

MYSTARA 2300 BC

CAMPAIGN SETTING

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OVERVIEW

The Mystara 2300 BC campaign setting is a dark and foreboding world, full of despotic oppressive rulers trying to hold on to their increasingly tenuous rule with increasingly brutal methods. It is a post cataclysmic world, where the golden age of yesteryear and the advancements of Blackmoor can still be remembered, first hand in some cases. It is a world brimming with suffering and struggle, but it is also a world of hope.

Only 700 years after the Great Rain of Fire, Mystara is just starting to recover from that catastrophe. New nations and cultures have emerged from the ashes of destruction, despite the dreaded Wasting disease that has continued to plague the Known World since Blackmoor was destroyed. Now however, the power of the Wasting is waning, and for the first time in centuries Mystarans are beginning to see the faint gleam of hope.

Not all welcome this new world of hope however. In the face of the Wasting, many nations were forced to take drastic measures, lest their culture wither and die entirely. Some sought solace in the darkness of undeath, while others fled underground and petitioned the forces of entropy for sustenance, and still some few clung onto the belief in Blackmoorian technology – something that only worsened their personal plagues. Now those who fought for their nation's existence, those who fought so hard to survive, are faced with the fact that their world is changing. They are no longer needed... and no longer wanted, for their choices brought other plagues onto their people nearly as unbearable as the Wasting.

Even this glimmer of hope won't last long for the people of the Known World however, for another catastrophe is set to happen circa BC 1700. Earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and even a device left over from the Blackmoorian era, will rock the Known World, sinking a large portion of the southeastern continent below the waves. Over the course of several centuries, starting at BC 2000 and ending with the catastrophic blast that forms the Broken Lands in BC 1700, at least five civilizations will be shattered including Taymora, Intua, Mogreth, the Shimmering Lands,

and the Deep Elves. Life will continue afterwards of course, it simply won't be the same as it was.

WHO SHOULD READ THIS

This mini source book is intended to be read by DMs and Players alike, in order to provide both with a high level overview of the setting. Cultural and racial secrets are not revealed here, however DMs may wish to limit the sections that individual players have access to.

The material presented within is also rules agnostic to a large degree. DMs should be able to use any of this information whether they run BECMI, 1E, 2E, 3E, or 4E games, however because there is very little crunch within these pages, there may be some extra work on the part of the DM to prepare this material for a specific rules set.

REPERCUSSIONS OF PLAYING IN THE PAST

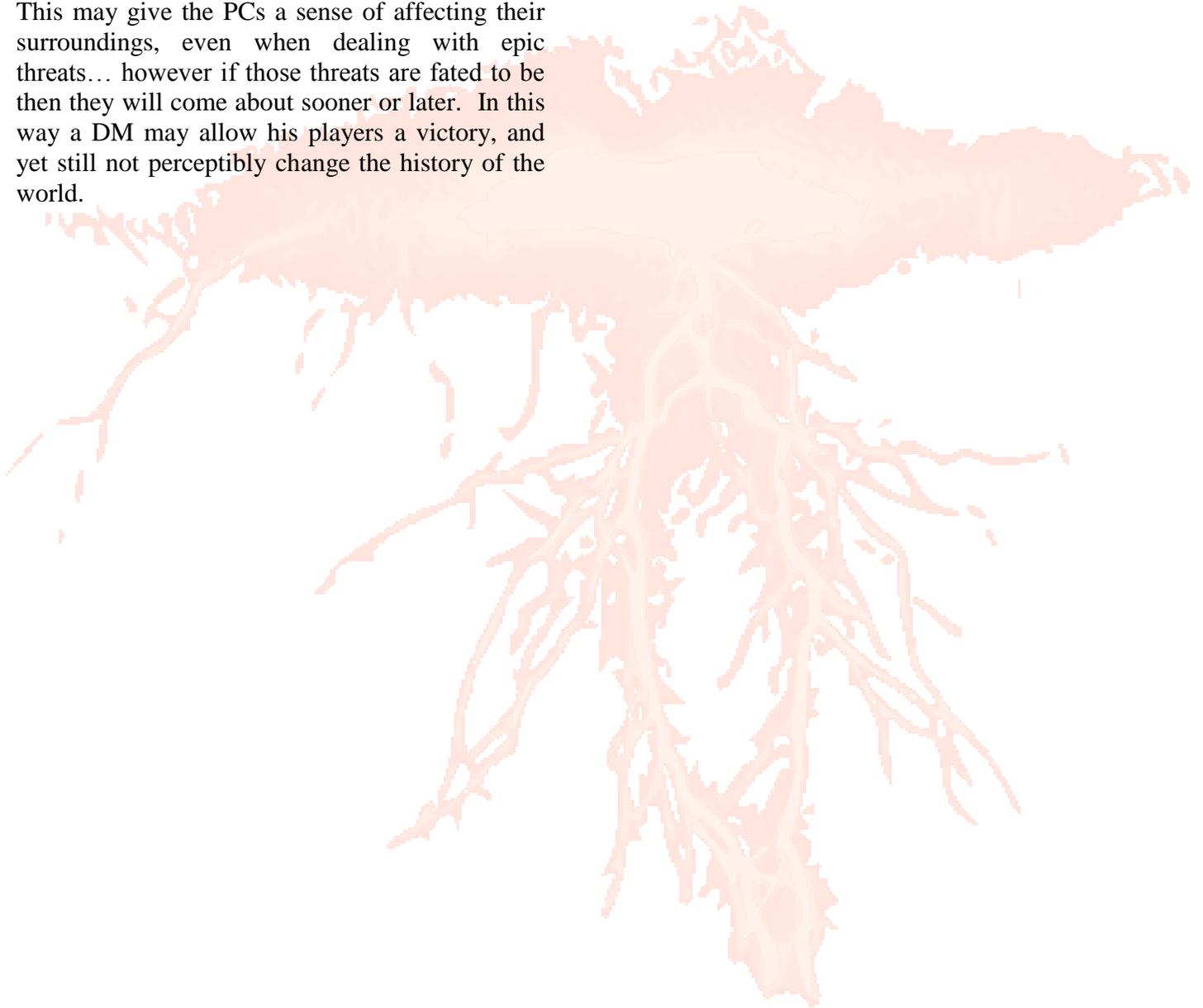
Present day Mystara is typically set in the year AC 1000, which is 3300 years in the future with respect to the Mystara 2300 BC setting. This may raise concerns, especially with groups that play in the present era as well, that character actions may alter the entire future of the campaign world. Enterprising DMs may wish to take this added responsibility on, however these kinds of world changing events are beyond the scope of this document.

Rather than treating every action of the PCs as branching points for future events, the suggestion of this document is to keep the PCs actions (and any repercussions thereof) focused on events in the Mystara 2300 BC era. Players should feel like their actions make a difference in the setting, and in fact they should. Indeed there are numerous opportunities for PCs to make a difference in their world... however none of these differences should change the way that Mystara will evolve 3000 years later. The ripples of one

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small pebble, and even those of large stones, rarely change the course of an entire river.

Another way to handle such issues is through the use of delaying tactics. Perhaps the PCs are able to stop a particular threat... for a short period. The river of time has a strong current however, and the same threat may reappear at a later date when the PCs are not nearby to defend against it. This may give the PCs a sense of affecting their surroundings, even when dealing with epic threats... however if those threats are fated to be then they will come about sooner or later. In this way a DM may allow his players a victory, and yet still not perceptibly change the history of the world.



HISTORY

GREAT RAIN OF FIRE

The nation of Blackmoor rose to prominence after plundering the treasures of the City of the Gods, but their good fortune was not to last. After nearly 1000 years of prosperity and dominance, the people of Blackmoor destroyed their civilization in the catastrophe known as the Great Rain of Fire. The shockwaves of this disaster shook the planet to its core, shifting its axis and sending most civilizations that survived back into the stone age.

In the aftermath of the Great Rain of Fire came the Wasting, a terrible magical disease that caused people to slowly wither away and die a horrible agonizing death. To survive this plague many cultures had to make costly sacrifices. The Taymorans turned to necromancy, while the Deep Elves along with a handful of dwarven clans sold their souls to dark powers. Likewise, the Antalianians made pacts with elemental beings, and the giant nations bargained with the otherworldly fey.

Seven hundred years after the great disaster, the legacy of Blackmoor has not been forgotten. Some struggle still, to reclaim a fragment of that lost glory, while others shun the devastation wrought by those people and their forbidden power and try to seek a new way to live in their world. As the Wasting plague disappears many seek to free themselves from the desperate bargains that their forefathers made.

TIME OF TRIALS

With the axis of the planet shifted, lands that were once warm and temperate found themselves thrust into an everlasting winter. Thrust into the frozen north, the dwarves decided to make the long trek into more temperate lands that they hoped would support their people. The long migration south was not easy, and the dwarves were beset by enemies on all sides – aggressive giant kingdoms, savage Antalian tribes, and all manner of beasts and monsters that thrived in the winter wastes. For the giants of Grondheim and the scattered beastmen in the wilds, this was

almost a blessing. Humans in the area that had been persecuting these creatures were devastated, giving the giants and beastmen an opportunity to stabilize their societies.

Though most humans in the area suffered, there were some that chose to embrace the savage conditions of their transformed homeland. Ancestors of the Skandaharian people made bargains with elemental beings of fire and ice. In return for worshiping such creatures the Antalianians, as they now called themselves, were given power and mastery over the elements to help them survive. Like the giants surrounding them, the Antalianians thrived in these harsh conditions, building a vast empire beholden to the Winter King.

Other races fared ill at these turn of events, and in addition to the climate changes, the Wasting disease began to claim many lives. An indiscriminate killer, the Wasting reduced entire civilizations to bone and dust. Desperate measures were called for, and those that survived these times did so by paying a high price. Elves and Azcans fled underground, forsaking the light of the sun, the ancestors of the Taymorans turned to necromancy, while others made pacts with dark immortals, all in the name of preserving their cultures... and their lives.

FROM THE ASHES

Persecuted nearly to extinction during the Blackmoorian Crusades, the beastmen of the north were scattered in what amounted to petty tribes. The near eternal winter that they were thrust into made life hard for them, though without the threat of humanity, the beastmen soon thrived. Their tribes grew larger and they began raiding their neighbors for resources that they themselves did not produce. Many of these tribes gathered at the ancient Blackmoorian fortress called Urzud. What once served as a staging area for the annihilation of the beastmen race now became their new home.

Giant kingdoms began to form as well, and over the next several centuries these grew, nearly

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driving all of the smaller nations out of the north. The giant kingdoms enslaved smaller folk, including humans, elves, and dwarves, and forced many of them to work until they expired in mines and other locations too small for the giants to operate. In time the giant kingdoms even began fighting amongst each other, constantly struggling to rebuild their former empires.

Meanwhile, the land of Mogreth, once a shrouded valley hidden in the deep wintery wastes of the northern pole, was thrust into more temperate lands by the shifting of the planet's axis. Kept temperate in such harsh climates by ancient Carnifex magic, Mogreth slowly and steadily began to warm. These conditions were perfect for stirring up renewed activity in the saurian inhabitants of the land. Mogreth expanded its borders, consuming many of the petty human tribes and nations that surrounded it and using their peoples as slaves. When they had exhausted all the resources on Brun the lizards expanded their operations across the seas in the Dawn Lands, and continued bringing fresh slaves into their nation.

The ancestors of the dwarven people on Brun were fled giants of the north who were persecuting them, founding a new homeland near the Bridge of Oost. To their surprise they were joined by cousins from Skothar who had escaped the devastation of the Rain. Together these dwarven clans formed the Shimmering Lands and sought to rebuild what was lost following Blackmoor's downfall.

Having long lived in darkness the Inti emerged from their caverns to once again reclaim their birthright, but unfortunately they were not alone underneath the sun. Taymoran city states, skulking in the shadows, had just as much lust for expanding their newly created empire. They made war constantly with Intua, and with Mogreth, and with Grondheim whenever they could.

Though the people of Brun no longer have need to fear the Wasting, new burdens have been placed upon them... burdens that will drag their new nations back into the dust from whence they came, unless heroes can be found that will fight for them.

TIMELINE

The Timeline presented here consists of commonly held beliefs and accepted historical facts in the BC 2300 era in Southern Brun. These events may be incomplete (and possibly inaccurate) in several cases. See the forthcoming individual Nation Gazetteers for more detailed and accurate timelines regarding each nation.

BC 5500: The Carnifex craft several magic artifacts which create a hidden, heated valley in the northern glaciers.

BC 5480: The Carnifex gather in their new refuge, which they have named Mogreth, and begin building a city for themselves. This settlement, Isshum, is built in the same fashion as sunken Y'hog.

BC 4500: Beastmen appear in the Borean Valley

BC 4000: Blackmoor begins its rise to greatness after having discovered and plundered the City of the Gods.

BC 3800: The empire of Mogreth is destroyed by a combined assault of Oltecs, Thonian colonists, and dwarves. The Carnifex are either destroyed or forced to flee to places unknown, and are hereafter known by Mogrethians as the Old Kings.

BC 3500: Blackmoor and elven cultures meet at the height of their power and begin periods of intermittent warfare and trade. Several elven clans adopt Blackmoorian ways and colonize the northern lands.

Azcan cities declare independence from the Oltec civilization, and the two peoples begin what will be centuries of fighting.

BC 3200: Blackmoor crusades drive Beastmen into Hyborea; they adapt to the colder climate and survive.

BC 3150: The Makers begin collecting creatures from across the globe, returning with them to Blackmoor

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where the creatures are magically modified.

BC 3100: Oltecs migrate to the Savage Coast to escape the wars in their homelands, but are followed by the aggressive Azcans.

BC 3050: Magical experiments with captured beastmen causes increasing unrest in Blackmoor. Shunned by their peers, the Makers flee their homeland for a secluded island stronghold far in the north.

BC 3000: Blackmoor comes to an abrupt end in the Great Rain of Fire, and the civilized world is devastated. The planet's axis shifts and it is thrust into an Ice Age. Glaciers expand, the oceans recede, and land bridges are revealed between the Known World and the Isle of Dawn. Radiance fallout expands from the center of the disaster and is carried by winds to all corners of the world for the next few centuries.

BC 2999: Northern elves that escape the initial catastrophe flee underground to escape the aftermath of the Great Rain of Fire.

BC 2995: The Antalian strike deals with elemental beings in order to preserve their culture from the rapid climactic changes following the Great Rain of Fire.

BC 2990 - Civilizations across the entire face of the planet stagger after the destruction of Blackmoor, and many of them falter. Hardest hit were those nations closest to the disaster on Skothar and Brun. To make matters worse a strange rotting disease slowly kills many of the survivors.

BC 2970: After several years of starving and torment in their new underground homes, the elves grow desperate. To preserve their society and culture they pledge their souls to dark powers.

BC 2950: The rise of the Winter Kings begins, as Antalian territory grows to cover much of the frozen lands of the north. The Antalian battle with giants and hoards of beastmen.

BC 2950: Giant kingdoms begin to reclaim territories lost to human nations during the rise of Blackmoor.

BC 2940: The Makers turn their art of fleshcrafting on themselves in the hopes of finding a way to survive the Wasting.

BC 2900: Garal Glitterlode creates the gnomish race in the land which would later become Rockhome and the mountains of the northern continent.

Taurans fleeing the Golden Realm of Gildesh in Davania, arrive along the shores of Taymora and bring with them worship of the Great Bull in the Earth (Ixion)

BC 2800: Elves divide on magic versus technology. The Returnists, under Ilsundal the Wise, begin a long migration to Brun, hoping to find those elves that colonized there.

The Azcans have shattered the Oltecs, however their victory is short lived. Their culture degrades under the aftereffects of the Great Rain of Fire, and in order to escape their impending doom they flee below ground, under the Great Escarpment.

Having changed themselves nearly beyond recognition, the Makers retreat deep into their island stronghold.

BC 2790: Deep elves come into contact with the Inti, a branch of Azcans seeking shelter from the Great Rain of Fire under the Great Plateau. This begins a centuries long conflict between the two peoples.

Conflicts between the Twaal and forerunners of Ilsundal's migration intensify, and the tritons aggressively defend their territory. The elves decide to migrate via land routes, rather than aggravate the triton further.

BC 2750: The Twaal subjugate other aquatic races in the area. The shark-kin become their main shock troops, just as effective beneath the waves as they are on the dry surface.

The Makers begin experimenting on other creatures in an attempt to create the perfect servitor race. Beastmen are one of their favored subjects.

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BC 2700: Remnants of shattered Oltec tribes begin warring with each other across the Sea of Dread. Twaal agents play one faction off of the other to destabilize the area.

Having learned of the existence of other surface dwellers from the Inti, the Deep Elves begin campaigns to infiltrate and corrupt all those living under the light of the sun.

Suffering greatly from the wasting, Taymorans turn to practices of undeath to help preserve their society. The first vampire queen is born.

BC 2650: The Twaal subjugate several Oltec tribes living on islands in the Sea of Dread and establish the Empire of Adhuza. The empire quickly establishes dominance over other cultures in the area.

BC 2600: As climates start shifting back towards the more temperate, human nations once again strengthen and become prominent. Several giant kingdoms band together, forming the nation of Grondheim, in the hopes of stopping the renewed threat to their peoples.

Conflicts between the Makers and their Oltec and triton neighbors rage on and off for the next few centuries resulting in the Refuge of the Makers being attacked on more than one occasion. Though few in number, the Makers repulse their attackers, withstanding every assault.

BC 2580: Despite the strides made through undeath, the Taymorans find their culture fading and decide that they must move to unspoiled lands.

BC 2576: Rafael takes an interest in the Moadreg and prompts them to begin building a wondrous artifact on the Bridge of Oost called the Gate of Light. Dwarven radiomancers break their traditional seclusion and form a community around the artifact.

BC 2550: The Moadreg conflicts with their neighbors intensifies. Giants, elves, even dragons in the area, take an immediate disliking to the plague bearing dwarves. Some of the giant tribes begin to work together to repel the new invaders.

BC 2550: Winter recedes, and many of the great glaciers begin to shrink. As the power of the Winter Kings lessens, Antalian society begins to fracture.

BC 2500: In Vulcania, the elven civilisation is losing its battle with the elements. The Second Migration leaves Vulcania, and once again elves violate the territory of the Twaal. These elves are more savvy sea travelers and are not intimidated by the ocean dwellers. Elven ships sail the seas looking for signs of the first migration 300 years prior.

Dwarves from the Brunian migration meet refugees from Skotharian near the Bridge of Oost. The dwarves unite with local gnomish tribes and attempt to build a home for themselves.

Taymoran humans (migrating from the northwest) settle the shores of the southern coast of Brun. They integrate several tribes of taurans and lupins already living in the area into their culture.

BC 2490: The Twaal tritons begin a long series of disputes with the elves of Vulcania. They call upon their immortal patrons to send a plague upon the elves.

BC 2473: Dranwyrf unites the clans and makes a final stand in the Maghkrys Mountains against the giant and elven hordes persecuting his people. The combined strength of the dwarves crushes their enemies like copper on an anvil. Dranwyrf is named First King of the Shimmering Lands and the site of the battle becomes Drangyr, the first gatherhold of the Moadreg.

BC 2460: Desperate to stop the tidal wave of human expansion, the giant kings call upon the fey court for assistance. Their pleas are heard, and the Troll Queen comes to their aid.

BC 2450: The Inti emerge from the Great Plateau and begin to rebuild their empire underneath the sun. They come into conflict with nearby giants from Grondheim and Taymorans.

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BC 2408: Massive volcanic eruptions in Vulcania destroy the elvish civilizations on that continent and send gouts of black ash swirling into the atmosphere. The resulting clouds plunge the world into decades of darkness and despair as the climate shifts and hunger and death plague the lands. Twaal propaganda claims responsibility for this righteous retribution against their enemies.

BC 2400: Antalian tribes flourish in the area later to be called Norwold.

Slave uprisings in Mogreth, both on Makai islands and on the mainland, disrupt agricultural production. The lizardmen mobilize to put down the revolts.

The beastmen of the frozen north begin to breed distinct lineages and start exploring the more desirable territories to the south. The tribes gather at Urzud where a powerful artifact waits to be uncovered by their people.

BC 2399: Elves spearheading Ilsundals migration efforts help revolting slaves on the islands west of Brun to claim independence from Mogreth. They secretly send help to mainland slaves in an attempt to get them to safety.

BC 2397: After nearly three years of mayhem, the slave revolts in Mogreth are put down. A sizable number of slaves manage to escape in foreign ships and lands safely on the Makai islands.

BC 2396: The Makai and other free slaves organize themselves into the Dawn Corsairs. Ilsundal's elves succeed in creating a friendly buffer state between their own people and Mogreth, possibly creating another ally against Adhuza. The Corsairs begin pillaging Mogrethian and Taymoran settlements along the coast.

BC 2395: The Dark Years end as the last clouds of ash settle from the sky.

BC 2392: The Twaal tritons move their capital to Thangea in the Sea of Dread, establishing a city to rule both those above and beneath the waves.

BC 2380: Petty kings and dictators begin to break away from the rule of Oltima Thual.

BC 2370: The Troll Queen consolidates her position, becoming undisputed ruler of all Grondheim.

BC 2350: Most of the Taymoran nobility has now joined the ranks of the undead under the tutelage of the original Nosferatu.

BC 2340: Taymoraz deposes its queen, becoming the first Taymoran city to free itself from the bonds of their vampiric rulers.

BC 2319: Construction on the Gate of Light is completed and the power of the radiomancers grows. The Wasting sickness begins to reach out from Moadreg territories to other lands.

BC 2300: The Blighted Lands begin to seep through the Gate of Light and spread across the Bridge of Oost.

This is the present day for the Mystara 2300 BC Campaign Setting.

NATIONS

The following nations and regions make up the major political influences in the Mystara 2300 BC era.



ADHUZA

Empire of the Waves

Location: Sea of Dread and Northern Davania.

Area: XXX sq. ft. (XXX sq. m.) beneath the waves; XXX sq. ft. (XXX sq. m.) on the surface

Population: Estimated XXX (X% triton, X% merrow, X% human (Oltec), X% aranea, X% phanaton, X% kna, X% other).

Languages: Twaal (Aquan) is the official language and is spoken by all undersea races, although subject (surface) states still maintain their own distinct speech. Humans and aranea predominantly speak Oltec and Tanagoro dialects, depending on their ancestry. Aranea also maintain their ancestral language of Aran, which they share in common with the phanaton.

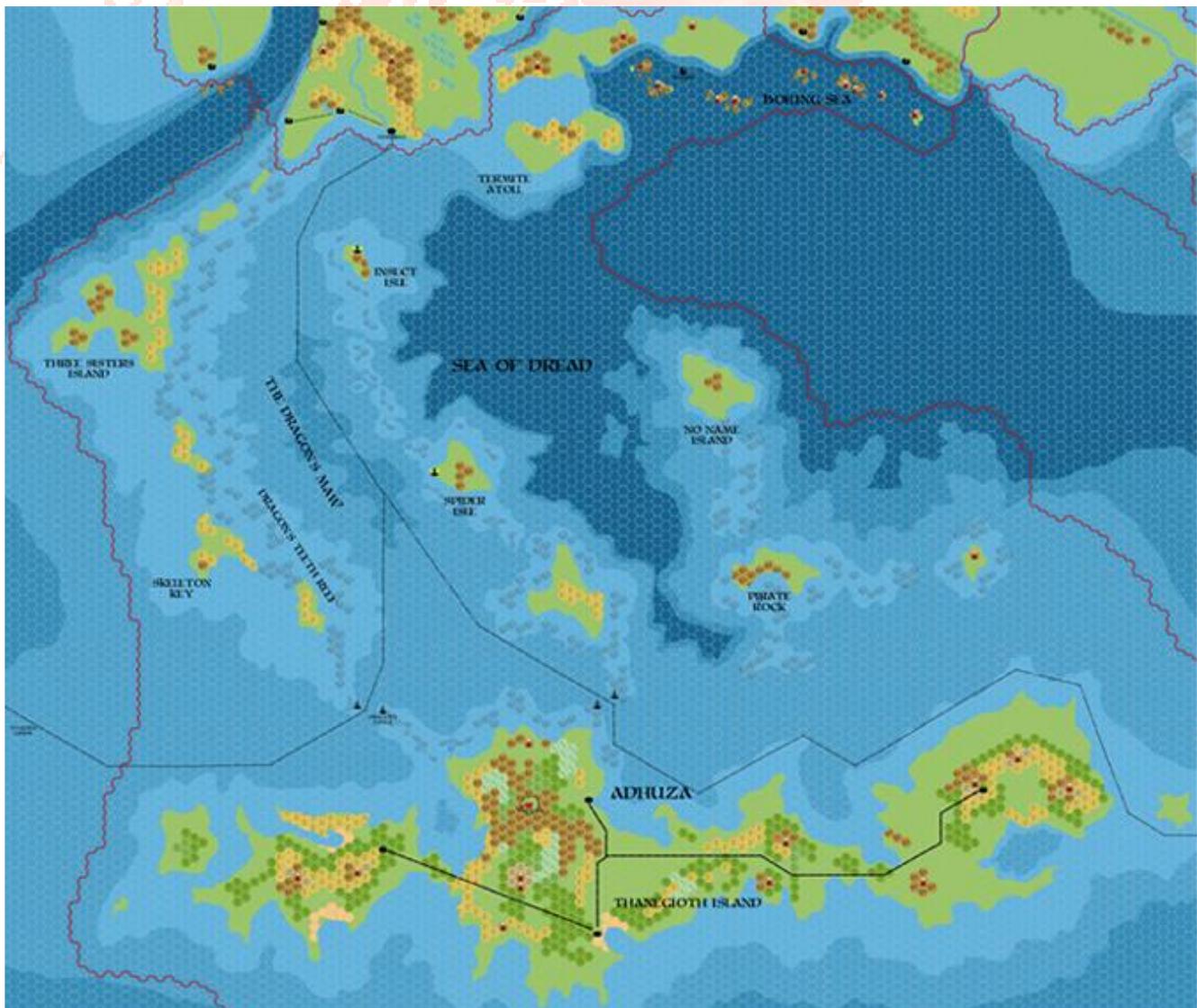
Coinage: Adhuzan currency consists mainly of variously shaded pearls along with tiles of carved mother of pearl. Gold coins of other nations are also common, although none are minted specifically by Adhuza.

Taxes: The Adhuzan priesthood requires a 10% tax yearly from all nobility in the empire. Common folk are taxed 1 copper (or its equivalent) per member in the household.

Government Type: Mercantile Dominarchy

Industries: Trade, tribute, fishing, exotic spices, exotic poisons

Important Figures:



Overview

A nation of ancient wonders ruled by triton kings from beneath the waves, the grasp of Adhuza stretches across the Sea of Dread and beyond. Once embroiled in countless wars among themselves, the nations of Adhuza have learned the arts of peace and cooperation, and working together have built up one of the strongest mercantile nations in the area. Goods and ideas flow freely across its borders, but worship of anything other than the True God is suppressed with swift and violent methods. Those that adhere to Adhuza's dictates find themselves growing fat with wealth, but those that oppose them are cursed with madness by the nation's enigmatic immortal patron.

Geography

Adhuza covers varied territories both above and beneath the seas, centered on the island continent of Thanegioth. From there it extends northward along the Dragon's Maw, a gaping gash in the ocean floor surrounded east and west by sharp and dangerous reefs piercing the surface of the seas. Volcanic vents litter the region of the Boiling Sea, sending steam and smoke bubbling up from the depths to disgorge into the air. Several island chains extend from Thanegioth to the mainland, including the Shark Chain and Spider Archipelago.

Flora and Fauna

Climate from the mainland of Brun to Thanegioth changes from moderately temperate all the way to tropical, lending itself to the support of many different creatures. Few larger life forms are native to the island chains, however domesticated animals such as pig and goat have taken hold on many of them and run feral. Saurian and insectoid life forms dominate Thanegioth, with some of them reaching staggering proportions.

Aquatic life also teams across the Sea of Dread and its surrounds. Fish are a staple diet of the Adhuzans and many of their neighbors, however larger and more aggressive creatures lurk in the dark depths as well. Dragon turtles are known to frequent the area and are especially dangerous to

seagoing vessels that attempt passage through the region without acquiring Adhuzan permission first.

History

The sea kingdom of Adhuza emerged in this area nearly 500 years ago, just a few short centuries after the Great Rain of Fire. In the wake of the Blackmoorian disaster many countries sank into barbarity and lost the means for fast and easy transport across the oceans. Adhuza, due to its very nature has preserved this sea going mobility and used it to become one of the foremost mercantile nations in the world.

Wealth is not the only force that drove the Adhuzans however, for they also have a rigid and structured sense of order. This led them to take a great interest in the land dwelling communities on islands throughout the Sea of Dread and on the shores that it bordered. In the centuries since the Great Rain of Fire there have been many wars and battles, but where the Adhuzans come, peace soon follows. They have absorbed kingdoms both above and below the surface of the waves, including the shark-kin of the Dragon's Maw, Oltecs of Thanegioth, and the Aranean Isles.

Peoples

The Twaal tritons are the undisputed rulers of Adhuza, having first united their own people shortly after the Great Rain of Fire and then subsequently conquering savage tribes of neighboring merrow. Other sea races have flocked to the stability and safety of the coral cities and have been welcomed there as well. Semi-nomadic kna traverse the sea floor in lengthy caravans, sea giants perform as laborers in the cities and act as special enforcers in the armies of the Twaal. Even the enigmatic kopru have found a role in Adhuzan society, serving as a priestly class, maintaining volcanic temples to Adhuza M'Thaz and leading the faithful in his adoration.

Though often savage and brutal, shark-kin also hold a special place in Adhuzan society. Their ancestral homes are centered on the eastern isles of the Dragon's Maw, but shark-kin can be found

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dispersed throughout the underwater realm. Their savagery makes them excellent soldiers, and their ability to tread land has aided many of the recent conquests of surface dwellers in the area.

Oltecs and aranea are more recent additions to the empire, occupying the surface of the many islands in the region. Survivors of the Oltec-Azcan wars before the Great Rain of Fire, the Oltecs have been struggling for survival ever since. The aranea have been in the area for much longer, descendants of colonists sent out from Old Aran millennia ago.

Customs

Adhuza is divided into several satrapies, each one governed by a local satrap. Although each satrap must eventually answer to the Twaal King, they are left largely to their own devices. In many cases for conquered people, life goes much as it had before the coming of the Twaal, though the eyes and ears of the empire lie everywhere.

Cultural practices vary widely from one satrapy to another, however many share a few core traits. The taking of slaves is frowned upon, and most Adhuzans would find the practice distasteful to say the least. Honesty and truthfulness are held in high esteem throughout the empire, as is law and order.

Religion

Adhuzans practice a dualistic religion devoted to their patron Adhuza M'Thaz (for whom they name their nation) in his efforts to overcome his wicked and hated rival O'Hmarn. Both immortals of thought, Adhuza M'Thaz held two elements in the highest esteem, Water and Fire, believing that all creatures derived from them were of the most worth and pure sort. His opponent O'Hmarn instead held that Air and Earth were sacred. Thus the two are locked in an endless battle, forever disputing the sacredness of their chosen elements. Some say that the empire building of the Twaal tritons is merely an extension of this ancient conflict.

For Adhuzans, the most sacred of places are those containing both the elements of Water and Fire. Many of their temples are built around deep sea

thermal vents or island volcanoes nestled away in the vastness of the Sea of Dread. Wherever they go, Adhuzans always bring some physical representation of their patron with them wherever they go, and all major temples have as their centerpiece a giant statue of their god.

Settlements of Note

Suthus (pop. XXX): Built in the midst of the Boiling Sea, the city of Suthus has thrived over the ensuing centuries and is known throughout Adhuza as a city of learning and religious piety. Recent decades have seen the city's population explode, mainly due to swelling from without, and soldiers swimming through its columns have become a common sight. The heart of the city bubbles and roils with dark smoky clouds tearing their way through the waters to reach the surface, caressing the gigantic statue of Adhuza M'Thaz on their journey.

Thanegea (pop. XXX): Newly appointed as the nation's capital only recently, Thanegea was designed as a meeting place for all the races of Adhuza, aquatic and land dweller alike. Built on an island in the middle of a lake on the central plateau of Thanegioth, the city is connected to the old empire beneath the waves through a series of aquatic tunnels that stretch all the way beneath the island to the sea.

??? (pop. XXX): Old Twaal capital?

Appearance and Dress

Although each nation in the empire has its own dress, most of them favor light clothing. Those living in the Sea of Dread region often favor light, airy fabrics, in bright colors, cut short enough to prevent heat exhaustion. In many cases this means they wear little more than loin cloths and gauzy tunics.

Aquatic races and the aranea wear even less, both opting for functional harness and belts allowing them to carry any essential supplies or tools. Oltecs tend to decorate their clothing with bright feathers and animal pelts, and this trend has swept across the rest of the nation, modifying local customs to one degree or another.

Weapons and Armor

Just like its peoples, the weapons and armors of Adhuza are exotic and varied. Aranean silk armor is popular among the folk living on many of the islands in the Sea of Dread. It is durable and lightweight, which makes it a favorite among sailors who can afford it. Lamellar wood armor is also common, especially among the Oltecs of the main island. Shells and bones make up the majority of armors in the area, especially those used by the undersea races.

Brine steel weapons are often grown in the shape of spears and harpoons and are commonly found in undersea cities and coastal communities. These living weapons are actually shards of coral. They are stronger than most bronze weapons equivalents, but require immersion in briny water every night in order to maintain their tensile strength.

Blades crafted from Fire Quartz fare much better on the surface world, however their use is typically restricted to the Adhuzan religious caste. These crystal shards are used as spear and arrow heads, but also commonly appear in bladed weapons such as daggers and short swords.

Foreign Relations

For nearly two centuries the Twaal merfolk have had contact with various dwarven factions, having especially strong ties with the folk dwelling in Qivar. They also have limited dealings further south in the lands of Mogreth, and are on friendly terms with a handful of the more primitive frogfolk tribes living in Rumog Swamp.

With the elves of Vulcania and their erstwhile migrants, the Adhuzans are on less friendly terms. Rumors abound that the Twaal once served as trusted advisors to elves departing from their homeland on Davania, but the two peoples had a falling out shortly afterward. Now elven ships openly defy Adhuzan laws, sailing through their territory without escort or leave.

The Adhuzans and Taymorans share a grudging respect with each other. While the Taymorans are definitely from a more fractured society they

have withstood the many attempts made by the Adhuzans to subsume them into the empire. Both nations have mercantile interests across southern Brun, and while Adhuza controls the waterways, Taymora dominates all inland trade routes. Taymoran religion is abhorrent to most Adhuzans, who despise both their Great Bull of the Earth as well as their reliance upon undead minions.

Of the other races, the Adhuzans know of and care for little. For the most part the giants and elves on Brun stay far inland, and rarely make contact. Of the deep elves they are completely oblivious, and the humanoids of Urzud range too far to the west to be of much concern.

Names

Male: *Atash, Aryo, Bahram, Behnoud, Fardin, Firouz, Giv, Hootan, Iraj, Jandhar, Kouros, Ramtin, Siamak, Tirdad, Zand, Zartosh*

Female: *Ara, Atosa, Behrouz, Chalipa, Danyah, Ghazal, Gita, Khatereh, Mehran, Nouri, Sepehr, Shaya, Tahma, Varsha, Zanya*

Language

The language commonly spoken in Adhuza is the Twaal dialect of Aquan. In addition to this many of the satrapies also speak their own native tongues, but the Twaal patios is what binds them all together.

Character Classes

Second only to the nobility in Adhuza are the merchants. Those that aspire to wealth and power are practiced in the art of using honeyed words and carrying a sharp blade behind their backs. Those who cannot master such skills often serve their merchant masters in other ways. Shark-kin of the Dragon's Maw are known especially well as mercenaries and strong-arms throughout the empire.

Wizards are also respected, whether they dwell in the deep sea vents of Suthus or tread across the silken lines of Arana. Many such wizards become masters of water and fire magic, as is proscribed by the Adhuzan religion, and in fact the religious orders are run almost exclusively by

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such folk. True clerics are few and far between in Adhuza, and most worship gods other than Adhuza M'Thaz.

After 2300 BC

The Adhuzan empire crumbles shortly after the geological upheavals that cause large portions of the main island to sink beneath the waves (forming the Thanegioth Archipelago) in BC 1720. The Twaal population splits in two with half traveling to the newly formed Sunlit Sea and

the other half moving into the deeper waters north of Davania. The two groups make war with one another, as well as with the nomadic bands of devilfish that plague the area, for centuries.

Surface dwellers living on the islands in the Sea of Dread are devastated. A few manage to migrate to more stable areas on the Isle of Dawn or the Savage Coast. Many others fall into a life of savagery and barbarism, never recovering from their losses even in the modern era.



ANTALIANS

Location: Continent of Brun, north of the Shimmering Lands.

Area: XXX sq. ft. (XXX sq. m.); additional notes if any

Population: Estimated XXX (X% human, X% dwarf, X% giantkin, X% other).

Languages: Several different dialects of Antalian are spoken by all races residing here, including Valharian, Vanitarian, Aesinarian, as well as a smattering of others.

Coinage: Lower class Antalians rely on the barter system rather than on minted coins of any type. Ancient coins still see some use, though they are coveted more as raw materials for jewelry making than anything else. Gems see more use as a pure currency in the Winter Lands, and most Antalians are experts when it comes to assessing their values.

Taxes: Antalians may collect coins in tribute from some of their neighbors (in return for not raiding their settlements), however internally Antalian freemen are expected to devote 6 months of the year to raiding with their Jarl. Spoils are divided evenly among the raiders, with 10% of the booty being paid to the Jarl for expenses incurred.

Government Type: Elemental Monarchy (with an increasingly limited radius of control)

Industries: Raiding, slavery, trade goods, jewelry

Important Figures:

http://pandius.com/Norwold_Region_24-m_v1.7.PNG

Overview

The world may have ended in a rain fire, but its resurrection was presaged in a blanket of ice. It is from that ice that the Antalians were born. Raiders ply the seas, the terror of coastal cities in northern Brun and beyond, but the frozen ships are merely the tip of the iceberg. The Winter King and his court survey their shrinking domain from the fabled city of Oltima Thaul, praying to their gods for an eternal winter.

Geography

The frozen domain of the Winter King stretches from the Inner Sea of Hawld, through the frozen mountainous peaks of Wolid, and all the way to the boreal forests of Geffron. Few longships set sail in the Sea of Hawld except those doing trade with the Shimmering Lands. The frigid and choppy waters of the Janivarian Sea are more to the Antalians liking.

The Halskur Bridge which reaches from the frozen wilds of Brun to the northern Dawn Lands marks their southernmost territory, though the Antalians rarely ply its southern shores. Where the Wurmsteeth Mountains collide with the Frozen Sea, the land of the Antalians comes to an

end. Not even their icy resolve is strong enough to occupy lands further north.

Flora and Fauna

The northern realms of the Antalians are dominated by massive glaciers and windswept tundra. Boreal forests predominate most areas where plant life does manage to take hold, and the brief passage of the sun leaves the ground frozen and solid even in the summer months.

Larger animals tend to flourish under these conditions with herds of caribou and elk being the most commonly encountered creatures, although mammoth, woolly rhinos, and giant sloth are not unheard of. Packs of wolves and lone flat nosed bears roam the tundra, while ice drakes and the occasional white dragon terrorize the skies. Other cold loving creatures, including tribes of giants, are not uncommon.

History

When the fires from the Great Rain had finally burned themselves out, and the chill of winter overtook the land, the ancestors of the Antalians were nearly a destroyed people. While others fled from the cold however, the Antalians embraced the ice. Like the slow crushing march

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of the glaciers, the Antalians built themselves an empire in the north. But winter would not last forever.

Mystara began to heal itself from the devastation caused by the Great Rain of Fire. The poisonous clouds of the Wasting blew over the lands less frequently, and the climate began to once again grow warmer. Winter receded, and with it the power of Thool. The Winter Kings however are loath to give up their power, and won't go down without a fight. Deep in their frozen redoubts they seek methods to halt the new summer that falls across their lands and to once again extend the icy grip of Winter.

Peoples

Antalians are the predominant race in the freezing north, and the undisputed rulers of Thaul. They tend to be tall with fair complexions and light hair color, though rumors abound that in some their veins flow with ice water giving them a deathly blue pall. Antalians tend to be grim and stoic in battle, but are prone to cheer and festivity when the occasion calls.

The Antalians faced the dual problems of the Wasting as well as an eternal winter brought on by the axis shift after the Great Rain of Fire, and many of them turned to elemental worship to ease their suffering. As a reward they were infused with the essence of fire and ice, enabling them to survive in some of the harshest climates on Mystara. That legacy can be seen in the communities of genasi that continue to thrive in these lands. Still Antalians in outlook and overall appearance, these folk have been infused with the raw elements of fire and ice.

Other folk live under the dominion of the Winter Kings. Scattered dwarven clans and families, those who did not continue in their migrations to the south, live here. They are renowned as craftsmen and weapon makers. Some giants and giantkin also call the north home. Most are emigrants or outcasts from Grondheim who value the individualistic ways of the Antalians.

Customs

Survival in these harsh winter lands is the top priority of every Antalian, and if it were not their society would cease to exist. The cold climate makes it difficult for a sustained agrarian lifestyle, and most Antalian tribes supplement the meager resources they generate internally with those gained from raiding and trading with neighboring settlements.

Antalian society is polarized by two extremes, the need to survive and a strong sense of freedom and individuality. Often time these two forces oppose each other, and many Antalians live through a constant struggle to find the proper balance in their lives. The Winter Kings offer protection from the deadliest environments in the heart of Antalian territory, and they demand nothing less than abject worship from those under their care.

Fiercely loyal to clan and kin, Antalians in borderland territories often choose to follow a leader who is dedicated to bringing wealth and prosperity to their community. This right of leadership is not a birthright however, and is only guaranteed to last as long as those Antalians choosing to follow it are satisfied with their lot in life.

Regardless of where their loyalties are placed, many folk of the Winter Realms spend a good portion of their time conducting raids or mercantile ventures, which in the eyes of the Antalians are one in the same. Goods acquired from weaker neighbors can be bartered and traded to acquire more valuable resources from stronger neighbors.

Villages are composed of several longhouses, often surrounded by a palisade or ditch. Each longhouse may contain individuals from one or more families, with the more powerful families claiming the most ostentatious abodes.

Religion

For Antalians religion is a deeply personal experience, and most households have their own patron immortals. Odin and Protius are favorites, but Zugzul and Hel have nearly as many adherents. Many of the ancient giantish gods also

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have followings in the northern lands, although their worshipers tend to be vicious and savage.

In the core lands, the Winter Kings discourage immortal worship of any kind, replacing it with worship of themselves. Although they do their best to stamp out any religious fervor, most Antalians continue to worship the old gods in secret.

Settlements of Note

Oltima Thaul (pop. XXX): Built between a volcano and surrounding glaciers, Oltima Thaul is a city of Fire and Ice. This is the seat of the Winter King's power, which once extended for here to the Helskir Bridge, but has since eroded due to the receding winter. Thaul is truly a city of wonders, with tiered palisades built along its cliffbase, finally ending in a great crystal dome. It is here that the Winter King resides, and from her that he extends his icy reach across the lands.

Isbeorg (pop. XXX): A floating fortress of Ice that sails the Janivarian Sea, Isbeorg has long been a bane to northern coastal communities. Frozen longships sail forth from its belly to scour coastal communities of all their treasures. They Reavers of Isbeorg are the most feared pirates in the northern hemisphere, though they seldom travel south of the Dawn Lands.

Konabrand (pop. XXX): Last refuge of the Valharians, and stronghold of Fire, the forges of Konabrand are renowned for creating some of the most spectacular weapons in the Antalian world. A fortress constantly beset by attacks from Grondheim and Urzud, Konabrand is nonetheless a popular pilgrimage for craftsmen and merchants alike.

Appearance and Dress

Antalians live in a cold, harsh environment, and their dress reflects this. Furs are the material of choice, and line boots, tunics, and cloaks. Normal folk of all races, tend to dress in layers and will wrap additional furs around their bodies especially when traveling through the wilds. Genasi and other folk with the raw stuff of the elements coursing through their veins tend to wear fewer layers.

Long hair is the norm for both sexes in the Winter Realms, and in addition men wear full beards, often braided and adorned with any manner of bands, clips, and other functional jewelry. Helms are often adorned with horns and antlers for decorations, and scrimshaw brooches serve as clasps and buttons for clothing.

Weapons and Armor

Bronze swords and wooden shields are the norm in the Winter Realms. Spears and javelins are used for hunting as well as in warfare. Most warriors make do with hide or leather armor, although the very wealthy will supplement this with a bronze cuirass.

It is rumored that deep within the citadels of the Winter Kings, forging techniques of old are remembered, and indeed some of their most devout heroes wield weapons of iron and steel. Still more fantastic artifacts find their way from the vaults of the Kings. Clear swords of blue ice, bracers of molten iron, and spears of lightning all see use in the service of Winter.

Names

Male: *Alrik, Ander, Arni, Asgrim, Bjorn, Ceowulf, Einar, Eric, Godfred, Gunnar, Harald, Hrolf, Ivar, Knut, Njarl, Olaf, Ragnar, Snorri, Sven, and Yngvi.*

Female: *Astrid, Brynhild, Elsa, Gunnhild, Helga, Inga, Ingrid, Olga, Ragna, Sigrid, and Yrsa.*

Language

The Antalians speak the Antalian language which is derived from ancient Skandahari. As such there are a smattering of Blackmoorian words and phrases that have crept into common everyday speech over the years. Many Antalians also speak smatterings of dwarvish and giantish, depending on which neighboring communities are closest.

Foreign Relations

As a raiding society, the Antalians have few close allies. The dwarves of the Shimmering Lands are protected from the ice boats by the Bridge of Oost, and the waters near their home are typically

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too warm for the Antalians to traverse. Especially cold seasons can encourage them to travel further south, and raids upon dwarven and gnomish settlements are not unknown. Mostly however they Antalians are content to hire themselves out to the dwarves as mercenaries in their wars against the giants of Grondheim.

Other nations of the Known World rarely have dealings with Thaul, although there is ample evidence that the northern culture once covered many of their lands, extending as far south as the northern tip of Taymora.

Only the savage elves of the north, the giants of Grondheim, and the beastmen of Urzud have any real contact with the Winter Kings and their folk. Between the Antalians and Grondheim, trade is just as likely as war. These two people have built up a grudging respect for one another and many cultural elements between the two nations are similar.

Between the Antalians and Urzud there is little love however. Both are predominantly raiding cultures and compete over many of the limited resources in the harsh lands of the north.

Character Classes

The skills of a warrior are some of the most prized in these lands, and unsurprisingly this is reflected in the mindsets of the Antalians. Fishermen, farmers, and other craftsmen all supplement their primary trades by raiding and pillaging neighboring countries. Likewise, Antalians are in tune with their surroundings, and many have skills as foresters and trappers.

Skalds and their ilk are not uncommon in the northern lands, and in addition to being renowned poets, many are also proficient in the elemental arts. Though feared, such individuals are also respected, and families take great pride in members with elemental talents.

After 2300 BC

With the climate warming, and the area of the frozen north steadily shrinking, the dominion of the Winter Kings is never able to recover from its downward spiral. The rule of Oltima Thaul is eventually broken, and the power of the Winter Kings is shattered.

2000 BC sees many tribes of Antalians migrating south, into warmer climates, where their newly transformed culture flourishes. This marks the beginning of a golden age for the Antalians, in which many of their warrior heroes prosper and attain immortality. With the decline of the Shimmering Lands circa BC 1800 the Antalians become a major force in the north once again. This newfound prosperity is not to last however.

Humanoid hordes and attacks by a new enemy in the south, the Nithians, take their toll on Antalian culture. Several tribes are captured and enslaved, and the rest are doomed to extinction on the outer world. Not long after a sizable portion of their population is moved into the Hollow World by the immortals. Those Antalians that remain on the outer world will eventually develop into the culture of the Northern Reaches.

DAWN CORSAIRS

Location: Islands off the eastern coast of Brun.

Area: XXX sq. ft. (XXX sq. m.); additional notes if any

Population: Estimated XXX (X% human, X% elf, X% other).

Languages: A Mogrethian patois is spoken as the tongue understood by most inhabitants of these lands; however languages from across southern Brun as well as the Dawn Lands are spoken by distinct groups.

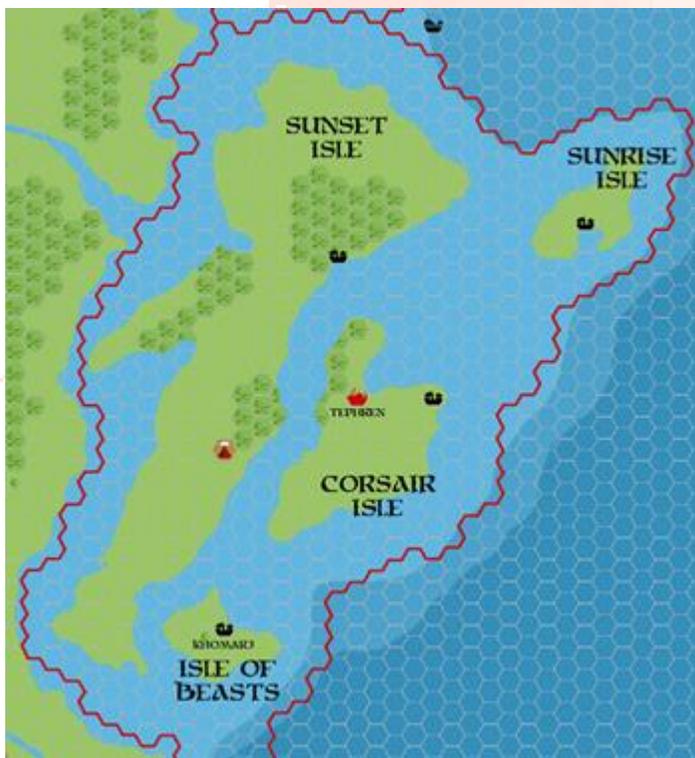
Coinage: No national standard is set, though coins from neighboring countries are common. When dealing in coins many folk trade based on coin weight, however more often a system of pure barter is used.

Taxes: 10% - 20% tax on all plundered goods, paid by ship captains to the community in which they regularly make port. Villagers pay 1cp per working age individual in their household per year.

Government Type: Meritocracy

Industries: Raiding, trade goods, fish, mead

Important Figures:



Overview

For a society that was created through bondage and slavery, many Corsairs claim that their land is the only true beacon of justice and freedom in the world. Few born outside its borders would agree, though the Corsairs claims may be closer to the truth than not. A land ruled by pirate kings, the Isles of the Dawn Corsairs are a hotbed of intrigue with secrets aplenty lurking just beneath the surface. Though once slaves, the Dawn Corsairs have a newfound dominion over the

seas... and some say, over the creatures that dwell within them as well.

Geography

Unlike the rest of southern Brun three of the four major islands that make up the Isles of the Dawn Corsairs, are not volcanically active. The only active volcano exists on Sunset Isle, the largest of the islands. Mt XXX constantly dribbles magma into the sea, but only very rarely does the mountain rumble with any more destructive forces. Rolling hills and sparse forests, with little to no canopy growth, cover most of the islands. The surrounding sea is fairly shallow, filled with reefs and sand bars, and tends to be treacherous.

Flora and Fauna

Most of the farmlands, owned by Mogrethian masters and worked by slave labor, have been slowly reclaimed over the past several decades, as those who previously worked the land took on other occupations. Forests long ago cut down to clear farmland, are now beginning to reclaim the island. Domesticated animals abound on the island, with some major pig and goat populations going feral. Very few predators exist, and those that do stay confined to the darker, less explored, portions of the islands.

The open waters surrounding the isles are much more perilous. Though the fishing industry supports a large portion of the Dawn Corsairs diet, the profession is not without its risks. Not only are the waters themselves treacherous, but

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many dangerous sea creatures make their homes in the coastal waters. Sharks, giant octopus and eels are common, but so too are sea serpents and their ilk.

History

Once a colony of Mogreth, the Dawn Corsairs united as a people shortly after the slave uprising of BC 2400. The large islands off the southeastern coast of Mogreth had long seen use as a key agricultural colony, but when the dark clouds of ash from the destruction of Vulcania disrupted food production, the slaves on the island overthrew their saurian masters. Before Mogreth could mount an assault to punish their wayward slaves, like groups on the mainland began to revolt. Led by arena gladiators, they gathered support from the outlying communities of Mogreth and soon had a slave army marching toward the sea. Helped by the Makers to the south, the slaves paid elven merchants, with booty ransacked from their masters, to take them to safe havens.

This the elves did, depositing a majority of the mainland slaves on the recently liberated southeast islands. There the rebels quickly commandeered Mogrethian fortresses, and with the help of sympathetic factions among both the elves and the Makers, they held Mogreth at bay and claimed their independence.

Peoples

Humans make up the populace majority on the Isles of the Dawn Corsairs, although many different races and cultures are represented. Descendants of Thonians and Oltecs, both from the interior of Brun as well as the Dawn Lands are represented here. The slavery of Mogreth has driven much of their original cultural heritage from them, but on the Isles they have begun to build a brand new society.

Folk of Taymoran descent, mainly hailing from the Frontierlands, find their way to the Corsair Isles, as do renegade lizardfolk and troglodytes, though they make up a distinct minority. Elves also make common appearances, especially in the

merchant quarters, and are greatly valued for their naval expertise.

Other outcasts and miscreants may make a home on the isles as well. Lupins fleeing from Inti conquest sometimes make it as far as these shores, as do tauran sailors who chafe under the rule of the Taymoran vampire queens.

Customs

Corsair society is divided up into two distinct populations, those who sail the seas, and those who do not. A council of elders rules the townships, often with the most prominent among them acting as spokesman. Many of these elders are former ship captains or officers, but all have given up a life at sea in their old age. In the townships their word is law. Elders may ask favors and services of a Corsair captain; however they may not compel him to act on their behalf.

Younger captains are the absolute masters of their own destiny, at least aboard their own ships. They earn the envy of the masses and although they have no direct say in the comings and goings of individual townships they can often act to sway popular opinion.

Most of the populace is devoted to agriculture and fishing, but many sign up with a sea captain during their off season in order to supplement their normal income with the promise of booty gained from raiding. Captains in turn, must prove their abilities as a leader, and make good on their promises of treasure, lest their men abandon them for more successful ventures.

Religion

Protius is chief among the immortals worshiped on the Isles of the Corsairs, and he has temples in every port and dedicated shrines on most Corsair ships. The Corsairs attribute their freedom from Mogreth and the bounty of their new homeland mainly to him. Sasskas is seen in the more violent aspects of the sea, and many attempt to appease him before going to sea even if they don't worship him outright.

Other immortals are venerated on the Isles as well, especially those such as Ninfangle and

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Tyche who are associated with luck and good fortune.

Settlements of Note

Jagged Edge (pop. XXX): A longboat commanded by Captain Brydd Kereph, the Jagged Edge is often towed by four slender, green scaled sea serpents. The creatures obey the commands of Captain Kereph and can be instructed to pull the ship, or set loose to flank an enemy vessel. Brydd can trace his family line back to some of the original rebels who threw off the yoke of Mogreth nearly 100 years ago.

Tephren (pop. XXX): Set along the eastern shores of Corsair Isle, Tephren is the meeting place of the Founding Fathers, and serves as the “capital” of the nation. The city has a naturally deep harbor, but is surrounded by jagged reefs and sand bars. No light houses or other man made wonders mark the way into the harbor, so those sailing there must know their way or risk running aground.

Khomarj (pop. XXX): A small village between Tephren and the Island of the Makers, Khomarj is the home of a band of intrepid fishermen brave enough sail the nearby waters. Monsters and sea creatures of all types abound near here, and it is to Khomarj that many aspiring sea captains visit to test their skills at controlling the creatures of the deep.

Appearance and Dress

A temperate climate coupled with warm northern currents mean that folk living on these islands rarely need to bundle up in anything warmer than short breaches and a light tunic. Sandals are the norm when on shore, but at sea most Corsairs walk bare footed to better grasp the deck of their boats. There is little difference in the dress between men and woman, although women prefer clothing that accentuates their figures. Both sexes adorn themselves with jewelry and will often accentuate their clothing with brightly colored scarves and belts.

Weapons and Armor

Light weapons are the norm aboard ships, with clubs, bronze daggers, and short swords being favored for hand to hand combat. Short spears and javelins are popular during boarding actions, and shields are rarely carried. Weapons crafted by the elves across the seas or by the Makers on the island next door are highly sought after commodities, and only the most bold, or most lucky, possess one.

Foreign Relations

Corsair ships are a bane to merchants in the southern seas. They attack Mogrethian interests in the Dawn Sea as well as the few merchant ships that make port in Gromhyeld in the Shimmering Lands. They have as little love for the dwarven slavers as they do for Mogreth itself, and slaves liberated by the Corsairs are always given the opportunity to join the pirate’s crews.

Settlements along the coasts of the Frontierlands may be either friendly ports or targets for raids, depending on the settlement’s wealth and allegiances. Many have deals with certain Corsair captains, promising them safe haven in return for support against hostile neighbors when needed. Few Corsairs sail as far as Taymora, though those that do find fat, though well defended, targets for their raids.

Maker presence on the Isles is limited, but always welcome. Most respect and fear the Makers and the wondrous feats they perform, but few have forgotten the role the Makers played in liberating their ancestors. Elves and their merchant ships are also a welcome sight in the ports of the Corsairs, though on occasion an unscrupulous pirate captain will attempt to liberate the elves from their wealth.

The Dawn Corsairs may have dealings with folk in the Dawnlands as well, though how such folk react to them is highly variable. Of the Inti and Urzud, the Dawn Corsairs know very little, and they sail in very different waters from their Antalian counterparts in the north.

Adhuzans are ill trusted by the elves and Makers alike, and the Dawn Corsairs give them a wide

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berth whenever possible, however they won't back down when their territory is being violated. Adhuzans have made several attempts over the years to gain a foothold on the Isles, each meeting with disaster for the aggressors. Despite their best made efforts, the Adhuzans can not break the power that the Corsair Princes have over the beasts guarding their waters.

Names

Prefixes: *Ab, Am, An, At, Ba, Be, Bo, Cha, Che, Chi, Dj, Eb, Fe, Ga, Ha, He, Ho, Is, Ja, Ka, Ke, Kha, Khe, La, Ma*

Suffixes (male): *api, ari, aru, bal, haq, heb, kar, omi, ops, rus, sa*

Suffixes (female): *at, ath, bah, het, ila, ina, is, kah, sah, thor*

Language

The Corsairs speak a combination of Mogreth, Taymoran, and languages from the Dawn Lands, although other languages can be heard all across the Isles.

Character Classes

Corsairs value independence and self reliance, and many supplement a career of farming or fishing with the occasional seagoing raid. Most are apt sailors, and can handle themselves in a fight. A few Corsairs make a life at sea their full time profession, valuing skills of intrigue and

deception just as highly as those of a more martial nature.

The Dawn Corsairs owe much of their current success to the creatures that inhabit the seas surrounding them. Several family lines, all able to trace their heritage back to the initial Mogrethian revolts, exist that have an extraordinary ability to communicate with such beasts. Such individuals are always desired as crewmen aboard the Corsair vessels.

Practitioners of the arcane arts are less common, and generally not trusted. Wizards tend to be loners who shun a life at sea. Priests of the immortals on the other hand, especially those of Protius, regularly move among their flock, and are welcome additions aboard any ship.

After 2300 BC

When Mogreth is swept away in the glacial flood of BC 2000, some of the Dawn Corsairs may return to the homeland of their former masters in an attempt to liberate any of their brethren who may still be living there. These two groups may eventually play a role in the formation of Nithia, which appears as a nation around the same time period.

The great upheavals that sink Taymora, from BC 1750 to BC 1720, also cause devastation on the Isles of the Corsairs. Many of their coastal developments are inundated by the sea when glaciers disappear and the ocean levels rise.

DEEP ELVES

Location: Underneath the Continent of Brun.

Area: XXX sq. ft. (XXX sq. m.); additional notes if any

Population: Estimated XXX (X% elf, X% tiefling, X% other).

Languages: Northern elvish dialect, with smatterings of Blackmoorian and Infernal mixed in. Some elves may speak any of the various Antalian dialects, as well as the language spoken by Brunian dwarves.

Coinage: All manner of coins and jewels are used for barter, although the most valuable currency of the Deep Elves is souls. Upon attaining adulthood all Deep Elves perform a ritual binding their souls to 100 gold coins. These coins become streaked blood red, and are then used by the elves to make all manner of infernal pacts.

Taxes: Vassals of the Deep Realm pay taxes to one of the dark cults that control their local region. These treasures are in turn dedicated to the elves' dark immortals (along with other appropriate sacrifices) in order to buy their continued survival in the inhospitable territories beneath the earth.

Government Type: Infernal Theocracy.

Industries: Mineral resources, metal goods, jewelry, intrigue, souls

Important Figures:

Overview

From caverns deep beneath the surface, the elves plan their revenge upon a world that so recently tried to eradicate them. Now, with the help of powerful new patrons, the elves seek to repay all those who somehow managed to remain on the surface of the world. Their corrupting touch can be felt all the way from Antalian lands in the north, to the shores of Taymora and beyond.

Geography

The tunnels of the Shadowdeep are long and twisted, and many would assume that the light of the sun never touches them... but this would be a mistake. Elven magic has connected the tunnels with other realms, including those of the surface world. One may pass from a dark tunnel to find himself walking in lands with a blazing red sun, or staring at a gray cloudless horizon that stretches into eternity.

Flora and Fauna

The underground realm of the Deep Elves is surprisingly full of life. Plants and creatures of all sorts find their way into the dark caverns through passages and portals to other worlds, created by the pact magic wrought from the elves. Many take on a fiendish aspect, revealing their true heritage. Brimstone

prowlers stalk through thick fungal jungles fed by underground thermal springs and refuse expunged from the lower planes.

History

When Blackmoor was destroyed in the Great Rain of Fire, the elven colonists on the northern continent were lucky to survive the catastrophe at all. Survive they did, although the initial destruction was the least of their worries for the Great Rain of Fire brought with it vast clouds of poison that settled on all the nearby lands. To escape the Wasting disease that the clouds carried, the elves fled into nearby caves delving deep underground.

Living in the bowels of the earth contained its own problems however. Food was scarce, as were many of the natural resources of the surface world, and even though the elves went deep, some trace of the Wasting followed them. Within years after fleeing the surface, the elves realized that they were a dying race. Starving, exposed to the elements of the dark, and slowly succumbing to the Wasting, the elves did the only thing that they could. They prayed. ...And something answered their prayers.

Dark powers heard the elves and offered them sustenance in return for worship. Using the dark arts that were taught to them, the elves began to rebuild their society, though they rebuilt it in the image of their new saviors.

Peoples

Elves dominate the deeplands, though elves unlike any that lived on the surface world before them. Many are gaunt and twisted, crippled by the dreaded Wasting and corrupted by the touch of fiendish masters. Because of the long lifespans of elves, many of their elders can actually remember living on the surface before Blackmoor destroyed the world. Though hoary with age, these elves look the most like their surface cousins.

Younger generations of elves, those born under the auspices of their new immortal patrons, all bear some mark of their new masters. Many have pale skin and pale hair, and larger than normal eyes that are better adapted to the darkness of the earth than to the shining sun in the sky.

Other creatures can be found in the deep realm, living among the elves. Fiendish servants of dark immortals roam the caverns, often posing as much a danger to the elves as a benefit. Generations of intermingling with such creatures has created tiefling bloodlines, often located in the more populous elven settlements.

Customs

Deep elf society is centered on the making of pacts; everything that they possess, even their very lives, is dependant on this. Trust and loyalty in these lands is measured only by how much of a person you actually own – a concept made manifest by the elves' soul coins. Many elves spent the majority of their lives attempting to regain the souls they sacrificed on becoming adults, or at least to replace them with souls of equal or greater value.

Family units make up the building blocks of Deep Elf society, and most communities are composed of the dwellings of several families that have banded together for mutual defense and survival. The elven priesthood lies at the top of Deep Elf society, and any elf that joins the dark cult must forswear any allegiance to family and friends. The Dark Council rules the priesthood, answering directly to the dark immortals themselves.

Unlike many cultures after the Great Rain of Fire, the elves were able to maintain a very high standard of living (thanks in full to the dark entities they made pacts with), and so want for very little in their own lives. Food, shelter, companionship... all these things the elves have aplenty. Unfortunately they had to sell their very souls to retain these things, and most of their efforts are focused on either punishing others (who made better choices in their lives) or bringing them down to the elves' level.

Religion

Only through dark rituals and fell deeds, did the elves manage to survive through the Wasting, and the darke entities who helped them through that are not likely to forget anytime soon. Demogorgon, Stodos, Arik, Hel, and Thanatos make up the accepted elven pantheon, and those beings require a steady stream of sacrifices to insure that elven society continues to function.

New ideas have begun creeping into Deep Elf society however, thinking that leads to the conclusion that the elves need no longer rely on darker powers. A younger generation of elves has begun listening to whispers from Ka, Korotiku, and even Ixion, leading them away from their tragic desperation and back into the light.

Settlements of Note

Aengmor (pop. XXX): Closest of all Deep Elf dwellings to the surface, Aengmore is truly a city in turmoil, for it is here that the Deep Elves realized they no longer need be beholden to dark entities. Nonetheless, the city is still dominated by a dark central temple, dedicated to fiendish patrons. Several passages off of the main cavern lead to a world with a red sun, and the elves of Aengmor bring the bounties of this world back to their city.

Malheim (pop. XXX): A thriving center of Deep Elf activity, the city of Malheim is built upon a nexus of several worlds. When the ceilings of the cavern aren't lined with bolts of red lightning, black stars shine through sending waves of terror down the spines of all who fall underneath their light. From Malheim, the Deep Elves plot and scheme, dreaming of ways to corrupt their neighbors and bring about their downfall.

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Valheffyl (pop. XXX): This small town borders a passage into a steamy and hot jungle world. Slaves toil nonstop to harvest the bounties of this world and ship its resources across all the tunnels in the Shadowdeep.

Appearance and Dress

Many features of the Deep elves – large inset eyes, gaunt pale skin, and stark white hair, are the results of their pact magic with fiendish beings. Intent on preserving their culture after the Great Rain of Fire, the elves have paid a terrible price indeed, and many show the signs of stress and oppression in their countenance.

Despite their physical fortitude, the elves dress only in the finest clothing and wear only the brightest, gaudiest jewelry. Silks and linens are the most common materials found, though cloth of shimmering silver and gold is quite popular as well. Many such materials are bartered for from across the planes, and may carry their own personal curses for those who choose to don them.

Weapons and Armor

The deep elves prefer short weapons that can be wielded in tight quarters. Their underground homes and the passages that connect them can often be tight and cramped, and larger weapons would only get in the way in such an environment. Short spears, short swords, and daggers are weapons of choice. Few elves carry short bows as well, although their effectiveness is limited underground.

Deep elf armor tends to be light and flexible so that the elves don't lose any maneuverability while navigating through their underground territories. Most are made from leather, or from woven fibers of giant mushroom and any vegetable matter that manages to grow beneath the surface.

Foreign Relations

The influence of the elves can be felt in many lands despite the depths of their redoubts. Pushed on by their dark patrons, the elves have

been striving to expand the region of their immortals demesne.

Elven tribes living in the north near Antalian lands or Grondheim, are especially despised. Isolated bands are often tricked into entering the depths where they meet the most gruesome of fates. Others living in the north, Antalians and the giants of Grondheim, may have sporadic contact with the elves. Although many may be receptive to their newfound allies, trafficking with dark immortals and their servants nearly always ends in tragedy.

Rumors abound that some dwarven clans have also had contact with the deep elves in the past, though the dwarven hatred of elves is well known and likewise reciprocated by the elves themselves. If the rumors are true, then such alliances must surely be close kept secrets among the communities involved.

With the Inti, the elves share many cultural similarities. Both races were driven underground by the Great Rain of Fire nearly 700 years ago, and forced to fend for themselves in a dangerous new environment. Since the two cultures discovered each other there have been periods of intense warfare interspersed with more peaceful times of trade. Regardless, the Inti have never been very trusting of the elves or the elven patrons, and most seek to avoid contact with them if possible.

Names

Prefixes:

Suffixes (male):

Suffixes (female):

Language

The Deep Elves speak the Deep dialect of elvish (which is understandable by all other elves), and are also fluent in ancient Blackmoorian. Some know passable dwarvish, giantish, or even Antalian, depending on which surface races they have dealings with.

Character Classes

Nearly all Deep Elves retain some innate abilities with regards to arcane magic, and those who rise to the tops of their profession are greatly envied.

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Wizards and sorceresses command a great deal of respect from their peers, though don't invoke quite as much terror as their divine counterparts. Those that traffic directly with the immortals are able to call up foul beasts and fell denizens to do their will.

Deep Elves prefer to have others fight for them, so the martial disciplines aren't as well

The founding of Aengmor signals the beginning of the end for the Deep Elves, as a younger generation of elves begins pushing back against wickedness and oppression of their predecessors. Over the following centuries more and more Deep Elven communities will drift away from the corruption of Malheim and begin to once again live in the world on their own ingenuity and determination.

In BC 1950 some of these elves move back to the surface in what will later be known as Glantri. Surrounded by humanoids and other perils, they have no contact with other surface elves moving into the area, and are soon driven back underground by the Broken Lands catastrophe in BC 1700.

represented in these lands. The elves prefer tact and trickery rather than sheer brute force in order to accomplish their goals. Sneaks and skulks abound, and those elves walking among the surface races, unknown to others, surely number more than can be expected.

After 2300 BC

The city of Aengmor itself will change hands several times following its founding, first being conquered by Azcans from the Hollow World, then reclaimed by the ancestors of the Shadow Elves, and finally taken by humanoids (led by the newly immortalized Atzanteotle, one of the city's original founding fathers).

A small, dedicated, cluster of Deep Elves will survive all of these transitions, possibly migrating out to dark planes across the multiverse. These same elves will one day have contact with the descendants of both the Antalians and the Shimmering Lands, being known to both races as the Dark Elves.

FRONTIERLANDS

Location: Continent of Brun, between Mogreth and Taymora.

Area: XXX sq. ft. (XXX sq. m.); additional notes if any

Population: Estimated XXX (X% humans, X% lizardfolk, X% troglodytes, X% giantkin, X% other).

Languages: Taymoran, Mogrethian are the most common languages spoken here, although several other human dialects exist as well (those spoken by Mogrethian slave races).

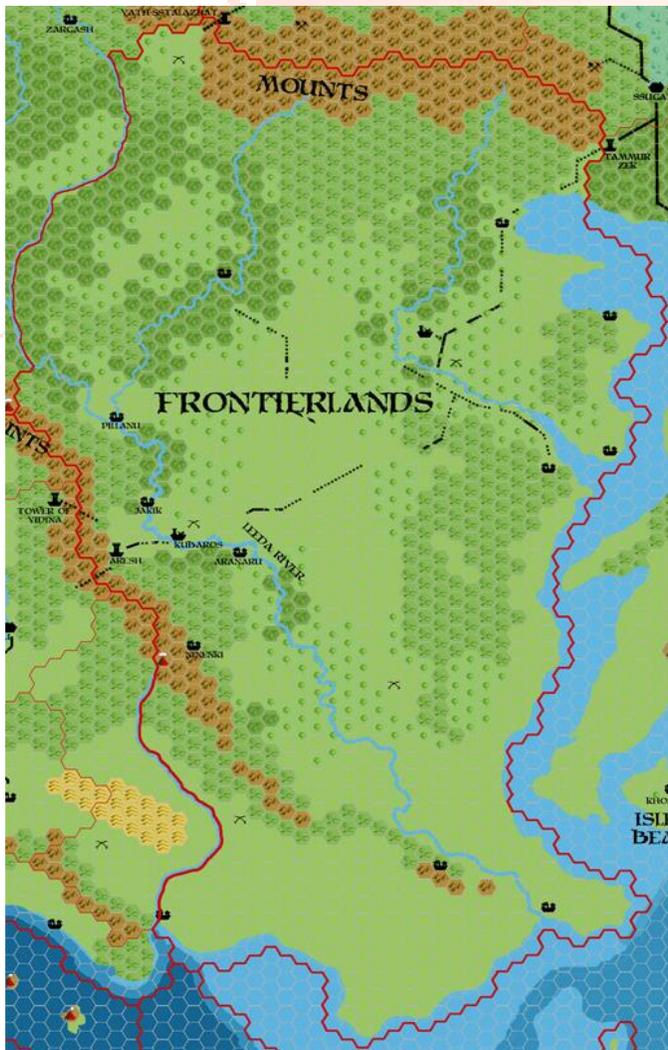
Coinage: No national standard is set, though coins from neighboring countries are common. When dealing in coins many folk trade based on coin weight, however more often a system of pure barter is used.

Taxes: No national tax exists, but local communities may tax their inhabitants anywhere from 10% to 50% of all goods produced in order to support and defend the settlement. Merchants are typically not taxed (providing incentive to visit these lands), although adventurers and thrill seekers may be.

Government Type: Non-centralized Cooperatives

Industries: Lumber, textiles, furs

Important Figures:



Overview

The wilderness between Mogreth and Taymor is a land of forested hills, swift-flowing rivers, and

frightful storms coming in from the Sea of Dawn, but the land is rich and highly coveted. Both Mogreth and Taymor have tried to settle it over the centuries, but doing so brought the two nations too close to each other, prompting a swift reaction from the other. Too equally matched for the time being, the territory is now a bitterly contested no man's land, where secret bases and colonies are established to watch the enemy, and proxy wars are fought amongst the locals. Every few years, one side musters enough strength to launch an offensive, and the cycle continues.

Geography

Lush, fertile valleys bisected by strong flowing rivers dominate the landscape of the Frontierlands. Rolling hills, covered by thickly grown forests, make their way from the XXX Mountains to the base of the southern Kuuromaresha. The XXX river runs the entire length of the Frontierlands, from the northern XXX to the Sea of Dawn.

Flora and Fauna

Some of the oldest forests on southern Brun exist in the Frontierlands, and as such they contain some of the darkest secrets. Pine forests in higher altitudes give way to those of birch and maple and oak, while the coastal areas are filled with giant redwoods.

Wolves and bears are the most common predators, while hippogriffs and manticores often

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duel each other in the air. Many stories also abound of saurian horrors that have crept out of Mogreth, or of restless undead set loose by minions of Taymora.

History

This region coalesced into being after many years of battle between Taymora and Mogreth, with occasional periods of occupation from the giants of Grondheim as well. One nation or another has claimed control over portions of this land over the past century, but that control is always fleeting, insured by the wild and rugged nature of the territory.

The land bears many signs of past battles – ruined fortresses and colonies (some half-completed), partly completed (or deteriorating) roads, vast swaths of burnt countryside and churned earth, abandoned quarries and lumber camps, small mountains of skeletons in rusting armor, and of course the dead. There are other signs as well, including those which continue to claim lives. The woods are inhabited by roving bands of undead, minions let loose after their masters fell in battle, and nightmarish creatures summoned by the sorcerers of Mogreth and left behind to roam.

Peoples

Indigents and outcasts from across Brun have found their way to the Frontierlands, with humans being the most populous. Many of those hail from Taymora, or are descendants of one of the human states that Mogreth has consumed over the years.

Giants and fey folk can be found in the mountains, as well as in the deep places of some of the oldest forests. Troglodytes and frogfolk are also common, especially in the eastern portion of the country. Most have either fled or been driven from Mogreth for some crime, perceived or not.

Small pockets of elves also exist, mainly along the shores where their traveling kin frequent. Even small groups of beastmen and other related creatures roam about the countryside, either as scouts of Urzud, or as some claim escaped (or

released) from some holding pit on the Isle of Teknuria.

Customs

Life is at the community level, with few locals venturing too far from the safety of their villages or strongholds. Most communities in the Frontierlands are self-sufficient, and can grow, hunt, or scrounge for everything that they need.

Folk living in these wild lands rarely trust outsiders, especially those with a different cultural heritage than their own. Most settlements form along racial lines. Communities of former human slaves, escaped from Mogreth, would have very little love for any neighboring troglodytes, regardless of where their loyalties lay. Likewise, troglodytes living in the area probably have very little reason to trust folk with a Taymoran cultural background.

Few lasting alliances between settlements in the Frontierlands exist, although even communities that hate each other will band together if the threat is great enough. Just such occurrences have happened on many occasions when one of the major powers has tried to invade the area, which plays a large factor in the continued independence of the area.

Some villages may be semi-nomadic, with entire communities moving from one location to the next throughout the year. Such migrations may follow the cycles of native wildlife, or might be driven by the aggressive nature of their neighbors.

Religion

As with customs, religious practice varies from community to community. Immortal patrons from Taymora, Mogreth, and Grondheim have all found purchase here. Ninfangle is also worshiped throughout the land as a patron of self reliance and fortitude.

Darker forces exist in the realm as well, though only rarely will their ranks swell with worshipers. Ancient temples, lost even before the rise of Blackmoor, still dot the land waiting to be found by brave explorers.

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Settlements of Note

Aresh (pop. XXX): Mysteriously abandoned by Taymoran forces several years ago, the stronghold of Aresh was quickly seized by locals and repurposed for their needs. The stone walls of the fortress have enabled defenders to repel Taymoran forces intent on reclaiming their lost stronghold several times. In return for keeping the Taymorans at bay, several neighboring villages routinely bring food and supplies to the beleaguered residents.

Naskwa (pop. XXX): The troglodyte settlement of Naskwa constantly vanishes and reappears, not by any magical means, but because the residents are constantly on the move. Every structure in the village is designed to be easily collapsible and moved, and the troglodytes do so for multiple reasons. Whether to avoid attack from Mogreth, or to follow migrating animal populations, the folk of Naskwa are ready to pack up and move their village at a moment's notice.

Appearance and Dress

Dress is utilitarian in this temperate region, with humans and their ilk generally wearing more clothing than their saurian counterparts. Furs and wool are the most common materials used in clothing, with others finding use only with the most affluent individuals. Men tend to dress in a long sleeved tunic with breeches, while women substitute in an ankle length skirt.

Other dress styles, especially those conforming to Taymoran or Mogrethian standards, are commonplace, though often subtle differences exist.

Weapons and Armor

Although many settlements have their own established smithies, there is very little organized industry for the creation of weapons and armor. Much of what the folk of this land possess comes from their native lands, or is acquired through trade.

Utilitarian weapons such as hammers, picks, axes, and scythes are favored over others, since many of those have a dual use as tools in daily life.

Spears and bows are also common, as they see use in hunting as well as in warfare.

Foreign Relations

Most folk of the Frontierlands would prefer to be left alone, but when an army marches through many flee their homes only to rebuild afterwards. They hate Mogreth because they know all too well the fate that would await them if the sorcerer kings gained control, but they have little love for the Taymorans, who would use them just as quickly.

Coastal villages in the Frontierlands have dealings with the Dawn Corsairs, elven traders from afar, and even some contact with the Makers. Dealings with the elves and Makers are almost always mutually beneficial, although contact with the Corsairs is more problematic. Depending on the group of Corsairs being dealt with they are just as likely to demand some form of tribute as they are to conduct real trade.

Adhuza takes little notice of the Frontierlands considering them to be little more than unruly rabble, and for that the folk of this area can be thankful. The underwater city of Suthus is nearby however, and conflicts between Adhuzans and the Dawn Corsairs sometimes spill over on an unsuspecting village.

With others there is very little contact. The occasional dwarven traveler or group of beastmen moves through these parts often enough that folks know of their existence. Antalians are far enough removed from the nearby waters that they are unknown.

Names

Names from any of the neighboring lands may be found here. See entries on the Dawn Corsairs, Mogreth, and Taymora for specific examples.

Language

The folk living in the Frontierlands come from varied backgrounds, and thus their languages are also varied. Many speak the language of Mogreth and Taymor.

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Character Classes

The independence and self reliance bred in the Frontierlands lends itself well to those making a living as woodsmen or hunters of all sorts. Most villages are concerned enough about attacks from their neighbors or threats from denizens of the dark forests, that they maintain a standing militia.

The lifestyle and tedium of everyday living is not conducive to those who practice the arcane arts, however the odd wizard hermit can be found secluded away in the wilds of this land. In contrast, those who devote their lives to an immortal patron, or to nature in general, find a genuine need for their services.

Less savory individuals also make the Frontierlands their home, whether they are escaped slaves desperate for their next meal, or bands of brigands driven from more civilized areas. These people become adept at moving over the land unseen, ready to pounce on any unwary traveler unlucky enough to pass nearby.

After 2300 BC

The Frontierlands will slowly disappear as portions of the area are consumed by neighboring empires over the next several centuries. By BC 2000 most of it will either be claimed by Taymora or Mogreth, but with the downfall of the lizard's empire after the glacial flood, most of the land will be conquered by Taymora. Some portion of the populace will return east, to reclaim lost kingdoms from the crumbled empire of Mogreth, and these folk will become the progenitors of Nithia. Others will go on to create the Kingdom of Cynidicea.

By BC 1750 little trace will be left of the cultures that once lived here. With the sinking of Taymora and the changing of the local climate, most folk in this area will turn to a semi-nomadic lifestyle. Receding forests will be replaced by rolling grasslands, upon which herds of bison migrate throughout the year.

GRONDHEIM

Location: Continent of Brun, and portions of the Fey Court in Fairae

Area: XXX sq. ft. (XXX sq. m.); additional notes if any

Population: Estimated XXX (X% frost giants, X% fire giants, X% other giants, X% trolls, X% fey).

Languages: The Fey language is the official tongue of the Troll Queens, but Antalian, several dialects of giantish, and even smatterings of ancient Blackmoorian are commonly spoken.

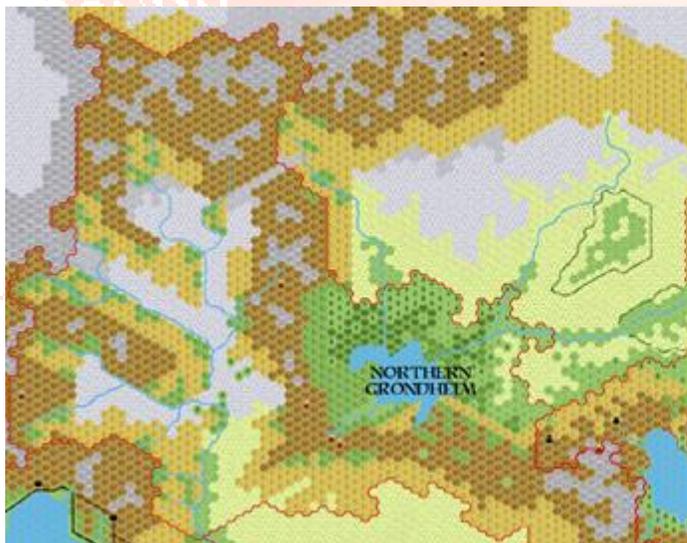
Coinage: Coins minted by the giants of Grondheim are very large and would be considered metal ingots by normal sized peoples. The most common denominations are the XXX (25 gp), XXX (50 gp) and XXX (100 gp), which are often subdivided by weight to make up desired amounts. In the frozen lands of the Frost Jarls, scrimshaw is also an accepted form of currency.

Taxes: Agents of the Troll Queen collect 10% to 20% of the value of a noble's holdings on an annual basis. In addition any and all iron tools, implements, or scraps are confiscated whenever they are found.

Government Type: Matrilineal Monarchy (with magocratic tendencies)

Industries: Changeling children, fey magic, artifacts, trickery

Important Figures:



Overview

The last of the giant kingdoms, the nation of Grondheim clings to its tenuous position among the upstart nations of the lesser races. Frost jarls, fire chieftains, and stone hetmans all pay homage to the Troll Queen and her cadre of wizards who rule Grondheim with terror and magic. Driven to desperation by nations encroaching on their territory since the Great Rain of Fire, Grondheim is poised to strike back at its enemies, both ancient and new. What magical retribution the trolls are cooking up remains to be seen, but whatever its cause, its effects are sure to be terrible.

Geography

Grondheim comprises a vast area stretching from the Icereach Mountains in the north all the way south to the Altan Tepes bordering Taymora. Most of the terrain is mountainous and inhospitable, with many of the icy peaks being snow laden even during the summer months. Those lands in the waking world wind through Antalia, Intua, the Shimmering Lands, and even parts of Mogreth and Taymora, but those are not the only lands of Grondheim.

High up in mountain passes, secret valleys lead to a lush green realm populated by spirits and fey. The land of Fairae, far beyond the eyes of most mortal beings, is the real seat of the Troll Queen's

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power, and that is a land more akin to dreams than anything else.

Flora and Fauna

Because the nation of Grondheim stretches across almost the entire length of Brun, nearly any creature and any environment can be found within its borders. Boreal forests of the north slowly turn more temperate the closer they creep toward the shores of the Sea of Dread.

Creatures adapted to mountainous dwelling are most common. Dragons ranging in color from white, black, green and red roam the skies of these lands, as do their lesser cousins. Their primary prey are goats, deer, and moose, but they are not above attacking herd animals, or those who shepherd them. Beasts from the Fairae Realm are also common here, including fauns, satyrs, centaurs, treants, and all other manner of fey.

History

In the centuries following the Great Rain of Fire, the giantish races saw an explosion of prosperity. Of all the mortal races on Mystara, they (along with the beastmen of Urzud) seemed to be immune to the worst effects of the Rain and the Wasting disease that followed it. Frost giant Jarls and fire giant Emirs reclaimed much of their ancestor's glory from the ashes of human civilizations around the globe. The nation of Grondheim was a shining example of this giantish rebirth.

Their luck was not to last however. The smaller races recovered quickly from the disaster and once again began rebuilding their kingdoms. Grondheim was beset by tribes of dwarves and gnomes to the north and east, by elves and humanoids to the west, and by humans to the south. Slowly all of their hard won gains were being eroded.

Then the troll Queen came. Strong in the ways of magic, the Queen and her fey court promised to help the giants reclaim their lands in return for their fealty. Since consolidating her control, the Queen has begun looking outward, towards

neighboring lands held by the other mortal races, ready to devour them at a moment's notice.

Peoples

Giants of all types live within the boundaries of Grondheim, with the frost and fire giants serving in most roles of authority, and keeping their lesser cousins in line. Stone and hill giants are far more numerous and many make their living in the borderland territories of the nation. These, along with any half-giant kin, form the backbone of Grondheim society, as well as its military.

Since the coming of the Troll Queen, fey creatures have become more common in Grondheim as well. Centaurs, satyrs, fauns, and all manner of pixies and sprites roam the forests, intent on keeping them free from unwanted incursions.

Less savory, and more aggressive, fey form the bulk of the Queen's retinue, along with her troll mages and warriors. Male trolls are tall brutes, with greenish rubbery skin and oily black hair, and their vicious animalistic behavior makes the fit for little else than combat. Troll females however are almost like an entirely different species. Masters of the arcane arts, it is rumored that they can take any form though their true form is just as ugly as the males.

Another rumor, though one that seems to bear fruit, is that changelings live among the trolls. Snatched at birth from their rightful parents, these humans, elves, and dwarves, have been raised by the trolls and taught all of the customs and arts of the Troll Queen's court.

Customs

Trickery and intrigue are the wheels that keep Grondheim society running, and making a deal with the Troll Queen's court can be a very dangerous prospect – even when all requests are granted. Many troll mages will offer their services to foreign dignitaries in return for some slight favor that ends up being more than they bargained for.

The Troll Queen is the absolute ruler of Grondheim, though many giants chafe at the idea, and her court of troll wizards act as her proxies

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throughout the nation and beyond. In addition she has installed many fey servants in positions of power, especially in the larger more prominent giant communities. Smaller communities retain their traditional rulers as long as they pay lip service to the Queen.

The practice of switching out troll offspring for mortal children has become widespread in the past several decades, and many of these “mortals” have grown up in the Queens Court under her parentage. These children may be sent out as agents of the Queen, completely loyal and ready to do her bidding. Likewise, her own children, disguised to look like the mortals they replaced, may exist anywhere in the Known World.

Greed and lust drive the Queen and her court, and their ultimate goals are to consume as much of the mortal world as they can, pulling it into the Realm of Fairae to be trapped for all time.

Religion

During the last few decades the giant immortals have been slowly supplanted by those worshiped in the fey realm. Faunus is chief among these with Terra and Ordana following a close second. The giant immortals still retain worship among devout followers, especially those with a militant bend that chafe under the rule of the fey. Zugzul is popular among fire giants, with Zalaj and Gorrziok being more popular among frost giant tribes.

Settlements of Note

Iron Hill (pop 0): Pure rumor, some speculate that Iron Hill does not really exist, which is exactly what the Troll Queen wants folk to think. This secret location, deep in the realm of Fairae, is where the Queen stockpiles all the iron and steel that she has acquired over the years. Weapons, ingots, tools, and even utensils of every shape and size intertwine to form a gigantic mound of iron. Inimical to fey creatures, the Queen has secretly been removing the substance from her kingdom for decades. Rumors among the fey also exist that she uses Iron Hill as a prison for those fey who oppose her will.

Abbadh (pop. XXX): Built around the caldera of an active volcano by fire giants centuries ago, Abbadh is now one of the chief weapon producers in Grondheim. Many of the bronze weapons forged here find their way into the armies of the Troll Queen. The city’s ruler, an XXX named YYY mistreats the native giants to the point that they actively speak of sedition.

Appearance and Dress

Trolls can appear human or giantish, but their real form is that of an ugly green monster with exaggerated facial features, warts, and oily black hair. Many choose to appear as an attractive member of the race they are dealing with, at least until whatever agreement they are seeking has been struck.

Giant and fey nobility wear the finest silk or linen cloth, dyed in bright brilliant colors. Often they adorn themselves with jewelry made of gold and silver and inlaid with finely cut gems. Some giants have taken to wearing iron jewelry in defiance of their new fey masters. Commoners dress simply, and it is readily apparent at the amount of hard manual labor they do.

Weapons and Armor

Iron weapons are outlawed by the Troll Queen’s decree, although a few of the older giant families manage to retain an ancient family heirloom or two in secret. Most other weapons fall into the category of stone clubs and axes. Several of the fire giant emirs craft swords and spears of bronze, but those tools are highly prized and only rarely traded. Much of this weaponry ends up in use by the troll army.

Armor among the giants of Grondheim varies depending upon giant clan. Frost giants typically wear furs supplemented by chain mail and bronze breastplates. Fire giants tend toward banded bronze mail or hardened leather cuirasses. Most other giantish folk (including stone and hill giants) make due with what they can find and piece together.

Foreign Relations

Mention of Grondheim can send shivers down the spines of even the hardest battle worn adventurers. With the coming of the Troll Queen that nation has earned an aura filled with terrors and mystery, and few wish to embroil themselves in Grondheim's politics.

In the north, Antalian tribes are traded with as well as made war on, although as of late more tensions are arising between these two nations. The beastmen of Urzud value and respect troll magic, and the Troll Queen sees them as an excellent source of resources and labor. For now there is relative peace with the beastmen, but that may change as more and more of them fall under the Queen's sway.

With the lizardfolk of Mogreth there is an uneasy truce, although this could change at any moment. The dwarves of the Shimmering Lands constantly raid giant territories for slave labor, and are subsequently reviled. The giants of Grondheim take every opportunity to instigate retaliatory conflicts with the dwarves, but so far have fallen short of declaring outright war.

Grondheim becomes more aggressive in the southern lands where their forces are constantly engaged with those of Taymora and Intua. There is little love for the humans from either the giants or their fey allies. In territories like the Frontierlands, the fey are extremely active, and it is in this land that the practice of switching out changeling babies is most common. The Troll Queen knows about the deep elves and there may be some secret interactions between these two groups.

Names

Language

Troll (a dialect of the fey language) is spoken by the nobility of Grondheim. Most others speak various giant languages and are semi-fluent in Antalian and dwarvish. Many fey speak other languages fluently as well. Those living near Intua and Taymora pick up those tongues easily in order to better blend into those societies.

Character Classes

Giants tend to gravitate more toward martial carriers, with many being proficient warriors in addition to practicing a peacetime craft. Defending one's community is a top priority in Grondheim. Skilled hunters and trackers are almost just as revealed, especially when they specialize in bringing down creatures such as dragons and their ilk that often terrorize giants whenever the opportunity arises.

Storytelling is also a skill highly prized, and some giants hone it like they would any other craft. These folk often travel from village to village as merchants and bards, and help keep society in Grondheim unified. Few giants are granted powers by the immortals, though such shamans do exist. With the coming of the Troll Queen and her fey court, many have turned to druidic rites in the hopes of appeasing their new ruler.

Few giants practice the arcane arts, for that is the realm of the fey. Wizards and sorcerers are common among their ranks, with many receiving their training directly from the Troll Queen's court. Fey also pride themselves on being tricksters and sneaks, and many make their living through intrigue.

After 2300 BC

Though the borders of Grondheim expand little over the next few centuries, the presence of the nation introduces a general state of instability in surrounding nations. Children, lone travelers, and sometimes even entire villages disappear over night, never to be seen again. Some theorize that the lost find themselves deep in the heart of the fey world, but few will ever know the truth or be able to tell it once discovered.

Grondheim is shattered in BC 1700 when the greed of the Troll Queen backfires and she and her court are transformed into ravenous beasts. Some theorize that the transformation was caused when a Blackmoorian device was set off in the Broken Lands and the magical backlash of that explosion interfered with the Queens own powerful spells. Regardless of the cause, the effects were devastating, and waves of giants,

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trolls, and other creatures fled from Grondheim and into Antalian lands.

With the power of the Troll Queen in pieces, Grondheim's fate is sealed. Antalian tribes and bands of humanoids from Urzud annihilate its

outlying settlements. Abandoned by their fey allies, the giants retreat back into the mountains where they remain in scattered villages and strongholds until modern times.



INTUA

Kingdom of the Sun

Location: Continent of Brun, around and under the Great Plateau.

Area: XXX sq. ft. (XXX sq. m.) on the surface; XXX sq. ft. (XXX sq. m.) underground

Population: Estimated XXX (X% humans, X% spirit-folk, X% frogfolk, X% other).

Languages: The spoken Inti language is a derivation of ancient Azcan, although the written language is almost identical to its predecessor. Inti is spoken by humans and spirit-folk alike. Burrugg (frogfolk). Other conquered peoples retain their indigenous languages, but are expected to learn Inti.

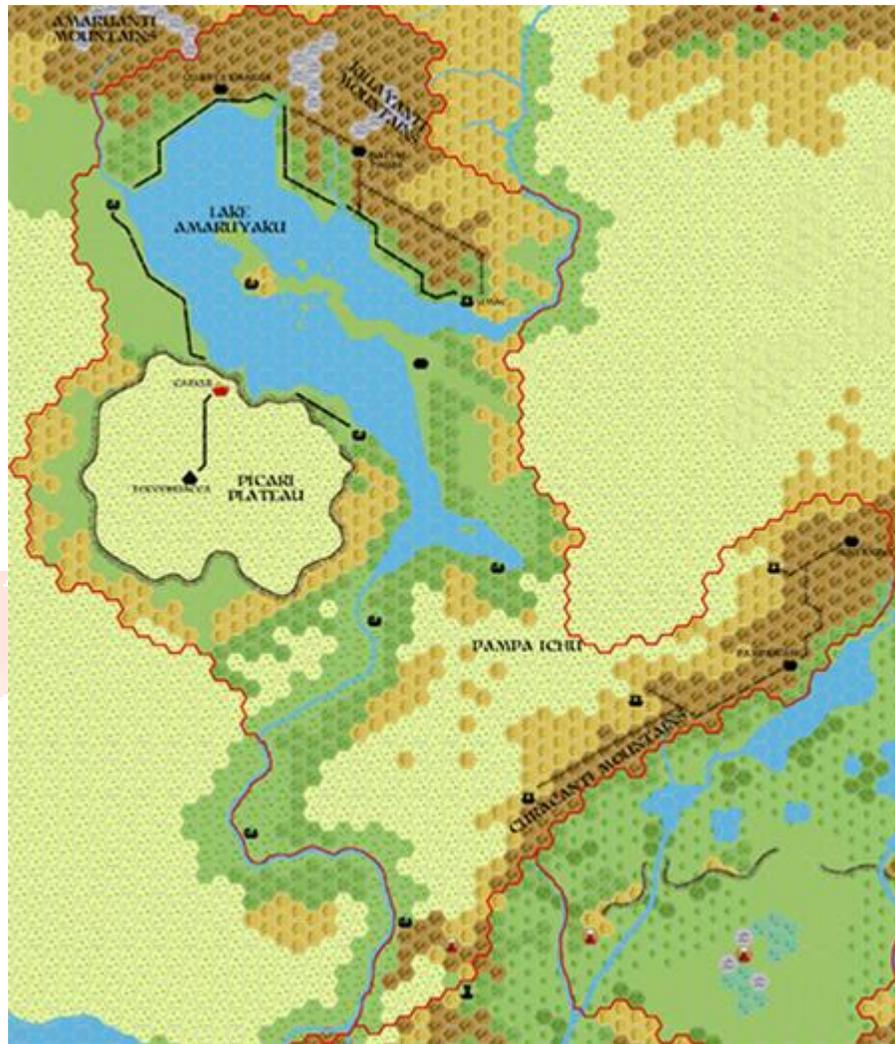
Coinage: *Pallu-inti* are large disks of gold (100 gp), while *callu-inti* are half the size (50 gp). Both are imprinted with the stylized image of the sun, and are designed to be placed together in interlocking stacks. Most common folk never see such large denominations however, and use lacquered plaques made from the wood of large underground mushroom trunks. These plaques have many denominations including the *quiphall* (1 cp), *quiplac* (1 sp), and the *quipla* (1 gp).

Taxes: The Inti are taxed based on the resources that they acquire or produce in a given year. One third of all their produce go to the military, one third are donated to the religious orders, and the last third can be used by the Inti as they see fit (most likely this is what feeds their families throughout the year).

Government Type: Militant Theocracy

Industries: Textiles, agriculture, gold

Important Figures:



Overview

To escape the Great Rain of Fire, the ancestors of the Azcans fled underground, seeking shelter in the heart of the Great Plateau on the coast of Brun south of Lake Amsorak. Now they have begun to emerge again, pushed to explore the outer world by blind leaders who have never before seen the sun.

Geography

The western landscape is dominated by Lake Amaruyaku and the Picari Plateau, from which the Inti emerged to begin their renewed life under the sun. West of the plateau is a vast expanse of grass through which the Inti never travel. East of the Streel the plains are called the Pampa Ichu and are cutoff in the southeast by the rising Curacanti Mountains, marking the border

between Intua and the Taymoran city states beyond.

Flora and Fauna

Bison along with a multitude of other grazers roam about the endless plains to the west and east, replaced by goats and llama in the Amaruanti and Killayanti ranges. Predators include many of the great cats, with puma being predominant in the mountains and saber toothed cats stalking about the tall grasslands. Flying predators such as the giant eagles, and occasional roc from the highest peaks of the mountains, also abound.

History

Even before the rise of Blackmoor, the ancestors of the Inti made war with each other. The empire of the Oltecs on northern Davania grew heavy,

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and under its weight several Azcan cities declared independence. These cities would rise to greatness over subsequent decades and centuries, eventually driving their former masters from their home continent.

Not content to merely drive away their former oppressors, the Azcans chased the remnants of the Oltec civilization all the way to the frozen wilds of southern Brun. It was then that the Great Rain of Fire struck, shifting the axis of the planet, and laying civilization to waste. The Oltecs were decimated, but the Azcans only narrowly escaped a similar fate. Their leaders led them into a vast cavern system located under the Great Plateau.

In the darkness the descendants of the Azcans, now calling themselves the Inti, began to rebuild. Deep horrors accosted them. Underground enemies beset their settlements. These things only strengthened the Inti resolve to one day see the sun again. That day has come, and the Inti venture forth from their dark sanctuaries to reclaim their birthright.

Peoples

Humans of Azcan descent dominate Inti territory, both below and above the ground, however other races also make a home there. Spirit-folk, ancestors of the Inti from the time of the Azcan-Oltec wars, also make their home under the plateau.

Lupin are common throughout Intua, having been conquered and integrated into Inti society once they emerged on the surface and began carving out an empire. Giantkin may also be found, especially in the northern mountains.

Less common are the toad-folk, descendants of a lost age who long ago buried themselves underground, even before the Inti's flight. Regardless of race, all who live under the Great Plateau are beholden to the Blind Fathers and their mystic wisdom.

Customs

Unlike many of their neighboring nations, the Inti are not concerned with taking slaves, but with building up an empire. As such they tend to slaughter enemy soldiers rather than take

prisoners, although they are more forgiving with non-combatant populations. They would rather have living vassals that can toil the land and pay tribute to their growing empire.

Inti kings are mummified upon their deaths, and through ancient rituals their spirits remain to animate their desiccated bodies. Such creatures become a part of the Blind Council, ruling over the lands that they conquered in life as governors. Their subjects carry them on golden thrones from one settlement to the next within their territory. The living king is thus constantly driven to conquer new territories, lest he be destitute in the life hereafter. Prestige and power are directly determined by the number of subjects and amount of territory that a king conquers during his lifetime.

Religion

Most sacred in all walks of Inti life is the sun. Even during their centuries of exile beneath the earth, the Inti revered the sun as the bringer of life and all that was good in the world. Iqaru (Ixion) is chief among the immortals they worship, and all Inti are considered to be his direct descendants.

Although Iqaru's hold on his people is strong, a new disturbing trend has begun taking shape among conservative elements in Inti society. The Cult of Shadows believes that the time has not yet come to return to the sunlit lands, and advocates a return to the old ways and life in darkness. Not even the Blind Fathers are immune to this corruption, and a small portion of the Blind Court is in fact the driving force behind the Cult.

Settlements of Note

Allqusinchi (pop. XXX):

Cazcul (pop. XXX): A maze of monumental steles, pyramids, and statue lined walkways, Cazcul marks the location of the first Inti settlement after having emerged from the caves of Toccohuacca to the south. It is considered to be the center of the empire, and is the seat of the Inti Kings both above and below the surface. Fantastic stone terraces meander back and forth

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from the top of the plateau to nearly all the way down to Lake Amaruyaku.

Machu Palqa (pop. XXX): A magical place, Machu Palqa is built high in the Killayanti Mountains. The Blind Court holds sway here and on the rare occasions when they meet, they do so here at the Temple of the Moon. Caverns beneath the temple are rumored to link Machu Palqa with the ancient realm of Picari Palaqwi.

Pampawasi (pop. XXX): Originally a fortress on the easternmost border of Intua, Pampawasi has since grown into a thriving city.

Picari Palaqwi (pop. XXX): Home to the Inti for centuries during their sanctuary from the Wasting, the great cavern of Picari Palaqwi now stands mostly uninhabited. Most Inti have made the journey to the promised Land of the Sun above, but a few dedicated souls remain behind to protect the sunlit lands from the dangers that lurk beneath the surface. Soldiers here maintain vigil against minions of the Deep Elves and the horrors that they serve.

Appearance and Dress

Inti have light to golden brown skin coloration, depending on whether they have been living above or below ground, with dark eyes and black hair. Men wear their hair short, while women tend to wear it long and uncut, parted in the middle of the head.

Most clothing is woven from plant fibers, although newer generations of Inti have also begun using wool harvested from surface animals. Although their cloth is never cut, the Inti do dye it various colors and weave intricate patterns into it. Checkerboard patterns are the most common for soldiery and the lower class, but rich merchants and nobles may have animals, people, and entire scenes integrated in their clothing.

Men wear breach cloths, sleeveless tunics belted at the waist, and cloaks that are often slung over one shoulder leaving the other arm relatively free. Typical attire for women is a single piece dress that extends from the neck to the ankles. Mantles may also be adorned in colder climates.

Weapons and Armor

Copper axes and star headed truncheons are staples of the Inti military, and most Inti are trained in their use from a very young age. Short spears are also common, especially in the underground territories, but are replaced by versions with more reach above ground. Slingshots and bolas round out the arsenal, and are used both in hunting and warfare.

Partial plate armor and helms made of copper are worn over the traditional cloth tunic, and warriors also often carry a small wooden or copper shield.

Foreign Relations

The Inti are an aggressive militaristic society, and this has brought them into conflict with the nearby Taymoran city states to the southeast. Contact with Adhuza is sporadic, nevertheless the dominarchy is already firmly in control of several coastal populations. In these areas secret wars and assassination games are played out every day as the kopru vie for dominance among one another.

There is an uneasy truce with elven immigrants from Vulcania who often trade with the Inti, bringing to them exotic goods and services. Likewise, contact with both the Shimmering Lands and the Mogreth is marginal. Both nations often send raiding parties into foreign lands in order to acquire new slaves, sometimes in secret and sometimes in force. When giants are met, they are almost universally conquered or killed, and the same treatment can be expected for any native elven nations in the area.

Underground, things are a bit different. Periods of guerrilla warfare with the Deep Elves are interspersed with periods of peace, and sometimes even cooperation. The Deep elves worship darker immortals, and many actively seek to spread their faith among the Inti. To some extent they have succeeded and a certain portion of Inti society has already succumbed to evil practices and actively opposes the return to the surface world.

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Names

Male: *Acahuana, Auqui, Capac, Cusi, Huallpa, Maita, Manco, Ninan, Pahuac, Quehwar, Urcon, Vicaquirao, Yupanqui*

Female: *Anahuarque, Cava, Chic'ya, Huaco, Illpay, Micay, Ocllo, Pillcu, Runtu, Uarcay*

Language

The Inti speak a dialect of the Azcan/Oltec language, albeit one that has been severely modified by centuries spent living underground..

Character Classes

Warrior professions are highly revered by the Inti, as every able bodied citizen can be called upon by the king to defend the country. Young boys begin training as soldiers when they are old enough to swing an axe, and are expected to serve a minimum of four years in the army before being released from their duties.

Philosophers, bards, and mystics of all types are also not uncommon, as the Inti have had many centuries to contemplate their plight in the dark depths of the earth. In addition to being warriors, nobles are also expected to be the spiritual leaders of their people and many are proficient in the

divine arts. Arcane adherents are less common, and often looked upon with some level of distrust, although they are not shunned outright.

After 2300 BC

The Inti Empire grows steadily above ground in the centuries following BC 2300, however their underground holdings diminish and are reclaimed by the denizens of the dark. With the destruction of the Great Plateau in BC 1750, a splinter group of Inti flee further underground and lay siege to the Deep Elven city of Aengmor. They succeed in driving the elves from their homeland and conquer the city. Their victory is short lived however, as the city and most of its Inti inhabitants are destroyed only 30 years later as the tremendous geological activity of the time wracks the landscape.

Those Inti who remained above ground suffered a lesser fate. Though their civilization was shattered along with the Great Plateau, the people survived. Orcs and other humanoids raided their lands, conquering most of the Inti and making them into slaves. Some found shelter in lands to the west, while others fought against their oppressors. Eventually they gained their freedom and became the people of the Atraughin Clans.

MOGRETH

Empire of the Lizard Kings

Location: Continent of Brun, on the eastern coast below the Shimmering Lands.

Area: Approx. 58,400 sq. mi. (151,255 sq. km.) This figure includes the human vassal states and overseas military territories.

Population: Estimated 1.8 million (27% lizard man, 55% troglodyte, 16% frogfolk, 2% other – predominantly humans from vassal states). Not counted are approximately 1 million slaves (75% of whom are human).

Languages: Burrugg (frogfolk), Carnifex (official), Hemkalss (lizard man), Troglodyte, Ussaldi (human). Slaves speak their own languages when no one is looking.

Coinage: Mogreth uses a derivation of the old Carnifex standard. In imitation of the old Lhomarran *alin*, coins are square, with holes in the middle to facilitate stacking and bundling. The basic denomination is the gold *dokhol* (2 gp), which is divided into 5 silver *azrukum* (4 sp), each of which is then divided into 25 *azruveshkum* (0.8 cp). Barter is also common, but is strongly discouraged.

Taxes: Members of the upper and middle castes pay a 10% tax on their assets each year, as well as 1 *azrukum* for each slave owned. The lower caste pays a head tax of 1 *dokhol* per year. Human inhabitants in the vassal states also pay a “protection tax” of 1 *azrukum* each season, and all families must surrender their eldest child for military service.

Government Type: Dictatorship (with theocratic and magocratic tendencies).

Industries: Agricultural products, arcane artifacts, slavery, spices, war.

Important Figures: The First of the Circle (absolute ruler).

History

Mogreth was founded, long before the rise of Blackmoor, by a powerful Carnifex sorcerer named Akhor and his followers – the sole survivors of a fallen Carnifex colony on southern Brun. At that time, Mogreth was located near the North Pole, but Carnifex magics created a temperate refuge. Contact with other peoples was infrequent, but hostile. Conflicts increased during the Beastman Crusades, and local conditions forced the remaining Carnifex to withdraw, but not before handing over control to their lizard man servants, marking the beginning of the Second Empire. The most powerful lizard men became the first sorcerer kings.

The planetary shift following the Great Rain of Fire brought Mogreth into a temperate zone, allowing the inhabitants to conquer neighboring lands. Contact was made with the dwarves of the Shimmering Lands, and a partnership was formed. Elsewhere, however, the lizard men saw nothing but savages who needed to be made to serve the empire. By BC 2700, large swaths in the interior had been annexed by Mogreth, and thousands of humans were enslaved. A more recent campaign against the indigenous humans began in BC 2500, and the border has crept westwards over the decades. At the same time, conflicts with neighboring Taymora increased, and the entire southeastern coast of Brun – the Frontier – has been a giant battleground ever since.

Peoples

Troglodytes and lizard men are the most numerous races in Mogreth, and the former are the backbone of society. These two races are found in all castes (although troglodytes are more concentrated at the lower levels), and performing almost every profession. Of the two, lizard men tend to be more outgoing and social, and are more similar to humans in terms of behavior. Most Mogrethians encountered abroad are lizard men. Troglodytes tend to be more taciturn – but this is also a reflection of their preference for communicating through scent.

Frogfolk are the most uncommon inhabitants of Mogreth, and they consider themselves to be in many ways superior to their saurial neighbors. They claim descent from an empire that predated Mogreth by millennia, and maintain their own institutions, language, and traditions in their villages on the swampy Issus River Delta. Despite their strongly isolationist tendencies, the frogfolk are tolerated by the lizard men because they tend to be competent, loyal administrators, and their spiritual inclinations have led many into clerical professions.

Outside the recognized “true peoples” of Mogreth, there are thousands of slaves. The vast majority are human, but there are also significant numbers of beastmen, giants, and even elves. Also living on the margins of Mogrethian society are the human inhabitants of the semi-independent city-states of Tarad, Itpalam, and Marasco. Although not technically slaves, they have no official status within the empire, and are often viewed by society as little more than domesticated animals.

Settlements of Note

Isshum (pop. 590,000): Isshum is the oldest city in Mogreth, and quite possibly in the Known World. It sits in the great Issus River delta, and is a web of winding streets and low stone buildings, but the older part of the city belies its Carnifex origins. There, the streets are broader, the buildings far larger, and there is a sense of something ancient slumbering underfoot. All of Mogreth’s peoples may be found here in large numbers, as well as a considerable number of foreign merchants, who keep to the Foreign Quarter.

Ssugath (pop. 65,000): Ssugath was founded not long after Isshum, but it never attained anything close to the glory of its sister city. Instead, it is infamous as a den of vice and a centre of forbidden learning. Only the protection afforded by the sorcerer king’s status, as well as his well-known streak of paranoia, have prevented the authorities from cleaning up Ssugath. Traders stop here only if they cannot dock at Isshum or Theliir.

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Theliir (pop. 130,000): Theliir is the southernmost of Mogreth's cities, and its second-largest port. This city lies close to the realm of Taymor, and as a result Theliir is defended by a massive wall that extends far into the sea. In other respects, this city is much like Isshum, save for the large numbers of soldiers. Many foreign merchants drop anchor here.

Customs

Mogreth's society is caste-based, a holdover from Carnifex times, where one's race and economic status determines where one lives, and what one does for a living. The upper caste lizard men live lives of luxury, attended by armies of servants and slaves. The middle caste, comprised of lizard men, frogfolk, and a small number of troglodytes, follow their professions, generate money, and seek to advance themselves in any way they can. The lower caste, which is predominantly troglodyte, provides the labourers and foot soldiers who maintain and protect the empire. Beneath everyone are the slaves, who are literally worked to death in mines, on farms, and in performing all the backbreaking labour on which Mogreth increasingly depends. Those who are no longer useful, or who show too much spirit, often find themselves sentenced to the arenas.

What overrides almost everything in Mogreth is the gnawing worry that the empire is steadily losing ground against the younger, predominantly human nations on its borders. The reclusive sorcerer kings of Mogreth, when they are not plotting against each other to advance their own agendas, spend countless hours searching for ways to recapture the lost greatness of the First Empire. The citizenry are increasingly diverted by entertainments and military campaigns designed to secure short-term gains against hated enemies like Taymora, but all the while there is a current of discontent.

Religion

Mogreth is unique among the major nations of this time in that the majority of its peoples worship the Outer Beings – or at least make a show of doing so. This fact has spurred Mogreth's enemies to stand firm, while instilling

in many common people a dread of the lizard man empire.

Appearance and Dress

Most inhabitants of Mogreth only wear clothing that is functional, such as belts and harnesses, because they lack the sense of modesty that other races have. Those who occupy special posts, or belong to the upper castes, wear decorative clothing to announce their elevated status and to proclaim their role. Sorcerer kings, for example, often wear colourful and richly embroidered robes. Brightly coloured clothing is permitted only to the elite.

Slaves of either gender who work in a household are usually forced to wear a shapeless black robe. This reduces their individuality and visibility, and respects upper caste sensibilities about allowing animals to be in plain view. Those who work outdoors – for example, in mines or on farms – are as naked as the cattle and other animals; although in cooler regions they may be permitted to wear some protective clothing.

Lizard men range from 5½ to 6½ feet in height, and have varying builds and colouration; although most are predominantly light- to mid-green. Troglodytes are stockier, and are usually green or grey (or a mixture of the two), and accompanied by a faint smell of sulphur thanks to their scent-producing abilities. Frogfolk average 4 to 5 feet tall, and have mottled green or brown skin.

Weapons and Armour

Soldiers in Mogreth typically do not wear heavy armour, as this is thought to impede freedom of movement, and the generally humid, wet climate makes it impractical. Common soldiers usually wear a metal breastplate over a cotton tunic, with a helm and greaves for the lower arms and legs. Officers wear more protection, and those from upper castes are permitted to wear helms with stylised crowns, to announce their status. Most warriors carry a spear or a forward-curving falcata, and archers use longbows or crossbows.

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Foreign Relations

Due to ingrained beliefs about the inferiority of other races, Mogreth is at odds with all of its neighbours, with the exception of the dwarves of The Shimmering Lands to the north. In the latter case, the lizard men acknowledge the dwarves' claim to be the inheritors of Blackmoorian civilisation. All other peoples are viewed as little more than cattle, to be enslaved and consumed in the grand project to restore the lost glory of the First Empire.

Particularly strong hatred exists between Taymora and Mogreth. The lizard men see their human rivals to the south as upstarts daring to challenge the universal truth of saurial supremacy. The fact that the Taymorans have not only resisted Mogreth's advances, but actually defeated them on a number of occasions, is even more galling. Masked within that hatred, however, is a fear that an aggressive, youthful, human Taymora might become the next Blackmoor – a nation that had effectively countered the First Empire.

Names*

Lizard Man/Troglodyte (male): *Darkessh, Felss, Ilassh, Ssekat, Ssethesh, Tuurssak, Zoressh*

Lizard Man/Troglodyte (female): *Atarssh, Azessh, Durassh, Itorrek, Margessh, Morrek, Vesskessh*

Frogfolk (male): *Burrug, Er, Grbac, Gribbt, Krum, Pol, Proak, Ribgt, Roak, Tibbir, Wog, Wrubbt*

Frogfolk (female): *Gub, Gurk, Heqet, Keret, Nass, Pakwa, Ran, Raya, Wiss*

Human (male): *Andahuur, Darakat, Itzalan, Gathan, Olan, Stelduur, Ulthuur*

Human (female): *Angialil, Gathana, Nyssa, Patiatil, Rissa, Stefa, Teotina*

*Troglodytes in Mogreth lost their traditional names long ago. Gender is signified by the first syllable in a name.

Language

Although the Y'hog dialect of Carnifex remains the official language of Mogreth, it is rarely

spoken outside of court. Daily life is most often conducted in Hemkalss. The most common foreign languages spoken by the middle and upper castes are Dwarvish and Taymoran, but some well-traveled lizard men also speak Antalian or Inti. Humans in the vassal states speak dialects of Ussaldi, which is a patois of Oltec and trade Thonian, but are expected to speak Hemkalss whenever one of the "true peoples" is present.

Character Classes

With the political and military resources of a nation at their disposal, the saurian peoples of Mogreth have as many class options open to them as humans do in the Gazetteer era, but this is constrained by social caste. The upper caste may practice any profession desired; although becoming a common warrior may bring disgrace on one's family. The middle castes have the same options, but must often find a patron to become a wizard. The frogfolk, by long-established tradition, are commonly found in the clerical disciplines, and in most cases they venerate the Outer Beings. Increasing numbers of people are quietly turning towards other faiths, and clerics of those Immortals can be found among all races.

Lizard men and troglodytes are physically strong, and those from the lower castes often gravitate towards combat-oriented professions; although troglodytes are more likely to hire themselves out as mercenaries. The less sturdy frogfolk tend to become scouts or thieves – both professions at which they excel.

The large underclass of slaves come from many walks of life, and may belong to any character class.

After 2300 BC

A great earthquake in BC 2000 shattered a portion of the glaciers in the Kuuromdaresh Mounts, allowing Raismyr Lake to drain through what is now the Ust-Urt Valley. The water surged over Mogreth in a great wave, scouring it off the map and changing the land drastically. The subsiding waters revealed a muddy wasteland; the great delta, and Isshum, were no more. By

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chance, more slaves had survived the destruction than their masters, and they quickly assumed control. The Issus River became known as the River Nithia.

Fragments of Mogreth survived, but only Theliir endured as a stable state. Nithia soon eclipsed the

small lizard man kingdom, and by BC 1300 the ancient city was under their domination. By the time the Thyatians, Kerendans, and Hattians arrived in BC 600, the last remnant of old Mogreth was remembered only on folktales.



REFUGE OF THE MAKERS

Location: Island off the southeastern coast of Brun.

Area: XXX sq. ft. (XXX sq. m.); additional notes if any

Population: Estimated XXX (X% Makers, X% beastmen, X% humans, X% elves, X% other).

Languages: Blackmoorian

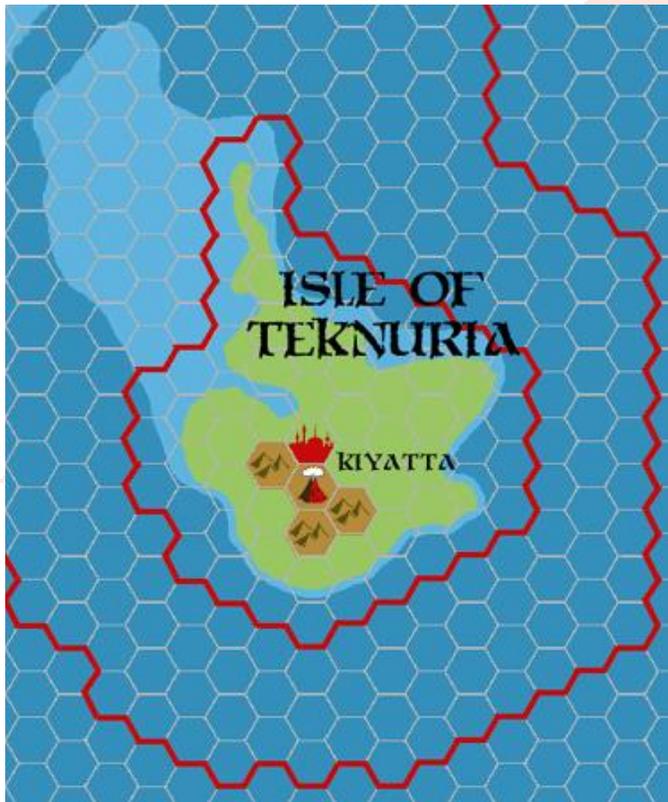
Coinage:

Taxes:

Government Type: Magocracy

Industries: Arcane studies, magical creations

Important Figures:



Overview

Rumored to be a refuge of ancient Blackmoor that escaped the destructive upheavals caused by the Great Rain of Fire, the Refuge of the Makers now holds little resemblance to that once great empire. In their attempt to escape the impending doom unleashed upon them by Blackmoor, the Makers turned inward. Using all of the magical powers at their disposal, they began to change their race into something else... something that could withstand the Wasting. Now the Makers must cope with a world that is terrified of what they have become.

Geography

A volcanically active island, the southern half of Teknuria is dominated by vast planes of black rock. Lava tubes and fields of jagged glass-like rock can be found here, interspersed with boiling mud pots and even rivers of molten magma. The northern half of the island is much less active. Rolling hills and fertile valleys extend from the center of the isle to the coast. The western shores of the island are shallow and treacherous, while the eastern shores are border deeper waters.

Flora and Fauna

The island is devoid of most mega fauna, and nearly all natural predators, save for the Makers and their servants. Tropical birds are abundant across the northern isle, as are several forms of domesticated animals including pigs, goats, and various breeds of fowl. That is not to say the island is safe however. Remnants of Blackmoor roam about, cursed and degenerate. Constructs of stone and metal infused with unnatural intelligence wander aimlessly, turning destructive when in the presence of sentient beings.

History

Ancestors of the Makers fled Blackmoor long ago to practice the art of fleshcrafting in secret. Although they had abandoned their heritage, Blackmoor never truly forgot them, and mages would often seek them out for the knowledge they possessed. Paranoid, the Makers went to great lengths to assure their privacy, building a great complex hidden deep in the earth, a complex which very likely saved their lived when Fire rained down from the skies.

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Although the Makers managed to survive the initial destruction of the great catastrophe, they could not escape the Wasting that followed it. With their own flesh and bones twisting and rotting to the disease, the Makers turned their skills upon one another, and began crafting a new form that would deliver them from suffering.

Since that time the Makers have become increasingly introverted and reliant on the products of their fleshcrafting. Creatures from across the planet were collected and brought to the island to be modified to serve the will of the Makers.

Peoples

Undisputed masters of Teknuria, the Makers are collectors and have collected life forms from all around the planet. Using their skills at fleshcrafting they have created many suitable servants over the years and continue to do so till this day.

Beastmen, descendants of creatures captured during the Blackmoorian Crusades, are a common sight on the island. Such creatures are favored servants of the Makers. Many have a great deal of autonomy, being given crucial roles and responsibilities in running the daily lives of their masters.

Humans and elves are also plentiful in the Refuge of the Makers, with the former mostly being refugees from some of the more violent locales on the mainland, while the latter tend to be nomadic merchants hailing from one of the great Vulcanian migrations.

Settlements of Note

Kiyatta (pop. XXX): Kiyatta is the largest Maker settlement on Teknuria, and is built at the base of a volcano by the same name. While most of the shining city basks in the light of the sun, there are also several miles of tunnels that connect the surface with pits of magma beneath the earth. The Makers have harnessed the raw energy of the mountain from these places, and use it to infuse their city with magical power.

Nimmalwo (pop. XXX): The sister city of Kiyatta, Nimmalwo is the stronghold of the

Shadow Masters. The volcano it is built upon is long dormant, but its recesses lead to a world built from shadow stuff, and populated by shades.

Customs

A council of guild masters governs Teknuria. Formed around the arcane arts, each of the guilds has its own unique structure and hierarchy. While not as antisocial as their dwarven counterparts in the Shimmering Lands, the Makers nonetheless rely on their servants to perform most of the mundane duties of everyday life.

Maker life revolves around master and apprentice relationships, and the prestige that one attains is often determined by the number and relative skill of individuals that a Maker has trained over the years.

Religion

The Makers pay lip service to Ssu-Ma, though they have no true form of worship. Their servants and creations have their own beliefs. The Sea Wife is worshipped by beastmen and others who maintain the maritime traditions of the island. Darker beings are also worshiped, especially by those falling within the sphere of influence of Nimmalwo.

Appearance and Dress

A Maker's features are distorted from the human norm. They appear somewhat stretched, and are taller and thinner than one might expect, with many measuring up to 10 feet tall. Makers have six digits and flared ears, and their skin takes on a bluish tint.

Silk is the common cloth on Teknuria, spun by domesticated spiders specifically crafted for the task by Maker magic. The color blue is favored, as are fine metallic threads made of gold and silver.

Weapons and Armor

Although very adept in the arcane arts, the Makers possess very little martial skills, and this is reflected in the armor and weapons that their servants employ. Most of their weapons are

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made of bronze, while their armor is crafted from hides or cured leather. Maker champions are often gifted with enhanced powers by their masters, sometimes with their own limbs being replaced by magical weapons or the appendages of horrible monsters grafted to their bodies.

Foreign Relations

The Makers of Teknuria are private people, and living on their island home affords them a good amount of security as well as the seclusion they desire. Despite this, the Makers are not unfriendly, nor do they shy away from strangers. Even so, many of their neighbors suffer from a general feeling of unease whenever a Maker is nearby.

Elves who sail the Sea of Dread often find a safe harbor in Teknuria. Elven merchandise is prized by the Makers, and even more so are the tales that the elves bring with them from the far corners of the world. Less trust is placed in folk hailing from Adhuza, both above the surface of the seas and below, although Maker ports are still open to them.

Maker support and patronage has been given to the peoples of the Corsair Isles as well as to those who dwell in the Frontierlands. The Makers view these territories as necessary buffer zones between their own island home and the aggressions of nations like Taymora and Mogreth.

With other folk, the Makers have little contact. Dwarves from the Shimmering Lands are rarely seen upon their isle, and Antalians and other northern folk are all but unknown in the warmer latitudes of the south. The Makers take a special interest in Urzud and the beastmen living there however, and expeditions are sometimes formed to replenish their beastmen breeding stock.

Names

Language

The Makers speak a dialect of the Blackmoorian language which shares several features with the language of dwarves from the Shimmering Lands, as well as with certain elven dialects from the north.

Character Classes

Makers favor arcane crafts, and many spend decades perfecting their arts. Fleshcrafting is one of the more prestigious professions, although several schools of focus exist on Teknuria. Merchants and tradesmen are also held in high esteem, and many of these actually travel abroad for extended periods of time.

Martial talents are rarely developed in Makers, although many of their servants exhibit the required physical prowess for such positions. Beastmen are especially suited as warriors and peacekeepers, at least when they are under proper supervision.

After 2300 BC

Most of the island will sink in BC 1720, but some remnant will continue to exist throughout the years, later to be known as the island of Teki-Nura-Ria. After the island is inundated during the catastrophe of BC 1720, the twin volcanoes become less active. The Makers lose the energy source they were harnessing to keep their magical city operating and their Blackmoorian age artifacts begin to break down.

The slow decline of their power causes many of the Maker's servants to take notice and reevaluate their relationship with their masters. The kara-kara, descendants of beast man experiments, become especially belligerent and drive their creators into the underground complexes beneath their once great cities. Eventually the kara-kara will destroy the Makers and become the dominant race in the area.

SHIMMERING LANDS

Last Beacon of Blackmoor

Location: Continent of Brun, on the eastern coast north of Mogreth.

Area: 166,056 sq. mi. (267,241 sq. km.); additional notes if any

Population: Estimated 1.9 million (46% gnome, 23% dwarf, 14% giantkin, 9% shade, 5% soulbound, 3% other). Not counted are approximately 500,000 slaves (90% human, 8% giant).

Languages: Brunian dwarves speak a dialect very similar to Antalian, while Skotharian dwarves speak a language derived from ancient Blackmoorian. Gnomes speak their own language, also derived from ancient Blackmoorian.

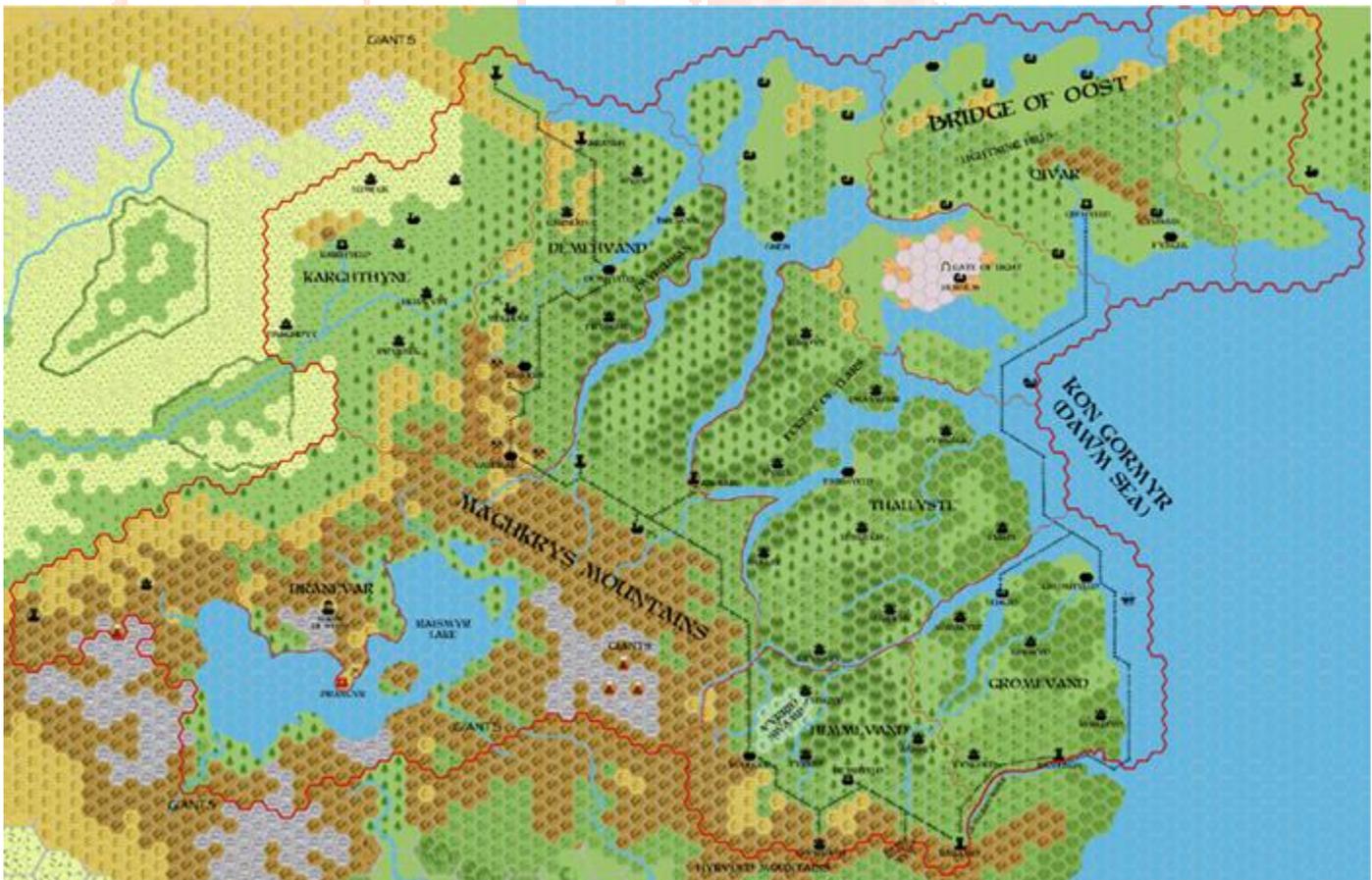
Coinage: Many forms of ancient Blackmoorian coinage survive and are still in use; however the dwarves also mint their own coins. Shimmering Lands coins are hexagonal in shape with the obverse containing the image of Dranwyrf in profile. Each type of coin has a different image on its reverse. Platinum *gates* depict the Gate of Light, golden *gleams* sport various renowned dwarven elders, silver *shimmers* depict a crossed hammer and pick, and copper *glints* show the Andahar Hawk in remembrance of lost Blackmoor.

Taxes: Dwarven estate owners are expected to tithe 10% of their raw resources and troops to their local Gatherhold every year. While resources are simply consumed, troops are rotated out on a regular schedule. City dwelling folk pay a more traditional tax of 10% of their annual income.

Government Type: Confederate of independent clans and guilds organized under the gatherhold system.

Industries: Constructs, arcane artifacts, radiance artifacts

Important Figures: Dranwyrf (First Elder) and founder of the Shimmering Lands.



Overview

Situated on the coastal areas and highlands of eastern Brun, The Shimmering Lands is a nation of dwarves and gnomes. The people of this nation cling firm to their faith in Blackmoorian technology and see themselves as the last shining beacon of real civilization left in the world. The rest of the world however, has a different opinion of them. While the Wasting declines across most of Brun, in The Shimmering Lands it continues to fester, and even to expand.

Geography

The Shimmering Lands are dominated by warm, temperate, deciduous forests in the east that gradually give way to cooler pine dominated forests covering mountainous slopes in the west. Glacial remnants make travel treacherous through the rocky peaks of Maghkrys. Boreal forests cover the northern mountain slopes terminating as the hills flatten onto tundra.

Flora and Fauna

Giants are the most common humanoid threat in the area, having been pushed from the territory by gnomish and dwarven settlers. Wyverns and the occasional dragon make their homes in the Maghkrys Mountains, sporadically raiding the underlying lowlands. Small mammalian game, birds of varied brilliant colors, and many forms of reptilian life dominate the eastern forests up to the Bridge of Oost. Unspeakable horrors and fiendish servitors are not infrequent roamers in these territories, having either escaped or been set loose by unstable masters, intent on keeping their privacy.

History

Dwarven settlements from across two continents fled the disasters created by the Great Rain of Fire, both for very different reasons. Brunian dwarves fled south from lands that had been plunged into eternal winter, while their cousins of Skothar desperately tried to outrun the poisonous Wasting disease that crept forth from the smoldering ashes of once great Blackmoor. Regardless of their initial intentions, the two

dwarven communities miraculously meet each other on the Bridge of Oost circa BC 2500. Together with gnomes migrating from the Altan Tepes, they formed a community working toward mutual survival.

Armed with ancient knowledge recovered from doomed Blackmoor, and some say even with dark secrets stolen from the immortals themselves, these dwarves and gnomes combated the dreaded Wasting disease that followed them across the lands, and began to carve out a new empire. Brought together by the edicts of Drangyr, the dwarves have managed to reclaim much of their lost heritage, even against the constant threat of monstrous invaders, and the increasing spread and potency of the Wasting.

Peoples

Gnomes and dwarves make up the majority of the population here, with their being two culturally distinct examples of the latter. The Yadrak clan is the most numerous dwarven clan. Their forefathers migrated from the far north of Brun, seeking to escape the brutally drastic climate changes after the Great Rain of Fire plunged their homeland into darkness and ice. Other dwarven clans migrated across Skothar, fleeing the constant threat of the dreaded Wasting. Less numerous than their Brunian cousins, these dwarves brought with them the scavenged remnants of Blackmoorian civilization.

Regardless of their heritage, the dwarven people tend to be fairly private and insular. Elders living on estates deep in the interior of the country rarely desire companionship of their own kind, much less the company of anyone else. What dwarves lack in hospitality however, is more than made up for by the gregarious gnomes. Many outsiders see the gnomes as the face of The Shimmering Lands, and to a great extent they are correct. Gnomes perform many of the standard day to day operations that keep the government running smoothly.

Customs

A huge dichotomy exists in Shimmering Lands society between those folk who live in the few

true cities within the nation's borders and those who live on Estates. Gnomes and Yadrak dwarves form the bulk of the city dwellers and tend to be an outgoing and social lot. They spend their time on the kind of endeavors that city folk around the globe do – trade, religion, and political intrigue being at the forefront.

Skotharian dwarves tend to be more introverted and value their privacy greatly. Many strive to become Estate Masters so that they can practice their chosen craft in privacy, sequestered away on isolated estates dotted throughout the wilderness. There they can conduct any manner of rituals and experiments, served only by their most trusted advisors and lifeless automatons.

Regardless of where a Moadreg chooses to live, combating the Wasting is always at the forefront of their thoughts. The disease takes a horrible toll on most dwarves at some point in their lives and most sport some deformity caused by it. The Wasting cripples the afflicted in a ways that impact their lives significantly. Blackmoorian technology is relied upon to ease their suffering and lessen the weight of daily tasks, but the dwarves have other methods of warding against the Wasting as well.

Religion

Although the dwarves are not an overly religious people, many faiths prosper within their borders. Ancient Blackmoorian sects are offered lip service by many, especially within the cities and in eastern territories. Among those Zugzul is the most prominent, although the faith of Silver and Gold (honoring the immortals Belnos and Garal) follows in popularity. Temples in the cities tend to be large and grandiose structures, many of which serve dual purposes for the populace, dependant upon the portfolios of the related immortals.

Worship of darker immortals, such as Angraboda and Stodos, is prevalent among communities and in the western territories. Temples to such entities are few however, as most practitioners maintain personal shrines dedicated to their patrons. This is not to say that such worship is forbidden, or even done in secret. Quite the

contrary is true, and in fact these darker forces have been insinuating themselves further into Shimmering Lands society especially in areas still plagued by the Wasting.

Settlements of Note

Fyngul (pop. 65,000): Originally established by gnomes migrating upward from southern Brun, Fyngul swelled with dwarven refugees from across the reaches of Skothar when the Shimmering Lands were only just forming. Now it is a bastion of scholars, its crowning jewel the Coruscating Tower, an academy that teaches the finer arts of war and magic.

Gromhyeld (pop. 93,000): Thought by most outsiders (incorrectly) to be the capital of the nation, Gromhyeld is a major port city, and most trade with foreign nations passes through its harbors and streets. Visitors are made to feel welcome by the gnomish inhabitants, as long as they bring valuables to trade. Elves however, are an exception to this rule and generally not tolerated, as dwarven beliefs attribute the Great Rain of Fire to their meddlesome ways. The city also has the less savory distinction of being the first stop along the road to Isshum, a trail used by slave traders porting their wares into Mogreth.

Himnem (pop. 5,000 – 20,000): The village of Himnem is populated by scholars, historians, and radiomancers, and is also the headquarters of the Seekers of Redemption. Although a center for magical learning, the village itself is not what draws folk to this blighted and desolate region. It is here that the Gate of Light was constructed, and its yearly opening causes the village population to swell the three times its normal size. Most folk of the Shimmering Lands make a pilgrimage here at least once in their lifetime.

Yadrak Gatherhold (pop. 37,000): Although technically an estate, Yadrak Gatherhold is more populous, and more heavily fortified than even the gatherhold of Demhyeld. The stronghold of those claiming direct descent from Lugett Yadrak himself, the city sized gatherhold is home for thousands of dwarves as well as all manner of fiendish creatures.

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Appearance and Dress

Folk of the Shimmering Lands prefer long robes and tunics and other concealing clothing. They favor lightweight materials that can be layered, and are more disposed to darker colors than lighter.

Most dwarves suffer some physical ailment or deformity on their bodies, however this can often times be difficult to see. Dwarves grow long beards when they can, although preferences vary according to clan. Some sport tattoos on their heads and even across their faces, while others have replaced body parts with construct or clockwork devices. Certain clans bear the mark of pacts with darker powers.

Weapons and Armor

The folk of the Shimmering Lands tend to wear light to medium armor. Although their ancestors typically donned heavier attire, the humid climate makes wearing such armor impractical. Hammers and axes are carried at the sides of many dwarven warriors, however the Moadreg specialize in a ranged weapon called a Dragon Belcher found nowhere else on Brun.

Foreign Relations

As a general rule, the dwarves of The Shimmering Lands try to have as little contact as possible with other nations and peoples. With Mogreth to the south, they are cordial. Both nations share several traits in common, and although the dwarves don't believe the Mogrethian claim that theirs was the first civilization, they recognize the saurians as being more civilized than the rest of the world. Both cultures are also fairly reliant on slaves, and may on occasion work together in order to acquire more of those resources.

Relations with the giants and elves to the north, is an entirely different matter. There is a deep seated hatred of all things elven in The Shimmering Lands, for the dwarves blame the elves for causing the Great Rain of Fire. Giants are often targets of aggression, as dwarves built most of their current empire from carved out slices of their territories. Likewise the humans of

Taymora have a great mistrust of the dwarves and their Blackmoorian arts, and dwarves are often unwelcome in those lands.

The beastmen of Urzud and the Antalian of the north each see equal time fighting against and serving with the dwarves as mercenaries. Other nations, dwarves rarely have contact with.

Names

Prefixes: *Dran, Dras, Jur, Jyr, Kher, Kur, Lem, Lum, Mol, Nur, Syr, Tyr, Wan*

Suffixes (male): *dehk, dul, dyn, egk, gyr, lak, mehr, neg, nohk, rak, uld*

Suffixes (female): *dah, dri, ehr, gid, vid*

Language

Several languages are spoken within the boundaries of the Shimmering Lands. The two dwarven populations have distinctly different tongues. The language of the Brunian dwarves is very similar to Antalian, while that spoken by their Skotharian cousins more closely resembles ancient Blackmoorian. Gnomish language is also very similar to Blackmoorian, and in the major cities a patois of these three languages is often spoken.

Travelers and merchants may also pick up additional languages, Hemkalss (spoken in Mogreth) or Gantish being the most useful, but Taymoran not being uncommon.

Character Classes

Dwarves in the Shimmering Lands are not like their modern counterparts. Many have aptitudes in the arcane arts, and gravitate toward wizardly classes. The academies of Fungyr and workshops of Himnen produce some of the most gifted radiomancers around. The psionic arts are less pronounced although it is not difficult to find practitioners, especially in the regions of Qivar and Gromevand.

Clerical disciplines are even less prolific, but in addition to priests of Zugzul, disciples of Belnos, Garal, and Khoronus can be found in many major cities. Acolytes of dark immortals can be found in western lands, especially among the Yadrak,

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and oracles devoted to Kagyar, The Dreamer, and Skuld are not unknown to roam the wilderness.

Dwarves are also physically strong people. Those who cannot excel at more wizardly pursuits often make a living as warriors and mercenaries. Such companies sprout up in most major settlements, from the twisted radiance forged Seekers of Redemption in Himnem, to the Sentinels of the Dusk Shroud and their shadow mastiff steeds in Kairhyeld.

After 2300 BC

The Shimmering Lands gradually fall apart in the earlier part of the BC 1800th century. Kagyar's followers, led by Dranwyrf himself, begin to gain more sway. Conflicts erupt between Dranwyrf's new order and the more traditionalist elements, the Blackmoorian technologists and Yardrak demon worshippers, eventually leading to civil war. By BC 1800, Kagyar's worshipers have defeated their enemies. The taint of entropy is expunged and the disease of Blackmoorian technomancy shattered.

The twin catastrophes in BC 1750 and BC 1720 succeed in erasing any remnants of Shimmering Lands culture, as the Bridge of Oost sinks beneath the waves. Kagyar's folk retreat into the Makrast Mountains to build the new and lasting nation of Rockhome, while the Mordrigswerg slink into the dark caverns of the Northern Reaches and fall further into the depths of insanity.

TAYMORA

Empire of the Dead

Location: Continent of Brun, along the southern coast.

Area: 177,141 sq. mi. (283,426 sq. km.)

Population: Estimated 5,310,000 (63% human, 13% lupin, 10% tauran, 10% elf, 4% other).

Languages: Taymoran is the official tongue in most of the city states, but dialects of lupin, tauran and elven are spoken throughout the lands in varying degrees.

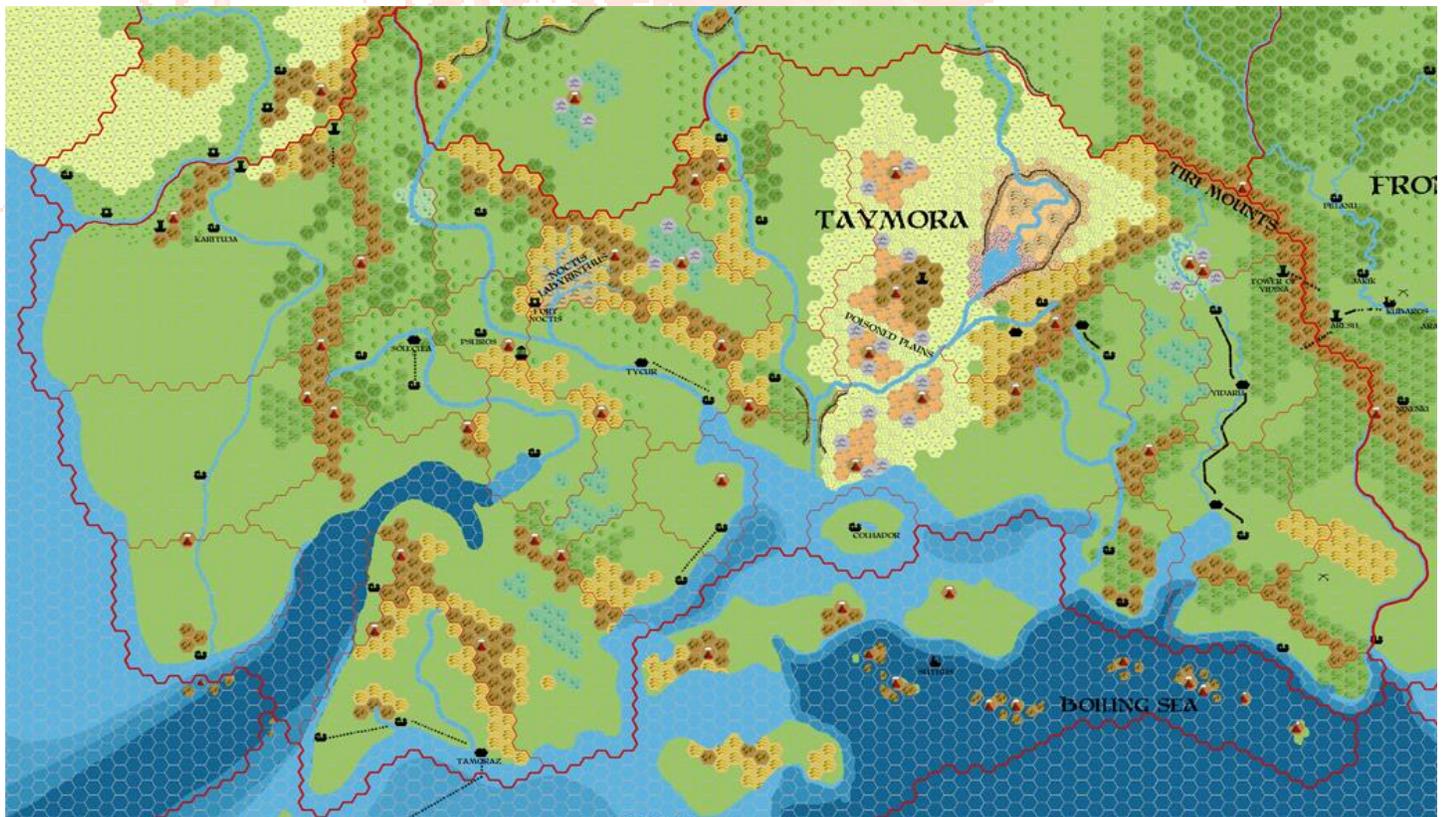
Coinage: Each city mints its own coins, typically placing the face of their queen on the obverse of each. Typical denominations are the XXX (1 cp), XXX (1sp) and XXX (1gp). Blood, stored in vials and kept fresh through either magical or alchemical means, is also considered a valid form of currency.

Taxes: 10% of total assets are collected in coin from the nobility and merchant classes. In addition, a monthly Blood Tax is collected from the peasantry. Typically a pint is drawn, but never enough to injure the donor. Wealthier families may sometimes send their children to serve as wards of the queen, exempting them from the Blood Tax as well as gaining them prestige in court.

Government Type: Independent City States, many ruled by Vampire Queens.

Industries: Agriculture, textiles, fermented beverages (beer and honeyed mead)

Important Figures:



Overview

Located along the southern coast of Brun, Taymora is an ominous land ruled by vampire queens. In the wake of the Wasting disease, the

Taymorans turned to the dark arts of necromancy in order to preserve their culture. Now, despite the lessening effects of the Wasting, the vampire rulers of the land cling on to the power they have. Taymoran city states fight amongst one another

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as often as they do with their neighbors, as the each of the cities fight for dominance and the chance to build a lasting empire.

Geography

The land of Taymora exists in what is essentially a large basin, bordered by the [Cruth] and XXX Mountains. The mountainous highlands are dominated by lakes and rivers, the runoff of which flows down to the midlands and feeds into the various marshes and bogs of the area. Coastal regions are gentle with many shallow bays although eastern Taymora is flanked by the XXX trench. The center of the basin is known as XXX's Anvil, one of the hottest locales on Brun, and is the lowest point on the continent sitting well below sea level.

Flora and Fauna

Taymoran bogs are replete with mosses of all kinds, and many varieties of berries grow within their borders. Birch, Poison Sumac, and Black Alder also grow in the midlands. The higher altitudes see more pines, while the lower altitudes including the Anvil are dry and more barren. Mule deer, antelope and quail are common, as are bears and wolves. The Taymoran riding boars were domesticated from a species in the western mountains which is still actively hunted, both for sport and food. Flying predators dominate the highlands, although dragons are rare. Giants and tribes of lizardmen (mostly Mogrethian outcasts) roam the northern wilds.

History

The Taymorans have several well established city states on and near the southern coast of Brun, each of which is led by a wizard queen or occasionally king. During the early years, when the Taymorans first began to establish themselves in this area, they had to contend with a very pervasive form of the Wasting disease. Much of the populace would succumb to the disease and be dreadfully deformed before undergoing a slow and painful death. To combat this some of the nobility embraced the kiss of undeath, becoming nosferatu and vampires. Now, even though the effects of the Wasting are felt far less severely,

the Taymoran populace suffers a new plague - that of their undead masters.

Throughout much of their history the city states competed and made war with one another, and that trend continues even now. Some of the more powerful states however, have been able to conquer their neighbors, and if the undead rulers have their way Taymora will soon be unified under the leadership of one of them. Which one will emerge victorious, none can say.

Peoples

The Taymorans are humans with light skin and dark, curly hair. They are a mostly agrarian people, although several cities along the coast make a living from foreign trade. Vampires form the noble caste and walk openly among the people, although other forms of intelligent undead are less common.

Lupins are also fairly common, even in the eastern territories, having migrated into the area from the west before the Taymorans themselves arrived. Several western towns and villages are primarily lupin, although most of those have adopted much from Taymoran culture.

Likewise taurans fleeing the Golden Realm of Gildesh from across the Sea of Dread have made their way into Taymoran lands and integrated with their society fairly well. These folk are the forerunners of the enduk and minotaurs that will born centuries later on the Savage Coast.

Elves may also be seen in many of the coastal cities. These traders from across the Sea of Dread are some of the forerunners of Ilsundal's migration, however many have already integrated into Taymoran society.

Customs

The Wasting effected Taymoran culture profoundly early in its history. Taymoran nobility turned to the curse of undeath to preserve themselves from obliteration. Taymoran serfs pay a blood tax to their lords and in exchange the vampiric nobility performs rituals that safeguard the populace from the worst effects of the Wasting. Now that the disease is in decline

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however, what was once a necessity has become a plague of its own.

Taymoran society is matriarchal and very structured. Females in are not restricted to the social class that they are born into and have the opportunity to move into the higher ranks. Male roles tend to be more static, with male heirs typically being apprenticed into their father's profession. Nobility is based on familial affiliations. Each noble family line controls one aspect of Taymoran society, be that the military, mercantile trade, agriculture or anything else, and each in turn support the reigning monarch of their city state.

Dwellings are communal, with several related extended families all sharing the same abode. In smaller villages this might mean that the entire population dwells under one roof. Separate buildings usually have separate functions. Cities are typically designed in spirals or concentric rings, and most structures from political offices to the lowliest of farmer's huts are designed as circles with living areas around the outside and an open courtyard in the middle.

Religion

Religion is important to Taymorans, and most are devout worshipers of Nyx. That dark immortal led the Taymoran people through the devastating times of the Wasting which nearly threatened to end Taymoran culture before it even began.

Bulls are sacred animals, having prominent roles in many Taymoran religious rites. Because of this minotaurs occupy a respected tier in Taymoran society, even though many of them remain firmly in the echelons of the lower classes.

Settlements of Note

Soleclea (pop. XXX): Soleclea is the largest and oldest city state in Western Taymora, and has over the last several decades won its freedom from the rule of the vampire queens. Now it serves as a shining beacon to other Taymoran cities, of what they can become once their plague of undeath is shed. The struggles of Soleclea are not over however, as the established matriarchy

faces serious opposition from the new patriarchal Cult of Sol. Neither are the Daughters of Night finished with the city, for Queen Nashane of Tycur covets its wealth and resources.

Tamoraz (pop. XXX): The citizens of Tamoraz lay claim to being the first Taymoran settlement in the area – the legendary seat of power for Queen Tayma, the Original Nosferatu. Now one of Tayma's daughters rules here, though Queen Jadikira constantly struggles to maintain control. Tamoraz is the oldest and one of the largest city states along the southern coast of Brun, and holds control over two smaller villages in the area.

Tycur (pop. XXX): Unlike the westernmost cities of Taymora, Tycur tolerates no opposition to its vampiric queen. Citizens think very little of their own plight and gladly pay the Blood Tax in return for the benefits and protection that the queen provides to them. Near the palace is another imposing structure that shoots up into the sky, the Tower of Night. From the topmost reaches issue forth terrible black clouds that keep the city in a perpetual twilight even during the brightest hours of the day.

Appearance and Dress

Most Taymoran clothing is made from light linens and accentuated by leathers and wools. Silk garments are rarer and may only be seen among the nobility. Those higher up in the social circles of society can often afford to add more expensive dyes to their clothing, with blues and purples being the color of choice among royalty.

Men typically wear only a loincloth, although these may be extensively decorated, but will sometimes don a knee length tunic. Women wear pleated skirts and blouses. Women of power, especially those of royal blood or priestesses of Nyx, will wear garments that bear their breasts as a display of their authority.

Weapons and Armor

Taymoran infantry wear leather cuirasses or plates of bronze armor. Conical helms made of boar tusks, and small circular shields round out the typical military uniform. Spears and short swords are weapons most commonly carried by

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soldiers. The double bladed axe is a sacred symbol, and a weapon reserved for the clergy or those that serve them directly.

Foreign Relations

One of the factors that began to unify the city states was the emerging Inti to the west. An aggressive and expansive nation, the Inti invasion is constantly being fought against. Urzud humanoids are rarely encountered, although when they are the outcome is never forgone. Sometimes the Urzud can be dealt with in a civilized manner and sometimes not. Conflicts in the east sporadically break out with Mogreth as both the lizard empire and Taymora vie for dominance over the human settlements between their two nations.

The Shimmering Lands and its inhabitants are avoided by choice, tolerated when necessary, and eradicated when possible. The dwarves carry with them the lingering rot of the Wasting, and many Taymorans still fear its touch. Some of the Taymoran leadership has dealings with certain dwarven households, buying slaves from them and hiring them to create magical items that the Taymora cannot create for themselves.

The sea holds both one of Taymora's greatest adversaries as well as one of its strongest allies. The kopru and their puppets fight a constant battle with the undead of Taymora, who they see as abominations that resist their control. The nosferatu have similar views of the kopru who constantly try to dominate subjects that rightfully belong to Taymora. From Vulcania come the elves on their long migration, and although they have no love for undead things they have always dealt with Taymora up front and honestly. Many elves have settled on islands in the Sea of Dread and are willing partners in the fight against the kopru.

Names

Prefixes: *Ari, Aran, Arud, Ban, Did, Dur, It, Jad, Kik, Kit, Kub, Mij, Nash, Pames, Pijas, Pit, Sam, Sij, Tar, Tit, Wid, Yid, Yik, Yish*

Suffixes (male): *aba, abira, aja, are, ara, aros, ase, ata, eru, ijos, ira, iros, iku, ina, ini, ipi, ros, ti, tos, uja*

Suffixes (female): *adnh, ane, aru, ash, esh, ish, jas, sab, uru, ush*

Language

Taymorans speak the Taymoran language. Some few have also learned to speak Inti, as well as ancient Blackmoorian.

Character Classes

Clerical professions are common, especially in the higher echelons of Taymoran society, and are often dominated by women. Practitioners of the arcane arts are less prevalent, but nearly just as respected.

Warrior professions also pervade Taymoran society, since many of the city states constantly battle their neighbors or one another. Men tend to gravitate more towards these roles, but warrior women are not unheard of. Stealth and intrigue are prized skills in Taymora, so classes that make use of such abilities are also common.

After 2300 BC

The city states of Taymora exist to one degree or another until their ultimate destruction in BC 1720. Over the resulting centuries the states grow, expanding both their power and their territories. On several occasions two or more form brief alliances, however true imperialism eludes them. With the decline of the Wasting, Taymoras vampiric elite find themselves under increasing pressures and are eventually routed from a majority of the populace.

BC 2000 sees an influx of a new race migrating from the west. Minotaurs fleeing the native lands flock to the Taymoran cities and due to prevailing religious trends are easily integrated into society. Many often end up serving the Taymoran nobility as elite guards and soldiers.

In BC 1750 the first geological catastrophe of that era sinks much of southern Brun beneath the waves. Much of Taymora is destroyed, however a portion survived until BC 1720 when Mt. XXX

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explodes sending the remnants of the nation to the bottom of the ocean.

Some legacy of these people continues on down through the ages however, as the ancestors of the

Traladarans and Millenians. Darker remnants are rumored to plague Traladara and Karamaikos thereafter, as well as portions of the Sunlit Sea.



URZUD

Location: Continent of Brun, Hiborea.

Area: Big sq. mi. (Really big sq. km.)

Population: More than you can count (50% beastmen, 40% proto-humanoids, 10% other).

Languages: Beastman

Coinage: Whatever you got.

Taxes: Whatever you can take.

Government Type: Tribal Confederate

Industries: Mercenary bands, raiding, pillaging

Important Figures:

Overview

Urzud. The very name reeks of violence and barbarism. It is here that the beastmen fled from the persecution of Blackmoor. Here that they found sanctuary during and after the Great Rain of Fire. Here that they have prospered and multiplied. Here that they have changed... or ceased changing. For after the coming of the Great Rain of Fire, the beastmen began to breed true for the first time. Forming themselves into new tribes centered on emerging bloodlines, the beastmen of Urzud are ready to venture forth once again. Only one thing yet remains – for a war chief strong enough to claim the Blue Knife, from Urzud’s sacred inner sanctum.

Geography

Hiborea is a flat expanse of tundra and ice covered plains bordered on the west and south by mountains and boreal forests. Summers here are warm and humid, as well as shorter at this latitude than elsewhere. Winters here last anywhere from 5 to 7 months, and daylight hours are minimal. Winter brings very little precipitation in Hiborea, although what water exists is frozen solid.

Flora and Fauna

A vast frozen tundra covers this land, broken up only by patches of twisted shrubs and stunted pine trees. Herds of elk and caribou eek out an existence grazing on bark and the meager grasses the manage to push their way through the ice. White dragons, remorhaz, and other cold loving mega-fauna are the apex predators of the area, followed by tundra cats and polar bears.

History

Blackmoorain lore tells that the twisted forms of the beastmen are born to the reincarnated souls of evil beings. Although originally spread throughout the old world, the zeal of the Blackmoorain crusade eventually drove the remnants of the race into the harsh, frozen, wilderness of Borea. Beastmen thrived in this area for a while, but their ancient enemy would not be deterred forever.

The Blackmoorian hunters followed the beastmen into the icy wastes, and there built a citadel from which they would launch the extermination of the beastman race. That launch however, would never come. That Blackmoorian offensive was cut down before it could even begin by the Great Rain of Fire.

Once reviled and hunted by the Blackmoorians, beastmen have become the true inheritors of that once great nation’s legacy. Unperturbed by the powers of the radiance or the Wasting disease that it causes throughout civilized lands, beastmen have moved into the territory of their former persecutors and claimed the shattered city of Urzud.

Peoples

Beastmen are a varied and chaotic race, and it is said that no two are born alike. Although the old chaotic blood is still evident, it is no longer as potent as it once was. New bloodlines have appeared and are breeding true.

Burly, muscled, orcs, as tall as most humans, but much bulkier are brutal warriors and effective tacticians. They may have overrun the city ages

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ago if it weren't for their hatred of the sunlight. Weak eyes make it difficult for them to function when the sun is out, or even with bright light shining.

Goblins have no such impediment, although they are small and sinewy compared to their larger cousins. Masters of stealth and trickery, goblins also have a knack with ancient Blackmoorian artifacts, though their countenance tends to be cowardly.

Wargs are more bestial in appearance and nature, though far less chaotic than the original beastman bloodlines. They are as large, or larger, than orcs with thick gray fur, heavy black claws, and wolf-like maws, though their twisted bodies rarely allow them to stand upright. Many are just as comfortable moving on four limbs as on two.

Customs

Society in Urzud has historically been fairly homogenous. Each individual was expected to provide all the amenities necessary for their own survival. This concept is changing with the introduction of the new bloodlines. The beastmen are discovering that each bloodline is better suited for performing different tasks. Some make better hunters, others are great warriors, and some are expert engineers. Among them all is emerging yet another class, a ruling class; those who deem themselves fit to command all others.

Tribute is an important aspect of beastman society. One pays tribute to important figures as acknowledgement that they are superior warriors and leaders. In return those leaders do their best to protect their charges, and pay tribute to even more powerful figures. Failure to pay tribute to superiors is seen as an act of defiance and a challenge to their rule, one that is usually settled in combat.

Urzud itself is ruled by a loose coalition of chieftains, each of which nominally controls a section of the city. The center of the city, which is rumored to house the fabled Blue Knife, remains unclaimed. Once a year its great gates open up, and the strongest chieftain and his clan venture within to try and claim their prize. So far none have succeeded, but should a leader emerge

with the knife, he would be able to unite the rest of Urzud under his power.

Religion

Beastmen tribes all revere their own patron immortals, with Hel being prominent among the old blood lines and a smattering of other immortals, dark and otherwise, holding sway with the new blood lines. Many immortals are borrowed from nearby cultures – Grondheim, Antalians, even fragments of Blackmoor's pantheon are revered. Most immortals adopted by the beastmen all share some common traits, they are harsh, unforgiving, and patrons of strength and combat.

The real religion in Urzud has nothing to do with worship of the immortals though. All beastmen know the story of the Blue Knife. It is the heart of their ancient enemy, and possessing it would grant the wielder all the powers of Blackmoor. The Knife itself is believed by many beastmen to be buried deep in the heart of Urzud, and it is the quest for this most holy of artifacts that really ignites the beastmen's fervor.

Settlements of Note

Urzud (pop. Lots): Built as a stronghold of ancient Blackmoor during their crusade against the beastmen, Urzud has now been claimed by the very creatures it was designed to wipe out. It is the holiest of sites to beastmen, for here the sacred Blue Knife is rumored to reside. Whether true or not, some power from within the city has begun to change the beastmen in the few short centuries since they first claimed their prize.

Carakk (pop. 1,000 to 10,000): Carakk is the name that the beastmen give to a rock outcropping near the border of Urzud and Grondheim. Shaped like the head of a wolf howling at the moon, there is no explanation for how the stone formation came to be. More of a meeting place than a true settlement; this site is a favored rendezvous for the packs of feral wargs who meet here before launching massive raids on their neighbors.

Steel Tower (pop. 500): Located in the center of the Adri Varma Plateau and mostly buried under

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tons of snow and ice, lies what must surely be another ancient outpost of destroyed Blackmoor. A small tribe of beastmen has claimed this site as their own and is slowly exploring its secrets. Others pass through this stronghold on their route to southern Brun.

Appearance and Dress

The dress of Urzud is eclectic, and beastmen wear everything from skins and furs of beasts they hunt, mismatched pieces of armor from defeated enemies, to ancient Blackmoorian silks found stashed away deep in the bowels of their city. Since two beastmen rarely have the same shape or form, most of their clothing is custom made, but because of the climate all of it tends to be designed for warmth.

Trophies are important to the creatures of Urzud, and many take pains to weave them into their clothing. Such trophies can be anything from bones and body parts to coins or medals or any other number of trinkets taken from defeated foes.

Weapons and Armor

Armor in Urzud tends toward hides, and leathers, many of which are adorned with cloaks of fur. Metallic armor is rare, although some of the best warriors and more powerful individuals sport scaled hauberks or tunics of overlapping plates. Many of these are scrounged from ancient ruins or cobbled together from the spoils of victory, but a few are actually crafted by the beastmen themselves from remnants of materials found within the city of Urzud.

Beastmen weapons are as varied as the creatures that wield them, although heavier crushing weapons are preferred by many, especially among the larger specimens of the race. Smaller creatures, including goblins, tend to prefer sharper implements – something they can slip through the cracks of their foes armor, as well as crude bows and slings.

Foreign Relations

Beastmen are happy enough to hire themselves out as mercenaries to nations across the Known

World. Those that can't afford to pay the creatures usually find themselves at the business end of beastmen spears... whether they are at war or not. In their own city the beastmen are just as violent and unpredictable, as conflicts between the Old and New Bloodlines abound.

Troll magic is greatly respected and feared by the beastmen of Urzud, nearly as much as troll wealth is desired. Because of this the creatures are tolerated within the borders by most, and welcomed by those who crave power. The less civilized regions of Urzud often find themselves in conflict with the folk of Grondheim however. As the giants are pushed from their own lands by younger nations, they are forced to encroach upon territory seen by the beastmen as their own.

Antalians and wild elves bear the brunt of most of Urzud's aggressive behavior. The former are attacked mainly for their resources. Pillaged Antalian goods sustain entire tribes, and can find their way across the nation. Elves on the other hand, are associated with the beastmen's ancient Blackmoorian enemies and are slaughtered on sight.

Names

Beastmen names tend to be short and guttural, mostly consisting of one or two syllables.

Prefixes: *Bag, Dak, Kar, Krug, Lo, Or, Pot, Zab*

Suffixes (male & female): *agg, akk, ark, ash, eg, erg, esk, ogg, orr, ork, osh, ozz*

Language

The beastman tongue is a corrupted form of ancient Blackmoorian, interspersed by bits and pieces of other languages that the creatures have come across over the ages. Enough of the Blackmoorian core has been retained that the folk of the Shimmering Lands can communicate at least core concepts and feelings with the beastmen, and communication with the Makers would probably also be possible, if the beastmen ever came in contact with them. New dialects are forming every day however, as the creatures change form and expand their territories. It is quite possible that at some point in the near future

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divergent beastmen tribes may not be able to communicate with one another.

Character Classes

Despite the political intrigue emerging in the city of Urzud itself, the face of the beastmen that most people in the Known World know is that of the mercenary or raider, and this is the profession that most beastmen practice. Warriors, berserkers, and tacticians are all revered professions within the halls of Urzud. Hunter and tracker are also widespread professions, especially in the wilds of the nation, the Wolves of Carakk being the most renowned.

The magically inclined are greatly feared in Urzud, and those that master the arcane secrets can become great leaders... if they can stay alive. The Black Roc Wokani are amongst the strongest magicians in the city and many agree it is due to the Blackmoorian secrets they plumb from the Rocs Nest.

Traditionally beastmen shamans revere their patron immortal Hel, said to be the creator of their race, however this faith has declined over the years. In its place has risen the worship of the Blue Knife, and of a myriad of other related warrior immortals, all associated with the Knife in some way through emerging humanoid dogma.

After 2300 BC

The race of beastmen is destined to die out on the outer world, although it will be preserved by a few creatures who manage to find their way into the Hollow World in BC 2400. This is not the end of the species in the Known World however, since their descendants will become the true breeding humanoids. Orcs, goblins, hobgoblins, bugbears, and many others.

The power and prominence of Urzud will be broken in BC 1800 during the Steel Wars when the Blue Knife is found and subsequently secreted out of the city. By BC 1725 most of the humanoids have left Urzud, migrating elsewhere. The Great Horde following Loark, migrates eastward, toward the Known World, in search of their lost artifact. The creation of the Broken Lands 25 years later, kills Loark and shatters his horde, but provides an abode from which humanoids in the region will terrorize their neighbors for centuries to come.

Subsequent centuries see many humanoid kingdoms spring up in the area, laying waste to native countries and enslaving their people. Atraghin tribes, the Shires of the hin, and even portions of Darokin will all see humanoid rule before once again regaining their freedom.

OTHER PEOPLES

Lupins of the Savage Coast

Lupins have had a presence on southwestern Brun for as long as any can remember. From their ancestral lands on what will one day become the Yazak steppes, the lupins have slowly but surely expanded outward. Clans of the creatures have migrated north and east, along the southern coast of Brun until hitting the borderlands of Intua and Taymora. Seen as ripe for conquest by both of these people, many lupin clans have been absorbed by the more aggressive cultures, although many more clans remain out of their reach... for now.

By the modern day, most lupins will have been driven off of this region of Brun, although pockets remain in areas such as Glantri and Ierendi. Modern scholars often theorize about the role these creatures play in the struggle with lycanthropy in the area, and it is very likely that they are tied to that curse in some way. After the rise of Nithia, it is a lupin that is credited with destroying the last were-hawk.

Makai

Although not present as a distinct group in this era, the Makai will one day play a pivotal role in the development of southern Brun. Their ancestors may be present in the borderlands of Intua and Taymora, and could come into conflict with one or both of those nations as the years progress. Eventually they will find themselves under the control of Taymora, and will mostly be treated as a subject race.

The volcanic cataclysms of BC 1750 to BC 1720 which sink Taymora beneath the waves, allow the Makai to regain their freedom. Finding themselves on newly created island homes, the Makai will rebuild their civilization, ultimately finding themselves integrated into the nation of Ierendi.

Northern Elves

The scattered remnants of Grunland's failed colony to Blackmoor have managed to survive

in these hostile lands. Beset on all sides by enemies who blame them for the Great Rain of Fire, many struggle to eke out a living from the harsh land. While some of their kin fled underground to avoid the Wasting disease that followed, the northern elves weathered the plague on the surface.

These elves include the Geffronnel and other clans that will eventually go on to help form the nation of Wendar. In the BC 2300 era the Geffronnel elves have been magically put to sleep by the fey prince Shurmaleigh, although a few other scattered clans remain awake. These must deal with the Antalian and minions of Grondheim, as well as eke out a meager existence in northern climes.

Proto-Ethengarians

The ancestors of the Ethengarians arrive in the area circa BC 2000, but some hint of these people may be seen even before then. They are nomadic peoples descended from the Peshwa of Skothar. It is very possible that they have domesticated several breeds of dog to help them move supplies and people across great distances, however the addition of the horse to their culture won't come until sometime after BC 1675 (after Tahkati Stormtamer's taming of those animals).

Proto-Ethengarians moving into the regions of northern Brun may have come into contention with some of the other cultures living there at that time, most notably giants, humanoids, and the descendants of Antalian peoples. Conflicts with the humanoids especially, intensify in BC 2000 and the centuries following until their enslavement by King Loark in BC 1710.

Taurans of Davania

These folk have been migrating from the Golden Realm of Gildesh on Davania since the Great Rain of Fire, although an influx of the creatures begins during this era shortly after the Golden Realm collapses. In BC 2300, after nearly 700 years of service protecting Ixion's faithful, Gildesh is granted a boon by his patron. Taking his most trusted followers, Gildesh establishes the enduk nation of Nimmur along the Immortal's Arm in

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southwestern Brun. Unfortunately this act also leaves those remaining in the Golden Realm relatively undefended against a myriad of hostile neighbors.

Although taurans physically resemble minotaurs in many ways, these folk are descendants of an earlier stock. Minotaurs won't come into existence until BC 2000, when followers of Minoides flee Nimmuria after the murder of Gildesh. Some of these true minotaurs will settle with their kin in Taymora, while others will continue on to found other nations across the Sea of Dread, Skothar, and Davania.

Toralai

The Toralai have probably existed in the southern region of Brun in some shape or form for the past several millennia. In BC 2300 they may be found bordering the lands of Intua, inhabiting the grassy plains region that will one day become Alfheim, and perhaps ranging as far north as Urzud. Should they exist as such, they would almost certainly come into conflict with the Inti as well as with ranging bands of beastmen.

As the climate changes, these people follow their traditional food source, bison, further east until they eventually end up on the south eastern coast. There they will stay until BC 600 when the newly arrived Thyatians drive them out.

Vulcanian Immigrants

Three major migrations have issued forth from Vulcania since the days of the Rain of Fire. The first of these was led by the elven king Ilsundal in BC 2800. Calling themselves the Returnists, these elves forsook the ways and technologies of Blackmoor in favor of a more natural way of life. Their destination is the Sylvan Realm along the northwestern coast of Brun, and the elves are slowly moving north from their shattered homeland on the southern continent. Many have settled on islands off the coast of Brun and act as merchants and traders to the northern lands.

The Second Migration followed Ilsundal's in BC 2500, and caught up to the first column of migrants along the Savage Coast in BC 2300. Holding onto slightly more technology than their cousins following Ilsundal, the elves in the Second Migration are master seamen and a naval power despite having forsaken their homeland. Sailing the Sea of Dread, these elves have been acting as merchants and suppliers to the main column for over a century.

Finally, in BC 2400 Vulcania erupted in torrents of fire, and the last bastion of pre-cataclysmic civilisation, the elves, was wiped from the surface of the planet. Some survivors remained however. Those who were lucky enough to be sheltered from the eruptions, or were away from their homeland traveling as merchants or explorers, have been trying unsuccessfully to reform the shattered fragments of their civilization. These elves will one day help to bring elven civilization to the Platea region of Davania, but will range no farther.

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MAJOR THEMES OF THE ERA

The Mystara 2300 BC era brings with it several key themes that can be integrated into any campaign setting run there. The first and foremost among these themes is recovery from the Great Rain of Fire and the Wasting disease that followed after. Blackmoor's destruction was sudden, catching even the immortals themselves off guard. Many cultures and nations were obliterated outright. Those that managed to survive the Great Rain of Fire had to contend with the deadly Wasting visited on their people by the dark clouds that hung in the sky afterward. Though the Wasting has lost some of its potency, it still plagues the people in this era, and its effects can be seen across the lands. Often rains bring with them sickness, as some residue of the Wasting leaches from the air and into storm clouds. Crops are more difficult to grow and are prone to disease and pestilence. The effects can even be seen in the general populace, as many individuals have been touched directly by the Wasting and carry its scars and deformities.

Not all afflictions in BC 2300 are caused by the Wasting. Some take on a much more physical presence. Vampire lords rule over many of the Taymoran city states, while fiendish forces corrupt the elves who dwell deep underground. The dwarves of the Shimmering Lands suffer similar corruptions, and inflict a renewed Wasting upon their neighbors thanks to the blasphemous Blackmoorian secrets they possess. Although many of these were once deemed necessary evils, times are changing. There are those who now believe that the time for such necessities has passed, and that life can continue in a higher quality without them.

Above all there is a sense of impending doom, a sense that the immortals and perhaps even the planet itself will cleanse the evils from the surface of the world unless the PCs can do something about it. In many ways this is true.

Most of the nations and cultures presented within this document are doomed to be destroyed sometime between BC 2000 and BC 1700, but this should not dissuade characters from taking positive actions. The reverberations from such positive acts will be felt across the eons for centuries and millennia to come, and will pave the way for future civilizations to rise and thrive. Nithia, Millennia, Traladara, Yavdlom, Alfheim, Rockhome, Thyatis – none of these nations could exist without the efforts of the brave adventurers of Mystara's past!

THE 2300 BC ADVENTURING PARTY

Natives

Many campaigns may be composed of individuals from a single culture or nation in the BC 2300 era, however cross cultural parties may also exist. Players should be able to find ample reasons for their characters to work together using the themes provided above.

It is important to keep in mind that while nations (and their leaders) may not have favorable attitudes to one another, this will not hold true across all strata of society – especially when it comes to adventurers. These are the people who have seen the wider world, or at least a portion of it, and have been able to expand their minds enough to make decisions on their own about who to call friend. So while Mogreth and Taymora may be on bad terms with each other as nations, it is perfectly acceptable for an adventuring party to include members from both cultures.

In some cases a DM may wish to play upon these national conceptions, working out how the characters may feel about one another in game. In other cases it may be better to ask the players to develop their character's mindsets as part of their backgrounds before play begins.

Time Travelers

Parties can be composed of adventurers from other times, either exploring their future or their past. Groups from Blackmoor can travel into the future to

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see what will become of their world in the near future. This campaign is set 700 years after the Great Rain of Fire which gives Blackmoorian parties a chance to glimpse their own fate and perhaps even an opportunity to work against it.

Other individuals may travel to their past from the modern age Mystara campaign setting. Doing so gives such characters an opportunity to see a portion of their own history and to witness events that helped to shape the world they currently live in.

Several means exist that might accomplish such time traveling experiences. Blackmoor's Comeback Inn can be used to bring characters of any time period, past or future, into the BC 2300 era. The Gate of Light in the Shimmering Lands also has some link with Blackmoor's past, and may be used to draw characters in from that era as well. In addition, Immortals of Time, especially Khoronus, may decide to send adventuring parties into this era for their own designs. Other devices may exist throughout the Know World as the DM sees fit.

THE COMMON TONGUE

No single language is spoken across the entirety of Brun, however several languages are commonly known in certain areas and these are typically used when communicating with members of foreign nations. In practice, very general terms and emotional states can be communicated cross culturally by the folk living within a single region. Communicating more complex ideas however, may be problematic.

Antalian

The root of the Antalian tongue is shared by many cultures in northern Brun. For centuries, even before the Great Rain of Fire, dwarves living on Brun absorbed and adapted portions of the language as their own. Likewise, giantish folk of Grondheim, as well as several other giant kingdoms, had very close interactions with the ancestors of the Antalians.

Even the beastmen of Urzud have picked up a smattering of Antalian which they use whenever communicating with potential employers in Antalian lands or the Shimmering Lands.

Derived Thonian

Many folk in the area, and indeed across the globe, speak some form of language derived from the Thonian tongue. Although these languages have had more than 700 years to drift apart, basic concepts can still be understood across cultures. Descendants of Skotharian dwarves, speak this language in the Shimmering Lands, as do the Makers in Teknuria and most folk that they have contact with (including those on the Corsair Isles and in the Frontierlands). Creatures of Mogreth remember some Thonian from ancient times, and use that to communicate with their neighbors.

Adhuzan

Adhuzan is really a patois created from the mixing of Azcan, Oltec, and Aquan tongues, along with a few other languages from northern Davania. This is spoken and understood nearly everywhere Adhuzan merchants can be found from the southern coastal regions of Brun and across the Sea of Dread into northern Davania. Taymoran and Elven merchants in the area learn the language of necessity, though for the latter it is distasteful to their tongues. Enough Azcan can be teased from the language that the Inti can speak it haltingly as well.

MOUNTS AND TRANSPORTATION

The use of horses as mounts was not practiced on Brun until after BC 1675, when Tahkati Stormtamer of the Atruaghin Clans first domesticates the animal. Instead, the folk of this time period have other means of transportation.

Horses and Ponies

Used mainly as draft animals in the Shimmering Lands, these animals are fairly rare, and represent all of the Blackmoorian stock that could be saved by dwarves migrating from Skothar. The dwarves take great pride in the bloodlines of these creatures and are loath to part with any of them.

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Dire Goats

The use of these large goats was brought into the area by dwarves migrating from northern Brun. They are hardy animals that can survive in some of the most inhospitable conditions. Dire goats mainly serve as mounts in mountainous or rocky terrain, where their sure footing makes them indispensable.

Dire Wolves

Savage and brutal, dire wolves are the mount of choice in the colder northern lands. The Beastmen of Urzud favor these creatures above all others, but their use extends even into Antalian lands, and sometimes beyond. They are also the favored mounts of Taymoran nobility, though the southern breed is somewhat smaller than the northern.

Dire Hounds

Selectively bred from captured dire wolves, many varieties of hounds serve as mounts across the nations of Brun. These are the mount of choice for warriors and knights, since

hounds can be trained to compliment their master's battle techniques in combat.

Skinwings

Although rare, skinwings are used as flying mounts by the lizards of Mogreth. They can carry little more weight than a single passenger, so when using them for long distance flights a traveler must pack light.

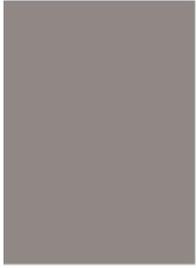
Ox

Domesticated by the Taymorans before they migrated to southern Brun, these are the draft animal of choice in Taymoran and Inti lands.

V'hruigg Lizards

These reptilian creatures see service as mounts mainly in Mogreth, but their use may extend from those borders into parts of the Shimmering Lands, Grondheim, and Frontierlands. The lizards are hardy and strong, and able to carry a great deal of weight for long distances, however they fair ill in colder climates.

MYSTARA 2300 BC



URUZUD



GRONDHEIM
LAND
OF THE
GIANTS



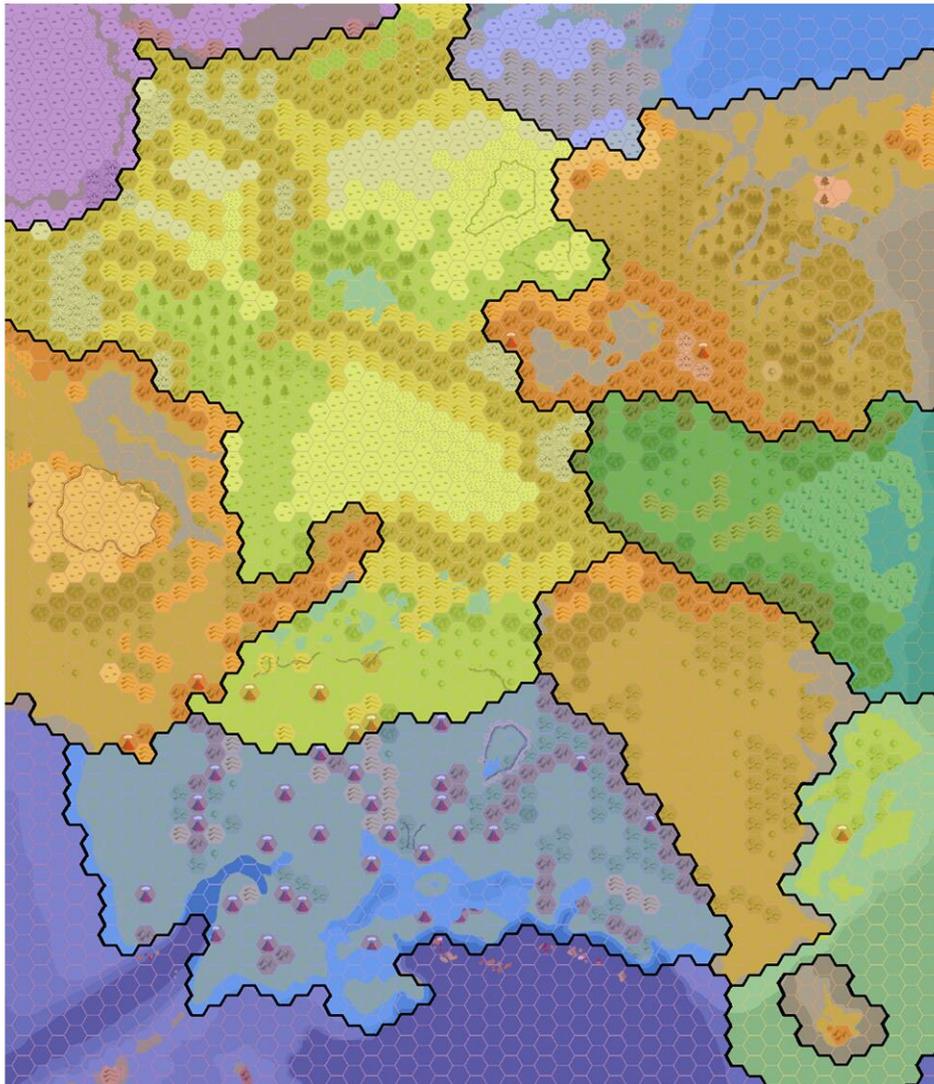
ANTALLIANS
KINGDOM
OF
WINTER



SHIMMERING
LANDS
LAST BEACON
OF
BLACKMOOR



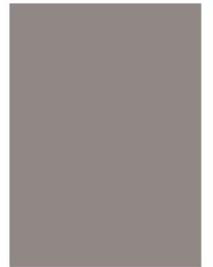
THE DEEP
ELVES



MOGRETH
EMPIRE
OF THE
LIZARD
KINGS



INTI PEOPLE
OF THE SUN



FRONTIER
LANDS



ADHUZA
KOPRU
DOMINARCHY

TAYMORA
LAND OF THE
DEAD



THE MAKERS



PIRATES

