

*Ktt'ttk was a red ant. Ktt'ttk was disgruntled. Ktt'ttk lead a glorious revolution, and conquered her hive. Then she moved on to other hives.*

*Ktt'ttk, queen of many hives on the world of Ortho, met a magus with a talent for talking to small things, named Jhary. Ktt'ttk had a plan.*

Ortho is a vast world, filled with great continents and greater oceans. It was also a fairly ordinary world until half a millennium ago. That was a dark time for Ortho, with fiends walking the land openly, the demon-god Alzrius conquering the North, the dark elves rising, and the Empire of Pan Thera enslaving the South. The keepers of balance, the legendary Ninth Cabal, had been attacked and destroyed - first by the lich Karvet, and then betrayed from within by their own.

In this depressing setting rose a hero, Romhel of Voll. Prince Romhel united the northern lands and led a series of quests for artifacts and allies to banish the fiends. It was also Romhel who is credited for founding the order that would ultimately bring peace to the entire world: the Knights of Harmony.

## **Introduction**

Ortho is a new campaign setting written by entirely by Planescape fans on the Planewalker forums. We've enjoyed beating this Prime world – which in the published material received a scant few pages of writing – into something as detailed as the product you are reading right now. We've collected fan work past and present to create a setting detailed enough for any campaign you would care to run in it be it planar or prime based. The majority of this book is background material for any planar campaign featuring the Harmonium as key players. We can only hope that you will enjoy playing it as much if not more than we enjoyed creating it.

Over half a millennium ago, Ortho was a standard, even cliché sword and sorcery world full of heroic battles against demons, wizards, and elves. Then the Knights of Harmony managed to unite two powerful lawful good kingdoms, and the pacification began. Today the entire planet is controlled by the Pax Harmonia, and their empire extends into the planes beyond.

## **Land, People, Setting, Campaign**

### **Chapter 1: Characters**

#### **Creating a Character**

#### **Races, Classes, Region, Skills,**

### **Races of Ortho**

The races of Ortho are divided mostly by the lands that they originated from. There are several base races of humans, tawny skinned, narrow-eyed folk of the Keln continent; light-skinned, round-eyed folk of the Athran continent; and a third folk from the Thaeran continent and islands, often darker skinned than the other two. Examples of these races may be found throughout Ortho, as the global government does allow and encourage migration, but many of these base stocks has stuck close to home.

Also, I notice that Rip and I may have two different roots for the humans of the as yet unwritten-up Ulfheim...Rip has them, along with the humans of eastern Xaric as originating from Omospondia, whereas I have the Ulfra, in my mind anyway, as originating from Voll/Heka via Province #3 and the north of Karazam...My view originated with Clueless's suggesting that the Lycanthropes of northern Ulfheim share their land with a blond-haired, blue-eyed folk which I assumed meant that they had to originate from Athra (most likely Voll/Heka)...This assumption led me to have a small group of them then invading Omospondia (but after the Omospondians colonized Xaric which had not yet been colonized for some reason- monsters?, non-human inhabitants?, not sure yet) and setting up a dynasty that ruled much of northern Keln for several centuries and to a lesser effect creating another Athran/Kelnic racial amalgamation...Thoughts on a resolution?...

Maybe both are true, or maybe the Omospondian humans were driven south by the werewolves.

Heka and Voll are quite a long ways from Ulfheim, however. It seems likely they'd look similar to any humans that might be in provinces #6 and #3, but Ulfheim is half a world away.

Plus, I was deliberately trying to subvert the assumption of Nordicness we get from the name.

I like the subversion of Nordicness. Just because the people of Keln have an Asiatic sort of culture, doesn't mean that they have to look like the Asian people of our worlds. Indeed, Keln is right smack dab on the equator.

If the people of Keln originated in Keln, Bergman and Allens' rules would indicate that the people of Keln would probably be quite tall and lean, and with at least a dark skintone if not going so far as to be "black".

If they migrated from elsewhere, then they could look like anything! Indeed, this is a Fantasy universe! Bergman and Allens' rules don't always apply... evolution could be just screed started by bored logisticians. But it seems better not to fall into our old realworld physical and cultural classification systems if we can avoid it.

Re: Three Races, One Race or a Single Amalgamated Race-

I find it hard to believe that all the races have merged over the past 400 and change years. I think it overestimates the power of a government/philosophy to move people around a globe...Most people, by nature, feel most comfortable staying right where they are, where they were raised...Sure, there would be people that would move around for any variety reasons (trade, better employment, military service, exploration, etc.), but I would think only a minority would, and the vast majority would live where their ancestors had, especially in a world without war...

As far as tall and lean, I was under the assumption that this was not so dependent on distance from the equator as with the availability of calcium, protein and vitamin D via locally raised (or imported) foodstuffs...

Re: the Ulfheimers

The distance from Heka/Voll to Ulfheim is not as far as one might think if you keep in mind that the world is a globe and not a flat surface, thus making distance at, say,

the 60th parallel much shorter than it appears on the map and even if the distance seems great, manifest destiny and/or Divinely Inspired Migration can do many things for a people...I, for one, like the nordicness of the Ulfheimers as I have no problem with analogs, which I think helps people new to a milieu and/or gaming to grok the milieu...As an alternative, it's also possible that the Ulfheimers originated from neither Omospondia nor Voll/Heka but from an Alternative Prime World.

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#### Beholder Families

Beholders reproduce asexually creating clones identical to themselves save for random genetic mutation. The mutation rate is surprisingly high in beholder populations, probably an adaptation to help fight the weaknesses inherent in parthenogenesis. In any case, there are twenty-seven different beholder clans each slightly different in terms of carapace shape, color, eyestalk length, and other physical traits. The clans are all related to each other, as they stem from the genetic bottleneck caused by the decimations of the Great Victory. These clans may contain within them smaller houses that are distinct sub lines of each clan.

Creation of a new clan is a very political act in modern times for the beholders of Ortho. In the past it was as simple as moving out and forming your own warren with perhaps an ally. However, Orthorian law defines a clan in terms of legal association and bloodline, so simply moving to another place to live is no longer sufficient to branch out. Creation of a new clan requires legal severance of previous clan connections, and the approval of a majority of current clan leaders. Considering the practical difficulties in getting the agreement of a majority of clans, the creation of a new clan is a very rare occurrence.

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#### Beholderkin

Deathkiss: Alien creatures, deathkiss beholderkin are unrecorded in Ortho. This doesn't mean you won't see one, just that you may not survive to tell the tale.

Director: Grell flesh-sculpted servitor beasts.

Eyeball: Naturally occurring beholder variant... create hives in caverns and trees.

Eyes of the Deep: Mythical creatures even to the beholders, the Eyes of the Deep dwell in the dark underground oceans where even beholders fear to float.

Civilized Gauth: Legally seen as equal to beholders, the civilized gauth are mostly seen as a separate lower class of beholders and form secretive clans and communities within beholder lands.

Degenerate Gauth: Degenerate gauths roam the cavern networks of the Flamedance Mountains like ravening monstrosities. Beholder lore states that these mad gauth are outcasts, cursed during the Great Victory. They barely speak and seem to only exist to cause mayhem and amass hordes of ill-gotten wealth.

Gouger: Horrifying beasts created during the Great Victory, Gougers beholders are slapdash aberrant monstrosities who roam unprotected throughout the Underdark. The forces of the Beholder Nation have exterminated most Gougers and driven the

remaining ones deep into the earth. However, adult beholders still tell tales to their offspring about hordes of horrifying Gougiers deep beneath the world -- tales that may have more truth in them than is commonly assumed.

Hive Mother: Unheard of on Ortho. Possibly driven to extinction by beholders early in history.

Overseer: Created by grell fleshsculptors, Overseers are "owned" by beholders as guards and wardens (even in this day and age, the beholders hardly trust each other). Overseers are completely unable to affect their "owner" with their domination ability and follow orders without hesitation.

Spectator: Grell built servants who have since been discontinued. Spectators were created with too much intelligence and will. Many were destroyed, others were given freedom (but, of course no vote). Spectators can be found in other Ortho cities, but they have no role in the "beholder warren" social system.

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The Grell

The grell have no representation in official beholder government. According to ancient compact, the grell serve the beholders faithfully and, for the most part, are treated as respected servants by their masters. No grell can ever harm a beholder through action or inaction, and none would even think to do so. It is with the help of the grell that the beholders have created many of the strange magic items that they are known for around Ortho. In addition, grell fleshweavers have designed a number of "Beholder-kin" worker beasts, similarly bound into the mystical shackles.

The grell are known on other worlds as "The Eaters" and the grell of Ortho are no different. Because of their domination, no grell would think to eat a beholder or beholderkin, but all other creatures are fair game. Recently the Great Congress voted to declare humanoids off of the menu of their grell servants (without provocation). While most beholders follow the will of the Congress, and the grell follow the will of the beholders unquestioningly, some isolated warrens have been slow to implement this change -- mostly due to being complete bastards.

Beholder mystics have recently determined that the grell contract is nearing its end and must find a way to renew or renegotiate it before it ends. In the best case, the beholders would lose their labor force with the contract's end. In the worst case, they would have a host of angry unbound grell to deal with. Regardless, the beholders are keeping quiet about the problem, as they would prefer to handle it themselves without the interference of other provinces or higher-ranking members of the Harmonium.

## Feats

### Feat Name:

Hardhead-butt

Harmonic Cover

Harmonic Headringing

Harmonize Spell

### Description:

Incapacitate grappled suspect quickly

Cover an ally with missile fire

Stunning mastery of mace dual-wielding.

Spells have greater effect on chaotic or evil outsiders

Head-Clearing Voice	Dispel mind-controlling magic by voice
Path to Perfection	Sense a future, and set course of action accordingly
Shades of Ortho	Dreams haunted by restless spirits
Shades of Ortho, Improved	Dreams haunted more persistently by restless spirits
Take it Like a Golem	One with your armor, soak dangerous blows easily

### **Hardhead-butts [General]**

Omnipresent in the streets of Sigil, the Harmonium have developed a technique that allows them to incapacitate minor criminals quickly and almost bloodlessly.

**Faction:** Harmonium.

**Prerequisite:** Str 13, Power Attack, grapple check bonus +6.

**Benefit:** While grappling, you can attempt a special head-butt attack that deals 1d4 points of bludgeoning damage (plus Strength modifier), and can stun the foe. If you successfully deal damage, the target must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + damage dealt) or be stunned for 1 round. If the attack is a critical hit, a creature failing the save is rendered unconscious for 1d6 rounds instead.

The first time you use this attack against an opponent, it is denied its Dexterity bonus to AC, but against any subsequent head-butts made in the same encounter, it retains the bonus.

**Special:** If you do not have your helmet on when making the head-butt attack, you need to have your head examined; the damage dealt is nonlethal, and you suffer an equal amount (though you can't be stunned).

### **Harmonic Cover [General]**

Harmonium on patrol learn to efficiently cover their partner's back with missile fire.

**Faction:** Harmonium.

**Prerequisite:** Joint Operation, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot.

**Benefit:** While armed with a ranged weapon, you can designate a single ally and ready an action to fire at any creature within 30 feet of him that triggers any of the following conditions: draws a weapon after the ally has clearly introduced your party as the Harmonium; moves away from the ally more than 5 feet after it has been ordered to stop; attacks the ally or casts a spell at him; summons another creature magically.

**Normal:** When you ready an action normally, you can specify only a single condition that triggers it.

**Note:** Most of these conditions are covered in some way in what passes for Sigilian legislative code, and will usually clear you of any accusations for "irresponsible crossbow handling" or similar ditchwash.

### **Harmonic Head-ringing [Style\*]**

It is said that Harmonium weaponmasters specializing in bludgeoning weapons can spread the word of Harmony by a few blows to the head better than any diplomat can using pretty words. Indeed, the newly enlightened sometimes stand dazed with revelation for a while...

**Faction:** Harmonium.

**Prerequisites:** Base attack bonus +8, Str 13, Cleave, Improved Critical (club, heavy mace, light mace, morningstar, or warhammer), Power Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (club, heavy mace, light mace, morningstar, or warhammer).

**Benefit:** If you hit the same creature with both maces in the same round, you gain an additional attack that you deliver with both maces at the same time, dealing the base damage for both weapons plus 1.5 times your Strength modifier. If you use your Power Attack feat on this head-ringing attack, you lose your Dexterity bonus to AC until your next turn, but the attack is automatically considered a critical threat, and has a chance of stunning the target. If the critical is confirmed, the damage from both maces is doubled, and the target must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 10 + 1/2 your character level + your Strength modifier) or be stunned for 1 round.

**Note:** The text above refers to a mace, but any combination of the weapons listed under the prerequisites can be used, as long as you have Weapon Focus with both weapons.

\* see *Complete Warrior* for more information on Style feats.

### **Harmonize Spell [Metamagic, Faction-Dependent]**

You can weave pure idealism into spells, causing them to have a greater effect on those who directly oppose your beliefs.

**Faction:** Harmonium.

**Prerequisite:** Any non-chaotic, non-evil alignment.

**Benefit:** Spells only benefit from this metamagic when cast at creatures of chaotic or evil subtype. When you cast a harmonized spell, you gain a +4 bonus on caster level checks to penetrate the spell resistance of such creatures, and the DC of the spell is increased by +1 for such creatures.

A harmonized spell uses up a spell slot one level higher than the spell's actual level.

### **Head-Clearing Voice [General, Faction-Dependent]**

You are trained to dismiss mass confusion, panic, or rage using only your voice.

**Faction:** Harmonium.

**Prerequisite:** Cha 13, Authority, Iron Will.

**Benefit:** Once per day, you can produce a spell-like effect resembling *dispel magic*, except it is delivered by voice only (no somatic component required), and it can dispel only mind-affecting effects. Also, you always create an area dispel, a 20-ft. burst centered on you; you cannot create a targeted dispel. Caster level equals your character level.

**Special:** You could use this feat in conjunction with your *command* spell-like ability (from the Authority feat), but it takes a full-round action to deliver them together. If you do so, your *command* is not affected by your dispel effect.

### **Path to Perfection [General, Faction-Dependent]**

You can meditate to gain intuitive visions of the ideal future, the Multiversal Harmony, and sense a few steps on the long way toward it.

**Faction:** Harmonium.

**Prerequisite:** Cha 11, Concentration 2 ranks, Knowledge (the planes) 2 ranks.

**Benefit:** Three times per day, by centering yourself through one minute of uninterrupted concentration, you can use *augury* as a spell-like ability. Caster level equals your character level.

Unlike the spell, this ability tells you whether a particular action will bring good or bad results for the Cause of your faction in the distant future; this outcome may or may not coincide with the events of your immediate future. Essentially, *augury* informs you if an action is the Right Thing to Do, not if it can bring personal benefit.

### **Shades of Ortho [General, Faction-Dependent]**

Centuries ago, the Harmonium has purged the world of Ortho from non-harmonic elements, but their methods were questionable to say the least. Even today, voices of restless souls trouble some members from beyond.

**Faction:** Harmonium.

**Prerequisite:** Any non-evil alignment.

**Benefit:** Mournful apparitions haunt your dreams. They accuse you and "your kind" for destroying them, and pray for vengeance. There is a 50% chance that your rest does not remedy fatigue or exhaustion. However, these vile attacks have only strengthened your dedication to the Cause - you are now certain that all such malevolent beings must be eradicated, and could never be incorporated into Harmony. You gain a +2 morale bonus on attack rolls against chaotic or evil creatures, and on caster level checks to penetrate their spell resistance (if any).

**Normal:** Resting for 8 hours normally frees you of fatigue, and one hour of rest normally reduces exhaustion to fatigue.

**Note:** It is not necessary for a character to have been involved in the genocide on Ortho in any way, or even to have any knowledge of the event. As long as he shares the ideals of the Harmonium, he can be haunted by the shades. The dream hauntings are never clear enough to provide exact details of the events that took place on Ortho.

### **Shades of Ortho, Improved [General, Faction-Dependent]**

The presence that haunts your dreams grows stronger, but so does your conviction.

**Faction:** Harmonium.

**Prerequisite:** Shades of Ortho, any non-evil alignment.

**Benefit:** The shades still visit you when you sleep, and their accusations grow more hateful every night. You respond in kind, and still cling to the Cause desperately. You gain a +2 morale bonus on attack rolls against incorporeal undead, and every weapon you wield is treated as a ghost touch weapon.

### **Take it Like a Golem [General]**

Experienced Harmonium are said to grow into their armor, gaining a high degree of protection.

**Faction:** Harmonium.

**Prerequisite:** Con 17, Endurance, Diehard.

**Benefit:** Any suit of heavy armor that you wear functions like *armor of moderate fortification*. In other words, while you are in heavy armor there is a 75% chance that a critical hit or sneak attack against you is negated and damage is instead rolled normally.

## **Prestige Classes**

### ***Drummer of Baelae***

Baelae, the Lord of Music, has given his blessings to an elite set of musicians trained within the Colleges of the Choir on Ortho. These bards have learned to develop their abilities in ways that best support the order and principles that Baelae represents.

*Prerequisites:* Training in an Ortho temple of Baelae or at an Ortho College of the Choir branch, Worshipper of Baelae, Lawful alignment, Performance rank 10, drumming listed as one of the types known, Bardic Knowledge as a class ability

Skills:  
As Bard

Level	BAB	Fort	Reflex	Will	Special Notes
1	+0	+0	+2	+2	Support of the Choir
2	+1	+0	+3	+3	Spell casting progression as bard
3	+2	+1	+3	+3	Trade Song 1; Spell casting progression as bard
4	+3	+1	+4	+4	
5	+3	+1	+4	+4	Chaotic Resistance; Spell casting progression as bard
6	+4	+2	+5	+5	Trade Song 2; Spell casting progression as bard
7	+5	+2	+5	+5	Beat Hijack
8	+6 / +1	+2	+6	+6	Spell casting progression as bard
9	+6 / +1	+3	+6	+6	Trade Song 3; Spell casting progression as bard
10	+7 / +2	+3	+7	+7	Domain Access

*Support of the Choir:* Given access to a branch of the choir by physical or magical means, the drummer is able to quickly research topics or speak to mentors and contacts within the choir. He receives a +4 circumstance modifier to Bardic Knowledge checks and Gather Information checks if at least one hour is taken in research at the College.

*Trade Song 1 (Sp):* A bardic magic attempt may be traded in for the purposes of casting Cure Moderate Wounds. This may be used up to the drummer's charisma bonus per day.

*Chaotic Resistance:* The Drummer receives a +2 circumstance bonus to saves vs. chaotic effects (with the chaotic subtype) and saves vs. chaotic casters.

*Trade Song 2 (Sp):* A bardic magic attempt may be traded in for the purposes of casting Protection from Elements. This may be used up to the drummer's charisma bonus per day.

*Beat Hijack (Su):* Caster receives a +4 to Perform for the purposes of countersong attempts. This only applies to counting magical effects of a chaotic nature, or from a chaotic caster.

*Trade Song 3 (Sp):* A bardic magic attempt may be traded in for the purposes of casting Death Ward. This may be used up to the drummer's charisma bonus per day.

*Domain Access:* The Drummer gains access to the Lawful domain as if a cleric of levels equal to his character levels. He is given domain spell slots to memorize these spells into. At the 9th level of this domain, only aasimons may be summoned with this spell, as they are messengers and servants of Baelae himself.

### **Fire Eater**

Alzrius in his time on Ortho created 'shock troops' to lead his armies across the sphere. They are extremely rare in the current day on Ortho, but may be



encountered in missions to the Abyss or in any lingering and forgotten stronghold of Alzrius.

*Prerequisites:* BAB 8, Knowledge (planes) 10 ranks, Sworn Fealty to Alzrius

Swearing Fealty to Alzrius requires a rite featuring at least one large example of arson. This ritual gives the Demon Lord access to your soul to claim it on your death. Alzrius doesn't particular care what your alignment is when you first swear to him, he will receive your soul regardless and generally by the time he's through with his new servant their alignment matches his own.

Hit Die: d6

Class Skills: 2+Int in skill points each level.

The fire eater's class skills (and the key ability for each skill are Balance (Dex), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Escape artist (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (planes) (Int), Knowledge (fire) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Spot (Wis).

Level	BAB	Fort	Reflex	Will	Special Notes
1	+0	+2	+2	+0	Fire Subtype
2	+1	+3	+3	+0	Flame Sheath
3	+2	+3	+3	+1	
4	+3	+4	+4	+1	Flame Dance
5	+3	+4	+4	+1	Alignment Shift; Intimidation 1
6	+4	+5	+5	+2	Fire Wyrms
7	+5	+5	+5	+2	
8	+6 / +1	+6	+6	+2	Spontaneous Combustion
9	+6 / +1	+6	+6	+3	
10	+7 / +2	+7	+7	+3	Alignment Shift; Elemental Form; Intimidation 2

*Fire Subtype:* The Fire Eater gains the subtype Fire in addition to any other subtypes he already has. This subtype grants him immunity to fire, and makes him more vulnerable to cold damage, taking double damage from cold effects.

*Flame Sheath (Su):* At will, any weapon wielded by the character may be wreathed in an Eater's unholy flame. This sheath of fire deals an additional 1d6 fire damage to opponents.

*Flame Dance (Sp):* An Eater may perform a flame dance similar to the spell Hypnotic Pattern, causing summoned firelight to create a hypnotic effect against all those around him that are capable of seeing the effect. All sentient creatures within 60 ft of the Eater may become entranced by this effect. Targets may save at a DC of 10 + character level/2 + Charisma bonus of the Eater. Targets who save are immune to the flame dance. The hypnotic effects last for a number of rounds equal to the Eaters charisma bonus. Hypnotized creatures are dazed, and will focus on the firelight suffering a -4 to their spot and listen checks. They will take no offensive actions, but obvious threats will break the hypnotic effect. An Eater may perform up to his Charisma bonus in flame dances per day.

*Alignment Shift:* The Eater's alignment shifts as Alzrius burns away the parts of his soul that are not to the Lord's liking. He becomes more chaotic or evil, as part of his

alignment changes to match. If the Eater's alignment is already chaotic or evil, the other aspect of the alignment shifts.

*Intimidation 1:* The Eater receives a +2 bonus to Intimidation.

*Fire Wyrm (Sp):* The Fire Eater summons fire in the form of a massive wyrm or dragon which attacks his opponents. The wyrm stays for a number of rounds equal to the Eater's Charisma bonus. The wyrm has only one attack (burn) and is effectively incorporeal as it is composed only of the Eater's own flames. Attacks on the dragon are pointless, as it is simply a visual manifestation of the summoned fire. The Wyrm may target only one square a round, and creatures in that square receive a Reflex save for half damage, at a DC equal to 10 + character level/2 + Charisma bonus of the Eater. The wyrm's burn attack does damage equal to 1d6 per levels in Fire Eater. An Eater may do this 3 times a day.

*Spontaneous Combustion (Sp):* The Eater may cause a single victim to burn into intense flames charring away their flesh and bones and leaving nothing else in the area harmed. Targets must be within 40ft + 5ft/level of Fire Eater. The target creature receives a Fort save at a DC of 10 + character level.2 + Charisma bonus of the Eater. If the target saves against this effect he feels intense heat and pain, causing a -2 morale bonus for 1d4 rounds but takes no damage. An Eater may do this 3 times a day.

*Elemental Form (Su):* An Eater takes on the form of a fire elemental, gaining the attacks and fire damage of an elemental. This power acts as polymorph self, with the restriction that the Fire Eater may only shapeshift into elementals with the Fire subtype. The Eater gains all of the elemental's special abilities when using this power. An Eater may do this 3 times a day.

*Intimidation 2:* The Eater receives a +4 bonus to Intimidation. This supercedes the bonus received at level 5.

### ***Iatharian Ice Guard***

In order to defend themselves against future attacks by Alzrius, the people of Iathra have developed an elite fighting force of ice manipulators. These Ice Guards are generally found in Iathra dealing with lingering troubles in that province, but may be found elsewhere as well.

*Prerequisites:* BAB 8, Survived exposure (at risk of death) to winter and/or cold environments, Trained under a member of the Iatharian Ice Guard

Hit Dice: d6

Class Skills: 4+Int in skill points each level.

The fire eater's class skills (and the key ability for each skill are Balance (Dex), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Intuit direction (Wis), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Spot (Wis), Wilderness lore (Wis).

<b>Level</b>	<b>BAB</b>	<b>Fort</b>	<b>Reflex</b>	<b>Will</b>	<b>Special Notes</b>
1	+0	+2	+0	+2	Cold Subtype
2	+1	+3	+0	+3	Quench the Flame 1
3	+2	+3	+1	+3	Chill Metal

4	+3	+4	+1	+4	
5	+3	+4	+1	+4	Icy Blade
6	+4	+5	+2	+5	Quench the Flame 2
7	+5	+5	+2	+5	Icy Blast
8	+6 / +1	+6	+2	+6	
9	+6 / +1	+6	+3	+6	Quench the Flame 3
10	+7 / +2	+7	+3	+7	Breath of the North

*Cold Subtype:* The Ice Guard gains the subtype Cold in addition to any other subtypes he already has. This subtype grants him immunity to cold damage, and makes him more vulnerable to fire damage, taking double damage from fire effects.

*Quench the Flame 1 (Sp):* The Guard may automatically counterspell any fire-based spell or effect of up to third level. He may do this three times a day, and must have a ready action in order to counterspell. In addition, he may quench a number of 20ft cubes of nonmagical flame up to his Charisma bonus over the course of the day.

*Chill metal:* The Guard may cast *Chill Metal* 3/day, as per the spell with an additional effect. On failing a Fort Save DC= 10 + CL/2 + Charisma bonus, the target's armor (if metallic) is made brittle due to extreme cold. Target receives a -4 to Armor Class as a result for a duration of 2d4 rounds.

*Icy Blade (Su):* At will, the Ice Guard is able to form a weapon of his choice out of ice. This weapon deals normal damage as a weapon of its type. The weapon is required to be able to be handled by a creature of the same size as the Guard, and melts instantly if it is removed from the Guards possession. No other creature may use this weapon. It is considered magical at a bonus equal to the Guard's levels in this class divided by two (max +5). In addition the weapon deals an extra +2d6 of cold damage.

*Quench the Flame 2 (Sp):* The Guard may automatically counterspell any fire-based spell or effect between fourth and sixth level. He may do this three times a day, and must have a ready action in order to counterspell. In addition, he may quench a number of 20ft cubes of nonmagical flame up to his Charisma bonus times two over the course of the day, this supercedes the number of cubes granted to him in Quench the Flame 1.

*Icy Blast (Sp):* The Guard may cast *Cold Orb* at a caster level equal to his character level, 3 times per day.

*Quench the Flame 3 (Sp):* The Guard may automatically counterspell any fire-based spell or effect between seventh and ninth level. He may do this three times a day, and must have a ready action in order to counterspell. In addition, he may quench a number of 20ft cubes of nonmagical flame up to his Charisma bonus times three over the course of the day, this supercedes the number of cubes granted to him in Quench the Flame 2.

*Breath of the North (Sp):* Once per day, a guard may summon a freezing wind. This wind instantly freezes targets in its path. The wind uses the same range, and area of effect as a Gust of Wind spell. Those in it's path must make a Fort save at a DC of 10 + character level/2 + Charisma bonus or be frozen instantly.

### ***Ironfang Avenger***

The world of Ortho is a wide and wondrous place, home to warriors of all kinds who fight in opposition to the forces of chaos and uphold the way of Harmony. Those known as Ironfang Avengers are only one example of this. Originally lycanthropic tribal champions hailing from the harsh polar wastes of extreme northern Iathra, these warriors learned new ways of fighting after the demonic host of the Alzrius invaded their homelands. The rise of the Harmonium saw their ways of fighting celebrated as an invaluable weapon against all beings of chaos, and the present day has seen many champions of Ortho study these arts.

Because of the natural attack requirements of this prestige class, most members are lycanthropes or members of other monster races who have gained levels of fighter, ranger or (rarely) paladin or monk. Some half-fiends originally hailing from Thaera also seek to adopt this class, and are usually among the more zealous opponents of chaos. While beholders possess the requirements needed to take this class, only a few choose to do so - those who do, however, are quite versatile and capable fighters, feared by all creatures of chaotic origin.

*Prerequisites:* BAB +6, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Multiattack, Survival 5 ranks, Lawful alignment

Hit Die: d10

Class Skills: 4+Int skill points per level.

The ironfang avenger's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (dungeoneering) (Int), Knowledge (geography) (Int), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Knowledge (the planes) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), and Swim (Str).

Level	BAB	Fort	Reflex	Will	Special Notes
1	+1	+2	+0	+2	Ironfang
2	+2	+3	+0	+3	Ironfur
3	+3	+3	+1	+3	Scent Chaos
4	+4	+4	+1	+4	
5	+5	+4	+1	+4	Fury's Howl
6	+6 / +1	+5	+2	+5	
7	+7 / +2	+5	+2	+5	
8	+8 / +3	+6	+2	+6	
9	+9 / +4	+6	+3	+6	
10	+10 / +5	+7	+3	+7	Purity of Law

*Ironfang (Ex):* The Ironfang Avenger's natural weapons are treated as cold iron for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction. At 6th level, the Avenger's natural attacks ignore any DR that includes cold iron as a component (such as the DR 10/cold iron and good possessed by a marilith).

*Ironfur (Su):* The Ironfang Avenger gains acid and fire resistance 5. This stacks with any existing energy resistance possessed by the character, and increases by 5 points for every two levels gained in the prestige class.

*Scent Chaos (Su)*: The Avenger can detect the presence of chaotic beings or magics by scent. Treat this ability as a detect chaos effect, except that its range is 30 feet in all directions from the character, and the ability cannot detect number, strength or location of any chaotic aura.

*Fury's Howl (Su)*: Once per day, the Avenger can release a bone-chilling howl that heartens and enrages lawful characters and causes chaotic characters to panic. Lawful characters within 60 feet of the Avenger receive a +1 morale bonus to attacks and saving throws; chaotic creatures must make a Will save (DC 10 + Cha bonus + class level) or be panicked. Chaotic outsiders suffer a -4 penalty to this save. Both effects last for 1 round per class level of the Avenger. At 9th level, the Avenger may use this ability twice per day.

*Purity of Law (Su)*: The most powerful Ironfang Avengers possess strength of faith and conviction that can stand steadfast against any force of chaos. With this ability, the character becomes immune to the effects of all spells and spell-like abilities with the [Chaos] descriptor. Effects without this descriptor still affect the Avenger normally, as do [Chaos] effects that do not allow spell resistance.

### ***Sinhunter***

(TBD)

### ***Truthseeker***

Designed to fulfill the need for an agent of Ina to both follow in his original path, and serve the needs of his new goddess, Truthseeker training is given only to clerics of Ina.

*Prerequisites*: Initiate of Ina, Knowledge (religion) rank 10

Class Skills: 8 + Int skill points per level.

As a class the truthseeker is merely an extension of the skills and abilities that Ina choose him for. Therefor a truthseeker's skill list represents his previous training. A truthseeker's skill list is the same as any class previously taken by the character. The class is chosen at the beginning of taking this class (skill selection cannot change after the first level of this class is taken). In addition a truthseeker receives the skills Knowledge (religion) (Int), and Sense motive (Wis).

<b>Level</b>	<b>BAB</b>	<b>Fort</b>	<b>Reflex</b>	<b>Will</b>	<b>Special Notes</b>
1	+0	+2	+0	+2	Chose feat from Truth Seeker list
2	+0	+3	+0	+3	Chose feat from Truth Seeker list
3	+1	+3	+1	+3	Chose feat from Truth Seeker list
4	+1	+4	+1	+4	Chose feat from Truth Seeker list
5	+1	+4	+1	+4	Chose feat from Truth Seeker list

### ***Truth Seeker List of Available Feats:***

*Lie Sensing (Sp)*: A truthseeker is extremely good at detecting deception. He receives a +4 bonus to sense motive checks, and may cast Zone of Truth, at a caster level equal to his character level three times a day.

*Manipulative (Sp)*: A truthseeker is skilled at manipulating others to achieve the effects he desires. He receives a +4 bonus to bluff checks, and may cast *Suggestion*, at a caster level equal to his character level three times a day.

*Enduce Forgetfulness (Sp)*: A truthseeker may cast *Modify Memory* at a caster level equal to his character level, three times a day.

*Subtle Movement (Ex)*: A truthseeker receives a +4 bonus to both Hide and Move Silent checks.

*Hidden Movement (Su)*: A truthseeker may use the feat Hide in Plain Sight as long as they are within 10 feet of some sort of shadow.

*Hidden Knowledge (Sp)*: A truthseeker may cast *Legend Lore* at a caster level equal to his character level, three times a day.

*Mystical Concealment (Sp)*: A truthseeker may cast *Nondetection* at a caster level equal to his character level, three times a day.

*Ina's Eyes*: A truthseeker gains access to the information network of Ina's operatives and clergy. By making a favor check (see below), he may call for their assistance in a situation without going through the time and trouble of a Gather Information check. Favors can also be used to acquire the loan of equipment or documents from influential acquaintances.

To call in a favor, you make a favor check.

Roll a d20 + the truthseeker's level in this class. The DM sets the DC based on the scope of the favor being requested; it can range from 10 for a simple favor to as high as 25 for highly dangerous, expensive, or illegal favors. A 10 or 20 cannot be taken on this check, nor can the check be retried for the same (or virtually the same) favor. Favors should help advance the plot of an adventure. A favor that would enable the truthseeker to circumvent an adventure will always be unavailable, regardless of the result of the favor check.

A truthseeker may try to call in a favor a number of times per week equal to one-half his character level, rounded down (minimum one). He can never ask for more than one favor from any one contact in a given week.

The DM will carefully monitor his use of favors to ensure that he doesn't abuse this ability. The success or failure of a mission shouldn't hinge on the use of a favor, and calling in favors shouldn't replace good roleplaying or the use of other skills. The DM may disallow any favor he or she deems disruptive to the campaign.

*Cloak of Secrecy (Sp)*: Once per day, a truthseeker calls on Ina to conceal the existence of a secret. This creates a *Nondetection* effect on secrets that lasts for a number of days equal to the charisma bonus of the truthseeker. Attempts to probe the secret are at a +4 modifier to gather information, intimidation, or research checks regarding it. Divination magics are obscured by the intervention of the deity. Those involved in the subject are subtly encouraged to temporarily forget its existence. Attempts to consciously address the secret, or to convey the contents of the secret will succeed only with a Will save at a DC of 10 + character level/2 +

Wisdom bonus of the truthseeker. This DC may be higher if Ina has a direct interest in concealing the secret.

## Chapter 2: Magic

<move to... spells>

This effect uses the incantation rules originally published in *Unearthed Arcana*. Reading up on the rules and campaign use of these effects is recommended.

Kelmuun's Bond of the Wolfpack

Enchantment

Effective Level: 8th

Skill Check: Diplomacy DC 28, 4 successes; Handle Animal DC 28, 1 success;

Knowledge (nature) DC 28, 2 successes; Survival DC 28, 1 success

Failure: Attack

Components: V,S,F,XP,SC,B

Casting Time: 80 minutes

Range: See text

Area: Ring formed by casters, no more than 50 feet in diameter

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: Will negates (DC 19 + caster's Cha modifier)

Spell Resistance: Yes

Kelmuun's Bond of the Wolfpack invokes the ways of pack law and dominance in the hearts of werewolves, cleansing them of the maddening taint of the moon and reconsecrating them to the way of order. The casters form a ring around the werewolves to be affected by the incantation, appealing in different and varied ways to the creatures' inner sense of self and condemning the blight of lunar chaos. As the rite progresses, the targets become calmer and more controlled, less prey to savage and disruptive instincts, until as the invocation completes they are reborn as creatures of hierarchy and law.

The incantation only affects werewolves (natural or afflicted), permanently changing their alignment to Lawful Evil if they fail a Will save. This overrides the werewolf's preferred alignment, but does not block other effects that affect alignment.

The targets to be affected by the incantation need not be restrained or rendered helpless, but must remain within the ring of casters. They may freely attack the casters if they so choose. As a result, the spell is normally cast on targets that either accede to the incantation, or who have been rendered helpless by some other means.

Failure

A gelugon (or other CR 13 devil) is summoned to attack the casters. After fifteen rounds or the death of all casters, whichever happens first, it returns to the infernal realms. It will not normally attack the spell's targets or bystanders, but will defend itself if attacked.

Focus

A finely crafted wolf's mask made of silver with inlaid gemstones, worth 5,000 gp.

XP Cost

400 XP.

## Backlash

All casters are exhausted upon the spell's completion.

## Extra Casters

Fifteen individuals are required; they space themselves in a ring along with the primary caster, reiterating and reinforcing the dictums and arguments presented.

## Campaign Use

Kelmuun's Bond of the Wolfpack is a campaign tool used by the Harmonium, used to tame new werewolf cubs and undiscovered rogue tribes alike. It's not likely to be directly employed by PC groups.

## The Forbidden Spells

The Harmonium has strict controls on weaponry, especially that of a magical nature. Any spellcaster of an arcane or divine nature is required to inform the Harmonium of their skills, and certain spells may only be learned, taught, and cast under the strictest of circumstances due to their inherently dangerous natures. In general, the use of a spell while committing a crime carries an additional penalty.

New spells are registered and classified with the Harmonium directly, or if created under the directive of a mage school or temple through the duly appointed officer of the school or temple. Spells are regulated according to the following classifications:

### *Class A: Legal and harmless spells.*

Essentially harmless or entirely beneficial spells. These spells may be freely taught and developed.

### *Class B: Legal spells.*

Spells that may be used in the course of committing a misdemeanor. These spells often include illusion spells, and minor enchantments. They may be freely taught and developed.

### *Class C: Controlled Spells.*

Spells that may be used in the course of committing a felony. Combative spells. These spells may be taught only by a licensed teacher under controlled situations. Examples include spells learned for the purpose of self defense, or spells learned to advance the Way of Harmony.

### *Class D: Restricted spells.*

These spells may only be taught by governmental or Harmonium classes to authorized personnel. They include the most powerful of the combative spells, and other spells capable of producing mass destruction.

### *Class E: Forbidden spells.*

These spells may not be taught, developed, or even *cast* except by specific permission of the Octave Council. These spells include all variations of demon summoning, and gates to other planes. These spells include those which open the caster and innocents high levels of danger, or which serve no useful purpose but to harm innocents.



## Summoning Spells

Summoning spells are under close scrutiny as they have the potential to summon creatures from the planes. As a result, while summoning spells are listed under the class system – specific uses of them to summon otherworldly creatures are more closely regulated. Any summoning of a demon, slaadi or eladrin is an immediate Class E offense. Summonings of devils, modrons, formians or archons is considered generally a Class D offense. Summonings of aasimons is only a Class C action, as these are considered godly messengers and do not pose a threat to Ortho's security.

## Classification of Common Spells

### Unclassified:

<i>Floating Disk</i>	<i>Mage's Lucubration</i>	<i>Ray of Exhaustion</i>
<i>Forceful Hand</i>	<i>Mage's Magnificent</i>	<i>Resilient Sphere</i>
<i>Freezing Sphere</i>	<i>Mansion</i>	<i>Scintillating Pattern</i>
<i>Glibness</i>	<i>Mage's Private</i>	<i>Scorching Ray</i>
<i>Good Hope</i>	<i>Sanctum</i>	<i>Secret Chest</i>
<i>Grasping Hand</i>	<i>Mage's Sword</i>	<i>Shades</i>
<i>Heroism</i>	<i>Magic Aura</i>	<i>Song of Discord</i>
<i>Heroism, Greater</i>	<i>Mnemonic Enhancer</i>	<i>Sympathetic Vibration</i>
<i>Hideous Laughter</i>	<i>Moment of Prescience</i>	<i>Telekinetic Sphere</i>
<i>Instant Summons</i>	<i>Overland Flight</i>	<i>Tiny Hut</i>
<i>Interposing Hand</i>	<i>Owl's Wisdom</i>	<i>Touch of Fatigue</i>
<i>Irresistible Dance</i>	<i>Owl's Wisdom, Mass</i>	<i>Touch of Idiocy</i>
<i>Longstrider</i>	<i>Phase Door</i>	<i>Transformation</i>
<i>Lullaby</i>	<i>Polar Ray</i>	<i>Waves of Exhaustion</i>
<i>Mage's Disjunction</i>	<i>Produce Flame</i>	<i>Waves of Fatigue</i>
<i>Mage's Faithful Hound</i>	<i>Rage</i>	

### Class A:

<i>Aid</i>	<i>Calm Emotions</i>	<i>Mass</i>
<i>Alarm</i>	<i>Cat's Grace</i>	<i>Cure Minor Wounds</i>
<i>Analyze Dweomer</i>	<i>Cat's Grace Mass</i>	<i>Cure Moderate Wounds</i>
<i>Animal Messenger</i>	<i>Clairaudience/</i>	<i>Cure Moderate</i>
<i>Animate Rope</i>	<i>Clairvoyance</i>	<i>Wounds, Mass</i>
<i>Antilife Shell</i>	<i>Commune</i>	<i>Cure Serious Wounds</i>
<i>Antipathy</i>	<i>Commune with Nature</i>	<i>Cure Serious Wounds,</i>
<i>Antiplant Shell</i>	<i>Comprehend</i>	<i>Mass</i>
<i>Arcane Lock</i>	<i>Languages</i>	<i>Curse Water</i>
<i>Arcane Mark</i>	<i>Consecrate</i>	<i>Dancing Lights</i>
<i>Atonement</i>	<i>Contingency</i>	<i>Darkvision</i>
<i>Augury</i>	<i>Continual Flame</i>	<i>Daylight</i>
<i>Banishment</i>	<i>Control Plants</i>	<i>Death Ward</i>
<i>Barkskin</i>	<i>Create Food and Water</i>	<i>Deathwatch</i>
<i>Bear's Endurance</i>	<i>Create Water</i>	<i>Delay Poison</i>
<i>Bless</i>	<i>Cure Critical Wounds</i>	<i>Detect Animals or</i>
<i>Bless Water</i>	<i>Cure Critical Wounds,</i>	<i>Plants</i>
<i>Break Enchantment</i>	<i>Mass</i>	<i>Detect Chaos</i>
<i>Bull's Strength</i>	<i>Cure Light Wounds</i>	<i>Detect Evil</i>
<i>Calm Animals</i>	<i>Cure Light Wounds,</i>	<i>Detect Good</i>

Detect Law  
Detect Magic  
Detect Poison  
Detect Scrying  
Detect Snares and Pits  
Detect Undead  
Dictum  
Dimensional Anchor  
Discern Lies  
Discern Location  
Dismissal  
Dispel Chaos  
Dispel Evil  
Dispel Magic  
Disrupt Undead  
Divination  
Dream  
Eagle's Splendor  
Eagle's Splendor, Mass  
Endure Elements  
Entropic Shield  
Erase  
Expeditious Retreat  
Fabricate  
Faerie Fire  
Feather Fall  
Find the Path  
Find Traps  
Flare  
Fly  
Forbiddance  
Foresight  
Fox's Cunning  
Fox's Cunning, Mass  
Freedom  
Freedom of Movement  
Gentle Repose  
Ghost Sound  
Glitterdust  
Goodberry  
Guards and Wards  
Guidance  
Hallow  
Halt Undead  
Haste  
Heal  
Heal, Mass  
Heal Mount  
Helping Hand  
Heroes' Feast  
Hide from Undead  
Hold Portal  
Holy Aura

Identify  
Illusory Script  
Illusory Wall  
Invisibility Purge  
Ironwood  
Jump  
Keen Edge  
Know Direction  
Legend Lore  
Light  
Liveoak  
Locate Creature  
Locate Object  
Mage Armor  
Mage Hand  
Magic Circle against  
Chaos  
Magic Circle against  
Evil  
Magic Mouth  
Magic Vestment  
Major Creation  
Make Whole  
Mending  
Message  
Minor Creation  
Minor Image  
Mount  
Move Earth  
Neutralize Poison  
Open/Close  
Order's Wrath  
Permanency  
Permanent Image  
Persistent Image  
Phantom Steed  
Plant Growth  
Prayer  
Prestidigitation  
Protection from Arrows  
Protection from Chaos  
Protection from Energy  
Protection from Evil  
Protection from  
Purify Food and Drink  
Quench  
Raise Dead  
Read Magic  
Refuge  
Regenerate  
Reincarnate  
Remove  
Blindness/

Deafness  
Remove Curse  
Remove Disease  
Remove Fear  
Remove Paralysis  
Repel Vermin  
Repel Wood  
Resistance  
Resist Energy  
Restoration  
Restoration, Greater  
Restoration, Lesser  
Resurrection  
Rope Trick  
Sanctuary  
Sculpt Sound  
Secure Shelter  
See Invisibility  
Sending  
Sepia Snake Sigil  
Shield  
Shield of Faith  
Shield of Law  
Shield Other  
Shrink Item  
Silent Image  
Soften Earth and Stone  
Speak with Animals  
Speak with Dead  
Speak with Plants  
Spectral Hand  
Statue  
Status  
Stone Shape  
Stoneskin  
Stone Tell  
Stone to Flesh  
Summon Instrument  
Summon Monster I  
Summon Nature's Ally I  
Telepathic Bond  
Tongues  
Transmute Metal to  
Wood  
Transmute Mud to Rock  
Transmute Rock to Mud  
Transport via Plants  
Tree Shape  
Tree Stride  
True Resurrection  
Undeath to Death  
Unseen Servant  
Ventriloquism

*Virtue*  
*Vision*  
*Water Breathing*

*Whispering Wind*  
*Wood Shape*  
*Word of Recall*

*Zone of Silence*  
*Zone of Truth*

**Class B:**

*Air Walk*  
*Alter Self*  
*Animal Growth*  
*Animal Shapes*  
*Animal Trance*  
*Animate Objects*  
*Animate Plants*  
*Arcane Eye*  
*Bane*  
*Bless Weapon*  
*Cause Fear*  
*Changestaff*  
*Charm Animal*  
*Chill Metal*  
*Chill Touch*  
*Command*  
*Confusion*  
*Control Water*  
*Darkness*  
*Daze*  
*Daze Monster*  
*Deeper Darkness*  
*Detect Secret Doors*  
*Diminish Plants*  
*Dispel Good*  
*Dispel Magic Greater*  
*Displacement*

*Enlarge Person*  
*Fire Trap*  
*Fog Cloud*  
*Grease*  
*Gust of Wind*  
*Heat Metal*  
*Hold Animal*  
*Hold Monster*  
*Holy Smite*  
*Holy Sword*  
*Holy Word*  
*Imbue with Spell Ability*  
*Levitate*  
*Magic Circle against  
Good*  
*Magic Fang*  
*Major Image*  
*Mirror Image*  
*Obscuring Mist*  
*Polymorph*  
*Polymorph Any Object*  
*Programmed Image*  
*Project Image*  
*Protection from Good*  
*Prying Eyes*  
*Prying Eyes, Greater*  
*Ray of Frost*

*Reduce Animal*  
*Reduce Person*  
*Reduce Person, Mass*  
*Repulsion*  
*Rusting Grasp*  
*Scare*  
*Secret Page*  
*Silence*  
*Sound Burst*  
*Spellstaff*  
*Spider Climb*  
*Summon Monster II*  
*Summon Nature's Ally  
II*  
*Summon Swarm*  
*Teleport*  
*Teleport Object*  
*Teleport, Greater*  
*Teleportation Circle*  
*Temporal Stasis*  
*True Seeing*  
*Warp Wood*  
*Water Walk*  
*Web*

**Class C:**

*Acid Arrow*  
*Animate Dead*  
*Antimagic Field*  
*Awaken*  
*Bear's Endurance Mass*  
*Blink*  
*Blur*  
*Bull's Strength, Mass*  
*Burning Hands*  
*Charm Monster*  
*Charm Person*  
*Color Spray*  
*Command Greater*  
*Command Plants*  
*Command Undead*  
*Control Undead*  
*Control Winds*

*Create Undead*  
*Death Knell*  
*Destruction*  
*Detect Thoughts*  
*Dimension Door*  
*Disguise Self*  
*Disintegrate*  
*Dispel Law*  
*Divine Favor*  
*Divine Power*  
*Dominate Animal*  
*Dominate Monster*  
*Doom*  
*Enervation*  
*Entangle*  
*Explosive Runes*  
*Fear*

*Fire Shield*  
*Fireball*  
*Flame Blade*  
*Flame Strike*  
*Flaming Sphere*  
*Flesh to Stone*  
*Forcecage*  
*Gaseous Form*  
*Ghoul Touch*  
*Globe of Invulnerability*  
*Globe of  
Invulnerability,  
Lesser*  
*Glyph of Warding*  
*Glyph of Warding,  
Greater*  
*Harm*

*Hide from Animals*  
*Hold Monster, Mass*  
*Hold Person*  
*Hypnotism*  
*Ice Storm*  
*Inflict Light Wounds*  
*Inflict Light Wounds,*  
*Mass*  
*Inflict Minor Wounds*  
*Invisibility*  
*Iron Body*  
*Knock*  
*Lightning Bolt*  
*Magic Circle against*  
*Law*  
*Magic Fang, Greater*  
*Magic Missile*  
*Magic Stone*  
*Magic Weapon*  
*Magic Weapon, Greater*  
*Mark of Justice*  
*Meld into Stone*  
*Mislead*  
*Nondetection*  
*Obscure Object*  
*Passwall*  
*Pass without Trace*  
*Phantom Trap*  
*Poison*  
*Power Word Blind*

*Power Word Stun*  
*Prismatic Spray*  
*Protection from Law*  
*Pyrotechnics*  
*Rainbow Pattern*  
*Ray of Enfeeblement*  
*Repel Metal or Stone*  
*Reverse Gravity*  
*Righteous Might*  
*Scrying*  
*Searing Light*  
*Seeming*  
*Shapechange*  
*Shatter*  
*Shillelagh*  
*Shocking Grasp*  
*Shout*  
*Shout, Greater*  
*Sleep*  
*Sleet Storm*  
*Slow*  
*Snare*  
*Solid Fog*  
*Spell Immunity*  
*Spell Immunity,*  
*Greater*  
*Spell Resistance*  
*Spell Turning*  
*Spike Growth*  
*Spike Stones*

*Spiritual Weapon*  
*Stinking Cloud*  
*Suggestion*  
*Summon Monster III*  
*Summon Monster IV*  
*Summon Monster V*  
*Summon Monster VI*  
*Summon Nature's Ally*  
*III*  
*Summon Nature's Ally*  
*IV*  
*Summon Nature's Ally*  
*V*  
*Summon Nature's Ally*  
*VI*  
*Symbol of Persuasion*  
*Symbol of Sleep*  
*Symbol of Stunning*  
*Telekinesis*  
*True Strike*  
*Vampiric Touch*  
*Veil*  
*Wall of Fire*  
*Wall of Force*  
*Wall of Ice*  
*Wall of Iron*  
*Wall of Stone*  
*Wall of Thorns*  
*Wind Walk*  
*Wind Wall*

**Class D:**

*Acid Fog*  
*Bestow Curse*  
*Binding*  
*Evard's Black Tentacles*  
*Blade Barrier*  
*Blindness/Deafness*  
*Call Lightning*  
*Chain Lightning*  
*Chaos Hammer*  
*Charm Monster, Mass*  
*Circle of Death*  
*Cloak of Chaos*  
*Clone*  
*Cloudkill*  
*Cone of Cold*  
*Contagion*  
*Control Weather*  
*Create Greater Undead*  
*Creeping Doom*  
*Delayed Blast Fireball*

*Demand*  
*Desecrate*  
*Dominate Person*  
*Energy Drain*  
*Enlarge Person, Mass*  
*Enthrall*  
*Eyebite*  
*False Vision*  
*Feeblemind*  
*Finger of Death*  
*Fire Seeds*  
*Fire Storm*  
*Flame Arrow*  
*Geas/Quest*  
*Geas, Lesser*  
*Giant Vermin*  
*Hallucinatory Terrain*  
*Hold Person, Mass*  
*Horrid Wilting*  
*Hypnotic Pattern*

*Implosion*  
*Imprisonment*  
*Incendiary Cloud*  
*Inflict Critical Wounds*  
*Inflict Critical Wounds,*  
*Mass*  
*Inflict Moderate*  
*Wounds*  
*Inflict Moderate*  
*Wounds, Mass*  
*Inflict Serious Wounds*  
*Inflict Serious Wounds,*  
*Mass*  
*Insect Plague*  
*Invisibility, Greater*  
*Invisibility, Mass*  
*Invisibility Sphere*  
*Limited Wish*  
*Magic Jar*  
*Meteor Swarm*

<i>Mind Blank</i>	<i>Storm of Vengeance</i>	<i>Symbol of Insanity</i>
<i>Mind Fog</i>	<i>Suggestion, Mass</i>	<i>Symbol of Pain</i>
<i>Miracle</i>	<i>Summon Monster VII</i>	<i>Symbol of Weakness</i>
<i>Mirage Arcana</i>	<i>Summon Monster VIII</i>	<i>Sympathy</i>
<i>Misdirection</i>	<i>Summon Monster IX</i>	<i>Time Stop</i>
<i>Modify Memory</i>	<i>Summon Nature's Ally</i>	<i>Trap the Soul</i>
<i>Nightmare</i>	<i>VII</i>	<i>Unhallow</i>
<i>Phantasmal Killer</i>	<i>Summon Nature's Ally</i>	<i>Unholy Aura</i>
<i>Power Word Kill</i>	<i>VIII</i>	<i>Unholy Blight</i>
<i>Prismatic Sphere</i>		<i>Wail of the Banshee</i>
<i>Prismatic Wall</i>	<i>Summon Nature's Ally</i>	<i>Weird</i>
<i>Screen</i>	<i>IX</i>	<i>Whirlwind</i>
<i>Scrying, Greater</i>	<i>Sunbeam</i>	<i>Wish</i>
<i>Shambler</i>	<i>Sunburst</i>	<i>Word of Chaos</i>
<i>Simulacrum</i>	<i>Symbol of Death</i>	
<i>Slay Living</i>	<i>Symbol of Fear</i>	

### **Class E**

<i>Astral Projection</i>	<i>Planar Ally</i>	<i>Greater</i>
<i>Blasphemy</i>	<i>Planar Ally, Greater</i>	<i>Shadow Evocation</i>
<i>Contact Other Plane</i>	<i>Planar Ally, Lesser</i>	<i>Shadow Evocation,</i>
<i>Earthquake</i>	<i>Planar Binding</i>	<i>Greater</i>
<i>Elemental Swarm</i>	<i>Planar Binding, Greater</i>	<i>Shadow Walk</i>
<i>Ethereal Jaunt</i>	<i>Planar Binding, Lesser</i>	<i>Soul Bind</i>
<i>Etherealness</i>	<i>Plane Shift</i>	<i>Undetectable</i>
<i>Gate</i>	<i>Sequester</i>	<i>Alignment</i>
<i>Insanity</i>	<i>Shadow Conjunction</i>	
<i>Maze</i>	<i>Shadow Conjunction,</i>	

### **Portals**

Ortho has only one official gate to the Planes, a great circular pool in the City of Harmony that leads to Arcadia. Access to this portal is open to any citizen of Ortho presenting the correct provincial paperwork and declaring an appropriate reason for travel. Merchants, non-Ortho citizens, planar natives, and anyone attempting to use the portal from the Arcadian side needs to have their paperwork thoroughly looked over and in order before even attempting to pass customs into Ortho. The Harmonium is very strict about what influence make their way into the prime. Rumor has it that the beholder nations have a gate of their own, but it is considered impolitic to ask.

On the other hand, the Lady's doors can appear anywhere, and the world has the normal amount of conduits and vortices for any world of its size. According to legend, someone could reopen the gates used by the fey in their great Retreat with the appropriate key. There are persistent rumors that the Fogs in the seas south of Thaera are a manifestation of a planar gate of some sort – it would certainly explain the occasional missing sea vessel. The authorities insist that the gates to the Abyss have been sealed forever.

### **Spells**

#### **Domains**

## **Spell Descriptions**

### **Chapter 3: Life**

One of the first things a visitor notices about Ortho is how *tame* it is. It's not Arcadia - the plants aren't all perfectly arranged in geometric patterns -- but it's close. Large parts of Ortho are cultivated, with roads easily accessible by those living in the area. The rivers are harnessed for mills to grind flour, or to assist forges for ironworks. Except for tiny parts of the southern and western continents, there isn't much wild forest or swampland left. Everything has been touched and changed by sentient hands: the bogs drained, the beasts slain, the trees chopped down, their stumps removed, and the area turned into farmlands framed by groves and windbreaks. The fey and spirits of the woodlands have gradually abandoned the world, except for the occasional grain nymph and house sprite, and their mass migration has greatly increased the size of the Seelie and Unseelie Courts in the outer planes.

The old coastal cities of the world -- Delastra, Steelgate, Threerivers, Han the Gem-studded, and so on -- have seen flooding of late as over the centuries the ocean levels have risen. The most common solution to this dilemma has been to continue to build upward, reinforcing the buildings with pylons, floating barges, and even fields of magical force. For a time the Harmonium's quest to bring its philosophy to other material worlds gained new urgency as the fields began to lose their fertility, especially with the departure of the fey, but new methods of crop rotation and exotic plants from other realms have allowed them to regain their stability. The Harmonium has found a solution to each problem their changes to the world have caused.

Regular church attendance is strongly encouraged by the Harmonium authorities. The approved churches are subsidized by the government, and in the less progressive areas those not inside one during Godshour each day can be expected to be dragged there by truant officers, unless they have a good explanation.

The beholders of Ortho are recognizable by their spiky bright red carapaces. Their teeming subterranean cities in the Flamedance Mountains are ruled by Hive Mothers and include the full variety of abominations, but they all have the same scarlet shells. Mutants are killed at birth. The traditional red armor of the Harmonium officer is actually designed to help make the beholders feel like the orcs, dwarves, and humans of Ortho and the planes beyond are part of their race; it works well enough to keep the beholders living in piece, although they still prefer to keep to themselves, and essentially have their own government. Young beholders found to be afflicted with the madness of tolerance are encouraged to live among other races, and there are enough of these that most Orthoites have spoken amiably with a beholder at least once in their lives, and there are quite a few who work beside one or more.

### **Season and Calendar**

### **Climate, Flora and Fauna**

### **City and Countryside**

In general, Ortho's cities are large and exotic toward the east, and smaller and newer toward the west, showing signs of being extensively rebuilt by the Hardheads. Some of the eastern cities even have bladed roofs in the Sigilian style, a practice

considered somewhat vulgar in the ancient East. The economy of the southern plains of the eastern continent mostly revolves around agriculture and mining.

## **Families, Learning, Adventurers, Language**

### **Technology**

Ortho has gunpowder; in fact it has enormous alchemical cannons used by the military and installed in the great steel leviathans, ironclads, and airships. However use of a powder or alchemical weapon by a civilian is illegal, and carries stiff fines and imprisonment. As a result, such weapons are very rare in Ortho, although some extraordinarily powerful and secretive criminal groups have a few available.

Numerous factories that pump out useful alchemical products dot Ortho's landscape. In some of the more industrialized areas of the east, a number of major waterways are coated with colorful salts from centuries of absorbing industrial run-off. Studies that indicate the run-off would cause no environmental harm have come under intense scrutiny in the last half-century, and in some cases fish and topsoil have had to be imported from other Harmonium worlds to make up for the loss.

### **Ecological Conservation**

The people of Ortho are strong conservationists. It is not that they wouldn't use their resources, but that they would make an effort to handle them in such a way as to maintain them. Because they are lawful and on some core level pragmatic, abuses of the land are rare. Abuses of the land occur out of necessities such as war, or emergency needs but rarely out of apathy, greed, or neglect. The Harmonium funds close studies of how to recover lands for forestry and farming that have been otherwise neglected. The Council of Ortho will occasionally put caps on fishing to maintain populations, and provide a work program for out of work fishermen.

This is not a surprise as Orthorans have a very good reason for this attitude: Iathara. They know what happens when a land is completely deforested, burned, and abused. The province is still recovering even now, 500 years later. The Ortho leadership isn't stupid, and knows well that they must work to preserve the usefulness of their lands.

### **Class and Station**

In a world as large as Ortho is you are bound to find many different kinds of societies and types of people throughout. There are the beholders, which demand at least equality from those around them if they cannot be given superiority. There are the dwarves, still firmly entrenched into their own extended family structures. There are the orcs, who acknowledge few societal ties outside of their closest family. And then there are the humans, with all their usual colorful variety. When all four of these cultures mix, a traveler in Ortho is bound to get a little confused by the result. Each province has its own flare.

One thing that is a common thread between them all though is the Harmonium. The vast majority of the populace is members of this faction. Some areas have a nearly one hundred percent membership. The nature of a class based society, as you would find in most prime worlds featuring royalty, nobility and peasantry as well as other ranges of social class is heavily broken down merely by the existence of the

Harmonium. This is because within the Harmonium one can advance regardless of your birth, and in many commands you cannot advance merely because of it. The Harmonium, and the power one gains with higher rank in it, is available for those willing to work for it. Of course, there is going to be plenty of good old-fashioned intrigue as you have to work up through the ranks but the opportunity is available.

### **Secrets in the Harmonium**

There is a widely held belief against the keeping of secrets on Ortho and throughout the Harmonium. The prevalent idea is that information that is needed should be shared to prevent disharmony especially when it should be shared to authorities. However, the Harmonium recognizes the need for secrecy in many areas, even everyday life, and an official vocabulary has been formed to deal with these.

#### *Individual's Notes*

Individual's notes are the first and most common type of official secret and always involve a single person, or family. An individual's note is any information that should be kept from public and officials who have not obtained proper warrants. These notes include things such as bank and accounting information, voting and political information in those provinces and integrated colonies that have secret ballot laws, medical information in provinces where such laws have been passed for privacy, and information pertaining to security such as combinations to locks and such. Information that falls under an individual's notes is not generally admissible in court without a short hearing and granted warrant if good reason for the information's admission is found.

#### *Sealed Notes*

A particular type of individual's notes are called "sealed notes" and are generally information about crimes committed in the individual's past. These are crime for which the person has both shown penitence and which have been ruled to no longer be something that would bear properly on the individual's character in court considerations. Most of the time these are transgressions committed in youth before an individual has obtained legal age. Any young child who commits a crime, in some cases crimes as serious as murder, often will have their past crimes ruled beyond current relevancy and taken out of official public records when the person reaches maturity.

#### *Private Notes*

Another class of informal secret is called a person's "private notes". These are things of personal taste, preference and generality, which are not the public's purview and should not be under official consideration without just cause or suspicion.

### **Ortho Government**

The world of Ortho is under the control of a world government, reflecting the ideals of the Temples of Ortho, its nations and the Way of Harmony. The government is divided into three parts or 'sources of authority' which tend to the citizenry of Ortho. The State, the Temple, and the Harmonium. You can find Harmonium members throughout all levels of government in all branches, as membership in the faction is nearly universal for advancement.



## **Ortho State**

The State is responsible for caring for the bodies of the citizenry. The State manages the physical resources of any particular region of Ortho. It is responsible for defending the welfare of the citizenry against famine, plague, violence, and other realities of life. The way a province runs its internal government is allowed as the province desired. Ideally this allows each province to customize their local government to the local needs.

Ortho's government is federal in nature. The world is divided into 17 provinces, each of which is subdivided into local governments as determined by the leaders of each province. Divisions may continue within a province as necessary to administrate the territory properly. The triad of authority in the province handles internal problems of a province, though legal appeals may work their way up to the highest council. Each of the 17 provinces is represented within the Ortho council and sends it's representatives to the Lower House of the world government. Harmony's Glory - as a neutral location within the Empire, and the capital of the Empire - is not represented as a province. The Planar colonies are considered a single province, though that is rapidly becoming a sticking point for the colonists.

The world government is divided into two houses, a Lower and Upper House, which must both approve any laws or judgments that pass through the federal government. The Higher House can override the vote of the Lower with a 7 to 1 vote, though they do so rarely. The Lower House can override the Higher only with a 3/4 majority.

### *The Council of Ortho*

The Lower House of Ortho's world government is referred to as the Council of Ortho. It is a representative council that passes laws and determines provincial governmental projects and budgets for the entire planet. The council consists of three representatives from each province, for a grand total of fifty one representatives.

Each province chooses a representative for each source of authority in the province, a representative of the State, a representative of the Temple, and a representative of the Harmonium.

### *The Octave*

The Upper House of Ortho is called the Octave Council. It consists of eight members, two representatives from the State chosen by the Council of Ortho, two representatives from the Temples chosen by the Conclave of Order, usually of opposing alignments in terms of good and evil, and the Factor of the Harmonium. Also in the Octave are a wizard and a lawyer, chosen from the Mage Schools and the Schools of Ethics in Harmony's Glory to represent the interests of magic and law respectively. #8(What do I put in here?!) holds the last seat. Members of this council cannot also have seats in the Council of Ortho. These appointments are life long appointments.

## **Ortho Temples**

The Temple is responsible for caring for the souls of the citizenry. The temples are organized to work together coexisting within the provinces of Ortho. One temple or another may have a greater power within each province, but overall, and by law, each religion is considered equal. This includes even those that originate from the colonies.

The primary deities of Ortho are the Lords of Order. The eight Lords are native to Ortho and are the primary temples throughout the entire world. The Lords of Law represent various aspects of law, order, and harmony. They have existed in Ortho since before the Knights of Harmony came to power in Ortho. Once, the Harmonium came to power, they restructured them, changing them to better suit the changing society of Harmony. The god of war was turned into a god of discipline, as war was no longer necessary. The god of learning was turned into a god of clerks to reflect the sharp increase in structure within the realm of the scholars. The god of martyrs and healing turned into a god of peace and harmony – for without war, there were no martyrs. Each of the deities underwent some form of modifications major or minor to better suit the needs of the new world order.

### *The Conclave of Order*

The temples of Ortho do have a formal way to decide on inter-temple conflicts and other religious matters. This Conclave of Order is routinely called once every twenty years to discuss the direction of the temples and make any long-term decisions requiring input from all of the temples. Each temple that holds membership in the Ortho pantheon sends three representatives to participate in the voting and debate at the Conclave. Only rarely will the head of a temple attend such a meeting. Each of the Lords of Order of Ortho itself may also send an additional three representatives to reflect the prior establishment of those powers and their specific experience with the souls of Ortho.

The Conclave may also be called for special sessions; usually those sessions are called to vote on the membership of a new Power to the Ortho pantheon since that particular matter can rarely wait for the next Conclave.

### *Planar Deities*

Planar deities have been added to the official pantheon as the colonies brought exposure to the new deities. The Lords of Law have welcomed these newcomers to the world, so long as they reflect the ideals of the Way of Harmony. New deities are subjected to an extensive ethical review in the schools of Ethics found throughout the world. If they meet the approval of this review, then they will receive a recommendation to the State and be added to the State approved religions list. Once a new deity has been recommended, the current temples may also issue their approval of the newcomer, opening up the world to the new Power and inviting them to join the pantheon. Such changes to the pantheon may only come after a conclave approves the recommendation with a  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority.

Planar gods commonly worshipped on Ortho include, St. Cuthbert, Torm, Koriel, Paladine, Chung Kuel, K'ung Fu-tzu, Shang-ti. Other lawful deities have managed to get small footholds within the colonies are on the approved list, but have not yet indicated an interest in joining the planar pantheon.

**The official Harmonium creation myth goes like this:**

Ortho was created by the Old Gods, and because of this it is flawed.

The Old Gods sat, as those who know such things will tell you, at a meeting. The Old God of the Beholders agreed to create the caverns under the world. The Old God of the Dwarves agreed to create mountains on top. The Old God of the Humans thought some fertile plains between the mountains would look good. The Old God of the Merfolk agreed to make oceans and seas.

Then the Old God of the Orcs burst in. "How dare you start this meeting without telling me?" he cried, outraged. "Now where will my people live?"

"But we did tell you," said the Old God of the Dwarves.

"No, you didn't," said the Old God of the Orcs.

"Sure, we did," said the Old God of the Dwarves. "Remember? You were talking about how nice it would be to create a world, and we all agreed to have a meeting about it the next day? Look: your name is even on this chair."

"Oh," said the Old God of the Orcs. "That's right. I'd forget my own head if it wasn't fastened on."

"That's quite all right," said the Old God of the Humans. "Now, what kind of terrain did you have in mind?"

"Deserts, tundra, barren plains," said the Old God of the Orcs. "That sort of thing."

"There's plenty of room for that!" said the Old God of the Beholders. "We'll just move some of these forests out of the way."

So it was decided, by mutual consensus and harmony. What the Old Gods should have done, though, is set one of their number as the committee chair in charge of properly organizing things. Then the Old God of the Orcs wouldn't have come in late, and they would have saved themselves an argument.

It's been calculated, scientifically, that the force of this first argument spread throughout the planes, enlarging and infecting others as it went, until finally that argument turned into the Abyss. This is why a proper sense of hierarchy is vitally important. We must always stop arguments before they start by listening to our superiors, or else the Abyss will feed.

Later on, the Lords of Chaos and the various demons came out of the Abyss. The Lords of Law were created in order to stop them, but it was a long time before they finally did (with the help of the Knights of Harmony!).

*Memorize this story exactly. Every deviation from it will earn you one demerit.*

**The Harmonium**

The Harmonium is responsible for tending over the Laws and Ideals that guide the actions of the citizenry. The Harmonium as the guardian of Laws and Ideals supports the largest organization of law schools on the Prime, including the highest of them in the city of Harmony's Glory. The law schools are also the source of philosophers of law and others who study the fields of ethics and logic.

The faction itself is open regarding its beliefs.

### *The Book of the Harmonium*

Hardheads, Harmonizers, Harmonites, Redcoats, Shell-backs, Lawboys, Coppers. They go by many names, but they have one creed. And that's written in the umpteen-volume Book of the Harmonium.

The Book of the Harmonium is quite old, and it's still a work in progress, continually revised by Harmonium sages in order to provide maximum harmony for all. It's said that it was begun by the sage Jhary of Heka, who served the very first true Harmonium factol.

The modern edition begins with this line:

"The Multiverse has always needed someone like us."

With this statement it openly appeals to all peoples, discovered and undiscovered, throughout the worlds. It also reveals its ultimate goal, which is no less than the multiversal conquest of its beliefs over all others.

Another section which has gained great importance is the Pax Benevolus, which the book explains is adapted from an ancient treaty written by the gods of law and good themselves in an attempt to find common ground between all benevolent deities. While the treaty was never officially ratified, the Harmonium's explorations of the outer planes have allowed its wisdom to supplement their own quest to bring common ground to the peoples of the multiverse.

The Pax Benevolus (Harmonium version):

- i. It Is Wrong To Murder*
- ii. It Is Wrong To Covet What is Not Thy Own*
- iii. It Is Wrong To Commit Adultery to Mortal or God*
- iv. It Is Wrong To Steal*
- v. It Is Wrong To Lie or Twist What is True to Benefit Thyself*
- vi. It Is Wrong To Sacrifice Lives to the Gods*
- vii. It Is Wrong To Dishonour Thy Parents and Family*
- viii. It Is Wrong To Sully the Purity of Ortho*
- ix. It Is Wrong To Consort With Demons*
- x. It Is Wrong To Work on Holy Days*

Rule number five is perhaps paramount. What is true is what the Harmonium says is true. Only through the doctrine of the Harmonium can peace be attained, and anything else is a selfish act of deception. Truth is harmony, the book explains, and harmony truth. Belief is power, and this power can be used for the selfish quest for

individual ascension, to create discord and conflict among society, or it can be used to forge a unified front of peace and safety for all. Those who care about others take care to find a common system of belief that benefits everyone; those who only care about themselves choose a different system of belief, inevitably false because disagreement causes friction and even war. Friction and war create demons and power the Abyss; they are the source of all ills which plague the multiverse. Without disharmony, there would be no tanar'ri. Without tanar'ri, there would be no Blood War and the baatezu and yugoloths would not be drawn down to the tanar'ri's wicked level. There would be no evil at all. Good people are willing to sacrifice their personal preferences to the cause of multiversal harmony. If you do that, all the other rules should follow naturally. If you don't, you're a danger to everyone around you; how can you trust someone whose beliefs you don't know? How can you know all of a person's beliefs unless you share them? A whole volume (Volume 2: the Book of Lies) is dedicated to explaining this rule in essays and proverbs.

Hardheads will also agree with the sayings of Saint Cuthbert (from *Village of Hommlet*):

*Square corners can be pounded smooth.*

*Thick heads are not made of glass.*

*Salvation is better than smart answers.*

*Some Good folk can understand only one thing.*

*Enlightenment can penetrate even the helm of iron.*

*Evil which cannot be removed must be eliminated.*

*Foolishness can be beaten.*

*Lawful correction lies in a stout billet.*

*Capricious behavior brings knots to the heads of those lacking wisdom.*

*Preach quietly, but have a large cudgel handy.*

The beliefs of the Harmonium can also be defined in negative terms: what do other factions believe that the Hardheads disagree with?

Revolutionary League: We must overthrow authority.

Harmonium: We must support authority.

Believers of the Source: We should strive to become gods.

Harmonium: It's hubris to deliberately try to become a god. Serve them faithfully instead, and accept whatever rewards they choose to give you. Rewards go to the humble.

The Sign of One: I am the center of the multiverse. The imagination of the One creates reality.

Harmonium: The Harmonium is the center of the multiverse. Our collective obedience creates harmony.

Athar: The powers are frauds.

Harmonium: The gods are not all frauds. Many are real, and many are worthy of worship. Of course, some are evil, or mad, or blasphemous; this is either the result of mortals not understanding them properly, or else they're false gods or fiends in disguise. The Harmonium knows which gods are correct, and the correct way to worship them.

Bleak Cabal: There is no meaning to existence.

Harmonium: The meaning of existence is harmony. The quest for harmony and peace through conformity is the highest of goals. The multiverse is predestined to one day ring with the true harmony that lies within it, currently masked by sin and discord. The multiverse was created with this goal in mind, and the Harmonium is the agent chosen to fulfill this goal.

Doomguard: The multiverse is falling apart. Eventually it will end in darkness and dissolution.

Harmonium: The multiverse is not falling apart; it's coming together. It's organizing itself with our help. The harmonious multiverse will be eternal.

Fated: Those most suited to make gains will gain them, and therefore deserve to.

Harmonium: We must all work together for the good of all. An individual is less important than the harmony of all.

Society of Sensation: Truth can only be apprehended through the senses. To learn through experience is the meaning of existence.

Harmonium: Truth can be apprehended only through the Harmonium. To conform to the Harmonium's instructions is the meaning of existence.

Xaositects: The multiverse is patternless chaos; order is an illusion.

Harmonium: Chaos is an aberration; order is the true, rightful state of the multiverse.

Fraternity of Order: Everything works according to laws, even if we haven't yet figured out what they are.

Harmonium: Everything works according to laws, and we can tell you what they are.

Mercykillers: Crimes must be paid for. Wrongs must be made right.

Harmonium: The unjust must be reformed, or otherwise dealt with, but respect for the Harmonium and the rule of law is more important. Justice should be upheld, but it is much more important to reform the criminal and bring them to our way of thinking.

Transcendent League: The planes have a pulse which can be known by quieting your inner dialogue and learning how to listen.

Harmonium: The pulse of the planes is the sound of marching Harmonium boots. The Harmonium will tell you the rhythm you should move by.

Dustmen: The planes are a false world of death and pain, mere dust masquerading as life. By quieting your passions and desires we can achieve eternal peace.

Harmonium: Passion for law and legally sanctified things is a positive sensation to have. Eternal peace can only be found through conformity. The living and dead each have their place in the cosmos, decreed by the gods. Each is equally real.

Free League: Everyone should be able to make their own decisions and believe what they want, free from the meddling of factions and other planar philosophical groups. The rights of the individual are paramount. What I believe is none of your concern.

Harmonium: Everyone must believe what the Harmonium tells them to believe.

Those who don't are only empowering discord, dissent, and the Abyss.

Ortho sees the entire planar faction as just a colony of their world. They need local rulers, though the Composer is still a powerful force among them.

I don't think the *Factol's Manifesto* indicates that Sarin rules Ortho. It says "Deserving of promotion, Sarin chose to go to Sigil, rather than take the easier route through the ranks of the prime Harmonium worlds. He knew Sigil would be a rough posting compared to one on Ortho and that he'd arrive a near Clueless. And he still wanted the Cage." He didn't want the planar position because it was the only route to absolute power, but because it was a challenge. There were other, cushier routes to similar power.

The Harmonium philosophy rules Ortho, there's no doubt about that. But I don't think it contradicts anything in Planescape to say that the Harmonium factol is only one of several rulers on that world.

I suppose we could call all the members of the Octave "Composers." They could be the Composer of Prime Harmony, the Composer of Magical Harmony, the Composer of Ethical Harmony, Composer of Planar Harmony, Composer of Theological Harmony (first clerical position), Composer of Metaphysical Harmony (second clerical position), Composer of Civic Harmony, and the Composer of Agrarian Harmony.

I would say they are something of a mix of Federal Military, and Political Party.

Regarding the idea that they would be "An Overt (as opposed to Secret) Society that controls the world, advancing its members up the social ladder faster than those who don't belong" - I don't think the Harmonium would necessarily automatically advance their members. That's a little too corrupt to be happening on all levels of the faction. Enough of them are LN or LG that they'd want to keep corruption low. So it's not likely to happen unless the local leadership fell more along the LE alignment.

As for how the Harmonium and the government interact and behave towards each other... In a way I think the best correlary may be China and its Communist Party.

The following quotes are from Wikipedia so take the information with a grain of salt. This isn't presented to start a political or historical debate on the accuracy of Wikipedia. I just believe the idea of a society like this is well conveyed by these quotes - so wither they are accurate or not, they serve their purpose here.

#### [Russia and the Communist party:](#)

"For most of the history of Soviet Russia and the Soviet Union, the Communist Party was virtually indistinguishable from the government, as it was the only political party tolerated by the government and its security forces... Membership in the party ultimately became a privilege with Communist Party members becoming an elite, or nomenklatura, in Soviet society. Members of the nomenklatura would enjoy special privileges such as shopping at well-stocked stores, have preference in obtaining housing and access to dachas and holiday resorts, being allowed to travel abroad, send their children to the best universities and obtain prestigious jobs for them. It became virtually impossible to join the Soviet ruling and managing elite without being a member of the Communist Party."

#### As opposed to [China and the Communist party:](#)

"The relationship between party and state is somewhat different than that of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in which the party controlled the state. In the current PRC structure, power derives from the state position, but key state positions are invariably held by members of the party and party through its organization department makes crucial decisions on who occupies what position. However, in contrast to the Soviet situation where the party had extra-legal authority, since the early-1990's, it has been established that the party is subject to rule of law and is therefore subject to the authority of the state and the Constitution of the People's Republic of China."

The original organization of the Harmonium was the Knights of Harmony. They're still knights even now - so this is a built in military structure and tendency for the group. The Knights of Harmony have probably taken on something of the role of federal military within the political structure of Ortho. However, the Harmonium may be involved in enforcing the law, and creating the law - but they are also subject \*to\* the law and no exceptions are made.

When the Harmonium was founded - they had no idea \*what\* a faction even was. For centuries they hadn't even heard of the planes. Of all the factions, they're the one that didn't consider itself a faction until recently. If anything I would think the leadership of Ortho probably looked at the Sigilian political structure and decided to simply adopt the outer appearance of a faction to make it easier to recruit. So, once again - we have to rethink how we view the structure. It's easy for us to see it the way a planar would, as it was written in the Planescape line. What we're doing is turning it around and looking at it from the point of view of the prime.

Combine this with the idea that the factol is the head of the Planar interests - \*not\* the head of the world and you should (hopefully) get a better feel for the idea that Ortho dominates the Harmonium policies. Perhaps to the other factions it made sense for the top-dog of the faction to be living in Sigil, but to the primes they probably kept the central power and organization at home... where it was needed.

### *The Harmonium Chain of Command*

The Harmonium has a strictly outlined system of rank. Members are classified according to this rank and are expected to obey the commands of those above them. The Harmonium's ranking system was originally derived from a military form dating from their original origin as the Knight's of Harmony. When they arrived in Sigil and took on the trappings of a faction, the ranks were classified into their Sigilian counterparts. Officer training for Harmonium members is available at Melodia in Arcadia, or on Ortho itself. The ranking system, with their military counterparts are listed here:

#### Namers

Notary 1	Private
Notary 2	Private First Class
Notary 3	Corporal
Notary 4	Lance Corporal
Notary 5	Sergeant

#### Factotums

Measure 1	1st Lieutenant or Master Sergeant
Measure 2	2nd Lieutenant
Measure 3	Captain
Measure 4	Major
Measure 5	Lt Colonel

#### Factors

Mover 1	Colonel
Mover 2	Brigadier General, One Star
Mover 3	Major General , Two Star
Mover 4	Lieutenant General, Three Star
Mover 5	Full General, Four Star

#### Factol

Composer	General of the Army, Five Star
----------	--------------------------------

The informal rank of Notary 0 is used to represent those who have served the minimum active military service and are no long active but are still full members of the faction. Notary 0 members of the Harmonium fulfill civilian roles such as



shopkeepers, touts, laborers, and not involved actively in keeping the peace in Sigil or on Ortho. They will still involve themselves in stopping law-breakers either by direct intervention or by calling for policing Hardheads.

Those who have achieved higher ranks within the faction, but have retired from active service to settle down have had their rank reduced by one and the term retired attached to their rank until they are recalled to active service. For example, a Measure 3 who retired to open up a bub-joint would be a Measure 2, ret.

### *The Schools of Ethics*

The Harmonium is the major backer of the Schools of Ethics that can be found throughout the Ortho provinces. These schools provide training in the disciplines of law, logic, philosophy and ethics for Ortho citizens and non-citizens alike. Proper training in the law is required to be a lawyer and speak in court as a legal representative or to make a case before the Ortho Council. In some provinces training may be required to hold certain positions, if not required it certainly helps. The spread of knowledge and understanding of the law and the thought behind the law is in the Harmonium's interest, and in many provinces the Harmonium will donate generously to the local School.

These schools are not just law schools of course. Ethics and philosophy are honed here in these schools, and overwhelmingly support the Harmonium's stance due to the belief in the good brought by peace. These schools are also the center for debate on new religions that are brought into the Harmonium and often provide fresh insight into the theology presented by newcomers. In rare cases, these schools are one of the rare places of self criticism allowed within the Harmonium – so long as all criticism are constructed logically and presented with the respectful intent of furthering the Way of Harmony.

### ***A legend...***

... and with Rolande's blade at its very throat, a thin stain of crimson ichor creeping forth from where the edge pressed against skin, the demon Athykaas spread its thin lips, showing a hideous display of razor-sharp teeth set against dusky skin... and smiled.

"Well fought, brave paladin!" cried Athykaas, madness dancing in its golden cat's eyes. "Truly, thou dost uphold the might and majesty of your god most excellently. But before thou dost claim thy victory, surely thou must see what your work is set to unmake. I shall show it to thee!"

"You mock me, demon!" was Rolande's brash reply. "I need know nothing of your misdeeds to know that my cause is just! I shall end your breath and your work with but a single stroke."

"Indeed?" came the purring reply. "And shouldst thy efforts be displeasing in thy god's sight, wouldst thou still be so sure? For I tell thee that the dominion I have made for myself upon this earth is a place of the most perfect Law, where never a crime is committed and never doth a man have cause to complain about the actions of his fellow. Dost thou doubt me? Then look, look and despair!"

And though Rolande was greatly distressed by such a challenge, still didst he fear to deny Athykaas his delight. For verily it is written, 'Turn not one's gaze from the depths of the Abyss, for there it is that the most dangerous foes will lurk in hopes to feast upon the unwary. And should one let oneself be blinded by the sins and depravity of the Pit, then verily into the Pit one shalt fall.'

And so Rolande didst hold to his courage in the face of the demon's taunts, and didst agree to glimpse; and Athykaas did make oaths most terrible, in the name of its own fell masters, that no harm wouldst come to Rolande, and that it would abide by the paladin's justice thereafter.

And so with all oaths witnessed, didst Athykaas begin his seeming. And Rolande saw into the heart of the domain of Hell - and saw utter, complete depravity.

The realm of Athykaas was a creation of anarchy, misery and despair. Men fought against one another for coins in the streets or scraps of bread; the strong used and abused the weak, and the weak clung helplessly to the strong. Cruelty, hatred and malice were a cloying miasma, tainted yet further with poverty, decay and strife. To comprehend such a Gehenna was the work of a lifetime, given to Rolande in but an eyeblink.

And Rolande challenged Athykass furiously. "How canst thou claim that thy realm is a place of Law and justice? For the worst sins are committed upon those unfortunate people, and the suffering dost make the very earth cry out in pitiable torments! Thou art not simply a demon, but a liar and a fool."

"Not so, noble paladin," came the reply of snake-tongued Athykaas. "For my realm is indeed a place of most perfect Law. It hath none. No limits have been placed upon the backs of mortals; no false protection offered by an uncaring state. My people art free to do whatever they doth wish. Kings, lords, even gods may seek to chain others with words, and call it 'the Law', but I disdain such works. How then, Sir Rolande, canst thou claim that thy justice is more than one man's illusion, or Law anything more than murder with the subtlest of blades?"...

- Excerpted from the *Ordis Rolande Cantlicorum*, an ancient history of Ortho; later banned by the Harmonium as a 'heretic text'.

## The Colonies

Ortho is the home of the Harmonium, its command and central place of power – but there are many planar holdings that also claim allegiance with the Harmonium. On Ortho these planar holdings are called the colonies and are merely extensions of the Ortho way of life.

Colonies may be gained by any number of ways ranging from an agreement of allegiance to direct conquest in the worst case. But regardless of how the colony is gathered to the Harmonium, each colony is expected to undergo the same progression into becoming a full member of Ortho's federal government.

The categories of colonies are as follows:

### *Provinces*

These areas are full members of the Harmonium with full citizenship to any sentient being born and living in the province. Provinces send representatives to the Octave Council and participate fully in Ortho's federal government. Currently, no provinces exist off of the prime world of Ortho. This is a slowly smoldering bone of contention in many of the off-world colonies, many of which feel they deserve equal rights.

### *Integrated Colony*

Each of these colonies is a full member of the Ortho Empire. However integrated colonies are without representation on the Council of Ortho. Otherwise these colonies are almost entirely self-ruled, following the doctrines and codes of the Harmonium. Their governments still answer to the Council of Ortho and the Octave but otherwise they are independent and for the most part equal in the written law of the Harmonium. Those born in these colonies are considered citizens of Ortho, but there is a social distinction between an 'Ortho' citizen and an 'Outer' citizen.

Still, trade between Ortho and the Integrated Colonies is very important and tends to bring more into Ortho than goes out to the Colonies, but the imbalance is only a slight one. Furthermore, integration is supposed to be a transitional state between organizing and becoming a province. In theory an integrated colony that shows its government can keep harmony and control of order for a certain length of time should automatically become a province.

During the late unification of Ortho, when the first colonies were made of the Theran archipelago, this period was between ten and fifty years. However, there are several off-world colonies that can claim integration for over 50 years, but have not been granted province-hood due to arguments and repeated calls for examinations to prove that they have truly been harmonious in those years.

### *Petitioning Colony*

These are the colonies that are petitioning to be recognized as able to self-govern fully (to become an Integrated-Colony) and are often allowed to establish limited self-government, and even legislative bodies. People born in a Petitioning Colony do not automatically gain citizenship in the Harmonium but they are able to apply for citizenship with 'considered approval.' This means that in theory they should be given citizenship quickly after they go through the application process unless a specific reason is raised. The prospective citizen is considered worthy of being a citizen unless evidence can be brought to show the contrary.

### *Organizing Colony*

In the letter of the law there is no difference between Petitioning Colonies and Organizing Colonies other than the former is actively working to become integrated fully into the harmonium. In practice the organizing colonies are those that are still considered too chaotic to be allowed self-rule. Technically, all petitioning colonies are classified as organizing. Also like a petitioning colony those born in organizing colonies should be able to gain citizenship with just going through the application process. However, in practice the burden of proof is put on the applicant rather than on those who would object to their application.

### *Ward Colony*

These are organizing colonies that have backslid into chaos. Those that have gained stability but have for one reason or another have shown that they need more 'help' to become harmonized and are allowed very little if any powers of self-governance. Martial law is held in all major cities of these colonies and their outer regions are often lawless, or even in open rebellion.

### *Sponsored Territory*

These are places and prime worlds that are being brought into the Harmonium. In order to become a colony the perspective territory must be introduced for approval to the Octave Council or the Council of Ortho. Thus they must be sponsored by one of the provinces or by the Harmonium directly. Once sponsorship and approval have been granted the area becomes a sponsored territory and is considered to be part of the Harmonium. People born in sponsored territories may apply for Ortho citizenship and use their status of being born in a territory as claim to eligibility for citizenship. They must also prove that they are worthy on their own merits for their application to be approved, a long and arduous process.

### *Holding*

This is territory under the Harmonium's control that is not seeking or being given sponsorship for one reason or another.

### *Outside Territory*

This is any territory not yet within the Harmonium.

### *Rebel Colonies*

The last category is unofficial, at least for the lower echelons of citizens in the Harmonium. These are the few colonies that have taken to order, but have split from the Harmonium. Normally when a rebellion occurs, the colony or territory is simply down-graded to the appropriate level, generally a ward colony if the rebellion is wide spread, or to an outside territory if the Harmonium has lost control.

## **Labor, Travel, Trade, Coinage**

### **The Knights' Roads**

As the world became assimilated into the Harmonium alliance, it became clearer that the leadership of such a wide-ranging power would require an effort of nearly godlike proportions. They would all as a world need to agree on resources, trade, and management from the smallest level to the highest to live in Harmony together. The rulers of the allied nations did not act without some expectation of returns, and the Harmonium had to answer. When it was difficult to even send a message from one side of the empire to the other, the task was neigh impossible.

It was with this in mind that the first travel lanes were opened, that form the basis of the Knights' Roads. Blasting through mountain passes with disintegration and carving the land before them straight and flat with the aid of beholder engineers – the Harmonium built a network of roads across the continents. These roads are wide and

straight as an arrow allowing trade, and troops, to move with comparatively blinding speed. The roads are paved with flagstones three feet wide on a side and perfectly fitted to each other. All distances are marked from the one point of true neutrality in the Empire - Harmony's Glory.

// Rephrase economics info

Where are the central resource points in this world?

Aka:

Where's the best iron ore? Coal? Gold and silver mines?

The Flamedance Mountains would be the area where the gold and silver would be best mined. Think Africa. Also precious stones, aka diamonds, would be found there.

The coal, steel, iron ore would be found in the Empire of Iathra. Think Pennsylvania and the mid-western states.

What about the best places to find salt? Spices?

Spices would be best found in the Han empire area. Think India and the Spice Trade.

Where is the "bread basket" for the world - food?

And where are the great forests for ship masts and furniture?

Southern Motmurk would be the best place to have the harvest land. Think the middle of America. Maybe Northern Motmurk for the timber. Thinking Northern America and Canada. Maybe the Empire of Thaera for exotic woods and precious stones. Think of the South Pacific. Thaera could also be involved in the Spice Trade, pirating ship filled with pirates and mercenaries.

## **Magic in Society**

### **Religion, Items**

// rephrase religious data

To do that took a wedding of the Harmonium Way to the religious. The gods of Law pairing with the Harmonium. Memberships merging, and slowly the Harmonium became one of a trilogy of authorities that the peoples of the world turned to: State, Temple, and the Harmonium. The State was responsible for caring for the people's bodies, the Temple for caring for their souls, and the Harmonium for tending over the Laws and Ideals that guided their actions.

The Harmonium gained membership in the highest of the Temples of law left in the world. And with that came the first schism of the Lawful Good against the Lawful Evil...

Problem #1: That's why I thought the Schism could be between Hardheads aligned with archons and baatezu, rather than between the gods themselves.

Problem #2: There were two pantheons, a lawful and chaotic one. Maybe I (or someone) should detail the chaotic counterparts of the Lords of Law, but they're banished from Ortho and not an immediate concern. They would represent things like anarchy, murder, vengeance, rebellion, discord, noise, and so on, but with positive traits too.

Perhaps before the Knights of Harmony, the chaos side was winning.

### **Reconciling the two ideas:**

We need a lawful good religion and a lawful evil religion to schism. Perhaps they were native to two different continents, and didn't come into contact until the unified Harmonium creed forced them to. Perhaps one group revered the Hebdomad while the other revered the Lords of the Nine, and the Schism was finally resolved by forbidding anyone from worshipping planar lords. From then on, the paragons of planar races could be honored, but only as intermediaries between mortals and the true gods.

Maybe there aren't any racial gods in Ortho, just Lords of Law and Lords of Chaos who accepted faithful from any race (like the situation with the gods of Krynn). Maybe there was an earlier pantheon before the Lords of Law and Chaos invaded, and that pantheon is now mostly or entirely forgotten (but would still like their world back).

That said, I'm not sure that "civilized" beholders couldn't revere the Great Mother like most other beholders do. The Great Mother doesn't match any beholder's alignment, really, and they worship her anyway. I think that Ortho's beholders are probably still lawful evil and mostly as xenophobic as any group, but they've accepted the beliefs of the Harmonium and won't attack fellow Hardheads (unless pressed). They just use the Harmonium philosophy as an excuse to focus their xenophobia on members of other factions. I like the idea of them using their disintegration beams to create roads, but mostly it's only going to be the "mad" beholders who are fully integrated into Ortho's greater society.

### **Crafts and Engineering** **Fortification, Technology, Ships** **Spelljamming, Sphere**

Those outside and inside the system have mapped the sphere of Ortho. The Harmonium of Ortho found the following document in the captain's chambers of a fallen spell jamming vessel from which they received many of the advanced spell jamming designs they currently employ. The vessel was a private ship, commissioned to map obscure prime systems by unknown employers. The crew was not found on board the ship, and it is assumed that the ship visited many of the other worlds documented in their records, which are now protectorate colonies of the Harmonium.

The Harmonium is offering a reward of up to 50,000 standard Orthorian gold pieces for any information regarding the background of the following document:

*Updated 3215, 12th cycle, 34th day - 74 days on current job.*

*We've finished mapping this sphere, and thank the gods we don't ever have to come back to this godforsaken backwater world. I've never seen a place more stuck up, self-destructive, arrogant and despicable. What little good these people have is buried underneath a bureaucracy and idealism that ought to be ripped out of their... I digress. The following is a rough map of the sphere, as well as notes regarding the information the dominant 'intelligent' life of this sorry sphere claims about the place. The names I give (the correct ones) are from the original records I found mentioning the sphere, the other information is provided from a small exploratory mission we did on the backwater of Ortho itself. Consider this a formal request for danger pay, I nearly lost my first mate after an arrest for a bar fight.*

### **Arariskein, The Wildspace of Ortho**

The Arariskein system is comparatively small, only about 3,000 million miles in diameter. It is a binary system, with two massive red stars orbiting a central point at the heart of the sphere. From the surface of any of the planets, the two suns appear at certain times of the year to merge together and then separate. It is believed that this is why the two suns were named Arariskein, from a phrase in one of the ancient languages of Ortho, meaning "to join together."

#### **Arariskein**

Type I Spherical Fire (System Primary)  
Type I Spherical Fire (System Primary)

#### **Nor-Ji's Chord (Aufrec)**

Type E Spherical Earth (Fire Ring)  
Distance from Primaries: 50 million miles

The closest world to the twin suns, Nor-Ji's Chord is an average sized world, about 5000 miles in diameter. It is a brutal world of scrub plains, deserts, and baked salt flats. It is volcanically active. Nor-Ji's proximity to Arariskein already makes life difficult; it is made worse by the existence of a halo of burning gas that stretches from within a few miles of the surface outwards some 3000 miles. From space it is a spectacular sight as the freely burning gases ripple above the surface.

As Nor-Ji's Chord rotates, every part of the globe passes under the halo twice per day, once as the passage from night to day is made, and again as day passes into night. Temperatures under the halo can rise anywhere from 50 to 200 degrees in moments. Brushfires and death are common, and subcontinent-sized firestorms are not unheard-of. Native life forms are either extremely heat resistant or dig deep into the surface. Many will do both. The only known intelligent native life is a breed of fire newts, who maintain a tribal society with a Neolithic technology.

It is named for Nor-Ji a mathematician and astronomer sage who published several great scientific treatises calling for greater order in scientific and academic thought

and establishing the rules used in most Harmonium higher teaching institutions used today. The planet was discovered by ground-based observations in the Harmony Year 223 about a century after his death. Currently, there has been only minor jammer exploration of the planet due to difficulties in successfully landing on the planet. The Harmonium has made contact with the planet's only inhabitants, a small clan of fire newts. Portals to Acheron and the elemental planes of Fire and Earth have been found on the planet's surface, and are sealed by the Harmonium.

### **Jislana (Strec)**

Type F Spherical Earth (Four Moons, Three Rings)  
Distance from Primaries: 200 million miles

A planet named in antiquity for a Lord of Chaos. From orbit Jislana appears to be a perfectly normal, habitable world just like Ortho, Toril, Oerth, Krynn, and countless others. The planet is small with three rings that lie each at slightly different planes. However, there appears to be no animal life at all. Explorers from Ortho have discovered ancient bones on this world. Many are fossilized, but some more recent and nearly fresh. They have also discovered ruins, indicating that there was intelligent animal life on the planet until recently. The Harmonium maintains a research colony on the planet, in an effort to learn what has happened; no other spelljammers are allowed to make planet fall or even enter the atmosphere without clearance from the Harmonium fleet commander responsible for Jislana.

Three of Jislana four moons are uninhabited and uninhabitable since they have no atmosphere at all. The fourth has a thin but breathable atmosphere, and boasts more animal life than Jislana itself, mostly rodent-like lizards and insects.

There has been a constant simmering movement to have the planet officially renamed but little progress has been made over the past two hundred years. Most academics feel that tradition in this matter should outweigh mere political considerations. It was so-named for the goddess of dance for the motions the planet makes across the sky a bright blue star seemingly moving in circles and dancing from ground based un-aided observations. The movements of the rings add to the appearance of the planet's dancing. Due to the traditional association with a Lord of Chaos, the Harmonium has sealed the planet for the 'safety of all citizens of Ortho' until it can be confirmed that the Lords of Chaos have abandoned the location.

### **Serth (Corrigere)**

Type E Spherical Air (Earth Ring)  
Distance from Primaries: 300 million miles

Serth is a smallish Air-world, resembling a malachite sphere from orbit. It has a thin set of rings that spin rapidly around this world. It has not been explored in any detail by spelljammers from Ortho, because only the outermost 100 miles of the planet are breathable by humans. Deeper, the atmosphere becomes foul smelling and toxic. This planet is unsuitable for habitation or even for landing.

Breathing the atmosphere within this world requires a Fort save vs. poison at a DC of 15 each turn of exposure. If the save is failed, the victim suffers a 1d6 of poison damage. For each 10 miles deeper a traveler moves into the poisonous zone, the save DC increases by 1.



It is not currently known if any creatures inhabit Serth. There have been sightings of strange flying animals by explorers, but nothing has been confirmed as yet.

However the Harmonium does keep a barge orbiting the sphere to study and mine the rings that have been found to be rich in crystallized mithril. These gems have been found useful in constructing magical items, as they are able to absorb and release fairly large amounts of elemental energy. Some of the researchers and station workers have reported odd shapes moving through the clouds and it is theorized that the planet might be inhabited by an as yet unknown species.

## **Ortho**

Type F Spherical Earth (One Moon, Earth Ring)

Distance from Primaries: 500 million miles

Ortho is a standard life-bearing earth world. It has one moon which orbits on a roughly 30-day cycle. In addition, Ortho has an orbiting ring of debris from the destruction at some point in the past of a second smaller moon. This ring is a few degrees off from the equatorial line of the planet.

It is also the home of the only spelljamming civilization in the system. To those in the know it is also famous or infamous for being the homeworld of the Harmonium, a quasi-religious organization that seeks to enforce universal peace, brotherhood, and harmony by whatever means necessary. Ortho is entirely dominated by the Harmonium; their leaders are the rulers of the planet, their beliefs set the precedent for civil law, and their goals dictate foreign and domestic policy. The populace of Ortho does not so much join the Harmonium as they grow up without ever realizing that there is any other way to live.

Ortho has only begun spelljamming activities in the past hundred years. Before that, their only off world contacts were made through dimensional travel. As a result, they understand the nature of the Outer Planes far better than they know their own sphere. Nevertheless, they are learning quickly. They are aware that other spheres than their own exist, and that those spheres also need to learn the truth of the Harmonium philosophy.

My first mate's review: "We rule this joint! No one fights in a bar in \*our\* town!"

## **(First Ring) Lyorn's Tears**

Standard asteroid ring

Distance from Primaries: 600 million miles

A thin asteroid belt with a large irregularly shaped planetoid. Superstitions on Ortho hold that they are the tears shed by the goddess Lyorn (goddess of fey) as she wept for the loss of her children.

## **Silence's Voice (Erta)**

Type I Irregular Earth (Vacuum, Five Moons)

Distance from Primaries: 750 million miles

Silence's Voice is a gigantic, potato-shaped world on the far edges of the system. Due to its peculiar orbit perpendicular to the orbital paths of the other worlds, it was almost overlooked. Its lack of an atmosphere made it seem even less desirable. However, orbital surveys have apparently discovered ruins on the surface of the planet, dating to a time when it was habitable, if what appear to be wind and water erosion patterns can be believed. Ortho is still experimenting with creating a ship that can safely land on a vacuum world, in order to explore this further. Two of the moons are currently serving as research stations while a third hosts a monastery built by clerics following the Lord of Silence.

According to mythology when the Lord of Silence held an argument with Ghanalim, the lord of death, over the lives of the gods. Unable to refute Silence's reasoning Ghanalim stole Silence's Voice and tried to hide it in the heavens, but it was not hidden in the blackness and instead shown bright every night.

### **Ghanalim's Voice (Mada)**

Type J Spherical Air

Distance from Primaries: 1080 million miles

Ghanalim's Voice is an air giant, composed primarily of toxic gases and the occasional giant firestorm. The atmosphere is particularly caustic, and attempts to enter into it are akin to plunging face first into a vat of lye. Some of the gases found here are flammable, and there are on going firestorms within the surface of the planet that are visible from orbit. The pressure of gravity more than 70 miles within the atmosphere of this planet would break any vessel not specially reinforced in two.

The two large moons of this planet are low hanging and pocketed from close brushes with the atmosphere of the gas giant.

In myth, after Ghanalim stole Silence's voice the god was caught by the Lords of Order and tried. After it was determined that Silence's voice could not be recovered, his punishment was to have his voice and eyes thrown into the heavens further than he threw Silence's.

## **Chapter 4: Geography**

### **Main Map**

### **For the DM**

#### **Format:**

.....

#### **Name**

#### **Proper Name:**

#### **Provincial Government:**

#### **Provincial Capital:**

#### **Leaders:**

#### **Population:**

#### **Languages:**

#### **Alignments:**

#### **Faiths:**

## **Life and Society**

### **Provincial Government**

### **Geography**

### **Important Sites**

### **History**

### **Plots and Rumors**

.....

#### **Harmony's Glory FD**

**Proper Name: Harmony's Glory Federal District**

**Provincial Government: None**

**Provincial Capital: Harmony's Glory**

**Leaders: None**

**Population: Total # - Human 50%, Dwarven 15%, Orc 15%, Beholder 15%, Other 5%**

**Languages: Orthorian common**

**Alignment: Lawful Neutral**

**Faiths: All Lords of Order have temples in Harmony's Glory, St. Cubreth**

## **Life and Society**

Established a little less than five hundred years ago, Harmony's Glory is the center of activity for the Orthorian Central Authority, the world government of Ortho. This city is the center of political debate, and is home to the representatives of Ortho's provincial governments. It is also home to the heads of the various Colleges and Schools that may be found throughout Ortho. The capital of this district is the central stanging point for the Knights of Harmony, and the nominal headquarters of this organization on the planet. Harmony's Glory is not considered a province of it's own and is under the direct control of the federal government of Ortho.

Harmony's Glory is a temperate rainforested penninsula, with few large cities aside from the capital itself, and scattered forms near to the capital. By agreement, the majority of the land of this province is left to federal use, and is amongst the least developed areas of the world. This district is also the site of the largest portal to the Planes on the planet.

Harmony's Glory is centered around a single city of the same name, and Orthorians will use the names interchangeably.

### **Provincial Government**

Harmony's Glory has no provincial government to speak of. Within the borders of the district the laws and jurisdiction of the federal government preside. Within the city of Harmony's Glory, the city government has jurisdiction, though that is subservient to the federal law system. The city of Harmony's Glory does have a small police force to defend the city, though the active military members of the Knight's of Harmony far outnumber the members of this force. Outside of the borders of the city there are no

military resources beyond those of the Knights. Citizens who choose to live in those areas are encouraged to learn how to defend themselves, and are instructed on the relatively safer locations on the peninsula.

<insert info on Mayor>

<insert info on head of Harmonium / Police here>

<insert info on at least one retired high-ranking member of Harmonium>

<insert info on Head of Schools of Ethics: Joril Windborn, LG, tiefling poet>

<insert info on Head of Mage school: Rrxachi'tl, LN and a little 'touched'>

<insert info on Head of Lords' Tending>

## **Geography**

The peninsula is for the most part thickly forested and lush with many small rivers throughout the area. The prevalence of waterfalls on these rivers make navigation tricky at best, and reaching the interior of the peninsula is not an easy task. Since this is a federal district, the Orthorian Central Authority has no concerns with further developing this land and prefers to treat these pristine areas as natural reserves held in safe keeping for the people of Ortho. Populations in Harmony's Glory are centered along the west coast, or within the city of Harmony's Glory itself.

Approaching the peninsula is easier from sea, as the northern part of this province runs into the Flamedance Mountains making land routes inconvenient. In the north of the province a series of lowlands are riddled with swamps and marshes. Along the east coast of the peninsula run a range of mountains, renamed the Spires of Perfection since the establishment of this district. There are a number of small islands on the western side of Harmony's Glory, which protect the main city, making this area ideal for trade and portage for large ships.

### *The Spires of Perfection*

These mountains are not the largest or highest mountain ranges on the world. They do however comprise the majority of this province, making it difficult to get deep into the peninsula for trade or settlement. The mountains are thickly forested with a temperate rainforest, and deeper into the range hold many secret cloud forests. Travellers through these mountains are encouraged to know how to defend themselves due to the relatively unregulated nature of these areas. Settlement in the Spires of Perfection is strongly discouraged.

### *Alae's Island*

To the south of the peninsula is a large island with a smooth coastline, and rocky beaches. This island is low lying with lush vegetation to the center of the isle, and enough wheat fields to sustain the small population to the eastern side of the island. It is known as one of the most peaceful places on the planet. The central temple of Alae's faith may be found on this island, surrounded by the meditation groves and training grounds of her clergy.

### *The Guardian of Order*

The Guardian Island is a large island to the west of the peninsula. Its position makes it a shield for the port of Harmony's Glory against both invaders and the powerful storms known to sweep through this area off the coast of Iironda. This island is fortified with the first line of defense for Harmony's Glory secured around the edges with stone and iron walls against a naval attack. Though it has not seen use in many decades, if not centuries, the Knights of Harmony continue their vigilance on this island.

### *Longear Marsh*

This marsh is found to the north of Harmony's Glory, and is a brackish water marsh. It is easily over three thousand square miles, and boasts some of the most varied wildlife in the area. Fishing is plentiful in this area, but travellers are warned to be careful of the large reptiles that may be found in this area as well.

## **Important Sites**

### *Harmony's Glory*

The district capital is built directly on the burned and buried ruins of the elven capital of Shilvestra'Ikhana, and is nestled within the valley formed by three tall mountain peaks. It is exemplified by a mixture of architectural styles ranging from tall reaching human towers to lacy beholder warrens carved from the surface of the mountains surrounding the city. The city is generally built like a clover around a central core, with each 'leaf' extending into the valleys of the three peaks. The city is divided into wards, each leaf being the greater wards of Order, Consensus, and Duty. The central core is called, predictably enough, Harmony Ward. Living quarters are scattered throughout the city, and much of the architecture of the city is built upwards, to most efficiently use the limited space within the valley of these mountains.

Nestled between the greater wards of Order and Consensus, is the Dock Ward where all of the city's port activity goes on. This is also the section of the city that has experienced the most flooding as the water levels of the planet have risen in the past few centuries. As a result the Dock Ward is riddled with bridges and extensive canals allowing smaller boats to easily penetrate to docks and markets further within the city. Water in the city is generally controlled through a series of canals that spread the rising water level throughout the Docks Ward and below to magically reinforced pumps that provide piped water throughout the city.

The greater ward of Order is a business district, holding the head offices of most legal and financial businesses in the city and on Ortho as a whole. This area is home to most of the trade markets dealing in goods as varied as glass and silk, to stocks of lumber and iron ore. This ward is also home to the School of Ethics in Harmony, the first and most prestigious of these schools. The School of Ethics here is located in a series of low laying brick buildings surrounded by tall oaks dating from the founding of the city itself. The students here are a common sight, studying over thick tomes and debating passionately over the purpose and place of law within society. The library at this school holds law books gathered from throughout Ortho, its colonies, and planar contacts to allow comparative study amongst the graduates and professors of the school.

The Consensus Ward is home to two Colleges. The College of the Arts, which is the premier school of mage-craft on Ortho, and the College of the Chant, one of the best of the bardic colleges on Ortho, though it doesn't compare to the College of the Choir

in Iathra. This Ward is generally lit with mage lamps, a gift from the masters of the arcane who make their residences here. In addition this ward is the primary docking location for Iirondian skyships.

The College of the Arts is located in a converted beholder warren carved on the edge of the ward, which towers over the rest of the ward. It is carved directly from the granite of the mountains and is difficult to traverse without either beholder abilities, or a minimum ability with mage craft. Apprentice level classes in this College are taught on the ground floor, with higher sphere magics taught to students capable of getting to the classrooms of higher levels under their own power. The school is presided over by the beholder mage, Rrxachi'tl. Rrxachi'tl may be politely termed 'cranky', though he seems to consider the students of the school to be a part of his own personal clan, and has never been known to assault any of them. Rumors also hold that he is completely insane (for a beholder). Students of the college are easily recognized by their school robes, a deep red, with stylized eye embroidery reflecting their rank within the college.

The College of the Chant is located near the edge of the ward adjacent to Duty Ward. It is separated by one of the larger canals from the central temple of Balae on the other side. The two complexes are linked by a series of freestanding arched bridges. This College is open to all talented musicians throughout Ortho, and gladly accepts poets as its primary concentration of the musical arts. Joril Windborn, a tiefling touched poet from Pan-Thaera, heads the College. Master Windborn is commonly found sitting on the bridges over the canal holding lectures on poetic structure in music with the newest students to the school. A recent addition to the school is the House of Numbers, a small building on the edge of campus that was recently acquired to provide space for the study of mathematics and number theory as they relate to musical theory.

Duty Ward is home to most of the temples of Harmony's Glory. All of the powers of the Lords of Order are represented here, and there are smaller temples as well to a few of the most common planar powers that have been accepted for worship on Ortho. The temples provide the largest source of medical assistance in the city, at the Lords' Tending - a circular building of black and green marble jointly operated by all clergy members. Healing at the Lord's Tending is held at a reasonable, state subsidised, charge and exceptions for great need or emergencies are available. In addition to the temples, this ward holds the complex of buildings known as The Honors of Passing a series of monuments and mausoleums of the honored dead of the Pax Harmonium. Most of the highest-ranking members of the Knights of Harmony have their ashes entered here. Only those of highest honor throughout Order are given space in this complex for full burial. The tombs of all past Composers may be visited during touring hours.

The core of the city, Harmony Ward, is built out of carved white marble and can easily be seen rising above the rest of the city regardless of your location within it. This core is secured against the flooding that all port cities of Ortho have experienced by a series of levees and force walls. Within the core of the city may be found the governmental buildings of the Orthorian Central Authority. In addition, many of the largest libraries of Ortho may be found in these pristine white towers, covering subjects as varied as magic, engineering, law, and farming techniques. All buildings in the core of Harmony's Glory are warded against scrying by magic and by means of lead used in their original construction. The residences of all Orthorian Council representatives may be found here, as well as the primary residences of the Octave.

An extensive complex of tunnels, pipes, sewers and canals run underneath Harmony's Glory. This complex provides piped water throughout the city to all major buildings and fountains. It is also responsible for the closed sewers that the city has as one of its greatest benefits. This system is responsible for much of the control of floodwater through the city, keeping the flow of salt water contained from the city streets. Once every turn of the seasons all inner gates throughout this complex are opened to the sea, allowing the water to flood through the inner chambers to cleanse the tunnels before being pumped back out. Security is increased in the complex to three times normal rates during these activities as even gates to the central core are opened.

#### *The Planar Pool*

Located a half day's ride from Harmony's Glory, on the outskirts of Duty Ward and tucked between two of the mountains can be found the Planar Pool. This complex is built of iron-reinforced stone with a sprawling series of administrative buildings. The complex is designed to monitor, tax, and control travel through the largest portal on the planet. The portal is a pool located at the center of the complex, which is ringed in iron and surrounded by the most potent divine and arcane wards available. It can easily accommodate massive cargo shipments and troop movements, as well as the casual traveller. The chamber containing the portal is roofed in iron and glass, and is monitored routinely by beholder troops above the complex, as well as troops within the chamber itself. This portal is heavily guarded at all times.

The portal can be sealed over with a series of iron plates to prevent travel from one side to the other, though this happens rarely. The last major closing of this portal was during the War of Iron.

#### *Guardian Post*

The central fortress on Guardian Island rises on the top of the island itself, standing out as a blocky central building plated in an iron exterior. The island is a rocky jut of land, and has few fishers or farmers beyond those directly connected to the fortress itself. Civilians are not allowed to settle on this rock. The iron is recognizable from a distance as a number of the armor plates show exterior rusting from the salt water in the wind. Plates weakened by the environment are replaced on a yearly basis.

The fortress has a series of iron walled channels that lead down from the central rise of the island to the walls allowing defenders to easily get to the island's built up defenses. There is only one location on the island that is still a viable port, and it is heavily secured on the rear of the island by docks manned by the Knights of Harmony.

A single spire rises above this fortress to function as a lighthouse, and fly warning flags for peaceful ships travelling in the area. In times of war - the lighthouse has been known to 'malfunction'.

#### *The Temple of Peace and Persistence*

The main temple of the worship of Alae is located on Alae's Island. It is a complex built of wood, stone and brick at which worshippers and those seeking peace of mind are welcome. The complex sprawls with quarters and cells for the faithful. Extensive water gardens, hedge mazes, and meditation chambers, each of which is designed to bring peace and introspection to those present, surround it. Also within the complex

itself may be found a wide field of white sand on which training in the arts of self defense are offered to all those who ask out of need.

To the west of the island, within a low wind swept forest is a deep cavern that opens as a rocky pit into the ground. This cavern plunges easily 600 feet down, narrowing to twenty feet across at its tightest point. At the bottom, the cavern spreads out forming into a natural arena with sand covering a rocky floor. This is one of the most sacred sites of the religion of Alae as it is the location that Ina took the goddess for her healing. The most secret rites of the clergy are held here, and the highest of titles for those mastering the art of self-defense are bestowed here. Worshipers of Alae or Ina are allowed at this site only with permission and the escort of a knowledgeable cleric of either of these deities. Aside from religious reasons there are safety concerns with a journey to this location, as at unusually high tides or during stormy weather the sea is known to flood part of this complex of caves. Rumors persist that a worshiper of Ina who stays and survives one of these floods may find a way into deeper chambers sacred to Ina alone.

### *The Bay of Resonating Silence*

The Bay of Resonating Silence is one of the deepest secrets that the Harmonium high-ups keep from the general citizenry, according to the paranoid or any number of drunkard's tales. The bay is rumored to exist in thousands of places throughout Ortho and tales abound regarding strange ships that come to dock in it. People talk of ships with wings, ships that are impossibly large, and even ships that can fly to the stars! While flying ships are not all that unheard of in Ortho as several have been made at great expense to facilitate trade to the interior regions of continents, I believe it is these flying ships that are causing the rumors. The idea that one could fly to the stars is absolute nonsense! It is a well known and simple fact that the higher one flies in the sky during the day the closer you get to the sun. While trade winds do make areas of the clouds cold, even freezing, once you get above them the heat rapidly raises to a point that any flying vessel would surely burn. At night just the opposite occurs as frost would bind to a ship and drag it down. It is my opinion that this must be a natural defense set down by the gods so that the perfect workings of the celestial heavens are not soiled by mortal influence.

- Professor J. Wrightend of the Central Han Harmonic Institute

The dark of the matter is that the good professor is completely wrong. The Bay of Resounding Silence does exist and is the focal point of all spelljamming to and from the sphere of Ortho. The Orthorian spelljammer fleet is small but elite, and only the most disciplined and well-trained beings are allowed on board even the smallest vessel.

Many speculate where the bay lies, presuming that it is on a remote coast somewhere in Ortho. However, they are generally completely off the mark. The Bay is built into the Spires of Perfection, where an elven enclave stood before a particularly brutal Harmonium commander cleansed them. This has caused many of the elven dead to rise and walk the valley in search of revenge, and for the bay's high command this is just fine. The undead are allowed to exist and even strengthened so that no sane person would ever dare approach the valley. A perimeter of fortifications and armed patrols circle the six mountains that surround the bay and none of the patrols or guards are any the wiser that it exists.



In order to bring in supplies without arousing suspicion three interior forts have been built in the mountain valley as research stations to look into the problem of quelling the elven dead. From these forts through underground passages the supplies are brought up to the summit of the central mount where the mountain is built up with stone walls and decorated with broken colonnades to look like the ruins of an elven palace. The top of the mount is hollow and open to the sky. Within this hollow port is the real Bay of Resounding Silence.

### *The Forest of J'hileos*

The Forest is located to the north of Harmony's Glory between the city and the Longear Marsh just a little inland. The Forest of J'hileos is the site of an ancient elven temple complex built below ground and within the living forest itself. Most of the forest has been clear-cut, cleansed and purified by the Harmonium in the centuries after the defeat of the elven nation, but the center temple complex and several outlying structures remain despite their best efforts.

The main site, the largest of the twelve quarantine areas lies on a hill with a depression at its northern end. A wall surrounds the site seventy feet high and at least as deep under ground made of solid granite blocks. The casing stones of the wall, on both sides, as well as below ground, have one of four protective runes carved into their outer surface and are polished. The wall has no gates or towers and its crenellated top is broken only by covered stone guard posts every eighth of a mile each with its own staircase down to the outside base. Similar walls surround the other eleven sites. Combined they cover around a hundred and eighty square miles that was originally the bounds of the destroyed forest city.

All freestanding structures designed to stand longer than a week within one half mile of the wall are required to be raised at least one foot off the ground, and be placed on a solid stone or brick base. This includes sign and fence posts and farmers can be fined for leaving a wooden ladder or wooden wagon wheels in place on the dirt soil ground for more than seven days. Most of the farmers in the area triple this requirement for their own homes and are very observant of the law on their own even without the Harmonium patrols that guard the area.

Another law forbids the cultivation of any wood stemmed plant-life, and requires that all trees in the area be chopped down and rooted out if possible within a week of their discovery; if this is not possible farmers are required to report the tree growth to one of the regular patrols.

The reason for all of this security is because of lingering elven enchantments in the area. All plants, including the grains and vegetables grown by subsidized farmsteads in this area, grow at a drastically accelerated rate. Farms often produce five to six times what comparable farms further away from the elven ruins do. However, trees grow faster than most plants and will grow in odd patterns. They either form into buildings or more rarely form into the 'sentinels' that originally guarded the destroyed elven city. It takes eight weeks for a sentinel to fully form and become mobile at which point it will usually immediately attack the Harmonium patrols and farmers.

Wooden objects left in contact with the soil will root and are more likely to become a sentinel than a building. Every tree growing in the area has a ninety-percent chance of forming into a building, and a ten percent chance that it will form into a sentinel. For rooted wooden items such as a ladder or dropped farm implement, the chance of

becoming a sentinel increases to fifteen percent. For larger items, such as wagons and small outbuildings, this chance rises to twenty five percent and large buildings constructed on these lands have a forty percent chance of becoming a sentinel.

## **History**

Prior to the Pax Harmonium, this land was ruled over by a particularly cruel breed of elven nobility. Their hunts ran wildly through the thick forests, and their preferred prey, human or lesser elves, was generally brought to the land by slave ship. The elves entirely dominated this area - holding it with mystical walls against incroaching humans, and using their own potent magics against the beholders to maintain their own territory. When the allied forces of the Knights of Harmony, the beholder clans, and the Orc Warrior kings decended upon the Elven Shaar the fight was a viscious and bloody one that lasted for decades. When it was over, the last of the twisted elven kingdoms was defeated.

The province Harmony's Glory is located squarely the Elven Shaar. The capital city of Harmony's Glory was built on the conquered and destroyed capital of the elves. Once called Shilvestra'lkhana - the Shining Towers - the city became known as Harmony's Glory. The greate towers of the elven capital were blasted and broken down to provide a flat foundation for the building of new towers by the Knights.

As the land was then no longer claimed by any of the allies of the Knights, by mututal agreement it became a neutral ground for all to air their complaints and make the decisions that would apply to all of the provinces of the Ortho Empire. The occasional leftover remnant of the elven people's may also be found in this area though these remnants are rarely recognized for what they are by the general populace. Since the founding of Harmony's Glory, the port city itself has grown to become one of the largest cities on the planet.

### **Plots and Rumors**

In the basement levels of one of the libraries in the Harmony Ward, students from the College of the Arts have discovered a broken piece of the marble floor. Rumors have filtered back from these students of a mass grave of some unknown species of humanoid, and extensive hallways covered in abstract art resembling columns of trees carved out of marble. Questions directed to city planning regarding the building plans of the complex under Harmony's Glory indicate no such structure existing below Harmony Ward.

## **Keln'in**

**Proper Name: Keln'in**

**Provincial Government: democratic legislature**

**Provincial Capital: Coldash**

**Leaders: Illix, Old Ghal**

**Population: Total # - Beholder 90%, Dwarven 5%, Human 5%**

**Languages: Beholder**

**Alignment: Lawful Evil, Lawful Nuetral**

**Faiths: The Great Mother**

North of Harmony's Glory is the almost entirely landlocked province of Keln'in. The largest mountain range on the planet is found here, the Flamedance Mountians. The mountains are home to the majority of the populace of this province. The coastal

regions are relatively poor and populated by numerous human fishing villages and a few port towns that are central points for the flow of trade in this area.

The real population centers of the province can be found in – and under – the mountains themselves. These mountains are considered to be amongst the most beautiful sites in Ortho, and have been the subject of entire schools of painters for centuries. Keln'in is the traditional home of the beholderkin of Ortho, and even now they are the predominant species found in this region. The Knight's Roads run throughout this region connecting trading and crafting warrens to the outside world and allowing for the easy transport of humanoids and goods throughout. But a traveler in this area who wishes to truly connect with the people of Keln'in would be well advised to stock up on some fly spells in order to reach any of the older beholder warrens deep within these mountains.

### **Life and Society**

A beholder warren is their species version of a village. Each warren is usually a cavern complex carved into the summit of a mountain. Beholder cavern complexes are complex and sprawling things, since the beholders themselves are capable of disintegration and levitation. Each one contains from 1 to 6 adult beholders and between 2 and 8 juvenile beholders who follow their singular parent until reaching full maturity. It also contains up to 50 grell who have their own dens in the topmost layers of the Warren. Increasingly, small settlements of mortals have begun arising above the primary entrances to some of the more tolerant beholder warrens, in a show of cooperation suggested by Illix himself.

### **Provincial Government**

The Beholders have had a democratic form of government since the days of the Great Victory. The original beholder legislature was very minimal as their population was decimated after years of warring. It originally consisted of all of the beholders in each 'state' coming together to make decisions. Majority ruled, and everyone obeyed the dictates of the full legislature.

Over time, as population increased with the end of their self-genocide, the beholders have been forced to modify their system. While each beholder feels that it is important that He be heard, logistical concerns of course make this difficult. Now, separate beholder regions elect a representative and send their representatives off to a Great Congress, only after giving him a full briefing of their opinions.

There are one hundred Representatives in the Great Congress, and one Grand Mediator. Officially, the Mediator has no vote. Unofficially, a strong Mediator can shape the policies of the Beholder Nation and holds a great power in the ability to negotiate agreements amongst the representatives. The current Grand Mediator is known as the Benevolent Eye to mortals, but Illix to its friends.

### **Geography**

#### *The Flamedance Mountains*

This province is dominated by mountains, the tallest and widest range on the planet. Visitors to this range may mistake the origins of this name from the light reflecting from stone and snow on strong days. But in truth the Flamedance Mountains received their name from an odd nightly occurrence. At night, and only from key

viewing points throughout the mountain range, odd lights can be seen swirling through passes or rolling down the sides of the highest mountains. These lights have no discernable source and attempts to view them closer fail as the lights seem to dissipate on approach.

Otherwise the Flamedance Mountains are one of the most difficult of environments to travel through on Ortho. They are tall, and in many places impassible for the majority of the year. Thankfully the Knight's Roads do extend through this area courtesy of the beholder natives carving out roadways with disintegration beams. Travellers throughout this area should use the roads, or equip themselves with some alternate form of travel. As high as these mountains are, danger comes both from the environment and what few predators are tough enough to survive the harsh living conditions.

In the valleys, and where the mountains are not so high to be covered in snow year round, the land is dominated by evergreens and other hardy plants. The higher elevations are generally populated by stunted, sturdy trees that have lived in these extreme conditions for thousands of years. The valleys themselves are generally temperate, but because the high peaks keep them so isolated from each other - each valley may have a completely different set of species from the one right over the next peak.

#### *Stalk of Amesh*

This peninsula juts from the eastern wide of the province and is almost the only section of the province that is not extremely mountainous. The land here is covered in pine forests and thick brush. It is also one of the only sections of the province with a majority of non-beholders. The coasts here are home to some of the finest cold water clambeds on Ortho.

#### *The Bay of Roiloki*

This bay forms one of the two major points of sea access for Keln'in. It is located in the south-eastern section of the province, between the main body of the continent and the Stalk of Amesh. The bay is rich with fishing, and active trade, and is dominated by the city of Lorvita.

#### *The Isle of Durgret*

Durgret is a relatively large rocky outcropping of an island off the east coast of Keln'in. The island is the top of a long dormant volcano, and the beaches here are composed of black sand from the minerals present from a long forgotten eruption. Most of the forest here is deciduous, and extremely thick as the occupants of this land don't tend to be farmers.

#### *Northern Marshes*

The Northern marshes of Keln'in are the only other spot on this mountainous province where the land flattens out. Between the last peaks of the Flamedance Mountains, and a string of great lakes within the continent is the district known as the Northern Marshes. This area is for the most part dreary and dark, save for once a year during spring when all the flowering waterplants for miles around go into bloom. At this time the Northern Marshes become one of the most spectacular impressionistic sites of Ortho. Flowering season lasts for only one week in these marshes, calling travellers and tourists to it during that time.

## Important Sites

### *Coldash, the Beholder Capital*

The beholder capital of Coldash is located inside an extinct volcano deep within the mountains of the province. A caldera lake sits in the long dead mouth of the volcano and a small town of humans, dwarves, and orcs has built itself up around the lip of the lake. The beholders are generally reclusive even in the center of their province and discourage settlers in this area who do not have a legitimate business reason to be there. This city subsides mostly on trade and services that tend to the needs of the legal structure located below. Beneath this city lies the true city center of the beholder nation.

Coldash itself is entirely underground in a great sprawling beholder warren that is contained within the volcano, and five peaks surrounding it. The complex is impossible to navigate without some form of levitation. Visitors are encouraged to bring their own lights as well, as only the central part of the complex is lit by great orbs of burning natural gas. None of the lighting or other facilities within the complex are magical as the primary occupants would find the idea laughable.

Within the center of Coldash is the Great Council. A massive cavern capable of holding thousands of beholders, this is the main legislative chamber for all beholderdom. The cavern walls appear lacy from a distance as each beholder representative has carved for himself a suitable place to rest during lengthy discussions. The floor is generally flat, and carved with lines denoting the proper seating of political factions represented in council. These lines are generally redrawn with each election. At the center of the chamber is the speaker's seat, a single spire of stone encircled by stairs for the convenience of the extremely rare humanoid speaker before the Council. The council chamber is located directly beneath the central caldera and is accessible only from below after going through a maze of pathways carved from the stone. Security around this chamber is high and humanoids will find the approach very difficult considering the caverns were carved with beholder abilities in mind.

Also found in this city is the Library of Xuuni. One of the great knowledge repositories of Ortho, the library is a massive cavern complex containing books penned by the great minds of the world. It is said that there are even some books written by the grell in its shelves, though these tomes for the most part remain completely incomprehensible. Those who visit the library must be wary, for it is built for beholders, and there are a number of library visitors who find it amusing to turn their anti-magic cone upon pesky library patrons using fly spells. In addition, the beholder Xuuni still roams the halls safeguarding his tomes against those who would defile them. Quite an amazing feat since the great sage died fourteen hundred years ago. It's the only library on Ortho where the penalty for a late return is being haunted by a spectral beholder.

The rest of the complex is divided amongst the clans of the beholder race, who patrol their territories with a vengeance, considering the areas to be claimed personal warrens for their clan. Clans may occasionally allow others to utilize their warren for personal purposes, but such dealings are entirely up to the leaders of the clan.

### *Perch*

The beholders are still a xenophobic people, and the rough mountains help keep other peoples from penetrating too far within their traditional territories. On the

southern edge of the province lies the main center of provincial trade in Keln'in, one of the few beholder cities with a high percentage of non-beholder residents. Perched on a carved shelf in a cliff lies a large gleaming city of humans, dwarves, and orcs. This city subsides mostly on trade through the port at the foot of the cliff and services that tend to the needs of the beholder city located within the cliff. Perch has a constant mail run through the Knight's Roads with Iironda, as each of the major trade houses there have a sizable percentage of the trade in the city because it allows them to cut out an entire trip around the Iirondan peninsula for trade to the east. Visitors to Perch should expect to be very fit by the end of their stay, as the majority of this city is built upwards and stairclimbing is the only way to get around without magic.

#### *Lorvita*

Lorvita dominates the Bay of Roiloki, and is the center of major fishing and crabbing within this bay. It is mostly populated by human fishermen who have supplied the province with fish and shellfish in exchange for being left alone for hundreds of years. The Fishers of Lorvita and its surrounding areas are generally a passive people and rarely object to the decisions of the Great Congress. Only recently have the Fishers, noting their long-standing generational residency within the province requested the Great Mediator to allow them a single representative to the Congress. They are quick, if polite, to point out their overall usefulness to the rest of the province in providing food as well as security from invasions by sea. This request is still in the process of being reviewed by the Congress. Meanwhile, many of the clans have taken to derisively referring to the Fisher's as "That Human Clan".

#### *The Eye*

A lighthouse on the tip of the Stalk of Amesh, the Eye was erected by Governor Mailk (Human Male) of Lorvita as a way to protect Rotlokis Bay and the dockyard of Lorvita from invaders as well as to guide ships through the treacherous cliffs of Amesh. Through the use of magical spyglasses, the watchmen of the Eye can see any ship entering Rotlokis Bay across the "Line of Sight". This keeps the people of Lorvita fully apprised of any maritime dangers. Some rooms in the Eye have been rented out as laboratories for those alchemists, mages, and other intellectuals conducting research in the oceanic regions.

#### *Raven's Tooth*

Raven's Tooth is a single crooked tower on the southern peaks of the Flamedance Mountains, overlooking the border with Harmony's Glory. This location, over five hundred years ago was the outermost observation point for the beholders wary of elven encroachment. It is now a nearly forgotten military post largely abandoned to time and the weather. It does offer a spectacular view over the crumbled remains of the elven Northern Wall, though the magics that kept the wall in good condition have long since broken.

#### *Durget's Exile*

The beholder Prince Dulig ostensibly represents the isle of Durgret. In fact, Dulig's post is more of an exile, the beholder having a history of deluded ramblings and a paranoid fear of their grell servitors. He spends his time in a small warren carved into the cone of the dormant volcano that is referred to as Durget's Exile. While the island is fairly large, only a half dozen beholders dwell on the isle, the rest of its inhabitants being a handful of aboriginal dwarven people who fairly well ignore the beholders from within their barricaded hill barrows. The dwarves of Durgret speak of horrible monsters that dwell on the island, massive beasts that sleep in the deep

forests and in the cones of the great volcanoes, but neither Dulig nor any other civilized Harmonium member has ever seen hide nor hair of such beast and write it off to superstition.

### *Hog's Head*

Hog's Head is a new town, mostly dwarven and recently established at the suggestion of the Harmonium and the Orthorian Central Authority. It is still in the stages of being built, but was established to provide stability within the foothills at the edge of the Flamedance Mountains. The dwarven city, like many others extends mostly downwards and underneath the mountains in this area. A complaint regarding pre-emptive use of communal territory is currently before the Council. The dwarves are from Xaric and a number of the beholders in the area have noted the similarity in culture between the two species.

### *Rainbow Bridge*

The beholders of Keln'in guard their privacy jealously, but even they cannot live completely isolated from the outside world. One narrow road runs east from Coldash across the peaks of the Flamedance Mountains, providing a link to the port at Lorvita and the rest of Ortho. This road cuts its way along many ridges and crosses several passes, but never quite becomes completely impassable - save at the Chasm of the Eye, a knife-edged crevasse nearly fifty miles long and deeper than any surveying crew has ever dared to gauge. Still, the Road must be kept open, in order to preserve respect and harmony. And so was built the edifice that has since been named Rainbow Bridge.

Rainbow Bridge arches over one of the narrower parts of the Chasm of the Eye, a full hundred-foot span of pale-tinged basaltic stone. Superbly functional yet elegant in its simplicity, the bridge is close to twenty feet wide, thick and strong enough to handle any weight, and sturdy enough to stand for years even without the frequent repairs it receives. On a clear day, the sun's light reflects brilliantly from polished surfaces along the sides of the edifice, making it a landmark visible for miles and giving the bridge its name.

For the most part, the trail that Rainbow Bridge lies upon is only rarely used. Beholders themselves have little need for it - they can fly. And high-up dignitaries usually use teleportation magics to visit the beholder capital, rather than spending weeks clambering over mountains. Still, though, a small trickle of trade caravans pass back and forth along the trail, carrying trade goods valued by the beholders and bringing back those craft items too bulky to be carried out by the beholders themselves. It's a minor part of Ortho's prosperity, but a useful one.

Crossing Rainbow Bridge is not for the faint of heart, of course. Wild emberhawks and wyverns, who roam much of the Flamedance mountains but avoid angering the beholders, have learned that softer and more succulent prey often can be found at the bridge and may sometimes lie in wait for a meal. Merchants accosted by such beasts find themselves having to fight off these creatures on their own, without the help of any beholders who may be in the vicinity, and with their maneuverability severely restricted. Perhaps fortunately, long-standing caravan masters on the Coldash run know of this problem, and take preparations to guard themselves against any such attack.

There is one thing about Rainbow Bridge, though, that isn't widely known. It was originally designed and built by the beholders, who were willing to extend this token

of peaceful contact to the outside world but not so fond of providing a strong invasion route to any potential enemies. They thus designed it to be easily demolished, in an emergency - a few quick shots of Disintegrate to key support structures, and the entire bridge comes down as soon as more than a few hundred pounds are placed on it. In the days of the Pax Harmonium, such precautions may seem antisocial, but the beholders keep their intentions to themselves.

### *The Temple of the Great Mother*

Underneath the Flamedance Mountains, and hidden deep within the province lies the holiest site of the beholder nation. Every beholder is expected to make a journey once in their life to this great place, where the touch of the Beholder Progenitor is felt.

The Temple of the Great Mother is arranged in the shape of a great beholder with its "stalks" reaching out into specialized shrines, each one containing an idol of some great hero or aspect of the great mother. In the center, beneath the great Eye of the temple, lies the sacred chamber of the temple. In this chamber lies the head priest, an old blind beholder whose name has long ago been forgotten. Within the chamber, the mad beast rages uncontrollably, a vicious fragment of the Great Mother's consciousness trapped in a single small form.

The priests of the temple care for this creature. They feed it and protect it (and the rest of the world) as a part of their duties. Only the archobasil, what others would call the high priest, though the beholders refer to their diefic aspect as such, is allowed to speak with the aspect and interpret and relate the messages it returns.

Each beholder sends some small token of its esteem to the temple every year. This tithe cements their strength spiritually and makes the temple a wealthy and nearly political entity. The temple rarely acts with its power save to speak when a particularly clear warning comes from the high priest. The Great Mother is heavily reinterpreted by the beholders of Ortho, and given respect as the origin of their species. But her more chaotic aspects are viewed by the beholders as remnants of the carnal and undisciplined nature of reality and their own creation. The Great Mother serves as a reminder of where they came from and where, without the discipline of the Great Victory and the Way of Harmony, they could easily return.

## **History**

### *The Great Victory*

Beholders do not speak of wars, only victories yet to come. In the distant past, millenia ago, there was a great Beholder War within the Flamedance mountains as the Eye Tyrants spent centuries trying to eradicate each other, as beholders are wont to do. But then other aberrations came up from the dark places beneath the world. At first they warred signally, but as the great Aberration Lords and their Mind Flayer lieutenants marched up out of the darkness, the beholders found that they had to band together or be subjugated. The Eye Tyrants found something worth overcoming their differences with each other.

As a unified force the beholders developed powerful enchantments, binding the arcane power of multiple beholders. They were a race chained together by common arcane might and blood and torn apart by madness and it took a greater madness from without to force them to reconnect the bonds of the Beholder Nation. They banded together, pushing the mad lords back and destroying them utterly.



It was the loss of the grell that rang the death knell of the Aberrant Horde. The grell were called by the Mad Lords from beyond the shadows and bound to their will by ancient compact. They worked hard, creating powerful arcanoalchemical items to aid the war effort.

It was a beholder mage by the name of Old Khan who, casting a spell of strange arcane magics, redirected the bindings of the grell. He did not dismiss them nor break them (an impossible feat) but redirected them to transfer the leash from the hands of the Mad Lords and into the waiting jaws of the Beholder Nation. And with this defeat, the war was over. The mind flayers fled and the tsochar crumpled inwards.

And that is how the Beholder Nation of Keln'in saved the world of Ortho without the other races even knowing, and how the grell artificers came to be the servant class of the Eye Tyrants in the land of mountains and caverns where, until recently, no mortal would dare to tread.

### **Plots and Rumors**

An iconoclast beholder by the name of Lx'aast has recently blockaded Rainbow Bridge, ordering human caravans to turn back so that 'Coldash may no longer be despoiled by the presence of outsiders'. The initial response of the Harmonium Council was to send a brigade in after the rebel, but such motions were quickly blocked by Keln'in representatives - who openly spoke of handling such an outburst in a manner more politic, and privately worried that Lx'aast might destroy Rainbow Bridge should no other option present itself. The fact that Lx'aast hasn't yet destroyed the bridge altogether is a worrisome question - but none of its elders want to provide it with the chance to kill off a regiment of troops in the process of becoming a martyr.

### **Leaders of the Beholder Race**

*Illix*

// Insert stat block  
<STAT BLOCK> LG

Illix is remarkably nice, especially so considering the reputation of his species. He is educated, having attended the Schools of Ethics in Harmony's Glory before returning to his own people, and is largely respectful of the cultures he has learned of. He is a kind soul with a kind tongue but a shrewd negotiator and orator. It is largely due to his guidance that the beholders have become a powerful force in the Harmonium rather than silent partners primarily concerned with their own problems. Diplomats and others who visit the Mediator expecting an uncouth beast are surprised to discover a well-spoken, polite, and inquisitive creature with a love of games of strategy and logic puzzles. He makes a point of being available and unpretentious with his visitors, often offering to share a cup of tea or mug of beer with them as they converse.

*Old Ghal*

// Insert stat block  
<STAT BLOCK> LE

However, the beholder representative to the rest of the Harmonium is an entirely different matter. Old Ghal is a warmongering old monster, notable for the two adamantine tusks he had surgically attached to his own jaw by his grell servitors. He speaks with a strange speech impediment from the massive mauling implements, but even those who cannot properly hear his words know that he is suggesting the bloodiest and most straightforward plan possible to end any given situation.

Old Ghal thinks Illix is a weak pansy while Illix finds Ghal a threat to the true cause of Harmony. Neither was particularly supportive of the election of the other.

## **Iironda**

**Proper Name: The Esteemed Coalition of Coin and Arms of Iironda**

**Provincial Government: legislative plutocracy**

**Provincial Capital: Han**

**Leaders:**

**Population: Total # - Human 70%, Dwarven 15%, Beholder 15%**

**Languages:**

**Alignments: Lawful Neutral**

**Faiths:**

The province of Iironda is a spacious land, stretching along the western coastline of the largest continent of Ortho. Running nearly a full four thousand miles from north to south and nearly a third of that distance from the western shore to the province's eastern borders, Iironda is one of the ancient centers of civilization on Ortho and a valued bastion of the Harmonium.

Though Iironda itself is all one province, the land has two very different parts - the mountains and the sea. The latter consists of Iironda's fertile coast, which possesses many small rivers and good natural harbors, and is good land for both agriculture and the growth of cities, manufacturing and maritime trade.

While the coastal areas may be prosperous, the vast majority of Iironda is different. Starting some two hundred miles inland, the flat alluvial plains begin to break sharply upwards, creating a vast range of rugged mountains and badlands that are ruled over only lightly, if at all. These are the foothills of what becomes further in, the Flamedance Mountains.

## **Life and Society**

Iironda is the center of the oldest human culture of Ortho. It is reputed as a grand province, full of wealth and riches and mysteries. The Iironda airships are objects of romance throughout much of Ortho, and the svelte dark eyed women are things of legend. The capital of Iironda, Han is rumored to be jewel studded, with the poorest of the poor able to rise to the highest of the merchant houses on luck and mere hard work. Iironda is a legend of openness, where all of Ortho can journey and find some part of home.

Iironda, and Han in particular, is a center of trade and craft. Their incense, fire-wood carvings, and copper sculptures are easily recognized by many around the world. The greatest craftsmen of Ortho are found here, ranging from talented painters and sculpters to carpenters and weavers. Iironda is the maker of the grand incense clocks, which are used to count the hours in Ortho's Council. They are also known for their many technological advances. It is only in Iironda that one may find caravans

guarded by men wielding matchlocks, or intricately geared locks and traps defending vaults. Iironda is home to a number of brilliant alchemists who have begun developing new chemicals for printing, woodworking, glassmaking, and other less mundane uses. Also found here are the grand airships used by the Iironidian merchant houses to send their cargo around the world or to simply impress their wealth upon each other. Air ships are still an uncommon sight in other places of the world, but as Iironda's merchant houses establish longer trade routes they will become more and more routine.

The Merchant Houses of Iironda dominate public and political life without question. These houses are geared towards acquiring and maintaining their profits, but are constantly maneuvering with each other to keep one step ahead. The realities of economics prevent any house from simply sitting on their laurels, and force them all to constantly reinvest their funds into the economy of Han and other provinces. Most privately owned businesses of Iironda have a trade contract with one or more of the merchant houses which they generally renegotiate every few years to better standing. It is not a coincidence that this renegotiation generally occurs shortly before the Houses are reassessed for their seats in Iironda's provincial government.

Any person directly under contract to one of the Houses, without any business acting as intermediary, is considered a member of the Merchant House. Individual contracts provide the holder with a voice within the House itself as well as the potential to inherit should all other members of the House die unexpectedly. In the past, this has not been as rare an occurrence as one would think. Historical examples of poorly managed houses give the current houses of Iironda a good reason not to mistreat their employees. By tradition, children of those with House contracts are considered to also have a contract unless specifically disallowed in the parent's contract. House contracts are mutually exclusive and if offered more than one an individual must select only one.

Of course, being home to the oldest continuous culture on Ortho, the people of Iironda are also known to be elitist. They take pride in their history and wisdom of the ages, and see no problem with passing this history to the other cultures they touch. Iironda actively encourages other provinces to follow in its footsteps for the greater benefit of all. The greatest influence that Iironda has felt from its western neighbors is in the form of philosophy, the Way of Harmony itself. When the Knights of Harmony first came to Iironda and offered their alliance to Han, it was the philosophy of Harmony that held the people of Iironda rapt. The Way of Harmony echoes many of their own philosophical schools of thought, and over the centuries Iironda has added its own flavors to the philosophy, emphasizing the importance of the group and society as a whole over the individual. The worst of the Han elitist tend to look on the mission to spread the Way of Harmony as a kindness to the cultures uplifted from their previously degrading lives.

### **Provincial Government**

The provincial government in Iironda is centered in Han, the oldest center of power in this region. Iironda's government is organized by Merchant Houses, akin in many ways to nobility as most members of a house are related by blood but in truth and in legal terms, membership in a house is determined by a legal contract with the House. Power within the House structure is generally related to personal resources and power, though smaller Houses may be more democratic in nature. The current

Iirondian system developed from the political and economic alliances of merchant houses for the past millenia.

A House holds power and votes based on its assets in both liquid and non liquid form as reported to the current Master House. The Master House is often, but not always, the one with the most resources on record. At times a weaker house may be chosen by the other houses to increase their position later in the games of intrigue that Han is famous for.

Challenges to the position of Master House, or to recorded House assets are often resolved through political maneuvering as houses form blocs and alliances with each other. Ultimately a House may petition to the Ortho Council specifically for a reassessment. In the past such issues would have lead to war, so this is certainly an improvement though resolution can take far too long for the patience of the houses involved.

## **Geography**

### *Iironda Coastline*

Tens of thousands live in the towns and cities strung along Iironda's coast, and the region is a center of crafting and scholarship for the Harmonium in Ortho. All along the coast can be found profitable port towns, with deep and welcoming harbors. The Knights Roads in the coast provide a direct shipping lane for trade products coming in overland from the Flamedance Mountians or the capital directly, and many of the finest craftsmen make their home in this area. The rich soil and abundant rain in this area provides the perfect center for the growing of spices and other valuable herbs. Most of the tea in Ortho is grown here, along with its cinnamon, pepper, and other exotic spices. Silk is another product of the more southern, and colder, regions of this province and good Iirondian silk is in high demand throughout the Empire.

### *Iironda Foothills*

Though not especially steep or treacherous, these inland mountains are so rocky and sparse of vegetation they are inhospitable to life as to be virtually uninhabited by civilized humans. The most use this land could see is through mining and other mineral resources. This great sweep of interior wilderness is only lightly ruled over by the provincial government of Iironda, and is a source of great concern to the Orthorian Central Authority.

### *The Northern Foothills*

The northern foothills of Iironda are slightly gentler than most of the other foothills throughout this area. Unfortunately this area is remote enough from the rest of Iironda, that the people here rarely identify themselves with others in the province who live along the coast. This area is known as a hot, muggy land gaining most of it's humidity from the nearby Dragon Sea and its series of lakes. The people here are meditative folks, though many of the villages have recently been offered trade pacts by the up and coming Merchant House, Dragon Claws, which is headed by a native of this region.

### *Iirondan Penninsula*

Off the southern tip of the province juts a string of land and islands referred to as the Iirondan Penninsula. This penninsula is the center of silk production for Ortho, and is home to many builders of the airships Iironda is famous for. The islands in this area are often held exclusively by major Merchant Houses and operate as remote

ports and resupply for all of their shipping trade going to the east. This land is covered in dicidious forests of great height providing abundant resources for ship masts and other projects involved in ship building. The most abundant tree here is the fire-wood, so because the wood produced from these trees have a unique reddish tinge, which when sanded and laquered is a naturally firey color.

### *Blackhaven*

Hundreds of miles off the southern coast of the province of Iironda lies the bleak and desolate island of Blackhaven. A forbidding mass of rock and ice, isolated from the rest of the world by deepwater currents and perpetual ocean storms, Blackhaven is rarely visited by outsiders, but talked about in many tales nonetheless.

Blackhaven is a long, narrow island - some three hundred miles from east to west, but barely a hundred miles across at its widest point. It's a place of rough, craggy basaltic rock, covered over by loose crabgrass and bramble brush; the beasts native to this place are a motley assortment of seagulls, crows, rock rodents, and a few hardy goats left loose here by some long-forgotten group of colonists.

### **Important Sites**

#### *Han, the Gem-Studded*

Han is an exotic port city that specializes in spices and silk, along with the rest of the produce of the province. It is the largest trade city and port in Ortho. Han used to be the capital of an ancient empire along this seacoast, and is still the center of trade to this day. Most of the worlds spice, silk, perfume, fine oils, and exotic goods flow through this city.

Han is located in a deep bay midway up the coast of Iironda, secured behind a large fortified island. It has the most commanding harbor on the coast of Iironda, which is shielded from seasonal storms by the island but deep enough to accommodate the largest ship. The city encircles the entire bay area behind the island and is divided into Wards and privately held districts for the warehouses of the top five Houses.

Like many costal ports Han has seen flooding in recent years as the levels of the ocean raise. Unlike many other ports though, the elite of Han adjusted swiftly to this and put the rise in water levels to good use. Water is piped throughout the city, and many of the mills, factories, and other technological demands of the city are fulfilled using the strength of water or steam driven engines centered on the dams just within the Docks Ward. The water afterwards is generally returned through pumps to the Bay itself, or after filtration for salt content is sent via aquaduct and pipes inland to provide water to the fields of Iironda.

On the island, can be found a number of very important sites. At the edge of cliffs overlooking the sea itself is an ancient monastery, home to a long tradition of philosophers and poets. A row of statues along the cliff are open for students and those seeking enlightenment to meditate on the Way of Harmony. This row is referred to by those who run the monastery as The Path.

Also on this island, is the white marbled, silken roofed House of Alliance. This building is roofed in silver toned spider silk, strong enough to endure the worst of storms. In poor weather the open walls are covered with spider silk, and in good weather they are rolled up or left to ripple in the breeze. This building is the center of government for all of Iironda's houses. House representatives are generally found

gathered in discussion throughout the building, or gathered in the open center for votes. The silken walls represent the symbolically open nature of the government to the demands of its contributing members. Realistically the backlighting of the silks make it difficult to eavesdrop casually.

The temple of the scribe may also be found here, housing all the records of contracts, and political agreements of the Houses of Iironda.

Han itself is divided into wards reflecting the needs of its population. On first entering the Bay, the first ward seen is the Docks Ward. This ward holds all of the docks and portage needs for the ships that come to Han. The docks and their built up supports slope upwards to the Han Dam, which was built within the last hundred years. This dam is constructed to accomidate easily another thirty feet of water rising, and even during the worst of storms has yet to see any overflow into the water reserves directly behind it. The top of the dam is spotted with tall spires, providing docking points for the airships of the Houses.

Directly behind the damn is the Reserve Ward, which generally consists of warehouses and House owned factories or mills. The Reserve Ward is the center of most industry work within the city. If the Han Dam were ever to overflow though, the Reserve Ward would be the first to take damage - so by mutual agreement the Houses have left a certain amount of space directly behind the Dam open and not built up with stone and mortar to encourage water to flow into those places instead of into their valuable holdings. These 'pits' are a common runoff point for factory byproducts, and are occasionally cleaned out by House mages each year. Unfortunately the Pits are also known as a common refuge for the destitute of Han, who have not found their place yet within Han proper. Harmonium patrols usually clear out the Pits every few months, rounding up those who have choosen to live there and moving them to safer and presumably cleaner locations.

Spreading in a crescent beyond the Reserve Ward, are all the other wards of the city. These include the Gods Ward, dedicated to the temples of the Lords of Order, the individual Wards of the most powerful of the Merchant Houses, and the Law Ward where the School of Ethics and it's accopmanment of laywers may be found.

The city is a center of learning, merchant trade, and intellectualism, but it has also been described as a cesspool of intrigue. The School of Ethics of Han in the Law Ward, while one of the finest places to learn ethics and laws, is also one of the most corrupt schools on the planet. Neoptism and secret fraternities on campus are only examples of the ongoing problem. While the city makes a point of following the law, family connections and money can still get you ahead in surprising ways in the city.

- < List the current Master House >
- < List the top five houses >
- < list the second top five houses >

### *Eboncove*

Even in such a forsaken place as Blackhaven, the Harmonium presence exists. The harbor village of Eboncove nestles in a small bay on the island's northeastern shore, home to a few dozen fishermen, minor crafters and a single small governor's post. A trail leads uphill out of the village, winding along the crest of the island. At its far western edge, a bleak edifice known as the Citadel of Silence rises. Part defensive

bastion, part holy site, part prison, this place is one of the more mysterious locations on all of Ortho.

#### *The Citadel of Silence*

The Citadel of Silence is a huge place - seemingly sized for small giants, with doorways and halls a full twelve feet high and a central keep that rises ten outsized stories into the air. The uppermost windows look out over perpetually storm-grey waters, so high up that even the smallest edge of land below is not visible, and seemingly upon the edge of another world altogether. The citadel is claimed by the Harmonium, and garrisoned by a small but highly trained company of soldiers and priests, but well over three-fourths of the massive structure lays unused and untouched, empty and smelling faintly of long-past decay.

Four types of people come to Blackhaven, taking port in Eboncove and setting out on the longwalk across wind-blasted hills and ridgelines to reach the strange Citadel at what seems to be the edge of the world. The first are the penitent - those who feel doubt within their hearts, and have chosen to seclude themselves from the world for a time while regaining their faith in absolute Law. The privacy and sweeping emptiness offered by the Citadel is said to be quite comforting to those unsure in their devotion; whether other, more drastic measures are taken behind closed doors is a thought that no loyal citizen of Ortho would dare voice.

The second are the loyal - those few sworn to defend the Citadel from whatever might come against it. If any enemy exists, it has never shown itself, or done so only so subtly that those resident have never realized.

The loyal also guard the repentant, the third sort of visitor - those who have committed a crime and must be shown the error of their ways. Such residents receive much the same treatment as the penitent, though they are watched at all times as a precaution against violence, escape or suicide - and while most are redeemed, a few leave the Citadel only in death.

The last kind of visitor is the watchful - those who wonder why the Citadel exists, who built it and what threats might appear from nearby or within. Though the Harmonium itself would never admit that the Citadel had been built by another, most who have seen it privately are certain that such is the case - and wonder who constructed such an edifice, and why. A person investigating such concerns must be on excellent terms with high Harmonium officers in order to receive permission to visit Blackhaven, but a few still manage. From these visits, a few confused whispers have leaked out about such things as ancient necromancies, dead gods of the giants, dreams of elder dragons, and traces of Shadow or the ether that lurk in the corners of the Citadel. No conclusive report has ever been revealed, however, and if the Harmonium is at all concerned about possible dangers they are responding with the utmost care and secrecy.

Most of the people of Ortho live out their entire lives without ever even hearing the name of Blackhaven. Only a few have reason to come here, and those in power consider it a place of little consequence. Whether such a casual dismissal of such a remote and unknown place is a good idea is yet to be determined.

#### *The Dwarven Line*

Most inhabitants of the inland mountains of Iironda are savages - barbarians who care nothing for the prosperity offered by Ortho's rightful rulers, outlaws and

fugitives from the Harmonium's justice, and creatures such as gnolls and grimlocks who are irredeemably lost to chaos. Such inhabitants would be mere nuisances were it not for the lingering fear that escaped faeborn or demonic infiltrators might choose one day to raise an unholy host, troubling all of Iironda and possibly the lands beyond.

While no such danger has ever come to pass, the leaders of the Harmonium are ever watchful. Many rangers and wilderness scouts patrol the crags and highland valleys, quashing any sign of resistance before it has a chance to threaten the citizens of Iironda. Infrequent military expeditions sweep inwards, launching punitive strikes against any sign of chaotic taint and putting unbelievers to the sword. Such measures suppress dissen, but cannot stop it entirely, and the Harmonium has recently begun work to settle many dwarven clans in selected areas beneath the mountains. Such work is slow, but likely to succeed, and within a millenium the inner reaches of Iironda may be as lawfully aligned and prosperous as the cities of its coast. The government sponsored settlements in this area are referred to as the Dwarven Line, the easternmost of which is Hog's Head in Keln'in.

### *Spider Heights*

The southernmost island of Iironda's penninsula is referred to as Spider Heights, and each of the top five merchant houses of Iironda have holdings on this island. The houses have built up heavily defended ports on this island both to defend against pirate and each other. The silk produced here is often used for airships and other heavy construction. Recently some of the Houses of Iironda have even begun to develop clothing from this silk tough enough to pass as lightweight armor. Silk here is not produced by the standard farming of cocoons as it is on the mainland. Instead, amongst the vastly tall fire-woods of the island, giant spiders can be found whose silk makes for the finest, softest, and most importantly strongest fibers on Ortho. Spider silk is not an easy thing to collect, as the majority of the spiders on the island are understandably defensive of their webs and their cocooned dinners. And some of the larger ones even view the silk gatherers as dinner.

### History

<the long past emire of Han>

<the Merchant Wars>

<the coming of the Harmonium adn the adoption of the way of Harmony>

### **Plots and Rumors**

#### *Troubles on the Seas*

The region isn't perfect, of course. Any land so widespread is bound to be a melting pot of many cultures, each with its own quirks, dislikes and old grievances. Warfare on the seas has been a part of Iironda's past almost as long as sea travel itself, and ancient rivalries sometimes break out into economic disputes, legal squabbles or even outright bloodshed on occasion. Harmonium troubleshooters react as quickly as possible to smooth over such confrontations, but they can't be everywhere - and are known to quietly look with favor on independents who act decisively to preserve peace and order in the region. Of course, luckless meddlers who make matters worse with their own blundering can expect no mercy whatsoever.



### *Spiders on the Rise*

Rumors hold that one of the smaller Merchant Houses of Han have recently established a small port, consisting of little more than a dock on the far side of the island. The port is remarkably undefended, but the spiders in the area have been behaving in an oddly coordinated fashion, creating sticky webbings around the port to prevent travellers from other places on the island from investigating further.

### **Bafatai**

**Proper Name: Bafatai**

**Provincial Government: decentralized**

**Provincial Capital: Roglyn**

**Leaders:**

**Population:**

**Languages:**

**Alignments: Lawful Neutral, True Neutral**

**Faiths:**

Bafatai is located at the northern most end of the Flamedance Mountains, where the mountains reach their highest peaks. It is as expected mountainous through out most of the region, but does command two coasts upon two seas. To the north is the Yishwei Sea, which Bafatai shares with Voll and Shoryko. To the south is the Thaerean (?rename) Ocean, which provides the province with trade from the province of Keln'in to the west, and of North Thaera to the east. It is a land of great beauty, which has a surprisingly low population for the amount of space within it. Most of the land is not yet developed to its full potential, and a visitor can travel for days between villages without meeting another living soul.

Baratai is a relatively undeveloped province, and one that joined the Pax Harmonium well after the Knights of Harmony had forcibly converted most of Ortho. It has always been something of a backwater on Ortho, but has within the last century enjoyed a population and economic growth. Industry is growing in this province as it begins to see the benefits of the Pax Harmonium.

### **Life and Society**

While the major cities in Bafatai contain standard temples to the Lords of Order, most common people perform worship not at temples but at hilltop or cave shrines far from civilization. The people of Bafatai routinely worship the Lords of Order under specific regional names. This is probably the result of syncretism with a pre-Lords of Order religious practice but all mentions to said practice have been lost.

Stemming from an ancient monastic tradition far older than the Harmonium monastic traditions, the monasteries of Bafatai are autonomous commune-like outposts built into hidden mountain valleys and other secluded regions. They raise their own food and only sometimes trade with passing Hhuanu nomads for llama fur and milk. The monks are said to practice martial arts and body purification rituals, and myths and legends speak of ancient immortals who dwell in hidden mountain monasteries and mythical elixirs of life that can prolong human existence beyond its natural limits.

This province is dominated by two distinct cultures, the Hhuanu (The Wanderers) and the Marn (The Settled). The Hhuanu are nomads, spending most of their lives in travel within the depths of the Flamedance Mountains or upon the Ice Coast. They are, in comparison to other Orthorian peoples, are considered poor peasants and ill

educated, but this is a deceptive view. The Hhuanu consider their wealth to belong to their tribe as a whole and an individual tribe may command a great deal of wealth from the profits gained from llama wool, weaving, crafted arts, and rich gem finds within the Flamedance Mountains. They are strictly ordered within themselves, observing both their own laws and those of the Harmonium willingly as the laws of the Harmonium match their own laws closely. The Hhuanu have an oral history nearly as long as that of Han, and an extremely rich spiritual and meditative tradition.

The Hhuanu system of time and date keeping is extremely precise, factoring in the rotations of all of the suns, moons, and other celestial bodies. Many Harmonium offices have adopted Hhuanu system for agricultural record keeping even while relying on Harmonium Standard for the majority of their recordkeeping.

Only recently have the Marn outnumbered the Hhuanu and most immigrants to this area are automatically classified as Marn, unless they choose a tribe of the Hhuanu to follow. The Marn usually gather in towns and villages, and consider themselves as individuals. Though Hhuanu who have settled down may keep to the communal organization of their tribe. The Marn are commonly found in coastal cities, providing a point of trade for their nomadic neighbors and growing wheat and other foodstuffs for trade within the province and for export. Marn on the Ice Coast are actively involved in the processing and manufacture of whale oil. The Marn are as critical to the operations of this province as the Hhuanu, and are more involved in politics on a provincial and federal level. They are known as hardworking people, willing and able to learn the ways of the rest of the world, and eager to build up their province.

The Marn are commonly held to be the descendants of travellers from across the seas, and appearances certainly support this as the Marn and the Hhuanu appear to be of radically different racial stock. The oral history of the Hhuanu says that the Wanderers come from a home within the Flamedance Mountains themselves and have been there for all time. Harmonium anthropologists have yet to confirm this mythology.

## **Provincial Government**

The government of this province is extremely decentralized. The Marn hold a loose association of cities, each of which governs within its own territory as it sees fit. Representatives from these cities will gather each year at Roglyn to determine representation for the year to the Orthorian Council and to resolve any disputes between the cities.

### *Timmons Seer*

The current representative to the Ortho Council is Timmons Seer. He has been the representative for the last ten years, and as far as the Marn cities are concerned at the moment, can keep his position for the next ten years. He is an extremely talented statesman and is behind much of the benefits that the province has seen from the Pax Harmonium lately.

The Hhuanu rely on the single leadership of their Timekeeper, a representative of their people given the authority to guide them for the duration of his life. Each Timekeeper is responsible for finding his successor amongst the tribes, and for training him in the proper rituals of the Hhuanu, for teaching him astronomy, and the proper execution of just leadership. The Timekeeper may also recommend the

Hhuanu's representative to the Ortho Council, though the tribes retain final say over who is sent.

#### *Sexidus Mellik (Mehluuc Wuna)*

Born in Bafatai but educated in Harmony's Glory, Mellik acts as the Timekeeper of the Hhaunu people, a group of nomadic herders. For centuries and centuries, the Hhuanu have operated under a complex timetable, moving from area to area according to a specifically choreographed system. The role of the Timekeeper is to design this plan, using complex weather divination, calendrical, and astrological systems. Mellik can punish groups who have acted improperly and reward others by issuing the best feeding grounds at the best times to certain groups. Mellik operates out of the city of Einih, a small village that is depopulated for most of the year and only truly full when the tribes return to roost, in order to avoid the appearance of impropriety.

<insert other rep. to the council here>

### **Geography**

#### *The Two Mounts of the Sky*

Harmonium geographers have identified two peaks of identical height as the tallest points in all of Ortho. Deep in the Bafatai section of the Flamedance peaks, these two mounts (Mount Sdklidus and Mount Queenshom) are the stuff of legendary adventure, man against the elements for the maddest of explorers. Only two groups have been recorded to have reached the top, one a Harmonium Geographical party who barely survived heavy losses and the other a private adventuring squad who claimed to have been helped by a group of white-furred mountain beasts (the ravings of elements maddened lunatics). The strangest thing about the two mountains is that, from certain observation points, those who spy the mounts can easily see a third peak standing between them, of height slightly greater than either. Harmonium experts describe this as a mirage or induced hallucination, and state flatly that no third mountain exists. But some choose to follow their eyes rather than the word of bureaucrats and dozens of teams go searching for the third mount each year, and few ever return.

#### *The Ice Coast*

Covered in a large, highly unnatural glacier, the ice coast is a treacherous region on the Bafatai coast facing the Yishwei Sea. The people of the Ice Coast developed a complex seafaring culture based upon canoeing hundreds of years ago, hunting the whales that dwelt under the ice and trading with nearby Shoryko and Voll. In this modern day, steel-clad sailing ships topped with totemic mastheads push through the cracking ice in the summer months. Whale and seal-hunting are common practices though the whales of the Yishwei Sea are thinning in population in recent years due to the creation of magical lures that draw them into the waiting range of the Bafatai hunting parties. Trade with Heka and Vol has increased, though some tension with the government of Shorkyo over seal pelt prices has led to an embargo on trade between the two nations.

#### *The Dreamers of Shadow*

The glacier of the Ice Coast is one of the most unnatural features of Ortho. The glacier persists in an environment that should have melted it thoroughly mellinia ago. The ice is extremely difficult to melt though there appears to be little innate magical quality to it. The glacier shows streaks of black ice like ink frozen within the water

that can be found and followed like veins of gold in a mountain. Usually these veins are in difficult to reach places, or buried miles beneath other ice and accessible only by crevasses in the glacier. Where black ice can be found, and chipped out of the ice surrounding it is shown to be even more reluctant to melt. In fact, it radiates a cold that will snuff any normal flame. The ice will also endure magical flames though it is incapable of snuffing them. This black ice is a valued export where it can be found, and is usually bought up swiftly by alchemists or the Ice Guard of Iathra.

The black ice has another aspect though. If a very small piece is sucked on, it has a mild sedative effect. A small cult has sprung up around this ice known as the Dreamers of Shadow. The Dreamers are often found in deep meditation on visions that the ice brings them. They will speak of dreams, visions from the ice or natural dreams, which have led them in their day-to-day lives. Friends and family of dreamers regularly report large personality shifts, as the dreamer seems to become more driven and ruthless, uncaring of past relationships. Oddly enough, most known dreamers do have a successful career in their choice of business before they mysteriously vanish. It is widely assumed by the populace, that once the ice 'gets' to them, they are drawn to seek more of it and die on the treacherous glacier. The Harmonium is reluctant to regulate black ice as it remains very useful to many governmental projects and the impact of the ice on the population as a whole seems minimal.

#### *The Eastern Coast*

The people of the Eastern Coast live in the small expanse of plains between the oceans and the foothills of the Flamedance Mountains. They gain the majority of their income from fishing the warm fertile coastal waters and have the most complex cities and technologies in the nation. The capital of Bafatai, Roglyn, sits in the Eastern Coastal plain, and is a quickly blossoming metropolis of modern technology.

#### *The Marn Peninsula*

Jutting from the eastern side of the province is the Marn Peninsula. It is said to be the original 'home' of the Marn immigrants to the area and it certainly shows a wide mixture of cultures from the surrounding areas. This outcropping of land is mostly flat, at most hilly and is the center of agriculture for the settled Marn population. Pomogranates and hot chili peppers are the most common crop in this area, and Bafatai is dominant in the trade for both of these crops.

### **Important Sites**

#### *Roglyn*

The city of Roglyn is the center of the provincial politics. It is a growing trade city, quickly rising in status as it is positioned perfectly to take advantage of both river and sea trade throughout the coastal region. Roglyn is a growing city, with new buildings constantly being built on the edge of town as tradesmen and their families move to the city to take advantage of its growth. In addition, Roglyn is seeing large numbers of workers pass through its port on their way to the Marn Peninsula to work the fields there, as the agricultural industry on the peninsula is booming.

Roglyn is a city that could benefit from some civil planning. The city is yet to divide itself into wards to assist in its management, and much of the city is outside of the older district has been put up in a hasty slipshod manner. The Harmonium and the city government both are encouraging builders to slow down and account for long

term planning for the city, but the economic boom is showing little sign of slowing down.

The city can be divided easily between the "Old District" and the "New District". The Old District is the original small port town of Roglyn. It is characterized by thin narrow streets and white washed stone buildings with red tile roofs. The old district is spotted with fountains for convenient a water supply to residents and enjoys the benefit of closed sewers. The roads, though narrow are well constructed with cobblestone. The docks associated with the Old District are ill equipped for the largest of trade vessels though. The wealthiest of Roglyn prefer to live in this district, and the town hall is located here. A few stubborn house owners have refused to sell what they consider to be family homes to 'outsiders', so the occasional middle to lower class family may be found in this district as well.

The New District is directly supported by newer and larger docks that are able to provide for the trading ships that are the cause of the economic boom of Roglyn. From the docks a series of wooden, and only occasionally stone buildings have built up around the original town. The further away from the docks one gets, the more ramshackle the buildings become. On the very edge of town can be found buildings so recently put up that the scent of sawdust and pine pitch can still be smelt on the air. The streets in the New District are generally dirt (or mud after a good rain). At best, and usually near the warehouses, the road may be sanded or covered in gravel tromped down to smoothness to make transport of goods easier in bad weather.

#### *Seabrother's Demise*

This town on the northern coast of Bafatai sits on the edge of the northern glacier, and is the main processing center for whales caught in the Yishwei Sea. It is a well-established town, long past its boom unlike its sister town Roglyn to the south. The buildings are made of stone, constructed to resist the intense cold of the glacier and are arranged around a central circular clearing which is used as a common meeting point for the town elders. Wooden poles set into the center of this clearing serve as a community message board and hiring offers for ships are commonly found there. Around the clearing set to each major street are eight poles, each representing the eight Lords of Order and their blessing upon the town.

This town is generally too cold for any but those directly involved in its industry to wish to live and does not reflect a population as large as its importance would suggest. Whale oil, meat, and ivory are routinely shipped to other points within Bafatai from this town. The ice fields on the edge of this town are routinely stained a deep red from the slaughtering and butchering of the day's catch.

#### *The Monastery of the Recluse*

In the foothills of the Flamedance Mountains may be found a monastery, welcoming travellers or Hhuanu on the journey between the north and south. This monastery is home to an order of monks who have never been known to speak a word. They provide a resting point in exchange for donations, generally using those donations to provide for the next weary traveller. The monks seem to understand innately the need of their occasional visitor for spiritual assistance and have been known to silently draw a visitor into rites and rituals, which will bring them peace. In extreme cases, a reluctant visitor may find themselves kidnapped after evening dinner and wake up deep within the monastery with the escape only available through proper contemplation.

The Recluse is almost never seen, but is known to be a tottering old man usually dressed in heavy gold embroidered robes. The monks of the monastery know exactly who the old man is, but very rarely are visitors ever treated to seeing him in his true form. The Recluse in his true form is an elder wyrm gold dragon, with a personal quest to see that travellers through his monastery find peace within and without themselves.

## **History**

Until lately Bafatai has little history to speak of. The province has been a quiet backwater throughout much of Ortho's history and only now seems to have come into its own as a center of trade.

## **Plots and Rumors**

### *The "Snow People" of Bafatai*

A common explorer's myth describes a lost group of wanderers trapped in a blizzard in the middle of the Flamedance Mountains. As death loomed nigh, they were beset by a dozen "snow people" who carried them to a hidden verdant valley and nursed them back to health. Then, one day, the snow people came to them and when they awoke they were lying in the snow within sight of a human settlement. Of the snow people, there was no sign.

Most see these stories as fanciful myths, but there are many secrets in the vast expanse of the Flamedance Mountains. And when the blizzards come down from the North, a man might be prone to mistaking the shadows around him for figures and the howling of the wind for the songs of primordial beasts, or at least, that's what people say as they huddle in the dark, waiting for the snows to pass.

### *The Monastery of Unmelting Ice*

Rumored to be deep within a crevice of the glacier of the Ice Coast is a monastery of reclusive hermits. They have carved within this crevice a complex of rooms from the ice, plunging deep within the core of the unnatural glacier. It is surrounded by great beasts frozen within the ice, described as gargantuan serpents crested with spikes and surrounded by thick streaks of the black ice common to the glacier. The ice here if chipped from the walls and sucked on is rumored to cleanse the soul of great sins committed. Darker rumors hold that the drinker of this ice water may also find their memories lost along with their sins. The location of this mythical monastery is entirely unknown, but recently a few high ranking members of the Harmonium, generally those who have recently returned from postings on the Lower Planes in Baator, have been funding private expeditions to locate this monastery for their own purposes.

### *A Rumored Dreamer of Shadow*

Rumors persist that Timmons is a Dreamer, keeping his piece of ice in a small amulet around his neck. Timmons is almost violent in his denials of this, going so far as to slug a reporter in Han who asked him questions regarding the subject. Timmons paid the local fine for simple assault out of his own pocket and is not otherwise known to be a violent man.

## **Hazhkan**

**Proper Name: The Allied Kingdoms of Hazhkan**

**Provincial Government: alliance of city states and kingdoms**

**Provincial Capital: varies seasonally**

**Leaders:**

**Population: Total # - Human 70%, Orc 20%, Beholder 7%, Rakshasa 3%**

**Languages: Infernal, Many native languages**

**Alignments: Neutral, Lawful Evil**

**Faiths:**

On the western edge of Ortho's largest continent lies the tropical province of Hazhkan. It is a peninsula laying almost directly on the equator of the planet, surrounded by lands active in trade, and near to major trade routes by sea. A low-lying land, criss-crossed with fens, jungles and huge tracts of bramble and vine, Hazhkan is a place that has only recently been claimed by the Harmonium. Great cities and prosperous farmlands have been carved out of the wilderness, but much of the land is still uncharted and its inhabitants remain blind to the guidance of Law. Decades of work remain yet to be done here, and heroes can make their names many times over in the service of the Way of Harmony.

## **Life and Society**

### *Settlers*

The masters of Hazhkan, at least in their own minds, are the Harmonium sponsored settlers who have come to the land in the past few centuries since the unification of Ortho. As a backwater wilderness, Hazhkan was never considered to be much of a bastion of chaotic forces, but the will of the Harmonium is not to be denied - all of Ortho shall be unified under the rule of Law. Those worthy souls who have chosen to come to Hazhkan know themselves to be the forefront of a new order, bringing enlightenment to a land which has never known anything but savagery. They are willing to do almost anything in order to further the Harmonium's mission and purpose.

Hazhkan's settlers have built many cities and fortresses of stone, and cleared what land they can to plant rice, grains and other crops. Their work has not always been completely successful - tropical heatwaves have caused many a crop to wither in the fields, insect plagues and diseases have caused much death and hardship, and at least three cities have been abandoned after flash floods tore at their centers, leaving only waterlogged ruins behind. Still, the Harmonium settlers persist.

And the newcomers have found valuable resources in this land. Gold is one of the most obvious ones, panned in rivers and streams across Hazhkan. Tropical fruits, inks and dyes, hardwoods, and exotic furs also come from this land, along with more mundane goods such as soft coal, shale and limestone, and salt. Such items are traded to neighboring provinces, and bring in the extra food, cloth goods and metalwork that the settlements of Hazhkan need to survive.

Settlers in Hazhkan are of many races. Humans are most common, of course, from a myriad of provinces, but Motmurk orcs are also prevalent, eager to test their strength against the challenges of this unknown land. These souls have been lectured on the need to transfer their loyalties to their new homeland and not hold any needless attachment to their old lieges in Motmurk, but whether this has been truly accepted by all is not yet clear. A few beholders have also come to Hazhkan - most common in the east, but valued everywhere for their magical talents and engineering abilities. And finally are the rakshasa - tiger-men, and unknown elsewhere on Ortho, but powerful, well-suited to Hazhkan's hot, muggy climate and

devoted to the spread of Law. The rakshasa are not yet wholly trusted by the other people of Hazhkan, but still considered valued allies in a dangerous land where civilization itself is an uncertain thing.

### *Natives*

Though Hazhkan is not an easy place to live in, it still has a large population of native people. Savage folk who dwell in the marshes and jungles, surviving as best they can as hunters and gatherers, the Hazhkan natives live short, dirty and brutish lives. Might makes right, no one who sees the squalor in which they live can doubt the good intentions and divine right of the Harmonium.

Some of the Hazhkan natives are slowly but inexorably being civilized. They've been brought into the new cities, taught to till the land and sell their goods at market, their histories recorded in writing and their tribal gods replaced with the worship of the Lord of Law. For a few of the tribes, this is progressing well. One shining example of this are the river nomads of the Qijari delta. They have been easily assimilated into the Harmonium, bringing their skills at crafting light boats and carving wood along with them, and prospered greatly. Their numbers are easily twenty times what they were a century ago, and indistinguishable from people of other lands save for their dusky skins and the odd facial tattoos they preserve as a mark of their past.

Many other tribefolk have not yet been so fortunate. They have proven unable to keep up the sustained labor needed to farm the land or practice a trade in the cities, and have drifted into peonage or begging for charity. Such an outcome is unfortunate, but the Harmonium was not built on forcing the industrious to feed the indolent; those who have wasted their first chance at prosperity must find their own way thereafter.

Several institutions have been created to bring discipline to the savages. The temple-farms of the southwestern coast take on any who will come, teaching discipline and exacting hard labor in the fields in exchange for food and shelter sufficient to live - not an easy life, but a longer one than a landless beggar might otherwise possess. The monastic compound at Aj-Rakaith accepts orphans, foundlings and other young children for instruction, but can only accept a few and often has problems with children who think they have some right to remain with their families. None of the institutions in Hazhkan are perfect, but all are better than letting the savages remain unenlightened.

Even with centuries of progress, there are still a few of the native tribes who have not heard the word of the Harmonium - or refuse to listen. These unbelievers hold to the deepest swamp, the most tangled jungle, and resist any who would challenge their isolation with fire, wood and stone. Their miserable resistance is not so important that the Harmonium must seek to destroy them outright - time will suffice to spread Law across all the land. The one exception is when a tribe of marsh halflings is discovered, for a few remnants of this race of chaos-friends still dwell within the unmapped depths of Hazhkan. News of a surviving pocket of halflings raises the Harmonium's full ire.

### *Gods*

Many of the deities of Ortho have taken an interest in the lands of Hazhkan, and continue to do so. Their actions as much as any other have shaped the past of this land. Gods of Law and Chaos alike play their great game, seeking to shape Hazhkan according to their will, and often clash with one another in this ancient land.



On the side of Law, the Lord of Discipline and the Lord of Scribes figure most prominently. The interest of the former is obvious - bringing order and the Word to the savages of the land, and encouraging them to structure and prosperity. Be it through the gentle touch, the stalwart example or the thankless scourge, his servants and priests will tame the wilderness and make a great garden of it. The Lord of Scribes has a similar interest, but a subtler one - to chronicle both what is being built, and what has come before - preserving the history and legends of the native folk, ensuring that they will not be forgotten and keeping the past alive.

Opposing them most of all is the fading belief in the old Lord of Tricksters. Though the deities of Chaos have fled Ortho with the Harmonium's triumph, still the Trickster is worshipped in secret, under many names and none. Its followers spread lies and deceit and flame, causing great trouble for the new rulers of Hazhkan and the death of not a few. What traps and curses which have been left by this departing god, waiting to be sprung on those who would call themselves masters of this land, remain to be seen.

### **Provincial Government**

Many kingdoms, districts, colonies and petty empires rise within the province of Hazhkan. Some were founded by outsiders who came to the land in the first days after the coming of the Harmonium, an enlightened noble class who set themselves as protectors and lieges of the native folk of a certain area in anticipation of later reward. Others are pure colonies, inhabited entirely by outsiders and granting citizenship only to those natives who demonstrate an understanding of and acceptance of the rule of Law. A few kingdoms are even ruled by natives directly - Ojjari is one such.

Each of the kingdoms of Hazhkan obeys the dictates of the Octave Council and holds to its laws, but also establish their own dictates and preserve their own customs. Kingdoms collect taxes and fees, recruit soldiers and officials to serve the Orthorian Central Authority's will, and enforce the code of the Harmonium within their own borders. Representatives to the Council of Ortho are named through a series of contests - one chosen through a tournament of arms, one with a test of wits, learning and oratory, and one through a display of master craftsmanship. Each kingdom may name up to three candidates for the great contest when a position on the council opens, but only one person in all of Hazhkan can hope to win.

The current Representative of Arms is a man by the name of Lord Wolfhound, or Mawto in one of the more obscure native tongues of Hazhan. Mawto was born in Hazhan of Ulfrheim settlers, one of them of wolf blood. At a young age the settlement of his family was burned to the ground in one of the most violent of the chaotic uprisings of this province. Afterwards, he grew up surrounded by the natives and competing with the wildlife of his surroundings, establishing a name for himself as a scout and as a master of many of the jungle animals. In his early days he earned the title "Lord of the Jungle", and now at his physical prime uses a combination of brute intimidation and wily intelligence to hold his seat as representative.

His closest challenger to the title "Lord of the Jungle" is the Representative of Mind, a raksasha from the Tiger's Paw area of the province. Lady Indrakshi Chandrasekar is easily one of the oldest residents of Hazhan and well known as a champion of chess

and grower of orchids. Her history is shrouded and probing questions into her past receive polite but pointed stonewalling. She insists on proper decorum at all times, and is known as a shrewd negotiator on points of law ranging from trade, to criminal, to civil and personal disputes. For the last three competitions though many from around Hazhan have entered the Contest of Mind, those who have made it to the final round have dropped out of the competition ceding their challenge to the Lady.

The newcomer is the current Representative of Craft, a young cleric of Didaridrin by the name of Lord Rell. Rell is a master carpenter, and was the surprise winner in the last Contests. His entry was a series of bridged homes completed for the residents of Qijari after a river flood took out the majority of their bridges, severing the vital connects throughout their city. Qijari was unable to afford to replace their bridges after the decimation of the flood, but Rell and his temple simply arrived one day with the wood pre-carved and ready to be put up. The homes are built of cyprus, and are delivered in a series of modules, easily put together by untrained hands and able to be rearranged to suit the needs of their owners. The bridges were customized to serve the needs of the community with hinges to allow the travel of masted ships through the city, and were a last minute addition to the design as Rell has until the flood, been unfamiliar with Qijari.

## **Geography**

Hazhkan stretches for nearly two thousand miles along Ortho's equator, and nearly half that distance north to south. Three words are almost entirely sufficient to describe the entirety of Hazhkan's geography and climate - flat, wet, and hot. Soft, rich sediments allow plants of all kinds to flower and flourish, and abundant rains cause shallow lakes and slow, silt-choked rivers to form throughout the countryside. The tangle of plants and streams make maps of Hazhkan difficult to scribe at best - the very shape of the land changes from season to season, with jungles spreading and new riverbeds being carved out of the land with each new year.

### *The Hazhkan Channel*

To the south of Hazhkan is the long, narrow channel, which separates it from the province of Iironda. This is a major trade thoroughfare between the two provinces and is a welcome point of safety from poor weather for ships making their way across the treacherous (xyz) Ocean. The coast of the province here is filled with islands, crannies, hidden ports and bays moreso than any other location on the planet. As a result, the area is rife with pirates and others attempting to make a profit off the hard work of traders and citizens of Iironda. The remnants of chaotic influence from Hazhan have been known to set this channel ablaze with ship-to-ship combat.

### *Silver Sea*

The Silver Sea borders Hazhkan to the north between this province and that of Omospondia. The sea here is a major trade route between the two provinces and warms the entire area keeping the coasts of both provinces muggy throughout most of the year. This sea is not known for storms though the occasional pirate can be a problem.

### *Dragon Sea*

The Dragon Sea is an inner sea, branching directly off of the Silver Sea and links Hazhan, Omospondia, Karazam and northern Iironda. There is some trade across this sea, though it is with great caution as the title "Dragon Sea" is not without reason.

The dragons of Hazhan are an active force within this body of water. The sea is very salty, and has a unique reddish tinge that has appeared within the last two hundred years. It has not been useful for fishing ever since, and residents within this area have been encouraged to find their meat elsewhere. The activity of dragons in this sea has also shown a marked increase since the taint appeared. Harmonium experts are still investigating the source of the blood tinge, and in the meantime alchemists are working with samples of the water to either cleanse it or find some use for it for the needs of the Harmonium.

#### *Tiger's Paw*

The Tiger's Paw is a peninsula jutting off of the far end of the province. This peninsula has almost the entirety of the small population of raksasha in the province. The fiendish extraplanars have lived in this area of the world for millenia, and their lawful natures fit in well enough with the Harmonium's worldview that the Orthorian Central Authority sees no reason to move against them. The land here is mostly thick jungle, densely shrouded with vines. The Tider's Paw is also known for producing the worlds most exquisite orchids, though the risks involved in hunting down such rarities and crossing the borders of the Raksasha's Kingdoms tend to dissuade any but the most reckless or the most obsessed.

#### *Beasts of Hazhkan*

Creatures of many kinds dwell in the jungles and swamps of Hazhkan. Most are dumb beasts - hydras, basilisks and carrion crawlers, destrachan and swamp krenshar, oozes and monstrous vermin. The larger and more dangerous of these creatures have been beaten back from the settled lands, but a few still raid outlying fields and towns. Punitive raids are sometimes conducted to discourage such attacks.

More dangerous are the flights of gargoyles and bands of minotaurs and jungle trolls who still call the depths of Hazhkan home. Like the less intelligent monsters, these creatures have lost much to the Harmonium - but their cunning has allowed them a better chance to survive, and bred a hatred of the new arrivals and all their works. They raid against the new kingdoms when they can, which is not often - an organized soldiery is well able to drive back such attacks, usually with heavy losses. Still, even the little damage that they do is more than the Harmonium would like to see.

Greatest of all the creatures of Hazhkan, though, are the mighty dragons. Such creatures have dwelled in the jungle since the earliest of days, and are a force that not even the Harmonium and the Lords of Law can dismiss lightly. Some kinds of dragons - greens and bronzes, for instance - are inclined to favor the dictums of the Harmonium, and have even made common cause with it. Others, most notably the black wyrms of the swamps, oppose its coming, and have been attacked by paladins and other heroes. Such battles have not yet been frequent enough to trigger a state of outright war between the Harmonium and the dragons of Hazhkan, but this may only be a matter of time.

### **Important Sites**

#### *Blackmoor*

One of the oldest ports on the coast of, Blackmoor is built of stone and levees against the rising ocean. This city is laid out in perfectly straight lines, squared against the port. It is built almost entirely of stone hauled from the depths of the jungle, shaped into giant blocks and sunk into place by the sea. Blackmoor is one of

the largest, and certainly the most prosperous of the cities built by settlers and is generally the first point of entrance for future settlers to the province.

The stone of the city is polished smooth, and generally reflects the heat of a noontday sun driving the residents of Blackmoor inside behind thick stone walls. Luckily while the stone makes the outside quite warm, the inside of these buildings is naturally cool. Rooftop gardens are a common sight here, as the stone paving has eliminated any other greenery within the city walls save for specifically reserved fields for a minimal supply of food within the outer walls. Blackmoor was conceived by its Harmonium founders before the land was even scouted, and the site required extensive reshaping to match the founder's original vision of the city. It is however an extremely well planned city, which allows for rapid transportation of merchant guilds to the Knight's Roads in the area, as well as providing extremely well kept shelter for permanent residents.

### *Qijari*

One of the few natively held kingdoms, this prosperous river delta has seen great leaps of progression since the Harmonium sent missionaries into the depth of this tangle of river and jungle. The Qijari adapted swiftly to the new visitors and have adjusted their lives to fit. They can be found acting as couriers throughout this area carrying messages and other valuable things in their small canoes at his speed. They also have a very good reputation as escorts and scouts through less civilized areas of Hazhkan. Their main city is actually a series of villages built on stilts within the islands of the delta. The buildings of this city are of course wood, generally built from local species, which are naturally resistant to water. The sides of these buildings are often woven reeds allowing a cooling breeze throughout the building. The villages are connected through wood and rope bridges and the occasional wooden bridge across larger channels of water. A recent summer flood decimated this city, and it has since rebuilt with the aid of the temple of Didairdin.

### *Aj-Rakaith*

In Tiger's Paw is a small monastery dedicated to inner harmony and contemplation, nominally headed by the raksasha Dayanand. Dayanand is a lover of orchids and his compound is the source of easily three dozen of the more well known varieties of this flower. The complex is built in the center of the jungle over a natural spring, and can only be approached through a winding road from the south. It is built out of marble with three greenhouses secured near the center of the compound that are built entirely out of wrought iron and thick glass. The monastery also runs a school whose students are resident on the temple grounds and are required to spend some of their time daily working in the greenhouses. This is for the betterment of the compound to ensure that it stays functional, as well as for the betterment of the children in learning the worth of hard work. Dayanand, his mate, and youngest litter live in the compound as well and are often seen tending to their wards and the day to day business of the school. Students are usually orphans or the abandoned, but the more wealthy of Hazhkan's settlers in the Tiger's Paw area have also been known to send their children here for their education as well.

### *Therhild*

Near the mouth of the Silver Sea where it touches upon the (Insert Ocean Name Here) Ocean, is an underwater settlement of merfolk called Therhild. The Orthorian Central Authority charges this settlement with the responsibility of guarding this critical channel against pirates. Therhild is arranged in two wards directly beneath the channel extending to both sides of the waterway. They are built to allow the easy

flow of water from one side of the city to the other, mostly consisting of slim streamlined buildings arranged in rows for the least resistance to the water. Much of the city is built of shaped stone or grown coral. The edges of the city are guarded by large amenones whose sting the mer are extremely tolerant to.

The wards are connected by a network of bridges, well below the depth of the surface. These bridges are usually open between columns of shaped stone but can be hung with nets to function as enormous filter traps for passing fish. This allows the residents to participate in an active trade of fish in addition to feeding themselves handily. The bridges are also equipped with spires that may be rapidly raised to block the channel to within feet of the surface, effectively locking out any but the smallest and shallowest of ships.

The merfolk here are on a constant look out for pirates and are vindictive in their pursuit of ships that pass without issuing proper identification. A young firey up and coming member of the Harmonium, a female mer known as Arnora Stoneshell, leads them. Arnora is one of the most charismatic of the mer, and has recently begun to petition the Ortho Council for formal recognition of what she refers to as "The Province of Water's Breath". Her strongest supporter in this political effort is the province of Ulfheim. Her second in command is a male mer named Svalan, who has a reputation for quietly tempering Arnora's outbursts of fury.

## **History**

Prior to the coming of Harmonium settlers within the last three hundred years, this land had nearly no history to speak of. Its population consisted mostly of ignorant natives and chaos blooded races, too disorganized to write anything down or build much of anything up. The Harmonium has made a note that the sole exception to this pattern in Hazhkan has been the raksasha. Unfortunately the great cats have not indicated where they came from or how they arrived, preferring to answer questions to their history in terms of their own lineage, emphasizing their family history of imposing order upon the backward natives of the Tiger's Paw. While the Harmonium are naturally wary of the fiendish creatures, knowing that they may have planar connections, the beasts have not caused any trouble and have been solid supporters of the Harmonium's actions on Ortho.

## **Plots and Rumors**

### *Orchid Thiefs*

Orchids, both from the monastery of Aj-Rakaith and other reputable merchants in the field have been disappearing at increasing rates. Even orchid hunters who roam into the depths of Hazhkan are reporting their normal hunting grounds are barren of these flowers. This worrisom trend has prompted the raksashas of Aj-Rakaith to post a bounty for inestigation that leads to the capture of the thief.

### *Hungry Dragons*

Rumors persist of a great bronze dragon in the Dragon Sea that has been driven to great hunger and possible insanity by the death of the sea life in his terrian. Ships have reported seeing the remains of other dragons, generally smaller than the tales hold of the bronze, riddled with claw and bite marks as if they had been partially eaten. Lately one or two ships have also disappeared within the red fogs of this sea.

### *Cheating Representatives*

Accusations of cheating have been flying for the last few years in regards to the Contests. The odd behavior of the contestants and judges has led to accusations of rigging and intimidation. Rumors hold that Mawto may be using magical means to increase his ability to fight in the Contest of Arms, passing off such abilities as learned from the mysteries of the jungle, or as tricks learned from his brethren animals. Three years of no-contest results for Indrakshi, in which her competition bows out at the last minute have propagated the opinion that the silken lady may be intimidating her opponents out of the ring. And Rell was noted after the last Contest to express surprise at winning. Witnesses to his acceptance speech have expressed doubt that he even entered the competition at all, saying that his surprise seemed as much surprise at his sudden new station in life as it was at winning.

### **Ulfenheim**

**Proper Name: The Republic of Fang and Sea**

**Provincial Government:**

**Provincial Capital:**

**Leaders:**

**Population: Total # - Human 45%, Were 45%, Other 10%**

**Languages:**

**Alignments: Lawful Neutral**

**Faiths:**

In the far north of Ortho can be found the province of Ulfenheim. Stretching alongside Motmurk, and reaching into the northern ice is this series of flatlands, of which the northern most reaches see little sunlight throughout much of the year. A mixture of cold tundra, mountain, and pine forest this land is known for its rough interior and rough peoples. Ulfenheim is a place of legend, home to talking beasts and dark twisted forests, to glisening expanses of frozen grass and ice, and wild-eyed sea raiders.

### **Life and Society**

Today, the inhabitants mostly live relatively peaceful lives making a living fishing and hunting for meat and furs. The people of this land are tough and willing to take on the environment considering it a personal challenge to survive in this cold land. The people of this land take the tasks of survival personally, competing with each other often to prove their worth to each other and the land they live in. These contests may test the individual's skill in fields such as fighting, hunting, and animal husbandry. The elderly are encouraged to compete in storytelling, though the competitions are really poorly veiled excuses to sit and listen to their poets speak. Much of the history of this land is entirely oral, and these contests of memory and prose keep this vital tradition alive. Incompetence is rewarded with mockery, and the worst may be sent into the dark forests of this land to learn an object lesson and improve their skills.

Ulfenheim society is split between man and beast, quite literally. The reputation of this land for 'talking animals' is justly deserved, as nearly half the population is some form of were-beast. The People of the Fang as the collective tribes and packs call themselves keep to the far north and the icy interior of this province, as they are generally tough enough to easily take it. To the south and along the coasts reside the People of the Sea, an adventuresome collection of humans who spend much of their time maintaining their ships and preparing for the next long ocean voyage.

### *The Beast-folk*

The barren, ice-swept lands of Ulfheim are home to many kinds of lycanthropes; creatures that survive in this inhospitable land mainly by changing into animal form during the long winter months. They can often be found travelling as packs through the wilderness. Of all the lycanthropic beasts of this land, werewolves are the most common.

Unusually enough, these werewolves do not harbor the chaotic inclinations of their kindred on other worlds, but are dedicated to the ways of order and law. Such a change is not happy coincidence but often a mandated imposition - created by a magical invocation called Kelmuun's Bond of the Wolfpack. Werewolves that are naturally born, as opposed to cursed are not required to submit to the Bond, but proving that a wolf is not cursed with lunar madness can be a lengthy and tiresome process. Overall it is generally safer for the population to assume a particular wolf is cursed and submit them to the Bond. Wolves, who reject the Bond without proving themselves otherwise, are routinely hunted down as dangerous loners.

The wolves are nomadic, moving in tune to the weather of this harsh land and in tune with the migration of deer and other larger animals. They have formed packs, which rarely accept members not of wolf blood, and most packs have a distinct territory that they keep to themselves. Members of a pack travelling in another pack's territory may find themselves challenged if they do not immediately present themselves to the leader of the other pack. The packs are strictly heirachial, and follow their leader without question. Packs may have their own ways of determining leadership, be it a contest of skill and strength, or an inherited position.

The second largest population of beast-folk is the werebears. Unlike many of the other migratory lycanthropes, they are a sedentary people and have carved out their territory and choose to live in it year round. The part of Ulfheim claimed by the bears is called Bulgrak. The people here are by neccessity a close-knit bunch. Living in a hostile enviroment, they soon learned a vital lesson, and one that facilitated their union with the Harmonium: fight together, or die alone.

All members of the were-bear community are expected to work for their participation in society. Those who commit crimes are exiled into the wastes, though though if they arrive at another villiage, they are taken in if they show genuine repentance for their crimes, as surviving on your own in the wilderness there is a punishment in itself, and the exiles are fair pickings for the winter wolves.

In the distant past they were once entirely human, yet while teamwork enhanced the inhabitants' chances, encroaching winters and dangerous predators still ultimately overwhelmed them. A mage named Khartos the Bear stepped in at their request and used a long lost magical ritual of his own devising to transform the villagers, infusing them with the power of the bears that roamed the frozen wastes and strengthening their communal instincts. Soon they began pushing back the unintellegent monsters, forging non-agression treaties with the less-powerful but intelligent denizens from positions of strength, and training some of the mighty frost worms and cryohydras as steeds.

Other were beasts exist in smaller numbers, but are generally rare enough that they do not form tribes of singular species, but instead attempt to be adopted by the wolves or bears, or collect together in a mutli-species tribe. The largest of these tribes is called the Kaldrthorp, which roams the furthest south bordering directly on

the land of the People of the Sea. The Kaldrthorp often interact with the People of the Sea, and are open with them.

### *The Seaborn Exiles*

*We are born of the storm wind and the high wave. The froth is our blood. The depths hold our hearts. Our breath is salt. We find solace in our mother sea. Harsh discipline in her icy hands. High mountain or low grassland, we wash over the land at our will. We are her children. We are her exiles. - Song of an Exile, Ulfrheim poetry*

The Seaborn are the closest thing to 'native' human blood in the province of Ulfrheim. Traditionally tall and blond, they are now much more of a mix of many traits from the blood from southern peoples conquered in the distant past and the influence of their widely travelled populations. But a Seaborn is still a Seaborn, and the people of Ulfrheim recognize the call of their own blood, thin though it may be. Even now they are often found plying the sea in trade or patrol, travelling over the lands. The Seaborn say they were born to the land in the crevices of the rivers in the seas and ice north of Shoryko. Their oral history claims they moved south in exile from the Mother Sea, always keeping to the coast, always sailing, but never returning to their true home. Their history as conquerors has always made the natives of Shoryko a little nervous, but the Ulfrheim have never shown interest in returning to the lands they claim birthed them.

Like the beasts that they share this province with, they are a harsh folk given to appreciation of feats of daring and skill. They trade often with their northern neighbors, willing to challenge the beasts on their own territory and easily viewing them with an equality born from centuries of close living. Seaborn live in coastal fishing villages, usually with at least one dock for their sleek fast ocean ships. The villages are dependant on outside trade, offering furs, ivory, and honey wines in exchange for wheat and other supplies from other provinces.

Rumors hold that the Seaborn's legends of being birthed from the sea are more than mere legend. The merfolk of Ortho call the Ulfrheim brother, and recognize even the thinnest lines of the Seaborn blood as such. That the rare child is born blessed with the Mother's Gift as the Seaborn call it, adds credence to the rumor. Those born with this Gift are naturally at home in the water - by adolescence developing plated red tinged gills remarkably similar to those of the more Southern merfolk.

It is said that the Seaborn are blessed on and in the water, and without a doubt many of the best ships and crewmen come from this land. They rival the Thaeran in their familiarity with the sea, especially that of northern and arctic reaches, though ancient ships matching their designs have been found scattered nearly half a world away.

### *The True Beasts*

The Seaborn and the People of the Fang are not the only sentient races of this land, though they are the ones best known outside of the province. Because of their natures, the people of Ulfrheim find themselves unable to deny acceptance to many of the sentient non-humanoid creatures living in this land. Amongst these creatures are the winter wolves. Hundreds of years of Harmonium indoctrination have shifted the alignments of the native winter wolves to be mostly lawful, though their proclivity to evil remains unabashed. They sometimes aid hunters in exchange for suitable compensation, and generally refrain from attacking humanoids. The winter



wolves are not foolish and know that should they threaten the human, and were-wolf inhabitants of this land they would swiftly find themselves hunted to extinction. Besides, harmonious relations are more profitable all around.

### **Provincial Government**

The were packs are generally self governing, preferring to follow the leadership of their alpha. Inter tribal relations are generally handled case by case between the alphas of the packs involved. Only in the cases where two packs cannot sort out their differences amongst themselves will all the packs send their leaders and second-in-command to meeting to negotiate truce and resolve the issue. These meetings are advertised by spell, word of mouth, and howl and news of such an event travels swiftly. The meetings take place deep within the interior of Ulfrheim, and are known as the Council of Fangs. It is considered a gross violation of tradition and law for any pack to attack another during the course of such a meeting. Packs who do so risk immediately losing in negotiations, taking a blow to their honor and in extreme cases their lives.

The Bulgrak district of the bears is unusual, with a central government. The Telgorn Council governs the bears. The members of the Council are selected from the villages and the Harmonium, with one member representing each village who attended the most recent Telgorn games, and extra seats allocated for those winning the assorted events. This council decides on matters of legislation for the territory, as well as acting as an appeals court, though those wishing an appeal must travel there on foot. They are allowed to have others to come with them to aid in the journey, if they so wish. Each village is run by Council of Elders, which makes local laws and act as judges for the local courts. This Council is composed of the ten eldest people residing in the village at any one time, as any who survive that long will (in theory) be the wisest in the village. Any who are convicted of the murder of a previous councilor are banned from holding this position in any village.

The Seaborn are sedentary when it comes to the land. They build ports and farmland, only to provide for themselves through hard winters when ice prevents their ships from passing. The Seaborn are inclined to view their home as merely a 'stopping place'. A warrior responsible as leader for the safety and health of his people usually leads each town. His laws are voted into place by all fit and contributing members of the people he leads. When a leader and his people don't see eye to eye on laws, a new leader is often chosen from amongst the people. Seaborn believe, like the People of the Fang they share the land with, that survival on land or sea is best achieved by working together. They form strong family ties though an extended family network referred to as their 'kinship', and are known to form even stronger friendships.

When it comes to sending a representative to the Council, then representatives from throughout the province will make their way to the interior, near the southern point to the Speaking Grounds. The Speaking Grounds are a deep cave plunging within the side of the mountains here. This cavern is large enough to fit all of the representatives in their many forms. A part of the cavern is reserved for those who come to represent themselves. While it is rare that an individual wants to attend as a sole representative it is allowed, as by tradition the Speaking Grounds are open to all speakers.

## Geography

The Great Bay, a saltwater bay often choked with ice and nasty weather, divides Ulfheim down the middle. This Bay divides the province into the Interior, an extremely mountainous area between the Bay and Motmurk, and the Coast, an at best hilly land dotted along the edges with human fishing villages, towns and ports.

### *The Great Bay*

Entirely surrounded by Ulfheim is the Great Bay. The southern reaches of this body of water, protected by the land around it are passable throughout the entire year. The northern reaches are well known for poor weather and icy conditions. Ships that traverse this area during the winter should be equipped with reinforcements to break through ice. If a captain is insane enough to want to risk the far north of the Great Bay during the dead of winter he should be willing to crew his ship entirely by himself as no one else would be foolish enough to step foot on the ship with him. To the north the Great Bay opens up onto the Great Northern Sea, a sea routinely used for trade between Ulfheim, Shoryko, and Voll.

### *The Interior*

The interior of Ulfheim is mountainous, and covered in thick pine forests. This land is craggy and unpleasant at best, and impassible at worst. Tall cliffs and thick forest await any traveller, and snowstorms are a common threat. Travellers in this area are advised to wear warm clothing, as parts of the Interior have been frozen in snow and ice for decades. Travellers should also make a point of advising the nearby wolf pack of their presence and would do well to avoid harming any wolf before confirming if it is sentient or not.

### *The Coast*

The coast of Ulfheim ranges from temperate and craggy to freezing cold and craggy. The coastline is rugged, and allows for easy porting of ships - when the northern ice doesn't block entry. The coast is fairly isolated from the rest of the province technically being a peninsula but there is much cultural mingling across the Great Bay through shipping and trade. The forests here are thick and old, and usually consist of oaks and other old growth woods. Passage through these forests is hard as the undergrowth is thick enough that passage requires a blade or fire.

### *The Ice Spears*

The northern coast of Ulfheim is bordered by an unusual ice formation called the Ice Spears. The ice in this area covers a liquid salt sea, but every hundred yards along the entire coast it is broken and jutting upwards as if a great spear were stabbed down into the ice to force it upwards in sharp spikes. The spears have been there for as long as oral tradition can relate, but few are exactly sure what caused them in the first place. During intense storms some of the spears have been known to shatter under force of wind or lightning strike and can be found scattered along the icy coast afterwards. In a similar way, after an unusually intense storm one or two smaller spears may be found. It is unknown if this is caused by lightning, wind, or some other aspect of the storms in this area.

### *Frozen River*

The Frozen River runs from the Interior to the northern coast of Ulfheim, just within the border of the land held by the Seaborn. The river is frozen throughout winter and provides an easy passage for sleigh and by foot into the Interior and throughout the northern regions. Travellers on this river though need to be cautious in the early and

late parts of winter, as the ice is forming or beginning to thaw. The river's surface becomes treacherous, and victims who fall through the ice are rarely found until late spring. This river is not the only river used for travel in this province, it is simply the largest.

#### *The Territory of Bulgrak*

In the northern reaches of Ortho, lies the cold land of Bulgrak. It is fairly harsh in temperatures, but the main threats are the numerous monsters that live within. Cryohydras, winter wolves, white dragons, frost worms, and remorhazes all call this place home, and the occasional elemental vortex lets through things from the Paraelemental Plane of Ice. There are rumors that the high concentration of beasts and dangerous predators is the result of a divine curse. Ancient ruins are sometimes found frozen under the snow and permafrost that may be related to this, but exploration is difficult most times of the year. Inland travel through this section of the province is primarily by means of sleighs pulled by polar bears or on special saddles atop frost worms.

### **Important Sites**

#### *Port-Town Whitecaps*

Whitecaps is the largest human port on the coast of Ulfrheim. It sits to the southern end of the coast, tucked within a river delta and looking out upon the Northern Sea. It also has easy access to southern waters, making it the center of inter-provincial trade for the ships coming from the south. Whitecaps is built around its ship building trade and its docks. Buildings here are made of wood, and rarely of stone. Family homes are often topped with a carved abstract beast of some form, best representing the personality of the family or their extended kinship. Homes are built around an open central chamber which is used for crafting, cooking, gathering and feasting. The 'mayor' or Helmgard, is an aging man by the name of Earst. He is a fair ruler, if getting slow in his old age and his careful planning has allowed Whitecaps to grow at a steady rate without becoming unwieldy or sprawling.

#### *Redtooth*

The wolf packs of the Interior don't have a capital exactly, but there is a port on the north side of the Great Bay that serves as a general meeting point for the packs and neutral territory. Redtooth is an port town populated with an even mix of wolf blood and human. The town is built out of wood, and surrounded by a pallisade to protect it from the dangers of the Interior. However within the gate the town is built to provide easy passage for both two footed and four rooted residents. Doors in this town are commonly built with two entrances, one for each and inns and other lodgings provide for private kenneling in addition to private bedrooms. People of the Fang are respected regardless of their chosen form at the moment.

#### *The Speaking Grounds*

The Speaking Grounds are a deep cavern on the southern side of the mountains of the Interior. It is about two days march from a good port. The caverns are a large complex, though generally only the first and second caves are used. The first is a place for attendants of meetings to knock snow off their shoes and paws. This cave is used to get dressed, or undressed as the case may be, and to warm up from the journey to the cave. The second cavern is much larger and is used to hold meetings. The Speaking Grounds are stained from years of meetings, and carry a scent of animal musk and burnt pine and sage, as well as other resins. Both caves are stained dark with smoke on their roofs, though they slope upwards enough that most

of the smoke escapes to the outside. When in use the main cavern holds a central firepit extending the length of the cavern to provide light for attendants who don't see as well in the dark. The other caves within this complex are used as sleeping chambers for attendants as well as places to hold smaller meetings.

### *Grashnok*

The largest 'village' of the were-bears is Grashnok. Due to its location at the southern tip of their territory it serves as the chief port of the area. It is a cozy little village, tucked between two hills and secured against the wind and intrusion by a large pallisade. The streets are not paved, but are generally frozen enough that they don't need to be. Streets are often on a level with windows in this villate as the buildings of this village dug into the ground to protect them from the wind and ice. They are built often out sod and earthworks, and thickly thatched as insulation against the cold. The docks are built of stone and wood. For smaller ships, usually fishing boats, there are covered docks to protect them from harsh ice and wind. Larger trading vessels are only able to reach this port during warmer summer months.

### *Telgorn*

Also of note is Telgorn, which is located in the middle of the territory. This village is surrounded by a heavy pallisade, and resides near a river. Like many of the villages in this area it is built low, and out of sod to protect the inhabitants from the harsh conditions. This village is otherwise insignificant save for its position in the center of were-bear territory, and the caves beneath it. These caves are the home to the Telgorn Council, and extend deep below the village. The entire cave structure is not explored.

## **History**

The Seaborn were the first to encounter the Harmonium. They were readily willing to accept membership into the Pax Harmonium so long as they were assured to maintain their own lands and freedom to travel. The Seaborne have been one of the strongest proponents of free trade and travel ever since and they are behind many of the most lax immigration laws that the Orthorian Central Authority has to regulate inter-province travel. The Seaborne acted as intermediaries between the Knights of Harmony and its allies though when it came to the People of the Fang.

With the exception of the werebears of Bulgrak, most of the weres of the interior were wild and painful cursed people. Many villages of the Seaborn along the edges of the interior had become infected as a whole and were roaming insane throughout the moutnians. The Seaborn have always held strong blood ties, even to their extended kinships. Regardless of the curse upon their distant relatives, the Seaborn wished to see them protected within the order the Harmonium was constructing. A mage, of great rank within his village and born to the Mother's Gift set out through the waters alone travelling for decades. Few know exactly where he may have swum, but one day he simply walked in from the waves of the Great Bay and presented the Seaborn with the solution to the plight of their cursed kinships. This mage was named Kelmunn, and his Bond spell was swiftly put to action before the Harmonium could commence to wholesale slaughter of the cursed.

When the Harmonium arrived, the werebears joined them readily, as their own beliefs almost completely matched those of the villagers. The werebears, while few in numbers, more than made up for it by skill and raw strength, with their 'tame' frost

worms and bears inflicting heavy damage on their enemies. During the Schism, the werebears fought on the side of the supporters of the Hedbomad, mostly against the werewolves who live to the west of their land. During the War of Iron, the werebears are said to have performed almost as well as the beholders on a per capita basis, though in the end, they were still killed to the last man and beast of war.

The werebear population took heavy casualties in the assorted wars of the past. But their numbers are climbing due to the willingness of Harmonium members to be infected. Infected werebears produce natural werebear children (even when the other parent is a human).

## **Plots and Rumors**

### *Icy Oddness*

According to rumor, the ice spears along the north have recently begun to encroach upon the land. Reports have slipped back that lightning seems to arc between the spears before they grow inwards, but no living witness of such an event has been found. Investigators into these rumors are turned back by poor weather or later found frozen in the icy wastes.

### *The Erin Forge*

This ironclad icebreaker of a ship sunk in heavy seas in the middle of the Great Bay. Sightings of the ship have been reported, through no ghostly activity has been detected by clerics. A few other ships have disappeared in the area, and local Harmonium officers are beginning to wonder if a pirating operation may have moved into the Bay.

### *Tree Contracts*

The border of the Interior with Motmurk has been a point of contention for quite some time. The lumber resources in this area are something the orcs of Motmurk feel are not being put to best use, and which the wolf blood of the area feels should be well guarded to keep food supplies in the form of wildlife populations high. Some of these conflicts in recent years have come to bloodshed, though charges have not been brought up before the Ortho Council yet.

## **Omospondia**

**Proper Name: The Great Alliance**

**Provincial Government: alliance of city states**

**Leaders: Iapitea, Euthipites, Constantiosis, Opitomes, Iphika, Kristoles**

**Provincial Capital: Alaens**

**Major Cities & Towns: Alaens, Aotaria, Bisos, Darda, Hiota, Iphika, Krotos, Koma, Ledes, Nisiprasinos, Petris, Phemis, Rhogma, Xios, Zomos**

**Districts:**

**Resources: grain, fruit, vegetables, cotton, flax, wool, copper, tin**

**Coinage:**

**Population: Total # - Human 80%, Orc 10%**

**Languages:**

**Alignment (Populace): varies**

**Alignment (Law): varies**

**Faiths:**

So here's my working map for Omospondia - Land of Ancient Heroes (Province #5) and...O is a Confederation of city-states with an grand ancient history and strong agriculture based economy...

### **Land of Heroes**

This land, located on the western half of the Parsadian peninsula, has been ever known for its mythic warriors, agricultural production, traditionally strong navies and classical culture. Omospondia is an ancient name, originally describing those city-states along the western and southern coasts of Parsadia that unified under a confederation of equals to defeat the mercantile power of Dardonian League and its monopoly on eastern and southern trade. It disappeared and reappeared throughout history ultimately to be resurrected by the Harmonium to describe the entirety of western Parsadia. Located in the northwest corner of the continent of Keln, it was from here that the humans of much of Mot originated, a legacy that would come back to haunt the land during the Great War of Unification.

### **Ancient Omospondia and Parsadia**

Many are the tales of the heroes of ancient times who helped shape the culture of this land- Iotar of Hiota, who slew the hundred hands tall Giagantos who had despoiled the Agiosopolis of Krotos and carried away Chrysemene, First Daughter of Epidonus; Myrgidar of Koma, who outwitted Pyroklaxion the Crimson Scourge, convincing her to devour her children that were harrying the Mines of Zomos; Pertos of Nisiprasinos, who convinced the Sea Devils of the Lykos (Wolf) Straits to seek their true homeland in the Southern Oceans, securing the sea lanes for his people; Protokles, Archon of Phemis, who introduced the concepts of democracy and republican government; Phleogone of Xios who stopped a war and brought tears to the eyes of the gods with her sculpture, *The Lost*. These are but a few of the heroes of Omospondia's mythic past, but foremost of the heroes of ancient times was Iskandros.

Iskandros was the grandson of King Aotar, who had invaded the Land of Heroes from his holdings of Kokinos ('Rhendholm' in Ulfar) in Ulfheim and conquered the city-states of western Parsadia, including Krotos, Alaens and Bisos of Omospondia, and establishing the intercontinental Kingdom of Aotarium. Aotar's son, King Hakos, established a capital at Aotaria and solidified the new kingdom, but expanded it no further. Hakos's son, Iskandros, was not content to merely rule this new kingdom, for in his youth he had sought out the Seer of Iphika and knew his destiny was to expand the kingdom or die. And expand it he did. He took the combined martial and magical styles of his Ulfheim heritage and Parsadian birth land, creating a new style army and conquering the remaining city-states of Old Omospondia, those of southeastern Parsadia, most of modern Karazam and the northern coast of modern Hazhkan, creating the largest Kelnic empire of ancient times. So great were his accomplishments and so adored was he by the people of the new Empire of Iskandria that he was elevated to divinity upon his ritual suicide at the temple complex in ancient Gurakat (modern Iskandral).

But not all was gyros, olives and wine. Those who spoke out for old freedoms and traditional independence were exiled to colonies west across the Iron Sea by the tens, possibly hundreds, of thousands throughout Iskandros's reign. Others followed the exiles to the west voluntarily, silent in their opposition to the empire, yet seeking the same freedoms.

Although Rhendholm and the western colonies would rebel a generation after

Iskandros's death, the rest of the empire would last for centuries under the conqueror's dynasty, expanding and retracting ever so. Ultimately, as happens to all dynasties, an emperor had no children and no siblings. Thus was the fate of Klontos the Sad, the last Iskandrian emperor. Upon his death, the empire broke down into its component parts, ruled by Klontos's distant cousins, power happy generals or strong-willed city magistrates. Western Parsadia reached back to the days of yore and reestablished Omospondia to control trade between the inner seas and the Western Ocean. Omospondia also reestablished control over their colonies across the Iron Sea. The cities of central Parsadia fell back into ancient ways, warring amongst themselves for the various resources of the Central Peaks. Iskandral and the rest of the far eastern provinces of the empire accepted the new Kisto-Iskandrian dynasty that would ultimately establish the Karazam Empire. The Iskandrian lands along the northern Hazhkani coast elevated General Padipoodra to the Raj, only to have that kingdom splinter time and time again as various heirs outlived their royal parents.

This state of affairs lasted for a century or so until waves of Ogrish nomads from the east raided through eastern and central Parsadia weakening the city-states there and ultimately forcing them to join the new Karazam Empire that hounded after (some say paid) them through central Parsadia. Eventually, the Ogres were forced northward into [insert name of Province #6], but the damage had been done. The agricultural and mineral resources, as well as the ports, of the central peninsula was now the property of the eastern empire, while the Omospondian city-states and other independent kingdoms of the west were eventually relegated to a vassal-like status. This situation continued as such until the Great War broke out first in Iathra, then Pan Thaera and the Elven Shaar and ultimately coming to a conclusion on the Parsadian peninsula.

### **Omospondia During the Great War of Unification**

The nations of the Parsadian peninsula were generally unfazed by the Great War when it broke out in Iathra, although a great deal of trade in grains and iron increased with the Pan Thaeran Confederation. When the Knights of Harmony turned against Pan Thaera, Omospondia continued trade with the island nation and many mercenaries from the city-states set sail for the islands. Few of them returned. Concern, and in some instances panic, emerged as news that the Knights had allied with the Tyrants of Motmurk and were giving their support to the colonists in Xaric. Trade with the nations of Mot ceased and its ports were blockaded by the Omospondian navy. While the war progressed from Pan Thaera to the Elven Shaar, the nations of the Lykos Straits and the Sidero (Iron) Sea began to boil.

//more forthcoming for this section

### **Geography**

Omospondia is a province extremes, from jungles in the southwest to forests in the central midlands to the Desert of Sweet Sighs in the northeast. Gentle sandy beaches are found along the shores of the Asimi (Silver) Sea and Drako (Dragon) Sea in the south, rocky beaches along the Sidero Sea in the west and cliff riddled shores along the Lykos Straits. With its great rivers and inland lakes, much of the land has been cleared over the last millennium and Omospondia's plains are some of the best farmland in the world, producing huge amounts of grain, fruits and vegetables as well as textile fiber plants such as cotton and flax. The central highlands are rocky and jagged and are thus the least populated portion of the province. The region is generally used for the herding of goats and sheep and the mining of copper, tin and to a lesser degree, iron, gold and silver, as well as minor

gemstones. With the exception of the Desert of Sweet Sighs and the central highlands, the land is lush with vegetation and life.

### ***The Desert of Sweet Sighs***

In the northeast corner of Omospondia lies the barren sands and rocks of the ever-expanding lands of the Desert of Sweet Sighs. This region, which reaches as far east into Karazam as it does west into Omospondia, is completely without any natural life, either flora or fauna, and those who enter it soon are dead as well for the sun, and the land itself it seems, leaches water from the body. A breeze, which in the summer may build to a great and constant wind, blows at all times throughout this devastated land, reminding those foolish enough of the sighs of both lovers and those at death's door.

But this is not the land as it always was. A little over four centuries ago, this land was another of the poli, Zotikopolis, the City of the Fey Folk. The elves of this land were fair, with a set of grey elven philosophers as leaders, a high elven middle class of merchants and military leaders and humans of the area as laborers, farmers and militia, all happily co-existing, tending the great fields of barley and wheat and the orchards of peaches, apples and pears. But then came the orcish armies of Motmurk during the Great War.

Those who could not reach the magically reinforced walls and were not slain in the original onslaught were driven to the winds. Those within the walls were to withstand a siege that would last a decade. Half way through the seige, elven refugees from the south appeared within the walls, the lone survivors of the Shaar Slaughter. Zotikopolis was the last stand for the elves of Ortho. But those that came from the south, were not of the same nature as the goodly, if independent, elves of the north. They were a bitter and cruel folk who sought vengeance. They began a ritual that would take five years, a ritual that would sap the life of both those who laid siege to the city and those who dwelled within, for the dark elves of the south saw that the only victory that could be achieved would take centuries, maybe millennia, as well as their lives.

So it was that after five years and a pact with Mab, the bitter Queen of Air and Darkness, those within the city and on the land around its walls were dehydrated so quickly that the wind that blew from the south blew away all trace of the attackers and all organic items they used or carried, leaving behind only their arms, armor and metal equipment. A constant breeze picked up, one that has yet to die, and whistled through the city. It is this breeze that gives the region its name. The remainder of the orcish forces that were unaffected tore down the now easily razed walls of the city, set fire to the city and the fields around it, salted the earth and declared victory over the last of the faeries of Ortho.

But in the ensuing decades and centuries, the area did not grow back and the area of devastation grew. It took the world government a century to realize that something was wrong and another century to realize what was wrong was growing. Divinations and auguries gave no information on what had occurred or what was happening and the Harmonium was distracted by other issues during this time. Thus it was not until a century ago that they realized that the spread of the desert could apparently not be averted. The cities of Petris to the southwest and Taruf in Karzam have been overcome and deserted.

Recently, it has been observed that the effect extends out into the sea, as the



salinity of the Bay of Zotika has risen to levels that can no longer sustain most sea life. At its edges, fish that enter the area quickly die and seaweed shrivels and floats to the surface; both wash ashore creating a great deal of stink. If not checked in some fashion, the Desert of Sweet Sighs may, one day, cover the entirety of Ortho.

### **Provincial Government**

The center of life in Omospondia is the poli, or city-state, and as such, the provincial government is highly decentralized. The Chamber of Ambassadors in Alaens is the de facto parliament of Omospondia, responsible for disseminating the federal laws from Harmony's Glory to each of the poli. It is also responsible for affirming or rejecting the Omospondian representatives of the Harmonium and the Church and to directly elect the State representative to the Council of Ortho. Otherwise, its only other function is to adjudicate any disputes between the varied poli.

### **People and Cities**

The people of Omospondia are wide and varied, ranging from the tawny skinned in the east to the fairer skinned in the west, but, on the whole, they all have a few things in common. Each is fiercely proud of his home poli, whether it be metropolitan Alaens or smaller, more rural Tritheon. The people are hardworking and proud of its heroic heritage, and as a result, many sign up with the Harmonium to serve in the expansion of Ortho throughout the multiverse. Given its location near the equator, in summer the people work hard in the morning and afternoon, taking a mid-day rest, while in the winter, they rise later and retire earlier, working the day straight through. In evenings, they celebrate life with a gusto rarely rivaled on Ortho, and on Godsdays, all answer the calls of the bells of the Church of Law, whether it be in the poli temple or local village shrine.

### **The Greater Poli**

**Alaens:** The City of Marble is the provincial capital and as its name implies most of its great civic buildings are constructed from marble quarried on the island of Marbos in the middle of the Bay of Agos on the Asimi Sea. These include the Hall of Ambassadors, the Queen's Palace and the attached Temple of Alae, as well as the Great University of Iathiphos.

**Aotaria:** The ancient capital of the kingdom of Aotar, grandfather of Iskandros, was razed during the Great War four centuries past. It has been rebuilt and serves as both the Harmonium navy's main port in the eastern Sidero Sea and the gateway to western Omospondia from the Xaric.

**Bisos:** The City of Bulls is the first city on the inner seas for those coming from the south and is the shipping port for the varied exports from the jungles of southwest Omospondia. These include teak and mahogany, rice and millet from the interior as well as saffron, cinnamon and nutmeg among other spices.

**Darda:** The Gateway City is the entry point to the Drako Sea, built twenty-five miles from the ruins of fabled Dardonus. It is also the hub of the fishing industry of the central portion of the inner seas.

**Hiota:** The City of Warriors has a long tradition of warfare and sided with the Harmonium against any who would stand against them during the Great War. As such, it holds the greatest Temple of Didairdin in all of Omospondia. The god's blessings can be seen in the bountiful harvests that are exported from this city each year.

**Iphika:** The City of Poets hosts a challenge each year to see who can best express the virtues of harmony. Its Great Library is home to some of the most ancient scrolls depicting the valorous deeds of Omospondian heroes of yore.

**Krotos:** The City of the Old Ones is best known for the ruins of the Agiosopolis, a

temple of the once united pantheon that split into the Lords of Law and the Lords of Chaos. The city is also a center of iron mining, a metal once thought to be the blood of the ancient gods.

**Koma:** The City of Naerids was once known for the enchanting fey that lived off the shores of Lake Hogos, but now is primarily known for the wheat production of the plains to the north and freshwater fishing of the lake.

**Ledes:** The City of Red Sails is the main port for the wheat grown around it and in central Omospondia. This wheat is primarily shipped to the teeming millions in Iironda and Hazhkan. The Ledean Regatta, held annually, is one of the most prestigious sailing events of Keln.

**Nisiprasinos:** The City of Seawolves was once known as a pirate haven for the feared seawolves of the Lykos Straits. It is now known for its great pine forests, which are tended well by Harmonium druids, and its shipyards which reap the rewards of those forests.

**Petris:** Once the City of Golden Fields, Petris is now a ruin, taken in by the Desert of Sweet Sighs a century ago. All that is to be found there now is thirst, sand and madness.

**Phemis:** The City of Democracy is the cradle of republicanism in the north, a philosophy that rules a third of the poli in Omospondia. It is also the center of cotton production for the province.

**Rhogma:** The City of Dance is best known for its dance studios. People from all over Ortho come to learn both ancient and modern forms of dance. Its Kaisos Troop performs the world round and for the various courts of Ortho. On a more mundane level, it is also the producer of the finest shoes and footwear in all Omospondia.

**Xios:** The Frozen City is not named such because of its climate, but for its tradition of fine sculptors. Statues of great heroes can be found on almost every street corner. Once the capital of one of the major provinces of both the Iskandrine and Karazam Empires, it controls much of the land to the north and west of the city. This includes a great deal of exceptionally arable farmland, as well as the white marble quarries of Sipsos.

**Zomos:** The City of Bronze is the mining center of the province. Its mines producing copious amounts of copper and tin, as well as a bit of silver and gold, although the latter two are found to the west in greater quantities if not in greater concentration.

## **Leaders**

The greatest of leaders of Omospondia are not on the provincial level, but on the level of the city-state. Of these the foremost are:

Iapitea of Alae is the Queen-Priestess of Alaens and is the moral leader of the province as well as its heart and soul. It is she who, through her will and empathy, makes sure that the commoners of the province are not taken advantage of and that none go hungry.

Archon Euthipites of Phemis encourages any and all in the province who are not happy with their lot to join the Harmonium and improve themselves. He attempts to spread the beliefs of his poli to others whose royal houses are waning. He is currently in his fourth five year term, which show how popular he is as one cannot serve as Archon for more than one term in a row.

King Constantiosis of Hiota makes sure that every citizen of his poli is well trained in arms and combat, despite the lack of a local enemy. All citizens capable of doing so are required to join the Harmonium in some form or another, although most serve in its military wing. His son Nostonios currently serves in the Spelljamming fleet and

has attained a rank of Measure Five and captains the ship *Concordant Belief*.

The Dictator of Zomos is Opitomes, whose taskmasters constantly remind the workers of the city that they will be judged by Tyerusus at life's end, so that the harder they work the better that they will be judged. The city pays all funeral costs for its citizens and has some of the finest and most beautiful cemeteries in the province. Opitomes makes sure all workers are fairly, if not extravagantly, paid for their labors and that those who break the law are paid for their transgressions.

The King of Iphika, the half-elf Kristoles, has begun a decade long program to move the city to the west, preparing for the apparently unstoppable growth of the Desert of Sweet Sighs to the east. The building of the town of Iphikara is being paid for out of the coffers of the poli, with the blessing of its citizens, many of which are the descendants of those who fled ruined Petris.

### **Plot Hooks**

//forthcoming

### **Karazam**

**Proper Name: Karazam**

**Provincial Government: constitutional monarchy**

**Leaders:**

**Provincial Capital:**

**Major Cities & Towns:**

**Districts:**

**Resources: horses, silver, iron**

**Coinage:**

**Population: Total # - Racial Makeup %'s**

**Languages:**

**Alignment (Populace): Lawful Neutral**

**Alignment (Law): Lawful Neutral**

**Faiths:**

### **Land of Splendor**

K is a Constitutional Monarchy with an imperial [relatively] recent history, strong silver and iron reserves and a tradition of horsefarming...Both have to deal with the ever-expanding Desert of Sweet Sighs, a repercussion of the Harmonium's victories on the peninsula...

In the remote eastern highlands of Karazam, far from any ocean, lie the desert lands of Uathein. A harsh, hard and unforgiven land, it has formed a natural boundary between Karazam and its eastern neighbors for as long as anyone can remember, and is home to a people who are insular, tough, and only nominally beholden to the Harmonium.

### **The Land**

Uathein itself is a bleak and forbidding expanse of ragged stone - granites and feldspar, difficult to crack or weather and resistant to any sort of plant life. The general lack of moisture and precipitation only make this land more desolate, creating a vicious circle of isolation - lack of rain keeps plants from taking form to break apart the rock into soil, lack of soil means the few plant seeds that do blow here fail to take root.

There are a few instances in which life does blossom, though. Lichens, small mushrooms and other fungi can serve at the base of a scant ecosystem, able to cling somewhat to life even with so few natural resources. More prevalent is the autharei plant - a kind of vine that has sometimes been deemed 'desert kudzu' for its resilience, high ability to retain water and other nutrients, and rapid ability to grow to the limits of any cultivatable space and regrow after being damaged. Autharei is, in a sense, the keystone of any ecology in Uathein - one variety or another is usually the most commonly found plant, and those creatures able to feed off it are the dominant animal lifeform.

The one fortunate aspect of life in Uathein is that the lack of plant life and animals generally corresponds to a lack of predators and monstrous beasts. Though the land itself can be dangerous and difficult for humans to live in, it generally is the only threat to life and limb - other beings generally seek more hospitable climes.

### **The People**

Sapient natives of Uathein are mainly of human stock, being short, dusky-skinned and wiry. Though not well-thought of by civilized standards, they are generally well versed in the unique needs of day-to-day survival in their own environment. Genasi kindred are also not unknown, mainly of earth and fire descent - some scholars think of these as descendants of the slaves of genie kindred, who fled to Ortho long ago, but little of such matters can be proven.

The natives of Uathein can be broadly divided into four kindreds:

\* *The Settled* - Farmers and townsmen in the few areas of Uathein suitable for cultivating crops, these people have a safer and more predictable life than others in this land. They still face a strenuous, hardscrabble existence, with the need to keep their crops protected from scavengers and autharei out of their fields, and have extremely low productivity by the standards of more prosperous lands. Still, though, their endeavours are sufficient to support a bare minimum of crafts and industry, making them slightly more well-off than their neighbors in this bleak desert.

\* *The Tribesmen* - These people are mostly nomadic, their lives centered around the herds of goats and similar draft animals. The beasts kept by Uathein tribesmen are as rugged and disagreeable as the land itself, able to feed off the autharei and other native plantlife and fed on by the tribesmen in return. These people are more or less what outsiders see as the archetypical native of this land - close-minded, knowingly ignorant of the outside world, and fairly xenophobic but extremely tough, and valued as fighters and scouts by provincial authorities. They possess an intolerant and orthodox worship of Didairdin and Rialondru that is nonetheless much admired by certain elements of the larger Temple hierarchy, and has offered many insights to theology on Ortho.

\* *The Messengers* - Sometimes honored souls who have followed a calling to belong to no town or tribe, sometimes outcast criminals who are simply too skilled and respected to simply kill, the messengers live alone and travel across the desert of Uathein. They spread news, rumors, tales of great deeds and foul doings, and carry small valuables and services between those who'd otherwise not have any contact with one another.

\* *The Learned* - A small caste within Uathein, and not well-trusted, this kindred is still too powerful to simply ignore or ridicule. Heirs to the regional traditions of

wizardry, scholarship and other lore, the Learned live apart from others and pursue their own research, offering little in the most part for the things they consume but responding in ways that no one else can in times of crisis. Though the Learned study mainly matters of necromancy and transmutation, with an eye towards the latter for cruel and crippling reshaping of their subjects, they still have prospered with the coming of the Harmonium and exposure to the larger world. Only a cultural more of accepting apprentices only from within the Uathein tribes has kept the Learned as a kindred of the land, rather than dispersing into the larger society of Ortho.

### **Adventure Hooks**

\* A member of the Messenger kindred, well-known to provincial magistrates in greater Karazam, has recently gone missing under mysterious circumstances. Rumor suggests that foul play of some sort is involved, but exact names, locations and the like have never come to light - it's always "an acquaintance of an acquaintance". The Karazam nobility wants such matters investigated, and the Messenger restored to good health - and if that means making waves among the Tribes or the Learned, uncovering an ancient and hidden evil that's slept for millenia beneath the stone, or hustling the Messenger out of Uathein ahead of a mob of enemies, then so be it...

\* A religious war appears to be in the making amongst the Uathein tribesmen. One side is arguing for the primacy of Rialondru in all matters, as indisputable head of the pantheon; the other promotes the greatness of Didairdin. Left to themselves, things will inevitably turn to bloodshed and suffering. The Harmonium authorities are absolutely uninterested in such a turn of events coming to pass, but can't intervene overtly - such action would only serve to delay hostilities, would make martyrs out of principals on both sides, and given the inhospitability of the Uathein desert might not succeed in the first place. A discreet group of adventurers is needed to go in and make sure matters settle down, with a minimum of bloodshed.

What's worse, there's some indication that some outlander priests on both sides of the disagreement see the conflict as an earthly mirror of a similar debate occurring in heaven - and have quietly sent magical support to the side they favor among the tribesmen, in order to put a fix in. If this is true, the region could be even more of a powderkeg, especially as none of the Uathein have any notion of how to safely employ modern war-magics. Disarming any such zealots will be a vital step on the road to peace...

\* The autharei plantlife has long been known as a dominant plant within the Uathein desert, but is relatively unknown in more settled and prosperous lands. This is widely considered to be a blessing, as autharei is tough and tenacious enough to be difficult to uproot even in the barren, rocky desert - how swiftly it might spread in a less unforgiving clime is possibly unthinkable. Now, though, the stuff's apparently been sighted off an island near Hazhkan - and unless something is done soon, it may overrun huge areas of landmass. Guess who gets to travel to Uathein, and see if anyone knows how to permanently uproot autharei, and whether anyone had any ulterior motives for transplanting the stuff to Hazhkan...

\* Uathein has been a refuge of the Lords of Law for centuries, although a harsh and poorly-understood one. Now, though, there's rumors - that one or another of the Lords of Chaos, possibly Chal Ruinmaker or Jislana of the Dance, has started a cult among more remote of the Settled peoples. Can such accusations be true? What sort of hold is in place, to make the deeply devout Uathein welcome such a danger into

their lives? And how can such a threat be dealt with? And why are the priests of Ina smiling?...

## **Shoryko**

**Proper Name: The Empire of Shoryko**

**Provincial Government: monarchy**

**Leaders: First King ??**

**Provincial Capital:**

**Major Cities & Towns:**

**Districts:**

**Resources:**

**Coinage: phoenix**

**Population: Total # - Human 99%, Other 1%**

**Languages:**

**Alignment (Populace): Lawful Neutral**

**Alignment (Law): Lawful Evil**

**Faiths:**

*This history doc is intended to follow up on Clueless's idea of Province #6 as an isolationist, repressive place ruled by autocrats who impoverish the common people - providing some history as to how a province could end up that way, and why the Harmonium might not openly attempt to reform it. This is intended to leave a whole lot of room open to define races, cities, current politics and government, prominent NPCs and similar - anyone who wants to add more information, feel free.*

## **Prehistory**

The nobles of the remote northern province of Shoryko Province claim that their homeland is the birthplace of humanity on Ortho, and consequently home to the purest bloodstock. Their claim is naturally disputed by many, and quite likely impossible to prove or disprove, but none of the historical or archaeological evidence gathered suggests to the contrary.

Myths about the prehistory of Shoryko vary widely, from great cities forged from solid gold and dweomercraft to unenlightened tribes scratching in the dirt with sticks, depending on where you go and who you ask. In many cases, a city's own legends are the same as those as the next city over, only with names changed and identities switched to place the city's own forefathers in the triumphant role and the local rival as the pitiful victim. Shoryko notables assert that a common truth exists in all the legends, and that only details have been lost to time. As the details are vital to proving eventual truth or falsehood, though, most outsiders treat Shoryko prehistory as fanciful legend.

## **The First Kingdoms**

Civilization came to Shoryko with the domestication of rice, lentils and millet. Such crops both allowed and, in time, required humans to settle in villages and towns to tend the fields - even moreso to manage irrigation and dam works and get the best yields from each year's harvest. Proper tending of such elaborate agricultural works required a high degree of training and specialization in the people of Shoryko - laborers with the strength and endurance for long manual labor, engineers trained to manage the upkeep of the irrigation works, capable warriors to defend against marauding monsters, and so on. Those city-states that practiced careful and

structured segregation of citizens into assigned roles nearly from the point of birth prospered. Those that did not entered the dustbin of history.

Though strife and struggle were by no means unknown in Shoryko's early days, serious conflict between the city-states was rare. This was due simply to the harshness of early life, and the inability of any single kingdom to spend time and resources on wars of conquest. Raids, challenges between single champions, and diplomatic exchanges and marriages of state were common in these early days, as a way to manage conflict without the waste inherent in all-out warfare.

### **Wars of Purity**

Of course, such a state couldn't last. No one is yet sure whether the slow growth of civilization and stability in Shoryko inspired some nameless ruler to begin war for its own sake, or merely allowed armies to march in response to some unknown slight, but the Wars of Purity began nonetheless. They began as all-out combats between neighbors, with no fixed alliances and no certain enemies, but soon evolved into a more formal, structured setup in which each faction had its own key members, preferred weapons and tactics, and reasons for battle.

The Wars of Purity lasted for years, perhaps decades, as each faction battled on with the intent of achieving primacy over all Shoryko. None of the alliances proved to be clearly superior to any of the others, or managed to achieve a lasting advantage in the Wars; any that did seem to have such an edge quickly found all the other states turning against it. Such it was that much of Shoryko was laid waste, and weakened against invasion from both without and within.

Before the states of Shoryko could destroy themselves, however, a hero-king emerged - Koryao the Great, he who would be known as First Among Kings. A figure out of legend, he realized the danger that Shoryko was in, and schemed his way to prominence in his home kingdom, then used alliances, carefully-managed dissent among enemies, cunning strategy, and raw military might to achieve dominance over all the warring states. Subjugated rivals were treated honorably, encouraged to join his coalition rather than be ground under; capable opponents were allowed to surrender with generous terms rather than suffer a painful, protracted war on their home soil. To unify all of Shoryko was the work of a lifetime - but before his death, Koryao the Great had assembled an empire to pass to his sons like none ever conceived of before.

### **The Golden Age**

The heirs of Koryao built on the legacy of their great sire, to turn the many cities of Shoryko into a single nation. Trade in crafts and specialty goods was encouraged, along with the deepening of art, literature and culture. Binding oaths and carefully arranged intermarriage between prominent families was also used to deepen ties and block the resurgence of conflict. Gradually, a unified society began to emerge, with all the nobles of Shoryko's many cities all seeking a common good.

The effort to create a single nation in Shoryko did have one other lasting consequence - the creation of an explicit caste system out of the many different traditions of hereditary role inheritance. The need to determine proper precedence, propagate order across the land, and determine exactly who was best suited to be elevated into the ruling interests of the new nation led to a web of social and legal

strictures becoming formalized, and many different privileges, rules and taboos becoming propagated. The inflexible structure of the castes became the central motivating force in Shoryko culture, dictating their own internal politics as well as their response to the outside world.

### **Rise of the Harmonium**

When the Harmonium first began its rise to power some five hundred years ago, Shoryko was already a unified, wealthy and powerful kingdom, and had been so for several generations. Its wealth, prominence and culture had caused it to become insular and isolationist, however, mostly uncaring of the outside world, and so chose not to involve itself in the Wars of Unity against Alzrius, Thaera, and the elven nations. Only after the Harmonium had unified much of the rest of the planet did Shoryko enter into diplomatic negotiations, accepting membership in the Harmonium in exchange for local autonomy.

Thus, the entry of Shoryko into the Harmonium proved to have limited effects for both sides. Military advisors and recruiters entered into a few of the largest cities, as did trade factors seeking to encourage trade between Shoryko and other provinces. Neither met with much success, though, as the strict caste system of Shoryko and its immense concentration of wealth and power blocked most attempts at change or progress. Temple authorities met with more success, as Shoryko worshipped the same deities as the rest of Ortho, but their influence was still mainly limited to having their teachings co-opted into the established culture.

The elite of Shoryko did choose to participate in the larger government of Ortho, sending representatives to the Council of Provinces, but did so mainly in the interest of blocking any incursions by neighbors. With such matters being few and far between, the council members soon found ample opportunity to enrich themselves through use of their offices. Such behavior has continued through to the present day, and given Shoryko a poor reputation in the wider world; the notables of Shoryko itself care not, as long as the wealth that former Council members garner is used subtly and doesn't disrupt the rulership within the province itself.

### **Crisis of Faith**

The last major upheaval within Shoryko occurred some two centuries ago. Disagreement between the different temples of the Lords of Law had been steadily increasing for generations, as representatives of each deity disagreed on whose doctrine should be preeminent. The political maneuverings of the Shoryko elite only compounded this problem, with precepts of each faith promoted at different times to justify some social strategem, but the core problem was undeniably with the temples themselves. Priests of Didairdin insisted on a strengthening of the local caste system, with the top nobles always being correct by definition; those of Tyerusus disagreed, promoting an ironclad system of laws applied equally and without exception to everyone in Shoryko. Such a conflict might have come to nothing, had not the clergy of Saeduenical intervened, arguing for investigation and discovery of all acts, ever, regardless of criminal intent. The dispute that broke out between the three viewpoints was fierce, bitter and unquenchable, and soon escalated into open conflict.

The ensuing struggle lasted for decades, and was fought in nearly every form imaginable - from conflicting exhortations shouted in the temple square, to attempts



to enshrine some key canon precept in secular law, to covert warfare and destruction of a rival's properties and treasures. The noble interests of Shoryko refused to involve themselves in the main, fearful of being seen as openly opposed to any single deity or finding themselves on the losing side, and blocked peacekeeping efforts proposed by the Harmonium government for much the same reason. The crisis ended mostly out of mutual exhaustion, with no real compromise ever presenting itself. To this day, the temples of Shoryko are weakened and mutually suspicious of one another.

### **The Present Day**

Modern-day Shoryko is a land in which turmoil simmers below the surface. Though it appears peaceful and industrious, danger and strife could potentially erupt at any time, unconstrained by the peacekeeping efforts of outside forces. The present First King of Shoryko is an underaged figurehead, controlled by regents after his predecessor died in mysterious circumstances; the nobles that control him might seek a more pliable tool at any time. The different temples are still at one another's throats, each dominant in different cities and covertly struggling for overall prominence in Shoryko. The effect of the larger Harmonium hierarchy remains shaky and uncertain, but is slowly gaining faith among the lower castes and may become viewed as a threat. Exactly what the future holds, no one can say...

#### **Xaric**

**Proper Name:**

**Provincial Government:**

**Leaders:**

**Provincial Capital:**

**Major Cities & Towns:** Threerivers, Xelhone

**Districts:**

**Resources:**

**Coinage:**

**Population:** Total # - Dwarves 35%, Human 35%, Orc 20%, Kobold 10%

**Languages:**

**Alignment (Populace):** Lawful Neutral

**Faiths:**

The province of Xaric is a mixture of fertile plains, long vibrant coasts, rivers and rocky hills. The province covers the southern half of the continent of Mot. This is a land of mixed views, mixed people, and hobbled together culture. Xaric is one of the most stable and prosperous provinces on Ortho, in no small part due to the rich soil of the land here. This is a land known for abundant harvests and vibrant plantlife. The people of Xaric are held together through interdependence, though debate continues on its forced nature.

### **Life and Society**

Xaric is a mix of three predominating peoples, orc, human and dwarven. The three races in this area were lumped together in the past, forced to live side by side in harmony under the rule of the Harmonium as an ongoing experiment. So far, this experiment has paid off, as all three peoples have retained much of themselves while bending to the needs of their neighbors. The Schools of Ethics routinely study this province as an example and experiment of social and political construction.

The province is centered around the lowlands, a plentiful and heavily farmed area of the continent. It is the center of wheat production, grazing and farming for the entire province. This land with the proper care is capable of supplying food for Xaric and its neighboring provinces as well. As a result, even the aggressive orcs of this area have no interest in disrupting a perfectly suitable system that ensures a steady supply of food.

Much of the land and larger farms of Xaric are mutually owned, often divided into shares by the nearby towns that work the land, ensuring that those towns with an owning interest receive the pick of the crop before the rest of it is shipped throughout the province and continent. The people of Xaric (regardless of their species) pride themselves on being able to cooperate with each other for the benefit of all. Most of the population of Xaric is involved in farming or agriculture of some kind, with the next most popular occupations involving long distance trade.

#### *On the Dwarves of Xaric*

Xaric is the native land for the dwarves of Ortho. They come from the northern reaches of Xaric, near the borders with Motmurk, and live in the rocky hills and foothills of the mountains of Motmurk. The dwarves have a historical claim to the land beneath the mountains of Motmurk as well, though their mines rarely surface in the orc dominated province. The dwarves have migrated much in the last five hundred years, travelling southward to the orc and human lands to participate in the Orthoian Central Authority's mandated provincial government. The newfound interest in their neighbors has paid off for them though, and they have since taken pains to integrate more thoroughly with their neighbors. Generally they prefer to integrate by moving to new lands, as their own under hill and under mountain abodes are difficult to expand to accommodate taller residents.

#### *On the Human Colonists of Xaric*

The humans of eastern Xaric were originally colonists from the city-states of Omospondia and share their tawny skin and narrow eyes. The eight colonies were Ethano, Theron, Drakon, Terapten, Veron, Anselm, Syphlo, and Equus. They eventually grew much larger and populous than the Omospondian city-states that spawned them. Each of the human colonies, now cities in their own right, are based on a different animal theme: Ethano is the owl, Theron is the wolf, Drakon is the Wyvern, Terapten is the horned eagle and crested turtle, Veron is the mouse, Anselm is the lion, Equus is the horse, and Syphlo is the sylph, harpy, and undine. The human population of Xaric can be found throughout the land, as they have spread from the coastal cities into the interior of Xaric.

#### *On the Orcs of Xaric*

The orcs of Xaric are a curious bunch. Originally descended from the exiled individuals and tribes of the northern mountains, they were a rough and rebellious group. Their exile for crimes ranged from murder, to failed attempts to take leadership in tribes. The southern orcs have had centuries to establish themselves in the lowlands of Xaric. In the past they held their lands in a tight grip, but have since seen fit to share the resources (and the work) involved in farming the land.

Due to their own history of rebellion against the orcs of Motmurk, the Xaric orcs tend to prefer a less formal tribal organization. They would rather work within the

structure of a town or an elected government, as the harsh tribal environment of the north was often enough exactly the sort of leadership their ancestors fled. The orcs of Xaric are noticeably better tempered than their northern cousins when dealing with humans and other races, as they have learned to be after centuries of partnership and interdependence.

#### *On the Kobolds of Xaric*

The kobolds of Xaric are a distinct minority within the population of the province. They are however a vocal group, and are rapidly becoming more involved in the day to day life of the province. They do not (yet) have any formal representation in the province, but are instead becoming a part of the society surrounding them.

### **Provincial Government**

The government of Xaric was originally established by the Harmonium shortly after the War of Harmony. It is a construct designed to force the disparate cultures of Xaric to work together, establishing interdependence. As a result, it is believed, the cultures would become harmonious, working with each other for the betterment of all because to do otherwise would cause personal harm. So far, this seems to be a working solution to the situation.

The government is divided into a set of locally run counties - allowing the villages and towns within Xaric to run their own needs within a limited role. The power of these local governments is sharply restrained by the provincial government however. The provincial government has the power to overrule any local ruling or law, and has been known to do so when the situation calls for it.

On a provincial level the government is run by a council, consisting of thirteen members. Four seats are required to be held by dwarves, four by orcs, and four by humans. The representatives may come from any on the counties. The last seat is used as a tie-breaker vote, and may be held by any of the three races of the province. All sub-councils, committees and other groups within the provincial government are required to show a similar distribution in representation. Elections are held every three years.

### **Geography**

#### *The Lowlands*

Most of Xaric is flat plains well suited to farming or where the soil is not rich enough, cattle farming. The best farming land can be found on the eastern side of the continent. Highest quality Xaric beef comes from the southwest corner of the province.

#### *The Foothills*

The north of Xaric is dominated by the foothills of the Motmurk mountains. The hills are rocky with deposits of stone, ores, and gemstones that make the dwarven populations of the area happy. Above ground the hills are relatively unpopulated, and are covered with oak and hickory forests. Travellers in this area should be cautious of intruding into the lands of reclusive orc families known to live in these hills. Visitors are encouraged to pay respects at the Ossuary Spire of the Elder Bones, a funeral monument of the dwarves formed from the remains of 300 generations of the dwarven clans.

### *Thorkhold*

This was the site of the Thorkhold dwarves, Bardolpho's Engine, which was empowered by Chaos itself. It was a hideously complex thing, impossible to look at directly without getting watery eyes and breaking into a chill sweat. Bardolpho's Engine was destroyed by a surprise strike by Scorpion saboteurs in past conflicts. As a result, the Thorkhold civilization vanished in a flash, leaving an oddly shaped crater where the very rock had vaporized.

This crater has remained abandoned to modern times, a hole dug into the earth down to the very bedrock. While the crater itself is barren rock, the land around this ancient city is overgrown with plantlife, which seems to enjoy an unnatural level of health. Though the effect on plant life will force them to grow to a spectacular size, no fruit bearing or grain bearing plant grown in this area has produced edible results. All such plants grown in this spot have produced bitter, sour and unnutritious food and therefore the land has been left to itself as useless.

### *Dragonbone Beach*

Near the tip of the continent, on the western coast, is a beach at the bottom of a steep cliff. The beach itself is unremarkable, but the cliff holds the spectacular sight of a fossilized dragon skeleton poised as if in mid-flight. The dragon appears to be an ancient silver according to the size and bone structure of the beast. No lair has been found of this primordial dragon, and otherwise dragons are extremely rare within Xaric.

## **Important Sites**

Theron, Ethano, Drakon, Terapten, Veron, Anselm, Syphlo, and Equus

These were the Omospondian colonies of old. Though they are now considered counties within Xaric, the original cities are still capitals of their respective areas. Each of the cities share a similar architecture of marble and stone governmental buildings. Residential areas are generally built of materials more easily found in the area, such as wood or thatch. The cities are usually built up around defendable ports, as the colonies were founded originally by seafaring peoples.

Scorpion, Scarab, Mantis, Ten-Mill, Aphid, and Locust

These are some of the original dwarven settlements. Like many dwarven cities these are grand underground complexes tunneling beneath the foothills of the Motmurk mountains. For the most part these halls are built sized for dwarven sized people. Though visitors are welcome they are not often comfortable in the close environment. The complexes of the dwarves roam deep, and are often divided for the use of extended family networks.

### *The Iron Jaw Harmony Training Center*

This re-education camp is positioned near a small town in northern Xaric to help citizens with chaotic tendencies overcome their personality problems and become good lawful citizens.

The camp is arranged on a flat plateau on the mountainside. A spring bubbles up from the base of the mountain and flows down the mountainside. The main road follows the spring up to the plateau. The camp is ringed by a double-walled stone stockade. The walls are several yards apart with a trench running through the center. In between these walls at regular intervals are sets of standing stones

covered in lightly glowing runes. The runes glow with swirling, chaotic colors, and the stones are the secret to the camp's success.

The camp was established when the Harmonium was expanding in its early years and was originally used for keeping prisoners of war, especially those with spell casting ability. Magic is absorbed by the ring of stones and all spells cast within the circle must overcome a caster check as if penetrating SR with a difficulty of 30. It was this property that made the Harmonium choose the site for a camp. The second property of slowly shifting alignments of those within the stones towards lawful was discovered later.

Indeed, the prisoners who are simply deemed too chaotic in temperaments to serve adequately in society are brought to the camp and are usually set loose within three to six months, and speak of good treatment and kind care. The camp is a model of how such things should be, and several individuals have volunteered to go hoping to become better citizens and shed their chaotic tendencies. The camp even boasts insane wards that with the help of doctors and healers often cure even the heavily deranged within months to a couple of years.

The Harmonium created the stockade and all structures on the plateau save for the ring of standing stones, which were there before the center's founding. These stones are shaped like long spikes that go deep into the mountainside. The Harmonium does not know how deep the stones go, how they were made, or what they were made for. The stones absorb most any divination magic cast at them effectively preventing research attempts and there are rumors that stronger casters attempting divinations find their spells blocked deliberately, possibly by a power.

#### *The Convent of the Rest*

The Convent of the Rest is a colony for dangerous heroes of war, established by the Harmonium, in the state of Terapten. A convent filled with brilliant warriors rendered useless when there is no more war, but who are not trusted to be permitted on other planes for fear of alien contamination. The convent is called the Rest.

At the dawn of the First Harmony, the Harmonium decided that a certain kind of terrible warrior that had been used often during the Expansion was not suited for the new, more civilized, age. The warriors were rounded up and taken to the Rest. For several generations they trained in isolation, interacting with no one outside their fortress home.

During the Schism they were once again brought out to do their atrocious work, and afterwards they were again put away.

They saw use once more in the War of Iron. Though this was far from the last military action the Harmonium would undertake, the Octave and the Council agreed that it was too much of a risk to bring them out ever again. Outsiders might not understand, and they could not risk their perfect warriors becoming contaminated by alien ideas.

The warriors of the Rest are not entirely human, nor are they entirely mortal. They're chimeras of a sort, both living and undead, unaging and capable of surviving decapitations, but still breathing, with hearts that still beat. The Harmonium is terrified of what might happen if other factions managed to convert one. For now, then, they remain in the Rest.

### *The Monastery of the Seven-Fingered Palm*

The Monastery of the Seven-Fingered Palm is in the lands near Theron, the northernmost of the eight human colonies. Its inhabitants are orcish worshippers of the Seven, gentle monks who allied with the Xarician human colonists against their brutal kin in the past. Quicker than sight, the monks were never caught by the minions of the Hierarchs.

Centuries later the Palm allied with the Knights of Harmony, agreeing to forget their ancient differences with their kin in order to help defeat the Flame of the North. During the Schism tensions rose once again, but by then many of the other orc clans in Xaric had been converted to the Palm's gentle philosophy.

### *Xelhone*

The second biggest city is the port city of Xelhone where the Bloodflow River meets the Iron Sea. This city is predominantly orcish, as it was the main position of rebellion of the southerner orcs against their northern cousins. The city is laid out along a bend in the Bloodflow river on a defensible hill. The hill is reinforced with stone and iron making the city a strong fortress against assault by land or sea. The red clay in the surrounding area, and the iron of the fortress itself near where the river runs are responsible for the naming of the river, as rust and mud both have tainted the water a deep red.

Within the fortress itself may be found buildings of stone and iron, built to last for centuries, in which generation after generation of orc families have lived. The streets are narrow but strictly straight, and the roofs of buildings nearly touch overhead resulting in narrow and extremely dim streets. The fortress over generations has dug down into the earth of the hill below it, resulting in ever deeper layers of secure living quarters. In recent times the bottommost layers have required reinforcement against water as the construction has finally reached the water table of the area.

### *Threerivers*

The biggest city on the continent is Threerivers. Where the rivers Charesh, Millwright, and Blood merge into the unified Bloodflow, a dwarven village originally squatted. It was a small place, a minor waystop connecting the great dwarven communities of the north with the sea. The port of Xelhone at the Bloodflow's mouth was far more important, and even the town of Tenmill to the north had a bigger population and at least some local industry. Except to provide a place for weary transporters to rest, the dwarven village called Xel had little purpose. Its rough inhabitants were mostly outcasts from the major clans; a motley collection of dwarves and more exotic monstrous humanoids come down from the mountains for reasons of their own. Their homes were stone huts, sometimes connected to local caves, and while there were a few fine inns, some stores, some well-maintained docks, and some crafters who could build and repair ships, for the most part they had a rude, primitive life. There was not much there to offer dwarves.

Humans, on the other hand, were another matter entirely.

The new Harmonium government, seeing the great division between the three major races of the continent of Mot, desired to create a common ground between them; the village of Xel, where rivers flowed from all three lands, was seen as ideal. The architect Malana Engrea of Equus colony was designated the city planner; the city itself would be part of no state or colony, but it was given a representative of its own

to Ortho's council. The dwarves and other beings who owned property in the village were allowed to keep it; their families would later become wealthy landowners in the heart of the growing city of Threerivers.

With the grand city buildings designed by Engrea, the convenient location on the banks of three major rivers, and the enthusiastic support of the Knights of Harmony, venture capital began pouring into the new city from all the pacified lands. Most notorious was Enric Blackhook, a former Thaeran pirate who had distinguished himself in the war with the elves; he soon became the wealthiest mill owner in the city, and he owned many frowned-upon businesses as well such as drinking, dancing, and gambling halls. The chitinous dwarf clans contributed many distinctive hive-like stone buildings; the orcs created the Cathedral of the Nine, with its soaring bat wings, and the new docks with their distinctive claw-like ramps for swift access to boats.

Much of this was destroyed when the human states rebelled during the Schism and before the War of Iron; the Cathedral of the Nine was torn down by rioters and was later replaced by a temple of Saeduenical, a courier service, and a stable. The sprawling yet stately mansion Malana Engrea designed for the governor was completely burnt (three times) and replaced by a more imposing, fortified building that would influence the renovation of Sigil's City Barracks centuries later.

The city's soul, with its freewheeling combination of many different races and ethnic groups, remained the same; even during the grim martial law imposed after the revolts, Three-Rivers' dance halls and taverns found a way to remain open in spite of government disapproval. For the people of Xaric and even elsewhere, Threerivers is the true heart of Ortho, its living spirit that endures and empowers the Harmonium's collective song. Threerivers is very much a mixed-race city. The confluence of three rivers that gives the city its name also symbolize the confederation of the three races common to the continent: humans, dwarves, and orcs.

## **History**

Before the humans came to Xaric, and before the dwarven clans broke the surface often enough to make their voices heard, the land Xaric contains was presided over by the orc Hierarchs of Motmurk. The mountain tribes, and their harsh kings would send forth their weakest kin to work the land, or release herds of cattle to propagate freely before raiding the land to reap the benefit of time and other's hard work. Some of the orcs simply left the north seeking better opportunities for advancement, or a place to start their own tribes if they were not able to rise to power within their own.

The southern orcs became known for their failure, their softer natures, and earned a reputation as malcontents and rubbish. With the coming of human colonists, and their negotiations with the dwarves and humans of the area, the Motmurk kings found themselves enjoying the fruits of others' labors. They considered the newcomers their new subjects and reached their hand even further to dominate the residents. The Motmurk kings ruled over their weaker cousins and neighbors with a stern fist and harsher whip.

The orcs of the north seemed otherwise content to ignore what would in the future be a greater problem for them. The human colonists of Omospondia faced threats from many sides: orcish pogroms, harsh Omospondian tariffs, fierce wyverns and other beasts. But nevertheless they prospered. They found trading partners in the

native dwarves and kobolds, although there were clans among both races who sided with the orcs and opposed the newcomers presence. The humans managed to survive, even through losing wars with their homelands. When the Empire of Omospondia collapsed, the colonists found themselves with hesitant allies and the attention of the northern orcs, eager to establish their complete dominance.

Into this situation came the alliance of an orc rebel and a human warleader. The Blood King was a northern orc, exiled to the south for a failed rebellion within his tribe. He forged strength into the southerners, and gathered his forces at the fortress of Xelhone to establish his own empire in the south outside of the control of the Motmurk Hierarchies. However, as the Blood King brought his forces northwards, they met strong resistance and quickly became bogged down as his army was hungry and the northern mountains an imposing obstacle.

It was then that the Blood King's armies met those of Lord Coriden of Theron over a mutual battlefield. The respective armies of the southern orcs and humans had come upon a northern raid and unbeknownst to each other until mid-battle had pinned the northern orcs between them. As both viewed the raiders as a greater threat, they forged a temporary alliance to turn back the raid.

Afterwards, and after no small amount of negotiation and contest, the two forged an agreement of mutual defense. This guaranteed the humans their land for farming and herding, in exchange providing the southern orcs the supply lines for their fight against the north. The colonists also provided weaponry and warriors to the defenses against the north, but the two races rarely acted under the same leadership due to personal conflicts between their forces.

Between their alliance, and the human alliances with the dwarves for their assistance with meeting their weapon quotas - the southern lands threw off the northern exploitation and held their ground for centuries. This was the state of things when the Harmonium reached Xaric.

#### *Xaric in the Age of Harmony*

Northern orcs had spent years mockingly claiming that their southern kin were turning 'human' when they found the orcs were farming the land. Their southern kin, though strong enough to resist them, were subjects of jokes, and derision throughout the northern tribes. Even when the Harmonium forged their alliance with the orcs of Motmurk, the southerners were dismissed as a stubborn but ultimately weak force. The pride of the northern orcs would tolerate no other view of the semi-permanent state of rebellion.

This changed drastically when the War of Harmony came, and the northern orc realized their southern kin were sitting atop an entire army's food supply lines. Negotiations with the orcs and humans in this area held the armies up for weeks, as the leadership of the Harmonium was hesitant to tempt the southerners to set their own fields afire as they threatened. As a result, the people of Xaric may have found themselves with a constructed experiment of a state set up as a 'proper' means to negotiate with the Harmonium, but they were also assured of security against the Motmurk Hierarchies, and any future Omospondian dominance. With the Harmonium's agreement, and a formal province, the people of Xaric were secure in their own rights.



The Xaric states are all loyal to the Harmonium cause, but their hatred of the Hierarchs of Motmurk and the cities of Omospondia has been the cause of unlawful tension in the past, beginning with unprovoked crimes against the orcs and cumulating in the Midwinter Rebellion when three citizens of Omospondia became members of the Octave at once; this was too much for many in the eight states to handle; led by Haran Firebeard, a dwarf descended from the vanished Torkhold clan, they declared independence from Ortho's government. The Harmonium had difficulty defeating them for a time, until troops were brought in from Integril to squash the revolt.

Investigation into the cause of such unexpected rebellion was the Harmonium's primary goal for a year afterwards, and it was concluded that only the undue influence of Chaos on such a people would convince them to bite the hand of their proper authorities. Naturally influence from the Abyss was the prime suspect, and shortly thereafter the War of Iron began with the aim of stopping such unrest from without.

## **Plots and Rumors**

### *The Power of the Ironjaw Prison*

Unbeknownst to the Harmonium, the stones of Ironjaw join deep underground and form a nest holding a single giant egg. The egg is from deep in the world's far past and is the union of an ancient red dragoness and a god of chaos and the stones absorb magical and chaotic energy to incubate it. The camp only serves to warm the egg and hasten its development. The egg holds the particular interest of the Lord of Silence – the one member of the Lords of Order who tends to such forbidden secrets. Why she protects this egg from the divinations of others is unknown.

In the past few years, geological surveys have been sent to the mountain to investigate several minor earthquakes. It is theorized that the mountain is actually an extinct volcano that might be waking back up through a geological cycle. The camp is such an asset that the officials of the region are willing to put quite a few resources to try and protect it so that it may continue to be used.

### *The Neverseen*

There's a legend being whispered in the alleys of Three Rivers. It's said a thief has recently come to the city - a thief like none ever seen before, the best thief in the world, possibly the best thief to have ever lived. Valuables and secrets are being liberated from the homes and safe-vaults of the city's most eminent personages, despite the best security money can buy. The wealthy and noble of Three Rivers are frightened and furious, the city watch and Harmonium investigators are frustrated and frightened, and whoever's behind the rash of crimes laughs at them all.

The downtrodden, desperate, and unlucky take hope in the fact that the system that grinds them under is not as invincible as it seems. Their hero is a stranger to them, known only by his deeds and the anguish he visits on their betters, but they love him nonetheless. They call him the Neverseen.

Such is rumor, legend and hearsay, in any case. The truth is somewhat grimmer. The Neverseen does exist, and is a rogue of no small repute, and does presently ply the cross-trade in the city of Three Rivers on Ortho. But he doesn't do so for personal gain, or to inspire the masses - far from it. In truth, the man who has been

dubbed the Neverseen is actually a deep agent of the temple of the Lord of Watchfulness, one of the mightiest powers for law on Ortho, and his actions are meant not to serve as a stalwart example but instead to tempt the weak into a state of sin.

The motivation for such a plot is simple. Man is fallible, and easily tempted by chaos - so better to expose those susceptible to such error at the temple's own urging, with inquisitors close at hand to help reform such endangered souls. By inspiring others to engage in theft, sedition and other unnatural acts, the Neverseen serves to evoke the hidden sin that would otherwise emerge only gradually - very much like drawing poison forth all at once from a wound, allowing it to later heal. Such tactics are very effective - the Neverseen himself was once such a young and foolish soul, tempted by the ways of chaos before being exposed to the teachings of the Lord of Watchfulness.

The Neverseen's work in Three Rivers is only in its early stages at present - the word has just begun to spread, and those foolish enough to see the Neverseen's deeds as something to emulate have not yet started to practice the craft. In the coming months, the Neverseen will continue to engage in visible, daring raids against the city notables, spread innuendo through the poor quarters encouraging the less fortunate in their own criminal intentions, and quietly mark the most promising footpads of the city for special attention from temple priests. If raids against city notables turn up evidence of corruption, personal failings or other matters of interest to the Lord of Watchfulness, so much the better; any such findings will discreetly be placed in the care of the local temple hierarchy.

City watch, Harmonium agents, and outside adventurers will undoubtedly all strive to capture the Neverseen, but will face an uphill battle. The Neverseen himself is quite clever and competent, and the priests of the Lord of Watchfulness will employ much indirect but still formidable leverage in order to ensure that he continues his work.

*Tomas Nevirsen, "the Neverseen"*

Male Human Rogue 19

Hit Dice: 19d6+19 (94 hp)

Initiative: +11

Speed: 30 ft

Armor Class: 17 (+7 Dex), flat-footed 10, touch 17

Base Attack/Grapple: +14/+14

Attack: Dagger +21 melee (1d4/19-20) or +21 thrown (1d4/19-20)

Full Attack: Dagger +21/+16/+11 melee (1d4/19-20) or +21/+16/+11 thrown (1d4/19-20)

Space/Reach: 5 ft/5 ft

Special Attacks: Sneak attack +10d6

Special Qualities: Evasion, improved uncanny dodge, skill mastery (climb, disable device, hide, move silently, open lock, tumble, use magic device), slippery mind, trapfinding, trap sense +6

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +19, Will +9

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 24, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 12, Cha 16

Skills: Bluff +22, Climb +22, Diplomacy +22, Disable Device +25, Disguise +22, Hide +25, Move Silently +25, Open Lock +24, Sense Motive +23, Sleight of Hand +24, Spot +21, Tumble +20, Use Magic Device +25

Feats: Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Negotiator, Nimble Fingers, Quick Draw, Stealthy, Weapon Finesse

Equipment and Possessions: Tomas Nevirsen usually works the streets equipped with nothing more noteworthy than a set of simple clothes, a brace of non-magical daggers, and a well-concealed set of masterwork thieves' picks; he oftentimes will even go about a foray only so simply equipped. He believes in trusting to his own skills and talents rather than magical trinkets, and knows that many of the highest-class security measures are specifically designed to detect and counter magical intrusion, not normal skill and finesse. If need be, though, the Neverseen can equip himself quite richly - he has cached in a safe location a mithril chain shirt, several magical daggers and other weaponry, a ring of protection +4, gloves of dexterity +6, a necklace of adaptation, three immovable rods, and a sizeable selection of scrolls, potions and minor wands. Additional equipment can be requested from the servants of the Lord of Watchfulness, if circumstances permit.

### **Motmurk**

**Proper Name:**

**Provincial Government:**

**Leaders:**

**Provincial Capital:** Fortress of Nine Claws

**Major Cities & Towns:** Fortress of Nine Claws

**Districts:**

**Resources:**

**Coinage:**

**Population:** Total # - Orc 70%, Dwarven 20%, Human 10%

**Languages:**

**Alignment (Populace):** Lawful Evil

**Alignment (Law):** Lawful Evil

**Faiths:**

Motmurk is a land of tall rocky mountains and deep, nearly inaccessible valleys. It is amongst the oldest of the provinces of Ortho and the first of the allies of the Harmonium. The province is dominated by the orc Heirachs and is the traditional homeland of the orcs.

### **Life and Society**

The influence of the baatezu in the past inspired a great love of learning to the orcs of Motmurk, bringing literacy to the culture for the first time. Though the erinyes had tried to suppress their new-found curiosity, it actually worked to their advantage as the orcish mage-priests penned long tracts on magical theory and practice, raising the science of magic among them to new heights. Even now, long after the Schism and the forbiddance of planar worship the orcs of Motmurk are for the most part literate with a strong tradition of magic use.

The province is generally unfriendly to outsiders. Visitors to a tribe may be viewed as possible spies or saboteurs in association with rival tribes within the orcish Hierarchy or with rivals within the tribe. This is not to say that visitors will be harmed, such actions are considered crass. However, their actions will be closely observed and a wise traveler will bring letters of introduction or other means to reassure his hosts.

The orcs of Motmurk live in an intricate network of a tribal community in which rank is determined by lineage and association with the tribal leadership. The orcs keep close track of their bloodlines, both as a point of pride and as a way to determine their new rank should another in the tribe rise to power. They believe in survival of the fittest, so sudden and violent changes in leadership are not uncommon. They prefer to force changes by trial by arms but assassination is a valid method as well.

Most orcs of legal age are able to explain in detail the change in rank they would experience should any other relative come to power. Changes in leadership generally occur only within the tribe. It is very rare for a non member of a tribe to challenge a tribe leader for his position. Attempts to come to power are not made recklessly as any new leader can expect to be challenged immediately. This results in an unexpected stability when a strong leader is in power as rivals may not feel they are yet capable of holding the position.

The politics of this region give rise to the belief that within each pigherder is the potential of a general. This is best demonstrated with the orcish version of chess called kersh. Kersh is a game in which opponents play to dominate territory on a square board with markers of differing values. That a marker may have a different face value on its reverse side makes this game as much one of memory as of strategy.

There are seventeen major tribes, most of which contain multiple lineages, clans, and families. The top ten tribes are:

**Iron Tusk** - This tribe is currently the most powerful of the orc tribes. They hold the position of First King, and are settled firmly on a range of mountains rich in gold and iron ore. This tribe is well known for a strong military background and bluntly harsh dealings with opponents. They employ a very large number of troops in the province and many of their youths are sent to the Harmonium for formal military training.

**Deepwater** - The second most powerful of the tribes, this tribe is known for potent wizards and clerics. While they have never taken position as First King, they have been a constant in the top three tribes for as long as anyone can remember. They are strong supporters of the current leadership. In the past this tribe was one of the most heavily involved with the baatazu, as a result they have a sizable percentage of tiefling families and most of the other members of the tribe show signs of their heritage in the shapes of tusk or horns.

**High Rock** - This upstart tribe is led by a young and fiery ex-mercenary named Sethan. He brought this small, declining tribe from the brink of bankruptcy and desolation to the third rank through a combination of sheer luck and competence. The bastard child of the previous leader, his right to leadership had to be confirmed by the First King before the tribe would fully acknowledge him. Since securing his position his tribe has grown wealthy from his worldly connections and rumors persist that he may challenge the First King for his place. His youth has made the other tribes wary as he is not only competition for the other leaders but also for their own heirs.

**Bone Break** - A tribe of traditionalists, this tribe is one of the least civilized of all of the orc peoples. Rulers of the tribe are obeyed as if their word were law. They hold to many of the orc traditions that predate the baatazu. This includes ritual scarification and polygomy, usually one male to as many females as he can take and

secure against others. Traditionally male orcs are culled to prevent wasting resources on the weak, leaving most families with only one or two sons. Even though the practice is technically outlawed the tribe has a suspiciously low percentage of male children.

**Silent Keepers** - The Keepers are one of the most mysterious of the orc tribes. Their lands are located within a set of three valleys that are otherwise isolated from the rest of the province. Access may only be found through one of the heavily guarded passes that are part of the Knight's Road network. They are a solemn people who have earned the name their tribe have been given. The most popular Lord of Order with this tribe is Ina. While powerful enough in terms of their military and magical strength to throw their weight around a little in the province, they tend to be neutral parties in most disputes.

**First Blood** - This tribe is among the smaller ones of the province, and are located mostly along the southern border of the province. This tribe is a restless bunch, jealous of the more valuable natural resources of the other tribes, and generally abusive to the dwarven populations of their territory. In the past, this tribe dominated at least one clan of the dwarven peoples whose mines were located primarily on their own land. Since the Harmonium made their presence known in this area though, they have lost their dominance over the dwarves. Unfortunately the animosity as a result of losing their 'property' continues and the First Blood Tribe routinely asks for sanctions to be passed against Xaric for historical slights.

**Silver Eye** - On the western side of MotMurk, in the mountains and coastal plains of the province, live the Silver Eye tribe. Of all the orcs, this is the one tribe that has an active inter-continental trade. The orcs of this tribe are long familiar with the sea and with shipping. In the past, they had a reputation as pirates, but this is an accusation that is largely inaccurate now. Simple high volume trade is more profitable. The leader of this tribe is unusual. Instead of a physically strong and dominating king, the orcs of this tribe are content with an elderly and slightly frail orc, who just happens to be one of the best negotiators and business traders they have ever seen.

**Wolfblood** - The Wolfblood come from the northeast corner of the province. Their ancestors held a longstanding feud with the Beastkin of Ulfriehelm, which through decades of conflict and battle ironically introduced a strong line of were-blood to the tribe. Baatazu influence in later years allowed affected members of the tribe to regain control of their affliction. Unfortunately the solution to the curse was not a cure, and the cursed have a fifty percent chance of passing it on to their children. Even now the tribe is fairly reclusive but they make excellent spies and military scouts, a fact the rest of the tribes rarely forget.

**Steel Hide** - A tribe expert in metal working, these orcs have learned many secrets of mechanical design and the forge from the dwarven clans they held under their sway in the past. Unlike other tribes who simply demanded work of the dwarves, the orcs of the Steel Hide tribe made an effort to learn from those they considered 'lesser'. As a result they have a near monopoly on siege craft in Motmurk, and their intricately geared works fetch a high price throughout the province. They guard their knowledge jealously and have frequently petitioned the First King for trade protections against imports from outside the province.

**Black Cat** - Of all the tribes, the Black Cat tribe is the only Motmurk tribe that does not prefer to live in the high mountains of Mot. They reside in the peninsula that

juts from the western coast of Motmurk. This land is swampy and covered with old growth swampy forests and cyprus. In this land the Black Cats have built carefully secreted away fortresses and homes isolated on stilts. The mountain living orcs are wary of these swamp living orcs as they have often been suspected to be active collaborators with the southern orcs of Xaric. The Black Cats have never been caught supporting the southern rebels.

### **Provincial Government**

The Hierarchy of Motmurk is little more stable than leadership of the orc tribes. A prospective leader may declare himself First King but if he cannot hold his position without being assassinated by rivals, then he is not said to have the mandate of the tribes. If a First King comes to power who is not killed but cannot compel a majority council to sit before him, then again he does not have a mandate. Inheritance of a position is presumed to go to the eldest child, but without the political savvy of extensive training an underage ruler may be wise to step down in the face of confrontation.

Representatives to the Ortho council are appointed by the First King and authorized (and briefed) by the tribal council. Laws within the hierarchy are determined by majority agreement, though the First King has veto rights. The First King is also responsible for mediating inter-tribal arguments, and approving or dissolving inter-tribal marriages. He is also the final recourse of those seeking separation from their own tribe, family, or spouse as he has the rarely exercised power to adopt an outsider into his tribe.

The current First King is Rokmorn "the Bloodletter" of the Iron Tusk tribe. He is harsh, even for an orc and paranoid. As he has reached his later years, he keeps his harem at his palace, along with his many children. This keeps all of his closest relatives not only on hand to defend him against assault but also keeps them busy out maneuvering each other instead of plotting against him. He has given no indication which of his children he would surrender his position to.

### **Geography**

*The Motmurk Mountains*

The majority of this province is taken up

### **Important Sites**

*The Fortress of Nine Claws*

The Fortress of Nine Claws was the capital of the diabolic orcish Hierarchs, created where nine roads met in the center of the northern mountains. Most of it is intact today, although since the Schism it is uninhabited except by ghosts. One of the nine watchtowers is rubble, destroyed by the Seven-Fingered Palm.

### **History**

The orcs soon dominated the northern half of the continent of Mot. The Scarab, Mantis, and Scorpion clan dwarves fell under their influence, the dwarven hive mothers pledging allegiance to the orcish Hierarchs and the Lords of the Nine.

The Hierarchs forcibly conscripted human colonists and kobolds into their armies, requiring perfectly obedient service in exchange for the lives of their loved ones. The human colonists complained to the Omospondian queens, but the motherland cared little as long as they received their taxes.

It wasn't until after the Schism that the dwarves of those three clans regained their independence from the Fortress of Nine Claws.

## **Plots and Rumors**

### **Iathra**

**Proper Name:**

**Provincial Government: representative democracy**

**Leaders:**

**Provincial Capital:**

**Major Cities & Towns: The College of the Choir**

**Districts:**

**Resources: charcoal, ash, wool, cashmere, fabrics, dyes**

**Coinage:**

**Population: Total # - Human 80%, Dwarven 5%, Orc 10%, Beholder 5%**

**Languages:**

**Alignment (Populace): Lawful Neutral**

**Alignment (Law): Lawful Good**

**Faiths: Didairdin, Baelae**

### ***The Demon Fire***

*Flame of the North, the demon fire, our father, lord, god, and master. We turn to you now before the face of your enemies from the West. Bless us so we may burn them from your new claimed lands.*

*- Opening hymn of the evocation to battle, Iatharian elite troops*

At the height of its power the Iatharian Empire ruled nearly an entire continent of Ortho. The earth hissed under the firetraced feet of demons, and the land trembled on the verge of joining to the planar realms of the Demon King. The fields were parched, and newly conquered lands were covered in deliberately set wildfires by the invading army announcing the claim of the Abyssal Lord Alzrius.

What mortals remained in command after the conquering of lands were the harshest of those who lived there before, murders, assassins, criminals and above all others arsonists. The fire elite were bonded to their demonic flames, controlling it in battle as others would control dogs or beasts of war. Troops would set themselves ablaze and leap into battle to savagely kill all they could before they were extinguished. The weak and the useful but otherwise defenseless, toiled in ashy fields forcing the dirt to give forth enough fuel for the mortal troops.

Iathra was the beachhead for Alzrius's attempt to draw the sphere of Ortho into the Abyss - to join it with his own layer. The slaves and serfs who survived under the weight of his troops would come to bless the paladin and his coalition of armies that forced the Fire Eaters from their lands and freed them from the demon god. Even now, the earth recovers slowly from the abuse, though those who live in this harsh

land are some of the staunchest supporters of the Harmonium.

### ***The Barren North***

Iathra is a land still recovering from the ravages of war. Five hundred years have passed since the demon lord was banished from the province but the damage done to the fields here is extensive. Ash, salt, blood, and the forests torn down to support the efforts of war have depleted the land of many of the nutrients it needs to support long term forming. The land is also significantly colder than it was in the past – unprotected by thick forests, and swept by the strong northern wind.

Farming here is hard, the land has been burnt in many places down to the rock, and the soil that is here is weak. Most farmers tend to their land as they would a sick child, choosing to farm plants known to replenish the soil and following the direction of the local temples in doing so. The temple of Didairdin is a strong force here, taming some of the worst reminders of Alzrius's reign and tending closely to the long term interests of the land. Didairdin's temple has been turning a mostly blind eye to the some of the new outlawed druids who have joined the temple to assist in the efforts to heal this land of its injuries. Their talents are simply too valuable to waste and the temple leadership, though lawful is also kind hearted and considers their efforts to assist to be atonement for the deception. For now. Thankfully higher ranking members of the temple who are not local to the area are not aware of the situation.

This day and time, most of the people here raise livestock instead of farm crops as they had in the past. They tend to flocks of sheep, and sometimes flocks of long haired goats. They produce the finest wools and woven clothes in Ortho, and are considered to excel in the create use of dyes. These are a pragmatic people, and the introduction of an animal from the southern provinces of Ortho has been taken up with joy by these people. The llama, capable of being ridden, hauling goods, and also producing fine wool for weaving, has found a new home.

### ***Provincial Government***

Democratic.

// Peoples

More troops were volunteered for the War of Iron from the provinces that used to be called Iathra than from any other province in the Empire, for the people who lived there knew in full what others do not of the horrors of the Abyss. Alzrius has seemingly withdrawn his hand from the sphere, tending to other playthings as he was thrown back - but five hundred years is a blink of an eye to an immortal such as he and there are many in these provinces who expect the demon to take another shot. When he does, they are ready with ice and iron.

// Leaders

### ***The College of the Choir***

Music and bardic magic are powerful forces everywhere in the multiverse, and the planet of Ortho is no exception. Unfortunately, the freewheeling and irreverent souls normally attracted to the bardic way of life fit in poorly with the rule of the



Harmonium, and are likely to clash with authorities if not dealt with.

Rather than allow such a situation to occur, the Harmonium has acted to promote such traditions of art and performance that demonstrate strong characteristics of order - choral and symphonic music, oratory, and structured poetry. It's the Harmonium's hope that aspiring artists will adopt these forms rather than establishing themselves as lone bards, and so promote order rather than defying it. Schools and instructors to spread these disciplines have been endowed across all of Ortho, but the College of the Choir is the oldest and most renowned of all.

### ***History***

The College of the Choir was founded by Landrien of Voll, a wizard and sometime troubadour who lived through the first years of the Harmonium's rise. Some legends suggest that Landrien was a friend and follower of the great paladin Romhel of Voll, and founded the College of the Choir in emulation of that man's efforts. Other rumors suggest that Landrien was simply a pragmatic and foresighted individual who realized the inevitable conflict due to arise between the nascent Harmonium and the bardic orders of Ortho, and sought to create some alternate path for those devoted to art.

Whatever his motives, Landrien's deeds are unmistakable and a matter of public record. He identified methods of performance and composition that demonstrated order, structure and cooperation, and relentlessly championed patrons of such art forms and creators of brilliant works. He convinced the leaders of the Harmonium to accept orderly art forms as necessary to an orderly society, and convinced many prominent bards and minstrels to join the Harmonium and accept its rules and protection, rather than make their way in an uncertain world.

Landrien's wisdom proved itself almost immediately, as bards and demagogues from other nations chose to resist the Harmonium's advance with deceit, hoaxes and other propaganda. The prodigals that Landrien had collected turned out to be some of the best weapons against such an attack, presenting the Harmonium's own position with the same power that the renegades had used to denounce them, and helping to keep new provinces content under the new order. Many within the Harmonium hailed

Landrien's efforts, and backed his efforts to spread the 'orderly arts' across the face of Ortho. Thus was the College of the Choir born, and its sister schools in other provinces as well.

Landrien lived long enough to see the original College open, and the first classes of students enrolled, but not long after that point. He had not been a young man when the Knights of Harmony first began their great work, and the effort of singlehandedly building a new recognition of art and music across all of Ortho proved to age him beyond his years. He passed away peacefully one winter evening, surrounded by friends, colleagues and students and secure in the knowledge that he had helped to make the world a better place.

### ***The College Today***

The College of the Choir has continued to thrive over the last five centuries, its reputation and accomplishments growing with each new generation. Its current campus rises in the wooded hills of the southwestern corner of Iathra, close to the old border with Pan Thaera and accepting many students from those isles as well as other notables from across Ortho. A catastrophic fire that consumed the old campus some two hundred years ago offered an opportunity to rebuild the College in a more grand and modern style; as a result, the buildings and auditoriums of the College feature wide spaces and spectacular architecture.

As one might expect from so prestigious an institution, the College of the Choir is a sprawling place, almost the size of a small city in its own right and surrounded by supporting businesses that definitely qualify it for such a title. Close to ten thousand students, faculty and independent composers are in residence at any one time, along with servants, support staff, and a strong enough Harmonium guard presence to insure the safety of the place from just about any force imaginable. As one might expect from such a large population, members of almost every race and profession can be found - somewhere - at the College of the Choir.

Despite its name, the College of the Choir offers instruction in all forms of music, art and culture deemed acceptable by the Harmonium Council, and is well-respected in all fields. Other specialist schools outstrip the College in narrow fields, but the College still stands alone as the most prestigious institution for honing general artistic talent in all of Ortho. Even some planars have apparently applied to study here - though few indeed have been accepted, and none without careful scrutiny by Harmonium factors.

In spite of its official position as part of the province of Iathra, the College of the Choir often functions as a nigh-independent city-state. Its deans govern themselves, making sure to stay within the broad letter of the law handed down by provincial authorities but handling most matters of punishment themselves. Residents of the school traditionally are never offered government positions within the Council of Ortho or its subordinate bodies, though many alumni have gone on to such positions and some current students are related to sitting Council members. This autonomy allows the College to present itself as a neutral body, offering advice on proper management of art and culture without the appearance of taking sides, and is unlikely to change anytime in the foreseeable future.

### ***Personalities***

Individuals resident at the College of the Choir come in several broad types. The most obvious are the faculty and administration - uniformly excellent in their fields, outwardly devoted to the College and its mission of inspiring art and cooperation across Ortho, but each with their own quirks and secrets. *Senna Arhonius* is a symphonic master, training and conducting orchestras for the past twelve years; her batons are all magical wands of various types, quietly commissioned as weapons that she can hide in plain sight. *Ramond Tallhollow* is an elderly singer, with a surprisingly strong and vibrant baritone that has changed surprisingly little over the years; he is secretly at least one-quarter elven, twenty years older than he claims to be, and hides his ancestry due to fear of Harmonium censure. *Lasic the Gray* is a respected bard-hunter, known across Ortho for identifying and countering improper use of bardic magic; he lost all spellcasting of his own twelve years ago after a particularly powerful cleric of chaos cursed him, and has since carefully manipulated subordinates into doing all the hands-on work.

Students at the College are an equally varied lot - talented almost by definition, but often unseasoned and lacking confidence, and looking for the best way to express their art. *Kalan* is from the restive and often rebellious district of Aeviryn, in eastern

Thaera; he's continually unsure whether he's at the College due to pure talent, as a pointed symbol to his countrymen, or as a hostage in case things flare up again in the near future. *Ayrissa Maricos* is both a gifted singer and a skilled dancer; the former is valued by the Harmonium, the latter isn't, and she's working to improve both skills as best as she's able, with the intent of teaching other dancers once she returns to her peaceful, isolated homeland. *Jadic Ironfist* is a dwarf with family connections in very high places; his gifts for chanting and oratory, while not insignificant, are distinctly marginal within the College, and he gets by more on his family name and spreading around his large living stipend than through actual talent. *Pargunna Kolvic*, a senior student in symphonic composition, seems to have been bitten with an odd Xaos bug and is pursuing something he calls 'discordant harmonization' and 'degenerate minors'; his advisors hope to straighten him out and get him graduated without calling in the heavy artillery.

### ***Adventure Hooks***

Adventures at the College of the Choir can involve many aspects of the place. Most obvious are the people at the school. Powerful mages, skilled instructors and experienced propagandists are all in residence here, and the PCs could need to seek aid or wisdom from any of them - or protect them from attack, or leverage connections with the Octave Council, or investigate claims of dissatisfaction against the Harmonium, or seek common cause against the authorities if the PCs are fugitives themselves. And of course, every prominent member of the College has a full roster of friends, rivals and enemies who the PCs will have to deal with as well, as best they can - intriguing at the College is never an easy thing.

The history, lore, art and magic within the halls of the College is also a thing of value in itself. Nobody is quite sure, after hundreds of years of accumulated use, exactly what's in place anymore - even a cataloguing system can't track all cases of things being lost or misplaced or damaged or stolen. PCs seeking a certain scrap of legend or long-lost spell may find themselves stymied by this - or aided, if their task requires such subtlety that the residents of the College itself never realize what the PCs seek.

Finally, the College's past and purpose may inspire adventures. The institution would be a primary target for anyone seeking to hurt the Harmonium or spread chaos on Ortho, inspiring attacks on anything from a small scale to a grandiose magical

conflagration. People that were once at the College or events that happened there may spark the interest of investigators or the curious. It's even possible that the great, departed Landrien himself still survives, through lichdom or some other method of binding the soul past death - an invaluable resource if kept secret, a terrible scandal if found out.

And the gods themselves may not operate with a unified purpose towards the College of the Choir - Baelae, Lord of Music sees it as a place without compare on Ortho, while Ina, Lord of Silence would quite possibly just as soon see it burn. Whether such a divine conflict will ever result in open action is uncertain, but even the most indirect clash could shake the College to its foundations.

### ***Enoril, The Orator***

Male, Human - NG - Age: 149 years  
Born Harmonium 50 - Last Seen: Harmonium 199

Enoril was born fifty years after the Harmonium was first established. He grew up in a small village on the edge of the Han, on the coast between the Flamedance mountains and the Elven Shaar to the west. His father was known to have a great amount of wealth and fortune shipping exotic spices and potions into the Greater Han. Officially, these shipments came from the near-by islands which today have several spice plantations on them that are about three-hundred years old, and spice growing is known to have gone back further. However, many scholars have found evidence and have speculated that Enoril's father actually dealt with the elves to the east. These evidences and speculations have been systematically erased to form a more unified vision of the history of the Harmonium.

What is undeniable is that at a young age Enoril had contact with many cultures, including the elven as he was known to be able to speak their dialects, and traveled widely with his father, through Han and even farther. As a boy he was known for his clear voice and his ability to help people talk through confrontations. At the age of sixteen Enoril sought out and was accepted into the prestigious wizard's collage in Han's regional capitol but only stayed only through the first semester. He then traveled through the world for five years, eventually meeting and becoming a student of Landrien of Voll, and was one of the first class of student's eventually enrolled in Landrien's collage, helping both as student and founder to the new collage having already learned from Landrien for a couple of years.

After being one of the five first official graduates of the collage, Enoril went on to help teach and guide first-year students. His final project, a ballad called 'The Founding Harmony' is still taught and sung today in many collages across Otho, the epic song dedicated to his late mentor Landrien. From there Enoril spent his time working at first as an aid to older teachers, and then gaining a professorship in his own right.

Finally, after eight years spent at being a student in and helping to found the Collage of the Choir, Enoril gave into his wanderlust to explore the world leaving to seek out other bards and counter the wrongful use bardic magic. Unlike many of his

counterparts in bard-hunting he recruited far more bards than he put down. He had an exceptional eye for talent, and a calm manor for quelling conflict that he at times was responsible for nearly a quarter of the enrollment in the collage.

Enoril returned to the collage on a regular basis to teach for a semester or two and then leave again for the next twenty years. At the end of these wandering years Enoril was slowly convinced to spend more and more time teaching, and less traveling. On his forty-fifth birthday he announced his acceptance of a full-time professorship at the collage, as well as a seat on the collage's director's board. Nine years later, he accepted the office of Dean of the Collage of the Choir; a seat he held for the next fifty-two years.

During the final forty years of his life, Enoril lectured and helping to tutor many students, but retired more and more into his own studies. Then one day before is one-hundred and fiftieth birthday Enoril disappeared from the campus, leaving all of his possessions behind.

He was known as a great force and teacher for Harmony, and even in his retirement had put forth great efforts to help others and keep the peace. Still his extremely long life, and rumors of research into history and rituals that were frowned upon officially by the Harmonium. Just as the first schism began this great force for Harmony and understanding disappeared from Ortho's soil.

### *Darks*

The Elves: Enoril visited the elven lands many times as a child with his father, and never lost touch with the elves. He did his best to argue against the war with the elves but at that time was almost a lone voice in a hurricane of others. Once the war started he took a personal oath of pacifism and refused to aid the armies by going to war with them, but did not forsake the cause of Harmony. As the final slaughter of the elves began he worked to help evacuate them to their hidden retreats saving thousands of lives.

He believed in Harmony but could never get over the destruction and abuse of the elves, and kept a meticulous secret record of the atrocities, one volume of which is still hidden in his secret study under his home near the campus of the Collage of the Chorus. He also took certain steps to make sure the Harmonium would never be able to forget the wrong they did. When he left the campus for the last time he left to meet the surviving elves now living in the realm of air in their hidden realms and retreats. There he began a ritual to transcend his mortal form.

Secret Libraries: Enoril not only kept records of the destruction of the elves. He also gathered tomes and information that was outlawed by the Harmonium and secreted them away to several secret libraries hidden throughout Ortho. The largest of these is deep underground accessed through a cave mouth opening near his birthplace, containing over ten thousand tomes of various sorts. Not all of the tomes are outlawed, and many of them are magical. A much smaller library is under his home mentioned before, near the campus of the Collage of the Choir, and is known of and used to this day by a small secret group of professors and trusted students. Each of the libraries are cloaked from scrying and most are also disguised to appear normal with no telltale dark spots on scrying and other divinations. Most of the libraries have a small cell of keepers working without knowledge of the location of the other libraries for the most part.

Bard: 10  
Virtuoso: 10  
Epic Virtuoso: 10

Str: 6(-2), Dex: 8[14](+2), Con: 7[11](+0), Int: 20(+5), Wis: 18(+4), Cha:  
33[41](+15)

Levels gained during each age category.  
Young(1-18), Middle(19-24), Old(25-27), Venerable(28+)

Feats: Persuasive\*, Trustworthy\*, Alluring\*, Lingering Song\*, Obscure Lore\*, Extra Music\*, Green Ear\*, Subsonics\*, Epic Spellcasting, Ranged Inspiration, Lasting Inspiration, Ranged Inspiration, Music of the Gods, Inspire Excellence, Epic Inspiration

#### Spells Known

0th: Detect Magic, Light, Mage Hand, Mending, Prestidigitation, Read Magic  
1st: Ambient Song\*, Expedious Retreat, Identify, Joyful Noise\*, Message  
2nd: Cure Moderate Wounds, Detect Thoughts, See Invisibility, Suggestion, Tongues  
3rd: Blunt Weapon\*, Clairaudience/Clairvoyance, Healthful Slumber\*, Hymn of Praise\*, Scrying  
4th: Break Enchantment, Cure Critical Wounds, Harmonic Chorus\*, Legend Lore, Listening Coin\*  
5th: Contact Other Plane, Dream, False Vision, Greater Dispelling, Improvisation\*  
6th: Geas, Greater Scrying, Mass Suggestion, Plane Shift

\*Song and Silence

#### **Voll**

**Proper Name: The Kingdom of Voll**

**Provincial Government: constitutional monarchy**

**Leaders:**

**Provincial Capital:**

**Major Cities & Towns:**

**Districts:**

**Resources:**

**Coinage:**

**Population: Total # - Human 85%, Orc 15%,**

**Languages:**

**Alignment (Populace): Lawful Good**

**Alignment (Law): Lawful Good**

**Faiths:**

Heka is a harsh, savage country that trades more with the western continent than the eastern, though it also trades with Voll across the sea.

Voll is a traditional medieval fantasy nation, the homeland of at least one of our heroes.

#### **The Empire of Thaera**

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*From "A Brief Summary of The Fraternity of Order's Guide to the History of Ortho"*

"The Confederacy of Pan Theara[1] is especially interesting from a sociological perspective. The region is surprisingly heavily populated by tieflings, due to the nature of the fall of the Thaeran Empire, and was, before the Harmonium, a center of piracy, which still has influences on the government of the region...

"The many spices that grow in the region, being very valuable, are prime targets for piracy; trade between Thaera proper and either Iathra or Motmurk also had to go through the region, further encouraging piracy. Kingdoms that serviced, or were run by pirates (known as the Pirate Kingdoms) were to be found throughout the region, and the successor states of the old Pirate Kingdoms are among the members of the Confederacy.

"The Confederacy actually dates back to well before the founding of the Harmonium, interestingly. The great Pirate King Renaldo Zee (a figure with a surprisingly positive reputation among Harmonium historians 2]) sought a pact to stabilize the region, intermittent warfare having been the state of affairs since the fall of the Thaeran Empire some six hundred years before, preventing both legitimate and illegitimate business from flourishing. The treaty that was eventually agreed to. While flawed in that it contained many concessions to the Pirate Kingdoms, it was a surprisingly stabilizing document, in that it kept piracy and other conflict on the waters of the Thearan Ocean to what were considered 'acceptable' levels.

"Among the provisions the treaty called for was a Court of the Seas, to arbitrate matters that might otherwise lead to war, and to agree to punishment for those Kingdoms that went outside the 'Code of the Seas'. Around this court evolved a system of agreements that eventually lead to the founding of a confederation for mutual protection.

"Note that during the High Age of the Confederacy, while piracy and open warfare between members of the Confederacy was not as common as it was in former times, Pan Theara remained a very dangerous place for an outsider, and piracy and limited warfare were frequent occurrences.

"When the Harmonium gained control of the region, they chose to maintain a suitably modified version of the Confederation as the regional government..."

[1] "Also known as the Empire of Pan Theara, both because it was a part of the Thearan Empire before said Empire's collapse, and because many of the languages of Ortho historically had no word for Confederation."

[2] "Yes, he was a killer and a thief, but he wanted to create an order that benefited everyone, and he created something of benefit to everybody that lasted (if in a different form) until today" is the reasoning behind the way most Harmonium historians view him. He's talked of as someone who was fundamentally misguided, but still closer to the right track than almost anybody else at that point in time.

Where Iathra in the North was the beachhead of a demon lord, Thaera in the south was little better in the eyes of the Harmonium. The Lords of Chaos, unwilling to see their worshippers or their lands slide into the Abyss were mounting their own unorganized defenses against the Flame - trying to shore up the weakening defenses



of the sphere. They provided, in ignorance of the fate soon to befall them, the anvil to the hammer of the Harmonium and helped to drive the influence of Alzrius out of Ortho.

However, in the eyes of the Knights of Harmony, they were Chaos worshippers all, and just as perverted and twisted as their mutual enemy had been. The Chaos worshippers, with their pirates and their enhanced troops, may have made a good defense against the Flame of the North. They may have been a lesser evil, but they were still an evil nonetheless and not to be tolerated.

In fact, the Harmonium claimed, in many an area the people willingly breed with those of chaotic blood in the pursuit of their perverted cult of worship. (Demons opposing Alzrius on the one hand, eladrin on the other. Slaadi don't exactly 'breed'.) That these made for troops able to withstand the assaults of Iathrian Fire Eaters, which held the forces of Alzrius at bay was something less advertised to the average Hardhead. Thaera hadn't defended itself from one conqueror just to be conquered by another and the Harmonium knew what had to be done.

The people of Thaera were assaulted shortly after the fall of the Iathrian Empire. They were brought into the beliefs of the Harmonium with a slow reluctance. The lands were claimed fairly quickly, becoming a military strongpoint, but it was the conversion of the isles that took the longest, in part because the blood of the people themselves was strongly tainted, and in part because of a steady resentment of their treatment at the hands of once allies. Tieflings in particular had a hard time of it, especially from any commanders the Hardheads had gathered from the survivors of Iathra. Many tieflings can still be found though in any of the four provinces that used to be the Thaeran Empire. The isles, home to the pirate kingdoms in particular often tieflings that have adaptations for underwater living: gills, fins, webbed hands and feet. The provinces were divided to encourage the peoples to contest amongst themselves instead of allying together, and even today the Harmonium holds reservations about the remotest populations in Thaera.

### **The Isles, Pan Thaera**

**Proper Name: The Confederacy of Pan Thaera**

**Provincial Government: republic**

**Leaders:**

**Provincial Capital: varies**

**Major Cities & Towns:**

**Districts:**

**Resources: spices, cedar, fruit, shellfish, pearls, mother of pearl, coral**

**Coinage:**

**Population: Total # - Human 80%, Orc 10%, Other 10%**

**Languages:**

**Alignment (Populace): Lawful Neutral**

**Alignment (Law): Lawful Neutral**

**Faiths:**

The isles are known to have the greatest free divers in the world - often plummeting to depths that would require magic for any other being to survive. It is of particular note that Thaeran divers will refuse to dive near the Fogs off the West side of their isle - not that that area isn't off limits anyways due to standing orders from the Harmonium citing strong tides and dangerously active steam vents.

## **North Thaera**

**Proper Name:**

**Provincial Government:**

**Leaders:**

**Provincial Capital:**

**Major Cities & Towns:**

**Districts:**

**Resources:**

**Coinage:**

**Population: Total # - Racial Makeup %'s**

**Languages:**

**Alignment (Populace): Lawful Neutral**

**Alignment (Law): Lawful Good**

**Faiths:**

## **Central Thaera**

**Proper Name:**

**Provincial Government:**

**Leaders:**

**Provincial Capital:**

**Major Cities & Towns:**

**Districts:**

**Resources:**

**Coinage:**

**Population: Total # - Racial Makeup %'s**

**Languages:**

**Alignment (Populace):**

**Alignment (Law):**

**Faiths:**

*The Fogs*

*// fill in here*

During the height of the the chaotic, carefree Empire of Pan Thaera, it became the custom of some powerful wizards to seek privacy and demonstrate their powers through the construction of a floating mage's tower. These edifices existed off the coast of the Thieran landmass, able to shift location at a whim and a blatant demonstration of the owner's wealth and arcane might. Though the original owners have mostly all been dead for centuries now, the Floating Towers remain, with a variety of new occupants and many possibilities for adventure.

### **Appearance and Design**

As structures largely built by magic, the Floating Towers have a very non-uniform appearance. Most are between forty and sixty feet high, and from twenty to forty feet across. Cylindrical towers are most common, but square-cornered towers are not unusual either, and even more unusual architectures can be found. Each tower has been built on a small, manmade island, which covers about half again the land area of the tower itself and extends only about twenty feet into the water. This landmass counterbalances the tower's own weight and provides a bit of beachfront for small boats and the like to tie up to.

### **A Typical Tower - Aur'Kenathai**

This tower is fairly typical of the Floating Towers - not too big, not too small, not too outrageously constructed. The wizard who owns the tower today is a native Thaeran who claims to be a descendant of the archmage who constructed the tower originally; his personal enemies like to grumble that his supposed lineage is just a lie to further his claim to Aur'Kenathai. The Harmonium keeps a wary eye on him regardless.

In addition to the tower's master, a small garrison of well-trained Harmonium troops resides in Aur'Kenathai - ostensibly to defend it against enemies and provide a quick-reaction force to the nearby coastal territories, but in reality as much to keep an eye on the wizard they serve and insure that his experiments don't blow up in anyone's face. Against a wizard prepared to betray the Octave Council, of course, they will likely be lucky to simply get the warning out before dying, of course, but they may prove useful in the event of simple carelessness. And in any event, the wizard seems like a cheerful and well-meaning sort, hardly the kind of person who'd stoop to common treachery. Right?

The following design notes draw upon information found in the Stronghold Builder's Guidebook:

\* **Ground Level:** The island below Aur'Kenathai is solid rock, formed ages ago from the layering of many Wall of Stone spells. Sparse grass cover has managed to take root here over the past several centuries, but it's by no means inviting. A basic dock has recently been cut out of the small cliff on the island's south side, in order to accommodate supply and troop ships from the mainland.

- *Components:* 1 basic dock, 4 foundation; 500 gp, 1 + 4 spaces. The ground level and foundation of a Floating Tower must have at least half as many spaces as the interior tower itself; these spaces need not be walled, but do count in the total for determining locomotion and mobility costs (see SBG, page 47).

\* **Walls and Structure:** Aur'Kenathai's exterior walls are hewn stone (originally constructed from Wall of Stone spells) and its interior walls are living wood. The latter disturbs the Harmonium more than a bit, but they haven't yet chosen to demand that it be replaced with normal wood.

- *Components:* 70% exterior hewn stone (7 spaces), 30% interior living wood (3 spaces). 6,000 gp.

\* **First Floor:** The lowest floor of Aur'Kenathai is mostly storage space - rows of shelves loaded with foodstuffs, spare uniforms and armor, and similar supplies. While they don't seriously expect to ever have to defend the tower against a mundane opponent, the Harmonium garrison of Aur'Kenathai have trained to set ambushes in here, striking from behind a shelf against unwary enemies and skirmishing through the narrow, mazelike confines. A spiralling stair in the back leads to the tower's upper levels.

- *Components:* 2 fancy storage; 2,000 gp, 2 spaces.

\* **Second Floor:** This area was originally more storage space, to insure that the wizard who built the tower could live as a recluse for months at a time without needing to worry about such piddling matters as restocking on food supplies. The Harmonium has since remodelled this floor into a barracks for its troop garrison here, reducing the time between supply runs to a matter of weeks.

- *Components:* 1.5 barracks, 1 basic bath; 1,000 gp, 1.5 + 0.5 spaces.

\* **Third Floor:** The general living space of the tower, this floor includes a pair of bedrooms originally intended for apprentices and currently home to the garrison's officers, as well as a sparse but functional kitchen.

- *Components:* 1 basic bedrooms, 1 basic kitchen; 2,700 gp, 1 + 1 spaces.

\* **Fourth Floor:** This area contains a library and laboratory workspace, used for magical research and study. Originally one of the key areas of the tower, it's since become less frequented, claimed mainly by the master of the tower and avoided by the garrison's troops except when necessary. Books here cover the topics of Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (dungeoneering) and Knowledge (the Planes).

- *Components:* 1 fancy library, 1 fancy magical laboratory; 9,000 gp, 1 + 1 spaces.

\* **Fifth Floor:** The undeniable domain of the tower's owner and master, this floor acts as a living space and private refuge from the cares of the world. The top of the staircase opens into a small study, which functions also as a control space for the tower's locomotion; a door from the study leads into a good-quality bedroom suite and bath space.

- *Components:* 1 basic study/office, 1 fancy bedroom suite, 1 basic bath; 5,600 gp, 0.5 + 1 + 0.5 spaces.

\* **Locomotion:** Aur'Kenathai floats along the coast at a top speed of about 1/2 mile per hour. This allows it to cover some 12 miles per day - slow compared to ships, but quite rapid when compared to mundane strongholds.  $(3,000 + 8,500) \times 15 = 172,500$  gp.

\* **Final Cost:** 225,200 gp.

## **South Thaera**

**Proper Name:**

**Provincial Government:**

**Leaders:**

**Provincial Capital:**

**Major Cities & Towns:**

**Districts:**

**Resources:**

**Coinage:**

**Population: Total # - Racial Makeup %'s**

**Languages:**

**Alignment (Populace): Lawful Neutral**

**Alignment (Law): Lawful Evil**

**Faiths:**

// Truly PISSY place to live in

## **Gelidahl, The Last Province**

**Proper Name: Gelidahl**

**Provincial Government: representative federal system**

**Provincial Capital:**

**Leaders:**

**Population: Total # - Racial Makeup %'s**

**Languages:**

**Alignments:**

**Faiths:**

In the farthest south of Ortho lies the polar continent and province of Gelidahl - "The Icy Land" in the native Ahltani. Amongst the harshest environments on the planet, it's a wonder that anyone would opt to live in such a life-threatening place. But humanoids are willing to live anywhere given the right motivation. For Gelidahl, three such groups have had that motivation- the 'aboriginal' natives, who traveled here millennia ago to escape the Chaos of Thaera; the capitalists, who came seeking riches in all their forms; and the Harmonium who came to instill order to the last place on Ortho. Gelidahl is a frontier province still coming into its own. It is a place where citizens of Ortho can challenge themselves while still enriching the whole. It is the last place on Ortho.

### **Life and Society**

There are two distinct groups in modern day Gelidahl, the 'natives' and the 'outsiders'. Both are the result of immigrations in past history. These two cultures exist side by side, co-mingling in the towns and cities of Gelidahl.

The natives of Gelidahl refer to themselves as the Ahltani, they are a hardy people long adapted to the harsh environment of this land. They traditionally live in small villages dotting the coastline of the continent, preferring to remain in those slightly milder areas. Their villages are usually built close together, sharing space and resources within their close-knit clans. For example, a new house may be built using one of the walls of the parents of the new residents, conserving resources and protecting the close family ties. It is not unusual for generations of houses to sprawl together as a single-family complex.

The Ahltani have a rich multilayered religious life. They have adapted to the Lords of Order and the Harmonium philosophy that their neighbors have brought to them, and can be found worshipping at the altars of the Lords of Order when they visit their neighboring provinces and cities. But on their own lands, they follow their own ways. They are one of the cultures on Ortho that are noted by the Harmonium for clinging to their 'superstitions'. They follow the teachings and sayings of the Lady, a philosopher of Law that shared her opinions with the tribal shamans of this land in the long forgotten past. The Harmonium has found few grounds to argue with the tenets of the Ahltani's native superstitions, and the Schools of Ethics have successfully argued that their beliefs seem to be a proto-form of the Harmonium's ideals. As a result the Harmonium is willing to turn a blind eye on the Ahltani's religion, hoping to see the beliefs mature into melding into the Harmonium's beliefs. In the villages furthest from the influence of the Harmonium and its outsiders, a second god is occasionally mentioned by the name of Kaji the Fox. Followers of this deity make a point of remaining close lipped about the cult though.

The 'outsiders' of Gelidahl have within recent decades become more and more a fixture. Many of the original outsiders in this province were only interested in quick profit, and wished to return home after succeeding or failing in their business on the southern continent. Of late though, many of these outsiders have been putting down roots. In some cases, they have found a home with the Ahltani and have built their own homes onto those who have lived in this land all their lives. In other cases, they have found something about this cold and harsh environment to love and have simply settled in. Some in the Harmonium feel obligated to stay, bringing peace and order to this rapidly expanding province.

Whatever the reason for staying, the 'outsiders' of Gelidahl come from extremely mixed stock as immigration to the continent has appeal throughout Ortho. Often newcomers to the continent will stand out because their habits reflect their homeland. In some of the warmer coast towns such as Yuno, the buildings are a hodgepodge mixture of styles, showing traces of Iirondian columns and height, to Ulfrheim's low turf homes. Eclectic is a phrase often applied to these towns that have sprung up with the influx of people, and decent urban planning has been at the top of the provincial government's needs for some time. After some time living here in these lands though, outsiders tend to adapt swiftly becoming acclimated to both the cold and the warm comradeship that comes from living in close quarters during the routinely harsh weather. The inhabitants of Gelidahl are not ones to stand on fancy protocol, preferring to get things done in a practical manner - and it is not uncommon for a village council meeting to convene immediately after voting to the town bar.

### **Provincial Government**

The provincial government is relatively new and represents a relatively small population. It is based on the federal model with the Legislative Council of Gelidahl, the Executive Triumvirate and the Provincial Courts. Three representatives are sent from each of the three cities, three from the interior towns and twelve from the indigenous Ahltani clans to the Provincial Council for a total of twenty-four representatives. Their primary concern is enacting the Laws of the Provinces, which is done by majority with ties broken by the Executive Triumvirate's Observer. The individual constituencies determine their term of office, which varies by entity.

The Executive Triumvirate consists of the Governor-General, the Proctor-General and the Solicitor-General. The Governor-General oversees the province's policing force, is the senior officer of the provincial Harmonium and holds a minimum rank of Mover One. The Proctor-General is the Head of the Gelidahl Church who is chosen for life by Church Convocation. The Solicitor-General oversees the prosecution of the violation of the province's laws and is elected from amongst the ranks of the Gelidahl Legal Association. The Solicitor-General is required to be an expert in law, and is a graduate of one of the Schools of Ethics of Ortho.

The Supreme Judge who is recommended by the Executive Triumvirate and confirmed by the Legislative Council directs the Provincial Courts. He, in addition to being the First Judge of Yuno, has complete control over the appointment of judges of the civic and circuit courts, although the Legislative Council can recall a judge with sixteen out of twenty-four votes to impeach. The Executive Triumvirate is the sole authority of appeal and requires unanimous agreement. Other positions of import such as the Minister of the Interior or the Minister of Revenue are chosen by the Executive Triumvirate and confirmed by the Legislative Council and can be impeached in a manner similar to judges.

Current issues before the Government include: The monopolies of extra-provincial companies within Gelidahl, primarily the whaling cartels of Axon and Nomo. The need to expand the economy beyond whaling and mining with possibilities being weapons research, expansion of trapping and hunting fur-bearing fauna and environmental tourism. The need for overall urban planning as the cities and towns of Gelidahl increase in size. Recently, a bill was introduced in the Legislative Council to prohibit the production and consumption of alcohol so as to increase productivity and reduce violence in the whaling ports and interior towns.

## **Geography**

Gelidahl can be divided into two primary areas. The first is that small portion that encircles Ortho's southern pole. It is defined by a freezing climate year round and is covered by glacial ice making it uninhabitable by almost all forms of life. The second area is the Ahlo ("The Life Land") peninsula which thrusts north between the Sea of Ahltash ("The Landless Place") and the Sea of Dho.

### *The Frozen South*

Straight south of the most inhabited area of this province visitors will swiftly find themselves subject to intense cold and harsh weather. The land near the South Pole is cold to the point where metal becomes brittle, and the air is enough to burn the lungs. Special equipment or spells are a requirement in this area. Frostbite and hypothermia are the obvious risks in this environment. Starvation is a risk if a traveller loses his rations, as is dehydration if he has no source of heat or picks to chip ice to melt, as the cold environment will dehydrate a traveller faster than they would expect. Metal will freeze to hands, so gloves are a required piece of equipment. Intense cold can damage even metal equipment, especially things with intricate gears as the metal contracts.

The greatest risk in this section of the province is the Pirhsu; a freezing wind of such intensity that unprotected humans may find themselves frozen solid within seconds. The Pirhsu is legendary in Ahltani myth, said to be the breath of a fierce ice demon trapped between layers of ice at the pole. The Pirhsu is usually preceded by a swirl of snow in the distance lifting high in the air, and a sound like the distant cracking of a whip as objects currently within the Pirhsu freeze, and in some cases implode or explode loudly depending on their reaction to the sudden freeze. Some Harmonium witnesses have compared the oncoming wall and fierce wind to a freezing cold sandstorm. Like a sandstorm the best protection is to hide low and near the closest source of heat one can find.

### *The Ahlo*

The Ahlo is split into two zones, the lowlands of the east and north and the mountainous south and west. The lowlands are the home to most of the province's population, being a mix of tundra coast and semi-forested inland hills. The eastern and northern shoreline is warm for its latitude due to the warm ocean currents that flow through the Sea of Dho. This warmth allows for some agriculture including Ahltani potatoes, thick-rind guayar fruit and polar oats, although the majority of foodstuffs must be imported from Iironda and Thaera.

The western coast is arctic cold and is iced in year round for two thirds of its length. The south's most prominent feature is Mt. Icespire (Ahlina to the Ahltani), rising some 14,000 feet into the southern sky. The mountains surrounding it have been cut into rugged tors and glacier filled valleys and would be completely ignored by man if not for the gold deposits found here over a century ago. Beyond these mountains stretch the glacial plain of the interior of the continent.

## **Important Sites**

### *Yuno*

Yuno is a small town with only eight thousand residents, which is only now getting used to being viewed as a 'city'. It has a good harbor, which is very rarely iced in,

deep enough to accomodate very large sailing and fishing vessels. Yuno is usually the first port newcomers to the province will see. This city is an informal blend of buildings designed by Harmonium architects and native Ahltani architecture, but it was built in a orderly fashion, with streets radiating from the docks to allow quick movement of supplies into the city and roads beyond. Since it is relatively newly built, it has not had to deal with the impact of the rising water levels as many older ports have had to do. The city retains it's 'small town' personality, and is noticeably peaceful and casual. City residents are a welcoming bunch, and are free with advice for those travelling south from the city, often dispensing the advice as freely as they dispense rounds at the bar.

#### *Axon*

Axon is a full-fledged city, with an all business personality. It is built into a natural rocky harbor, and is the oldest city on the continent - which isn't really saying much in the long term. It is built on the western coast of the Ahlo, and is at best cold, at worse icy throughout most of the year. This city is the southeastern whaling station for the Valdi Corporation fleet of South Thaera, and shows it. The buildings are built mostly for the benefit of the fleet's needs with residential living considered a side effect of buildup of the city despite the eleven thousand odd that live here. This city is mostly shades of grey, from the stone used to build it, the weathering of wooden buildings, and the stone and dirty snow of the city. To the north of the harbor lies the main processing for whale carcasses the fleet brings in. And to the south lies the shipyards for repair of the fleet stationed here. A mayor, who is nominally elected by the populace, but is more often simply on the payroll of the Valdi Corporation, controls the city.

#### *Nomo*

Nomo is the second largest city in Gelidahl, and prizes itself as the only truly civilized one on the continent. It is certainly the most populated with a current population of fourteen thousand. It was founded by the Sapphire Seas Trading Cartel of Han, and is still considered amongst that merchant houses's capital. The Han influence on the city shows mostly in the effort made by the civil designers of the city to encourage living in the Han fashion. The central core of the city is built with tall spires and paved streets, neither of which are well suited to the environment, but the city builders wished to retain the elegance of Iironda in their new city. Outside the central core of the city, more native architecture can be found, as the city grew faster than its original founders could account for.

#### *Sysillia*

Sysillia is typical of the few towns of the interior, sprouting up along one of the routes to the gold fields in the south and where three Ahltani clanlands meet. The buildings here sprawl in a loosely spiralling pattern around the central road, and reflect at least three generations of Ahltani living in this location as house has been built aside house.

#### *The Love Camps*

The southern portion of the Ahlo peninsula is a bleak land incapable of sustaining all but the hardest life, but that has not kept folk from trying to find riches here. When gold was found to the north of this region and then slowly gobbled up by mining conglomerates, a few hardy folk set forth into the this harsh land in search of more gold veins, usually dying in the attempt. However, one small group of dwarves from the far reaches of northern Xaric were successful in finding not gold, but mithril deep in a crevice below an ice shelf on the slopes of Mt. Icespire. Successful in finding this



vein, they were unfortunately unsuccessful in returning to the civilized north of Gelidahl, having been slain by pack of Polar Shimmercats (a.k.a. Albino Displacer Beasts). Their corpses were found by a Harmonium patrol who found a map back to the mithril find and upon speaking with the spirits of the dead dwarves, the secret of the mithril vein was the property of the Harmonium.

With that secret arose The Love Camps, underground gulags that would mine the large mithril and adamantite veins that lie below Mt. Icespire, the result, it is theorized, of a meteor that crashed to Ortho eons ago when Ortho's second moon exploded. The primary goal of the camps is to rehabilitate the prisoners so that they might reenter society and be a productive member of it. Of course, the mithril and adamantine that is mined and refined here is a great resource for the Harmonium. Since the time of its initial founding, the Love Camps have grown to three distinct compounds following three distinct veins. They are Pure Love Camp, Tough Love Camp and Harsh Love Camp.

The Pure Love Camp is generally the first camp that prisoners new to the continent will find themselves in. It is most concerned with rehabilitation; encouraging residents to repent for their actions and learn a trade skill with which they may then re-enter society. In this camp may be found the casual criminal, or non-violent offender. The guards tend to be the least corrupt here, and there is a strong clerical interest from the temple of Didaridin in this camp.

The Tough Love Camp is where troublemakers from the Pure Love Camp will be sent. It is also the place where repeat offenders or those whose actions hurt many people will be sent. Redemption is as equal a theme here, as is repayment for crimes.

The Harsh Love Camp is where the irredemable go. Troublemakers from the Tough Love Camp, serial killers, the depraved and truly sick will find themselves at the Harsh Love Camp. There is no concern for redemption in this camp, and there is no return from it. The guards here are here only to ensure that work and repayment continues, and to receive the food shipments that arrive every six months. They have no interest in forcing residents to stay, since the environment alone will do that as the Harsh Love Camp is the southernmost of all the camps. They are predominantly uncaring souls. The only clerical influence in this camp is that of the church of Saeducial.

### *The Watching Stone*

A single lone symbol of the power of the Ahltani's philosophical Lady remains, kept in close secret by those handful that remain loyal to her entirely. The Watching Stone is a standing stone on the northernmost point of the continent, with a hole bored through it by time and wind. It stands on the peak of the southernmost continent overlooking the waters of the Sea of Dho. The stone itself is relatively unimportant. But placing a single green leaf and acorn within the hole and it flares to life, becoming a portal to the Lady's last sanctuary in Arcadia. This temple teaches the truth of the original Harmonium way, uncorrupted by time and greed: That it comes from the simple desire to see peace and coexistence of all. Knowledge of this stone, and its portal is protected by the innermost circle of the northern Druids, who have been worried for some time that the Harmonium may detect the portal and lock it against use.

## **History**

The first people to come to inhabit Gelidahl were tribal refugees fleeing the expanding evils of their homeland, migrants following their shamans away from the islands of South Thaera across the cold waters of the southern seas to a land free of corruption. Collectively calling themselves the Ahltani ("People of the Land") they quickly adapted to their new home and its extreme climate, taking up fishing and whaling in the surrounding seas and rivers of the Ahlo peninsula and acclimating their belief and social systems as appropriate to their new milieu. The different clans spread out and claimed various lands for their own, coming into conflict with each other every decade or so as a particularly harsh winter brought competition for the same food sources.

This was the way of life until about 300 years ago when an elven shaman from the northlands appeared on the land's shores and began preaching harmonious cooperation amongst the clans when times were hard and bringing forth a more peaceful way to resolve disputes. Her philosophies and saying quickly became a part of their way of life, as all the clans found themselves better off for it. When the elven lady disappeared as mysteriously as she arrived, the clans encountered no one from the outlands until the whaling cartels arrived over a century later. Today, the Ahltani number in the range of 60,000.

The second group to arrive in Gelidahl were outlanders, first those that hunted the whales of the southern seas and needed outposts for their fleets and later on miners. The first such settlement founded was Axon which became the southeastern whaling station for the Valdi Corporation fleet of South Thaera. The Sapphire Seas Trading Cartel of Han who sponsored the hunting of the sperm whales of the Sea of Dho founded the other settlement, Nomo, several decades later. With the discovery of gold a century or so ago in the south, both Axon and Nomo grew from company towns to small gateway cities to the interior, although today the primary industry of the two remains the rendering of whale carcasses for their oil, ivory and meat (considered a delicacy in Iironda) and their storage.

The final group in Gelidahl is the Harmonium, who arrived in significant numbers to insure order shortly after the miners came in search of gold in the south. Although the Harmonium had a minor naval base on the northern tip of Gelidahl at Yuno, assignment there was considered to be a punishment posting and exploration of the interior had been limited. But when gold deposits of significant size were found and mining companies began coalescing the various strikes into fewer and fewer individual claims, the Harmonium increased their presence to insure fairness of business practices and insure that violence did not become a bargaining tactic. A Governor-General was installed at Yuno and the town became the home of the colony's courts, being considered a good neutral ground by the diverse groups that made up the population of Gelidahl. Subsequently, minor courts were established in Axon and Nomo and a circuit court was established for the towns of the interior. When the colony was elevated to provincial status, Yuno became the capital.

## **Plots and Rumors**

### *Weather Related Deaths*

Ongoing reports from the Harsh Love Camp indicate that the requery and intensity of Pirhsu storms has taken a sharp upturn in recent years. More and more prisoners have been found frozen on the edges of the camp, or worse, simply not found at all. The Harmonium is getting nervous regarding this as a danger such as this threatens

a third of their operations on the continent. The persistent rumor that it may be a set of guards using the Pirhsu as a cover only makes them more nervous.

#### *Axon Unrest*

Social unrest in Axon grows as the local population of tiefling Thaeran's increases. The corporation's 'us first' mentality in the city has begun to rub the sensibilities of the locals raw, and the current mayoral elections are being publicly called to a recount.

#### *Social Morality Police*

Yuno has recently seen a number of extreme actions taken at its local bars by one of the middle ranking members of the Harmonium in that city. Sir Krinneth'il has been organizing like-minded individuals to crack down on the rampant misbehavior and violence associated with alcohol in the city. Unfortunately, his actions may also be steadily driving the alcohol underground. Though not technically illegal yet, if the current bill passes this may pose a long-term problem.

### **The Colonies**

The Eight Jewels of Harmony: The eight mainstay colonies of the Harmonium.

**Proper Name:**

**Rulers:**

**Government:**

**Provincial Capital:**

**Major Cities & Towns:**

**Districts:**

**Resources:**

**Coinage:**

**Population: Total # - Racial Makeup %'s**

**Languages:**

**Alignment (Populace):**

**Alignment (Law):**

**Faiths:**

Eallia is a ocean covered water world ruled by two nations ruled by the aboleth and one of sahuagin. The colony provides a large supply of algae and fish food stocks. Both nations have a large population of sea-elves that tend most of the fish stocks, kelp beds and undersea mines. Before the Harmonium came the elves were entirely subjugated as slaves but now they are free by the same proclamation that brought the world officially into the Harmonium. Still it seems that the former slaves have not all adapted well to their new found freedom and Harmonium peacekeepers have been brought in to help settle the unrest.

The Eight Jewels of Harmony: The eight mainstay colonies of the Harmonium.

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**Rulers:**

**Government:**

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**Resources:**

**Coinage:**

**Population: Total # - Racial Makeup %'s**

**Languages:**

**Alignment (Populace):**

**Alignment (Law):**

**Faiths:**

Intagril the oldest of the eight provides the Harmonium with many formidable spell casters and a great deal of magical equipment. Before the first official expedition from Ortho came to Intagril the world was already coming to accept the principals of the Harmonium. Less than a century before the world had been at the edge of complete warfare after over four hundred years of bad-blood. Then the two nations that controlled the sphere united under the banner of Harmony, brought to them by the appearance of one of Ortho's greatest orators and bards, Enoril. This was several years after he had disappeared from the sphere of Ortho, and it was a relief when the expedition confirmed his identity as the savior of this primeworld. The world of Integral was established as a colony nearly fifty years before the Harmonium entered into the War of Iron. During the war Integral put its massive magical and weapon stockpiles, originally intended to be used against one another to a higher purpose using them against the hoards of demons that filled the Abyss. Furthermore, the world gave over five-hundred-million soldiers to the great armies of Harmony in the attempt to take the Abyss.

### ***The First Jewel, Intagril***

The world was already in revolution when members of the Harmonium found their way to the sphere with two great nations feuding over control of the sphere, the nation of Sea and the nation of Sky. Both Sea and Sky had powerful clerics and wizards with spells and artifacts able to wreak terrible destruction upon the world. All out war seemed inevitable, with new skirmishes flaring up every day across the borders of the great nations.

Sea and Sky were both possessed wise rulers and a great palace was built between them to negotiate. It had staved off war for a hundred years but year by year the agreements and compromises have been fewer and each harder made than the last. Negotiations regularly broke down and fears were growing across the world that the end of their world was coming through a horrific world war that would destroy all in its path.

Then a lone disciple of the Harmonium, who refused to give his name or ever show his face began to appear on the borders of these two nations, calming all the conflicts that he met as he traversed the plane, making his way to the great palace. Even as word of his story and words spread through both the nations things degenerated and when the figure stepped first into the Palace of Negotiation the walls of the palace had already been cracked from the first salvos of what was to be all out war, and the ambassadors were all starting to flee.

He stood in the palace hall and spoke in a voice as loud as thunder but as smooth as the flow of water in a calm stream. The armies stopped their advance on one another instantly, soldiers with blades drawn ready to strike. And the ambassadors were drawn back to the hall.

For a week the figure calmly spoke of Harmony, his words traveling on all the winds from the palace to reach almost every ear of that world. He gave no orders. He took no side. He spoke not of either nation, but his words were applicable to all. Then after the eighth day just as the sun dropped below the horizon the figure fell silent, having brought his speech to a finish.

A young girl and a young boy, who were attendants of the hall working to serve the ambassadors the girl from sky and the boy from sea approached the figure, offering him food and water. He ate, drank and then walked from that place and disappeared, never seen again on the plane. At dawn on the next day, the two rulers of the nations stepped into the hall just as the ambassadors awoke. Only the two children had witnessed the figure leaving. By sunset of that very day, the unification of that world had been agreed upon.

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#### Darks of Intagril

The integrator did not leave as the legend says. Instead, after his meeting at the palace he met with the high ranks, the leaders, and to the secret places of the world. The nations of Sea and Sky had been at a cold smoldering war for nearly four hundred years and had been in open warfare for hundreds of years before that time with each other and with smaller nations that where eventually crushed or absorbed into the two larger. Though the war had not been waged on any battlefield it had been waged, and its combatants had honed their skills over the centuries. Secrets, espionage, and all the other unseen arts of war had been developed along side the more well known of the warrior arts.

Intagril came into the Harmonium with its upper echelons knowing fully what they were going into and much of the history of Ortho that the Harmonium keeps out of the history books. Furthermore, the secret projects and bases hidden in the dark corners of the world and in Intagril's star system have largely been kept from the Council of Ortho and the Octaves as well as the rest of the Harmonium. This was accomplished simply because the world of Intagril had already united and formed a world government in line with the Harmonium before they joined. Thus there was no need to reorganize and the colony never gave the Harmonium leadership the excuse it needed to take full control of their government.

Outwardly, the colonial government of Intagril follows ever rule, every order handed down to it working in perfect time with the greater Harmony. Still the colony has always gathered an amount of suspicion because of the known activities of Enoril while he was still on Ortho. The high-ups in the Ortho chain of command would have liked to push Enoril's memory to a far page deeply hidden in the book of History for his support of the elves and his protest against the expansionist policies in the Harmonium's leadership. Still after the support that Intagril gave to the War of Iron with millions of lives sacrificed for the greater glory of Harmony.

During the War of Iron great spells from Intagril's magic wielders swept over the battlefields tearing millions of tan'ar'i apart in controlled hurricanes of iron shards that covered entire layers of the Abyss. Great war machines went to work against the demon hoards and saved many millions of Harmonium lives. Yet the greatest spells and laboratories from whence they came have been kept secret from the Harmonium. Furthermore, while Intagril was the first people to introduce spell-jamming to the Harmonium rumors persist that the world has an entire fleet operating outside the control of the larger Harmony.

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Harmonium. Furthermore, while Intagril was the first people to introduce spell-jamming to the Harmonium rumors persist that the world has an entire fleet operating outside the control of the larger Harmony.

I'm not sure about this part of Gerzel's otherwise excellent Intagril article, since millions of Harmonium didn't return from the War of Iron - if there had been millions remaining, the war would have continued. They were *very* stubborn, those Hardheads, and the Abyssal Lords rewarded them accordingly. You don't invade the realm of the goddess Kali, as the *Factol's Manifesto* said they did, and get to make an ordered, strategic retreat. You get *destroyed*.

I think I would revise the text to say something like, "Great war machines went to work against the demon hordes, helping the Harmonium to accomplish the few victories they did early on in the war: the taking of Broken Reach and the hard-won defeat of an army of liches in Thanatos."

Frankly, the War of Iron was an utter, unmitigated disaster, and while Intagril might well be honored for the substantial help it gave and celebrated for what victories it provided, they couldn't ultimately help a substantial number of Hardheads return alive.

The few remaining remnants found a portal to Sigil, which is the only reason any of them returned. Presumably there couldn't have been *too* big an army squeezing through a portal in the Cage. In fact, I had been assuming only two made it (Corwin of Anchor and her companion, who was scragged probably by one of the Doomguard).

We could argue, of course, that millions of lives saved in any one conflict meant millions of lives not sent in as reinforcements, and the Intagrilians saved millions in *that* sense. Presumably, the Harmonium kept dumping in troops until someone convinced them just how hopeless the campaign was. In that case, perhaps we could say it this way:

"Great war machines went to work against the demon hoards [sic] and saved many millions of Harmonium lives at the battles of Broken Reach and Mithrengo."

...although I don't think that's as impressive-sounding as my previous revision.

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**Coinage:**

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**Languages:**

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Anoc is the largest of the eight jewels even with only half of its prime sphere actually occupied by the Harmonium. It is a huge world of plains and sky, with relatively few mountains. Only Anoc's Northern hemisphere is inhabited as the equator is far too hot for any permanent settlement. The southern portion of the sphere is largely unexplored due to veins of ore that seem to block divination and travel to the South is exceptionally hazardous. The colony exports a large portion of the grains consumed throughout the Harmonium.

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Meter is the most politically outspoken of the eight jewels, at the fore for the push to become a province and demanding rights for its citizens. While this does cause tension the colony spans the entire prime sphere and has provided some of the best generals, officers and elite forces that the Harmonium has ever seen. It also is rich in both agriculture and mining resources. <<This world needs more work. What direction should it be taken in?>>

### ***Meter***

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### ***History.***

Fifteen hundred years ago, Meter was the home of a magically and culturally advanced empire from which the world takes its modern name. The Old Empire of Meter, or *the Meter* as it was known at the time, believed that division was the key to effective conquest, and that maintaining an ordered division was the key to retaining its holdings. This it did with great efficiency, and for eight hundred years the Meter ruled the world, extending even to other worlds in the same system, masterfully manipulating its composite states against one another in accordance with an ancient philosophical work, the *Book of Measurements*.

Seven hundred years ago, a religious movement formed among the common folk, worshipping the first dynasty of the Meter as gods. The authorities at first encouraged this practice, believing it strengthened obedience to the state. As it turned out, the movement - which became known as the Unity - did just the opposite.

The Unity started out harmless enough, deriving a host of gods of law, agriculture, music, and other important spheres of influence from the first dozen emperors of the Meter. The authorities were a bit bemused at their enthusiasm - certainly the emperors had been deified and everyone was *supposed* to worship them, but in practice the cult had been up to that point perfunctory at best. They didn't even notice when what began as a new group of useful divinities started to develop a *philosophy*. Whether this creed originated among the mortal priests or among the deified emperors themselves - grown proud with the sudden influx of truly devout worship - is not clear, but its results are. With the advent of the Unity, suddenly people of all species and ethnic groups had something in common, a single group of gods - for the Meter touched all groups, where their native faiths had not - that all

peoples could relate to. And the new philosophy of Unity made the most of this, encouraging people who would otherwise not even speak together to worship together, to bind together their hopes and dreams in this universe and the next.

The result, for the government of the Meter, was disastrous. Nothing in the *Book of Measurements* had prepared them for this eventuality; a universal religion had been inconceivable to its writers. Gods fought one another over followers and encouraged their followers to do the same: that was the nature of gods. It was what they *were*. For eight hundred years, the empire had taken advantage of that fact. And now, in an extraordinary example of cosmic irony, the nature of the empire itself had created a series of gods who were strong enough to defeat them all.

Within the rapidly growing Unity, the conflict and strife that the Meter had built itself on turned to unity and harmony. The Meter tried persecuting the church, tried martyring its members and feeding them to the dragon-cats, but the Unity only grew stronger. Eventually one emperor tried mainstreaming the church by declaring it official, but this only accelerated the empire's decline.

The power of the priests of Unity eclipsed that of the Emperor himself, and that sealed its doom. The Meter finally died not from invasion or bloody revolution; it simply became unnecessary as the Unity slowly took over all its functions. When the last Emperor packed up his things and retired to a quiet life of fishing, scarcely anyone noticed.

But without conflict, there was also little reason for civilization to advance, or indeed for civilization. Although the deified emperors mostly presided over practical concerns, the emphasis of the Unity was in the spiritual, not the temporal, and this trend became exaggerated as the temporal rulers vanished.

Spelljamming technology was the first to be lost. With little demand for magical armaments in the new, peaceful sphere of Meter, the mercenaries sought more profitable worlds. As their remaining helms got lost, they became harder and harder to replace, and soon the worlds lost contact with one another.

Next to go was arcane magic. With combat mages no longer needed, the great schools of arcane learning were disbanded, and wizardry was left to individual tutors to continue on their own. The books of spells became lost or scattered, and much of the learning of old was forgotten.

Finally even divine magic became simplified. With no major competitors, the deified emperors grew complacent and thought it no longer necessary to spend their powers improving their clerics. They continued to grant enough spells to keep the common folk happy, but the days of flashy miracles were over.

Within a few centuries, Meter had declined from a dramatic world of powerful spells and constant action to a sleepy agrarian place where nothing much seemed to happen. Apart from the increasingly distant Church of Unity, all interactions were at a purely local level.

Then the wars started.

It is thought that it was a local landowner or a rogue bishop who first came across an old copy of the *Book of Measurements*. Because the tongue in which it had been

written was long forgotten, the translation was spotty, but the basic lesson of personal power through strife was learned. In a decade the entire continent was engulfed in battles, and the Church of Unity, despite numerous excommunications and edicts, was no longer powerful enough to stop it.

The wars efficiently destroyed what bits of the Meter's civilization which still remained. Eventually even the Church was broken as a schism emerged between what was called the Traditional Church and what became known as the Purified Church, which sought to do away with centuries of ornate ritual and clerical privilege to concentrate on the core principles of unity of all peoples. The Traditional Church sought to destroy the Purified Church with all the resources still at its disposal, while the Purified Church sought to do the same.

Only a few centuries ago, a new player emerged. A woman named Rose Talbot appeared in a small island nation-state, offering technical and magical knowledge to a faction dedicated to the Purified Church there like nothing that the declined peoples of Meter had conceived of. The government of that island quickly changed, and grew to dominate several continents, shattering the structure of the Traditional Church, driving its clerics underground or forcing them to change faiths. Talbot revealed herself to be part of a planewalking organization she called the Harmonium that she said had a philosophy similar to that of the original Church of Unity; she said the Harmonium would help the world regain its lost glory. The grateful Purified Church agreed to an alliance. Within a few more decades, the Harmonium considered Meter to be essentially pacified and welcomed it as Ortho's "little sister," soon to be considered one of the Eight Jewels of Harmony.

More recently, however, the relationship between Ortho and Meter has changed. Meterites have begun complaining that Ortho has gained much from Meter's agricultural and mineral resources, from its generals and troops, but since its technical aid in the original Unification Ortho has given back little. Some have been muttering that when the Harmonium offered to teach the people of Meter, what it really wanted was to steal the secrets of the Old Empire, which it has done while restricting natives from learning much of it themselves.

The sliding of Nemausus was especially bitter for Meter, as it was Meter's elite troops that helped bring order to the colony in the wake of the upheaval. The people of Meter believe they should be rewarded for this with a status equal to that of Ortho's own provinces. They are sick of being a mere colony and demand to be treated as equals with the same representation in Ortho's Council and access to Meter's wealth and ancient knowledge as citizens of Ortho get. Thus far, their demands have gone unanswered.

#### *Population.*

Meter has four major races: humans, the elephantine [loxoth](#), the hippopotamus-like [giff](#), and the rhinoceros-like rheks. Humans are the dominant race, with the semi-nomadic loxoth a fairly close second in the forests, mountains, deserts, and other uncultivated parts of the world. The loxoth fit into the ecology of Measure much as elves, centaurs, and halflings do in other worlds.

The giff, the least common, live mainly in urban areas, serving in the world's armies and navies. They are believed to be not native, having been brought to Meter in the last days of the Old Empire before the Church of Unity's triumph in an attempt to slow the church's ascent. The giff today are as faithful church-goers as any, though

their worship isn't devout.

Most distinctive are the rheks, who until the Harmonium brought them elsewhere were known in no other sphere. These powerful monastic creatures were the chief enforcers of order in the Old Empire, solidly squelching dissent within a given district to insure that citizens disagreed with one another in carefully measured ways. During the civil wars of a few centuries ago they appeared on both sides of the conflict, serving both feuding churches with discipline and honor. After the sliding of Nemausus they were the primary difference between anarchy and the tenuous peace that was eventually established there, and the Harmonium has found them invaluable in a variety of theaters.

### *The Sphere.*

The crystal sphere of Meter has within it six inhabitable worlds.

The primary, called the Furnace, is an enormous fire world, a red giant. It has no known inhabitants other than the odd elemental visiting from the Plane of Fire.

Orbiting the Furnace are three smaller stars, known as the Three Candles. They are each alike, pale and yellow-white, barely visible in the Furnace's scarlet glare but helping to widen the spectrum of light available on the six inhabited worlds. Even fire elementals generally disdain the Candles.

The six inhabited worlds are, from innermost to outermost, Rhyme, Reason, Meter, Pyrrhus, Iamb, and Trochee. Each of these worlds was once part of the Old Empire of Meter. Rhyme is a jungle world inhabited by halfling-sized catlike creatures, Reason is another jungle world with a unique race of its own, Pyrrhus is a fire world, Iamb is a fire world with a water world orbiting it, and Trochee is a water world with a fire world orbiting it. Iamb and Trochee have populations similar to that of Meter, having been originally colonized by that world in the time of the Old Empire. Despite their distance from the Furnace, Iamb and Trochee are temperate thanks to the proximity of Pyrrhus.

The only one of these worlds the Harmonium has not made substantial progress with thus far is Reason, which is dominated by a slender race of giant-sized immortal carnivores; not vampires, but a living species which regenerates itself instead of reproducing. Being absolutely still and constant and desiring a multiverse which is much the same, they are parlaying with Harmonium representatives, trying to work out a mutually compatible philosophy. Things are going well, but the natives are so slow in their routines that it may be a century or so before the first preliminary treaty is drafted, and the Harmonium may never convince any of them to accompany the faction off-world.

A number of other worlds exist on the distant edges of the system, but these are small and cold, with no inhabitants of note.

(Official versions of the loxoth can be found in the *Monster Manual II*, rheks in the *Book of Exalted Deeds*, and giff in Dragon #339)

### *Secrets of Meter:*

Much of the ancient magic of the Old Empire was necromantic or depended on vast quantities of human sacrifices, which is why the Harmonium won't allow the native Meterians access to it.

There are also rumors that the magi of the Old Empire had an extremely efficient way to travel between parallel worlds, and the Harmonium wish to discover this magic and exploit it.

Some Anarchists are looking for a copy of the *Book of Measurements*. The Harmonium is looking to stop them at all costs.

They may, on the other hand, end up trying to get it from a lich who was formally the last matriarch of the Traditional Church. The lich has been using the book to ferment jealousy and distrust between Meter and Ortho.

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**Alignment (Law):**

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Lucidia is a small colony built on the moon orbiting a fiery volcanic prime sphere. It is the base for a great many spell-jamming ships and is a large port of call helping to protect four major trade routes. Due to the small fleet of and Ortho's appropriation of the ships to protect its sphere there is only a small fleet of jammers to protect Lucidia and its space. Still the moon is able to field a potent defense through joint operations of the Harmonium's fleet stationed there and the larger fleet of merchant ships that keep the port as their home. <<Rip's redmoss lichen would probably work well for this world.>>

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Fjorge is a world inhabited by a race of small industrious insectile creatures, called the K'jinte. The first explorers from the Harmonium were quickly drawn into negotiating between two hives. Now the Harmonium has brought peace to the world by acting as mediators between the hive-clans. The K'jinte are a strong industrious race that have taken a natural ease to adapting to the Harmonium way of life individually. The only problems come from competition between hives as their warriors pheromones will cause them to attack warriors of another hive automatically. Thus while K'jinte armies are highly efficient the generals of the Harmonium must be careful not to mix warriors from different hives. <<I've been thinking of changing the race controlling this world to one related to the Thrycryn of Athas. Though I don't know much about that race and don't have any of the suppliments from Darksun.>>

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Several planar researchers who have studied insect races have noted that the K'jinte and the Thri-Kreen of Athas have similar biology. The K'jinte however are not adapted to the harsh desert environs that are present on Athas and it is speculated that they might be similar to the Kreen's ancestors before Athas had succumb to desertification.

The K'jinte have five stages of development: egg, larva, pupa, adult, and enriched adult. The K'jinte eggs are laid deep in their hives in a Queen's nest and are then taken by caretaker adults to various egg-chambers in other parts of the nests. The eggs themselves are oddly underguarded from an outsider's perspective and the K'jinte are even willing to sell them or eat them in times of famine. It is almost as if they do not recognize the eggs as their own young at that stage. The closer an egg gets to actually hatching however the more well guarded it becomes if it is healthy. Eggs deemed unhealthy or unsuitable are removed and used for food even if they have living larva inside them.

If an egg grows well enough to be allowed to hatch it is brought to the hatchery deep in the most heavily guarded part of the hive. When a larva hatches it is immediately given the hive-scent and pheromones shared by that hive-clan. It is a mark that the young k'jinte will carry for the rest of their days and can never be changed, even it appears with strong magic. Larva are then moved to the near by larva chambers that surround the hatchery to be fed, and grow. Larva are all separated into different chambers according to what kind of adult they are to metamorphose into during their pupal stage. At the end of the larval stage and throughout the pupal stage the larva are specially fed and given pheromones supplemented with secret k'jinte magical spells and incantations, to change their adult forms.

The pupa are kept for the first four months or so in adjoining chambers to where they were raised as larva. Once that time is over the pupa either are hatched immediately or they are kept in large chambers stacked one on top of the other warehoused until they are needed. It takes about three months to change from larva to pupa and another four or more to develop as a pupa to be ready to hatch as an adult.

The adult stage of the K'jinte is for most the final stage in their development. They have taken on the full adult form that has been shaped to suit the purpose they are needed for in the hive. However, there is another stage that is sometimes initiated after adulthood through a process called the enrichment. It is nothing less than a second pupal stage and a new improved adult form and few k'jinte will ever attain it.

The K'jinte hives are built largely according to the materials and landscapes around them. They are very conscious of the aesthetics of their homes even to the point of sometimes choosing looks over safety. Perhaps this is because they are the only sentient race on their world as well as the dominant predator. It often comes as a surprise to outsiders that this "hive" race is so concerned with aesthetics and art, but to the K'jinte their every action is part of a grand work to please their creator gods. The workers are able to produce a compound that is at first acidic breaking things down before re-hardening. The warriors and most other casts have a form of this venom diluted and changed for one purpose or another, but it is produced in its greatest amounts by the workers.

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K'jinte Worker

Size/Type: Small Humanoid

Hit Die: 1d8+0

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30ft. Burrow: 10ft. Climb: 10ft.

AC: 17 (+1 dex, +5 natural, +1 size)

Attacks: bite +0

Damage: bite 1d4+2  
Face/Reach: 5ft. by 5ft./5ft.  
Special Attacks: Acid Spray  
Special Qualities: Acid Resistance 5, Scent  
Saves: +2 fortitude, +1 reflex, +1 will  
Abilities: str 14, dex 12, con 11, int 7, wis 13, cha 10  
Skills: +3 Climb, +3 Craft(Stone Masonry)  
Feats: Skill Focus(Craft(Stone Masonry))

-----  
Climate/Terrain: Any Land, and Underground  
Organization: Team(2-4) or Crew(7-18)  
CR: 1/2  
Treasure: None  
Alignment: Usually Lawful Neutral  
Advancement: As Character Class

The K'jinte workers look like a centaur-like cross between a beetle and a mantis standing at about waist height to a normal human. They are able to stand on their hind legs and walk using their four front limbs to manipulate objects. The second set of arms are less dexterous than their front set and are usually only used for lifting and to hold an object in place while their front most limbs do all the delicate work. On two legs they are able to walk at a movement rate of 15ft. On four they can move at 30ft and still use their front limbs for heavy lifting. When moving long distances they will move on all six limbs at a rate of 35ft.

While they do feel more comfortable operating under a hive mind they are unable to psionically connect to one another without the help of a psionic member of their race, usually a taskmaster or foreman. Most workers have an extremely limited sense of self and individuality, but it is those few that do develop greater individuality and creativeness are usually chosen to be transformed into a higher form of their species, almost always into a taskmaster, a foreman, an architect, or an engineer.

Acid Spray(ex): When forced to attack or defend themselves workers are able to use their acid spray that is normally used in their construction techniques for an effective attack. At a maximum range of five feet they are able to spray a jet of acid as a ranged touch attack dealing 1d6+ Con bonus points of acid damage. A worker is able to do this an number of times a day equal to two plus their total hit dice.

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Anara is the great industrial world blessed with great veins of ore and thick forests. It has only been colonized for a hundred years but has quickly become a vital part of the Harmonium's economy. The reason Anara was so quickly brought into the greater Harmony rising in the ranks among lesser colonies and holdings is the extreme adaptability of its people. Anara is populated by a race that seems to have descended from either mimics or some other shape-shifting race mixed with mundane animal stock. They reproduce asexually with a single individual dividing into two or more equal parts. For the first couple of years after this division the new "youthes" are very mentally malleable and tend to pick up the tendencies and characteristics of those around them, both physically and mentally. They also retain some memories from the original whole, again each part having an equal portion. The first twenty years of colonization Anara was thought to be an uninhabited world, then the animals began to take on the features of the Harmonium colonists.

### ***Eallia***

Eallia is a ocean covered water world ruled by two nations ruled by the aboleth and one of sahuagin. The colony provides a large supply of algae and fish food stocks. Both nations have a large population of sea-elves that tend most of the fish stocks, kelp beds and undersea mines. Before the Harmonium came the elves were entirely subjugated as slaves but now they are free by the same proclamation that brought the world officially into the Harmonium. Still it seems that the former slaves have not all adapted well to their new found freedom and Harmonium peacekeepers have been brought in to help settle the unrest.

### **The Realm of R'Talnir**

This is the only colony of Ortho to have become a colony, been brought to accept the Harmonium ideal and then rebel against Ortho and the greater Harmony it gave to the world.

R'Talnir was one of the first handful of worlds to be colonized brought into the greater Harmony in that first short wave of planar expansion before the Harmonium learned of the Abyss and set upon the War of Iron. It is a small world of oceans, deserts and mountains with two small suns, one red one white. While the surface is only habitable in the small oases that dot the higher part of the northern continents and the surviving belt of tropical forests that lies on the southern continent the world has an extensive underground network of aquifers, rivers, caverns and tunnels dug out during the nearly-forgotten heyday of R'Talnir's civilization. The underground network had been an effort to save the world from its desertification but along the way as famine set in so did chaos and eventually anarchy. The once great laws of

civilization where sadly forgotten, until the day that the first Harmonium expedition showed up.

With the help of Harmonium mages, clerics and druids as well as Harmonium organization the clans and tribes that the old civilization had broken into were re-united and the main aquifers were repaired and cleansed. The light of civilization had not completely faded from this world and the people remembered the glories of their past. With the coming of the greater light of true Harmony the people rejoiced and as the waters flowed again so did the world re-unite. From all accounts it was a splendid time lasting twenty years or so. However, during that time investigations began into what caused the great upheavals as according to the historical record they had begun well before the major famines set in. Portals to the Abyss were found as well as ruined temples to foul gods and demon spawn.

R'Talnir stands for those who are high enough in the Harmonium to know about it, as a monument and example of why history must be controlled and carefully censored for the masses. This is because once the people of R'Talnir started to learn of the Abyssal involvement they started to fear and resent any other-planar contact, even contact from other primes and Ortho itself. The people rejoined in their nation and while thanking the Harmonium for their help pushed them out of their world by force and somehow sealed most of the portals. Tales from those darkening times tell of the people casting off and discarding the gods they had come so recently to worship; gods brought to them by the Harmonium after the people had lost their own during the worlds previous trials. Tales tell of that world establishing their own government and then declaring separation from the Harmonium along with many other strict and harsh laws before casting the Harmonium out.

## Chapter 5: Powers

**In the beginning, there was Order and there was Chaos. And where the two mingled there arose Spirit, Flesh, and Truth. These were the forbearers, parents to our gods.**

In those times long past, before the Lords of Order or Chaos even existed, and before the Pantheons split, the Oldest of the gods were born. Out of Flesh and Spirit were conceived Didairdin – god of war and aggression, and Kibajij – god of trickery. Out of Spirit and Truth was born Rialondru – god of heirachy. Out of Flesh and Truth was born Olinem – god of love and blind trust. These four are the oldest of the gods of Ortho.

After they were born, Truth abandoned the now populated world, leaving the newborn gods to their devices. Rialondru took upon himself an apprentice, Iathiphos the Scribe to record the history of their family and learn at his feet. Kibajij took to his pranks and trickeries, indulging in shape shifting and pretending to who he was not. He soon discovered the joys and dangers of tricking others in such a way when he deceived Olinem, and soon after Jislana and Lanimin were born. Their parents vowed to never repeat the experience or speak of it again.

Didairdin found Alae on the battlefield – a mortal woman desperately defending her homestead against his troops. He took her to bed by force producing Tyerusus, and Namaneil as offspring. Guilt and regret for his actions led him to sever a part of his godly essence to heal the woman he so wronged, and for centuries he repented – in

doing so finding his own salvation. Jislana, until now dancing in silence, found her movements set to rhythm by the music of a mortal Baelae. She shared her godly powers with him, setting him at her side in her performances before the pantheon.

And it was then that the goddess Saeduenical was born of Flesh and Spirit. The last born, and the only born without the light of Truth to welcome her to the world and banish darkness from her eyes. It was she who found the heat of fire in the hidden depths of the earth, and brought it to her home in the pantheon, locking it behind gates of wood and iron to keep it for herself. Kibajij saw her claim fire from the earth and knew the world was cold through and through without it. He snuck into her home, stealing it to give it to the mortals of the world. When she discovered the theft she knew the thief was the Fox, for the tip of his tail was singed black. Instead of bringing it to the attention of the family though, she turned a trick upon the trickster and stole a place in his bed with a magical draught. From this union were born Chal – goddess of ruin, and Ghanalim – god of murder, and she assigned the two to guard her home.

With this, Order and Chaos began to churn – this crime committed amongst their own grandchildren repulsed Flesh and Spirit and both fled, following on the heels of Truth. Order and Chaos divided, repulsed by each other and demanded the same of their children. The arguments were fierce and swiftly turned to bloodshed. The Pantheon divided – The Lords of Chaos and the Lords of Order broke apart, building high walls between each other to prevent their enemies from peering in upon them.

After the family divided, the god of war turned to raising his children, and the goddess of martyrs turned to finding peace with others as well as herself. With the gentle mediation of Ina, a newcomer to the Lords of Order, the two were reconciled and a third child was born. Nothing is known of this child save that it was surrendered to Ina after birth, to be protected and raised.

- The Incarnate Records, held by the Temple of Iathiphos

## **The Lords Of Order**

The Lords of Order are native deities to Ortho. They are the primary keepers of the Pantheon of Ortho, and are the cornerstone of the most powerful pantheon in the sphere. Any other deities are guests of the pantheon or at most minor members of it. The Lords of Order accept planar deities often as intermediaries for themselves, or if they are well respected enough will allow them to join the pantheon after careful consideration.

The Lords of Order predate the Knights of Harmony, and were strong supporters of the Knights in the course of the Expansion. The Lords of order welcomed having the mortal support in their on-going conflict with the now mostly defeated Lords of Chaos.

After the Harmonium came to power in Ortho, they subsumed all the Lords of Chaos that they could and have turned any lingering remnants of the old gods into the lawful pantheon. So, for example, a temple dedicated to the Lord of Anarchy would have been torn down and replaced with a temple of the Lord of Hierarchy, or an old druid grove that had been mostly forgotten since the coming of the Lords of Law and

Chaos would have been converted to a temple of the Lord of Discipline. There is no doubt that the Lords of Order are the main Powers on this sphere.

**Didairdin, Lord of Discipline**  
**The Ironhanded, Separator of the Chaff**  
**Greater Deity**

**Symbol:** A sword crossed with a sheaf of grain

**Home Plane:** Arcadia

**Alignment:** Lawful Good

**Portfolio:** Military, Agriculture, Children. Formally the god of war.

**Worshippers:** soldiers, farmers, teachers, midwives

**Cleric Alignments:** LG, LN, NG

**Domains:**

**Favored Weapon:** "Might's Power" (longsword)



Didairdin is the god of agriculture and protector of the weak of Ortho. He is one of the most powerful members of the Lords of order, matching that of Rialondru and Saeduenical. He is a father figure of a god, watching over those under his care with a firm hand and strong defense. His avatar takes the form of a tall wiry man, weather beaten with deep lines of guilty, worry and living in his face.

Of all the gods he is the one likely to punish a crime with a wrath unmatched even by any of the Lords of Chaos. In the faces of victims of such crimes he often finds the face of his own wife, so his fury is only heightened. However, he will also truly forgive those who commit a crime yet truly regret and atone for their actions. He is guilt ridden and repentant for his own actions in the past, and keeps his sword "Might's Power" an artifact of his time as the god of war close to him to keep himself from ever forgetting his own crimes.

The temple of Didairdin is populated by priests who often are also experts in some aspect of providing, caring, or protecting the weak around them. A priest may also have skills as a healer or midwife, as a farmer or expert carpenter, or even as a soldier versed in defending small villages from dangerous surroundings. The church is very proactive in its mission to protect and provide, and can often be found in the less developed areas of Ortho where they are most needed. Much of the Church's current attention is turned westward to Iathara or the outskirts of Thaera.

The temple does not deny the violence of its god's past nor the practical use of armed violence in life. However, like their god they consider crimes committed even on the battle field inexcusable. And will punish those crimes to the fullest extent under the law. This makes the temple guards, paladins and knights some of the most ethical troops from Ortho when they are in battle. They will strictly follow a standard that respects the citizenry and bystanders of any area they are in, and will push any allied troops to the same level of discipline and restraint.

The temple holds seasonal festivals centered around the patterns of planting and harvest. The largest, the Harvest Feast, occurs late in fall when the food is plenty, and is considered a last big festival to celebrate a good crop before the surplus of food is rationed for the winter. This festival often sees families gather for feasts, children gathered to tour the village to visit extended family and neighbors, and parties that last from sunrise to sunrise of the next day when belts must be tightened for the coming winter.

Once a year the temple will hold a much more somber festival on the Equinox of Winter called Repentance. This is a period when the adults of a temples are will go to the temple to privately light candles for each of their sins committed over the year. This is the time for atonement and regret. This ceremony is only offered to children over the age of twelve, and adults as those younger are considered too young to truly understand the concepts involved. This festival coincides with the yearly anniversary of the first meeting of Didairdin and his wife Alae.

The third largest celebration comes at the Equinox of Summer. This is a fertility and marriage festival as a celebration of the marriage of Didairdin and Alae. Aside from parties, lovers games, and general merriment this is also the time for worshippers of Didairdin to offer forgiveness to others for their actions against them. This celebration is often used as a date to sign peace treaties or resolve long-standing conflicts, often with the support of the temple of Alae.

### **History/Relationships:**

Didairdin used to be the god of war in the pantheon. In fact, he used to be a decidedly less kind and gentle entity. While still lawful, his actions were anything but good. He gloried in war, blood, violence and death. He led his army of mortal worshippers across continents destroying their enemies as they came across them. As a god of war he had little concern for strategy other than how it would aid him in defeating the next enemy.

All this changed in the height of winter when he led his troops through a forest in the high hills of the western lands. It was then that he met Alae, a mortal woman who stood in helpless defiance of his trained troops with little more than a dagger to her hand and a houseful of younger siblings to protect. Didairdin committed that night the crime that he has never forgiven himself for, taking Alae by force and razing her home to the ground. When morning came and the silent lady in his bed simply bowed her head expecting the worst, something within the god broke. He took his army home that day and did not march for a year and a day afterwards.

Didairdin only came to the field when he became aware of another army, this one a mortal army with the goal of simply obtaining the lands that his own army had shattered. This army was approaching once again the high hills where he remembered the woman he hurt before lived. It was then that the guilt that had eaten at his belly for the past year turned into something more resolved. His army marched again on the high hills, this time to protect the inhabitants against the coming assault. In this war he found Alae again and gifted her with part of his own essence as a god, securing her, and the twins he found with her, against any further assaults by mortal or god alike. The children would later grow into the gods, T and N respectively. Centuries would pass as he turned himself, and his clergy from experts in war into experts in protection.

To his lingering regret, one of his own children would later join the Lords of Chaos, acting against him. He still feels this failure in his own child is a punishment for his crimes.

### **Dogma:**

In peace, your job is to provide. In war, your job is to protect. When in war, if you leave the homes intact, the people unharmed, the walls in place and your enemies swiftly eliminated you will win the hearts of the people as much as their lands. A

crime in battle is still a crime. Never forget your own trespasses, atone for them. Control yourself and you will be able to control your surroundings.

### **Iathiphos, Lord of Bookkeepers**

**The Scribe, The Inkstained**

**Intermediate Deity**

**Symbol:** A quill and inkwell

**Home Plane:** Mechanus

**Alignment:** Lawful Neutral

**Portfolio:** Scribes, Copyists, Proper Knowledge, Invention

**Worshippers:** scribes, scholars, lawyers

**Cleric Alignments:** LN, LG, LE, TN

**Domains:**

**Favored Weapon:** "Bow of the Lightbringer" (longbow)



### **Clergy and Temples:**

Iathiphos, is responsible for the recording of accurate history and documents. He is a thin, pale sort of god, often appearing with ink stained fingers and a collection of spare quills tucked behind his ear. His avatar form is usually a middle aged, sandy haired man dressed in clerical robes or a leather smock.

His clergy holds significant power in the province of Iironda where the temple records are often used to validate the holdings of a house when government positions come open. They are also very important within Harmony's Glory, where copies of all meetings of the Ortho Council, and all open meetings of the Octave are stored for review by any Ortho citizen.

The clergy of Iathiphos is best described as bureaucratic. Iathiphos and his temples track the birth records of nobility and significant bloodlines, and his clergy will willingly confirm the birthrights and bloodline of any who ask it of them. If the asker's family is not already in the temple records a small fee will add their name to that of family's to be tracked regardless of the social standing of the asker. Bastard children, or parents who doubt the parentage of their children will often ask the temple to confirm their bloodlines. A cleric accused of falsifying records will take this as a personal insult, and may confront the accuser violently.

The temple of Iathiphos has few festivals, but the most significant one comes once a year in the late spring. Clerics, scribes, and inventors who have spent the winter inside avoiding wintry weather, will present their winter projects that they have worked on for the year. This festival is called the Festival of Light, though with a smile non-worshippers may call it "Fireball Fest". These projects often range from demonstrations of new inventions to detailed historical summaries, with everything in between covered, including new mathematical, magical, and astrological research. These festivals may have participants from the lowest schoolings of children, to graybeards who gather in a corner to share their views on the reality of the planes.

### **History/Relationships:**

Iathiphos, the apprentice scribe, is subservient to Rialondru and is his direct student. The god holds the power given to him by Rialondru as a great responsibility. He was

discovered as a cleric in the temple of Rialondru, who brought the attention of the god upon himself with his own audacity.

Iathiphos made a proposal to organize the temple records and laid out an extraordinarily clear approach to doing so, but his god was more amused than spurred to action. Iathiphos took the challenge of 'if you want to do it, do it yourself' to heart, and unraveled the records of the temple. At the time he clarified the birthright of a local kingdom, putting an end to civil war in the area and proving his point to his deity.

As a reward for his service, and at the clear need for someone of his skill, Rialondru split off a fraction of his deific power and fused it to Iathiphos, setting the scribe within the pantheon.

### **Dogma:**

Recorded history is the only true 'history' once those who remember it are gone, it should be preserved accurately and with honor to those ancestors. To change a record is to change the way history happened, therefore records are not to be tampered with. You should always strive to learn more about your field, and never cease learning. Obey your teachers and use their knowledge as a foundation for your own. An invention is not worthy of note until another can replicate your work. Share your work freely. A fact is not a fact until it can be proven. A theory is not wrong until it can be disproven.

This is the story of a beautiful lady named Grace. After Truth left the world, and the elder gods stepped back, surrendering the world to their children, Rialondru found himself idle in his rule. His people were content, his temples organized by his apprentice, and he found himself wishing for a queen. Rialondru commanded a message be carried across his lands: that he sought the most beautiful and noble blooded woman of them all to be his consort and join him in his palace above the clouds. He would view them all at a ball to be held at the end of the month, and lady after noble lady returned his invitation, with list and list of their escorts to attend the ball.

All of the ladies replied, save one. Her invitation was delivered to her drawing room on a silver platter, placed on her desk for her perusal by red-coated footmen, but her window was open. A small breeze lifted the fine engraved card and took it off into the nearby woods to land at the feet of a young man lounging on a picnic blanket. Now this young man was Olinem, in disguise buttering up his newest lover, the peasant girl at his side on the blanket. She was lonely with no husband in sight but all the beauty and grace of the gods had been granted to her. She was called Grace.

Olinem quickly corrected the name on the invitation, and turned to her, smiling. And so it was that Grace found herself the only peasant woman to attend Lord Rialondru's ball. Olinem dressed her in bright reds and whites, finery borrowed from Kabajij. His daughter, Jislana, taught her how to dance and float on the wind. And he himself taught her how to look for love, and welcome it when it flowered.

And so, Grace arrived at the ball dancing on snowflakes without leaving a trace of her path, dressed in rich furs and bearing her own shining face to all. She brought no

footmen to serve her drinks, no slaves to primp her hair and boost of her beauty, no chamberlains carrying scrolls of family histories, and no bards to line her path with roses and read poetry of her beauty. She came alone, dressed in fineries that befit her and the most beautiful jewel of them all - a true smile.

Within a heartbeat she captivated the ball, and all there wondered what king sent his daughter and snubbed her so without a proper escort. She sent Iathiphos scampering through his bloodlines looking for her name, and drew Rialondru's attention effortlessly. Rialondru was captivated by her beauty, her manner, her kindness to those around her of high and low blood. She caught the eyes of the escorts and attendants; the bards stumbled on their words. The night passed in song, and dance, wine and sweets and still she looked for the flowering of love that she hoped to find.

When the evening came to a close, she found herself in the arms of the god looking into his eyes as they danced, and she found to her disappointment that she saw no flowers in his eyes. He was looking for a wife, a symbol of his royal right and to that she had no answer. Rialondru opened his mouth to speak and Grace burst into tears. Shaking her head, she placed a finger across his lips and whispered, 'No.'

As she left, leaving Rialondru to look upon the ladies who had come knowing what they were looking for, a single bard held the door for her. He was named Alec. He was new to his court, innocent of the intrigues and still caught by his art. He had spent the evening composing in his mind songs that his sworn lady would presume were odes to her own beauty.

Grace fled, sparing a feeble smile for the young bard as she darted down the stairs. At the bottom of the stairs she stopped, weeping for her new understanding of love and royalty. Standing there with tears in her eyes looking up at the stars, she felt a hand at her shoulder and a handkerchief dabbing at her cheek. Opening her eyes, she turned to Alec and smiled in the face of flowering love, her husband found.

And that is how Rialondru learned that nobility is no guarantee for love, and how Olinem gifts his worshippers.

- *From the Green Woods Cycle, fairytales of Voll*

## **Rialondru, Lord of Hierarchy**

### **The Great Composer**

### **Greater Deity**

**Symbol:** A shield and scepter

**Home Plane:** Arcadia

**Alignment:** Lawful Neutral

**Portfolio:** Obedience, Authority, the Harmonium. Formally the god of kings and nobles.

**Worshippers:** Harmonium members, lawyers, law makers

**Cleric Alignments:** LN, LG, LE

**Domains:**

**Favored Weapon:** "Order's Strength and Order's Wrath" (shield





and greatsword)

The Great Composer is the patron of the Harmonium and its ideals. He is the patron of order and empires. He is the kingmaker, the lawmaker, and the ring giver - giving order to his people and rewarding them according to their due. His focus is on his people as a whole, valuing the organization above the individual, as a result he is willing to ask sacrifices of his followers though they may be cruel if they are necessary for his goals.

His avatar takes the form of tall man, crowned as if an ancient kind. He generally appears to be middle aged, dark haired, with fine sharp features, clear eyes, and the bearing of a highest royal. He wears red plated armor and carries a sword and shield though he is more likely to be found coordinating forces over wide stretches of territory than leading a charge. He is a strictly methodical god, preferring to lead the pantheon through slow changes following a defined plan. His closest ally in the pantheon is Iathiphos, the cleric he brought to godhood to assist in his record keeping.

The temple of Rialondru is virtually unchanged after millennia. The temple goes to great lengths to retain the rituals of it's past in their original form and prides itself on it's long history. His temple libraries are stacked with copies and copies of scriptures, rulings, works on ethical leadership and government, and records of family trees for families that no longer even exist. Often an adjunct cleric of Iathiphos can be found in these libraries assisting their organization.

History and tradition hold such a grip on the temple that the rites are still held in the long dead original tongue of Ariatha - though the vast majority of worshippers don't understand a word of it, merely parroting their priests in ritual. The clerics themselves are required to learn the language and great pains are taken to preserve pronunciation exactly as it was three millennia ago.

There have been three great points of reorganization in the temple, at least three that are on record. Every millennia the highest of the temple officials meet to review the scriptures and their interpretations of them. They spend upwards of a year in Council, reading, debating and meditating with their god before making any changes or approving the standing theology of the Great Composer. These three Councils, known as the Council of Batton, the Council of Ree, and the Council of Tlan Mer established the current codified dogma and approved scriptures of the temple. It is considered highest heresy to retain copies of apocryphal materials outside of archival purposes with the temple.

While there are no records of the temple prior to the Council of Batton, rumors persist among certain sects that the temple existed before the council. The rumors also whisper that the true temple, dating from before the Council of Batton held radically different beliefs that were simply excised from the temple and blackened from the historical records at that time. The temple certainly does not encourage exploration into the subject.

The temple has a number of festivals throughout the year. The Lion's Feast is an acknowledgement of the need for law and order within a society. A village gathers

and holds a feast, at it honoring the heads of their family, their elders and the leaders of the village as a whole. This is a time to express thanks to these figures of authority who otherwise often receive no thanks for their duties.

The day after the Lion's Feast though is an entirely different matter. While the Feast is a time for the community to acknowledge its leaders, the day after is known as Censure. This day is dedicated to humbling the leaders of a community to their duties to their people, and is dedicated to hearing the complaints and requests of those they rule over. No words spoken on this day may be punished, and in some communities it is the only time when complaints may be freely lodged against their leadership.

Crowning day is the traditional day for king and rulers to take power. In some provinces, such as Ulfriem, it is the same day that elections are held.

### **History/Relationships:**

Rialondru is one of the trio of powers that form the highest leadership of the Lords of Order. He is equal in rank in the pantheon only to Didairdin and Saeduenical.

Rialondru despises Kibajij the most of all the Lords of Chaos. The irreverent Trickster is his perfect opposite, and has over the millennia dedicated much of his time to harassing the god and his followers. In fact, a long standing tradition of the temple is a yearly fox hunt - supposedly to keep the skills and health of the monastic clerics of the temple in shape.

Iathiphos and the alliance with his temple, dates from shortly after the Council of Batton, a god brought to godhood by Rialondru for his services.

Rialondru spent much of his time in the past tending to the bloodlines of nobility and building empires out of the work of his followers. Many stable kingdoms owe their existence in some part to his efforts.

Amongst the most noted empires that he supported was that of Iskandros, the young conqueror of nearly half the continent of Keln. Iskandros's prowess on the battlefield and skill at laying forth an empire that would hold for generations until his bloodline weakened leads the temple to presume he was a proxy of the god. His status as a proxy is likely to be confirmed at the next Council in three years.

// Insert other great conquerors here

### **Dogma:**

Respect your leaders; they are the only thing that stand between you and anarchy. Leaders hold an obligation to tend to the needs of the people. The people outweigh the needs or petty desires of any one individual, regardless of the individual's bloodline. Changes to any system of government can only legitimately come from within. Confusion in the chain of command is abhorrent. Adultery is a strike against the very fabric of a civilization confusing bloodlines, loyalties and inheritance, and should not be tolerated. Bastards must be acknowledged and cared for by their father.

## **Alae, Lord of Peace and Harmony**

### **Titles**

### **Intermediate Deity**

**Symbol:** Two hands clasped

**Home Plane:** Mt. Celestia

**Alignment:** Lawful Good

**Portfolio:** Peace, Harmony. Formally the god of martyrs and healing.

**Worshippers:** healers, midwives

**Cleric Alignments:** LG, NG, LN

**Domains:**

**Favored Weapon:** "Staff of the Gentle Hand" (staff, subdual damage only)



Alae is the goddess of peace, a serene figure in the pantheon of the Lords of Order. She tends not to take a strong side in any conflict though is often a vote breaker when issues come before the Lords. Since she is one of only two members of the pantheon that used to be mortal, and has seen both the good and the evil that deities are capable of she has a unique understanding of the role that powers should play in the lives of their followers.

Her meditative gentleness conceals a considerable strength of decision, and if she feels strongly regarding an issue she will push the issue with the other powers until she convinces them of her position. In the past some issues have been resolved in her favor simply because no one else was willing to continue the fight. Alae is nothing if not patient, and has been accused of being stubborn.

Her avatar takes the same form as her original mortal form. She is not a classic beauty, rather a picture of vitality and personality. She is pictured as a woman in her mid twenties showing the tan of a farmer's daughter, with both laugh lines and worry lines on her face. She has brown hair, generally kept braided, and hazel eyes.

Her temple is often the quiet center of the lives of peasants in the surrounding area. Her clerics are required to know a minimum amount of the healing arts, and midwives often receive their training in her temples. The comfort and healing available at these temples draw much support from the common folk. The temples are often guarded by worshippers of Didairdin as many of the clergy of Alae do not believe in harming others. But the temple is not without its strength, and does have a small sect of clerics dedicated to the twin disciplines of personal discipline and self defense.

These clerics become experts in turning attacks from others against them, and defending themselves without any weapons available to them. These clerics teach these abilities openly, and will often request to speak with women who have been victims of abuse or rape to offer the training expecting nothing in return.

The temple holds yearly festivals, the largest of which celebrates the birth of Alae's children Tyerusus, and Namaneil. This festival honors family, mothers in particular and entreats followers to tend to their children closely to raise them up properly. This is often a naming day for the children of devout worshippers.

A second important day in the temple of Alae is held silently in personal meditation. This day is called Conquering, and is used as a day to conquer your own fears, doubts and demons. The clergy spend this day in silence from sunrise to the next sunrise – examining themselves and their motivations of the year. Worshippers are encouraged to do the same, though the vow of silence is not a requirement.

The third largest celebration comes at the Equinox of Summer. This is a fertility and marriage festival as a celebration of the marriage of Didairdin and Alae held in conjunction with the temple of Didairdin. Clergy of Alae will often choose privately at this festivity the next long term conflict in their area that they wish to resolve by the time the festival is held next year.

### **History/Relationships:**

Alae used to be mortal until she was taken by the god Didairdin by force. She was given immortality and a splinter of deific power in repentance but it would be millennia before she would forgive Didairdin for his actions. In the meantime she spent her time trying to save others by taking their pains on herself, and healing those who needed it.

It was during this time that Ina came to her to comfort her, and guide her into healing herself. Alae was descending into madness and bitterness at her own unresolved pain at the time. Ina kidnapped the young goddess, trapping her with her own ghosts for a period of seven years, training her into facing and eventually conquering them. It was this that introduced Ina, the interloper, to the rest of the Lords of Order – but the safe return of a now-sane Alae reassured the Lords of her intent.

### **Dogma:**

Do no harm. Inaction is as much a choice as action. Harm caused by inaction is still harm. Do not harm yourself needlessly. Seek to resolve the pain and suffering of others, and show them how to avoid it for themselves. Enjoy life, family, children. Seek peace within yourself, within your family and within your people.

### **Tyerusus, Lord of Death and Judgment**

#### **Titles**

#### **Intermediate Deity**

**Symbol:** A balance scale

**Home Plane:** Mechanus

**Alignment:** Lawful Neutral

**Portfolio:** Judges, Courts, Justice, Peacemaking. Formerly judged all the souls of the people of Ortho.

**Worshippers:** judges, lawyers, law makers

**Cleric Alignments:** LN, LG, LE

#### **Domains:**

**Favored Weapon:** "Rod of Judgment" (mace)



The son of Didaridin and Alae is a solemn power, manifesting most often as a dark haired young man with cold eyes in the robes of a lawyer or judge. Of the Lords of Order he is the youngest, not counting the interloper Ina. He rarely expresses any emotion unless he is in the middle of passing judgment on an individual or situation,

and is known as a downright joy-killer of a god. He approaches every situation with the logic of a lawyer, and like his father will tolerate no crime - though he defines crime by the law as opposed to his father's moral definition. Tyerusus would judge Didairdin for his past crimes as he would any other but an agreement with Alae (and his own lack of comparative power) prevents this.

The temple of Tyerusus is a place usually found in conjunction with a city courts or law library, and rarely stands out significantly from any of those governmental buildings. Temples are usually built of dark polished marble or granite. The temple serves as a meeting place for the judicial representatives, and those in good standing with the Schools of Ethics will often receive more hospitality than other citizens of Ortho. The temple provides overnight lodgings for lawyers, jurors, and others who are in the midst of dispensing justice in accordance with the law.

The clergy of Tyerusus are required to have an understanding of their local laws as well as the ethical philosophies that are involved in creating laws to govern a community, clerics will often spend time lecturing at the local School of Ethics.

There is an ongoing rivalry between the clergy of Tyerusus and that of Didaridin, reflecting the rivalry of the two deities, as Tyerusus believes Didaridin to be a criminal at large. While the clergy of Tyerusus will not go out of it's way to prosecute followers of the Iron Handed, they do tend to closely review their actions. They specifically follow up on those who serve as local law enforcement to ensure that they follow the letter of the law exactly. The temple of Tyerusus also provides it's own security; there is a small sect of the temple dedicated to defending the temple grounds and pursuing investigations. They have been known to refuse assistance from Didaridin's followers regardless of the needs of the moment. The temple of Didairdin holds no ill will towards Tyerusus, if perhaps a little pity.

The temple of Tyerusus has no large celebrations or holidays as such things are considered a waste of time in the dispensing of justice. Instead the temple will often hold a small celebration after the successful completion of trials, inviting the attending judge and lawyers of both sides to partake.

#### **History/Relationships:**

Tyerusus is the child of the union of Alae and Didaridin, and it has certainly left its mark on him. He holds a fierce hatred for the acts that brought he and his sister into being, and only with the gentle intervention of Alae has this hatred not consumed him entirely. Tyerusus instead has thrown himself headlong into serving his position in the pantheon, much to quiet worry of his parents who care for him regardless of his beliefs.

#### **Dogma:**

Time must not be wasted. The crimes of the guilty must be punished. The pleas of the victimized must be answered. Justice must be swift, through, and above all else accurate in its dispensing. A victim of the court is a greater victim than any other.

#### **Ina, Lord of Silence**

##### **Titles**

##### **Lesser Deity (Greater Deity)**

**Symbol:** A blank field

**Home Plane:** Mechanus/See Below

**Alignment:** True Neutral



**Portfolio:** Secrets, Things that are forbidden to speak of.

**Worshippers:** scholars, spies

**Cleric Alignments:** Any

**Domains:**

**Favored Weapon:** "Subtlety" (dagger)

The Lord of Silence is the most mysterious of all the powers of the Lords of Order. Ina is technically an interloper deity, the weakest in the pantheon and for the most part she remains a neutral party in the interactions of the pantheon itself. She is known as a wise and knowledgeable power, who interferes in deific and mortal affairs only when absolutely necessary. Ina does not speak openly in the pantheon - preferring to speak one on one with the individual powers. With a reputation for moderation and responsibility the Lords of Order are content to let her guard their secrets.

Ina's avatar form takes the form of a female figure in a long blue-gray cloak and hood. Generally the hood is pulled forward over half her face; as a result there are no known descriptions of her beyond that.

The temple of Ina is small, though her clergy are extraordinarily devoted to her. It is said that her clerics are "made, not called". New members of the clergy are selected, often times before they themselves are aware of their religious inclinations. Initiates are exposed to the secrets and truths that the temple is aware of, and are brought into the temple through the course of initiation. As the new initiate comes to understand the truths presented to him their faith in Ina deepens, and they receive more support from the Lord of Silence.

Members of the temple of Ina are not required to take on the mantle of cleric, though many of them will receive small abilities or gifts from her even if they prefer to pursue their previous occupation.

The temple of Ina does not openly pursue any course of action, though it is widely assumed that they will actively conceal and defend the secrets of the Lords of Order and the Harmonium as a whole. The temple conceals a lot of darks, but has been known on occasion to deliberately allow some of them to slip - generally with a benefit to the whole of Ortho being seen in the long run.

Ina's temple has no openly held festivals, though yearly the clergy will gather to renew their oaths and dedication to Ina's causes.

### **History/Relationships:**

Ina is not an interloper deity. In fact, she isn't even a lesser deity as she actively conceals her strength from the Lords of Order. She is a greater deity, in fact the mother or aunt of most of the pantheon. In millennia past, Ina was known by the name Truth. The highest of her temple, those initiated fully into her secrets, are aware of the ultimate goal of Ina, which is to return the pantheon (and her family) to their original unified state.

Ina returned to Ortho after the Lords of Order and Chaos split from each other, claiming to be an interloper deity. Her first act on entering the world was to kidnap the Lord of Martyrs, Alae, and imprison her secretly. At the time this caused great worry amongst the Lords of Order, as they believed that a Lord of Chaos might have kidnapped the most vulnerable member of their pantheon. Ina spent years with Alae

in secrecy, helping the Lord of Martyrs to grow past her own pain. When the two returned, Alae sponsored Ina's membership to the Lords of Order.

**Dogma:**

Keep silent on that which you know need not be spoken. Cry loudly that which you know needs be spoken. Not all fights can be won, and not all evils can be killed.

**The Knights of Ina**

*The Seven Without Names, The Swords of Silence, The Voiceless*

These minor deities are new to Ortho and to common worship - lesser powers, in service to Ina, who each have stewardship over some matter of minor concern and promote it on behalf of the Lord of Silence. Though only of small consequence within the theological and political circles of the Harmonium, the priesthoods of the Knights grow somewhat with each passing year, improving upon their own power and that of their patron, and someday may end up as a force to be reckoned with.

**The Knights**

The Knights of Ina are seven. None act or appear on Ortho without the approval of the Lord of Silence, and then only rarely; their avatars, as well as church depictions, keep their faces always masked and never speak, nor identify themselves. Nonetheless, they are powers, and even their slight authority is much greater than that of any mortal. Do not discount their ability.

The Knights of Ina are as follows:

- *Knight of the Candle*, an experienced, cunning and keen-eyed warrior. His followers are fond of the indirect approach, feints and misdirection and achieving success with the minimum necessary force.
- *Knight of Penitence*, a sepulchral soul who moves absolutely soundlessly and can dispense a killing stroke without any warning or sign of emotion. Priests of this Knight are willing to dispense the ultimate punishment as needed to achieve atonement for sins.
- *Knight of the Storm*, the most visibly active of all the Knights, able to sweep an entire area clean of perdition. Her priests are the most indiscriminate and least favored of the orders.
- *Knight of Grace*, calm, eternally confident and self-possessed, never making a misstep or false cue. His followers are born diplomats, courtiers and messengers, taught when to act and when not to, and incredibly difficult to surprise or shock.
- *Knight of Folly*, the most fortunate of souls and a deity whose favored tool is serendipity. Priests of this Knight are rarely conventionally powerful, but indisputably cheerful, optimistic, good-natured and certain that life will become better.
- *Knight of Colors*, the careful draftsman, planner and visionary, able to communicate through sketch and gesture despite being as silent as his comrades. His priests make messages and memories, defend that which is beautiful and meaningful, and help to make dull and pointless lives ever so slightly more colorful.
- *Knight of Dust*, the most humble and least outwardly threatening of the Knights, but one whom seems to jinx all enemies. Priests of this Knight are tolerated rather than welcomed, but prove to be able ministers and defenders in times of natural or created disaster.

## **The Priesthood**

Clerics of the Knights are somewhat rare, but make up for their small numbers by generally being unusually capable. Though they command almost as much respect as priests of the Lords themselves, they're much more flexible in their actions and able to consider different points of view. Though their methods of dealing with difficulties are sometimes unorthodox, few dare oppose them openly; they have the support of their fellows, and Ina's priesthood as well, and usually succeed in what they set their hands to. Though they have little voice yet in the highest councils of the Harmonium, and don't seek to openly proselytize their faith save to those already dissatisfied with the teachings of the Lords, the following of the Knights is growing yearly and has surprisingly wide support among the poorer farmers and laborers.

The chain of command within the Knights' priesthood is a somewhat unusual one. By the strictest order of such things, they are a part of the temple hierarchy of Ina; like their patrons, though, they possess an unusual amount of independence. A priest of any of the Knights must answer for their actions to any regional patriarch of Ina, but does so directly and without any interfering authority; a very short chain of command, and one rarely drawn upon. As priests of the Knights are also often itinerant, and easily able to plead ignorance of recently issued edicts and such, they are difficult to call to account. Wise prelates of Ina's church don't even try, content to let the priests of the Knights pursue the calling of their own faith.

Priests of one of the Knights are members of the cleric class. Their domains are chosen somewhat differently than usual - each Knight has only one core domain, which is granted to all the deity's clerics. The second domain available can be chosen from any domain granted to Ina's priests. A cleric of one of the Knights can be of any nonlawful alignment.

- Knight of the Candle: Fire
- Knight of Penitence: Death
- Knight of the Storm: Destruction
- Knight of Grace: Travel
- Knight of Folly: Luck
- Knight of Colors: Creation
- Knight of Dust: Madness

## **DM's Dark**

As far as most any mortal on Ortho knows, the Knights of Ina are nothing more than minor deities, newborn powers unable to link to the faithful on their own and exercising their power only through the intercession of the Lord of Silence. This is absolutely not the case.

In fact, the seven Knights are in fact alternate identities for the seven Lords of Chaos (the eighth being Ina herself), set up so that these ancient deities can continue to have some following on their own home world without needing to take more drastic and dangerous measures. This arrangement may eventually lead to reconciliation, with a more-or-less reunified pantheon that allows for greater divine balance. Such an arrangement would undoubtedly shake the Harmonium to its core. If this arrangement is discovered prematurely, it may lead to a war in the heavens to surpass even the conflicts of half-forgotten myth.



The true identities of the Knights are as follows:

- Knight of the Candle: Kibajij
- Knight of Penitence: Ghanalim
- Knight of the Storm: Chal
- Knight of Grace: Jislana
- Knight of Folly: Olinem
- Knight of Colors: Lanimin
- Knight of Dust: Namaneil

### **Saeduenical, Lord of Watchfulness**

#### **Greater Deity**

**Symbol:** An open eye

**Home Plane:** Baator

**Alignment:** Lawful Evil

**Portfolio:** Divinations, Sins and Confessions, Police, Military Scouts, Spies.

**Worshippers:** the paranoid, police observers, spies

**Cleric Alignments:** LE, LN, NE

**Domains:**

**Favored Weapon:** "Far-reaching Retribution" (longbow)



Saeduenical, the bitter, the angry, the wrathful, the paranoid - she has many names but none are whispered openly by their speakers for their own good. The Lord of Watchfulness is the third of the triad of power in the Lords of Order.

She is patron of all operations on Ortho that root out the cause of dissention. She claims responsibility for keeping the weak from succumbing to evil, for finding the roots of disharmony and ripping them out, and for burning away the seeds of discontent that bring about traitors. She is an expert at manipulations and at applying the law to her benefit.

Her avatar often takes the form of a dark haired woman, pale, with reddened lips. Reports conflict regarding the source of the red - be it blood or her natural coloration. She dresses conservatively at all times, and holds herself in the most formal and polite manner. She is said to be beautiful if a little cold, and to speak kindly even to those who question her actions.

The temples themselves would be mistaken for jails if it weren't for the face that they are generally too large and too grandly constructed to be so. They are often made of iron and black marble, highly polished. The doors and every window of a temple of Saeduenical is barred, and often locked unless worshippers are coming and going at the time. According to doctrine, this is to protect the goddess from the taint of corruption.

Her clergy are mostly concerned with policing the Harmonium, the Schools of Ethics, the Ortho government and anyone else in a position of power for signs of 'corruption' as they define it. Of course they also look for lawbreakers in the populace, and for the roots of corrupting disharmony amongst the people. Visits with the clergy are uncomfortable for any they suspect of ill doings, as they will question every detail explained to them in an attempt to reveal the hidden agendas of the guilty.

Clergy members are required to undergo a personal review each year by the highest in the temple. Those who have wavered from the path of the goddess are asked to enter private meditations within the temple grounds to find themselves again. Rumors that the occasional cleric does not return from these meditations are flatly denied. As the temple would say "Confrontations with personal demons have been known to take some amount of time".

The temple of Saeduenical focuses heavily on eradicating the worship of the Lords of Chaos, Kibajij, Chal, and Ghanalim - the three Lords that Saeduenical sees as the greatest threat. When a cleric of Saeduenical speaks of 'evil' in the world, it can be assumed they speak of chaos and the Lords of Chaos.

### **History/ Relationships:**

Saeduenical is a paranoid figure, her vision obscured by her own inner fears. In fact, she most fears her own children Chal and Ghanalim that she brought into the world, and trained. She gave them the knowledge of ruin and murder, destruction and assassination - but she also gave them cause to hate her. As a result it is their agents and their actions that she sees surrounding herself in Ortho.

Kibajij she hates more than she fears, as a thief and blames him for the betrayal of their original pantheon. It is her opinion that the Lords of Order have not gone far enough to secure their world against the influence of Chaos and it's bearers. What it would take to make her feel secure though is unknown.

### **Dogma:**

Everyone has a little bit of evil in them, and therefore all are suspect. Evil must be tapped, like sap from a tree before the roots may be ripped out and removed. It must be guarded against at all times, and sought out to be destroyed in order to protect others. The fight against evil is a greater fight than any other, sacrifices may be called for and should be surrendered as the willing price to pay.

### **Sinhunters**

*Sin is the root.*

*Sin is the poison.*

*Man sops it with his bread.*

*He quaffs it's flame with his wine.*

*We are the only antidote.*

- a Sinhunter Mantra

Sinhunters are an elite sect within the church of Saeduenical. Sinhunters are clergy with additional training and skills. They receive training in the fields of investigation, interrogation, deduction, and torture. They are investigators of the obscene, the perverse, and the extreme crimes and troubles on Ortho. A sinhunter may be called in when the activities of the Abyss or those of the Lords of Chaos are suspected within an area. The temple may also send Sinhunters before they are requested by the local authorities, and are often instructed to review the authorities themselves for evil influences.

Sinhunters are not always welcome when they arrive to conduct an investigation. They are willing to go to further extremes than many other investigators are and in

some provinces the temple of Didaridrin will provide an 'assistant' to ensure that the sinhunter's actions are observed as well. Occasionally such partnership will result in an open conflict between the temples.

When a sinhunter begins an investigation he assumes that his prey may be anyone within the area, from the smallest child to the highest lord. Once the source of the sin has been found, if it is within an individual the sinhunter will then do his best to rid the sinner of his burden. A sinhunter will use all of the tools at his disposal to convince the sinner to turn away from his chosen path, including torture if it is required. A sinhunter truly believes he is doing good upon the face of Ortho, and believes that his actions are needed to prevent the disease of sin from spreading to the healthy body of the populace. If a sinner cannot be cleansed, a sinhunter may act to insure that the sin cannot spread further - killing the sinner if necessary to do so.

A sinhunter's investigation is through and obsessive, and he will often make an effort to identify closely with the action of his prey. Sinhunters often claim to 'feel' the evil within another, or to 'see' the crimes as they are committed from the point of view of the sinner. As a result this sect is also the most unstable of all of Saeduenical's sects. They are the most likely to go insane from constant exposure to sin, or become tainted themselves.

An insane sinhunter will often begin to see sin behind every action and in the heart of all around him. They may even turn against the temple of Saeduenical itself, claiming that the temple hides it's own sinners, and has destroyed clergy that do not follow it's ideals. This corruption will often force the sinhunter's superiors to hunt the sinhunter himself in an effort to bring him peace.

### **Baelae, Lord of Music**

#### **The Drummer**

#### **Intermediate Deity**

**Symbol:** A trumpet with banner

**Home Plane:** Arcadia

**Alignment:** Lawful Good

**Portfolio:** Music, Composition, Marches.

**Worshippers:** musicians, artists, dancers

**Cleric Alignments:** LG, NG, LN

**Domains:**

**Favored Weapon:** "The Songblade" (spear)



Baelae is one of the younger and weaker members of the Lords of Order. He is the musician of the Lords, and sets their feet and those of their followers to the beat of music and march. The Drummer is the patron of the organized musical arts - marches, choirs, chants and drumming. He watches over his followers with the practiced eye of a musician, working to keep them inspired and happy within the ranges of his composition. Baelae, with tolerance, will allow his musicians to learn of the less orderly musical and artistic forms as well in no small part because he believes they should be exposed to the other forms to learn the contrast and what makes his preferred music better. That he can't quite bear to lose all traces of his ex-lover Jislana is not something he will openly admit to any other Lord of Order.

His avatar, when he manifests is often that of a wiry youth with an easy smile and

spiky blond hair. He is often seen carrying a small drum or a set of sticks, and is generally dressed in a simplistic bardic tunic. Baelae's avatar can blend in with other musician easily save for one trait that stands out in a crowd. He habitually taps on things in rhythm, generally a complex pattern that one has to listen to for quite some time before it becomes apparent.

Baelae's temple is generally attached to the Bardic colleges such as the College of the Choir, and its clergy are often found lecturing or tending to the bruises and blisters the musicians gather. The temples may also be found in large cities, or near any central point of government - providing for the nobility or for governmental entertainment needs. Unusually there are also a few small monasteries that are restricted to only clergy or musicians seeking inspiration. These monasteries may be found in some of the most picturesque places on Ortho, overlooking valleys, seascapes, or mountain ranges.

All clergy members are required to understand the basics of musical theory, though they are not required to be performers. The clergy will also provide information regarding jobs and places to stay to bards that come through the area, especially those in favor or graduated from one of the Colleges. If desperate a bard in good standing may ask for a few nights grace under the Lord's roof as well.

Baelae's temple holds a few festivals. The first is Marching Day, when the bards of the land that follow this god will turn to their patrons and work to compose or reinforce their will. This day is the most martial of Baelae's ceremonies as it is in commemoration of the day that the Pantheon split. Music composed on this day is intended to reinforce or support the spread of Order. A heretic splinter group within the Temple will write an additional song on this day, generally dedicated to themes of lost love or love's betrayal.

The second festival that Baelae holds is a weeklong summer event of drumming circles and other musical events. The Colleges often hold this Week of Song as a time for students to demonstrate their skills, and make a little extra money on the side. Some colleges will even use the week's performances as something of a final exam before graduation. Instrument makers often see this week as their best week of the year to sell their wares.

The temple holds festivals in conjunction with every other temple of the Lords, in addition to their own. Baelae provides the entertainment or background music for each.

### **History/Relationships**

The drummer used to be a mortal bard, and worshipper of Jislana. It is her dancing that he set to music and the rhythms of her body that lit inspiration first in his heart. In her honor he crafted the first drum, and delighted her with the tones he pulled from it. The two became lovers and she set him at her side in the pantheon.

Unfortunately as the years passed, their love matured and then eventually soured. She discovered that he was too slow to change, and reluctant to take the risks she took. He discovered that she was simply too hard to pin down and rely upon. These differences could have been the basis of an understanding between them, as they would temper each other's extremes - but instead the two lovers quarreled. The last time they spoke to each other was when the pantheon split into the Lords of Order and the Lords of Chaos.

Baelae has not taken a lover since that time. It is suspected in the pantheon that he still loves Jislana, and in truth he loves just as much as he hates her. Baelae has not admitted this hurt to any of those in the pantheon, not Alae nor Ina.

### **Dogma**

Life follows a rhythm, you just have to be still and listen for it. Set your actions to a steady pace and things will get done, the music will steady your hand and speed your step.

### **The Planar Pantheon**

I think of the Lords of Law as something like the original Roman pantheon, which was so boring that the Romans eagerly adopted the gods of other cultures, which brings us to planar gods commonly worshipped on Ortho:

- St. Cuthbert (one of the most popular)
- Torm
- Koriel
- Paladine
- Chung Kuel (god of truth and testing)
- K'ung Fu-tzu
- Shang-ti

### **The Lords Of Chaos**

#### **Kabajij, Lord of Tricks**

#### **The Fox, Firedancer**

#### **Greater Deity**

**Symbol:** A fox tail on fire

**Home Plane:** Arborea

**Alignment:** Chaotic Good

**Portfolio:** Tricksters, Pranks, Fire, Inspiration.

**Worshipers:** inventors, rogues, pyromaniacs

**Cleric Alignments:** CG, NG, CN

**Domains:**

**Favored Weapon:** "Flamedance" (dagger)

#### **The Harmonium's Take:**

The Fox is the most clever of the Lords of Chaos. He is a tempter and seducer of the innocent and uncorrupted. Kabajij most favors corrupting those in a position of authority into misuse and abuse of their power. He will use deceptive visions to lead his victims astray. Those who fall to the lies of Kabajij may be redeemed, and should be brought to the temple of the Lord of Watchers for redemption.

#### **The Dark:**

Kabajij is in fact just as much the trickster the Harmonium claims he is and will target those in authority for his pranks. But generally he targets those who are already abusing their power. He is not a malevolent creature, though the Temple of Saeduenical and Rialondru would say otherwise. He is wise, clever, and generally has

the best of intentions for Ortho. He believes the Lords of Order have abused their power to an extent where for the safety of all they need to be removed from the pantheon at risk of stagnating the world.

**Dogma:**

Live. Laugh. Smile. Dream.

**Lanimin, Lord of Arts**

**The Sculptor, The Painted God**

**Lesser Deity**

**Symbol:** A paint brush and chisel

**Home Plane:** Limbo

**Alignment:** Chaotic Neutral

**Portfolio:** Creative Writing, Visual Arts, Invention.

**Worshippers:** painters, poets, writers

**Cleric Alignments:** CG, CN, CE

**Domains:**

**Favored Weapon:** "Stone Carver", (hammer)

**The Harmonium's Take:**

The lord of visions is a source of tainted inspiration and insanity. His presence is felt in his influence on the gifted young, and of artists. Lanimin is an open door to insanity for these vulnerable members of society. He is the father and root of lies. He encourages fantasy and reckless abandon - bereft of practicality. His followers swiftly become unstable and irrational bringing harm often to themselves and occasionally to others. A follower of Lanimin will starve before he finds fortune in his art. For their own safety and future security, those who are vulnerable to this Lord of Chaos should receive careful training and tend closely to the traditions of their art. No artist should be abandoned to Lanimin's harsh care.

**The Dark:**

Lanimin finds inspiration from pain as well as pleasure. Suffering and joy go hand in hand for this god, for without both an artist has nothing to channel his art with. Lanimin is not a comfortable god to follow, as he will allow his worshippers experiences that are not always for their own good. Lanimin dislikes the stagnation that the Lords of Order bring to his art. More so he has built up a great deal of resentment as he has seen many artists, with the skill and inspiration for greatness, be convinced to be little more than 'normal'. For every artist that is convinced to abandon his path by others, be it for his own good or their own comfort, Lanimin tattoos their name upon his skin in remembrance.

**Dogma:**

Life itself is your inspiration, live it. Do not fear what you see before you, take it within yourself, change it, and give forth a new vision.

**Chal, Lord of Ruin**

**The Scythe, The Reaper**

**Intermediate Deity**

**Symbol:**

**Home Plane:** Pandemonium

**Alignment:** Chaotic Neutral

**Portfolio:** Destruction, Revolution, Rebellion, Free Thought.

**Worshippers:** rebels, arsonists, anarchists

**Cleric Alignments:** CN, CE, CG

**Domains:**

**Favored Weapon:** "Sky-Torn", (scythe)

**The Harmonium's Take:**

Chal is a vicious and reckless rabble-rouser. Her followers will often attempt to infiltrate many levels of society in an attempt to destroy civilization from within. She will stop at nothing in her attempts to bring down the Lords of Order, civilized society and the Harmonium itself. Her lies are often found surfacing in the Schools of Ethics, where they are shown for what they truly are. She glories in the destruction of those things that are symbols to Ortho and is responsible for the destruction of the second moon. The temple of Saeduenical will kill clerics of Chal on sight, their souls are long damned and irretrievable.

**The Dark:**

Chal is the patron of free thought and not all of that thought is comfortable for the Harmonium to be exposed to. Questioning of authority is Chal's role, and she does actually glory in breaking down stagnant societies. Chal believes that a rebirth of society is good, refreshing to Ortho as a whole and necessary for continued existence. She was one of the first to step away from the pantheon of Ortho, believing that the old way was a failure.

**Dogma:**

What is built up must come down eventually. Questioning authority is not the same thing as destroying authority - both have their place. Take what works, and discard what doesn't.

**Namaneil, Lord of Filth**

**Lord of Vermin, The Ratfaced**

**Intermediate Deity**

**Symbol:** A fly

**Home Plane:** Abyss

**Alignment:** Chaotic Evil

**Portfolio:** Disease, Famine, Plague, Perversion.

**Worshippers:** evil druids, sadomasochists, serial killers

**Cleric Alignments:** CE, CN, NE

**Domains:**

**Favored Weapon:** "Pleasure", (whip)

**The Harmonium's Take:**

Namaneil is perversion in its highest form. She delights in seduction, torture, corruption and sickness. Worshippers of this goddess are sick in the mind, and often in the body, a reflection of their twisted goddess. Her worshippers will freely commit the most horrific of actions - killing and torturing repeatedly, when they aren't out spreading disease and corrupting the underage. The corrupted victims of Namaneil, and the clergy and worshippers of the goddess are often the subject of sinhunter missions. She has a fondness for serial killers and sadists.

**The Dark:**

The Harmonium is right.

**Dogma:**

Does it feel good? Do it.

**Ghanalim, Lord of Death****The Assassin, Quiet Death****Intermediate Deity****Symbol:** A bloody dagger**Home Plane:** Abyss**Alignment:** Chaotic Evil**Portfolio:** Betrayal, Murder, Assassination**Worshippers:** assassins, politicians**Cleric Alignments:** CE, NE, CN**Domains:****Favored Weapon:** "Blood Hunter", (dagger)**The Harmonium's Take:**

The Assassin God is a ruthless murderer, bent only on slaking his own bloodlust. He lives on betrayal and death. He is a resentful god, which uses shadows and secrecy to conceal his actions. His servants lie and seduce their way into the offices of great and powerful men, only to stab them in the dark. It is his hand that is behind the most horrific of betrayals, and the deaths of great leaders. Sarin's death, may he rest in peace, was a triumph for Ghanalim. The temple of Saeduenical will kill clerics of Ghanalim on sight, their souls are long damned and irretrievable.

**The Dark:**

He really didn't have much to do with the Sarin incident, but if he could have he probably would. Ghanalim is an assassin, and is just as nasty as the Harmonium believes. But he has a goal in mind. He resents the training and treatment he received at the hands of his mother, Saeduenical, and has spent the majority of his time since he joined the Lords of Chaos building up to an ultimate betrayal within her temple. He would like nothing more than to take her down. A small number of her clerics in truth belong to him, and he has infiltrated at least one of the highest order of the sinhunter sect.

**Dogma:**

Step quietly when your prey can hear, there is no rush. The betrayed earn their dues by their own complacency and trust. Never forgive a transgression, but choose your time for repayment carefully.

**Ina, Lord of Silence****Titles****Lesser Deity****Symbol:** A blank field**Home Plane:** Limbo/See Above**Alignment:** True Neutral**Portfolio:** Secrets, Things that are forbidden to speak of.**Worshippers:** scholars, spies**Cleric Alignments:** Any**Domains:****Favored Weapon:** "Subtlety" (dagger)**The Harmonium's Take:**

The Lords of Order and the Harmonium are unaware of Ina's dual membership in the Lords of Order and the Lords of Chaos.



**The Dark:**

The Lords of Chaos are aware that Ina is involved with the Lords of Order. They firmly believe that she is a double agent for them, and with her sponsorship of some of the more reasonable of their activities they have no reason to doubt her. Ina plays a dangerous game with her activities, attempting to keep just enough of the Lords of Chaos active on Ortho without alerting the Lords of Order to her duplicity. Ultimately she would see the pantheons reunited as the two halves of the pantheon need each other more than they think they do.

**Dogma:**

Keep silent on that which you know need not be spoken. Cry loudly that which you know needs be spoken. Not all fights can be won, and not all evils can be killed.

**Olinem, The Lord of Luck****The Blind Fool****Intermediate Deity****Symbol:**

**Home Plane:** Arborea

**Alignment:** Chaotic Good

**Portfolio:** Luck, Fools, Blind Trust, Love.

**Worshippers:** fools, lovers, rogues

**Cleric Alignments:** CG, CN, GN

**Domains:**

**Favored Weapon:** "Fickleness of Fate", (rapier)

**The Harmonium's Take:**

Fickle and unreliable. The Lord of Luck is never to be trusted or relied on and his worshippers are left vulnerable to bad luck and betrayal. He inspires his followers to acts of rebellion, foolishness, and to disregard their duties to their family and beliefs. He preys upon youthful fantasy, and seeks out juvenile delinquents.

**The Dark:**

The Lord of Luck is, for the most part, a god of good luck. Though he cannot shield his followers from all of the bad parts of life, if they simply trust in him he makes sure everything works out in the end. He is the god of love, particularly that of new love and teenage romance. The Lord of Luck sides with the Lords of Chaos due to his own nature, as opposed to any lingering resentment of the Lords of Order.

**Dogma:**

Love is the greatest pleasure in life, seek for it openly, and you will never go without. Trust in fate, a little sorrow now will bloom into joy later.

**Jislana, Lord of Dance****The Fleetfooted, Sanddancer****Lesser Deity**

**Symbol:** A swirl of footprints in sand

**Home Plane:** Arborea

**Alignment:** Chaotic Good

**Portfolio:** Dancing, Freedom, Martial Arts.

**Worshippers:** dancers, rebels, monks

**Cleric Alignments:** CG, NG, CN

**Domains:**

**Favored Weapon:** "Quick-Tap", (staff)

### **The Harmonium's Take:**

A juvenile delinquent and seducer of young men. The dancer is a temptress into rebellion and neglect of spiritual matters. She has little to no self control, and encourages the same flaws in her followers. Her followers refuse to acknowledge any lawful authority, are anarchists at heart, and contribute nothing to their communities. They are leeches. Her followers may be found among gypsies and other rootless peoples. She destroys authority and property if called to by her belief in freedom for all. She keeps no promise she makes and holds no bond sacred, acting in the name of misguided freedom.

### **The Dark:**

Jislana is not a goddess willing to be tied down to any one person, place, or cause - but that doesn't mean she does not care about anything but herself. She has a boundless energy that she gives to her causes and her actions on Ortho, but she rarely manages to stay long enough to see the action through entirely, leaving that to her followers or other powers allied with her. She is skilled at seeing to the heart of the matter before her, and at leading others into doing the right thing. The only cause she has never abandoned is an ongoing quest to destroy the very concept of slavery. In addition, after the split of the pantheon she holds a strong aversion to making promises, as the last one she made was to Baelae and it did not turn out well. Even now she regrets their quarrel and that she was not able to convince him to come with her.

### **Dogma:**

Dance. Live freely, and share your life with others. Do not suffer others to be shackled, by words, sorrows, or iron.

### **Forgotten Gods**

These gods are no longer remembered since the Lords of Law and Chaos consumed the world in their war.

### **The Forbidden Goddess**

**Our Lady of the Watch, Truthbearer**

**Lesser Deity**

**Symbol:**

**Home Plane:**

**Alignment:**

**Portfolio:**

**Worshippers:**

**Cleric Alignments:**

**Domains:**

**Favored Weapon:**

<move to religion>

As for the four first adventurers, I like the idea of the Druid being female. Maybe she IS LN and is slipping towards True Neutral. She becomes, over a long amount of time, more accepting of chaos. Maybe SHE is the one that falls, like the biblical Lillith from the Garden of Eden, towards The Empire of Pan Thaera, and becomes a protector of the chaos ridden people who still search and fight for their right to freedom. She becomes like a goddess to them when she dies, it would be great if the Druid was

elven for a longer life span to play this all out in. She could become the Forbidden Goddess, the one that you worship in the darkness, in corners, in secret, amongst the Harmonium population. And maybe she is exhalted in The Empire of Pan Thaera as the Forbidden Goddess. Worshipped in the open, statues and temples openly shown to all to worship her.

The Elven Lady's name was originally Morgranhu, which may or may not be wiped clean of the books of the Harmonium at this point. She was a Lawful Neutral Druid, and from the Heavens She was sent by her deity Lao Tzu to bring forth the truth to those that seek it... the truth of the True Harmonium Way.

The Elven Lady was over a hundred years when She first arrived in Ortho. Yes, if a man is lucky he might be able to live to be seventy, and yet She was over a hundred years when She first came here. We know that She was one with Nature and all things within Nature, including humans, dwarves, orcs, and even beholders (insert any race I have left out here). Yes, I know that the beholders weren't made by the God who made Ortho, but they have become a part of this world, and therefore a part of the Nature of Ortho itself. She was one with the trees, the breeze that swayed them, the ground that bore them, the sun and rain that fed them and even the parts that had fallen to the ground to die. She was one with the animals too, did you know that? Her laws were the Laws of Nature.

At first when She came to Ortho, She stayed where she was, in Voll on the Empire of Iathra. But She soon longed to see what else this world had to offer. So She left claiming to the Harmonium that She would chart the uncharted lands, and get to know the peoples of this world. In Her way, she left, on her own, even though the Harmonium sent others with Her. She quickly evaded them by turning herself into a bird. Yes, a bird, for She was powerful indeed. She knew that the Harmonium would punish Her for this, but She had the True Sight just as the wisest of the Sage's do. She knew what would happen in the future, did you know that? She knew that what She did, she did for the Harmonium's best interest. She saw the corruption that would spread throughout the Harmonium, and She was not about to let her knowledge die with her.

She first went to Heka, and learned from the savage people there, and in turn taught them the ways of Harmony. Most of them just laughed at Her. They laughed at her because they couldn't see what She saw. But, there were some, some who believed that there could be Harmony in their land. Some even saw how the world could be changed to become more Harmonious, though they were few in number.

Secondly, She went to Motmurk, to the orcs. At first they wanted to hunt Her, but she created a storm that was so terrible that they saw Her power. They knew they could not kill the Elven Lady, for they would lose too many in the process. It took a few years, but eventually some of the elders of their clans came to her and asked why She was there. When She told them of the Harmony that could be theirs, they too scoffed at Her. But slowly She was able to show a few of the elders the Truth, and that was enough for Her.

She then went on to Three Rivers. It was there that the people listened to Her the most attentively. She, in turn, created a beautiful Garden there, in the middle of the city. Some say that if you know what to look for, you can even find Her image within the Garden. But you mind your tongue around the rest of the people here! We don't want the Harmonium to desecrate that Holy place. Many that heed Her call go there

on secret pilgrimages.

She in time made Her way to the Flamedance Mountains. She tried to reason with the beholders, and though they agreed with the gist of what She said, they obeyed a higher power than Her. She was actually sent packing! Believe it or not. Beholders are not the kind to trifle with, She learned very quickly, but at the cost of Her own life she felt She had to try.

When She went to Han, the people there were so caught up in their businesses and culture to pay much attention. But again, there were a few that listened, and that was enough for Her.

She went sadly to the Elven Shaar, soon before the Elves of Chaos there were to be conquered completely. She tried reasoning with them, but most of them wrote Her off as a nutty Lady that had no idea what she was talking about. Though some did listen, and She knew that those few would go to a good place when they died. That was enough for Her.

Lastly She came to the Chaos ridden Pan Thaera. Yes, the Elven Lady even set foot upon our land. She tried talking to the people of Pan Thaera, and She was not well received, to say the least. But it was here that She knew She was needed the most, so She spent the rest of her life here. Living in seclusion, She always had an open door for those curious about this strange Lady from the north.

Slowly, year after year, the Harmonium conquered the rest of the world. It was the Second Unification that brought Her to Pan Thaera. As the years wore on, and those that were young when She first came here became adults and saw that She didn't seem to age. They became more curious about Her, and more came to Her door. They were seeing first hand what the corruption of the Harmonium could bring, and so they sought the Truth of the Elven Lady.

She could only tell them what She knew to be true. That the Truth of the Harmonium was to bring harmony with a peaceful hand to these lands, not with a fist. True Harmony, peace among fellow man, the good of the individual people to create the good of the whole, She spoke. She elaborated that it was in every person's nature to long for peace on their own terms, but that sometimes you have to look to the things similar in people to find peace. Not to focus on the differences of the individual. Those differences would always be there, but they could become strengths if a society focused on the common goal of peace. Peace was to be found on the inside of one's soul, and then to be passed on to another's soul. In that manner, a True Peace could be found within a society.

At the end of Her days, at the time of the Second Trial of Order, She started speaking of a Holy place that She would create with the help of Lao Tzu. She would not tell anyone where it was, the journey was part of the process of learning the Truth for ones self, and that one must bring one nut. She told the people, who by now were large in number, that She would not leave them in spirit... that Her spirit would be found every once in a while in Nature, if one were to look hard enough. And so She left the people of Pan Thaera to find where Her deity wanted her to quest for.

Now, somewhere in this world of ours, there is a place where you can find the ultimate Truth. No one who has found it has ever spoken of it, but they come back a

changed person. Sometimes people will say that a snowflake, leaf, raindrop or even ladybug will fall upon them, giving them an epiphany of what She was, and how She saw the world. Other times, a lone hunter in the wild will run into an animal that will speak to them, which are called a Totems, and tell them wondrous things of how life could be, if only True Peace was found. All these people come back changed forever. They carry within them an inner peace that is rare to see. That, my son, is why we call her the Forbidden Goddess.

This is loosely what the Dark of the Forbidden Goddess is. Please tell me if there are changes to make, or if you have things to add.

The Facts of the Dark of it for DM's:

Name: Mogranhu

Alignment: LN

Epic level Druid/Chosen of Lao Tzu

Deity: Lao Tzu

Was one of the First Four to come to Ortho.

Told the Harmonium that she would chart the uncharted lands and check out the people of each land. They wanted her to go with a group, and she ditched the group by turning into a bird and flying until her wings wouldn't work. The others went back to the Harmonium and told them of what she did. They were furious and probably erased her name from the history books.

She traveled alone all over the world and tried to tell them of the True Harmonium Ways.

At the Second unification she left to do this.

She ends up in Pan Thaera, at the time of the Second Trial of Order.

She goes off into the wild to create a mystical Holy Druid's Circle. She creates a Human sized Sensory stone with a hole in the middle of it. When a pilgrim brings a nut to the Druid's Circle, and stick it into the hole, it will re-awaken the stone and show them of the slip of the layer of Arcadia into the plane of Mechanus, and what consequently happened after that, up until the point that she "died". All over the stone it is written in every language on Ortho: "Put the nut in the hole in the stone, and watch the Truth come to light".

After she did this, she called one of every animal to her (and believe me, they came from all over) and gave each one of them a part of herself, creating the first True Totems on Ortho. They left with a high intelligence and wisdom, and the innate ability to talk through telepathy. Mogranhu asked her deity for this and being a chosen one of her deity, Lao Tzu answered by giving her the power to do this.

The deity Lao Tzu then asked Mogranhu to give the rest of her essence to all of the

elements, and all of the different more minute parts of Nature. Now I am not saying that EVERY part of Nature, like every leaf in all of Ortho, but a little bit into each part of Nature, here and there spread around the world of Ortho, mainly in Pan Thaera. So every once in a while in the fall, a leaf will land on a woodsmen's shoulder and he will get an epiphany of Mogranhu's Truth, and in fact her deity's Truth. The leaf could be a raindrop, a snowflake or even a ladybug. Anything you can think of that is a vestment of Nature itself, besides animals... that part was already covered by the Totems.

So in short, she became minutely part of Nature on Ortho in every way. I don't know if she would have been given any DR by Lao Tzu, but the fact that she gave a part of her soul to everything in Nature, make's her a goddess in the eyes of many around the world, whether or not she is seen as a good goddess or an evil one (which would be because the Harmonium got word of her and poisoned people's minds from the truth).

goddess of fey

**XXX**

**Titles**

**Deity Ranking**

**Symbol:**

**Home Plane:**

**Alignment:**

**Portfolio:**

**Worshipers:**

**Cleric Alignments:**

**Domains:**

**Favored Weapon:**

Introductory information.

Church information.

Festivals.

Conclusion.

**History/Relationships:**

**Dogma:**

**Clergy and Temples:**

the beholder Great Mother (I changed my mind)  
Gruumsh, Corellon Larethian, and so on

goddess of agriculture

**XXX**

**Titles**

**Deity Ranking**

**Symbol:**

**Home Plane:**

**Alignment:**  
**Portfolio:**  
**Worshippers:**  
**Cleric Alignments:**  
**Domains:**  
**Favored Weapon:**

Introductory information.

Church information.

Festivals.

Conclusion.

**History/Relationships:**

**Dogma:**

**Clergy and Temples:**

god of storms and weather

**XXX**

**Titles**

**Deity Ranking**

**Symbol:**

**Home Plane:**

**Alignment:**

**Portfolio:**

**Worshippers:**

**Cleric Alignments:**

**Domains:**

**Favored Weapon:**

Introductory information.

Church information.

Festivals.

Conclusion.

**History/Relationships:**

**Dogma:**

**Clergy and Temples:**

androgynous god/goddess of magic

**XXX**

**Titles**  
**Deity Ranking**  
**Symbol:**  
**Home Plane:**  
**Alignment:**  
**Portfolio:**  
**Worshippers:**  
**Cleric Alignments:**  
**Domains:**  
**Favored Weapon:**

Introductory information.

Church information.

Festivals.

Conclusion.

**History/Relationships:**

**Dogma:**

**Clergy and Temples:**

**Worship in Society**  
**Patron Deities, Sins and Penance**  
**List of Gods by Name**  
**Chapter 6: History**  
**From the Beginning**  
**By Event and Time cycle**

**The Riven Elves of Bluphoril have a myth of the creation of their world of origin, which is called Ortho:**

It's been centuries since the Riven dwelled in their homelands, before they were forced to flee through the moon gates to the elemental plane of Air before the Harmonium pogroms, but the oldest of them remember it well. They think back in their daily reverie and remember the pattern of stars, the four wanderers, the twin suns, the feel of trees and soil instead of bare rock and empty air. They think of their tall towers and hidden groves, of their mad delights and cruel fantasies before the coming of Man. They think, most of all, of the lost moon. At times they are moved to tell their story to the younger generation, so that it will not be entirely lost.

This is the story they tell.

In the beginning there was only Faerie, wild and green, chaos and dream, reverie and twilight, all of it created by Rhiannon, the Mother. In the sky was a shining silver moon, the eye of the Goddess and the eternal sign of Her presence.

Then came the Lords of Law.



Sometimes they blame themselves, speaking of forbidden research into other planes. Occasionally they'll blame the orcs, or the dwarves, or the beholders. Very rarely they'll blame the curious pixies, always getting into trouble. Sometimes they blame the coming of the second sun. Usually they blame the humans.

They don't know how humans first came to Faerie. Perhaps it was a mistake on Rhiannon's part, or perhaps the Lords of Law sent them in as an invasion force. At first they were nothing of particular note: a little stupider and clumsier than elves, more short-lived of course, but primitives with only the most basic understanding of tools.

Then something happened. One day the humans were living in caves and bathing in mud, the next they were using the mud to make entire cities out of mud brick, writing on mud tablets, using "mud technology" to do things that had never occurred to the elves or any other race. And they started to expand.

The elves only took note when then the humans began turning their forests into mud in which to plant their filthy crops rather than being content to harvesting what the Mother chose to provide. This was obviously taking the human love of mud much too far. The elves fought back, fully intending to drive the humans back into their muddy caves where they belonged.

When it seemed like the last human was lying down in the mud in one position or another, aided by an elven spear point, a lone elven soldier heard a strange, unearthly series of syllables being read from a mud tablet he had forgotten to confiscate. Words of power, apparently, for a rift forced itself into the space of Faerie.

The moon shattered.

Shards of lunar rock fell onto the face of the world, devastating elven civilization and leaving vast areas of treeless waste. The voice of the Goddess fell silent. Eight androgynous, identical beings, taller than trees, appeared before the elves and their human prisoners. "We are the Lords of Law," they said simultaneously. "We have been called. We have come. We accept your offering of this world."

Faerie was no more. There was only Ortho.

The following centuries were troubled times. Humans, dwarves, beholders, and orcs, aided by the Lords of Law, spread throughout the world, building mighty cities in the treeless wastes (which the Mother's lunar touch made more fertile than ever before).

Using shards of lunar rock to focus their power, a few elven nations managed to open moon-paths into other planes, intending to found new Faeries on other worlds. This is remembered as the First Flight, and the Riven of Bluphoril do not know where their lost siblings went.

Other elves were determined to fight back. Working together for centuries, they learned of counterparts to the Lords of Law: the Lords of Chaos. Together they summoned them, and the cosmic war over the world of Ortho began.

Much later, it seemed that the elves and the Lords of Chaos they had sworn themselves to might be winning when a small group of mostly humans calling

themselves the Knights of Harmony managed, almost single-handedly, to conquer the world.

With the humans now enraged, the Second Flight began. Some elves are thought to have found the moonbeam paths to where their lost siblings had vanished, or perhaps they just died. The Riven only know what happened to themselves, and of the city they founded in the clouds, swearing off Chaos and Law both in the hope of finally being left alone.

<Move to History>

I meant to say 'just keep in mind that Pertalos 'drove' the Sahuagin south'...The Merfolk (a gender neutral term I prefer to Mermen) are also there (here and everywhere)...I figure that there existed an animosity between Sahuagin and Merfolk in ancient times (as per standard D&D) and that when Pertalos rid the Wolf Straits of the Sea Devils, he helped both his people and the Merfolk (at least those in the area)...The Seaborn are you're baby and their links to the Merfolk are not in question (unless you want them to be)...

My take on the War Beneath the Waves, had the Harmonium allying the Sahuagin and Merfolk (and the Eyes-of-the-Deep, but that's been nixed due to Primus's opinion on the E-o-t-D's) against the Sea Elves and Tritons...This part of the Great War of Unification is, as yet, unchronicled, but strikes me as an important part of Ortho's History given the amount of water that's out there...

### **The Age of Deep Darkness** ***The beginning to Harmonium -30***

Before the Harmonium, before the human were much more than a worrisome pest in the wilds, elves ruled most of the continent of "Keln" (excepting the beholder lands). With the rise of the Iirondan city-states, elven civilization was split between those of the north and those of the south, and as the human cities and farms continued to grow, the elves had to retreat even from that.

There was no malice in humanity's expansion, but elves and humans simply couldn't live in the same sorts of lifestyles, and humans were growing too quickly for the elves to keep up.

In the north, they were mostly content to retreat, to live among the halflings and other races in the jungles of Hazhkan, to learn to use the monsters of the swamps to protect them from unwelcome intruders. Some retreated still futher into the wilderness of Xaric and Motmurg, where they came into conflict with the orcs and dwarves.

In the south, though, they fought back against the humans. They gathered together in the cold extremities of the Twin Shaars and decided they would be pushed no further. They built sleek, fast vessels with sharp, deadly prows: ships made for hunting other ships. They became pirates. They discovered something unexpected; piracy paid well. Piracy paid very well, especially among the fat merchants of southern Iironda.

The isles clustered around the twin Shaars were filled with sharp coral reefs and rocks like unexpected teeth. Only the elves knew the impossibly twisty routes that enabled a ship to get there safely. The sheer, towering Flamedance Mountains prevented overland pursuit, so for a long time the lightning-fast elven ships were impossible for angry human merchants to follow, and the southern elves grew very wealthy indeed.

At last, after many centuries of this, the wizards of Han developed magic capable of blasting a route into the eastern Shaar. The rich elven pirates had grown complacent and weren't ready for a direct assault. After several decades of war, the elves were forced to flee to their cousins in the western Shaar. Then the elves grew mean.

No one today knows where the elves developed sorcery capable of transforming all the soldiers of the invading Hannish fleet into ghouls, or of melting the bones of every citizen in the colony of Anya newly built in the western Shaar. But while the Iirondan armies kept the western Shaar at a great price, they were stopped there. They would not press any further until centuries later, during the time of the Harmonium.

The rulers of the last remaining Elven Shaar continued to grow wealthy through piracy, but now they enriched themselves still further on the backs of those they had enslaved through necromancy and fouler transmutations. The capital of the Elven Shaar became known as the City of Screaming Flesh, and the delights the elven lords took at the expense of other races were more than physical, cutting into the very souls.

Still, it is true that not all of the southern elves forsook the ways of their ancestors. The flashy atrocities of the nobles did not speak for every elf in the Shaar. Throughout the peninsula there were isolated communities who paid little attention to what went on in the gilded ports. Still, in the eyes of the outside world the fact that they did not trouble themselves to destroy the sea barons made them accomplices.

While in Iironda the excesses of the chaotic elves turned them toward the magic of Law, the opposite happened in the islands of Thaera. Though no less affected by the elves' depredations, their solution was not to counter the elves, but to emulate them. They researched the same forces and sought to do the elves one better, becoming one with the powers of Chaos by intermating with them. The half-demon (and eladrin and slaad) sorcerers of Thaera created an even stranger empire, as piratic as the elves but open to the outside world. Where the elves turned in on themselves, the Confederacy of Thaera turned outward, incorporating not just elven ideas but ideas from every people they encountered. During the Harmonium Expansion, the elves would learn to curse the legacy of Renaldo Zee.

Before the coming of the Way of Harmony, the land was conquered by demons. The strong held all the power, and Chaos held sway. To the south, ruled the Empire of Chaos, worshippers of the Lords of Chaos. To the north, ruled the Demon God Alzrius whose attempts to slide the world into his layer were succeeding. Lycanthropes ran wildly through the woods, elves hunted their human prey with cruel laughter and spears, and the strong profited from the weak. This was the world that Prince Romhel of Voll was born into. One on the cusp of sliding into the Abyss itself.

## **Realization**

### *Harmonium –30 to Harmonium 0, the Founding*

*Prince Romhel*, the founder of the Harmonium, grew into his rank in this time, which is reckoned from the date of his birth. He was a knight of noble blood dedicated to all the Lords of Law in an abstract sense. Under his leadership he formed the original Knights of Harmony which consisted of his closest allies and friends.

*Jhary of Heka*, a wizard of great renown. He was formally a member of the order of the Keepers of Balance, the Ninth Cabal. They were attacked by forces from without and within and as the sore survivor of the attack, Jhary turned to advocating Order. Throughout his time serving with the Knights Jhary concealed his true alignment. Though he truly was dedicated to law, his personal inclinations were too selfish to be called anything but evil.

*Anju*, a monk from the islands of Pan Thaera. She led a slave rebellion of her own island to win her people freedom. She was a great believer in personal discipline conquering all.

*Mogranhu*, an elven druid and priestess from the northern lands who believed in harmony between civilization and nature. Now primarily remembered as the inspiration for an ornamental garden in the capital city, her actual beliefs have been twisted to serve the needs of civilization.

These four adventurers formed the basis of the Knights of Harmony, forging a destiny that few would have guessed would have the wide ranging effect that it did. Their goal at first was a simple one, "to rid the country of Chaos and bring peace to the land." Many adventurers aspire to similar schemes, but unlike most adventurers, the Knights of Harmony actually succeeded. They defeated each of the warlords and monsters who had been feuding since the death of the previous king and installed Romhel on the throne of Voll. And once they'd brought peace and harmony to that country, they set out to do the same to other countries. And after those, still more.

The ascension of Romhel to the throne of Voll is celebrated today as the Founding, and is considered to be the Harmonium's true beginning.

## **The Expansion**

### *The Founding to Harmonium 100*

The Expansion marked the initial drive of Romhel and his Knights to forge alliances to drive back the Abyssal Lord Alzrius and the Lords of Chaos.

Iathra was the first trouble to be dealt with. A temporary alliance with the Empire of Thaera, and the orcs of Mormurk brought an end to the ambitions of Alzrius in regards to Ortho. At first, the conquered Iathran lands were shared between the newly allied states of Motmurk and Voll.

With peace established in the north and west, the newly created Harmonium order was able to concentrate on defeating the Empire of Pan Thaera to the south, which had never been especially unified anyway. They were weakened after holding their side of the battle with Iathra, and their worship of the Lords of Chaos was something the Harmonium could no longer allow to continue. There was worry that Alzrius or something of a similar nature would attempt to use that worship as a base to invade

the weakened world. Pan Thaera crumpled under the dual military assault.

The last truly disgraceful evil that Prince Romhel felt needed to be removed, to assure the peace his Knights sought were the elves southeast of the Flamedance Mountains. They had long been a thorn in the side of both Pan Thaera and Han the Gem-Studded, and were known for their acts of cruelty. An alliance was forged with the nearby, and lawful, beholder nations and the elves were soon pacified. This particular war lasted decades and anti-elven sentiment rose worldwide until the war expanded to include cordoning all elves into camps for reeducation. Even those with partial elven blood found themselves unwelcome at the height of the war.

The Knights had become quite famous, legends in their own time, and so they began to exert their political power. As they, with their allies, vanquished evil after evil, the kings of Ortho swore allegiance to them. Wherever a king would not pledge himself, the Knights found a noble that would, and supported their claim to the throne.

It was hard work, and sometimes the Knights even found themselves fighting others that were good and lawful. Romhel was saddened by these misunderstandings; how could two peoples, both essentially good and lawful, fight each other over what in the end were small details? It seemed to the Knights that only when a people were united could they ever truly be at peace, and they wanted the peace on Ortho to last, even after their time had passed. But how could they ensure that the countries of their world wouldn't squabble and fight among themselves ever again?

In time the Knights of Harmony united all of the planet, even the so-called "monster races" such as the beholders, under one banner, and a new kind of government was formed so that the peace they created would last forever. This government they called the Harmonium. To them it was more than a government; it was an institution whose foremost function was the resolution of disputes by means of a strong and robust chain of command. When Prince Romhel became the first Composer of the newly dubbed city of Harmony's Glory south of Keln'in, he decreed that no lawful god should be set above any other, just as no lawful citizen should be set above any other. Furthermore, he decreed that the religious and military powers would work hand in hand with the governors of the world to ensure the harmony they created would be perfect for everyone, whether they knew it or not.

The other nations were assimilated more or less peacefully in the next few centuries, though individual ethnic areas occasionally rebelled. Anju's island ironically rebelled most often, despite the Harmonium's liberal use of the hero's name and creed. The rebels used her name, too, for the opposite purpose, though eventually they lost. The druid-led nomads of the north also resisted for a long time. The ancient empire ruled by the city-state Han embraced the war against the elves and found the Harmonium ideals easily adaptable to its bureaucratic religion and often obscure philosophical notions. Much of their culture became incorporated into elements of the Harmonium creed today.

### **The First Harmony**

*Harmonium 100 to 200*

Construction of the Empire and the Harmonium's word spread. The beholders built roads across the world, and trade flourished. The harmonium became the primary advisory force throughout the world, and begins to ally with the Temples.

## **The Schism**

*Harmonium 201 to 205*

The Harmonium comes to criticize itself in the first major reformation of policies and methodology. The alliance of the Harmonium with the Temples of Lawful Evil tendencies comes into question causing a civil war. Peace returns with the mediation of a Lawful Neutral group. (Needs more details here!)

It was a hundred years into the First Harmony, during the reign of Composer Julhien the Reformer, that cracks in the relationship between the devotees of the Nine and those of the Seven began to widen.

Up to then the priests of both the Seven and the Nine had coexisted relatively peacefully, a representative of each standing on each side of the Composer acting as advocate for mercy or prosecutor of the weak. Julhien was a man, however, of Ideas, and he was content to let few things simply stand without examination.

The government of Ortho in Julhien's time consisted primarily of the Composer, who was head of the Harmonium; the Pontificator of the Lords of Law, the Pontificator of the Seven, and the Pontificator of the Nine, who together represented the official religions of Ortho; and representatives of the four quarters of the world. Together, these eight people made up the Octave Council. Each of the four Quarters ruled over a measure of Ortho's 17 provinces, the Composer controlled the military, and the Pontificators controlled the churches.

Julhien changed this balance, expanding the power of the Composer far beyond what it had ever been before. To Julhien, who saw everything in military terms, everything could be seen as in some way under military jurisdiction. Schools, hospitals, roads, ports, temples: everything had some military value and posed some military threat. He began slowly at first, posting military "advisors" in schools and churches, but within five years he had taken most public organizations over in all but name. Then he turned to the process of reforming them.

He was not alone in his ambitions, of course. Movers and shakers within all the departments of the Council quickly realized Julhien's power and sought to take advantage of it. Engineers came to him with plans for better roads, scholars came with plans for better schools, doctors came with plans for better hospitals, sailors came with plans for better ships and ports, and clerics came with plans for better churches. And, naturally, most of these plans contradicted one another.

Julhien soon tired of the clamorous supplicants. Citing the words of an ancient Iirondian philosopher, he declared that Harmony could never be achieved amidst contradiction. The strategy that had served Ortho for the past 100 years, since the reign of Composer Angelus the Even-Handed - the idea that truth could be found by reconciling conflicting views - he called poison and the seed of civil war. "As there can only be one truth," he said, "Only one mouth can speak it. Only one hand can execute it. Oneness comes only from oneness; multiplicity only leads to division."

To make his point, Julhien unilaterally banished the Pontificator of the Nine from the Octave Council. For the Council, who had watched with growing unease as the Composer slowly usurped all of their authority, this was the last straw. Quite a lot of power can be claimed in the name of security, but dismissing one of his own was something a Councilor *may not* do, even one of Julhien's charisma. If the Pontificator

of the Nine could lose his station, any of them could. Of the Councilors, only the Pontificator of the Seven remained at Julhien's side.

In the name of the gods of Law, the remaining two Pontificators urged soldiers to defect from Julhien's army, and began to form an army of their own made up of clerics and layfolk of the various churches. This had a very real effect on military morale, as the Pontificator of the Seven lacked the confidence of some two thirds of the troops. Yet the discipline of Julhien's military was such that most of the soldiers remained even with the threat of a loss of clerical magic and a place in the afterlife.

Undeterred, the Four Quarters stirred up revolts in the more rebellious provinces, promising better conditions than they had felt under Julhien's rule. Then the civil war began in earnest.

Iathra, Voll, Kelmen, and Heka stood unapologetically with Julhien and the Seven. Thaera, the Isles, Motmurk, Ruko, and Hazhkan joined the other Councilors; regardless of how they felt about the Council or the Lords of the Nine, they were eager to rebel against the military, who represented the Harmonium authority to them as nothing else did.

Other provinces, such as Iironda, were torn in half. The Province of the Isles was torn between the mainland region of Verinshen and the chaotic isles themselves, while Three-Rivers and the whole South of Motmurk were similarly torn, brother against brother and sister against sister.

For the first time in a hundred years Ortho was plunged into war. For five long years Julhien's hardheaded troops fought pirates, clerics, and guerillas in places believed long since pacified.

More than four years into the fighting, a group of sorcerers from Heka met with prominent leaders and merchants of Northern Thaera, Han, and elsewhere in the beholder capital of Coldash. The beholders had mostly stayed out of the war; though one of the Four Quarters was a beholder, the war was still seen in the province of Keln'in as a human, orcish, and dwarven affair. But the conflict had gone on long enough, the beholders felt, and many others agreed. Together they drafted a proposal and delivered it to the leaders of both warring parties. With soldiers of both camps beginning to rebel due to dwindling supplies and general weariness, the generals agreed to discuss terms. After months of negotiations, the treaty was signed.

The terms were these: henceforth, planar lords were not to be worshipped by citizens of the Harmonium (who included, under the treaty, all of Ortho), except as intermediaries for the "true gods." Both the Pontificator of the Seven and the Pontificator of the Nine were to lose their positions in the Octave Council; these Pontificators, in exchange, would be given new positions as the newly created Councilor of Education and Councilor of Public Health and Safety. In this way the civilian power of the Composer would be checked, but religion on Ortho would be undivided, resting under the authority of a single High Pontificator.

For the rebel provinces, this compromise solved none of the problems they had with the Harmonium military, but nobody asked them what they thought and they were too tired of fighting to continue warring against the now united military, religious, and provincial leaders.

Julhien continued to rule as Composer for another twenty years, and though his authority was more limited than before he made the most of it. While he continued to push for reforms at every level, the foremost achievement of his later years was institutionalizing the philosophy of oneness, which would become the central ethic of the Harmonium in the centuries to come.

### **The Second Harmony**

*Harmonium 206 to 297*

A period of Reformation and reestablishment. The new provinces of the Empire were laid out, to be run by the local 'triad' of power: State, Temple, and Harmonium. The provinces in some cases deliberately mangle old lines of the traditional nations. The Harmonium adopts military-esque hierarchy for its provincial regulation.

### **The War of Iron**

*Harmonium 297 to 306*

Continued rebellions in remote areas, and the dedication of some populations to holding onto their superstitions prompt the Harmonium to advise the Council of Ortho (on which their head holds a seat) to seek out the source of this rebellion and evil. The Planes are discovered and the first assault on the Abyss occurs and fails miserably. (Hence the name of the War considering the tanar'ri allergy to iron.)

### **Colonization**

*Harmonium 306 to 510*

The Harmonium spreads, establishing a colony of like believers in Sigil and around the Planes, expanding their belief and power base. Ortho sees an influx of resources from the planes, though there is very strict control on the influx of people and ideas from outside of Ortho.

### **Recent Timeline**

*Harmonium 300 (Hashkar -74)*

Corwin of Anchor, the last survivor of Ortho's invasion of the Abyss, becomes the first Harmonium soldier known to set foot in Sigil. She remains trapped there for a time before discovering a portal to Arcadia.

*Harmonium 306 (Hashkar -68)*

The Harmonium sets up shop in Sigil. Grateful to have someone to take over law enforcement, the Guvners give the Hardheads the City Barracks. (Factol's Manifesto, pg 70)

*Harmonium 307 (Hashkar -67)*

An ambitious Harmonium factor learns of the blasphemous beliefs of the Athar and leads a full-scale attack on the Shattered Temple. The factor is mazed by the Lady of Pain, but discrete guerilla raids continue against the Athar for a long time. Eventually, the Harmonium gives up and takes its case to the Hall of Speakers, gaining the Fated and Mercykillers as allies against the Lost. (FM, pg 8)



*Harmonium 308 (Hashkar -66)*

Some of the Hardheads' allies send them to pacify the Doomguard, who have been a thorn in their sides since the Great Upheaval. The Sinkers conquer the Armory, hole themselves inside it, and open war between the Harmonium and Doomguard continues in Sigil's streets for months. The Lady of Pain does not choose to interfere, although the dabus repair roads and structures damaged in the fighting. The Doomguard finally calls off hostilities when the other factols threaten to revoke their faction status. The Doomguard swears a blood oath to "never again instigate a war in the Cage." In exchange, the Sinkers get to keep the Armory. (FM, pg 40)

*Harmonium 350 (Hashkar -24)*

The Harmonium factol is assassinated by a few members of the newly founded Xaositect faction. The cause of death is an hourglass the Chaosfolk launched at his brain-box. Whether this was deliberate homicide or the unintended result of some bizarre prank is unclear, and probably doesn't matter. (FM, pg 152)

*(Although I notice Gerzel has Intagril introducing spelljamming to the Harmonium.*

*Well, that's no problem. Intagril had it first, but Ortho still needed to contact the mercane to get helms of their own. We should probably push my dates back earlier, though, as I think Gerzel's history would have spelljammers being used in the War of Iron.*

*Yes. Basically during the cold war both sides were researching and looking into spell jamming technologies. They might even have made strides towards producing their own lesser versions, at least enough to get the mercane's attention to sell them some helms. Still spelljamming is one of those things that the Integral government held back when telling Ortho what they had which is more to the point.)*

*Year of Harmony 392 (Hashkar 18)*

The mercane Iscurus of the cartel known as the Ring gains an audience with Ortho's council and offers to sell spelljamming technology. The council accepts.

*Year of Harmony 393 (Hashkar 19)*

The first Harmonium spelljammer, the *Consensus*, makes an expedition to the nearest planet. They return, reporting that the world is uninhabitable.

*Year of Harmony 394 (Hashkar 20)*

The *Consensus* makes an expedition to the next closest planet. Which also seems uninhabitable.

*Year of Harmony 395 (Hashkar 25)*

At last, the *Consensus* finds an inhabitable planet and forms a small research colony on it.

*Harmonium 429 (Hashkar 56)*

The "Empyrean Harmonies" vogue among the Believers of the Source draws the ire of the Hardheads, and covert bloodshed rages between the Great Foundry and the City Barracks. (FM, pg 18)

*Harmonium 449 (Hashkar 76)*

A young githzerai named Omar rises rapidly through the Harmonium ranks. (FM, pg 114)

*Harmonium 450 (Hashkar 77)*

The githzerai Omar is named factol of the Harmonium. The newly elected factol announces that the Harmonium's mission is now complete. The faction will disband throughout the planes and the City Barracks must now be shut down. The lesser factors arrest him, and in the course of the trial Omar reveals his true allegiance to the Revolutionary League. Omar is swiftly "made short work of," and the next factol announces that of course everyone knew what Omar was all along; they were only stringing him along so he'd unintentionally reveal information about his confederates. (FM, pg 114)

*Harmonium 500 (Hashkar 127)*

Publication of The Factol's Manifesto

*Harmonium 503 (Hashkar 130)*

The Faction War.

*Harmonium 504 (Postbellum 1)*

The Harmonium officially abandons Sigil, leaving law enforcement in the Cage to the Sodkillers, Sons of Mercy, and the Planes-Militant.

*Harmonium 510 (Postbellum 7)*

Today

// Current plot points, rephrase

I say leave the triad of authority still in place... \*but\* make the stability of that triad into a current plot line for the world. The Harmonium in the planes have recently proven they have power and some considerable influence - so the triad is at risk of getting destabilized. The colonists might be getting a tad restless, and the non-Ortho Harmonium members might be asking to be granted Ortho citizenship... and we all know what happens when colonists get restless and righteous about their 'rights'.

## **Chapter 7: Organizations**

### **By Group**

The keepers of balance, the legendary Ninth Cabal, had been attacked and destroyed - first by the lich Karvet, and then betrayed from within by their own (*Jhary*).

The Ants

## **The Burrowdogs**

The Harmonium has controlled the entirety of the planet of Ortho for more than five hundred years. They write the histories, present the methods of law and proper culture, control all trade and travel, even dictate matters of religion to exclude all deities not acceptable to their creed. Their grip on authority is absolute.

Yet there are still rebels.

Some dissidents come from outside - Anarchists and other planars who seek to create unrest on the Harmonium's home ground. Others are native born, individuals who for whatever reason have chosen to oppose the Harmonium and its works. Against the combined forces of an entire world, these rebels are mere irritants, powerless - but still despised by the government for their actions. Among the most effective of these groups are the ones known as the Burrowdogs.

The Burrowdogs are not an organized group, but more of a diffuse movement - lone agents who have adopted similar tactics, methods and goals in their struggle against provincial and planetary authority. They seek to cause visible unrest and dissatisfaction, raising controversy and dealing out embarrassment as opposed to inflicting actual harm. The Burrowdogs know that their handful of agitators will never be able to affect a planetary government on their own - so they try to lampoon, humiliate and make laughingstocks out of the authorities and their messages. Success at this goal, they hope, will undermine the Harmonium and help to lead to a general uprising.

Burrowdogs are adept at stealth, at disguising themselves and spreading innuendo and subversive messages. Their methods are many and varied - some spread bawdy and vulgar rhymes that put down local rulers, others plant fake evidence of deeds that turn a region's potentates against one another, and yet others will prick the ego of the local police from hiding in order to create a widespread and heavy-handed retaliation against all the citizens of a district. Burrowdogs are generally not adept in the arts of combat or magic, and so are easy prey if discovered - but after all, if combat skills are required, a Burrowdog has probably already failed at what she set out to do.

Burrowdogs can be found in most of Ortho's provinces, but are probably most common in the land of Motmurk, where harmony first arose from tyranny and is still closely linked to that form of rule. Humans, dwarves and members of other races living alongside the orcs are particularly susceptible to Burrowdog subversion, and the police forces of the province are poorly suited to deal with such agitation. Even determining that Burrowdog presence exists in a Motmurk city is difficult, usually requiring a broad and intrusive search - which is expensive and disruptive to daily business even if it works. This response alone is enough to guarantee the Burrowdogs at least a partial success in their work.

As a result, outside investigator specialists are sometimes called in when Burrowdog activity is suspected. Members from the Harmonium's planar branch have recently shown more success than others in such efforts, possibly due to their broader viewpoints - a result that has been noted, and led to even non-members recommended by Harmonium officials being hired for investigative work.

As a result, searching for Burrowdog presence in a city on Ortho can be very rewarding work, both in hard cash and in favors owed by high-ups. It can also be quite risky. Local authorities and police will resent outsiders' presence in their bailiwick, may attempt to hinder or pre-empt any investigation, and if the Burrowdogs are caught will almost certainly try to take the credit for themselves and dispose of the criminals in a most unpleasant and visible manner. And the Burrowdogs themselves are certainly not incompetent or easily caught. All in all, hunting Burrowdogs is an experience best left to the professionals.

## **The Elves of Lunefall**

The shattered remnants of the second moon of Ortho are a battered, ravaged wreck, a minor hazard to spelljamming navigation and seemingly devoid of any sort of life. The Harmonium pays little attention to this region, knowing it to be of little import and wary of the wild surges of magic that may still spark from one chunk of rock or another. In truth, though, these bits of moonstuff are still inhabited, by a race that is secretive in the extreme and bears the Harmonium no small amount of ill will. These are the elves of Lunefall.

### *History*

Refugees from the elven homelands of Ortho, fleeing from the imminent genocide of their race and seeking some hiding place, first settled Lunefall. Skilled in magic, in particular the weaving of shadow-illusions and other forms of deception, the first families of Lunefall found a path to escape taking them into the skies of Ortho and beyond. Refuges were constructed in the dark craters of splintered lunar rock, sealed away and made self-sustaining through powerful incantations, and a slow trickle of elvenkind found themselves spirited to safety even as their kindred were destroyed in an unstoppable tide of steel and blood.

The initial devastation took nearly half a century to accomplish, and indelibly shaped the continued future of Lunefall. Refugees reacted in one of two ways - bone-deep, bitter anger, all the stronger for its futility, and a ceaseless resolve to find some way of making the humans pay properly and in full for their crime. The other response was guilt, despair and fear - seeing the Harmonium not as mortals, but some sort of malevolent force of nature that had eradicated the elven race on Ortho for unspeakable crimes. Elves of this type wish to remain in hiding forever on Lunefall, never drawing the notice of their tormentors and always looking for some other form of escape. Though the genocide of the Elven Shaar was five hundred years in the past, many of the elders of Lunefall were alive when it first happened, and they have educated the children born since then in its bloody memory. What the future holds is uncertain.

### *Cities*

The heart of Lunefall today are the cities - great constructs of shadow-magic and rock-crystal, grown into the regolith of the lunar shards that the elves presently call home. All are self-sufficient, able to grow fruits, mushrooms and other foodstuffs in buildings specifically shaped for such purposes, and well shielded from the harsh vacuum and other dangers of the outside world. Still, though, life is precious and must be carefully managed in order to keep everything in balance; as a result, plants, pets and other things beloved to elven hearts are rare here, and never

allowed to live freely. Though the cities of Lunefall are a vital refuge, lovingly shaped to be as organic-seeming and spontaneous as possible, they can never truly be an elvenhome.

### *Hinterlands*

Elven travel outside their city-redoubts is rare, but does sometimes happen. Young elves may have a sense of adventure; messengers or couriers may have a need to carry certain information or vital goods between cities; a first strike may be needed against the chaos effects that roil across the surface of the moonshards. Excursions are dangerous and frowned upon, but sometimes necessary.

Beyond the cities is a place harsh beyond belief. The air itself is thin and often poisonous, easily able to kill a traveler without proper magical protection, and gravity often varies enough to where one step will send a person bounding across the landscape while the next finds them almost pinned to the ground beneath their own weight. Chaos surges strike like riptides across the landscape, transforming any being they touch and often causing a quick and painful death; these must be carefully scried out with divination magics, and avoided. Beings of twisted elemental earth, as well as restless undead spirits, roam the land, attacking passerby as often as letting them pass unmolested. And finally are the alien Ydrarg, creatures of amorphous iron-grey metallic liquid whose touch is poison, who puddle in slumber across the lunar surface but sometimes rouse to taunt the elves or demand tribute from them. Though the Ydrarg are sometimes able to be reasoned with, their thoughts are difficult to comprehend and their motives impossible to predict. Treat with them at your peril.

### *Magic*

Though the elves of Lunefall are few and their lives are difficult, the joy of shaping the arcane remains. Many of Lunefall's first elders are mages of great repute, and skilled juniors are absolutely encouraged to take up the art as well. Lunefall survives through the power and diligence of its wizards, a fact that no resident is allowed to forget.

A great deal of spellcraft, magical research and study is conducted in the process of simply keeping Lunefall intact and functioning. Much of what is done is straightforward repair or improvements on the structure of the existing cities, but some of it is always new. The *winterlance*, a weapon that draws forth cold from the very rock of the moonshards, is one creation that may help against the Ydrarg. Another recent creation is the *shadowsail*, great wings of blackness that allow a wearer to glide between moonshards at great speed (Spelljammer tactical SR2) and potentially even drift to the surface of Ortho. No such tests of this last feature have been made, for a shadowsail falling to earth would allow its wearer no way home. But it may yet be useful as a weapon to take the battle back to the humans of Ortho, after so much time.

### *Plots and Adventures*

Plots in Lunefall center around its elders, and their desires - powerful wizards in many cases, and in all cases filled with ages of experience, intrigue and sorrow. Almost any scenario one can imagine - revenge, escape, defense, discovery - can come out of the efforts of one elder seeking assistance (openly or otherwise) in

achieving a prized goal.

All the elves of Lunefall, vengeful or penitent, can agree on one thing, though. **The Harmonium must never discover Lunefall's existence.** If a sizeable elven refuge was discovered anywhere in Ortho space, no effort would be spared to destroy it utterly and completely, regardless of the consequences or cost. The primary effort of any Lunefall elder will be to silence any outsider who finds out that the elves exist - whether by imprisoning them forever in the cities, using powerful magics to confuse their memories, or the simple expedient of a knife through the heart.

## **Chapter 8: Running the Game**

### **Ortho Through the Lens of Planescape**

The world of Ortho is a sizeable and important place, to be sure - but set against the entirety of the Planescape multiverse, it's fairly small and insignificant. Why should a bunch of planewalking adventurers ever come to Ortho, and how does the world best fit into a Planescape campaign? Three different views of Ortho are presented below, each of which interprets the world somewhat differently and is best suited to a different style of campaign.

#### *Ortho as Paradise*

In this setup, Ortho really is the established, unshakeable bastion of law that the Harmonium claims it to be. The entirety of the citizenry is happy with their lot, prospering under the Harmonium's rule and the wisdom of the Lords of Law, and only the incorrigible and the insane rebel against the established order. Friends of the Harmonium who come to Ortho can expect a warm welcome, while enemies will be hounded by all they encounter and will have to rely on cunning, deception and a very large helping of raw luck in order to survive.

This view of Ortho is probably best suited for a campaign in which the PCs are inclined to oppose the Harmonium, belonging to enemy factions or readily accepting missions that damage the Harmonium's interests. A mission against the Harmonium that takes the PCs to Ortho becomes the ultimate challenge - the PCs' work will be hindered not only by special guardsmen but also by the common citizenry themselves, and any misstep sets an entire planet against them. What's more, spreading around too much collateral damage simply creates martyrs for the cause, as well as encouraging the top leaders of Ortho to make common cause with the planar Harmonium to bring the interlopers to justice.

#### *Ortho as Battleground*

This version of Ortho is somewhat different. While the original source material remains mainly intact as the way that the Harmonium and most of the citizenry view the world, things are much less settled behind the scenes. Powerful forces from the Outer Planes - an Abyssal Lord, an eladrin court, a githyanki legion, a plot by Xaositects, Anarchists or a similar faction, or some other player entirely - have begun serious efforts to infiltrate and attack Ortho.

Detailing such an aggressor, its methods and resources, plan of attack, initial targets and timetable is up to individual DMs, as suits the needs of the campaign. The

campaign may be obvious, with outsider warriors establishing a beachhead on Ortho and subjugating/liberating Harmonium citizens, or subtle, with spies, assassins and demagogues acting as the enemy's primary agents. Whatever the plan, though, such an attack should strongly impact the PCs during their time in Ortho - either putting them on the front lines, and possibly allying with Harmonium heroes to fight off the enemy, or else stranding them elsewhere in Ortho as a vital ally or resource is sent away from them and into the war zone.

Making Ortho a battleground works well for any group of PCs, but especially so for characters who are allied with or sympathetic to the Harmonium. Such characters are more likely to see the preservation of Ortho as important and more likely to join in a battle to defend it. While the Harmonium of Ortho is powerful, its experience with extraplanar threats is limited, and the help of planewalking adventurers may be invaluable - assuming, of course, that our heroes don't rub a prideful high-up the wrong way.

### *Ortho as Dystopia*

The final view of Ortho is possibly the most likely - a place where the Harmonium has achieved its goal, but very imperfectly. Absolute law has not led to absolute justice - far from it. Peonage, debt slavery, and outright slavery are common, all made possible by abuse of too-vague laws or misinterpretation of overly complex and incomprehensible ones. Similar problems lead to inefficiencies in farming, in crafts, and in trade, as people waste time and effort following pointless regulations or refuse to innovate for fear of violating some cryptic prohibition. Those on top use the law as a weapon to keep their positions - establishing broad trade monopolies, creating new laws to punish rivals and potential competitors, and insuring that all power is concentrated in the hands of a select few.

The dystopian Ortho is a trap, plain and simple. Many residents are unaware that life could be better given a different system; those who are aware of the possibility of change see no way such a thing could be accomplished. Inequality of wealth and authority is common and extreme; decadence, autocracy, and police states are not unknown. Whether such a system can be reformed into something healthier, due to collapse under its own weight, or will expand outwards and swallow up other Prime worlds if unchecked is up to the DM.

A dystopian Ortho can work in any campaign, but is perhaps especially effective with a PC group that doesn't have any strong inclination either for or against the Harmonium's goals, or has a philosophical split on the question within the party itself. Such a group visiting Ortho will be faced with a difficult moral challenge. Should they try and fix the system, even though one wrong move could throw the planet into chaos and possible civil war? Or do they leave the current setup in place, knowing that an entire planet is suffering and they've done nothing to stop it?

### **Harmonium Expansion in a Spelljamming Setting**

The Harmonium has developed spelljamming technology and is proactively exploring the prime material plane using a navy they are even now building up. This raises some interesting questions regarding how the Harmonium is likely to handle the active conquest of other spheres. Their techniques have been adapted for spheres specifically, but are also useful for planar locations as well.

The Harmonium's methods of expansion are remarkably patient. One thing to recall with any war is the problem of supply lines. Without secured lines your forces at the front are going to fail. Because of this, the Harmonium prefers to secure what they already have as much as possible before reaching for the next sphere they find.

An attempted Harmonium takeover proceeds in a series of stages. After all, they don't intend to hold conquered lands for a few decades and then abandon them. They want the sphere to join on a permanent basis - so the Harmonium needs to make sure they approach the problem correctly. Their experiences in Sigil with the power of belief have given them more subtle ways of approaching this situation than a standard conqueror has at his disposal. In their belief, a land is much easier to hold if those living there are willingly giving it to you. Of course through each of these stages some heroic sort may try and step up to stop the takeover.

In the first stage, the Harmonium makes an effort to understand those it is looking to show the Way of Harmony. They send a few well-trained and discreet troops to the sphere to get a feel for the peoples, to see if they're already fairly lawful or not, and to determine how hard it would be to take over militarily. If the sphere is already in chaotic anarchy, for example living in a frontier-style of 'law by force of arms', then the Harmonium often finds it easiest to swing into action to save the oppressed from the chaotic abusers. They can then be fairly assured of being welcomed in the long run by the survivors, especially if they plan it well and handle the aftermath competently. Once dominated in such a way, the sphere skips ahead to the third stage almost immediately.

In the second stage, the Harmonium makes an effort to establish themselves more subtly, since the population is already fairly peaceful or lawful. Often the Harmonium will perform mercenary security work. Kingdoms hire mercenaries all the time to reinforce themselves and this gives the Harmonium a chance to prove their capabilities. This also allows them to wipe out any evil or chaotic kingdoms in their target area while enjoying the support of the redeemable ones. This allows them to avoid fighting more than one war at a time. Then the Harmonium can take over law enforcement and make themselves known and trusted by the local population. They can recruit local support to their side, recruit critical members of governments, and other key figures. In essence, this is what they were proceeding to do in Sigil before the Lady's Edict. Once the Harmonium has thoroughly ingratiated themselves in the society of their new territory, they can then offer to bring the sphere in as a colony, and offer them full protection.

In the third stage, indoctrination truly begins. After the new colony has been rebuilt, and the people are enjoying all of the benefits in terms of support, economic trade, military protection, road building and reconstruction job boosts - then the place is well on its way to becoming a reliable stepping stone to the next sphere. The sphere is protected by the Harmonium, which watches for illegal or dangerous trade goods or persons. In other words, the world is often isolated from outside influences so the Harmonium becomes the only choice left for those living there. The area is given time to get settled into the Harmonium way, time for the deities to be approved or replaced by approved gods, and time for a new generation to be born and raised with the Harmonium ideals. By the time that's done - the sphere belongs wholeheartedly to the Harmonium and its peoples are willing followers.

All three of these stages assume that the whole matter is handled with competence, and with a gentle enough hand to bring the peoples around to supporting them. More



cruel members of the Harmonium may be asked to participate in the initial take over but certainly not in the continued management of a sphere.

<move to DM's tips>

The unrevealed dark of the incantation, though, could provide adventuring hooks in either of two directions. The first possibility lies in the identity of Kelmuun, the spell's creator - hailed by the Harmonium as an early hero, but quite possibly a druidic devotee of the Forbidden Goddess, instead. In this circumstance, Kelmuun created the incantation not so much to extend the Harmonium's creed as to provide some alternative to a bloody, irrevocable genocide of all the werewolves of Ulfheim. In this instance, the invocation could certainly have some hidden flaw that could allow its effects to be undone or reversed - an opportunity, or a threat...

The other possibility is that the incantation doesn't invoke principles of natural law, but instead imposes devilish influence on its targets. As a result, the lords of Baator have, for the past several centuries, slowly and imperceptibly been forging a hellish army in a corner of Ortho. Such a thing might not be an immediate cause of alarm for the Harmonium, but would certainly worry many other players both planar and prime - and how do such individuals convince the Harmonium to abandon their effort?

## **Chapter 9: Bestiary** **By Monster Name**

### **Immergaunts**

The lockstep order, structure and efficiency brought by the Harmonium to Ortho has its disadvantages. Though many threats and dangers have been eradicated entirely, making the world safer for all who live in it, a few of the most cunning and vicious threats to public safety have simply taken to the shadows, striking only at night and vanishing before capture. These monsters lurk along the fringes of civilization and in the foul niches that grow up in Ortho's greatest cities, and prey on the weak, defenseless and destitute. Hunting immergaunts is one of the necessary chores of the Harmonium guard - but they have no great success in dealing with the creatures. The common folk, unable to fight against such enemies directly but needing some sort of recourse, have managed at least to give a name to their tormentors. They call these beings 'Immergaunts'.

An immergaunt appears very much like a common shadow - a vaguely humanoid shape made of animated, soul-chilling blackness - but is much more fearsome, for its features and exact appearance reflect the hidden terror that lies within every mortal soul. Each person who sees an immergaunt witnesses it somewhat differently, putting their own fears on it as a mask, and innocent civilians and battle-hardened watchmen alike have found themselves unable to defy the creature's hunger. Fortunately, the appearance of an immergaunt does not lead to high levels of valor on the creature's part - one usually only appears when a single, vulnerable target is present, and will not seek to pursue fleeing victims into any open or well-lit location.

Immergaunts are thought to be the result of a chaotic curse, forming themselves from the nightmares of those who have come too close to the Abyss or descend from certain tainted bloodlines of Iathra and Thaera. Even in these bright days, the appearance of immergaunts in an isolated village can lead to witch-hunts against those suspected of dreaming these monsters into existence. The Harmonium has

declared that creation of immergaunts is an unwitting crime at best, and does not sanction mob violence against those responsible - but is also noticeably slow to retaliate against villagers who lynch a visitor for bringing the immergaunt curse to their home. Travelers are advised to be on their best behavior, and to be ready to make a quick departure should matters begin to turn ugly.

## **Immergaunt**

Size/Type: Medium Undead

Hit Dice: 4d12 (26 hp)

Initiative: +2

Speed: 40 ft

Armor Class: 14 (+2 Dex, +2 deflection), touch 13, flat-footed 11

Base Attack/Grapple: +2/-

Attack: Slam +4 melee (1d6 Wis)

Full Attack: Slam +4 melee (1d6 Wis)

Space/Reach: 5 ft/5 ft

Special Attacks: Frightful visage, nightmarish tendril, wisdom damage

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft, daylight vulnerability, incorporeal form, +2 turn resistance, undead traits

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +3

Abilities: Str -, Dex 14, Con -, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 13

Skills: Hide +8, Listen +7

Feats: Alertness, Weapon Finesse

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary, pair, pack (3-8)

Challenge Rating: 4

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Advancement: 5-8 HD (Medium)

Level Adjustment: -

*Daylight Vulnerability (Ex):* An immergaunt exposed to direct sunlight, or within the area of a Daylight spell, is greatly weakened. It can make only one move action per combat round, and is unable to attack either by touch or its nightmarish tendril, or affect characters with its frightful visage. The immergaunt also loses the ability to become incorporeal (and becomes corporeal if it wasn't already). These restrictions last until the immergaunt is no longer exposed to direct sunlight.

*Frightful Visage (Su):* Any creature of less than 6 HD that meets the gaze of an immergaunt must make a DC 13 Will save or become frightened, as if affected by a Scare spell. If the save succeeds, the creature is instead shaken for 1 round. Creatures with more than 6 HD are immune to this effect, and a creature affected by an immergaunt's frightful visage cannot be targeted again by the same immergaunt until 24 hours have passed. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Incorporeal Form (Su):* An immergaunt can become incorporeal as a free action. Normal attacks against an immergaunt suffer a 50% miss chance while the immergaunt is incorporeal; the immergaunt's own touch attacks suffer this penalty as well. An incorporeal immergaunt can return to corporeal state as a free action, but cannot both become and cease being incorporeal in the same combat round.

*Nightmarish Tendril (Su):* An immergaunt can create a shadowy, clinging tendril to

make a trip attack against one opponent within 30 feet as a standard action. An opponent knocked prone by this attack must take a full-round action to stand up, due to the tendril's vile nature.

### **Ortho: Oakengrim**

Powers older than man exist in the western reaches of Ulfrheim. In these bleak, desolate lands live beings both eerie and mysterious, who have struggled for dominance since before even the thought of the Harmonium existed and may continue to do so long after it is forgotten. One such race is the oakengrim, creatures who pay lip service to the ideals of law and order, but are only barely trusted or tolerated. They keep to their own lands, are bothered as little as possible, and hopefully cause no trouble for the larger world.

Oakengrim are short, averaging less than four feet in height, and though almost painfully gaunt possess a fierce, wiry strength. Their bodies are nearly hairless, and their skin mottled between patches of reddish-brown and pale white, and leathery. They wear little clothing, and carry few tools though they know how to fashion and use such things and have been traded a few prizes by Harmonium facilitators. Their teeth are razor sharp, as are claws on both hands and feet, and an oakengrim in a combat rage is easily able to balance on one foot to claw at an opponent with up to three limbs if need be. Their stench is incredibly foul, able to cause a delicate stomach to gag even when they've bathed recently - which they rarely do.

An oakengrim's personality is distinctly nasty. They are vicious, impulsive, inclined to practice random cruelty on any helpless creature they can catch, and possessed of ugly and inventive senses of humor. They respect only the strength to kill and destroy; the Harmonium has bargained with them in the past mainly through the repeated threat of armed force. While an oakengrim seems at times to be almost animalistic in its behavior, the things do have speech, thought and memory - it's just that such things are rarely used. The oakengrim do understand oaths, though, and will never violate the letter of a pact - nor allow a human visitor to do so, either. When swearing oaths, oakengrim generally insist on reciprocal duties, with each side binding themselves in some form - even if only symbolic. Of course, an oakengrim sees nothing wrong whatever in weaseling out of an oath's intent, if some means presents itself to do so.

Oakengrim are tolerated by the Harmonium mostly because they occupy desolate, remote forestlands that few other people would want. These lands were once warred over between oakengrim and fae folk, with the oakengrim gradually claiming the upper hand as the power of Law rose across Ortho; now, only fragments of memory and a lingering hatred of the fae remain. An oakengrim may be able to lead travellers to some fastness of the fae folk, if properly bribed or coerced, but travellers accepting such a service should be cautious - the oakengrim have been known to attack any being that they see as having the fae 'taint', and no outsider has ever been able to determine exactly how they decide what causes such a thing.

### **Oakengrim**

Small Monstrous Humanoid

**HD:** 3d8-3 (11 hp)

**Initiative:** +4

**Speed:** 20 ft

**Armor Class:** 17 (+4 Dex, +3 natural armor), touch 14, flat-footed 13

**Base Attack:** +3

**Attack:** Bite +7 melee (1d6+2)  
**Full Attack:** Bite +7 melee (1d6+2) and 3 claws +5 melee (1d3+1)  
**Space/Reach:** 5 ft/5 ft  
**Special Attacks:** Possess plant, spell-like abilities  
**Special Qualities:** Low-light vision, resistance to cold 10  
**Saves:** Fortitude +0, Reflex +7, Will +5  
**Abilities:** Str 15, Dex 18, Con 9, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 11  
**Feats:** Alertness, Multiattack, Weapon Finesse  
**Skills:** Hide +7, Listen +4, Sense Motive +5, Spot +4  
**Environment:** Cold forest  
**Organization:** Solitary, gang (2-8) or tribe (6-36)  
Challenge Rating: 2  
**Treasure:** Standard  
**Alignment:** Usually lawful evil  
**Advancement:** By character class  
**Level Adjustment:** +3

**Possess Plant (Sp):** An oakengrim can meld its form with that of a plant it's touching, 1/day, and remain within for up to 24 hours. A plant-type monster targeted by this effect may attempt a DC 15 Fortitude save to block this effect; the save DC is Wisdom-based. While inside the plant, the oakengrim cannot act, be harmed or targeted by spells or effects. It is aware of anything that the plant is aware of, and if the plant is destroyed is immediately forced into normal form. Upon departure (voluntary or otherwise) of the oakengrim, the affected plant is immediately targeted by a Blight spell effect.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** 3/day Bane, 1/day Spike Growth. Treat these abilities as if cast by a 5th-level druid (save DC 12+spell level).

## Seareivers

The defeat of the Chaos-loving Empire of Pan Thaera was one of the great triumphs of the early Harmonium, but one that did not come without a cost. The rulers of the Empire, in their fear of everything that the Harmonium stood for, took every measure imaginable to combat the crusade - including some measures that any right-thinking person would consider unspeakable. Scorched-earth tactics, contagious insanity, demon summoning, and many other atrocities were committed, leaving the Harmonium with many lifetimes' cleanup work after the conquest of Thaera was complete.

One of the most horrific and longest-lasting of the Empire's creations was the birth of the Seareivers. Huge oceangoing monsters trained to think of humans and their ships as natural prey, these killing machines were released without a care into the waters of the Ocean of Foam in order to counter the Harmonium invasion force - and if they destroyed neutral shipping, that was an acceptable loss. Even after the Empire itself was defeated, the seareivers proved to be wily opponents and cunning prey, eluding Harmonium hunting flotillas and occasionally striking at undefended ships. A small but dangerous population still survives today, in the deepest oceans of Ortho.

Each seareiver is a unique life form, different in likeness from any other, but they all have a same general shape and appearance. Most seareivers are serpentine, streamlined for fast movement both inside and outside of the water, and with the

reflexes needed to take full advantage of such a body type. They are also fantastically tough, with outer scales or plating tough as armor covering a layer of tough fatty tissue that absorbs most shocks and blows harmlessly. Only below these defenses come the inner muscles and vital organs of the beast.

Seareivers attack either with their terrible bite, or by striking enemies with long, flexible tentacles that extrude from their bodies at random points. These tentacles are thin, but as tough and well-armored as the rest of their bodies, and strike with incredible force. The tentacles also carry some sort of poison or foul curse, which can paralyze and eventually rot skin on contact. Seareivers have almost no weak points that can be attacked - eye-equivalents and other sensory organs are often armored, and rarely necessary in any case as the beast works as much via tremor sense as sight, and the thing's mouth is coated with so much razor-sharp bone and chitin as to be near-impenetrable.

Seareivers may once have existed in many different forms, but today only two types survive - Lesser and Great. The lesser seareiver is small, comparatively, perhaps only ten feet in total length, but are incredibly fast and stealthy. They will lurk beneath the surface of a strong wave front, aware of the passage of any ships but invisible to any observer that doesn't know exactly what to watch for - and then strike, propelling themselves from the ocean's surface to the deck of the largest galley in one mighty leap. Once a pack of lesser seareivers has boarded a ship, they become killing machines - attacking any air-breather they come across until it stops moving, then moving onwards to strike at other enemies. If nothing remains alive, they descend to the vessel's waterline, tear holes in the sides of the ship, then exit while the ship sinks behind them.

As terrible and vicious as the lesser seareivers are, the greater seareivers are worse. As long from tip to tail as any Harmonium ship ever constructed, and almost as massive, these creatures don't bother with emerging from the water, or sweeping the decks for exposed crew. They simply lurk a hundred feet or so below the ocean's surface, then rip the bottom out of whatever they see as a target. While a great seareiver possesses tentacles that can strike at any creature foolish enough to approach it, its most terrible weapon is its bite, which is easily enough to disembowel anything it comes across - living or not.

Fortunately, both lesser and great seareivers are rare, and found only in the deepest oceans. The lesser seas don't give these horrible creatures enough room to hide in, and Harmonium military forces will attack any seareiver on sight. Packs of lesser seareivers avoid extinction through numbers, speed, animal cunning and pure ferocity; great seareivers are slower and less intelligent, but are also believed to be able to hide themselves on the very bottom of the ocean floor if need be to avoid detection. In spite of a great desire to do so, the Harmonium has never been able to fully exterminate either kind of seareiver.

Little is known - or desired to be known - about the ecology and life of such loathsome creatures. They are known to feed on flesh of any kind, though whether such a diet is needed for them to survive or just a sadistic touch by their creators is uncertain. Their continued survival indicates that they can breed somehow - yet more evidence of the insanity of the Pan Thaerans and the folly of working with chaos. Seareivers frequent both the Ocean of Foam and the Ocean of Fevers, but strangely have never been reported within the Ocean of Fog.

Any suggestion that the seareivers were originally unleashed by factions within the Harmonium to terrorize the Pan Thaerans is treasonous and will be punished with the utmost exaction. Evidence purporting to support such a claim is a forgery and a lie.

### **Seareiver, Lesser**

Size/Type: Large Magical Beast (Aquatic)

Hit Dice: 8d10+32 (76 hp)

Initiative: +6

Speed: 20 ft, swim 60 ft

Armor Class: 18 (-1 size, +2 dex, +7 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 16

Base Attack/Grapple: +8/+16

Attack: Tentacle +14 melee (1d8+6 plus paralysis)

Full Attack: 4 tentacles +14 melee (1d8+6 plus paralysis) and bite +12 melee (2d6+3)

Space/Reach: 10 ft/10 ft

Special Attacks: Paralysis, pounce

Special Qualities: Resistance to acid and fire 10, tremorsense 60 ft, water dependent

Saves: Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +3

Abilities: Str 22, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 9, Cha 10

Skills: Hide +9, Spot +3

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Multiattack

Environment: Any aquatic

Organization: Pack (8-20)

Challenge Rating: 5

Treasure: None

Advancement: 9-15 HD (Large)

Level Adjustment: -

*Paralysis (Su):* The touch of a lesser seareiver's tentacle paralyzes affected beings for 2d4+1 rounds (Fort save DC 18 to negate). The save DC is Constitution-based.

*Pounce:* If a lesser seareiver charges a foe, it can make a full attack. This ability can only be used if the seareiver begins its turn immersed in water.

*Water Dependent (Ex):* Lesser seareivers can survive out of water for 10 minutes per point of Constitution (after that, refer to the drowning rules).

*Skills:* Lesser seareivers receive a +8 racial bonus to all Swim checks. They receive a +4 bonus to Hide, Listen and Spot checks while underwater. They receive a +15 racial bonus on Jump checks if it begins its movement in water, and does not land prone if the Jump check is successful.

### **Seareiver, Greater**

Size/Type: Colossal Magical Beast (Aquatic)

Hit Dice: 36d10+396 (594 hp)

Initiative: -1

Speed: Swim 40 ft

Armor Class: 18 (-1 Dex, -8 size, +17 natural), touch 1, flat-footed 18

Base Attack/Grapple: +36/+67

Attack: Bite +51 melee (6d6+22)

Full Attack: Bite +51 melee (6d6+22) and 8 tentacles +46 melee (2d8+7 plus paralysis)

Space/Reach: 30 ft/20 ft

Special Attacks: Improved grab, paralyze, sundering bite, swallow whole

Special Qualities: Resistance to acid, cold and fire 20, tremorsense 120 ft, water dependent

Abilities: Str 40, Dex 8, Con 33, Int 8, Wis 15, Cha 11

Skills: Hide +20, Spot +20

Feats: Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 18

Treasure: Standard (swallowed)

Advancement: 37-54 HD (Colossal)

Level Adjustment: -

*Paralysis (Su):* The touch of a greater seareiver's tentacle paralyzes affected beings for 4d6 rounds (Fort save DC 33 negates). The save DC is Constitution based.

*Sundering Bite (Ex):* A greater seareiver's bite attack ignores the first 15 points of hardness when making sundering attacks.

*Swallow Whole (Ex):* A greater seareiver can try to swallow a grabbed opponent of Huge size or smaller by making a successful grapple check. Once inside, the opponent takes 4d6+15 points of crushing damage plus 8 points of acid damage per round from the creature's gizzard. A swallowed creature can cut its way out by using a light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 50 points of damage to the gizzard (AC 20). Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out. A greater seareiver's interior can hold 2 Huge, 4 Large, 16 Medium, 64 Small, 256 Tiny, or 1024 Diminutive or smaller opponents.

Skills: Greater seareivers receive a +4 bonus to all Hide, Listen, Spot and Swim checks.

### **Polar Shimmercats (a.k.a. Albino Displacer Beasts)**

// Stats go here

### **Aquatic Teiflings**

// Stats go here

The following monsters all use game statistics from the SRD, with only minor modifications. Though they are apparently unique to Ortho, their close cousins can be found on many other worlds.

### **Blooddriver**

These strange self-animate devices have served as steeds for generals and champions of Motmurk for longer than anyone can remember. No one is certain, anymore, whether the first blooddrivers were the creation of orcish shamans, gifts from Ilneval or another power, or coming from another origin entirely. Each takes the semblance of a huge, patient scorpion with an unnaturally smooth and hard carapace of a strange, variegated shade of green. Though such creatures are prized war steeds, they aren't entirely trusted - more than one hero has apparently become slowly infected with paranoia and megalomania after prolonged periods riding a blooddriver, and taken their steed into the wilderness with the insane intent of overthrowing all of Motmurk single-handed.

Use the stats for a retriever, with the following changes:

- Replace the bite attack with a stinger attack - +10 melee (1d8+5 plus poison).
- A blooddriver can use more than one eye ray attack per round, with the assistance of a rider. If the rider uses a standard action to activate an eye ray, the blooddriver can make two eye ray attacks in that round. A particular ray can be used only once every 2 rounds.
- Replace the Find Target special quality with the ability to continually Pass Without Trace, as the spell.
- A blooddriver's poison stinger is Injury, Fortitude DC 15, initial 1d8 Str, secondary 2d6 Str. The Fortitude save DC is Constitution-based.

### **Emberhawks**

Native to the Flamedance Mountains of the province of Kel'n'in, these savage creatures are at the top of the food chain, roaming the skies and devouring (almost) any creature that they sight upon. Though not quite foolish enough to attack beholders or their grell servants, they do consider humanoid visitors to be fair prey and will stoop upon such targets with incredible fury. Cutting loose a horse or other large animal may serve to placate an emberhawk's hunger - but individuals trying such a trick had best be sure to be long gone by the time the emberhawk finishes its meal.

Use the stats for an arrowhawk, with the following changes:

- Type changes to Outsider (Fire, Native).
- Electricity ray changes to a fire ray, with the same attack bonus and damage.
- Has immunity to fire, electricity and poison, resistance to acid 10 and sonic 10.

### **Ghulang Dhal**

Also known as mountain spirits, these beings have dwelt in the remote reaches of the Xaric highlands since time immemorial. They seem like small, deceptively slender humanoids with dull grey, stonelike skin and eternally wild hair, and near-transparent gossamer wings that speed into a rainbow blur whenever the creature takes to the air. Though the dwarves who are their closest neighbors often speak of them with hair-pulling aggravation, they are considered good luck by many and tolerated as fellow creations of the land. Nonetheless, their numbers are growing fewer as mankind spreads further over Ortho, and their final days may be coming soon. Their pranks and daily lives grow less joyful and more desperate with each passing year.

Use the stats for a dust mephit, with the following changes:

- Has no breath weapon.
- Replace spell-like abilities with 3/day Meld Into Stone, Stone Shape, 1/day Transmute Rock to Mud, all as a 6th-level druid (save DC 12+spell level).
- Heals only when in contact with raw, unworked stone.

### **Gnaazg**



Bestial, twisted creatures dwelling in the inhospitable Anvil of Fangs in northwestern Keln'in, these monsters are thought by some to actually have some glimmering of intelligence. The beholders who rule the region, though, insist that gnaazg are merely a more cunning and unpleasant kind of dumb beast. Since the Harmonium as a whole is uncertain of the proper method in which intelligent gnaazg should be treated - attempt the difficult task of enlightening them in the ways of Law, or exterminate them utterly as chaotic creatures? - the beholders' claim is allowed to stand in the main. For their own part, the beholders treat the gnaazg as a distasteful but self-renewing food source.

Use the stats for a troll, with the following changes:

- Speed increases to 40 ft.
- Intelligence is reduced to 3.
- Replace the Track feat with the Run feat.

### **Horned Man**

These huge, stag-antlered creatures are only rarely found, even in the inland hills of Omospondia that are their ancestral range. Though the orthodox claim that these beings are fae-kin and so should be driven to extinction, the people of Omospondia claim the Horned Men as a vital part of their history, and resist any efforts at wholesale genocide. This does not stop the nobles of Omospondia from organizing a yearly hunt of a single Horned Man, however - such a ritual is considered a sign of valor and good breeding in that land.

Use the stats for a hill giant, with the following changes:

- A Horned Man gains a Horn attack, at +15 melee (1d8+7/x3). This attack deals triple damage on a charge and cannot be used in conjunction with any other attack method in a full attack.
- A Horned Man can neither throw nor catch rocks.

### **Miststeed**

Ghostly horses that roam the forests and coasts of southern Ulfheim, it's impossible to say whether these apparitions are natural beings, guises taken on by some other being, the spirits of a species exterminated by the Harmonium, or something else entirely. Hunters have tried to capture or drive off miststeeds in the past; the miststeeds mock such efforts with their continued existence, and roam wherever they choose.

Use the stats for a unicorn, with the following changes:

- Gains the incorporeal subtype.
- Speed is fly 60 ft (perfect).
- Has no horn attack; hooves attack at +11 melee touch (2d6 sacred).
- Has no Strength score.
- Radiates a continual Magic Circle against Law effect and can Detect Law as a free action, rather than the comparable powers against evil.

### **Oqakki**

Said by many natives of Hazhkan to be sly, malicious trickster-demons, these creatures have the faces and heads of men attached to the bodies of monstrous spiders. Though sardonic, deceptive and not wholly friendly to the Harmonium, these beings have sometimes provided valuable advice and assistance to human explorers and so have not been declared a race enemy. Debate on whether and how to bring the Oqakki into the Harmonium is proceeding slowly, but an expedition to uncover more information or test the efficacy of conversion methods may be imminent.

Use the stats for an aranea, with the following changes:

- Replace the bite attack with a sting attack, +5 melee (1d4 plus poison).
- Oqakki cannot change shape, but can use magic aura and ventriloquism at will.
- Oqakki poison is Injury, Fortitude DC 13, initial damage 1d6 Dex, secondary damage 2d6 Dex, with a Constitution-based save DC.
- Oqakki cast spells as 3rd-level druids.

### **Riverfeeder**

Large, serpentine beasts that lurk along the bottom of the deep, silt-rich rivers of the Iironda coast, riverfeeders are usually placid creatures that remain in their natural waters, feed on any small fish unfortunate enough to cross their path and don't trouble surface folk. During times of drought or famine, though, or one of their (blessedly infrequent) mating cycles, these creatures will swim close to the surface in search of fresh meat. Common folk usually grab whatever's handy in order to placate these beings; the Harmonium tries to hunt them down. When they aren't maddened with hunger, a riverfeeder's presence does help to keep the surrounding waters reasonably clean and drinkable, though, which is why such ferocious beasts are tolerated.

Use the stats for a digester, with the following changes:

- Add the aquatic subtype.
- Speed changes to 10 ft, swim 60 ft.
- Replace the claw attack with a bite attack (similar attack and damage).
- Replace the Jump skill rating with the Swim skill.

### **Sibilant**

These strange, catlike creatures lurk in the scrub forest and swamplands of lowland Heka. Sly, malicious and deceptive, these creatures are hated by many - but were deemed sacred messengers of the Lord of Repose by the local patriarch, three centuries ago, and so cannot be hunted openly. This doesn't keep local farmers from trying to club one over the head whenever they feel their actions won't be discovered, however.

Use the stats for a krenshar, with the following changes:

- Replace the scare special attack with the spell-like abilities to use Glibness 1/day and Augury 1/day, both as a 2nd-level caster.
- Intelligence increases to 10.
- Gains skill ratings of Bluff +6 and Sense Motive +6.

### **Tzotke**

A race of slave laborers bred by the autocrats of Pan Thaera, these beings served loyally and without complaint for many years, unaware of the potential for any better life. Their inner nature and upbringing included a deep, abiding desire for structure and order that could be somewhat satisfied within their own ranks but was sadly lacking across the wider Empire, and so when the Harmonium arose the tzotke willingly traded their allegiance. They provided information, supplies and other aid to the invading Harmonium armies, and in exchange were granted their freedom and an enclave on the northwestern edge of the Thaeran continent.

Tzotke are tall, well-muscled hairless humanoids; their hands each have an extra opposing thumb, and thick plates of bone line the front and back of their upper torso. Though physically imposing, they are not very outgoing or ambitious; few leave their homeland. The reaction of human Thaerans to the sight of the tzotke reinforce this behavior - even today, some Thaerans still consider tzotke to be 'dirty traitors', and will vilify them or worse if given the chance.

Use the stats for bugbears, with the following changes:

- Add the special quality of Goad: When reduced to half maximum HP or less, a tzotke gains a +2 bonus to Strength but suffers a -4 penalty to Wisdom.
- Alignment is usually Lawful Neutral.
- Add Craft, Handle Animal, Knowledge (local), Profession and Survival to the list of racial skills.
- Favored class is Monk.

## Index

### // Extra matter to be integrated and conflicts resolved

Also – resolve lingering questions re:

- 1) Hive Mothers
- 2) Merfolk vs. Aquatic Tiefers (See Spiderwick pg 60)\

End of book adventure ideas:

In Iathra – in one of the most devastated areas (as bad off as the Slags in Sigil) a leftover remnant of the Alzrius incursion is discovered, and reawakes. A Fire Eater – turning folks to ash in the middle of the night in classic wendigo style. (Incorporeal, psionic? Perhaps) – Best detected as a 'hot spot' in an area, like one would find a 'cold spot' if dealing with a ghost

Use: Orthoran

Let the Question-Pesterin' begin...

On the Orcs of Ortho-

So, one of the big buggaboos of 3rd ed. is the change of alignment for orcs, from the (25 year) traditional LE of 2nd ed. and earlier to the CE of 3.x...Now PS was a solid 2nd ed. setting, so it's logical that the orcs of Ortho were generally LE and fit nicely

into the Lawful races bein' on the side of, well, law...But with the change in editions, orcs are generally CE...So my question is, since this project is 3.5, what's the rationale for the orcs being lawful?...Were they originally chaotic, but converted by some messiah to law?...Were they just aborations?...Were they possibly a lost colony of scro?...Also, was this just a localized taint of law, only in Motmurk?...Were the other orcs of Ortho, if there were any, on the side of chaos in the Great War of Harmony?...

On the Great War-

I know the war started with Voll/Heka and Pan Thaera vs. Iathra and then turned to Voll/Heka and Motmurk vs. Pan Thaera and then Law vs. Elven Shaar, but I'd like the whole war a little more settled, timeline or legend wise...Who fought who and when and in what order?...I know that many of these facts are coming to the fore with the write-ups of the Provinces, but as this is the "national epic," so to speak, I think it's important...I guess I'd just like to know how long it took to defeat Alzrius and Iathra, then Pan Thaera, then the Elven Shaar and then the rest of the world...I guess I'd like to at least know the order of events, how long each one lasted and who was involved...

Note: I notice in a lot of the varied write-ups people state that "for five hundred years" or for over five centureies" or some such to describe how long Law has been dominant, when the whole of the conquest took a century (according to the timeline), so perhaps this should be edited for consistency...

In reference to the Planet/Sphere - the physical \*place\* and people:

"Ortho"

"Othorian"

In reference to Harmonium beliefs and philosophies:

"the Way of Harmony"

"Harmonium beliefs" (duh)

In reference to the political organization the Harmonium:

"Knights of Harmony"

"The Harmonium"

"Hard Heads"

In reference to the current time period on Ortho since the rise of the Harmonium:

"The Pax Harmonium"

In reference to the world government of which the Harmonium is participant and military branch:

Rarely "the Pax Harmonium"

"the Othorian Central Authority" or "OCA" ?

Does that sound good to folks? The world government needs some sort of 'name'.

### **Icons of the Octave Council**

Just as Romhel of Voll, Jhary of Heka, Anju of Pan Thaera and Morgranhu of Iathra were the first heroes of the Harmonium and the Great War of Unification, so too were there others throughout the first century who epitomized the ideals of the new

Ortho. Later, as the war moved around the world, these others would step to the fore to lead the forces of Harmony and embody the goals of the movement. The first four would be mirrored later in the war by these Latter Four and the combination of the two would be icons for Ortho's Octave Council.

#### **The Latter Four were:**

*Varzak the Crushing Fist*, a Hierarch of Motmurk, led the forces of Xaric and Motmurk against the nations of Parsadia (modern Omospondia and Karazam) who stood against the forces of unification. He is most famous for the decade long siege against the elven state of Zotikopolis, leading ultimately to the destruction of the last stronghold of the elves of Ortho and salting the earth thereof.

*Xiang Zhou* was the Chamberlain of the Court of Han who fostered the alliance between the Knights of Harmony in the west and Iironda in the east, drawing up the treaty that would lead the two against the vile elves of the Shaar. Once that war had reached in victorious conclusion, he headed the Committee For a Lawful World which chartered the Harmonious Concordant Constitution that established the world government's structure and the High Laws of Ortho.

*Queen Ealataeva of Alaens*, High Priestess of Alae, who stopped the unnecessary loss of thousands, possibly millions, of lives when she gave her life at the Battle That Was Not. The forces of Xaric had marched through western Omospondia from Rhogma in the northwest, south to Aortia and moved east towards Alaens. As the ravenous army sought revenge for centuries old slights at the hands of their one-time masters, Alaens' generals called for the remaining members of the Omospondia confederation to send their forces to help protect the Marble City. When the hosts met, the Omospondians were outnumbered seven to one, the Xaric legions having been bolstered by allies from those Parsadian City-States that had joined their cause. After parley occurred, the Queen remained between the two armies and began to commune with her divine patron. The forces of the Xaric army charged forward, mindful that the Queen was a High Priestess and, as they assaulted her, she fell before their onslaught, a beatific smile on her face. Spreading from her bloody body was a golden light that engulfed both sides of the conflict infusing all with a great sense of sadness and loss. The two armies came to a standstill, neither side having confronted the other with arms, save those who had slain the queen. Then, a sense of hope arose and the two sides met in Harmony. The people of Omospondia joined the Crusade for Concordance and many were saved by the martyrdom of Queen Ealataeva.

*Gnar'ar'rikx* was the great unifier of the beholders of Keln'in who fought the xenophobia of its people and coordinated the forces of beholder-kin with the Forces of the West against the Elven Shaar. It was his will that kept him in power long enough to change perception of its people of the outsiders and brought Keln'in into the world community.

#### **The First Four, The Latter Four and the Octave Council:**

The combination of the First Four and the Latter Four are icons of the Octave Council and the basis for the form of that body. Romhel and Varzak are the icons for the two Harmonium members, the Composer of Planar Harmony [formerly the Composer of the Army] and the Composer of Prime Harmony [formerly the Composer of the Spelljamming Navy, formerly the Composer of the Navy]. Anju and Ealataeva are the

icons for the two religious members, the Composers of Metaphysical and Theological Harmony, respectively. Gnar'ar'rikz and Morgranhu are icons for the two state-oriented members, the Composer of Civic Harmony and the Composer of Agrarian Harmony. Xiang Zhou is the icon for the Composer of Ethical Harmony and Jhary is the icon for the Composer of Magical Harmony.

### **Sidebar: The Goblins of Ortho**

Orcish mythology (and, strangely, no other) speaks of an ancient race they call the *goblins* - or, more often, simply the Ancient Ones - who once ruled the continent of Mot.

According to the orcs the goblins were a weirdly beautiful race, graceful and strong, if slightly alien in appearance, their skin the color of flame. They uplifted the orcs from savagery, teaching them all of their culture, magic, and arts. They trained the first orcish wizards, potters, farmers, and smiths. The orcs, in return, gave them love and respect.

For a long time, all was good. Yet with the passing of time, the goblins became capricious and cruel; they began treating the orcs as servants, not allies.

A hero emerged among the orcs, chosen by the Valkyries themselves. The hero - who the chronicles remember as Grune - led his people in rebellion. Together they overthrew the goblins.

"Lest we be led by tyrants," said Grune. "We must become tyrants ourselves." His people agreed, naming Grune the first Tyrant of Motmirk. Under his leadership all the goblins were exterminated in punishment for their crimes.

According to some variations of the myth, the gods took pity on the goblins, transforming some of them into the first humans, dwarves, and elves.

### **A History of Athra**

The second sapient race to colonize Athra was the elves. A complex game in the elven court of Keln resulted in one of their great princes being banished from the land with all his followers. All this was long before the humans rose from hairy savagery, before even the Great Aberrant War of the beholders, and longer still before the founding of the Elven Shaar.

The exiles fled north and east, settling in the forests of Athra where Nature and the moons still called loudly. They made their exile into a virtue, rejecting the ways of their civilized kin. They made friends with the pixies who already dwelled there, founding druidic and bardic orders and learning to hunt so well that they had only to call out into the forest for beasts to sacrifice themselves willingly. Eschewing the grand palaces of Keln, they made their homes among the tall trees and in hollow hills. They grew racially distinct from the elves of Keln, pale as snow, with pale blue eyes like the winter sky; their cousins were dark of hair and olive-skinned, their eyes green as the tropical seas.

Eventually the humans, whom the elves had considered no more than another beast among many, began to speak and sing and finally develop a culture of their own. They learned from the elves in part - mostly accidentally, some bardic and druidic lore here and there - but saw the elves and pixies as enemies, wicked tricksters who existed only to bedevil them. And they weren't entirely wrong.

It wasn't until one of the Bronze Age empires of Thaera conquered southern Athra that the humans of the northern continent learned writing and wizardry. While the empire soon collapsed under its own ponderousness - the confederacies that would appear later proved to be much more efficient - Athran humanity now had a weapon with which to even the score with the elves.

Athran humanity specialized in necromantic and summoning magic, making constructs empowered with otherworldly energies to use as terrible war machines. It was in this period that one of the moons was shattered, though whether this was the fault of the people of Athra, Keln, or both is very muddled. The elves of Athra were driven to the forests of the north, some even crossing the north pole into Ulfrheim, followed closely by vengeful human tribes. The southern humans began referring to the elves as Snow Elves, and set about domesticating the continent that they were now the primary possessors of.

In the following millennia kingdoms grew into empires, empires schismed into kingdoms, kingdoms declined into tribes and spawned new kingdoms and empires in their place. Gods and prophets were born, their teachings spread across the land, their churches schismed and the religions were ultimately forgotten in favor of new ones. Knowledge was forgotten and regained. Wizard-kings were usurped by their chief warlords, warrior-kings were usurped by their court wizards, and so-on and on in a vicious cycle.

In the northeast portion of the continent, the region called Heka, things were much more stable, influenced as they were by the cultures and caste systems of Shoryko and Bafatai. In Heka the old wizard-kings never lost power. The greatest lich of the late Bronze Age, Jharymias Khorzhoon, foresaw the danger of warlords, necessary as they were. He founded a cabal of wizards who would be aligned with no single wizard-king whose sole duty would be to watch the warlords and ensure none grew too powerful. Though Khorzhoon was slain a mere 800 years later when his apprentice, Karvet Shivaan, threw his body and phylactery into an active volcano, the cabal lived on.

Over time, other cabals formed in order to counter the growing power of the first one. Within a few centuries there were nine cabals in total, each corresponding to a different combination of the grand cosmic forces - Good, Evil, Chaos, and Law. The Ninth Cabal was dedicated to Balance.

So, although they shared a common language, chill Heka grew up along very different lines than neighboring Voll across Lake Querei and the Middlesea, which was much more feudal and wild. Voll was briefly part of Shoryko, but this didn't long outlast the death of Koryao the Great. The religious and cultural differences between Shoryko and Voll (at least, since the advent of the now forgotten druid-prophet Bastil, who rejected Shoryko's mysticism as demonic) were too great, and after several crusades over a period of centuries it became taboo for one to lay claim on the other.

The wizard-kings of Heka remained aloof from all this, concentrating on the elaborate games of magical and martial one-upmanship they played against one another using their soldiers and peasants as pawns. But there came a day when Karvet Shivaan of the First Cabal looked into Osgaard, Verinshen and its colonies, Ilmyth, Greater and Lesser Kellany, Chaarkhold and its hinterlands, Mournrest and its protectorates, the many independent duchies, counties, and principalities of Voll - all the nations of the west - and thought to expand the chessboard.

Karvet began with great subtlety, using shape shifters he created in his laboratories to infiltrate many of the western governments. The leaders of the other eight Cabals soon followed suit, and soon all of Athra had succumbed to their game. In doing so, however, they encountered more playing pieces than they knew how to deal with.

The spies the wizards of the Fourth Cabal had placed in the Principality of Southern Voll, for example, turned out to have much more magical knowledge, developed during the crusades and hardly used since, than the Hekans had anticipated. They began using it against the neighboring Duchy of Western Voll, which was under the control of the Second Cabal. The Eighth Cabal, based in Chaarkhold, countered with the strange incantations that the northern druids had gotten from some long-ago god, while the Ninth Cabal, which had taken over Mournrest, tried frantically to keep innovation down to a reasonable pace. Ruled as it was by nearly immortal rulers who controlled the population utterly, Heka was not used to change and dealt with it poorly.

The situation escalated for a number of centuries.

Jhary Etreiu, a minor member of the Ninth Cabal, was more interested in his study of insects than in the games his colleagues played. He admired the way they organized themselves. When he was stationed in the Duchy of Eastern Voll as a "court wizard," however, the shy, retiring wizard developed a friendship with the nation's duke, Carolinus IV. He became convinced that what the Hekans were doing was wrong, both ethically and pragmatically. Unearthing ancient battle-magic, he summoned energy from the Abyss to shock his colleagues into reconsidering their actions.

A few least tanar'ri by themselves wouldn't have done much more than destroy a few buildings, but the Ninth Cabal assumed the terrorism was the action of a rival Cabal, and retaliated accordingly. The other Cabals retaliated in the same kind. It was unfortunate for them that they were summoning beings from the realm of the Abyssal lord Alzrius, and Alzrius spreads like flame - the more sparks in play, the hotter and more quickly he burns.

Before the reprisals ended, the North had become a conflagration, with Alzrius himself (it is said) setting up a throne in the remains of Chaarkhold. Most of the northern states were erased from the map forever.

Jhary had gotten his wish - the games ended as the struggle became a matter of survival for the entire continent, if not the entire world. In punishment for their actions, Karvet had the entire Ninth Cabal eliminated. Jhary escaped only because Carolinus gave him refuge; Karvet had not imagined such loyalty from an outsider. This only made things worse, however, for without the Cabal of Balance the more extreme Cabals became more at cross-purposes than ever before.

A few centuries later, Jhary Etreiu was trying to undo his mistake by helping a



descendent of Carolinus, Prince Rommel, to unite his nation and ultimately take on the Flame of the North himself. In the intervening time Jhary had grown much more experienced and canny, traveling the world and the planes to learn more magic. He had also grown harder, less introverted but no less ambitious in his determination to change things in what he saw as a pragmatically and ethically superior direction. While his fellow Knights of Harmony battled various intractable monarchs in their plan of uniting the land, never sure why some were willing to ally themselves and other, equally good rulers were not, Jhary was carefully destroying the power bases of the chaotic Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Cabals while making pacts of mutual aid with the lawful Second, Third, and Fourth Cabals.

Although he was tempted to try and destroy Karvet of the purely evil First Cabal, he did not; in fact, the powerful lich became a vital part of his plan. Karvet surpassed Jhary's expectations, personally dueling an avatar of Alzrius while the Knights of Harmony destroyed the gates to the Abyss. In the end, the ancient lich agreed to allow the formation of the Harmonium in exchange for being made absolute ruler of all the old Hekan kingdoms and a member of Ortho's Council. Many other Hekan wizards joined the Knights of Harmony in the new capital of Harmony's Glory, adding their knowledge to the nascent Harmonium's arsenal.

The slaughter of the snow elves and their pixie allies during the next century was not Jhary's idea, or part of the plan of the Knights of Harmony or any of the Cabals. During the long war with the Elven Shaar the general population began to believe all elves were enemy sympathizers and began attacking them on their own accord. Some of them managed to escape through moon-gates they opened into other planes, but many did not.