devil's Tongue (p. 363), Eyes of Truth, Holy Ward (p. 363), Immolation, Righteous Flames, Vision**
COST 3	**Cleansing Fire, Crevasse, Eye of Menoth (p. 363), Hex Blast, Hex Hammer (p. 363), Protector's Mark (p. 363), Purification**
COST 4	**Ashes to Ashes, Mindlock (p. 363), Overmind**
STARTING ASSETS	100 gc, Scrutator's masked helm, and a wrack (p. 368)

SCRUTATOR ABILITIES	Authority (p. 361), Battle Plan: Call to Action, Dominating Presence (p. 361), Iron Will, Language, Natural Leader, Rallying Cry, Torture (p. 362)
SCRUTATOR CONNECTIONS	Connections (Temple of Menoth)
SCRUTATOR MILITARY SKILLS	Great Weapon 3, Hand Weapon 3
SCRUTATOR OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS	Command 4, General Skills 4, Interrogation 4, Law 4, Medicine 2, Negotiation 4, Oratory 4

The scrutators are a caste of the Sul-Menite priesthood fanatically devoted to the preservation of the Temple and the continuation of the theocracy. It is their role to do whatever must be done to protect and preserve the faith. The scrutators bear the ultimate authority to enforce the True Law on all citizens, including the clergy. Nothing is more important than this sacred purpose, and scrutators sacrifice their humanity to the requirements of their office. Emotions such as compassion, mercy, and forgiveness must be excised to harden the scrutator's will.

Scrutators often serve at the highest echelons of the Protectorate's theocracy. They are masters of governance, information, and intrigue. They are trained to root out treachery and heresy in any form, to strip their enemies of secrets, and to find any lingering corruption even at the heart of the Temple. Forever apart from their people, the scrutators conduct their sacred work from behind masks they remove only when they are alone. Among Menite citizens a regular priest might be loved or adored as a teacher of Menoth's glory, but scrutators are universally feared.

Playing a Scrutator: In addition to being a powerful spellcaster, the Scrutator excels at manipulation and intelligence-gathering. These abilities pair well with those of the Investigator career to create fearsome judges of the human soul. Alternatively, combine Scrutator with a second arcane career to create a versatile arcanist with an enhanced array of support spells or the ability to control warjacks in battle.

Unlike some Gifted characters, the Scrutator has numerous spells available to him that enable him to counter the abilities of other spellcasters. Even a starting Scrutator can dispel an enemy upkeep spell with Chasten, and his anti-magic capabilities have plenty of room for growth.

As the Scrutator gains experience points, a number of potent abilities can augment his potential. A Scrutator taking on a leadership role might consider Battle Plan: Call to Action, Natural Leader, or Rallying Cry. A Veteran-level Scrutator should pick up the Dominating Presence ability to ensure no character will be able to resist his will.

NEW ABILITIES

AEGIS

Prerequisite: None

This character is immune to continuous effects.

AUTHORITY

Prerequisite: None

Scrutators are uniquely dreaded and feared even by those of the Menite faith. Traditionally these dark priests exist outside the hierarchy of the Menite Temple, and within the Protectorate their word is law. A character with this ability gains +2 on social skill rolls when dealing with other Menites.

CHAIN ATTACK: BODY SLAM

Prerequisite: Flying Fists, Unarmed Combat 3

If this character hits the same living target with both his initial punch unarmed melee attacks, after resolving the attacks he can immediately make one additional unarmed melee attack against his target. If the additional attack hits, the target is slammed directly away from this character. A character who attempts to slams another character with a larger-sized base suffers –2 to this attack roll. The POW of the slam damage roll and any collateral damage resulting from it is equal to the STR of the attacking character.

CHAIN ATTACK: SMITE

Prerequisite: Two-Weapon Fighting, Hand Weapon 3

If this character fights with two magical melee hand weapons and hits the same target with both his initial attacks, after resolving the attacks he can immediately make one additional melee attack against his target. If the additional attack hits, the target is slammed directly away from this character. A character who attempts to slams another character with a larger-sized base suffers –2 to this attack roll. The POW of the slam damage roll is equal to the STR of this character + the POW of the weapon used to make the chain attack. The POW of collateral damage is equal to the STR of this character.

CIRCULAR VISION

Prerequisite: PER 5

This character's front arc extends to 360°.

COMMUNION

Prerequisite: Reclaim

Once during each of his turns, this character can use a quick action to spend up to three soul tokens to give soul tokens to a friendly steamjack within 5″ of him. For each soul token spent, give the steamjack one soul token. The steamjack can spend these soul tokens as if they were focus points and the steamjack were controlled by a focuser.

DIVINE FORTITUDE

Prerequisite: Willpower 10

The character can wear Bastion plate armor.

DOMINATING PRESENCE

Prerequisite: Intimidation 3

The character can reroll failed Social rolls. Each failed roll can be rerolled only once as a result of Dominating Presence.

FIST OF GOD

Prerequisite: Willpower 11

The character's unarmed melee combat attacks are magical. Additionally, the character gains an additional die on unarmed melee attack damage rolls against structures.

FLESH OF STEEL

Prerequisite: None

While unarmored, double this character's PHY when determining his ARM. This ability has no effect while this character is wearing armor.

FLYING FISTS

Prerequisite: Unarmed Combat 2

While fighting unarmed or with a weapon in only one hand, this character gains an additional punch unarmed melee attack with his other hand.

GATEKEEPER

Prerequisite: Reclaim

Enemy characters cannot gain soul tokens from characters destroyed in this character's command range.

HARDENED STRIKE

Prerequisite: Unarmed Combat 1

The character's kick and punch unarmed melee attack damage rolls are automatically boosted. At Veteran-level, the character gains an additional die on kick and punch unarmed melee attack damage rolls instead of automatically boosting them.

IMPERISHABLE CONVICTION

Prerequisite: Willpower 10

When another friendly character of this character's faith suffers damage from an enemy attack while in this character's command range, this character regains 1 vitality point. Imperishable Conviction has no effect while this character is incapacitated.

IMPERVIOUS WALL STANCE

Prerequisite: Stone and Mortar Stance, Willpower 13

During his turn, this character can forfeit his movement to use Impervious Wall Stance. The character gains gain +5 ARM, cannot be pushed or knocked down, and is immune to continuous effects. Impervious Wall Stance lasts for one round.

OATH OF SILENCE

Prerequisite: None

This character cannot speak, and his command range is reduced by half. He must generally rely on the Signal Language ability to make himself understood by other characters, including any steamjacks he marshals.

RECLAIM

Prerequisite: None

When a Menite character is destroyed within the Reclaimer's command range, the Reclaimer can immediately erect a grave marker (p. 368) to gain a soul token. This character can have up to five soul tokens at a time and can spend soul tokens to boost attack or damage rolls. If this character has the Will Weaver tradition, he can spend a soul token at any time to remove a fatigue point. If this character is a Focuser, he can spend soul tokens as focus points.

REED IN THE WIND

Prerequisite: None

This character cannot be targeted by free strikes.

RELENTLESS ADVANCE

Prerequisite: Willpower 10

When another friendly character of this character's faith suffers damage from an enemy attack while in this character's command range, this character gains +2 SPD for one round.

RESTORATION

Prerequisite: Imperishable Conviction and Willpower 12

When a friendly character of this character's faith is destroyed while in this character's command range while this character is incapacitated, this character is immediately stabilized, regains 1 vitality point, and is no longer incapacitated.

SANGUINE BOND

Prerequisite: None

When a friendly character of this character's faith suffers damage while in this character's command range, this character can choose to suffer any amount of that damage instead. If this character suffers all the damage the other character suffered, the other character is no longer considered to have been damaged.

SERPENT STRIKE

Prerequisite: Unarmed Combat 2

The character's kick unarmed melee attacks gain Reach.

SHIFTING SANDS STANCE

Prerequisite: None

During his turn, this character can forfeit his movement to use Shifting Sands Stance. This character gains +2 DEF. If an enemy attack misses this character while this character is affected by Shifting Sands Stance and not advancing, after the attack is resolved this character can immediately advance up to 3″. Shifting Sands Stance lasts for one round.

SOULSTORM

Prerequisite: Reclaim

While this character has one or more soul tokens, enemy characters not of the Menite faith entering or ending their turns within 2″ of him immediately suffer d3 damage points.

STONE-AND-MORTAR STANCE

Prerequisite: None

During his turn, this character can forfeit his movement to use Stone-and-Mortar Stance. The character gains +3 ARM and cannot be knocked down. Stone-and-Mortar Stance lasts for one round.

TORTURE

Prerequisite: None

This character can torture a helpless subject within his power. For every two hours he spends torturing a subject, the subject loses 1 PHY. If the subject is reduced to 0 PHY, he dies. The subject regains +1 PHY for each complete day he is not tortured. Subjects reduced to 1 PHY will say anything they believe the torturer wants to hear to end the torture. Torture is especially effective at attaining confessions, regardless of actual guilt. Skillful interrogators combine a variety of methods to arrive at the truth.

TRIP

Prerequisite: None

When resolving a kick unarmed melee attack, on a critical hit the target is knocked down.

URCAEN'S GATE

Prerequisite: Willpower 13

Once per turn during this character's Control Phase, he can spend one soul token to be placed anywhere completely within 3″ of his current location.

WHISPERS OF THE CREATOR

Prerequisite: None

In addition to speeding the flight of Menite souls from Caen to the City of Man, Reclaimers are also sometimes directly charged by the Creator to deliver the souls of the living. When called upon to execute such a duty, the Reclaimer hears the voice of Menoth ordering him to slay a living person within his field of vision. This individual will always be of special interest to the Creator and generally be of the Menite faith. Occasionally the Reclaimer might receive other visions and direction from the Creator, such as to travel to a specific place or to destroy an enemy of the faith. The Game Master determines when the Creator calls upon the Reclaimer to execute this solemn duty.

WHIRLWIND

Prerequisite: Flying Fists, Unarmed Combat 3

The character has nearly perfected unarmed combat and can lash out with a flurry of powerful blows in the blink of an eye. When the character makes his first unarmed melee attack during his turn each round, he can perform a thresher attack instead of making a normal attack. A character making a thresher attack makes one unarmed melee attack against each character in his LOS and in his melee range.

NEW SPELLS

	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
ASHEN VEIL	2	6	—	—	YES	NO

Target friendly character gains concealment. Living enemies suffer –2 to attack rolls while within 2″ of an affected character.

	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
BLAZE OF GLORY	2	SELF	CTRL	—	YES	NO

While in the spellcaster's control area, the weapons of characters in his battlegroup become magical weapons.

	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
CHASTEN	2	8	—	12	NO	YES

Enemy upkeep spells and animi on a character damaged by Chasten expire.

	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
CLOAK OF FEAR	2	SELF	—	—	YES	NO

The spellcaster gains Terror [Willpower +2].

	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
DEVIL'S TONGUE	2	SELF	—	—	YES	NO

The spellcaster gains boosted Deception rolls.

	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
EYE OF MENOTH	3	SELF	CTRL	—	YES	NO

While in the spellcaster's control area, friendly Menite characters and steamjacks controlled by friendly Menite characters gain +1 to attack and damage rolls.

	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
HALLOWED AVENGER	2	6	—	—	YES	NO

When an enemy attack incapacitates or destroys one or more friendly characters within 5″ of target steamjack in the spellcaster's battlegroup, after the attack is resolved the affected steamjack can charge an enemy character. Hallowed Avenger then expires.

	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
HEX HAMMER	3	SELF	CTRL	—	YES	NO

When an enemy character casts a spell or uses an animus while in the spellcaster's control area, after the spell or animus has been cast or used the enemy character suffers d3 damage points.

	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
HOLY WARD	2	6	—	—	YES	NO

Target friendly character gains +2 DEF and cannot be targeted by enemy spells or animi.

	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
MINDLOCK	4	8	—	—	YES	YES

Each time a character affected by this spell attempts to cast a spell, he must make a contested Willpower roll against the spellcaster. If the affected character wins, he can cast his spell normally. If the spellcaster wins, the affected character cannot cast the spell and loses the quick action he would have used to cast the spell.

	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
PERDITION	2	10	—	10	NO	YES

When Perdition damages an enemy, immediately after the attack is resolved one steamjack in the spellcaster's battlegroup that is currently in his control area can make a full advance toward the nearest enemy. A steamjack can advance as a result of Perdition only once per turn.

	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
PROTECTOR'S MARK	3	8	—	—	YES	YES

When the spellcaster is directly hit by an enemy attack, if the character affected by this spell is within 3″ of him, the spellcaster can cause the affected character to be directly hit instead. That character is automatically hit and suffers all damage and effects from the attack, then this spell expires.

	COST	RNG	AOE	POW	UP	OFF
SYNERGY	2	10	—	10	NO	YES

While in the spellcaster's control area, characters in the spellcaster's battlegroup gain a +1 cumulative bonus to melee attack and melee damage rolls for each other character in the battlegroup that hit an enemy character with a melee attack this turn while in the spellcaster's control area.

ADVENTURING COMPANIES

CRUSADERS

The characters are members of a Menite crusade fighting the faithless outside the Protectorate of Menoth. They could be part of the Northern Crusade fighting alongside the Resistance in Llael or covert warriors striking targets within Cygnar, Khador, or Ord. The characters receive their orders from a ranking priest or Exemplar and could be tasked with all manner of missions abroad.

Requirements: Each member of the company must be a human Menite and must have at least one of the following careers: Allegiant of the Order of the Fist (p. 356), Cutthroat (Daughter of the Flame), Exemplar (p. 357), Man-at-Arms (Temple Flameguard), Paladin of the Order of the Wall (p. 358), Priest (Menite), Protectorate Warcaster (p. 355), Reclaimer (p. 359), Scrutator (p. 360), Soldier (Deliverer or Flameguard Cleanser), or Vassal of Menoth (p. 354). The group must include at least one Priest, Protectorate Warcaster, or Scrutator character. The players in the group should designate one Priest, Protectorate Warcaster, or Scrutator to lead the party.

Benefits: The characters in the company receive regular assignments and information of military significance along with the equipment necessary to carry out the mission. Additionally, each character in the group gains one melee or ranged weapon from the "Protectorate Gear" section below.

The company leader gains the Natural Leader ability whether or not he meets the prerequisites.

IDRIAN TRIBE

The characters are the members of an Idrian tribe that might (or might not) be allied with the Protectorate of Menoth. In addition to seeing to their own survival, the characters engage in hunting, trading, and raiding across the Bloodstone Marches and beyond. They likely come into regular conflict with invading skorne and farrow as well as migrant trollkin kriels. Even if the characters are not directly associated with the Protectorate, they might trade with that nation or seek its protection on occasion. The characters are nomadic and could even range outside the Protectorate and the Marches.

Requirements: The majority of the characters in the band must be Idrian characters. Others are tagalongs who have joined the tribe for a time. Likely the group includes a number of children or elderly NPC characters that must be cared for.

Each Idrian member of the tribe must have at least one of the following careers: Highwayman, Horseman (p. 179), Priest (Menite), Ranger, Rifleman, or Sorcerer.

Benefits: The players should choose a chieftain from among the Idrian characters. The chieftain is the nominal leader of the band, though all Idrian characters in the group have a voice and a vote in tribal discussions.

Characters in the company gain the Expert Rider ability even if they do not qualify for it and begin with a riding horse.

Bastion Heavy Plate

PROTECTORATE GEAR

ARMOR

BASTION HEAVY PLATE

Cost: 400 gc
SPD Modifier: –3
DEF Modifier: –4
ARM Modifier: +10

Description: Bastion plate is among the heaviest armor ever devised. It is nothing short of a miracle that Menoth's holy warriors can bear the weight of such armor, let alone fight in it. In battle the holy writs inscribed upon the armor's steel flare to life, fueled by the incredible faith of the knight within it.

Special Rules: Only characters with the Divine Fortitude ability can wear Bastion heavy plate.

CLEANSER ARMOR

Cost: 150 gc
SPD Modifier: –1
DEF Modifier: –3
ARM Modifier: +8

Description: This is the distinctive armor of the dreaded Flameguard Cleansers. The armor is made of layers of encompassing plate over heavy fire-retardant cloth.

Special Rules: A character wearing Flameguard Cleanser armor gains an additional +3 ARM against fire damage and never suffers the Fire continuous effect.

EXEMPLAR PLATE

Cost: 175 gc
SPD Modifier: –2
DEF Modifier: –3
ARM Modifier: +9

Description: This is the standard plate armor worn by the Protectorate's Exemplar knights. It is made up of heavy layers of plate, padding, leather, and studs.

Special Rules: None.

TEMPLE FLAMEGUARD ARMOR

Cost: 40 gc
SPD Modifier: 0
DEF Modifier: –1
ARM Modifier: +5

Description: Though this armor could be mistaken as more ceremonial than functional, considering its exposed arms and flowing tabard, Temple Flameguard armor has served the guardians of Menite holy sites for centuries. Intended to be used with a shield, the armor focuses on protecting the head and torso of the Flameguard while leaving his legs and forearms exposed.

Special Rules: None.

VASSAL ARMOR

Cost: 90 gc
SPD Modifier: 0
DEF Modifier: –2
ARM Modifier: +7

Description: This is the ceremonial, yet functional, armor worn by the Vassals of Menoth. The medium armor is made up of heavy metal plates, large shoulder pads, and an iron mask. Harkening back to the days when the Vassals were a wholly captive order, the armor integrates chains and shackles and the vassal wearing the armor is literally locked with in. However, the chains have come to signify the faithful arcanists purifying devotion to the Creator rather than being a physical constraint.

Special Rules: None.

MELEE WEAPONS

BLAZING SWORD

Cost: These weapons are never available for sale.
Skill: Great Weapon
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 5

Description: Most blazing swords were forged in antiquity under the baleful gaze of attending priests and now serve as the weapons of the Exemplar Cinerators. Still burning with an unquenchable inner fire, these weapons remain warm to the touch. Those who fall to them are consumed in blasts of flame.

Special Rules: In the hands of a character of the Menite faith, a blazing sword is a magical weapon. When a Menite character armed with a blazing sword incapacitates an enemy with it, the enemy is consumed in a blast of fire and enemy characters within 1″ of the consumed enemy suffer the Fire continuous effect.

A character must have at least STR 5 to use this weapon in one hand.

BLESSED LANCE

Cost: These weapons are never available for sale.
Skill: Lance
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 8

Description: These finely crafted lances are provided only to Exemplar Vengers. Each lance is inscribed with sacred prayers before being purified and blessed by a priest.

Special Rules: The blessed lances has Reach.

A character must have at least STR 5 to use this weapon.

Blessed lances can be used only to make charge attacks and then only while mounted.

When a character of the Menite faith makes an attack with the blessed lance, ignore spell effects that add to the target's ARM or DEF. Additionally, in the hands of a Menite character the blessed lance does full damage against Incorporeal characters.

CONSECRATED HALBERD

Cost: These weapons are never available for sale.
Skill: Great Weapon
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 5

Description: Consecrated halberds are holy weapons wielded by Menoth's holy warriors. These weapons are often found in the hands of the Bastions and the elite Exemplar guards charged to protect the hierarch and the visgoths.

Special Rules: The consecrated halberd has Reach.

In the hands of a character of the Menite faith, a consecrated halberd is a magical weapon.

A character must have at least STR 5 to use this weapon in one hand.

FIREBRAND

Cost: These weapons are never available for sale.
Skill: Great Weapon
Attack Modifier: –2
POW: 7

Description: The Firebrand is an ancient Menite weapon that erupts with holy power while in the hands of the faithful. Intended to be wielded one-handed, this heavy and unwieldy weapon can take a lifetime to master.

Special Rules: In the hands of a character of the Menite faith, the Firebrand is a magical weapon that causes the Fire continuous effect on a critical hit.

A character must have at least STR 5 to use this weapon in one hand.

Firebrand

Flame Spear

Relic Blade

FLAME SPEAR

Cost: 30 gc
Skill: Great Weapon
Attack Modifier: –1
POW: 4 (one-handed), 5 (two-handed)

Description: These seven-foot steel spears are the weapons of the Temple Flameguard. The haft of each spear contains a reservoir of Menoth's Fury designed to superheat the spearhead in combat.

Special Rules: The flame spear has Reach.

While this weapon is fueled and ignited, a character hit by it suffers 1 additional point of fire damage.

The spear's integral reservoir holds roughly 5 gc worth of fuel, which burns for 30 minutes in combat. Refueling the reservoir takes a full action.

RECLAIMANT TORCH

Cost: 30 gc
Skill: Great Weapon
Attack Modifier: –1
POW: 4

Description: This is a long brass-and-steel torch fueled by a tank of Menoth's Fury. The torch ends in a blazing, mace-like head capable of delivering bone-crushing blows. The fuel tank is generally strapped to the wielder's waist. Reclaimers use these weapons in the execution of their duties, such as purifying the bodies of the faithful and striking down those who would defile the souls of Menites.

Special Rules: The reclaimant torch has Reach.

While this weapon is fueled and ignited, a character hit by this weapon suffers 1 additional point of fire damage and the Fire continuous effect.

The tank holds enough fuel for 45 minutes of use. Replacement tanks cost approximately 10 gc, depending on availability. Replacing the fuel tank takes a full action.

RELIC BLADE

Cost: These weapons are never available for sale.
Skill: Great Weapon
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 5

Description: Relic blades are sacred swords entrusted to the Knights Exemplar. Each is inscribed with holy runes and purified by the prayers of Menite priests.

Special Rules: In the hands of a character of the Menite faith, a relic blade is a magical weapon.

RANGED WEAPONS

CROSSBOW, LAWBRINGER

Cost: 45 gc
Ammo: 10
Effective Range: 60 feet (10″)
Extreme Range: 300 feet
Skill: Crossbow
Attack Modifier: –1
POW: 10
AOE: —

Description: The Lawbringer is a crossbow design unique to the Exemplar Errants of the Protectorate of Menoth. Unlike a standard repeating crossbow, the Lawbringer utilizes an integral rotating drum rather than a replaceable magazine to reload the weapon rapidly. As a result, the weapon holds more bolts but is slower to reload. Exemplar Errants usually load their crossbows with blessed bolts (p. 368).

Special Rules: Loading each bolt into the drum takes one full action.

This weapon requires two hands.

It costs 1 gc for ten standard bolts.

FIRE BOMB

Cost: 8 gc
Ammo: —
Effective Range: 30 feet (5″)
Extreme Range: —
Skill: Thrown
Attack Modifier: –2
POW: 12
AOE: 3

Description: Fire bombs are inexpensive incendiary devices produced in large numbers for the Protectorate's zealous militias. The bombs are loaded with Menoth's Fury and detonated by a lit fuse.

Special Rules: Attacking with a fire bomb requires both a quick action and an attack. The quick action is to light the fuse, and the attack is to throw the bomb. If a lit bomb is not thrown, it still explodes at the end of the character's turn.

The fire bomb causes fire damage. On a critical hit, characters in the AOE suffer the Fire continuous effect.

Fire Bomb

PURIFIER

Cost: 75 gc
Ammo: 8
Effective Range: SP 8
Extreme Range: —
Skill: Light Artillery
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 12
AOE: —

Description: The purifier is the sleek and well-made flamethrower utilized by the Flameguard Cleansers. The weapon is fed fuel from a back-mounted tank joined to the purifier by a heavily reinforced hose. The weapon is fitted with a pair of wicked blades that can be used for slashing or thrusting in close combat.

Special Rules: The purifier causes fire damage. A character hit by a purifier attack suffers the Fire continuous effect.

When used as a melee weapon, this weapon has an attack modifier of –1, is POW 3, and uses the Great Weapon skill.

Refueling a purifier requires removing the spent tank and strapping on a replacement tank. Removing or replacing a tank requires a full action.

It costs 25 gc for a fresh tank of flamethrower fuel.

This weapon requires two hands.

Skyhammer

SKYHAMMER

Cost: 30 gc
Ammo: One rocket
Effective Range: 96 feet (16″)
Extreme Range: —
Skill: Light Artillery
Attack Modifier: –4
POW: 12
AOE: 3

Description: A weapon tailor-made for the Protectorate of Menoth's lightly trained but zealous conscripts, the skyhammer is essentially a tube and ignition mechanism for firing explosive self-propelled rockets. The simple weapon is dangerous and wildly inaccurate. Accordingly, the Protectorate's Deliverers use them in groups to fire into masses of enemy soldiers on the battlefield. Saturated bombing can yield results where a single skyhammer would likely miss the mark.

A flint striker mounted over a vent near the capped end ignites the fuse of the skyhammer rocket inside the tube. Once ignited, the rocket is propelled from the tube in the direction of its target.

Risking burns and possibly incineration, soldiers are trained to fire skyhammers held in their arms in order to help aim the unwieldy weapon. Goggles, water-soaked face wraps, and heavy flame-resistant cloth are essential protection when using a skyhammer. Even with these precautions, these unpredictable weapons sometimes explode on ignition while still in their tubes, making prayer another advisable component of their operation.

Special Rules: This weapon requires two hands.

On an attack roll of all 1s, the rocket explodes in the tube, destroying the weapon and likely seriously injuring the character trying to fire it. If a rocket explodes in the tube, center a 3″ AOE on the firing character. The firing character suffers a POW 12 damage roll. Anyone else caught in the blast suffers a POW 6 blast damage roll.

A character firing a skyhammer without the necessary protection (goggles, fire-resistant cloth, and so on) suffers d3 damage points each time he fires the skyhammer.

Loading the weapon requires a quick action.

Skyhammer rockets cost 5 gc each. These rockets are produced inexpensively and in great numbers for the Protectorate's Deliverer martial order, but they are rare outside the theocracy.

TRAPPINGS OF FAITH AND FANATICISM

Many of the weapons and equipment presented in this chapter are holy relics or powerful symbols of faith in the Protectorate. Characters looting or otherwise acquiring this gear put themselves at considerable personal risk if they fail to hide such objects from the eyes of the faithful. Characters who clearly should not be in possession of such items or are found to be masquerading as clergy or other agents of the Temple within in the confines of the Protectorate are likely to be torn apart by mobs of zealots, tortured by scrutators, or cut down by Exemplars. Even escaping the borders of the Protectorate might not provide safety from the reach of the faithful, since the Exemplar Errants have been known to strike deep into foreign countries to reacquire lost relics and to punish those responsible for crimes perpetrated against the theocracy. It is common knowledge among adventurers and merchants that such religious objects are to be avoided at all costs and that it is better to leave them where they lie. Even pious Menites, who might feel obliged to return them to a temple, would face stern questions as to their origins.

GEAR

BLESSED BOLTS

Cost: These bolts are never available for sale.

Description: These finely manufactured crossbow bolts are made of sacred woods and fine steel inscribed with sacred verses. Blessed bolts are typically available only to Exemplar Errants.

When a character of the Menite faith makes an attack using a crossbow loaded with a blessed bolt, ignore spell effects that add to the target's ARM or DEF. Additionally, in the hands of a Menite character blessed bolts do full damage against incorporeal characters.

GRAVE MARKER

Cost: 1 gc

Description: These are plain black rod-iron Menofixes placed by Reclaimers to mark the passing of the faithful. By tradition, a Menite will never willfully move a placed grave marker.

RECLAIMANT'S IRON MASK

Cost: These masks are never available for sale.

Description: These iron half-masks are worn by the members of the Reclaimant Order through their every waking hour. The heavy and uncomfortable masks integrate an air filtration system that protects the wearer from the thick smoke that often accompanies the execution of his office.

It takes a full action to put on or take off a Reclaimant's iron mask.

A character wearing a Reclaimant's iron mask is immune to gas effects.

Replacement filters for an iron mask cost 5 gc and provide enough protection for six full hours of exposure to caustic gasses and other undesirable particles the wearer might breathe.

WRACK

Cost: Wracks are never available for sale.

Description: The scrutators of the Protectorate offer the screams of heretics as a sacrifice to the Creator, and the wrack is one of their favored tools for obtaining this fuel for their holy work. The wrack is a massive Menofix wrought of steel and brass and purified with the prayers of priests. Wracks normally integrate incense censors that burn with scents sacred to the Creator. The wracks favored by the crusading armies of the Sul-Menites are designed to fold for ease of transport. Those who erect wracks on the battlefield often forgo the traditional iron helmet associated with these devices as an expedient.

Those sentenced to the wrack spend days or weeks hanging from chains and shrouded in a fog of incense. The suffering victims are forced to reflect upon their sins as they cry out in unbearable pain. Even the strongest wills quickly erode. Most victims are wracked as punishment, but some of the faithful seek out this suffering willingly, hoping for absolution from the burden of their heavy souls.

Prior to the release of death, the wracked individual's soul is redeemed whether his contrition is forced or voluntary, and his body glows white-hot under the scrutiny of Menoth's gaze. The Lawgiver's redemption cleanses the penitent, whose soul becomes a radiant source of power for the Protectorate's priests and warcasters. When the sufferer relinquishes his soul, the release of energy is consumed in an eruption of fiery essence—yet another tangible reminder of the righteousness of Menite faith and glory.

Special Rules: The wrack generates power only while a living victim is chained to it. The victim might willingly submit himself to the wrack or be helpless and chained to it against his will. Chaining a character to a wrack takes a full action.

A wracked character cannot move or take any actions, has an effective DEF of 5, and is automatically hit by melee attacks. While chained to the wrack, a character cannot speak and does not suffer hunger, thirst, or lack of sleep in any conventional sense. Even as his world narrows to the pain he suffers, the power of the wrack sustains his life, at least in part.

Each day a character spends chained to the wrack, he must make a Willpower roll against a target number of 20. If he succeeds, nothing happens. If he fails, his Willpower is reduced by 1.

Once at any time during his turn, a Priest (Menite), Scrutator, or Warcaster (Protectorate) character with a living wracked character in his control area can draw power from the wracked character. If the character is a Will Weaver, he can immediately remove 1 fatigue point. If the character is a Focuser, he immediately gains 1 focus point. When drawn upon in this way, the wracked character must make a Willpower roll against a target number of 20. If he succeeds, nothing happens. If he fails, his Willpower is reduced by 1.

If the wracked character is incapacitated or his Willpower is reduced to 0, the character dies and erupts in holy fire. If the character dies for any reason, center a 5″ AOE on him. Characters in the AOE suffer a POW 14 fire damage roll.

A character can be freed from a wrack by another character but cannot escape the wrack by any other means. A character freed from a wrack regains lost Willpower at a rate of 1 point per day.

A wrack can be moved only while folded and not while a character is chained to it. A wrack can be moved by a group of characters or by a single character with STR 7 or greater. While carrying a wrack, a character suffers –2 DEF. Setting up a folded wrack takes a full action.

PROTECTORATE STEAMJACKS

The earliest Protectorate warjacks were either modifications of chassis used by other nations or were laborjacks outfitted for battle. Some of these original chassis are still in use, having been maintained and rebuilt over the decades, although they rarely resemble their original forms. Over the last three decades, the Protectorate has greatly increased its steamjack production output, and its machines have become more clearly intended for war. The Protectorate now boasts several chassis of its own creation that emphasize the design philosophies of the Sul-Menite Artificers.

The Artificers have developed warjacks that maintain a good compromise between armament and mobility, often more heavily armored than Cygnaran warjacks but less bulky than their Khadoran counterparts.

Since the Menite Temple considers mechanika at least partially tainted and unclean, all Protectorate steamjacks are blessed and consecrated by priests during and after their production and include ceremonial elements to augment connection with the divine. The finest Protectorate warjacks are functional works of art, glorifying the Creator even while they stand ready to crush the faithless or light them afire with great gouts of Menoth's Fury.

CHASSIS AND WEAPON SYSTEMS

The armies of the Iron Kingdoms approach their warjacks as integrated weapon systems. Each chassis has a host of weapons developed specifically for it, most designed for use only in specific configurations. Mounting these weapons on a chassis they were not designed to work with can be expensive and labor-intensive.

RULES

The following attributes define each steamjack chassis in the game.

Cost: This is the cost of the cost of the chassis in Cygnaran gold crowns.

Description: This is a description of the chassis.

Height/Weight: These are the chassis' technical specs.

Fuel Load/Burn Usage: This describes the chassis' standard fuel load and burn rate.

Initial Service Date: This is the date the chassis first entered service.

Original Chassis Design: This is the original manufacturer or designer of the chassis.

Stock Cortex: This is the cortex that comes stock with the steamjack chassis. The cost of this cortex is included in the cost of the chassis. It is assumed that the cortex has been wiped and has no lingering personality at the time of purchase. The cortex can be replaced, but the original personality of the steamjack will be lost as a result. For cortex descriptions, see *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*.

Stats: These are the chassis' stats. The steamjack's INT and PER are determined by its cortex. The stats listed below assume a stock cortex.

Special Rules: These are the special rules that apply to the chassis.

Damage Grid: This is the chassis' damage grid.

DEVOUT CHASSIS AND WEAPONS SYSTEMS

DEVOUT LIGHT WARJACK CHASSIS

Cost: 8,000 gc (with stock cortex), 5,500 gc (chassis only)

Description: The Devout was designed to be the ultimate bodyguard for high-ranking priests and warcasters of the Protectorate. It was developed with fast reactions and durability in mind. Its variant, the Dervish, utilizes the chassis' whip-like reflexes for purely offensive applications.

Height/Weight: 8′7″ / 3.9 tons

Fuel Burn/Load Usage: 387 lbs / 7 hrs general, 75 mins combat

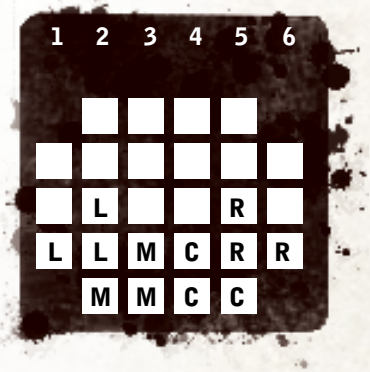
Initial Service Date: 579 AR

Original Chassis Design: Vassals of Menoth

Stock Cortex: Aurum-grade

PHY	**9**
STR	**9**
SPD	**5**
AGL	**6**
PRW	**5**
POI	**3**
INT	**2**
PER	**2**
Initiative	**12**
MAT	**6**
RAT	**4**
DEF	**13**
ARM	**16**

DAMAGE GRID



Special Rules: Initiative is rolled only in the case of an uncontrolled steamjack; otherwise the 'jack activates on its controller's initiative.

Initiative MAT, RAT, DEF, and ARM assume a stock cortex.

DEVOUT WARJACK

The Devout comes stock with a pair of fists. It is armed with a pole axe and great shield. These warjacks also integrate a unique neural agitator system (p. 370) and a defensive reflex array (p. 110) upgrade.

POLE AXE (LIGHT STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 170 gc
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 4

Description: This is a long-hafted steel and brass axe.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the pole axe. While wielding the pole axe, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the pole axe is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

The pole axe has Reach.

GREAT SHIELD (LIGHT STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 2,860 gc
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 1

Rune Points: 4

Description: The Devout's great shield is a mechanikal shield covered in holy script. The mechanikal components of the shield are carefully integrated into the weapon, leaving little sign of their presence. The shield is designed to impart powerful arcane defenses to a warcaster controlling the steamjack armed with the shield. It is powered by an integral arcanodynamic accumulator.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the great shield. While wielding the great shield, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the great shield is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with its weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

A steamjack gains +2 ARM against attacks originating in its front arc.

While B2B with its controlling warcaster during its turn, a steamjack armed with this weapon can spend 1 focus point to use Spell Barrier. When Spell Barrier is used, the warcaster cannot be targeted by enemy spells for one round. This steamjack loses this ability while this weapon system is crippled or locked. If this weapon does not have a functional accumulator, it also loses this ability and gains an attack modifier of –1.

Fabrication: The material cost of the great shield housing is 660 gc. It takes four weeks to construct the device. The pertinent Craft skill for construction is Craft (metal working).

The great shield's runeplates require four weeks to scribe and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 16.

NEURAL AGITATOR (UPGRADE)

Cost: 300 gc

Description: The neural agitator supercharges the steamjack's response time to incoming threats. Connected directly to the steamjack's cortex, the device enables the machine to strike at incredible speeds to take enemies completely off guard.

Special Rules: Once per round, when an enemy character advances into and ends its movement in melee range of a steamjack with a neural agitator, the steamjack can immediately make one normal melee attack targeting that enemy.

This upgrade can be integrated only into the Devout chassis. Integrating this upgrade into a Devout chassis requires the proper tools, six hours of labor, and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 16. If the roll fails, it can be repeated after another hour of labor. Having a neural agitator integrated into a steamjack costs an additional 80 gc.

A Devout chassis can have either a neural agitator or a battle driver but not both.

Dervish

DERVISH WARJACK

The Dervish comes stock with a pair of fists. It is armed with a pair of dervish swords. These warjacks also integrate a unique battle driver system.

DERVISH SWORDS (LIGHT STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 240 gc (pair)
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 4

Description: This is a pair of well-balanced blades designed to be dual-wielded by a light warjack.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up a dervish sword. While wielding the dervish sword, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the dervish sword is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

While neither of its arm systems are crippled, a steamjack that is armed with a pair of dervish swords can make a combo attack with both of its swords simultaneously, using both of the steamjack's initial attacks to make a single devastating strike. Make a melee attack. On a hit, make a damage roll with POW equal to the STR of the steamjack plus twice the POW of this weapon.

BATTLE DRIVER (UPGRADE)

Cost: 400 gc

Description: The battle driver dramatically increases the speed at which signals travel from a steamjack's cortex to its systems in combat while simultaneously synchronizing these signals to exact manipulations of steam pressure throughout the machine, thus giving it sudden bursts of speed. The battle driver pushes the steamjack constantly forward, turning it into a true killing machine on the battlefield.

Special Rules: When a steamjack with a battle driver hits an enemy with an initial attack using a melee weapon, it can advance twelve feet (2″) after the attack is resolved. The steamjack cannot be targeted by free strikes during this movement.

This upgrade can be integrated only into the Devout chassis. Integrating this upgrade into a Devout chassis requires the proper tools, six hours of labor, and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 16. If the roll fails, it can be repeated after another hour of labor. Having a battle driver integrated into a steamjack costs an additional 80 gc.

A Devout chassis can have either a neural agitator or a battle driver, but not both.

REPENTER CHASSIS AND WEAPONS SYSTEMS

REPENTER LIGHT WARJACK CHASSIS

Cost: 7,000 gc (with stock cortex), 4,500 gc (chassis only)

Description: Relatively inexpensive, durable, and versatile, the Repenter has been the Protectorate's mainstay light warjack for generations. Its variants include the Revenger and Vigilant.

Height/Weight: 9′10″ / 4.25 tons

Fuel Burn/Load Usage: 165 lbs / 6 hrs general, 1.5 hrs combat

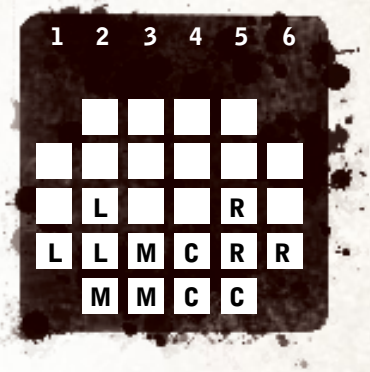
Initial Service Date: 533 AR

Original Chassis Design: Vassals of Menoth

Stock Cortex: Aurum-grade

PHY	**9**
STR	**9**
SPD	**5**
AGL	**5**
PRW	**5**
POI	**4**
INT	**2**
PER	**2**
Initiative	**12**
MAT	**6**
RAT	**5**
DEF	**12**
ARM	**17**

DAMAGE GRID



Special Rules: Initiative is rolled only in the case of an uncontrolled steamjack; otherwise the 'jack activates on its controller's initiative.

Initiative MAT, RAT, DEF, and ARM assume a stock cortex.

REPENTER WARJACK

The Repenter comes stock with a flamethrower mounted on the left arm and a fist for its right. It is armed with a war flail.

WAR FLAIL (LIGHT STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 130 gc
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 4

Description: This is a massive, triple-balled flail of brass and steel.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the war flail. While wielding the war flail, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the war flail is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

Attacks from war flails ignore ARM bonuses from bucklers and shields.

REDEEMER WARJACK

The Redeemer comes stock with a skyhammer mounted on the left arm and a fist for its right. It is armed with a battle mace.

BATTLE MACE (LIGHT STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 120 gc
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 4

Redeemer

Description: This is a heavy, reinforced light steamjack–sized flanged mace.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the battle mace. While wielding the battle mace, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the battle mace is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

SKYHAMMER ROCKET POD (LIGHT STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 350 gc
Type: Ranged
Location: Left Arm
Ammo: 9
Effective Range: 96 feet (16")
Extreme Range: 480 feet
Attack Modifier: -4
POW: 12
AOE: 3

Description: The skyhammer rocket pod is designed to fire large volleys of rockets quickly. Though powerful, skyhammer rockets are notoriously inaccurate, and most volleys wind up spreading their payload across a wide area.

Special Rules: Generally this weapon can be fired only once per round. A bonded steamjack with this weapon can spend a focus point to make up to two additional attacks with this weapon during its turn. A 'jack marshal with the Drive: Ancillary Attack ability can use the drive to allow the steamjack to make attacks in addition to the one it makes during the steamjack's turn each round.

Reloading the skyhammer's internal ammo supply outside of combat takes thirty minutes and can be accomplished by any character with the Mechanikal Engineering skill without a die roll.

Skyhammer rockets cost 5 gc each and are generally only available in the Protectorate of Menoth.

Mounting this weapon on a steamjack chassis requires the mechanik to remove the steamjack's old arm and replace it with the skyhammer rocket pod (see "Removing or Replacing Arms" in *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*). Mounting a skyhammer on a light steamjack chassis other than a Repenter chassis takes double the normal amount of time and increases the target number to 16. A character who wishes to have a skyhammer integrated into a light steamjack chassis other than a Repenter must pay double the normal rate.

Replacing a Repenter arm system with a skyhammer costs an additional 60 gc unless the character does the job himself. Having an arm system replaced with a skyhammer on a chassis other than a Repenter chassis costs an additional 100 gc.

REVENGER WARJACK

The Revenger comes stock with a pair of fists and an arc node. It is armed with a halberd (equivalent to a war spear, p. 101) and a repulsor shield.

Vigilant

REPULSOR SHIELD

Cost: 2,320 gc
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 1
Rune Points: 2

Description: The repulsor shield is a mechanikal shield designed to generate a powerful kinetic force to push back attackers who seek to cause damage to the steamjack. It is powered by an integral alchemical capacitor.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the repulsor shield. While wielding the repulsor shield, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the repulsor shield is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with its weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

A steamjack gains +2 ARM against attacks originating in its front arc.

While the repulsor shield has power, any character hit by the shield is pushed six feet (1″) directly away from the character wielding it. While the shield has power, when the character wielding it is hit with a melee attack made by a character in his front arc, after the attack is resolved the attacking character is pushed six feet (1″) directly away from this character. If this weapon does not have a functional accumulator, it loses this ability and gains an attack modifier of –1.

Fabrication: The material cost of the repulsor shield housing is 600 gc. It takes three weeks to construct the device. The pertinent Craft skill for construction is Craft (metal working).

The repulsor shield's runeplates require two weeks to scribe and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 14.

VIGILANT WARJACK

The Vigilant comes stock with a pair of shield fists.

SHIELD FIST (LIGHT STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 600 gc (pair)
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 2

Description: This is a specially crafted Open Fist that integrates a heavy shield into the arm itself, giving the steamjack the benefits of both shield and Open Fist.

Special Rules: A shield fist has the Open Fist rule and can be used to make Headlock / Weapon Lock, Push, Throw, and Two-Handed Throw power attacks (*Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*, p. 312). A shield fist cannot be used to pick up other weapons.

A steamjack gains +2 ARM against attacks originating in its front arc for each of its non-crippled shield fists.

Provided neither of its shield fists are crippled, a steamjack with a pair of steam fists gains Girded. (A character with Girded does not suffer blast damage. Friendly characters B2B with it also do not suffer blast damage.)

Mounting this weapon on steamjack chassis requires the mechanik to remove the steamjack's old arm and replace it with the shield fist (see "Removing or Replacing Arms" in *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*). Mounting a shield fist on a light steamjack chassis other than a Repenter chassis takes double the normal amount of time and increases the target number to 16. A character who wishes to have a shield fist integrated into a light steamjack chassis other than a Repenter must pay double the normal rate.

Replacing a Repenter arm system with a shield fist costs an additional 60 gc unless the character does the job himself. Having an arm system replaced with a shield fist on a chassis other than a Repenter chassis costs an additional 100 gc.

CRUSADER CHASSIS AND WEAPONS SYSTEMS

CRUSADER HEAVY WARJACK CHASSIS

Cost: 8,500 gc (with stock cortex), 6,000 gc (chassis only)

Description: The Crusader is one of the original warjacks designed to serve the Protectorate. Created during the early days of the Protectorate, the warjack was designed with two Open Fists to allow it to pass as a simple laborjack. Possessed of an immensely durable frame, the Crusader has been the basis for several Protectorate warjack designs. Its variants include the Guardian, Templar, and Vanquisher.

Height/Weight: 12´/ 8 tons

Fuel Burn/Load Usage: 253 lbs / 6 hrs general, 60 mins combat

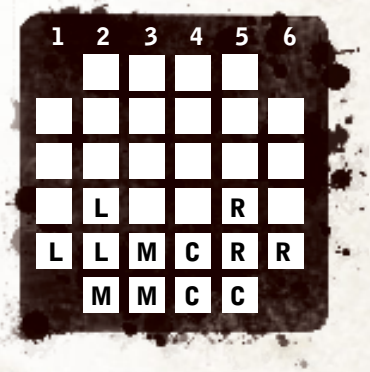
Initial Service Date: 513 AR

Original Chassis Design: Vassals of Menoth

Stock Cortex: Aurum-grade

PHY	**11**
STR	**11**
SPD	**4**
AGL	**4**
PRW	**5**
POI	**4**
INT	**2**
PER	**2**
Initiative	**11**
MAT	**6**
RAT	**5**
DEF	**10**
ARM	**19**

DAMAGE GRID



Special Rules: Initiative is rolled only in the case of an uncontrolled steamjack; otherwise the 'jack activates on its controller's initiative.

Initiative MAT, RAT, DEF, and ARM assume a stock cortex.

CRUSADER WARJACK

The Crusader comes stock with a pair of fists. It is armed with an inferno mace.

INFERNO MACE (HEAVY STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 280 gc
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 6

Description: The inferno mace is a heavy weapon with an integral reservoir of Menoth's Fury. What the weapon does not crush, it sets ablaze.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the inferno mace. While wielding the inferno mace, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the inferno mace is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

While this weapon is fueled and ignited, a character hit by this weapon suffers 1 additional point of fire damage. On a critical hit while this weapon is fueled and ignited, a character hit suffers the Fire continuous effect.

The mace's integral reservoir holds roughly 15 gc of fuel, which burns for 45 minutes in combat. Refueling the reservoir takes five minutes.

GUARDIAN WARJACK

The Guardian comes stock with a pair of fists. It is armed with a flame pike. Guardians integrate an arc node upgrade.

FLAME PIKE (HEAVY STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 400 gc
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 5

Description: The flame pike is a massive iron spear with an integral reservoir of Menoth's Fury designed to superheat the spearhead in combat.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the flame pike. While wielding the flame pike, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the flame pike is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

A steamjack gains +2 to charge attack rolls with this weapon.

On a critical hit, instead of rolling damage normally the steamjack can throw the character hit. Treat the throw as if the steamjack had hit with and passed the STR check of a throw power attack. The thrown character suffers a damage roll with POW equal to the steamjack's STR plus the POW of this weapon. The POW of collateral damage is equal to the steamjack's STR.

While this weapon is fueled and ignited, a character hit by this weapon suffers 1 additional point of fire damage.

The pike's integral reservoir holds roughly 15 gc of fuel, which burns for 45 minutes in combat. Refueling the reservoir takes a full action.

TEMPLAR WARJACK

The Templar comes stock with a pair of fists. It is armed with a templar's flail and shield.

TEMPLAR'S FLAIL (HEAVY STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 450 gc
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 6

Description: This is an incredibly powerful flail made up of a massive head at the end of an eight-foot chain.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the Templar's flail. While wielding the Templar's flail, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the Templar's flail is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

The Templar's flail has Reach.

Attacks from a Templar's flail ignore ARM bonuses from bucklers and shields.

On a hit with this weapon, the steamjack can immediately push its target 1″ directly away. After the target is pushed, the steamjack can advance up to 1″.

VANQUISHER WARJACK

The Vanquisher comes stock with a flame belcher mounted on its left arm and an Open Fist on its right. It is armed with a blazing star.

BLAZING STAR (HEAVY STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 375 gc
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 5

Description: This massive flail is designed to be whirled about in deadly arcs.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the blazing star. While wielding the blazing star, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the blazing star is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

Attacks from a blazing star ignore ARM bonuses from bucklers and shields.

A steamjack armed with a blazing star can perform a thresher attack instead of making its initial melee attacks. A steamjack making a thresher attack makes one melee attack with this weapon against each character in its LOS and this weapon's melee range.

FLAME BELCHER (HEAVY STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 600 gc
Type: Ranged
Location: Arm
Ammo: 5
Effective Range: 60 feet (10″)
Extreme Range: 300 feet
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 14
AOE: 4

Description: The flame belcher is a heavy cannon that fires explosive balls filled with Menoth's Fury. The erupting projectiles cover their targets with blazing oil hot enough to melt steel.

Special Rules: This weapon can be fired only once per round.

The flame belcher causes fire damage. Characters in the AOE suffer the Fire continuous effect.

Reloading the flame belcher outside of combat takes ten minutes and can be accomplished by any character with the Mechanikal Engineering skill without a die roll. Flame belcher rounds costs 10 gc each.

Mounting this weapon on a steamjack chassis requires the mechanik to remove the steamjack's old arm and replace it with the flame belcher (see "Removing or Replacing Arms" in *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*). Mounting a flame belcher on a heavy steamjack chassis other than a Crusader chassis takes double the normal amount of time and increases the target number to 16. A character who wishes to have a flame belcher integrated into a heavy steamjack chassis other than a Crusader must pay double the normal rate.

Replacing a Crusader's arm system with a flame belcher costs an additional 60 gc unless the character does the job himself. Having an arm system replaced with a flame belcher on a chassis other than a Crusader chassis costs an additional 100 gc.

RECKONER CHASSIS AND WEAPONS SYSTEMS

RECKONER HEAVY WARJACK CHASSIS

Cost: 9,000 gc (with stock cortex), 6,500 gc (chassis only)

Description: The Reckoner is the first warjack designed and built completely within the Protectorate of Menoth. A fast moving workhorse, the chassis is an evolutionary step forward for Protectorate warjacks. Its variants include the Castigator and Sanctifier.

Height/Weight: 12′ / 8.6 tons

Fuel Burn/Load Usage: 710 lbs / 5.5 hrs general, 1 hr combat

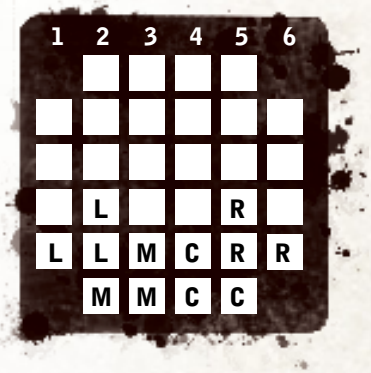
Initial Service Date: 604 AR

Original Chassis Design: Vassals of Menoth

Stock Cortex: Aurum-grade

PHY	**11**
STR	**11**
SPD	**5**
AGL	**3**
PRW	**5**
POI	**4**
INT	**2**
PER	**2**
Initiative	**12**
MAT	**6**
RAT	**5**
DEF	**10**
ARM	**19**

DAMAGE GRID



Special Rules: Initiative is rolled only in the case of an uncontrolled steamjack; otherwise the 'jack activates on its controller's initiative.

Initiative, MAT, RAT, DEF, and ARM assume a stock cortex.

RECKONER WARJACK

The Reckoner comes stock with a condemner cannon mounted on its left arm and an Open Fist on its right. It is armed with a consecrator.

CONDEMNER (HEAVY STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 450 gc
Type: Ranged
Location: Left Arm
Ammo: 5
Effective Range: 72 feet (12″)
Extreme Range: 360 feet
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 13
AOE: —

Description: The condemner is a heavy cannon that fires incendiary shells that erupt on contact with a target.

Special Rules: Due to the slow rate of its auto loading mechanism, this weapon can be fired only once per round.

When a steamjack armed with this weapon charges, after moving but before making its charge attack it can make one ranged attack targeting the character charged unless they were in melee with each other at the start of the steamjack's activation. When resolving this ranged attack, the steamjack does not suffer the target in melee penalty. If the target is not in melee range after moving, the steamjack can make the ranged attack before its activation ends.

The condemner causes fire damage. On a critical hit, the character hit suffers the Fire continuous effect.

A character hit by a condemner suffers –2 DEF for one round.

Reloading the condemner outside of combat takes ten minutes and can be accomplished by any character with the Mechanikal Engineering skill without a die roll.

Condemner rounds cost 10 gc each and are generally available only within the Protectorate.

Mounting this weapon on a steamjack chassis requires the mechanik to remove the steamjack's old arm and replace it with the condemner (see "Removing or Replacing Arms" in *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*). Mounting a condemner on a heavy steamjack chassis other than a Reckoner chassis takes double the normal amount of time and increases the target number to 16. A character who wishes to have a condemner integrated into a heavy steamjack chassis other than a Reckoner must pay double the normal rate.

Replacing a Reckoner's arm system with a condemner costs an additional 60 gc unless the character does the job himself. Having an arm system replaced with a condemner on a chassis other than a Reckoner chassis costs an additional 100 gc.

CONSECRATOR (HEAVY STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: 375 gc
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 6

Description: The consecrator is a massive reinforced-iron club designed to act as an incense censor on the battlefield. The holy incense pours from the consecrator and clings to the steamjack bearing it as an obscuring haze.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up the consecrator. While wielding the consecrator, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds the weapon. If the arm system holding the consecrator is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

The consecrator has Reach.

The consecrator holds roughly 15 gc of incense, which burns for 45 minutes in combat. Refilling the consecrator with incense takes five minutes. While the consecrator's incense is burning, the steamjack carrying it always has concealment.

Additionally, while the consecrator's incense is burning, living characters within 2″ of the steamjack carrying the consecrator suffer –2 to attack rolls unless they are immune to gas effects.

CASTIGATOR WARJACK

The Castigator comes stock with a pair of Flame Fists. Castigators also integrate the fire shielding upgrade (p. 378).

FLAME FIST (RECKONER CHASSIS ONLY)

Cost: 800 gc (pair)
Type: Melee
Location: Arm
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 4

Description: Flame fists are fully functional steamjack fists set with immense fire vents fueled by a reservoir of Menoth's Fury from within the steamjack's torso. A mass of hoses spilling from the back of the steamjack to the fists keep the weapons well fueled. In combat the fists burn continuously, sending rippling waves of distorting heat through the air around the machine.

Special Rules: These weapons, which are always used in pairs, are designed only for the Reckoner chassis.

Flame fists have the Open Fist rule and can be used to make Headlock/Weapon Lock, Push, Throw, and Two-Handed Throw power attacks. Flame fists cannot be used to pick up other weapons.

While this weapon is fueled and ignited, a character hit by this weapon suffers 1 additional point of fire damage and the Fire continuous effect.

Sanctifier

A steamjack with a pair of non-crippled flame fists can make a combustion attack with both of its fists simultaneously, using both of the steamjack's initial attacks to ignite the air around the machine. When the steamjack makes a combustion attack, other characters within 2″ of the steamjack suffer a POW 12 fire damage roll and the Fire continuous effect. A combustion attack consumes five minutes' worth of fuel from the steamjack's reservoir.

The steamjack's integral reservoir of fuel holds roughly 30 gc of fuel, which burns for 70 minutes in combat. Refueling the reservoir takes thirty minutes.

Mounting this weapon on a Reckoner chassis requires the mechanik to remove the steamjack's old arm and replace it with the flame fist (see "Removing or Replacing Arms" in *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*). The Reckoner chassis must have the fire shielding upgrade to have flame fists installed on it. Mounting a flame fist takes three hours. Replacing a Reckoner's arm system with a flame fist costs an additional 90 gc unless the character does the job himself.

SANCTIFIER WARJACK

The Sanctifiers were created both to aid the Reclaimers in their duties and to combat the necromantic horrors of Cryx. They are viewed as holy machines by the Protectorate and are invested with sacred armaments. The Sanctifier comes stock with a pair of fists. It is armed with a single grave marker and typically fights with its other fist. Sanctifiers integrate the cenotaph upgrade (p. 378).

GRAVE MARKER (HEAVY STEAMJACK ONLY)

Cost: These weapons are generally unavailable for purchase at any price.
Type: Melee
Attack Modifier: 0
POW: 6

Description: The grave marker is a weapon of sacred design. On the surface it simply appears to be a long-handled mace fashioned in the image of a Menofix. In fact the device resonates with holy power that can rob the discarnate dead of their defenses.

Special Rules: A steamjack must have a non-crippled arm system with an Open Fist to pick up a grave marker. While wielding the grave marker, the steamjack cannot make attacks with the fist that holds it. If the arm system holding the grave marker is crippled, the steamjack can continue fighting with the weapon but suffers the penalties for the crippled system.

The grave marker is a magical weapon and has Reach.

PROTECTORATE GEAR AND UPGRADES

CENOTAPH

Cost: This upgrade is never available for sale.

Description: The cenotaph is a spiritual conduit to Urcaen. The device draws power directly from the steamjack's heartfire to establish an open gate for Menite souls to travel through to the City of Man. The steamjack, in turn, draws arcane energy from the souls passing through it. These devices are found only in steamjacks silently commanded by the Reclaimant order.

Special Rules: This steamjack gains one soul token each time a Menite character is destroyed within 5″ of it. This 'jack can have up to three soul tokens at a time. This steamjack can spend soul tokens to boost attack or damage rolls. During its controller's control phase, you can remove all soul tokens from the steamjack to allocate it focus points, 1 for each token removed.

While within thirty feet (5″) of a steamjack with a cenotaph upgrade, enemy characters lose Incorporeal.

Integrating a cenotaph into a steamjack requires the proper tools, three hours of labor, and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 16. If the roll fails, it can be repeated after another hour of labor.

Having a cenotaph integrated into a steamjack costs an additional 45 gc.

FIRE SHIELDING

Cost: 350 gc (light warjack), 600 gc (heavy warjack)

Description: The intense heat generated by some Protectorate steamjack weapon systems is so powerful that the Sul-Menites have been forced to develop means of protecting their machines. Fire shielding is a combination of insulation and treatment techniques that render a steamjack invulnerable to heat and fire.

Special Rules: A steamjack with fire shielding gains Immunity: Fire.

Adding fire shielding to a steamjack requires the proper tools, six hours of labor, and a successful INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 14. If the roll fails, it can be repeated after another hour of labor.

Having fire shielding integrated into a steamjack costs an additional 80 gc.

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