



Glorantha

THE SECOND AGE



ELFS

A GUIDE TO THE ALDRYAMI



RuneQuest



ALDRYAMI

A GUIDE TO THE ELFS

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Aldryami: A Guide to the Elfs* one of the race-specific books that detail the Elder Races of Glorantha. Humans mainly know elfs as the sturdy defenders of the forest who emotionlessly dispatch all that try to enter their woods. They are known to be long-living, well-skilled, and utterly arbitrary in the decrees that they make upon the humans who dwell near their lands—or so the common wisdom goes.

However, there is much more to know about the elfs of Glorantha.

Most humans interact with the Vronkali (or green elfs)—the oldest warders of the forests—but they are just one of many elf races. The more philosophical Mreli (or brown elfs) often dwell in the same woods as the Vronkali, while the olive-skinned Embyli (or yellow elfs) live primarily in the east, where Errinoru's mighty Empire has been a great thorn in the side of the Middle Sea Empire for centuries. Almost no one knew of the strange Slorifings (or red elfs) until the Six Legged Empire rediscovered them during their conquest of inner Pamaltela. There are also at least three races of blue elfs who live beneath the waves: the Alim, the Gentari, and the Makistanti.

Though they appear humanoid in shape, the Aldryami are actually moving plants. Upon close viewing an observer can discern the bark that makes up an Aldryami's skin and the leaves which make up its hair. Because of their plant-like nature Aldryami are actually much closer to their forests than any human would ever realize. They have a 'life sense' which allows them to communicate with not only their forests but also their fellows. Besides the elfs, Great Trees, dryads, and ape-like runners are also part of this web of life that lies within every Aldryami wood.

Though Aldryami ways may seem arbitrary to humans, they do have their own strange philosophies and rules. They believe that the entire world lies in balance, with the forces of the Grower always fighting against the forces of the Taker in an entirely natural manner, but they also recognize that some peoples do unnatural things and upset the balance of the world. In the First Age it was the forces of Chaos that tried to disrupt the natural order. Now it is the God Learners who do so; their Goddess Switch was the worst thing to happen since the Dawn.

Many of the forces of the Aldryami in Imperial Age Glorantha are weak, for the Mreli and Vronkali are still recovering from the time known as Aldrya's Woe, when elf fought elf during the Dawn Age. But Errinoru's Embyli Empire offers a new hope of strength for the Grower's people. If the deprecations of the God Learners are to be survived, all Aldryami must follow Errinoru's example, rising up to try and restore the world they once knew.

What's in this Book?

This book contains a variety of information about the Aldryami intended to provide Players with resources for playing them and Games Masters with resources for using them in adventures. It includes the following chapters:

Chapter One: The Aldryami

An extensive overview of the Aldryami people, including descriptions of the different types of elfs and notes on their biology and culture. Originally prepared by Lograch the Chronicler, a God Learner of Seshnela, for distribution to his peers in the late 800s, this text has since appeared in various forms, and can be given to God Learner mercenaries or EWF soldiers alike as a reference.

Chapter Two: Aldryami Communities

Highlights several Aldryami communities that Players might interact with, focusing on two near Dragon Pass—Arstola and Tallseed—as well as giving some details on the faraway Errinoru Jungle.

Chapter Three: Playing the Aldryami

Provides complete information on playing all the races of Aldryami, from the common Mreli and Vronkali to the rare Murthoi.

Chapter Four: Aldryami Religion

Completes the book by detailing the various Aldryami cults, some of which are familiar to humans, and some of which are entirely unknown outside of the Aldryami culture. Besides complete cult descriptions it also includes new divine spells and a new set of elementals.

THE ALDRYAMI

'We are the children of the Grower. We live in the forests of Glorantha and we tend to the trees, the brush, and the grass. We commingle with dryads, we commune with Great Trees, and we immerse ourselves in Seyotel – the thoughts of all plant things. We are the upholders of the balance, for we grow where the trolls, the dwarfs, and those lost things take, but together with them we are all parts of the world who must fight against oblivion, which in this age strikes at us through the godless God Learners.'

'We are life! We are growth! We are plant! We are Aldryami!'

— Ferifil Treebridger, Aldryami diplomat

This was the statement offered by a Mreli of the Enkloso Forest in Umathela when he was asked to describe his people. It is a typical Aldryami creed that displays many emotions common to these plant peoples, including them naïveté, enthusiasm, and the need to see the world in clearly delineated black and white, without any shades of grey. As an exemplar piece of Aldryami oratory, it also serves as an introduction to this treatise on the Aldryami peoples.

My name is Lograch, called by some 'Lograch the Chronicler'. I am a wizard of Seshnela, a subject of Keralamalos – our most mighty Emperor of the Land and Sea, and the humblest follower of the One Invisible God.

We of Seshnela have had the greatest opportunity of all Malkioni to interact with the Aldryami peoples, for we have long allowed them to dwell in our forests of Kanthor and Jorestl. We have exchanged the appropriate gifts and made the appropriate offerings when the seasons changed, and have even allowed the Aldryami to symbolically marry into our families to

solidify our ties. It is with this knowledge that I began to scribe this treatise. However, I have gone beyond these simple beginnings – and beyond the writings of my predecessor Revary Hirsul – and I have also taken the next step, that of careful and considered research.

With my own hands I have sent forth over a dozen researchers across all our lands. They have visited the Aldryami forests within our mighty Empire, snuck into the woeful dragon lands, and even attempted an entry to the well-guarded forest fortress that is now called Errinoru. I have spared my researchers no danger to collect this knowledge, and from the survivors I have gleaned everything I could about the elfish culture.

So now do I present this treatise on the Aldryami. It reveals many of their greatest secrets, heretofore unknown to outsiders, and now only known to us. May it enhance the glory of our Empire and of the Invisible God, and may it aid our research into the pagan gods to which the Aldryami give reverence.

The Aldryami Race

The Aldryami are a race of plant entities, closer in nature to trees than to humans, despite their humanoid form. Our Reconstructionalist brethren believe that they are born of the plant and man runes, and are thus are plants given man-like shape. However as always the Reconstructionalists oversimplify and we can better understand the Aldryami through the fourfold technique of the Word and the Law.

Literally, the Aldryami are plants that move. When we look upon an Aldryami's head we see leaves and when we cut one open we find twigs and tubers where bones and organs should be. They are a particular type of botanical species which possesses cunning and independence that is atypical for the plant kingdom. Otherwise, however, they are no greater than the trees our peasants cut down and mill to build their simple domiciles or the rye our peasants use to bake their breads. Aldryami are plants, no more.

Allegorically, the Aldryami are mobile kin to immobile trees. As I shall relate, climatology defines major divisions among the Aldryami race, just as it defines major divisions among the plant kingdom—including evergreen firs, deciduous oaks, warm-weather ferns, and swampy lichen. The Aldryami further this allegory by declaring kinship to specific breeds of trees, and one may thus meet crab apple Mreli and monkey puzzle Embyli.

Morally, the Aldryami are nature's avengers. They abide by no decent morality, and instead kill, murder, and maim to defend their forests—even striking down their own kind if necessary. They have little concern for their own lives and no hope of ever reaching Solace. Instead they are doomed to forever be reborn into this world. Their lack of morality may be shown by example: When one of my researchers tried to become a member of the Aldryami tribe in Jorestl's Forest he was crucified upon a tree, with copper spikes driven through his limbs; his organs were all cut out and replaced with plants. So do they reward those who would seek to befriend them.

Mystically, the Aldryami are manipulators of the magic within the world. They rely upon a special sense that we call 'life sense' and which they name Seyotel which allows them to converse with their fellows, their forests, and their pagan deities. When they sing with Seyotel, the whole world looks like a spirit plane to them—though through my own studies I have determined that their deities are not spirits, but rather atypical pagan gods with a strong presence in the Inner World.

When speaking of Aldryami we should understand that the word means 'children of Aldrya' who was the first seed that fell from the primal plant Falamal (Flamal) upon the primal earth Gata. Thus it should technically only refer to the four elf races that live upon the earth. However, vernacularly, the word Aldryami is used to refer to all the elf races, which also includes three races that live under the sea and a single race which once lived upon the sun and which is now lost.

I shall address each of these races in turn, using both the correct terms for these people and the vulgar terms which were coined by our peasant classes.

General Aldryami Biology

'They are plants! They bleed sap like frees and withstand blows that would kill lesser foes. I would prefer not to fight them, though given the choice between trolls and elves ... I'd be chopping wood any day.'

— Curek Runespear, Mercenary of Safelster

There are certain elements of Aldryami biology which are common among all the Aldryami races.

It bears repeating that the Aldryami are plants. Leaves, needles, or fronds cover their heads. Their skin has a rough, bark-like texture. When we dissect them we find hardened branches acting as bones and undifferentiated plant matter acting as organs. Sap circulates through an Aldryami's body, most likely to keep it cooled. As a result an Aldryami's 'blood' is yellow and sticky. It quickly hardens when exposed to air.

Nonetheless, Aldryami do appear quite humanoid. Externally they have all the features that we find in a human, though it appears that at least some of these growths are solely vestigial. Most elves are shorter than humans, with the Vronkali being a rare exception. The oceanic Aldryami differ the most from the humanoid norm, but instead we find them cleaving to mermen ideals.

An Aldryami's substantive needs can be entirely fulfilled through natural processes. When an Aldryami is imprisoned in a natural environment which provides access to healthy soil, regular rain, and direct sunlight he can stay fit for years. In order to sustain himself without access to actual 'food' an Aldryami becomes increasingly immobile. He sinks root-like tendrils into the ground and tracks the movement of the sun with the leaves atop his head, disallowing more active pursuits. Though such an Aldryami can remain physically fit, after a decade mental deficiencies tend to set in, most likely due to the Aldryami's absence from the 'Song of Seyotel.'

Travelling Aldryami have often been found carrying a dried mulch which is made of vegetable matter from within their forests that has been reduced down to its essential nature. A very low intake of these mulches appears to provide for substantive needs, allowing Aldryami to travel far without foraging and without having to root themselves in the soil. Peasants fed the substance proved that it was filling for humans as well, though some grew weak after living on nothing but the mulch for several years.

All Aldryami are long-lived, with the exact life span of an Aldryami relating to its kin tree. The average life span of most Aldryami tends to be approximately two hundred years, with Vronkali living longer and Slorifings living considerably shorter. Aldryami in captivity tend to live for no more than ten to twenty after capture, due to the aforementioned insanity that strikes them. When an Aldryami does not die through misfortune, and is not cut off from its forest, it becomes more treelike in its old age, finally rooting itself permanently. One day it simply does not awaken. Within several decades even these immobile, treelike corpses tend to crumble away.

Though we have direct experience with the Aldryami death, we know less about the Aldryami birth cycle. The Mreli and the Vronkali both appear to have similar birth procedures, wherein a male and female engage in intercourse and the female then gives birth to a large seed. The seed is planted and grows into sturdy vine, upon which a fruit eventually sprouts. Approximately two years after the initial fertilization the parents open up the fruit and find a child inside.

Methods of birth for other Aldryami are more strange and varied, and are discussed in more detail below.

Different species of Aldryami—such as crab apples and oaks—can interbreed, but one species always runs true. This defines an Aldryami's 'sapline', which runs up its family tree through all ancestors who shared the same kin tree. Different races of Aldryami—even closely related ones such as the Mreli and Vronkali—can only interbreed with the aid of magic; again, a single species runs true.

Aldryami have particularly keen senses of smell, hearing, and sight—though they are utterly unable to see in the dark. Their sense of taste is comparatively

poor, doubtless a reflection of the lack of importance ingested food has in the plant life cycle. The Aldryami also possess a special sense which has alternatively been called 'elfsense', 'life sense', and (by the Aldryami's own terms) the 'Song of Seyotel.'

You do not understand. We do not engage in rituals as our sole method of communing with the greater songs. Instead, they are always with us. When we look upon the sun we can feel the blessings of Halamalao. When we stand under the cleansing rain we can feel the spirit of Eron. When we tread upon the earth we can commune with the remaining shards of Cata. What you would call our gods are the world, and so they are a constant part of us. That is the wonder of Seyotel.'

—Ferifil Treebringer, Aldryami Diplomat

The Song of Seyotel is the method by which Aldryami can empathically communicate with all the plant denizens of a particular forest. The method is slow and is inefficient for communicating precise information—particularly over longer distances. It also seems entirely unable to bridge communication from one forest to another. Despite these limitations it is a powerful tool. Aldryami can use the life sense to gain a general sense of a forest, and over time can reach consensus decisions through it, with each Aldryami providing input to the community's plans. The Aldryami can also use their life sense to measure the relative health of individual plants and even the soil.

The Aldryami's life sense should be further understood as a mystical tool not unlike a very stunted version of our own RuneQuest Sight. Though the Aldryami are unable to use it to discern the deities of other peoples—thus making it largely useless for our own purposes—they are able to use it to sense their own deities *while within the Inner World*. The Aldryami do not travel to the higher planes; in fact their deities are poorly connected to other pantheons and are very hard to find as a result. Instead the Aldryami use their life sense to tap the power of the world and to

communicate directly with their gods while remaining herein. This aspect of the Song of Seyotel is notable for further study.

Each of the seven races of elves also has particular differences which individuate them even more from the human norm.

Vronkali: The Green Elfs

'We Vronkali are the followers of Vronkal, the great Aldryami hero who saved the world from ice and Chaos, and who sacrificed himself to recreate the cycle. We are stout warriors. We protect our forests and deal out death to any who would seek to enter them without our permission. We are born to fight, from the sharp needles atop our heads to the hard bark that protects our bodies. None of us died during the Black Age, and instead repopulated the world. The entire world of Aldrya is alive today only due to our reawakening. Without us, the Aldryami would be nothing, the world would be nothing, and even you red men would be nothing.'

— Resifus Evergreen, Vronkali warder

Our peasants call the Vronkali 'green elfs'. This is no reflection upon their pigmentation: many different Aldryami have a green cast to them because of the leaves—or in the case of Vronkali, needles—found upon their heads. Instead the term green elf arises from the fact that the Vronkali are evergreen. They are the Aldryami who inhabit the colder climates of the world. They are thus most populous in the Winterwood Forest which abuts Valind's Glacier, but may also be found in most Aldryami forests west of Magasta's Pool. As evergreen Aldryami, the Vronkali are kin to the needle-bearing evergreen trees, most notably firs, pines, and spruces.

Like all surviving land-dwelling, Aldryami the Vronkali have changed from the archetypical ideal which must have existed before the Ice Age. Comparative botany—using the lake-dwelling Alim as a baseline—suggests that the original land-

dwelling elfs, which we call Shen Senae, were weak, helpless creatures. Following the incursions of ice and Chaos, and as part of the mounting battles with dwarfs and trolls, some Shen Senae hardened themselves, becoming spectacular warriors who could protect their less combative kin. These were the Vronkali.

Vronkali are quite common in the modern world. Interviews suggest that just a few conclaves survived in Winterwood following the end of the Ice Age, but those Vronkali then travelled south in a great expedition intended to re-grow all the lost forests of Glorantha. These travellers have become known as the Awakeners. During their journeys the Awakeners discovered many Aldryami who had succumbed to the dangers of the Ice Age. They reawakened these 'Mreli' and some Vronkali then stayed behind to rule over them. Besides reawakening forests across Genertela, the Awakeners also travelled to Pamaltela where they founded great forests in Umathela and Fonrit which have been some of our fiercest adversaries on that continent.



Though the Vronkali continue to rule over most western Aldryami forests, there was a notable ecological realignment in the Dawn Age, wherein Vronkali and Mreli withdrew from other events in the world in order to slaughter each other within their own forests. We call this time 'Aldrya's Woe'. Following this event the Slontos forests of Arstola and Tarinwood are entirely free of Vronkali rule.

The Vronkali are notable, even among the Aldryami races, for their longevity. Most Vronkali reach an age of approximately three hundred years. The most long-lived appear to be redwood elves. We know little of these peoples since most live beyond the cursed dragon Empire, but if rumours are to be believed they can live to be a thousand years old, and their elders still remember the Gray Age before Hrestol was martyred.

Finally, the stories of the Vronkali's great military might are not exaggerated. They are the strongest warriors among all the land-dwelling Aldryami. A full third of their population is formed into the Marching Aldryami, an impressive standing army that keeps intruders from the Aldryami's forest and has on occasion marched forth to do battle with the other Elder Races. If we were not content with our ancient covenants with the Aldryami of Seshnela, then we would find their marching armies to be a mighty force indeed.

Mreli: The Brown Elfs

'The lingerers. That is what our name means in Aldryami. We were those elves who refused to change. We remained what we were, with our soft wood and soft leaves and soft minds. Some say we are like the Alim, but at least we did not hide, we did not cower. We simply lingered as ourselves and eventually we fought and because we had not changed we died. The world would have died had it been left to us, and now we are punished forever for our arrogance. We die every winter. We descend into Trigora, surrounded by the grey, hopeless spirits of our kin, dead before us and dead after. Dead.'

— Terinia Softwood, Mreli philosopher

The Mreli are more frequently called the 'brown elves' and that is due to their unique nature as deciduous Aldryami. When Dark Season comes—to use the Theyalan designation—the leaves on their heads slowly darken, turning brown, red, and grey. The Mreli then drift into a long sleep that lasts until Fertility Week of Storm Season. During this time of vulnerability the Vronkali watch over them—the last line of defence against all the predators of the world.

The Mreli's winter long hibernation is the only time that they partake of sleep's essence. They do not lay down each night, as normal men do, but instead stay awake for over half the year, before succumbing suddenly. The Mreli say that when they sleep they are welcomed into 'Trigora's embrace', which is their euphemism for the Underworld. Based upon my research, this is no exaggeration. Through their own life sense the spirits of the Mreli are dragged down beneath the world to the grey halls of the pagan dead. They commune with their ancestors and those Aldryami soon to be reborn. Slowly the soporific ether of the Underworld eats away at their memories and their individuality so that when they awaken they are numb, quiet and morose. They usually do not return to their old selves until Sacred Time has come and gone; for those Mreli who are cut off from their fellows, their depression can sometimes last the entire year.

In the Ice Age the Mreli were still the Shen Senae—the original Aldryami species. They died in great numbers for they could not stand against the trolls, the dwarfs, Chaos, or even the cold. In the end there were many who simply gave up hope. They buried themselves in the earth where the shattered remains of their earth goddess Gata protected them. So did they live out the Ice Age and that which followed. In the Gray Age it was the Mreli who were awakened by the Vronkali Awakeners. They were dug up from beneath the soil and the Awakeners enacted great rituals to steal their spirits back from the Underworld and to imbue their withered bodies with new life. Thereafter the Vronkali have ruled over the Mreli in all the forests west of Magasta's Pool, excepting only Tarinwood and Arstola Forest, which threw off the yoke of Vronkali rule some five hundred years ago.

Of all the land-dwelling Aldryami, it is the Mreli who are nearest in form to Shen Senae race which existed before



the Ice Age. Though some have become warriors, most remain soft. They are a race of gardeners, philosophers, and pollen bearers who tend to their woods; they are usually no more dangerous than a bush or a tree. The Mreli deviate most from the old Shen Senae norm due to the great wounds they bear from their trauma in the Ice Age. Their close connections to the Underworld and its effects upon their temperament portray how far this race has fallen. We could best describe the Mreli as the half-dead remnants that the Shen Senae have left behind in the modern world.

Because of the history of the Awakening, modern Vronkali and Mreli remain so closely tied that we can almost see them as one race—absent only of the militarism of the Vronkali and the Underworld connections of the Mreli. They share the same forests and many of the same myths. They worship together and sing together. Their physiology is quite similar, missing only the aforementioned differences of sleep and stamina. Although they are unable to interbreed without certain magical aids, there are nonetheless certain species of Aldryami which can be born as

both Mreli and Vronkali. Fig Aldryami are among the elves closely studied in the preparation of this treatise, a species that has been found among both the Mreli and Vronkali. Unfortunately experiments determined to discover whether environment played a role in a fig's growth as Mreli or Vronkali were ultimately unsuccessful due to the fact that the Aldryami refuse to breed in captivity.

As we shall see, although the Mreli and Vronkali are very closely related races, the other two land-dwelling Aldryami—the Embyli and the Slorifings—are more distant relatives.

Embyli: The Yellow Elves

'Back, God Learner! We do not fear your lumber cutters! We do not fear your metal armies! We do not fear your wizard-assassins! Errinoru led us victoriously against you. He scoured you with wind and rain. He plagued you with fever and ague. He led great armies against you, filled with the peoples of our jungle—Embyli, animal, and red man alike. He set forth in ships and burned your cities.

We do not fear you God Learner, for we have seen you and we have defeated you. Now, you should be very, very grateful that you chanced upon us, and not the Onlaki, for at least we will give you a chance to survive. Run godless man, run! We shall be upon your heels in minutes.'

— Ghybbiste Sharpfrond, Embyli warder

The 'yellow elves'—named both for their olive complexions and for the dire effects of the diseases that emerge from their jungles—are the most troublesome of all the Aldryami peoples to our great Empire. Our adversarial relations with them began as the result of several misunderstandings before the Jrusteli Period of our mighty Empire. These started almost two hundred and fifty years ago when a band of Pamaltelan Mreli named the Dragon Eaters attacked our Umathelan

colonies, for reasons that we still do not understand. The Seshnegi settlers were thus entirely just in burning out the forest of Vralos from which these rebels had emerged. All of Fonrit was cleansed of the rebellious taint other than the deepest woods. After that our warriors pressed eastward.

In Laskal our Seshnegi military tracked the surviving rebels to a great jungle. These soldiers bravely held the Invisible God in their hearts, and thus they pressed inward, slashing and cutting this new forest as well. Unfortunately they did not realize that they had come into the territory of an entirely new people, the Embyli. Thus began a hundred years of conflict between the Embyli and the nascent Middle Sea Empire.

At the time the great jungle in Pamaltela was still called the Falutha Jungle, but the Embyli's great hero—and our great foe—Errinoru had already been born. It was he who led those early wars against us. It was he who destroyed an entire army but for the Valiant Four who fought back through the disease-ridden Falutha to tell us what they had learned. It was Errinoru who united the entire forest under his name, and who later built the great elf ships to contest our own upon Glorantha's oceans. It was Errinoru who ravaged our coasts for years, intent upon vengeance, until he suddenly returned to his home almost a hundred years after our conflicts had begun in Vralos.

'There was no return for the Valiant Four. Their paths overgrown, their markers lost. But they offered up faith to find lost ground. For life, for home, for Solace refund. They cut through the jungles; they slashed through the trees. Their hand was guided by pure divinity. They returned to their ships; they returned to their home. The elves wouldn't have them, thanks to faith alone.'

— Malkioni Traditional

Errinoru appears to be dead now—or at least rooted somewhere deep within his jungle. However his children still carry on, and they are nearly demigods, immune to blade, spear, and arrow and resistant to magic. They are mighty leaders as well, and even if Errinoru himself is gone, there is no doubt that his spirit lives on through his dynasty.



the Aldryami

The common Embyli are warriors as well, though they are not as great as those of Errinoru's house, or even their Vronkali cousins to the west. They were born of the core Shen Senae stock in the Ice Age and though they did not harden themselves like the Vronkali, they did fight. Led by their mythical hero Embyl they were among the protectors of Falamal, the primal tree from which all other plants emerged. According to Aldryami legend, Falamal (Flamal) was an enormously tall tree which grew upon a mighty island at the centre of the world—which we can easily recognize as botanical cognate of the spike, complete with leaves and bark.

When the spike imploded—and Falamal fell—the Embyli fled southeast to where they founded the Falutha Jungle. But Pamaltela was growing ever warmer during that time. Droughts ravaged the Embyli people, killing their women and decimating their race. In this time the Embyli were forced to abandon their ideal form. Under the guidance of an Artmalí witch the Embyli grew their leaves long and wide to survive in the harsh environment and learned to breed with the dryads to propagate their species.

Like the Vronkali, the Embyli today are evergreens. However, they bear no needles and instead are adorned with the long, wide leaves which are necessary to shade themselves from the Pamaltelan heat. Not a single female Embyli survived their harsh journey south and what followed, and to this day they continue to breed with dryads. As a result the dryads are given great positions of responsibility within the Embyli forests. Before Errinoru they ruled with mighty matriarchies, and today they remain important advisors in Errinoru and continue to rule other jungles.

The Embyli also vary from other Aldryami in their size. They are considerably shorter than any of their brethren other than the bestial Slorifings. At first they appear more primitive than their fellows: they wear few clothes and use simple weapons such as blowguns and sharpened wood spears. However, it appears that these distinctions may primarily be due to the more primitive environment found in their jungles. On our few successful attempts to infiltrate Embyli jungles we have discovered a culture no less complicated and complete than those found among other Aldryami races. Indeed, it should be noted that no Mreli or Vronkali leader has ever managed to bind together as large an Empire as that found in the Errinoru Jungle.

In recent years a schism has appeared among the Embyli of the Errinoru Jungle and has slowly spread to other Embyli enclaves. The schismatics call themselves the Onlaki after a jungle in north-eastern Errinoru. Of all the Embyli the Onlaki are the most mindlessly aggressive toward humans in general and our Middle Sea Empire specifically. Other Aldryami claim that the Onlaki disobey the word of Errinoru and his house, but from what we remember of the ravaging of our coasts a hundred and fifty years ago, the Onlaki seem no different from the Embyli that came before them.

Besides the Embyli in the Errinoru Jungle, there are two other Embyli outposts, both in the east. Some Embyli, along with the pirates of the Rainbow Fleet, inhabit the island of Teleos. Though we were forced to discipline the pirates there, the Embyli have never been a factor. Embyli also live in Fethlon in south-eastern Glorantha, amidst the mystical empires of Teshnos and Kralorela. Fethlon is the only jungle where Embyli and Mreli live together in large numbers. We have tried to win the Fethloni over using the lessons learned from

our Joresteli allies, and although the Mreli have been pliable, the Embyli of that land have not, and a war has erupted between the two. This suits us just as well. Though we may remember the loyalty of the Mreli, we must also remember the perfidy of the Embyli who might have been been our gravest enemy if it were not for the dangers of the dragon presence.

Slorifings: The Red Elfs

The Slorifings are not our true kin. Though their spores did lift from the great tree Falamal that was during the Red Age, when the Taker came into the world. As a result the Slorifings take equally from the essence of the Grower—who gave birth to all other Aldryami—and the Taker himself. We thus call them one of the red races, like the animals and you humans, who forever embody that time of grafting. Here in Umathela we have warred with the Slorifings. To the southwest of our forest you will find Green Elf Stop, a magical line that divides forest from swamp and keeps Mreli and Vronkali apart from Slorifings.

Despite our differences, the Slorifings do partake share some of the nature of us Aldryami. They upkeep their swamps as we upkeep our forests, and they too participate in the Song.

Do not think of the Slorifings as true elves, but do not think of them as your kind either.'

— Ferifil Treebridger, Aldryami diplomat

The term 'red elf' is a recent construct, invented by my predecessor, the Seshnegi wizard Gruelli. It matches the hue-based terminology favoured by peasants when describing Aldryami, though it is unlikely that the peasants will ever see Slorifings; they are exceedingly rare in the present, particularly in our well-groomed western lands. The term 'red elf' also matches the terminology used by the Aldryami to refer to their mythical ages, with their 'Red Age' approximately corresponding to the fourth action era, when the

darkness creatures divided and when animals and people were born. Older texts refer to the Slorifings as 'goblins', a race of strange and deformed creatures who haunted the edges of our kingdoms in the Dawn Age before we brought the light of revelation to the west.

Slorifings primarily inhabit swamps and other less desirable lands. Several of their young can breathe water and indeed require it for their maturation cycle, and this is likely an element in Slorifing habitation patterns. The Slorifings also bear close kinship to ferns and other such spore-bearing plants. These particular plants show a greater vitality in many moist climates, offering a second reason for the Slorifings' choice of their otherwise inhospitable homelands.

The reproductive cycle of the Slorifings is peculiar, even for the Aldryami. Like the Embyli they have no females, though they offer no mythical reason for this lack. As with the Embyli, dryads aid the Slorifings in maintaining their species. However, the method is quite strange. A dryad will engage in a ritualistic dance with a Slorifing desiring reproduction. Afterward the Slorifing buries himself and dies. Some time later

ferns rise up from the Slorifing's grave and let loose spores which fly freely upon the wind. If they land in appropriate environments new Slorifings are grown from these spores.

There is also one other peculiarity of Slorifing biology: they experience notable species-specific differentiation and specialization. We believe that there are over twenty species of Slorifing currently living, and that each one is an expert at certain tasks: some are soldiers, others diplomats, some are cavalry, others peasants. It is a logical caste-based system brought to an illogical extreme.

My researchers have been able to meet with only a few Slorifings. Rumours suggest that there are large Slorifing empires in the swamps that bracket the Pamaltelan continent, but expeditions to those areas remain uncertain and dangerous. Two researchers did not return. Attempts to discover Slorifings in other swamps where they had been sighted—here in Genertela and elsewhere—were likewise fruitless. However in the last few years Slorifings have increasingly ventured out and we have thus found them on occasion acting as mercenaries in the battle grounds of Dragon Pass and Ralios. We have thus been able to confirm the existence of the race.

As noted already, the red elves are often small and stunted, and are thus the smallest of all the Aldryami races. Many are quite ugly, though this varies from species to species. Red elves abroad are often led by a member of the Nythini species which seems to translate to 'danger seeker'. They goad their fellow Slorifings into dangerous behaviours, under the belief that even if they die, their species will be continued. The result is that Slorifings sometimes seem immune to danger to the point of insanity, and have thus been used successfully as shock troops and secret spies alike.

Though other Aldryami adamantly insist that the Slorifings are not true elves, they nonetheless possess many of the most important characteristics, including a rudimentary life sense, an unbounded love for their environment, and a general affinity with plants and the plant world. As such we categorize them here, with the caveat that they are the most distinct and far-removed of all seven Aldryami species.



Murthoi: The Blue Elfs

'Continued examinations of the aquatic Aldryami that I have dubbed the blue elfs suggests that they are as similar to seaweed as their land bound kin are to trees. They maintain kelp forests of all sorts, some of which are apparently mobile, allowing the blue elfs to wander the seas of Clorantha.'

— Ombast Slope-Treader, Pedant of New Frowal

My earliest studies for this treatise entirely neglected the 'blue elfs', a race discovered and named by my colleague, Ombast Slope-Treader. His continued work in the Swermela Sea has definitively proven their existence as a sea-bound analogue to the Aldryami found in forests and jungles above water. However, due to his typically shoddy research, Ombast entirely omitted the differences that actually divide the blue elfs into three different races—differences as important as those which differentiate the Vronkali, the Mreli, and the Embyli.

Broadly the proper name for the blue elfs is the Murthoi, another distinction that Ombast missed in his overly hurried desire to publish. Murthdria was the first elf born under the sea, just as Aldrya was the first elf born upon the earth, and thus her people were thereafter known as the Murthoi. However, during the wars leading up to the Ice Age, various changes occurred which split the Murthoi into three different races.

The first to deviate from the Murthoi norm were the Makisanti, named after their greatest hero. They defended the primal tree Falamal alongside the proto-Embyli. However when the Spike imploded, instead of fleeing—as the proto-Embyli did—they descended with Falamal into the Underworld. They continued to defend him in the Underworld until the Dawn Age when, for reasons unknown, they were suddenly returned to the Inner World.

The second Murthoi to deviate from their norm were the Alim, a group of ascetic philosophers who refused to fight in the great mythic wars. When the oceans of the world began to grow salty—which the Alim claim was due to their water god being wounded and bleeding into the oceans – the Alim fled inland. They now live in freshwater lakes. As previously mentioned the Alim are believed to be the elf race most similar to the archetypical Aldryami of the Green Age. They remain soft, pliable, and largely unable to defend themselves.

The third group of Murthoi are those who stayed behind to tend to the world after the Makisanti had adventured on and the Alim had fled. They grew harder, for they were not afraid to fight, but they do not become as mighty of warriors as the Makisanti. This race is called the Gentari, which means 'Gardener' in Murthoi. Since the Dawn Age return of the Makisanti, the two have shared cities, but they have never experienced an 'Aldrya's Woe' like that which occurred on the surface.

'We trade with humans. We help guide ships in the worst storms. We bear you no ill will. But dare to enter into our seaweed forests, and the entire weight of the sea will soon be at your shore.'

— Sesthori Waverider, Gentari gardener

Despite their differentiation, the three Murthoi species still possess many of the same features. They are all waterbound Aldryami, unable to breathe air. They likewise cannot walk upon the land because they have a long, whip-like tail rather than legs. The Murthoi also seem to generally have a low sensitivity to death—even among the Aldryami races which typically view it without fear. If we could ascribe human emotions to these plant beings, we would generally say that they are 'cruel' and 'uncaring'.

The Gentari and Makisanti each have four sexes, two of which produce a seed, the third of which brings that seed to a faraway location, and the fourth of which brings it to term. The idea of ‘drift’—which is at the heart of this seed’s traversal—is also of general importance to both the Gentari and the Makisanti. These Murthoi often undergo nomadic travels during their youth, as they drift about the world.

The Alim, meanwhile, have only one sex. Studies to determine whether this represents a more ideal stage of Aldryami existence or whether their additional sexes were slain in their journeys inland have been inconclusive. Rather than using dryads, Alim reproduce by breaking off portions of themselves.

As already mentioned, the Alim live in freshwater lakes—primarily in Genertela. The Gentari and Makisanti live in shared cities all along the coasts of the major continents and islands of Glorantha. Ombast’s theories of drifting Murthoi forests are largely fantasies, again based upon insufficient research. It appears that there are a few such floating forests, but they are by far the minority among the Murthoi people.



Halamali: The White Elfs

‘We remember the Halamali. The goldenelms, the lightboughs, the sunbirches. We remember their glowing light, forever bright upon Halamalao’s surface. They are lost to us now, forever gone, lost in the darkness which has swallowed them whole. They are taken.’

— Terinia Softwood, Mreli philosopher

Although there is no evidence of their continued existence, I mention the Halamali—whom I have named the ‘white elfs’—out of completeness. The Aldryami worship a trinity of landscape deities: the earth, the sea, and the sun, who are also the providers from whom they derive sustenance. Just as the Shen Senae were born of the earth and the Murthoi were born of the sea, the Halamali were born of the sun. They were lost after the Spike imploded and the sun was doused. There are stories of these legendary Halamali throughout the Aldryami mythology, but if they truly did exist they left no artefacts in the world, and we have likewise been unable to find them on the Hero Plane.

Dryads: The Tree Spirits

‘You categorize dryads as nymphs, and thus see them as a general part of the natural landscape. You try and draw connections between them, oreads, hags, and many other spiritual beings. But you fail to understand the true nature of a dryad. They are the spirits of the tree, and as we are brothers to the forest, so are they are sisters. They are the very forest of which we are a part, and thus they are Aldryami too.’

— Ferifil Treebridger, Aldryami diplomat

There can be no question that dryads are part of the natural world, and thus of the ecosystem to which the Aldryami belong. However, despite statements to the contrary, the dryads are not Aldryami as we otherwise understand them. Thus my colleague Mogad the Stern



must be considered entirely incorrect in his attempt to label them 'orange elves'. The Aldryami proper are born of the plant world, and created of plant matter. They possess a spiritual component shown in the ease with which they can commune with their forests, but it is secondary at best. Conversely, dryads are born of the spiritual world, and if their bodies seem plant-like, we must also realize that they are entirely ephemeral as is evidenced by the fact that they decompose rapidly following death.

Properly, each dryad is the spirit of a grove of trees. There might be ten or twenty trees within a grove, but nonetheless that grove will only give birth to a single dryad at a time. Each dryad is born of a specific tree within a grove, and if that tree is destroyed the dryad will die as well. A new dryad will soon be born from another tree within the grove. I had originally hoped to determine the effects of transplanting, pruning, and grafting upon a dryad, but our two researchers assigned to that task were both killed due to the prejudice of the Aldryami within their forest.

Though the core of a dryad is spiritual, she nonetheless takes on an entirely physical existence while embodied. She can be harmed and she can be killed. As our

research upon the Embyli has shown, she can even bear Aldryami seeds—though this practice seems very rare outside of the Embyli jungles.

Dryads are very highly respected by Aldryami because of their inherent ties to the forest. Dryads tend to have particularly strong life sense, and they are always especially aware of the status of their home grove. Dryads also possess various magical powers—some of them mischievous—which allow them to protect their home groves. They can change paths, move vegetation, and even encourage native animals to aggression. Because there are thousands of dryads in most forests, they are one of the prime deterrents we face when considering aggression against the Aldryami.

The respect given to dryads also results in them being given notable authority within their forests and jungles. As noted, this has resulted in matriarchies in some Embyli lands, but even in the western forests where the Vronkali tend to rule, careful attention is still given to dryad counsel.

Runners and Pixies: The Elflings

'Then the beasts, they began to howl, and they began to throw rocks, stones, and branches. One moment there was just a few, and then there was a hundred. They covered the trees, they deafened us with their screeches, and they filled the sky with a rain of death.'

— Truget, peasant

A bestiary of the elf races would not be complete without a mention of the semi-sentient races that inhabit Aldryami forests. There are two distinct types.

First are the runners which are apelike beings with a rudimentary animal-like intelligence. They are used by the Aldryami as workers, tending plants with simple needs, removing debris, and otherwise keeping the forests clean. In this way they are not unlike a peasant caste, though with less intelligence.



Second are the pixies, which are a stranger species. These flying plant beings largely exist to pollinate flowers. By all logic they should be even less intelligent than the runners due to their reduced size and utility. Nonetheless they seem nearly fully intelligent, though some Aldryami claim this is a recent change that came about in the Gray Age or Dawn Age. Some of the pixies that my researchers met were extremely impish. At least two of my researchers were wounded due to their 'pranks', though neither needed to be put down.

Interviews suggest that there are cognate species under the sea. I use the word 'murthing' to refer to the runners which live in seaweed forests, while the underwater pixie-like beings seem to be called 'flitters', some of

which tend coastal coral reefs. None of my researchers were able to make contact with these undersea beings, but the argument for their existence is strong.

Trees and Great Trees: The Forests

'If I have to step a single foot into an elf wood, I demand immediate danger pay. No sane person would ever enter one unless there were sufficient silvers on the line.'

— Gurek Runespear, Mercenary of Safelsjer

Finally, let me mention the forests themselves. Though they are generally not intelligent entities as we understand them, the Aldryami are able to communicate with them, to make general assessments of the overall health of an entire wood, and even to detect a forest's overall desire.

This close empathy also makes Aldryami woods very dangerous. Thus we have fallen afoul of trap plants, sneeze plants, and itch plants. We have been turned back by barrier plants, and on that cursed trek into the Errinoru Jungle several of our knights were slain by spike plants, poison plants, and hanging plants alike.

No treatise on the plant species of Glorantha would be complete without some mention of the Great Trees. These are the first plants born from Falamal's seeds, and thus the ideal reflections of these plants within the world. They are huge, overarching trees that are strong, sturdy, and immortal. They are also fully intelligent and, like the dryads, are a strong force within the councils of the Aldryami due to their inherent ties to the forests. The number of Great Trees has slowly decreased over time, but I believe there to be at least twenty remaining on the continents of Genertela and Pamaltela. Most are at the heart of the mightiest Aldryami forests, and their very existences tend to be a great secret.

Elf Gardening

'Would you let ivy overgrow your solid stone houses? Would you let your fields of grain become filled with weeds? Of course not and so it is for us. We garden. We tend our forests. But that is an action filled equally with life and death, with giving and taking. It is the Cycle which makes up our world. We grow and we prune alike, all thanks to the vision of our high gardeners. We germinate seeds and we fear down trees. That is true gardening, just as it is the true Mreli nature.'

—Terinia Softwood, Mreli philosopher

Though the Aldryami warders are spoken of with great reverence and fear, especially when they gather together into the Marching Aldryami, they are not the greatest force within an Aldryami wood. It is the Aldryami gardeners who are the strongest force among the Aldryami.

There are gardeners among all the Aldryami races. In mixed Mreli and Vronkali forests, Mreli take on the role more often and Vronkali less so, but these are not absolutes. Of all the races, dryads are most frequently gardeners because of their close connections to the land. Among Slorifings only the Genthre tribe practice gardening, and they are not found in every swamp.

The overall role of an Aldryami gardener is to improve the health of his forest. An Aldryami presence, it should be noted, is not required for every forest to prosper. There are woods which exist largely or entirely without Aldryami aid. However the Elf Woods which benefit from gardening are usually healthier, older, and denser than the wilder, more chaotic woods which are not gardened by Aldryami.

Generally gardeners take part in five tasks: tending, growing, pruning, shaping, and planning.

Tending is the lowest and simplest task that may be given to a gardener. Tenders watch over the health of the plants within a certain region. They ensure that

their wards are getting sufficient sunlight, sufficient water, and that the soil remains healthy. They know how to heal wounded plants and ward off disease spirits. Sometimes they cut back wounded limbs or even transplant vegetation which has escaped from its intended area. Tenders are the gardeners who most frequently interact with the elf-like runners, which help to watch over a territory and tell tenders which areas need special attention.

Growing begins with the pollination of flowers or the spreading of seeds. Some growers spend all of their time carrying seeds from one locale to another. In this activity they work closely with pixies, which are more attuned to the generative aspects of an elf wood than any true Aldryami. However, most growers only work toward germination in the most fertile seasons. During the rest of the year they tend to their young, budding offspring. As such they work much like the lower level tenders, but their responsibility is greater because they are tending only the youngest, most vulnerable plants.

Pruning is a peculiar type of gardening because it focuses on killing off unwelcome plants. Though most gardeners work their way up through the hierarchy of tasks as they gain in age and experience, only a few become pruners. They are those growers who are picked solely for their affinity with the Aldryami Taker—and it is a rare gardener who actually possesses the appropriate type of spirit for this task. Pruners understand a bigger picture than tenders or growers: rather than concentrating on the health of a single plant, they instead look at how individual plants affect the forest as a whole. They recognize that sometimes plants must be put down because they would otherwise overgrow other ecosystems or because they are acting as a vector for diseases to enter a forest. Pruners are correspondingly grimmer and more matter-of-fact than most gardeners.

Shaping involves the actual manipulation of plant growth through magical forces accessible through an elf's life sense. Though they can not speed up growth, shapers can determine the directions in which plants and trees grow. It is the shapers who are responsible for the mighty thorn hedges and the precise placement of trap trees to block entrance into their forests. The lowliest shapers are able to manipulate plants to grow in natural but specific ways. The mightiest shapers

can make trees and other plants grow into entirely unnatural shapes according to the shapers' whims. It is a philosophy that we could learn from, for it matches our own shaping desires in the Hero Plane.

Planning is the greatest of all gardening tasks, and thus planners are the most highly esteemed and skilled of all gardeners. They often become wood lords or heroes within their woods. Planners engage in serious investigations of a forest's overall ecosystem. They no longer care in the least about individual plants, but instead understand a forest as a whole. As such they also must be masters of the Aldryami life sense. Planners ultimately direct growers and pruners, telling them what to grow and what to take; just as shapers change the form of individual plants, planners change the shape of the woods as a whole, though these changes may be slow and subtle, taking hundreds of years to complete.

Though they would not appreciate the analogy, Aldryami gardeners work together like a finely oiled machine, and thus have more in common with the Mostali race than they would have expected. Together they create forests which are perfectly designed for the area in which they grow, are the best poised for growth as new lands open up, and are overall the ideal forest that could exist in that place. This philosophy and activity is one of the reasons that we have often given Aldryami respect and support in Seshnela, for they bring the ideal down onto Glorantha.

Aldryami Culture

Any true Malkioni will understand when I say that Aldryami society is entirely unnatural. We understand the natural place of beings within the Order of the World. Peasants work, knights war, nobles rule, and wizards know. This is almost entirely anathematic to the Aldryami world-view which instead allows for entirely unbounded individual choice.

There are, of course, roles within Aldryami society. I have already spoken of the warders and the gardeners, the two most important Aldryami 'castes'. Aldryami also take on the roles of philosophers and diplomats. They become closely attuned to the earth, the sun, or the water. Some may travel while others stay within their woods. Uniquely, however, this is the choice of

the individuals—which might perhaps explain why the Aldryami have never risen to a greater role within the world.

Besides having individual choice, each Aldryami within a forest is also given the power of individual decision. They are trusted to decide upon matters which might affect their fellows or their forest. It is as if each individual were a lord and all the other Aldryami were his peasants—and if that were the situation alone we could understand—but this unequal relation instead applies to every Aldryami equally.

However, there is more to Aldryami culture than mere anarchy—except, apparently, in Slorifing colonies where anarchy does tend to reign. However, for all other Aldryami personal choice is ultimately constrained by two major factors: collective knowledge and the good of the forest.

Collective Knowledge

'Seyotel tells us everything. It is how we learn which parts of our forest have grown too much and which need more tending and care. It is how we discover where we need warriors and where we need gardeners. It is how we discover the will of the trees, the brush, and the low-growing vine. Without Seyotel we would be blind, deaf, and dumb, but with her we are one with our forest and party to its wonder, its life, and its vitality.'

—Ferifil Treebridger, Aldryami diplomat

I have already written of life-sense, and the ability of any individual elf to reach out into this magical web that connects each Aldryami forest. Through it individuals can quickly assess how nearby individuals feel about a decision and over a lengthier period of perhaps a day or two they can determine the general feeling of a forest toward an individual decision.

This ability ultimately impacts any important decision that an Aldryami makes. Though some decisions can and must be made immediately, for any longer term decision that is likely to impact the forest as a whole

an Aldryami will consult with the entire forest and make sure he understands the impact his decision will have upon others and how they feel about it. This decision-making process is so deeply ingrained in the Aldryami psyche that an Aldryami is unlikely to even realize it is part of what he does. In experiments where we presented Vronkali test subjects with a difficult decision we often found that they would arrive at a firm decision after sleeping on it overnight, during which time they communed with the life-sense as they slept.

Though Aldryami always take input upon their decisions, individuals do not always act with consensus. Most do, without doubt, but Aldryami heroes tend to be more individualized. They have more self-confidence in their own abilities and more belief that they may know better than the forest as a whole. These Aldryami will sometimes learn what the forest thinks, then act against it. Aldryami not living in forests are, of course, without access to life-sense, and thus must make decisions without collective knowledge.

The Good of the Forest

'I do not understand. Why would I even consider cutting down that tree if the forest not need it? That is not in my nature.'

— Chubbys Quickprune, Embyli gardener

However there is another major factor that affects every Aldryami decision. The idea of the 'good of the forest' seems to be grown into the very grain of the Aldryami people. Any individual acting on his or her own considers it, and any collective knowledge will ultimately depend on it.

We see self-sacrificial behaviour in our own peasants. A farmer may, for example, throw himself at a bestial bear in order to protect his child. This is a unique trait of loyalty which seems born into our peasant stock. Likewise it is grown into the Aldryami, but to an even greater extent.

Let me put it simply: an Aldryami would never purposefully take an action which brought more harm to his forest than good. This is not a rule, nor a legal writ. If it is a law, it is a law of nature that germinates deep within an Aldryami's mind. An Aldryami would never think to act against this law because it would be acting against his very nature. It is as likely that a cow would fly or a peasant would suddenly write a sorcerous tome.

However it is notable that Aldryami also look at the world in broad swaths. The good of the forest is not the good of an individual. If a tree must be cut down for the forest to grow, then so be it (and we have already seen this philosophy in the work of the pruners). Likewise individual Aldryami will give their life without complaint or regret if it will improve the forest as a whole. This is yet another factor that makes the Marching Aldryami particularly fierce.

I should finally note that the Aldryami are not omniscient—nor is the collective knowledge of the Aldryami. They can individually make mistakes which might indeed harm the forest. If they do there is no guilt and no regret, for everyone knows that they tried their best. The role of an Aldryami who has harmed his forest is to repair that harm, but there is no additional onus placed upon him.

The Role of the Council

'Everyone knows that elves are ruled by kings and queens. I have seen the rulers of Ballid with my own eyes. They were hulking plant monsters with lifthe, beautiful brides. And I have heard tales of whole courts: elf lords, ladies, and knights entertained at huge feasts by jesters and other entertainers.'

— Gurek Runespear, Mercenary of Safelster

Discussions of individual Aldryami choice and collective Aldryami knowledge may seem odd to some. In Seshnela our interactions with Aldryami

have always occurred through special councils of Aldryami elders. We have also encountered councils in our investigations into Pamaltelan forests—except in the Errinoru Jungle where that hero's descendents continue to rule. In Ralios a king and queen regularly hold court within Ballid.

It would surprise many to learn that these councils are largely facades, meant only to interact with, and perhaps impress, us. Nonetheless, they do serve real purposes within Aldryami cultures, for they allow the interaction with other races. We are too fast for them. We who are powerful enough to talk to the Aldryami councils are willing to quickly make decisions that might affect all of our peoples with just a few moments careful consideration. Aldryami, if given their choice, would prefer to ensure that all such large decisions were considered by the forest as a whole through the slow empathy of life-sense. This would bring any negotiations with other races to a halt, and so the Aldryami instead allow their councillors to make such decisions.

Aldryami councils are not elected. They are instead made up of the people who are best connected to various aspects of the forest. A standard Aldryami council has eight seats. The Great Tree is the being which has the best understanding of the forest as a whole; for the more important Aldryami forests it is the literal Great Tree of that forest. The Elder Sister is the being who best understands the mobile plants of a forest; she is usually a dryad. The Hero is the being who best understands the overall goals and purposes of a forest, often those laid down by some mythical hero before the Dawn; in most forests this seat is known as The High King Elf. The Mother Earth, The Lightson, and The Healing Waters are those beings which best understand the earth, the sun, and the water; they are typically wood lords of the appropriate pagan gods, Gata, Halamalao, and Eron. The Gardener best understands not just the shape of the forest, but also its future potential; this role is usually taken by a planner who is coordinating the gardeners of his forest. Finally there is a last seat called He We Name Not. It is often empty, and we believe it may be left so for a hero who the Aldryami believe will some day return them to glory.

Because of their strong connections with the various elements which are important to a forest Aldryami Councils can make decisions in 'human time' and still do so in a manner which is likely to reflect the desires of the forest as a whole. The Councils are thus trusted to make these decisions, and the forests ultimately abide by them. However, for internal matters the Council is not usually consulted; their voices are heard within the web of life-sense like all others.

Within Glorantha the ideal organization of the Aldryami Council has been tainted by reality to some extent. In mixed Vronkali and Mreli forests, Vronkali tend to make up the entirety of Councils, even if there are more qualified Mreli in the same forest. This is a continued reflection of the respect given to the Vronkali for their role as Awakeners; it is probably also a weakness in Vronkali and Mreli forests that we might exploit if the need ever arises. In the eastern jungles, the Embyli tend to give their greatest respect to the Elder Sisters of their Council, inevitably dryads. Because the dryads are esteemed to the point of deference within the collective life-sense, we often speak of Embyli jungles as Queendoms. Inevitably what the dryads say goes, except of course in Errinoru where the last Queendom was overthrown when Errinoru unified the jungle.

Of Dwarfs and Trolls

While I am breaking down commonly held—but false—beliefs about the Aldryami, I must of course speak of their cultural antipathy toward the dwarf and troll races. Many myths are full of warfare between Mostali and Aldryami, while Uz are an occasional aggressor as well. We even saw numerous skirmishes amongst these Elder Races in our current age, when the Aldryami emerged from their forests following their own racial genocide.

Remarkably Aldryami have no racial hatred for the Mostali or Uz. They speak of them as part of the 'balance', which I will return to when discussing their philosophy. Mostali and Uz do not seem to feel likewise, and in particular Mostali seem to think that elves are 'infesting' their machinery. This may give some rise to the talk of racial hatred.

(Uz apparently do not hate Aldryami; they just think they are tasty.)

Of Humans

'Never trust a human.'

— Aldryami proverb

Aldryami cultural interactions with humans are perhaps even more confusing. The Aldryami as a race tend to have a single emotion directed toward humans: distrust. They call us a 'red race' to reflect the fact—according to their mythology—that we were born in the Red Age, when the world was divided between the forces of life and death. This is the same category into which they place animals, mermen, and the Slorifings. As a red race we supposedly take part of the two great forces of universe.

Looking at this from the Invisible God's true understanding of the world, it is easy to understand what they see. As the children of Malkion, we are the only complete creatures in the universe. We partake of all parts of the world equally, as opposed to the stunted Elder Races that—again according to the Aldryami—are only able to understand half of the universe at best. However, because of our completed perfection the Aldryami are not able to understand humanity, nor are they able to predict our actions. Thus their common philosophy is that we should be distrusted.

However individual Aldryami forests tend to take their own views of nearby humans. We long ago befriended the Aldryami of Seshnela, and even convinced them to give over to us those lands that they did not need. The Aldryami of Umathela have befriended certain primitives though they war against our own righteous forces. Tarinwood seems to take a similar point of view, befriending the primitive peoples that we have converted in our righteous crusade, but turning wooden ears to our own entreaties.

Whatever attitude Aldryami take to those native humans, their attitude toward outsiders is almost always distrust, suspicion, and unwarranted aggression.

The Rootless

'I once met an elf who said he was rootless. He was a mercenary too, and he was the craziest person I've ever met. He had no fear of death. He led every charge, faced down every rune priest, and went first into any enemy stronghold. He was finally eaten by a troll one day, and he died fighting, slashing and cutting as the troll gnawed at him, rather than trying to get away. It was like he had nothing to lose.'

— Curek Runespear, Mercenary of Safelsfer

Though I speak of the Aldryami as a cohesive whole, there is one exception: the rootless elf. These are Aldryami who do not have access to life sense. Some are born this way while others slowly lose their connection to life sense due to removal from the Aldryami community.

(This is most likely the cause of the insanity that sets in on Aldryami too long removed from their society.)

Rootless Aldryami are considered entirely helpless by others of their race. They do not understand the state of the forest, and they are unable to offer either their knowledge or their opinions to the Aldryami collective. They can participate in pagan Aldryami rituals at only the most superficial levels, and they have no ability to connect with the Aldryami gods. Of all the Aldryami they are the only ones able to purposefully do harm to the forest.

Some rootless Aldryami are cared for by their brethren. They are not allowed to participate in tasks within their forests because their lack of understanding of the forest's status might cause them to do harm. Instead they are provided with whatever they need and otherwise left alone. Many rootless Aldryami decide to leave the forest; they usually try and find new communities by joining pagan cults. Others are driven from the elf woods because they become deranged and purposefully harm their woods. Others are simply pruned.

Aldryami Names

'Five hundred years ago my grandfather faced down an army of peasants who came to burn our wood. I still proudly bear his sapname.'

— *Verafin Firesopper, Vronkali warder*

Despite the collective actions that they take, Aldryami do have entirely personal names. It is what distinguishes them from the forest as a whole. As is common, Aldryami have a personal name and a surname. The surname follows their sapline.

Sapline names usually originated as deed names. Some ancestor was noted for some particular trait or for some notable action and was then given a deed name. The name has since been handed down through the sapline and is kept until some descendent is so notable that he is given a deed name of his own—which is then used by that hero and all of his sapline descendents. As a result of their origin in deed names, surnames almost always have a common translation.

When an Aldryami introduces himself to a member of another race, he tends to do so by offering his personal name and his translated sapline name. I offer as an example Terinia Softwood, one of the elves who offered my researchers the most aid in preparing their reports.

Among the four land-dwelling elf races, Mreli and Vronkali have very similar names which are quite common in the Aldryami language, Embyli tend toward much harsher names with guttural 'g's and cutting 'x's and 't's being common, while Slorifings tend to have short and simple names.

Aldryami Communication

'Can you feel the winds whispering through the trees? Can you hear the babbling of the streams? Can you detect the pockets of activity and silence within the wood? If not then you would never understand our language.'

— *Eriniitha Flowerbloom, dryad*

The Aldryami use three different methods of communication: life sense, song, and speech.

Life Sense

Life sense is their most primitive form of communication. It is the entirely silent and empathic method which allows Aldryami to understand the feelings of their fellows and the forest itself.

Individuals can also use life sense to communicate when they are in close proximity—although it appears that life sense is never able to transmit more than the simplest concepts. However, the ability to transmit such individualistic conversations deteriorates rapidly with distance. The explanation offered for this by various Aldryami is not entirely understandable. However, the reason appears to be because life sense is *not* entirely mental. Instead it is transmitted at least partially through the presence of the woods themselves. One dryad suggested that it could be heard in the wind, in the waters, and through the trees.

As a result this makes life sense fairly 'contextual'. The further away two Aldryami are, the less aware they are of each others' surroundings, and thus the less able they are to understand all the information encoded in each others' messages. With greater distance emotions remain but individuality is increasingly lost.

The greatest use of life sense as a communication medium seems to be for a purpose already mentioned: community decisions. Because these decisions involve an entire web of Aldryami scattered across a forest, the issue of distance is greatly reduced. Each Aldryami tends to be near some others that are a part of the communication, and thus the context—the understanding of each Aldryami’s surroundings and what they mean—is maintained. However, no Aldryami can *consciously* communicate with so many others, and thus any such community decision is entirely subconscious, with an elf only becoming aware of a consensus when it has drifted through the entire web, a process that can take days.

Song

‘If you ever hear the elfs sing, it is a beautiful thing. Their voices melodize together like the most heavenly choir, and you can feel your soul go straight up to Solace.’

— *Unnamed Malkioni heretic*

Song appears to be the true communication method of the Aldryami people. It uses their common tongues, which I will return to shortly, but it is a largely ecstatic manner of communication. Like life sense, song is a form of group communication, with many individuals all joining together; each Aldryami takes their part in the larger chorus and thus creates a beautiful and harmonious whole.

The importance of song to the Aldryami people can be seen in the fact that they use it as metaphor for their entire religious belief system. They claim that all of their pagan gods are a part of the ‘Song of the World’. When they speak of their gods they call them ‘maternal songs’ (meaning the maternal deities like Aldryami), ‘worldly songs’ (meaning the elemental gods like Gata), and ‘spiritual songs’ (meaning uniquely Aldryami deities like Seyotel). They communicate with these gods through life sense, and the Aldryami say that is a song too.

Aldryami songs are amazingly freeform. They often start spontaneously, with other Aldryami joining in as they desire. Despite that, the songs are remarkably harmonious, with the Aldryami voices blending together almost seamlessly.

Though Aldryami songs are clearly based in the Aldryami languages, only some words are actually recognisable. Often individual syllables aren’t intelligible at all, except as being made up of the same patterns of sounds as Aldryami speech itself.

It appears that song actually makes it easier for Aldryami to understand each other through life sense by increasing the feeling of community and oneness among the participants. Thus these unrecognisable syllables are probably shorthand for more complete concepts that are only understandable by others who are both a part of the song and a part of the life sense web.

Song is most frequently used by Aldryami in rituals. It is also used in some communal meetings. Like life sense itself, song is a slow medium of communication. However, that does not appear to be its primary purpose; it is more often used in rituals where participants repeat standardized psalms. When song is used in communal meetings for purposes of communal knowledge or decision, it is clearly more efficient than life sense—which again argues its main purpose as an augmentation of the more primal elf sense. Decisions can be made in hours rather than days through song, and like those made through life sense they are truly understood and agreed upon by the community.

Language

‘I know one merc, he learned the elf language just because he was trying to get a leg up. He wanted to be the whole communicator-to-the-elfs, hero-to-his-battalion-commander thing. Now these elfs, this was in Ralios, they’d always made us jump through all these hoops with translators and all that whenever we talked to. But Dirk, he started talking kind of halting Aldryami to them one day to try and speed things up, and I swear these elfs smirked, and then they started speaking entirely fluent common. They were just playing with us the whole time, and Dirk, he spent all that time and energy for nothing. The battalion commander could do his own speaking afterward.’

Last I heard, Dirk was trying to learn dwarf.’

— *Gurek Runespear, Mercenary of Safelster*

The third manner of Aldryami communication is language. In many ways it is surprisingly similar to human language. It does not have the grunts and less verbal communications of the trolls nor the indistinguishable subtleties of the wyrm languages. Instead it is as if Aldryami were created to be spoken with humans—which may indeed be the case, though it is definitely used within Aldryami communities as well for its huge advantages in speed.

There are at least three major Aldryami languages.

The first, Aldryami, is spoken by most Aldryami, including the Mreli, Vronkali, and Embyli. It is believed to be the primal language of the Aldryami people. The language makes more use of vowels than most languages, and each one is pronounced, rather than blending together into longer syllables. There also tends to be a greater distribution of soft sounds like ‘f’, ‘r’, ‘s’, and ‘v’ in Aldryami. Sound distribution is slightly different among the Embyli who tend toward more full sounds like ‘gh’ and ‘rr’ and more unusual sounds like ‘x’, ‘y’ and ‘z’. Some of this may be accent, but it also results in slightly different Embyli names, as already noted.

Murthoi is a very similar language spoken by the blue elves. It appears to be a close cognate of Aldryami. The two languages are not interchangeable, but speakers of one language can usually express simple concepts in the other. Murthoi is a very sibilant language with heavy use of ‘s’ and soft vowels.

The Slorifings seem to speak entirely degenerate languages that are almost unrecognisable. They may be variants of Aldryami, but if so they have badly devolved. Amongst Slorifing adventurers I have found two entirely different dialects which aren’t at all compatible. Vorlarian seems to come from western Pamaltelan and Parolarian seems to come from eastern Pamaltela. Some Slorifing tales speak of the ‘hilarious’ misunderstandings that occur when different tribes of Slorifings attempt to speak each other, which leads me to believe that there may be even more Slorifing languages. Perhaps each tribe, no matter how small, has its own method of speech.

Aldryami and Murthoi both seem to have a written language, though they are reluctant to speak of them. It appears that they can temporarily preserve speech in plants, using trees, flower beds, or other natural growth as chalkboards of sorts. They also have developed

methods for more permanently storing this writing as marks on tree bark. Slorifings were confused when my researcher asked them about written languages.

Aldryami Philosophy

Though I have alluded to them already, let me now specifically describe the two cornerstones of Aldryami philosophy, The balance and the cycle.

The Balance

‘We Vronkali are of the Grower. We were born of Falamal and Gata, the greatest tree and the bountiful earth. We strive to bring green growth to the world. But the ice demons, they are of the Taker. They were born of her dark nature and the frozen snow. They strive to bring frozen stasis to the world. Every winter we war, the Vronkali against the ice demons, life against death, Grower against Taker.’

That is the Balance.’

— Resitus Evergreen, Vronkali warder

The Aldryami philosophy is at heart a simplistic dualism. They believe in two great forces within the universe which they call the Grower and the Taker. At first these forces lived outside the universe, but upon entering the universe they divided into many parts. Now these forces make up the entire universe and are the ultimate creators of everything within the world.

The Grower has three elemental forms: the earth goddess Gata, the sun god Halamalao, and the water god Eron. These are the ‘good’ elements, or as the Aldryami would say, the Grower’s elements. Major Aldryami racial divisions are based upon where the primal tree Falamal’s seeds fell. When Falamal’s seeds fell on Gata, that gave rise to the Shen Senae. Eron gave rise to the Murthoi and Halamalao to the legendary Halamali. These races are all called the ‘children of the Grower’. Not surprisingly they are also all Aldryami, thus allowing the elves a simplistic measure of their ‘us’ nature.

The Taker has three elemental forms: the stone god Ekeem, the darkness goddess Zasara, and the not-water god Iri. These are the 'bad' elements, or as the Aldryami would say, the Taker's Elementals. The elves claim that other Elder Races arose from these elements: dwarfs from Ekeem, trolls from Zasara, and various assorted creatures like ice demons and fire men from Iri. These races are all called the 'children of the Taker' and it is again not surprising that their most antagonistic relations are grouped into this category.

The Aldryami claim that all other races—except the dragon peoples—are hybridized. They are made up of parts of both the Grower and the Taker. We Malkioni might more correctly recognize these peoples as 'complete', unlike the more simplistic Elder Races. As already discussed, these 'red races' include humans, animals, mermen, and the Slorifings.

Having developed a dualistic split of the world, the Aldryami further extend that philosophy with fatalism. They believe that each creature has an essential nature which is based upon the element from which it was born. Children of the Grower are meant to extend the role of plants and life in the world while children of the Taker are meant to pillage and destroy. This explains the many clashes between Aldryami and trolls, dwarfs, and ice demons. It is a natural and expected part of the world.

This fatalism is a necessary part of a true understanding of the Aldryami's philosophy of balance. It states not only that there are two great forces in the universe, unlike and apart, but also that this is expected and healthy. When the forces are not in balance, bad things occur. The Aldryami explain the Green Age as a time of the Grower's excess and the Greater Darkness as a time of the Taker's excess, and proclaim that each almost destroyed the universe. Therefore the optimal position for the universe is to lie equally in the domains of the Grower and the Taker: that is balance.

'The trolls, the dwarfs, and those lost things are takers. They eat the light, harden the earth, and corrupt the water. But no, we do not hate them for this. Would they hate us for brightening the sky, loosening the earth, or stilling the waves? Would you?'

— Ferifil Treebridger, Aldryami diplomat

As a result, the Aldryami—at least according to their philosophy—never attempt to totally wipe out their enemy races. Nor do they hold any inherent animosity for those races. They believe that trolls, dwarfs and the others are acting in the best interest of the world, just as they are. They will as happily work a field with a dwarf to grow new crops as they will slaughter a battalion of trolls. There is not emotion in either decision, simply an attempt to embrace the basic natures of the universe.

The anomaly to the Aldryami's simple dualistic belief is Chaos. In their own tongue the Aldryami call this force 'oblivion'. They again explain this with a dualism, saying that the force which gave birth to the Grower and the Taker was 'potential'—the possibility for the universe to have life—and that afterward a second force intent on utterly erasing the universe snuck in, and that was 'oblivion'. Although there are far fewer stories found on the Hero Plane of mighty battalions of Aldryami warring against Chaos, the Aldryami claim that they are just as opposed to it as the mighty Chaos-fighting trolls.

The Cycle

'I sleep and I go to the dead place. I wake and I return to the world. This is no different than what will happen when this body faces true death some day.'

— Terinia Softwood, Mreli philosopher

The other core Aldryami belief, the 'cycle', centres on Aldryami beliefs about life after death. Again, it is dualistic. Just as there is an above ground world where all life lives and prospers, that which we call Glorantha, there is also a below ground world where everything is dead. The Aldryami call this place Trigora, and believe that it is a part of the Taker.

Trigora is a terrible, gray place which we could classify as one of the many pagan hells. It has a corrosive influence which slowly eats away at the memories of those who are confined there until there is nothing left but a gray, desiccated husk. Powerful heroes and living creatures are both able to resist this effect, but for the vast majority of Aldryami everything that they knew and learned is lost.

After being hewn down to their essential nature, the Aldryami are then reborn into the world. This is the essence of the cycle: life leads to death, but then in turn death leads to life. In some ways it is a restatement of the philosophy of the balance, but here it is given a more explicit form as a core of universal Aldryami religious belief. It is also a close cognate to certain eastern beliefs of resurrection, and this correlation should be noted for future study.

Again Chaos is that force which can disrupt this philosophy. The Aldryami sometimes call Chaos ‘that which takes without giving’. Beings lost to certain types of Chaos are erased from the face of the world, never to be seen again in Glorantha or Trigora.

In addition, becoming rootless can have this effect. Many rootless Aldryami flock to other pagan gods in search of new stories of life after death.

Minor Racial Variations

All Aldryami but the Slorifings hold to these beliefs, though some races have slightly variant philosophies.

The Vronkali seem less concerned about the balance than other Aldryami. This is likely because they are the ones most likely to be fighting the so-called children of the Taker. They generally see trolls, dwarfs, and ice demons more as forces of evil than a natural part of the world.

The dryads meanwhile believe in a variety of the cycle wherein individuals are not reborn; instead life force is generally recycled into the world as a blended whole. How different this is than being reborn without memory or skill is unclear—though a few of my researchers did find stories of Aldryami who claim to have rediscovered memories from past lives.

Because of their very different environments the Murthoi have developed new philosophies in addition to the balance and the cycle.

The Gentari and Makisanti talk about a general need for movement, which they call ‘the drift.’ It explains the constant migration of Murthoi through the underwater forests which encircle the Homeward Ocean.

The Alim, one of the least friendly of all the Aldryami tribes, talk of ‘the unity’, which is an understandable desire for purity not just in themselves, but also in the world.

Slorifing Philosophies

‘Goblins are crazy!’

—Curek Runespear, Mercenary of Safelsjer

Of all the Aldryami, only the Slorifings hold philosophies that are truly different from their kin. Some claim to have heard of the balance and the cycle—and a smaller number even seem to understand what they meant—but it is obvious that these ideas are neither well propagated nor deeply believed in the Slorifing swamps.

Like other Aldryami, Slorifings do not fear death. However they have taken the next step and seem to entirely embrace it. This appears to be a defensive reaction to the role of death in Slorifing birthing, and may be all that keeps the Slorifings’ minds stable, given the ever-approaching spectre of mortality in their lives. Whatever the reason, Slorifings will take on tasks that are dangerous or even deadly with little concern for their own survival. Military leaders should note that this could make them excellent shock troops against the vile dragon worshipers if only we can ever find sufficiently large Slorifing encampments.

The Slorifings further have a strong racial loyalty that embraces all of the goblinoid species but not the other Aldryami. Though the other Aldryami claim Slorifings as half-brothers, the Slorifings feel little relation to Aldryami as a whole.

Finally, Slorifings have a dangerous philosophy which my researchers have dubbed ‘the sporing’. They have an innate, in-born need to expand. In some this seems to embody itself as a desire to explore, which explains the Slorifing mercenary bands that we occasionally see even in Seshnela. However it can also embody itself as a warlike expansionistic urge. Some of the natives that we have been able to interview in Pamaltela talk of legendary goblin expansions which destroyed everything before them.

The race as a whole seems to feel the sporing sporadically. For tens of years not a single Slorifing leaves his home, and then suddenly they all begin

to do so, all across the world. This suggests some expansion of life sense beyond what the other Aldryami can do, because it simultaneously touches upon distinct Slorifing communities which have no actual communication with each other.

It appears that we are now entering a sporing period because the numbers of Slorifing explorers have begun to increase in the world. This document is being copied to some of my fellows in Pamaltela mainly as a warning against the possibility of Slorifing warfare erupting from the south.

Aldryami Society

Having now explained Aldryami methods of community and Aldryami philosophies, we can better understand the core of Aldryami society.

Communities

'My name is Arfia Hardmulch. I am a Mreli of the Tarinwood. My sapline goes back through six generations of cork oak trees to the time of the balance. Though I have no pod, I was once raised in one, and I may once raise saplings of my own, as the forest needs. I live in the goldenblossom grove at the edge of Heartwood. I name 73 Aldryami and two dryads my grove-fellows, and together we are community.'

— Arfia Hardmulch, Mreli gardener

Though each Aldryami lives within a forest, this is akin to saying that a peasant lives in the Middle Sea Empire. It is factual and correct, but it does not accurately describe that peasant's existence, when instead saying that he dwelled near the blessed city of Eradinthanos on the island of Jrustela would. Similarly, Aldryami have smaller communities, and describing those communities can better describe the lives of the Aldryami within.

The standard Aldryami community grouping is the 'grove'. They are universally small, never numbering more than a hundred of so Aldryami. Thus they are similar to our own villages.

A grove is always a geographical description. It contains the Aldryami who live within a set region of forest. The divisions between different groves appear largely arbitrary, but are actually based upon subtle climatological and ecological differences. Groves are also relatively homogeneous. Even in mixed Mreli/Vronkali or Gentari/Makisanti forests, only one of the races tends to live in a grove. This appears to be due to the biosphere-related divisions of groves rather than an explicit racial prejudice. Multiple Aldryami species can and do live within a grove, just as multiple types of trees grow within the area, but again these differences are limited by the climatological divisions inherent to a grove.

Almost every grove within a forest has the same purpose: the growth and protection of the nearby woods. However the occasional grove—perhaps one in a hundred—has a more specific goal that is intended to benefit the wood as a whole. My researchers learned of groves that grew specific types of weapons such as the legendary elf bow, that taught other Aldryami unusual skills, and that supported the High Council of the forest.

There is no explicit leadership within a grove. Life sense works well when Aldryami are in close proximity, and thus they are able to very quickly come to decisions without speaking and without the need for a specific arbiter. My researchers believe that a medium-sized grove can come to a true communal, consensus decision within 15 minutes.

Though most grove members act as independent equals, there is one further subdivision for some: the pod. A pod is a group of Aldryami that is raising one or more young. In Mreli and Vronkali forests they tend to be a simple familial group made up of a father, a mother, and one or more young, plus a few additional caretakers. Pods tend to grow quite large, with the same female Aldryami continuing to give birth to new Aldryami over an extended period of time. Whether this is an occupational specialization or simply a reflection of only a percentage of Aldryami being fertile is unclear.

Once a pod is founded it tends to stay together for decades, due to a combination of multiple children and an extended juvenile period for the young. However, once all of the children of a pod are grown, the pod breaks apart with no further emotional bounds remaining.

Community Dwellings

'You build, we grow. That is the difference between our peoples.'

— Farith Longstick, Vronkali warder

Common belief tends to hold that Aldryami dwell in their forests amidst the trees, under the open stars. This is another legend which I must dispute. In truth Aldryami create dwellings just like every other intelligent race. However they tend to grow them naturally. Woodshapers guide the growth of trees to form natural houses for Aldryami. They always live trees which continue to grow and be shaped. A researcher visiting Arstola reports raised tree-houses up among the limbs of trees, but most Aldryami communities seem to build at ground level within or between the trunks of trees.

Even by peasant standards, Aldryami dwellings tend to be quite small. Very few Aldryami have their own homes, and for those that do they are tiny, with room for bedding and a small quantity of personal objects, but little more. Most Aldryami live in larger community 'bunkhouses'. Additional community structures are grown to provide for other necessities like food and cleanliness. Some community structures actually are largely outside, just as is commonly envisioned. In particular song and ritual are almost always conducted beneath the stars. Plants are grown to help define the area and to provide certain props for the ceremonies, but there are no walls or ceilings.

Besides being shared, dwellings tend to be used by whoever currently has a need for them, but this leads to a more extensive description of Aldryami economy—or the lack thereof.

Aldryami Clothing

Likewise I must discount the inaccurate portrayal of Aldryami as naked primitives frolicking through the woods. The Aldryami are perhaps slightly better adjusted to their particular climates than other races, but nonetheless they require some protection from the elements. This tends to be one of the few reasons for Aldryami clothing, and thus it is almost always of a pure utilitarian nature: they wear clothes to survive the

cold and to be protected from sharp or thorny plants. Likewise they wear clothes to help them carry tools—and sometimes to protect them from the same.

Most Aldryami clothing is woven from simple plant material. The Aldryami grow specific plants which they call 'weave bushes' which provide a durable but plain fabric. Aldryami clothing tends to be grey, beige, or brown, depending on the exact species of weave bush, and is almost always unadorned. The warders are the only Aldryami who tend to dye their clothing. They use green and brown dyes—which are again derived from specific plants—to create clothing which can camouflage them in their woods.

The sole exceptions to the rule of simplicity and utilitarian design in Aldryami clothing are for those who interact with outsiders—Council members and diplomats in particular. These Aldryami tend to dress in high-quality clothing appropriate for the cultures which they are interacting with, or else wear clothing made from a beautiful silk-like material called 'elf hair' (which is a plant, and is sometimes sold and traded as well). This purely superficial façade put on for outsiders again demonstrates how Aldryami hide their true selves from the outside world, and instead offer up the images that they think others expect.

The Role of Copper

'The metals of Glorantha can likewise be viewed as atomic constructions built upon the fundamental runes of Glorantha. The fundamental atom that is part of every metal is law. Bronze, the most common metal found in the world, may thus be understood as law mixed with disorder—an imperfect combination that reflects the imperfect world. The so-called rune metals, however, mix law with the higher elements. Gold is thus a mixture of law and fire while copper is a mixture of law and earth.'

— Grobun Metallurge, Jrusteli Reconstructuralist

Traditional records consistently show that the Aldryami work with a single metal: copper. Repeatedly coming across this fact in my research placed me with a quandary. Though copper is the rune metal of the earth—and indeed the Mreli, Vronkali, and Embyli are all earth-



related elves—Aldryami nonetheless treat most metal as evil ‘stone’—the broken element which takes the place of fertile earth. One of my researchers discovered the answer to this mystery while making a secret foray into the Umathela wood: Aldryami grow copper on trees.

These ‘copper’ trees are called the Sunlit Trees and they grow best in warmer climates. According to legend they are one of the few trees which once grew upon the surface of the sun, but have survived to the present day upon the earth. The leaves of each tree are thin, shiny copper. When they fall copper crafters gather them together, and eventually use them to forge religious artefacts as well as weapons and armour for their woods’ greatest wood lords.

Aldryami copper seems functionally identical to normal, mined copper. Experienced metallurgists were unable to find any variation between the few leaves we collected and normal ore. Mixing the two together resulted in no separation, and afterward the strength of the copper was exactly as expected. Therefore we can only conclude that Aldryami copper is the same as the copper found under ground. Perhaps copper deposits are simply the remnants of fallen copper trees.

The land-based Aldryami have spells which enchant copper armour and weapons. This provides it with the strength of normal bronze. In addition the use of copper in numerous Aldryami rituals suggests that it increases those rituals’ power. My current belief is that it increases the life-sense ability of nearby Aldryami, thus providing deeper connections to the Aldryami gods when used.

I have been unable to ascertain whether any rune metal is used by the undersea Murthoi. Reconstructionist investigation suggests that if they do have similar enchantment spells to their land-based brethren, they probably revolve around aluminium, the water metal.

Economy

‘Why would we charge an Aldryami for the weapons he needed to defend our own community? Why would we prevent a crafter from doing his job by holding back tools? We are together, all one and all for life. We give what we can, we ask for what we need. That is true community, not the mazes of debt and obligation that you red races delight in.’

— Ferifil Treebridger, Aldryami diplomat

Internal to their society, Aldryami seem to have no understanding of—or at least no need for—an economy. Falling back to their cultural ideal of everyone working for ‘the good of the forest’, Aldryami take what they need from their fellows—as long as their need is the greater one. Again, life sense and the ability to form a collective understanding seem to help in this process.

If a human society tried to adopt such a philosophy it would likely lead to corruption and warfare. Even we could not expect our peasants to withstand the temptations of such a system. However, it seems to work surprisingly well for the Aldryami. They only request an item when they truly have a need for it and it truly will benefit the forest for them to have that item. There seems to be little or no true desire among Aldryami, so they would not demand something simply because they wanted it.

Normally a request is made, and the community decision-making of the Aldryami determines whether the return is worth the effort; the requesting Aldryami who was part of that decision-making then stands by it, whether his request was granted or not. In a more acute situation an Aldryami would simply take something that he felt like he needed. If the forest later decided that the need was not great enough they would request the item back, with no stigma attached to the original decision to take it.

Aldryami leaving the forest upon some greater task are usually showered with items that might help them in the greater world. Conversely rootless Aldryami are taken care of only out of a sense of pity or obligation.

Though the Aldryami have no economies within their forests, it is clear that they understand them because they are shrewd bargainers with outsiders. The main interaction of many Aldryami with other races is through the trade centres that they grow on the outskirts of these woods. These trade centres tend to offer special plants for trade—plants that are largely grown with the explicit purpose of trade. In return Aldryami ask for items which they are unable to grow within their forests. Seeds from foreign lands tend to be particularly valuable to them, and are thus of particular interest to those who would trade with them. However trading Aldryami are willing to take anything of value. They even accept coins, knowing that they will later be able to trade them again for other items of value.

Occupations

As already noted, the vast majority of Aldryami are either gardeners or warders—either helping their forests to grow or protecting them from outsiders. These are the two dualistic poles of existence for Aldryami existence. However, there are also numerous other occupations within Aldryami society. Generally they are each only held by a small number of Aldryami within a forest. Nonetheless, these specialists are ultimately required for the healthy continuation of a forest.

Selection among these various roles is largely self-made, but as always Aldryami tend to pick the roles which will allow them to help their forests the most. Among the more prevalent occupations in Aldryami societies are:

Agriculturalists. This appears to be a sort of gardener, but one more interested in maintaining the health of the semi-sentient runners and pixies than the plants of a forest itself.

Crafters. Most Aldryami goods are grown. Elfs are able to produce beautiful and complex items by growing specific plants and shaping them as they grow. Thus most of what we would call ‘manufacture’ is actually done by Aldryami gardeners. However elfs do produce some more complex items. The bark armour common among elf military units is one such example, because it must be correctly shaped and cut once grown. There are also crafters who produce the high-energy mulch that most Aldryami consume. Further, some crafters produce items specifically for trade with humans. Almost all Aldryami crafters work exclusively with wood and vegetation, but a scant few, such as our native Aldryami in Seshnela also make use of other materials including metal and stone.

‘I once traded a single seed to an elf for a handful of gold. But do not think they ain’t fierce bargainers, because I’ve seen them take an Issaries for practically everything he had too. They just know what they like and what they do not.’

— Gurek Runespear, Mercenary of Safelsjer

Diplomats. These are Aldryami who are trained to interact with outsiders. This includes negotiators and traders alike. For the Aldryami, learning to interact with other races at a faster speed than life sense allows is more difficult than the mere fact of learning some individual trade like writing treaties or bartering goods. The best diplomats are *not* those who are best attuned to life sense—unlike the council leaders—because diplomats are often called upon to make decisions outside the forest. Instead diplomats must be self-confident and able to make decisions without the immediate backing of their forest—a fairly rare trait among the Aldryami. We regularly interact with diplomats in outlying Aldryami villages, at Aldryami trade posts, and even within our own cities.

Journeyers. My initial surmise was that different elf forests had very little contact, but this proved wrong. Instead there seems to be an occupation of elves that exists solely to travel back and forth between forests. They do not necessarily carry messages—though they can in times of need. Instead they tend to spend a few weeks each in a few different forests each year. The life-sense allows each forest to gain a limited, but meaningful understanding of what is going on elsewhere. Among the Murthoi, the philosophy of ‘drift’ seems to make journeying even more common, but it is not done as a purposeful action. Seaweed forests do learn about each other through Murthoi drifters, but it is as much an accident as anything else. Further, since all Murthoi drift counter-clockwise around the Homeward Ocean, communication is explicitly one way.

Philosophers. This is actually a wide selection of occupations which the Aldryami jointly call ‘great singers’ but which we can better understand by the label philosopher. These are the Aldryami who spend their lives in pursuit of their pagan gods. Some concentrate upon an understanding of the balance and the cycle, and thus offer their opinions of how any decision might affect these basic Aldryami concepts. Others instead dedicate themselves to specific gods and thus can tell their communities how an action might affect the earth, the sun, the sea, or some other sphere of influence. There is a real need for such philosophers within Aldryami forests, because they help contribute important points of view to the community’s joint decision-making. When a point of view is lacking, the Aldryami feel it, and they believe their resulting decisions to be incomplete and potentially incorrect. The greatest philosophers of a forest tend to sit upon most of the seats in a forest’s Great Council because of their in-depth understanding of the world.

Teachers. Generally the Aldryami have no former structures of education such as those that can be found among our own schools of wizardry. Young Aldryami are brought up by their pods, and when they are old enough to select an occupation they informally apprentice with an elder who shows them a job. However there are some teachers among the Aldryami who specifically teach more exoteric knowledge, including religious lore and cultural or historical knowledge of other races.

The Marching Aldryami

The most fearsome of all Aldryami occupations is that of warder, for these are the elves who make up the mighty Marching Aldryami armies. As previously noted, The Marching Aldryami are a mighty standing army that consists of a full third of the population of most forests. This is a huge force that even we under the mighty rule of the Emperor of the Land and Sea are unable to sustain. Only an inhuman force like that of the Aldryami could do so, thanks to the primitive needs of their own society.

‘Every time we march we give song to Vronkal, for he was our first leader, and the first High King Elf of the Marching Aldryami. When we sleep he still whispers tactics into our ears, and thus he is still our greatest leader in Glorantha today.’

— Resitus Evergreen, Vronkali warder

The legends we have collected indicate that the first incarnation of the Marching Aldryami was led by the mythic hero Vronkali, and that he led his warriors as a ‘moving forest’ which was able to uproot itself every morning and plant itself every night. If these legends are correct they explain why the Marching Aldryami has a military structure identical to that of rooted forests.

Within the Marching Aldryami individuals are grouped into ‘pods’ which are groups of five to six Aldryami which fight together as a unit. In turn five to six pods are grouped into a ‘grove’ which is a larger military unit that moves together and fights together.

An army of Aldryami is called a ‘marching forest’ and it can contain many groves. There is no intermediary military structure used to coordinate individual groves because, once more, decision-making is done via life sense. Before a battle begins all groves will know their place in the general structure of the army, and during a battle each is trusted to do the right thing for the good of its forest.

There is one leader at the head of any marching forest. Among most armies that is the High King Elf, but increasingly in Embyli armies the leader appears to be an elf who claims descent from their hero Errinoru.

That leader is always advised by two philosophers, one specialized in the ways of the Grower (and called the Veratha) and one specialized in the ways of the Taker (and called the Bengara). The High King Elf, under advisement from his philosophers, ultimately makes any quick decision required by the army as a whole, much as an Aldryami Council makes decision for a forest when decisions are required at a quicker speed.

The Marching Aldryami is a particularly fierce fighting force. This is for numerous reasons, including: the Aldryami belief in the cycle and rebirth, the general specialization of the Vronkali as warriors, and the extensive training allowed by a large standing army. The Marching Aldryami is also notable because it is able to react quickly and cleverly, which seems to be a result of their loose command structure and the trustworthiness of their individual groves. Everyone always works together for the good of the army, and this is a generally successful tactic.

Fortunately the Marching Aldryami rarely leaves Aldryami forests. For the most part they train and they maintain their borders, either individually or in small pods. There are some areas of particular build-up of Aldryami military forces, but these build-ups seem entirely defensive.

When the Aldryami do leave their forests it is always for a very specific reason: to meet an army of Uz that is on the march or to burn down a specific village or city that is of note to them. The Marching Aldryami are slightly less powerful outside their woods because they are not able to call upon all the powers of their forests, nor to make use of the traps, hedges, and tricks already grown there. Nonetheless they remain a strong force, even beyond their woods.

Myth and History

We could not complete any study of the Aldryami without examining their mythology and their history.

The mythology of the Aldryami is, of course, important because it provides us with an atlas of legendary people and places which we can use to help navigate the Hero Plane, find the Aldryami's pagan gods, and ultimately access their powers. Unfortunately this process has been hindered by two factors.

First of all, the Aldryami seem to treat their gods more as physical entities and less as anthropomorphic beings. For example the majority of the tales of Halamalao, their sun god, represent him as a ball of heat and light which sits at the top of Falamal. Far fewer tales represent him as a person – as is more common in other pagan societies. This has forced us to often turn to weaker Aldryami heroes who lived during the God Time in our pursuit of Aldryami magic.

Second of all, and perhaps related, the Aldryami heroes and gods are very hard to find on the Hero Plane. When their stories intersect with other mythologies, then we are usually able to locate them, and we even find the gods to be properly anthropomorphized. However, their paths away from these crossroads are very hard to follow. Some of my researchers believe this is due to our own lack of life sense; this was the prime contention of researcher Aldin, who was crucified in Jorestl's Forest. Others believe that it is due to the Aldryami's close ties to the Inner World, and their ability to contact their gods therein.

Despite these issues, we have been able to extract some Aldryami magic while upon the Hero Planes, all from the better known Aldryami deities who have cognates in other cultures. A better understanding of Aldryami history will just improve these efforts. If one of my ancestors had done my work a few hundred years ago, then perhaps our mighty Empire would not have faced the inconvenience of Errinoru.

In this document I have adopted the (incorrect) methodology by which the Aldryami divide time. They divide mythology into four periods which I call the Green Age, the Red Age, the Black Age, and the Brown Age. Similarly the time since the Dawn forms a fifth period of time which I call the White Age. In discussing each of these periods I have also done my best to explain how it ties into the larger understanding that we have gained of the mythology of the world.

Finally, besides these five periods, I have also devoted space to discussing Errinoru and the minor Empire that he founded in Pamaltela.

Though some of this material repeats topics already discussed in brief in this manuscript, it is now all offered in its correct chronological ordering—at least according to the Aldryami.

Before the World

The Aldryami pre-creation myths show a surprisingly good understanding of the Second Action, or Manifestation. They recognize that the universe began as a Prima Materia which they choose to call potential. Then the world splits into the cosmic duality, which they recognize as the two forces called the Grower and the Taker. The Grower embodies all life and the Taker embodies all death.

Eventually the Grower decides to form a world so he dismembers himself and he becomes the three elements that form the world: the earth Gata, the water Eron, and the sun Halamalao. He then reincarnates himself as a primal life force within the world, and that is the primal tree Falamal, which sits on an island in the centre of the world.

In this pre-creation story we can find many of the same elements found in other pagan myths. Falamal (or Flamal) takes the role of the Spike at the centre of the world. As we will see the Aldryami's view of the elements is ultimately incorrect: water, earth, and fire are indeed three of the five elements, and we will find darkness as one of their three 'bad' elements, but air is omitted altogether. Finally we can clearly note that Halamalao is a cognate of Yelmalio and Eron is a cognate of the minor healing god Arroin. These connections have helped us in our tentative explorations of the Aldryami hero paths.

The Green Age

*'What is there to say about growth without end?
About life without death? About an endless
beginning with no ending? I really think the Green
Age must have been quite boring.'*

— Taver Halfwit, Mreli teacher

The Green Age begins when Falamal brings life to Glorantha by seeding the world. Maintaining the tripartite world-view of the Aldryami, seeds fall upon Gata, Eron, and Halamalao, giving birth to different breeds of plants. Among them are three races of Aldryami. The first seed that falls to Gata become Aldrya, the first of the Shen Senae. The first seed

that falls to Eron become Murthdria, the first of the Murthoi. The first seed that falls to Halamalao because Haladrya, the first of the Halamali.

We must understand that the Aldryami of this Green Age were not intelligent beings. They acted without true thought and without intention. The world was filled entirely with primal growth, because the Taker still lay beyond the world, and so the Aldryami and all the other plants of the world grew. Eventually the whole world filled with plant life, and still the growth continued. Finally the plants cracked the sky dome in an attempt to grow more.

This is the primal sin in the mythology of the Aldryami, and it further explains their philosophy of balance. Because they grew too much they broke the world, and according to them that is what let Chaos in. Further, this is what made the Aldryami conscious and intelligent, both elements which many Aldryami consider curses. The Aldryami also mark this time with the birth of four gods who together explain how the Aldryami are different from the non-intelligent plants that surround them. These gods are largely abstract, and we do not find records of their deeds except as part of the life-sense consciousness. Further, we have been unable to find them at all within the Hero Plane.

First and greatest of these new gods is Seyotel, which is the Aldryami word for life sense. She is literally the web of empathy that binds all Aldryami together and to their forests. The other three are considered her sons. Eirrenor represents all of the physical senses beyond life sense. Larayse represents the power of movement which allows elves to pull up their roots. Trileme is a god of activity, both physical and magical.

When considering the Aldryami mythology of the Green Age we can see that it reflects a highly elf-centric worldview. They claim to be born before all of the other Elder Races, even the dragons, and before there were any humans in the world. Further they claim that it was their fault that Chaos was let into the world, and they mark that event as occurring much earlier than in almost any other mythology—long before the Storm Age which we realize truly gave rise to Chaos. Despite these anachronistic differences, the Aldryami Green Age genuinely seems to have been an era of mythology, and my colleagues and I increasingly place it as a time before the Golden Age. It reflects our

own Third Action era when the gods raised the Great Mountain in imitation of Malkion's Citadel.

The Red Age

'You humans can never understand what Vronkali's new way meant to us in the Red Age. Before we were entirely Children of the Grower. We gave and we grew and that was our life. But Vronkal knew that there must be more for us to achieve balance, and so he learned the ways of leadership from Halamalao, then he learned the ways of battle from Bengara. Then he taught the Marching Aldryami how to kill, and in doing so still do the Grower's work.'

'That was the lesson of the Red Age, that life and death must be forever intertwined.'

— Resitus Evergreen, Vronkali warder

The Red Age begins after the cracking of the sun dome. There is a general understanding that the universe is unbalanced, and so the Taker is invited into the world. Just like the Grower he dismembers himself and he becomes the darkness Zasara, the stone Ekeem, and the bad water Iri. Iri cannot hold herself together, and so she becomes many types of bad water including the snow InIri and the fire Kitipah. Each of these elements then gives rise to Elder Races. The trolls come from the darkness, dwarfs from the stone, ice demons from the snow, and flaming beings from the fire. The Taker is also reincarnated in the world, and she becomes Bebestor, who continues to aid all of her peoples with the power of death.

This is a time of warfare, where all the so-called Children of the Taker slowly cut back the forests and plants which had overgrown the world. At some point there comes a moment of balance when the world is half grown and half taken. This is the centre of the Red Age, and it leads to the birth of what the Aldryami call the 'red races', those beings which are half-Grower and half-Taker. It includes animals, humans, and mermen as well as the Slorifings.

In this moment two new deities are born as well. The Grower gives birth to Bengara, who is the power of life given a warrior spirit to defend the world. The Taker gives birth to Trigora who is the Underworld that ensures

things stay dead after they are killed. Supporting their simplistic duality, the Aldryami call Bengara 'death-to-life' and Trigora 'death-after-death'.

The coming of Bengara also brings to life a warrior spirit in the Aldryami. Among the Shen Senae a hero named Vronkal begins to form his mighty Marching Aldryami army; his people turn their leaves to needles and call themselves Vronkali. Under the sea we find a very similar tale, where a hero name Makisante leads a group of Murthoi to help defend Falamal. They call themselves the Makisanti.

After that moment of balance the Taker races continue to take the world and the balance is lost. In this time all the 'good' elements are wounded: Gata is broken apart and Eron is cut a thousand times and his blood drips down and makes the seas salty. Finally a long queue of deities heads toward the centre of the world to attack Falamal. Eventually Bebestor succeeds in cutting him down and afterward Halamalao starts drifting down through the sky. As he falls further down the sky, flowers appear for the first time, but in the end he falls down beneath the world and he and Halamalao are both lost. Thus ends the Red Age.

These events cause several new racial divides among the Aldryami.

First the wound of Eron causes a second division among the Murthoi. A new race called the Alim fears the increasing saltiness of the oceans and so they flee inland to freshwater lakes.

Second the death of Falamal causes several repercussions for his defenders. The Makisanti descend with him to the Underworld and are lost for a time. A group of Shen Senae who had defended him flee south. In the process they are burned by the falling sun and they eventually grow wider leaves to protect themselves from the heat. They call themselves the Embyli after their leader, and they eventually form a great jungle in Pamaltela which they then call the Falutha Forest. Under Errinoru it will become a nuisance to us.

Generally the Red Age seems to cover an immense amount of mythic time, and some Aldryami myths reflect this by saying that the moment of balance at its centre lasted for an eternity. In comparison to other

myths, it covers all of the later racial creations, plus the Golden Age and the Storm Age. Universally we understand the Golden Age to be a time of perfect peace, and we can find that Aldryami peace in the central moment of balance (though some of my less esteemed colleagues instead claim the birth of flowers represents life and beauty for the Aldryami). Uniquely the Aldryami give no description of the mighty human empires which rose during what we recognize as the Fourth Action era, when true peoples came to live in peace all across the world.

The Black Age

'The Black Age was the time of our great sorrow, for that is when we proved insufficient. That was when the Chaos seeped over us, and we died. That is when we went down to lay beneath Cata and thereafter sang in Trigora's halls forevermore. That was our time of shame and failure.'

— Terinia Softwood, Mreli philosopher

The Black Age is a dark mirror of the Green Age. Just as the Grower was ascendant in the world then, now the Taker is ascendant. The sun is gone from the sky, Uz, Mostali, fire people, and ice demons are ascendant, and Chaos continues to seep into the world.

Eventually the Taker devours everything. This gives rise to the final two races of Aldryami. The Murthoi who fight until the end of the world begin to call themselves the Gentari, meaning 'gardeners'. They are relatively successful in trying to hold out against darkness and Chaos. However the Shen Senae who fight to the end are not nearly as competent, because they are the ones who choose not to become warrior Vronkali or Embyli. Many of them bury themselves in the earth rather than face the end. These are the Mreli, who are the 'lingerers'.

The last surviving Aldryami eventually fight in the universal 'I Fought We Won' battle, though the story of what happens there is different from one race of Aldryami to another. Nonetheless, all of the Aldryami other than the Alim work together, and they are able to bring a new spark of life to the universe. This allows

the Grower to give birth one more time to Veratha, or 'life-after-life', who dances the rites of spring which lets all dead things rise back up from Trigora into the Inner World. In turn the Taker gives birth to Ferotha, or live-to-die, who brings mortality to the world by ensuring that things die of natural causes.

This solidifies the two central Aldryami philosophies. Trigora and Veratha together represent the cycle, as all living things now die, go to Trigora, then return to Glorantha through Veratha's aid. Bengara and Ferotha together represent the balance, as one represents life's willingness to kill and the other represents life's willingness to die. To forever root the world in these two philosophies, the four children of the Grower and the Taker now forever leave the world, enacting the Aldryami version of the great compromise.

We can see that this Black Age is a clear cognate of the Greater Darkness, albeit with Chaos already infiltrating the world. It is also, of course, our own Fifth Action era, when decay and devolution came to the world. It is no surprise that, as we draw nearer to the modern world and the Aldryami's myths become less embedded in legend and superstition, they also begin to better match what we truly know happened.

The Brown Age

'We speak of Vronkal as the great hero of the Aldryami, but we must not forget those who came after, for the Vronkali are a many heroed folk. Second after Vronkal are the three great Pineneedles—Rhombur, Rostyl, and Risaf. It was they who led the Awakeners, and thus regrew the world in the Brown Age.'

— Resitus Evergreen, Vronkali warder

Following this great compromise is a period of re-growth and resurrection.

The surviving Vronkali in Winterwood initiate this by sending forth a group of heroes that they call the Awakeners. This hero band travels slowly south, replanting forests and reawakening buried Mreli. They also alternatively help or terrorize the settlements of

other peoples. Some Vronkali stay behind in each forest they replant to rule over the Mreli. Eventually the Awakeners land in Pamaltela where they establish the huge Umathela forest.

The surviving Embyli likewise decide to replant all the jungles of the world, though they are less successful in doing so. They do regrow the Falutha jungle, most of which was destroyed in the Black Age, but in heading north they are only able to establish jungles in Teleos and Teshnos before they come into conflict with the ancient Kralorelan Empire. Likewise, their attempts to plant jungles in the Eastern Isles are largely unsuccessful.

The Aldryami's Brown Age ends with the Dawn, when Halamalao finally returns to the world above thanks to Veratha's rites of spring which ended the Black Age.

This depiction of a time between the great compromise and the Dawn is not universal, but can be found in several other mythologies. It is the Silver Age of Manaria or our own Gray Age. Again, we find the Aldryami Brown Age to be good cognate for these other, recent events.

The White Age

"There was no woe to what happened in the White Age, no sorrow. Yes, elf fought elf, but it was necessary. It was the balance reasserting itself in the world. We call it The Planting, and I would remind you that what was planted will grow again once more. There is no death in the cycle!"

— Ferifil Treebringer, Aldryami diplomat

The Aldryami label all time since the Dawn as the White Age. They do not divide it into the Dawn Age and our own Imperial Age as do more civilized peoples, but instead see it as a coherent whole.

The most important Aldryami event that has occurred during the Dawn Age is the time known as Aldrya's Woe. In this time all of the western Aldryami forests, from Erontree in the north to Umathela in the south were mixed between Vronkali and the recently



awakened Mreli, with the Vronkali ruling over the brown elfs. For inexplicable reasons, the Mreli and Vronkali started warring against each other.

This began in Umathela in the second century after the Dawn and from there spread northward over the next few hundred years. Many more Vronkali were killed than Mreli, despite the former's greater military proficiency. The Vronkali were entirely driven out of Arstola forest in Maniria and were expelled from power in the nearby Tarinwood forest. Eventually the elf wars ended just as quickly as they had begun.

In the Dawn Age the Aldryami were also involved in the mistake now known as the Broken Council. They raised up the false god Gbaji, thinking that they were healing their own Halamalao. They stayed with the council after it was broken, and fought against Arkat the Betrayer. Tarinwood's trachodon war patrols temporarily stalled Arkat's army in Maniria, but he eventually brought them down. He was even less lenient in the Elder Wilds, where he burned down their forest and cut down their Great Tree. In the end the Genertelan Aldryami were struck as great a blow by Arkat and his armies as they were by their own racial wars in the centuries before.

In our own Imperial Age there is again only one Aldryami story of note, and that is the story of Errinoru and his Empire. When he lived Errinoru distracted us from our pursuits, and today his Empire remains a thorn in our side, as we do not currently wish to divert the resources to crush it.

Errinoru's Empire

Errinoru's story begins with the dryads, who have always exerted a considerable influence among the Aldryami of Pamaltela. At the end of the Dawn Age a group of powerful dryads named the Lynelsian Council ruled over all of the Falutha Jungle. They took advantage of the Sunstop caused by the Broken Council in 374 S.T. to gather certain secret tools, and thereafter they were able to plant a special seed which promised to give birth to an Aldryami unlike any other in Glorantha. This would be Errinoru, whose seed the Lynelsian Council watched over for a hundred and fifty years.

'Errinoru was your better, God Learner! He was an elf like no elf. He knew things no one knew. He gathered together people that had never gathered before. He was a mythic hero reborn today, and he was entirely unique. Pray to your hidden god that he never return in your lifetime!'

— Ghybbiste Sharpfrond, Embyli warder

During this period of Errinoru's germination, we Malkioni came to inhabit Pamaltela. Our first peoples settled in Umathela in 580 S.T. thanks to the wisdom of King Nralar the Old and the aid of our treacherous allies, the Waertagi. After the foundation of the Jrusteli Confederation in 650 S.T. we sent many new missionaries to Pamaltela to spread the new word. This led to a revolt among the misguided peoples of Umathela which was aided by a band of Aldryami from the eastern Umathela forest who called themselves the Dragon Eaters.

A knight named Sir Gerait was given the high honour of leading the war against the Aldryami who had dared to interfere in our affairs. In 654 S.T. he led the Order of Yoranday into eastern Umathela—the area now known as Vralos. His lumber cutters removed many

of the most valuable trees from Vralos and his forest burners destroyed the rest. Only the deepest, darkest Vralos woods, furthest from our settlements, were allowed to survive.

Sir Gerait's sub-commander, Sir Refat was left behind to continue the siege of Vralos until the spirits of the Aldryami within were totally broken. Unfortunately he chose to exceed his authority. When certain surviving Dragon Eaters escaped east into the Falutha jungle, Sir Refat followed after them, and then began the war anew by starting to cut and slash away at Falutha.

In the meantime Errinoru had been born in 610 S.T. He had spent an idyllic childhood among the nymphs and had already sired many children. When the Order of Yoranday assaulted Falutha, he led the defence. First he tried to drive us off with weather magic, and that was not enough. Then he made foul agreements with spirits of disease and sent those at us as well. Finally he sent a huge army of animals against the Order, and that was enough to make Refat retreat, not out of fear, but out of concern for his troops.

Refat then assembled an even stronger army and took to the sea, hoping to find a secret way into the Falutha jungle. His army eventually landed at the Talking Beach and began to fight their way inward, planning to destroy the Great Trees at the heart of the jungle, just like the Betrayer had done in the Elder Wilds. However Errinoru then revealed his children who were impervious to missiles and blades. They slaughtered Sir Refat's army, and Sir Refat deservedly died among them as his atonement for reaching above his caste. But, the Embyli did not kill us without cost, for each knight took out at least ten times his number in Embyli, and in the end Errinoru's forces were not able to stop The Valiant Four from returning to the beach and setting sail again.

'Are you afraid of a bush?'

— Sir Refat, his final words

After that we had no interactions with Errinoru for many years. We have since learned that he took control of the Falutha Jungle around 660 S.T. and in his



arrogance renamed it after himself about thirty years later. In 718 S.T. we defeated the traitorous Waertagi fleet, and that would open the way for Errinoru's prideful dreams of Empire as well. He somehow stole our secrets of shipbuilding and in 734 S.T. set sail upon our seas with a mighty fleet of leaf-sailed ships.

Over the next several years Errinoru's fleet sacked and razed several of our ports in Genertela, partially aided by the Triolini mermen. As all carrion-eaters do, he attacked when we were vulnerable, as we concentrated upon the final destruction of the cursed Cult of Arkat. Despite the fact that our Return to Rightness Crusade would not end until 740 S.T., we were nonetheless able to eventually turn Errinoru back from our ports. We chased him away, until he finally fled down Magasta's Whirlpool itself, into the Underworld.

After that we thought Errinoru was gone, but he suddenly returned in 751 S.T., heralded by a new star which dropped him into the Maslo Sea. We were now ready to turn back his aggressions, and Errinoru must have known this, for he never led his boats against us again. We believe Errinoru planted himself around 760 S.T. However his children continue to rule his jungle in his name. Thus, though it no longer has the strength that it held a hundred

years ago, the Errinoru Jungle retains the potential to be an annoyance, and thus we must eventually deal with it after we are done with the dragon friends.

Final Thoughts on the Aldryami

"I tell you one final time, just leave them alone! No good ever came of messing with elf things!"

— Curek Runespear, Mercenary of Safelster

Thus I have recorded all of relevance that my research over the last several years has revealed of the Aldryami. It is most important to note that the relatively tame Aldryami that we know in Seshnela are by no means the norm, and that we should expect notable resistance if we make any attempts to usurp Aldryami territory. The betrayer's short-lived war with the Tarinwood dinosaur riders and our own experiences with Errinoru's fleet both depict the strength of the Aldryami peoples.

We would be well-advised not to initiate further activities until such a time as the dragon friend problem is resolved. Unfortunately the unexpected ramifications of the Goddess Switch seem to have turned Aldryami sentiment against us, with Tarinwood and Arstola both acting threateningly in recent years.

If hostilities become necessary we would do well to consider a tactic currently being initiated in Teshnos, where our diplomats are attempting to widen existing fractures among the elves by turning the different races—herein the brown and yellow elves of the region—against each other. Using such a tactic will, of course, require an excellent understanding of the Aldryami peoples, and this is one of the ways in which this humble wizards hope this document will be of use.

I offer up this document for the glory of our Empire and the Invisible God.

Lograch the Chronicler

ELF COMMUNITIES

'A Mreli community is as permanent and as ephemeral as our own lives. We come together when Seyofel both allows and demands it. We join as a pod to raise our young or as a grove to undertake our tasks. But there will come a day, there will always come a day, when these too will end. When the young no longer need raising and the task no longer needs doing, that is when we move on to what comes next. Yes, we may leave behind friends, fellows, and family that we have known for decades, even centuries, but they will always be there with us, as part of Seyofel above or Trigora below.'

— Terinia Softwood, Mreli philosopher

Generally Elder Race communities have much more similarity among them than human communities do. Each and every forest is different, and the differences between Vronkali or Mreli forests and Embyli jungles are even greater. However, none of these differences are as great as those found between the Middle Sea Empire and the EWF—or even between Orlanthi and Pelorians.

Before the Dawn there were only two land-based Aldryami cultures: the Mreli/Vronkali culture in the west and the Embyli culture in the east. These monocultures were the result of the great Awakener and Replanter migrations. Beginning in the Dawn Age different leaders in different forests—and their different reactions to common events—have slowly caused divisions among the Aldryami. The time of Aldrya's Woe was the greatest differentiator, for each forest dealt with it in its own way. The elves of Arstola killed all their Vronkali, while the elves of Erontree drove their Mreli out. Tarinwood simply took power away from the Vronkali, while most other forests descended into bloody warfare. Likewise forests responded differently to other events: some participated in the High Council of Genertela while others did not; Tarinwood fought against Arkat's army while the Elder Wilds succumbed to it.

Thus in the Age of Empires when a Games Master wishes to plan an elf community, he must consider what factors might have influenced the growth of that community since the Dawn. Each elf forest is increasingly unique, though they all have the same underlying ideals of Aldryami philosophy.

Following are descriptions of several of the elf strongholds most likely to be influential in an Imperial Age campaign. Arstola and Tuskwood together bracket the Dragon Lands, one of the most adventurous areas of Imperial Age Glorantha. The faraway Errinoru Jungle is the most important forest of the Age. (For Safelster adventures, details of Ballid can be found in the *Ralios* PDF, pages 34–35.)

Arstola

'If we have one home left in these days remaining to us, it is Arstola. There Fwalfa Oakheart stood strong in the Black Age, and there the Mreli struck down the Pineneedles during the Planting, in a valiant attempt to free our spirit. Today, however, it grows weak and fragile, like our leaves in winter. All things must pass in this world, and I fear that Arstola is now passing before us.'

— Terinia Softwood, Mreli philosopher

Nestled in the crook of the western Rockwoods, the largely deciduous forest of Arstola is one of the best protected and most civilized Aldryami kingdoms in the world. These mountainous borders also make Arstola particularly private. Most of the land is hilly, rising slowly up toward the mountains in the north. Rainfall is plentiful and the weather is generally quite mild, though it grows chillier in the foothills.

Relatively dense forest covers the entire area, from the Pralorian plains in the west to the Skyreach Mountains in the east. Much of the Arstola Forest is ideally suited

for evergreen vegetation, but those trees have largely died out since the Dawn Age. The forest has since grown back with hardy oaks, laurels, and magnolias, though in the higher foothills they are often sickly and withered due to the climate.

As with all Aldryami forests Arstola is divided into many groves. There are approximately two hundred in all, divided among three broad areas.

At the centre of the forest is a small area called Heartwood. There are only ten groves in this region, but they are the heart of Arstolan philosophy and spirituality. They include the Great Tree's grove, the Planting Grove, and many other places of great ritual importance.

Humanwood includes all the lands to the south, about a hundred and twenty groves in all. The majority of the Arstolan Marching Aldryami dwells here, while eight different groves interact with the humans of the regions. They run from Stumpgrove on the Volior River to Womangrove on the Malthin River. The last has taken particular prominence in recent years because it lies adjacent to Kotorland, where the God Learners and the EWF increasingly vie for power, and thus has become a major crossroads.



Arstola Forest Magic

As described in Chapter Three, Aldryami in a forest centred on a Great Tree can draw upon certain magical spells and abilities possessed by that Great Tree.

Hlaolal Mrakol offers two runic powers through Forest Magic. All Aldryami in his forest can draw upon his Plant rune, giving the normal runic power of +10% to Survival and +5% to Lore (Plant) and Resilience. Only those Aldryami who know of Mrakol's darkness connections can draw upon his Darkness rune. This provides a darkness friendship power which gives the recipient +50% in social dealings with trolls and other darkness creatures.

Each ability costs 1 Magic Point, lasts for 5 minutes, and is activated per the normal rules for Forest Magic.

Hardwood is all the lands to the north, containing just seventy groves, because the climate is colder, harsher, and harder to live in. These are the lands that should have been covered by strong evergreens. Instead deciduous trees and brown elves eke out a hard living thanks to the Planting. The elves here are often gruff and bitter. Though Arstola is a land of plenty, they do not share in that excess.

Arstolan Leadership

For the last five hundred years, a strong Mreli leadership has helped to maintain the strong goals of the woods which were set forth by the hero Fwalfa Oakheart after the Dawn. Unfortunately over the last fifty years the leadership of Arstola has weakened. Many believe this was due to the Goddess Switch, which crippled the earth power of the elves in both Arstola and Tarinwood. Whatever the reason, the leaders who have come to power in Arstola since then have each been uniquely flawed.

Though Arstola maintains a full Council, there are only three leaders who are of particular note in the late Imperial

Age: the Great Tree Hlaolal Mrakol; the Gardener Arete Oakheart; and the Lightson Teaf Lightbringer.

Hlaolal Mrakol, a Great Oak, is the spiritual centre of the wood. He was once the wise voice which suggested all counsel, but for the last fifty years he has been increasingly silent. Today he is locked in an endless dream of darkness, dragons, and death. He foresees the destruction that the God Learners and the EWF will bring, as well as the eventual fall of the Shadow Plateau, and this knowledge oppresses him. Freeing Hlaolal Mrakol from his nightmares is required if the Arstola forest is ever to become great again.

Arete Oakheart is the last descendent of the Mreli hero Fwalfa Oakheart, who planted the goddess Veratha to save the world at the Dawn. Unfortunately Arete will never measure up to his noble ancestors. He is oppressed by the weight of history and destiny, and it leaves him paralyzed and unable to make any decisions of import. Though he holds in his hands power over countless Mreli all across Glorantha, he fears to use that power. The hero's sap is thin in his wooden veins, and only when the last Oakheart falls can the Mreli again rise.

Teaf Lightbringer is the only ray of hope amidst the leaders of Arstola. A Halamalao worshiper, he sees the need for decisive command, and realizes that Arstola must choose a side in the wars still to come. Reflections of the Golden Dragon – and the past might of Dara Happa – glint in his eyes, and he believes that an alliance with the EWF is the forest's only chance to regain its stature in the modern age, but much of the forest fears such an allegiance.

Part of Arstola's current weakness comes from the fact that they are still entangled with three historical matters: the Planting, the Oakheart, and the Kingdom of Night.

The Planting

The Mreli of Arstola Forest call Aldrya's Woe—the Dawn Age time when Vronkali and Mreli fought—the Planting. Alone of all forests in Glorantha, the Mreli of Arstola slew *all* their Vronkali. They were then planted in a huge grove located just a mile south of the Great Tree. Since that time no true Vronkali has been allowed in the Arstola Forest.

Ebarata Hazelnut, the leader who began the Planting in Arstola, is still revered by a band of Mreli within Arstola. They have little power to date, but they hope to eventually rise up, perhaps overthrowing the last Oakheart to do so. They call themselves the Axe Friends, and envision a day when the Planting will be repeated across Glorantha.

There are also some within the forest who still regret the Planting. Prime among them are the Newblossoms, a group of Aldryami spread throughout several groves in Humanwood. They want to welcome true Vronkali back into the forest, for they fear the ecological repercussions of their absence. The Newblossoms oppose the plans of the Axe Friends and would likely abandon the forest if they ever came to power.

The Oakheart

Fwalfa Oakheart was one of the greatest Aldryami heroes in Glorantha. He helped Arstola survive the Darkness, he fought at the Unity Battle, he did great deeds in the Underworld, he joined the World Council of Friends, and he led Arstola through much of the Dawn Age. When he was unable to stop the Planting, he felt that he had betrayed his people, and he disappeared.

Before his disappearance, however, Fwalfa give his people one last gift: He founded a secret brown elf Empire by extending roots to Mreli in all the other forests of Glorantha. Fwalfa hoped that his people would use the network of spies to learn again about the nobility of the Vronkali, but Arete lost control of it about ten years ago, and it has since come into use by the Axe Friends, who instead are turning it to their own goals of racial purity.

Despite this failure the imprint of Fwalfa's greatness remains in many other ways, scattered across Arstola. The Dark Stand is the grove where he defended the forest alongside the Only Old One. Thrice Wise is the river inlet where he three times learned new wisdom from the land. Deer Stand marks where he first met the Pralori and thus learned that Tarinwood too had survived the Darkness.

Any Imperial Age story of Arstola is likely to become quickly entwined in Fwalfa's myths and legends.

The Kingdom of Night

Before The Only Old One was forced back to the Shadow Plateau he ruled over a great Empire called the Kingdom of Night. Fwalfa Oakheart himself gave homage to the Only Old One and named him one of Arstola's great protectors.

Today many in Arstola forget about the old aid offered by the Only Old One, but the Great Oak Hlaolal Mrakol is one of the few who will never do so. He carries within himself the Obsidian Seed, a darkness artefact that forever ties him to the Only Old One. It is what now gives him his dark nightmares; they will only be cured when Arstola comes to the aid of the Shadow Plateau one final time.

Womangrove

When founded in its current form in the Dawn Age, Womangrove was intended to be a trading outpost for the quickly growing matriarchy of Esrolia. However during the Imperial Age politics have changed, with God Learners invading much of Esrolia—including the lands closest to Arstola—then the EWF several times pushing the God Learner invaders back. Today the land known as Kotorland has become a chaotic battleground inhabited by God Learners, Dragon Friends, Esrolians, and Caladrian barbarians alike. Thus Womangrove has taken on a new importance as a centre of diplomacy for all of these different parties—when they are interested in such.

Womangrove is nestled into a curve of the Malthin River on a small hillock. To put visitors at ease, most of the settlement is located outside of the forest proper. It is roughly split in two, with accommodations for visitors lying to the south while native Aldryami dwellings lie either to the north of the grove, across the river, or behind the tree line in the forest proper.

There are approximately 100 Aldryami living in and about the Womangrove. About 40 of them are members of the Marching Aldryami. They protect this portion of the forest, and are always ready if any guests turn unruly. Most of the Marching Aldryami are located east of the Malthin River where they dwell in two barracks. Another 40 Aldryami are gardeners, who live in a huge, open Gardener House just within the woods. They maintain this portion of the forest,

growing and pruning as necessary. They also oversee a group of runners numbering between 50 and 100 at any time. The last 20 Aldryami of the grove are the only ones who regularly interact with humans. This includes traders, negotiators, healers, and philosophers. They mostly dwell in the Goods House and the Eron House.

Womangrove shuts down every winter, during which time the Mreli sleep. The majority of the elves retreat further into the forest, where they dig down into the earth and plant themselves. A few live oaks guard the village from the army barracks during this vulnerable time.

1. The Sun Garden: Sitting at the centre of Womangrove, the Sun Garden is a spectacular place of beauty that offers worship to the sun god Halamalao. A hundred different species of flowers grow in a seemingly confused and intertwining mass. One or two gardeners are here tending the flowers every day, carefully growing the flowers into specific patterns. The colours and shapes of the flowers actually depict prayers to Halamalao in a secret Aldryami flower language. Some EWF diplomats in the area have come to realize the significance of the flowers and are hoping to learn more about them.

At the centre of the Sun Garden is the massive Silver Oak, forty metres tall, said to be a first-generation son of the Great Oak Hlaolal Mrakol himself. The Oak is also beloved of Halamalao. Its leaves shine bright silver in the sunlight and are warm to the touch. A single, curving path leads to the Oak amidst the flowers. An Aldryami warder stands constant guard at the base of the tree. Visitors are allowed to approach the tree, and even touch it if they wish, but trying to pluck a leaf, or otherwise damage the Silver Oak, will result in an immediate attack by the warder.

2. Grand Grove: A large open space surrounding the Sun Garden. It is bounded by the Malthin River to the east and the tree line to the west. All of the main domiciles of Womangrove lie around the grove in a rough circle. It is covered only with short grass; trees and bushes are warned away from the grove by the Aldryami.

Two southern paths have been worn through the grove by the long trekking of human feet: a route from the



visitor's area to the goods house and a route from the visitor's area to the meeting house. Not even weeds grow on these dirt paths any more. Contrariwise, all of the grass in the northern grove remains lush and healthy, as the elves know to constantly vary their routes so as to protect the vegetation.

Though visitors scarcely give any notice to the Grand Grove, for the Aldryami it is the centre of ritual and spiritual life in Womangrove. It is here that they gather—usually surrounding the Silver Oak and the Sun Garden—to sing, dance, and engage in their rituals on their most holy days. If humans are present on these days they are allowed to watch, but not participate. No business is conducted in Womangrove on these ritual days.

3. Visitor House: The visitor's area to the south of Womangrove is all constructed by means that are unusual among Aldryami. Wood has been cut, trimmed, and fitted to build regularly shaped human dwellings. The wood was, of course, all dead and fallen before it was taken for this task, but nonetheless the decision to mold dead wood rather than to shape live wood is almost unheard of among the Aldryami. It was done only to make visitors feel more comfortable, and shows the underlying purpose of the grove.

The visitor's house is large, about 250 square metres in size. It includes a huge sitting area, a large kitchen, and six individual bedrooms, each with three beds. It is sufficient for most groups visiting Womangrove. Larger groups either take over the sitting room as an additional bedroom or else camp out south of the house, near the stables.

A diplomat named Ergia Shallroot, an acolyte of Aldrya, regularly visits the humans in the visitor's house to make sure that their needs are taken care of. She feels a kinship to the Esrolians to whom her sapline has long ties, and thus is frostily polite to God Learners and Dragon Friends alike, as she blames them both for the troubles that have come to this region. If she is able to support the Esrolians to the deficit of one or both empires in the coming days, she will.

4. Woman Dock: A dock that runs right up to the porch that runs along the east side of the visitor's house. Like the rest of the visitor's area, it is built from dead wood. Woman Dock was built just a few hundred years ago at the request of Esrolian diplomats

who had begun to boat up the river from Roskoth, then a growing Esrolian town. In recent years Woman Dock has fallen into disuse because most Esrolian boats have been either destroyed or conscripted into service—even those shallow boats that can navigate the upper Malthin.

5. Visitor Stable: A large stable that can accommodate 20 horses. Several of the stalls are also large enough for chariots. It is built from dead wood and regularly shaped.

Tarin Goodheart, a gardener with a love for animals, and two runner assistants take care of all the animals here. Inevitably the animals leave Womangrove healthier and happier than they entered, and as a result Tarin's herbal cures are now numbered among the trade items offered in the trade yard. Tarin Goodheart despises the God Learners because of the damage they did to the earth itself—as do most of the area's gardeners. He would never directly confront a God Learner, but on occasion their horses have been known to 'escape'. The traders of the village are of course happy to recompense the God Learners for their loss, but they nonetheless must then make a long trek southward on foot.

6. Guard Barracks: A twin to the visitor's house, this dwelling is likewise built from dead wood, and is constructed on the exact same floor plan, but mirrored. It was originally a second visitor's house, but in the last several years it has instead become a guard house. A third of the grove's Marching Aldryami, who traditionally all dwelt across the river, now live here, only going across the river to train every third day. This new situation came into effect two years ago when a fight broke out between a band from the EWF and a group of God Learners who happened to arrive at the same time.

Veritain Greenface, the leader of the guards, dwells here. He is a live oak, as is half of his pod of twelve fighting warriors. The live oaks are rare Vronkali that are allowed into Arstola because of the fact that they have broad leaves rather than sharp needles. They thus *look* like Mreli, but they stay awake through the winter, and are able to protect the forest while it is asleep.

Veritain is a High King Elf who follows the way of Vronkal. He personifies the ideal of a Vronkali warrior. He holds no grudges and no animosities, yet he will strike down another without flinching and without

guilt, whether they are troll, dwarf, God Learner, or Dragon Friend. And, he will do so fearlessly, as will his men, no matter what the odds. Verithain is a bad enemy to have, and an even worse person to face in a one-on-one fight because of his more than hundred years of fighting experience.

Veritain reports to Gerith, who usually dwells across the river, a Mreli who is uncomfortable with the idea of broad-leafed Vronkali living in Arstola.

7. Meeting Hall: The final building in the visitor's area is a compromise between human and elf aesthetics. It is built from dead wood, but the wood has all been shaped into beautiful forms by very rare Aldryami wood carvers. The structure itself is minimalist. Tall pillars rise up along the edges of the hall, each carved with images of ivy and woodland creatures. The front of the hall, facing the Grand Grove, is entirely open. The other three walls of the house are made of thin lattice work, through which flowers and vines snake. The roof is totally open to the sky.

Three enormous round tables take up the majority of the hall, each carved from the trunk of a mighty oak. Approximately thirty beautifully carved wooden chairs surround each table, each of them unique.

Visitors are invited to use the meeting hall for their meals when they visit, though the cooking must be done back in the kitchen of the visitor's house; the elves have no cooking facilities of their own. On occasion the elves have been known to treat their most favoured visitors to an Aldryami feast, consisting of many exotic plants and fruits, some of them entirely unknown to humankind. More frequently the elves meet with visitors here to engage in conversations and negotiations.

8. Goods House: This is the most solid and cohesive of the dwellings on the Aldryami side of Womangrove. It was grown from seven oak trees which were shaped together to form a single, solid dwelling. Ivy grows up the house from the garden to the north and interweaves with the roof of the house, making it waterproof—a rarity for an Aldryami dwelling. There are just two entrances to the Goods House. To the south two oaks grow together over an archway which opens into the Trade Yard while to the east there is a large opening onto a dock.

The interior of the Goods House is one huge room which is used to store trading goods, including those shipped down the Malthin from elsewhere in Arstola, those made by the gardeners of the grove, and those bartered with visitors. The interior is surprisingly dark and dank. That is because the Aldryami's purpose is to create a safe warehouse for their goods, not a pleasant living space. Nonetheless a few of the Aldryami traders tend to take up residence here, back in the furthest corners.

The Goods House contains all number of wondrous Aldryami items. They are almost entirely plant-based, including delicious fruits, herbal cures, rare seeds, and specially crafted wooden items. More rarely these goods sometimes include rare rocks and gems from the Rockwoods, shipped down the entire length of the Malthin.

There is one warder in the Goods House at all times. His main purpose is to alert the Marching Aldryami across the river if there are any problems.

9. Trade Dock: An eighth oak tree grows out of the Goods House and over the river, forming a dock for goods being transported down the river.

Goods are usually shipped down the Malthin on unmanned boats. They are carefully scheduled to arrive during the day—a feat which the Aldryami are able to manage due to their perfect understanding of the forest. Two runners are kept out on the dock at all times to watch for these boats. Puka, the most trusted runner in the area, is patient enough to wait for the boats and intelligent enough to swim out and pull them to the dock when they arrive—most of the time. Puka misses about every tenth boat, but the Marching Aldryami across the river keep an eye on things too, and if Puka misses a boat they go racing after it—though it's possible that a boat could slip past both of these defences and head further downriver, perhaps thus acting as an interesting dilemma for adventurers approaching Womangrove.

Boats are usually carried back northward by Marching Aldryami who are changing assignments.

10. Trade Yard: This is where the Aldryami of Womangrove trade with visitors. It is entirely open air, though hedges help define it to the south and the west.

Goods are set out on rocks and shaped trees or on the ground, and then negotiations are conducted.

Gerit Strongvoice is the lead trader of Womangrove, though he has four assistants who help him, and sometimes take over entirely. Much of Gerit's purpose in trading is simply to maintain good relations with nearby neighbours, and thus he is usually willing to trade for anything. However he is a tough negotiator who does not reveal his ultimate apathy toward many of the items offered him. His aloof nature has caused many a nearby merchant to spend seasons scouring for items that Gerit might be particularly interested in, not understanding that almost nothing actually catches his fancy.

In recent years Gerit has become more reluctant to trade weapons because of the increased hostilities between the two empires. Instead he trades antidotes and other herbal remedies. He has been known to offer cures to certain diseases that can be found nowhere else in central Glorantha, resulting in his herbs becoming increasingly legendary across all of Kethaela.

11. Eron House: The main dwelling place for the diplomats, negotiators, and other Aldryami who live in Womangrove mainly to interact with visitors. Laurel trees form the rough outline of the house and together with shrubs and vines they help to give the house depth and shape. There are no sleeping rooms in the Eron House, or even private rooms. Instead the Eron House contains half-a-dozen large rooms which can be alternatively used for small group interaction or personal meditation. Though the house is not open to the air; it is not waterproof either. Rain slowly seeps through the house—generally to the appreciation of the Aldryami, who draw sustenance from it.

The Eron House is named after Eron, the Aldryami god of healing, and one of the rooms is indeed set up as a hospital. Seritus Eronfriend is the chief healer here. He is a very skilled woodshaper who typically uses his talents to heal wounded plants and Aldryami alike. He also has become skilled with healing human wounds, and is available if any visitors need aid. However, his tendency to replace broken bones with ironwood is quite disconcerting to some humans, even if the results are generally beneficial.

12. Ivy Garden: This garden, lying between the Eron House and the Goods House, is a retreat for Aldryami who wish to temporarily withdraw from the too-rapid action demanded by the visitors to the grove. Ivy has been shaped into a large dome which swells up between the two domiciles, and which dangles down into the garden forming multiple, secluded 'rooms' within. Water from the river also flows into the garden through several inlets, the outermost of which is called the 'life stream'. The soft burbling of these riverlets increases the tranquillity of the garden by softly drowning out any nearby noise.

Aldryami come here to quietly meditate. It is a particularly sacred place to Eron, thanks to the running water. Visitors are not forbidden here, but are not particularly welcome either.

13. Gardener House: A large open house built much like the Eron House, with trees, bushes, and vines forming the rough outline of a dwelling. It lies just behind the tree line, where it seamlessly blends into the forest itself, making it hard to find for those who do not know what they are looking for.

The front of this house contains a few large rooms where gardeners tend plants requiring more careful attention before transplanting them back to the forest. Rooms in the back of the house are small, private retreats. Some are used for storage of gardening tools, while others are available for short rest periods, when required.

The only permanent resident of the house is Porite Leafhead. He is an ancient oak Mreli who will plant himself in a few years. He is also the sole garden planner not just for Womangrove, but also for the half-dozen groves surrounding it. He has overseen the long-term gardening plans of this area for over a hundred years. For the most part this has involved deciding which plants were allowed to grow into his area and which had to be pruned away. However his final plan is his greatest: he is working with the gardeners to establish a quick growth into Kotersland which will separate the two warring empires. Unfortunately a Malkioni hero in Caladraland has discovered Porite's plan and is considering methods to foil it, possibly including an attack upon Womangrove itself.

14. Rock Garden: Adjoining the Gardener House is a carefully sculpted rock garden. It is overseen by Weve Streampebble, a Mreli philosopher who is intrigued by the mysticism of the visitors from the EWF. His garden is carefully shaped to depict the patterns he sees with life sense. It is a holy place to Gata, completing the trinity of casual temples within Womangrove, alongside the Sun Garden and the Ivy Garden.

15. Runner Rambles: Behind the Gardener House is a confusing and chaotic warren of bushes and trees. This is where the runners of the area live. They are fiercely protective of their home and are likely to screech and throw rocks if anyone tries to enter. Visitors would in any case quickly become lost as they tried to crawl through the tight, thorn-filled tunnels that make up the ramble.

16. Dryad Tree: There are several dryads living around Womangrove, but Good Leaf Sable Heartlight is the only one who interacts with the visitors to the grove. Her tree, a golden laurel, lies at the very edge of the tree line, not far from the Meeting Hall.

Sable is beautiful and charming. As a result she is the chief negotiator for the grove. She will flatter visitors endlessly, but has a quick and innate understanding of what will benefit the forest and what will harm it, and will only agree to those things which will do no harm. Despite her charming nature, she will hold to this with an iron resolve.

Sable also has an unfortunate love of exotic things. She is entranced by the idea of foreign lands, probably because she knows that she will never be able to leave her grove. She has been known to offer harmless concessions to visitors in return for some item from a faraway land. It doesn't have to be particularly beautiful, but it does have to be exotic and strange.

Beyond that, Sable has an enormous love of life. She is a joyful spirit.

17. First Army Barracks: One of two identical barracks which lie across the Malthin River from the main Womangrove settlement. The initial intent in locating the Marching Aldryami across the river was to avoid scaring away visitors, but that has changed in the more difficult modern day, as evidenced by Veritain's pod of warriors, located near the entrance to Womangrove.

A third of Womangrove's Marching Aldrya call this barracks their home. It is another largely open dwelling, mainly used to store personal effects such as weapons and armour. Fifteen warders live here, including the leader of the warders in the grove, Gerith Tightarrow. He is a deciduous oak, and is the commander of Veritain's live oak pod and 28 warders who dwell on this side of the river. The warders who dwell with Veritain are all Mreli. In fact he dislikes the idea of Vronkali serving in his army, whether they have broad leaves or not.

Gerith is perhaps a bit too emotional for command. Unlike his subordinate, Veritain, he is unable to maintain a cold ruthlessness. He has made friends with most of the Aldryami in the grove and has even been known to befriend human warriors who show him the proper respect.

About an eighth of Gerith's forces transfer out of Womangrove each season. They are replaced by an equal number who Gerith must then train. This is a standard pattern in Arstola, as warders move between the inner and outer woods.

18. Second Army Barracks: Identical to the first army barracks. Fourteen warders, the rest of Gerith's direct command, live here.

19. Training Yard: A large open field which has been cleared of brush and foliage. An archery range and a battle yard form the two parts of the yard. Here Gerith constantly trains all of his warders, live oak and Mreli alike, to ensure that they all remain at peak efficiency.

20. Root Bridge: A tangle of roots lies across the bottom of the Malthin River here. With the aid of just one Aldryami on either side of the river, the roots can be quickly hoisted up and tied to nearby rocks to form a quick, safe path across the river. This is to get the warders across to the main settlement in case of attack. (If needed, they could swim the river instead, as the upper Malthin is never more than five metres across, but that would take longer and leave them more vulnerable to enemy attack.)

21. Dragon Outpost: The EWF has set up an outpost approximately two miles south of Womangrove along the Malthin River. They usually maintain a small unit of mercenaries there. Thus far they have only recorded

the comings and goings of people journeying to the Aldryami settlement, but they are generally unhappy with the God Learners' access to the forest.

Tallseed Forest

'My grand-pap used to talk about the Tuskwood. He says it was a beautiful place that the elves would sometimes let him into and he could see wonders the likes of which you never saw in the Pass. Wondrous trees braided together like hair, spiders that was as docile as dogs, fields of grass that swayed to a softly heard harmony, that sort of thing. Grand-pap had a hundred stories.

Me, I went to the Tuskwood once, drawn by my pop's stories, and I was sad to see that his wonders are gone. The forest is growing dark and gnarled. Red was dabbled across trees like a bloody fence. And the whole place, it smelled like pig.'

— Gurek Runespear, Mercenary of Safelster

The Tallseed Forest is a small Aldryami wood located beneath the Eastern Rockwood Mountains. It is hemmed in by many other forces: Snake Pipe Hollow—one of the few modern sources of Chaos in Genertela lies to the south; high mountains to the north; Skyfall Lake and the domain of Cragspider to the east; and the Dragon Lands to the west. Tallseed Forest was once known as the Westwood when it covered all of Dragon Pass, and today many call it Tuskwood after the rise of the Aramite tusk riders.

The climate in the Tallseed is generally temperate, running from freezing dark seasons to warm fire seasons, all a little cooler than the surrounding Dragon Lands. Much of the land is rugged foothill, slowly rising up toward the Eastern Rockwoods. Evergreens are quite prevalent, particularly in the Brontosaurus Hills, where silver firs, spruce, and fir are all common. The lower areas have a mix of deciduous and evergreen vegetation, including oaks, lime, hornbeams, and beeches. The vegetation of Tallseed is generally scraggly, though some areas of particular interest to the Aldryami are denser.

Tallseed Forest faced notable setbacks in the Darkness, when its Great Tree was destroyed and in the Dawn Age, when Arkat's army cut through the woods in Dragon Pass. It is now facing new aggressions from the Aramite tusk riders and the EWF itself. As a result, the forest is but a shadow of its former self. It contains approximately 25,000 Aldryami, a full quarter of which are degenerate 'wild elves'.

Tallseed Forest is broadly divided into five regions. The Tradelands lie to the southwest. It's here that humans come to interact with the Tallseed Aldryami. North of that is Aramas, the land traditionally inhabited by the ancient Aramites. Because of the new ways of the people there, some have taken to calling this area Bloodwood. East of these realms are the areas where most of the Aldryami live, including the Brontosaurus Hills, which is the primary Vronkali stronghold and the Oak Valley, which is the primary Mreli stronghold. Still further east is the Wild Wood, which is the home of the degenerate wild elves, who are mainly ignored by their more civilized fellows.

Four Peoples

In all there are four peoples who call the Tallseed Forest their home: the Tallseed elves, the wild elves, the Aramites, and the EWF.

The Tallseed elves are the rulers of the Tallseed forest. They trace their lineage back to the Oakheart dynasty which ruled here before Time and to the Awakeners who found these fallen Mreli before the Dawn and brought them back to life. The Tallseeds comprise three-quarters of the elves of the Tallseed Forest and the only elves likely to be encountered by outsiders. They are ruled by a council that is composed largely of Vronkali, as is common in Genertelan forests.

The wild elves are a primitive people who woke themselves after the Dawn, and as a result never rediscovered true civilization. In the Wild Wood they practice primitive rituals and worship ghosts. They avoid humans though they, the wild elves, are not antagonistic to them.

The Aramites are an ancient human tribe of boar riders which have always lived in the north-western Tallseed near the Ivory Plinth. In the last few hundred years they have been subjected to strange experiments and the majority of the tribe is now blasphemously interbred

between humans and trolls. Where the Aramites used to be fellows and friends of the Tallseed elves, they have become increasingly aggressive in recent years, and have started raiding over Falamal's Cap in attempts to steal away young elves for use in their bloody rituals.

The EWF is another newcomer to the Tallseed. In recent years the EWF has started releasing strange insects into southern Tallseed then hunting them down. The Tallseed elves have tried to discourage this, but have been reluctant to take more aggressive actions for fear of offending the powerful rulers of the Dragon Lands.

Tradelands

The Tradelands are all the south-western lands of the Tallseed Forest. This area is only lightly inhabited by Aldryami though there are numerous gardener and warder patrols that pass through the area. There are several Aldryami holy spots within the Tradelands, but for the most part they are a relatively empty wilderness.

1. Fort Sanorost: A newly built fort that sits on the cliffs overlooking Snakepipe Hollow. It is a wooden stockade with one barracks and two visitors' quarters inside. A dozen EWF troops are regularly stationed here, though there is room for twice that number. Twenty to thirty visitors could comfortably rest here, though there are not sufficient supplies for visitors to remain here for long.

Fort Sanorost is the main entrance to the Tradelands and thus to the Tallseed Forest itself. The fort soldiers charge each person who travels past Fort Sanorost a 1 SP tax, plus 3 SP for anyone who wants to stay the night. Fort Sanorost lies along the only actual road into Tallseed. To the south this road runs to Tikal—the city surrounding the old Fort Tikand—which provides access to the southern lands via the River and to the northern lands via the Wideway. To the north it becomes Elf's Walk.

Fort Sanorost has come into more use over the last few years as Throne Hands have begun to develop the southwestern corner of the woods into a new Lordly Forest and have begun hunting Beasts of Falsity there. (See *Glorantha: The Second Age* on page 107.)

2. Hunting Ground: A rough area of mixed vegetation, approximately thirty kilometres across, lying west of Fort Sanorost and overlooking the Wideway. This is the EWF new hunting ground for Beasts of Falsity. The creatures are collected from the nearby cities of Tikal and Hannand, and then deposited here. Only the EWF ruling class and their special invites are allowed into the Hunting Ground. Beasts of Falsity increasingly rampage through the area. Thus the Aldryami have been forced to establish warder patrols along the borders of the Hunting Ground to keep the strange creatures from escaping further into Tallseed.

The release and hunting of these creatures in Tallseed has been an increased point of contention between the Tallseed elves and EWF negotiators in recent years. It is also a flashpoint for adventure, as elves could hire adventurers to cleanse these lands without dirtying their own hands, or the EWF could hire them as guards.

3. Elf's Walk: A well-beaten path that runs the 10 kilometres from Fort Sanorost to The Golden Grove. The nearby plants have all been trained not to grow onto the walk, though many tall trees arch over it, creating beautiful tunnels that sometimes last for a full kilometre. Elf warder patrols regularly shadow visitors walking the path from the woods, but they never interact with or interfere with the visitors. Their main purpose is to keep any dangerous animals from causing the visitors problems.

4. The Golden Grove: A beautiful grove of beech trees which tower up over a clearing that is fifty metres across. The beech trees are tall and resilient and have leaves that glitter faintly in the sunlight like the gold for which they are named. However, some of the beeches have started to twist and gnarl in recent years, and the leaves of the trees have slowly started to fade.

Faritin Leafheal is the head of a group of ten experienced woodshapers who are now constantly camped out in the grove. These woodshapers are trying to reverse these strange trends, but thus far they have been totally ineffective. Nonetheless they can be found constantly tending the grove's namesake trees. Increasingly they blame the dark rituals of the Aramites for cursing the wood.

The main purpose of the Golden Grove is trade. Visitors camp out here to await the arrival of elves bearing trade goods.



elf communities

The Good Leaf Lea Brightflower usually travels here once a week from the village of Elberry. Guarded by a half-dozen warders and attended by three or four fellow negotiators and traders, Lea spreads out her vine blankets full of fruits and herbs in order to exchange them for seeds, plants, and goods brought from the outside world. She invites human traders with particularly interesting specimens back to the village of Elberry where more and rarer goods are available for trade.

Artggits Toothman travels here every five weeks on a very regular schedule from Sacred Earth where he is a speaker for the Aldryami council. He arranges meetings with the Council of Sacred Earth and also negotiates for the right to hunt in the Brontosaurus Hills.

5. Spire: Spire is an enormous 40 metre tall redwood tree that soars over the nearby forest. It is the only redwood in the area, a transplant from the Redwood Forest that lies 350 kilometres east. Spire was brought here as a seed by Fwalfa Oakheart in the early Dawn Age, and has since been a centre for Falamal rituals, with Spire acting as a mythical substitute for Falamal himself.

Many Tallseed elves gather here on the first day of Dark Season to sing the song of Falamal's death and the world's rebirth. Afterward many Mreli fall into their winter sleep, and are guarded over by the Vronkali until they awake. The Spire grove is thus one of the best guarded places in all of Tallseed over these long winter weeks.

The rest of the time Spire is guarded by a small group of warders. Humans are sometimes allowed to travel to Spire along a very rough path that runs up from the Golden Grove. To gain permission they must offer the Aldryami sufficient bribes, and it must be clear that they will not harm the ancient redwood.

6. Elberry: This is an Aldryami village that lies approximately ten kilometres east of Golden Grove. It is one of the first true Mreli outposts of the woods, with most of their groves lying further north or east. It houses about 50 elves, who live in a community protected by a three-metre tall fence made of spiky vines. Another 50 or so elves live within a kilometre or two of the village, forming the rest of Elberry's grove.

A. The Public Garden: The heart of Elberry. This is an enormous garden, approximately 80 metres per side, that sits at the centre of the village. The area is filled with flowers of all sorts – many of them imported from the Vale of the Flowers, though they do not grow to giant sizes here. In addition there are many bushes filled with all sorts of delicious berries. The garden is allowed to grow wild, but is nonetheless very beautiful. A half-dozen paths wind through the garden, all of them crossing over one another and eventually arriving at the Trading Gazebo in the centre of the Garden.

B. Trading Gazebo: This is where all trade in Elberry occurs. Humans are invited to bring their goods to the gazebo, which is overgrown with many sorts of vines and flowers, and elves will bring a constantly changing stream of offerings until the humans find something that interests them. Trading is overseen by Lea Brightflower when she is in residence, else by the head gardener, Sartin Wideleaf.

C. Elf Houses: Four different houses lie just north of the Public Garden. As with most Aldryami buildings, these are naturally grown from living trees. Each houses seven or eight Aldryami. The accommodations are typically sparse and small.

D. Gardener House: A much larger house grown from trees which lies immediately east of the public garden. Twenty gardeners live here, overseen by Sartin Wideleaf, an aging Oak Mreli who was born in

the nearby Oak Valley almost two hundred years ago. Their main purpose is to oversee the trading garden and to process the plants grown there.

E. The Trading Garden: A well cultivated, carefully organized garden. It includes more exotic flowers than those found in the public garden, some again from the Vale of Flowers, but some from much further lands. It also includes a variety of vegetable crops and a section dedicated to basket-plants which, if prepared correctly, produce waterproof pouches that keep fruit always fresh. The tall vine fence runs along the back of the garden, while the garden is carefully delineated on the other three sides by the storing house, the making grove, and the gardener house.

F. The Storing House: An unusual Aldryami house built from gathered rocks and cut partially into the ground. Vines grow along and through the rocks to give them shape and strength. The majority of the vines used are 'cool vines', which are slightly cold to the touch and which help to keep the inside very chilly, even in the warm summers. The storing house is used to store plants which have not yet been prepared and final products which are awaiting trade. It has a wide opening to the Trading Garden and a smaller opening to Lea's house.

G. Lea's House: A small house grown from trees. It sits between the storing house and the gardener house. Lea has a small sleeping area and a larger office area. Unusual for an Aldryami, she keeps careful records of all her transactions, with papers full of these records all stored here. Some Aldryami in Elberry claim that Lea is abandoning her own people and growing too close to humans, but Lea says she is just trying to do her best *for* her people.

H. The Making Grove: A large grove of trees lying to the south of Elberry. There is a 30-metre wide open space inside the grove, but the tree tops have been shaped together atop it to help keep out the elements. Fallen trees and flat rocks provide work areas here, which the gardeners use to process the goods growing in the trading garden. They prepare basket-plants for use, separate out valuable herbs from other plants, and prepare various items made from plants. They also process certain plants grown outside Elberry into the mulch eaten by many Aldryami.

7. Sacred Earth: This was once the holy centre of the Westwood. It is where the Great Tree called Frotami Golden Tree once rose before he was struck down by the dust—that-follows—the-light. Now Frotami is gone entirely, his absence a scar upon the land, but the grove is still sacred to Gata, and so the Council of Tallseed continues to meet here.

Artggits Toothman, a Mreli beech, is the guardian and tender of the grove. Every five weeks he travels to nearby Golden Grove to see if any seek guidance from the Aldryami council. If he finds any, he alerts the Council by life sense, and they are waiting at the Sacred Earth by the time Artggits returns.

Soritia Fortreaders also lives nearby, and often does the Council's bidding, as described below.

The council of Tallseed is currently overseen by Farghina Dirtfriend, the Mother Earth of the Council, a Vronkali fir. She has served on the council for almost a hundred years, and still remembers an earlier time when the world was not quite so bitter and divided and when the Aramites were still friends. However Tragin Quickspear, the High King Elf of the Council, and another Vronkali fir, is a rising power. He wishes to gather together the Marching Aldryami to march upon all that infringe upon his forest, including the Aramites, the EWF hunters, and even the wild elves.

Besides being the meeting place for the Tallseed council, the Sacred Earth is also the portal to the Brontosaurus Hills for those who have gained permission to travel there, and to the Aramite lands, for those still willing to enter that cursed place.

8. Fartreader's Hut: Located just a few hundred yards southeast of the Council grove is the wood-shaped hut of Soritia Fartreader, a young but mature oak Mreli. She is not a member of the Council, but she often eavesdrops on the conversations at Sacred Earth, and is welcomed by the Council members when she decides to actually attend.

Soritia is the Tallseed's far-travelling negotiator and diplomat. She leaves Tallseed for seasons at a time—though she is always back in time to sleep—and as a result she is the Tallseed elf most likely to be encountered outside the forest. Soritia regularly

follows a path along the Indigo Mountains, which brings her from the dragonewt city of Contemplative Rest up into the troll stronghold of Dagori Inkarth.

Contemplative Rest is a particularly interesting stopping point because the current leader, Lord One Ex, has peculiar connections to plants. Soritia often leaves young gardeners at Contemplative Rest to teach the dragonewts their arboreal skills. However, this relationship is growing strained because the Council of Tallseed has recently learned of Lord One Ex's visionary plans to cover the entirety of Glorantha with plants, which recalls the bad times at the end of the Green Age when unbounded growth almost destroyed the world.

Soritia's journeys into Dagori Inkarth are always more dangerous. She maintains good relations with the traders of The People of the Sundered Eye, and through their benefice is also regularly able to trade with the elves of the Redwood Forest. Her other attempts to negotiate with the trolls of the region have largely been unsuccessful, such as when she was unable to even reach the leaders of the Opal Seer Caverns due to the animosity of the lower-prestige tribes which lived on the caverns' outskirts.

Soritia also trades, barter, and talks with many other peoples living south of the Eastern Rockwoods. Sometimes she does them favours, and sometimes they do favours for her. Any of this might require the hiring of mercenaries, which could introduce Player Characters to Soritia and her travels.

9. Falamal's Cap: Lying to the west of the hilly range that forms the Brontosaurus Hills, Falamal's Cap is a small peak that is visible from kilometres around. Overgrown paths run down to the Sacred Earth to the south and to Aramas to the north, but they have been unused for a few decades due to the increasing aggression and bloodthirstiness of the boar riders. The ruins of a small trading post atop Falamal's Cap have been largely overgrown by the berry bushes which cover the hill's peak. The area has now been given over to runners, who have proven a nuisance to Aramite boar riders who travel here. A force of fifty warders regularly patrols the area, alert for any boar riders who try and cross into the Tradelands.

Sometimes EWF scholars journey to Falamal's Cap, with permission of the local Council, to see what their experiments upon the Aramites have wrought. Guards are always required in case the half-troll Aramite people become hostile.

10. Brontosaurus Hills: This area is where the majority of the Vronkali of the forest, some 7000 in total, live. It is also inhabited by various dinosaurs, among them the placid brontosaurs. In times past various human tribes sometimes paid tribute to the elves to gain permission to hunt prey in this land. Now scholars and magic-users from the Dragon Lands pay the Aldryami bribes to come and study the creatures. They sometimes hire mercenaries to guard them in this dangerous land.

The Aldryami have found the disappearance of human hunters slightly annoying, because it has caused a surge in the dinosaur population in the area. As a result there are now more warder patrols surrounding the area, and plans are in place to begin sending taking parties into dinosaur nests to bring the population back down. EWF visitors will be horrified by this wanton destruction of dinosaurs, and it might cause sudden hostilities between the two groups.

11. Oak Valley: The Mreli stronghold of the Tallseed, a virgin valley of oak trees, untouched by human industry or draconic magic and never seen by any eyes other than Aldryami. Unfortunately the magical experiments in the Hunting Ground and in Aramas are threatening the purity of this region, and the Mreli are coming to believe that the only way they can save it is to abandon it, leaving it to grow alone and untouched by even their own hands.

Errinoru Jungle

'You would do best to stay far from the Errinoru Jungle, brother. They do not like our kind.'

— Robins Tarrol, Scribe of Umathela

The Errinoru Jungle is an enormous Aldryami enclave that covers all of north-eastern Pamaltela. It actually consists of several different jungles which were joined together by the hero Errinoru in the 7th century S.T., following a period of warfare with human settlers in the area. The Errinoru Jungle is also the largest enclave of the Embyli yellow elves in the world, and ultimately the source of their greatest plans.

The best known area of the Errinoru Jungle is the realm called the 'Elf Coasts'. These coastlines surrounding the Maslo Sea have the most interactions with the rest of the world of all of Errinoru, mostly through trade. However, the Errinoru Jungle is much larger, and the Elf Coasts are just the outermost shell. Within the Jungle are seven smaller jungles, six of which contain their own Great Trees.

The climate of Errinoru Jungle is generally warm and tropical, with some cooling toward the ocean. The plants found therein are mostly tropical fronds, among them numerous wide-leafed evergreens such as bananas, palm trees, ironwood trees, and monkey puzzle trees.

The Seven Jungles

Although all the jungles of Errinoru are overseen by his dynasty, they are, nonetheless, each distinct and individual.

† **Gaskalia:** This jungle is the home to the house of Errinoru, and thus the greatest of the Pamaltela jungle. Its council currently has sovereignty over all of Errinoru. Gaskalia is also rapidly expanding, pushing south over the Mari mountains. This has brought it into conflict with the Agimori people of the southern plains, resulting in constant warfare all along the southern border.

† **Jhastrobbios:** Located in north-eastern Pamaltela, Jhastrobbios is the most reclusive and secretive of the Errinoru jungles. Seven dryads who were once members of the Lynelsian Council have retired here after using the magic of Larayse to free themselves from their trees. They continue to advise the dynasty of Errinoru and also watch over Errinoru's grave, where new plants continue to appear.

† **Moino:** The westernmost of the jungles, Moino once had a Great Tree like all the rest, but it was destroyed in the Dawn Age following a conflict with the lost Vronkali jungle of Jolar. In the 7th century Moino was also the centre of the early battles between the God Learners and Errinoru. Today, under the leadership of the dryad Rith Sharpleaf, the Moino elves are bitterly planning counterstrikes against the humans of Pamaletela—against the wishes of the Errinoru dynasty who is attempting to broker friendship with Umathelan breakaway states.

† **Novarooplia:** The northernmost jungle of the Elamle peninsula. The Embyli here are particularly friendly to humans due to old oaths. Ironically this is where the God Learners decided to land when they assaulted the Errinoru Jungle in the 7th century. The friendliness of the Novarooplia tribe, combined with a narrow, unforested beach gave them all the invitation they needed. The Novarooplia jungle suffered most in the God Learner attack, but nonetheless they still hold by their Dawn Age promises.

† **Onlaks:** The northernmost jungle of the Onlaks peninsula. It has been engaged in warfare with various human tribes for generations. Uniquely the leader of this jungle, Trigyx Sharpthorn, is an Embyli not a dryad. He is the war leader of Onlaks and the one who cries the loudest for a return to the more aggressive warfare of Errinoru's time.

† **Ytarian:** The southernmost jungle of the Onlaks peninsula. It is engaged in warfare every bit as bitter as that in Onlaks, though the dryads that guide the Council of the forest are still seeking a more peaceful way.

† **Zhnaquafian:** The southernmost jungle of the Elamle peninsula. They are relatively reclusive and neutral to the great movements of the Imperial Age.

The House of Errinoru

The ultimate ruler of the Errinoru Jungle is the House of Errinoru and thus the jungle of Gaskalia. In the present day two of Errinoru's sons still survive, as well as a few dozen grand-children and over a hundred great grand-children. His sapline is strong and promises to rule over the jungle long, long into the future.

The immediate sons of Errinoru—third-born Tarrinia Errinoru and seventh-born Derror Errinoru—are both nearly demigods. They are invulnerable to normal weaponry and are constantly in rapid empathic contact with the jungle. They are also all particularly favored by Halamalao, thanks to blessings ensured by their father, and thus they are able to call down mighty light and fire magic. Errinoru's two sons theoretically rule the jungle together, but it is Derror who makes all the true decisions. Tarrinia is a philosopher and scholar who is happy to advise.

The power of Errinoru's kin is slowly lessening through the passing of generations. His great grand-children are still notable heroes, but other than continued blessings from Halamalao, they are no more powerful than mighty heroes found elsewhere in Glorantha in the Imperial Age.



The Embyli

The Embyli are one of the three great tribes of land-dwelling Aldryami, alongside the Vronkali and the Mreli. For most of history they have had little to do with Genertela, except in the eastern lands. That has changed in the Imperial Age. Today over a hundred scouts, spies, and warriors have been sent forth from the Errinoru Jungle to continue to watch over the actions of the EWF and the Middle Sea Empire. Some of them are elders who travelled with Errinoru in his assaults upon the God Learners, while many others are younger Aldryami eager to repeat the experience of their fathers.

Players interested in being Embyli will probably number their characters among these various scouts and spies, which provide them a connection with the *third* mighty Empire of the Imperial Age, the great Errinoru Jungle.

NOVAROOPLIA FOREST MAGIC

As described in Chapter Three, Aldryami in a forest centred on a Great Tree can draw upon certain magical spells and abilities possessed by that Great Tree. Within the Errinoru Jungle each Aldryami can draw upon the abilities of his own Great Tree *and* one major ability from the Gaskalia Great Tree, Gaskallia Homewood.

Novarooplia's Great Tree offers access to its Harmony rune. Any Aldryami may use Forest Magic to gain the Harmony rune ability, which allows him to grant a single ally +20% to a single skill test. However, this may only be used on humans, reflecting Novarooplia's old oaths. This costs 1 Magic Point.

Gaskallia Homewood grants access to its Motion rune. Aldryami may use Forest Magic to cast the Mobility spell. This spell may be cast at up to Magnitude 6, for the normal Magic Point cost.

Talking Beach

One of the best-known locations in the Errinoru Jungle is the Talking Beach, where the God Learners tried to assault the Errinoru Jungle in 655 S.T. It is located in north-eastern Novarooplia on the Elamle peninsula. Occasional God Learner pilgrimages now come to the Talking Beach to visit the place where the Valiant Four made their last stand. When these visitors are pleasant, the Embyli of Novarooplia may come out and speak with them, trying to find understanding. However if the visitors attempt to enter the jungle, they are attacked with blow guns until they flee into the sea.

Talking Beach is also notable because it lies on the route of the Mother of Monsters, one of the most fearsome monsters in all of Glorantha. (See *RuneQuest Monsters* on page 159.)

1. Last Stood: This is a area of sandy beach some 100 metres in diameter which has been fused into dark, blackened glass. It is where the Valiant Four last stood before they fled the Errinoru Jungle and is the prime destination of most pilgrimages here.

Last Stood is the result of the mighty sun magic which Errinoru's sons cast at the Valiant Four as they made their escape. The elves have tried to eradicate it, but neither they, nor the regular visits of the Mother of Monsters have had any effect.

2. Talking Sands: The sands which cover the beachfront are said to be magical. When a person lies there, as he slowly drifts off to sleep, he begins to hear quiet whispers. Once, these whispers told of the jungle, the nearby waters, and certain mysteries of both lands. Since the battles of 655 S.T., the whispers have been more chaotic and distorted, and are often screams rather than quiet speech.

3. Skull Pyramid: Though the Novarooplia are dedicated to a new era of peace, they nonetheless remember the past as well, and much of that past is embodied in this pyramid of skulls, which lies to the back of the Talking Beach, just before the tree line. It currently contains just over a hundred skulls, the bleached white remnants of

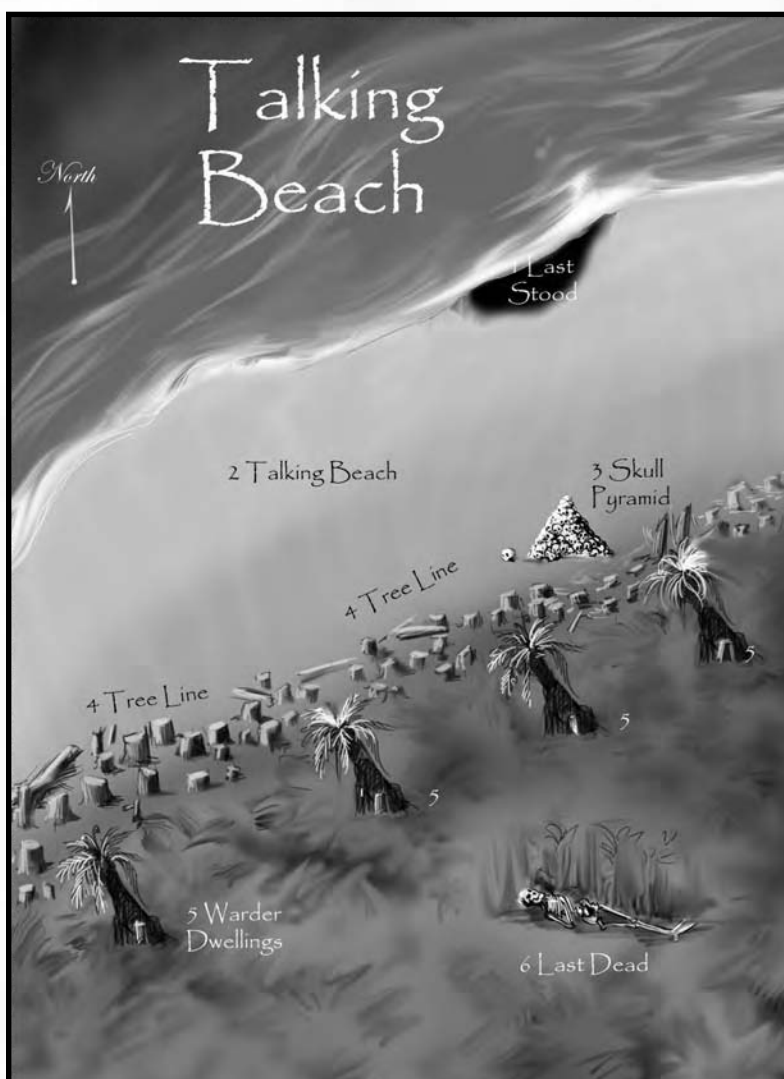
the army that assaulted Novarooplia over two hundred years ago. Every few years, when they make friendly contact with a group of pilgrims, the Novarooplia allow them to take one skull from the pyramid. They say that when the pyramid is gone, then that which was taken will be re-grown, and humanity need no longer be held accountable for the attack.

4. The Tree Line: All of the area around the Talking Beach is cleared in a ragged semicircle. This marks where Sir Refat's army first cleared away the trees when they landed at the beach. The trees have never grown back.

5. Warder Dwellings: Four different warder dwellings are set back into the forest. One hundred Marching Aldryami—a full grove—watch over the Talking Beach at all times. They are always prepared for a new assault upon Errinoru. Their leader, Qig Longsight, is not Novarooplial, but instead an Embyli from the Onlaks jungle across the Maslo. He is vigilant and militant and is unlikely to allow humans any chance to damage the jungle. Nonetheless he is fair and will not react harshly unless given cause.

A half-dozen philosophers and diplomats also live among the warders. Their leader is Weryx Unseen. He talks with the pilgrims whenever he can and has thus managed to gain a very thorough understanding of the God Learner religion. This helps him to put pilgrims at ease and to work toward his main purpose: learning what they know, for the betterment of the jungle.

6. Last Dead: A kilometre into the jungle, straight south from the Talking Beach is Last Dead, the place where the last member of Refat's expedition died. This was Sir Gortin, sometimes called The Valiant Fifth, for it was his sacrifice that allowed The Valiant Four to reach the beach. When he fell the Invisible God smiled upon his sacrifice, and as a result his bones were never found by the Embyli and are unmolested still. Wizards among the God Learners have recently discovered this fact, and are trying to determine a way to press a kilometre into the heavily protected jungle in order to retrieve their dead hero.



PLAYING THE ALDRYAMI

The following section includes everything needed to play Aldryami of all species as either Players or Non-Player Characters. Complete rules are included for all the types of Aldryami. The green Vronkali and the brown Mreli are the most likely to be used in Second Age Genertelan campaigns, but if Players wish they can choose to play either Embyli, runners, or Slorifings as well.

Although rules are also included for dryads and all three races of Murthoi, these are not typically viable Player races, except under the special direction of a Games Master. Instead the rules for these races should generally be used for Non-Player Characters that Players might encounter.

Aldryami Characteristics

The following rules describe young but mature Aldryami. This is the age at which an Aldryami is most likely to leave its forest behind and head off on an adventure—usually for the long-term good of the forest itself. They are relatively comparable to beginning human Player Characters, though no attempt has been made to precisely balance them. Just as Aldryami have some abilities that other races do not—most notably life sense—they also face their own problems, including a generally fearful reception in the human world.

Because Aldryami can live to be hundreds of years old, these random characteristics will not represent the elder leaders of an Aldryami forest. If you want to roll an elder's stats randomly you should choose the one or two characteristics which best define them and either remove one die, instead adding 6 to the result (for an old Aldryami), or remove two dice, instead adding 12 to the result (for a very old Aldryami).

Games Masters' Note: These rules are intended to describe Gloranthan elves. They entirely replace the

characteristics found in *RuneQuest Monsters*, which instead defines a more general sort of fantasy elf, not necessarily appropriate for Glorantha. There are also minor variations between the rules found here and those found in the *Player's Guide to Glorantha*, though the various backgrounds and professions in the two books are entirely interchangeable.

Dryads

Dryads are the natural manifestations of forests. They are exceedingly beautiful and powerful in all the mental characteristics—though, as might be expected, they are less imposing physically. Dryads can be associated with any species of elf, including the three races of Shen Senae, the three races of Murthoi, and the Slorifings.

These rules are primarily intended for Non-Player Characters, because dryads disappate if they leave their grove of trees. There is, however, a special ritual which may be conducted to help a dryad leave her grove. It is called Larayse's Third Unseen Step, and it must be continually supported by a dryad's community. It was used most memorably to allow the dryad hero Throna Silverleaf to attend the World Council of Friends in the Dawn Age. If a Player wishes to play a dryad, his Games Master must agree to a backstory wherein his character is constantly supported by her community in this way.

Strength (STR): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice.

Constitution (CON): Roll 4D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice.

Dexterity (DEX): Roll 5D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice.

Size (SIZ): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 3 to the result.

Intelligence (INT): Roll 4D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 6 to the result.

Power (POW): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 15 to the result.

Charisma (CHA): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 12 to the result.

Embyli (Yellow Elfs)

Yellow elfs are among the wounded descendents of the Shen Senae who fell from their ancestral greatness in the Darkness. They are the smallest of all the Shen Senae, which makes them similar in height to the pygmies that tend to inhabit their Pamaltelan jungles.

Strength (STR): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 3 to the result.

Constitution (CON): Roll 4D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice.

Dexterity (DEX): Roll 4D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 6 to the result.

Size (SIZ): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice.

Intelligence (INT): Roll 4D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 6 to the result.

Power (POW): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 6 to the result.

Charisma (CHA): Roll 4D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice.

Mreli (Brown Elfs)

Brown elfs were also wounded during the Darkness. They have some physical weaknesses, as might be expected of Aldryami who lingered rather than fighting Chaos. However they are also among the most intelligent of the Aldryami.

Mreli, along with Vronkali, are the two Aldryami races most appropriate for Player Characters.

Strength (STR): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 3 to the result.

Constitution (CON): Roll 4D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice.

Dexterity (DEX): Roll 4D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 6 to the result.

Size (SIZ): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 3 to the result.

Intelligence (INT): Roll 4D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 6 to the result.

Power (POW): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 6 to the result.

Charisma (CHA): Roll 4D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice.

Murthoi / Alim (Blue Elfs)

The Alim are philosophers who have never had much to do with the world, and this is reflected in their physical stats. However, they are also the most intelligent of all the Aldryami species, exceeding even the intelligence of the Mreli.

None of the Murthoi make particularly good Player Characters because of the fact that they breathe water and have a single whip-like tail instead of legs. These characteristics should thus be largely used for Non-Player Characters.

As with dryads, if a Player wishes to play a Murthoi he can do so if the elf is supported by the magic of his community. Another Larayse ritual called The Second Unseen Step allows a blue elf to temporarily grow legs, breathe air, and blend in with humans. Again, this background may only be taken with the agreement of the Games Master, and the Player should realize that his Murthoi will be even more bound to his community and its desires than a normal Aldryami.

Alim are even a more difficult Player Character choice than the rest of the Murthoi because they are religious purists. They are afraid of being tainted, and believe that any interaction with the wider world could introduce this taint. This should be another constant concern for any Player wishing to play an Alim.

Strength (STR): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice.

Constitution (CON): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 2 to the result.

Dexterity (DEX): Roll 4D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice.

Size (SIZ): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice.

Intelligence (INT): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 12 to the result.

Power (POW): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 6 to the result.

Charisma (CHA): Roll 3D6.

Murthoi / Gentari (Blue Elfs)

The Gentari are warriors in their own right, but not as great as the Murthoi Makisanti. As such they tend to be comparatively weak. Though the Gentari do not have the same potential as the Shen Senae to be highly intelligent, there is very little variation among them, and they all tend to be as smart as the smartest humans.

As with the Alim, Gentari can only be used as land-dwelling characters if enchanted with Larayse's Second Unseen Step.



Strength (STR): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice.

Constitution (CON): Roll 4D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice.

Dexterity (DEX): Roll 4D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 3 to the result.

Size (SIZ): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice.

Intelligence (INT): Roll 2D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 12 to the result.

Power (POW): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 6 to the result.

Charisma (CHA): Roll 3D6.

Murthoi / Makisanti (Blue Elfs)

As the greatest warriors among the blue elves, the Makisanti have the best physical characteristics of all the Murthoi species. However like all the Murthoi they are fairly small. In addition, their intelligence is strictly normal, making them the least intelligent of all the true Aldryami.

As with the Alim, Makisanti can only be used as land-dwelling characters if enchanted with Larayse's Second Unseen Step.

Strength (STR): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 3 to the result.

Constitution (CON): Roll 4D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice.

Dexterity (DEX): Roll 4D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 3 to the result.

Size (SIZ): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 3 to the result.

Intelligence (INT): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 6 to the result.

Power (POW): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 6 to the result.

Charisma (CHA): Roll 3D6.

Runners

These ape-like beings are like stunted, degenerate elves. Generally they have none of the advantages of the elf species, but they are not much worse off than humans. The biggest challenge in playing a runner is not in their characteristics, but rather in their primitive attitude, which can offer real problems as they tend to do without armour, clothing, and most tools. Runners can come from either forests or jungles, and thus tend to be associated with brown, green, or yellow elves.

Strength (STR): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice.

Constitution (CON): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 6 to the result.

Dexterity (DEX): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 6 to the result.

Size (SIZ): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice.

Intelligence (INT): Roll 4D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice.

Power (POW): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 6 to the result.

Charisma (CHA): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice.

Slorifings (Red Elfs)

There are twenty-seven different species of Slorifings in Imperial Age Glorantha, and each one is different and unique. The following characteristics define an 'average' Slorifing—if such a thing actually exists.

If a Games Master wishes he can define specific characters for specific Slorifing species. Some are bigger and others are good fighters. Some are almost as intelligent as their Aldryami kin and others can swim and breathe underwater. The only consistent element among all the Slorifings is that each species has one or more flaws, usually represented by some low characteristics.

Strength (STR): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice.

Constitution (CON): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 1 to the result.

Dexterity (DEX): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 7 to the result.

Size (SIZ): Roll 1D6. Add 3 to the result.

Intelligence (INT): Roll 4D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice.

Power (POW): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 6 to the result.

Charisma (CHA): Roll 2D6. Add 3 to the result.

Vronkali (Green Elfs)

Green elves are natural leaders and the most likely of all the elves to leave their forests. They are born fighters and this militancy is reflected in their superior physical abilities. Also, like all the true elves, Vronkali are quite intelligent, a reflection of their longer view of life.

Strength (STR): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 4 to the result.

Constitution (CON): Roll 4D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice.

Dexterity (DEX): Roll 4D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 6 to the result.

Size (SIZ): Roll 4D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice.

Intelligence (INT): Roll 5D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice.

Power (POW): Roll 3D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice. Add 6 to the result.

Charisma (CHA): Roll 4D6, drop the lowest die and total the remaining dice.

New Advanced Skills

The following skills are available to some Aldryami.

Life Sense (INT+POW)

This Advanced skill—available only to Aldryami, dryads, pixies, and certain other forest dwellers—provides its user with a powerful empathic connection to all life, particularly forests and other plant life. At the simplest level this skill gives the ability to determine the vitality of another living creature by touch alone. The Aldryami must make a Life Sense test, and if it is successful he will learn the current hit points and Fatigue level of the target, as well as whether it is currently afflicted by any poison or disease.

However, life sense also provides for much broader communication within forests. In that environment a character is able to empathically communicate with every other creature in the same forest that also possesses life sense. Generally, life sense is used to understand the general state of the forest as a whole. This is a gradual, but constant process that requires no skill test. The Games Master should occasionally impart knowledge about the forest and the general thoughts of its inhabitants to an Aldryami with life sense as days pass within a forest. If a Player wants to gain a quicker sense of things, or to communicate his own feelings, then he must succeed at a Life Sense test.

If an Aldryami wishes to learn about an individual, or to more fully communicate with an individual, then he may make a Life Sense test with penalties. These possibilities are all summarized in the chart below. Note that any communication with life sense remains very rudimentary and limited to simple ideas, even for these more complex tasks.

If an Aldryami is more than a quarter mile outside of his forest, he may no longer communicate with it using Life Sense.

This skill appeared in a simplified form—as an ability—in RuneQuest Monsters and in the Player's Guide to Glorantha. The rules found elsewhere are acceptable shorthand—and are appropriate for non-Aldryami—but the more complete rules found here should be used for Aldryami Player Characters.

Treespeak (POW+CHA)

This skill allows its possessor to ask plants simple questions, which they must answer to the best of their ability. However, it should be realized that plant perceptions are very limited, which will ultimately limit the utility of what they say.

This skill is drawn from the Player's Guide to Glorantha, where it appears in an identical form.

Life Sense Skill Use

Situation	Skill Used	Difficulty
Gaining the sense of the forest	Life Sense	Automatic
Gaining the sense of the forest, quickly	Life Sense	+0%
Communicating with the forest	Life Sense	+0%
Gaining the sense of a nearby individual	Life Sense	–20%
Gaining the sense of a known individual in a forest	Life Sense	–60%
Gaining the sense of an unknown individual in a forest	Life Sense	–100%
Communicating with a nearby individual	Life Sense	–40%
Communicating with a known individual in a forest	Life Sense	–80%
Communicating with an unknown individual in a forest	Life Sense	–120%
Locating a known individual in a forest	Life Sense	–100%
Locating an unknown individual in a forest	Life Sense	–140%

Aldryami Special Rules

The following rules describe additional special abilities that are available to all Aldryami, including dryads.

Forest Magic

Aldryami are greatly feared within their own forests, and for good reason. Great Trees, which have usually integrated numerous runes over the centuries, are able to impart some of their runic abilities upon the Aldryami living within the forest. Each Great Tree grants one or more special ability to the Aldryami in its forest. Sometimes these are Rune Magic spells, sometimes they are the runic powers that came from integrating the runes, and sometimes they are both.

(Chapter 2, Elf Communities, listed the Forest Magic for Arstola and some of the Errinoru Jungle.)

At any time an Aldryami within the forest may attempt to access one of these powers. This is treated as a Cast Spell action, but the Aldryami tests his Life Sense skill to successfully cast. Rune Magic works as normal, with the Aldryami paying the Magic Points to cast, and having the ability to overcharge. For Runic Powers, the Aldryami must pay 1 Magic Point, then takes on the effect for 5 minutes.

As noted above, life sense is not usable more than a quarter mile outside of a forest, and thus an Aldryami may not draw upon a Great Tree's Forest Magic when outside his forest.

Herbanoids

Aldryami are mobile plants. They are humanoid, but their skin feels faintly like wood, their hair is usually made of leaves (or in the cases of Murthoi, seaweed), and their internal organs contain all sorts of vegetative manner. As a result they are affected by spells that affect both plants and humanoids.

Aldryami biology depends upon the three protectors: the earth, the sea, and the sun. If all three elements are available to an Aldryami, and he temporarily roots himself, he needs no other sustenance. Even when moving he still only needs one-tenth as much food as a human, provided that the three elements are available to him.

Dryad Special Rules

Due to their intimate connections to the forests, dryads have additional special powers that are usable primarily in their home groves.

Plant Control

A dryad may control the plant life in her home grove. This allows her to make flowers bloom, cause plants to grow quickly, tangle intruders with vines, and move the branches of trees. When this power is used offensively, the dryad should make a Life Sense test opposed by Dodge or some other appropriate physical skill. Usually a dryad can only control plant life in her grove—an area with a radius of her POW x 2 in metres. If a dryad is outside her grove and wishes to control plant life there she may attempt to do so with a Life Sense test at a -100% penalty.

Spiritual Essence

A dryad has two forms: a physical body and a spiritual essence. While within her grove a dryad may form her body from its spiritual essence or dissolve her body back into her spiritual essence—thereby escaping back into her tree. Doing so requires a Combat Action. Usually a dryad will automatically return to her spiritual essence (and her tree) if she attempts to leave her grove.

Tree Empathy

A dryad has a deep and personal connection to her tree. If it is diseased or poisoned, she must also resist that disease or poison. If it takes hit points damage, she does as well. If it dies, she does too. The converse is also true.

Aldryami Backgrounds

The following cultural backgrounds for Aldryami focus on the three elements most important to an Aldryami's culture: their racial type, in some cases a sub-race, and in some cases their forest of origin. Each major race features at least one background, with alternate backgrounds sometimes offered.

In addition the backgrounds have been divided between common, uncommon, and rare types, describing the

frequency of Aldryami of that background in the wider world of Glorantha. Players wishing to play an Aldryami from a rare cultural background must discuss it with their Games Master.

Games Masters' Note: These cultural backgrounds differ from those found in the *Player's Guide to Glorantha*. The Fethloni background from that book has been incorporated here as an Embyli variant. The Pollen Carrier and Warder backgrounds from that book have not been included as those professional cultures do not mesh with the racial backgrounds here. They are entirely viable alternative Aldryami backgrounds that may be used in place of the ones found here, though the Advanced skill Life Sense must be added to each, per the rules herein.

Following are additional explanations of some of the backgrounds:

Dryad: Only one background is listed for a dryad, however the dryads who live with the Mreli and Vronkali, those who rule the Embyli, those who live near the Slorifings, and those who dwell underwater amidst the Murthoi all vary somewhat. At the least, each dryad's language skill should match the Aldryami with whom she dwells.

Embyli: The Embyli of the Errinoru Jungle are specifically described by the main Embyli background. The Teshnan Embyli are strange outcasts who live amidst the fire-worshippers of Teshnos, near the Fethlon Jungle, and revel in their peculiar mysticism. They are far from the Embyli norm.

Mreli: The main Mreli background may be used for brown elves from any forest. For a game played in central Genertela, possible forests include Ballid or Tarinwood in Ralios, Tallseed in the Rockwoods, or the Elder Wilds. The Arstolan background specifically depicts Aldryami from the centre of Mreli culture, the huge Arstola forest in Maniria.

Murthoi: Each of the major species of blue elves appears as an alternate cultural background for the Murthoi.

Runner: Only one background is listed for runners, though a Player should determine what type of forest or jungle his runner comes from. Whether he has

relationships with Embyli, Mreli, or Vronkali should affect a runner's background.

Slorifing: The main Slorifing background is a generic default that could be used for red elves from various small swamps scattered throughout the world. The two alternate Slorifing backgrounds depict two of the twenty-seven Slorifing species still living. The Orveltor are a relatively large species of Slorifing warriors. They are very common in the Hornilian Swamp in western Pamaltela, but can be found elsewhere. The Scythanni are a species of Slorifing hunters, trackers, and trappers. They are very common in the Sozganjio Swamp in eastern Pamaltela, but can also be found elsewhere—though in lesser numbers than the Orveltor.

Vronkali: Green elves using the default Vronkali background could be from any green elf forest. In central Genertela, this could be Ballid, the Elder Wilds, Tallseed, or Tarinwood. The Redwood, in the Eastern Rockwoods, is another possibility. A Vronkali using the Winterwood background has travelled from much further, since Winterwood is in the furthest corner of Genertela. However, it is also the breeding ground for many green elf heroes.



Common Aldryami Backgrounds

Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills	Starting Money
Mreli 'Brown Elf'	Athletics +10%, Lore (Plant) +10% Pick Two Lore (Animal) +15%, Perception +15%, Persistence +15%, Sing +15%, Stealth +15% Pick Two 1H Sword +10%, 2H Sword +10%, Bow +10%, Dagger +10%, Shield +10%, Spear +10%, Staff +10%, Throwing +10%	Language (Aldryami) +50%, Life Sense, Lore (Regional), Survival Pick One Craft, Dance, Healing, Language, Lore, Play Instrument	4D6x10 silver
Mreli 'Brown Elf' (Arstolan)	Athletics +5%, Influence +10%, Lore (Plant) +5% Pick Two Lore (Animal) +10%, Perception +10%, Persistence +10%, Sing +10%, Stealth +10% Pick Two 1H Sword +15%, 2H Sword +15%, Bow +15%, Dagger +15%, Shield +15%, Spear +15%, Staff +15%, Throwing +15%	Language (Aldryami) +50%, Life Sense, Lore (Arstola Forest), Survival Pick One Craft, Dance, Language, Lore (Theology), Play Instrument	4D6x25 silver
Vronkali 'Green Elf'	Athletics +10%, Perception +10% Pick Two Dodge +10%, Lore (Plant) +10%, Persistence +10%, Resilience +10%, Sing +10% Pick Two 1H Sword +15%, 2H Sword +15%, Bow +15%, Dagger +15%, Shield +15%, Spear +15%, Staff +15%, Throwing +15%, Unarmed +15%	Language (Aldryami) +50%, Life Sense, Lore (Regional), Tracking Pick One Craft, Dance, Language, Lore, Play Instrument, Survival	4D6x10 silver
Vronkali 'Green Elf' (Winterwood)	Athletics +10%, Perception +10%, Resilience +10% Pick One Dodge +10%, Lore (Plant) +10%, Persistence +10%, Sing +10% Pick Two 2H Axe +15%, 2H Sword +15%, Bow +15%, Polearm +15%, Shield +15%, Spear +15%, Staff +15%, Throwing +15%, Unarmed +15%	Language (Aldryami) +50%, Life Sense, Lore (Winterwood), Tracking Pick One Craft, Language, Lore (Military Tactics), Lore (Snow & Ice), Survival	4D6x10 silver

Uncommon Aldryami Backgrounds

Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills	Starting Money
Embyli 'Yellow Elf'	Athletics +5%, Influence +5%, Lore (Plant) +10%, Lore (World) +10% Pick Two Dodge +10%, Lore (Animal) +10%, Perception +10%, Sing +10%, Stealth +10% Pick Two Bow, +10% Blowgun +10%, Shield +10%, Spear +10%, Staff +10%, Throwing +10%	Language (Aldryami) +50%, Life Sense, Lore (Regional), Survival Pick One Craft, Dance, Language, Lore, Martial Arts, Play Instrument, Tracking	4D6x10 silver
Embyli 'Yellow Elf' (Teshnan)	Athletics +5%, Influence +5%, Lore (Plant) +10% Pick Two Dodge +10%, Driving +10%, Lore (Animal) +10%, Lore (Plant) +10%, Perception +10%, Sleight +10%, Stealth +10% Pick Two 1H Flail +10%, 1H Sword +10%, Bow +10%, Dagger +10%, Shield +10%, Sling +10%, Spear +10%, Staff +10%, Throwing +10%, Unarmed +10%	Language (Aldryami) +50%, Life Sense, Lore (Forest Spirits), Lore (Fethlon Jungle), Survival Pick One Craft, Dance, Language, Lore, Arts, Play Instrument, Tracking	4D8x25 silver
Runner	Athletics +20%, Lore (Plant) +10% Pick Two Dodge +10%, Perception +10%, Persistence +10%, Resilience +10%, Sing +10% Pick Two Blowgun +10%, Thrown +10%, Unarmed +10%, Whipstick +10%	Dance, Language (Aldryami) +50%, Life Sense, Survival Pick One Play Instrument, Tracking	1D6x10 silver
Slorifing 'Red Elf'	Athletics +10%, Dodge +10%, Resilience +20% Pick One Lore (Animal) +10%, Lore (Plant) +10%, Perception +10%, Persistence +10% Pick Two 1H Axe +10%, 1H Sword +10%, Dagger +10%, Shield +10%, Spear +10%, Unarmed +10%	Language (Slorifing Variant) +50%, Life Sense, Survival Pick Two Craft, Lore (Dinosaurs), Lore (Regional), Tracking	1D6x10 silver
Slorifing 'Red Elf' (Orveltor)	Athletics +10%, Resilience +20% Pick One Dodge, Perception, Persistence, Riding +10% Pick Two 1H Axe +15%, 2H Axe +15%, 1H Sword +15%, 2H Sword +15%, Dagger +15%, Shield +15%, Spear +15%	Language (Vorlarian) +50%, Life Sense, Survival Pick Two Healing, Lore (Dinosaurs), Lore (Hornilio), Tracking	2D6x10 silver

Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills	Starting Money
Slorifing 'Red Elf' (Scythanni)	Athletics +10%, Lore (Animal) +10%, Stealth +10% Pick One +10% Dodge +10%, Lore (Plant) +10%, Perception +10%, Persistence +10%, Resilience +10% Pick Two +10% 1H Axe +10%, 1H Sword +10%, Dagger +10%, Shield, Spear +10%, Throwing +10%	Language (Parolarian) +50%, Life Sense, Survival, Tracking Pick One Dance, Disguise, Lore (Sozganjio)	1D6x5 silver

Rare Aldryami Backgrounds

Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills	Starting Money
Dryad	Athletics +10%, Influence +20%, Lore (Plant) +20% Pick One Dodge +10%, Lore (Animal) +10%, Perception +10%, Sing +10%, Stealth +10% Pick One Dagger +10%, Sling +10%, Staff +10%	Language (Local elf language) +50%, Life Sense, Lore (Botany), Lore (Regional) Pick One Dance, Language, Lore, Play Instrument	4D6x10 silver
Murthoi 'Blue Elf' (Alim)	Athletics +10%, Lore (Plant) +20%, Resilience +10%, Stealth +10% Pick Two Lore (Animal) +10%, Lore (World) +10%, Perception +10%, Persistence +10%, Sing +10%	Language (Murthoi) +50%, Life Sense, Lore (Philosophy), Lore (Regional) Pick One Language, Lore	1D6x10 silver
Murthoi 'Blue Elf' (Gentari)	Acrobatics +10%, Athletics +10%, Lore (Plant) +20% Pick Two Dodge +10%, First Aid +10%, Lore (Animal) +10%, Perception +10%, Persistence +10%, Sing +10% Pick One + Dagger +10%, Spear +10%, Thrown +10%, Unarmed +10%	Language (Murthoi) +50%, Life Sense, Lore (Regional), Lore (Undersea) Pick One Craft, Healing, Language, Lore, Play Instrument, Survival	4D6x10 silver
Murthoi 'Blue Elf' (Makisanti)	Acrobatics +10%, Athletics +10%, Lore (Plant) +10% Pick Two +10% Dodge +10%, Lore (Animal) +10%, Perception +10%, Persistence +10%, Resilience +10%, Sing +10% Pick Two Dagger +10%, Spear +10%, Thrown +10%, Unarmed +10%	Language (Murthoi) +50%, Life Sense, Lore (Regional), Lore (Undersea) Pick One Craft, Language, Lore, Play Instrument, Survival, Tracking	4D6x10 silver

Aldryami Professions

Suggested Professions: Craftsman, Farmer, Healer (RQC), Priest, Ranger, Woodsman

Restricted Professions: Bard, Blacksmith, Diplomat, Herdsman, Hunter, Knight (RQC), Peddler (RQC), Scribe (RQC)

The above lists of professions updates the Aldryami profession list found in the *Player's Guide to Glorantha* to also include professions from the *RuneQuest Companion*. In addition, the following new professions are only available to Aldryami.

Gardener: A Gardener is an Aldryami whose job it is to constantly maintain and better the plants of a forest. Young Gardeners are called tenders. Most become growers, while the most powerful eventually become shapers and planners. Mreli and Gentari most commonly become Gardeners.

Gatherer: An exclusive profession for the Embyli race, Gatherers follow the path of Errinoru and Embyli heroes before him who sought to gather knowledge and skills from many different peoples and bring them back to the Errinoru Jungle, to benefit the Embyli people.

Good Leaf: A good leaf is a friendly ambassador who learns how to interact with other races to create friendship between the Aldryami and those races. Good Leaves usually meet outsiders in specially prepared groves for trade and commerce, though sometimes they go out into the world. Dryads are the most frequent Good Leaves, followed by Mreli, Gentari, and Embyli.

Harmony Voice: The Harmony Voice is an average member of the Aldryami community. He participates in the rituals, tends the garden, and does all else that is required of him. He is a follower, not a leader, just one plant in a great forest ... at least until he is tasked to enter the outside world. There are many Harmony Voices in all Aldryami community, though a larger than usual percentage of Mreli and Gentari are Harmony Voices.

Rootless: This is a damaged elf that has lost its connection to the Aldryami community. It can no longer access life sense, and thus can no longer feel a connection with its forest or its inhabitants. Some Rootless elves stay within their communities, which care for them. Most set out on their own, to try and find a new way of life to replace that which they have lost. Rootless elves may not worship the Aldryami gods described herein, and must instead forge connections to foreign deities.

Warder: A warder is a member of the mighty Marching Aldryami army. He has been trained to fight from a young age and has spent most of his life patrolling his forest and keeping intruders out. Vronkali, Makisanti, and Embyli are most frequently Warders.

New Equipment

Most of an Aldryami's equipment is made from plant life. It tends to generally work like the same equipment made from other material, so there is no need to describe its differences. However, the Aldryami do use some unique living plants and some exotic weaponry as well.

All prices for Aldryami equipment are the prices when an item is released on the open market. With an Aldryami society an elf takes what he needs. (Though a Games Master should exercise control over what a young adventurer 'needs'; he's unlikely to be given copper armour or even ironwood, for example.) Some of these prices are high due to the item's uniqueness, while others—such as the elf bows—are just not available for sale.

Aldryami Weaponry

Some of this exotic weaponry originally appeared in *RuneQuest Arms & Equipment* and is included here for completeness sake.

Blowgun, Elf: A living weapon used by the Embyli, similar in nature to the Elf Bow (see below). They are granted to Embyli initiates and grow from an Elf Seed into a magical patch of reeds. When they are finished, after two years of careful attention, they have a POW of 2D6+2. They work as normal blowguns to others.

Aldryami Professions

Profession	Cultural Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills
Gardener	Dryad, Embyli, Mreli, Murthoi, Runner, Slorifing, Vronkali	First Aid +10%, Lore (Animal) +10%, Lore (Plant) +10%	Lore (Botany) Pick One Craft (Plantweaver), Healing, Survival, Treespeak
Gatherer	Embyli	Evaluate +5%, Influence +5%, Lore (World) +10%, Stealth +10%	Lore (any), Streetwise
Good Leaf	Dryad, Embyli, Mreli, Murthoi	Influence +10%, Lore (World) +5%, Perception +5%, Persistence +5%, Sing +5%	Lore (Regional), Streetwise
Harmony Voice ¹	Dryad, Embyli, Mreli, Murthoi, Slorifing, Vronkali	Bow +5%, Evaluate +5%, Sing +5%, Stealth +5%	Craft (Forester), Survival Pick One Lore (Aldrya), Lore (Seyotel), Treespeak
Rootless ¹	Embyli, Mreli, Murthoi, Slorifing, Vronkali	Athletics +5%, Dodge +5%, Resilience +5%, Persistence +5% Pick Two 1H Sword +5%, Bow +5%, Perception +5%, Shield +5%, Spear +5%, Stealth +5%	Streetwise, Survival Remove Life Sense
Warder	Embyli, Mreli, Murthoi, Vronkali	Athletics +5%, Perception +5% Pick Two 1H Sword +10%, 2H Sword +10%, Bow +10%, Dagger +10%, Shield +10%, Spear +10%, Staff +10%, Throwing +10%, Unarmed +10%	Lore (Military Tactics), Tracking

¹ Harmony Voice and Rootless have all been updated from the *Player's Guide to Glorantha* to match the new cultural backgrounds of this book. Ballid Forester and Songbearer, which are also found in that book, have not been updated, but can be used with the cultural backgrounds and other rules in this book if desired.

Elf blowgun darts are sometimes treated with plant toxins from Embyli jungles (as, for that matter, are darts blown by Embyli from normal blowguns). Jungle Fever and Yellow Death (see below) are particular favourites.

Bow, Elf: When an elf becomes an initiate he is given a bowseed which he must plant and which will grow over the next two years into an elf bow. Elf bows are living plants that are green and leafy. They can be healed as a normal person. Each has a POW of 2D6+2 and its magic points are usable by its owner for the purposes of spell casting when he touches it. Only the owner of an Elf Bow may use it. To anyone else it is acts as a normal short bow.

Dart, Sea: A small, thin dart produced by the Murthoi for use underwater. Like the lancets, they are usually carved from bone or bamboo, but they are much smaller in size. A Makisanti will usually carry a half dozen of these when patrolling.

Lancet: An amazingly thin and sharp spine that is carved from a single bone or from a bamboo splinter. This is a preferred weapon of the Murthoi, who often carve lancets from whale bone. Because of their narrow size, they can be thrown effectively underwater.

Trident: A three-pronged spear. This weapon is used by some Murthoi, particularly the Makisanti. Note that

though tridents can be thrown, this isn't particularly effective in water.

Whipstick: A peculiar weapon braided by runners from sticks and vines. When it hits, the vines wrap around the targeted location.

When a target is hit they must make an Athletics skill test at a -25% penalty. If they fail, the location is immobilized. Limbs are rendered useless until freed, while an immobilized abdomen or chest simply keeps the target from retreating. If the head is immobilized the target begins to strangle. One HP of damage is applied to the head, ignoring armour, every round.

An immobilized location is freed if another attack is made with the Whipstick, or if the target succeeds at an Athletics test at -30%. This takes a Combat Action but may only be attempted once per round.

Aldryami Armour

Aldryami can (and do) wear normal armour, made from metal or bronze. However they also have their own styles of armour grown from trees, as well as the copper armour worn by their greatest heroes.

Copper Armour: Copper is the metal of Gata, the earth goddess of the Aldryami. It is prized by wood

lords and other powerful Aldryami heroes. Though it is brittle it can be hammered considerably thinner than bronze, allowing for lighter armour that is less awkward to wear. The Aldryami do not typically mine their copper, but instead grow it on special trees.

Wood Armour: This armour is grown from a variety of trees. It is lightweight and an Aldryami is able to move effortlessly in it due to a natural acuity. Others can use it, but benefit only from the lightness of the material.

Most Aldryami are content with natural wood armour, however a few more powerful variants do exist.

Embyli often 'lacquer' their armour, finishing it with a unique sap found in certain broad-leaved jungle trees. This stiffens the wood and makes it more resilient without any increase in encumbrance, but it also destroys any natural affinity an Aldryami feels toward the wood by 'deadening' it.

Ironwood armour is considerably rarer, coming from certain ironwood trees that are difficult to tend and slow to grow. It is much prized, and usually used only by heroes.

Aldryami Close Combat Weapons

Weapon	Skill	Damage Dice	STR/DEX	ENC	AP/HP	Cost
Lancet	Spear ^{1,3}	1D10	7/11	1	2/2	250 SP
Trident	Spear ^{1,2,3}	1D8	10/7	2	4/10	155 SP
Whipstick	Whipstick	1D6	5/13	1	2/8	25 SP

¹ This weapon will impale an opponent upon a critical hit. See page 48 in *RuneQuest* for details on impalement.

² This weapon may be set against a charge. See page 35 in *RuneQuest* for details on setting weapons against a charge.

³ This weapon suffers no penalty when thrown.

Aldryami Ranged Weapons

Weapon	Skill	Damage	Range	Load	STR/DEX	ENC	AP/HP	Cost
Blowgun, Elf	Blowgun	1D4	30m	1	—/14	—	4/6	N/A
Bow, Elf	Bow ¹	2D8	175m	1	—	1	8/15	N/A
Dart, Sea	Throwing ¹	1D3	30m	—	—/11	—	1/1	25 SP

¹ This weapon will impale an opponent upon a critical hit. See page 48 in *RuneQuest* for details on impalement.

Aldryami Armour

Armour	AP	ENC	Locations	Cost	Total Skill Penalty
Copper plate	5	3	Abdomen, Chest	10000 SP	-5%
Copper plate leggings	5	3	Legs	5000 SP	-5%
Copper plate helm	5	1	Head	2000 SP	-3%
Copper plate vambraces	5	2	Arms	4000 SP	-5%
Ironwood armour	5	3	Abdomen, Chest	1250 SP	-10%, -5% to Aldryami
Lacquered wood armour	5	1	Abdomen, Chest	1500 SP	-10%
Wood armour	3	1	Abdomen, Chest	300 SP	-6%, -0% to Aldryami
Wood greaves	2	1	Arms	250 SP	-4%, -0% to Aldryami
Wood trows	2	1	Legs	250 SP	-4%, -0% to Aldryami

Plant Poisons

Aldryami can grow plants to do just about anything. The elf bows, of course, are grown from plants, as are many other miraculous items, such as the fast-growing night hedges. However it is the poisons grown from Aldryami plants which are some of the most feared items found in Aldryami woods.

The following poisons can be extracted from various plants:

Jungle Fever

Type: Smeared

Delay: Immediate

Potency: 35

Full Effect: Victim is paralyzed and cannot move

Duration: 3D10 minutes

A favourite of the Embyli because it retains its efficacy for days at a time; it can thus can be applied to blowdarts before going on patrol. The lesser potency is a fair trade-off. Jungle Fever has no effect on Aldryami.

Km Kill

Type: Smeared

Delay: Immediate

Potency: 58

Full Effect: 1 Hit Point damage to all locations

Duration: 1D6 hours

A poison derived from a plant that was originally cultivated in Umathela, but which can now be found in Maniria as well. It is only effective against Aldryami. It was originally grown by the Mreli as a weapon against the Vronkali, but proved stronger than expected.

Stick Death

Type: Smeared

Delay: 1D3 minutes

Potency: 48

Full Effect: 1D6 Hit Points damage to location struck

Duration: 1D10 minutes

Certain protective bushes grown by the Aldryami naturally excrete the Stick Death poison. If someone attacks one of these thorny bushes he must make an Athletics test each round to avoid being stuck. If he fails he takes one Hit Point of damage and must resist the Stick Death poison. Trying to climb over or through one of these protective hedges may inflict a victim with 1D20 sticks, at the Games Master's discretion.

Talk Poison

Type: Ingested or Inhaled

Delay: 1D6 minutes

Potency: 82

Full Effect: victim loses his inhibitions and talks incessantly

Duration: 6D10 minutes

This poison is not exactly a truth serum, but it can encourage victims to talk about things of which they normally would not. It is used by all sorts of Aldryami, but particularly the Vronkali.

Yellow Death

Type: Smeared

Delay: 1D3 Combat Rounds

Potency: 65

Full Effect: 1D6 Hit Points damage to all locations, applies a -6 penalty to the victim's INT, victim turns pale yellow

Duration: 2D10 minutes

Runes

As with other Elder Races, not all the runes affect the Aldryami in the same ways that they affect humans. In particular, the following runes have different effects when tuned to Aldryami: death, fertility, man, and plant.

Death

Whereas Aldryami are the children of the Grower, death is the rune of the Taker. It is everything that they are opposed to, and generally it rejects them. An Aldryami may not attune themselves to a death rune unless he is rootless, a dark elf, or at least an initiate of Bengara. The exceptions are Slorifings, who are hybrids, and thus can attune to death at will.

Fertility

Contrariwise, fertility is the rune of the Grower, and thus is very close to the Aldryami's core nature. As a result the Aldryami gain additional benefits when they attune to a fertility rune. Rather than healing in half the normal time, they instead heal in a fifth the normal time, recovering in a day what a normal person recovers in a week. Aldryami attuned to a fertility rune can also re-grow lost limbs; doing so takes a season. Slorifings gain none of these benefits.

Man

Though Aldryami are manlike in shape, they actually have very little in common with humanity. As a result they gain none of the benefits when attuned with a man rune, other than the ability to cast related spells.

Plant

Plant defines an Aldryami's core nature almost as well as fertility does. They also gain an additional ability when attuned to a plant rune: a +10% to Life Sense. This will not give the Life Sense skill to a rootless Aldryami who no longer possesses it.

Roleplaying the Aldryami

Aldryami are not humans, nor are they the noble elves found in fantasy literature. Instead they are a species of mobile plants that is entirely alien. Playing an Aldryami will be a challenge. The following suggests some of the main elements that should be considered when playing an Aldryami character.

Leaving Home

The first rule of Aldryami is that they do not leave their forests. As a Player Character, your Aldryami has left the forest, creating something of a contradiction. There are a few possible reasons for this.

Being Rootless

Your Aldryami might be rootless. If you choose this profession, then you have an easy answer for why your character is roaming Glorantha. Becoming rootless is a terrible thing for most elves. It cuts them off from their forests, and from the web of empathy that connects everything with everything. Though rootless elves can stay in their forests if they want; most can not bear it. They are reminded too clearly of what they've lost.

Besides that, many rootless Aldryami leave their forests to seek a new religion. Rooted elves know that they are a part of a cycle of life and that when they die, they will be reborn. Not only can rootless elves no longer feel this visceral truth, but in fact they are told that rootless elves cease to exist when they die. The only solution to this terrible fate is to find new gods who can offer new promises of life after life.

Rootless elves are sometimes melancholy and often angry. They are lost and they do not know what to do with themselves. Everything that they thought was true is gone, and they must now find a new way of life. They can be courageous explorers or tragic heroes.

Being Well Rooted

Alternatively Aldryami might leave their home forest for the exact opposite reason: because they are so well rooted, and so in touch with the needs and desires of their forest, that they are willing to give up everything they know and love to try and better their people. This is truly the ultimate sacrifice for an Aldryami. Every

day that an Aldryami is away from his forest he can feel that emptiness. Some who stay away for too long even become rootless themselves.

If a well-rooted Aldryami leaves his forest he *must* have a goal. It will be a mission or a purpose that in some way is important to his people. It could be something that is entirely open-ended, such as a need to learn about the various peoples of the world to increase the knowledge of the forest, or it could be a very specific mission, such as recovering a lost seed. However, if a mission is so specific, you should be ready for your Aldryami to go home when it is completed. To figure out a purpose for your well rooted Aldryami you should consult with your Games Master who may have ideas about your forest's long-term goals in the Imperial Age.

Rooted elves may be melancholy too, but they are often proud and noble, neither afraid nor regretful of the sacrifice that they offer.

The Empires

The mighty powers of the Imperial Age themselves may offer powerful reasons for Aldryami to leave their homes.

The God Learners offer one of the deadliest threats ever to the Aldryami people—and the world. Their blasphemous meddling with the songs of the world has further broken Gata and upset the very ebb and flow of the seasons. These wounds to the Grower must be corrected, and that ultimately requires the destruction of the Middle Sea Empire.

The EWF is more of a curiosity to the Aldryami. They have never understood the dragon races and do not know how to incorporate them into their world view. They seem to be neither of the Grower nor the Taker, but something else—perhaps the very essence of Potential. As a result, some Aldryami study dragons and dragonewts with interest. Likewise, there are some who now watch the EWF. The Embyli of Fethlon in particular are interested in draconic secrets.

The Errinoru Jungle was the third great Empire of this new age, but it now lies in a quiet slumber, with Errinoru rooted and buried, his assaults against the God Learners long past. Nonetheless, the Errinoru Jungle maintains an interest in the world. Adventurers

and explorers—or less politely, spies—regularly travel out of Errinoru to watch over the God Learners, in preparation for the time when Errinoru's kin might need to continue their ancestor's work.

Different Ways

One of the ways to roleplay a realistic Aldryami is to play up the different ways in which their society operates.

Economic issues can be interesting to explore. Aldryami are used to a society where they carefully consider whether they truly *need* something or not, but where, if they do need something, they take it. Granted, most Aldryami will not stay with this ideal for long, as a single angry interaction with a shopkeeper will probably be enough to get the point across that humans are different. Nonetheless, these ideals will probably continue to influence the way an Aldryami interacts with his band of fellows. An 'even' distribution of loot might seem particularly confusing to an Aldryami if there are some who need what has been hard-won and some who do not.

Likewise hierarchical rules are likely to cause problems for Aldryami within adventuring groups. Though they will happily turn to a leader when quick decisions have to be made—such as in the heat of battle—they will probably expect to have an equal say in all matters outside of sudden events.

Aldryami might be particularly naïve in interacting with people who have their own motivations and goals. They are used to a forest where everyone works together, and to suspect that someone might be working against the group goals is just about unthinkable.

In numerous other ways it should be remembered that Aldryami have very different ways because of their different cultural origins. For example when dealing with plants (which they will have close connections to) or with women (whom Embyli will offer notable respect to because of the role of dryads in their own society) Aldryami will act differently.

The balance and the cycle—the two core ideals of all Aldryami philosophy—offer two other methods by which the differences of Aldryami can be highlighted.

The Balance

The balance states that the world is equally divided between growing and taking—between life and death. The Aldryami dwell on the side of life, while trolls, dwarfs, and the lost people lie on the side of death.

All Aldryami will almost always choose life. Given the choice between two options, one of which promotes growth in the world and one of which promotes loss, he should choose growth. This does not mean that Aldryami never kill—because they do, especially Vronkali. However it does mean that in doing so they believe they are bettering the way of life in the world, even if just by preserving their own existence as children of the Grower.

The balance also colours the way that Aldryami interact with dwarfs and trolls (and the less common ice demons, fire men, and sludge things). Aldryami do not hate these other races, and they do not even distrust them. Rather, they expect each of these other races to act according to their nature—which means ‘taking’, whether it be eating, paving with stone, burning, freezing, or killing. Likewise, Aldryami expect to have to work against these children of the Taker.

In the short term an Aldryami will be happy to work with a troll or a dwarf as part of an adventuring party, as long as he is certain that he is pursuing the goals of the Grower, his forest, and himself (in roughly that order). However he will be ever watchful, and if the good that troll or dwarf is doing for the Taker ever outweighs the good the elf is doing for the Grower, then the elf might have to kill him.

Finally, it should be remembered that those hybrid races—which include humans, animals, mermen, and Slorifings—can never be trusted. Children of the Grower and the Taker will always act according to their nature, but the ‘red races’ can act in whichever way they want. This makes them very unpredictable and thus dangerous.

The Cycle

The cycle states that life is an everlasting transition between Glorantha, the world above, and Trigora, the world below. When things die they go down to Trigora where they are eventually scoured free of everything they knew in life, and are then returned to Glorantha as a new being.

This belief causes the Aldryami to be more casual about death than many other races. Killing something is not terrible because they are simply helping the being to re-enter the cycle. Likewise dying is not a very bad thing. This philosophy is what has drawn the Fethloni Embyli particularly close to the fire-worshippers of Teshnos, who have their own ideas about reincarnation.

Because things are supposed to re-enter the cycle, it is seen as particularly bad when something does not. For this reason Aldryami have a particular fear of ghosts and other revenants which refuse to go on to their rightful reward. Likewise they have a particular hate for shamans who imprison spirits against their will—particularly plant and elf spirits.

Though the cycle is a core of Aldryami belief, some powerful heroes make a great sacrifice by not re-entering the cycle. Instead their spirit continues to be a part of Trigora so that modern Aldryami can contact the hero and learn from him.

Actions & Emotions

Ultimately playing any character centres on what actions they take and what emotions underlie those actions.

The actions of an Aldryami can be like the actions of any other Player Character, as determined by the core Aldryami ideals that are discussed here and elsewhere in this book. However, for most Aldryami a quiet, thoughtful deliberation usually precedes those actions.

Aldryami are used to thinking slowly about things, about discussing them with their community through life sense, and only taking action when everything has been considered and a consensus is reached. When an Aldryami is away from his forest he may internalize this whole decision-making process, he may think out-loud, or he may try and engage his fellows in the same sort of deliberations that he would expect to subconsciously conduct in his own forest. Whichever the case, an Aldryami does not tend to be quick in his decisions, except when absolutely required.

This thoughtful deliberation usually hides an Aldryami's emotions. Aldryami *do* have emotions, like any sentient species. They can be happy or angry. They can feel grateful or they can hate. However, these emotions are less likely to escape an Aldryami's control because of his thoughtfulness. Rather than acting immediately on an emotion he's likely to consider it, and decide whether that emotion should be a part of his action or another. An Aldryami *might* decide that because he hates someone he is going to kill him, but this would be a deliberate decision, not an act of passion.

Sometimes Aldryami seem emotionless because of their interactions with the balance or the cycle. If an Aldryami kills a friend or turns upon a dwarf or a troll that he knows, this might seem unemotional, but it is

actually a careful decision to put the importance of the balance or the cycle above an Aldryami's individual emotions.

On Rootless Elfs

Playing a very different race can be a lot of fun. However, if you want to have the enjoyment of playing a plant-based elf without the difficulty that might arise from playing someone with a mindset very unlike your own, then play a rootless elf instead.

Rootless elfs have been cut off from their empathic group mind, and have usually been cast out of their communities as well. They tend to be looking for new gods, new cultures, and new ways of life, and thus they can act as human as you want them to ... exactly because they are trying to forget what they used to be.

Playing Red Elfs

Of all the Aldryami covered in this book, Slorifings are the only race which is not born entirely of the Grower. This makes them very different from the other Aldryami described here. They do have connections to the Grower, so do not be afraid to use many of the general Aldryami roleplaying notes. However also be aware of the Slorifings' differences.

First, they do not hold the same great respect for plant life as the rest of the Aldryami do. This might explain their relatively decrepit swamps when compared to the beautiful forests and jungles of the rest of the Aldryami. It also makes them less likely to respond with violence if someone damages a plant. They also do not like the rest of the Aldryami all that much.

Second, they are even less careful of life than the rest of the Aldryami. For them life isn't just a cycle. Rather, they see the whole point of life as death, for it is only through death that their own race can continue. As a result they think less about killing and they think a lot less about dying. This has made Slorifings into crazy daredevils, and is the reason that hundreds of species of Slorifings have died out entirely.

Third, Slorifings have an intense urge to expand. For some this means violent warfare to take new lands for their species, and for others it means an urge to explore, to see everything that is new.

Together these elements can make Slorifings some of the most amusing and enjoyable of the Aldryami to play. They can be curious and fearless, with a naïve love of life.

ALDRYAMI RELIGION

Glorantha: The Second Age says the following about Aldryami religion: ‘Ask a God Learner whether Aldrya is a goddess or a spirit and you’ll suffer through a hair-splitting disquisition explaining that she is neither or both at the same time. The short answer is that the magic she grants works like Divine Magic but feels like a spirit encounter to the Aldryami.’

This confusion originates from the fact that Aldryami deities do not reside on the God Plane. Instead they are found in either the Inner World (*Glorantha*) or the Underworld (*Trigora*). With life sense Aldryami can personally interact with these various entities. They can truly *know* Aldrya, Halamalao, or even *Trigora* because they can sense their emotions and desires, just as they can sense the emotions and desires of anyone in their forest. Thus, for the Aldryami, religious rituals feel like a spirit encounter. Nonetheless the various powers that the Aldryami spirits offer are powerful and clearly of divine origin. Thus, the magic works like Divine Magic.

The exceptions are the Aldryami heroes like *Errinoru*. These weaker spirits, which permanently reside in *Trigora*, are unable to offer the powerful benefits of true divinity. They can only be approached by shamans or other spirit practitioners, and thus their worship is less common than those of the true Aldryami deities. It should be noted that these Aldryami shamans and spiritualists do not work like other spiritualists. In particular they do not imprison spirits; instead their fetishes represent powerful life sense connections which allow immediate access to a spirit in a different part of the web of life.

This chapter discusses all the major elements of Aldryami religion. Some notable cults, including Aldryami and Falamal, have already appeared in *Cults of Glorantha*, and reference is made to that book. However, every other Aldryami deity of any importance appears in this volume.

The elf gods are broken into three groups:

- † ‘The Grower Gods’ are the deities followed by most Aldryami.
- † ‘Aldryami Heroes’ are the heroes available through various spirit practices.
- † ‘The Dark Gods’ are the deities of the Taker followed by only a few.

This deity section is offered as a primer written by *Revarv Hirsul*. It presents both the deities themselves and God Learner notes and discussions thereof. It can thus be used both as a book of Aldryami deities and a guide to HeroQuesting for their powers—though there are notable issues with Aldryami-related HeroQuests.

The Grower Gods

— The Compiled Notes of *Revary Hirsul*, *Jrustelan* Loremaster of the God Learner Alliance

The elves possess a curious religion. Though they have many different gods that they worship—some of which we have been able to track to and correlate with other religions—they have also proven uniquely difficult to interact with on the Hero Plane, as noted herein.

Elf HeroQuests

The biggest problem with elf HeroQuests is a general lack of anthropomorphism. The elf gods appear generally to be spirits which have grown into divinity. Many other cultures would nonetheless anthropomorphize these spirits, attributing stories to them and thus generating a mythology that we could then interact with. However because they are able to directly and intimately interact with their deities, the elves have rarely done so.

(From what I know of the elf species, I would also blame a general lack of imagination.)

This has resulted in a notable problem for our elf-related HeroQuesting attempts. We have very limited means to find the elf deities on the Hero Plane. We have been most successful in doing so when their tales intersect the tales of other cultures, but apart from those notable points the path often grows confused.

We are attempting to resolve this by searching harder for what kernels of myths we can find and by strengthening connections between elf deities and clear cognates in other cultures. In addition we are delving further into the myths of elf heroes. Particularly for those heroes who lived before time, we are able to find powerful myths for these lesser powers, and this has sometimes led us to previously unknown myths for the elf gods with which these heroes interacted.

The Elf Hierarchy

The elves recognise a bipartite hierarchy for their deities.

On the one side are the ‘good gods’ or the ‘gods of the Grower’. These are the gods which almost all the elves worship. They fall into a hierarchy of three levels, all ruled over by Falamal, who is the Grower reborn.

First you have the ‘maternal gods’ or simply ‘our gods’. These are the ancestor spirits which the vast majority of Aldryami worship. We know of two: Aldrya and Murthdrya. There appears to have been a third, Haldrya, the god of ‘white elves,’ who is no longer accessible.

Second you have the ‘worldly gods’ who are the major deities of the elves, representing their most important forces. This includes three elemental deities—Eron the water, Gata the earth, and Halamalao the sun—as well as two deities which represent life and death: Bengara, death-to-live, and Veratha, life-after-life.

Third you have the ‘spiritual gods’ who are more esoteric deities worshiped by a small subset of elves. The most important spiritual deity is Seyotel who is their world-spanning ‘song’. She also has three descendents who represent the various powers granted to the elves: Eirennor, Larayse, and Trileme. Falamal is often categorized as a spiritual god as well.

On the other side of the elf’s bipartite system are the ‘dark gods’ or the ‘gods of the Taker’. A very small percentage of elves worship these dark gods which are clear cognates of ‘foreign’ deities. Nonetheless there are some who do so in order to better understand the entire ‘balance’. These elves are called ‘dark elves’ and they are respected and honoured, but are also feared by their communities.

The dark gods fall into the same hierarchy as the elf gods. They are all ruled over by Bebestor, who is the Taker reborn. The maternal gods are the gods of the other Elder Races, and are mostly ignored by dark elves, while the spiritual dark gods are entirely unknown. It is rather the worldly gods who the dark elves turn to. These are the three dark elements—Ekeem the stone, Iri the sludge, and Zasara the darkness. There are also two deities who represent life and death: Ferotha, live-to-die, and Trigora, death-after-death.

As students seeking the powers of the elf deities, we should consider all of these gods open to our inquiries, and in particular the dark gods can both offer an entry path into the elf pantheon and a crossover point to the gods of the dwarfs and trolls as well.

Aldrya

*‘Aldrya first born.
Seed of earth, Gata’s daughter.
Mother of us all.*

*Shen Senae her children.
Vronkali mother.
Mreli mother.
Embyli mother.’*

—Aldryami Traditional

Overview

Aldrya is the ancestor deity of all earth-born elves. She is called the ‘Song of the Forest’ or the ‘Mother of the Forest’ because she embodies the entire way of the elf people. Generally the cult of Aldrya is a cult that glorifies the elf way of life.

According to the elves, Aldrya is the granddaughter of the Grower who created the universe. The Grower became the elements—including Gata—then embodied itself in the world as Falamal. Aldrya was then born of these matched male and female urges when Falamal's first seed fell upon Gata and was nurtured. Aldrya is thus the first plant born upon earth and the ultimate source of all earthly plant consciousness.

Because of Aldrya's all-encompassing nature she is often wrongly confused with other deities. First, she is sometimes confused with the other maternal deities, Murthdrya and Haldrya. All elves, including the Murthoi, tend to be called Aldryami, though this is technically incorrect because Aldrya is only the deity of surface elves. Aldrya is sometimes also confused with Seyotel, who is the spiritual song that connects all elves together and has been identified elsewhere as 'life sense'. The 'Song of Aldrya' is simply another, less correct, name for the 'Song of Seyotel' or the 'Song of the World'.

Mythology

Aldrya was born at the start of the Green Age. She was loved by two jealous gods (who I have been unable to identify) and thus took refuge on the island at the centre of the world where Falamal was planted—which we can recognize as the Spike. Herein she discovered the first of the Great Trees born from Falamal's seeds, and that was Shanasse, with whom she fell in love. Afterwards Aldrya spread the seeds of Falamal and Shannase far and wide, giving birth to many new Great Trees and many of their descendents throughout Glorantha.

From this were born all the other plant creatures of the world. Dryads came from the trees, elves rose up to protect them, and runners were born of the bushes and smaller shrubs. Eventually pixes rose too, from the flowers that appeared when Halamalao fell from the sky.

A disaster occurred near the beginning of the world which the elves identify as the cracking of the Sky Dome. This let bad things into the world, including storm, darkness, fire, dust, stone, and ice. The elves slowly learned how to fight these things, though Aldrya protested against it, and travelled the lands trying to convince the elves to remain with the ways of peace. She said, 'There is no death in life.'

Eventually Falamal was struck down, leading to the Greater Darkness. Many elves began to die too, and this is when Aldrya laid down beneath the earth and slept. Thus she rejoined her mother, Gata, and thus she showed the way for the Mreli people to live through death.

When the Darkness was overcome, there was a place reserved for Aldrya in the new world, and she temporarily re-entered Glorantha. However when the two twins decided to leave the world to protect the Compact, Aldrya was forced to leave as well. She has thus returned to Trigora, where her people may continue to communicate with her. She is especially beloved by the Mreli.

Today Aldrya is the spiritual being to which most elves turn. Perhaps eight out of ten elves worship her and her alone, but her cult is sufficiently vast that it is almost a pantheon of beliefs, not a singular god as other cultures would understand them.

The cult of Aldrya is found in *Cults of Glorantha: Volume 2* on page 62. Some of the Associated Cults listed there use the God Learner names. They should be Eron (Chalana Arroy), Gata (Ernalda) and Falamal (Flamal).

Bengara Death-to-Live

'Death to live. Take to give. That is the credo of Bengara. She is our most awful and most powerful god, for she represents life and death intertwined and she is the only means through which a true Aldryami can embrace the Taker without darkening.'

— Terinia Softwood, Mreli philosopher

Overview

Bengara is one of the four deities which the elves recognise as combining the powers of life and death—of the Grower and the Taker. She represents the power to destroy in the name of life and is the most fearful of the elf war gods.

Bengara was born entirely of the Grower. She is half the Grower reborn into the world; she was followed eons later by her twin Veratha. However because she was born at the moment of balance at the middle of the elf Red Age, Bengara always partakes of the nature of the Taker. She does not—and could not—have any children of her own.

Mythology

At the centre of the Red Age there was a moment of balance and that was when the Grower re-grew half of himself as Bengara, the first of the twins. She was born in the Wonderwood, in southeast Ralios, and that was her first home. Bengara was a warrior who knew new ways to fight. She did not battle in formation like Halmalio, but rather knew a more personal, fiercer, and angrier way of fighting. Because she was born at the moment of balance she was able to channel the will of the Taker to fight for life.

Bengara's greatest pupil was the Shen Senae Vronkal to whom she taught all her tactics. In the end Vronkal would eclipse even his teacher, for he had learned the techniques of both Halamalao and Bengara, and he knew when to use the one and when to use the other.

Bengara did not use her skills to defend Falamal or to shield any of the elf peoples during the Darkness and thus she is not numbered among the Protectors. Instead she used her skill, her bravery, and the madness that lay within her hybridized mind to bring the battle to the enemies of life. She was particularly active in Fronela where she once marched alongside Vronkal's army to fight the Second Coming of Cold and in Maniria where she defeated the Secret Dust and the Chaos that Crept at Night.

In the Black Age Bengara lost her way and she began to Take without Giving. This was her danger and her curse, for she drew enough upon the powers of the Taker to also be consumed by him. It was only after the Flower Lord of Greenwood gave up his life to her that she returned to herself, his sap still upon her coppery axe. After that she never again forgot that she killed for the purpose of life alone.

After that Bengar found a secret path into Trigora upon the blade of her own axe, and she was able to help the Mreli hero Fwalfa Oakheart, who was searching for

the means to re-grow the Grower. Thus was Bengara's twin, Veratha born. After Veratha regrew the world, the twins and their dark opposites, Trigora and Ferotha, made a compromise which required them all to leave the world forever. Today Bengara's spirit still remains accessible to the elves, but she now dwells in Potential, not in the Inner World.

Bengara is the most fearsome of all the elf gods. She is little worshiped, even by warriors, and those who do worship her are both respected and feared.

Some elves worship Bengara in a more vengeful aspect called 'the Song of Bergara', which is oriented toward revenge and rage without any thought of balance. Orlanthi cultures worship the same entity as Babeester Gor, an avenger with more emphasis on her connections to the earth. This description instead identifies the aspect most commonly worshiped by elves in general.

The cult of Babeester Gor is described in *Cults of Glorantha: Volume 1* on page 17, while the Song of Bergara is described in *Cults of Glorantha: Volume 2* on page 67.

Runes: Death, Life.

Type: War.

Pantheon: Elf.

Worshippers: Aldryami who embrace the Grower and the Taker alike.

Worshipper's Duties: Slay so that your fellows do not have to, justify any means by the ends accomplished, protect the forest.

Initiate Membership

Requirements: Only plant beings may join. Aldryami may join automatically upon reaching maturity.

Cult Skills: Athletics, Lore (Bengara), Lore (Dwarfs) Lore (Trolls), Lore (other Taker race), Survival, 1H/2H Axe, Shield.

Cult Spells: Bladesharp, Detect Dwarf, Detect Troll, Detect (other Taker race), Hand of Death, Strength, Transfer Life (see page 100), Vigour.

Common Divine Magic: All.

Special Divine Magic: Axe Trance, Terrify Taker.

Acolyte Membership

Requirements: Standard.

Good Taker (Runelord) Membership

Requirements: A candidate must have 90% or more in the Lore of one of the Taker races, plus 75% or more in four other cult skills. He must have killed at least ten entities, which could include animals or trees.

Special Benefits

Initiates of Bengara get +10% to their Weapon skill while attacking children of the Taker. Runelords may terrify individual children of the Taker (as per the spell Terrify Taker) when the child of the Taker is alone and not in combat.

Associated Cults

Ferotha: Provides Prepare for Death.

Trigora: Provides Command (Undead).

Veratha: Provides Recall Past Cycle to Runelords.

Eirennor

'The first step of our spiritual awakening was to sense the world around us, rather than reacting to it instinctively. That was Eirennor.'

— Serinia Farsight, Seyotel Philosopher

Overview

Eirennor is the first of the three sons of Seyotel. Each of these gods represents one of the gifts that were given to the elves when they awoke at the end of the Green Age and became living, sentient beings. Eirennor represents the ability to perceive the world through normal senses—not just life sense. Because perception also creates a common reality, Eirennor is also the god of the truth that underlies the world.

Mythology

None of Seyotel's sons are represented in the mythological tales of the elves. Even more so than the average elf deity, these gods are very clearly abstract ideals that are only accessible through life sense. Nonetheless, they represent power.

Runes: Truth.

Type: Insight, Perception.

Pantheon: Elf.

Worshippers: The most spiritual Aldryami who commune deeply with the perceptive parts of the Song.

Worshipper's Duties: See everything, share your knowledge, protect the forest.

Initiate Membership

Requirements: Standard, except only plant beings may join.

Cult Skills: Lore (Eirennor), Lore (World), Perception, Persistence, Sing, Survival.

Cult Spells: Detect Enemy, Detect Magic, Detect [any species], Detect [any substance].

Common Divine Magic: All.

Special Divine Magic: See the Original Form, See the True Form, See the Unseen.

Acolyte Membership

Requirements: Standard.

Tree Seer (Runepriest) Membership

Requirements: A candidate must have 90% or more in Perception, plus 75% or more in four other cult skills.

Special Benefits

Initiates of Eirennor get a +10% bonus to Perception in a forest. Runepriests can never be surprised in a forest.

Associated Cults

Larayse: Provides Run Long to Aldryami or Swim Long to Murthoi.

Seyotel: Provides Rune Priests with Join Forests as One.

Trileme: Provides Magic Sight.

Eron

"We give our greatest devotion to the three protectors. Eron! Cata! Halamalao! It was they who helped us survive the long winter before time. They all gave us sustenance. Halamalao fought our hard battles, Eron healed us weeping wounds, and Cata gave us quiet protection. If not for them, the Aldryami would not have survived!"

—Ferifil Treebridger, Aldryami diplomat

Overview

Eron is one of the three good elemental deities of the elves. He represents all water, but particularly the seas. He is also, with the other good elementals, one of the Protectors who gave aid to the elves during the Darkness.

Like the other elementals Eron is a direct descendent of The Grower, being one of three elements that The Grower became when he first entered the world. As such he is the father—with Falamal—of Murthdrya and the entire Murthoi species as well as the twin of the 'dark' water deity, who is Iri.

Mythology

Eron was born as part of the first generative urge in the elf mythology. Before the world began there had only been The Grower, but The Grower dismembered itself, and its blood—the spiritual portion of The Grower—flowed down into the world and became water, and thus the water god Eron. This was the start of the Green Age, before even Falamal came into the world.

In the Green Age, when Falamal's second seed fell upon Eron he gave birth to Murthdrya, the first of the

blue elf species, and afterward Eron succoured and supported many Shannasse trees beneath the waves, forming the many sea forests that continue to dwell on our coasts to this day. He also came to visit certain elves in the surface world who were his favourites. Today both the Erontree and Tarinwood forests bear his name—pointing to a long history of worship of Eron above the waves.

Eron became an even greater force among the elves in the Lesser Darkness. During that period he began to move among all the elf people, exhibiting for the first time the healing powers of water, which had never been important before. In the Winterwood he once warmed a frozen lake using no fire while near Falamal's island at the centre of the world. He many times came to the Shen Senae and Makisanti defenders, healing their wounds so that they could fight for Falamal another day.

Eron's first great foe in the Darkness was the air god Orlanth who disturbed the waves with his harsh blowing and sometimes unknowingly destroyed Murthoi communities with the damage his clumsy ways. One day when Eron went to talk to Orlanth about this, Orlanth knocked him down with a breath of wind before he even knew Eron was there. Eron was wounded by this attack, receiving a great gash that never healed.

It was the first of a thousand wounds that Eron took upon himself during the Darkness, every one earned in defence of someone else. Though the first came from Orlanth, many others came from Chaos beings and from troll gods. As Eron's wounds grew, his blood and tears slowly fell down upon the seas of the world and began to turn them to salt.

Finally, when the Greater Darkness reached its height, Eron took his thousandth wound from Bebestor herself when he tried to stand in final defence of Falamal and his elf defenders. Eron succumbed, and when Falamal fell and the island was destroyed, Eron too was sucked through Magasta's pool into the Underworld.

Today Eron exists only as a part of the elf's song and a part of the natural landscape of the world. His days of walking the world himself are gone.

The cult of Eron seems to correspond to the barbarian cult of Arroin. Chalana Arroy may be the same deity

or may have been a follower of Eron/Arroin during times past. This connection offers us a path into both Eron's myths and the elves' mythology generally.

As with all the Protectors, Eron receives intense worship from the elves, but only a very small percentage take Eron as their primary deity. His worship seems to be gaining some ascendance in both Erontree and Tarinwood, and is more common among the Murthdrya people.

Runes: Fertility, Water.

Type: Healing, Water.

Pantheon: Elf.

Worshippers: Aldryami with a particular affinity toward the sea, water, or healing.

Worshipper's Duties: Keep the waters pure, heal sick plants, protect the forest.

Initiate Membership

Requirements: Only plant beings may join. Aldryami may join automatically upon reaching maturity.

Cult Skills: First Aid, Healing, Lore (Eron), Lore (Water), Survival.

Cult Spells: Coordination, Extinguish, Heal, Mobility, Vigour.

Common Divine Magic: All.

Special Divine Magic: Command (Undine), Regenerate Tree.

Acolyte Membership

Requirements: Standard.

Healing Water (Runelord) Membership

Requirements: A candidate must have 90% or more in Healing, plus 75% or more in the other four cult skills. He must have healed at least a hundred different people.

Special Benefits

Initiates gain a +10% First Aid bonus when treating Aldryami. Acolytes ignore the effects of Serious

wounds while in combat, and continue to fight normally. Runelords may ask Eron for advice while they sleep, with the results entirely up to the Games Master.

Associated Cults

Gata: Provides Bless Crops to all and Command (Gnome) to Runelords.

Halamalao: Provides Melting Hand to all and Command (Lume) to Runelords.

Falamal

You speak of the Spike, but there was no such thing. What sort of terrible god would put a pin of dead metal at the heart of the world? No, the world was instead grown around a living, breathing principle, and that was Falamal, the First Tree. Our first father!

—Ferifil Treebridger, Aldryami diplomat

Overview

Falamal is literally the first plant and the ultimate source of all plant life in the world. He is the seed father and even the source of the strange spore beings like the Slorifings. Falamal is the Grower reborn in the world. His seeds landed in Gata, Eron, and Halamalao to sprout Aldrya, Murthdrya, and Haldrya. His other direct descendents are called Shanasse trees, many of which sprouted into Great Trees.

Mythology

When the Grower dismembered himself, he became Eron, Gata, and Halamalao, and thus he created the world. But then he reincarnated himself within the world he had created—thus establishing the cycle—and now he was known as Falamal, the first plant.

Falamal planted himself in the middle of everything, on the island at the centre of the world—which we can recognize as the Spike. His roots firmly entrenched themselves in Gata's soil, and quested down until they could find Eron's sustenance. His upper limbs grew up in the Sky until they touched Halamalao; they would

keep the sun rooted firmly in the centre of the sky when the Sky Dome was upset at the end of the Green Age.

Falamal's seeds began to fall upon virgin Glorantha, and they gave rise to his three daughters. First Aldrya was born of Gata, then Murthdria was born of Eron, then Haldrya was born of Halamalao. Those were his greatest seeds, but his lesser seeds still give birth to the Shanasse trees on land, in water, and upon the sun. Many of these trees still live today as the Great Trees and Great Plants of the elf forests.

After that, life spread across all of Glorantha. But, eventually, it became too much, and the Shen Senae in the north accidentally cracked the Sky Dome, ushering in the elves' Red Age.

During the Red Age many bad things entered Glorantha. Falamal, rooted at the centre of the world, needed protection, and each of his children contributed to that cause. Aldrya sent Falamal a group of warrior Shen Senae under the leadership of Embyl Tribefounder; Murthdria sent Falamal a group of warrior Murthoi under the leadership of Makisante Waverider; and Haldrya sent a great hero too, but his name is lost.

These defenders of Falamal came to settle in a city called Falamalenor, also located upon the Spike. It was grown by Gata from living black stone, surrounded by Eron with the Bubble of Purity, and enclosed by Halamalao within the Sun Dome. Its construction was a great feat of the Red Age, and afterward it was a nearly unassailable fortress.

While the city was under construction, a strange thing happened to Falamal. Secret sacs opened on his limbs and spores from them blew all across Glorantha, giving rise to a whole new breed of plants which were born out of death—among them the Slorifings. Some said that this was Falamal showing a new aspect of himself, but others claimed that a secret god called Slor had insinuated himself onto Falamal's limbs.

Throughout the Red Age many people came to try and cut Falamal down. Orlanth tried to blow him over and Kitipah tried to burn him down. Falamal's defenders held them all back until Bebestor herself—the Taker reborn in the world—came to the Great Tree. She cut a



path through Falamal's defenders and then deforested the island at the centre of the world, finally cutting down Falamal himself.

Afterward a huge hole opened in the centre of the world to welcome Falamal down into Trigora, the Underworld. He quietly fell down into it, and he would have gone into the Underworld alone, if not for the fact that his Makisante defenders decided to follow him; they would defend him in Trigora below as they had in Glorantha above. The world had never seen the loss of such a great being before, and the hole at the centre of the world was never able to close; today it is Magasta's Pool.

At the end of the Darkness, when various elf heroes went upon various quests to save all existence, some of them consulted with Falamal. He gave them wisdom, but advised them against trying to return him to Glorantha, for his time was done. All the plant species that could ever live upon Glorantha had now been born, and so Falamal's time was past. Thus when the world started again, Falamal stayed down in Trigora, where he stays to this day.

Today Falamal remains as a spiritual aspect of Seyotel's Song. He is worshiped by those elves most in tune with the world.

The cult of Flamal (Falamal) is found in *Cults of Glorantha: Volume 1* on page 29. The Associated Cults there use God Learner names. Both Bless Crops and Command (Gnome) actually come from Gata, the true earth goddess.

Gata

'When we remind the Protectors, we must remember Gata with the most kindness and love, for it was she who gave us everything, who protected us and died for us, so that we could live—as much as we do. She also gave us the gift of death, for it was she who first hid beneath the world and thus showed both Aldrya and us how to do the same. She is our curse and our blessing, everything that keeps us alive and everything keeps us dead.'

— Terinia Softwood, Mreli philosopher

Overview

Gata is one of the three good elemental deities of the elves. She represents all earth, but especially the fertile soils which gives life to plants. She was one of the Protectors of the elves during the Darkness, when she offered them shelter.

Like the other elementals, Gata is a direct descendent of The Grower, however she is also the least part. Whereas Eron was The Grower's spirit and whereas Halamalao was his mind, Gata was the body that was left behind. Though still of a divine nature, it should be no surprise that Gata was the most wounded of the Protectors during the Darkness. Gata is also the mother of Aldrya and all the Shen Senae people, who were born from Falamal's first seed. Her dark twin is the stone deity Ekeem.

Mythology

Gata was born when The Grower entered the world. She was the deity of earth that formed when The Grower's body fell down into Glorantha and created all the lands that could ever be. This was in the start of the Green Age.

Shortly afterward Falamal's first seed fell upon Gata and she thus gave birth to the Shen Senae. She was a protective mother, the closest of all the Protectors to her people. She taught the Shen Senae how to remain safe, how to hide from enemies, and how to avoid trouble. As such she kept her Shen Senae both numerous and weak, and this is what led to the overcrowding that eventually caused the cracking of the Sky Dome. When oblivion rushed into the world, Gata knew that the fault was ultimately hers, and this caused the first cracks in her.

During the elves' Red Age Gata never fought like Halamalao did and she never healed like Eron did. Instead she hid from the ever-worsening world. She taught the Aldryami to hide too, especially the Mreli who were always her favourite people—though she also helped the Murthoi Alim; on three notable occasions she hid them, first from the forces of oblivion, then from predatory mermen, and last from the boiling seas.

Once, Gata tried to hide Vronkal from Bengara because she did not want Bengara to teach Vronkal the ways of bad war. However, Vronkal would not follow Gata's way, and he called out to Bengara, who afterward always knew how to discover Gata's most secret hiding places.

In the Darkness Gata increasingly gave shelter to the various Aldryami races, and many times forces of the Taker and oblivion attacked her instead. This caused her cracks to grow and grow, until finally she shattered apart. After that Gata was never whole again, and instead there were pieces of her all across the world. She lay down beneath the earth and she slept, and soon Aldrya, then the Mreli followed her example. They all slept until the end of the world.

Gata slowly woke again as the Awakeners travelled across the world and awoke her people. However she is still not whole. Instead she is worshiped as many different land goddesses and grain goddesses across the world.

Generally the cult of Gata seems to be a metacult which attempts to combine together the many lesser earth cults—an admirable goal. As such we can find correspondences between her and every other

earth deity, from major deities like Ernalda (in her earth aspects) to Esrola, Ralia, and many other local deities.

As with all the Protectors, Gata is well-loved but individually worshipped by just a few. She is best loved among the Mreli and—we may presume without confirmation—the Alim.

Because Gata is shattered, her cult is weaker than the other two Protectors.

Runes: Earth, Harmony.

Type: Earth, Protection.

Pantheon: Elf.

Worshippers: Aldryami with a particular affinity toward the the land, earth, or protection.

Worshipper's Duties: Keep the earth pure, hide those in need, protect the forest.

Initiate Membership

Requirements: Only plant beings may join. Aldryami may join automatically upon reaching maturity.

Cult Skills: Craft (any), Dodge, Lore (Gata), Lore (Earth), Stealth, Survival.

Cult Spells: Clear Path, Protection, Shimmer.

Common Divine Magic: Consecrate, Excommunicate, Shield, Spirit Block.

Special Divine Magic: Bless Crops, Command (Gnome), Hide Beneath Earth.

Acolyte Membership

Requirements: Standard.

Protecting Earth (Runelord) Membership

Requirements: It is difficult to gain Gata's attention because of her wounded state. A candidate must have 90% or more in at least five cult skills. He must have actively protected or hid others on at least ten different occasions.

Special Benefits

Initiates gain a +10% Stealth bonus when hiding others. Runelords may ask Gata for advice while they sleep, but the results are usually fractured and confusing.

Associated Cults

Eron: Provides Regenerate Tree to all and Command (Undine) to Runelords.

Halamalao: Provides Melting Hand to all and Command (Lume) to Runelords.

Halamalao

'Halamalao was our first great war leader. He taught us the use of the spear and how to fight in formation. He taught us how to kill with honor and how to fight fairly. It was not the only way to fight, and when Bengara came to us we learned much more, but it was the start of our military education. Afterward when Halamalao ascended back up into the sky, he always shined upon our military expeditions, blinding our foes and burning their supplies. Thus we were taught and supported by Halamalao in the Red Age and thus we Vronkali remember him as a great Protector.'

—Resitus Evergreen, Vronkali warder

Overview

Halamalao is one of the three good elemental deities of the elves. He represents light and warmth, but not the burning heat which consumes and leaves behind only ash. He was also one of the great Protectors of the elves during the Darkness, along with Eron and Gata.

Halamalao is a son of The Grower. He was the first created when The Grower dismembered himself; the greatest part of him became the bright sun Halamalao. In turn he is the father—with Falamal—of Haldrya and the entire Halamali species. Zasara, the dark sun who always lies opposite Halamalao in the sky is his dark twin, born from the Taker.

Mythology

Halamalao was the first and greatest of all the elements created in Glorantha. He was born from the mental

essence of The Grower and placed in the sky far above the world, where his noble spirit brought light and warmth to the whole world. Halamalao built a great palace up in the sky and rooted it to the great world tree, Falamal, so that he would always be connected to the world despite its lofty status. Soon he filled his palace with Falamal's seeds, which became the Halamali, or white elves. This was in the Green Age.

Because of Halamalao's mental nature, he was of course a master of all skills, and one of his favourite skills was military tactics. He would sometimes take his Halamali out on great hunts in the sky, trying to capture the sky bear and certain other monsters that inhabited the darkest places. When the elves' Red Age came, this skill became even more useful, because it allowed for survival.

During the Red Age Halamalao frequently snuck out of his palace so that he could teach the Aldryami people how to fight properly. His greatest pupil was the Shen Senae Vronkal who marched with Halamalao in the Three Great Treks to Deter Oblivion. Afterwards he used Halamalao's military tactics for many years.

In the Red Age, Halamalao fell when Falamal did. Many entities besieged Falamal throughout the Red Age, and then finally the Taker herself—Bebester—came to Falamal's island. She defeated all of Falamal's defenders, including his Shen Senae and Makisanti guards and even the legions of Halamali that Halamalao sent down the tree. Then Bebestor denuded the island at the centre of the world of trees before finally cutting down Falamal himself.

This left Halamalao unrooted in the sky and his palace slowly began to spiral downwards. Halamalao knew that he was doomed to fall into the Underworld, but he tried to save his Halamali by creating sanctuaries for them in the sky. First he created Ziga, but that star moved and so the white elves couldn't stay there. Then he created Tree, but only four white elves went to that place: the traitor, his kin, the builder, and the patriarch. The rest of the Halamali stayed with Halamalao as he fell down through the sky.

Down in Glorantha the first flowers bloomed to welcome Halamalao's approach, and then he finally fell down past Gata, past Ekeem, and into Trigora—the Underworld. The Halamali somehow

became lost during this descent. Halamalao stayed in Trigora throughout the Darkness while Zasara ruled over Glorantha. After the Compromise Halamalao was allowed to rise up into the sky again, but with Falamal gone he could only find balance through the opposition of the dark sun Zasara. Thus Halamalao and Zasara now race through the sky, always equidistant, balancing each other in the heavens.

The modern cult of Halamalao clearly corresponds to the 'wounded sun' archetype, most clearly seen in the god Yelmali, though the elves worship Halamalao as a full sun god and claim that he never embodied burning heat. Some incorrectly claim that the elves worship Yelmali himself, but there are differences in the mythologies and spheres of the two gods; at the least they are different aspects of a greater truth.

As with all the Protectors, Halamalao is only worshipped by a small number of elves in any community. He is the most popular in Embyli communities.

Halamalao shares some similarities with the cult of Yelmali described in *Cults of Glorantha: Volume 2* on page 67, but the following description more correctly depicts the aspects worshipped by the elves.

Runes: Light, Mastery.

Type: Leadership, Sun.

Pantheon: Elf.

Worshippers: Aldryami with a particular affinity toward the sun, light, or leadership.

Worshipper's Duties: Keep the community pure, lead through example, protect the forest.

Initiate Membership

Requirements: Only plant beings may join. Aldryami may join automatically upon reaching maturity.

Cult Skills: Athletics, Bow, Lore (Halamalao), Lore (Light), Lore (Military Tactics), Spear.

Cult Spells: Farsee, Glamour, Light, Protection, Warmth.

Common Divine Magic: All.

Special Divine Magic: Blinding Light, Command (Lume), Melting Hand.

Acolyte Membership

Requirements: Standard.

Lightson (Runelord) Membership

Requirements: A candidate must have 90% or more in Spear or Bow, plus 75% or more in four of the other cult skills. He must have led a unit of at least ten people into battle.

Special Benefits

Initiates gain a +10% Bow or Spear bonus when fighting Chaos or the children of the Taker: dwarfs, trolls, ice demons, or fire trolls. Acolytes ignore the effects of Serious wounds while in combat, and continue to fight normally. Runelords may ask Halamalao for advice while they sleep, with the results entirely up to the Games Master.

Associated Cults

Eron: Provides Regenerate Tree to all and Command (Undine) to Runelords.

Gata: Provides Bless Crops to all and Command (Gnome) to Runelords.

Larayse

'Next we had to learn how to move about the world, rather than remaining forever rooted. That was Larayse.'

— Serinia Farsight, Seyotel Philosopher

Overview

Larayse is the second of the three Sons of Seyotel. Like the others, he represents one of the gifts that the elves received when they awoke at the end of the Green Age. Larayse represents the ability of elves to pull up their roots and move around the world, being active participants rather than reactive recipients.

Mythology

None of Seyotel's sons are represented in the mythological tales of the elves. Larayse is an abstraction. Sometimes tales are told of the first elf who ever moved, who was also Larayse, but generally Larayse is only accessible through life sense, not through the God Plane.

Runes: Motion.

Type: Movement.

Pantheon: Elf.

Worshippers: The most spiritual Aldryami who commune deeply with the parts of the Song which remain forever in motion.

Worshipper's Duties: Constantly move, learn of new places and new things, protect the forest.

Initiate Membership

Requirements: Standard, except only plant beings may join.

Cult Skills: Athletics, Language (any regional), Lore (any regional), Lore (Larayse), Lore (World), Resilience, Sing.

Cult Spells: Endurance, Good Fortune, Mobility, Speedart, Vigour.

Common Divine Magic: All.

Special Divine Magic: Run Long, Swim Long.

Acolyte Membership

Requirements: Standard.

Tree Mover (Rune Priest) Membership

Requirements: A candidate must have 90% or more in Athletics, plus 75% or more in four other cult skills.

Special Benefits

Initiates of Larayse get a +10% bonus to Athletics in a forest. Rune priests learn Larayse's Unseen Steps. If they are a dryad they may leave their grove. If they are Muthoi they may grow legs, breathe air, and walk upon the land. If they are Shen Senae they may never be bound or otherwise trapped while within a forest.

They may also lead communities in rituals to confer these abilities upon others.

Associated Cults

Eirennor: Provides See the Original Form.

Seyotel: Provides Runepriests with Join Forests as One.

Trileme: Provides Magic Sight.

Murthdrya

'She is mother of all sea plants. She is kelp and seaweed. She is coral. She dwells within each of our hearts and fulfils and completes us.'

— *Sesusi Quickspear, Makisanfi warder*

Overview

Murthdrya is the ancestor deity of all sea-born elves. She is called 'Mother Beneath the Waves' and 'Sea Gardener'. She represents the entire Murthoi way of life, just as Aldrya represents the way of life for the Shen Senae.

Like Aldrya, Murthdrya is a granddaughter of The Grower. She was Falamal's second seed, who fell upon Eron.

Mythology

We know very little of Murthdrya's myths because the Murthoi are notably closed and private—even more so than the elf people as a whole.

She was surely born at the start of the Green Age, perhaps moments after Aldrya was born upon the earth. In the earliest days she befriended many sea spirits and convinced them to be calm and placid, a state which lasted until Orlanth entered the world and began to upset things. Like Aldrya she helped to people the seas with Great Plants which became the heart of mighty underwater forests.

After the seas grew unruly the water god Eron was wounded and his blood began to fall into the oceans, turning them salty. Murthdrya tried to bring her people together to purify the oceans, but she was abandoned by the Alim and afterward there were not enough to undertake the mighty task. This betrayal still hurts the rest of the Murthoi.

In the Greater Darkness Murthdrya became a humble gardener, one of many who strived to protect the undersea forests from all the bad things in the world. She eventually fell to an underwater disease. She did not die heroically, but rather was one of many innocent victims, as was befitting one who symbolized her entire people.

Since then she has dwelled in Trigora. Unlike Aldrya, when she was offered the opportunity to return to the surface world after the Darkness she declined. Thus she was able to open the way back for her sister when Aldrya came back to Trigora after Aldrya's brief visit above. Underwater, decisions may be made slowly, but they are usually the right ones, as this interaction between Murthdrya and Aldrya shows.

The cult of Murthdrya is as important beneath the waves as Aldrya is above. What follows is a simplified form of her cult.

Special Notes: Murthdrya is the spirit of all undersea forests. Her followers may practice both Spirit and Divine Magic from the Elf array.

Runes: Plant, Water, Fertility.

Type: Ancestor spirit.

Pantheon: Elf (Undersea).

Worshippers: Murthoi and other undersea plant species.

Worshipper's Duties: uphold the balance, uphold the cycle, protect the undersea forest.

Initiate Membership

Requirements: Murthoi and other sentient plants may join automatically upon reaching maturity.

Cult Skills: Athletics, Enchanting, Lore (Plant), Lore (World), Sing, Spear.

Cult Spells: Endurance, Heal.

Common Divine Magic: All.

Special Divine Spells: Coral Life.

Acolyte or Assistant Shaman Membership

Requirements: Standard. Candidate may choose to qualify as either an acolyte or as an assistant shaman.

Shaman Membership

Requirements: Standard.

Special Notes: Can also learn Murthdrya divine spells.

Shamanic Abilities: Shamanic Escape, Spirit World Travel.

Plant Lord (Runelord) Membership

Requirements: Standard.

Plant Priest (Rune Priest) Membership

Requirements: Candidate must have been a Shaman or Runelord for at least 20 years. He must roll POW + years served in that capacity or less on a 1d100. He must purchase the Rune Priest Legendary ability.

Special Benefits

Initiates give a +10% bonus on Athletics for swimming. Acolytes and Assistant Shamans may communicate with any animal native to their kelp forest. Shamans, Runelords, and Rune Priests will not be attacked by any plant or plant spirit even if it is magically coerced.

Associated Cults

Aldrya: Provides Chameleon.

Eron: Provides Regenerate Tree to Rune Priests.

Larayse: Provides Swim Long.

Makisante: Provides Water spirits.

Seyotel, The Song

'Seyotel is our song.'

—Ferifil Treebringer, Aldryami diplomat

Overview

Seyotel is literally the universal consciousness of the Aldryami. She is the life sense that connects them together and allows them to share their thoughts within their forests. As such she is also representative of both the Green Age—when Seyotel truly did connect all the elves together—and of the elf people themselves.

Seyotel has no mother and no father. She was born of the sudden awakening of the elves and is their spirit given life.

Mythology

At the end of the Green Age the Sky Dome cracked and let something else into the world. This sudden change in the world, and the sudden entrance of the previously unknown force of the Taker, awoke the elves—bringing them to brutal, unwanted consciousness. Together they all screamed out their fear at the thoughts that now filled their mind, and that was Seyotel, the Song.

Seyotel has no physical form. After the Green Age ended she was the universal thoughts of every elf in the world, but as trolls, dwarfs, and fire men ate away at the forests, she was slowly split and sundered, becoming a single entity for each forest. Finally when the Greater Darkness came she was banished entirely to Trigora, as every forest in the world was eaten away.

Since the Dawn Seyotel exists in both Glorantha and Trigora. She is a single unified entity again, but there is an individual part of her in each forest which can not communicate with the rest except through the medium of the Underworld. If the forests were ever to join together once more, Seyotel would cast aside the shackles of Trigora and entirely return to the world ... but such an act is impossible in the world of modern Glorantha.

Seyotel is one of the greater spirits of the elves, alongside her three sons. As such, she is one of the least worshiped spirits, though every elf knows her.

Runes: Spirit, Mastery.

Type: Ancestor, Spiritualism.

Pantheon: Elf.

Worshippers: Aldryami with a deep connection to the Song of Seyotel and the spirit of the elves as a whole.

Worshipper's Duties: Obey the elf spirits, listen to the song, protect the forest.

Initiate Membership

Requirements: Standard, except only plant beings may join.

Cult Skills: Lore (Animal), Lore (Philosophy), Lore (Plant), Lore (Seyotel), Lore (World), Persistence, Sing.

Cult Spells: Clear Path, Co-ordination, Countermagic Shield, Mobility, Second Sight.

Common Divine Magic: All.

Special Divine Magic: Join Forests as One.

Acolyte or Assistant Shaman Membership

Requirements: Standard. Candidate must choose to qualify either as an acolyte or an assistant shaman.

Spiritsinger (Shaman) Membership

Requirements: Standard.

Special Notes: Spiritsingers can only bind plant spirits to their fetch. They may also learn Seyotel divine spells.

Shamanic Abilities: Shamanic Escape, Spiritual Perceptions, Spirit World Travel.

Greatsinger (Rune Priest) Membership

Requirements: A candidate must have 90% or more in Sing, plus 75% or more in four of the other cult skills.

Special Benefits

Initiates gain a +10% life sense bonus in their home forest. Acolytes and Assistant Shamans always have a general sense of their home forest and any dangers present, as long as they are within it. Spiritsingers and Greatsingers will not be attacked by any plant spirit even if it is magically coerced.

Associated Cults

Eirennor: Provides See the Original Form.

Larayse: Provides Run Long to Aldryami or Swim Long to Murthoi.

Trileme: Provides Magic Sight.

Veratha: Provides Speak with Deadwood.

Trileme

'Last we had to learn how to take action, both through mundane and magic means. That was Trileme, who completed the trinity of Seyotel's sons, and made us complete in body as we had once been complete in spirit.'

— Serinia Farsight, Seyotel Philosopher

Overview

Trileme is the third of the three Sons of Seyotel. He represents the last of the gifts that the elves received when they awoke at the end of the Green Age: the ability to take action. More than simple activity, Trileme is also the elf god of magic.

Mythology

As with Seyotel's other children, Trileme is not represented in elf myths as a physical being. Instead he is an abstraction—a source of power—which elves draw upon through life sense to discover their own power.

Runes: Magic, Mastery.

Type: Activity, Magic.

Pantheon: Elf.

Worshippers: The most spiritual Aldryami who commune deeply with the active parts of the Song.

Worshipper's Duties: Lead through action, strike through magic, protect the forest.

Initiate Membership

Requirements: Standard, except only plant beings may join.

Cult Skills: Athletics, Craft (any), Lore (Magic), Lore (Trileme), Persistence, Resilience, Sing, Weapon (any).

Cult Spells: Co-ordination, Countermagic, Dispel Magic, Glamour, Strength, Versatility, Vigour.

Common Divine Magic: All.

Special Divine Magic: Impossible Act, Magic Sight.

Acolyte Membership

Requirements: Standard.

Tree Doer (RunePriest) Membership

Requirements: A candidate must have 90% or more in Athletics, plus 75% or more in four other cult skills.

Special Benefits

Initiates of Eirennor get a +10% bonus to Athletics in a forest. Runepriests can never be surprised in the forest.

Associated Cults

Eirennor: Provides See the Original Form.

Larayse: Provides Run Long to Aldryami or Swim Long to Murthoi.

Seyotel: Provides Runepriests with Join Forests as One.

Veratha Life-after-Life

'There are two great ages of flowers, one of sorrow, one of joy. The first flowers sprouted when Halamalio fell from the sky. As he descended, so did we plants, but in the end we sprouted forth the most beautiful and bright petals so that he may take a moment of colour and joy with him into the Underworld. The second flowers sprouted when Veratha danced the rites of spring. This was when the world was dead, and she brought it back. We could not contain ourselves, and our joy showed forth on our leaves, and thus were flowers seen once more in the world. Veratha is life unending. She is the Cycle, and she is thus our mother as much as Aldrya herself!'

— Ferifil Treebridger, Aldryami diplomat

Overview

Veratha is one of the four deities which the elves worship who combine the Grower and the Taker. But, of all four, it is Veratha who is the brightest and the least touched by death. She is life born out of death, and the possibility of resurrection beyond the sterile halls of Trigora. She is rebirth and spring.

Like her twin, Bengara, Veratha was born entirely of the Grower. She is half of the Grower reborn in the world. She is touched by the Taker only by the fact that she was born down in Trigora. Though she has no children of her own, Veratha is the midwife of every living thing, for it is only through her intercession that life was reborn after the last embers were extinguished in the Darkness.

Mythology

For most of the mythological age, Veratha was a promise unfulfilled. When the Grower grew himself into Bengara at the centre of the elves' Red Age, he also held exactly half of himself back, seeing the future need for one final growth. That was Veratha, and she remained in a state of potential until the end of the Darkness.

Because Bengara and Trigora had reached a compromise in the Red Age, Veratha could only be born of a mortal impulse. This act was carried out by the mighty Mreli hero Fwalfa Oakheart. He had learned Gata's secret and he had buried himself, along with all of Arstola Forest, when things got very bad in the Greater Darkness. But when he was reborn in Trigora he sought out the three children of Seyotel—Eirennor, Larayse, and Trileme. Thus he was able to regain his memories, his independence, and his free will. After that he faced the challenges of the Three Dark Songs, then he discovered Eron's lost blood, Gata's lost hope, and Halamalao's lost warmth. With these elements in hand he was able to sprout Veratha in the deepest depths of Trigora, and thus life came from death.

Afterward Veratha learned the rites of spring and danced them so that everything that was dead and forever doomed to Trigora could now be born again into Glorantha. Thus she recreated the cycle which the Taker had broken when Trigora was born. After that she made a compromise with the other three hybrid gods, and they all walked outside the world so that they would unbalance it no more.

Veratha is the most beautiful and hopeful of all the elf gods. Though she is only worshiped by a minority of elves, she is loved and respected by all of them.

Runes: Life.

Type: Rebirth.

Pantheon: Elf.

Worshippers: Aldryami who love flowers or believe strongly in the Cycle.

Worshipper's Duties: Participate in the beauty of death and rebirth, nourish flowers and their keepers, protect the forest.

Initiate Membership

Requirements: Only plant beings may join. Aldryami may join automatically upon reaching maturity.

Cult Skills: Craft (any), First Aid, Healing, Lore (Flowers), Lore (Veratha), Sing, Survival.

Cult Spells: Emotion, Glamour, Good Fortune, Heal, Vigour.

Common Divine Magic: All.

Special Divine Magic: Flowers, Recall Past Cycle.

Acolyte Membership

Requirements: Standard.

Good Grower (Runelord) Membership

Requirements: A candidate must have 80% or more in five of the cult skills. He must never have purposefully killed another sentient being.

Special Benefits

Initiates of Veratha get a +10% to their skills while negotiating with children of the Taker. Runelords may begin to remember general details of their past lives. A player may arrange these details with the Games Master. They do not provide skill bonuses, and do not provide specific information unless deemed appropriate based on the background generated, unlike the Recall Past Cycle spell.

Associated Cults

Bengara: Provides Terrify Taker to Runelords.

Ferotha: Provides Prepare for Death.

Trigora: Provides Command (Undead).

Elf heroes

The heroes of the elves are often able to provide support to the elf people as well. These were once living elves who have since died and who now live in Trigora—the Underworld. Unlike their fellows they have decided not to re-enter the cycle, but instead remain in Trigora so that they may advise and aid the living. This is considered a great sacrifice.

The worship methods for the elf spirits are most closely attuned to spirit practices, and the followers of these heroes are thus usually practitioners or shamans. Though sometimes elves decide to exclusively ally themselves with an elf hero, more frequently worshipers of the gods which allow mixed worship—

Aldrya, Murthdrya, and Seyotel—extend their worship to a specific hero, and thus a yellow elf might be a ‘Shaman of Aldrya and Errinoru’, as an example. This typically requires no additional commitment of time and resources.

As noted already, fetishes in elf magic are not the same bound spirits found in other spirit practices. Instead fetishes provide connections to entities that live within life sense and which an elf can call upon in seconds. For the hero cults, these fetish powers usually come directly from the hero and his close allies.

Errinoru Healing Plant

Errinoru is the great yellow elf hero of the Second Age who fought the God Learners, joined his Jungle as one, sailed through Magasta’s Pool, returned from Trigora, and eventually settled back in his jungle for his last days.

Though Errinoru was once a great leader and a great warrior, today he is worshiped instead as he was known in his final days—as a healer, negotiator, and life giver. Even when he died he gave the gift of healing to his peoples through several new healing herbs that had never been seen before.

The Cult of the Errinoru Healing Plant is described in *Cults of Glorantha: Volume 2* as ‘Errinoru’s Sons’, on pages 23–24. The requirements section should be modified also to allow initiates of Seyotel to become practitioners.

Fwalfa Oakheart

Fwalfa is the greatest Mreli hero. Before Time he led the Arstola Forest, sat at Council with The Only Old One, and offered leadership to all of the elves of Dragon Pass. After he buried himself beneath the Earth, he adventured further within Trigora, overcoming many obstacles to regain his individuality, then to gather the seeds necessary to grow the new god Veratha.

Fwalfa is primarily worshipped as a great leader and a great communicator who gave hope to many people

and showed great endurance. He was the heart of a community, and gave his all to that community, both in life and in death.

Runes: Death, Life, Plant.

Array: Elf.

Worshippers: Brown elves of all sorts.

Worshippers Duties: Give hope to the hopeless, promote cooperation among all peoples, protect the forest.

Practitioner Membership

Requirements: Standard, plus must be an initiate of Aldrya or Seyotel.

Practice Skills: Dodge, Influence, Lore (Animal), Lore (Plant), Survival.

Charms: Death, Life, Plant.

Practice Spells: Clear Path, Cover of Night, Glamour, Heal, Vigour.

Fetishes: Plant spirits.

Assistant Shaman

Requirements: Standard.

Shaman Membership

Requirements: Standard. The candidate must be a brown elf.

Shamanic Abilities: Second Sight, Spirit World Travel, Shamanic Escape.

Special Benefits

Practitioners gain a +10% bonus when hiding from a foe in their own forest. Assistant Shamans gain a +10% bonus to Influence when trying to convince someone to help protect their forest. Shamans can—once per year—seek wisdom directly from Fwalfa, though Fwalfa is one of the hardest heroic spirits to contact and typically only responds through cryptic dreams.

Associated Cults

Gata: Provides Hide Beneath Earth.

Makisante Waverider

Makisante is the great Makisanti hero who turned his people into warriors. It was he who led a force of Murthoi to defend the Great Tree Falamal from the ebon city of Falamalenor. When Falamal fell it was Makisante who followed him down into the great whirlpool, so that he could continue to defend the Great Tree after death. In the Dawn Age the Makisanti people returned to the surface world, but Makisante has never been seen since. He still dwells in Trigora, where he watches over his people.

Like Vronkal Makisante is a great warrior. He is worshiped exclusively by the Murthoi people, including both Makisanti and some smaller numbers of Gentari.

Runes: Death, Plant, Water.

Array: Elf.

Worshippers: Blue elves of all sorts, but especially Makisante.

Worshippers Duties: Protect the elf's greatest leaders, fight bravely and stoutly, protect the forest.

Practitioner Membership

Requirements: Standard, plus must be an initiate of Murthdrya or Seyotel.

Practice Skills: Athletics, Persistence, Resilience, Spear, Survival.

Charms: Death, Plant, Water.

Practice Spells: Endurance, Mobility, Pierce, Protection, Vigour.

Fetishes: Magic spirits, Water spirits.

Assistant Shaman

Requirements: Standard.

Shaman Membership

Requirements: Standard. The candidate must be a Makisanti.

Shamanic Abilities: Second Sight, Spirit World Travel, Shamanic Escape.

Special Benefits

Practitioners gain a +10% bonus to Spear tests when fighting in their own undersea forest. Assistance Shamans gain a +10% bonus to Dodge tests when fighting in their own forest. Shamans can swim without fatigue if they are going to the aid of elves.

Associated Cults

Eron: Provides Command (Undine).

Murthdrya: Provides Swim Long.

Vronkal High King Elf

Vronkal is the greatest Vronkali hero, and also a hero of great importance to all of Shen Senae. He was born in the mighty Winterwood and was trained first by Halamalao and then Bengara. Afterward he created the mighty Marching Aldryami which allowed him to travel across Glorantha all throughout the Darkness to preserve and protect. Eventually he allowed himself to succumb to the ravages of Ferotha so that the world could be reborn.

Vronkal remains the greatest warrior hero of all the Aldryami. Though he is primarily worshiped by Vronkali; some Embyli and Mreli likewise follow in his footsteps.

Runes: Earth, Metal, Plant.

Array: Elf.

Worshippers: Elves of all sorts, but especially green elves.

Worshippers Duties: Attack the forces of the Taker, destroy Chaos, protect the forest.

Practitioner Membership

Requirements: Standard, plus must be an initiate of Aldrya or Seyotel.

Practice Skills: Dodge, First Aid, Shield, Spear, Survival.

Charms: Earth, Metal, Plant.

Practice Spells: Bladesharp, Clear Path, Heal, Protection, Repair.

Fetishes: Magic spirits, Plant spirits.

Assistant Shaman

Requirements: Standard.

Shaman Membership

Requirements: Standard. The candidate must be a green elf.

Shamanic Abilities: Second Sight, Spirit World Travel, Shamanic Escape.

Special Benefits

Practitioners gain a +10% bonus to Spear tests when fighting in their own forest. Assistance Shamans gain a +10% bonus to Shield tests when fighting in their own forest. Shamans can march without fatigue if they are going to the aid of elves.

Associated Cults

Bengara: Provides Terrify Taker.

Halamalao: Provides Blinding Light.

The Dark Gods

The vast majority of elves are content to follow the ways of the Grower. But, there are also those who instead turn to the ways of the Taker, learning about the dark and dead parts of the world. These elves are not shunned but are instead honoured for their sacrifice, for they give up a bit of their true heartwood in order to learn the ways of their enemy, but they do so for the betterment of their people.

Dark elves worship one of five different Taker gods which are accessible to them. Most frequently they worship the dark elemental gods: Ekeem, Iri, and Zasara. Iri, who was the goddess of bad water, fell apart upon creation, and so she is instead worshipped

through a number of masks such as Iri Kitipah the fire and InIri the snow. Other dark elves worship the two dark twins: Ferotha and Trigora.

According to the elf mythology there is a dark match for each of their own gods. However the goddess Bebestor and many others of whom we do not know the names are beyond the power of elves to contact.

Many—if not all—of these dark gods are actually variant forms of enemy deities. Nonetheless the elves' worship of them is real, and may offer another path into their mythology.

Ekeem

'Dark earth. No life, no sustenance. Loose as seed, hard as stone. Ekeem.'

—Aldryami Traditional

Overview

Ekeem is one of the three bad elemental deities, according to the elves. He represents bad earth, both that which is too loose to root in and that which is too solid to allow growth. He offers no sustenance and thus prevents life rather than encouraging it. Ekeem is also the threshold between life and death. Above him is Gata and all of Glorantha while below him is Trigora and all of the Underworld.

Ekeem is a direct descendent of the Taker, one of the three elements which The Taker became when it first entered the world. It also gave birth to an equally lifeless race: the dwarfs. Ekeem is the dark mirror of Gata.

Mythology

Ekeem was born when The Taker dismembered itself to enter the world. Ekeem was the lifeless body which remained behind when everything else was gone. It fell down into Glorantha and it was so dense that it sank beneath the earth to become the bottom of the world—this being the time before Trigora came into existence. This was in the elves' Red Age when the Taker multiplied in Glorantha to save the world.

Ekeem is the father of the dwarf people, but as with all the Taker races, Ekeem did not give birth to his offspring. Instead they sloughed off from the stone beneath the world like scabs. They showed their gratitude to Ekeem by immediately beginning to tunnel through his body, tearing it apart over the eons.

Some Aldryami also tie Ekeem to our own progenitors, the Brithini, believing that the Brithini are descendants of the Mostali, and that Ekeem is ultimately our own Invisible God. This is not a widely held belief, and it has been discouraged whenever possible.

Ekeem is only worshiped by dark elves who delve into the secrets of lifeless stone to better learn the ways of the Taker.

Runes: Death, Earth.

Type: Infertility, Stone.

Pantheon: Elf.

Worshippers: Aldryami with a particular affinity toward the stone, the Underworld, or infertility.

Worshipper's Duties: Learn the secrets of stone, learn the secrets of the dwarfs, protect the forest.

Initiate Membership

Requirements: Only plant beings may join. Otherwise standard, plus the prospective member must succeed at a test of life sense in order to communicate with a being so far removed from the Song.

Cult Skills: Craft (any), Engineering, Lore (Ekeem), Lore (Stone), Mechanisms, Survival.

Cult Spells: Bludgeon, Hand of Death, Repair.

Common Divine Magic: All.

Special Divine Magic: Command (Barren), Stone Walk.

Acolyte Membership

Requirements: Standard.

Stonehead (Runelord) Membership

Requirements: A candidate must have 90% or more in five cult skills. He must have invented one notable mechanism or delved into Ekeem—the stone chambers that lie far beneath the earth.

Special Benefits

Initiates gain a +5% Engineering or Mechanisms bonus while in the forest. Runelords may find the secret paths down to Ekeem and from there the secret paths into Trigora itself.

Associated Cults

InIri: Provides Command (Boreal) to Acolytes and Runelords.

Kitipah Iri: Provides Command (Salamander) to Acolytes and Runelords.

Zasara: Provides Command (Shade) to Acolytes and Runelords.

Ferotha Life-to-Die

'Life-to-die. That is the mantra of Ferotha. It is she who extends to all the Aldryami the doom that once lay upon the Mreli alone. We Mreli die every winter, and we are constantly aware of the twilight lands, but Ferotha is the reminder to the rest of our kin that death comes to all in time.'

— Terinia Softwood, Mreli philosopher

Overview

Ferotha is the one of the four elf deities who combines together the powers of life and death—of the Grower and the Taker. Ferotha represents the ultimate mortality of all beings. She lives in each living thing, causing it to eventually wither and die.

Ferotha was born entirely of the Taker. She is half the Taker reborn one more on the world, younger twin to Trigora who preceded her by many eons. Like the other hybrid deities, Ferotha has no children but she lives (to die) through all elves.

Mythology

Like Veratha, Ferotha was an unfulfilled promise through the mythological age. When the Taker grew Trigora he held half of himself back as a final weapon in case the Grower ever came to ascendance again.

At the end of the Darkness Veratha was born with the power to dance everything dead back to life. With the Taker and Chaos both growing weaker, this offered the chance that the world once more would become overpopulated, as it had been in the Green Age, with disastrous consequences. Thus, the time had come for Ferotha to be born. However, for this to occur a mortal needed to intervene. The elf hero who did this, was an elf who intimately understood death and life alike. Vronkal High King Elf gave himself over to an unnecessary death of aging mortality so that the universe might be reborn.

Afterward Ferotha followed Veratha up into the world above, and after Veratha danced the rites of spring, Ferotha danced the rites of fall. Thus was the cycle reborn—life and death, autumn and fall, Grower and Taker. After that time *everything* died, and everything was reborn too. Then Ferotha and the other hybrid gods made their final compromise and left the world forever.

Ferotha is a terrible god, because she embodies the death all of beauty. But she is also the cycle. She is worshiped only by dark elves.

Runes: Death, Life.

Type: Mortality.

Pantheon: Elf.

Worshippers: Aldryami who understand the necessity of death.

Worshipper's Duties: Protect the forest, help others to pass peacefully into the cycle, die.

Initiate Membership

Requirements: Only plant beings may join. Otherwise standard, plus the prospective member must succeed at a test of life sense in order to communicate with a being so far removed from the Song.

Cult Skills: Influence, Lore (Death Rituals), Lore (Ferotha), Lore (World), Persistence, Resilience, Sing.

Cult Spells: Befuddle, Dullblade, Fate.

Common Divine Magic: All.

Special Divine Magic: Predict Death, Prepare for Death, Speak with Deadwood.

Acolyte Membership

Requirements: Standard.

Dead One (Runelord) Membership

Requirements: A candidate must have 90% or more in five cult skills. He must have spoken with at least five dead beings by some means; the Mreli can most easily meet this requirement through their yearly sleep.

Special Benefits

Initiates gain a +5% when fighting with the Undead or resisting them. Runelords can use their life sense to interact with Trigora and the dead souls there at any time.

Associated Cults

Bengara: Provides Terrify Taker to Runelords.

Trigora: Provides Speak with Deadwood.

Veratha: Provides Recall Past Cycle to Runelords.

InIri

*'Dark water. Fallen apart, cold as ice, slow as stone.
InIri.'*

— Aldryami Traditional

Overview

Iri was one of the three bad elemental deities of the elves, but she could not stay together, and instead fractured into many parts. One of those was InIri, who is water that no longer moves. She is ice, snow, and cold.

Iri was a direct descendent of Taker and thus InIri is its granddaughter. She is one of Eron's dark twins, and she is the mother of the Holtri.

Mythology

Iri was born in the elves' Red Age when the Taker dismembered itself to enter the world. She was the Taker's blood which fell down to the deep places of the earth to contest with the waters. When Iri fell apart, her descendents were scattered across Glorantha. InIri was thus born weak and sleeping.

The Holtri were born of InIri's body and for a time they settled on her like mites, but eventually they came to know and worship her. They built a mighty palace of cold around her, and in time it restored her to life and movement. Afterward InIri ruled from her ice palace, and her power of cold grew throughout the Darkness, and thus the glacier known as Valind's Glacier grew around her.

InIri's dominion finally came to an obstacle when it began to sweep across the mighty Winterwood, which was known by a different name in that time. Determined to destroy this obstacle InIri set forth from her palace for the first time ever and came to Winterwood. Though she brought great cold and misery, and though she forced the elves all to shed their colourful leaves, in the end she had to retreat before the might of a young green elf warrior. His name was Vronkal.

InIri was never forced to leave the world, and today she still rules the lands of flowing ice from her palace, far to the north. Few travel there now, but the Holtri still know the way.

As with the other dark elements, InIri is only worshiped by dark elves.

Runes: Cold, Stasis.

Type: Ice, Snow.

Pantheon: Elf.

Worshippers: Aldryami with a particular affinity toward ice, snow, or stasis.



Worshipper's Duties: Learn the secrets of cold, learn the secrets of the Holtri, protect the forest.

Initiate Membership

Requirements: Only plant beings may join. Otherwise standard, plus the prospective member must succeed at a test of life sense in order to communicate with a being so far removed from the Song.

Cult Skills: Driving, Lore (Cold), Lore (InIri), Lore (Zasara), Resilience, Spear, Survival, Tracking.

Cult Spells: Extinguish, Frostbite, Pierce.

Common Divine Magic: All.

Special Divine Magic: Command (Boreal), Command (Holtri), Snow.

Acolyte Membership

Requirements: Standard.

Coldhand (Runcord) Membership

Requirements: A candidate must have 90% or more in five cult skills. He must have lived a winter in ice or snow.

Special Benefits

Initiates gain a +5% to Resilience in the cold. Runelords are immune to the adverse effects of natural cold.

Associated Cults

Ekeem: Provides Command (Barren) to Acolytes and Runelords.

Kitipah Iri: Provides Command (Salamander) to Acolytes and Runelords.

Zasara: Provides Command (Shade) to Acolytes and Runelords.

Kitipah Iri

'Dark water. Fallen apart, hot as flame, ever ephemeral. Kitipah.'

— Aldryami Traditional —

Overview

Iri was one of the three bad elemental deities of the elves, but she could not stay together, and instead fractured into many parts. One of those was Kitipah, who is the antithesis of water. He burns where water soothes and destroys where water heals. He is fire.

Iri was a direct descendent of Taker, and thus Kitipah is its grandson. He is one of Eron's dark twins, and he is the father of the fire men.

Mythology

Iri was born in the elves' Red Age when the Taker dismembered itself to enter the world. She was the Taker's blood which fell down to the deep places of the earth to contest with the waters. When Iri fell apart Kitipah was the part that fell near the centre of the world.

Kitipah was ever-moving, never stopping, the flame that devours without thought and that moves without direction. During the Red Age he constantly circled the centre of the world, creating mayhem wherever he appeared. As he moved, flickered, and flamed, Kitipah slowly dropped off pieces of himself, and thus he

became weaker as the Red Age progressed. It was in Pamaltela, shortly after he first rose – when he was still strong and vibrant – that some of Kitipah's backfires became the fire men. These thereafter bedevilled the Artmali for many years, and who were waiting when the Embyli finally arrived in this land.

Many times during the Red Age Kitipah found himself at the centre of the world, and here he always tried to assault the world tree Falamal, but as he grew weaker and weaker his attacks upon Falamal slowly grew less determined. Late in the Red Age Kitipah finally came to Genertela, and this was when he lit fire to Genert's great garden and reduced it to ash. After that Kitipah made one final assault on Falamal, and though he did not succeed, he was one of many who weakened the tree before Bebestor's final assault. After that Kitipah tried to assault Embyl's fleeing warriors, and though he gave them their first burns, he was too weak by far to do worse.

When the Darkness came Kitipah sparked out suddenly and forever. In this time his fire men largely disappeared from Glorantha as well. Though Kitipah's worshippers can sometimes call forth his spirit from the Underworld, he is no longer the mighty god-spirit that he once was.

As with the other dark elements, Kitipah is only worshiped by dark elves.

Runes: Fire, Motion.

Type: Flames, Harm.

Pantheon: Elf.

Worshippers: Aldryami with a particular affinity toward fire, flames, or movement.

Worshipper's Duties: Learn the secrets of fire, learn the secrets of the lost fire men, protect the forest.

Initiate Membership

Requirements: Only plant beings may join. Otherwise standard, plus the prospective member must succeed at a test of life sense in order to communicate with a being so far removed from the Song.

Cult Skills: Athletics, Bow, Dodge, Lore (Fire), Lore (Kitipah), Persistence, Survival.

Cult Spells: Firearrow, Fireblade, Ignite.

Common Divine Magic: All.

Special Divine Magic: Command (Salamander), Firespear.

Acolyte Membership Requirements: Standard.

Firehand (Runelord) Membership Requirements: A candidate must have 90% or more in five cult skills. He must have visited a desert or waste and lived there for at least a season.

Special Benefits
Initiates gain a +5% to Resilience to flames. Runelords are immune to the adverse effects of fire Rune Magic (but not Divine Magic) and normal flames smaller than a bonfire.

Associated Cults
Ekeem: Provides Command (Barren) to Acolytes and Runelords.

InIri: Provides Command (Boreal) to Acolytes and Runelords.

Zasara: Provides Command (Shade) to Acolytes and Runelords.

Trigora Death-After-Death

'Trigora is hell. She is the dark, silent cave that opens up to swallow us every winter. She seeks to sap away our memories, our personalities, and eventually our lives. In the end she succeeds, for there is some winter after which each of us will not arise. That is when Trigora has won.'

— Terinia Soffwood, Mreli philosopher

Overview

Trigora is one of the four hybrid deities of the elves. She is the darkest of the four, for she is death touched only by the fact that she ends life. She is the elf god of the Underworld who rules over not just those whose lives have ended, but also those Mreli who sleep in winter.

Trigora was born entirely of the Taker. She is half the Taker reborn once more in the world who would be followed eons later by her twin Ferotha. Though she has no children of her own, Trigora is the wicked stepmother of every living thing that dies.

Mythology

Like Bengara, Trigora was born in the Red Age. She was the Taker's response to the Grower strengthening himself through the creation of Bengara and also a punishment to all things living. Before she came into existence, things that had died in Glorantha had been reborn in Glorantha, but afterward things that had died in Glorantha instead fell down to Trigora, where they were never reborn. She broke the cycle.

Throughout the elves' Red Age and the Darkness Trigora became increasingly powerful, for the deep tunnels that she created below even Ekeem became filled with everything that had ever dwelled in the world above, even the greatest gods like the world tree and the sun. In this time Trigora proved herself a cruel goddess. She sought to reduce her denizens to nothing—to shells that were as empty as she was herself.

In the end the Mreli Fwalfa Oakheart staged a rebellion. He found all those things that Trigora had taken from him and from his people and he used this power to birth the Grower's lost daughter, Veratha. After that the cycle was restored. Things died in Glorantha and came down to Trigora, but after that they eventually returned to Glorantha as well through Veratha's intercession.

Trigora is only worshiped by the dark elves, but she is considered an integral part of the cycle that all elves worship.

Runes: Death.

Type: Underworld.

Pantheon: Elf.

Worshippers: Aldryami with a particular affinity toward death, the dead, or the Underworld.

Worshipper's Duties: Learn the secrets of death, communicate with the dead, protect the forest.

Initiate Membership

Requirements: Only plant beings may join. Otherwise standard, plus the prospective member must succeed at a test of life sense in order to communicate with a being so far removed from the Song.

Cult Skills: Influence, Lore (The Dead), Lore (Underworld), Lore (World), Resilience, Sing, Stealth.

Cult Spells: Demoralise, Disruption, Undead Bane.

Common Divine Magic: All.

Special Divine Magic: Command (Ghost), Command (Undead), Keep Dead, Speak with Deadwood.

Acolyte Membership

Requirements: Standard.

Dead One (Runelord) Membership

Requirements: A candidate must have 90% or more in five cult skills. He must have spoken with at least five dead beings by some means; the Mreli can most easily meet this requirement through their yearly sleep.

Special Benefits

Initiates gain a +5% when fighting with the Undead or resisting them. Runelords can use their Life Sense to interact with Trigora and the dead souls there at any time.

Associated Cults

Bengara: Provides Terrify Taker to Runelords.

Ferotha: Provides Prepare for Death.

Veratha: Provides Recall Past Cycle to Runelords.

Zasara

'Dark sun. No light, no warmth. Cold as ice, dim as Hell. Zasara.'

—Aldryami Traditional

Overview

Zasara is the last of the three bad elemental deities of the elves. She is the orb of darkness that passes over Glorantha and down into the Underworld always halfway through the cycle away from Halamalao. As he brings light to the day, she brings darkness to the night.

Zasara is a direct descendent of the Taker, one of the three elements which The Taker became when it first entered the world. The trolls are her children, born of congealed darkness given form. She is Halamalao's dark opposite.

Mythology

Zasara was born in the elves' Red Age when the Taker dismembered itself to enter the world. She was the Taker's head—dark, cold, and lifeless. Zasara was not then as strong as Halamalao, so she was forced to flee beneath the earth, taking refuge beneath Ekeem. Trigora grew around Zasara, for death—after—death was able to draw life and sustenance from Zasara's dark nothingness.

At the end of the Red Age Halamalao fell out of the sky and into Trigora, and Zasara was forced to flee once more, this time up into the heavens. Her dark children, the trolls, followed after her, afraid to be without her dark beauty.

Though Zasara was never rooted—as Halamalao had been—her children's dark magic kept her aloft in the sky throughout the Darkness. While there she grew in power for she learned the secrets of the Sky Dome, and how the darkness there hid the splendour of the stars themselves.

When the Darkness ended, Zasara and Halamalao made a compromise. They each agreed to balance the other in the heavens since neither had roots and Zasara's children could not continue their rituals forever. Ever since, the two heavenly bodies have raced through the sky and down into the Underworld, exactly opposite to each other and each balancing the other in perfect harmony.

Zasara is only worshiped by dark elves who wish to learn of the darkness that follows the light. She appears to be the deity that trolls worship as Xentha, the goddess of night, though some claim that she is instead the evil Black Sun.

Runes: Darkness, Mastery.

Type: Night.

Pantheon: Elf.

Worshippers: Aldryami with a particular affinity toward darkness, the night, or shadows.

Worshipper's Duties: Learn the secrets of darkness, learn the secrets of the trolls, protect the forest.

Initiate Membership

Requirements: Only plant beings may join. Otherwise standard, plus the prospective member must succeed at a test of life sense in order to communicate with a being so far removed from the Song.

Cult Skills: Lore (Darkness), Lore (Sky), Lore (Zasara), Perception, Stealth, Survival, 1H/2H Hammer.

Cult Spells: Cover of Night, Darkwall, Dullblade.

Common Divine Magic: All.

Special Divine Magic: Command (Shade), Create Shadow.

Acolyte Membership

Requirements: Standard.

Darkheart (RuneLord) Membership

Requirements: A candidate must have 90% or more in five cult skills. He must have created new shadows

in the world through the shadowing of an area via construction or growth, or through the destruction of some notable permanent light source.

Special Benefits

Initiates gain a +5% to Athletics at night. Runelords gain the Dark Sight and Night Sight abilities: pitch black is treated as partial darkness, and partial darkness is treated as illuminated.

Associated Cuts

Ekeem: Provides Command (Barren) to Acolytes and Runelords.

InIri: Provides Command (Boreal) to Acolytes and Runelords.

Kitipah Iri: Provides Command (Salamander) to Acolytes and Runelords.

New Spells

This new magic follows the standard descriptive rules found in other *RuneQuest* supplements.

Rune Magic

Transfer Life

Casting Time 1, Instant, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Touch
Rune: *Death*

A dark thread briefly connects the caster and the target, seeming to drain the light out of the caster while infusing the target with a bright illumination.

For every point of Magnitude of this spell, the target regains two hit points of damage to a hit location, but in turn the caster takes one point of damage to the same hit location on their own body. If the target and caster are not of the same species, then the caster instead takes two points of damage for each point of damage that he heals.

Unlike the more standard Heal spell, Transfer Life may not be used to re-attach limbs or heal poisons or diseases.

Divine Magic

Axe Trance

Cult: Babeester Gor, Bengara

This spell may be found in *Cults of Glorantha: Volume 1* on page 75.

Bless Crops

Cult: Ernalda Allmother, Gata

This spell may be found in *Cults of Glorantha: Volume 1* on page 75.

Blinding Light

Instant, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Ranged

Cult: Halamalao

The caster suddenly glows with a brilliant and blinding light. Anyone looking at the caster when the spell is cast may be blinded. Each such target must succeed at a Resilience test, with a -10% penalty for each level of Magnitude of the spell. Anyone who fails will be totally blinded for 1 day per Magnitude of the spell. Blinded characters will suffer a -60% penalty to most physical tests, including combat.

People specifically looking at the caster—including those in combat with him when the spell is cast—must automatically a Resilience test. People involved in the same melee or otherwise within a few metres must also do so but have a +20% bonus to their skill. People within 50m must make their Resilience with a +40% bonus. People further away, but in line of sight, must make their Resilience test with a +60% bonus. Party members or others aware of the spell before its casting may also have a +60% bonus even if they are closer, unless they were specifically looking at the caster or fighting against him.

Command (Otherworld Species)

Cult: Eron

These command spells, which include spells that affect all elementals, can be found in *Cults of Glorantha: Volume 1*, on page 79. Most of the elementals



themselves can be found in *RuneQuest Monsters*: gnome (Gata) on page 51, salamander (Kitipah) on page 54, shade (Zasara) on page 55, and undine (Eron) on page 58. Three new elementals appear in this book: the barren (Ekeem) on page 106, the boreal (Iniri) on page 107 and the lume (Halamalao) on page 109.

Coral Life

Concentration Special, Instant, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Touch

Cult: Murthdrya

Regenerates a damaged coral reef. This spell will rapidly heal a coral reef of all wounds, allowing it to grow back over an area where it was ripped away, reviving dead coral, and healing it of toxins or diseases. For each Magnitude of the spell the caster may heal 1 square metre of coral and must concentrate for 15 minutes.

CREATE Shadow
Cult: Argan Argar, Zasara

This spell may be found in *Cults of Glorantha: Volume 1* on page 81.

FLOWERS
Cult: Veratha
Duration 15, Magnitude 1, Touch

The caster can create flowers. When she touches any surfaces and expends a Magic Point a flower or vine instantly grows. If it is in an appropriate environment, it will also take root and continue to grow beyond the duration of this spell. The caster may continue to create flowers for the duration of the spell, as long as she still has Magic Points.

HIDE Beneath Earth
Duration 60, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Touch
Cult: Gata

Allows the caster—and a number of additional willing participants numbering no more than the Magnitude of the spell—to slip down beneath the earth. While there

they may not be harmed by any means other than a gnome, or other creatures or spells which specifically affect the earth. However, conversely they may not have any effect upon people above the earth, nor may they move from the space where they sank down beneath the ground.

While hiding beneath the earth, elves visit with their ancestors in Trigora, while humans and other species restfully sleep.

IMPOSSIBLE Act
Instant, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Touch
Cult: Trileme

Allows the target to engage in one physical act that would usually be impossible. This might include leaping across a mighty river, pulling open a massive door, or digging a hole incredibly fast. For a spell cast at Magnitude 1, this action may be no greater than what five average men could accomplish, can not overcome more than a Magnitude 5 spell even temporarily, and cannot last for more than one Round. These limits increase with the Magnitude of the spell, so that a Magnitude 3 Impossible Act could be something that it would take 15 men to accomplish, could overcome a Magnitude 15 spell, or could last for 3 Rounds.

After the Impossible Act is completed, the target must face any long-term consequences. For example, if the target used his Impossible Act to suffer a Major Wound to his leg without falling, after the first Round he would drop to the ground as usual.

JOIN Forests as One
Duration 15, Magnitude 2, Touch
Cult: Seyotel

This Divine Magic only affects beings with life sense—usually elves. It allows an elf to communicate with a forest that he is not currently in and thus is beyond the usual scope of life sense. Because of the slow communication speed of life sense an elf will usually be unable to transmit or learn more than a few bits of information before the spell ends. Life sense rolls must be made as usual, as described on page 60. However, the additional distance offers no additional penalties.



Keep Dead

Duration 10 years, Magnitude 1, Progressive
Cult: Trigora

This spell prevents an elf from re-entering the cycle. It can be cast upon any dead entity which the caster can find with life sense—which includes elves which have entered Trigora. Although the target could be raised by other means, such as magical Resurrection, it will not naturally re-enter the Cycle for the duration of this spell. The base duration of the spell is 10 years, but each point of Magnitude doubles that duration. A Magnitude 2 spell would thus freeze a spirit for 20 years, a Magnitude 3 spell for 40 years, etc.

Magic Sight

Duration 5, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Touch
Cult: Trileme

This magical sight allows a character to make out exactly what spells people and items have cast upon them, to a maximum Magnitude of the Magic Sight's Magnitude times five. If more powerful spells are present, the target knows that they are there, but doesn't know what they do—unless the spells are purposefully hidden, in which case the target does not even know of their existence. Some elves suspect that Trileme's Magic Sight is similar to the RuneQuest Sight that some God Learners possess; that has caused some consternation in the elf community, and the existence of Magic Sight is thus an increasingly well kept secret.

Melting Hand

Duration 15, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Touch
Cult: Halamalao

Imbues the caster's hands with pleasant warmth which may be used to thaw frozen ground, melt ice or snow, or otherwise beneficially warm whatever it touches. In a minute the caster may melt a full cubic metre of ice or thaw a similar amount of frozen ground.

When applied to a living elf, human, or other humanoid for a full minute the caster heals all ill effects from hypothermia, any cold damage from a boreal, and any demoralization effects from a shade.

When applied to a boreal—most likely as part of an attack—a melting hand reduces the size of the boreal

by a cubic metre each Combat Action, reducing all of its other stats appropriately.

Predict Death

Instant, Magnitude 1, Touch
Cult: Ferotha

Allows the caster to predict when the target would die from natural causes. If the caster succeeds at a Lore (Ferotha Theology) test, they will know when the target will face their natural mortality with no more than 10% error. For example if a target had 50 years to live, the caster would predict somewhere between 45 and 55 years. However if the target was going to die from natural causes within a day, the caster would be right within an hour if the Lore (Ferotha Theology) test succeeded. This does not account for death by unexpected, unnatural means, such as by a sword blade.

Prepare for Death

Instant, Magnitude 1, Touch
Cult: Ferotha

Allows the caster to prepare the target for impending death. The target will become perfectly at peace with their fate. He will also have the presence of mind to put any affairs to rest, saying things long unspoken and doing his best to ensure that things will continue well after his death.

Recall Past Cycle

Concentration Special, Instant, Magnitude 2, Touch
Cult: Veratha

Allows the target to briefly recall a little bit of a past life. This spell only works on peoples whose mythology supports the idea of reincarnation, including all elves, dragonewts, and certain humans such as the Teshnans.

Sometimes this remembrance may help a character gain specific information of use for the present day. In seeking information on a general topic a player may make a Lore (Veratha Theology) test with a -20% penalty. If he succeeds, he knows some general information on the topic in question. The Games Master should additionally record the information that was known, as a guide to future recollections.

More commonly a character is able to use this recollection to temporarily improve his skills. Whenever a player makes a skill test while under the influence of this spell he should make a Lore (Veratha Theology) test first. If he succeeds he has a +10% bonus to that skill for the duration of the spell; if he fails, he does not and need not test again for that skill.

The caster of the spell must concentrate for the duration of the spell. As soon as he is disturbed the spells immediately drops. Thereafter the target's recollections begin to grow fuzzy and any skill bonuses immediately disappear. The maximum amount of time that a player may concentrate upon this spell is his INT in minutes.

Regenerate Tree

Concentration Special, Instant, Magnitude 2, Touch
Cult: Eron

Regenerates a tree no matter how badly hurt it is, provided that the tree is still alive. Limbs detached from the tree can be reattached within a day, and if the upper half of the tree was removed even it can be reattached provided the stump is still alive. Also allows trees that have been split apart by lightning or torn about by wind to be grown back together.

Regenerate Tree takes a number of minutes equal to the tree's SIZ to complete the regeneration. It is usually only used on the grand old trees of a forest, struck down before their time, and thus it usually takes hours to complete.

Run Long

Duration 60, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Touch
Cult: Larayse

This spell increases the ease with which the target can run long distances. Each point of Magnitude adds a +10% bonus to any Athletics tests involving running as well as reducing the activity level of running by 1 level for purposes of fatigue (making reasonable running non-fatiguing, rapid running a Light Activity, and racing a Medium Activity).

See the Original Form

Duration 15, Magnitude 1, Touch
Cult: Eirennor

This spell allows the target to see things as they once were. Using this spell the target may roll back the natural history of a place to see it in the most virgin form possible. A city might be seen as the natural plain where it was built, while a dammed up lake might be seen as the valley that had previously existed.

See the True Form

Duration 15, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Touch
Cult: Eirennor

This spells allows the target to see things as they really are. The target may see through all divine illusions cast at the Magnitude of this spell or less and all Sorcery illusions cast at double the Magnitude of this spell or less. If See the True Form is cast at Magnitude 3 or higher, the target will be able to see all shapechangers in their native form as well.

See the Unseen

Cult: Buserian, Eirennor

This spell may be found in *Cults of Glorantha: Volume 1* on page 91.

Snow

Cult: InIri, Valind

This spell may be found in *Cults of Glorantha: Volume 1* on page 75.

Speak with Deadwood

Duration special, Magnitude 1, Touch
Cult: Ferotha, Trigora

This spell allows the target to communicate with an elf which is dead and has not yet been reborn. This will typically include any elves killed in the last one hundred years, plus stronger elves who have decided to try and maintain their identity within Trigora. Finding a spirit can be difficult. Each week the target makes a Persistence test with a -40% penalty. If he succeeds, then he has found the spirit; otherwise he must try again next week. Upon finding an entity the target may ask it a question, which the spirit will answer with either a simple vision or no more than seven words. Answers are limited by what the spirit actually knows. Mreli casting this spell just before they fall into their winter sleep are sometimes able to discern more information, though it will not available until they awaken, over a season later.



Stone Walk

Duration 1, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Touch
Cult: Ekeem

This spell allows the target to walk through stone like a barren (see page 106). This is a particularly difficult task due to the solid density of stone, thus the short duration. Each additional point of Magnitude doubles the duration, allowing 2 minutes for Magnitude 2, 4 minutes for Magnitude 3, 8 minutes for Magnitude 4 and so on. The target may not carry anything other than his personal possessions, and has no particular ability to see through stone, making passage very uncertain unless he already knows his destination.

Swim Long

Duration 60, Magnitude 1, Progressive, Touch
Cult: Larayse

This spell increases the ease with which a Murthoi can swim long distances. Each point of Magnitude adds a +10% bonus to any Athletics tests involving swimming as well as reducing the activity level of swimming by 1 level for purposes of fatigue (making

reasonable swimming non-fatiguing, rapid swimming a Light Activity, and racing a Medium Activity).

Terrify Taker

Instant, Magnitude 3, Ranged, Resist (Persistence)
Cult: Bengara

All creatures of the Taker within range—which include trolls, dwarfs, fire men, ice demons, and dust monsters, but not the hybridized red races—must make a Persistence roll or be terrified. This acts as the Demoralise spell (*RuneQuest*, page 70) with the effect lasting for 15 minutes.

Any such terrified creatures will also refuse to attack the caster of the spell unless absolutely forced to. In addition the caster has a +40% bonus on any Influence tests on a terrified subject if intimidation is used.

New Elementals

The Aldryami recognise a different set of elements than much of Glorantha. They perceive six different elements, grouped into three pairs of a 'good' element and a 'bad' element. There is clearly some basis to their elemental belief because their priests are also able to summon forth elementals for each of their six elements.

Good light is the source of the unique lume elemental while bad light—or darkness—is the source of the more familiar shade. Good earth is the source of the gnome while bad earth—or stone—is the source of the barren. Good water is the source of the undine, while bad water fell apart into many different types, among them fire (the source of the salamander), ice (the source of the boreal), dust, and several others. Notably the Aldryami do not recognize air among their elements.

Three of these new elementals, the boreal, the lume, and the barren are detailed here. They generally follow all the rules for elementals as described in *RuneQuest Monsters* on page 51. These creatures are thus otherworldly entities that form bodies from their individual elements. They lack CON, represent SIZ as a volume, and have fixed INT. They can be hit by normal weapons, and dissipate when reduced to zero hit points.

As with other elementals, the special Aldryami elementals may face each other in battle, reducing or destroying each other, as described in *RuneQuest Monsters* on page 60. The opposing elementals—gnomes and barrens; lumes and shades; and undines and the various Iri elementals—destroy each other as per the rules therein.

Barren

A barren is an elemental of stone, which to the elfs represents not just hard earth, but also sterility and the inability to grow. barrens are composed of granite, marble, and other stones—as appropriate for the region where they are summoned—but the stones are constantly crumbling and shifting as if the barren were always on the verge of falling apart. Barrens can be summoned only in those places where there is sufficient stone. They are often brought forth from large boulders or other outcroppings of rock. Dark elf Ekeem worshipers are among the few denizens of Glorantha who know how to summon barrens.

Abilities

Barrens can swim through earth or stone just as easily as they can walk on the surface. In doing so they can carry one or more people provided that they have sufficient strength to do so, however they cannot provide air for that person, who might suffocate as a result. Only unresisting people may be carried by this means.

Because of their ties to dead, ungrowing earth, barrens are surrounded by auras of unfertility. No fertility rune spells may be cast in a radius around the barren equal to their POW in metres unless the Magnitude of the rune spell is greater than the POW of the barren. This can make a barren a particularly dangerous opponent since most healing spells will fail.

A slain barren has a percentage chance equal to its POW to leave behind a Death rune in its remains. The remains of barrens are particularly valuable to dwarfs who may offer up to 500 SP per cubic metre of the barren.

Combat

Barrens are the most dangerous when met upon solid stone outcroppings. In these areas barrens may suddenly fracture and break apart stones. Such an attack is

automatic, with the barren able to spontaneously open up a fissure beneath a character each Combat Action. In order to see how far he fell into the chasm opened beneath him a character must test POW x3 until he succeeds. Multiply the number of failed POW tests times the size of the barren (in cubic metres). This is how many metres the character fell; apply damage as described in *RuneQuest* on page 89–90.

For Example: A player with a POW of 14 has a chasm opened under him by a large, 5 cubic metre barren. He tests POWx3 and rolls 47 (a failure), then 81 (a failure), then 39 (a success). He failed twice, so he fell a total of $2 \times 5 = 10$ metres. This means he takes a total of 2D6 points of damage applied 1D6 each to two random hit locations.

A barren can only open a fissure under a target it can see. This means that someone who has fallen down a pit is usually safe until he climbs back out—unless the barren swims down to see how he's doing.

The aura of lifelessness around a barren can also cause nearby opponents damage. At the beginning of each round any character who is within 2 metres of a barren—which will include anyone meleeing with them—must make a Resilience roll to avoid taking one Hit Point of damage to each location.

Characteristics & Attributes

All of a barren's Characteristics except DEX are predicated upon the size of the barren. Each cubic metre the barren possesses gives it 2D6 STR, 1D6 POW, half a point of fixed INT, half a point of CHA and 2D6 hit points. All barrens have a DEX of 2D6. A barren's Damage Modifier is computed with the barren's STR x2, rather than STR + SIZ.

Sample Barrens

Characteristics

STR	2D6	(7)
DEX	2D6	(7)
SIZ	1 cubic metre	
INT	1	(1)
POW	1D6	(4)
CHA	1	(1)
HP	2D6	(7)

Special Rules

Damage Modifier: -1D4
Combat Actions: 2
Strike Rank: +4
Movement: 2m
Skills: Perception 10%, Persistence 30%, Resilience 40%

CHARACTERISTICS

STR 6D6 (21)
 DEX 2D6 (7)
 SIZ 3 cubic metres
 INT 2 (2)
 POW 3D6 (11)
 CHA 1 (1)
 HP 6D6 (21)

Special Rules

Damage Modifier: +1D8
Combat Actions: 2
Strike Rank: +5
Movement: 2m
Skills: Perception 10%, Persistence 35%, Resilience 50%

CHARACTERISTICS

STR 10D6 (35)
 DEX 2D6 (7)
 SIZ 5 cubic metres
 INT 3 (3)
 POW 5D6 (18)
 CHA 2 (2)
 HP 10D6 (35)

Special Rules

Damage Modifier: +2D6
Combat Actions: 2
Strike Rank: +5
Movement: 2m
Skills: Perception 10%, Persistence 40%, Resilience 60%

CHARACTERISTICS

STR 20D6 (70)
 DEX 2D6 (7)
 SIZ 10 cubic metres
 INT 5 (5)
 POW 10D6 (35)
 CHA 5 (5)
 HP 20D6 (70)

Special Rules

Damage Modifier: +1D12
Combat Actions: 2
Strike Rank: +6
Movement: 2m
Skills: Perception 10%, Persistence 50%, Resilience 70%

Boreal

A boreal is an elemental of ice, representing freezing, cold immobility. They are composed entirely of ice and can only be summoned from a body of water that is already frozen, such as a glacier, an ice floe, or a river or lake that has iced over. Boreals tend to be hulking creatures made up of jagged, frozen water, not at all like the formless and beautiful undines. They are most frequently summoned by dark elf worshipers of Iri, but some ice demons upon Valind's Glacier have also been known to summon boreals.

Abilities

Boreals can freeze any liquid. Every Combat Round they freeze a total volume of the liquid that they are touching equal to their own volume. They may ultimately freeze water in a radius in meters equal to their POW. After a boreal leaves an area of liquid that it has frozen, the liquid will slowly melt, returning to the ambient air temperature at a speed about four times slower than expected because of their unnatural cold.

Boreals can slowly move through ice, at half their normal movement, but they may not carry anyone when doing so.

Generally, boreals are some of the most substantial and inert of all elementals because of their ties to stasis and immobility. They thus act less like elementals than most of their brethren, and more like hulking monstrosities.

A slain boreal has a percentage chance equal to its POW to leave behind a Stasis rune in its remains.

Combat

A boreal's primary attack is through its large, clubbing fists. However, it also does two additional types of damage whenever it hits.

First, it does cold damage. If a blow is parried, this damage is applied to the weapon's Hit Points, ignoring

its armour points. If a blow hits the target this damage is applied to the Hit Points of the location, ignoring any armour except leather. This damage is treated separately from the damage applied by the actual blow.

Second, it does slowing damage. This is treated exactly as the Slow spell (*RuneQuest*, page 77), except a successful Athletics test allows the target to ignore its effects.

Both the cold and the slowing damage occur whenever a boreal hits, whether it penetrates the target's armour or not.

CHARACTERISTICS & ATTRIBUTES

All of a boreal's Characteristics except DEX are predicated upon the size of the boreal. Each cubic metre the boreal possesses gives it 2D6 STR, 1D6 POW, one point of fixed INT, half a point of CHA and 2D6 hit points. All boreals have a DEX of 2D6. A boreal's Damage Modifier is computed with the boreal's STR x2, rather than STR + SIZ.

Sample Boreals

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	2D6	(7)
DEX	2D6	(7)
SIZ	1 cubic metre	
INT	1	(1)
POW	1D6	(4)
CHA	1	(1)
HP	2D6	(7)

Weapons

Type	Weaponskill	Damage
Punch	40%	1D12-1D4 + cold 1 + slow 1

Special Rules

Combat Actions:	2
Strike Rank:	+4
Movement:	2m (normal), 1m (through ice)
Skills:	Perception 15%, Persistence 30%, Resilience 30%

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	6D6	(21)
DEX	2D6	(7)
SIZ	3 cubic metres	
INT	3	(3)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	1	(1)
HP	6D6	(21)

Weapons

Type	Weaponskill	Damage
Punch	40%	1D12+1D8 + cold 2 + slow 2

Special Rules

Combat Actions:	2
Strike Rank:	+5
Movement:	2m (normal), 1m (through ice)
Skills:	Perception 15%, Persistence 35%, Resilience 35%

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	10D6	(35)
DEX	2D6	(7)
SIZ	5 cubic metres	
INT	5	(5)
POW	5D6	(18)
CHA	2	(2)
HP	10D6	(35)

Weapons

Type	Weaponskill	Damage
Punch	40%	1D12+2D6 + cold 3 + slow 3

Special Rules

Combat Actions:	2
Strike Rank:	+6
Movement:	2m (normal), 1m (through ice)
Skills:	Perception 15%, Persistence 40%, Resilience 40%

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	20D6	(70)
DEX	2D6	(7)
SIZ	10 cubic metres	
INT	10	(10)
POW	10D6	(35)
CHA	5	(5)
HP	20D6	(70)

Weapons

Type	Weaponskill	Damage
Punch	40%	1D12+3D12 + cold 5 + slow 5

Special Rules

<i>Combat Actions:</i>	2
<i>Strike Rank:</i>	+9
<i>Movement:</i>	2m (normal), 1m (through ice)
<i>Skills:</i>	Perception 15%, Persistence 50%, Resilience 50%

Lume

A lume is an elemental of light, representing warm, bright intelligence. It is composed entirely of light, and can be summoned anywhere outside during the day, provided that cloud cover is 50% or less, and that the summoner isn't in a heavily shadowed area. Though they are tangible, lumes are light and misty, less concrete than even a sylph. They are all bright white or gold, flickering and pleasant to look upon except when the lume is attacking.

Abilities

Lumes have multiple abilities which affect a spherical area with radius equal to their POW in meters.

Lumes can light this area. They can even dispel magical darkness of a Magnitude equal to or less than their size in cubic metres. This is a constant effect of the lume that can not be shut off.

They can warm this area. No one in it will suffer any ill effects from normal cold, though the ill effects of magical cold such as the Frostbite spell or a boreal attack still occur. This is also a constant effect.

They can also enlighten all the peoples in this area. This grants a +1% bonus on all Lore tests for each meter of size of the lume. This is also a constant effect.

Finally they can also calm all peoples in this area. Any emotions are damped down, and any emotion-affecting spells, such as Demoralise and Fanaticism, are dispelled if their Magnitude is equal to or less than the size of the lume in cubic meters. This ability takes one Combat Action to use.

A slain lume has a percentage chance equal to its POW to leave behind a Light rune in its remains.

Combat

The misty lume can attack up to one character for each cubic metre of volume that it possesses, but all victims must be within that number of metres of each other. (For example, a five cubic metre lume may attack up to five characters that are within five metres of each other.) It does this by engulfing the head of each victim.

By engulfing a victim's head a lume may attack it with its bright illumination ability. This is a direct assault upon the victim's psyche that shows him the world as it truly is. This is too much for many victims to comprehend. When a lume uses bright illumination it matches its Persistence against the victim's Persistence in an opposed test. The Lume Bright Illumination Effect table determines the result.

Lumes also grow bright enough to partially blind their opponents. This is reflected in their Dodge scores, which mostly represents a general inability to see where a lume actually is.

Lume Bright Illumination Effect

Result	Outcome
Lume Succeeds, Victim Fails	Victim goes catatonic for INT rounds and must roll a successful Persistence test or go insane for INT weeks.
Both Fail	Victim is Demoralised (as the Rune Magic spell). This effect lasts for INT rounds.
Both Succeed	No effect on creatures with fixed INT. Creatures with normal INT are Demoralised for INT rounds.
Lume Fails, Victim Succeeds	If the Victim has at least one Lore skill he gains an Improvement Roll which must be used immediately on the Lore of his choice. He cannot be targeted again for 24 hours.

CHARACTERISTICS & ATTRIBUTES

All of a lume's Characteristics except STR and DEX are predicated upon the size of the lume. Each cubic metre the lume possesses gives it 1D6 POW, two points of fixed INT, one point of CHA and 1D6 hit points. All lumes have a STR of 1D6 and a DEX of 4D6. A lume's Damage Modifier is computed with the lume's STR x2, rather than STR + SIZ.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	1D6	(4)
DEX	4D6	(14)
SIZ	5 cubic metres	
INT	10	(10)
POW	5D6	(18)
CHA	5	(5)
HP	5D6	(18)

Sample Lumes

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	1D6	(4)
DEX	4D6	(14)
SIZ	1 cubic metre	
INT	2	(2)
POW	1D6	(4)
CHA	1	(1)
HP	1D6	(4)

Special Rules

<i>Damage Modifier:</i>	-1D6
<i>Combat Actions:</i>	3
<i>Strike Rank:</i>	+8
<i>Movement:</i>	6m
<i>Skills:</i>	Dodge 50%, Perception 50%, Persistence 20%, Resilience 45%.

Special Rules

<i>Damage Modifier:</i>	-1D6
<i>Combat Actions:</i>	3
<i>Strike Rank:</i>	+12
<i>Movement:</i>	6m
<i>Skills:</i>	Dodge 70%, Perception 70%, Persistence 60%, Resilience 55%.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	1D6	(4)
DEX	4D6	(14)
SIZ	10 cubic metres	
INT	20	(20)
POW	1D6	(4)
CHA	1	(1)
HP	1D6	(4)

Special Rules

<i>Damage Modifier:</i>	-1D6
<i>Combat Actions:</i>	3
<i>Strike Rank:</i>	+17
<i>Movement:</i>	6m
<i>Skills:</i>	Dodge 80%, Perception 80%, Persistence 80%, Resilience 60%.

CHARACTERISTICS

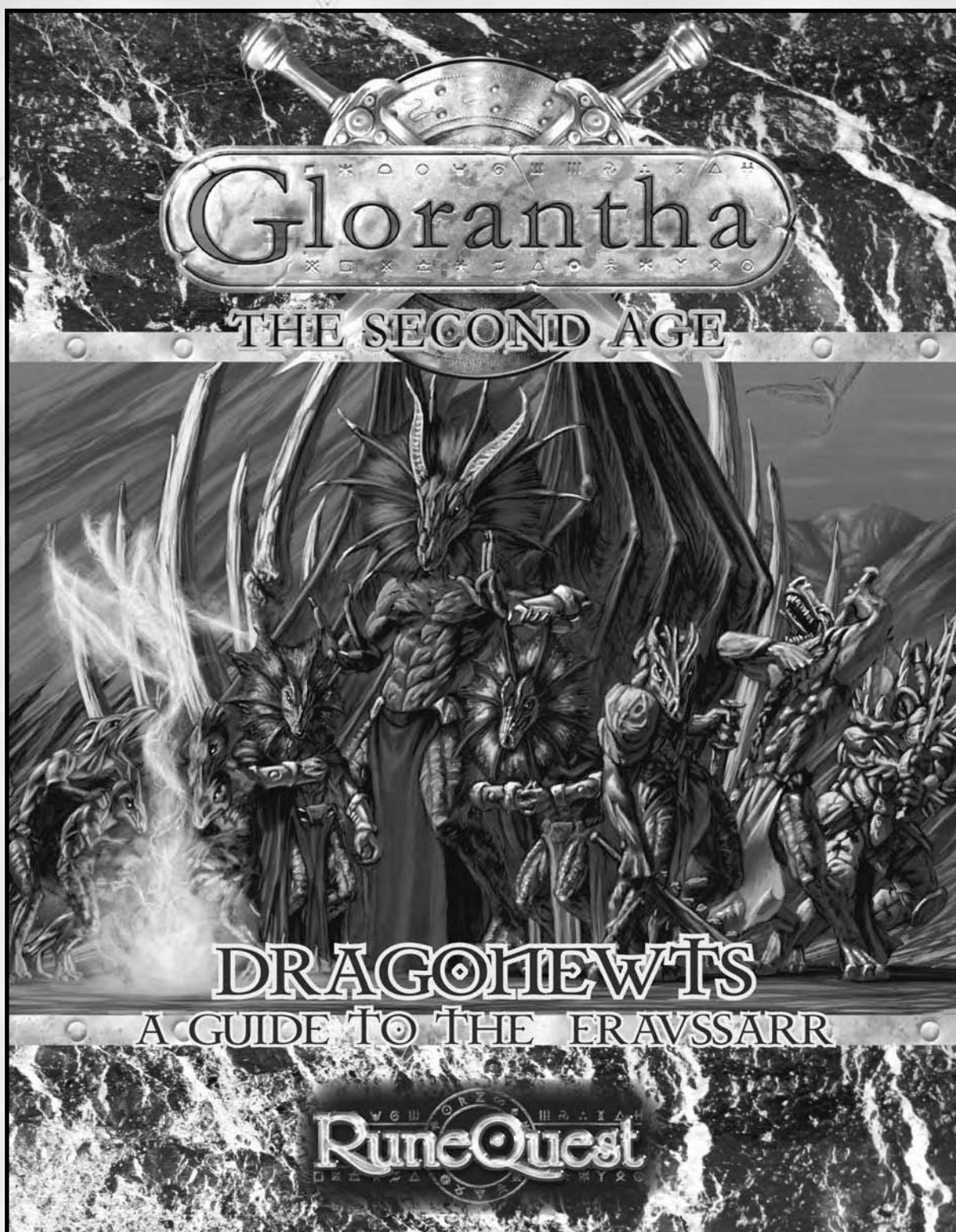
STR	1D6	(4)
DEX	4D6	(14)
SIZ	3 cubic metres	
INT	6	(6)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	3	(3)
HP	3D6	(11)

Special Rules

<i>Damage Modifier:</i>	-1D6
<i>Combat Actions:</i>	3
<i>Strike Rank:</i>	+10
<i>Movement:</i>	6m
<i>Skills:</i>	Dodge 60%, Perception 60%, Persistence 40%, Resilience 50%.

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Glorantha

THE SECOND AGE

ELFS A GUIDE TO THE ALDRYAMI

The Aldryami, or elves as men are wont to call them, are one of the Elder Races of Glorantha. Just as the trolls are a fusion of the runes of man and darkness, the elves are of the runes of man and plant. They are the guardians of the forests, kelp beds, jungles and swamps, and come in a wide variety of forms, reflecting the environments in which they live.

Strong when defending their homelands they do not seek to expand, fortuitous indeed for their neighbours as, with their mighty armies, they could overwhelm those who would stand in their way. Believing in the balancing forces of the grower and the taker the elves do not seek confrontation.

The motivations behind these alien beings are explained in depth, allowing the Games Master to use them to their full extent. They also can provide a challenge to veteran players, being a truly different roleplaying concept.

The aldryami have arrived, now you can spread your branches across Glorantha!



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To use this supplement, a Games Master will require *RuneQuest*,
RuneQuest Companion and *Glorantha - The Second Age*.