



NEX

NATIONS



NEX [N]
Council of Wizards
Capital: Quantum (60,000)

PEOPLES

Catfolk
Djinni
Fleshwarped
Garundi
Ghoran
Gnome
Keleshite

Mwangi
Ratfolk
Vudrani

LANGUAGES

Kelish
Osiriani
Taldane
Vudrani

FACTIONS



Arclords of
Nex



The
Fleshforgers
Guild



The
Merchant's
League of Nex

RELIGIONS



Aakriti



Calistria



Mahathallah



Pharsasma



Abadar



Irori



Nethys



Sarenrae



Abraxas



Lamashtu



Norgorber

RESOURCES



Books/
Lore



Luxury Goods



Magic Items



Seafood



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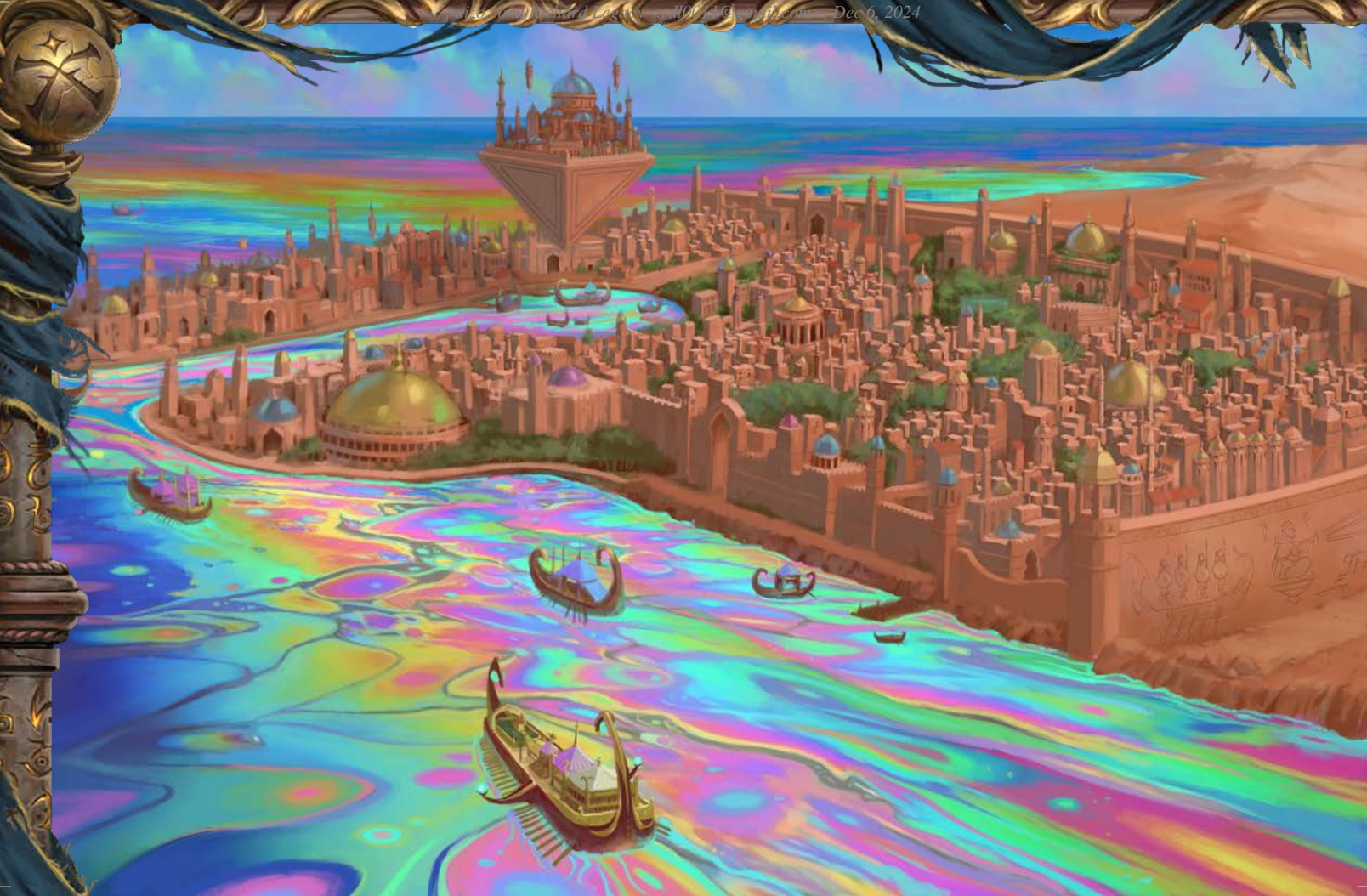
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Few would disagree that Nex was, if not is, Golarion's greatest wizard. His arcane influence on the world—and in some ways, beyond—is contested by Old-Mage Jatembe alone, though the contributions Nex made to the world were often as happenstance as they were calculated. The archmage wizard-king is recognized as the tremendous force responsible for a nation of great impact. The extent of that greatness only comes into full relief four millennia after his disappearance from the Material Plane, and that greatness has limits.

The sprawl of Nex's consequence is a different story. With each year that passes, the wrinkles of his ambition and ego mark Golarion. Ironically, the country of his namesake looks the most weathered through time by his actions. Nex, the country, is wound of ancient wonder and woe alike.

Nex presents a surreal romance to newcomers. Quantum, a capital whose handsome visage flows from subterranean depths to skies of unusual color, brandishes a dizzying array of wonders conjured from hither and thither. Oenopion is less showy, but an intrepid traveler can find a world within themselves as complex as the enchanted warrens of the Bandeshar palace in the capital; all it takes, in the alchemical city, is cleaning a plate of Ghoran cuisine and reaching the bottom of an exceptionally potent glass. Few who live in the military hold of Ecanus care if it isn't the nation's most charismatic city. It's formidable, and because it's formidable, so is Nex.

Staying in the nation exposes its preexisting cracks. Everyone knows not to traverse Nex's countryside, a scourged area nearly as dangerous to traverse as the Mana Wastes, blasted from the archmage's war with Geb 4,000 years ago. Dangerous miscreants, harsh wild things, cold desert-like nights, and waywardly inconsolable fleshforged titans menace the countryside. What few will tell you in the countryside is what nobody will tell you in Oenopion: if you're new to the city, there's a better chance you'll vanish there than in the wastelands.

The capital is built of secrets reaching a bureaucratic tipping point. The people of Quantum fend for themselves for the sake of provoking—or preventing, depending on whom you ask—the reignition of war with Geb. Each secret revealed, ancient or new, weighs the scales more heavily to the former. Ecanus is supposed to defend its two fellow cities from threat, but it's a literal festering wound of a city, which only causes the wider nation to bleed internally. What dealt the blow that led to the Evisceration of Ecanus is unclear, but if it wasn't Geb's doing, then Archmage Nex's dream is more self-sabotaging than his rival necromancer could ever have wished.

Oenopion poisons not only itself with the great, sentient mass of oozes known as the Bath beneath the city, but also assists in a wider poisoning of the region's waters with irrigation that leaches water from the

rivers to its south and north. This is nothing compared to the Miasmere, a horrendously polluted bay made so by years of willful neglect of Quantum's arcane activity, which contaminates any water entering the nation from the Obari ocean. The Miasmere runs westward down the Elemion and Ustradi rivers, poisoning them both in the process. Valkus Isle is a dumping ground for prisoners and enemies of the nation, but more than a few officials bringing them there end up trapped on the island with Nex knows what else.

In the Mana Wastes, the last gasps of Nex's continued expansion (which started the war with Geb over an age ago) are fading as the technocratic Grand Duchy of Alkenstar forms into a territory of its own and crawls out of Nex's grasp. In the capital, the last person to know the archwizard—and the oldest member of the ruling Council of Three and Nine—has gone missing. The nation's leadership fights a newly cold civil war as it prepares for the resurgence of a literal, deeply scarring ancient one.

In the west of Nex is the aptly titled Well of Lies, a vast dungeon near the foothills of the Shattered Range. The instruments of Nex's rise to power are often traced to this mysterious complex that predates even this ancient nation. Once closed by the wizard-king's order, the Council of Three and Nine is too preoccupied with national turmoil to maintain that ancient edict. Because of the boldness of the occasional adventurer, keen to consult the enchanted (but duplicitous) scrying pools within for power and fortune, the complex has been reopened.

Those intrepid souls aren't who reemerge, but instead a steadily increasing procession of individuals who refer to themselves as the "Keys of Nex" as they make their way to the capital. Navigating the city while bearing the guises of many whom Nex apparently killed, they speak in cryptic messages that only those with the most intimate knowledge of the archmage could know. They say Nex remains in his arcane refuge because his inevitable return will be Nex's fall. It's a hard notion for the Council to concede, but the cracks expanding through the nation make the portent difficult to deny.

People come to Nex because it's amazing. Such a place reforms those who visit. How could it not? The process of creating his dream to the fullest of his wishes didn't change Nex himself; it exposed him. The nation is a fertile ground for everyone who follows him, to discover, and, even in unexpected ways, to grow. Nex might have created much in the world, but the people who traverse his domain always find themselves asking: what good did he actually accomplish? Then they do the magical thing that Nex was meant to do, and they accomplish something new.

GEOGRAPHY

Nex's geography is a perfect encapsulation of its marvelous and mercurial history. The nation's countryside is barren and necrotically blasted due to the prolonged conflict with Geb. Its lands are a less treacherous version of the Mana Wastes that lie south of the nation, sandwiched between Nex and its rival, but still treacherous all the same. The sands and rocky topsoil don't provide much for the bandits, brigands, and clans who roam the land. They often meet traders migrating between the major Nexian cities freckling the wizard-king's domain with trade and calculated turmoil. Perusing the west edge of the Mwangi Expanse's tangle often yields little or costs more than the Nexian outlanders bargained for.

The other borders of Nex are little better, when it comes to travel. The deserts of Katapesh, while more hospitable than the unpredictable Mana Wastes, do not make for a pleasant trek. The Shattered Range and Brazen Peaks on Nex's western border forms

ISLE OF BLACK PALMS

Though technically claimed by Nex, few pay any attention to the small chunk of land to the north of Varkus Isle. Known as the Isle of Black Palms, there is nothing to be found on the locale aside from dead palms and the lonely minaret of a ruined building. Fishers who stray too close report occasional signs of life, but no indication of who might have left them. No one who has set foot on the island has ever returned, discouraging further research.

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WELL OF LIES

LOCAL FAUNA

The blighted lands of Nex remain cursed by Geb's necromancy even after thousands of years, with only the expertise of ghoran farmers coaxing anything from the soil. Some hardy animals still survive in the area, however, such as desert birds and mammals, as well as bizarre prehistoric throwbacks that were either mutated by the Mana Wastes or failed to evolve as their kin did. Terror birds are the most common sight near Nexian cities, either tamed or wild.

an imposing barrier that limits any reliable contact with cities in the Mwangi Expanse, though travelers and caravans still periodically make their way through the Ndele Gap. Most in Nex travel by river or sea, sending massive ships down the northern Elemion and the southern Ustradi.

THE CIRCULATION

For all of Nex's magical pedigree, many of its troubles are entirely mundane. The bandits who dwell in the wastes and waylay caravans throughout the nation aren't unique in any way; like brigands across the cosmos, their lust for plunder is outweighed only by their personal losses and compounding rage in the face of desperation. Many descend from scorned and broken bloodlines when the walls of the great city-states shuttered their ancestors to a cruel fate of exile. Generations spent hunted by the fleshforged creations of their former homelands and treated as common detritus to be scraped off a Quantum aristocrat's boot have left these malicious souls without compassion or mercy.

The largest of the wasteland clans, the Manymen, continue to map the region under the discretion of their representative on the Council of Nine, Elemion. They chart all the safe roads that run through the nation, starting west of the Ndele Gap and the notoriously treacherous Shattered Range below it. Amidst the wider chaos in the countryside, the Manymen, in coordination with Nex's government, have created numerous safe waystations along their reliable roads in exchange for uncontested entry to the nation's three major cities. These roads, built and maintained by the Manymen and Nex's military, have become the most reliable routes linking the territories of Nex.

Collectively, these trading roads—as well as the roads connecting the nation's own settlements—are referred to as the Circulation of Nex. The original network of roads took almost a decade to build after Nex's vanishing, as most prior attempts during the war with Geb were destroyed by invading forces and magics on the necromancer's order. When the war ended with Nex's disappearance, the Council of Three and Nine created a few trade routes flowing to and from Geb as an initial reparative step in an attempt at brokering a tenuous peace.

The largest three roads of the Circulation are referred to as the “arteries” of Nex and were completed in 588 AR. These three roads link Nex's most critical cities: the economic backbone of Oenopion, the military hold of Ecanus, and the resplendent capital of Quantum. The road leading from Quantum southwest to Ecanus is known as the Barapara Damnu, or Road of Blood, as it was the most heavily contested and sabotaged during the war. Some say there are still spots in the barren soil along the Barapara Damnu that smell of iron and copper. Sometimes winds from storms along the Obari Ocean spread a heavy crimson dust throughout the countryside, which many claim are ghosts of conflicts past.

The second road of this inner triangle is the Barapara Uchafuu, or the Road of Dirt. This road crosses the middle of the Ustradi river from Ecanus and travels north until it reaches Oenopion, halfway in the northwestern wastelands of Nex. It's a double reference to both the place of the dead (and undead) in Nex and its alchemical foundations.

The final road was the first road established in the region around -731 AR in the midst of the war. The Barapara Dhahabii, or Road of Gold, links Oenopion to Quantum. The Road of Gold is farther north than the Road of Blood, so the wizard-king was more easily able to protect it during the war. The Barapara Dhahabii is one of the few places in the countryside to again show signs of the region's former fertility, thanks in no small part to Ghoran tending. Though it

ELEMION



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was the first road established, it was the last to be named. Its moniker references Oenopion's material importance and the alchemical effects of time.

These three roads are enchanted with protections that ward against wayward fleshforged terrors, though the enchantments must be renewed every 20 to 30 years. The smaller veins and arteries of the Circulation receive no such arcane protections for the most part, despite being a complex link to the rest of the region. As a result, there's little security off the beaten path of the Circulation in Nex's modern era.

THE MIASMERE

Significant veins link the Miasmere—the large bay that joins the east coast of Nex to the Obari—to the capital, though Quantum also has its own port that feeds directly into the polluted waters. Magical pollution makes the waters' effects on its citizens unpredictable and dangerous. The Council of Three and Nine has wrangled their most skilled alchemists and arcanists to work endlessly on mitigating the waters' effects within the nation's major cities, so far seeing only limited success. The Miasmere is so magically toxic that as its waters evaporate, they create surreal and beautiful clouds over Quantum and Nex's eastern rim that pour somewhat acidic rain for which only the capital has formal protections. Boats making port in the bay or at the city have similar trouble with acidity if they aren't

properly constructed for the Miasmere's alchemical corrosions. As Quantum continues in its excesses, the Elemion river forming the northern border of the nation and the Ustradi river at the south carry the cursed arcane water west through the rest of the region, still full of wartime flotsam from more than 4,000 years ago. The water further isolates the arcane prison of Valkus Isle (and the haunted Isle of Black Palms north of it) from the rest of the nation. Nex's leadership largely neglects the isle in favor of other lands. Like Nex's ego, his nation struggles to temper its reach, even in peaceful times. With his disappearance, Nex's namesake slips through his fingers due to his heirs' tacit overextensions.

VALKUS ISLE

A large island off the eastern coast of Nex, Valkus Isle was once a popular resort for the nobility of Nexian society. It also once hosted a palace for the archmage Nex, who used the sanctum as a private place for his earliest experiments. Unfortunately, these magical experiments went awry, blasting the entire isle with planar energy and unleashing horrific monsters. Nex was forced to solve the problem by creating an impenetrable magical barrier known as the *Stalwart Wall*, which locked everything on the island inside permanently. With Valkus Isle now an inescapable prison, it now serves as an oubliette and dumping ground for Nexian undesirables of all kinds.