

hearts in GLORANTHA

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Poisonthorn Forest

Names: Poisonthorn Forest; Old Talastar; the ancient Greenwood.

Look and Feel: A dense, deciduous forest full of thorny bushes and trees and numerous poisonous plants.

Reaction to Foreigners: Aggressively and violently xenophobic.

Purpose: To survive in Dorastor.

Significant Abilities: Kill Intruders 10w2, Know Dorastor 5w2, Make Poison 15w2.

Forest Keyword

Prominent Species: Ash (brown), Beech (brown), Red Maple (brown).

Typical Skills: Fight Elves, Keep Secret.

Typical Personality Traits: Arrogant, Private.



within the POISONTHORN

By Shannon Appelcline

Every place in Glorantha has its own peculiar contents: those gods which are only worshiped there, those creatures native to the land, and those items which define the place.

What follows are some “crunchy bits” which help to fill out the standard outline of the Poisonthorn Forest. Included are a look at one god specific to the land and four creatures which define the essence of the Poisonthorn, with its connections to chaos, poison, and nature.

Poisonthorn Songs

The songs of the Aldryami, which humans would call gods, are described in the upcoming HeroQuest Elf Book. What follows is a nature god of the beast people, worshiped by some elves of the Poisonthorn as a hero.

Barkuli, The Satyr Lord

In the Red Age, the Grower and the Taker melded, producing the red races, of which the best known are the humans and the animals. In that mythical time there was less difference between the red races than there is today, and so they were able to breed with each other. Thus did half-human, half-animal races come into being, creatures that the elves called the “red grafts”.

At first most Aldryami forests accepted these new races, for they embodied the Balance in a way never before seen. This was particularly true in the Greenwood, where the beast men and the Aldryami lived together in peace throughout the Red Age and fought together in war throughout the Black Age. The greatest leader of the beast men during the Black Age was Barkuli, a satyr who continually tried to reforest the lands using Aldryami secrets.

In the end Barkuli learned the ways of the Cycle; thus when he sacrificed his life to save his people, great plant barriers leapt forth from his body to protect his people, just as the Aldryami were shielded by Gata herself.

Oblivion is a terrible force, and thus Barkuli was not only lost, but forgotten as well. He would never have been remembered again if not for Vyrope, a First Age priestess of Dorastor, who rediscovered Barkuli's lost song, and taught it once more to the humans, the beast-men, and the Aldryami alike. Thus did she create ties between the three peoples that

would last for hundreds of years.

In the time since Arkat's destruction of Dorastor, the humans have once more forgotten Barkuli's song, but there are still many beast men within the Poisonthorn who remember and worship him.

Barkuli is less well respected among the elves of the Poisonthorn, for many of his initiates were also followers of Kalyra Shadowfriend, who preached friendship with the humans. However, his religion is not entirely extinct among the Aldryami.

The following description lists the complete cult of Barkuli, as it is worshiped by beast men. Elves instead treat it as a “heroic theme”, which is a heroic sub-cult that they may join after becoming an initiate of Aldrya. As such, they have access to a more limited set of abilities and just one greater song, all of which are marked with a star(*).

Entry Requirements: Be a beast man or be at least an initiate of Aldrya.

Homeland: Any beast men, Brown Elves (in Dorastor).

Abilities: Beast-Men Knowledge*, Dance, Devotee



IRON

history, economy, and drama

By Jane Williams

We've known from the first time we ever gamed in Glorantha that Iron is rare, special, and precious. The trouble is, the descriptions, and especially the rules that go with them, have varied. Now, obviously what Iron is really like can't vary just because we happen to pick a new rule-set today. Your armour won't suddenly get heavier over-night, you won't lose any abilities you had yesterday, that troll isn't suddenly going to get immune to any allergies. What might happen is that we find out about new possibilities that we hadn't previously realised were there. They can't be the major option, or we'd have been using them before, but they can exist. So, let's take a look through at what we've got. What's special about Iron?

- 1) It's physically better than bronze – stronger, tougher, lighter for the same strength.
- 2) Some of the Elder Races are “allergic” to it
- 3) It can affect magic around it
- 4) It's the sign of a Rune Lord to wear it.

The other thing to remember is that “iron” is just a handy name for a metal that's not really terrestrial iron at all, but is like it in a lot of ways. We don't have to assume that this stuff works the same way or has the same properties.

Runequest 2

This is the earliest readily-available description of Iron in Glorantha. Here, we are first told that “unalloyed, or “pure” metals, such as iron, lead, tin, and copper, prevent a person from using magic unless he is “sealed” to the Rune connected with that metal.”

The main description of Iron is on pages 56-57, in the section about Rune Lords. Most of this is about the special “enchantment” that keys Iron items to the character they are created for. This “also suppresses the magic dampening effect iron and other Rune metals have on battle magic, so that the Rune Lord can use battle magic as well as his weapons.” The RQ2 reference to “battle magic” is what is known

in RQ3 as “spirit magic” and in HQ probably as “common magic” - small spells provided by the cult, much less powerful and more readily available than divine magic. Rune Lords in RQ2 do not normally have access to “Rune Magic” (later known as Divine Magic) – that is the province of Rune Priests.

The enchantment ritual is also described as

“tempering”, and is powered by “divine intervention” (a rather different beast from the thing of the same name in HQ, and here given a chance of success of 95%)

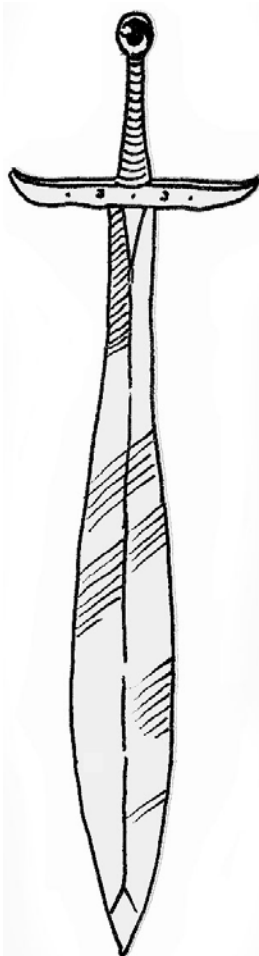
In terms of availability, “Large or old established cults generally have Iron or Rune metal armor and weapons available for re-enchanting, Small, nomadic, or fugitive cults usually do not, and the new Rune Lord must quest for his Iron or Rune metal.”

But: “the use of iron weapons is important to a Rune Lord, as the added durability of these weapons is an immense aid in his adventures and progression towards Herodom.” The Orlanth cult description tells us that “Iron weapons and armor are rarely available to present to a Wind Lord upon his accession to his rank. He may receive one piece of iron to mark his status, but it is often the first quest for the new Wind Lord to gain his whole regalia or iron accoutrements.”

In a novel set in the RQ2 Glorantha, Penelope Love's “Eurhol's Vale”, the hero is an Orlanthi Rune Lord who is doing just this: he has been given his iron sword, and is questing for some iron armour, which he eventually captures from an enemy and takes

back to the temple in Pavis to have re-worked for him. In a later story, a Humakti who is about to be promoted to Rune level is presented with a full set of iron armour, plus an iron sword which she had acquired previously and sent to the temple for safe-keeping until she was able to use it.

Iron here is tougher than bronze: half as tough again, in fact. It can be made lighter (the actual encumbrance rules are unhelpful, but “lighter” covers it).



WE ALL LIVE IN A BRASS SUBMARINE

A Short HeroQuest Campaign by Richard Crawley

This is an outline of a short campaign that I ran using the Hero Wars rules in 2001. The idea was to explore the use of Mostali as player characters and also to give my players the chance to leave a lasting mark on Glorantha.

In the course of writing this up for Newt I've had sight of HeroQuest 2 and although I haven't gone all the way towards the new style, you'll find far fewer stats here than I had in my original notes.

Throughout, you'll find some short narratives of varying style. I used them to introduce each session. I like to think of them as a combination of "Previously on Buffy the Vampire Slayer..." and a James Bond film's opening teaser scene.

The campaign went on for about a dozen weekly sessions but I've cut out some extraneous material to keep this down to a reasonable size. I'd like to thank my players, Simon Beaver, Andy Sangar, Graham Spearing, John Wostenholme, and Tom Zunder for their input to the games.

Part 1 Cast off from the side

Filthspeaker sat in the rear corner of the mineral wagon as it trundled down the track, its wheels clattering on the worn stone joints. Behind him the Jolanti stared fixedly onto the darkness ahead, feeling the descent as an interplay of air currents across its barrel-broad stone torso. The Jolanti did not, could not, think of telling its passenger that the three hour journey was nearly over any more than it would pass the time of day with a load of rubies from the crystal mine. It simply, at a draught of salt laden air, shifted its considerable weight on its narrow ledge at the rear of the wagon. A grinding noise. The smell of hot granite. With a plate-sized foot jammed onto the smooth worn stone, the wagon began to slow in a shower of orange sparks.

The tamestone was unconcerned at having a living work-unit in its truck and took the tight curve at the bottom of the tunnel faster than Filthspeaker would have liked. He slammed into the opposite corner of the wagon spewing a stomachful of greasy monthly stew over the sleeve of his leather jacket and the dusty boards beneath him.

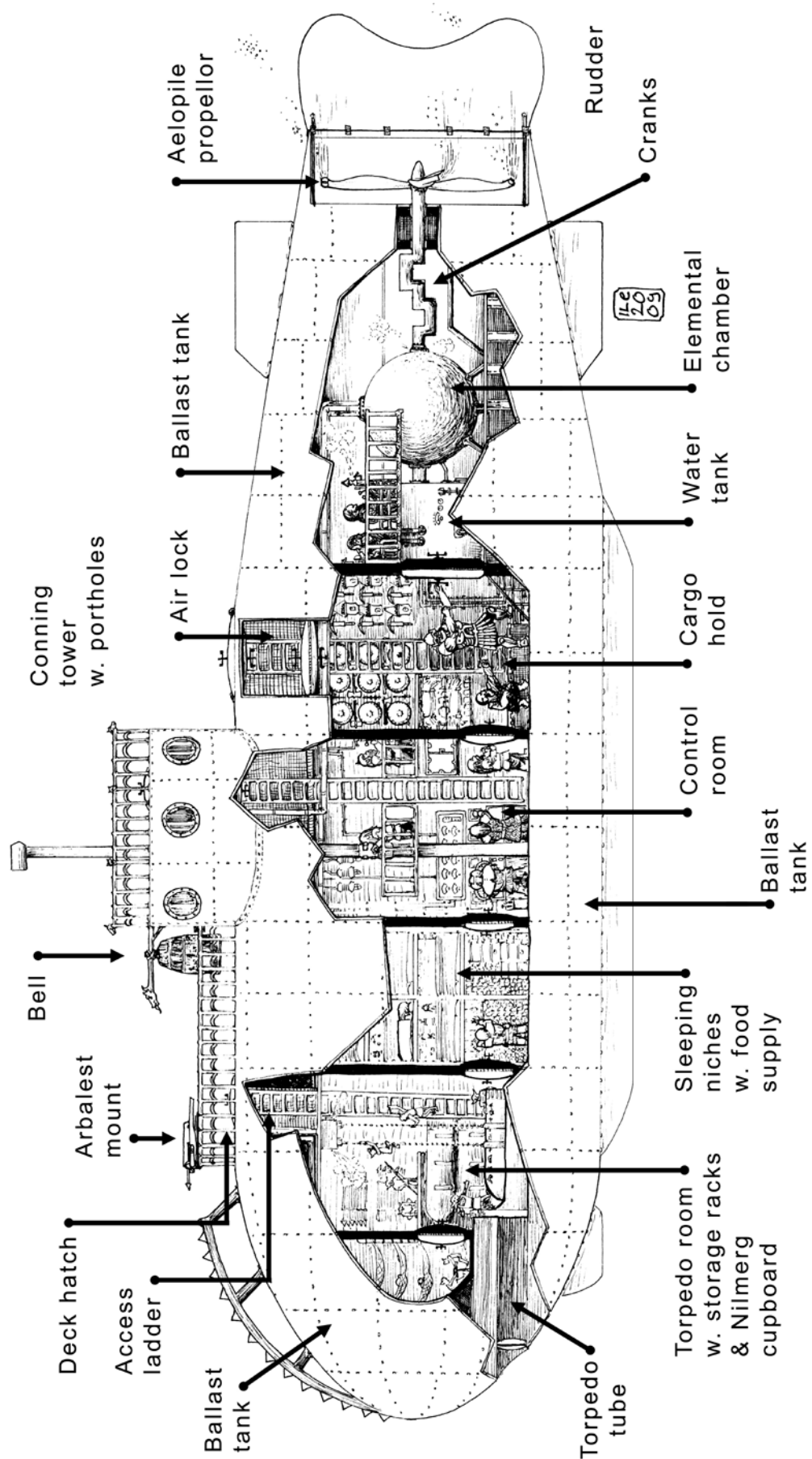
Moments passed in a whirl of pounding blood before Filthspeaker realised the wagon had come to rest. He rose unsteadily to his feet drinking in the unfamiliar salty air. Water lapped somewhere nearby. With a grinding of stone sinews, the Jolanti was already taking its place among a group of similar creatures. They would squat there, like occasional piles of rock, until ordered to push another, full wagon back up the thirty mile incline to Gemborg.

The cavern was an echoing, domed space, dimly lit by guttering oil lamps and populated by occasional scurrying dwarfs. Warehouses around three sides of the stone flagged jetty were, Filthspeaker remembered from his training manual, built in Esrolian human style; remnants of some previous period when the Openhandists had dominated the Gemborg Conclave. On the fourth side a dark void hid the view from his eyes but the swirling air currents and salt-laden breezes told him all he needed to know of the Black Glass River and the Poison Shore beyond. A darker strip studded with points of light caught his attention. Briefly, Filthspeaker's thoughts fled back to the city. He was disappointed to discover that real stars were far less impressive than the diamonds set into the jet ceiling of the Lesser Conclave Hall.

But Filthspeaker was of base clay and his breed not given to romantic notions. As a distant tremor shivered the stone beneath his feet, he shrugged his small pack onto his back. He turned to an anonymous, granite-lintel-topped doorway and, beyond it, the hidden basin where he knew Submersible No.1 would be waiting.



AN OVERVIEW OF THE SUBMARINE



THE MONSTERS OF MAGASTA

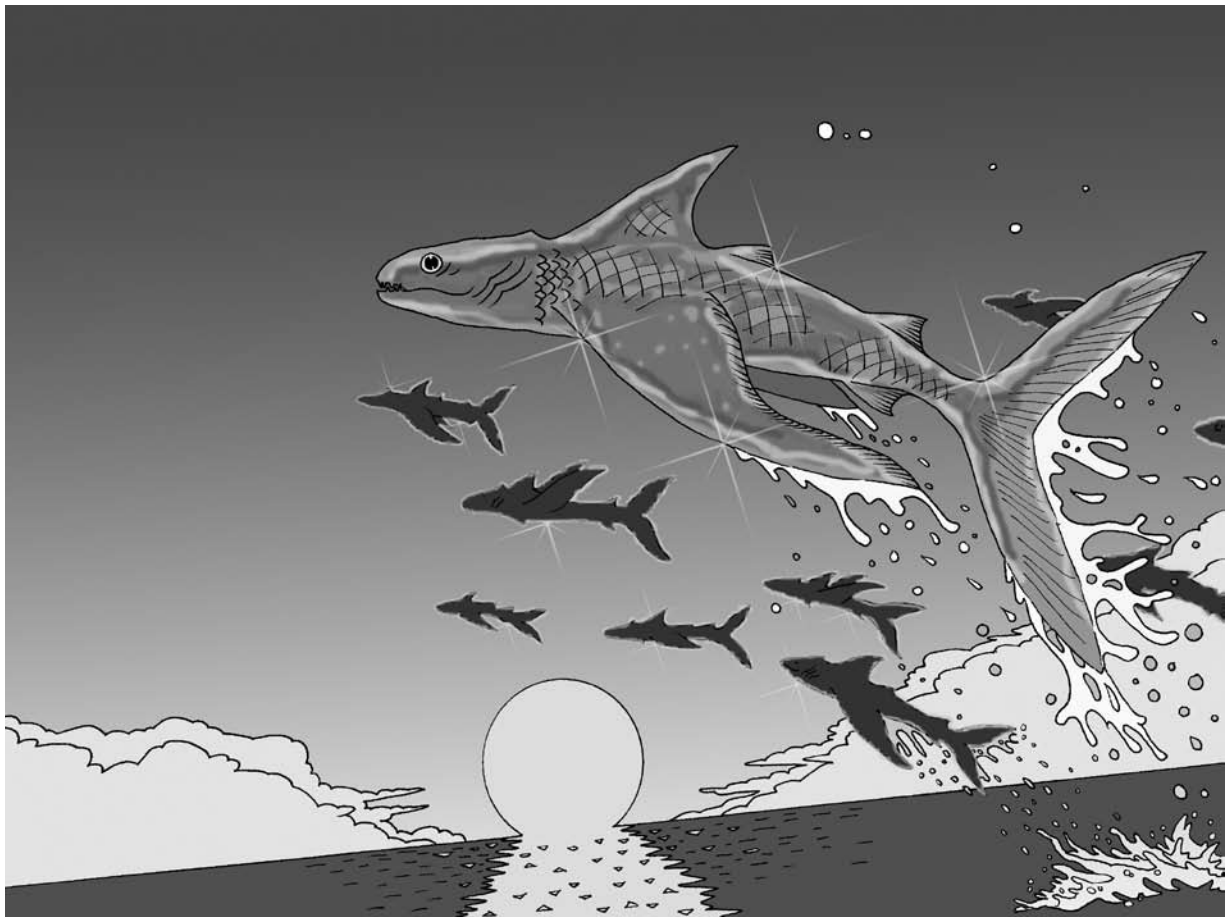
By Nick Davison

Sea monsters are vital to any nautical campaign. Here are the origins of ten monsters, the reasons that they acquired their names, their attributes and tactics. They will be encountered in deep water, by vessels hugging the coast or moored offshore. Some of the Monsters of Magasta are individual creatures who act alone or with allies, others such as shoals of Bronze Fish consist of multiple individuals. Their means of attack include from underneath directly at the hull, jets of water at crew members on deck or even stealthily sneaking aboard at night.

They could be encountered randomly at sea, deliberately sought out in search of adventure or at the request of local merchants or the sailor's guild. Ships crews may learn of their existence or origins through 'Word around the docks', shipwrecked sailors, maritime scholars, or from storytellers and minstrels in seaport taverns.

These creatures may also be treated as 'Heroes of Magasta'. This allows them to move very rapidly along secret ocean currents and appear unexpectedly at huge distances from the locations that they were last seen. Such is the power of Father Ocean that these ocean voyages can even involve Doom Currents which might normally result in the risk of being sucked down into Magasta's Pool. In times of dire need merfolk could summon these monsters or they can appear as champions of Magasta in heroquests. Ludoch, Malasp or Ysabbau herobands may also elect to have a relationship with them.

All these sea monsters have individual backgrounds. Although many readers will recognise their names as those defeated by Barran the Monster Slayer. Narrators have the option of adding a relationship with the Vomiter to some or all of them.



By John Harding

Description

Cults

Knowledge Few

History

Powers

If a victim resists successfully (Opposed persistence test) then the victim will wake up and simply discount the experience as a bad dream. However



satisfy the polyglot army's necessities in ceremonial murder and sacrifice.

Mandates are financially beneficial to all involved. No mandatary achieves his or her prize without recourse to politicking, bribery and payment of the necessary Stampers' Dues – but when received it proves a lucrative monopoly, with many opportunities for self-enrichment. Technically, promandates governing supply are subject to the approbation of the Anirestyu Corps, who claim one navar in every lunar taken in Stampers' Dues, and hire out army wagons to the mandataries at considerable charge. But on campaign all mandataries are governed by the whims and patronage of the Warlord, and his or her quartermasters.

The Three Legs of Vice

Beyond food, sleep, bloodletting and the occasional torture of captives, the horrors of war drive many Imperial soldiers to seek more liberating pleasures. It was the most prominent of these that stoic toga-man Jakhumarnu Pendrool pronounced to be the Three Legs of Vice: gin, hazia and prostitution.

Soldiers find the words of old DeroAddiAsu ('whining rod-up-his-arse' in Pelandan) riotous fun, and have adopted them in their slang. Though it's best to be legless (unmarred by vice) on parade, getting legged (partaking in one of Jakhumarnu's vices) is always enjoyable. While being thrice-legged (having partaken in all three!) is a state of bliss that veterans assure new recruits is comparable to Illumination.

Less shall be said here about the Right and Left Legs of Vice, which are better known; instead this monograph shall focus more on that prurient third leg, prostitution.

Gin, the Right Leg of Vice

When Jorad Sideburn was asked how his soldiers might best defeat the enemies of the Goddess, he quipped: "Breathe on them." So widespread is the consumption of gin in the Lunar Army that, following the celebrations of Victory Day 7/50, the Anirestyu Corps was presented with receipts for the imbibition of over 5000 gallons of the stuff. Across the entire army, gin consumption among the Lunarised regiments alone can exceed 188,000 gallons in a year (excluding Festival Rations).

A simple drink made of malted barley and maize, and flavoured with the juniper berry, gin is one of the Seven Imperial Monopolies (the others including such items as silver, iron and glass). Its production

and sale is – in theory at least – strictly controlled in the name of the Red Emperor, and overseen by the Red Dancer of Power.

It is also in effect a monopoly of the Radiance of HonEel, Goddess of Maize and Third Inspiration of the Moonson. Without this goddess' blessings the creation of sanctified gin would be impossible. For this reason alone, Radiance Hierarch JavashEel is reckoned the sixth richest potentate in the Empire.



To many, gin is the lifeblood of Inclusion. For others it is the universal solvent that can alone dissolve the Lunar Way. Of the latter Great Sister and her crones are at the fore, decrying the sins of gin stupor with their Just Say No (to Gin)! campaign. Indeed, gin is forbidden to the Sister's Army, and its units are frequently called upon to strong-arm those who partake of its mysteries. (Who, as always, are marked by their irises – burning red with the power of the fire spirits.)

Despite the continued refutals of their preceptors, Lunar soldiers remain convinced that the Silver River on the Red Moon flows with gin; so much so that this was listed by the Provincial Church as one of the Nineteen Errors of Subdued Import, to be eradicated if possible.

The physical supply of gin is controlled by the Allied Mandataries for the Provision of Licensed Intoxicants, the motley collection of mercantile leagues that control the Gin Pedlars of the Army of Dragon Pass—all the while acting to eliminate

THE DRAGONSNAIL A PART OF THE DEVIL

By John Harding

From the Bestiary of Ashkoran the Tamer

Further fragments from "The Scroll of Bestial Excellence" describing the Dragonsnail collection at the Hideous Zoo in Glamour.

Names of the Dragonsnail

God Learner designation Spirulum biceps

Other names Devil snails, Chaos Snails, Wakboth's Snails, Wakboth's Cattle, Devil's Cattle (Sartarite), Wakboth's Horse (Praxian), Wakbothtanaki literally A Part of the Devil (Praxian)

Runic Associations

Beast, Chaos, Water

On the capture of the beast

The specimens were studied in the wild at three locations including the Devil's Marsh at the foot of the Block in Prax, the New Fens in Maniria and Marshlands south of Fay Jee also in that country.

We captured six specimens four in swamps in Maniria and another two in the Devil's Marsh. These were taken back to the Fragrant Marsh at the Hideous Zoo in Glamour. The study took place over 4 years.

These creatures are stupid, vicious and highly chaotic. Capturing a specimen is more a question of logistics than hunting skill. On our first trip to the New Fens in Maniria we took along a metal worker, a carpenter, five large carts, many stout ropes and about 20 local hunters. Getting one cart through a swamp is difficult enough let alone five of them. In the end we created a raft to float the specimens out of the marsh. One of the hunters was a fen walker and he helpfully told us that if you surrounded a Dragonsnail with a ring of some type of ash or rock salt then it would not be able to cross this barrier, he then also very helpfully told me that he had never seen this done. Unsurprisingly it's very hard to find an area dry enough in a marsh for this to be effective. We did however try this method under more controlled conditions at the Hideous Zoo. It was found to be efficacious as long as the beast was not overly hungry or agitated. In these cases a number of specimens simply rolled over the barrier although it did seem to cause them some discomfort. We had more success capturing them in the wild by feeding a snail until it became sleepy and waiting until it retreated into its shell. We then bound a stout bronze bound door over the opening to stop it coming out. This worked on most occasions with the exception of a particularly large specimen which managed to squeeze past a crack between the door and its shell. If we had used a larger door I'm sure it would have been as equally effective as with the smaller animals.



THE TOMB OF THE EMPTY EMPEROR

A OpenQuest adventure set in Glorantha

This is a Gloranthan Heresy Game. Imagine that back in the good old RQ2 days, that Greg & co had written Cults of the Sun instead of Cults of Prax and "Zonos and the Grand Debris" has just been released. Plucky Sun worshipping Dara Happans fight the repressive (and downright sleazy) Lunar Empire to oust the false Red Emperor and return Dara Happa to the rule of the rightful Solar Emperor. This is one of the adventures included in this 'Solar Pak'. Dungeon bashing done D100 style with Gloranthan Mega Gaming Fun.

Although the stats are presented for OpenQuest, D101 Games D100 Fantasy system (see <http://d101games.co.uk/openquest> for free pdf), it is broadly compatible with other D100 games. Also for minor characters only the essential quick stats are given.

The player characters are all rune level Dara Happans who are members of the Yellow Standard, a society opposed to Lunar rule. Six example characters are found at the end of the adventure.

Player's Background

"Everyone in Dara Happa knows that the Empty Emperor was a false Emperor who seized power during the Greater Darkness and brought the evil of Chaos to the Empire. That he was destroyed when the light of Yelm returned to the world and the rightful Dara Happan Emperor mounted the Celestial Footstool. That his very palace was crushed under a meteor pulled from the Skydome becoming his Tomb.

It is now the Third Age of Time and Dara Happa has been taken over by a group of charlatans and tricksters known as the Lunars. These evil and deceitful people worship the false Lunar Goddess, who arose four hundred years ago in challenge to the old Gods. Through magic she enslaved your proud people and arose into the Middle Air as the Red Moon, leaving her son the Red Emperor to rule the Empire. Most of your country men are still bewitched by her spell, and follow the Red Emperor as if he was the true Emperor of Dara Happa. You belong to ancient families who patiently wait for the return of the true Emperor and the ousting of the Lunars from your beloved Dara Happa. Publicly you are all members of the 'Yellow Standard' a social society dedicated to preserving the traditions of Dara Happa in the face of Lunar Modernisation, which the Lunars in their folly actually tolerate and encourage. Secretly you wait for the day of revolution!

That day has not yet come, but you must spring into action to save Dara Happa. A group of Lunars under the traitor Count Ardrú have travelled to the Grand Debris, the Empty Emperor's ruined city, with the implicit objective of awakening him to learn

magical secrets that will allow them to dominate all of Glorantha! Not only that but they have snatched relatives and loved ones to sacrifice to the foul Chaos God. Gathering your weapons and magic you quickly move to stop them.

Now you find your self on the dusty streets of Zonos which stands next to the Grand Debris. You stand in the Square of the Lost. To the north is the Lunar governors' Palace, to the South there appears to be a rude two story flat roofed Administration and Records building while to the west are the giant closed Gates of Doom, which lead into the Grand Debris."

