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# AGAPE

**Andrew Larsen**

Agape is an Oasis located at the southwestern tip of the Eiritha Hills. The Eiritha Hills end in a series of low mesas pock-marked with small caves. Agape is located on the southern side of a long mesa at the southwestern tip of the Hills. Unlike most of the mesa-caves in the Eiritha Hills, these caves are characterized by a warm, moist vapor that comes from deep inside the mesa. These vapors provide a great deal of water that collects on the southern wall of the mesa and runs down to the ground in large rivulets, pooling in several large ponds, creating conditions that support large numbers of animals, some modest settled agriculture, and the local Oasis Folk.

## **The Region**

The area around Agape is characterized by a number of small waterholes, most of which are fed from streams running down the wall of the mesa, although a few well up from the ground. By Praxian standards, the area is quite lush, with numerous acacia trees, date palms, stands of flowering shrubs, and ample grasses. Papyrus grows along the edges of the waterholes. Watermelons and serpentweed are easily found. During Storm and Sea season, there is often a thin morning mist that hangs around until the rising sun burns it off.

Because of the waterholes, wildlife is quite common in the area. The ponds themselves are constantly host to a range of Praxian birds and animals, particularly substantial numbers

of Praxian cranes, but also ducks, spoonbills, grebes, cowpeckers, hawks, marmots, wild ui, lizards, wild goats, and of course Eiritha beasts. Snakes are very common here, including rhinoceros snakes, but few of the snakes are poisonous. Predators such as lions, feral dogs, hyenas, and even occasional daggertooth cats and leaping bears are found in the region, drawn by the ample prey. Bas-moli and Agimori frequent the area as well, because of the good hunting.

## **The Pueblos**

About a hundred feet above the ponds, the largest of the caves is the site of a substantial pueblo. The cave has a long, high mouth but is comparatively shallow. Houses built out of mesa stone and mud brick are packed tightly



against another, with enough housing to hold several hundred Oasis Folk; some of these buildings are accessed through doors in the front wall, while others are entered through the roof, via a ladder. A second, slightly smaller pueblo lies a short ways to the west of the main pueblo, accessible by a narrow path carved into the face of the mesa centuries ago. Both of these pueblos have a network of cisterns designed to catch the condensed vapors and store their water for the use of the Oasis Folk. The Oasis Folk have also carved out a series of storage chambers in the face of the mesa where water vapors do not naturally exude, allowing them to keep grain and produce in relatively dry conditions.

The two pueblos are accessible by a narrow trail carved into the face of the mesa. This trail leads up from the ground to a narrow platform about 20 feet below the pueblo. The last 20 feet is bridged by wooden ladders that can be pulled up in times of danger. The Oasis Folk developed this system to protect them from the worst depredations of the Praxians. Praxians and other non-Oasis Folk are never permitted up to the pueblos, and instead must trade with the Oasis Folk who come down to tend their fields around the Oasis. By strict tradition, the ladders are drawn up at sunset, and not lowered again until sunrise. The two pueblos have a large collection of rocks and similar missiles that can be showered down on those who attempt to climb up to the villages.

The Oasis Folk engage in some formal agriculture, tending small fields of holygrain and skullbushes down by the ponds. They also cultivate the watermelons that grow easily, with a few small caves given over to melon vines. Other caves up along the mesa house pens of ui, the Praxian guinea pig. The Oasis Folk also hunt the birds and small beasts that come to the watering holes. They weave bas-

kets, mats, and other items from palm leaves and papyrus, and make pots from the local clay; they often trade their produce and baskets to the Praxians; wool cloth and animal hides are common purchases.

In general, the Oasis Folk are remarkably good climbers, with little fear of heights. They are not, however, particularly bold; they avoid combat unless their pueblos are directly threatened. When dealing with outsiders, most Oasis Folk are polite and agreeably submissive, seeking to avoid saying anything that might contradict or displease those they are talking to; they will frequently agree to a suggestion and then simply ignore it as soon as practical. This can make interactions with them rather aggravating, and the nomads generally consider them all liars.

The Oasis Folk worship a goddess named Manali, who is a spirit of agriculture. Like most Oasis cults, it is a small cult with no importance beyond Agape. Unlike most Oasis cults, Manali is not a water spirit, but rather a plant spirit (her runes are Plant and Stasis) and is not considered a child of Camenura; the water at Agape is considered the gift of Eiritha. Manali is considered a friend of Eiritha, and is said to be a refugee from Genert's Garden. The cult offers a variety of agricultural skills and two Divine Magic spells: **Bless Crops** and **Preserve Food**.

Manali's shrine is a small building in the center of the larger pueblo, entered through the roof. She is represented as an effigy made of holygrain stalks woven together. Twice a year her effigy is taken out and paraded around the fields to bless them, and then returned to a sanctum under her shrine. Only her priest and attendants are permitted into this sanctum.

Manali's priest, Salu, is the leader of the Oasis Folk at Agape. He is a deeply conservative

**Preserve Food:** 1 pt. Range touch. Duration 1 season. Stackable. Reusable.

This spell must be cast on a food container. It preserves all organic matter within the container, protecting it from decay, mold, and small pests. Water will not leak into the container, nor will heat or cold affect the contents. The spell lasts for 1 season or until the container is opened, whichever comes first. It has no effect on living creatures, so it cannot be used to preserve someone's life. 1 point of the spell will affect one small container, such as a pot or a bag. 2 points will affect one large container, such as a barrel or chest, while 3 points affects a very large container, such as a silo or a sealed room.

man, convinced that his people's well-being is best served by following traditional ways. He insists on keeping strangers out of the pueblos under all circumstances. He is not unsympathetic to strangers in need, but sees strict limits to what help he can safely give them. He is on good grounds with Chabi Jumping-Pot, and recognizes that the cult of Eiritha is a source of valuable aid. As a result, he will do almost anything to keep the good favor of the priestess of the Eiritha shrine. The pueblo routinely gifts her with baskets of food.

The other major figure among the Oasis Folk is Old Jaru, who is in his 50s. He is the most experienced hunter at the Oasis, and extremely knowledgeable about the mesa and the area around it. Although he does not worship Foundchild, he gets along with Praxian hunters quite well; he respects them, understands their concerns, and knows how deal with them. Unlike most of the Oasis Folk, he is not afraid to be disagreeable; he is honest, often to the point of bluntness, but also rather taciturn. He is the person most likely to tell outsiders important information.

## The Old Village

The Oasis Folk currently occupy two pueblos, but there is a third, ruined pueblo, slightly to the east of the other two. The Oasis Folk call this the Old Village, and they do not go to it anymore. There is a trail that leads up to a platform about 15 feet below the Old Village, but there is no ladder to close the remaining distance; getting up to the Old Village requires two **Climbing** rolls. A narrow path in the face of the mesa leads from the main village to the Old Village, but at some point in the past, about 10 feet of that path has been cut away, leaving a sharp drop of about 200 feet to the ground; bridging the gap requires a **Jumping** roll at -20%.

If questioned, the Oasis Folk say that the Old Village is haunted and that it is not safe to go there; they are reluctant to even discuss what happened to the Old Village. During the Sacred Time, the Old Village sometimes appears to be intact and occupied by men and women; it is, in fact, a Ghost Place. (See Rule One Issue 12)

## The Eiritha Shrine

The northernmost cave at Agape is a fairly large cave at ground level, curtained off from the outside with animal hides. It is known as Eiritha's Snout. Praxians claim that this cave is Eiritha's mouth, and as such it is the second-most sacred place for the cult of Eiritha, after the Paps. The Snout is a permanent shrine to Eiritha, with a small staff of Eirithans who reside here permanently. The cave has powerful healing properties, and Praxians with unusual medical problems sometimes journey to Agape to seek healing at the Snout.

The Snout is a woman's shrine. It is forbidden for men or male animals to enter the Snout under normal circumstances. Men who

seek assistance at the shrine are normally kept outside the cave and will be inspected and treated in the open air. On the rare occasions that men are allowed inside (which usually happens with difficult medical problems), it is under the fiction that they are actually women; they must be wrapped in a woman's blanket and given a woman's name for the duration of their visit.

When the light of the rising sun hits the shrine, the cool moist caves emit a low, haunting moan that is known as the Lowing. In the Dawn Age, Eiritha frequently issued prophecies to the priestesses of the Snout, but these stopped long ago. Why Eiritha has chosen not to speak is a source of discussion. Every priestess now hopes that she will become the first to receive a prophecy, but these hopes have been met with stubborn silence.

The Snout is also home to the Eirithan subcult of Sariba Walks-at-Dawn, a Dawn Age Eirithan. While most clans claim her as their own, evidence suggests that she was probably born into the Bison nation. She was married to a powerful Storm Bull khan, Chatokeh Walks-in-the-Wind, whose frenzies she learned to master. Her cult became so useful that it spread from her original nation and can now be found among all Praxian nations. After he was slain, she sought solace at Eiritha's Snout, where she founded the shrine. Eventually she traveled down into Eiritha and never returned.

Any Eiritha woman can join Sariba's subcult by sacrificing 1 point of POW and receiving a special tattoo. Her worshippers may marry, but may not remarry after their husband's death. Once initiated, she must sacrifice 2 MPs to Sariba every holy day. Sariba teaches the Spirit Magic spell **Calm Frenzy**.

**Calm Frenzy:** 2pts. Duration Instantaneous. Range 2 meters. Passive.

This spell calms the target, bringing it out of any frenzied or terrified state. The caster must overcome the target's current mps. If successful, the target calms down. This spell cancels the effects of Fanaticism and Demoralize, brings a warrior out of Berserk frenzy, and calms a stampeding animal.

At the moment, Eiritha's Snout is tended by a small group of priestesses led by Chabi Jumping-Pot, a Rhino Nation woman. She is an extremely skilled healer, and knows much about the plant life around Agape. She is a harsh woman, inclined to take a 'tough love' approach to most situations. She believes that Eiritha grants her blessings only to those likely to benefit from them; the weak should die in the harsh Praxian environment. Despite this attitude, Chabi has comparatively good relations with the Oasis Folk. They have earned her grudging admiration for their ability to survive and protect themselves. Thus she occasionally grants healing and other assistance to them, though always in return for payment of one sort or another. Complete outsiders to Prax may gain her healing aid, but at much higher cost than a Praxian would. She does not believe in letting someone owe her a favor. The Eirithans are guarded by two Axe Sisters who live at the Snout. The shrine owns a modest herd of Eiritha beasts, acquired from the various tribes that have stopped at Agape. They are kept in a corral within the shrine itself, and herded out to graze during the day.

Other than the Oasis Folk of the pueblos and the Eirithans at the Snout, most of those at Agape are Praxians, particularly those who roam the South Head Acres. Trade caravans occasionally come through, on a journey between Cam's Well and the Zola Fel, but there



is much less of this sort of thing than at some oases (such as Day's Rest or Moonbroth, which lie on more obvious trade routes). Thus non-Praxian visitors are somewhat unusual and are likely to arouse some interest, especially if they have goods to trade. Small bands of Agimori and Basmoli also roam the region, which tends to discourage smaller caravans from coming through. It is rumored that the Basmoli may have a shrine in a cave at one of the other mesas in the region.

## **The Thed Shrine**

Agape has always been troubled by broo. According to legends, one of the caves along the mesa was the lair of Thed. However, there is some uncertainty about which cave is the one in question, and broo have been known to congregate at several of the smaller caves in the region. The Oasis Folk tell a number of ominous tales of those who went exploring those caves and never returned (or worse, returned pregnant with a broo), and so they do not go into those caves, although they will gladly point them out to eager chaos-hunters. Feral broo easily proliferate due to the ample numbers of wild animals in the region. Much less commonly, a more sophisticated group of broo takes residence in one of the caves; such bands have typically been destroyed by Storm Bulls from whichever clan is currently resident at Agape.

Unknown to the Praxians and pueblo folk, there is another shrine at Agape, this one sacred to Thed. It marks the place where Thed hid after her rape, and it is there she grew strong and malevolent.

The Thed Shrine is hidden deep in one of the caves in the area, far on the east end of the mesa. It is the reason that this area has so much trouble with the broo. Feral broo instinctively migrate toward the shrine, and young

broo grow much faster than normal, and tend to be more impressive specimens of that race. Additionally, the broo reproduce much more easily here; any creature they molest is almost guaranteed to become pregnant. Over the centuries, the shrine has been found and cleared several times, but those who did so never recognized it as a shrine and simply assumed it was another cave. Consequently, despite the attentions of the Storm Bulls in this area, the shrine remains an unnoticed threat.

## **Scenario Ideas**

### **Into Eiritha's Mouth**

The PCs are Praxians, traveling in southern Prax. One of them (or an important NPC) contracts an illness that resists normal attempts to cure it. A shaman attempts a spirit healing but is unable to overcome the disease spirit; he advises them to take the sick character to Eiritha's Snout and seek healing there. Chabi agrees to take the players down Eiritha's throat, where they will undergo a variety of challenges to persuade Eiritha to heal their sick comrade. And if they return, Chabi has a service they must perform for her...

### **Counting Heads**

The PCs are Lunars, or Lunar sympathizers. A member of Governor Sor-Eel's staff asks them to conduct a census of Agape. Chabi reluctantly agrees, but Salu steadfastly refuses to permit them to enter the pueblo to count heads. Salu has no understanding of the Lunar Empire's size and power, and imagines the PCs are merely bandits trying to cheat the Oasis Folk somehow. Do the players decide to punish his intransigence by telling their superior that the Oasis Folk are in rebellion, or do they seek some other solution to the problem?

## Seeing Ghosts

The PCs are at Agape during the Sacred Time, a time when the spirits of the dead manifest easily. An important NPC starts acting strangely. A Praxian tells them that the character is suffering from *kubu*, possession by the dead. The possessed character tells them that he is Arkalu, one of the restless spirits of the Old Village. He demands that they help him avenge an ancient wrong, and claims that the Old Village was massacred by the ancestors of the Oasis Folk during a quarrel between the pueblos. Is he telling the truth, or does he have a reason to wish to hurt the Oasis Folk? And will they agree to help him, or can they persuade a shaman to help exorcise the spirit?

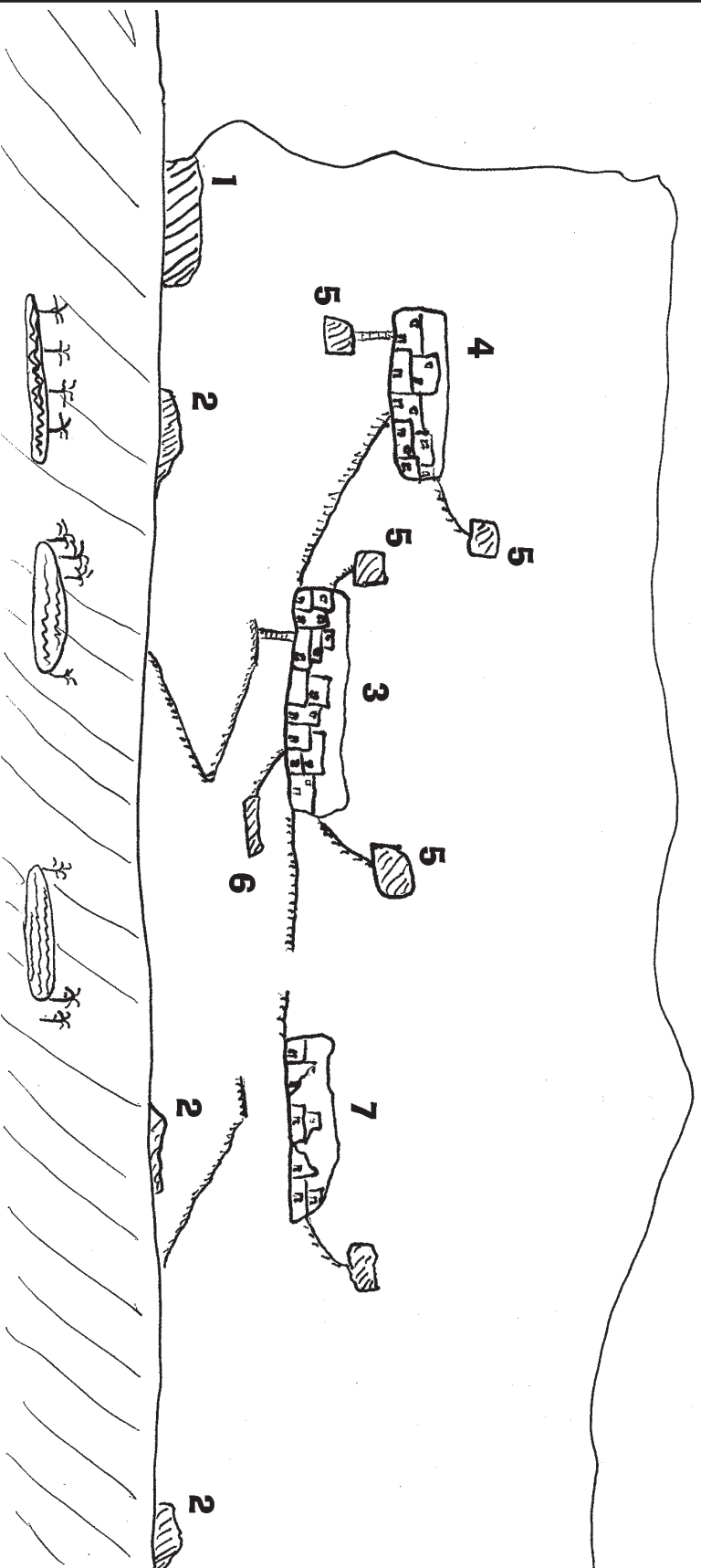
## The Map

The map presents a view of Agape as one approaches it from the south.

1. The Eiritha Shrine, known as the Snout
2. These are small caves along the base of the mesa. They are sometimes inhabited by temporary visitors, caravans, and the like.
3. The Main Pueblo. Directly beneath it is the access trail.
4. The Small Pueblo. It is only accessible via the Main Pueblo
5. Storage caves. These caves hold grain silos and plots of watermelons.
6. The ui cave. The Oasis Folk maintain pens of ui here.
7. The Old Village. It is an uninhabited ruin. There is an access trail below it, and a partly destroyed trail that used to connect it to the Main Pueblo.



# AGAPE





# GODLEARNER TAROT

Roderick Robertson

## Description

Decks of Godlearner tarot cards are made of paper, papyrus, parchment, or even thin sheets of silver, jade or granite. The size of the cards varies between “travel” decks measuring approximately 2x3 ½ inches (50x88 mm) – the size of a modern business card – to luxurious decks measuring 5x8 inches (125x200mm). Decks are usually colored in some way relating to the runes on them. Some have elaborate pictures – such as pictures of the major Elemental Gods conquering their foes, etc.

## Cults

**Associated** – Godlearners, some Godlearner remnant cults.

**Friendly** – very few people have a clue to the origins of the cards.

**Hostile** – those few cults or people who *do* know where the cards came from

## Knowledge

Automatic (Divination is a Cult Secret), Common (decks from the time of the Godlearners are Extremely Rare)

## History

Godlearner tarot were divination devices, training tools in the relationships of the runes, and used for various card games similar to Poker, Rummy, and Bridge.

Entertainment was probably the greatest use of decks, with Rune training a strong second.

Using the decks for Divination (much like modern tarot) was always a Cult secret, with different schools of interpretation.

## Powers

A tarot deck has no powers in and of itself, unless it was enchanted in some way. Using the Tarot as a tool for divination helps the user focus their thoughts and discern the symbolic flow of power throughout the world.

## Value

Decks vary tremendously in value, from torn, dirty parchment decks costing a few coppers, to inlaid and enameled silver-paper decks worth thousands of Silver just on their artistic merit.

## The Tarot Deck

Developed after the Godlearners consolidated the runes into the system we know today, each deck consists of several “Courts” – the

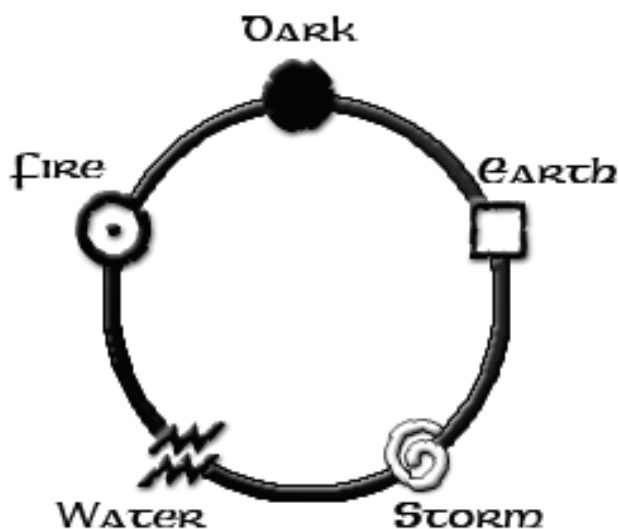
Elements, the Powers, the Forms, and the Conditions.

### Elemental Court

The Elemental Court consists of 50 cards. Each card has two elemental runes, based on the Elemental Progression (*Masters of Luck and Death*, pg 53).

Each element is numbered 1-10, with the 1-5 paired with the 6-10 of the preceding (Superior) element, and the 6-10 paired with the following (Inferior) element. Cards are normally called by their Numbers and Rune, which can be either rune: the “4-7 of Air” is the same as the “7-4 of Earth” (4 Air, 7 Earth). Naming the card depends on what game is being played, how the card is being played in the game, or which Rune is at the top of the card when it is dealt.

There are cards for Dame Darkness, Sir Sea, Empress Earth, Lord Light and King Storm, sometimes counted as the “11-0” card for that element.



### Power Court

The Power court consists of either four or five cards, depending on whether the creator of the deck recognized the Fate-Luck card. Each card consists of two opposed Powers: Harmony-Disorder, Fertility-Death, Stasis-Movement, Truth-Illusion and possibly Luck-Fate.

### Form Court

The form court consists of cards marked with a particular Form rune. The usual forms included are Plant, Beast, Man, Dragonewt, Spirit, and sometime Chaos (Chaos is sometimes placed in the Condition Court, instead).

### Condition Court

The Condition Court consists of four to six cards: Mastery, Magic, Infinity, Law and sometimes Balance. Chaos is sometimes placed in the Condition Court, rather than the Form Court.

### Variant decks

Numerous variant decks can be found, from minor changes, such as the “Gods Deck” that names each card according to its Runic significance (the Fertility-Death card is either Kargan To or Uleria, depending on its orientation), to the “Mostal Deck” that classifies the Runes according to Gems and Minerals, and includes cards for the various races of Octagony, the Rock, Lead, Quicksilver, Copper, Tin, Brass, Silver and Gold. (and Iron, Clay, and Diamond, in the so-called “heretical” decks).

### Divination by Cartomancy

Cartomancy is a learnable skill, but it must be learned – no-one can use the cards as a divination tool until they have not only learned the cards, but also learned to interpret them

and are able to “open” themselves to what the cards tell them.

Inexperienced cartomancers are unable to use the cards on their own behalf – another person must pose a question, and the cartomancer interprets the cards in relation to that question. More skilled diviners can ask questions of the cards themselves, and interpret the answer.

Cartomancy can no more tell the future than any other form of Divination, though it can show the currents of the cosmic forces that are influencing the questioner.

### **Download your own deck!**

Go to [www.ruleonemagazine/downloads/Tarot.zip](http://www.ruleonemagazine/downloads/Tarot.zip) to download the Simplified Peresk Deck, created sometime in the reign of Emperor Miglos by Sandalat of Peresk. It was intended as a “beginner’s” deck, made of inexpensive papyrus or paper, with simple inked designs of the runes.

Download the file, print out the cards, attach them to old playing cards, and make up your own games and Divinatory Patterns. I have found that “Reading the tarot” can even help me plan scenarios and adventures! There are many ways to read the Tarot in the real world — experiment with them, or create spreads unique to Glorantha

*(I’d be happy to publish articles on variant games or spreads for these tarot; or better-looking Tarot decks! - editor)*



# BOSHAN PROVINCE

David Millians

**Population:** 1.5 million (*Glorantha; Book 2: Genertela*, page 21)

**Urban:** no more than 150,000

**Mandarins:** about 150

Boshan is a large province in the south of Kralorela, known for its contrariness and diverse ethnic and religious heritage. To the north lies Puchai Province, the Suam Chow is north and east, while the Hachuan Mountains tower to the west and across most of the south of the province, descending into the jungles of Fethlon. Abundant with resources and several important cities, Boshan is also an important area for trade.

## Geography

Boshan is a vast region, encompassing a range of geographical and physical features. Vast mountain ranges, Hachuan Shan, fill the southwest, while the Hsa Shan stretch away to the north. The Golden River and its tributaries converge in the center of the province and wind across wide, flat country, perfect for

rice farming, to the sea. A handful of prominent hills dot this country. Most of the population lives in this region.

To the west of the Golden River, the land rises into increasingly sharp hills and minor mountain ranges and stretches into deep, narrow canyons. The highest part of this dissected plateau, Hwa Gow, fills the relatively low gap in the Shan Shan Mountains, beyond which lie the burning plains of the long-dead giants. Hwa Gow is full of towns and tribes whose ways are strange and varied, but this area remains part of the empire.

East of the Golden River rise gentler hills, a fertile landscape of occasional crags and growing patches of ancient forest and jungle. The creatures and peoples are a mix of

Kralori and other folk, though all answer to the rule of the Mandarins. This area is famous for its gigantic fruit, some oranges weighing hundreds of tael (100 tael weighs approximately 3.7 Kg/8 pounds). Many kilometers from the Suam Chow, this landscape finally spreads into the Fethlon Jungle with its elf and beast inhabitants.





Most of Boshan is notorious for its hot and humid weather throughout much of the year. Winter brings a slight cooling but also typhoons and thicker mists out of Kahar's Sea. The hill and plateau country of the west and south of the province, however, is more temperate, and many wealthy families have estates in these regions, where they can escape the heat of the lowlands.

## Demographics

Boshan Province is infamous for both its diversity and its truculent nature with regard to the central government. Ethnic and religious variety has a long history in the area now known as Boshan. The causes and course of this assorted cultural array is clear from the region's history, described below. Their sheer diversity keeps this province colorful and challenging to rule.

Three major kingdoms existed in this region, each with a long tradition of its own. The people of the central areas along the Golden River and its branches look back to the Dyan Kingdom and its proud traditions. This makes itself felt in many ways, including both rural practices and ancient noble lineages that still hold power throughout the area and see everyone since Emperor Shavaya as an interloper.



Some parts of the western uplands and the Hwa Gow remember the Eagle Lords of Yu Ah and the peaceful age they ruled, while the ghosts of the long-lost princes of Voon in the southeast sometimes still appear to disturb the peace of Boshan by inspiring old, bloody ways among the peasants.

Several tribes of semi-civilized mountain folk live along the settled frontier. The largest are the Feng, Kachwin, and Laow. The delicate Feng grow tea in terraced plantations on steep hillsides and are known for their kindness and love of dance. They have much in common with the more remote Meefung Bee People but are contented citizens of the empire. The Kachwin are rough hillfolk farmers, warriors and defenders of their lands and family. They have an unruly and base reputation, much like their pigs, but dutifully pay tribute on time. The Laow are farmers and hunters and worship a great spirit, Lord Cervid Dragonson. Most lowlanders assume that these are Hsunchen folk that have become enlightened by Kralori civilization, but many of them are a mix of Kralori that settled the areas long ago and made peace with the local spirits.

The range of physiognomies in Boshan points to possible Wareran influences, presumably from southern Greatlands long ago. Both Kralori and the aboriginal people deny such speculations. There are, however, some Beast Riders that do inhabit the far west of the Hwa Gow Plateau, and some of them offer intermittent tribute to the Kralori Empire. These include the Khagar, who follow Storm Bull and may have an admixture of Ngau Bull Folk but do not ride beasts; the Lesser Bison Riders, known as the Chwong, who ride small forest bison and settle in villages for years at a time; small groups of Loo Chiao Lizard Riders and Xi Rhino Riders; and even a few



bands of Morokanth, regarded as dangerous demons by all lowland folk.

The cultural, legal, and linguistic diversity of Boshan Province keeps the Mandarin's translators busy.

### **Hsunchen Beast Peoples**

Arguably the most ancient influence in the region is the Hsunchen beast peoples, mostly now confined to the further reaches of the hill country and mountains. Some of these tribes and communities acknowledge the rule of the Kralori, while others live in a restless peace with nearby forces or are simply too remote to bother.

The largest communities are those of the Loo Deer People, identified by foreign scholars as kin of the Damali of Ralios; a few of these live under government rule. Kralorela actually hosts several deer peoples, and Boshan also has a few bands of Faiy, pygmies known for

their sharp fangs, lowland swamp villages, and barking deer totem.

Sofali Turtle Folk have villages dotting remote stretches of the coast of the Suam Chow. The strange Bat Hsunchen, the pygmy Pujaleg, some of whom roam by day, others by night, live in the jungles of the mountain slopes, while the Meefung Bee People tend their hives and tea groves on the clear slopes. Boar (Ga) and Bull (Ngau) Folk have a few small villages. Qa-ying Eagle People and Lofak Yak People dwell high in the mountains. Everyone knows that lone Mio (Cat), Hok (Crane), Wu (Fox), Yo (mongoose), and Hsa (Tiger) wander at the edges of civilization and on quiet rural pathways, usually up to no good. Viper Folk, allies of the evil Huan To, are rumored in every dark valley. Both the Geet Chicken Folk and the Tsao, who once served the Jungle Hen Spirit, are said to be extinct, but the ghosts of what may be these ancient warriors have been seen on more than one occasion.

### **History**

The oldest tales of the region are in large part similar to those told throughout Kralorela, though the emphases and lessons can be different. The first several emperors have far more forest and beast imagery, perhaps a carryover from the area's strong Hsunchen roots. Their dragon nature gets little attention, and Emperor Shavaya received their greatest respect, for he is considered the founder of many traditions and lineages. Emperor Daruda and succeeding Kralori emperors are described as little more than heavy-handed, even while the people of Boshan have gradually accepted the same draconic ways as the rest of the empire.

The oldest records of the province speak of the Kingdom of Dyan, whose kings claimed



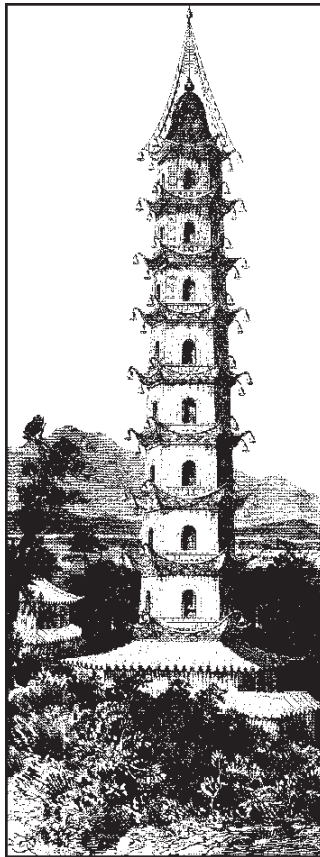
descent from Emperor Shavaya. They were famed for their elaborate, beautiful bronze work, lacquerware, and silk embroidery. Based in high hilltop fortresses and around the rivers of central Boshan for transportation, the kingdom grew rich and influential. Their gods and spirits were forms of serpents and tigers, and their script was a variation of ancient Kralori forms with elaborate floral and animal motifs. Many modern scholars see Hsunchen and possibly Aldryami influences.

They buried their dead in vertical pit graves and their leaders in great mounds, most of which were plundered of their relics long ago, but many hills, some quite large, in Boshan are rumored to be the last resting places of Dyan kings. Old carvings show the Dyan wearing their hair in elaborate topknots, indicating roles and ranks, and many people in Boshan still arrange their hair in some of the same forms.

Modern historians view the Dyan as a decadent kingdom, lewd and shamanistic. This is symbolized by their dedication to bullfighting, music, and strange foods, all of which remain popular in Boshan. Ever rebellious, the kings of Dyan defied and resisted the center for many ages, fighting among themselves as much as against the civilization and armies of the Kralori.

A reformist king, Lord Gok, appointed a wise prime minister, probably a learned Kralori man, but while he made many changes, he was killed at king's funeral and the reforms reversed. A later reformist king appointed an-

other sensible prime minister, but other nobles threatened his life, and he fled the court and drowned in the Golden River. People in Boshan still claim this as the origin of the Dragonboat Races, though all other Kralori view this as nonsense. The arrogant last king of Dyan, Lord Ao-pan, died in the earthquakes and rebellions that shook the foundations of his great fortress and the support of his people.



Similar upheavals left little clear information about the two other polities of early Boshan. The "Eagle People" ruled the Kingdom of Yu Ah in western Boshan from their "nests in the sky, mountains, and tallest trees," according to local tradition, but while the Eagle Lords figure in a number of folk tales, their ways are mostly forgotten.

Voon in southeastern Boshan was a culture of valley principalities, ruled by immortal elves, perhaps dryads. Their ways involved tribute paid to the fields and forests in horrid, bloody rites. Voon and Yu Ah vanish from historical records during the many incursions of Sekever.

During these distant ages, the fire faiths of Teshnos arrived from the south, though their modern priests claim they have always existed in the area. They do not accept all of the teachings of Chal and show many significant divergences from the practices in Teshnos. A minority faith, the flame temples continue to flourish throughout the province.

A hero of the Kralori, Huang Is, finally tamed and integrated the people of the region as best as they ever would be. Inspired by the emperor, he came to the banks of the Golden River with all of the riches of Kralori civiliza-

tion. Foolish and unimpressed by real culture, the local people ignored him or tried to rob Huang Is of his noble gifts.

Huang Is perceived their nature and announced a grand feast, incorporating all of the bizarre, dangerous, and disgusting ingredients eaten by the natives. Every kingdom and tribe sent their leaders and many others to enjoy this banquet. Huang Is brewed a fabulous meal in a great cauldron, some say a relic of Dyan, and when the chiefs, princes, kings, and magicians of the land drew around it, he overturned it upon them, cooking away their most base natures. When he lifted the cauldron, they were freed and eagerly joined the Dragon Way. The outline of the cauldron rim marked out the imperial walls of Sha Ming, ever after the center of Boshan. They hold a great festival of food every year to commemorate this event and all of the lessons learned, though some lessons may not be the ones intended.

As the taste of any stew varies, Boshan remained diverse and sometimes intractable. During the reign of Emperor Vayobi the Tch- eng Twins, two sisters, led a rebellion against the central government. Though their uprising suffered defeat and they were deemed servants of Sekever, local people still remember these heroines fondly, and they serve as inspiration for a secret society of women warriors in the region. Their story does nothing to curb the rebellious nature of the people of Boshan.

A tribe or district will sometimes seethe with defiance, but these scattered acts of insubordination are quickly scattered or crushed. More serious are the uprisings led by ambitious noble families, claiming some ancient heritage, allying with Hsunchen, monks, and even Huan To. Sometimes a Mandarin or even a governor falls prey to the delusion of

reviving independence for Boshan. These events require more significant application of military, magical, and draconic force.

During the reign of ShangHsa May-His-Name-Be-Cursed, the region of Boshan was split between multiple provinces, and the area was active with resistance groups and righteous

warriors. Emperor Godunya recognized this service when he took the throne, though that has not prevented the War Dragons from descending on rebellious Sha Ming on several occasions.

As a frontier region and an area of Sekever- an activity and interest from before the reign of Emperor Vayobi, secret societies, evil cults, and the Yellow Turbans remain dangerously active in the province into the modern era.

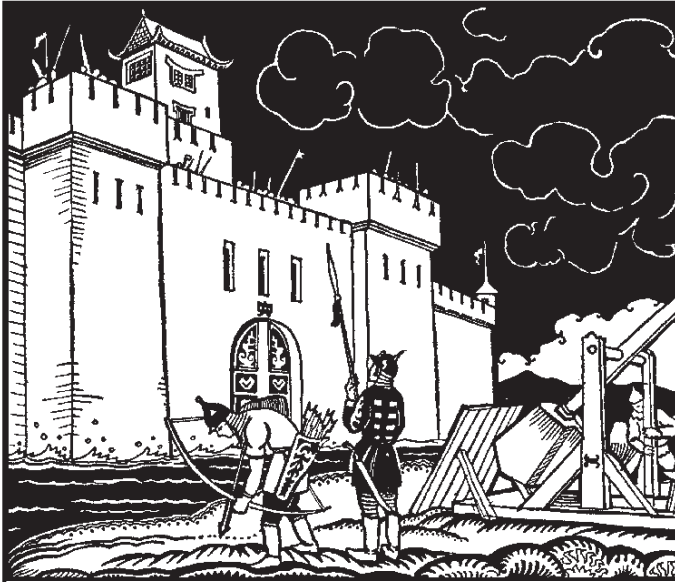
## Districts

Boshan is composed of eleven districts, each led by a senior Mandarin and his staff. Within these are varying numbers of subordinate districts, encompassing smaller cities or collections of towns and villages. A few hinter sub-districts are quite large and may have only a few settled communities, the rest of the area being the haunt of barbarous tribes and monsters. Needless to say, these are hardship assignments for Mandarins.

## Ah Kwa

Ah Kwa encompasses the deep valley of the Wrath River and the surrounding plateau and uplands in western Boshan. There are two main cities in the district, Ah and Bow Xing,





both near the river. The Wrath River itself is cluttered with massive boulders and rapids and has long, beautiful stretches, but it is a poor medium for long distance transportation. Flat and terrace rice paddies fill the river bottomlands, while farmers of millet and sorghum and herdsman use the higher country. The region is famous for its cormorant fisherman. The water buffalo is the primary beast of burden, and the most common livestock are bees, ducks, elephants, pigs, and sheep. Moving into the high country, Kralori villages thin out into the lands of Feng and Kachwin tribes, then various scattered Hsunchen and the Ha Shan Mountains.

Several areas of the district have mining activity, and there is a significant community of rural Keets near Ah. Several ruined Eagle Lord fortresses sit atop towering hills along the river.

### **An Kwan Dai**

An Kwan Dai District centers on the small city of the same name on the southeastern coast of Boshan. The city was much larger during the reign of ShangHsa May-His-Name-Be-Cursed and the site of several

major God Learner universities. These areas now lie shattered by the dragons' judgment and overgrown by the centuries. A few fools and madmen still pursue fragments of these broken studies, but the modern city faces the sea, and its people engage in fishing and trade. There is a major fortress nearby, where the War Dragon keeps watch on the Fanzai Straits to the south.

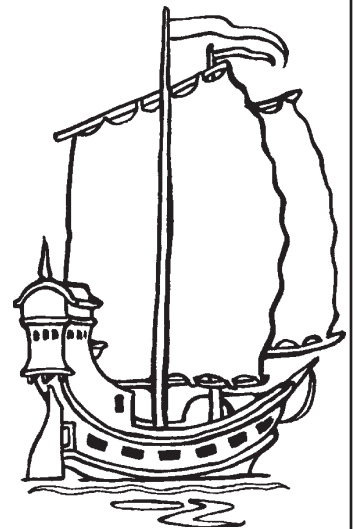
The surrounding district is densely settled with rice farmers. Other Kralori consider them lazy fools. Many strange folk, Keets, Hsunchen, and Aldryami live in the marshes, jungles, and other wild areas of the region.

### **Ban Jau**

Ban Jau is a large peninsula stretching into the Suam Chow northeast of Sha Ming. It has no major cities, and the seat of the Mandarin of the district is at the modest town of Daai Saan (Big Fishing Basket), on the east side of the peninsula. Sam Jan is a busy new port created by Godunya near the tip of the

peninsula, just west of the western end of the Bridge of Liver, Bile, and Honey. The coastal areas have many coves and inlets, full of fishing villages and government salt works. Boat races and the Cult of the Golden Fish Dragon are popular.

The interior of the district is much more rugged than the rest of the coast of Boshan and spreads from a small mountain range running down its middle. This area has many settlements and farms and is also home to many





Kachwin and Laow clans and small numbers of Hsunchen folk. The hills also contain many reclusive temples and hermitages, some famous for their holiness and martial arts traditions. Among the latter are Black Bell Temple and Resting Leopard Temple.

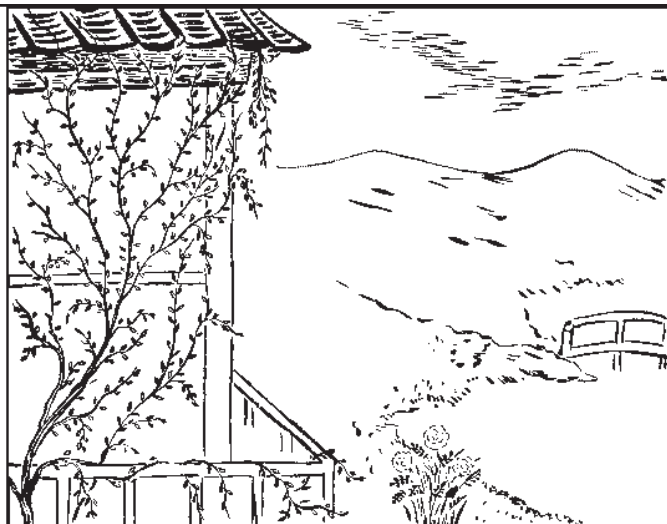
### **Bok Tong Goon**

This district lies in the far southeast of the province at the edge of the Fethlon Jungles. Its farmland is sufficient but poor, and its main wealth comes from lumber and rare herbs gathered from the forest. The old noble families of the district have ancient pacts with the Aldryami to allow this exploitation of the jungle's wealth, but they have been overly greedy in the past, and this has led to conflict and the involvement of the War Dragon.

Deep in the jungles of the extreme south of the district lie the ruins of Shi Mai, a city of the False Dragon Ring. Humbled in the Dragon's Awakening Shudder and avoided by all righteous Kralori, its remains are overgrown, and just a few towers still poke above the mighty trees. Many treasures and strange magic from that age may still lie within it, but it is haunted by numberless hungry ghosts and demons.

### **Choong Tak**

This rich, wealthy district south of Sha Ming produces abundant rice and other foodstuffs, and its ancient wealthy families are famous for their scholarly ways and sponsorship of artists, making it also a region of great beauty endowed with many pleasant estates and lovely gardens. This area suffered greatly during the depredations of ArgatuSay's followers, but it is restored since the victories of Imolo Wen, and his family now owns much of the land in the region and many of the best estates. Their new titles are not always appreci-



ated by the older families, and this district is prone to intrigue beneath its beautiful exterior.

Three small cities are the focus of the district. Kok Ke Hoo lies near the center of the region and is the seat of the district's senior magistrate. It is famous for its fine lacquerware, paper umbrellas, and horn combs. The locals claim that all three were invented in their town.

Naam Chyoh in the south is best known for its hot springs, where wealthy visitors take the water and sip the area's well-known golden tea. In addition to these blessings, the town draws its real wealth from its endless groves of almond trees.

Saan Saan is just north of Kok Ke Hoo. Its ancient kilns produce a much sought after porcelain. It also has a long history of martial arts masters, and is home to more than a dozen major schools and dojos.

### **Hwa Gow**

The Hwa Gow Plateau rises high in the west above the lowlands of Boshan and forms a high, wide pass through the Shan Shan Mountains. While administered by a few lonely Mandarins and settled by a few Kralori, the rugged landscape is the home to a vari-



ety of peoples, including tribes of Kachwin, Khagar, Laow, beast riders, and Hsunchen, including Ga, Loo, Ngau, Pujaleg, and others. These create a fractious, frontier culture with more than its share of the bizarre and violent, but all in all Kralori officials keep the peace, and the plateau acts as a buffer against beast rider raiders.

Hwa Gow is littered with strange topographic features like One Hundred Pits, Lizard Dragon Caverns, and Moon Hill. There are also several ruins, many of which predate Kralori activity in the area. A few orders of monks have sought out the seclusion of these lands and built remote temples.

## Jing Kong

Jing Kong encompasses the tributaries of the upper Golden River, extending deep into the mountain valleys of the Hachuan Shan. Mining interests – gold, silver, bronze, copper, lead, zinc, tin, obsidian, quartz, fine stone like marble, several kinds of semi-precious stone, even jade - are strong here, and while the seat of the district is the small city of Yat Gam, guilds and wealthy families dominate the region, and corruption and smuggling are a problem.

The dwindling remains of many tribes still live on their ancient lands, but all experience cultural pressure, bad bargains, and violence from the numerous mining interests, which dig their territory. These mountain folk include Feng, Kachwin, and Laow villagers, Ga Boar Folk, Loo Deer People, Ngau Bull Folk, and both types of Pujaleg Bat Hsunchen. The land is strong with beast and earth spirits.

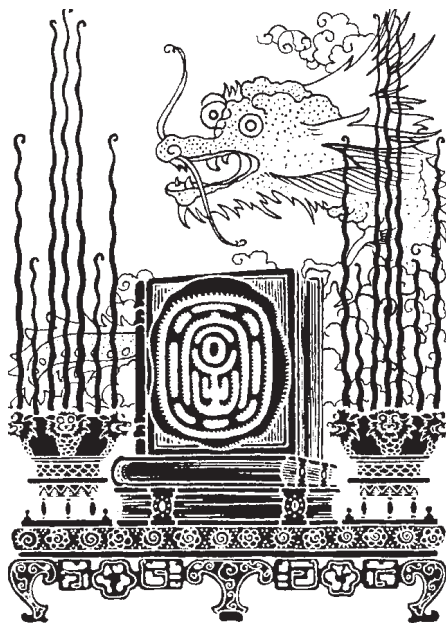
## Sha Ming

The great, ancient Kralori metropolis of Sha Ming lies on the north bank of the estuary of the Golden River and dominates trade and society in southern Kralorela. Though known for its intermittently rebellious nature, the city is also the center of government and the military. Locally, Sha Ming is best known for its many temples, monasteries, and beautiful gardens in the Lake District.

Sha Ming was a major center for the False Dragon Ring and the empire of ShangHsa May-His-Name-Be-Cursed, and God Leaner influences remain in the city. These include some temples and traditions, as well as secret societies. Few modern Kralori remember the origin of these institutions.

Guilds and wealthy merchant clans, especially those engaged in the mineral trades, are stronger in Sha Ming than in other Kralori cities. The city never fell to the rebel allies of ArgatuSay, but when Imolo Wen came to the land and defeated the emperor's enemies, his family gained huge grants, and while the master remains mostly with his studies within his dojo, his now distant relatives dominate local wealth and culture.

Only one other significant city, Toh Tow, lies in this district, and it is dwarfed by its larger neighbor. It lies on the west side of the wide bay formed by the estuary of the Golden River. Its people are famous for their consumption of tea. Their city is under the protection of a sea goddess and her eel-like son.



## Sya Sau

Sya Sau comprises the northeast of Boshan Province, where the coast curves west into the Suam Chow. The town of Sya Sau guards the sea, facing east, and is the center of the province's official salt extraction and trade. South along the coast is the smaller city of Hsiang Fung, also an important salt center and based on an ancient fortress. Inland are countless rice paddies and canals. The largest routes stretch all the way to Sha Ming.

The ruins of Taap lie partially submerged along almost a mile off the north coast, its towers and spires battered by even the gentle waves of the Suam Chow. Ghosts, monsters, and sea demons haunt it, but this does not keep the local people from diving there for both lost treasure and the fine pearls that grow in its ancient boulevards. Historians differ as to when the city fell.

## Tung Shui An

The large city of Tung Shui An and its surrounding district lie in the north of Boshan, where it meets Puchai Province at White



River, just below Descending Cloud Falls. A powerful, hungry demon once dominated the city, driving its inhabitants to never eat with anyone outside their families for fear of poison. Bok Chan, a hero of Emperor Godunya, defeated the demon, and now no citizen of Tung Shui An ever eats at home. The city still has many walls and wards, more than most other Kralori cities, but its people always circulate, seeking the best meals.

Near Ting Shui An is the Pool of Resurrection, a sacred place that some say dates back to the time of Heenmaroun. Ghosts roam its waters and rise to speak to mortals. People come from all over the empire to visit the large monastery that now surrounds it, some seeking prophecy, others hoping to speak to their lost loved ones. The monks run a large hostel, sell special charms, and grow rich.

## Xia Gu

Xia Gu lies west of Sha Ming and south of Tung Shui An, where the Boshan lowlands rise into the labyrinthine canyons below the Hwa Gow Plateau. Scattered Kralori communities farm and herd, but transportation is difficult, and mostly small tribes of barbarians and Hsunchen dwell here, though under the leadership of officials in the small town of Tiwan Bin and the nearby, growing outpost of Shoon. The district is little known, and many lost things hide in its winding terrain.

## Politics & Nobles

Boshan Province is one the empire wealthiest and most important regions in spite of its truculent, sometimes barbarous nature. Exarch Goh Jinhong governs the province from his seat at Sha Ming, while a few thousand government employees, led by just over one hundred Mandarins, maintain harmony and regularity in the city wards and rural districts.

General Jang Bwadoong commands the Green Dragon of Effulgent Victory, which is based in the province.

Clannishness is, if anything, stronger in Boshan than elsewhere, which results in powerful clan patriarchs and village headman. The unusual and varied inhabitants of the province's fringes are mostly left to their own devices, so long as they pay tribute to the emperor.

Boshan Province's diversity creates a complex, layered system of power, but as everywhere in the empire, a few prominent, scholarly, wealthy Kralori clans dominate the region. The youngest and smallest of these is also the most powerful, the Wen family, formed from various collateral lines of the clan of Imolo Wen. Following and assisting the great general, his righteous kinfolk received grants from both him and the emperor for their meritorious deeds. Their children and grandchildren now own some of the best land in the province and dominate several of its prominent institutions. Squabbling with one another over old claims and envied by the older families of the region, it is not clear if any of the now powerful Wen clans will long continue their prominence.

Three other much older clans hold much power and wealth in the region, and while the Baak, Byo, Dyan, and Yat have

old feuds, they also have intermarried and reached accords over the years that make them much more stable than the Wen. The Baak claim descent from the hero Bright Spear and resent in particular the Wen dominance of the ancient city of Sha Ming. The Byo are the richest clan in the province and have extensive lands around Sha Ming and in Choong Tak District. The patriarch Byo Yitsin has a penchant for poison and keeps two tame tigers. The Dyan Clan, led by Dyan Lo-pan, boast the blood of the land's ancient kings, have many mining investments, and shelter numerous secret societies. The Yat are the most involved in the province's mines and guilds, seen as demeaning by other clans, and may also engage in smuggling.

A score or more minor clans also jostle for wealth and traditional perquisites in the province. Their shifting coalitions and alliances with the great clans make the governor's duties ever complex.

- The Chaak are famed as scholars.
- The Cheem are rumored to maintain the province's largest band of assassins.
- Kway clansmen often join the military.
- The Laan are followers of the fire gods and sponsor several temples and monasteries.
- The Lyoon have a diabolical reputation as demon worshippers and may descend from God Learner founders.
- The Yaw run a private bank and are renowned as clever accountants.



## Economy

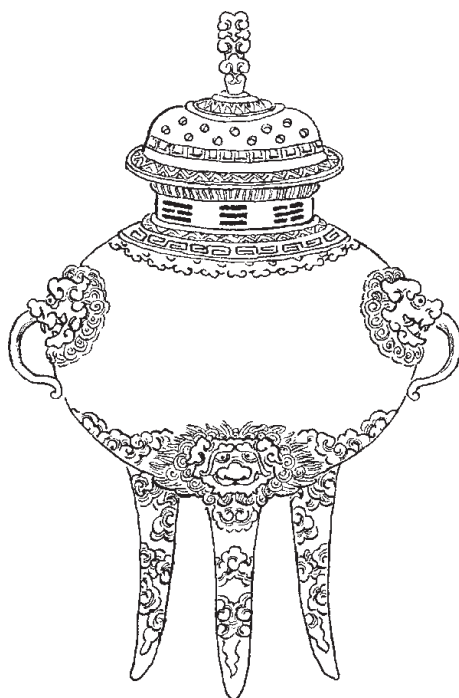
Boshan Province is blessed with rich land and valuable mineral and timber resources, but it is also famed for its embroidery, fine tea, jewelry, metalworking, silk weaving, and woodworking.

The region produces far more rice than it requires to feed its inhabitants, and the excess is traded to other parts of the empire, especially the capital Chi Ting. The value of rice on the market has occasionally led to economically-induced famines, where the fields produce, but the rice is taken by the taxman and merchant clans for sale elsewhere.

Silk is produced and woven throughout the province, though the greatest concentration is around Sha Ming. Fine tea, on the other hand, comes from both large clan plantations and from smallholdings in the more mountainous districts. In fact, the best teas come from the most remote areas. Sandalwood and other fine timber come from the jungle fringes of the province.

A number of specialty products are also grown. These include bananas, coconuts, dragon fruit, longan, lychee, mangoes, peaches, and various citrus, melons, and nuts. Hemp and other fibers are grown for sale. Salt and pearls are products of the coastline.

Even more lucrative than agricultural products, however, is mining, concentrated in Jing Kong but occurring in all areas other than the flat lowlands along the Suam Chow. The work is primarily underground and usually conducted by slaves and convicts. Hsunchen captives provided slaves in the past, but most have moved away from mining areas, and the government tends to discourage their capture in order to reduce conflict in this diverse province.





# THE ORDER OF ST. JOSSELYNE

Jamie Revell

The Order of Saint Josselyne is one the largest religious military orders in the West. Only a few other orders, such as those of Saints Gerlant and Talor, are comparable in size or influence. It is less well known beyond the West, however, because it is more concerned with the protection of the faithful than in proselytising in foreign lands. Unlike the more crusading orders of Gerlant and Talor, however, it is influential in both Loskalm and Seshnela, and is thus important to a thorough understanding of Western knighthood.

The Order uses a clenched iron gauntlet as its symbol, painted onto the shields of its knights and adorning its banners.



## Origins

Josselyne was the eldest son of a powerful Brithini talar (noble) who ruled a domain in present-day Junora in the early first century. The entire noble house converted to the Malkioni Way after their first encounter with missionaries only a few years after Hrestol's martyrdom. They taught the new religion to all the inhabitants of their domains, who eagerly converted *en masse*. The act naturally brought condemnation from neighbouring Brithini talars and Zzaburi, but the military expertise of Josselyne's father, Talar Mandol, discouraged them from taking any direct action. When Mandol died in the year 64 and Josselyne inherited his domain, matters rapidly took a turn for the worse.

Believing that the young man could not have the skill or magic to resist them effectively, a coalition of the local talars was formed to crush him and kill all his subjects who would not renounce their faith. By doing so, the Brithini hoped to make a powerful example, and discourage any further mass conversions in their area, as had already happened further west (in present-day Loskalm). However, they had badly miscalculated, for the rebellious household and their knights showed a dogged determination never to surrender or to yield any ground without exacting a terrible toll on the invaders. As the fighting continued through the year, at times literally house to house through the villages, the Brithini five



times offered peace if only the defenders would abandon the Malkioni Way. None did, yet the Brithini felt they had no choice but to press on, no matter what the cost, for they could not back down once they had made such threats.

The overwhelming superiority of numbers on the Brithini side, combined with their vastly superior resources made their victory inevitable, no matter how hardly bought it would be. At the last, they faced the final few defenders, lead by Josselyne himself, within the walls of the ancestral castle. As they prepared themselves to face their doom, the defenders witnessed a miraculous event. A vision of the martyred prophet appeared in the air above the castle battlements, and blessed all the defenders with the certainty of Solace in Glory, not only for themselves, but for all those Malkioni who had been slain by the Brithini during the year-long war. So persuasive was the vision that four of the Brithini warriors besieging the castle switched sides and joined the defenders in their last hopeless struggle.

In the years since, the story grew with the telling, and the name of Josselyne became a by-word for valiant resistance against overwhelming odds, and for strength in the face of adversity. Anyone may pray to him for the strength to continue with their tasks, while his Order is especially important to those whose job is related to defence, such as garrison troops or the builders of castles. Members of his Order build their physical strength up as a symbol of their inner will, and to better wield weapons in the defence of their fellows.

## Philosophy and Membership

The central tenet of the Order is that The Strength Without Mirrors The Strength Within. Knights of Saint Josselyne are expected to keep themselves in peak physical condition,

## Keyword

*Entry Requirements:* Must be a male member of the Knight or Noble classes.

*Abilities:* Athletic, Strong.

*Virtues:* Determined, Energetic.

*Scripture:* **The Life of Saint Josselyne**

**△ Common Blessings:** Ignore Distractions, Resist Fatigue, Resist Fear, Strong Will

**✧ Special Blessings:** Bless Sword, Increase Strength, Strengthen Armour.

*Grimoire:*

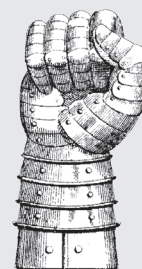
**📖 The Book of Irresistible Strength** (Banish Fear, Fist of Steel, Hurl Heavy Stone, Ignore Crippling Injury, Impede Invaders, Reinforce Armour, Resist Magical Coercion, Strengthen Sword Arm, Unbreakable Sword).

*Icons and Images:* Images of the saint depict him wearing the heaviest armour of the period and bearing a mighty broadsword in one hand and a sturdy shield in the other.

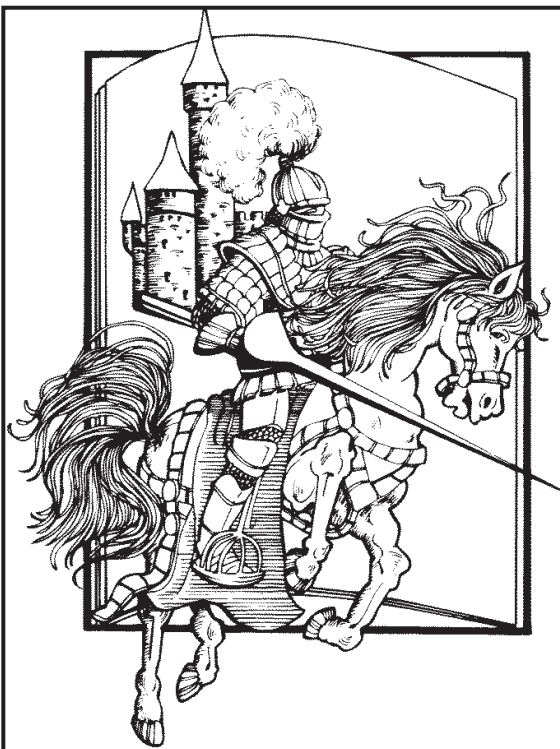
*Saint's Day:* 5th Sementis, the anniversary of the saint's martyrdom.

*Other Side:* The Fortress of Strength in the Saint Plane is a cyclopean castle.

*Disadvantages:* Members of the Order take a vow never to surrender to non-Malkioni, and must always keep themselves in peak physical condition.



with a daily regimen of exercise and martial practice, wherever possible. By building a strong and healthy body, they are better able to maintain the willpower and dedication necessary for a true knight. They favour outward expressions of strength and solidity, such as powerful fortresses and heavy armour. While there is no official restriction on the weapons that they use, many prefer the heaviest weapons available, especially two-handed swords.



Because of this emphasis on physical prowess, most chapters only accept male members, even where women are otherwise permitted to become knights. Even in those rare places where this is not the case, such as some parts of Loskalm, female applicants are few, and usually develop muscular bodies far from the ideal of Western beauty. All members of the Order must either be knights, or squires on the path to knighthood. In some countries, such as Seshnela, this may include some members of the noble caste as well as the more traditional knight caste.

The development of physical power and strength is not, however, an end in itself. The demanding regimen is intended to build character and reinforce devotion to holy ideals. Cowardice is one of the worst sins a Josselyni can commit, and a true knight should be as strong of will as he is of sinew. Similarly, the Order recognises the highest virtue as a determination to succeed and to protect the Church and its followers. This rigid attitude has made the Order slow to change and to

adopt new practices, although, inevitably, much has altered down the more than fifteen centuries of its existence.

The Order of Saint Josselyne is generally not a crusading order, although individuals may certainly seek to prove their prowess against pagan or heretical foes. Their primary role is the defence of the faithful, and they favour the construction of strong fortifications to guard frontiers and other vulnerable locations. In battle, they rarely form the vanguard of an army, but guard the flanks, establishing an impenetrable barrier of shields and armour to repel enemy assaults. Similarly, they are commonly used to guard forts or other outposts in hostile territory.

The Order's beliefs are generally compatible with all the major branches of Malkionism. While the majority of modern Josselyni are members of the Idealist Church of Loskalm, this is a simple factor of demographics, and of the Loskalmi approach to saintly devotion. In no country is the order dominant amongst military religious orders, although it is usually an important presence. In Seshnela, knights of the Order are mostly loyal Rokari, following the tenets of that faith, while in Loskalm they are equally dedicated Idealists. The Order is also common in Jonatela and its neighbouring lands, although it less popular in Ralios, where knights are more likely to follow one of the multiple competing henotheist and Arkati sects.

Despite their primarily defensive role, individual Josselyni often join hero bands or other associations that campaign more actively. Their magic makes them powerful warriors, and they are dedicated to protecting the faithful from all manner of outside threats. The neutral position of the Order politically makes it possible for them to work alongside all manner of other heroes, from healers to wizards

and fellow knights. Similarly, knights of Saint Josselyne may hold any of a number of differing political or religious beliefs of their own, so long as these are broadly compatible with the Order's aims.

There have been several instances in the past where Josselyni knights have found themselves on opposite sides of a conflict, for example, in the wars between Loskalm and Jonatela over rule of Oranor. Their primarily defensive role in combat has minimised the number of direct clashes, but, in most cases, they have not flinched from battle when the situation has arisen. Indeed, the modern Rokari and Idealist branches of the Order have barely communicated with each other since the fall of the Ban, each regarding the other as heretical. That the Rokari claim Josselyne's final vision was of Malkion, while the Idealists claim it was of Hrestol, only serves to deepen the divide.

## History

A small band of Josselyne's surviving followers founded the Order after his martyrdom in the year 65. The Malkioni Church was still a

persecuted minority in Fronela in those days, existing largely in hiding and in rural communities while the Brithini ruled the cities. As a result, little is known of these very early years, when the very institution of knighthood was mistrusted at best, and at worst, punishable by death. By the time significant Malkioni communities arose to challenge Brithini rule, many chose Josselyne as their patron, as a martyr in the face of oppression.

In the second century, the Order of Saint Josselyne grew in influence, one of only two significant religious orders of chivalry. Its knights were less closely associated with Hrestol than their rivals in the Order of Saint Carpattia (see the *Book of Glorious Joy*, p.93), but were vigorous in defence of the Church and its worshippers. Unlike the Carpattians, the early Josselyni favoured smaller groups, with no centralised control, and no single leader for the Order as a whole. The Dawn Age order was, in many ways, different to that which survives today. Josselyni knights at this time were much more likely to be involved in active assaults on pagans and other enemies of the faith, believing in a vigorous expansion of Malkionism into the hinterland.

Prior to 228, there was no formal procedure for canonisation of Malkioni saints. However, Josselyne's followers had discovered his node on the Saint Plane in the late first century, drawing up a grimoire of spells that has continued in use, albeit with some modification, ever since. By the time the Second Ecclesiastical Council of Malkionism met to draw up the first list of approved saints, there was little doubt they would include Josselyne.

For most of the Dawn Age, the Order was restricted to Fronela. Most scholars agree that Saint Talor himself was a member of the Order before walking his own path to sainthood and herodom. But, as Talor's own legend





grew, it eclipsed that of the older saint, so that the latter's order was less influential for much of the Imperial Age than it had been before, or was later to become.

Many Josselyni resisted the rise of the Middle Sea Empire, envisaging a more radical Fronelan independence from distant Jrusteli rule. By the ninth century, this resistance had largely ceased, as new generations of knights grew up with Imperial power already established. The Order took the opportunity to spread into foreign lands, creating branches in Seshnela, Jrustela, and beyond. It was during this period that they developed the close association with fortifications and defensive actions for which they are best known today. Whilst a relatively minor part of the Empire's chivalric forces in those days, the Church formally recognised their existence, and took no move to condemn the Order's teachings.

Like many similar organisations, the Order suffered in the aftermath of the Empire's downfall. However, they had never been closely associated with the God Learners themselves, working with them no more than many common people had done. In both Seshnela and Loskalm, the Order eventually grew in influence, as an expression of simple knighthood, which many thought reflected the golden times of the Dawn Age. Jonat Bigbear also supported the Order, allowing it to grow in his newly founded Kingdom of Jonatela.

## Scripture and Magic

The scripture of the Order is the *Life of Saint Josselyne*, accompanied by whatever other scriptures the local Church may support, such as the *Abiding Book*, or *First Times*. A number of different authors compiled the *Life* during the first century, drawing on eyewitness testimony from those that had known the Saint, and from accounts of his miracles. The *Life* begins with Josselyne's adulthood initiation, and follows his story from then on in a broadly chronological order, emphasising his piety and his interpretations and revelations concerning earlier scripture. Roughly a third of

the book comprises a detailed description of his last days, leading up the climactic confrontation that resulted in his death. An appendix cites the miracles claimed by his Order in its earliest days, confirming his true sanctity.

At least three different versions of the *Life* are in use in the Third Age. The version

used by Hrestoli makes mention of their own prophet, emphasising Josselyne's devotion to Hrestol's cause during his life. A second version, promoted by the Rokari, makes no such mention, claiming that these passages were inserted or modified by heretics in the early Imperial Age. The Idealist version uses the Hrestoli text, but adds a chapter referring to additional grimoires, and describing the saint as a wizard-knight with powerful magic of his own. This chapter, regarded as heterodox and apocryphal by other Josselyni, was compiled through heroquesting research by the forerunners of the Idealists, the Immaculate Church, in the fourteenth century. They claim that it represents passages lost from the original, as the rigid caste system replaced the inclusiveness of Hrestol's original message.



Outside of Loskalm, the *Life* is supplemented by a single grimoire, *The Book of Irresistible Strength*. The grimoire begins with a brief preface outlining the fundamentals of the saint's life and mission, but otherwise consists entirely of a list of spells and the formulae and incantations needed to cast them. The Loskalmi claim to have discovered two additional grimoires, written by the saint himself during his time as a wizard; other sects, which assert that Josselyne remained a noble knight throughout his life, obviously dismiss these texts as unverified supposition. (For a spell list, see BoGJ, p.102).

## Organisation

The Order of Saint Josselyne consists of a number of chapters. In most Western nations, each chapter has its own chapterhouse, a group of fortified buildings within a walled compound. In keeping with the traditions of the Order, the buildings should have strong walls and solid defences, even in relatively peaceful areas. A chapter typically has a few dozen knights, together with their squires

and a small number of servants. Since only knighted individuals can join the Order as adepts, the squires have only the magic available to lay members of their Church, although they submit to the Order's discipline and governance. The chapterhouse includes all the facilities necessary for training knights to become adepts, a process that typically takes at least a year of intense religious study.

Each chapter has a master, who directs the actions of the knights, and is responsible for their training and constant readiness for action. At his discretion, individual knights may return to the general community to serve temporal lords or other leading figures, thus raising the profile of the Order in the nation. The master is also the main individual to work with the chapter's guardian essence. The chapter also has one or more liturgists, responsible for leading religious services and prayer. Josselyni liturgists are also regular knights, having the full range of martial skills, in addition to their liturgical magic.

As in many other respects, Loskalm differs from this typical pattern. Loskalmi chapterhouses are merely chapels within larger fortifications, used as meeting places, not as residences. Loskalmi join the Order as squires to existing adepts, undertaking their religious instruction alongside their training for promotion to the knight class. Most chapters have no master, with their most senior liturgist acting to coordinate their activities as needed. Instead, the knights answer to their own regiments, serving the Loskalmi state as much as their separate religious hierarchy.

The largest Loskalmi chapters, however, have their own abbeys, free-standing churches used as places of worship for many knights from the surrounding area. Such chapters have several liturgists and other staff, and the leading wizard class liturgist,





or abbot, has a function similar to that of the masters in other lands. The purpose of the abbeys is to act as a focus for veneration, worship, to train liturgists, and to conduct the initiation of new adepts.

There is no overall leader or governing body for the Order of Saint Josselyne. This fact helps to maintain their neutrality, since there is no concern that the Order in, for example, Seshnela, is taking instructions from a more powerful official in a foreign country. In many parts of the West, each chapter is essentially independent, although like-minded masters operating in the same general vicinity may work together for the common good, or even meet in local conclaves to decide matters of general policy.

In other places, there is more structured hierarchy. In Seshnela, a Grand Master heads the Order, claiming authority over all Rokari chapters, including those beyond the Kingdom's borders. In Loskalm, the headquarters of the Order stands in Pethercombe in Tawars Province, and the Grand Abbot is a member of the noble class.

## The Other Side

As with most other important saints, Josselyne is associated with a complex web of spell nodes on the Adept Plane. These are all connected to the Fortress of Strength on the Saint Plane, which serves as the Order's most important node. The Fortress is a huge castle with towering walls of stone several feet thick. Those arriving in the Fortress find themselves somewhere in its array of defensive rooms and corridors. The Fortress is wholly given over to the arts of war, as if inhabited by knights alone, with no accommodation for servants or nobles. Like most nodes, it has no permanent residents of its own, although a visitor may frequently en-

counter other Josselyni, perhaps from foreign lands. Weapons and suits of armour decorate the walls, but cannot be removed from the Fortress.

Nothing is visible through the arrow slits but grey sky, and there is no access to the battlements. This is because the node, like all others on the Saint Plane, is a self-contained entity, and travel beyond it, into whatever empty spaces may exist between the nodes, is not possible. The heart of the Fortress is its chapel, through which a supplicant may commune with the Saint himself.

The main gate of the castle opens out onto the Gods War, used by Josselyni hero-questers. Within the castle are numerous other doors that lead to the various spell nodes of the Order. The castle's floor plan is fixed, representing the solidity and permanence of its founder's ideals, so that finding such doors is relatively easy with an experienced guide. A few heroquesters claim to have discovered doors that lead to the nodes of other saints, but these seem to be less permanent, and may not have a fixed location within the Fortress.



# SHIELD PUSH

Oliver Bernuetz



This is my attempt at creating a set of rules for playing a tabletop game of Shield Push. It's based at least partially on the description of the game as presented in The Garhound Contests for Hero Wars. ([www.glorantha.com/hw/fan/garhound.html](http://www.glorantha.com/hw/fan/garhound.html)). The intent of these rules is to allow existing player characters in your campaign to be Shield Push players. I wanted to simulate the play of the game without going into a lot of detail or requiring excessive die rolling. The game includes both die rolls and card play. Note that this game uses the MRQ II rules. If you're playing a different ruleset, you'll need to translate *Resonance* (a measure of Mythic "difficulty") and *Pact with Yelm/Solar Pantheon* into your own system.

## The Rose and Dusky Orbs – A Shield Push myth?

It's uncertain what the origins of this myth are. Some scholars purport that it describes the origins of Shield Push but most devotees of the game dispute that. You can perform a Heroquest based on this but it does require a regulation Shield Push team to do so. It's extremely dangerous for some reason, and has a Resonance of 150%.

*Dawn and Dusk did feud. At first naught but haughty looks flew back and forth but soon they switched to words and baleful glances and finally with intent of mayhem each hurled their beloved*

*orb at the other. Being full of grace though each caught the other's orb and so avoided lasting harm. But each looked down at what they held with disgust. "What is this thing I hold? This orb displeases me.*

*I wish I had my own to hold once more." Each glared at the other. "Return my orb to me!" each shouted and implored but neither would risk the other ending up with both. Dawn turned to her ten golden suitors and Dusk to her ten violet ones: "Fetch me my orb my sister has stolen." They turned to do her bidding but were called back at once. "But take care to shed no blood lest Yelm burn us with His displeasure." The suitors nodded and arming themselves with shields they went to wage bloodless war. The two lines of suitors strained and pushed at each other trying to force the other back. It was a titanic battle but eventually one of the line of suitors managed to force the other back so they could take the orb back to its rightful owner.*



## The Game

Shield Push is an ancient game that originated in Dara Happa. The game has since spread wherever the Lunar Empire has extended their reach. It is played on a large field with a post at each end. On top of each post is a Templar's Helmet with a distinctive colored crest – Gold for the Dawn helmet, Violet for the Dusk helmet. The field is traditionally 24 x 40 meters (roughly representing the lozenge shape of Glorantha) but can be of any

size. Every two meters along the length of the field is a line called a *Step*. Wherever possible the field is oriented on a strict East-West basis. The eastern end of the field is known as the Dawn line while the western end is known as the Twilight line. (For simplicity's sake both of these lines are referred to as End Lines). In the centre is another line known as the Noon Line. Each team guards the opposing team's helmet.

There are two ways to win the game. The first and most exciting way is to grab your team's helmet from under the other team's noses and run it back over your own end line. The oldest form of the game involved two teams of 10 (a sacred number in Dara Happa) striving to push the other team back over their own end line. This allowed one of them to grab their helmet and run it back across their own end line. (More recently, in order to save time the game has been ended as soon as one team forces the other off the field, but this innovation has been decried by traditionalists).

This traditional form of the game can take hours to play as the teams shove each other back and forth. Centuries ago modifications began to appear in the game. First was the addition of the Star Captain (usually shortened to just Captain) or Eleventh. He directs the team and has become the only team member allowed to run the helmet back over the End Line.

The next addition was a player known as the Flier. This player's goal is to get over, through or around the opposing line and make a dash for his team's helmet. The Flier is usually a small but fleet individual. The last addition to the team was two players known as Shar-gashi. Big, burly brutes, their job is to protect the Flier, push through the opposing shield line, or stop the opposing Flier. Technically no one is supposed to be intentionally injured in shield push, but accidents do happen. Every team member except the Captain and the Flier are armed with a large flat shield, traditionally modeled on a hoplite shield but often only the size of a target shield. The two Shar-gashi are often equipped with two heater-sized shields instead. The two teams line up 4 meters from the Noon line and at a signal charge each other.



## The Basics

The game consists of a series of turns. It lasts until one team or the other wins. Each team is made up of five components: 1) The Shieldwall, which acts as a single component; 2 & 3) The two Shargashi which can operate independently; 4) The Flier; 5) The Captain. Each turn the separate components of the team are allowed one action each. Both teams move at the same time, and the person controlling the team plans out the turn's actions using cards. Included in the game is a mat to print out that allows you to control each team component. Before the game starts, and at the beginning of each turn, the team controller must decide what action each of the team components is going to attempt. Once a card is played determining the component's actions their actions are limited.

## Game Set-up

Before the game starts sides are chosen, using a golden wheel for the coin toss. It's considered lucky to be playing on the half of the field that corresponds to Yelm's actual position in the Sky Dome – which isn't surprising, as your opponent will be playing with Yelm's glory in his eyes. If the time of day hasn't been predetermined by the GM, roll a D10 to see where Yelm is in the heavens:

1D10	Yelm's Position
1-4	Climbing into the heavens over the East Side of the field. Captain on West side must test his <b>Pact with Yelm</b>
5-6	Directly Overhead; both Captains must test their <b>Pact with Yelm</b>
7-10	Descending towards the Gates of Dusk over the West Side of the field. Captain on East side must test his <b>Pact with Yelm</b>

The Captain of the team on the side looking at Yelm's brilliance must make a test versus his **Pact with Yelm** to see whether his team is disadvantaged. (On a roll of 5 or 6 both Captains test). If he has no Pact with Yelm he can test versus half his best **Solar Pantheon Pact**. If he is from some heathen cult his team has only a 5% of not being disadvantaged. This disadvantage takes the form of a 10% penalty to all skills used in Shield Push. This disadvantage also affects the Captain's bonus.

## Rules

Only Captains and Fliers are allowed to touch the helmet. Fliers are not allowed to touch other players. Shieldmen are only allowed to push and are not allowed to touch any of the players other than other Shieldmen. Shargashi are allowed to touch any of the players but cannot touch the helmets.

## Mechanics

The game is divided into turns. Each turn every player can make one action. To simplify the game, assume that no one can move farther than 4 Steps in a turn without an Athletics





roll. On a successful Athletics roll, they can move 8 Steps.

Skills are either unopposed or opposed rolls. In unopposed rolls, rolling under the team member's skill on percentage dice allows that player to succeed. Opposed rolls work slightly differently than they do in the RQ rules; if both contestants in an opposed contest roll the same success there is a Stalemate, (neither side succeeds and nothing happens). The applicable skills used depend on the position played.

### How It All Works

You need some markers or figures. 14 a side with 10 Shieldmen, 2 Shargashi, 1 Flier and the Captain. The field of play should be 24 X 40 meters. For 25 mm figures this corresponds well enough to 12 x 20 inches. You can use a battlemat marked with hexes. Each hex is considered to be 2 meters or 6 feet. Dark lines should be marked for the Dawn, Noon and Dusk Lines with lighter lines every inch or hex in between to mark the step lines. In the middle of each end zone should be a dot representing the post holding the helmet.

A field to print out is included in the Game Pack, which can be found at [www.ruleo-nemagazine.com/Downloads/Shieldpush.zip](http://www.ruleo-nemagazine.com/Downloads/Shieldpush.zip).

- 1) Roll a D10 to determine Yelm's position.
- 2) Flip a coin to see whose team gets which side.
- 3) Set up the two Shieldwalls three Steps away from the Noon Line. They may not set up closer than 1 inch/hex to either side of the field. The other team members are placed at least two Steps back. The Shargashi are placed three inches/hexes away from the side line with four inches/hexes between them.

The Captain and Flier can be placed anywhere behind them.

4) While the Fliers are still on their own side of the Shieldwall, both Captains must use the attached action cards to indicate their strategy for the Captain, Flier & the Shargashi. All four players can be sent to different parts of the field. Once any team members are in front of their own Shieldwall, cards no longer need to be played.

There are five areas the Flier and the Shargashi can attempt: Outside Left, Left, Centre, Right, and Outside Right. Outside Left and Right are the hexes between the Shieldwall and the side of the field. Left and Right are the three hexes next to the Outside ones and Centre is the four hexes in the middle of the field.

5) The contest begins at the sound of the sacred horn. The Shieldwalls rush at each other and start pushing while the Flier and the Shargashi move to their assigned areas. The team controllers roll percentage dice for their Shieldwall's **Push** ability. Compare levels of success as you would in RQ.

For each level of success attained, the opposing Shieldwall is pushed back one Step.





If the winning side rolled a critical, the losing side has to test their Athletics skill (unopposed). If they roll a failure or fumble they fall down as well as being pushed back.

6) The Flier, meanwhile, is going around or over the Shieldwalls. To go around just requires standard movement. They will have to avoid the enemy Shargashi. To go over they can do either of the following:

- Use their Athletics (or Acrobatics) skill to climb over their own and the enemy Shieldwalls and then jump to the ground. This takes one turn.
- Be hurled over the wall by their Shargashi. This requires a Brawn roll by the Shargashi. Combine their STR and subtract the Flier's SIZ. For every point remaining the Shargashi can hurl the Flier one-quarter Step (1/2 meter). This takes one turn and requires an Athletics roll by the Flier to land on their feet and avoid a face plant. The Shargashi cannot react to the enemy Flier the turn this happens.

To go through, the Flier needs the aid of the Shargashi and the Shieldwall. On a turn when the Shieldwall normally pushes they can instead split in two and fall back a step. Once they've done this the two Shargashi rush the enemy line and attempt to force their way through. They must succeed in an opposed contest of **Brawn** versus the enemy Shieldwall's **Push** skill. If they get at least one level of success they break the opposing Shieldwall and the Flier can run through.

On the turn the team is attempting this action the Captain plays the "We're Going Through" card and an applicable Zone card (Left, Centre or Right) to show where the Shargashi are going to attempt their breakthrough.

If both teams try this tactic during the same turn and choose the same Zone, there is a

chance that the Shargashi will get to bonk heads together, allowing the Fliers free rein.

7) Once around or through the enemy Shieldwall, the Flier has to run to the end zone to retrieve their helmet and run back close enough to the Shieldwalls to hurl the helmet over the Shieldwalls to their Captain. Retrieving the helmet is a Simple test (+20) versus **Athletics**. The helmet can be hurled one hex (2 meters) for each point of STR the Flier has. The Captain has to make a simple test (+20) versus **Athletics** as well to catch the Helmet. Once he has possession of the Helmet he just needs to race it to his own End Line for his team to win. If the helmet passes within 2 hexes of an opposing Shargashi, they may attempt to block the throw using their shields. They need to beat the flier's **Athletics** roll with their own **Athletics**. If the helmet is intercepted in this manner, the game is stopped temporarily while the helmet is returned to its post and everyone but the Shieldwalls have to return to their own side of the field.

## Applicable Skills

### Captain

The skills the Captain uses in the game are:

**Tactics or Influence:** He can add his critical range in either of these skills to all other skill tests his team makes. *For example: Captain Starcrossed has an 86% Tactics skill. Therefore he adds a 9% bonus to his team's rolls. (Note that this may be modified if he failed his roll versus Yelm's Brilliance. In such a case his Tactics skill goes down to 76% and the bonus drops to 8%).*

**Athletics:** This is the skill used to grab the Helmet thrown to him by the Flier. If he runs to his own End Line unopposed, he doesn't need any rolls.

**Evade:** This is the skill used to avoid getting pummeled by the Shargashi. If a Captain is running and a Shargashi comes at him to block or knock him down, he can attempt an opposed **Evade** versus the Shargashi's **Bash** attack to avoid getting knocked down or blocked. Unlike regular combat, the Captain can evade every turn. Roll dice and compare the results on the Evade Shargashi Table.

## Flier

**Athletics:** This is the skill Fliers use to clamber over the Shieldwalls, and the skill they use to land on their feet if they're thrown by the Shargashi. It's also the skill they use to grab the helmet and to throw it over the Shieldwalls. **Acrobatics** may be used instead, if the Flier has that skill and it's higher than his Athletics.

**Athletics** is also used to temporarily run faster. On a successful roll the Flier can move 8 hexes instead of the usual 4.

**Evade:** Same as the Captain

## Shargashi

**Athletics:** Used if the Shargashi wants to run faster than normal to intercept a Flier or Captain. On a successful test normal movement of 4 hexes is doubled. Also used if the helmet thrown by a Flier passes within 2 hexes of a Shargashi. If they can make a successful **Athletics** roll versus the **Athletics** roll made by the Flier, they can knock the Helmet out of the air. Once the helmet is out of the air, the Captain can retrieve it and return it to the End Post.

**Bash:** Based on their best shield-based combat skill; this is the simple act of trying to knock a Flier or Captain from his feet, or at least stop them. Make opposed rolls for the affected players and compare the results with the Evade Shargashi Table.

## To Assemble the Game

Print off all pages and cut out all the counters. Note that the Shieldwall is cut out as one long strip, not 10 separate pieces.

The game board can be made up by printing off the attached Shield Push Map. Alternatively, use miniatures and a hex battle map.



ShieldWall



Shargashi



Captain



Flier



Helmet

### Levels of Success Table

Team 1	Team 2			
	Critical	Success	Failure	Fumble
<b>Critical</b>	Stalemate	1 Level (Team 1)	2 Levels (Team 1)	3 Levels (Team 1)
<b>Success</b>	1 Level (Team 2)	Stalemate	1 Levels (Team 1)	2 Levels (Team 1)
<b>Failure</b>	2 Levels (Team 2)	1 Level (Team 2)	Stalemate	Stalemate
<b>Fumble</b>	3 Levels (Team 2)	2 Levels (Team 2)	Stalemate	Stalemate

### Evade Shargashi Table

Shargashi	Captain/Flier			
	Critical	Success	Failure	Fumble
<b>Critical</b>	Stalemate	Captain/Flier Stopped	Captain/Flier forced back one Step	Captain/Flier knocked down. Falls prone and must stand up on his next turn
<b>Success</b>	Captain/Flier gets past	Stalemate	Captain/Flier Stopped	Captain/Flier forced back one Step
<b>Failure</b>	Captain/Flier gets past and doubles movement	Captain/Flier gets past	Stalemate	Captain/Flier stopped
<b>Fumble</b>	Captain/Flier gets past and doubles movement. Shargashi must roll on fumble table	Captain/Flier gets past and doubles movement	Captain/Flier gets past	Stalemate

### Shargashi Fumble Table

1D10	Effect and result
<b>1-2</b>	Falter – May not act next turn.
<b>3-4</b>	Drop shield. Shield falls D2 hexes away. -10 Bash skill if not retrieved. Retrieval takes an entire turn.
<b>5-6</b>	Fall. Lose next turn standing up.
<b>7-8</b>	Bash friend. If someone is close enough you bash them. Roll normal bash attack against them. They automatically fail their test. If no one is close enough, bash yourself.
<b>9-10</b>	Unlucky. Roll twice.

# PRAXIAN GREETING CONTEST

**Andrew Larsen**

When Praxians meet other Praxians unknown to them, they engage in the Greeting Contest. This is an important interaction that defines how the Praxians wish to interact with each other.

The rules of the Greeting Contest are fairly simple. The new arrival is considered the challenger, and initiates the challenge by driving a spear (or other weapon) into the ground or by spitting. The defender then announces the contest. The contest can be almost anything, but there is no reason why the challenge has to be fair (Bison Riders frequently challenge opponents to a head-butting contest with each other's mounts). Men often

have a simple test of physical prowess, such as a brief race, wrestling to the first throw, or a boasting contest where each tries to impress the other with his accomplishments. Women engage in dancing or singing contests, herd-calling contests (in which the winner is the one who gets a herd beast to move toward her first). Cross-gender challenges are very rare, but occasionally take the form of dancing, recitation of genealogy, and the like.

There is considerable nuance to challenges, which generally are used to indicate the defender's attitude toward the challenger. Challenging someone to a contest they clearly cannot win (such as challenging an Impala Rider to a test of height or an Eiritha Woman to a Peaceful Cut test) is an insult, while challenging someone to something they will clearly win is a statement of welcome. If the recipient of the challenge is hostile to the challenger, the challenge will usually be a fight with weapons.

The challenge winner is usually obvious, but sometimes each side will appoint one judge, who is expected to be honest. Tradition requires that the loser give the winner something of value or use; it can be a place at the fire for the evening, a drink of water, or a tangible gift. The value of the gift is a measure of the loser's respect for the winner. Refusal to give anything is an extreme insult, and will often provoke violence.



## The Greeting Contest between Clans

When two clans meet, the Greeting Contest typically happens between the clans as a whole. Even if the clans are known to each other and friendly, the Contest occurs, but it takes on a more festival atmosphere. Once the Contest is decided, the members of the two clans are not obligated to conduct individual contests, but they often do.



In the case of new arrivals at an oasis, the rules are slightly different. The clan(s) occupying the oasis normally maintain patrols to look for danger and intercept new arrivals. If the new arrivals are a small group (such as a party of PCs or a trade caravan), they are permitted to travel to the oasis if they win the challenge. If the new arrivals are larger (such as a clan), a more formal challenge takes place. The *Yassa*, Waha's law, forbids initiating violence with a hour's ride of a permanent shrine to the Praxian gods, which means that inter-clan violence is functionally forbidden at oases such as the Paps, Horn Gate, Agape, and Day's Rest. So instead of a battle for con-

trol of an oasis, the clans resort to a Greeting Contest. The patrol will summon the clan's khans and clan champion, who will decide on the nature of the contest and who is best suited to represent the clan. The losing side must leave the Oasis within three sunsets. This system is one of the reasons that Praxian clans migrate so much; it is rare for one clan to manage to defend its position for too long before they lose the Greeting Challenge to another clan.

When the Greeting Contest occurs between two clans, tradition tends to encourage the use of one of several standard challenges, although nothing mandates the use of these.

**The Test of Waha** is essentially a test of Waha skills. Each clan selects a herd animal and a brave (sometimes more than one animal and more than one brave are selected). The animal is goaded into flight, and is chased down by the other clan's brave, who must catch the animal, lead it back to the oasis, sacrifice it with the Peaceful Cut and butcher it completely. The winner is the one to finish first, although sometimes khans are appointed to evaluate the quality of the Peaceful Cut instead. In this test, the losing clan forfeits its animal to the winning clan, which feasts on it.

**The Test of Eiritha** requires each clan to select its three best bulls, cows, and calves. The Eiritha Woman of each clan are sworn to judge fairly, and together they evaluate the quality of all the beasts. The clan who is judged to have the best beasts wins. The best beast in each clan is sacrificed to Eiritha, and the loser forfeits four of its beasts to the winner, which typically results in a feast.

**The Test of Foundchild** is a hunting challenge. Each clan selects the same number of hunters, and they have from sunrise to sunset to hunt, bring back and butcher animals.



The clan that gathers the most meat wins the challenge, while the losing clan forfeits its catch to the winners.

**The Test of Storm Bull** is normally resorted to only between clans with deep rivalry. Each clan offers a number of warriors, who fight to the death outside the precinct of the oasis. The winning warriors keeps the gear of the losers.

**The Test of Daka Fal** is rare. It is a test of magical power. Each clan appoints a shaman of Daka Fal, who competes to see which can recite his lineage further back. Each then seeks to summon the oldest ancestor he can name. If both succeed or both fail, the clan occupying the oasis is deemed to win. In this challenge, there is no forfeit.

When clans are friendly, the Contest is treated as a sporting competition, with wagers made on which side will win. When the clans are hostile, the atmosphere of the Contest is much more tense. Cheating and accusations of cheating are common, and violence has been known to happen, regardless of Waha's ban on violence at shrines.



# TIMINITS & TROLLS

*A Labour of Love*

Gianni Vacca

## Playing Tunnels & Trolls in Glorantha

### Part One: Introduction

Glorantha is a setting that hasn't been linked to a particular game system for several years now. Although Glorantha started as the default setting for the original editions of **RuneQuest** by Chaosium (1st and 2nd editions), the 3rd edition of the game was setting-agnostic. Glorantha was only supported by its fans for several years after that, then it became the default setting for **Hero Wars** and **HeroQuest**, two games with a completely different 'engine'. Then in 2006, Mongoose re-booted RuneQuest with a different Glorantha setting (the Second Age instead of the canonical Third Age) and published an incredible number of background manuals. Although the license lapsed in 2010-11, these manuals are still easy to find, especially in their pdf version.

Since Glorantha isn't linked to a particular game system any more, why not use one's favourite game 'engine' to adventure in this fantastic world? Personally I've chosen **Tunnels & Trolls** (T&T), which can be found at [www.flyingbuffalo.com/tandt.htm](http://www.flyingbuffalo.com/tandt.htm).

T&T (1975) is one of the very first role-playing games, and possibly one of only two role-playing games that have been continuously in

print without any major rule system overhauls for more than thirty years – the other one being **Call of Cthulhu**.

At first sight, T&T shows its age and its game system may be considered as obsolete. However, as always with role-playing games, a game is but what its users use it for. Let me explain to you why I consider T&T as one of the most versatile and modern systems on the market.

T&T only uses the D6. It has a very simple engine, which uses two basic (and unrelated) mechanisms:

1. A generic skill system used for everything except mêlée combat, based on 2D6+skill value against a difficulty level.
2. A dice pool system used for mêlée combat only. With a single roll, you know if you hit, whether you crit, and how much damage you deliver.

Except for mêlée combat, the system is not that different from HeroQuest, especially since the T&T talents are 'open' and not to be chosen amongst a set list. Mêlée combat does use a different system, but at least it's simpler than HeroQuest's extended contest and its headaches.

T&T player characters are defined by their attributes and their talents [skills], the latter being derived from the former. The distinction,

however, is not as clear-cut as, say, in RuneQuest, since attributes are used much like skills, e.g., if your PC wants to jump a chasm you have to roll against your DEX unless you happen to have a Jump talent, in which case you use the Talent. If the PC is carrying a heavy load, the GM may require the player to roll against the average of STR and Jump. A truly versatile system, again not unlike HeroQuest's augments. T&T player characters also have a level. But unlike the level system of that other fantasy role-playing game, levels in T&T are determined by the values of the skills (and not the other way round!). Levels have a minimal impact on the game system, mostly through bonuses for some skill rolls, and by setting minimum level requirements to access some spells – not unlike RuneQuest, where some spells were restricted to rune-level characters.

T&T player characters also have to choose a character class. Unlike the class system of that other fantasy role-playing game, T&T character classes are mostly archetypes: being a Warrior is not unlike being an initiate of Humakt as per Cults of Prax!

**Timinits & Trolls** is a homebrew old-school fantasy role-playing system designed for sword-and-sorcery adventures in the Second Age of Glorantha. As implied by its name, **Timinits & Trolls** is based on the classic **Tunnels & Trolls** frp game, with good measures from the 1976 'Perrin Conventions' and from the original **RuneQuest** game.

A copy of the 7th edition of **Tunnels & Trolls** is necessary to enjoy **Timinits & Trolls**.

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More information about Timinits and Trolls can be found at [2ndage.blogspot.com](http://2ndage.blogspot.com)

## I – HISTORY

*They call it the Imperial Age, but we call it the Forlorn Tide.*

*It did start well, though. The Empire was good at the time. Imperial ships took us from the barren lands of our forefathers and brought us to our new home. Imperial settlers helped us clear the woods and drain the marshes. This also drove out the wort-men who lived here before we did.*

*We grew and we thrived on this new land of ours with rolling hills and open fields. The Imperials lived in their great towns on the shore, we lived in our steads and townlets and kept to ourselves. But the Empire grew wicked and slanderous. Our elders had to bow down to their aldermen; our warriors were taken far away to fight wars which weren't our wars. Many did not return. Worse of all, however, was the path that the Imperial wizards took. They built their lore halls where they would grow in uncouth spellcraft-lore and dwimmer-lore, and whence fearsome gear-beings stepped out. They brought in bug-men from their home island. This was too much. We got together, swore oaths of help and brotherhood, and set upon the evil that the Empire had become. The struggle was long and harsh but in the end we won.*

*Life is tough, though. Trade hasn't borne well our newfound freedom. The great towns on the shore yielded to us, but kept many of their wizards who may still plot against us. Leftovers of their eerie experiments are still there; fearsome fiends dwell in forsaken wrecks. Yet young daredevils set out to delve into those stows. This game is about their undertakings.*

## TIMELINE

475 ST: The Aldryami exterminate the last of the Lascerdans

580 ST: First human settlers (Storm Worshipers), from a very far continent north of the Ocean

Early 7th century: more human settlers (mostly Malki), from many lands of the Empire of the Land and Sea

654 ST: The Empire of the Land and Sea devastates the Elf forest of Vralos

789 ST: The coalition of Malki Cities in Umathela joins the Empire of the Land and Sea

806 ST: Establishment of the Order of Other-world Exploration

845 ST: Formation of the God Learners' Collective

901 ST: False Gods Revolt; destruction of the Malki University of Yoranday

901-911 ST: The Pamaltelan Wars:

- Fonritan cities revolt from God Learners.
- The Duchy of Kolar (aka the "Six-Legged Empire") is annihilated by the Agimori. Its few ruins are accursed and shunned.
- A coalition of Umathelan rebels prevents Imperial ships from landing.

922 ST: Last Imperial possessions in Pamaltela are lost (i.e. find independence from the Empire)

940 ST: Jrustela sunk

942 ST: Closing scoured Fonrit coasts

943 ST: Pillars of Water rise in Kareeshtu

944 ST: Pillars of Water splash onto land, Fleet of the Dead sails

950 ST: A Jrusteli scholar publishes a book proving that the Elves of Enkloso are extinct

954 ST: just before the Closing— a fleet of Waertagi ships arrives from the sea, smashes the rest of the hated universities into gravel and pulp

955 ST: Worst of Closing over in Fonrit

955 ST: The Closing reaches Umathela and Teleos

956 ST: Closing reaches Marthino Sea

975 ST: A plague of insects ends dynasty of Errinoru (Jungle Elves)

1020 ST: Legions of Elves march from secret lairs, defeat the self-styled Lord of the World's Knowledge, ruler of Vralos and Enkloso

