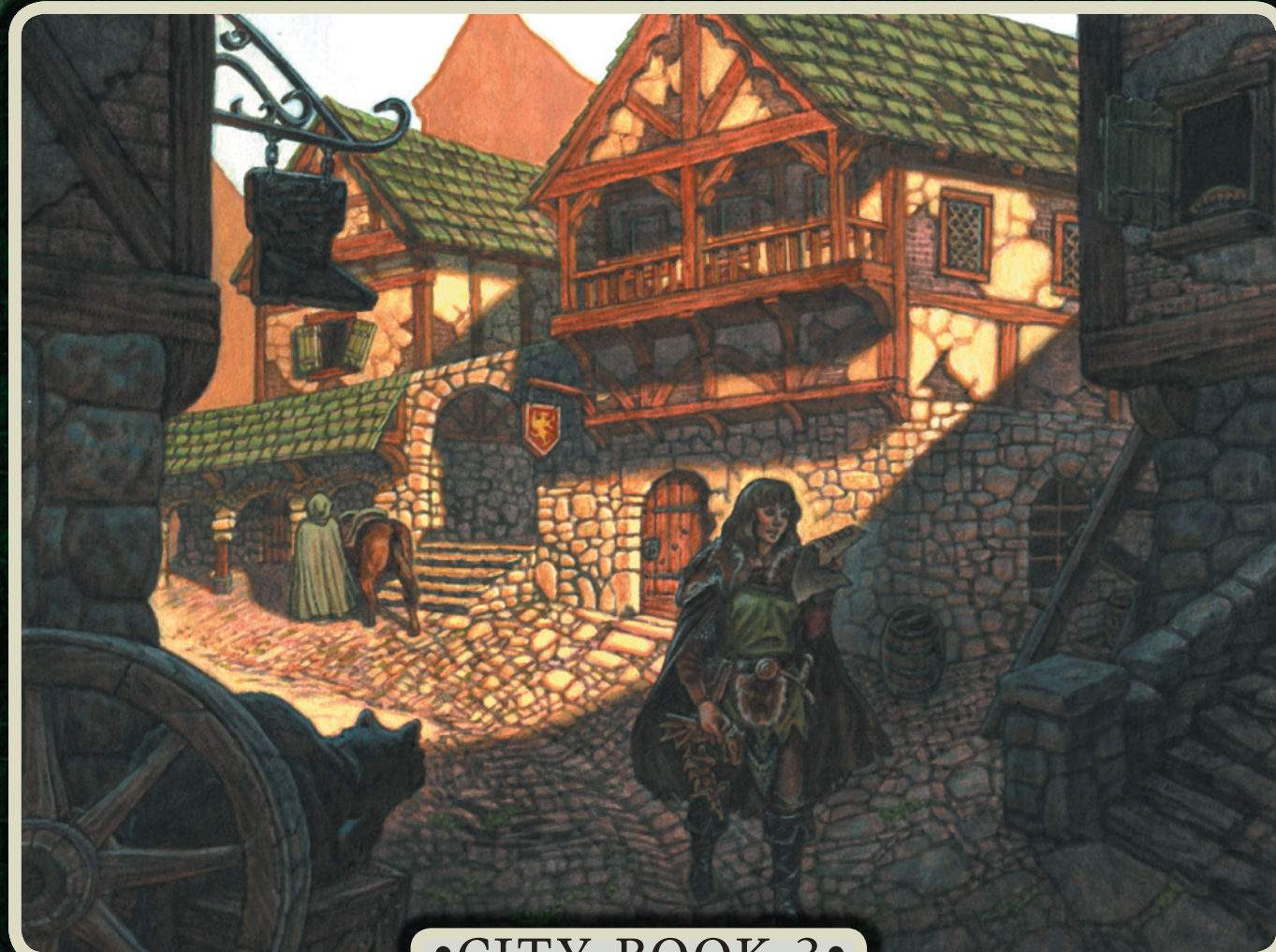


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PAUL "WIGGY" WADE-WILLIAMS

# HELLFROST

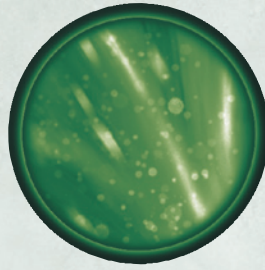
•CITIES OF THE CRYSTALFLOW•



•CITY BOOK 3•







# CITY BOOK 3

## CITIES OF THE CRYSTALFLOW

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# BRIDGEWATER



## ● HISTORY ●

Bridgewater was founded four centuries ago, at the dawn of the recovering of civilization from the Blizzard War and its deadly aftermath.

It began as, and in the eyes of many locals remains, two separate settlements. Technically it began as *one* settlement, though, as Westsiders are quick to point out. The Hellfrost armies were stopped before sweeping across the land, but this did not save the region from famine, plague, and banditry in the decades that followed. Living next to a marsh was not an ideal choice, but the ground provided a secure and isolated home.

The settlement that became East Bridgewater owes its existence entirely to Drakeport. Unable to navigate any further up the Crystalflow, and with overland trade on the west bank hampered by the marsh, merchants began unloading their cargoes on the east bank. Word soon spread and within a few months a village has formed to cater to the needs of the merchants and their ships.

As trade steadied and civilization returned to normal, East Bridgewater prospered most, and thus grew at the faster rate. It also had plenty of room in which to expand, including good farmland. Conversely, the inhabitants of the western settlement had to make do with harvest reeds, hunting, and fishing for survival.

Arguments rage to this day over the origin of the first bridge, after which the modern city is named. Eastsiders claim their ancestors constructed the bridge at great expense so as to allow the peasants on the other side access to their markets. Westsiders insist it was the opposite, saying their ancestors were forced to build the bridge in order to sell their wares and buy nice things. The truth, largely forgotten, is rather different. In order to prevent captains attempting to sail beyond the confines of the navigable stretch of the river (ahead lie shallows and mud banks even barges cannot cope with), the low bridge was erected as a barrier to ships.

Tensions between the two sides were always high—a case of haves and have-nots. In 137 IR, this boiled over into violence. Who started the conflict depends on which side of the river you live, as does the side which emerged victorious. The site of the battle, such as it was, was the bridge. According to popular songs, the “war” raged for nine days, with each side gaining and losing ground. In the end, somebody won and peace returned.

One popular theory is the fight began over who had claim to the name Bridgewater—a name actually applied to the bridge at this point in history. The western village was there first, but the eastern town, as it had become, was both larger and richer.

The matter was eventually settled not by the locals but by their new masters. Following the Saxa rebellion, the victorious tribes set about carving up the land. The Crystalflow made an ideal border. In drawing a line on a map, though, the settlements were placed in different nations—East Bridgewater became part of Nordmark, while West Bridgewater found itself in Royalmark. Unable to settle the dispute themselves, the matter was placed before the high king. His solution was simple—both would use the name, but one would prefix it with East and the other with West.

Bridgewater remained two separate settlements, linked by a bridge but in neighboring states, until 246 IR. Emisaries from Drakeport had already visited with the idea of forming a new independent state. Sensing an opportunity to increase their power, the rulers of the twin villages put aside their differences and arranged a marriage of their children, thus linking both settlements together under one ruler. In doing so, they adopted the title of baron (most citizens were still of Anari stock)—high enough to carry weight in the surrounding noble courts but not so high as to offend any of their new neighbors.

Since then, Bridgewater has continued to grow at a steady rate. Its economy is currently suffering a downturn due to an influx of refugees and loss of foreign cargoes from Drakeport, but it is coping with the downturn well thanks to its twin land and river access.



## RULES OF THE REALM

These setting rules apply in Bridgewater.

\* **Displays of Wealth:** Overt displays of wealth are considered poor form. Characters wearing tailored clothing or excessive amounts of jewelry in the streets receive a -2 Charisma penalty instead of the usual +1 bonus. Likewise, formal clothing warrants a -1 penalty. Behind closed doors, the usual rules apply.

\* **Trading:** Selling goods is also much easier, as there is always a trader within earshot. Streetwise rolls to find a buyer receive a +2 bonus.

\* **Transport Hub:** Characters who make a successful Streetwise roll can locate a ship departing downriver in the next 1d3 days. On a raise, the ship is leaving in half that time. With a suitable bribe (200 gs per point of the ship's Toughness), the ship can be made ready to sail within the hour.

Hiring a ship costs 50 gs per point of Toughness per week or part thereof if the captain is allowed to trade on the voyage, or 200 gs per point of Toughness per week or part thereof if not. Allowing the captain to conduct trade is cheaper, but it trebles the journey time unless the characters are heading to the next settlement anyway.

Caravans heading north into the Freelands or toward Ostmark take a little longer to assemble. A successful Streetwise roll locates one ready to depart in 2d4 days, or 1d4 days on a raise.

## SOCIAL HIERARCHY

The family of the ruling baron heads the social hierarchy. Under ancient law, the heir is appointed directly by the incumbent rather than voted in, as is common in Saxa lands. Traditionally, a woman marrying the baron receives the title baroness. If the heir is a woman, her husband is awarded the title baron-consort. By this means, governance remains with the family.

The baron can be addressed in person as "My lord" or "Baron Bridgewater." Addressing him as "Baron Gallandros," except in the third person, is reserved for foreign nobles with higher titles (who may also use "Bridgewater" as if it were his surname). Only his family and his counterpart in Drakeport ever refer to him by his first name alone, and the latter only on the rare occasions they meet face-to-face.

The baron's children all hold the title of knight (more formally, Knight of Bridgewater). Their children are simply referred to as "Lord Bridgewater" or "Lady Bridgewater," with no formal noble rank.

Geared toward trade, Bridgewater's upper class is dominated by merchant families. Some are independent families, while others are clerics of Var who have risen

to wealth. Although the baron is the sole ruler, the merchants carry a lot of collective weight—it is they, after all, who produce the city's main income.

Regardless of how they earn a living, clerics of Var and Neorthe form the next social strata. Immediately below them are grouped the city's senior courtiers, its few master craftsmen, powerful mages, military officers, and the plethora of lesser merchants.

Rather than follow Drakeport and its complex social system, everyone else is considered part of the lower class unless their wealth warrants a higher station. Even then, influence within the city plays a major part in being accepted into a higher tier. Boorish behavior, odious personal habits, odd views, and the like can all lead to social exclusion.

Unlike in Coglelund and Drakeport, cities also dependent on trade, overt displays of wealth, while not taboo, are considered poor behavior at all levels of society. No one doubts the rich have money to fritter away on extravagant clothing or expensive jewelry, but rubbing that into the nose of poorer citizens has always been frowned upon. That isn't to say the rich don't own nice things, just that they reserve displaying them for the right situation (such as dealing with superiors or impressing guests or potential business clients). Even the baron, when he leaves his home, dresses modestly.

One odd side-effect of this is that overt charity is also seen as untoward behavior. Despite this, Bridgewater has its fair share of beggars. Wealthy citizens who feel the urge to make donations to the poor do so through temples or anonymously through hired agents. These charity-men, as they are known professionally, suffer no stain on their honor for handing out coins to the needy as it is not their money.

Whether donating in this manner constitutes a sin for clerics of Var is a contentious point. Many clerics, never ones to give away wealth, believe that it still counts. Others argue that giving money to someone who then passes that on to the poor is not a sin—the cleric has not directly handed over anything to a poor person. For game play, the Gamemaster is the final arbiter of whether or not an act of charity through a charity-man is a sin.

## GOVERNMENT

The latest in a long line, Baron Gallandros ap-Morgwen has governed the city for the past 35 years. Like all the previous rulers, he is an autocrat, being responsible for the final decisions concerning every part of daily life.

This isn't to say he is a tyrant or refuses to take advice out of hand. Like any wise noble who wishes to avoid a dagger in the back or a peasants' revolt, he is surrounded by courtiers and advisors. Most important among these are the most powerful merchant families and the cults of Var and Neorthe, all of whom he must keep happy if the city is to prosper. Similarly, while the baron's word is final, the finer details are handled by one of his many



courtiers. For instance, the castellan has command of the military, the provost acts as magistrate, and the steward oversees the baron's household. No courtier, individually or collectively, has any power to overrule his lord—to do so is treason.

The voice of the common people is far less important in Bridgewater. There is no elected council of citizens and no civic spokesman—Bridgewater is a strictly feudal society and everyone knows his approximate place in the grand scheme of things. Should the peasants feel they are hard done by, they always have the option of revolting.

Unless they go around raping and murdering (see below), or are of sufficiently high social rank to warrant an invitation to a feast, few locals, and even fewer visitors to Bridgewater, ever get to meet the baron in person. Most times they interact only with an underling, and quite often one of that person's subordinates.

## LAW AND ORDER

While the city guard mans the walls and safeguards the inhabitants from outside threat, internal security is the domain of the city watch. It is considered part of the army, although it answers to the baron's constable.

The city operates just two patrol shifts—Sigel (0700-1900) and Maera (1900-0700). At any one time there are just 100 watchmen on duty, with three-quarters of these in East Bridgewater and one-quarter in West Bridgewater. Roughly half these numbers will be in a watch station (or tavern) rather than pounding the streets at any point in time. Securing the city gates falls to members of the regular army, rather than the watch.

Commanding each shift is a Watch Constable. He is aided by two Watch Captains, one for each side of the city. Every fifth man holds the rank of Watch Sergeant and is responsible for a five-man patrol.

As is the norm elsewhere, watchmen do not investigate crime scenes or attempt to track down perpetrators—they chase down criminals spotted in the act of breaking the law and attempt to prevent it through their public presence. Citizens who want a crime actually investigated must hire paladins of Var or clerics of Forseti.

An obscure law, introduced by the baron's great-grandfather, entitles the watch to receive a half of all fines imposed by the court. This is not bonus money for the watchmen, but funds to be used in hiring Thieftakers and clerics of Hothar or Sigel to bolster the ranks. At present, there are six Thieftakers, seven Swords of Truth, and three Sun Knights on the city payroll. In a bid to ensure the watch remains a civil force and is not unduly influenced by religious mores, no paladin can rise above the rank of Watch Sergeant.

As with all city's that make a living from trade, smuggling is a major issue. Unlike in Drakeport, there is no one commodity that sticks out—anything that can be taxed is likely to be smuggled in or out of the city. The city also has problems with slavers (slavery is illegal in the city itself), although no one knows the extent of this fell business.

## THE COURTS

The city is governed by the Baron's Law. That is, whatever the baron wishes to be law is the law, with no exceptions. The cult of Hothar has long acted as legal counselor to the barons, although it powerless to limit his authority or repeal tyrannical laws.

Except in capital crimes, justice is meted out by the provost in accordance with the book of laws. This vast collection of volumes details every crime (some repealed) and the range of punishments that may be passed down. Unfortunately, like all legal systems in Rasilon, it is weighted in favor of the rich and influential. It isn't fair, but justice rarely is when not handled solely by the cult of Hothar. Trials which warrant the death penalty are judged by the baron on a weekly basis.

While slavery is condemned, judicial bondage is acceptable practise. The guilty party is sentenced to a period of forced bondage for his crimes ranging from a month to as much as 20 years. Often this is to the state, with the criminal sent to work the baron's lands outside the city. In other instances, he may be auctioned off as a general laborer to one of the merchant families.

The criminal receives no wages, but is entitled to a minimum standard of food and shelter as laid down by law (and it is a minimum level). When his time is served, the criminal may return to his normal life. Because he is on loan rather than permanently bonded as a slave, the criminal cannot be slain out of hand or even injured. Should he die, his "owner" must pay the state twice what he bid in the auction as compensation. Criminal proceedings may also be warranted.

## THIEVES' GUILD

Where there is wealth there are thieves, and Bridgewater is no exception to the rule. The Water Boys, as the guild is called, has little interest in burglary and petty theft. Instead, it puts its efforts into smuggling, a far more lucrative venture. Indeed, it is remarkably relaxed about freelance thieves operating on its territory, so long as they avoid muscling in on its primary business or targeting properties that pay the guild protection money (which rules out most of the rich merchants and their warehouses).

To be fair to the guild, their involvement in organized crime is a case of supply and demand—merchants don't like paying taxes they can avoid, and the guild offers that service at very reasonable rates. Although there is inherent danger involved, smuggled goods typically enter and leave via Gnatmarsh, where there are fewer city watchmen and guards more amiable to taking a bribe.

Smuggling has also kept the cults of Var and Forseti (minor god of catching thieves) from interfering in their operation—no goods are actually being stolen, which is all that matters to the cults. Furthermore, smuggling and tax evasion are only sins for clerics of Var if they are caught. As a result, the guild and the cult are actually strange bedfellows. Both sides know where they stand with regard to conventional theft, though.



## EDUCATION

Most of Bridgewater's citizens receive only a minimum level of formal education. They are taught to read and write and perform basic arithmetic, but little more. Instruction in local customs, heraldry, and law comes from the family, unless one can afford to hire a private tutor. Officially, schooling starts at age five and finishes at age 12. In reality, most children leave school by the time they are eight or nine.

To be fair, this is as much as most need, for they are destined for a life working on the docks or the river in one form or another. A fortunate few are apprenticed to merchant families (whereupon they are taught more complex arithmetic) or master craftsmen (whereupon they learn a practical trade).

Many of the older families are of Anari stock (though rarely pure these days), but the city is bordered by two Marklands. As a result, Saxa is the language of daily use, with Anari reserved for courtly interaction. Trader is the most common second language and is widely understood, if not spoken daily, by all levels of society.

## RELIGION

Ask any citizen to name a deity and the first to pass their lips is usually Var. The god of trade, while patronized only by merchants, has been the city's official patron since the formation of East Bridgewater and he is in little danger of being usurped anytime soon. While its political power is relatively weak, its economic power is massive—its clerics account for a good 40% of all trade that passes through the gates or down the river. Like all merchants, they produce very little in terms of physical goods, though.

Neorthe, said to be the creator of the Crystalflow, ranks second in terms of general worship. Without the river, there would be no trade and thus no city.

Although he has few hard-core worshippers, Freo is extremely popular with visitors and merchants. Neorthe may govern the mood of the river, but only a fool embarks on a journey without offering the god of travel at least a brief mention. The cult has no official presence beyond a few small shrines, but clerics passing through on their travels can earn a modest income blessing ships and caravans.

Var may be the patron of the city, but the barons have long favored Hothar, god of justice and order. Hardly popular with the masses, whose daily lives he rarely affects, the cult makes much of its income in tithes from the baron. His larcenous counterpart, Nauthiz, is not as popular as one might think. More interested in smuggling than theft, many thieves actually favor Var. Indeed, despite the fact that it never pays taxes and wilfully helps others break the law, the guild considers itself a semi-legitimate business.

Unlike in Drakeport, Eostre Plantmother is a popular deity—Bridgewater has farmland on its eastern shore and the

marsh reeds are a source of revenue in West Bridgewater. Her Animalmother aspect is not entirely ignored, but with the only livestock being those transported up and down the river, she has little daily influence. Ullr has some adherents in West Bridgewater. With no mines or few craftsmen, Ertha and Kenaz are considered very minor cults, regularly worshiped by just a handful of citizens (Kenaz receives more support in his role as patron of hearth and home).

Vali's cult is hard at work—rich or poor, men always want more. Likewise, rich and poor alike seek diversions from the monotony of their daily existence. Unusually, the cult's twin aspects are rivals. Followers of his pestilential aspect see Bridgewater as an ideal point from which to launch plagues into surrounding lands. Followers of his corruption aspect want the city to prosper, for wealth, or the desire for it, corrupts as surely as power.

## FESTIVALS

The high holy days of Var and Neorthe, few of which concern the bulk of the population, are half-day holiday. Businesses open as normal but close their doors at noon. Auction Night is especially popular with the masses—citizens save up throughout the year in the hope of securing a good bargain for quality objects.

By comparison, Boat Blessing Day and Quenching Day, both important to followers of Neorthe, are all day holidays for citizens of any faith.

The only other standard high holy day enjoyed by all citizens is the first day of Oath Renewal Day. Citizens are required to pay their taxes during this time. In doing so, they also swear their support for the baron for another year. Not swearing allegiance is considered sedition.

Regardless of his chosen patron, the baron plays a minor part in many rituals. The first boat blessed always belongs to him, he has the honor of extinguishing the first bonfire on Quenching Day, he lights the candle on Auction Night, he accepts a ceremonial sword manufactured on Sword Day, and so on throughout the year.

Bridgewater's citizens celebrate just two local festivals during the year.

The conflict of 97 IR, known in Bridgewater as the Great War (despite it being nothing of the sort by the definition of either word) is commemorated every year. Held on the first Healfdaeg of Werremonan, it is less a festival of remembrance and more an opportunity for civil pride and to settle old scores. At dawn, two sides of citizens, usually already the worse for wear, march to their respective edge of the bridge (which has been abandoned by stallholders).

The baron, safely positioned on a boat moored halfway along the bridge, throws a leather ball onto the structure. This is the signal for the participants to storm the bridge. The objective is simply to carry the ball to your opponent's side, whereupon victory is given. No weapons are permitted and the ball cannot be thrown or carried outside the confines of the bridge, but non-offensive magic is permitted. Considering the sheer weight of numbers, the "celebration" continues late into the afternoon.



As well as civic pride in their half of the city, the victors receive an added bonus—a 1% reduction in their tax income for the coming year.

The date of the second festival varies with each ruler, for it marks the baron's ascension to the title. It is a day of feasting and singing. It begins with the baron appearing on the balcony of his fortress and addressing the crowd and accepting gifts from wide-eyed children, and ends with a procession through the streets just before dusk as the baron and his courtiers pay a brief call at each major temple to a benevolent god to accept a blessing. This is one time when displaying wealth in public is socially acceptable, for it shows to the baron that under his rule the people are prospering (regardless of the truth).

## MILITARY

Bridgewater is not only the northern economic powerhouse of the Confederacy, it is strategically important, guarding as it does the last navigable stretch of the great river and the branch that forms the Lesser Crystalflow. In keeping with its responsibilities, it has always maintained a large standing army.

The current army, though, is far greater than normal. During the civil war in Nordmark, Bridgewater swelled its military ranks with conscripts, positioning them along the border to prevent the river being used as a staging post by either side. The fighting has finished, but Baron Gallandros does not yet have the measure of the young king. Until he is sure his city is safe, he has no intentions of disbanding his troops.

Out of the 1,200 soldiers currently employed, only 1,000 are considered frontline troops—the rest form the city watch. Half of these are conscripts.

Protecting the border with Nordmark are five companies, each of 100 men—one archer company, two cavalry companies, and two militia infantry companies. They have become known as the Eastern Army. Command of these forces falls to Knight-Captain Gueri ap-Amyon of the Knights Hrafn.

The remaining one archer and four infantry companies are stationed within the city proper. The archers and two militia companies are garrisoned in the eastern side of the city, and two infantry companies—one militia and one light—in the western portion. Despite being divided by the river, they are considered a single force. They are commanded by Knight-Officer Carelia ap-Marc of the Knights Hrafn, an expert in siege warfare.

Nearby Gnatmarsh is infested with marsh trolls and harpies, as well as several tribes of bufomi. Charged with keeping their numbers in check and ensuring they pose no threat to the city are the Gnatmarsh Wardens, the western city's light infantry company. Locals know them better as the Toad Hunters.

Faced with clouds of biting insects, foul-smelling cloying mud, and dangerous foes, the Wardens have a serious problem with illegal narcotics, which they take

to help them cope with their lot in life. As a result, they are developing another nickname—the Toadlickers, a reference to the narcotic properties of the secretions of certain species of toad.

Protecting the person of the baron and the royal fortress are a company of heavy infantry known as the Wardens of the Bridge. Their captain is also the baron's castellan, the person responsible for ultimately overseeing all aspects of the city's military.

Bridgewater also has a powerful navy. At its core are four drakkars (240 crew total), three of which continually patrol up and down the Crystalflow. The fourth vessel remains in dock, a spare in case an active ship needs maintenance or repairs. As well as keeping an eye for pirates, they are a rapid reaction defense force for settlements who find themselves under attack.

Providing additional firepower are three battle barges. Equipped with a coldfire thrower, two ballistae, and a small catapult, they can provide fire support to troops on the riverbank, as well as deal pirates a lethal blow. Manning each barge are ten artillerists and forty light infantry trained in both shore and ship combat.

## MILITIA

Bridgewater has a militia of 1,000 men organized into ten companies. Well equipped and trained, they have been a vital addition to the city's army since the foundation of the Crystalflow. Half their strength is currently part of the standing army. In order to keep morale high, most of the conscript forces serve in the city, allowing them to go home to their families at night.

## PRIVATE FORCES

As the rich grew richer, so a law was passed restricting the city watch to protecting private citizens and their property. That the cult of Var was ultimately behind this was obvious to all, but once issued into law by the then baron little could be done. Merchants looking to protect their warehouses, tradesmen their shops, and craftsmen their workshops had only two recourses—pay the thieves' guild protection money, hire the cult of Var or Forseti, or employ private guards. Most opted for the latter.

The business of guards-for-hire remains popular today. Most patrons use a clearing house (ironically run by a cleric of Var) to ensure their candidates are honest citizens. The cost of this is paid for by the hopeful guard, who receives an engraved token making him eligible for employment. Only citizens with something to hide from the authorities use unlicensed guards.

## TRADE & TRIBUTE

In terms of major bulk exports, the Confederacy does not appear to produce much beside food, wine (palatable, but poor compared to Aspirian produce), and



wool. This is, of course, only half the story. Many goods, such as clothing, pottery, and metalwork, are produced locally, but the primary markets are other settlements within the Confederacy. Bridgewater is unusual in that it produces very little, instead devoting its economy almost entirely to trade. It has a basic level of self-sufficiency in manufactured goods, but lacks high-quality items.

With Nordmark peaceful once more and Drakeport's economy suffering a downturn due to orc pirates in the Crystal Sound, Bridgewater's future looks rosy. Exotic goods from Al-Shirkuh, imported through Ostmark, pass through its gates on their journeys north and west, and Nordmark has once again become an exporter.

Much of the city's infrastructure is concerned with trade and the services required to ensure a steady flow. For a city of its size, it has a great percentage of wainwrights, coopers, farriers, shipwrights, carpenters, provisioners, ships chandlers, cofferers (wooden coffers), rope-makers, and sail-makers. Entertainment services for visiting merchants are not neglected, for the city boasts a large number of inns.

Ideally, Bridgewater's merchants would love to become the main port for Royalmark. Unfortunately, this is hampered by geography—barges cannot sail the river north of the bridge and no caravans are prepared to make their way through Gnatmarsh. As a result, it is Scathmoor that is benefitting most. Aside from constructing a raised causeway through the marsh, something that has been attempted more than once over the years, Bridgewater can do nothing except grit its teeth and watch Scathmoor grow more prosperous.

The city's craftsmen are formed into small guilds. Producing goods more for home use than export, they have little political power—if they stop working, Bridgewater will just import goods from elsewhere.

## TAXES

Bridgewater's primary income is tax revenue. Rates are kept artificially low to make it an attractive place to do business. Fortunately, the amount of trade is more than enough to keep the coffers full. Long ago there were myriad minor taxes based on the level of income, the size of house, the number of hearths, and even the number of children in a family. The complex system has since been streamlined into just a handful of flat rate taxes.

**Berth Fees:** Ships pay 3 gs per of base Toughness per half-week or part thereof they remained berthed at a dock. Ship captains looking to dock, unload quickly, and anchor in the river channel until it is time to load find their plan is no escape from the fees—docking for as little as a minute incurs the full charge.

**Customs Duty:** Imports for local use are charged at 1%. Goods imported into the city from outlying communities for export elsewhere are charged at 2%. Despite these low rates, smuggling is a problem.

**Income Tax:** Citizens forfeit 20% of their wages. While this goes to the baron, much of it is spent maintaining the city's infrastructure and paying the army.

**Tithing:** All citizens are required to pay 10% of their

income to a cult. Seven percent goes to a cult of their choice. In order to curry favor with the gods, many citizens pay 5% to the cult of their patron deity and spread the other 2% around.

Var may be the city's patron, but the cult has no automatic entitlement to tithes from non-worshippers. Several generations ago, the then baron, a gambling man, made a deal with the cult. Each year, the high priest and baron would select a champion to play a game of chance. If the cult won, it would receive 3% of every citizen's wages. If the baron won, though, the cult would pay an extra 3% of its income to his treasury and its citizens would tithe less as a result.

**Weapon Tax:** Intended purely a revenue stream, visitors pay 2 gs per damage die of their weapons. For ranged weapons, this is base damage of a bow or sling. Daggers are excluded. No tokens or paperwork are issued—the city watch assumes that anyone who has made it past the gates or off the docks has paid up.

## MARKETS

Bridgewater has three markets. Those on the banks open only on Marketdaeg, and do so between dawn and dusk. The main market, located on the Bridge of Scales, is open for business every day. Although regular trading is from dawn until dusk, food vendors set up their stalls on the bridge from dusk until midnight.

## ARCHITECTURE

Despite being home to many of Saxa extract, Bridgewater has a decidedly Anari feel—the 80 years or so of Saxa rule had little impact on its architecture.

While the majority of Bridgewater's houses are single story buildings constructed of stone and timber, the manses of the rich and powerful citizens are two stories and built entirely of stone. The city's older sections, most notably in West Bridgewater, retain a village feel, with detached buildings surrounded by small allotments.

The newer parts of East Bridgewater, which includes the upper-class districts, were constructed to limit the buildings' footprint and prevent wild expansion. This is not to say they are small or crammed together. Indeed, many of the grander houses have enclosed gardens, allowing the owners to enjoy summer evenings in relative peace and quiet or cultivate a small quantity of crops.

Despite their larger size, the homes of the rich are not ostentatious on the outside—such crude displays of wealth are bad manners.

## THE SUN

As elsewhere, the inhabitants of Bridgewater base their working day on the rising and setting of Sigel's Hearth.



Below are the local sunrise and sunset times and the hours of daylight for the first day of each month.

| Month         | Sunrise | Sunset | Daylight |
|---------------|---------|--------|----------|
| Snaermonan    | 0734    | 1632   | 8h 58m   |
| Frostmonan    | 0720    | 1706   | 9h 46m   |
| Eostremonan   | 0641    | 1744   | 11h 3m   |
| Plohmonan     | 0553    | 1818   | 12h 25m  |
| Sowanmonan    | 0504    | 1852   | 13h 48m  |
| Werremonan    | 0428    | 1924   | 14h 56m  |
| Scerranmonan  | 0416    | 1945   | 15h 29m  |
| Hegmonan      | 0431    | 1940   | 15h 9m   |
| Haerfestmonan | 0500    | 1909   | 14h 9m   |
| Falmonan      | 0532    | 1821   | 12h 49m  |
| Huntianmonan  | 0605    | 1730   | 11h 25m  |
| Fogmonan      | 0640    | 1646   | 10h 6m   |
| Wulfmonan     | 0715    | 1623   | 9h 8m    |

## MAJOR LOCALES

Separated by the waters of the Crystalflow, known locally simply as the River, Bridgewater is truly a city of two halves (but not equal halves). Although it has been a single city in name for over three centuries, inhabitants still refer to themselves as Westsiders and Eastsiders, and take great pride in their half of the city.

West Bridgewater lies close to Gnatmarsh and the first impression of most visitors is that it is the poorer half of the city—the buildings are less grand and more rundown than those on the east bank. This is largely true—the east side dominates trade, leaving the west side to harvest reeds and produce goods.

## OUTSIDE THE CITY

Save for adventurers seeking to prove their mettle against marsh trolls, members of the Gnatmarsh Wardens, and lowly reed gatherers, few people ever enter or leave on Bridgewater's western landward side. The fringes of the marsh begin a mere 200 yards from the city walls, a narrow strip of cleared ground (the vegetation is cut and burned back every few years) providing guards with a clear view of any hostiles attempting to sneak up on the city.

Except to the northwest, where the trees of Dreamwood straggle down to the riverbank, the eastern countryside is marked by fields and small farms. Merchant families own a handful of the hamlets, but the great majority is controlled by the baron. The farms are not large enough to keep the city fed, but their produce alleviates the need for huge quantities of imported food. Further out, bordering Nordmark, are livestock farms—mostly sheep raised for wool and milk.

The first entry in this section does not appear on the city map and it is too close to the city to appear in the *Hellfrost Atlas*. Several of the later entries are within the city limits but are found on both sides. With that in mind, they are placed here for convenience.

## NORTH BRIDGEWATER

A steady stream of refugees has trickled south from the Winterlands in the last few years, desperate men and women seeking a better, and warmer, life in the Hearthlands. Drawn by stories of its fabulous wealth, many make their way to Bridgewater.

Baron Gallandros knows the limitations of his city—an increased population will lead to overcrowding, disease, and possibly civil unrest. He is not a man without a heart, however, although it is certainly a hard one. Under his guidance, the construction of North Bridgewater has commenced. (Technically it lies several miles to the northeast of the city.) Gallandros has given the refugees three choices—either use what savings they have to build new cooperative farms and help support the city, move on to other lands, or starve to death. Most have decided to take the first option.

Those who have elected to remain have been given plots of vacant land and are free citizens rather than serfs. Beholden to the baron by feudal allegiance, they are not paid for their labors. Instead, they are allowed to retain all their produce. Any excess can be sold or traded in the city markets. Of course, refugees are still expected to pay their taxes like any other citizen of Bridgewater.

North Bridgewater is currently little more than a large village surrounded by a ditch and bank.

### 1. THE COMPOUND

The elves of Dreamwood rarely trouble those who pass its borders, but few merchants are content to camp out in the open if they miscalculate their journey times and find the city gates closed for the night. To provide them with some degree of protection (more from roving bandits than the elves), a compound protected by a wooden palisade has been erected close to the gate. There is no charge for caravans to park up here overnight, but nor are there any facilities.

### 2. CITY GATES & WALLS

Bridgewater has two external gates—one in each half of the city. The western gate is known as Marsh Gate. Its heavily reinforced gates, designed to withstand a battering from huge trolls, are kept shut. Only when traffic needs to pass through are they ever opened. Rather than continually open and close them, the city guard prefers to wait until there are sufficient travelers to make it worth their while. This typically takes 2d6 hours. A force of 20 medium infantry man the gatehouse during the day and double that number at night.

The eastern gate is officially called the Main Gate, but most citizens refer to it as Traders Gate as all caravans pass beneath it. The gates are opened an hour before dawn and closed an hour after dusk. Traffic arriving after this time must wait until morning.

Under the Marklands' governance, the city was protected only by a wooden palisade atop a steep bank.







## bridgewater

1. the compound
2. city gates & walls
3. bridge of scales
4. ferries
5. sea dragon island
6. wharves
7. temple of neorthe
8. iron guild office
9. swords & spears
10. oswald the merchant
11. the laden wagon
- 12 temple of var
13. the house of fortune
14. the agency
15. the house of lore
16. little vale
  - a. the leaf field
  - b. the crackling pig tavern
  - c. trade mission: the vale
17. trade mission: nordmark
18. ram's head merchant house
19. the blind scales
20. messenger guild
21. the armory
22. east garrison
23. the fortress
24. the old quarter
25. gnatmarsh supplies
26. troll & toad leather goods
27. shrine to ullr
28. the night-soil guild
29. ullr's house
30. west garrison
31. the trolls' den

Since its independence, this has been replaced by a city wall. Impressive enough, the stone wall is hardly monumental—it measures just 25 feet high and 15 feet thick.

### 3. BRIDGE OF SCALES

The sole bridge across the Crystalflow's lower stretch is the Bridge of Scales. It is not the first bridge to span the river and likely will not be the last.

Investing his wealth, the baron's great-great-great grandfather has a previous wooden construction torn down and replaced with a majestic stone span. The bridge is supported on a series of arches, deliberately built too low to allow masted vessels passage beneath but high enough to allow the river to flow with minimal impediment. Above the middle arch facing downriver is a heater shield-shaped heraldic design carved in stone, the family crest of the baron's family.

The bridge, while not on a par with Three-Way Bridge in Aspiria, is a marvel to behold. Not only is it wide enough to allow wagons to pass along the center, but its width is such that there is still room for market stalls along both sides. For all intents and purposes, the bridge is the center of daily life, a busy, loud, colorful marketplace as well as a vital river crossing.

As far as most locals are concerned, the bridge takes its name because it is the main marketplace, and traders weigh goods and coins on scales. An older tale, surviving only in a few garbled lines of poetry, suggests a dragon is involved. Alas, until more of the work is unearthed, exactly how remains a mystery.

### 4. FERRIES

The Bridge of Scales is the main crossing point, but it lies in the north, making it inconvenient for those who live in the southern parts of the city. During the day, crowds of shoppers make it difficult to traverse the bridge quickly, especially with wagons or heavily laden pack animals.

Given that easy movement of people and goods is essential, the city operates three ferries. These are subsidized by the baron to keep costs down. For 1 ss, a citizen can purchase ten wooden tokens from booths near each terminal. Crossing as a foot passenger costs one token per trip. Merchants pay in coin, the amount varying with both the weight and footprint of their cargo.

The ferries operate only between dawn and dusk for safety reasons. Passenger ferries leave the east bank on the hour and the west bank on the half-hour. The trip across takes around 20 minutes depending on the flow. Freight ferries run whenever there is cargo to be moved.

### 5. SEA DRAGON ISLAND

In the middle of the channel is a small artificial island constructed of wooden beams and rubble in-fill. Embedded in the island are the painted sea dragon-shaped prows of ships.

Salvaged from vessels sunk along the river, they initially reminded mariners to honor Neorthe or risk his wrath. Over the generations, constant supplications for good luck have transformed them into a beneficial sacred place. The site is owned and maintained by the cult of Neorthe. In order to ensure it is not desecrated, two paladins are on duty day and night. According to legend, the prows are inhabited by the spirits of ten nykrs, river fey beholden to Neorthe.

**Spirit Name:** The Ten Daughters.

**Ambience:** The island is totally stable, but those who set foot on it or touch one of the prows feel as if they are on a ship in a heavy swell.

**Deity:** Neorthe.

**Senses:** Notice d4.

**Communication:** The spirits do not communicate through speech, though it is said the high priest has held conversations with them on high holy days. Those who receive a blessing, though, hear crashing waves and smell the salty tang of the distant ocean.

**Sacrifice:** In order to receive a blessing, a supplicant need only pour river water over each of the ten prows. Unfortunately, this does not guarantee success—they must also make a Boating roll.

Unusually, the spirits are not inclined to help those



who are already competent mariners. Rather, they aid those who are about to set sail with no knowledge of how to navigate the river or its many dangers.

**Powers:** A *failed* Boating roll grants the supplicant a bonus benny, while a critical failure grants him two bonus bennies. These can only be used on Boating rolls made on the Crystalflow and last only until the character next steps foot on dry land (other vessels do not count). A character may benefit from only one sacrifice at a time. Heroes able to share their bennies may not do so with these ones—only the supplicant may use them.

## 6. WHARVES

Bridgewater may have overland trade links, but the river is its lifeblood. While it has wharves and warehouses, those on the west bank are far fewer in number and smaller in size. They mostly cater for smabyrdings and small river barges. Grander warehouses stand on the east bank, their doors and signed emblazoned with a merchant's mark to denote ownership. Alongside are docked knarrs, busses, and long barges.

Only slightly quieter at night, the wharves are crowded with merchants, laborers, hawkers, thieves, watchmen, urchins, doxies, and customs officials, not to mention stray cats and dogs after a quick meal. The taverns and inns dotted through the docks are distinctly lower-class.

## EAST BRIDGEWATER

The larger portion of the city, East Bridgewater is the economic and political center, and home to the wealthy and powerful citizens. The neighborhoods around the wharves and warehouses are rough, lower-class areas. As one moves further away, so the districts become more prosperous and less crowded.

## 7. TEMPLE OF NEORTHE

The second largest temple in Bridgewater is devoted to Neorthe, god of water. Constructed of wood, as is traditional, the temple lacks the usual plethora of shells found in coastal communities. Instead, the outside is draped with faded pennants, nailed here by sea captains for good luck (at a cost of 10 gs).

Among the adjoining buildings are a sailors' refuge, where visiting mariners can sleep for free, a shrine to Vegtam, and the Catch—an indoor market for fishermen. Here local fishermen can sell their daily catch and purchase new nets and sails from, or have existing ones repaired by, cult-approved vendors.

In addition to its normal spiritual activities, the cult operates a separate business. Priests of both Neorthe and Vegtam, minor god of sailors (see *Matters of Faith*) hire themselves out as navigators and pilots—the Crystalflow has many dangers. The cults' paladins form an unofficial river watch. In addition to hunting down pirates, they are prepared, for a donation, to act as mercenaries for any riverbank community that needs assistance.

## 8. IRON GUILD OFFICE

Nordmark still has roving bands of brigands yet to be brought to heel (thanks to the machinations of Jarl Erp in Norvold) and the Freelands has no central authority. Merchants who want to ensure their cargo reaches its destination turn to the Iron Guild, which operates a greater guildhouse in the city. Running things is Gauntlet-General Gerard ap-Sauson.

Gerard began his career as a minor merchant, inheriting an ailing business from his father. Although good with numbers and people, Gerard boosted his fortunes but lacked the influence to expand his trading empire much further. When the Bridgewater Iron Guild franchise was put up for sale, he took a risk, liquidating his assets and purchasing the franchise before the cult of Var could lay claim to it.

The Gauntlet-General has been head of operations for six years now, and the business is finally turning a good profit (franchises are not cheap, especially major ones). Not a military man, Gerard appointed a retired mercenary to oversee the tactical side of the business.

Gerard has big plans now that he is making money. He hopes to buy up nearby wainwrights, wheelwrights, and the like, and bring them under Guild control, thus expanding his revenue stream into new areas. Likely unable to collect his new ventures together into one location within the city, he will (he hopes) purchase the Compound (see #1) from the baron and turn it into a purpose-built center of operations, complete with an inn and stables.

Many of the craftsmen he has spoken are in favor of the plan. Although they would lose their status as independent craftsmen, they would receive a lump sum for their business and a steady wage for their continuing labors. Those Gerard has not approached see this as a potential threat to their livelihood. Unfortunately for them, attempts to involve the cult of Var have failed—so long as Gerard doesn't start operating warehouses, he isn't muscling in on their territory with his grand plan.

## 9. SWORDS AND SPEARS

The Iron Guild guards caravans, but has no interest in protecting warehouses. Merchants who do not wish, or cannot afford, to hire clerics of Var or Forseti, and who refuse to bow to demands from the thieves' guild, instead hire private guards.

Swords and Spears is a private vetting agency run by a cleric of Var, Colcu ap-Alexis. Those seeking employment come here to be thoroughly questioned about their past experience and judged on their moral stance. Those meeting the strict requirements may purchase a token for 50 gs. This token is key to finding employment as a private watchman or bodyguard, for few patrons will hire a warrior without one.

Many merchants have taken to posting vacancies inside the office. This costs 5 gs per week—expensive, but it is a guaranteed means of ensuring suitable applicants learn of the employment opportunity.



## 10. OSWALD THE MERCHANT

*Note:* Oswald is the villain in adventure *N3: Pirates of the Crystalflow*, the plot of which is briefly described below. If the party has run that adventure, Oswald may be dead or imprisoned. In such cases, his business is now run by his nephew, Oswig. A devoted relative, Oswig craves revenge on those who ruined his uncle.

A respected merchant (and priest of Var—a fact he keeps hidden), Oswald, an engro, is also a member of the Gray League. Eager to secure a greater share of the trade passing up and down the river, he has made a deal with a tribe of bufomi dwelling in Gnatmarsh—the bufomi raid merchant ships of his choosing and in return Oswald would pay them in metal arms and armor.

As well his business ledgers, Oswald has a small private library. Much of his collection is devoted to business matters, but he has several books covering such diverse topics as military strategy, politics, history, and geography. Among them is a +2 tome of lore concerning Knowledge (Crystalflow Confederacy) entitled *A Gazetteer of the Confederacy*. All are penned in Classical Anari.

*Admission:* No admission to the public.

*Specialties:* Business.

*Investigation Rolls:* +1 general, +2 for specialties.

## 11. THE LADEN WAGON

With high prices and well-appointed rooms, the Wagon caters to the needs of wealthy merchants. The temple of Var offers facilities for merchants to conduct business, but many prefer the comfort and genteel atmosphere of this large tavern.

Unusually, the tavern is closed to the public every Market-daeg eve, a busy time for taverns and inns. Private guards ensure only select individuals are allowed entry. Gathering here on this one night of the week are members of the Gray League, merchants devoted to controlling all trade across Rassilon. Members include many rich local merchants, several clerics of Var, and the head of the thieves' guild.

Nothing within the inn ties it directly to the League—no papers are kept here and there are no secret signs for visiting members to identify it as a meeting place. For added security against eavesdropping, conversation is coded, with different cargoes, settlements, and rival merchants being given a misleading name.

The gathering of notable persons in private has not gone unnoticed by the city's population. Most believe they are nothing more than a social club, the elite using their status to ensure they can gather without interruption from riff-raff. Others view the gathering with a more suspicious eye, and whisper that they are a secret cabal who secretly run the city.

## 12. TEMPLE OF VAR

The largest temple in the city honors Var, as well as the affiliated cults of Auðun (see *Matters of Faith*) and Forseti. The temple is built around all four sides of a

paved central courtyard. Each range of buildings has a separate purpose—the temple proper is in the north, cult warehouses occupy the south, meeting rooms the east, and clerics' quarters the west.

The central space is reserved for market stalls. However, only clerics and devoted of Var may run a stall here. Locals refer to it as the Holy Market. The goods on sale vary. A citizen can pick up many common goods here, but also more unusual items. For instance, one cleric has, somehow, managed to secure a goodly number of Norn charms, while another trades in alchemical devices. At the GM's discretion, one may also find tomes of lore or learning here, though often at inflated prices.

## 13. THE HOUSE OF FORTUNE

Standing a short distance away from the temple of Var, this establishment is an extension of the holy site. Owned and operated by the cult of Auðun, lesser god of wealth, it is a licensed moneylender. The cult does not loan money to ordinary citizens under normal circumstances. In order to secure a loan, one must either run a business in the city, be a local merchant in a good standing with the cult of Var, or be a visiting merchant with letters of reference from an acknowledged cleric of either Var or Auðun.

The cult loans up to 10,000 gs, though only existing customers with a history of quick repayments can expect such assistance. Most citizens can hope to secure 1,000 gs. The charges are 5% compound interest per month (32 days). The cult will also invest money deposited in their vault by private citizens. It accepts deposits of up to 10,000 gs and offers a flat 2% return per year, less a 100 gs administration fee.

Private citizens can deposit valuables in the vault. Protected by mundane traps, *glyphs*, and vigilant paladins, it has never been robbed. Charges are 0.5% of the items' value per month.

## 14. THE AGENCY

Another branch of the temple of Var, and thus a holy site despite it being a business premise, the Agency is operated by the cult of Forseti. It is a detective agency, its diligent agents available for hire by those who want crimes investigated and stolen property returned.

Heading up operations is Detective Herehild Four-Eyed, so named because very little escapes her attention. Available for hire are four other priests. There are no paladins on the payroll—the Agency is not interested in preventing crime or making arrests. Instead, that falls to the main cult of Var and its militant Thieftakers.

Ironically, the cult is in need of outside support to aid in a major investigation. One of its detectives was engaged in an operation to infiltrate the thieves' guild. No word has been heard from him for several weeks, and Herehild has become convinced his identity has been blown. She expects to hear news of his bloated corpse being found downriver. In order to infiltrate the guild and the secure evidence necessary to bring its criminal



empire crashing down, Herechild is hiring strangers to the city, men and women whose faces are not known to the local criminal underworld. While it pains her, she knows her best hope of success is to hire actual thieves.

## 15. THE HOUSE OF LORE

This property is occupied by three Lorekeepers. Officially part of the House of Lore in Nara, they reside in Bridgewater in the hope of purchasing old writings from adventurers and merchants. Two of them are rather elderly and somewhat condescending in tone. They rarely bother to socialize with the locals except to do business. The youngest of the trio is keen to promote education. He spends his days trying to convince wealthy citizens to send their children to Nara to be educated.

Characters with tomes of lore can make a little money by allowing the scholars to copy them. They pay 10% of the standard value of a tome, but only once their work is complete. Unfortunately, they are rather slow—it takes them one month per +1 bonus of a book to copy it completely. During this time, the owner loses access to his precious volume.

## 16. LITTLE VALE

Engros are no strangers to the Crystalflow. Most live in Drakeport, but Bridgewater has a community of around 1,000 settled within its walls. Grouping together for community spirit more than security, their neighborhood has become known as Little Vale.

Undoubtedly some of the inhabitants are engaged in larcenous activities, but most have opened legitimate businesses or have sought honest employment. The desire to integrate has meant their homes and businesses are large enough for non-engros to move around in within without having to duck.

Settled they might be, but the engros have never forgotten their roots. They remain a collection of traders, already prepared to haggle or barter with strangers, and are quick to show hospitality to these they deem deserving. At night, music, song, and laughter float through the air from both taverns and private homes.

### A. THE LEAF FIELD

Pipeleaf from both Ostmark and the Vale is commonly available in Bridgewater. For those with a taste for good leaf, though, the only shop worth visiting is the Leaf Field. The owner, Flore ap-Mamert, is a master at marketing, but she is not the reason for the store's success. That honor goes to Hoban, her engro herbalist. Now getting on in years, the herbalist is popularly known as Old Hoban (Young Hoban applies to his son, who is in Seathmoor training to be a skald).

Casual shoppers can pick up pouches of conventional leaf, but most come here for the special blends. Brought up on a pipeleaf farm in the Vale, Bingo has perfected blending different varieties to produce different types of smoking sensation. He also cuts his most special blends

with dried medicinal drugs, transforming simple pipeleaf into herbal brews one must inhale.

Common medicinal herbs (0 or higher modifier) are easy to acquire, and the store has a regular supply delivered each week. Rarer, more potent herbs are harder to find. Flore never hires gatherers for rare herbs, but it is common knowledge she is always happy to hand over 10 gs per bunch, whether the herbs are fresh or dried.

Common pipeleaf costs the usual 15 gs per five smokes. More exotic blends cost double this. Shared with a fellow smoker or any engro, they grant the sharer a +1 bonus to Persuasion or Streetwise rolls when interacting with the smoker for one hour.

The medicinal blends cost 35 gs per smoke, expensive, but still cheaper than conventional herbal remedies. More importantly, because they are made from dried herbs, the pipeleaf brews retain their medicinal effect for 1d4+2 weeks. The following herbal brews are available in smoking form:

*Player's Guide:* Anti-inflammatory, healing (regenerative), numbing, restorative, stimulants I and II.

*Rassilon Expansion:* Anti-craving, courage, focusing, stimulants IV and VI.

### B. THE CRACKLING PIG TAVERN

Since coming under new management six years ago, the Crackling Pig (formerly the Broken Wheel) has become a favorite haunt for locals and visitors alike. Once a dingy drinking hole frequented mostly by stevedores, it is now a bustling tavern serving hot roasted pork. In addition to cuts from the two pigs roasting over open fires, one can order plump sausages and thick cut chops. Merely walking into the tavern gets the taste buds tingling and saliva dribbling.

Prices suit every pocket. A few slices of succulent leg or shoulder, or a plate of belly pork, costs as little as 5 ss. An entire leg, served with a choice of sauces and a string of spicy or seasoned sausages, can cost as much as 20 gs.

The proprietor, a rotund engro of good cheer and perpetually greasy fingers affectionately known as Oinky by regular patrons because of all the pork he consumes, buys pigs from a local farm. When he can get it, he serves roast wild boar.

Always on the lookout for fresh meat, Bill pays 30 gs for each fresh wild board carcass (no more than three days old) and 50 gs for a live specimen (which he can then fatten up). Similarly, he is keen to purchase exotic fruits to make into sauces, such as apricots and dates. Alas, these only grow in Al-Shirkuh, and are becoming harder to acquire.

### C. TRADE MISSION: THE VALE

Every settlement within the Confederacy is independent and responsible for its own trade agreements. Until recently, the merchants of the Vale had little need to travel to Bridgewater—they dealt solely with merchants in Drakeport. Things have changed, though, and not in the Vale's favor.

The trade in pipeleaf has become a very contentious



issue. Once the dominant seller, high import duties in Drakeport and increasing production in Ostmark now threatens the Vale's profits. While not yet desperate, the farmers have persuaded Mayor Pepin to open a trade mission in distant Bridgewater.

Behind Drakeport's back, the merchants are trying to negotiate a direct route to Bridgewater, with settlements north of Drakeport acting as the point of embarkation. They also take great pains to point out the inferior quality of Ostmark's pipeleaf (a fact that is only mostly true).

Dobert, one of the trade representatives, is an engro merchant. While his peers attempt to damage Ostmark's reputation, he is hedging his bets. Acting through middlemen (such as adventurers), he is quietly investing heavily in Ostmark's growing pipeleaf industry. Too wise to entrust strangers with shipments of coin, he has them deliver letters of credit and encoded instructions to his contacts in distant Ostmark.

### 17. TRADE MISSION: NORDMARK

Following a period of civil unrest and a brief but bloody civil war, Nordmark is finally getting back on its feet. Its iron is greatly sought after in Vestmark, and Bridgewater profits from the war against the orcs. Until the young king constructs a trade road from Yorvik to Nara and ensures the safety of wagons, goods produced in central and lower Nordmark are shipped first to Yorvik by caravan and then by ship to Bridgewater to join the trade road into the Freelands.

With local affairs settled, King Geirmund turned his eyes to trade. Knowing he could not yet ignore Bridgewater, he opened a trade mission. Responsible for negotiating trade agreements and maintaining goodwill between the two nations is Haulda Godred Botgeatsdohtor. During the civil war, her family supported the king, supplying both men and materiel. As a reward, her father, at that point a lowly ridder, was made a thegn and Godred a haulda. Having proved herself to have a nose for business and stewardship by governing her father's lands, Godred was quickly appointed trade negotiator.

Young and attractive, it is commonly held that her posting was not the king's choice. Instead, she was sent here through the machinations of older and more powerful noble families—families whose daughters are quietly being lined up as a potential queen.

Godred's job is not as easy as she would like. Unbeknownst to her, one of her staff is an agent of Jarl Erp the Crow. Spiteful of the king and his popularity with the masses, the jarl is desperately trying to sabotage relationships between Nordmark and her major trading partner. Never acting openly, the agent has managed to pay pirates to mount attacks on Nordmark shipping and spread vile rumors concerning the young king (including his "plan" to annex Bridgewater).

### 18. RAM'S HEAD MERCHANT HOUSE

Several months ago, a business contact from Al-Shirkuh

unable to repay a debt offered Hervis ap-Milon, the head of the family, a statuette in compensation. The figurine was as ugly as sin, something not quite human, not quite octopus, and carved of a black stone that felt slick and oily to the touch. Hervis was repelled, but simultaneously felt compelled to possess it. Placing the statuette in his basement, where only he could see it, Hervis began to spend long hours staring at the monstrosity and stroking it.

Hervis has changed. He has become very secretive, expelling all but one of his servants from his townhouse, and constantly mutters strange words to himself. His family put it down to old age. What they do not know, and could not attribute to dementia if they did, is that he has started "feeding" the statue with the brains of innocent victims kidnapped off the streets.

### 19. THE BLIND SCALES

All manner of goods flow into Bridgewater. Most are quite mundane, but every now and then something unusual turns up. Those who want such oddities evaluated swiftly head to this small shop.

The owner, Priscilla the Blind, is a retired cleric of Var, her mercantile career brutally cut short when her eyes were plucked out by vicious bandits. Despite her mutilation, she is regarded as the best appraiser of goods on the continent. Merely by feeling an object she can deduce its origin, any flaws, and its approximate value—an item's exact worth is only what someone is prepared to pay for it, after all. In return for this service, she demands 3% of the object's appraised value. Her bodyguard, a hulking Thieftaker with catlike reflexes in her permanent employment, ensures that patrons do not try to swindle her.

She never buys or sells objects, but she is prepared to recommend a potential buyer for an additional 1% fee. Not all of her clients are in Bridgewater, mind you—she has contacts as far afield as Aspiria and Alantaris Isle.

Player characters will rarely benefit from visiting Priscilla if they want standard booty evaluated—weapons and armor scavenged off the dead are rarely anything special, and while pottery looted from an ancient tomb may be old, it has little intrinsic value save to a collector. The GM may wish to draw a card from the action deck just to spice things up a little, though.

A red card or Joker means that the goods are of better quality than realized or may appeal to a specific buyer in Bridgewater. When they come to sell their booty, they receive 30% on a successful Streetwise and 60% on a raise. A black card means the goods are of poorer quality. The heroes receive only 20% and 40% respectively.

Gems, works of art, unusual statues, and the like, however, are a different story. Priscilla can give the heroes a very accurate appraisal of such wares—an appraisal that might open up a new adventure.

### 20. MESSENGERS' GUILD

Merchants visiting Bridgewater often have need of swift and reliable communication. They may, for instance,



wish to receive orders from a superior, check the price of certain goods back home, or ask for reports of bandit activity on their intended route. Facilitating their needs is the Messengers' Guild.

The Guild hires runners and riders, and sells *voice on the wind* alchemical devices with varying ranges. The Guild also offers overnight hospitality to messengers and heralds, even those not in Guild employment. The rooms are small but comfortable, and the meals are satisfying.

## 21. THE ARMORY

Not the city armory, but a shop that sells only armor and weapons. The owner, Angwulf Grim-Mouth, is a retired Iron Guild mercenary and devout follower of Tiw. His nickname comes from the huge scar that cuts across the left side of his face, leaving him with a permanent one-sided grimace. Treated courteously, he may introduce heroes looking for work to the Knights Hrafn or company captains, or the city's various paladins, all of whom are loyal customers.

He manufactures nothing himself, instead purchasing his wares from local armorers and weaponsmiths. He can, however, show customers how to don and wield everything he stocks with great proficiency.

Angwulf has a standing arrangement with Gauntlet-General Gerard (see #8)—members of the Iron Guild can purchase arms and armor at 20% discount. In return, Gerard points Iron Guild members and private caravan guards to his shop when they need new equipment.

## 22. EAST GARRISON

The larger of the city's two garrisons, the eastern barracks were designed to accommodate three companies. Over time the infantry has been pushed over to West Bridgewater and the barracks extended to suit the needs of the city's two cavalry companies (archers form the third company). Due to demands elsewhere, only the archers are currently occupying the barracks.

As well as the usual rooms one would expect, there is a sizeable stable block and exercise yard, as well as a farrier. One small building serves as the garrison chapel. Inside are shrines to Tiw, god of war; Atriðr, minor god of cavalymen; Earhclud, minor deity of archers; and Epona, lesser god of horses (see *Matters of Faith* for details on the lesser gods).

Thanks to having a steady congregation, the minor cults have been able to secure employment for clergy. The three paladins of Earhclud act as archery instructors, while the sole paladin of Atriðr helps train the cavalry. A priestess of Epona serves as senior veterinarian—she and her staff are currently in the field with the cavalry companies.

## 23. THE FORTRESS

Baron Gallandros' "house" is a fortified keep that forms part of the perimeter wall. A display of the barons' wealth, it is also a blunt reminder to its neighbors that

the city is not defenseless. Given that the fortress is part of Bridgewater, the baron does not maintain any private craftsmen—he buys what he needs from locals to aid the economy. The keep is home to the baron's bodyguards, his courtiers, and a host of servants.

The fortress is not open to the public. Citizens trying to enter the castle are always stopped and questioned by the Wardens of the Bridge duty sergeant. Unless they have an appointment, only a high noble title (count or higher) warrants swift admission. Other hopefuls must give their name and address to the door guard (a courtier responsible for granting access to the baron). Should the baron deign to grant them an audience, a herald is sent to inform them.

## WEST BRIDGEWATER

The western portion of the city has always been the poorer cousin. Unification has brought some wealth, but nowhere near as much as on the opposite bank. The western side is the location of much of Bridgewater's non-trade related industry. Unlike in East Bridgewater, there is much less definition between lower-class and middle-class neighborhoods (there are no upper-class areas as such).

## 24. THE OLD QUARTER

Sometimes known as the Saxa Quarter, this is the oldest part of West Bridgewater. The houses are small and detached, each surrounded by a small plot of land on which crops are cultivated. Despite its common name, the district has always had a mixed population. Unlike elsewhere in the city, the homes are constructed in the manner of small longhouses rather than traditional Anari cottages. It is for this unusual architecture the district is known as the Saxa Quarter.

## 25. GNATMARSH SUPPLIES

No major ruins or hoards of treasure have ever been unearthed in Gnatmarsh, but that does not stop adventurers from trying their luck. Located close to Marsh Gate, this establishment caters to the needs of those planning a trip into the mire. The shop stocks backpacks, flasks, flint and steel, insect netting, lanterns, rope, salt (for removing leeches), tents, waterproof satchels and scroll cases, waterskins, whistles, and freshly brewed insect repellent herbal remedies—the essentials for exploring the dank marsh. Stored in a small hut outside the store are bundles of dry firewood.

Prices are just 75% of normal. This is because the goods are all previously used—adventurers returning from an expedition usually have little need for insect netting or unused repellent. The owner, Pondo (an engro), purchases unwanted items at 15% of their true value, less if they are damaged or heavily worn.

While he has never ventured far into Gnatmarsh, Pondo questions his customers should they return to his shop. Through their exploits he has learned a great deal concerning Gnatmarsh and its denizens.



## 26. TROLL & TOAD LEATHER GOODS

For those with the right skills, and an enterprising eye for business, Gnatmarsh can be a rich resource. Cadmar ap-Eustache is a leatherworker his wife, Berthe, a tanner. Their wares, which include normal clothing, leather armor, backpacks, pouches, satchels, tents, and waterskins, are made from the skin of marsh trolls and bufomi. Marsh troll skin items, except for leather armor, are tougher than normal leather. Such goods cost 20% more than normal but have +1 Toughness.

Venturing into the marsh in search of raw materials is far beyond their abilities, but they are quite prepared to pay for the materials they need. Heroes can earn 10 gs per bufomi and 100 gs per marsh troll corpse they drag back to the workshop. The meat is sold to Burcan (see #29) as food for his hounds.

## 27. SHRINE TO ULLR

The god of hunting rarely receives much worship in large cities, but a shrine in his honor stands in West Bridgewater. Local hunters are hardly after big game—they scour the marsh for frogs, lizards, and small birds, all local staples, using nets and slings rather than spears and bows.

The shrine takes the form of a huge boar's skull. Legend states that the monstrous boar terrorized West Bridgewater long ago, smashing through the palisade and demolishing buildings. A hunter (a cleric of Ullr in some versions and a peasant boy in others) brought the beast down with a single shot from his bow (or sling, or javelin). While the grateful citizens roasted the beast's flesh, the skull was set out as a trophy to Ullr.

The shrine boasts just a single cleric, an elderly Saxa Huntsman named Herne. Too old to actively hunt, the priest maintains the shrine, blesses hunters as they leave the city, and performs all the necessary rituals to ensure Ullr's favor shines on the city. Dressed in a deerskin cloak complete with antlers, he is a common site in the neighborhood.

## 28. THE NIGHT-SOIL GUILD

Bridgewater has no sewage system. Solid waste is collected each morning and evening by the Night-soil Guild, a motley band of grubby peasants paid a pittance by the baron. Liquid waste is collected separately and dumped in Gnatmarsh. The cult of Neorthe forbids the dumping of any form of waste into the Crystalflow and is quick to punish those who seek to do otherwise. They have yet to convince the baron to make polluting the river a crime, but the courts rarely prosecute the paladins if they decide to teach a lawbreaker a lesson with their fists.

Not all the filth ends up lawfully deposited, though. Poorly paid, the night-soil men don't ask many questions if someone offers to buy a pail of waste for a few silver scields—it's not as if they are paid by the weight of dung they collect. Some of this produce goes to residents' vegetable patches and gardens. Other pails find their way into the hands of Vali's pestilential followers.

## 29. ULLR'S HOUNDS

Despite its name, this business is not directly associated with the cult of Ullr. The owner, Burcan ap-Vincent, is actually a retired warrior who worships Eostre Animalmother. He and his family raise and train foe hounds (see *Rassilon Expansion 2*). A trained adult dog costs 500 gs. Two different types are available—one focused on hunting trolls (trollhounds) and one on tracking bufomi (toadhounds). Burcan can also train hunting dogs at the usual rates.

Among his animals are several pedigree hounds. The following modifier can be combined and added to any dog purchased from Burcan. Existing dogs cannot be trained to have these added abilities.

*Keen Nose*: increase Tracking to d10 (+250 gs); *Purebred*: the hound is a Wild Card (+2,000 gs); *Relentless*: the hound has Spirit d8 (+400 gs); *Resistant*: the hound has +2 to Vigor rolls to resist disease (+150 gs); *Vicious*: the dog has the Frenzy Edge (+750 gs).

## 30. WEST GARRISON

Built to house 200 men (no horses), the garrison is currently only half occupied—the militias company returns home every night, leaving the Gnatmarsh Wardens with sole run of the building. Warm enough in winter, the garrison is nothing special—two large halls divided into smaller sleeping areas, and a central building containing the mess hall, kitchen, and armory.

While the regular archer company normally garrisoned here is outside the city walls, the Gnatmarsh Wardens have started renting out their rooms. The rates are cheaper than those of an inn and meals are thrown in for free (though only served at set times). Naturally, none of the revenue raised every gets handed over to the tax collectors—most of it ends up behind the bar at the Trolls' Den (see below).

## 31. THE TROLLS' DEN

Located close to the garrison, the Trolls' Den is a low-class inn of ill repute. The patrons are rough and the drinker is rougher still. Brewed in a shed around the back, Troll's Blood is a bitter, very strong beer (9% ABV). Whether it actually contains troll's blood is still something patrons debate nightly.

The inn is the favorite haunt of the Gnatmarsh Wardens. Their patronage has in turn attracted adventurers planning on exploring the stinking mire. Many a young would-be hero has had his drunken boasts of how many trolls he will slay awkwardly silenced by older Wardens revealing ugly scars or, in the case of retired veterans, missing limbs.

Warriors and hunters who come here to seek advice from the experienced Wardens are greeted warmly and with respect. Those who plan on visiting the marsh to play hero or earn a name are given the cold shoulder or ridiculed mercilessly.



# DRAKEPORT



## HISTORY

Drakeporters, as the locals are known, are extremely proud of their city's history, and they have every right to be. It has never flexed its military might, nor has it ever produced a mighty king, but only the most ignorant of souls could deny the role it has played in shaping the modern Hearthlands.

Its origins are quite humble, though. Ask any resident and they will puff out their chest and inform you that Drakeport has always been a port. That much is true, but its origin was as a fishing port, a tiny Saxa settlement at the mouth of the mighty Crystallflow. Its original Auld Saxa name was Fiskrgarðrviðrfliot (literally "the fish enclosure by the wide river.")

The Anari Empire's conquest of the Hearthlands took two key fronts. While its main armies swept ever eastward and northward, crushing all who stood in their path and driving those who fled further east, its powerful navy carried advanced forces along the coast. Situated across from Midmark, the tiny fishing village was an ideal position from which to keep the neighboring Saxa pinned down and launch attacks further up the river. It was at this point that Drakeport changed from a fishing village into a fortified garrison town. As far as most locals are concerned, this is when Drakeport made its first appearance in the annals of history, though under its Anari imperial name of Eastport.

As the northern lands fell and resistance crumbled, so the Crystallflow became a rapid means of both keeping the distant corners of the empire supplied and removing its natural resources. Although it remained a strategic military base against incursions by the Saxa huddled in Midmark, Eastport's focus switched to trade.

Early Eastport comprised only what is now the Wharf Ward. By the time of the Blizzard War, its wealth and status had grown, with new walls erected around what today are the Market and High Wards. The Empire's second largest port in terms of trade passing through, Eastport

was always a working city, and never developed grand architecture or ornamental buildings.

As with Imperial City, Eastport was a prime strategic target for the Hellfrost armies. So long as it stood, the Anari could bring supplies up to and through the Icebarrier Mountains with little effort. As with the great capital of the empire, a flight of Hellfrost dragons was unleashed, their intent to reduce it to rubble.

Unlike the capital, however, Eastport, a much smaller city, did not succumb to the devastating attacks. At this juncture history descends into mythology. It is widely held that the city defenses were prepared because the high priest of Sigel, actually an ancestor of Baron Draconov (a fact now forgotten by all) received a vision in the weeks before the attack. Fearing the city would be destroyed, he removed the golden statue of Sigel, which took the form of a sun dragon, and concealed it for safekeeping. It is at this point that it vanishes from history.

One story claims that the cult of Sigel, led by the baron's long-forgotten ancestor, drove back the attackers. A more fanciful version has a colossal sun dragon coming to the city's aid in answer to prayers from the cult of Sigel. Whatever the truth, the war, which left Eastport battered but undefeated, marked two key events. First, the Draconov family became the hereditary rulers of the city as the lands around descended into chaos. Second, Sigel became the city's patron, elevating the cult above that of Var. It was also at this point that the city took its present name.

While the Hearthlands descended into anarchy and darkness, Drakeport remained a beacon of light and hope. With few natural resources of its own, its citizens had little option but to continue trading as best they could. In a bid to establish some sort of social stability, Drakeport began minting a new currency. As its merchants headed north up the river and westward into the ravaged lands of the former empire, so gold and silver shields went with them.

A century later, the Saxa tribes united and stormed from their remaining ancestral holds to reclaim lands stolen by the Anari. Although they had no intentions of claiming the



city as their own, the Saxa besieged Drakeport in order to prevent its army aiding the crumbling Anari states. The ruling baron was forced to make a choice—side with the Anari, side with the Saxa, or sit things out and wait to see who won. Fearing the trade would suffer if he supported the wrong side or remained neutral for too long, he threw his lot in the with Saxa, though not militarily. Instead, he vowed that his forces would not march against the Saxa. In return, the siege was lifted.

With the foundation of the Marklands, Drakeport was granted the status of a free city, an independent state surrounded by new Saxa nations. Trade boomed and Drakeport expanded both its physical size and its influence. The latter would prove crucial in later years.

Although united under a high king, the Saxa of Royalmark, Midmark, and Nordmark continued to squabble over who commanded, and was thus responsible for patrolling, the Crystalflow. Sensing a golden opportunity, the then baron, having conferred with representatives of other riverside communities, made a proposal—grant the settlements along the river permission to found a confederation and they would safeguard trade up the river. Naturally, those nations forced to concede land to the fledgling state would prosper by tax breaks on riverborne trade.

History has little troubled Drakeport since. That is not to say that it does not have problems. The great wealth brought in by merchants carrying exotic goods from Al-Shirkuh has reduced to a trickle and its westward sea routes have been cut off by orc pirates. Drakeport is diminished in influence, but it is far from defeated. It has weathered many storms, and none of its citizens doubt it will emerge stronger when this one blows over.

## SOCIAL HIERARCHY

Whereas most citizens in Rassilon fall into relatively neat social groups—upper-, middle-, and lower-class—Drakeport's society is much more fluid and has far more groupings. Indeed, its social hierarchy can be rather bewildering to outsiders.

Sitting at the top of the social ladder is Baron Draconov and his extended family. Despite holding onto power for over five centuries, Drogo's noble blood is heavily watered down, having intermarried with peasants numerous times. Still, the baron is the ruler and he and his kin are accorded great respect.

On a rung down are Drakeport's movers-and-shakers, those with city-wide wealth, power, or influence. Highest among them are the senior courtiers and counselors, religious, and community dignitaries, individuals who have the ear of the baron or the masses.

Next are ordained clerics of Sigel, Var, and Neorthe (in that order) and arkhwisards of the Convocation. Following on are ordained clerics of the other gods and then maegisters of the Convocation.

While they perform different duties, master craftsmen and wealthy merchants are grouped together social-

## RULES OF THE REALM

These setting rules apply in Drakeport.

\* **Collapsing Streets & Falling Buildings:** The basic infrastructure of Drakeport is unsound. Each morning, the GM should secretly deal every character a card. On a deuce, that character is destined to fall into a hole or be struck by rubble at some point during the day. The victim is allowed an Agility roll to avoid a level of Fatigue from Bumps & Bruises.

\* **Trading:** Selling goods is much easier in Drakeport, as there is always a trader within earshot willing to speculate. Streetwise rolls to find a buyer receive a +2 bonus.

\* **Transport Hub:** Characters who make a successful Streetwise roll can locate a ship departing upriver in the next 1d3 days. On a raise, the ship is leaving in half that time. With a suitable bribe (200 gs per point of the ship's Toughness), the ship can be made ready to sail within the hour.

Hiring a ship costs 50 gs per point of Toughness per week or part thereof if the captain is allowed to trade on the voyage, or 200 gs per point of Toughness per week or part thereof if not. Allowing the captain to conduct trade is cheaper, but it trebles the journey time unless the characters are heading to the next settlement anyway.

Caravans heading west toward the Vale take much longer to assemble. A successful Streetwise roll locates one ready to depart in 2d6 days, or 1d6 days on a raise.

ly—one manufactures and one sells, but neither profits much without the other. Below them are those who produce little but are still essential workers—bureaucrats, journeyman craftsmen, lesser merchants, shop owners, and novitiate clerics.

Finally, there are the unskilled workers, the laborers, stevedores, tavern workers, and rat catchers. While lowly, they are still an essential part of the city.

Birthright can be a limit to social advancement, but hard work and a desire to better oneself can drag one up the ladder. For instance, no one is born a master craftsman. One typically begins at the bottom of the ladder, advancing through the ranks as an apprentice and journeymen before becoming a master of the craft. For quick social advancement, one might consider becoming a cleric of a deity associated with a craft. Once ordained, one automatically outranks a mundane master craftsman socially.

Respect and influence among the masses are very different things. For instance, a cleric of Brúni, god of dung, is a servant of a deity, albeit a minor one. He can expect to be greeted politely because of his status, but few citizens would consider him to wield much temporal power or influence, and even fewer would welcome him as a table guest in their homes purely because of the smelly material he handles.



## GOVERNMENT

Baron Drogo Draconov may rule over Drakeport, but one man alone cannot control so great a city, at least not on a daily basis. Since the foundation of the Crystalflow Confederacy, much power has lain with the Dragon Council, a body made up of appointed, hereditary, and elected officials from all walks of life. Elections for applicable positions are held every four years and are open to all adult citizens of Drakeport.

The Dragon Council comprises four factions. The names, gender, race, and age of the incumbents is given below for the most important seats. Each councilor is permitted to use the title Lord Councilor in addition to any other titles he possesses. For some, their full title can become something of a mouthful. Any titles below are those of other organizations, such as a cult.

### LORDS MARTIAL (3 SEATS)

The Lords Martial comprise of two appointed and one hereditary seat. The appointees are the city's two military commanders, those being the Dragon Marshal and Dragon Sea Marshal. Although appointed by the baron, though the council must give its approval.

The third seat is hereditary, in that it automatically goes to the high priest of Tiw. Depending on whether the cleric is a priest or paladin, the city has drifted between a strong defense and a strong offense.

**Dragon Marshal:** Commander of the city's professional army and militia. The incumbent is a member of the Knights Hrafn on a long-term contract; *Incumbent:* Knight-Captain Oriabel ap-Elad (female, Anari, 44)

**Dragon Sea Marshal:** Commander of the city's naval forces; *Incumbent:* Egwald Godricsunu (male, Saxa, 56)

**Cult of Tiw:** High priest of the cult of Tiw; *Incumbent:* Shield Doolin Strong-Shield (male, Anari, 40)

### LORDS SPIRITUAL (6 SEATS)

The religious branch of the council comprises three hereditary and three elected positions. Hereditary seats go to the high priests of Sigel, Var, and Neorthe. The remaining seats are elected representatives of the other cults, as voted for by the people. Minor cults are treated as separate entities, despite having affiliations with one or more of the major cults. Thus, the cult of Sigel could, given election of clerics from the right minor cults, have multiple voices on the council.

Although each branch of the council has its own specific focus, the presence of clerics means there is ample room for crossover and bloc voting. For instance, the high priest of Var typically votes with the guilds, as do any clerics of Ertha and Kenaz. Nothing prevents a second cleric of Tiw sitting on the council as a Lord Spiritual, which gives the Lords Martial more voting power.

**Cult of Sigel:** High priest of the cult of Sigel and *de*

*facto* chairman of the council; *Incumbent:* Sun Knight Lanval Dragonheart (male, Anari, 36)

**Cult of Var:** High priest of the cult of Sigel. Although he sits with the Lords Spiritual, his primary interest in the city's finances; *Incumbent:* Profiteer Brontome Six-Rings (male, Anari, 67)

**Cult of Neorthe:** High priest of the cult of Neorthe, representing the spiritual needs of both the merchant and military fleets and the voice of the common fishermen (who have no guild); *Incumbent:* Navigator Edith Wihlafsdohtor (female, Anari-Saxa, 37)

**Cult of Haptabeidr:** Associated with both Hoenir and Hothar, the cult of Haptabeidr (see *Matters of Faith*) is committed to providing impartial advice. Since arriving in the city 26 years ago, the cult's sole cleric has been a popular choice with voters for his straight-talking and clear head; *Incumbent:* High Civil Counselor Bungo (male, engro, 73)

**Cult of Hothar:** Never granted a permanent seat, the cult of Hothar has nevertheless managed to be repeatedly elected; *Incumbent:* Sword of Truth Berel ap-Huges (male, Anari, 54)

**Cult of Thunor:** Popular with travelers, and with Freeo's clerics ever coming and going, the cult of Thunor has recently earned a position on the council; *Incumbent:* Thunderdaughter Cyneswith ap-Danain (female, Saxa-Anari, 50)

### LORD LOGISTICAL (6 SEATS)

Originally called the Lord Artisanal, the name was changed when the stevedores, a guild with considerable weight in terms of number of members, decided to get involved with politics.

Initially elected, five seats have long become hereditary, filled by the heads of Drakeport's most powerful guilds. The sixth seat is elected, the masters of the lesser guilds choosing one of their number to represent their collective interests on the council.

Over time, various guilds have merged together to increase the size of their membership and thus their political influence. As a result, the city has around a third of the guilds it had even a century ago.

**Commonware Guild:** Craftsmen providing the basic wares a city needs to survive, such as pottery and clothing, had little political influence when they were separate guilds. Combining forces into an organization that accepts any craftsman producing basic wares for everyday use, except those made of metal, the guild has since become a major player; *Incumbent:* Guildmaster Nicolette the Weaver (female, Anari, 60)

**Merchants' Guild:** Keen to ensure they have a voice on matters of trade and taxation, the city's many merchant families formed a loose guild; *Incumbent:* Guildmaster Mantie ap-Pepin (female, Anari, 53)

**Metalworkers' Guild:** Once a dozen or more separate guilds, every craftsman who handles metal is now a member of a single, powerful guild. So long as they are a paid-up member, no law prevents a cleric represent-



ing a guild. With that in mind the Metalworkers have long relied on clerics of Ertha to lead them; *Incumbent*: Guildmaster Forge Daughter Frithuwynn of the Hammer (female, Saxa, 39)

**Rivermen Guild:** Formed by the merger of the Sailors, Shipwrights, and Navigators' Guilds, the Rivermen Guild has a vested interest in all aspects of nautical trade. Taking a leaf from the Metalworkers' Guild, the Rivermen have frequently elected clerics of Vegtam, the minor god of sailors (see *Matters of Faith*), to serve as guildmaster. The guild has strong affiliations with the cult of Neorthe and remains supportive of that of Var most of the time.; *Incumbent*: Guildmaster Master Mariner Rabel ap-Foulque (male, Anari, 48)

**Stevedores' Guild:** Responsible for loading and unloading ships and wagons, and moving cargoes between warehouses, the stevedores are the strong backbone on which Drakeport's merchants rely; *Incumbent*: Guildmaster Hardouin Roughhands (male, Anari, 39)

**Lamplighters' Guild:** An elected guild, the Lamplighters are the latest in a long line of differing minor guilds to sit on the council. Their victory, so the records show, came from the fiery rhetoric of its guildmaster. That she is the cousin of the high priest of Sigel is merely a coincidence; *Incumbent*: Guildmaster Erembourg ap-Turpin (female, Anaei, 29)

## LORDS TEMPORAL (12 SEATS)

The largest faction is comprised of citizens elected by their peers. Each of the four city wards elects three persons, thus ensuring there are voices from the rich down to the poor. The names of the Lords Temporal are not detailed, leaving the GM to decide.

## LAW AND ORDER

Drakeport's military protects the people, but it does not police them. That honor lies with the Wardens. On paper, the Wardens answer to the cult of Sigel. It has long been agreed in principle, however, that should a cleric of Hothar sit among the Lords Spiritual then he or she acts as their commander. This gives the cult considerable influence over both the police and the courts.

The Wardens have 500 members divided among the four wards. Half serve during the day (0600-1800) and half at night (1800-0600). Low Ward has the great number, with 100 wardens on duty at any one time. Market Ward has 60 members during each shift, Wharf Ward has 50 wardens, and High Ward just 40 wardens.

During the day, patrols pound the streets in squads of five. The squad size is doubled at night in the Low and Wharf Wards due to the unsavory nature of the inhabitants. Each squad is led by a Warden-Sergeant and each ward has a Warden-Captain serving on every shift.

In order to prevent corruption (something it has failed to stamp out entirely), the cult of Sigel sends clerics to serve with the Watch. The cult is large, but it cannot afford to devote its entire clergy to policing duties. As a

result, around one squad in three has a cleric assigned at any one time. Clerics are assigned randomly to keep the wardens on their toes.

Corruption is endemic but low key. Wardens have long turned a blind eye to certain activities or altered their patrol route in return for a few coins. Few would accept a bribe if it entailed aiding a threat to the city or the baron, though.

A constant priority with the Watch is catching a serial killer. Every year since Baron Draconov ascended the throne, a number of bizarre deaths have occurred without fail on his birthday. The victims, who appear to have been picked out at random, are always found with their eyes and mouths sewn shut and their ears filled with wax. A sun dragon head is branded into their chests. It has been 35 years since the killer first struck, and so the authorities have absolutely no clues to his or her identity. Watch patrols are increased in the days leading up to the annual cull and citizens are more wary of strangers, but still the killer strikes with impunity.

The main problems are with smugglers and thieves—standard issues for a trading city. While the wardens do their best to stay on top, they are understaffed and too willing to take a bribe. Instead, the city pays Var's Thieftakers, more specifically clerics of the associated cult of Forseti, god of catching thieves (see *Matters of Faith*), to investigate and disrupt organized crime.

Although they serve on the same side, the paladins and wardens have a deep-rooted animosity. For their part, the wardens see the need to hire clerics as a stain on their honor. Conversely, the Thieftakers see the wardens as incompetent and corrupt buffoons.

## THE COURTS

Dominated by the cult of Hothar, the courts nonetheless remain a civil institution ultimately answerable to the baron. As with the Wardens, daily power rests with the cult of Sigel unless a cleric of Hothar sits on the council. What cult the incumbent follows, he also serves as chief magistrate, with responsibility for overseeing all trials of crimes that carry the death penalty.

Typically, a case is heard by three judges—a chief judge and two assistant judges. The final decision always lies with the chief judge—his assistants are merely there to advise him on points of law or research precedents.

Appeals are possible, but only for capital crimes. Anyone found guilty of such heinous activity is held in the city dungeons until the case is presented before the baron. Depending on the severity of the case, public interest, and the perpetrator's wealth and status, this can be anywhere from a few days to several months. The baron never meets the criminal in person—rather, he reads the court records and makes a final judgment. There are only two verdicts from an appeal—sentence to be carried out immediately or suspect to be exonerated and released forthwith.

The death penalty varies with the crime. Most involve hanging, but certain crimes carry specific methods.



Arson, for instance, involves death by burning. Destroying a merchant ship, either through piracy or sabotage, requires death by drowning. Hanging, drawing, and quartering is reserved for traitors and evil cultists.

Slavery, while not legal, is a growing business in Drakeport. For their part, the courts can employ civic slavery as punishment. Nine times out of ten the sentence involves the criminal being put to work helping to shore up the sagging buildings and collapsing streets. It is demanding physical work and extremely dangerous.

## THIEVES' GUILD

The thieves' guild—the Golden Rats—protects its monopoly by covertly aiding Var's Thieftakers in investigating crimes committed by non-members. Outsiders are given the choice of paying a finder's fee of 50% of the loot and then leaving town before the next dawn or dusk, whichever comes first, or being handed over to the clerics of Var after a thorough beating. Outsiders who go to the trouble of locating the guild and asking permission to ply their trade may, after a brief but thorough investigation, be granted the right to purchase a temporary membership. This costs 50% of the items stolen. The guild reacts very badly to being cheated out of its share.

## EDUCATION

Drakeport has good rates of literacy and basic education. Every child aged between five and 12 is given a rudimentary education free of charge through a school jointly run by the cult of Hoenir and the state. After leaving school, children are expected to either join a cult as a novice, become an apprentice to a master craftsman, or go to work for one of the labor guilds. Those with an aptitude for letters and numbers might be lucky enough to be apprenticed to a merchant or the city's bureaucracy. Only the rich can afford advanced education.

Drakeport has two dominant languages—Anari and Saxa. The former is more widely spoken and is considered the official language for all temple services and council meetings. Due to the number of ships arriving, most every citizen can converse in Trader, if only a few basic phrases. Greater fluency in Trader is more commonplace among merchants, dockworkers, and mariners than city bureaucrats or courtiers.

## RELIGION

While Var is the most popular deity in much of the Confederacy, Drakeport's patron is Sigel. Few citizens actually honor the sun god as patron, but everyone prays to him at some point. Never having suffered from the Demongate Wars or the rise of the Liche-Priest, Drakeporters honor him in memory of his servants' defense

of their city during the Blizzard War. The modern cult, beside being on the Dragon Council and aiding the wardens in their work, actually does little to serve the city.

Var, as befits as a trading port, has a sizeable number of followers. He has far more regular followers than Sigel and his cult wields greater influence over ordinary citizens. Although cult members are primarily out to serve themselves, the taxes they pay ensure the city benefits from their business acumen.

Locally, Neorthe is seen as Var's boatman, ferrying celestial cargoes to and from wherever the gods need them transported. Fishing remains a key industry, and Neorthe also serves the spiritual needs of the fishermen, their families, and associated trades.

The last deity of real renown is Hothar. The citizens of Drakeport aren't any more honest or law-abiding than those in other cities, but they have long prided themselves on remaining civilized when society was collapsing around them in the aftermath of the Blizzard War. Order and conformance not only saw Drakeport survive, but has seen it prosper. This isn't to say Drakeporters are blindly obedient to authority figures, and they are certainly no lovers of oppressive rulers, only that they appreciate an orderly and just society.

Despite heavy penalties for thievery, Drakeport has two temples to Nauthiz. One is located in the basement of the Wheel of Fortune, a gambling den frequented by the city's rich and powerful. While the clerics must perform certain larcenous acts to appease their god, they are not professional thieves. The cult of Vali the Corrupter has recently expanded its business into gambling. This, in turn, has led to a violent turf war. The second temple is located deep in the dank tunnels and is run by the city's sole thieves' guild.

Every deity has followers in Drakeport to a greater or lesser degree, and many minor cults boast a resident cleric or two. Ertha watches over the metalworkers, householders pray to Kenaz for protection, healers and herbalists honor Eira, and the masons charged with preventing the city from collapsing give praise to Rigr as god of fortifications.

Of the evil cults, only Dargar and Thrym lack organized cults. Vali's insidious network of corruptors and polluters thrives in the crowded city and has infiltrated all levels of society. At least one member of the Dragon Council is a secret follower of Vali, having been corrupted into a life of vice and depravity. Hela's dark cult, while less organized and far smaller, has plenty of corpses to harvest.

Whether Drakeporters are more spiritual or simply more aware of the vast pantheon of gods through their trade links is hard to say. It is certainly true that the average citizen is very accepting of the myriad minor gods that govern part of their daily life. Every temple in the city has shrines to at least one affiliated lesser god and, unusually, most of these have at least one cleric serving the needs of the cult. While their cults have few permanent adherents, and are often very poor, most locals offer a quick prayer when their needs match the aspects of a minor deity.



## FESTIVALS

Drakeporters enjoy many religious holidays. Every high holy day of Sigel, Var, and Neorthe is a public holiday, a time when much of the city grinds to a halt in favor of feasting and prayer. Because of this crowded calendar, Sangdaeg and Raestdaeg are not acknowledged as official holidays unless an appropriate high holy day falls during them.

Private citizens, those who work for themselves, can obviously work whatever hours they like. Thus, they can attend whatever religious ceremonies they want. Drakeporters who work for the city or a business do not have this luxury. In order to prevent them taking dozens of holidays every year, every employee must declare to his master which deity they follow.

Confederacy Day is held on the second Endedaeg of Werremonan. Honoring the day when the Crystalflow Confederacy was signed into existence by the neighboring Marklands, it is actually a common festival held by communities the length of the river. Drakeport, which played the major role in the Confederacy's formation, hosts a street carnival and grand market. It is not a good time for outsiders to besmirch the city's name—fueled by drink and patriotism in equal measure, the locals are prone to react with their fists.

## MILITARY

The largest city in Rassilon by population, Drakeport maintains both a standing army and navy to ensure its continued safety.

Forming the city's army are 2,000 soldiers. Of these, only 500, known as the City Guard, are garrisoned in the city. They are split into five companies—three of archers and two of medium infantry. The other three-quarters occupy a series of forts watching over the coast in readiness for an orc invasion and along the border with Midmark. The Outer Guard, as these soldiers are known, are split into six infantry companies, three archer companies, and six cavalry companies of 100 men each.

Leading each company is a captain. Five companies form a regiment, led by a captain-in-chief. Overall command of the army falls to the Dragon Marshal, though he remains subservient to Baron Draconov.

The baron has a personal bodyguard of 50 men known as the Sun Dragon Company. Answerable directly to the baron, the company is made up of elderly veterans. Although still capable of fighting, their role is purely ceremonial, a means of ensuring soldiers who have served with distinction continue to receive a wage in their old age. Dressed in red tabards emblazoned with a yellow sun dragon, they escort the baron whenever he goes out in public. Actual security of the baron's residence falls to members of the City Guard.

Drakeport's navy consists of six snekkes (660 men total) and two drakkars (140 men total). While the large

warships patrol the Crystal Sound as a deterrent against marauding orc pirates and escort merchantmen safely to harbor, the smaller, more agile vessels patrol up and down the river. Under the terms of the Confederacy's military pact, there are no restrictions in how far up the river they patrol. In practice, they rarely go north of Scathmoor, leaving security of the upper stretch to Bridgewater's navy.

Each vessel is treated as a separate company led by its captain. Command of the city's navy lies with the Dragon Sea Marshal. As with his land-based counterpart, he remains answerable to Baron Draconov.

## MILITIA

The city's army, while large, lacks the strength to repel a major invasion. To that end, Drakeport has a militia it can summon in emergencies. Open to any adult in good health, the militia currently stands at a further 2,000 citizens broken down into 20 companies.

Each company has a drill sergeant. His duty is simply to ensure the militia attends regular training and knows its martial drill formations. Should war break out, a veteran sergeant from the regular army is appointed to command each company. He receives a temporary promotion to militia captain during his posting.

Berthed in the harbor are a further two snekkes and one drakkar. These belong to the navy and are replacement vessels for when active warships need maintenance or repairs. Every able-bodied fisherman resident in the city is required to serve as crew (but not warriors) should the extra warships be required to sail.

## PRIVATE FORCES

Armed private citizens, while they could potentially pose a threat to the city in great numbers, are also an additional revenue stream for the city coffers.

Most private guards work for merchants, protecting their warehouses from thieves and jealous rivals. City law forbids the use of ranged weapons in public, but there are no limits on how many melee weapons a privately employed guard may employ, nor their type. So long as he has a license, anything goes. Of course, wielding them inappropriately might still warrant criminal prosecution—being a licensed guard does not permit one to flout the law of the land.

Paladins do not require a license to wield weapons, nor are ranged weapons banned for appropriate cults (most notably those of Tiw and Ullr).

## TRADE & TRIBUTE

Trade has always been Drakeport's primary revenue stream, but it has never relied on this alone. While it exports no one locally produced commodity in bulk, it exports smaller quantities of lots of things. Most of these



goods head north up the Crystalflow, sold to the other communities or destined to set out on one of the overland trade roads that criss-cross the continent.

Fish is a major staple in the local diet, though there is always enough left to export. Other foods are in shorter supply—the city sits on a spur of dry land surrounded by the boggy Drakeport Delta, waterlogged land ill-suited for anything but growing reeds. To that end, Drakeport is forced to import great quantities of food every day to keep its population sated. Famine, while having been avoided for many years, is always on people's mind come harvest time. Despite their wealth, citizens tend to eat frugally for much of the year, enjoying large meals only during times of celebration.

Drakeport's days as a major port are far from over, but it fair to say they are diminished. With orc and lizardmen galleys prowling the seas, the annual flotilla of merchant ships from Al-Shirkuh has become a thing of the past—there are safer ports with just as much money to be found elsewhere. So long as Orcmark remains in existence, ocean-going trade is set to decrease even further.

## TAXES

Baron Draconov demands nothing in taxes directly from the citizens. Instead, the city pays him 2% of its total revenue for the year. Citizens do pay tax, of course, but it goes directly to the city.

**Berth Fees:** Ships pay 5 gs per of base Toughness per week or part thereof they remained berthed at a dock. Ship captains looking to dock, unload quickly, and anchor in the river channel until it is time to load find their plan is no escape from the fees—docking for as little as a minute incurs the full charge.

**Customs Duty:** To help promote trade, exports of locally manufactured goods are taxed at just 0.5%. Imports for local use are charged at 2%, except food, which carries a 0.5% levy. Goods imported into the city from outlying communities for export elsewhere are charged at 4%.

Pipeleaf, a major export from the Vale to Drakeport, is taxed at 5% on import and 25% on export. With exports of Ostmark pipeleaf growing steadily, the Vale has demanded the duty rates be cut to help promote the sale of its crop. The Dragon Council has yet to approve this. As a result, smuggling pipeleaf out of Drakeport has become a growth industry.

Merchants registered with the city as coming from Midmark, Nordmark, and Royalmark pay half these duties. To prevent fraud, lengthy forms must be completed and checks carried out before a license is issued.

**Foundation Tax:** The poor state of Drakeport's roads and the undermining of its buildings requires considerable sums of money to fix. Every citizen must pay 5% of their income specifically for this purpose.

**Income Tax:** Every citizen, business, and temple must pay 20% of their income to the city coffers. This helps maintain the military and wardens, pays the wages of bureaucrats, allows the city to subsidize imports of grain for internal use, and such like. The cults do not pay tax

on monies received as tithes, but they do for other services they offer.

**Tithes:** Citizens are required to pay 10% of their income to the cults. Regardless of the citizens' religious views, one-quarter of their tithe goes straight to the cult of Sigel. The remaining three-quarters goes to the patron cult of the taxpayer.

**Weapon License:** City law forbids any weapon larger than a dagger being carried openly without a license. Ordinary citizens, local or visitors, cannot apply for a license unless they are in the direct employ of a registered business or person in Drakeport. A license costs 130 gs per annum.

The thieves' guild does a brisk trade in forged licensed applications, using forged seals to make it look like the applicant has a job with a merchant house. The guild charges 200 gs for this service. In all honesty, "tipping" the right bureaucrat half this will often get one an approved license, no questions asked. On-duty soldiers and wardens, and paladins of any benevolent faith, are exempt from requiring a license, as are council members and their bodyguards.

## MARKETS

From a handful of stalls selling goods of dubious ownership down a side street to the bustling grand market, Drakeport is a city of markets. Those selling common household goods, including food, are open every day. Others open only on Marketdaeg.

Most markets open from dawn until dusk. Business is brisk, especially in poorer areas—buyers don't have time to linger over the quality of goods when there is bread money to earn. Haggling and bartering are both accepted, but not on stalls selling high quality goods—the elite aren't expected to demean themselves by arguing over prices and the stallholders certainly don't want to act like common hawkers or tarnish their reputation by lowering prices just to attract commoners.

The wardens police the markets as best they can, but they cannot be everywhere and their willingness to accept bribes is common knowledge. This plays directly into the hands of the cult of Var.

Most lower-class stallholders cannot afford to hire a Thief-taker under any circumstances, yet alone one just to watch their low value wares. Unless their goods are especially valuable, those in middle- and upper-class areas club together to hire a paladin to keep an eye on multiple stalls. In return, they receive a pennant to hang from the stall canopy. This denotes the stall is protected by the cult, something guaranteed to deter most opportunistic thieves.

## ARCHITECTURE

Built to be practical rather than ornamental, Drakeport's houses are clustered together in small blocks divided by small streets and narrow alleys. The architecture is typically Anari, despite the large Saxa population. Most buildings are wooden, a wattle-and-daub construction



with shingle roof tiles. Houses are typically two-story affairs, though many families occupy just a single floor. The use of stone is restricted to temples, warehouse owners who can afford the added cost, and important civic buildings.

For all its wealth, Drakeport looks to be on the verge of collapse. While first-time visitors often make jokes to this effect, they are closer to the truth than they realize. The legend of the golden dragon statue hidden somewhere beneath the city streets has attracted treasure hunters for centuries. Eager to claim the prize, they have excavated a warren of tunnels under the city. Such are the number of passageways, coupled with much of the city being built on semi-soft ground, that the city's foundations are sagging. Excavation is now banned on penalty of 20 years hard labor helping rebuild the city.

The city walls sag dangerously in places and have been shored up with makeshift buttresses, some of which block entire streets. Soldiers standing atop towers lean at jaunty angles to remain upright. Buildings lean almost to the point of collapse, their foundations weakened, and are supported by beams and scaffolding. Even the streets are not safe—several large holes have been covered with planks to stop wagons falling in, such is their size.

The citizens generally stick to areas of the city they know, for every year dozens are killed when holes open up suddenly beneath their feet, plunging them into the dark maze below.

## THE SUN

As elsewhere, the inhabitants of Drakeport base their working day on the rising and setting of Sigel's Hearth. Below are the local sunrise and sunset times and the hours of daylight for the first day of each month.

| Month         | Sunrise | Sunset | Daylight |
|---------------|---------|--------|----------|
| Snaermanon    | 0716    | 1651   | 9h 35m   |
| Frostmonon    | 0707    | 1719   | 10h 12m  |
| Eostremonon   | 0637    | 1750   | 11h 13m  |
| Plohmonon     | 0557    | 1816   | 12h 19m  |
| Sowanmonon    | 0516    | 1842   | 13h 26m  |
| Werremonon    | 0446    | 1908   | 14h 22m  |
| Scerranmonon  | 0437    | 1925   | 14h 48m  |
| Hegmonon      | 0449    | 1923   | 14h 34m  |
| Haerfestmonon | 0512    | 1858   | 13h 46m  |
| Falmonon      | 0536    | 1818   | 12h 42m  |
| Huntianmonon  | 0601    | 1735   | 11h 34m  |
| Fogmonon      | 0629    | 1658   | 10h 29m  |
| Wulfmonon     | 0658    | 1640   | 9h 42m   |

## MAJOR LOCALES

Drakeport is made up of four wards, each separated from its neighbors by sagging stone walls. The smallest district is High Ward, home to the rich and famous. Low

Ward, the largest, houses the majority of the population and much of the industry. Market Ward is home to many merchants and is the financial heart of the city. The final district, Wharf Ward, lies along the riverbank.

## OUTSIDE THE CITY

Drakeport sits on waterlogged ground, a contributing factor to its current poor state of repair. Although relatively safe to traverse on foot, save after heavy rains, the ground is ill-suited for agriculture. The trade road that winds its way to Rushton and then the Vale is made up of a raised causeway lined with stone to prevent subsidence.

## CITY GATES & WALLS

As Drakeport grew wealthy and attracted more people, so it became necessary to construct more walls. Surrounding the city on the landward side is the Outer Wall. In olden times it boasted three gates, but two have been bricked over to help focus caravans to the warehouses and protect the city from potential attack. The remaining gate is known as the Vale Gate.

Studded along the walls surrounding the city and breaking up its wards are numerous tall towers. Each is broken into three levels with a ballista on the flat roof. Between each pair of neighboring towers is a large platform on which stands a small catapult. Responsibility for maintaining and firing these are a small number of artilleryists, plus an equal number of laborers who serve as loaders. In a recent exercise, the judders of the catapults caused a section of wall to collapse, killing a number of citizens. As a result, Baron Draconov has ordered a halt to further live fire exercises.

Due to undermining and the boggy ground, the city wall is in a shocking state of repair. It is very unlikely it would withstand the battering of enemy siege weapons without further strengthening. Only around half the towers are manned due to the risk of collapse.

## LOCK GATES

In order to control traffic along the Crystalflow and ensure taxes were paid, Baron Draconov's ancestors installed a series of locks in the northern section of the river, just upstream from the city proper.

Positioned at equal distances across the width of the river are ten artificial islands constructed of log piles with stone infill and paved surfaces. Between each island are two sets of heavy chains, one at each end of the channel. Erected in the center of each island is a single stone building, which houses an office and accommodation for ten guards. Mounted on the flat roof is a coldfire thrower (the icewood is kept inside the customs house).

When a merchant sails downriver or wishes to head upstream without docking in Drakeport, a pilot vessel meets it and guides the captain into the channel between a pair of islands. As the ship approaches the chains at the opposite end of the island are raised. When the ship







## Drakeport

1. dragon council chambers
2. temple of sigel
3. baron draconov's library
4. wheel of fortune
5. the knight & orr
6. the mages tower
7. the golden drake
8. fromondin's maps
9. the grand market
10. temple of var
11. the high market
12. dagger alley
13. sand town
  - a. house of khamsin
  - b. house of black water
14. pig in a bun bakery
15. stevedores' guild
16. warehouses
17. garrison
18. travellers' market
19. low market
20. temple of hothar
21. guild fortress
22. fish market
23. temple of neorthe
24. rat catchers' guild
25. the shipwreck
26. shipwright

is fully in the now blocked channel, the second pair of chains are raised, trapping the ship. Here the vessel is searched, its cargo checked, and taxes collected.

In the event of a major invasion, something yet to occur but more likely since the orcs conquered southern Vestmark, all the chains are raised and the mechanisms sabotaged, thus stalling the advance up the Crystalflow. Each community along the river pays a token fee toward the upkeep of the locks, since they form part of the entire Confederacy's collective defenses.

### HIGH WARD

Home to the rich and influential citizens, the High Ward occupies the central part of the city. There are services catering to wealthy patrons, but no industry.

#### 1. COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The Dragon Council meets in a finely appointed building in the center of this walled area. Dotted around the perimeter of the courtyard are various civic buildings, such as the records office (where citizens record births, deaths, and marriages), the tax office (which calculates and records tax payments), and the merchants' registry (where foreign merchants register their country of origin).

All citizens have free access to the buildings, though the main council chamber is locked and guarded when the Dragon Council is in session.

#### 2. TEMPLE OF SIGEL

Although not the largest temple in the city, the temple of Sigel is certainly the grandest. Circular in shape to represent the sun disc and constructed from yellow sandstone for added emphasis, it is topped by a golden dome. Thanks to the cult receiving regular tithes and having little to spend it on, much of the gold is melted down and turned into thin roof tiles.

The gold-plated interior is devoted entirely to worship—the clerics, small library, and other mundane functions are housed in the surrounding buildings that encircle three sides of the temple. Dominating the center is a statue of Sigel, again lavishly coated in a veneer of gold. While his right hand follows tradition and holds a sword, his left hand holds a lantern. This serves as a shrine to Heimdallr, minor deity of light (see *Matters of Faith*) and patron of the Lamplighters' Guild.



## 3. BARON DRACONOV'S LIBRARY

Baron Draconov may reside in Wharf Ward, but his impressive private library is located in High Ward. Built up over the centuries by his family, it focuses mainly on mercantile activities, though it is renowned for its coverage of a wide variety of other topics. Among the volumes are dozens concerning the cult of Sigel. With the people having forgotten that the baron's distant ancestors with the former high priests of the cult, no one remembers why such books should be placed in the library.

**Admission:** No admission to the public. Draconov is inclined to allow scholars, clerics of the good gods, and nobles access to his collection, but only after he has personally vetted them.

**Specialties:** Al-Shirkuh, Drakeport, mercantile activities, Sigel.

**Investigation Rolls:** +1 general, +2 for specialties.

## 4. WHEEL OF FORTUNE

Catering to citizens with more money than sense, the Wheel of Fortune is a gambling house. Closed during the day except by special invitation, the establishment rapidly grows busy in the hours after dusk. On rare occasions Baron Draconov attends in person to fritter away some of his vast fortune.

The Wheel is operated by the cult of Nauthiz, though it only honors his aspect of gambling. The owners pay the thieves' guild protection but are otherwise unaffiliated to them. Concealed in the basement is a small temple to Lord Luck. Eager to ensure that luck continues to go their way, the owners have recently added a shrine to Nauthiz's daughter, Galfuleysi, Lady of Misfortune (see *Matters of Faith*).

## MARKET WARD

North of the High Market, the Market Ward is home to wealthy citizens yet to achieve the highest rung of society. Many merchants and ship captains live here, as do clerics and mages. South of the market are workshops dedicated to higher crafts, such as jewelry making, as well as the businesses of master tailors, potters, and the like.

## 5. THE KNIGHT & ORM

Located by the northern wall, the Knight & Orm tavern is patronized by merchants, elementalists, and adventurers. The crowd is boisterous, but rarely rowdy—causing a disturbance in a tavern frequented by powerful mages is rarely a good idea.

As well as serving good food and drink, there is a brisk trade in alchemical devices. The legality of these objects is highly questionable, but bribes to the wardens ensure they don't ask any questions. Adventurers seeking alchemical devices not commonly for sale, such as those containing *blast* and *bolt*, are discretely guided toward the tavern. So long as their gold is good, no questions are asked as to the intended use of the device. The Convocation knows nothing

of this trade, which is made possible only by a small number of elementalists misusing its resources in the city.

## 6. THE MAGES' TOWER

The first members of the Convocation appeared in Drakeport during its days as a military outpost, when they served with the imperial army. Following the collapse of the empire, the mages were granted permission to purchase the tower they called home, but only on the condition they swore to help defend the city in times of need.

The tower is six stories high. The ground floor is a temple of Maera open to mages of any type. This is as far as non-members of the Convocation may go without permission from one of the arkhwisards. Immediately above it are offices for administration and record keeping. The middle two floors are laboratories for the manufacture of alchemical devices, especially potions and scrolls. Player characters who construct a potion or scroll here have +1 to their Knowledge (Alchemy) roll. The top two floors are the private quarters of the four senior arkhwisards who call Drakeport home.

Although still referred to as the Mages' Tower, the Convocation actually owns the rows of buildings immediately north and south of the structure. Those to the north contain the living quarters of the resident mages, while those to the south are classrooms and libraries.

The main library is primarily concerned with matters of direct use to the Convocation, though there is also a very small reference library.

**Admission:** Elementalists, clerics of Maera

**Specialties:** Arcane matters, the Convocation, elementalism.

**Investigation Rolls:** -2 general, +1 for specialties.

## 7. THE GOLDEN DRAKE

The closest inn to the Mages' Tower, and certainly one of the finest in the city, the Golden Drake is commonly avoided by members of the Convocation. Partly this is because of the high prices and partly because the inn attracts treasure hunters interested in learning more about the fabled golden dragon statue.

The proprietor, Sylas Argyll, sells wooden replicas of the golden dragon. Painted bright yellow and fully articulated, they make wonderful toys for children—rich children, since each sells for 50 gs. Sylas knows every rumor concerning the golden dragon, including a few visitors will not hear anywhere else. The more drinks patrons purchase, the more rumors he shares with them.

## 8. FROMONDIN'S MAPS

Fromondin, an Anari male and proprietor of this store, claims to be a cleric of Freo, though if this is true he has committed a mortal sin by residing in the same city for over twenty years. He stocks a huge collection of maps dating back centuries. In many cases, the maps show settlements wiped off the face of the planet during the



Blizzard War. Most of his stock is of little great value, save to scholars and adventurers looking for lost treasure, but occasionally a rare find surfaces from the disorderly piles.

## 9. GRAND MARKET

The Grand Market is occupied by stalls only on high holy days of the city's four most important deities. On other days, the wide plaza is largely empty. Given its location close to High Ward and in the center of Market Ward, rents for stalls for very high. The goods are of far higher quality than those found elsewhere, but whether they deserve the 30% price increase over similar wares of lower quality is down to how much one has to spend and whether material trappings matter.

## 10. TEMPLE OF VAR

The largest temple in Drakeport is a sprawling complex dedicated to Var. The biggest building in the compound is the temple proper. As well as the hall of worship, there are numerous small rooms where merchants can conduct business deals in private. It also houses the treasury, a fortified room protected by numerous *glyphs*, as well as Thieftakers. Rumors abound concerning the fabulous wealth contained within, but no thief has yet managed to pierce its security. Side rooms are dedicated to two of Var's affiliated minor gods. They serve for both the spiritual and business side of the faithfuls.

The cult of Auðun, god of wealth (see *Matters of Faith*) hires its services as financial consultants, advising merchants on which cargoes to speculate, loaning money, and acting as accountants to the merchant houses. The cult boasts two clerics and six laity working full-time. Although the cult is devoted to making money, it is notoriously honest in its dealings. Its fees are high, but it is extremely popular with Drakeport's merchants and wealthy citizens (the latter hoping to secure more riches through wise investments).

The cult of Forseti, god of catching thieves (see *Matters of Faith*), is the larger of the affiliated cults. Its priests and paladins (three of the former and 14 of the latter) are constantly employed safeguarding warehouses and private property, and investigating crimes committed against individuals and the state. With little interest in accumulating wealth, the cult spends a small fortune paying informants. Despite this, it has been unable to infiltrate the thieves' guild.

## 11. HIGH MARKET

Open from sunrise to sunset on Marketdaeg and until noon on other days, High Market is the regular market for the High and Market Wards. The ground is marked out with painted lines denoting the position of stalls. Traders willing to pay more receive positions along the main thoroughfares, increasing their chance of attracting passing citizens. These prestige plots are marked out in gold paint and the lesser slots with silver paint. Regardless, exact positions within the two zones are drawn by random lot each morning.

Although common goods, such as pottery and cloth-

ing are sold here, they exist in greater variety and are of better quality than in the markets of the poorer districts. Certain common goods are more exotic or personal in nature. For instance, candles can be purchased in both colored and fragrant wax and flasks and leather goods can be engraved or embossed with family crests or initials. Higher cost items, such as jewelry, and rarer products, such as books, can also be found for sale. Food, both cooked and raw ingredients, is available for purchase. Foodstuffs are fresher and more varied.

On occasion, a ship from Al-Shirkuh arrives carrying a cargo of exotic wares such as spices, perfume, silk, coffee beans, candied treats, and preserved meat of unusual animals. Word of these now-rare visits spreads quickly and such products are usually sold out within an hour of reaching the market stalls.

The wardens patrol here only infrequently—the traders have long paid the cults of Var and Forseti to ensure their goods are not stolen.

## LOW WARD

The largest district by areas and population, Low Ward is home to the bulk of the population. It is also the center of manufacturing, with craftsmen of all types plying their trades. The craftsmen are not grouped together by type, making finding a specific type frustrating. For those who persevere, or simply don't mind spending hours browsing, every craft, legal or not, has at least one proponent somewhere in the sprawling maze of streets.

According to the city's architectural plan, there are only two gates out of Low Ward—one leading to High Ward and one to Wharf Ward. The reality is that many of the walls are so structurally unsound that makeshift passages have been knocked through or occur naturally. Everyone is supposed to use the official gates, but many decide to spare their legs a lengthy walk—uttering a quick prayer, they take their lives in their hands and dart through a breach.

## 12. DAGGER ALLEY

So named because it was one home to several bladesmiths, Dagger Alley is currently abandoned. Part of the street and two houses collapsed into a sinkhole two months ago, forcing the wardens to evacuate the residents and seal off the street until repairs could be made. Since that time, residents in neighboring streets have complained of strange noises emanating from the hole. There have also been a number of disappearances. The wardens have conducted a brief investigation and drawn a blank. The locals lack the income to hire clerics to investigate, but hope to have more luck with curious adventurers. Rumors claim the problem lies with everything from giant rats to slavers to undead.

## 13. SAND TOWN

The near-cessation of trade with the Free Emirate States of Al-Shirkuh some 15 years ago did more than



harm the city's finances—it stranded hundreds of foreign merchants and laborers who had moved here to help facilitate trade along with their families. Some have managed to secure passage back home, but most have elected to stay and start a new life. Built up around the former trade mission, now a temple to the gods of Al-Shirkuh, the brown-skinned denizens live in an area known to Drakeporters as Sand Town.

The houses look little different to those of their Anari or Saxa neighbors, but stepping into Sand Town is like being transported to a foreign country. The difference is most notable in the air, for the scent of spiced dishes, hot coffee, and fragrant perfume (all from cargoes retained by the merchants after their situation became apparent) wafts through the narrow streets and alleys.

The inhabitants have retained their native faith and customs, although they have made it their duty to integrate as best they can. Indeed, while the older denizens were stranded, their children were mostly born in Drakeport. They have many strange ways and speak a different native language (Sandspeech is the dominant language here, though most people know enough Anari or Trader to get by), but they are native Drakeporters, the children of two worlds.

## 13A. HOUSE OF KHAM SIN

Hidden away in the heart of Sand Town, this innocuous-looking building is a hashish den. Trade between Drakeport and Al-Shirkuh may have dwindled to a trickle, but Freetown is expanding its business. Since all shipments of hashish now come through Freetown, the cost has skyrocketed to 30 gs per smoke. Its name relates to a type of jinni (an air elemental as far as most northerners are concerned) native to the desert realm.

The owner, Samal ibn Azal, is having problems with his supply lines. He hasn't received a delivery in weeks, despite his contacts insisting they were sent. Hardly able to contact the authorities to investigate, Samal plans to ask adventurers—who likely won't know what hashish is and might be duped into thinking it is a resinous incense—to get to the bottom of things.

The cult of Vali, having learned of Samal's business and the effect of the drug, has "requested" he begin donating them part of his shipment. He has one week to decide, after which time his kidnapped wife will be tortured before being executed in a very gruesome manner. Samal may sell drugs, but he is not a pusher—customers must come to him. For all his vices, he has no desire to help an evil cult corrupt others through drugs.

## 13B. HOUSE OF BLACK WATER

Stranded in Drakeport with several tons of coffee beans, Aisha bint Ahmed decided the only sensible thing to do was open a coffee house. It took several years before her bitter "black water" caught on with the locals, but it is now a very profitable business, thanks mainly to stevedores and wardens.

The problem is that her supplies are almost exhausted.

She is prepared to pay a goodly sum to anyone who can bring back a hold full of coffee beans from Al-Shirkuh.

## 14. THE PIG IN A BUN BAKERY

This unassuming bakery, one of dozens keeping the bellies of the inhabitants full, is actually a front for the thieves' guild. From here, small but valuable stolen goods and pouches of pipeleaf are hidden in loaves of bread and smuggled out of the city. Buyers who have arranged for the guild to steal an item can also collect it here.

Illegal activity aside, the bakery is very popular, especially with the stevedores who work in the nearby warehouses. Long queues of burly men and women form just before dawn as the workers purchase bread for their lunches, and again in the evening when the tired laborers grab a roll to eat on the walk home.

All manner of bread is baked here, but the specialty is fresh, hot pork from the butchers next door stuffed into a freshly baked roll. On occasion, sweet rolls sprinkled with cinnamon purchase in Sand Town are available. These sell out very quickly once word gets around.

## 15. STEVEDORES' GUILD

Stevedores are responsible for loading and unloading wagons and ships and moving goods between warehouses. Without their strong muscles the city's trade would grind to a halt. As a result, the guild has accumulated a great deal of power.

This building serves as their headquarters. Few members have much call to visit—the clerks primarily deal with merchants, caravan masters, and ship captains in need of the guild's services. Assignments for the coming day are then posted outside the guild.

Every guild member pays 3% of his earnings directly to the guild. Should he fall ill or suffer an injury at work, a stevedore is entitled to a payout each week until his kitty runs dry or he returns to work. Some of this money is kept inside the guild for immediate use, but much of it is invested in various mercantile schemes to help build up the organization's revenues.

## 16. WAREHOUSES

While Wharf Ward has multiple warehouses, they are spread out along the riverfront rather than grouped together. The warehouses in this ward are for goods delivered by and to be collected by caravans from the Vale and beyond.

The warehouses are owned by various merchant families and trading consortiums—some native to Drakeport and others located in neighboring lands. Each has a unique mark, which is daubed on the doors of its property in paint, allowing the stevedores to quickly identify the right place. Caravans waiting to be serviced trundle into one of the squares located beside each district.

Warden patrols are frequent but fairly ineffective—the thieves' guild is prepared to offer sizeable bribes for wardens to be somewhere else when its members are



plying their trade. The owners have little recourse but to hire their own guards or the cult of Var to safeguard their precious wares.

## **17. GARRISON**

This massive building is the garrison of the City Guard. Aside from barracks, the only other facilities are mess halls, kitchens, and an armory, the latter also shared by the wardens. Equipment, whether new purchases or repairs to existing gear, is purchased from the craftsmen who live and work in the surrounding neighborhood. With no official parade ground nearby, the soldiers make use of the empty Grand Market plaza.

Although it houses only 500 soldiers on a daily basis, the garrison is big enough to hold double that, a contingency in case the city is ever besieged and reinforcements must be summoned from the companies stationed along the river.

## **18. TRAVELERS' MARKET**

Denoted by Freo's holy symbol highlight on the wall in red bricks, this indoor market caters solely to the needs of travelers. Inside one can purchase outdoor clothing (including winter clothing and furs), backpacks, bedrolls, firewood, insect nets, satchels, tents, and trail rations, as well as footwear to aid in moving through snow and ice.

Several traders sell the same wares, making it easy to play one against the other to secure a good bargain. On average, player characters will pay 80% of the normal price for items listed above.

A small group of young adults is usually found loitering outside. In return for coin, they will do a traveler's shopping for him and deliver his purchases to a preassigned location in the city. The service is quite genuine and honest. While their services save the party time (they need only provide a list), the final bill means the heroes end up paying 110% of the standard costs for any items.

## **19. LOW MARKET**

The largest market in Low Ward, the Low Market caters for the daily requirements of the working man. With the exception of equipment specifically designed for travel in snowy climes and tents, all items listed in the *Hellfrost Player's Guide* under Common Goods can be found here. Quality varies from barely usable to functional, although prices do not always reflect this. The market is busy from the time it opens until the time it shuts, with a constant stream of citizens passing through. It is also a favorite haunt of pickpockets and opportunist thieves.

## **20. TEMPLE OF HOTHAR**

Offered a building in the Market Ward, the cult declined the offer in favor of Low Ward—the high priest believed that locating it among the rich would send out the wrong message. Among the commoners, he insisted, would show that justice is equal for all.

Built to be functional rather than ornamental, the building is easy to spot among the rooftops thanks to the towering holy symbol of Hothar erected on the roof.

While it boasts 15 clerics, most of whom are employed as judges, the temple has just four paladins. Ineffective as policemen on their own, the high priest has allowed the cult of Sigel to augment the wardens. His paladins act as an internal police force, weeding out corruption in those sworn to uphold the law.

## **WHARF WARD**

Wharf Ward stretches along the riverbank. Although there are no dividing walls, the district is divided into three separate zones. Furthest west are the wharves of the baron's warships. Just east of them are the smaller wharves used by fishermen. Everything east of them is for commercial shipping. Further back from the water are great warehouses, industries catering to keeping ships provisioned, and a few residential areas. Crime is relatively light, at least during the day, but the area is considered to be rough—few well-to-do citizens would walk here without a bodyguard, especially once the sun sets.

## **21. GUILD FORTRESS**

Rising up in the southwest corner of the city is the imposing stone edifice known as the Guild Fortress, a fortified structure intended to protect the city against sea-borne raiders (by means of the artillery pieces on its roof). Although the name hints at crafter guilds, it is actually a corruption of the Saxa word "gild," which means "gold."

Most visitors expect to find Baron Draconov's mansion in the center of the city. For as long as they have ruled Drakeport, the barons have actually made their home in the fortress. Because of this, and because many of the surrounding buildings are home to a number of important courtiers and city officials, the area has become known as Little High Ward.

The stories about a golden dragon statue, while they have grown increasingly fanciful over the centuries, are actually true. Unbeknownst to the numerous treasure hunters who have sought it (not to mention everyone else alive today), the statue is actually concealed in a secret chamber deep in the castle dungeons. That explorers have never breached the concealed vault is more a matter of luck than anything else.

## **22. FISH MARKET**

A staple part of the local diet and one of its major homegrown exports, fish is big business in Drakeport. Fishermen sell their hauls in this indoor market to local traders and merchants. The market is only open for business a few hours a day, but trade is always brisk.

Fish intended for near-immediate consumption is carried out raw. Fish for export is delivered to one of the neighboring buildings, which preserves them with salt or smoking. Row upon row of air-dried fish hangs on great



racks in the open space southwest of the market. Not surprisingly, the area stinks of fish. It is also home to a great many wild cats hoping to snatch an easy meal.

The cats may be feral and vicious, but they help keep away rats and seabirds. Fed scraps by the fishmongers and by fishermen, they have become part of everyday life in the neighborhood. In recent weeks, though, a number of cats have been found brutally mauled to death.

### 23. TEMPLE OF NEORTHE

Carved to resemble the prow of an enormous ship, the temple of Neorthe is a prominent feature. Initially constructed from driftwood, it has been repeatedly patched up with timbers from decommissioned ships and donations of planks made by sea captains. A local superstition has grown up around this—anyone having a new vessel constructed in Drakeport buys an extra plank, which they gift to the temple. The outside is decorated with shells, jetsam salvaged from the river, old sails, and fish and whale bones.

The main building is devoted solely to the worship of Neorthe and the living quarters of the clergy. Atop the altar, again made from driftwood, is an enormous jug tilted to one side. Through what appears to be magic, but it actually a miracle of engineering constructed by craftsmen from Al-Shirkuh, the jug pours an endless stream of water. Considered holy, the holy is used to bless vessels and worshippers alike.

At the rear of the temple is a seaman's mission. In return for listening to sermons and avoiding strong drink while on the premises, any ordinary seaman is given a bed and a hearty meal of fish soup, bread, and cheese. Guests are permitted to stay for a maximum of three nights, after which they must either make a cash donation or move on.

A third building serves as a shrine to Vegtam, minor deity of sailors and marines (see *Matters of Faith*). As usual for the cult, it serves as a meeting place for navigators and marines seeking employment.

### 24. RAT CATCHERS' GUILD

Drakeport is a crowded city with sewers breached in several places by treasure hunters' tunnels. No one can say for sure, but few doubt that its rat population exceeds that of its bipedal inhabitants. As a result, the Rat Catchers Guild has a thriving business here.

Work can always be found at the run down shack the Guild proclaims as its headquarters. Many adventurers sign up as the guild is allowed to operate in the tunnels running under the city. Members are paid 1 ss for each dozen ordinary rats they bring back, or a gold scield for every giant rat.

The guild is run by Ratter Raisende the Feral, a wild-haired, grubby paladin of Veth (see *Matters of Faith*) with a mastery of colorful language that would shame a soldier and a love of strong drink. Too busy hunting rats to deal with other affairs, she is currently looking for adventurers who want to earn hard coin by bringing the Fish Market cat slayers to justice (see #22).

### 25. THE SHIPWRECK

Popular with mariners of all types, the Shipwreck is a busy inn. The story goes that the original proprietor's ship was smashed on the river in a storm. Instead of rebuilding it, he dragged the timbers back to Drakeport and used them to build a tavern. Since then the tavern has grown larger and transformed into an inn.

Characters looking to arrange passage or seeking smugglers will find no better place in the entire city. Out of long tradition, clerics of Neorthe and Vegtam eat and drink here for free. So long as they are polite and entertain the crowd with a tale or two of their adventures, they may be offered a free room for up to three nights.

The walls are covered in maps donated by patrons. Typically they show stretches of the coast, with lines indicating the routes mariners have taken. Others show sightings of whales, fish shoals, sea monsters, pirates, ghost ships, phantom islands, and other such things popular in mariners' tales.

### 26. SHIPWRIGHT

Owned by Anlaf Eorraedsunu, and operated with the help of his three adult sons, this shed is considered the best shipwright in all Drakeport, an honor Anlaf accepts with great humility. He spent much of his early life serving aboard a merchantman traveling between Drakeport and Bridgewater. Customers prepared to keep him in pipeleaf will find he has much wisdom to share about the river and the settlements along its banks.

The vessels he constructs have +1 Handling on rivers but -1 on the open seas. Constructing a ship from scratch takes his workshop one week per point of Toughness (ignoring Armor) and costs 120% of the normal price.

## BENEATH THE CITY

Buried beneath the streets of Drakeport is a labyrinth of tunnels. No one knows how many tunnels there are, nor their routes or how deep they go. Some stories, unproven but popular, claim the passages descend many hundreds of yards into Ertha's Realm.

Few of the tunnels were excavated by expert miners—lack of shoring beams means that most are prone to collapse if subjected to loud noises or heavy footfalls.

Interwoven with these are the city's ancient sewers. Last extended some centuries ago, they do not pass under much of Low Ward. In many streets human waste is collected in buckets, to be dumped outside the city. In others, sinkholes, supplemented by shafts bug down from street level, allow waste to pour into the maze.

Few people use them for legal purposes. Smugglers, thieves, and criminals escaping justice are the most frequent users, and they can be very picky about who shares their stretch of the passages. Stories—perhaps spread by thieves to keep folk out the system, perhaps truthful—tell of terrible creatures that lurk in the dark, dank depths of the city's warrens.



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