Idrasia: The Blasted Reach

# The Markarskan Giants

## Description

The giants of this region separated into two ideological camps. The Markarskans favored ruling over the lesser races more directly. From their perch in Markarska, they terrorize the whole of the plains. Besides demanding a large amount of food and consuming much of the groundwater, they also force the plainsmen to work in their mines.

#### Tithe

Every month, the under races of the city must provide the giants with ten working age individuals as well as a significant amount of food. These goods are left on the tall steps that are inside the massive mesa. Anyone other than the offering at the doors when they open is killed on sight.

## Affiliation

Giants obviously.

### Naming Conventions

Russian and eastern european.

## Interactions

#### With G:

The rift between the two sets of giants now goes back several decades and stems from their goals and way they seek to interact with the lesser races, one paternal, the other with a fist of iron. Communication has always been possible with magic. Occasionally, envoys visit one another. In this era of breaking barriers, perhaps the two sides will be forced into more cooperation.

## Cities

#### Markarska

*Description*

By far the most advanced city on the continent, high above the clouds, its marble spires and towers of magic cast dark shadows, both literal and metaphoric, over the center of the plain if not the whole continent. The giants of Markarska are the most powerful magic users in the continent and have used the intervening years since the war with the dragons to discover and explore many deep secrets. It would not be surprising if they have or *fabricated* a dragon sphere.

Some of the offered lesser races are used in the mines which lie deep below the mesa, accessible only through magic. Others are used in unspeakable experiments into life and death.

*Seat of Power*

Markarska is ruled by an uneasy council of mage-giants. It is something between a gerontocracy and a meritocracy.

*Trade*

Markarska does not trade usually with other cities or factions, except to consume massive amounts of natural resources. The most sought after resources are reagents for magical spells, rare gems, exotic minerals, and metals of all kinds. The magical items and information created by its labs stay in the city. On rare occasion, they might trade some of their items or artifacts with other giant factions both on the continent and off it.

*Races*

Markarska is almost completely made of giants. However, they do have a sizable slave population as noted below. Certain lesser race collaborators who are of great use to the gaints may be invited to live in the city as well, but it is rare.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A mix of cloud and storm giants | 70% |
| Assorted slaves (mix of lesser races) | 25% |
| Collaborator Goliaths | 4% |
| Dominated Earth Genasi and constructs (for mining) | 1% |

#### Koprivina

*Description*

Koprivina one of the larger cities on the continent and by far the largest in the plains. Its inhabitants are ruled over by the giants and their collaborators who stifle any rebellious intentions. It is built into the side of the mesa, as if constantly looking up at the splendor of Markarska which it can never hope to equal. The buildings are made of clay and are usually stacked on top of one another forming a twisted three dimensional maze of star-corridors.

There is an internal staircase up to Markarska, but none are allowed through the gates at the top. There are massive water pipes powered by magic which supply Markarska. This is not common knowledge.

It takes a good fourth of a day to climb the many stairs from the plains floor up to the city, and because of such, many inhabitants choose never to leave.

*Seat of power*

The city is ruled over by a Goliath Overseer and his guard of loyal goliaths. He also employs some spies to find dissenters. Overseers are chosen by the ruler of Markarska.

*Trade*

Koprivina's main trade resource is livestock which are used as food for Markarska, and the inhabitants themselves, who the giants above use as slaves. Mercenaries are easy to find here. A large amount of ore and ingots comes into Koprivina, some of which gets smelted. They are therefore better at metalworking than one might assume.

*Races*

Koprivina is a motley mix of lesser races, but mostly Aarakocra, who have the dubious honor of having lived in the area for centuries. Legend spoken in hushed tones says that they once lived at the top of the massive mesa.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Aarakocra | 70% |
| Humans | 10% |
| Minotaur | 10% |
| Goliath Collaborators | 7% |
| Dwarven metalworking experts | 3% |

#### Tymnozavod

*Description*

One of the few floating cities left in Idrasia. This massive smoke belching monstrosity survived the fall through its non-standard propulsion mechanism. Tymnozavod was designed as a mobile war factory. Its arcane semi-automated workshops constructed at the high point of giant knowledge are capable of constructing hundreds of constructs a day, that is, if anyone can remember or figure out how to work the thing.

Visually it is a bulbous metal plated blob the size of a small mountain. From its top are smoke stacks pointing in every direction, half of them emit a noxious black smoke which causes respiratory problems if inhaled for too long. During the night it gleams red from cavernous openings, hinting at the raw elemental power that was required to be harnessed to aid its construction and levitation.

Because of its unique purpose, it weighs even more than a typical floating city, being made almost entirely of metal. The anti-gravity engines at its bottom are palpable as the city flies overhead, increasing gravity almost three fold for those underneath. Thus, the city also has a secondary role in being a morale weapon against the giants enemies. They are known to park the city atop misbehaving settlements to great effect.

However, the engines come with a further advantage, it can lift objects and materials no other force on Idrasia could hope to budge. Because of this feature, it is now being used as an ore transport between the Markarskans and the Silver Circle. Every month or so, huge amounts of raw ore containing gems and magical cluster rocks travels from the Canticle to the slopes of Markarska.

*Secret Stuff:*

The engine of Tymnozavod requires a captured elder fire elemental plucked from the searing center of the plane of fire. Needless to say, this is not an easy task and the few giants who know this fact use whatever substitute they can.

Perhaps the heart of a fire dragon would work, but where are they going to find something like that?

# B) The Adisan Collective

## Description

If you want a clear sign of the giant's decaying hegemony you don't need to look father than the Collective. Once a fractured and subjected group of witless mountain and forest dwellers, mostly genasi, these tribes have consolidated in recent years and now a small but present challenge to giant power.

Because they are in fact a collective, their purpose, goals, and actions are sporadic when viewed as an outsider. There are no less than twenty main tribes all with their own systems of internal government and place of origin. They are together only in their hatred of the giants and their underlings.

The Adisan are close to nature, but mostly to the type of surrounding the tribe is from. For instance, those that come from the forest are masters in camouflage and the bow. Those from the river are some of the best fisherman on the continent.

## Affiliation

Fey. The force behind the tribes cohesion is unknown. It might just be mutual interest. Or perhaps there might be someone or a group of someone pulling the strings?

## Naming Conventions

Native American, but with liberty as to the source tribe to reflect the fractured nature of the tribes themseves.

## Interactions

#### With A:

Historically staying on “their” side of the river, they have gotten brash as of late and will raid Markarskan cattle and dwelling located far from the city. The Markarskans will less frequently retaliate or undertake raids of their own, but these are unsupported by the ruling giants.

#### With L:

Although they don't nessesaril share a real border with the Circle, the death zone represents a constant threat to their northern lands. Heroic braves often put together adhoc groups of other warriors to battle the scourge.

Actual diplomatic interaction with the Circle is limited, although the Adisan will occasionally trade wood, ore and beasts of burden. Some more unscrupulous braves work as mercenaries or scouts for the Circle.

#### With P:

Although the mountains prohibit mass trade between the two peoples, the Adisan, especially the mountain tribes maintain good relations with their neighbors, and will trade for dried fish especially in harsh summers when the crops wilt.

## Cities

The majority of Adisan do not live in permanent cities and instead move around between seasonal hunting grounds.

#### Dulbovnin

If you thought this name didn't sound like a Adisan city, you would be right. Dulbovnin was either an outpost town taken through relentless raids or simply abandoned by the Markarskans, depending on who you believe.

The town is situated right on the edge of a canyon. Steep steps take one down to the red stone fracture, through which a mighty river flows. Often times rope bridges span the canyon at this point, but it is just as common for them to require a toll or be destroyed by the elements or angry towns people.

The town itself is a motley collection of mostly one to two story wooden houses. Most houses will have a basement used for living and a sub basement for storage. Some of the houses closer to the canyon edge have their own tunnels down to the river.

Dulbovnin is a chaotic place ruled by no one in particular. Law seems to be only enforced when killings happens and is an adhoc mob response.

*The Trees of Dulbovnin*

One of the most important features of Dulbovnin are its mighty trees which ring the town. It is not allowed to cut them down because they were planted with the express purpose of protecting the city from wind storms. Anyone who cuts down a tree must plant a thousand trees to replace it, and either pay a thousand gold or maintain these trees themselves for perpetuity. If they do no meet with this request, they are strung up on another of the trees until dead and all their possessions are used to pay the cost of replanting.

*Seat of Power*

Because the very existence of a centralized city is counter to the sensibilities of the Adisan, this is not in fact their capital. Instead, the tribes meet every month and a time picked in the previous meeting, but usually falling on natural days like solstices and harvest festivals. The actual process of discerning direction for the collection is an anarchic mash of yelling on all sides between the tribes. However, honor and respect for nature lore plays a large part in convincing course of action.

*Trade*

Dulbovnin exists solely for trade between the various tribes, since it is part of none of them. Therefore, a large amount of fish, crops, cattle, wood, and a small but valuable amount of finished goods and weapons crosses its storefronts.

Of special note is its large mercenary contingent. Merchants from many nations, even those far away know about Dulbovnin's prestige when it comes to these wild men. Mercenaries in this city are not usually part of any larger company and must be hired individually, usually as guards or scouts.

Some mercenaries are have no bounds and simply know the town as a good place to find work, but others have houses and lives in the lawless village that they return to when their contract is done.

*Races*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Genasi of all types | 50% |
| Humans (mostly farmers or mercenaries) | 20% |
| Aarakocra (some of the original inhabitants stayed, mostly ranchers and merchants) | 15% |
| Minotaurs | 10% |
| Other (Mercenaries) | 5% |

# C) The Everlasting Kingdom of Basilia

## Description

#### Early Years

In recent years, it is fair to say Basilia is now the second power on the continent, and by far the most active. The kingdom was born from three great city states who in eons past had safely been under giant hegemony. However, almost a hundred years ago, when the schism between the giants emerged, they gained defacto independence. They then engaged in almost a century of intense warfare where they bloodied the ground with dead between themselves. With some help from the dragonborn to the south, the leaders of the three cities signed into affect a peace agreement.

This agreement was not born of pragmatism, but of fear. The **G** had, shortly after the walls come down, engaged on a very militaristic and expansionist course of action, especially their southernmost city.

After a short but furious counter insurgency, again aided by the dragonborn and also by fellow cities D and E, managed to drive the northerners back to the river which marked a natural bottleneck in their expansion.

This situation lasted a few decades, but in the meantime, the elected king consolidated his power, declaring the south one nation. Not everyone in the cities was very happy about this, but because of the continuing threat of war, they viewed it as militarily expedient, at least for the time being. Most would regret their decision.

#### Recent War

Almost ten years ago peace was threatened once again. This time there was fear on both sides. The south had received a great deal of help from their dragonborn and very indirectly, dragon backed friends. Some of the giants in the north but especially their Goliath lieutenants suddenly felt quite worried about their state in local power.

Concerned that the weakening of the barriers had shifted the balance of power, and convinced that every moment they waited only increased the consolidation of the southern powerhouse, the north attacked.

Nor did they attack alone. For one of the first times in the history of Idrasia, there was close to a continent spanning war whose sides defined their current geopolitical status. One one side was the Heartfire Alliance, which included Basilia, D,E and nominally the dragonborn. They were backed financially by the Goldwater Assemblage, but they did not take place in the actual fighting. On the other was the Defense of Order comprising **G,** indirectly **M,** who violated the nominal neutrality of **J;** in addition, for the first time in recorded history, the ice paladins **T** cast off their own neutrality, and joined as well, mostly for reasons of preserving the status quo.

The attack was well planned but was ultimately a monumental failure. The first action was a first strike against the dragonborn in their citadel of cindernost through the use of Triton auxiliaries which attacked from the sea. The goal of this attack was to prevent their coming to the kingdom's aid.

The second attack came across the river which for years now had signified the uneasy border between the two kingdoms. In what would be recognized in hindsight as a disastrous military decision, this attack was split in two, one group attacking Crucible to the east, the other going southward, hoping to cut off Telmasus from the rest of the fighting and so directly engage the kingdom.

Unfortunately, due the efforts of the king and his group of well trained counselors, the north's plans were learned of partially in advance. Spies and saboteurs were slipped into the column heading east, who at the time of fighting, assassinated the head leader and later were able to bring down a landslide on the beleaguered forces.

The southern column didn't fare much better. Despite initial success, they were met at the river and the crossing was successfully contested. The help of the paladins was countered by a group of powerful mages from Crucible, and a sweeping Calvary charge snuck around through the swamps of Telmasus finished the fighting.

#### Outcomes

Two fate defining actions happened in addition to the victory. One was the near death of the elected king of Basilia. The second was the success of the death clerics and their agents. Both would have long reaching effects in the years to come.

Near death, the king was due to pass away, even in victory. However, his closest counselors had discovered a very powerful artifact from unknown origins (The Circle). Using it, they returned him back to life, but not as a human. He was now the Immortal Sovereign, a powerful undead.

The death clerics, seeing their winning hand, encouraged him to destroy the rest of the north. Even as he did so, they attempted to sink their agents into ever part of the fledgling bureaucracy.

However, the king would not be so easy a target. He did take a vast amount of northern land, and one of its cities (Sverograd, the most responsible for the war). However, he stopped well short of the capital, and did not besiege the monastery of the Ice Paladins as was expected. He met the defeated parties by himself and came to terms, much to the dismay of the death clerics. It is thought he feared that if he pressed to hard, the giants themselves would come to the aid of the northerners.

Furthermore, he announced that the gift of unlife would not be one solely for the king. With his announcement, he raised two recently killed ministers, the start of what would become a strange tradition. He also declared the bureaucracy a meritocracy, effectively sidelining the entire former political elite...

#### Current Day

As one could be expected, many of the parties who had once been allies of the kingdom were repulsed by this announcement. In particular, the dragonborn were particularly put off. They felt like the change was a hard turn towards neutrality in the dragon/giant conflict, and felt like the years of help they had given the kingdom had been in vain.

A cult like religion that worships the eternal king has grown up despite his efforts to squash it. Perhaps to got give them any political ammo, he has been seen only rarely outside his closest circles.

#### Ok, sure, history is a thing, but what about the actual description?

Fine, Gosh!

Basilia is a kingdom focused on rule of law. The treaty between the three cities was very important to the inhabitants and laid the foundation for modern culture. In that sense its pretty much a typical lawful good kingdom. There are guards, laws are enacted usually fairly.

Despite having a knowledge of machinery and an entrepreneurial drive, most commoners are still farmers. Getting a job in the bureaucracy is seen as a patriotic action, but one that is hard to achieve. Acheiving the rank nessesary to be bestowed the gift of immortality is only granted to the select few.

*Basilian Undead*

Ever sinc ethe king rose again, he has open the path to immortality for the select few who distinguish themselves in the Kingdom. The actual process is shrouded in secrecy. Necromancy is state-sanctioned only. Performing unlawful necromancy is similarly to forgery only much more severe.

Sentient undead not of the kingdom (The Circle) must carry special papers. Non Sentient undead are still looked down on but not illegal. They too must have papers carried by whoever controls them.

The undeath process is socially disruptive. Although some stay with their families, most leave in order to stay in government provided living spaces.

One last important note is that these beurocrats are not paper pushers. Think instead of investigators and inquisitors. They root out corruption, serve as emmesaries, devise military and economic plans.

There is a military wing of the undead as well. These are the Kingdom's greatest warriors and generals brought back from death.

*Basilian Undead: The Secret Stuff:*

Although the king and the first couple undead are tied to the Silver Horn, the King soon discovered that the horn in some sense is the only thing tying them to the world. Its tied to the Circle in some horrible ways and irrevocably evil. Fearful that the destruction of it would destroy the kingdom, he had the Death Clerics and a group of powerful sorcerors from Crucible and one master alchemist from the Khanate create a new method of undeath:

They made a spell similar to raise dead:

***Eternal Bond of Basilia***

*6th Level Necromancy (ritual)*

*Casting Time: 6 Months. Divided by two for every person contributing to the spell*

*Range: 66m*

*Components: A soul sphere\**

*Duration: Permanent*

*You return a dead humanoid to life. There is no restriciton on how long it has been dead, however it must be a willing target. You must have the body or the soul of the target. The soul can then be sent to any humanoid body, including non-organic ones(!) If the soul is sent to its original body, missing limbs are restored. This spell cleanses any remaining flesh from the body and can only create skeletons.*

*\*The casting of this spell requires a device not unlike a dragon sphere which actually houses the soul of the undead. Creating such a sphere requires 100,000 gold and a solid crystal sphere with no imperfections.*

*Because the soul is actually in the sphere, a fact which is not apparent to the target, destroying the body has little effect in the long term. The process can be repeated. Souls can freely move from sphere to sphere if they know how to (Only the creators are aware of this fact). Destroying the sphere kills those inside it and makes them impossible to re-ressurrect except individually via wish due to the experiemental nature of this spell (Although this efect is unknown to the creators, as it has never happened)*

At massive cost to the kingdom, the king had four of these spheres made, the first one being an actual modified dragonsphere. There is one in each of the major Basilian cities and one buried nearly a mile underneath the capitol in a solid iron room with no door. It is specifically warded against the Grey Mages.

### Ancias Lucenus I “The Eternal Soveriegn”

Born in a small mountain pass village, Ancias departed his home at a young age, joining the military of Olyntheos before the cities had pledged peace. During campaigns against the other cities, he showed his leadership and military brilliance, quickly rising through the ranks.

He had a good connection with the dragonborn, knowing someof them personally as friends. He has traveled to Cindernost several times.

After defeating a Triton expedition against Telmasus, he gained even more renown. He was also instrumental in sabotaguing the power of the old aristocracy, subtly disgracing them, or at times, killing them in duels. He has survived many, many assasination attempts mostly due to a small cadre of very talented advisors who grew up around him in his military years.

When the cities negotiated peace, he was the spokesman for Olyntheos and was instrumental in getting Parintium to agree. In a very unclear process, he somehow emerged as the elected king of the united cities, possibly due to subterfuge and possibly beauase of his military prowess.

After leading the South to victory, rising as undead and finishing the campaign, he has withdrawn somewhat from the public eye.

He controls the south with a fair if absolute rule.

*Secret Stuff:*

The raising process of the horn was neither pleasant nor without harm. He was deeply distrubed by the process. Although he still is Ancias, there was a distinct distancing after his ressurrection from even his closest allies. He would now be almost one hundred and ten. Secretly, the horn does not prevent the mental degeneration due to aging, only the physical (The Circle knew this).

The kingdom has no sucession plan and he himself has not chosen a successor. It is not clear the cities or the people would even support whoever he chose. Secretly, in truth, he hesitates because he doesn't believe anyone is worthy enough to take over for him. If he were forced to choose, he would choose one of the high ranking non-undead investigators in his beurocracy for political reasons.

As his condition worsens, he loses more and more of his political power to four sources: The military and the beurocracy (both undead and alive), the death clerics, and the old aristorcracy. These four groups, along with a small delegation from the dragonborn make up the ruling counsel which advises the king.

He was a powerful force for justice and good for so long, who would dare speak ill of him now?

## Affiliation

Formerly with the dragons. Now still anti-giant, but less so than prior. Think pragmatically neutralish.

## Naming Conventions

Byzantine.

## Interactions

There are few state level groups that Basilia *doesn't* have interactions with.

#### With H:

The dragonborn of Cindernost have a long history with the kingdom even from before it was a kingdom. They always viewed themselves as mentors and advisers to what they consider lesser races. They have in the past helped Basilia both economically, in providing smelting and mining techniques and in military affairs.

Now that the kingdom of Basilia is truly everlasting, the dragonborn feel like their investment in the humans was unrequited. They are on neutral terms now.

#### With D:

Telmasus's history is intertwined with Basilia. Racially and ethnically the inhabitants are the same. If not for the cloying swamps which the Temasians took refuse in during the giant occupation, they might be one whole today.

Telmasus sent forth an even larger contingent of men percentage wise than the kingdom in the last war, and were rewarded with everlasting safety, as they are now surrounded by the kingdom. However, the undeath and tendency towards rule of law is contrary to the more chaotic and libertarian sensibilities of the swamp people. They are on neutral terms now, but Telmasus is somewhat afraid of being forcibly integrated with the kingdom.

#### With E:

Crucible's beginning was also similar to Basilia's establishing their own city state. Like Telmasus, the artists and musicians of Crucible are fundamentally incompatible with the strict yet parental attitude of both the northerners and the kingdom.

Unlike Telmasus, Crucible as a whole very rarely acts as a whole, being a very anarchic place. Therefore, it has no formal embassies, but its mages, musicians and artists are well known in Basilian cities. There is much trade with the city especially in art and magical supplies.

#### With G:

For the first time in centuries, it looks like the Basilians and the Northerners see eye to eye, although many still are ashamed from their defeat. That being said, they understand that Basilia's advantage could have been pressed much stronger than they did.

The Goliaths are somewhere between passively hostile and neutral now towards the kingdom.

#### With F:

The deep shelf supported the Defense of Order during the war, but when the giants failed, the deep ones found themselves again without allies in the area. Rather than reach out to the newly strengthened kingdom, the Tritons seem to be avoiding it at all cost.

#### With J:

The war was a very profitable venture for the Goldwater Assembly; many merchant families made fortunes off of loans and financing. They remain very good friends of the Basilians. Although its likely that most individuals in the Assembly are wary of the Kingdom's new turn towards undeath, they know an opportunity when they see one. For once, North-South trade can continue relatively uninhibited.

#### With S:

The Basalian's have never traded much with the firbolg, but recenlty conflict has broken out over the Basilian's use of some older mountain pass forests for fuel in their industry.

#### With L:

There is no official interaction with the Circle, but not even the king can silence critics pointing out that the artifact the king used was made by the Circle. The king *did* in fact meet with one of the highest Princes after his undeath, but relations soured quickly after that. The Circle is decidedly mercenary, much more so than the law abiding Kingdom.

It is not known, but perhaps suspected that the death clerics are being funded by the Circle. It seems that the Circle has decided that there is not enough room for two immortal nations in Idrasia.

## Cities

#### Parintium

Located at the mouth of a river, Parintum even in its past was a major trading destination. Constructed from grey granite, it has a large curtain wall and barracks. Its port is the largest in the southwest. In recent years it is also the heart of Basilia's new industrial center. Weapons and armor are produced here for the whole kingdom. Its people are practical, down to earth, and dubious of religion and superstition.

Seeking to retain their lucritive trade position, they are currently building an airship center as well.

*Seat of Power*

The city is controled by the King. Local rule is decided by bureocratic rank. There is a sort of mayor who is actually a high ranking federal appointment. Actual representation is nonexistant, but concerns are dealt with by the government (mostly benevolent absolute monarcy and all)

*Trade*

Grain and crops come from upstream as well as ore from the capitol and the hills surrounding it. Fish and other seafood from the tritons. Art comes in, indirectly from the Goldwater Assembly and Crucible. More interestingly, alchemical and mage supplies which are hard to get in the kingdom, come in from here all the way from the Khanate.

*Races*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Humans | 90% |
| Dwarves (metalworking experts) | 5% |
| Minotaur (dockworkers and farmers) | 2% |
| Misc. other races | 2% |
| Undead Margraves (human) | 1% |

#### Idatrea

A medium height wooden wall surrounds only half of this sprawling city. It is a hub for grain and crops. Its buildings are likewise well made from wood and can range all the way to four floors. At its heart is a square for its vaunted agriculture market.

Idatrea's legacy is one of privlidge. The lands surrounding it were and are very fertile. Most of the old aristocracy live here, mostly on overly-large vinyards.

*Races*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Human | 95% |
| Earth Genasi (Farmers) | 5% |
| Undead Margraves (human) | <1% |

#### Olyntheos (The shining city)

The towering capital of the South. Once threatened by war, it is now free to build towards the heavens. Massive white stone buildings reach 3-6 stories tall. It is surrounded by a perfectly circle two story high stone wall.

Its roads are all completely paved. There is a fee to simply enter the city to satisfy the upkeep of all of it.

Theivery is especially looked down upon in this city: theives guild beware. Many are in its large underground jail.

Olyntheos is a city of art and culture as well as a economic powerhouse. It is the home of the beurocracy and many trade houses. The king lives here in a only slightly ostentatious keep on the outskirts of town.

*The sanctum of Basilia*

At the center of the city is a large half dome that takes up nearly a whole city block. At its top is a nearly eight story white marble spire which is used as a lookout post, a time keeping device (it serves as a massive sundial) and a place for observing the stars.

The building itself is the house of the beurocracy. The inner areas are for hearing the voices (or most likley, the complaints) of the citizenry.

Its shape is a architectural wonder, but unknwon to most people, it was built like this for magical reasons. The frescos and stained class built into its sides also are lines with many protection spells. This is the safest bulding besides Cindernost, and the giant strongholds, in the whole continent.

Below the floors are offfices. Below these are living areas for both dead and undead officials. Below these are restricted vaults and private meeting areas. Somewhere on this level the Death Clerics have their center of worship. Below even these are massive food and supply stores extending almost three stories downward. Below these are secret military bunkers. And finally, almost a mile down is a secret iron lined room with no entrace which stores the fourth soulsphere.

*Trade*

There is little that doesn't pass through its walls. You can bscially find anything here. Stone working is common. Unlike the other cities it is even possible to find religious and magical artifacts here, either found or created. The Grey Mages have a local headquarters here which sometimes teaches pupils.

*Races*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Humans | 80% |
| Aarakocra | 5% |
| Dragonborn | 5% |
| Misc races | 5% |
| Undead Margraves (Misc Races) | 5% |

#### Sverograd

Tall shattered guard spires lie empty above a thick ruined stone wall. Inside lies a medium sized city with a small shallow port.

From its inception a millitary city, they fought the initial giant invasion unlike the other cities and were completely destroyed. Undeterred, they greatly admired the Giant and Goliath martial prowess and became their closest human allies. Following their recent defeat in the war, they are starting to understand that the balance of power mgith have shifted in the area.

Sverograd is a city still under Basilian military rule. There is a cerfew in effect. Guards occasionally go missing. The undead investigators are especially active here and sometimes are forced to resort to harsh methods to quiet the rebellious populace.

At the same time, the city itself is split between those that think they should now side with the South, versus those who remain misguidedly faithful to the giants.

Both men and women are taught martial arms from a young age, but little else. Mages are very uncommon.

*Trade*

They have their own weapons supply chain from the hills surrounding the city, but it is nowhere at the scale of the Parintium. That being said, the quality is better, and if there were a master armorer or swordsmith, he would be here.

Races

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Human (Native) | 50% |
| Minotaur | 20% |
| Human (Southern Occupation) | 20% |
| Goliath | 9% |
| Undead Margraves (human) | 1% |

# D) The bog men of Telmasus

## Description

When the giants first exerted hegemony over Idrasia, some fought, some holed themselves up in fortresses. The peaceful rivermen hid in the thick marshes that grew near the coast. Safe from attack for the time being, the built their town while dealing with occassional giant attacks, internal strife and a constant battle with nature that came from living in a swamp.

The bog men are feircely independent, good hunters, trackers and trappers. All of them can swim and are knowledgeable in medicinal plants. They tend to use spears in combat with wooden sheilds, bound with hide. Metal is scarse and good weapons and armor prized in the bogs, especially ones ensorcelled to be rust resistant and several such items are owned by heads of households.

## Affiliation

Dragons.

## Naming Conventions

Also Byzantine.

## Interactions

#### With E:

Crucible is most similar in temperment to Telmasus along the west coast. However, Telmasus's constant struggle for survival they tend to be much more pragmatic. They focus on martial skills and the application of knowledge rather than art or performance.

When sorcerors from Crucible visit, it is usually for arcane supplies. Performers visit once or twice a year and it is always a festive occasion and a welcome break from the slog of everyday life.

#### With F:

The Tritons of the deeps shelf have in the past attempted to conquer the bogs of Telmasus, and the white bones of their warriors that one can still find in the muck of the swamps attests to their failure. There is quite a big of animostiy towards the tritons. Recently, Telmasian fisherman and tritons have come into conflict over fishing rights off the coast.

#### With H:

There didn't used to be much of a connection between the dragonborn and the Telmasians, but with recent developments in Basilia, the dragonborn have turned their attentions to the bog men. Some of it may be recognition of simmilar chaotic spirit. Other of it may be mutual abhorence for the undead direction that the kingdom has taken.

These discussions are still in their infancy, but may yeild something greater in time.

#### With K:

The khanate in recent years has expressed interest in Telmasus because of its knowledge of local plants. A small trade has grown up providing them with crushed petals, extracts and animal parts found in the bogs. Representatives from the Khanate are sometimes seen trying to get infromation from the medicine men and women with varying levels of success.

## Cities

#### Telmasus

The bog men have only one true city, Telmasus. It is a sprawling disorganized affair of rope bridges and planks extending over the ever prescent muck of the swamp. There are little laws, and the theives guild has found this place a great location for recruitment and as a base of operations, its relative seclusion being its only downside.

*Seat of Power*

Never one consolidated power, the men of Telmasus bicker among themselves, usually along family or racial lines. They tend to come to decisions fairly quickly for items of defense, but other things like intra family marrige, fishing rights, forestation and hunting allocations are a thornier issue.

Its a representative democracy, with weight given to the prestige of each individual family.

*Trade*

The city itself is located somewhat close to the shore, but the very shallow water prohibits any real sea trade. Larger ships from Basilia and the Goldwater Assembly have to dock offshore and transfer things to and from the city through smaller boats.

Trade includes animal skins, medicinal herbs, extracts and the prized deadwood, found only in the deepest mires, which has necromatic attributes needed for many spells.

Coming into the city comes grain, finished goods, luxuries, and metal items. A small amount of art is bought by the leading heads of house.

*Races*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Humans | 70% |
| Swamp Tritons | 20% |
| Swamp Minotaur | 10% |

*Swamp Tritons and Minotaur*

These somewhat distinct subraces have taken to identifying themselves alongside the bog-men. No one is sure when the division has happened, but the effects of hundreds of years of isolation are visible. The swamp tritons are brown green in color and hardier, their skin having bark like coverings on their forearms, shoulders and calves, at the cost of much reduced lifespan. They are also found out of the water more frequently.

The swamp minotaur have special oiled fur which stays waterproof. They can however, catch a fungus which attaches to their fur in green clumps, and causes it to fall out, leaving the hapless individual unable to enter the water.

These subraces, especially the tritons reject their ancestral heritage. In the past the tritons have fought against their deepwater relatives and in fact fights between the two nations states are usually started because of fishing conflicts.

Ponder: if it makes sense, the swamp tritons can be replaced/reskinned by lizzardfolk and the minotaur as reskinned Hobgoblins.

# E) The Crucible of Innovation

## Description

Usually just called Crucible, this peaceful fishing village on the side of a lake gained its identity following the arrival of strange sickness which broke out among the populace. It killed almost fifty percent of the inhabitants, but those remaining displayed much higher propensity for art, culture and magic. This gift comes at an additional cost though, its inhabitants, especially its brightest and most outspoken have a tendency to go completely insane.

Crucible extends on wooden stilts out on the cold but serene waters of a melt-water fed lake. The houses are mostly only one or two stories, with only the large gathering buildings being much higher than that.

Each person in crucible is responsible for himself. Small children cannot be found in crucible; those who were born in the city either do not speak of their childhood or cannot remember it. This includes building or finding shelter, finding and gathering food and so forth.

*Seat of Power*

The city is complete anarchy. It is not uncommon to simply have random people burst into uninvited into rooms. Despite this lack of laws, there seem to be very few crimes except those of madness, and in some bizarre situations, art. The thieves guild has obviously tried to send agents here. All of them have either abandoned their missions for simple lives of fishermen or painters, or for the more driven, gone completely mad.

The percentage of mages is much higher in crucible than anywhere else on the continent. Explosions happen frequently as experiments go awry.

*Secret Stuff*

Crucible is, as one might expect, the result of a very interesting and powerful fey deal gone horribly wrong (or right, depending on how you think about it). The villagers, terrified of encroaching giant armies called on a mysterious presence known to live in the lake (The Pale Lady).

This enigmatic entity granted their request by making them known as a city of madmen and crazed artists, hardly the cell of a resistance group worth attacking. She also drowned close to a thousand elite giant infantry when they tried crossing the lake in a surprise attack.

She, when she graces this plane of existence, lives among her citizens, or in a small but bizarrely fashioned cave on the north shore of the lake. The entrance is small and the clear water shows the bones of the men she has dealt with in the past.

She thrives off of creation, and desires nothing more in the world than to see new and interesting things created. Sometimes she forces a little too hard and people go insane.

Because of her unique goal, she is basically anti-giant, but only since their domination is dull and horrid, which reduce the innovation of their subjects.

*Call of the Fey*

You can visit crucible, but once you live there, you must stay forever. This unfortunate sideeffect of the pact made by the original inhabitants has to do with its wording. They defined themselves, their side in the pact as people who lived in the city. The pact is passed on by default then, anyone who lives in the city falls under its power.

Even visitors describe leaving it is difficult and always express some desire to return. Those that manage to do so usually never return to their homelands.

*Temposanire*

The only time the members of crucible are known to work together is in times of war or intense creation called Temposanire. These are actions directly instigated by the Fey herself. All members of crucible are called back during a Temposanire. All foreigners or visitors are all but forced to leave. Those that stay might be used as material for the ceremony of innovation.

These boughts of insanity can literally be anything, from burning down the town in crazed madness, to the group creation of a massively powerful artifact, or simple ritual murder. Regardless of the action, the people forget what happened after the event and clean up whatever materials, destruction or blood they need to and go on with what they were doing.

*The Faceless Artist*

Sometimes insanity can go too far. One particularly driven and motivated mage who was trained as an artist from birth figured out about the Pale Lady. Rather than destroy him, she let him make a separate deal with her. The details are not known, but he gained the ability to travel through art. When two songs are played in any city in the continent, or similar sculptures or paintings are made, he can move between them.

Of course, such an ability to consciously understand this distortion drove him completely mad. Desperate to please his new master, he engaged and still engages in a horrid spree of art inspired murder, with bodies integrated into rugs, frozen withing ice sculptures and so forth. He is wanted in every lawful city and even some unlawful ones. No one has quite put two and two together yet however.

## Affiliation

Fey.

## Naming Conventions

None.

## Interactions

#### With K:

The alchemists of the Khanate are very interested in the sorcery of the people of crucible; so much so that they have enlisted the help of the grey mages (and a great deal of coin) in creating a stable two way portal in a cave (not by the shore, in the mountain to the north) to an underground chamber in the High Alchemists yurt.

This allows for a great deal of collaboration between the two parties. However, have they unknowingly extended the hand of the Pale Lady? Why did all of the mages go mad after opening the portal? Why have the alchemists called for more and more bizarre ingredients in their potions and elixirs?

#### With I:

The sorcery of the people of crucible has not escaped the notice of the counsel of mages. After several teams were sent to determine the cause, and after most of the party had either gone mad, missing or lost their magical ability, they ceased their efforts.

#### With L:

The Members of the circle are not stupid. Unlike the Grey mages they retain their ancient magics. Unlike the giants, they care about the state of the world outside their own domain. They are fully aware of crucible's state, and try sometimes to either learn from it, or capture and dissect members to try to understand the Fey.

Because they are already graced with their own curse of insanity, they are mostly immune to the Fey's curse.

#### All over the Continent:

Members of Crucible can be found all over the continent, usually in three main types as seasonal performers, who operate circuses and plays, as wandering or mercantile sorcerers and enchanters, or as recluse researchers.

*Secret Stuff*

In all cases, they all retain their identity as members of crucible through some object which ties them to the city. For some it is simply nostalgia which they think brings them back. For the more powerful, the object has deeply disturbing arcane runes which forcibly drag the person back.

*Races*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Humans | 50% |
| Misc | 50% |

The Pale Lady seems to particularly like humans, but ensnares anyone she can. Crucible is then the most diverse city on the continent, or at least unfortunately tied with the slave pits of the Circle.

# F) The Deep Shelf

## Description

The Tritons have their own history, some they insist dates to before the giants and dragons even existed, back to when the world was formless and shapeless. Regardless, the tritons were once a united peoples. Some forgotten catclysm or war forced them apart. Some of them settled on the bottom of the ocean at incredible depths where light doesn't even shine.

These tritons are more like Sahuagin, twisted by the dark pressure and alien depths.

## Affiliation

Giant. The giants of old did them some service, perhaps separating them from their enemies by accident when they created the walls that separated the continents. Since then the Tritons have been loyal followers.

## Naming Conventions

Hebrew

## Cities

#### The Undercity of Seph

Down further than than any other mortal could survive, there is a thriving city in the darkness. Covered with strange and bio illuminated skins of skinned fish, the glowing city is located in a deep chasm. The buildings themselves are more like cave like formations carved in the rock.

Because of its unique position, few non-tritons have ever seen it, although some know it by name in passing. Mages are the only individuals who can dare descend to its depths, and perhaps one or two people attempt it a year. The survivors are tight lipped about the specifics, but from what they will tell, the Tritons are actually quite hospitable to foreigners who manage to reach their city.

*Seat of Power*

Who knows...

*Trade*

The tritons are obviously master fishermen, and can accomplish in a day what it takes a full ship a week to do. They trade with land walkers occasionally, but often come to conflict over fishing rights.

They have a small but dedicated crafting group which combines coral, undersea volcanic silicia from vents and bone to create a variety of interesting and horrifyingly organic pieces of art. For the tritons, these pieces blur the line between religious, arcane and aesthetic.

*Races*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Tritons | 80% |
| Deep Tritons (sightless elite) | 20% |

*Deep Tritons*

Down this deep, eyesight is useless and the tritons who live down here permanently are sightless. Instead they “see” through gradients of pressure in the water around them (similar to tremor-sense)

In the very rare cases these sightless creature venture to the surface, for instance in times of war, large trade deals or negotiations, they wear blindfolds of black silk with arcane rune eyes of seeing on them.

# G) The Despotism of Arkastroza

## Description

Following the schism between Giants, the Arkastrozans have helped the lesser races who still look to them for guidance. This is no easy task. The goliaths are warlike and seemingly oblivious of social niciety, the humans are greedy and at the same time constantly fearful, the plainsmen who sided with them are constantly at odds with their Markarskan brethren to the east.

Through this all, the giants have to only exert their own power to what they consider to be a respectful degree. To the cloud rulers of Arkastroza, the world is a thing to structure, the lesser races are chaotic desperate flashes of life that must be aligned with the greater structure of the ordered universe.

The war for the Arkastrozans was a horrible affair, a decision that the regret completely. In all situations, they prefer negotiations to fighting, the former being much more productive and orderly. The despair for the falling of the walls, and see their collapse as an almost personal failure, even though fractured and reduced they no longer had the power to keep them up.

They consider themselves to be the offshoot most aligned with the goals of their forefathers who fought the dragons in an attempt to bring order to the world. They regard the isolationist and cruel Markarskans as at best misguided, and at worst, treasonous, although they would never admit so in person.

So they push and pull, usually in the shadows if they can help it, attempting to still shape the increasingly chaotic world around them in what more and more seems like a futile attempt to realize their vision of an ordered world.

*Noskov Anatol Kazimir: The Solemn Defender*

The giants of Arkastroza have been ruled over for centuries by the same individual, Kazimir. Kazimir is a now subdued cloud giant, who at one time, through sheer personal charisma, force of will, and an almost fanatical devotion to the order of creation, gained the trust of the giants on the continent.

Yet as he became older, and as he saw the effects that giant subjugation was having on the populace, he spoke out against the ruling storm giants. For this, he was named traitor. Enraged, he met his accuser, the leader of the storm giants of Markarska in one on one combat.

During this almost day long fight between the two combatants, Kazimir actually managed to defeat and kill his superior. The cloud giants who had sided with him were set to escalate the action into a full on coup against the Ordning, but Kazimir forbade it. Ashamed and regretful of his actions, seeing that he succeeded in only fracturing the giants further, he and his splinter retreated to their fortress on Mount Azar where they were later joined by like minded giants of all types.

He has a personal friendship with the leader of the ice paladins.

Now centuries old, he looks out over a world increasingly slipping out of his grasp. He finds it harder to overturn the more forceful views of his youngers, especially the storm giants, who argue (never to his face) that they supersede him and the goliaths.

*The War*

No where is this more obvious than the recent war, which was instigated through goliath, human and lower ranking giant efforts, especially those of the warlike city Sverograd. Against his better judgement Kazimir allowed giant backing.

## Affiliation

Themselves.

## Naming Conventions

Russian and eastern european

## Cities

#### Orerbash

*Description*

Mt. Azar is an extinct volcano that was once, in time immemorial, a dragon's lair. On its slopes there are two cities. The city of the lesser races is Orerbash. It has large stone walls, constructed by the goliaths, but lacks the splendor of Palinteos. It is constructed of a grey blue stone which seems to never be quite exposed to the sun, and is cold even on warm days.

The buildings of the city are massive slab buildings mined out of the mountain side. Behind and around the city are mines that lead deeper into the mountain and its foot hills.

*Seat of Power*

The Goliaths take as leader only the strongest, most charismatic and most intellegent of themselves. Typically, this results in a good candidate, however, the last leader proved to be a bit too honor-seeking for his own good.

It is common for the Goliaths to take counsel with the Giants even for domestic matters. They view themselves as allies in a common goal.

*Trade*

Orerbash's trade is in mining. Mostly its mines are stone mines, and it exports gems, cut slabs and stone trinkets. Although the Goliaths revel in conflict, their weapons tend to be crude. After all, it is the man wielding the weapon that matters, not the weapon itself.

*Races*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Goliaths | 55% |
| Minotaur | 20% |
| Humans (Mostly farmers, but some soliders) | 20% |
| Lesser Giants | 4% |
| Earth Genasi | 1% |

### The Unstopable Citadel of Vayelsk

*Description*

A holdover from the war against the dragons, Vayelsk is a solid monolith ripped from some god-forsaken crag and set into motion through a forgotten mixture of arcane and mechanical means. Because of its experimental movement system and massive shielding it remains afloat, even after the Windwalker plunged the rest of them to the ground.

Being literally carved from a single stone, Vayelsk is the smallest of the floating giant holds being only the size of a city block. It was never meant to be a city, and has little actual living space in it.

However, what it lacks in facilities and niceties it makes up in firepower. Vayelsk was constructed to explicitly take punishing amounts of magical damage, and return the favor. It is responsible for the destruction of Mt. Azar and several other dragon strongholds. Only Cindernost could stand before its might.

In a more concrete sense, its defense systems include many mundane siege weapons but also turrets of chain lightening and several batteries of disintegration. The most powerful of its weapons though is a hideous artifact made at the height of the war. It is essentially a disintegration beam, but of unique creation which enables it a range of miles and the ability to blast holes through magic enhanced rock with ease.

It sits right now floating above Mt. Azar, a reminder of the leniency that the Arkastroza giants afford the world.

*Seat of Power*

Only the highest circle of giants (in both Arkastroza and Markarska) have even an inkling of how to operate the fortress, and Kazimir makes sure that its ignition system key (a physical object) stays on his person at all times. He does not mean to use the fortress unless forced to.

*Races*

Although no one lives in the fortress full time, a contingency of storm and cloud giants remain on alert inside it at all times.

#### Arkastroza

*Description*

High of the face of Mt. Azar lies Arkastroza, city of the clouds. Lightening storms and snow storms are common here. The giants of Arkastroza are typically a somber lot as if the weather reflects their mood or perhaps vice versa.

The city is made from simple stone. There is not much in the way of decoration. What makes Arkastroza remarkable is the attention to its architecture. Every brick is press fit perfectly in line with one another. None of the buildings or even the streets have cracks or imperfections. Stone lies from floor to ceiling. It is a cold yet ordered place, indicative of the Arkastrozan giant's vision for the world.

At its center lies a fountain which spews ice cold water, even when the weather is below freezing.

The city has no walls, nor even any defenses besides the giants who live in it and the sheer cliffs of Mt. Azar itself.

If the giants of Markarska are cruel wizards, experimenting in their twisted labs, the giants of Arkastroza are grave artificers and smiths. The Markarskans can claim to be able to make many wondrous items, unparalleled on the continent, but the Arkastrozans make the best weapons and armor.

*Seat of Power*

Kazimir rules the giants by himself. Although he often counsels with the higher giants, and particular annoying collections of vocal lower rank ones, he is in full control of the Arkastrozans at all times.

*Races*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Cloud Giants | 50% |
| Fog Giants | 20% |
| Stone Giants | 15% |
| Storm Giants | 10% |
| Chosen Individuals (Misc lesser races) | 5% |

*Chosen Individuals*

The giants of Arkastroza honor those who do especially well in their service or impress them in feats of intelligence or battle. This can even extend to enemies, provided that the person is at least honorable and not directly affiliated with the dragons.

It is not rare to see dwarven artificers in the forges of Arkastroza, nor heavily armored Minotaur sparing with stone giants. Ice paladins are common visitors and some stay, meditating on the frigid crags of the moutain.

These lesser races are assumed to stay to themselves mostly (and not to make too much of a nuisance). The ability to visit the city is an honor. The ability to live there is even higher still.

# H) The Invincible Fortress of Cindernost

## Description

When the dragons of Idrasia realized that they were destined to lose the war with the giants, they collected at Mt. Azar and Hoarfell Peak. There there built two massive fortresses. Cindernost was the greater of the two by far. When the lair at Mt. Azar fell to Vayelsk's weapons, cindernost was next in line. Fortunately, the giants decided to regroup before pressing on. This allowed the dragons and their allies the time to prepare.

They opened the earth beneath the formerly frigid Hoarfell Peak and fire filled the sky for days. From this heart stone they shaped Cindernost, interleaving the folds of cooling lava with the strongest runes they could create.

The result was fearsome and effective. Three times the giants fired the full power of Vayelsk and attacked in full onto Cindernost's walls, and three times, the incredible beam was withstood by the defenses, resulting in the worst casualties of the war which prompted the giant's acceptance of peace soon afterward.

Visually, what is left of Hoarfell peak rises clouded in a permentnt cloud of soot and noxious gasses from the earth's center. The volcano remains active, even after decades of peace and beneath the heavy clouds of darkness that endlessly obscure the mountain, it is possible to see streaks of flaring red, a reminder that the legacy of the dragons is far from gone.

The fortress is built into the top third of the mountain, half formed from the living earth in concentric circles of organic looking stone. The only part of the fortress visible form the outside are the magically reinforced walls. However inside is a massive warren of underground tunnels, obviously large enough to sustain a large dragon population.

Beneath the fortress is one entrance to the underground.

*Hoarfell Peak and surroundings*

The still active volcano frequently spews massive tides of burning lava down its slopes, much to the great ire of the Firbolg in the pass to the east and even to their once allies, the Basilians. Miles of country side surrounding the peak are completely barren, a treeless animal-less wasteland. What the dragons created was truly a deathly place, and it remains the second most inhospitable place on Idrasia after the death zone.

*Current Cindernost*

Although the dragons have long retreated into the twisting warrens of the underdark, their spawn, the dragonborn continue their legacy in Cindernost. Cindernost for a time was the only place on Idrasia besides the circle to remain unconquered. Because of this legacy, it has attracted a very diverse collection of refugees from the war who have since put down roots in the dark chambers of the fortress alongside the dragonborn.

## Affiliation

The dragons.

## Naming Conventions

Viking. The word cindernost and its suffix -nost are a Russian construction, but hell, the Russians were originally Norsemen (Kievan Rus) so I'll let it slide because I think it sounds cool.

## Cities

#### Cindernost and nearby tunnels

*Seat of Power*

When the dragons left, they did so hurriedly. With the time they had, they sealed the worst of their weapons in inaccessible places in the stone of the fortress, and gave knowledge of some of the weaker weapons and arts to the dragonborn.

In addition to weapons, they gave the dragonborn laws and a philosophical codex which guides their decisions to this day.

The dragonborn rule themselves via a counsel, usually headed by the oldest and wisest member of the clan.

However, the dragonborn also have to contend with the other races living in the fortress. To this end, every week there is a large gathering of all the races in one of the larger underground chambers where the representatives discuss, and sometimes argue for hours, about the affairs of Cindernost and the world.

In short, its a representative democracy, but with each representative chosen by the race's own methods. Amid the larger gathering, weight is given to each vote by population, with the dragons holding a veto over all actions.

*Trade*

One of the most valuable goods that the dragonborn have is their knowledge given to them by the dragons. It is common to see at least one dragonborn adviser even in not strictly dragon aligned nations.

Set in a mountain, Cindernost produces the second best weapons and armor next to Arkastroza but relatively little of it gets outside the fortress and even less is used. The armor produced in Cindernost is instantly recognizable because of its matte black finish. Those who would rather remain more politically neutral are unable to use it.

The dragonborn maintain a trade with the other denizens of the underdark, but only they know what trade that entails.

*Races*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Dragonborn | 30% |
| Dwarves | 20% |
| Kobolds | 20% |
| Earth Genasi | 10% |
| Fire Genasi | 10% |
| Minotaur | 5% |
| Human | 5% |

The humans of cindernost are dark skinned, with black hair and pale red eyes. They have trouble seeing in bright sunlight, a result of living underground, but are slightly more resistant to heat, and can see better in the dark. The other humans of the continent are wary of them because of their strange appearance.

# I) The Grey Mages

## Description

They grey mages are a group of powerful arcane magic users. They specialize in spells and enchantments that affect the flow of time and position. They are primarily known for providing logistics to other nations by opening semi-stable portals across Idrasia. However, the mages are really only important in their own research. Therefore, the price of their contracts is frequently astronomical.

With the introduction of airships, the mages have found themselves in a logistics war with the Goldwater Assemblage.

Visually a grey mage is instantly identifiable through his pale grey cloak and typical aloof mannerisms. The counsel will agree to train any initiate who wants to join, but the process is not an easy one. It typically takes five years even with previous magical experience. At the end of it, the initiate is allowed to call himself a grey mage. All associations with their previous life are assumed to be null at this point. Whoever they were in the past, they are now simply another grey mage.

*Lore*

The grey mages were founded in the last few years of the dragon-giant conflict when their founder Tiberia Aquilius, a mage of only middling power discovered a book of great power amid a crashed sky fortress.

Although the book was only one of a volume, it contained enough information to set the young wizard's mind in motion. Obsessed with finding the secrets of the universe, she worked night and day in seclusion on the end of a deserted stretch of peninsula.

As her work grew more and more powerful, she indirectly became a destination for other mages, tired of the conflict. Together, the combined their resources and created the Grey Mages, an organization solely for the study of the world.

It wasn't long before their work attracted the eyes of both the giants and dragons. But by then, the war was ending and Tiberia made it clear she didn't intend to join either side. Still, agents of both sides tried to spy on her research, apprentices annoyed her with inane questions, and the secret of the world and time still eluded her.

So, one night, on the roof of her laboratory, she carved an incredibly complicated hundred foot magic circle into the ground and disappeared with the original codex she had found. She has not been seen since then. The purpose and exact design of the circle is still unknown, however, a grey orb the size of a small house appeared over the circle and is still there to this day.

The apprentices, dismayed at losing their master, did their best to formalize what Tiberia had taught them and enshrined their master's last act in the form of a grey tower overlooking their haphazard camp. From that day on, the counsel has tried to understand the ritual Tiberia discovered and unlock the secrets of the universe.

Their organization has since grown into thousands strong, and is rich beyond belief, their small camp having turned into a veritable city. After so many years, some wonder whether it is worth pursuing such esoteric and risky work.

## Affiliation

Independent. True to their name, the grey mages have never taken part on any side of any conflict. Why would they, when they can supply to both sides?

## Naming Conventions

Roman.

## Interactions

#### With A:

The giants of Markarska know exactly what book Tiberia found, but have similarly been unable to replicate her success, to their great annoyance.

Because they are indirectly responsible for the creation of the mages, and because the two groups share a somewhat similar goal in research, the two groups talk once or twice a year, but cards are always held close to the chest on both sides.

The Mages worry that the giants, afraid or jelous of their work will interfere with them. The giants, somewhat embarrassed that they cannot replicate derivative work *do* interfere in small ways with the mages, if only out of spite.

#### With J:

The motley Goldwater Assemblage has much to owe the mages, and in fact some of their first and most important contracts to this day remain supplying the research juggernaut of Tempus with alchemical and arcane ingredients.

However, the relations between these two once closely aligned nations has recently soured. With the introduction of airships, which the Assemblage now uses frequently, the primary income source of the mages, their teleportation abilities has been lessened drastically. Airships are cheaper than the exorbitant fees the mages used to charge.

Always neutral, the counsel of mages has made no concerted effort against the Assemblage, yet important documents, artifacts and small amounts of gold have been known to simply disappear at times withing the Assemblage.

#### With L:

Many of the princes of the circle also conduct their own research. It is not unheard of to find mages at the Canticle or princes in Tempus. The power of the princes, and their immortal knowledge is always tempting, and if the twisted morality of the circle has ever bothered the mages, they keep quiet about it.

The secrets of immortality were never what the grey mages intended to find, yet the circle's ability to live forever starts seeming more and more advantageous as individual grey mages grow older. If grey mages have made some sort of deal with the circle in the past, allowing them to pursue their research infinitely, they have done so in secret.

## Cities

#### Tempus

*Description*

The headquarters of the Grey Mages, Tempus is less a city than one large university with hundred of buildings and shops springing up around it.

The city sits at the end of a long peninsular, where the land is ill suited for farming. The mages specifically chose this place for its seclusion. Large sea walls of grey stone have been risen to defend against the elements but the city itself have no walls.

The city is centered around a large spire in its middle. This is the remains of Tiberia's laboratory, and at its top hangs the erie and supernatural grey ball of power she left when she disappeared.

Perhaps because of the vast strain on the sources of magic here, the city and the weather near this town have taken on the characteristics of the mages themselves. The wind is calm; it is always overcast yet only drizzles when it rains; the sun is never seen, and only alternates between dull grey day and pale lit night. The whole city smells of alchemical and arcane ingredients.

Not all people who live in Tempus belong to the counsel. In fact only about sixty percent of the city is actually an affiliated mage; the others are suppliers, visitors from other nations, merchants, and common-folk.

*Seat of Power*

The Mages ostensibly are ruled by their counsel. However, in reality the Counsel is headed by the remaining apprentices of Tiberia who have the most wisdom and skill in the arcane arts. They come to decisions among themselves and typically, the rest of the counsel follows that decision.

Below the high counsel though, individuals jostle for power quite literally, the most versed and gifted mages attract both the respect and jealousy of their peers. The creation of a new spell or discovery of an artifact would have great effect on the social status of a mage.

*Trade*

The city requires a massive amount of alchemical supplies, most of which it gets through contracts with the Assemblage.

In the other direction, the mages use their skills at teleportation to move armies, strike teams (assassins), large shipments and even whole ships if requested.

*Races*

Although originally mostly human, the inclusiveness of the mages, (actually their disregard for anything other than knowledge) means that Tempus is perhaps a surprisingly diverse place for such a drab town.

That being said the counsel of mages recognizes that dragonborn and goliaths are in some sense a proxy for their greater races, and their admission to the counsel is much harder, although not impossible provided they suitably agree to abandon their racial agenda. For such admittances, their initiation is usually conducted by a member of the “opposing” side.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Misc Other races | 35% |
| Humans | 30% |
| Water Genasi | 10% |
| Wind Genasi | 10% |
| Tritons | 10% |
| Fire Genasi | 5% |

If the Yuan-Ti are cannon, they would be found here.

## Grey Mage

Grey Mages are a specialized type of wizard whose skills focus on bending time and space (Mostly Conjuration and Abjuration). Ever searching for hints at the true nature of the universe, they spend years in training and research.

If they became a mage after already being a magic user, they are discouraged from using spells unavailable to regular grey mages (see below). Evocation spells in particular are seen as disgustingly uncivilized. As part of the final initiation ceremony grey mages have a geas placed on them that allows the counsel to know about the use of such spells (but interestingly enough does not forbid their casting) Use of such spells at first is met with a warning, further use might see the mage banished and his robe stripped from him, regardless of the situation.

Grey mages never wear armor and are loath to get involved in any conflict. If directly attacked, they can defend themselves with an array of time and space related spells.

These restrictions may have been placed upon themselves as a kind of honor towards their neutrality and their focus on research over worldly goals. However, it might have been as part of some forgotten deal with the giants in exchange for more knowledge.

#### Special Mechanics

The spells with a \* below are particularly suited for grey mages. Mechanically it might mean they're easier to cast (no components?) or even that they get these spells at lower levels.

Teleportation spells \*\* are their direct focus:

*Misty Step, Dimension Door, Teleportation Circle, Arcane Gate, Teleport*

A grey mage can cast these spells as a ritual with some large casting time (1hr?). If the mage casts these spells in this manner, their effective range is increased by a multiplier of 4x caster level. Furthermore if there are more grey mages contributing to the ritual, their effective ranges add.

For instance, a 3rd level grey mage can cast misty step (ritual, not bonus action) and move 3x4x60=720 ft.

Another example, if two level 11 mages cast Arcane Gate, the range is (11x4x500)x2=44000 feet or about 8 miles.

Through these examples you can see why it would be beneficial to have as many people helping with the spell as possible and why the creation of a counsel was beneficial. Given large groups, the grey mages can place portals or teleport to any place in Idrasia.

For lore's sake, they cannot teleport through the barriers that the giants placed, although they might have studied them (Wall of force is an allowed spell ;) )

#### Allowed Spells

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Cantrips** | Counterspell | Guards and wards |
| Blade Ward | Dispel Magic | Programmed Illusion |
| Dancing Lights | Fly \* | True Seeing |
| Light | Gaseous Form | **7th Level** |
| Mage Hand | Haste \* | Etherealness |
| Mending | Magic Circle | Forcecage |
| Minor Illusion | Major Image | Mirage Arcane |
| Prestidigitation | Nondetection \* | Plane Shift \* |
| True Strike | Sending | Project Image |
| **1st Level** | Slow \* | Reverse Gravity \* |
| Alarm | Tongues | Sequester \* |
| Comprehend Languages | Water Breathing | Teleport \*\* |
| Disguise Self | **4th level** | **8th Level** |
| Expeditious Retreat \* | Arcane Eye | Antimagic Field |
| Feather Fall | Banishment \* | Demiplane \* |
| Identitfy \* | Dimension Door \*\* | Maze |
| Illusory Script | Fabricate \* | Power Word Stun |
| Jump \* | Greater Invisibility | Telepathy |
| Longstrider \* | Hallucinatory Terrain | **9th Level** |
| Sheild | Leomund's Secret Chest | Astral projection |
| Protection from G & E | Mordenkainen's Private Sanctum | Foresight |
| Silent Image | Otiluke's Resilient Sphere | Gate \* |
| Sleep | Polymorph | Imprisonment |
| Tenser's Floating Disk | **5th Level** | Time Stop \* |
| Unseen Servant | Contact Other Plane \* | Wish |
| **2nd Level** | Creation \* | True Polymorph |
| Alter Self | Dream |  |
| Arcane Lock | Geas |  |
| Blur \* | Hold Monster \* |  |
| Darkness | Legend Lore |  |
| Darkvision | Mislead |  |
| Enlarge/Reduce \* | Planar Binding \* |  |
| Hold Person \* | Rary's Telepathic Bond |  |
| Invisibility | Telekinesis |  |
| Levitate | Teleportation Circle \*\* |  |
| Locate Object | Wall of Force |  |
| Mirror Image | **6th Level** |  |
| Misty Step \*\* | Arcane Gate \*\* |  |
| See Invisibility | Contingency |  |
| **3rd Level** | Disintegrate |  |
| Blink \* |  |  |

# J) The Goldwater Assemblage

## Description

Formed from the shores of several small fishing villages, the assemblage first came into being by supplying the grey counsel of mages with alchemical supplies from the Khanate.

Since then they have expanded forcibly into almost every trade route on the continent, although their specialty remains sea voyages.

#### The assemblage

While the internal runnings of the cities are decided by whatever merchant families happen to live there, external politics is a direct democracy for all citizens\*. Physically, the assemblage meets in a cyclopean stadium in the heart of Vebiera.

The speaker, a rotational position is responsible for directing discussion, but often finds the chorus of shouting voices too much to control. The speakership is supposed to be a big honor, especially if a new citizen is appointed it, but in actuality all citizens dread being called because of the stress of trying to control tens of thousands of people.

Most Assemblages start with a hearty bout of yelling, typically about trade deals. After an hour though, when everyone's voices have given out, the talk then turns to more pressing matters.

The assembly meets every week on Monday, but most citizens never show up at all. Those that do rarely go to two in a row.

All votes must achieve 50% in order to pass a resolution. Voting procedure varies and one can vote on voting type.

Resolutions are written out by a scribe and nailed to the town boards. In actuality though, since enforcement is up to the local families, they typically only enforce the ones that they have some stake in.

Foreign dignitaries hate the assemblage. It is the cause of several abandonments of position. The worst was a three hour long discussion turned screaming match between a representative of the kingdom of Bascilia and a very ornate citizen who stood to lose thousands of gold if the assemblage sided with the kingdom.

Some disagreements turn into duels, which are legal in all places in the assemblage. But fighting within the stadium is generally considered poor form, and all parties will be thrown out by the guards, unless of course, they started it. Then its anyone's game.

\*You must at least be nominally part of an existing merchant family or do a specific amount of trade (10,000 Gp) a year to gain citizenship. Citizenship gets you better protection under the law, better trade deals, and a say in the assemblage. You can be a foreigner, you can be any race; they don't care as long as you're not a Triton or perhaps undead.

## Affiliation

Somewhat towards the dragons, but usually only financially.

### Naming Conventions

Italian and croatian.

## Interactions and Trade

#### With A:

* 1. Although the assemblage is theoretically a dragon siding faction, they know money when they see it. The Markarskans give good gold for raw materials and the assemblage is only too happy to provide. In return they get dried meat, skins and hides, and very rarely magical items.

#### With C:

* 1. The assemblage backed the Basilians in their war but were disturbed by their recent turn towards the undead. They still engage in large amounts of trade with the kingdom, but perhaps are not quite as enthusiastic about it as they were before.

#### With D:

* 1. Some of their best supplies come from Telmasus. They bring in finished goods and get in return wood, exotic wood, beast skins and unrefined alchemical supplies.

#### With F:

* 1. They maintain a neutral interaction with the deep tritons. Their ships have to pay a tax to cross their waters though, which irks the merchants to no end.

#### With G:

* 1. They broke off trade with the giants of Arkastroza during the war. Now though, its back on, although usually only in small amounts. Raw ore in and out. Weapons and armor out.

#### With K:

* 1. The Khanate is one of their best partners. To them they provide raw material that get made into alchemical and arcane supplies. They also trade mercenaries and horses. The two factions have recently been in secret talks about reducing the influence of the shallow tritons following their encroachment on both of their lands.

#### With L:

* 1. Money is money. Although most of the merchant families claim certain moral boundaries, most in actuality do at least some form or trade with the Circle. The worst will trade slaves to the princes in return for magical items and massive amounts of gold. This is accomplished mostly through the use of airships which try to thread the needle between Khanate land (the Khanate is not happy about any deal with the Circle) and the death zone.

#### With M:

* 1. If the main conflict in Idrasia is the one between the Kingdom of Basilia and the Northerners, a close second might be the newer one between the Goldwater Assemblage and the Wavebringers (The shallow tritons)
  2. What started as simple misunderstandings about fishing rights has, in the last several years turned to piracy and sometimes outright raids on both sides. A short but violent retribution against the destruction of one waverbringer village saw the tritons actually take land on the peninsula, cutting land ties with the mages of Tempus.
  3. Ever practical, the mages simply set up a portal and ignored the whole conflict, but the incident continues to infuriate the Assemblage. Unlike the conflict between the kingdom and the Northerners, this one is about fifty percent economic and fifty percent good old racism.

#### With the Thieves Guild:

* 1. The collapse of the walls was met with much rejoicing among the trading families of the assemblage. The first thing they did was learn about and invite the theives guild into their cities, not because they are unlawful (far from it in fact) but because they really, really wanted access to airships.
  2. However, has the collapse of the barriers been a strictly good thing? On one hand, airships are now seen floating over the assemblage. On the other hand, such increased trade has exposed the families of the goldwater to competition from other continents. Who will come out ahead is still yet to be known.

## Cities

#### Vebiera

* 1. *Description*
  2. The trade hub for the whole west coast of Idrasia, this booming town sees hundreds of ships a week, now both airship and mundane ones.
  3. Located high on the cliffs above a protected bay, the city also serves as the capital for the Goldwater Assemblage. With this means that it is also the most heavily decorated city with many fountains and statues, although visiters who have also seen Olyntheos say most of it is nothing more than a jumbled collection of copycat unrefined greed.
  4. Most families have their headquarters here, and most buildings are made of stone, which is seen to be a great luxury.
  5. There is a permanent portal to Varevento operated by the Grey Mages (They charge a fair sum, even for simple travelers, and most make the journey on foot)
  6. *Seat of Power*
  7. The city's rules are enforced and funded by the families who live here. Disagreements among the families about city policy are seen as internal conflicts and *usually* don't spill outside the city if both sides can help it
  8. *Races*
  9. Vebeira is often the first place a foreign traveler will land. The city is amazingly diverse, with the exception of tritons, who are dragged outside the city if they are found.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Humans | 50% |
| Misc other Races (except tritons) | 50% |

#### Varevento

* 1. *Description*
  2. Of a much different style from Vebiera, Varevento is a sprawling unplanned monstrosity. It has since outgrown its simple life as a fishing village and instead turning into the foci for trade in the north.

Varevento is a maze of small one to two story wooden buildings. The roads are unpaved, and the whole place smells like fish. There is an inescapable multitude of people, almost all of them very poor, scraping against one another to get by.

Disease is frequent and deadly. It is common to simply throw the bodies into the ocean, a practice that always causes conflict with the waverbringers, who have begun to retaliate by hurling their own dead at the land sometimes.

Those families that historically have lived here still remain but have moved themselves out of the toxic sprawl onto much better ground slightly above the city, where they live in proper stone mansions.

* 2. *Seat of Power*
  3. The city's rules are enforced and funded by the families who live here. Disagreements among the families about city policy are seen as internal conflicts and *usually* don't spill outside the city if both sides can help it.
  4. *Races*
  5. Varevento is often the first place a foreign traveler will land. The city is amazingly diverse, with the exception of tritons, who are confined to a separate ghetto in the shallows nearby the city.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Misc other Races | 60% |
| Humans | 30% |
| Tritons (Some have been here for a while) | 10% |

# K) The Atabalwan Khanate

## Description

By own legend, the people of the khanate believe that they originated from a large slave revolt that happened beneath the Canticle of the immortal circle at some vague time in the past. Freed from their slave pits, the group lost members in their escape, but heroically made it to the shore with no food or water left, and only a hundred men and women left.

Their leader, a man supposedly named Atabalos, declared eternal war against the Circle for their evil actions.

Regardless of true origin, the Khanate has stayed true to their pledge, although by far the newest true nation they have indeed waged war against both the circle and the death zone itself for nearly a century.

The people of the Khanate exceed at two things, warfare, especially mounted warfare, and alchemy. They are the most active people at the edge of the death zone, and have reportedly even come up with a way to nullify the powers of the zone in small quantities using a mixture of arcane and alchemical methods.

Using this weapon, they have plunged into the very heart of the death zone, leaving piles of burnt undead, abominations and their own casualties to bake in the sun of the caustic dead land.

Very recently though, and at no warning, the Wavebringers took one of the khatate's cities, prompting a sudden and alarming stalemate with the circle.

Even now, the Khan plans to retake the city, and is talking with the Goldwater Assemblage as to a possible alliance against the wavebringers.

## Affiliation

Perhaps a small amount towards the dragons, if only because they sympathize with the other lesser races against the long hegemony of the giants. At the same time, they are impressed with the giant's ability at war and strength of arms.

## Naming Conventions

Chinese and Mongolian

## Cities

#### Sinyong

*Description*

Capitol of the Khanate, the focus of this city is on alchemy. This is a medium sized city comprising some wooden and stone buildings, but mostly made from traditional yurts, from a time when the khanate citizens had to move around to follow the few animals on the peninsula.

Alchemy is traditionally performed underground, in dirt rather than stone, and with as expensive ingreients as one can acquire. The spoke of a hundred fires, some in strange colors and smells can be seen coming from sinyong

*Seat of Power*

The Khan rules the whole Khanate, appointed by the leaders of the great houses. Individual cities are overseen by appointees of the Khan, usually members of a great house. Sometimes, if one appointee is getting too independent the Khan will move his jurisdiction, typically to that of a city that has a rival house in it.

*Trade*

Potions, salves, alchemists fire, and so forth are are made here, as well as the secret alchemical reagent that allows for defeat of the death zone.

Huge amounts of ingredients pour into this city, mostly from Dongzhao, the major port in the area. In return the end results of their alchemy are sold aboard which finances their war against the circle.

*Race*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Minotaur | 70% |
| Misc other races | 20% |
| Human | 10% |

#### Dongzhao

*Description*

Located purposefully at the site of a very good natural harbor, Donzhao is the life link between the khanate and the rest of the civilized world, at least until they can get more airship captains to agree to fly over the death zone or around it.

The city itself is small, and the port might be equal size to the city. The houses and shops and walls are made of wood. Only the administration building is of stone construction.

*Race*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Minotaur | 50% |
| Human (Merchants and farmers) | 20% |
| Misc other races | 25% |
| Tritons (Here before the attack, theoretically unaffiliated with the waverbringers politically) | 5% |

#### Shaarvi

*Description*

The only good undead is one that has died twice, thus say the cavalry of Shaarvi, the forward operating base of the Khanate. From this large earthen and wooden fort they launch attacks into the death zone at the circle.

Behind it, the land is slowly returning to normal after untold millennia scorched by the magic of the death zone.

Even with their warlike nature and masterful logistics, the khanate sometimes bites off more than it can chew, especially when one of the princes decides he or she wants to put up a proper fight with the khanate. Because of this, there are many mercenaries who hang around the city waiting for work. Usually they don't have to wait long. As an added bonus, the profession is actually somewhat less deadly here, the potions of the khanate can restore one, provided that one isn't captured and tortured endlessly by the princes.

*Race*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Minotaur | 75% |
| Human ( Mercenaries and farmers) | 20% |
| Aarakokra (Mercenaries) | 5% |

# L) The Silver Circle of the Immortals

## Description

Tasked by unknown masters to guard the Canticle, and gifted with the tools of immortality to do so, the once proud and noble druids have long, long fallen into evil. They have abused their gift, using their immortality to acquire massive wealth, and have enslaved many of the lesser races.

Their deception came at a cost though, perhaps inflicted upon them by some deity, every time they preform their now polluted ritual, they lose a bit of their sanity.

Having been reduced to madness, they have become unspeakably horrifying masters or their own fractious towers of slavery, excess and ritual murder. An outsider forced to gaze upon the broken circle might find it hard to decide which the more pathetic, the avarice of the squabbling princes, the cries of their teams of slaves or the war-chants of their bodyguards as they launched themselves into meaningless bloody slaughter.

Although the lesser princes range far and wide when not needed at home, looking for more bodyguards and talented people to serve their masters, the platinum might not be worth it. Under their fickle gaze, a visitor might find it hard to leave, and the line between adviser or bodyguard and slave thinner every day.

Physically, the circle is in fact a circle in the middle of the death zone. Despite being well inside even the inner layer, it is actually a paradise of sweet smelling flowers, luscious fruit trees and meandering streams. It would be hard to believe a collection of evil could live in such a place. When any nature is destroyed due to infighting, it is repaired the following night magically via the implicit magic of the circle.

At the center of the circle is the Solid Canticle, a wavering not quite physical building made out of solid sound. No one but the archprinces is allowed to ascend to its top and it is there where they perform the ritual, with the human sacrifice being an addition added later, and thus has to happen around, rather than in the central tower.

The arch princes did not build the tower, but are merely guardians of it.

#### Heirarchy

*Archprinces (Chaotic Evil)*

There are only six of these. They each control their own tower and they each are irrevocably and completely mad. Most are hated and feared even within their own tower, which they theoretically control. They are masters of both divine and arcane magic, and are on the same power level as demigods in regular D&D. They could incinerate armies by themselves, raise small mountains, cast the highest level spells and engage planar entities in combat if those elements existed in our world.

However, they are not all knowing, they are not all seeing, and they do not always make rational decisions. Unlike the fey who pursue some sort of goal, the only purpose of the archprinces seems to be, to continue their own existence, and to bask in the suffering of others.

Because all of them must be present to perform the ritual, and because they have fallen to hedonism, the only place on the continent that they are usually found is their own towers.

If they do leave their towers, everyone would know, whether they wanted to or not.

*Princes (Neutral Evil)*

For all intents and purposes, the archprinces cannot be factored into any plans, they are an almost elemental unstoppable force of chaos. Ironically because of this, no one, not even the large nations worries about them much. The princes are the real problem.

Princes are immortals whose insanity and power have not quite destroyed them yet. There are the most dangerous of the circle and are similar to fey in their pursuit of certain goals. Mostly they want to acquire power, but they try to do so much more subtly, they rarely if ever make any direct dealings with mortals. A good example of this is one prince's gift of the silver horn, four times removed, to the king of Bascilia, an action which caused a massive political realignment in the continent. They work in the shadows, in different guises and forms, through other people and objects to achieve their ends.

Princes range in power from adventurer level all the way to below the Archprinces. Sometimes, perhaps once in every couple of centuries, archprinces are murdered by the prince(s) below them. This usually sets off a cascade of murder, not always contained to one tower or even the circle itself, until some sort of horrid equilibrium is reached and some prince becomes the new Archprince.

*Lesser Princes (Either Neutral Evil or True Neutral)*

Lesser prince are immortals in the making. Whatever mechanism the gift of the circle utilizes to make its princes immortal takes a long time, on the order of years.

The princes gather around them teams of capable individuals and advisers of all races and skillsets, not unlike an adventuring group. They then use this band of people as their arms, eyes and ears while they contend with the internal politics of the tower and the circle.

You can find lesser princes anywhere, doing anything, but most are looking to buy or sell artifacts, knowledge, information, spells and so forth. Sometimes, they look for other potential advisers. The offer of gold or platinum is always unbelievably high. However, it is easy for an adviser to become a slave.

Its important to note that not all lesser princes are evil. Some may regret some of their actions, or even feel remorse. Some have honor. Some adhere to arcane rules they are bound to. Whatever the reason though, they want or need immortality enough to sacrifice their soul for it.

#### Slaves

Part of the ritual has been corrupted to require large amounts of human sacrifice on the order of hundreds of individuals.

Aside from this, the princes operate deep mines beneath the circle where they extract artifacts from the war, strange stones warped by the death zone.

Recently the giants of Markarska have become interested in the magical properties of whatever the princes are mining. They transport tons of it each month using their one remaining sky keep across the death zone to their laboratories in Markarska.

In return, to the horror of the citizens of Koprivina, the giants sometimes give shipments of slaves for the prince's mines.

Being a slave is not necessarily a death sentence. Provided that you aren't randomly chosen for some experiment, die of exhaustion or of ritual murder, slaves can actually climb the social ladder of the princes by serving them well, displaying feats of mental or physical strength or ingenuity.

A slave then becomes an adviser and can later rise to become a prince himself is he so wishes, or can murder the existing prince and take his place.

## Affiliation

Neutral.

## Naming Convention

None. Each arch-prince heads their own tower, and each has their own background, mostly that they can't remember through their madness. Their names are not cohesive.

## Interactions

#### With the Khanate:

The khanate does battle continuously with the uncontrolled servants of the circle, but to the immortals this is merely a nuisance. In fact, they find it all somewhat amusing that such pathetic lesser beings would try attack them. The fact that the whole nation has pledged the circle's destruction just makes it all the more so.

The circle doesn't truly view the khanate as a threat. Individual princes sometimes lead their own towers against the khanate, sometimes for slaves, other times for fun or simply to see large amounts of chaotic bloodshed, but they have never combined to fight and are unlikely to do so.

## Towers

#### The tower of life

One of original towers, the princes in charge of this have a love for all kinds of undead. They personally have been known to torture prisoners to their death, only to revive them as undead to continue the torment.

This tower is responsible for making the massive quantities of undead found in the death zone.

This tower is deep black. Its symbol is a broken skull.

#### The tower of change

Another original tower, the princes in charge of this delight in the corruption of the flesh. Horrific bloodstained carnal acts are committed in this rust red tower. A master to transmutation and polymorph, the survants of this Archprince seldom have the same form for long. They alter so frequently they have forgotten their own original bodies.

When wroth, they create abominations of squirming tentacles, and shifting mouths. This tower is responsible for the massive quantities of abominations found in the death zone. Its symbol is a writhing ball of flesh.

#### The tower of being

This tower's master has never been seen by any of his servants. He has locked himself in a solid coldsteel and silver box completely covered in divine and arcane runes which lies at the very top of his tower.

Obsessed with the mind, these princes are known to give their followers gifts of insight and visions of the future. However, because their power comes from the unseen archprince who is just as corrupted as the rest of the arch princes, these visions frequently devolve into hallucinations of terror and violence, some of which become reality.

In return these princes want memories. Any memories. They especially like emotional ones. When some so not cooperate they are known to wrench them forcibly via magic, leaving the poor target either brain dead or insane.

This tower is steel gray. Its symbol is a shifting third eye.

#### The Rest

There are three more towers, but what they are after and what their focus is, is unknown at this time.

# P) Clear Lake Confederation

## Description

The last fifty years have been tumultuous for the peaceful peoples of the lake. The waters are cold but bountiful, and this abundance has historically kept the peace between the various peoples on and in the waters.

However, a place of relative isolation with the walls has suddenly found themselves open to the world. After initial violent interactions with N, the lake peoples gather together and decided to protect their peaceful lands.

The confederation is less of a solid country and more of a patchwork of three main races faced with a common enemy and set of problems.

#### A motley collection of fisherman

The three races, from bottom to top are Water Genasi, Humans, and Lizardfolk. They have been joined in recent yearss by a small number of peaceful tritons who have somehow adapted to the fresh water. These are labeled race traitors by their saltwater brethren and unlike the other tree races, who usually are captured and ransomed, are mercilessly killed in raids by N.

#### Evidence of the past

The western shallows of the lake are festooned with ruins and caves. A common sight is of broken masonry from hundreds of years past, either lurking beneath the clear waters, or breaking the surface briefly in ruined spires. It is hypothesized that this makes great fish spawning areas.

These ruins are all that is left of some earlier civilization. Perhaps they ran afoul of the giants or dragons. Perhaps they were affiliated with the original people responsible for the Canticle.

#### Ancient Spirits

The lizardfolk are guided a gargantuan cayman. The genasi are guided by an ancient water elemental. It is unknown how old these creatures are. These communicate infrequently with the lesser races and completely ignore politics. They are elements of nature and have motives that are very hard to understand, resembling more those of a massive animal than a sentient creature. These spirits are worshiped by all three races, as well as their primary.

Theologians are split as to their divine nature, are they worshiped because they exist or exist because they are worshiped?

Humans lack an avatar and worship a mythical magical silver fish said to inhabit the lake. The source of this idea is likely the symbols found on the ruins near the human city. They maintain that the civilization that created the ruins was a human one and that they are the descendents of that civilization. There is little solid evidence to support this conjecture however.

## Affiliation

* 1. Loosely dragon. Or at least loosely anti-giant. N are tritons, and thus giant aligned. Their aggression carries transitive diplomatic problems. To solve some of these problems, P has allied with O, a group of dwarves, although the alliance is purely one of convenience. O, being connected to the underdark, is dragon aligned. Yet another proxy war, but much less large than the one once fought in the west.

### Naming Conventions

* 1. Native American

## Interactions

* 1. tbd

## Cities

* 1. tbd

*Description*

*Seat of Power*

*Trade*

* 1. *Races*