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PLAYER'S GUIDE



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Rise of the Runelords

PLAYER'S GUIDE

by F. Wesley Schneider



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The "Rise of the Runelords Player's Guide" introduces new players to the realm of Varisia, setting for the first Pathfinder Chronicles™ Adventure Path™. This Player's Guide is compliant with the Open Game License (OGL) and is suitable for use with the world's most popular fantasy roleplaying game. The OGL can be found on page 16 of this product.

The following text is Open Gaming Content: all game mechanics.

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"Like no other land I have visited in all my vast and fevered travels, here in Varisia art and environment are truly one. The monoliths of a mysterious and romantic people weather the ages, telling the voiceless tales of a race lost to silence. Each inspired day colors the skies in vivid palettes of placid blue, raging red-orange, and sorrowed gray—heavenly emotions painted across an endless, cloudless canvas. Even the natives live like masterpieces on display, their tattoos becoming the likenesses of their lives, their dances telling their endless tales, and their wisdom tempered by murmured harmonies echoing from both past and future."

—Cevil "Redwing" Charms Esq., Eidolon

WELCOME TO VARISIA

Scarr'd by the depravity of ancient wizards and reclaimed by a wilderness of beasts and savages, only in the past few hundred years have the steps of civilized men again trod the wondrous and mysterious lands of Varisia.

Welcome to Varisia, the home of *Pathfinder*'s Rise of the Runelords Adventure Path. It's in these ancient and treacherous lands that your character will take up arms against the return of a centuries-old evil. Yet, before you dive headlong into your adventures, there are things you must know. This guide seeks to prepare you for your quest, supplying you with information about Varisia: an introduction to the varied people that call the land home, a primer to the unique skills and tools you're likely to encounter, and that extra edge that just might mean the difference between heroic triumph and an ignominious end.

How to Use This Guide

Aside from introducing the Rise of the Runelords Adventure Path, this guide reveals much of the history and background of Varisia and aids players in the creation of characters native to the region. All of the information presented herein should be considered common knowledge, especially to characters who call Varisia home—players are encouraged to create characters with ties to this varied land.

To aid in that task, this guide is organized to facilitate character creation, providing you with details about races in the

area, regional characteristics of various character classes, deities commonly worshiped, new feats unique to the region, and equipment created and utilized by natives. The latter sections detail the lands of Varisia, with a special focus on Sandpoint, a town that takes particular prominence in the Rise of the Runelords Adventure Path. While any character, new or old, can take part in the Rise of the Runelords, those created and equipped using this guide are likely to have an advantage as the events of the Adventure Path unfold.

As the first adventure, "Burnt Offerings" in *Pathfinder* #1, begins in the coastal town of Sandpoint, characters should consider being local to that community or having a reason for visiting the area. If you choose to create a character from beyond Varisia's borders, work with your GM to establish a reason for being in Sandpoint.

If this guide whets your appetite for more information about Varisia and the Rise of the Runelords Adventure Path, *Pathfinder* #1 includes a complete description of the town of Sandpoint. Beyond that, the *Pathfinder* website (paizo.com/pathfinder) and each subsequent issue of *Pathfinder* will reveal ever more information about this fantastic and mysterious land and the world around it, as well as new options for players to further immerse themselves in the ongoing adventures.

Rest assured, this guide is merely the first step, and your journey into Varisia is just beginning!

"Savagery and regressivity epitomize the disfigured lands of Varisia. Jagged mountain chains break the worthless, dusty clay at queer and reckless lengths. Tangled forests grow wild with titan weeds—the flora of these fecund briars little more than tenacious brambles. Blasted reaches of cracked earth and rolling scrub form the parched paradises of all manner of backward savages, including the doomed final generations of humanity's brutish ancestors. And everywhere the land bears the scars of a forgotten people whose eroding ruins and crude attempts at artistry litter a landscape already scarred by its own geological leprosy."

—Darvayne Gios Amprei; Merciless: Abendego, Belkzen, Varisia, and Other Hells

↪ RACES OF VARISIA ↪

From the reclusive elves of the Mierani forest to the orc-blooded interlopers from the Hold of Belkzen to the Varisian wanderers from whom the region takes its name, diversity and conflict characterize the varied cultures that make Varisia their home.

HUMANS

Three distinct human societies dwell in Varisia: the expansionist colonists of Cheliax, the tempestuous tribes of the Shoanti barbarians, and the enigmatic Varisians.

Chelaxians: Beyond the Mindspin Mountains and far to the south lies the cosmopolitan heresy of Cheliax. Once an empire of unquestioned might, the death of the empire's god Aroden allowed the rise of a diabolical aristocracy who treat with the denizens of Hell to afford their endless decadence and eternal rule. Although unquestionably depraved and diminished by the loss of its deity, Cheliax remains a beacon of culture, art, and magic that dominates much of the southern part of the continent.

While expansionist Cheliax once coveted the riches of Varisia, its decline has freed its colonies to their own fates. Now, the most powerful of Cheliax's city-states, monument-haunted Magnimar and imperial-minded Korvosa, vie for control of its abandoned Varisian holdings.

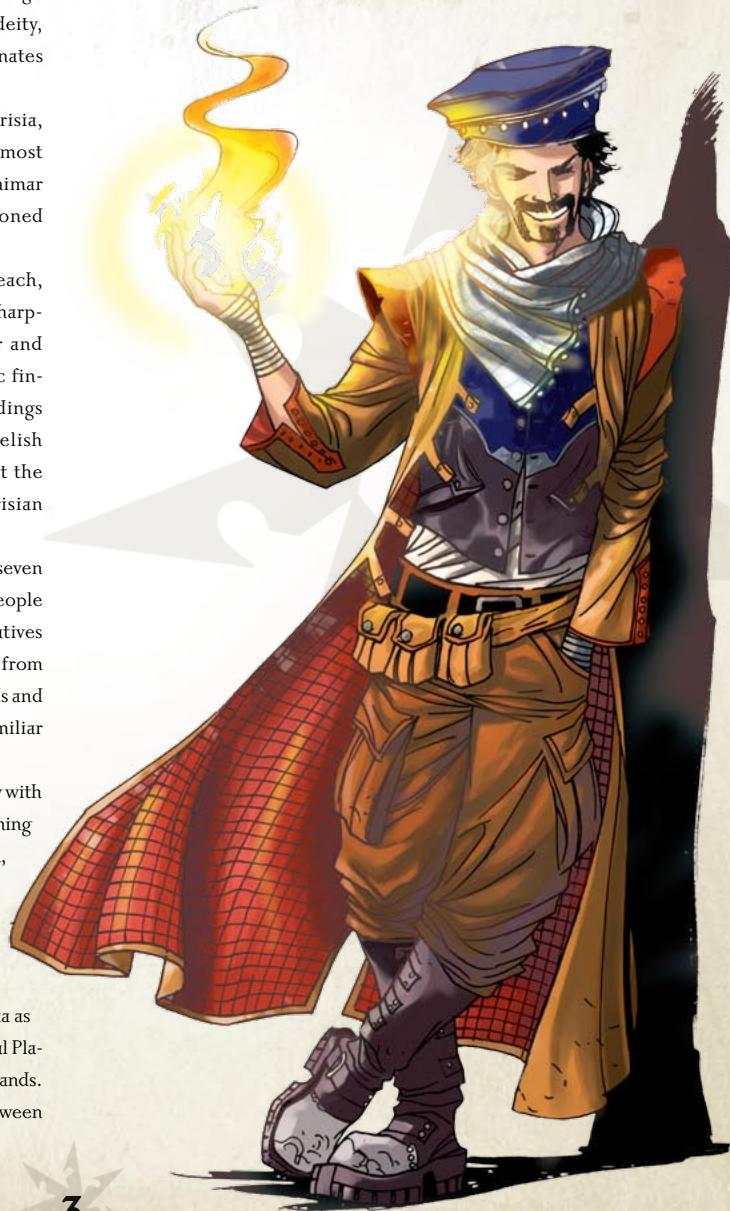
In these cities and the numerous vassal settlements of each, the majority of the populace can trace their ancestry to the sharp-featured people of Cheliax. Chelaxians possess dark hair and eyes contrasted by pale skin—along with a taste for artistic fineries and high art—and the far-reaching and polyethnic holdings of Cheliax allow humans of varied heritages to claim Chelish descent. So numerous and varied are these immigrants that the natives of Varisia now simply refer to all humans not of Varisian or Shoanti blood as Chelaxians.

Shoanti: Across the northeastern reaches of Varisia, the seven ardent tribes of the Shoanti make their homes. A turbulent people adhering to traditions unchanged in hundreds of years, these natives live harsh lives, preying upon predators and eking what they can from an unforgiving land. Most of the tribes nomadically follow herds and water as the seasons demand, but they typically stay within familiar territories and return to favored homelands year after year.

The Shoanti once held all of Varisia as their own, sharing it only with the Varisians, whom they coldly accept as distant cousins. The coming of explorers and colonists from Cheliax changed all this, though, sparking an age of bloody warfare. Few know how many tribes of Shoanti were lost in these endless battles—and even today the names of the so-called dead tribes are not spoken—but finally the barbarians were forced to cede their homeland's southern reaches to the invaders. While they still claim all Varisia as their rightful land, today the Shoanti tribes are limited the Storval Plateau, the Cinderlands, the Curchainian Hills, and the Velashu Uplands. Their loss of the south remains an unhealed wound shared between

all the tribes, and fiery youths often raise their voices in bloody oaths against all those of Chelish blood. Of the seven remaining Shoanti tribes, those of the Shriikirri-Quah—a people who hold great respect for animals and claim to learn much from their ways—are most likely to interact with other peoples. The other tribes, those of the Lyrune-Quah, Shadde-Quah, Shundar-Quah, Sklar-Quah, Skoan-Quah, Tamiir-Quah, typically prove more warlike and aloof.

The Shoanti are a hale and powerfully built people. Typically of ruddy complexion, most men stand well over 6 feet tall, with women only slightly shorter. Hair is viewed as a distraction and possible detriment (especially in the complex arts of hand-to-hand battle many tribes cultivate) and thus both genders frequently



VARISIAN AND SHOANTI NAMES

Although native to the same land, Varisians and Shoanti both hold distinct naming conventions.

SHOANTI

Male Shoanti names are made up of a few sharp syllables, while an “ah” sound at the end implies a feminine name. Titles based upon one’s exploits are also common among the Shoanti.

Male: Ancrym, Frarnak, Galstak, Ivolt, Kaddok, Mestrard, Nalmid, Pikrak, Roakkad, Shadfrar, Tanrov, Zakok.

Female: Adohah, Cada, Desba, Eytah, Ista, Lenna, Meda, Nuna, Shadlah, Toska, Unas, Yola.

VARISIAN

Names among female Varisians tend to be elaborate and lyrical.

Male names tend toward shorter, harder sounds.

Male: Camlo, Chaine, Deivon, Durriken, Jal, Jubrayl, Lel, Mandraiv, Pais, Rauno, Wesh, Zurisatro.

Female: Aymora, Chavali, Emralda, Iymkala, Marilis, Relisy, Seoni, Syeira, Tauni, Wren, Zenovia.

shake their heads—with only mystics and the elderly ignoring this meme. Many Shoanti wear prominent tattoos, typically of shapes and patterns heavy with traditional meaning, which wearers expand and embellish upon as they age.

Varisian: Passionate and fiercely independent, Varisians lend their name to their homeland, Varisia. While these clannish wanderers can be found throughout the world, nowhere are larger populations found than in the land of their ancestors.

Insular and adhering to an ancient, nomadic way of life, extended families of Varisians form wandering communities, traveling wherever fate directs them. Varisians don’t believe in claiming land and thus see no hardship in their nomadism. While nature provides for most of their needs, these wanderers often visit the cities and towns of settled people to trade art and curios from their travels, earn coin by entertaining and performing small jobs, and sometimes to con and steal from the unwary. Varisians are also known for their unique mysticism. Some believe their traditional dances provide insights into the future and their family elders can hear the voices of the long dead.

The typical Varisian possesses deep olive skin and hair that ranges from black to auburn, often worn long by both men and women. Customary tattooing leads most to exhibit complex patterns and symbols significantly different from those worn by the Shoanti who share their homeland. As wanderers and—often—entertainers, Varisian dress tends toward extremes, from functional garb fit for traveling to wildly impractical dress meant to accentuate their dancing, exotic tattoos, and naturally fit forms.

DWARVES

The majority of the dwarves of Varisia live in the iron-walled town of Janderhoff. Having settled in the copper-rich foothills of the Mindspin Mountains centuries ago, with the coming of foreign interlopers the dwarves have seen their home change from a simple mining village to a bustling trading town. Despite Janderhoff’s fortresslike exterior, its people welcome any visitors who seek to do honest business and who don’t cause trouble. This hospitality extends to both the Shoanti tribes of the Storval Plateau and the Chelish traditionalists of Korvosa. While the barbarians and Chelaxians antagonize one another seemingly at every opportunity, Janderhoff has no mind for such bickering. The dwarves eagerly capitalize on their position as the sole passage for the worked goods of Korvosa and beyond onto the plateau and rare Shoanti foods, medicines, and ancient artifacts into the south.

While Janderhoff offers great opportunities to enterprising dwarves, those who seek their fortunes away from their home’s copper steeples can be found among the workshops of Magnimar, the gas forges of Riddleport, hunting alongside the Shoanti, and anywhere else in Varisia that a profit might be made.

ELVES

Few elves make their home in Varisia, with the exception of the residents of the Mierani Forest. From the giant pines, white barks, and towering coastal redwoods, the Mierani elves have sculpted several villages, most notably cliff-side Arsmeril on the coast and the trading town of Crying Leaf on the edge of the



Velashu Uplands. Their true home, though, the tree-city of Celwynian, is a city abandoned. Although it still stands, the elves have fled the City of Emerald Rains, saying only that the place has fallen under the deepest of shadows. Few elves—and no outsiders—know any more than this, though emissaries to Korvosa and Magnimar offer incredible rewards to any willing to investigate the forsaken city.

Aside from those of the northern forest, elves from far-off exotic locales like Kyonin, Sovyrian, and the Mordant Spire are not unknown in Varisia's larger ports.

Gnomes

While it's well-known that the gnomes of Varisia make their homes in the Sanos forest, few can truthfully say they've ever seen an actual gnome community. Whimsical but secretive—despite their seemingly good natures—the gnomes of Varisia rarely speak of their homes. Even when they do, their details rarely weather retellings, leading many to speculate that a great treasure, gateways to the fey court, or some other secret lies hidden within the forest. Regardless of their mysteries, Varisian gnomes share their race's typical ties to the natural world, and perhaps even a heightened curiosity, as many gnomes seem to sense something vaguely "off," "strange," or "old" about the land.

Gnomes are most commonly found in the rural communities around the Sanos Forest. Nybor, Wartle, and Whistledown host the largest populations, with some even traveling as far as Magnimar and Riddleport. While gnomes are sometimes seen in Korvosa or farther north, these rare individuals are typically traders and wanderers from Thom to the east, Brastlewark in Cheliax, or the shey citadels of Irrere.

HALFLINGS

As they tend to throughout the world, the halflings of Varisia live among the other races of the lands they inhabit. Most commonly met in the southern lands from Magnimar to Korvosa, halflings tend to adopt one of three distinct ways of life.

As many migrated to Varisia following Chelish explorers, the halflings of Korvosa and its vassal townships live life similarly to their kin in Cheliax: second-class citizens who toil as servants, middlemen, and entertainers. To the west, in the lands claimed by Magnimar, halflings enjoy more emancipated lives, occupying many of the same roles as humans. Although some Chelish prejudices survive, leading some to ridicule the smaller folk, most halflings are happy to swindle foolish and condescending humans.

Numerous halflings have also joined the land's native Varisians, sharing in their nomadism and reverence of the goddess Desna. Both peoples seem to view the other as kindred spirits and willingly share their ways.

HALF-ELVES

Born of extraordinary and often unfortunate circumstances, half-elves face prejudices of both their parent races. While some find it easy to disguise their mixed heritages in the teeming human cities of southern Varisia, a considerable number discover a harsh

HEIGHT AND WEIGHT

Although the races of Golarion are fundamentally the same as those presented in the PHB, there are some slight differences in height and weight. Most notably, those of elven blood are taller in Golarion, and the fey-kindred gnomes are lighter. The details of all races are presented here for ease of reference.

Race	Base Height	Height Modifier	Base Weight	Weight Modifier
Human, male	4' 10"	+2d10	120 lb.	× (2d4) lb.
Human, female	4' 5"	+2d10	85 lb.	× (2d4) lb.
Dwarf, male	3' 9"	+2d4	150 lb.	× (2d6) lb.
Dwarf, female	3' 7"	+2d4	120 lb.	× (2d6) lb.
Elf, male	5' 2"	+2d8	100 lb.	× (1d6) lb.
Elf, female	5' 2"	+2d6	90 lb.	× (1d6) lb.
Gnome, male	3' 0"	+2d4	35 lb.	× 1 lb.
Gnome, female	2' 10"	+2d4	30 lb.	× 1 lb.
Half-elf, male	5' 0"	+2d8	110 lb.	× (2d4) lb.
Half-elf, female	4' 10"	+2d8	90 lb.	× (2d4) lb.
Half-orc, male	4' 10"	+2d12	150 lb.	× (2d6) lb.
Half-orc, female	4' 5"	+2d12	110 lb.	× (2d6) lb.
Halfling, male	2' 8"	+2d4	30 lb.	× 1 lb.
Halfling, female	2' 6"	+2d4	25 lb.	× 1 lb.

sanctuary among the cutthroats and outcasts of Riddleport. Some half-elves dwell on the fringes of the Mierani Forest where they are, at best, pitied by their elven kin or, at worst, shunned. A few half-elves have come to live among Varisia's wandering natives: the Shoanti see no difference between them and full-blooded elves, while Varisians prove all too familiar with the scorn of their "civilized" human cousins.

Regardless—or perhaps in spite—of the cards cast against them, half-elves strive for extraordinary goals, doing and saying what few would dare, defying the world, and determinedly shattering prejudices.

HALF-ORCS

Members of this rare, bastard race most commonly come to Varisia alongside marauders from the Hold of Belkzen, which frequently raid Shoanti tribes and pillage the sparse resources of the Cinderlands. The warlike clans long ago discovered that breeding with humans produced whelps of greater cunning and discipline and have since preyed upon Varisia's native peoples to provide such brutal unions.

While some half-orcs have sought to escape the barbarousness of Belkzen, most travel Varisia on special orders from their warlords, taking them to scurvy Riddleport, shadowy Kaer Maga, or the merciless pits of Urglin. While some make their homes in the same depraved dens their bloodthirsty kin frequent, others live on the fringes of Varisia's southern lands. In seeking acceptance, these outcasts lead lives of incredible daring and personal discipline, ever hoping to prove their worth by actions and escape the shadows of their birth. In any case, wise half-orcs rightly avoid Varisia's native Shoanti, who see them as the foulest abominations, more hated than even the Chelaxians of the south.

ADVENTURERS OF VARISIA

Adventurous spirits from every walk of life seek their fortunes in Varisia. Those who wish to survive in these dangerous lands might consider the following advice.

BARBARIANS

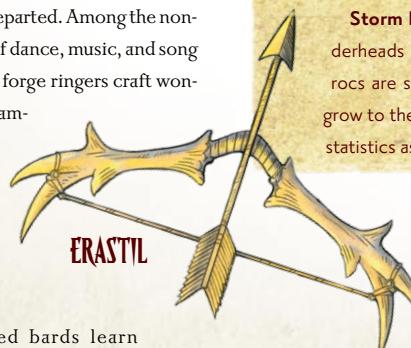
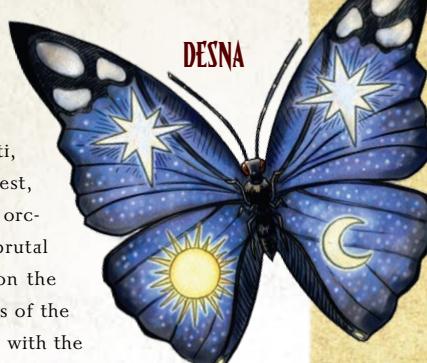
Numerous barbaric peoples inhabit the lands of northern Varisia, most notably the proud Shoanti, the feral-born of the Mierani Forest, and foreign raiders from both the orc-ruled Hold of Belkzen and the brutal Lands of the Linnorm Kings. Upon the Storval Plateau, the raging warriors of the Shoanti prove the most numerous, with the barbarians of the Lyrune-Quah, Shadde-Quah, and Sklar-Quah being especially renowned for their abandon in battle. Many of the Shoanti's greatest warriors exhibit ties to their tribal totems and draw upon those spirits for aid in battle (see the Totem Spirit feat).

Beyond the Shoanti, the sea-raiders of the Linnorm Kings and orc marauders of Belkzen sometimes wander Varisia, either questing to prove their prowess or to escape the brutality of their people. Some elves of the Mierani forest also embrace the feral ways of beasts, living like animals to better understand their land and drive out the taint that festers within.

BARDS

Performers of all types travel to Varisia in hopes of making names for themselves and studying the unique performances of the land's native people. Among these populations, entrancing Varisian dancers spin to the boisterous pace of their peoples' traditional songs, while Shoanti thunder callers sing down the heroics of the departed. Among the non-human races, the elves weave rich traditions of dance, music, and song into hypnotically beautiful displays, dwarven forge ringers craft wondrous works of art with the songs of their hammers, and gnome storytellers fascinate any who listen with their elaborate tales. The puzzle masters of Riddleport and performers at the Echohall of Magnimar and Her Imperial Majestrix's Melodeum also travel widely to demonstrate their talents.

Aside from performers, well-traveled bards learn much of Varisia and its history. The tales of countless monuments, natural wonders, and bygone mysteries prove invaluable in a land so haunted by its own past. Those who cultivate these skills—especially Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (history), and Knowledge (nature)—gain great insight into the land's seemingly endless secrets.



BEASTS OF VARISIA

Numerous animals unique to the region make Varisia their home. Any druid or ranger native to these lands is familiar with these beasts and might befriend them as animal companions.

Auroch: Powerfully built herd animals that range across the northern Storval Plateau and western hills, aurochs refuse to be mere prey animals. With thick, mottled gray hides and forward-curving horns (reaching 2-1/2 feet in length), adult aurochs often weigh well over a ton. Aurochs have the same statistics as an advanced 7 HD bison.

Cindersnake: These giant red-patterned vipers hide amid the crags and fine silt of the Cinderlands, crippling prey with a painful, burning venom. Cindersnakes have the same statistics as Medium vipers.

Donkey Rat: Snowy white rodents the size of small dogs (in some places known as capybaras or giant guinea pigs), the donkey rats native to Varisia's coast are popular pets (and meals) throughout the southern lands. Donkey rats have the same statistics as dire rats (without the disease ability) and are CR 1/4.

Fire Pelt: These black-and-red-furred mountain lions stalk much of northwestern Varisia. The color of their pelts changes from predominantly black to a range of autumnal colors with the seasons. Fire pelts have the same statistics as leopards.

Giant Lizard: Geckos the size of ponies prowl the moist sea cliffs and forests of southern Varisia, feasting on rodents, giant insects, and even the occasional goblin (see Pathfinder #1). Upon the Storval Plateau, aggressive horned spirestalker lizards hide among rocky outcroppings and fearlessly attack anything that comes in sight.

Storm Roc: Proud raptors with wings the color of thunderheads and crownlike crests of tousled feathers, storm rocs are said to live for hundreds of years and eventually grow to the size of the true rocs. Storm rocs have the same statistics as eagles.

CLERICS

Worldly hunters of Erastil, mindful priests of Irori, seductive followers of Calistria, and marauding fanatics of Rovagug: the faithful of nearly every religion known to Golarion are found in Varisia. While the rare temple might appear in the villages and cities of the southern lands, religion most often comes to the people informally, either in the hearts of devoted worshipers or in the words of wandering ministers. Pious towns too small to host multiple temples often build communal places of worship dedicated to deities of local importance.

DEITIES OF GOLARIAN

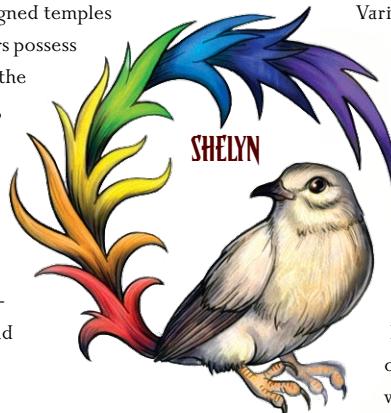
Deity	AL	Portfolios	Domains	Favored Weapon
Erastil	LG	God of farming, hunting, trade, family	Animal, Community, Good, Law, Plant	longbow
Iomedae	LG	Goddess of valor, rulership, justice, honor	Glory, Good, Law, Sun, War	longsword
Torag	LG	God of the forge, protection, strategy	Artifice, Earth, Good, Law, Protection	warhammer
Sarenrae	NG	Goddess of the sun, redemption, honesty, healing	Fire, Glory, Good, Healing, Sun	scimitar
Shelyn	NG	Goddess of beauty, art, love, music	Air, Charm, Good, Luck, Protection	glaive
Desna	CG	Goddess of dreams, stars, travelers, luck	Chaos, Good, Liberation, Luck, Travel	starknife
Cayden Cailean	CG	God of freedom, wine, bravery	Chaos, Charm, Good, Strength, Travel	rapier
Abadar	LN	God of cities, wealth, merchants, law	Earth, Law, Nobility, Protection, Travel	crossbow
Irori	LN	God of history, knowledge, self-perfection	Healing, Knowledge, Law, Strength, Rune	unarmed strike
Gozreh	N	God of nature, weather, the sea	Air, Animal, Plant, Water, Weather	trident
Pharasma	N	Goddess of fate, death, prophecy, birth	Death, Healing, Knowledge, Repose, Water	dagger
Nethys	N	God of magic	Destruction, Knowledge, Magic, Protection, Rune	quarterstaff
Gorum	CN	God of strength, battle, weapons	Chaos, Destruction, Glory, Strength, War	greatsword
Calistria	CN	Goddess of trickery, lust, revenge	Chaos, Charm, Knowledge, Luck, Trickery	whip
Asmodeus	LE	God of tyranny, slavery, pride, contracts	Evil, Fire, Law, Magic, Trickery	mace
Zon-Kuthon	LE	God of envy, pain, darkness, loss	Darkness, Death, Destruction, Evil, Law	spiked chain
Urgathoa	NE	Goddess of gluttony, disease, undeath	Death, Evil, Magic, Strength, War	scythe
Norgorber	NE	God of greed, secrets, poison, murder	Charm, Death, Evil, Knowledge, Trickery	short sword
Lamashtu	CE	Goddess of madness, monsters, nightmares	Chaos, Evil, Madness, Strength, Trickery	falchion
Rovagug	CE	God of wrath, disaster, destruction	Chaos, Evil, Destruction, Weather, War	greataxe

Beyond the typically good- and neutral-aligned temples of the south, the region's Varisian wanderers possess a strong traditional belief in Desna, while the Shoanti revere abstract powers of nature, their ancestors, and tribal totems. Many of the monstrous races of Varisia perform blood sacrifices in the names of Lamashtu and Rovagug.

The civilized peoples of Varisia most commonly worship one of six deities: Abadar, Desna, Erastil, Gozreh, Sarenrae, and Shelyn (see *Faiths of Varisia* on page 9).

DRUIDS

Defenders of nature wage a subtle war in Varisia. For decades, outsiders have come to plunder the land of her wild treasures and take advantage of the native races. The druids of Varisia have ever fought to confound such efforts. Among the Shoanti—already fierce protectors of the land—some follow the path of the druid, using their magic to aid their people and live at peace with nature. Within the Mierani Forest, the region's eldest druidic circle works to overcome the malady that afflicts the heart of that wilderness. Small communities and individuals guard many other natural holdfasts, with the druids of the Churlwood, Sanos Forest, Mushfens, and Stony Mountains being the most active. Beyond these groups, many of Varisia's druids are, in fact, strangers themselves, natives of other lands or agents of larger druidic circles who view Varisia as unspoiled and deserving of protection.



Varisia's druids are keenly sympathetic to the moods and whims of the land. To assist them, most local druids befriend creatures native to the region, typically beasts of the vast forests and hills, dire animals of the mountains and plateau, or the numerous indigenous creatures unknown beyond Varisia's border mountains (see sidebar).

FIGHTERS

Many live and die by the blade in Varisia, and numerous breeds of warrior do battle upon its soil. The warrior tribes of the Shoanti teach their children the basics of the hammer and sling, giving them the knowledge to hunt for and defend their tribe. Savage raiders from the Hold of Belkzen prove their prowess through their scars, raiding and fighting in the Warpits of Urglin for the love of bloodshed. The Mierani elves cultivate their people's ancient skill with bows and long blades to defend their forest homes. In Janderhoff, wall wardens heft the axes of their fathers and wear rune-carved ancestral armor to guard their mines and forges. The pirates of Riddleport clash their rapiers against the axes of raiders from the Lands of the Linnorm Kings. Lone sheriffs and constables keep the peace in numerous southern communities, while the soldiers of Magnimar and Korvosa ever seek to spread the colors of their city-states. And wherever there is such need, mercenaries and adventurers sell their swords to anyone with the coin to pay.



MONKS

While found elsewhere in Golarion, no martial monastic tradition holds strong ties to Varisia. The closest Varisia has to native martial arts are the brawlers of the Shoanti, warriors who see weapons as a weakness and seek to forge their bodies into instruments of war. Practiced most commonly by members of the Sklah-Quah and Skoan-Quah, these battle regimens callous the warrior's body and teach him where to punch and grab to do the greatest harm.

Despite Varisia's lack of monasteries and organized fighting schools, there are still some who call themselves monks and practice techniques of battle from foreign lands. Traveling alongside clerics of Irori, monks devoted to self-perfection and the lethality of the body guard their brethren in the faith. Travelers from the far south, the lands of Tian Xia, and other exotic locales sometimes appear in southern ports, bringing with them the occult battle arts of their people.

PALADINS

Although Varisia lacks much of the social structure that typically gives rise to knightly orders, this lawlessness makes the need for paladins and honorable warriors all the more great. When barbarians and monsters menace those who would live and toil in peace, few stand to come to such peoples' aid. To protect their faithful and spread their teachings among the faithless, several religions have sent their champions to Varisia. The churches of Abadar and Erastil hold particular interest in the land. Abadar's champions travel between the communities of the land, acting as wandering judges and lawbringers in their goal of forging a unified, law-abiding society from this land of savages and thieves. Those who follow Erastil know the dangers and hardships faced by those alone on the fringes of civilization, and they go where they are needed, aiding in what ways they can. Although the militaristic arms of these churches appear most active, the faithful of all the deities of Golarion can be found at work throughout the land.

Beyond the servants of individual gods, members of a divergent, grim order of paladins (and ex-paladins) might also be found. Korvosa—in its traditional ties to Cheliax—enthusiastically supplies Citadel Vraids, bastion of the Hellknight Order of the Nail. The Chelaxian Hellknights pay homage to no deity, but rather bend the rigid law and infernal traditions of Hell to their will. Made up primarily of grave humans and dwarves, along with the occasional half-orc or centaur, these fiercely devoted servants of Cheliax seek to further their empire's interests in the region, preparing southern Varisia for its inevitable return to Chelish rule and subjugating the land's rebellious barbarians and demihumans.

RANGERS

A wild land of untamed wildernesses and incredible beasts, Varisia is an explorer's paradise. Those with skill at hunting, tracking, and

VARISIAN FAMILIARS

In Varisia, some familiars are popularly employed by sorcerers and wizards of specific types.

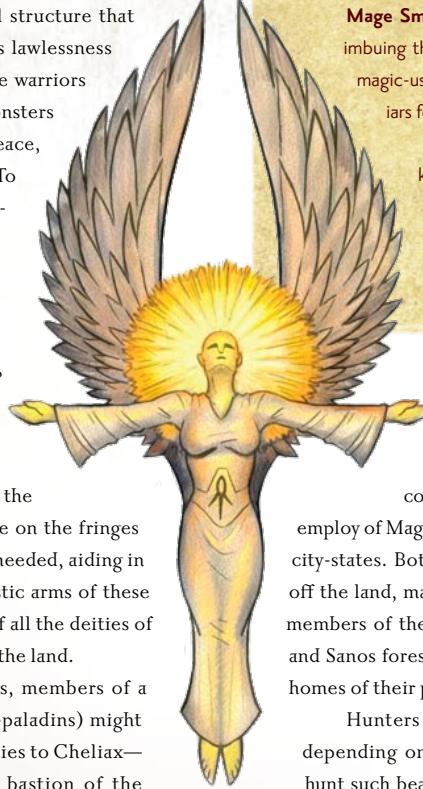
Chelish Devil Binder: No serious devil binder keeps a terrestrial familiar for long, summoning an imp or fiendish viper as soon as he gains access to the Improved Familiar feat (DMG, 200). Until that time, however, most make do with bats, snakes, or other sinister servants.

Cyphermage: Spellcasters who seek to decipher the many riddles of Varisia, most notably the great ring of Riddleport, often call hawks or owls to aid them in their observations. Blue skinks (same stats as lizards) are also popular among mages who expect to reach some of the land's most obscure monuments.

Golemworker: The golemworks of Magnimar is haunted by flocks of ravens, the favorite familiars of the construct creators who work within. The most obsessed golemworkers create their own homunculus familiars using the Improved Familiar feat (DMG, 200).

Mage Smith: In their fanatical devotion to crafting and imbuing the most perfect magical items, these dwarven magic-users frequently summon many types of owl familiars for their alert eyes in typically dimly lit forges.

Varisian: Adding to their reputations for knowing the unknowable, many Varisian sorcerers can employ thrushes (DMG, 203) capable of speaking. These small birds can convey messages, keep watch, and follow individuals as their masters order.



SARENRAE

surviving in uncivilized places find their talents in great demand. In the south, rangers serve as some of the most active providers and protectors of numerous small communities, while some organized bands in the employ of Magnimar and Korvosa guard whole regions for the city-states. Both the nomadic Varisians and Shoanti survive off the land, making skilled hunters and wayfinders honored members of their communities. The rangers of the Mierani and Sanos forests also stealthfully protect the leaf-shrouded homes of their people.

Hunters in Varisia face wildly different creatures depending on where they wander, with those trained to hunt such beasts finding no end of prey. Along the coastal and southern lands, deadly animals, vermin, goblinoids, and the occasional undead harass Varisia's civilized peoples. The forests, hills, and plateaus beyond play home to deadlier animals, savage humanoids, and fey, while within the land's wildest realms dwell magical beasts, fierce dragons, and tribes of savage giants.

ROGUES

On the fringes of civilization, all manner of outlaws and opportunists flourish. The land's best known rogues are a subculture of its native people, the Varisians. While their reputation for thievery and deception is well known, even outside Varisia, not all of the region's native wanderers are deceitful scoundrels—but enough

are to make the reputation stick. These rogues belong to a loosely-organized association of bandits, smugglers, and thieves called the Sczarni (SCAR-nee). The Sczarni rarely prey upon other natives of the land, the Shoanti being dangerous marks with little of value, and clan traditions make scamming other Varisians taboo. Thus, southerners and foreigners most often fall prey to Sczarni scams. Rarely malicious in their crimes, the Sczarni are skilled pickpockets, liars, and thieves of opportunity, taking what they need and what might aid their people. As such, food, horses, and unattended goods often make more attractive takes than raw coin.

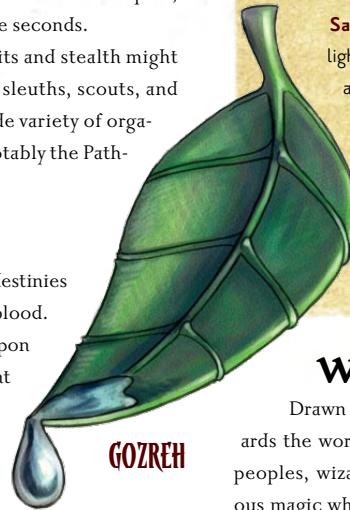
Besides the Varisians, both Magnimar and Korvosa host active criminal communities. Two thieves' guilds—the Gargoyles and the Night Scales—uncomfortably share rowdy Magnimar, the former with interests on the city's wealthy and elite, while the latter seems content to bilk the poor and unwitting foreigners. In Korvosa, any whisper of a thieves' guild is crushed by a mysterious crime syndicate tied to one of the city's wealthier families. While few know which family monopolizes the city's black market of drugs, slaves, and illegal magics, none dare oppose them. Yet, perhaps the best known den of thieves in Varisia is the pirate haven of Riddleport, with cultic Kaer Maga and savage Urglin close seconds.

Aside from criminals, those with quick wits and stealth might find all manner of work across Varisia. Deft sleuths, scouts, and explorers might serve the city-states or a wide variety of organizations interested in Varisia's past, most notably the Pathfinders (see *Pathfinder* #1).

SORCERERS

Magic infuses the lands of Varisia, and great destinies beckon those who hear the calling of their blood. Craved into countless monuments and inked upon the skin of its native peoples, symbols of ancient might cover the land. The enigmatic Varisians know these runes best. The clans carefully watch their young for any signs of innate arcane ability and encourage even the faintest spark of the arcane. They view magic as part of their birthright, each knowing the elaborate symbols they inscribe upon their flesh to draw forth and enhance the power within their blood (see the Varisian Tattoo feat). While these markings give many of the wands an exotic, even fearful appearance, Varisians see the trepidation of the ignorant as a paltry price to pay for access to the immortal powers of their ancestors. Varisia's other natives, the Shoanti, also feel the pulse of innate arcane prowess, but rarely indulge such talent. With the exception of the Lyrune-Quah and Skoan-Quah, magic is viewed as the trickery of cowards, useful only in the hands of a few shamans and medicine workers.

Aside from these seemingly magic-favored peoples, sorcerous skill arises haphazardly. The most affluent of Kovosa's Chelish families claim to frequently sire scions with innate arcane skills as the result of diabolical favor (although luck and selective breeding often has more influence on these spurious claims). Sorcerers are also found in number among the Sanos gnomes, as is common for the fey-touched people.



FAITHS OF VARISIA

While worshipers of all Golarion's varied religions can be found in Varisia, the majority of the region's civilized populace adhere to one of six major faiths.

Abadar: Master of the First Vault, gold-fisted Abadar seeks to order the world. Judges, merchants, and aristocrats worship him, praying for his clarity in judgment and business. The poor and wronged also frequently honor him, seeking reversals in their fortunes.

Erastil: To his followers, Old Deadeye is a stern father, a helpful neighbor, and a watchful hunter. Small communities, farmers, hunters, and common folk most often pray to Erastil.

Desna: The furtive Song of the Spheres, Desna is the goddess of dreams, luck, stars, and travelers. She delights in freedom and mystery, and teaches her people to experience all they can. Mystics, explorers, wanderers, and those in need of a little luck worship Desna.

Gozreh: The Wind and the Waves, the god of nature cares nothing for the ways of men and their irrelevant empires, ever demonstrating that mortals are insignificant and would do best to remember such. Farmers, seamen, foresters, and all who live at the whim of nature fear and respect Gozreh.

Sarenrae: The Dawnflower, the Healing Flame, the Ever-light, Sarenrae brings warmth and radiance to all souls who allow her in. Those with compassionate hearts and kind intentions turn to Sarenrae as both the source and protector of all things good.

Shelyn: Goddess of art, beauty, and love, Shelyn encourages creativity and inspires the world. She challenges her faithful to test their limits, share what the create, and delight in the gifts of others.

WIZARDS

Drawn to its arcane secrets and ancient sites of power, wizards the world over come to explore Varisia. Among the native peoples, wizards are relatively rare—the Varisians favor sorcerous magic while the Shoanti favor the ways of clerics and druids. Diverse other methods of magic have filled the gap left by the natives' disinterest, however. In Janderhoff, dwarven mage smiths magically empower items of incredible craftsmanship. In Magnimar, the city's countless monuments have given rise to an interest in constructs and their creations, a fad enhanced by the new city-funded golemworks. Chelish devil binders employ the dangerous magics of their homeland to enslave fiends to the will of Korvosa's people. And, in the ruin-city of Kaer Maga, whole cults of depraved wizards plumb the ageless halls for secrets, unleashing forgotten things they can only hope to command.

Those who seek to learn magic or who require arcane advice can find hedge wizards, sages, and small shops of magical trinkets scattered throughout southern Varisia. More formally, a fledgling school of magic has recently been established in Galduria, and the dark mages of Kaer Maga might perform any magical task—no matter how depraved—for the proper price. The elves also have their own school of wizardry on the haunted fringes of Celwynnian, the magnificent Tower of Stars.

EQUIPMENT OF VARISIA



Adventurers in Varisia employ a wide variety of weapons, armor, and gear unique to Varisia. Here are but a few of the most common tools and armaments found in the region.

Barbarian Chew: The Shoanti make this bitter red chew by drying the leaves of the galtroot, a stunted bush found across the Cinderlands. Aside from staining the teeth a shocking shade of crimson, it increases the duration of barbarian rage by +1 round as the stimulant increases aggressiveness. These effects last for 1 hour.

Dogslicer: A savage weapon created from castoff bits of sharpened metal, goblins named the weapon after the act for which it's most commonly employed. Holes drilled in the weapon's blade make it easier to heft. If a wielder rolls a natural 1 when attacking with a dogslicer, the weapon breaks. Masterwork and magical dogslicers do not have this flaw. Most dogslicers are size Small.

Earth Breaker: A massive hammer used by Varisia's Shoanti tribes, the crude metal of the weapon's head ends in multiple blunt spikes, which channel the momentum of a powerful swing.

False Jewelry: Favored by rogues in statuesque Magnimar, these adornments hide tiny secret compartments. False jewelry grants a +8 bonus on Sleight of Hand checks to hide a tiny object on your person (does not stack with the bonus for hiding very small objects) and negates the +4 bonuses searchers receive when frisking you.

False jewelry costs 20 gp in addition to the value of the ornament being fitted with the secret compartment.

Harpy Musk: The reek of this doubtful cure-all proves useful at scaring off Varisian goblins. If smeared on a surface or used as

a thrown weapon, the musk fills a 30-foot area with the stink of harpies for 1 minute. Any Varisian goblin who enters the area must make a DC 14 Will save or be shaken for 1 minute.

Klar: Traditionally a Shoanti blade bound to the skull of a horned spirestalker (a breed of Storval Plateau giant gecko), in recent years the armorers of southern Varisia have started crafting these bladed shields from iron. You can attack an opponent with a klar, using it as an off-hand, martial slashing weapon. For the purpose of penalties on attack rolls, treat a klar as a light weapon. If you use a klar to make an attack, you lose its AC bonus until your next action (usually until the next round). Both the sword and shield segments of a klar can be enhanced separately. An enhancement bonus on the shield does not improve the effectiveness of the blade.

Hide Shirt: Made from the hide, bones, and thick scales of the giant lizards, a suit of this light armor provides greater protection than its heft suggests. Many Shoanti warriors favor this armor, especially shirts made from rare black-scaled spirestalkers.

Ogre Hook: A huge crook of crude, sharpened metal, ogre hooks take their name from the savages who most typically employ them. You can use an ogre hook to make trip attacks. If you are tripped during your own trip attack, you can drop the ogre hook to avoid being tripped.

Usually created by giants and their ilk, ogre hooks are commonly size Large and awkward for most humanoids to use.

Scarf: Well-known as entertainers with a flair for the dramatic, Varisians often employ seductive garb and entrancing props in their performances. Scarves of colorful cloth, transparent silk, or

WEAPONS OF VARISIA

Weapon	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
Martial Weapons							
<i>Light Melee Weapon</i>							
Dogsticer	8 gp	1d4	1d6	19–20/x2	—	1 lb.	Slashing
Starknife	24 gp	1d3	1d4	×3	20 ft.	3 lb.	Piercing
War razor	8 gp	1d3	1d4	18–20/x2	—	1 lb.	Slashing
<i>One-Handed Melee Weapons</i>							
Klar	12 gp	1d4	1d6	×2	—	6 lb.	Slashing
<i>Two-Handed Melee Weapons</i>							
Earth breaker	40 gp	1d10	2d6	×3	—	14 lb.	Bludgeoning
Ogre hook	24 gp	1d10	1d12	×3	10 lb.		Piercing
Exotic Weapons							
<i>Two-Handed Melee Weapon</i>							
Scarf, bladed*	12 gp	1d4	1d6	19–20/x2	—	2 lb.	Slashing

ARMOR OF VARISIA

Armor Cost	Armor/Bonus	Maximum Dex Bonus	Armor Check Penalty	Arcane Spell Failure Chance	—Speed—		
					(30 ft.)	(20 ft.)	Weight
Medium Armor							
Hide shirt	90 gp	+4	+4	-3	20%	30 ft.	20 ft.
Shield							
Klar	12 gp	+1	—	-1	5%	—	6 lb.

* Reach weapon.

embroidered with elaborate scenes are favorite accessories. Aside from the mundane variety, though, clever Varisians have subtly repurposed these favorite tools for a variety of covert uses.

Bladed: Knowing their unkind reputation and that their seductive performances can sometimes bring out the worst in watchers, some Varisians craft rows of razor-sharp blades into their scarves. While one side is all color and sequins, the other hides a deadly weapon. The skill required in using such scarves effectively and not revealing their deadly nature makes them exotic weapons.

A bladed scarf has reach, so you can strike opponents 10 feet away with it. In addition, unlike most other weapons with reach, it can be used against an adjacent foe. You can make trip attacks with the bladed scarf. If you are tripped during your own trip attempt, you can drop the scarf to avoid being tripped. If you are proficient with a bladed scarf, you deal 1d4 points of slashing damage to any creature that makes a successful grapple check against you.

You can use the Weapon Finesse feat to apply your Dexterity modifier instead of your Strength modifier on attack rolls with a bladed scarf sized for you, even though it isn't a light weapon for you.

Pocketed: An elaborate design disguises several small pockets on one side of this scarf. This scarf grants you a +4 bonus on Sleight of Hand checks made to hide objects on your body. This bonus does not stack with the bonus wearing heavy clothing provides, but does stack with bonuses for attempting to hide small objects.

Reinforced: One side of this 8-foot-long scarf is reinforced with chain links and metal plates. While not enough to provide a benefit to Armor Class, these versatile scarves can be used like a length

EQUIPMENT OF VARISIA

Item	Cost
Barbarian chew	15 gp
False jewelry	20+ gp
Harpy musk	2 gp
Scarf, pocketed	8 gp
Scarf, reinforced	10 gp
Varisian idol	50 gp

of chain to climb short distances or bind an enemy. A reinforced scarf has hardness 10 and 4 hit points. It can be burst with a DC 24 Strength check.

Starknife: An ancient weapon widely used by Varisian wanderers, this weapon has long served the church of Desna as a holy weapon. From a central metal ring, four tapering metal blades extend like points on a compass rose. A wielder can stab with the starknife or throw it like a chakram.

Varisian Idol: Scavenged from rare uneroded Varisian monuments, these depictions of forgotten spirits can be used to augment summoning magic. If used as an additional material component for any *summon monster* or *summon nature's ally* spell, the summoned creature has an additional +2 hit points per Hit Die.

War Razor: In all appearances, a war razor is an oversized razor or flip knife. As the razor folds into the handle, no sheath is required, making the weapon easy to hide, granting you a +2 bonus on Sleight of Hand checks made to conceal the weapon on your body.

.Varisia.

"Blind in our ways, we warred amongst ourselves as we had for generations. Until black steel scarred the land and our true enemy came upon us."

—Koeas-Civin, Words of the Elders



The seat of civilizations forgotten by most modern empires, Varisia's history is etched upon the stones of its innumerable ruins. Few know what mysterious people once ruled these lands, their towering monuments and incredible architectural feats the sole records of an age of power and wonder. Yet, ask the native Varisians of the past and the monoliths that litter their land and only the cold dread in their eyes will answer.

Nearly 300 years ago, Cheliax founded the colony of Korvosa in the supposedly cursed wilderness between its northern provinces and the Lands of the Linnorm Kings. A century of bloody war with the native barbarians, the Shoanti, followed, culminating in southeastern Varisia falling to Chelish rule. Soon after, colonists and adventure seekers of all persuasions came to populate the newly tamed land. Yet, the deeper foreigners trod inland, the greater the mysteries they discovered: endless walls of carved earth, titanic monoliths, and writings no sage recognized. While many viewed these oddities and obelisks as evidence of the land's cursed reputation these oddities did little to halt Cheliax's imperialistic march.

A century ago, the death of Cheliax's god Aroden fractured not just the country's domestic holdings but indefinitely severed its links to numerous colonies, including those in Varisia. Korvosa, the oldest and largest of Varisia's cities, made overtures of fealty to Cheliax's diabolical new Magistrix—overtures which went ignored. Abandoned, discord erupted in the city between traditionalists to the dead Chelish theocracy and revolutionaries eager to embrace Cheliax's new rule. Realizing that infighting would doom all they had accomplished, many of the traditionalists left Korvosa, migrating west and ultimately founding the city of Magnimar. Today, both Korvosa and Magnimar fancy themselves the center of culture in Varisia. Both cities have birthed or claimed numerous vassal townships in the surrounding lands. Other races have also come as well, integrating with the human populace or claiming their own territories. The natives of the land also remember a time when Varisia was theirs alone and swear the land will once again be theirs.

And, alien and now largely ignored, the monuments of an ancient era look on... biding their time.

THE LAND

A rocky land that slopes from the high Kodar Mountains in the north to the drenched fens of the south, Varisia is a realm sculpted from stone. Yet between the mountain ranges that carve the region, wildly disparate and vibrant lands flourish.

The most dramatic natural wonder of Varisia is the Storval Rise, a continuous line of cliffs that runs hundreds of miles and in some places rises as high as 3,000 feet. Adding to this wonder, nearly the entire face of these cliffs bears eroded sculptures, ruined cliff-castles, and grimly carved passages into depths below.

Above the rise stretches the Storval Plateau, a barren, hilly land of sparse vegetation and deadly giants. This is the primary home of the Shoanti. A nomadic people, the barbarians range from the Stony Mountains in the west to the Cinderlands—a badland of ragged tors—in the east.

Below the Storval Rise, rolling hills, dense forests, and rocky plains make up Varisia's more hospitable reaches. Many of these lands are marked by ancient monoliths, eroded statues, and cairns of unnatural size. To the northwest, hills covered in high grass and windy flatlands form valleys between mountains and the sea. In the south, fertile lands pocked by rocky limestone pavements and mist-shrouded moors border the massive rot of the Mushfens.

Numerous dense deciduous forests also huddle against Varisia's numerous mountain ranges. While spiders and other vermin infest the Churwood, the ghosts of werewolves are said to haunt the Ashwood. Few dare brave the Lurkwood, for its dark trees grow and shed their leaves in an order not set by the seasons. Deadly and deathly things have also long been rumored to haunt the northern Sanos Forest, but the gnome population of the wilderness's southern arm has done much to dismiss such tales. Finally, the Mierani Forest was once and is now again a home to elves. While they have done much in the 200 years since their reappearance to treat with the peoples of Varisia's southern lands, the elves permit few outsiders entrance to their woodland home.

CIVILIZATION

The largest city in Varisia, Korvosa dominates the lands from the Ashwood to Bloodsworn Vale. Today, King Eodred Arabasti II and Queen Ileosa Arabasti rule Korvosa, their reign epitomized by the exploitation of the city-state's vassal townships for the benefit and luxury of Korvosa's elite. Korvosa claims to be the most cultured and civilized city in the region, yet visitors might also grant the city-state the titles of most decadent, exploitative, and socially stratified.

To the west, the city of Magnimar vies with Korvosa for dominance of land and trade in and around Varisia. Spread along the shores and cliffs of the Varisian Gulf, Magnimar's best-known

landmark is the Irespan—the ruin of a gargantuan and ancient bridge around and under which the city sprawls.

A council of elected elders presides over Magnimar along with the Lord-Mayor, a title held for life. Currently, the overbearing Lord-Mayor Haldmeer Grobaras controls the city, his bombastic and largely self-serving voice drowning out those of a fractured council of squabbling merchants, commoners, and bored nobles.

FEATS OF VARISIA

The people of Varisia display a variety of innate skills and unique talents. Subject to your GM's approval, you may choose any of the following feats as a bonus feat during character creation.

Big Game Hunter

You are experienced in fighting the gigantic creatures that stalk Varisia's landscape.

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus on attack rolls and a +2 bonus on weapon damage rolls against Large or larger creatures.

City Born

You grew up in Magnimar, Korvosa, or Riddleport, one of Varisia's three city-states. You are educated and well-informed on the

AREAS OF INTEREST

Varisia holds dozen of locales ripe for exploration and adventure. Listed here are but a few.

Bloodsworn Vale: A fey-haunted pass to southern lands.

Brinewall: A mysteriously ruined sea-fortress.

Celwynnian: The doomed capitol of the Mierani elves, abandoned by its people.

The Sunken Queen: A great, timeless pyramid rising from the Mushfen's murk.

Hook Mountain: A peak of dark repute and ancestral home to several tribes of murderous ogres.

Kaer Maga: A city built within ancient ruins, renowned for its anarchic population of squatters and outlaws.

The Mobhad Leigh: A vast and deep pit, which the Shoanti say has no bottom.

Riddleport: A depraved pirate city whose ancient harbor bears a massive, rune-carved arch.

The Lady's Light: An ancient, towering lighthouse rumored to be haunted by the ghosts of witches.

The Storval Stairs: Titanic steps cut into the face of the Storval Rise.

Urglin: An ancient ruin overrun by brutal savages, orcs, half-breeds, and worse.

Viperwall: The Citadel of Snakes. Its walls of carved serpents endlessly leak a venomous gas.

news and needs of your home and hold tight to the knowledge that your city-state is unquestionably greater than the others.

Prerequisite: 1st-level character, cannot have Country Born or Lone Wolf.

Benefit: Choose Magnimar, Korvosa, or Riddleport as your home city. The frantic bustle of the city has honed your reactions—you gain a +1 bonus on Reflex saves. If you’re from Magnimar, you gain a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks. If you’re from Korvosa, you gain a +2 bonus on Intimidate checks. And if you’re from Riddleport, you gain a +2 bonus on Bluff checks.

Country Born

You come from one of Varisia’s rural regions, where you were raised in an environment of rustic tradition, honest work, and common sense.

Prerequisite: 1st-level character, cannot have City Born or Lone Wolf.

Benefit: A childhood of farm work, apprenticeship, or similar toil has granted you reserves of endurance. Once per day, when an effect would normally leave you fatigued or exhausted, you may ignore the fatigue or exhaustion effect. This ability activates the first time you are affected by fatigue or exhaustion in a day—you cannot “save” it to apply it to a specific effect. Your traditional upbringing has sharpened your will-power as well, granting a +1 bonus on Will saves.

Lone Wolf

Although you may have grown up in the city, you led a lonely childhood and were forced to fend for yourself.

Prerequisite: 1st-level, cannot have City Born or Country Born.

Benefit: Whenever you are dying, your chance of stabilizing is 50%. Your vigorous health also grants you a +1 bonus on Fortitude saves.

Totem Spirit

You are closely and mystically tied to your tribe’s sacred totem.

Prerequisite: Member of a Shoanti tribe.

Benefit: The benefit granted by this feat depends on which Shoanti tribe you belong to:

Lyrune-Quah (Moon Clan): You gain a +1 bonus on Will saves and a +2 bonus on Listen checks.

Shadde-Quah (Axe Clan): If you have the rage ability, it lasts for one additional round. You also gain a +2 bonus on Intimidate checks.

Shriikirri-Quah (Hawk Clan): You gain a +2 bonus on Initiative checks and a +2 bonus on Ride checks.

Shundar-Quah (Spire Clan): You gain a +1 bonus on Fortitude saves and a +2 bonus on Spot checks.

Sklar-Quah (Sun Clan): You gain a +1 bonus on Reflex saves and a +2 bonus on Tumble checks.

Skoan-Quah (Skull Clan): You gain a +2 bonus on weapon damage against undead and a +2 bonus on Heal checks.

Tamir-Quah (Wind Clan): Your base land speed increases by 5 feet. You also gain a +2 bonus on Jump checks.

Varisian Tattoo

You bear intricate tattoos which inspire and empower your natural magical ability. These tattoos mark you as a worker of the ancient traditions of Varisian magic.

Prerequisite: Spell Focus in matching school.

Benefit: Select a school of magic other than divination in which you have Spell Focus—you cast spells from this school at +1 caster level. Additionally, you can cast a single cantrip as a spell-like ability a number of times per day equal to your Constitution modifier (minimum 1/day, caster level equals Hit Dice, save DC is Charisma-based). The spell-like ability gained (and its Varisian name) are as follows:

Abjuration: Resistance.

Conjuration: Acid splash.

Enchantment: Daze.

Evocation: Dancing lights.

Illusion: Ghost sound.

Necromancy: Touch of fatigue.

Transmutation: Mage hand.

A Varisian tattoo typically consists of a long string of characters in Thassilonian, the language found on the ancient monuments of the land. Most are quite complex, running the entire length of an arm or leg.

LORD-MAYOR
HALDMEER GROBARAS

VARISIAN LANGUAGES

Numerous languages are spoken throughout Varisia, including Common, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, and Halfling. Not as commonly heard in civilized regions are the Draconic, Giant, Goblin, Orc, and Sylvan tongues. In addition, the following five languages each have their place in Varisian culture.

Boggard: A language of croaks and pops belched by the frogmen of the Mushfens. Non-reptiles can only speak the simplest form of this crude tongue.

Chelaxian: Only the wealthy of Korvosa and travelers from the far south speak the national tongue of Chelax. Humans of Chelish descent gain this tongue as a bonus language.

Shoanti: The language of Varisia’s Shoanti tribes, this sharp tongue is spoken across the Storval Plateau and any of the other rocky lands the barbarians inhabit. Humans of Shoanti descent gain this tongue as a bonus language.

Thassilonian: This is the dead language of the land’s ancient monuments, spoken today only by intellectuals, historians, and arcanists.

Varisian: Songs in this rolling, sultry language of Varisia’s native wanderers precede them wherever they travel. Humans of Varisian descent gain this tongue as a bonus language.

SANDPOINT

"Welcome to Sandpoint! Please stop to see yourself as we see you!"

—Mirrored Sign Outside Sandpoint

Sandpoint has faced many hardships but also great prosperity in its 42-year history. A small town on the Varisian Bay, fishermen, farmers, and other simple folk make the community one of the rare truly peaceful havens in Varisia. Yet, while the townsfolk have known dark times in the past, a new shadow has begun to loom over the unsuspecting town.

Players in the Rise of the Runelords Adventure Path are encouraged to create characters with reasons to be in Sandpoint at the campaign's beginning. While reasons to visit the community and a more detailed look at the town appear in *Pathfinder #1*, what follows is all common information that even the newly arrived might know.

THE TOWN

A simple, relatively peaceful town with all the color and common oddities one expects from a tightly-knit community, Sandpoint sits at a point on the Lost Coast halfway between Magnimar and Windsong Abbey. Wood buildings and cluttered docks line the town's natural harbor, while farms and the manors of wealthy citizens dot the surrounding countryside. During the day, fishing, farming, lumbering, glass-making, and shipbuilding occupy most of the townsfolk, who commonly retire to their homes by way of Sandpoint's many taverns. A playhouse and would-be museum make unusual attractions in such a small community, but Sandpoint's true landmark is the Old Light, a lighthouse of ancient origins that lies in ruins.

A relatively peaceful town, devoid of many of the dangers of a true frontier town and intrigues of a sprawling city, Sandpoint has nonetheless had its share of troubles. The fading scars of a recent terror still linger, a time most folk refer to as the Late Unpleasantness. Just over five years ago, a madman stalked the streets of Sandpoint, killing dozens. Known as Chopper, the killer's month-long terror ended bloodily when an eccentric local artisan was revealed as the murderer and killed during his attempted capture. Adding to the pain, less than a month later the local chapel burned to the ground in a conflagration that nearly consumed the town's northern half and left the local priest dead.



Emerging from the shadow of these events, though, Sandpoint has healed and rebuilt, with many townsfolk viewing the coming dedication of a new church as a symbolic end to the healing and return to normality.

THE LAW

Kendra Deverin has served as Sandpoint's mayor for the past eight years. Lawmaker, judge, and general peacemaker, Deverin has proven to be both an adept diplomat and stern hand when need be—skills likely honed during her youth in Magnimar and adventuring in the region. With a personal—some say sisterly—style of governing, Kendra holds the abiding respect of most of Sandpoint's people, charming them with her fiery temper and tenacity for justice (as dem-

RUMORS IN SANDPOINT

As in any small community, gossip accents every business transaction and spices every evening meal. Anyone who makes a DC 10 Gather Information check might hear one of the following rumors, some of questionable veracity.

- Sheriff Hemlock shares a long-running, "secret" romance with Lady Kaye, madam of the town brothel.
- The ghost of the murderer Chopper haunts Chopper's Isle, just north of town.
- The White Deer Inn used to be the Black Deer Inn, but was tastefully renamed after the fire.
- Ask Ven Vinder at the general store to see the "wine cellar" and he'll sell you a jug of disgusting but potent orc rotgut.
- Farmer Grump claims the Sandpoint Devil, a horselike monster with bat wings, once flew off with one of his prized sows.
- Old Ilsoari at the museum sometimes wanders the beach at night, looking for treasures.
- Don't go down to the junktoss after dark: goblins steal the trash at night.
- Solsta Vinder claims Sczarni stole her sheets last week and two cooling pies a week before that.
- The new cathedral is magically protected from catching fire.
- Murdermaw, a giant red snapper big enough to bite a boat in half, lurks in the Varisian Bay.
- The Deverin family was once affiliated with the Chelish resistance, but was forced to flee to Varisia.

onstrated during the Late Unpleasantness). A council of several of the town's most respected and affluent landowners aids Deverin's work. While several councilmembers have their own agendas and visions for the town, the mayor's no-nonsense attitude assures that council decisions ever work toward the common good.

Meting out the town's good justice, sheriff and councilmember Belor Hemlock keeps watch over Sandpoint's people. Held as something of a local hero, Hemlock is lauded with being the man who brought the serial killer, Chopper, to justice. Although rarely faced with misconduct more severe than vandalism and public drunkenness, the sheriff is both a keen wit and a skilled swordsman, and openly proves both when the rare crime requires it. While the town's chief enforcer, Hemlock knows the difference between the word of the law and its intent, and often gives those under his protection the benefit of the doubt.

Their sheriff's work aside, Sandpoint's people realize they must often fend for and defend themselves, especially on the outlying farms. In the rarest and most extreme cases—and even then thoroughly discouraged—mob justice is sometimes all that satisfies the outraged people.

THE LAND

A rolling, lightly forested land of limestone escarpments, rugged tors, and verdant moors surrounds Sandpoint. Most who populate the area live off the land and sea. Numerous farms spread over the surrounding countryside, while the homes of fisherfolk dot the

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coastal cliffs. Viable farming land is a coveted commodity around Sandpoint, as rocky hills and expanses of limestone pavements—uneven areas of flat rock—break the lush landscape.

Wolves, snakes, and oversized weasels primarily stalk the deer and hares common to the area, along with the occasional stray farm animal, making attacks on humanoids rare. When the fogs common to Sandpoint's stretch of shore rise, though, every dark shape in the mist becomes a monster, giving rise to numerous local legends of hungry wild men, winged terrors, and reeking things from the sea.

THE PEOPLE

A welcoming, largely unprejudiced community of colorful locals call Sandpoint home. Presented here are but a few of the town's most noteworthy residents.

Kendra Deverin: Town mayor.

Cyrdak Drokkus: Grandiloquent actor, gadabout, and proprietor of the Sandpoint Theater.

Belor Hemlock: The gruff but protective town sheriff.
Ameiko Kaijitsu: Ex-adventurer and proprietor of the Rusty Dragon inn, rebellious daughter to nobleman Lonjiku Kaijitsu.

Lonjiku Kaijitsu: Stoic noble, owner of the town Glassworks.
Jargie Quinn: One-legged owner of the Hagfish tavern.

Titus Scarnetti: Tradition-minded noble who controls Sandpoint's bustling lumber trade.

Ethram Valdemar: Oldest of the town nobles.

Ven Vinder: Owner of Sandpoint's best-stocked general store.

Abstalar Zantus: Sandpoint's mild-mannered local priest.

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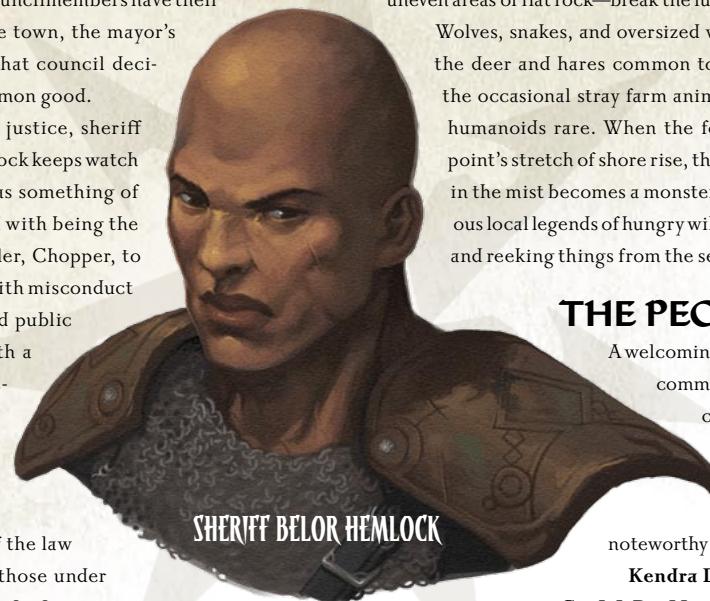
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