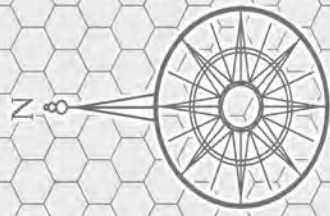


THE WORLD OF ARDEN VUL



C. RACES AND PEOPLES

Archonteans (Ar-KON-tee-ehns): Properly the term refers to the humans from the great city of Archontos, capital of the empire and dominant center on the island of Mithruin, but it has come to refer to any citizen of the empire, regardless of where he/she resides.

Archonteans are typically medium height (5'4" to 5'7"), with black or dark brown hair and slightly olive-colored skin. They are naturally arrogant when dealing with 'barbarians', even while deferring to the myriad social hierarchies that govern Archontean society. Archontean society is highly ordered, with a strong belief in the 'city' as the natural building block of civilization.

While Archonteans do farm, the elites typically run their plantations from the nearest 'civilized' location. As a result of their urban focus, the Archonteans have been great builders, of towns and cities, bridges, aqueducts, roads, and fortifications.

Archonteans are modeled on the ancient Romans and Byzantines. In antiquity, their names were Latinate, typically with two names (e.g., Priscus Pulcher, Marius Tricotor). About a millennium ago, however, their names have shifted to a more Greek, or Byzantine, style. Hence, the names of the powerful clans Basileus and Ligareus shifted to become Basileon and Ligareon; similarly personal names have ceased to favor names like Priscus, Marius, Julia, and Licinia and instead favor names such as Alexios, Georgios, Marcion, and Theodora.

Modern Archontean male names typically end in -on, -ion, -os, or -ios, while female names typically end in -a or -is. Modern male Archontean names: Alexios, Anaximander, Basil, Belisarios, Hector, Heraclion, Iskander, Kallion, Lukon, Marcion, Melchior, Paullor, Teodor, Uriel, Valerian. Modern female Archontean names: Alexia, Basina, Berenice, Callista, Eudocia, Helena, Megaris, Petronia, Sarabel, Syagria, Theodora.

Dwarves: Dwarves appear cold, distant, and avaricious to humans. By nature, they are clannish, wary of outsiders, and extremely vengeful, to the extent that they frequently seem xenophobic. Sarcastic jokes about 'the generosity of dwarves' are common in Archontos. Dwarves are reputed to be masters of stonecarving, metalworking and enchantment; still, as a rule they refuse to offer their goods for sale, so few are able to evaluate these claims. In keeping with their flinty, avaricious natures, dwarves are often teetotalers, as they fear that the effects of alcohol may render them open to being tricked or cheated. They prefer dour black clothes, sometimes embroidered with silver or gold thread. Some warrior clans favor beards, but most dwarven craftsmen do not.

Dwarven society is two-tiered. The upper tier is composed of the established clans, most named after a type of rock or similar substance (e.g. Malachite); members of these clans are the elites, and enjoy special privileges within dwarven holds. It is said that members of a clan will go to any end to rescue a clansman, or at least to recover his/her body and life-stone. The lower tier of dwarven society is composed of the clan-less. Some of the clanless were born that way, others were exiled from their clans for misdeeds, while still others are survivors of clans that imploded or were eliminated in factional politics.

The clanless do much of the mining and shaping, usually under the supervision of a dwarf from an established clan. When dwarves die, they are said to 'take to the stone'; whether this is literal or figurative is an open question among human sages, for the dwarves are particularly tight-lipped about such intensely intimate practices.

The Archonteans know of only two dwarven settlements, although its sages suspect that other holds exist on Irthu in and in the southern jungles. One known settlement is Durildor, or Deephold to humans; this small settlement is set in the mountains of Mithruin. The dwarves of Durildor are technically citizens of the Archontean Empire, although they are quite reclusive. It is said that ancient Emperors swore terrible oaths of support to persuade the dwarves to come to Archontea, and that the price of their arrival was near immunity from imperial rule and law.

The other known settlement is Kazildor (Dwarfhome), a major hold lying beneath the mountains north and west of Narsileon. The dwarves of Kazildor have refused all requests on the part of the empire to exchange ambassadors, so little is known of Kazildor itself. Perhaps to fend off more such requests, the dwarves of Kazildor have recently established a small permanent embassy in Narsileon. In return for certain advice and smithy work, the exarch has allowed the dwarves to operate their own trading factor in Narsileon, and has granted them certain monopolies.

Dwarven names are usually derived from types of rock or stone, and/or stone-related crafting, mining or related skills. Given names vary widely, but clan names (if a dwarf has a clan) are relatively few in number, and are of great antiquity. Dwarven clan names: Gest, Granite, Jade, Malachite, Obsidian, Tapper. Dwarven male given names: Etsil, Gedric, Grist, Jasper, Scoria, Utor, Zhorak. Dwarven female given names: Bressia, Dunita, Grishia, Hergist, Norita, Sable.

Elves: Elves are rare in the human-dominated areas of Magae. The largest and best-known elven enclave is the realm of Lady Ellagel and Lord Gallador, located deep within the central forests of Irthu. Those elves that travel in human society frequently do so for highly specific, temporary reasons (searching for a specific object or piece of knowledge); on occasion, they reside as advisors in the courts of human lords. Most humans have never seen an elf, and will treat elves with fear and caution.

Elven society is broadly collective, with younger elves associating themselves with seniors who have established reputations for great deeds, excellent craftsmanship, or particular wisdom. Elves prize core balance in all things. Those elves who are able to blend their emotions, magical sensibilities, knowledge, and connections with nature are held as paragons. Elves are curious and inquisitive, but do not care to reveal themselves before strangers (and especially non-elves). Most elves pursue a highly specific intellectual interest, as well as a specific interest in magic

of some sort, whether as a practitioner, theorist, or amateur. Elves are particularly attracted by wisdom, by knowledge, by beauty, and by magical lore.

Elves have two names, one given name and one that describes one of their parents. Given names vary widely. The second name invariably is composed of a parent's name with the suffix -son or -dottir. Which parental name an elf adopts as his/her second name is a personal choice, one marked by much symbolism (as the elf is thereby linking his/her future to that of the selected parent).

Only the most venerable and powerful of elves dispense with the parental name. Male elf names: Erist Ellagelsson, Gallador, Gelanchian Gellisson, Jiltorin Trillissason, Lellagalon Begelsson, Nagellor Belladorson, Nisdis Jeronsson, Seldorin Seldorsson. Female elf names: Aelin Gillesladsdottir, Ellagel, Gilleslad, Noredde Galesdottir, Pelissa Halbestdottir.

Halflings: Halflings are uncommon, and largely found in segregated agricultural communities. Most halflings known to the Empire live on the Grain Islands to the east of Archontea, where their agricultural prowess provides important food supplies to Archontos itself. These halfling communities are largely self-regulating, although they are under the loose supervision of the imperial strategos and his legion. Local halfling lore does not fully account for their existence on the Grain Islands, being content to distantly recall the Great Voyage on the Big Ships.

Although most halflings are content with their rural lives, a few bold sorts attach themselves to the staff of the Strategos and end up traveling 'across the water' to Archontos. These halflings are seen as exotic and rustic, and they tend to suffer some general paternalistic patronizing from Imperial citizens. Imperial officials treat halflings in a genial but patronizing way, and will assume them to be political naïfs. Ordinary citizens of the Empire treat halflings as great curiosities, and will often approach them, pinch them, and ask them simplistic questions.

Halflings have given and family names. Family names are typically derived from botanical or agricultural features. Given names vary widely, but are typically English in origin. Male halfling names: Harry Berrymash, Jenks Pipeweed, Phlebotomas Plumthorn, Rosco Barleystalk, Williston Appleroot. Female halfling names: Alice Goldengrain, Gail Winebottom, Livinia Greenthumb, Lucy Rosepetal, Petunia Turnstile.

Imperial Goblins: The humans of Archontos enslaved the goblins of Mithruin in antiquity and put them to work as miners and as laborers on the vast imperial latifundia of Mithruin. Millennia of servitude – but also of exposure to the 'civilizing' forces of the Archontean empire – have created a distinct racial subgroup. Even if they resemble 'wild goblins' (monsters) physically, these 'imperial goblins' are culturally distinct from their monstrous kin and thus look at wild goblins with disdain.

Imperial goblins are short, long-armed, and bandy legged, with yellowish skin and, frequently, yellow eyes. They possess black hair and are comfortable wearing minimal clothing, but possess their own standards for fine dress (these include tall conical caps, colorful vests, and jodhpurs tucked into beautiful leather boots). They reach a maximum of 4' 8" in height. Goblins are known for their wiry strength and tough constitutions.

Many imperial goblins have been freed from slavery over the years, leading to a large number of imperial freedgoblin citizens. Although these freedgoblins are noted as highly effective merchants, estate managers, and bureaucrats, they are typically treated as second-class citizens by ordinary Archonteans and are the object of casual racism on the part of the Archonteans. If allowed by the GM, imperial goblin PCs should use the racial statistics of gnomes (who are unknown on Magae).

Imperial goblin names combine two radicals, and usually describe a profession or task that the goblin (or his/her ancestors) practiced. Male imperial goblin names: Capdoffer, Lamplighter, Seamfinder, Wicktrimmer. Female imperial goblin name: Hearthminder, Kettlelifter, Threadspinner, Warplifter.

Khumus (Koo-moose): The Khumus are a nomadic horse-people. They inhabit the far western side of Irthuín, and their Khor-ate is separated from the Thorcinga and Archonteans by the vast forests of central Irthuín. The Khumus are small (5'1" to 5'5"), swarthy, and typically expert riders and bowmen. They are only rarely encountered in the Archontean territories. Khumus is used both as a noun and as an adjective. Male Khumus names: Arslan, Batengis, Batu, Ganzorig, Nergui. Female Khumus names: Enegen, Gerel, Khulan, Sarnai, Sube.

Thorcinga (thor-KING-ga): The origin of these inhabitants of the western continent of Irthuín is opaque. Physically they range in size and coloring, a fact that outsiders use to claim that they are a hybrid people. Some Archontean sages, in fact, believe that the Thorcinga are the descendants of the ancient Archonteans abandoned on Irthuín when the empire pulled back to Archontos about 1,200 years ago. Whatever their origin, however, the Thorcinga have established their own distinctive culture.

Although the Thorcinga did occupy the old Archontean cities and maintained them as trading depots, the Thorcinga prefer a rural life. A hereditary aristocracy (the thegns) holds title to most of the cultivated land and other rights of wealth; lesser folk living in villages or manors owe taxes (in kind) and service to their local thegn. Since the return of the Archonteans to Irthuín 350 years ago, and the re-establishment of imperial exarchates at Narsileon and Arcturos, many Thorcinga have chafed at the reappearance of imperial law and bureaucracy. A Thorcin Recovery League (TRL) has sprung up, led by a possibly mythical figure known as Eadric Strigona, with the purpose of permanently driving the Archonteans from Irthuín.

Thorcinga is the collective noun; Thorcin (THOR-kin) is the substantive noun and adjective. Their names are loosely derived from the stock of English names of the Anglo-Saxon period. Male Thorcin names: Aelfric, Aethelred, Colmund, Edric, Godric, Horsa, Swithun. Female Thorcin names: Aethelflad, Cyneburga, Eadgithu, Ebbe, Thalia.

Wiskinga (wis-KING-ga): Inhabitants of Borelios, the Wiskinga are typically tall, blonde or red-haired, and fair-skinned. Their society is more tribal than that of the Archonteans, being based on small kinship groupings clustered around a chieftain's hall. Wiskin society values physical skills and ability, and reaving is an ancient and well-respected tradition among young Wiskinga. It is also common for young Wiskinga to journey within the Archontean empire, seeking glory, adventure, and wealth before returning to the ancestral steading.

Wiskinga is the collective noun, Wiskin (WIS-kin) is the sub-stantive noun and adjective. Their names are loosely based on Old Norse naming conventions. Male Wiskin names: Bjorn, Hjalti, Njal, Olaf, Thorvald. Female Wiskin names: Birte, Freya, Gudrun, Gunhild, Hallgerd.



H. GODS OF MAGAE

Many deities are worshiped across Magae. Whether or not each is distinct, or merely an avatar of a set of ur-deities, is a question that has been debated by theologians in Archontos and other bastions of learning for millennia. Some heretics are even known to have claimed that deities are nothing more than mortals who have transcended death and time.

The Archontean Pantheons (aka, The Twelve and the Ten)

There were twelve original gods of Archontos, with the earliest written reference to one of them dating to 1218 SP (it refers to Thoth). Certainly, all of the Twelve were acknowledged by c.500 SP, and thus they were the gods whom the Archontean brought with them in the great period of imperial expansion. During this golden age, the Twelve each boasted broad portfolios of 'expertise'. This made syncretism not only possible but common during the Archontean expansion: it was easy enough for the Archontean to

see in some foreign god a particular 'aspect' of one of the Twelve. Many aspects were thus 'discovered'. For instance, Sekhmet (F) came to be understood as an aspect of Wadjet, with special influence on fire and warfare. Of course, whether or not such foreign 'gods' were distinct entities or merely aspects of the Twelve was, of course, a hotly debated theological point. Some modern theologians blame this flexible and accepting approach for the gradual decline of the Twelve; these critics suggest that by claiming to encompass all things, the Twelve lost their uniqueness and thus their appeal to the broader populace. For whatever reason, worship of the Twelve had become ossified and ritualized by the time of the War of Sortians and Theosophs. By 1855 AEP, the imperial government decided to officially link itself to a new slate of deities, ones whose divine support promised to revive the empire. The new pantheon centered around ten very powerful deities ("the Ten") who were served by seventeen (or more) lesser gods. Theological cynics could and did note that many of these 'new' gods resembled the most popular of the 'aspects' of the old pantheon, but the official



position is that the Ten are distinct from the Twelve. In the present, worship of the old gods is rare; some of the Twelve are forgotten, at least one (Horus) is presumed 'dead', and another (Set) is the object of secretive, illegal cult worship. The Ten and the Seventeen have clearly replaced them. For the past 500 years, the emperor has also been the subject of a cult; the theology of this is a bit fuzzy, and 'worship' of the emperor is primarily understood as a measure

of loyalty more than anything else. **Note:** the Archontean remain accepting of foreign gods; it is not at all uncommon to find temples or shrines to the Wiskin and Thorcin pantheons existing alongside those of their Archontean rivals within the communities of the Empire. The same, however, is not true beyond the borders of the empire; shrines and temples to the Ten are unwelcome outside the imperial boundaries.

Table 1: The Twelve **No Clerics**

God	Alignment
Anubis (M), greater god	Lawful neutral
Besa (F), greater god	Chaotic evil
Horus (M), greater god	Neutral good
Isis (F), greater god	Lawful good
Jael (F), greater god	Neutral evil
Osiris (M), greater god	Neutral
Ptah (M), greater god	Lawful good
Seker (M), greater god	Lawful good
Set (M), greater god	Lawful evil
Thoth (M), greater god	Lawful neutral
Tiamat (F), greater god	Neutral evil
Wadjet (F), greater god	Lawful neutral

Cleric Rules:

good god = normal spells only

evil god = reversed spells only

neutral god = you may pick from

normal spells only or reversed spells only upon reaching 2nd level

Ex normal spells: Cure Light Wounds, Light, Bless

Ex reversed spells: Cause Light Wounds, Darkness, Bane

Table 2: The Ten **Any Clerics**

God	Alignment	Areas of Influence	Symbol(s) and Weapon(s)
Ardenia Tessaeron (F), greater god	Lawful good	Wisdom, battle tactics, invention, justice	Owl; spear
Crestion (M), greater god	Chaotic good	Poetry, music, the arts, creative impulses, selfishness	Lyre, cluster of wild berries; bow
Debellaton (M), greater god	Lawful evil	Death, might, order through might, sacrifice	Skull, scythe, black disk; flail
Demma (F), greater god	Lawful good	Fertility, crops, households, childbirth, magic	A seed; flail
Heschiu Ban (M), greater god	Lawful evil	Triumph, water, inevitability, power, magic	Shackles, a green oval; flail
Lucreon (M), greater god	Lawful neutral	Profit, amassing wealth, negotiation, merchants, impartiality	A gold coin; hammer
Lysseon (M), greater god	Chaotic neutral	Wine, indulgence, madness, rage, creativity	A bunch of grapes; flail, sickle
Mitra (M), greater god	Lawful good	Justice, contracts, omniscience, defender, oaths, humanitarian impulses	Scales of justice, lions, flames; long sword

Thelis (F), greater god	Chaotic good	Love, desire, aspiration, planning	Diamond; sword
Tychias (F), greater god	Chaotic neutral	Luck, fate, wealth, 'the Lady of Thieves'	Crimson coin; dagger, staff

The Wiskin Pantheon

Wiskin Clerics Only

The Wiskinga are a hardy people inhabiting the frozen north of glaciers, mountains, and snow-covered fields. The Wiskinga believe

their gods inhabit an enchanted valley high up in the mountains above Westholm.

God	Alignment	Areas of Influence	Symbol(s) and Weapon(s)
Bragi (M), greater god	Chaotic good	Poetry, music, persuasion, beauty	A bagpipe; staff
Fenrir (M/F), lesser god	Chaotic evil	Hunger, chaos, destruction, wolves	Wolf's pawprint; axe
Freya (F), greater god	Chaotic good	Beauty, love (esp. unrequited), sadness, wealth	Strand of yellow hair; sword

Frigg (F), greater god	Lawful good	The household, motherhood, spinning	Distaff; staff
Gna (F), lesser god	Chaotic neutral	Travel, messages, speed	Brass arrow; arrows
Hafgufa (F), greater god	Chaotic evil	The Seas, relentlessness, implacability, the Red Whale	Red whale; trident
Heimdall (M), greater god	Lawful neutral	Watchmen, fidelity, stamina, defense	Blindfold; halberd
Jormungundir (M/F), greater god	Lawful evil	Destruction, sabotage, planning and undermining endeavors, snakes	Ouroboros; flail
Loki (M), greater god	Chaotic evil	Plots, trickery, crafts, invention	Fish; dagger
Odin (M), greater god	Neutral good	War, justice, prophecy, inspiration, the All-Father	Raven; spear
Snotra (M), lesser god	Lawful neutral	Hospitality, noble behavior, speech	Songbird; sword
Surt (M), lesser god	Lawful evil	Fire, caves, smithing	Pair of glowing red eyes; hammer, two-handed sword
Thor (M), greater god	Chaotic good	War, battle, storms	Hammer; war hammer
Ymir (M), lesser god	Chaotic evil	Strength, endurance, giants; All-Father of Giants	Red handprint; maul

The Thorcin Pantheon **Thorcin Clerics Only**

The Thorcinga have a remarkably diverse pantheon, especially for a people that have never built a lasting monumental civilization. If Father Utar is the technical head of the pantheon, he is in fact often an object of ridicule for the failure of his (and Thorcin) schemes.

God	Alignment	Areas of Influence	Symbol(s) and Weapon(s)
Apenn (M), greater god	Chaotic good	Good fortune, wine, agriculture, revelry. Represents life of the vine from first tender shoots to death in winter	Wine cup; sickle, staff
Croul (M), greater god	Neutral	Mountains, snow, pitiless striving. The Lord of Peaks, the Cold Warrior. Famously uncaring.	N.a.; axe
Ethrik (F), lesser god	Chaotic neutral	Love, sensuality and passion, beauty, seduction and carnal desire. The eternal adulteress without spite. Daughter of Utar and Shimra, twin of Shapral	Figs; dagger
Fenth (M), greater god	Lawful evil	Forests, nature, harshness. Lord of The Trees, First Seed. Brother of Utar.	Acorn; bow
Ghareela (F), greater god	Chaotic evil	Anarchy, destruction, chaos; hermaphroditic; the Destroyer, the Dark Mother, Lady of Blood.	Skeletal finger, hooded figure; bows, acid
Ghureena (F), greater god	Lawful good	Life, growth, productivity, order. Toad-headed opposite of Ghareela	Toad; club
Laraveen (F), greater god	Lawful neutral	Wisdom, war, planning, construction	Framing square; spear
Mishpral (F), greater god	Lawful neutral	Health, healing	An open hand; spear
Nitheral (F), lesser god	Neutral	Forests, nature, hidden paths and secrets; Pitiless Lady of the Hunt, Wild Daughter, Finder of Tracks. Daughter of Fenth, and more popular than him.	A large canine tooth; bow
Pertiora (F), lesser god	Chaotic evil	The Seas. The Bitch of the Sea, who preys on impious sailors	Octopus; spear

Phreena (F), lesser god	Lawful neutral	Fate, lost causes, slaves, the destitute	Potsherd with a black dot on it; staff, club
Shapral (M), lesser god	Chaotic neutral	Thieves, the night, adventure, warfare. Son of Utar and Shimra, twin to Ethrik	Coil of rope; long sword
Sherlosh (M), greater god	Chaotic neutral	Seas and oceans, fishing	Net, fishing hook; trident
Shimra (F), greater god	Lawful good	The hearth, kitchens, mothers, infants. Wife of Utar.	Cooking pot; knife
Utar (M), greater god	Lawful neutral	Knowledge, wisdom, schemes, oratory, justice, ingenuity, questioning authority. Father Utar, Lord of the Eyes	Jeweled eye; short sword
Thefila (F), greater god	Lawful good	Marriage, respect and fidelity, hearth, family	Tear-drop earring; staff
Thrufor (M), lesser god	Chaotic good	Travel, trade, the disabled. Clubfooted.	Generic smiling face, sandal; iron- shod staff

The Khumus Pantheon **Khumus Clerics Only**

The gods worshipped by the Khumus people of the far west are not of their deities are listed here. If more are needed the GM should widely known in the Archontean empire. As such, only a handful feel free to expand upon the list.

God	Alignment	Areas of Influence	Symbol(s) and Weapon(s)
Ak Alif (M), greater god	Neutral good	Fertility, fecundity, plenty, horses. Brother of At Ayut	A stallion's head, a phallus; spear
At Ayut (F), greater god	Neutral evil	Sorrow, death, loss, consumption. Sister of Ak Alif	A skull; bows
Gol Tingri (M), greater god	Chaotic evil	Battle, destruction, sacrifice	A red dot; swords, axes
Tingri (M), greater god)	Lawful neutral	The sky, winds, storms, procreation, creation	Raindrop, lightning bolt, yurt; spear, bow