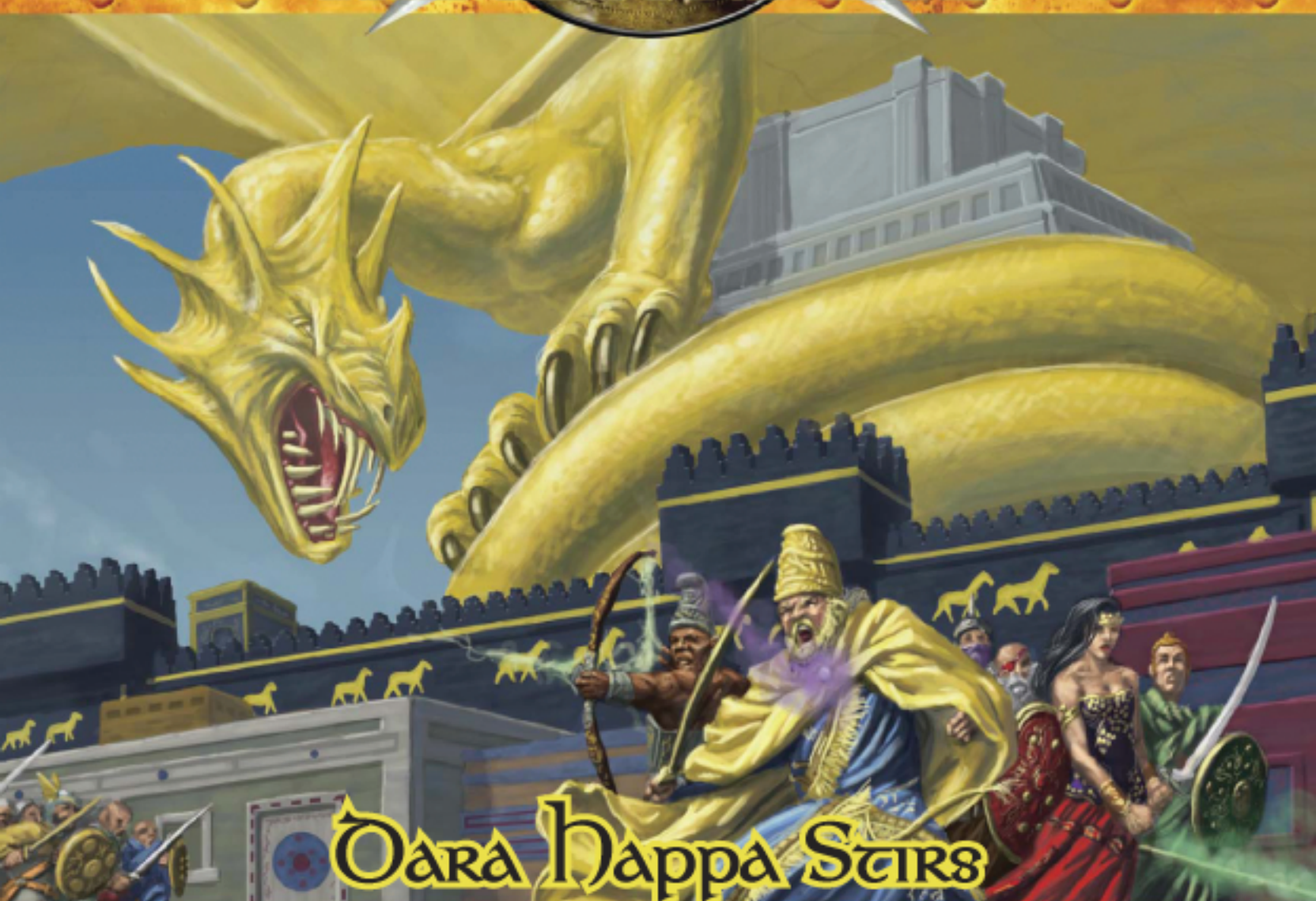




Glorantha

THE SECOND AGE



DARA HAPPA STARS



RuneQuest



DARA HAPPA STIRS

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INTRODUCTION

In those dark, bleak years it seemed inconceivable that our beloved Dara Happa, much conquered and abused, would ever shake free of the dragon's scales. Indeed, many had come to accept that Yelm had turned his back on his most faithful of children, surrendering us to the Dragon Empire which, cloaked in the rays of the sun, sought to blind us to the truth and lead us all into that most hideous enterprise that created monsters out of men like Obduran, Lord Great Burin and so many others.

But the golden smile of Yelm was simply hidden. It was hidden deep, yes, and in the most unlikely of places, but Dara Happa was not surrendered. From out of the shadow stepped a man and he challenged the Golden Dragon Emperor and emerged victorious. That fake cloak of the sun was torn to shreds and the Dragon Friends put to flight. Dara Happa's armies found their true strength and Yelm marched at their head, banners unfurled and their radiance blinding to all who would oppose Him.

It took courage and it took blood. It took the manifest will of true heroes and, although their names have been lost to us through the fickle ways of time, we remember, here and now, the deeds they performed and the freedom they provided. But there is one name we shall never forget. One name that shines brightly above all others.

That name is Karvanyar and this is his story.

— Cuthanyar Ironsun, writing in 'The New Book of the Sun'

This book concerns Dara Happa. It tells an epic tale of rebellion, treachery and, ultimately, open war. It chronicles the exploits of Karvanyar, the Poor Woman's Son, how he slew a dragon and how he restored Dara Happa's pride and independence.

Yet Karvanyar did not act alone. Although he is remembered as the Great Hero of the early 10th century he had many followers who were heroes in their own right; Karvanyar could not have succeeded without their help and, without them, the Empire of Wyrms Friends might still rule the mighty lands of Dara Happa, changing forever the fate of the Second Age of Glorantha and, with it, the course of its Third Age which sees the creation of the Red Moon and the rise of the glorious Lunar Empire.

This book, then, concerns Karvanyar. But it also concerns the player characters who, in different ways, have a profound effect on Dara Happa's future.

How to Use This Book

Dara Happa Stirs is a campaign setting. It describes several years of events in Glorantha's Second Age, beginning in the year 909, with Karvanyar's emergence from hiding, and concludes in 920 as Dara Happa ejects the Empire of Wyrms Friends from its lands and pursues its armies to destruction in the lands of Sylila. The player characters take part in these monumental events acting as the key followers of Karvanyar, helping him to ascend to greatness. In the course of the campaign they will engage in quests mundane and heroic, take part in missions concerned with guile and stealth, great magic and mighty battles. They will face the full might of the EWF and its most powerful champions. It is a tale of might and courage, of desperation and luck, but also of heroic sacrifice.

The campaign, as read, will seem to Games Masters to be very linear – to coin a phrase sometimes used in roleplaying game parlance, ‘railroading’. This is deliberate to a large extent. Karvanyar’s story and the arc it forms in this campaign is largely fixed. That said, the characters are participants within it and there are many ways in which they will influence certain parts of the story arc and will undoubtedly have opportunities to change it. It is impossible to account for every character-driven eventuality and outcome, of course, and we have not attempted to try. One of the arts of Games Mastering is adapting planned outcomes and story arcs to how the characters act; in many ways then, you, as Games Master, need to decide how you want the *Dara Happa Stirs* campaign to unfold. If you want to tell Karvanyar’s story as presented here, with the outcomes described, you will have to do some railroading. However, if you prefer a more freewheeling campaign style, with the characters driving the outcomes as fully as possible, you may find yourself swinging to the other extreme and having to adapt the campaign structure to account for the characters’ actions and their consequences. A happy medium is somewhere in between the two styles – but do not, or try not to, feel constrained by the density of the campaign arc: Your Dara Happa Will Vary; maybe the EWF retains control of Peloria; maybe one of the characters ascends to emperor. That, after all, is one of the joys of roleplaying.

Characters

Some parts of the campaign are tough and some characters will not survive. It is therefore recommended that, before the campaign begins, Games Masters consider the following.

- ◉ Have each player create two characters. The first character should be of either Veteran or Master level, as described on page 106 of the *RuneQuest* rules. The second character should be of standard or Seasoned level. This second character is considered to be either a friend, colleague, retainer or trusted relation of the main character – someone who accompanies the main character and knows what he knows. If the main character dies, then the secondary character becomes the main character. If

necessary, the player can create a new secondary character to maintain the character chain.

- ◉ Secondary characters improve in experience just as the main character improves. The Games Master should decide if the secondary character improves discretely from the main character, or if he receives an identical number of improvement rolls and improvement points (but obviously in skills chosen by the player).
- ◉ Secondary characters can assist or aid the main character or simply remain in the background.

There are considerable areas of downtime between scenarios and these should be used for the characters to advance and grow. Games Masters should not be overly stringent in giving Improvement Rolls and Hero Points; the characters are taking part in heroic events and whilst they will not begin the game as such, they should, by the end of the campaign, be of a heroic level – movers and shakers in Dara Happa.

The campaign includes game statistics for non-player characters but some important ones, such as Karvanyar or Lorenkarten, are deliberately devoid of statistics. These people are story protagonists and are unlikely to be in positions where they can be killed by the characters. The final chapter of this book offers guidance on how the likes of Karvanyar should be roleplayed through the campaign, and lists the magic or powers they have available; this should be enough for most circumstances. However if it proves necessary to create statistics, then these figures will be of a Heroic status without question – and should always be more than a match for any of the player characters.

The Campaign

The Games Master should read through *Dara Happa Stirs* carefully to become familiar with its structure. Although the overall story arc is linear, the events that contribute to it are not. Time passes between key events when the characters simply get on with their lives; at others one event leads directly to another. The Games Master, and players, should be prepared for a long-term approach. It is recommended that other adventures are interspersed where appropriate although the whole campaign can be played through if that is the preferred approach.

The Games Master also needs to be fully familiar with the central protagonists, their motivations and their powers. Some shift sides; others become more ruthless and desperate as Karvanyar's schemes come to fruition. Their responses need to be keyed to the actions of the main heroes of Dara Happa, and adjusted accordingly.

There is, of course, the possibility that Karvanyar will fail and Dara Happa will not win its independence. If such a thing happens Games Masters should consider the impact it will have in the future. Otherwise, this book details events that shape Dara Happa's history for the remainder of the Second Age and into the Third Age – the Age of the Hero Wars. But, naturally, Your Glorantha Will Vary...

The Structure

The campaign takes place over about a decade, starting with Karvanyar's emergence in 909 and concluding with the EWF being driven from Dara Happa in 920. Some events may take hours or days to resolve, but the implications of these events are described in terms of their longer-range effects. Perhaps most crucially, do not lose sight of the importance of the characters. There are many great and powerful non-player characters in this story, not least Karvanyar himself, and legendary figures such as Alakoring the Dragonbreaker and Lorenkarten the Mile, but this campaign should be about the *player characters*. They should be given the opportunity to act as heroes and emerge as heroes. At the story's conclusion Karvanyar's name is the one that shines, but that radiance cannot be possible without the efforts of others. History will remember the Emperor, but contemporaries will remember those who did the dirty work. The Emperor himself will reward them too, so their descendants will live in glory and wealth. Game Masters should strive to make sure the players are aware of this long-term benefit as they must always feel this way and contribute fully to a great and epic tale.

Glorantha: The Second Age Errata

In *Cults of Glorantha volume I*, and *Dragonewts: A Guide to the Eravssarr*, the Golden Dragon Emperor is referred to as being coiled around the Imperial Temple in Yuthuppa. This is incorrect, and should read *Raibanth*. This book provides the correct detail and supersedes the references found in earlier works.

Summary of Dara Happa Stirs

Chapter One - Dara Happa and the Osir River Valley.

An overview of the area where Dara Happa Stirs is set, including detail concerning Raibanth, the capital, the Golden Sun Emperor, and the EWF presence in Dara Happa.

Chapter Two - Dara Happan Characters

A chapter containing extended guidance on creating authentic Dara Happan characters for use in this campaign and other Gloranthan adventures.

Chapter Three - Cults of the Sun

An overview of Dara Happan cosmology through the description of the Gods' Wall. New cults are described, and sample Associations and Leagues provided.

Chapter Four - A Door Woman's Son

The first part of the Dara Happa Stirs campaign. Here the characters find and identify beyond all doubt the hero Karvanyar, who will become the axis of the adventures to follow.

Chapter Five - Seeing Out the Goddess

In which the characters assist Karvanyar to enter the Golden Daughter Contest so that he might marry the daughter of the Dragon Sun Emperor. A part of this task involves the assassination of a Wyrmfriender proselytiser in the ruined city of Mernita.

Chapter Six - Within the Green Walls of Hell

The characters must journey to the city of Alkoth, gate to the Underworld, in order to both continue with the Golden Daughter Contest and seek allies from those who worship Shargash the Destroyer.

Chapter Seven - As Vast as Emperors

Karvanyar and his companions return to Raibanth and challenge for the Golden Dragon's daughter. The first act of rebellion is executed and the emperorship of Dara Happa is decided.

Chapter Eight - Lords of War

This chapter provides an overview of the key events between 911 and 920, outlining the battles that follow the downfall of the EWF in Dara Happa. A series of scenario seeds are presented for Games Masters to flesh-out as needs dictate, if they want to take the characters through to the final expulsion of the EWF from Peloria.

Chapter Nine - Dramatis Personae

Notes and guidance on how to play and use the legendary characters appearing in this book: Karvanyar, Urvanyar, and so on.

Supporting Resources

Dara Happa Stirs draws upon the full gamut of Second Age Glorantha resources. The following books will be of considerable use:

Cults of Glorantha volumes 1 & 2

Dragonewts: A Guide to the Eravssarr

Glorantha: The Second Age

RuneQuest Spellbook

RuneQuest

RuneQuest Companion

Dara Happa's history figures prominently in *Dara Happa Stirs*. To gain a greater appreciation and understanding of this fascinating land, we also recommend the following books from the Stafford Library, published by Moon Design

Glorious ReAscent of Yelm – for a detailed mythical understanding of Dara Happa

History of the Heortling Peoples – a full history of Glorantha's second age from an Orlanthe viewpoint

The Fortunate Succession – for a detailed chronology of Dara Happa's emperors



DARA HAPPA AND THE OSLIR RIVER VALLEY

Yelm rules the cosmos and the region known as Dara Happa is sacred to him and those serving him. Yelm's re-ascent from Death returned light to the world and it was to Dara Happa that he came first. Many lands with many gods surround Dara Happa but none are so old or so great and Yelm ignores all those that did not come before him and pledge allegiance. The gods that did are commemorated in the Gods' Wall and they, alone, define Yelm's dominion and are held aloft within Dara Happa.

This chapter traces Dara Happa from its formation under Murharzarm, the first emperor, through to its present day. Space precludes a detailed examination of Dara Happa's lengthy and turbulent history but the key events are covered.

Present day Dara Happa is described in terms of the cities of the empire, its people, their outlook, and life under the Golden Dragon emperor and the Empire of Wyrms' Friends. This entire chapter is relevant to the *Dara Happa Stirs* campaign that unfolds through the rest of the book.

Peloria

Dara Happa occupies central Peloria. It is essentially a thin band following the Oslir River from the Thunder Delta in the north down to the Plough Line in the south. To the east are the kingdoms of Rinliddi, Kostadi and Vaird, with the Hungry Plateau and Jord Mountains rising from the Kostadi plain.

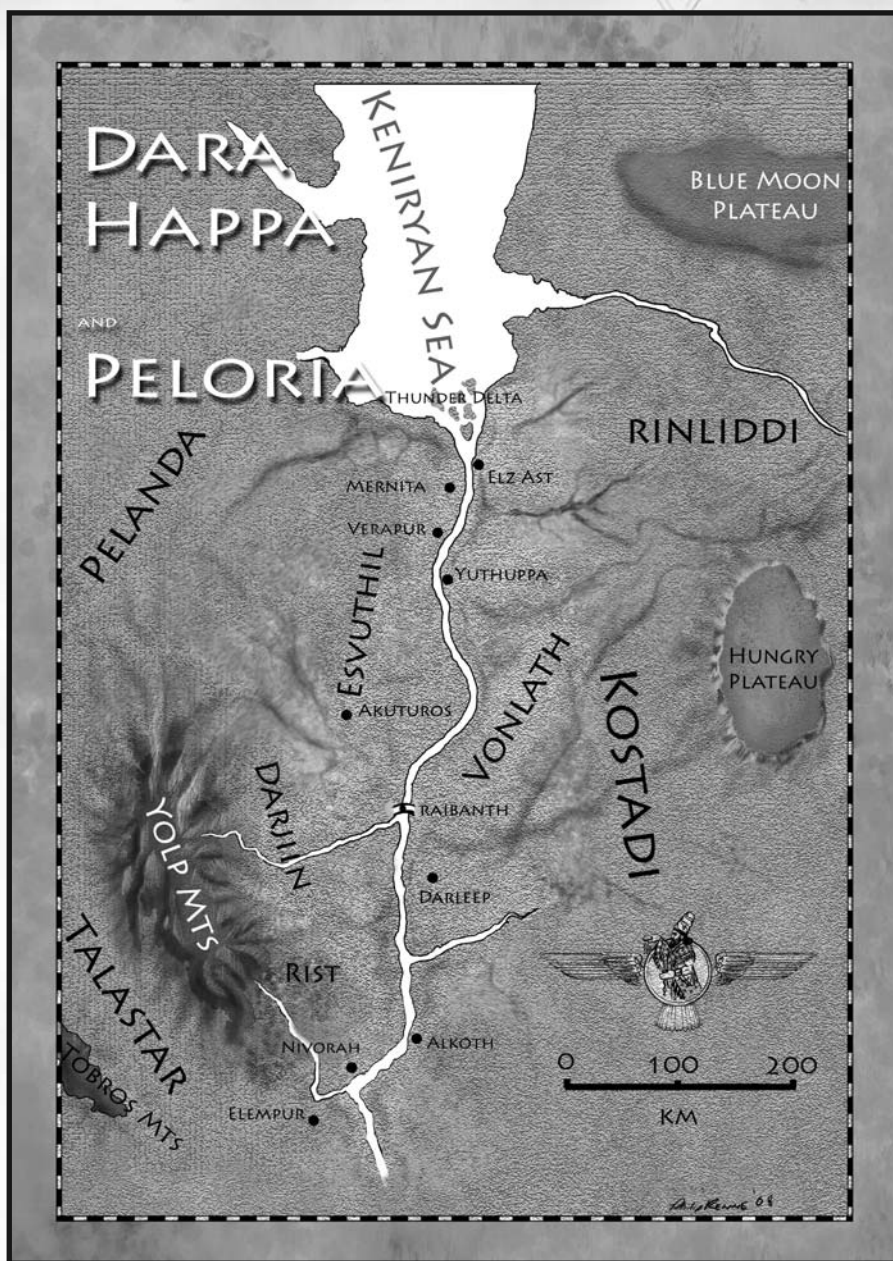
To the west are the kingdoms of Pelanda and Darjinn. Darjinn, in particular, has been disputed for many centuries, viewed as a property, but a lesser property, by the Dara Happans, and as an independent kingdom by the Darjinni. Currently the Darjinni have their independence, but under the watchful eye of the EWF. Beyond Darjinn is Talastar, a kingdom of Orlanthi barbarians that have embraced the EWF but are held in check by Carmania, which has claimed Talastar as a

Dara Happa is one of the Great Dragon's wings, cloaked in the scales of the sun. With that wing and the spine of Oslira we shall use Dara Happa to take to the skies, the Crown of Sovereignty burning above us with the radiance of the Cosmic Dragon itself.

— *Lorenkarfen the Mile, member of the Eternal Dragon Ring*

province. Talastar might be a crucible for disastrous civil war were it not for the stirrings of chaos in Dorastor.

Despite its confines Dara Happa has always dominated central Peloria. None can dispute Yelm's influence and although it is skirted by kingdoms with individual agendas and territorial claims, Dara Happa holds sway even in these days of draconic occupation. If anything the Dara Happan dominance is given a greater degree of legitimacy because the EWF has permitted the Solar pantheon to continue across the empire despite its effective defeat at the hands of the Golden Dragon and the Eternal Dragon Ring. Old provinces, such as Rinliddi and Kostadi, that ceded from the Dara Happan empire under the emperor Karmexdros hope that the EWF's presence will secure their independence but there has been little evidence to support these ideas. Yuthuppa and Elz Ast continue to exert a considerable influence on Rinliddi and Kostadi lives in constant fear of Alkoth opening its hell gates, seemingly with EWF blessings. If Pelorians believed that draconic occupation might weaken Dara Happa and usher-in a new era of nation states sharing power across the Oslir region, then they have been disappointed. The EWF's chief concern is to secure devotion to draconic mysticism and a continued contribution to the Great Dragon Project; it is not to strengthen and legitimise political boundaries.



Dara Happa

Creation

When Yelm accepted the rule of the cosmos he raised a great ziggurat and from its highest tier, where he placed his golden throne, he could see the entirety of the world, represented by the Four Directions which Yelm named. Having named each direction and given it a colour, he decreed that a great city should be built at each direction, and each city would duplicate the Great City and be an extension of it. These Four Directions are known as the camps: the East Camp,

which is yellow, lies before Yelm, and its power is insight. To the right is the South Camp, which is green, and strength is its power. Behind Yelm is the West Camp, coloured red, and its power is sovereignty. And to the left of Yelm is Alabaster Camp, which is white and commands the power of wisdom.

When Yelm called for splendour one day, whilst looking out over his kingdom with Dendara at his side, Dendara noticed that everything was the same

and difference was needed. So Yelm called for Lodril and Dayzatar, and Dendara called for her sisters Oria and the Other Goddess. Between them they made two creatures which were the same but different; and because each god made a creature there were six in total. They were given their natures and their shapes and Dendara clothed them with cloth she had weaved. Lodril gave them tools with which to work and finally Yelm gave them the Four Camps as their place of living. These first six were the Aristocrats and they went forth and prospered.

A Note on Time...

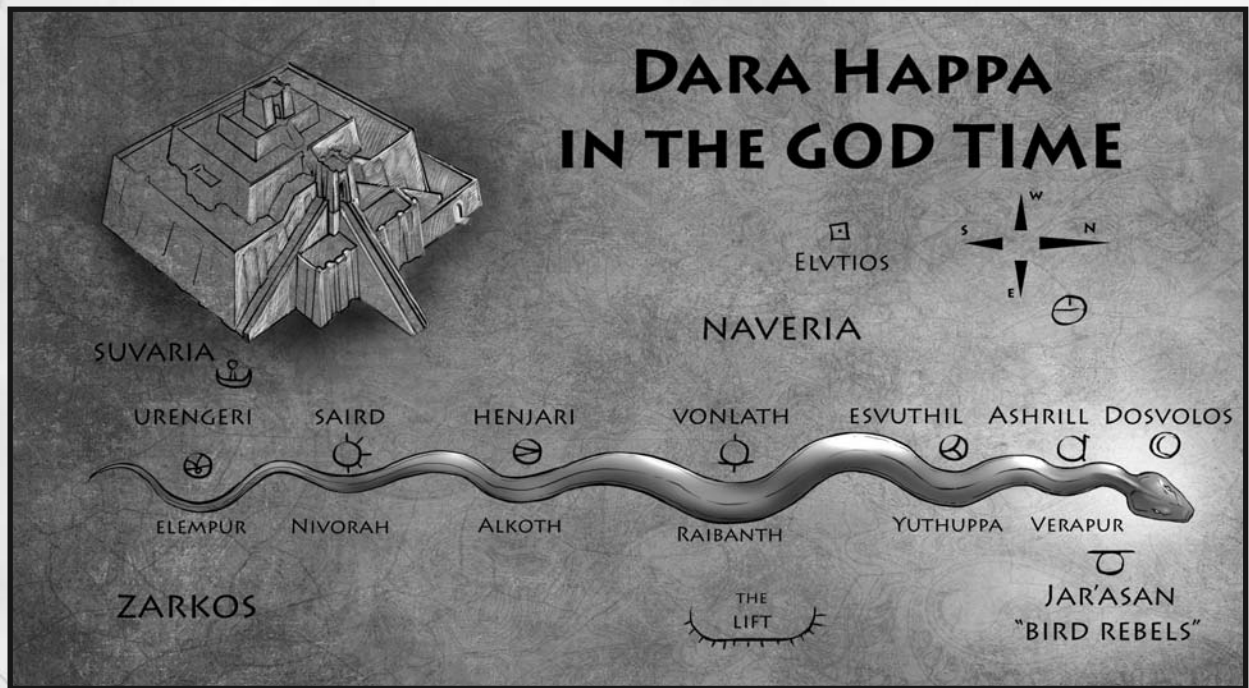
Dara Happans chronicle their years from Yelm's birth, during the God Time. Yelm reigned for 100,000 years although Murharzarm became the first earthly emperor in 60,000. Since Yelm's birth 111,909 years have passed, bringing us to the time described in this campaign. The Second Age of Glorantha began in, roughly, 111,000.

The Founding of Dara Happa

Nestenos was an immense blue serpent that arose from the deep. None of the gods had seen anything like it before and Nestenos surged across the land, cutting a deep furrow and drowning everything before it. Lodril went to wrestle the monster but was bested. Next Shargash the Thunderer advanced with five divisions of drummers but he, too, was vanquished. And so it was left to Yelm to come down from the Imperial Footrest and face Nestenos, but because Yelm was innately just he was forced into the sky and could not confront the serpent. His son, Murharzarm, climbed the Imperial Footrest and faced the monster. Murharzarm, unafraid of new experiences, let the serpent coiled itself around

him seven times, but broke its jaws with his sceptre and wrestled it back to the ground. Lodril and his Ten Workers used the sacred tools to carve a channel in the ground to contain Nestenos and that is where Murharzarm put it with the help of the Ten Workers. This tamed the serpent and made her happy. She changed her name to Oslira and coupled with the gods to bear several children who served the new lands well.

Yelm was pleased with what Murharzarm had accomplished and secretly created the Ten Tests of Empire that Murharzarm unknowingly undertook,



having to move across the lands to do so. When he returned to the Imperial Footrest, nine of the secret tests having been completed with ease, he ascended to the Golden Throne and was shown the Imperial Regalia which he identified without hesitation: the Loincloth of Morality, the Sandals of Protection, the Vestments of Disclosure, the Girdle of Command, the Mantle of Sovereignty, the High Crown of Dominion, the Low Crown of Rule, the Orb of Authority, the Sceptre of Order and the Eagle of Heaven. This done Murharzarm was named First Emperor and he took a wife, Dareeshena, as First Empress. Next he built a great city around the Imperial Footrest and this was Raibanth; his son, Raiba was its protector and governor.

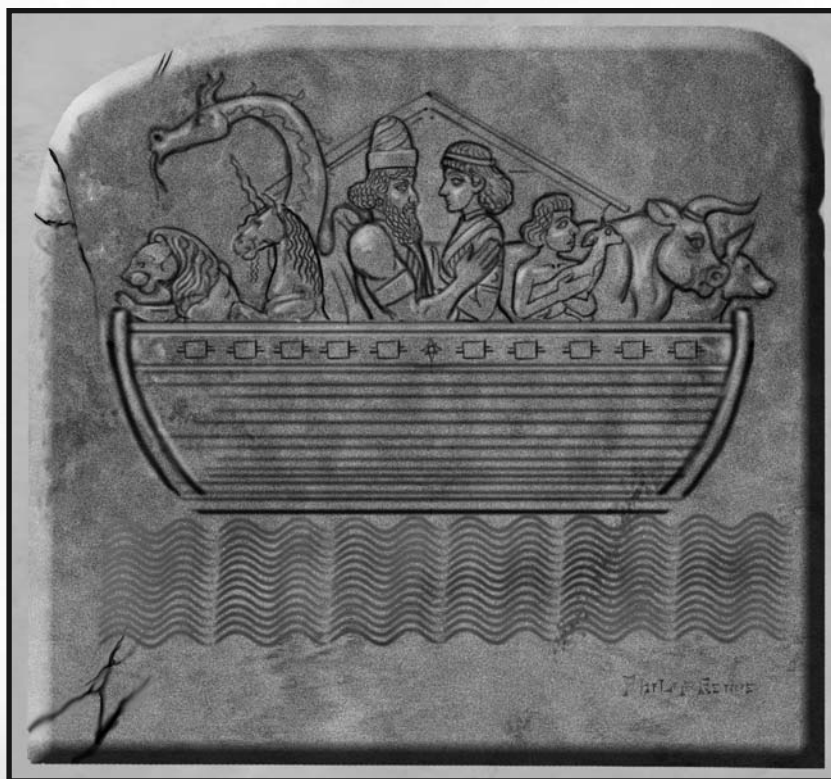
In their happiness the people made many children and then dug channels from the Oslir River to make the whole land fertile and offer plenty to eat. Now that the land was made whole, Murharzarm established the Ten Cities, each to be the home of a god. The Ten Cities were *Yuthubars*, the City of Spirit, *Raibanth*, the City of Emperors, in the center. *Abgammon*, the City of Priests, in the near east - the home of Buserian. *Senthoros*, the Looks Up city, in the far east. *Alkoth*, the City of Strength, in the near south, the home of Shargash.

Nivorah, the City of Serenity, in the far south. *Hamados*, the City of the Crown, in the near west. *Akuturos*, the City of Dirt, in the far west – Lodril's home. *Verapur*, the City of Raptors, in the near north. And, in the far north, *Mernita*, the City which Turns

These were the original Ten Cities of the Empire and Murharzarm named the empire Dara Happa.

Antirius, Anaxial and the Flood

The world was plunged into darkness when Yelm was slain but his son, Antirius, who was born of Yelm's inner essence, took his father's Cloak of Majesty and watched over Dara Happa in those dark years, keeping its emperors strong and its people safe. Antirius embodied Yelm's wisdom and justice but, because there were new gods, not everyone trusted to his dominion. Antirius suffered many wounds because of the actions of the people, and was brought closer to the world because of it.



This was a time of turmoil. Angered, Oslira rose up and engulfed the world bringing a great flood. Lodril was driven underground to escape the deluge and there learned that as the earth-bound of Yelm's brothers he was doomed to suffer. Creatures of the underworld shadow, the *digijelm*, raped and imprisoned Lodril's household, compounding the god's fate.

One man was warned of the flood. Anaxial suffered nightmares that told him of Oslira's coming wrath and so Anaxial sought counsel from Antirius. Under Antirius's guidance Anaxial built a huge boat so that all the creatures of the world might be saved. Those who believed the nightmares Anaxial suffered warning of the flood went far and wide to collect what was the very best to be saved. The flood cleansed the world of the many bad things that had arisen in the dark years of Yelm's absence and those who were pure were aboard Anaxial's boat and were saved.

When Oslira was finally placated and the flood settled, Anaxial went to Raibanth and took the Ten Tests. He became emperor and reigned for many years, bringing fresh prosperity to the cleansed lands although in some corners of Dara Happa some of the new gods had not been washed away or forced into hiding. In time they emerged to challenge the word of Antirius and bring further suffering.

The Golden Dragon Society and the Rise of the Dragon Emperor

It is agreed that the EWF established its influence in Dara Happa when, in 111,770, the emperor Elmexdros the Conqueror welcomed the Golden Dragon Society into the empire in his fateful bid to recreate ancient Dara Happa through the manifestation of the Body of Yelm. This was to be a mystical venture based around each and every Dara Happan realising their Inner Sun and achieving a state of transcendence that echoed the great events of the emperor Khorzanelm. Nysalor's birth and deeds under Khorzanelm had taught many valuable lessons in mysticism that had been forgotten. Elmexdros exhibited rare skill in articulating the soul

of Dara Happa and his precision in command secured the implicit trust of the noble families who largely embraced the ideal.

News of this attempt to realise the Body of Yelm through mystic interpretation was spread far across Glorantha and inevitably reached the Eternal Dragon Ring and the larger EWF. Understanding that Elmexdros was engaging in precisely the same methods as themselves, draconic emissaries were sent to Dara Happa to learn more of the emperor's methods and teach their own.

Elmexdros's plan was embraced widely amongst the nobles and lesser people of Dara Happa. The Body of Yelm spoke to them all through cleansing rituals and universal truths. Ecstatic ceremonies in Alkoth, Raibanth and Yuthuppa saw miracles being worked and old enemies being defeated as the Ten Precepts of Learning manifested themselves through the larger Yelmic body. Into this ecstasy walked Lorenkarten the Mile and Hurarbargarten, both Great Dragons who, acknowledging Elmexdros's transcendent capabilities, taught him the inner secrets of draconic mysticism and showed him that the Body of Yelm and the Body of the Cosmic Dragon were indistinguishable. Elmexdros embraced this new path and taught it to others through the creation of the Golden Dragon Society.

Soon Dara Happa was filled with mystics intent on mastering this new path to enlightenment. Yelm and the Dragon were seen as essential components of the same celestial body and the Golden Dragon Society's influence stretched the length of the Oslir. Where the Golden Dragon Society's teachings were rejected or refuted, Elmexdros marched against them with the Imperial Army, bolstered by draconic warriors and dragonewts.

By 111,775 the reconciliation between Yelm the Imperator and the Solar Dragon was complete. The Eternal Dragon Ring raised one of their own, Hurarbargarten, to become the Golden Dragon Sun and offered him as Elmexdros's successor, but at this point Dara Happs became nervous of the revelations. Elmexdros created a new court at Raibanth, welcoming the Eternal Dragon Ring into the great ziggurat, pledging one of its levels to the worship of the Golden Dragon Sun and thereby polluting the ideal of the Body of Yelm. This led to some rejecting the ideas of the Golden Dragon Society, but it was, by now, too late.

The Golden Dragon Sun had taken to the sky where it blazed like a star and across the empire many acclaimed it as the Body of Yelm or The Heart of the Sun.

When Elmexdros died in 111,800 the Golden Dragon Society entombed his body in gold and placed it alongside the sarcophagi of the greatest emperors. Dismexdros, his son, took and passed the Ten Tests with the help of draconic mysticism and proclaimed the Golden Dragon Society as an equal religion alongside that of the Solar pantheon. Still the Golden Dragon Sun blazed in the skies and Lorenkarten the Mile went to Alkoth, where he remains. The EWF had gained its first claw-hold in Dara Happa and its influence spread far and wide under the tutelage of the emperor and his draconic advisers.

Over the next thirty five years the Golden Dragon Society consolidated power in Yuthuppa, Alkoth and Raibanth. EWF mystics flowed into Dara Happa in an unstoppable tide and a number of secret draconic societies formed as a result, supported by militias created from the Leagues of these cities. The New Dragon Association called for greater worship and the draconisation of the major Solar temples. The Gods' Wall was redecorated to reflect the growing strength of the Golden Dragon Society with many deities being given a draconic cast. In 111,835 Elmatryan, the emperor, conducted mystical experiments of measurement that relied not on draconic principles but on the precepts of Antirius. Elmatryan became known as the Measurer and his astrological findings, conducted against a growing number of sacrifices amongst the draconic secret societies caused unrest amongst the draconic faithful. The Red King of Alkoth and Lorenkarten the Mile emerged from Alkoth and came to Raibanth to study Elmatryan's writings and, on the steps of the sixth tier of the ziggurat, proclaimed them to be heretical. Elmatryan claimed to have determined that the Golden Dragon Sun was itself a falsehood and the teachings of the Golden Dragon Society were nothing but a tissue of lies. His measurements supported his arguments but, by now, Dara Happa was gripped with the draconic spirit and acceptance of his teachings was confined to a handful of scholars who found themselves hounded from Raibanth. Elmatryan was forced to flee but was caught by the Exultant Golden Scale cadre, a powerful secret militia, and brought back to Raibanth. Here he was executed for heresy. Dismatryan, who was head

of the Exultant Golden Scale cadre, took the Ten Tests and completed them through draconic interpretation.

With Dismatryan espousing purely draconic philosophies the EWF had, by now, succeeded in controlling all the major Associations of Dara Happa. The empire was reorganised on draconic lines and the combined Dara Happan and draconic armies conquered lands to the west, east and south, including Darjinn and Kostadi. Dismatryan, suffering from a madness brought about by exposure to the deepest knowledge of the Eternal Dragon Ring, claimed himself to be the Golden Dragon Sun incarnate and moved to proclaim himself Emperor of the Universe. This provoked the Golden Dragon to descend and murder him – an act that caused outrage in the true Dara Happans who were led by Ulikarelm, Dismanthuyar and Urvanyar. Through the application of the precepts of justice Ulikarelm proved that he was fit to become the next emperor and succeeded in the Ten Tests. Dismanthuyar and Urvanyar raised an army and challenged the Golden Dragon Society in every city of the empire.

War raged for sixteen years and provoked the Eternal Dragon Ring to enter the fray. Isgangdrang, Lord Great Burin and Lorenkarten assumed their draconic forms for these battles, leading the EWF and loyal Dara Happan militias against the armies Dismanthuyar and Urvanyar commanded. Their power was too great, and even though Ulikarelm maintained his position as emperor, Alkoth rebelled, opening the Hellgates to spill forth Hellmen, demons and things in draconic disguise to destroy Ulikarelm's forces. Ulikarelm was forced to abdicate and Dismanthuyar took his place. The Golden Dragon Society believed it could control Dismanthuyar and sought to create a new counsel of draconic significance around him, but sunspears destroyed them when Dismanthuyar uttered the Solar blessings of emperorship.

Open war was inevitable. The Eternal Dragon Ring mustered the armies of Alkoth and Yuthuppa whilst Urvanyar mustered his own armies from Elz Ast, Verapur and Darleap. The clashes were terrible, bloody affairs, fought at Alornik in the west, Zeranós in the east and, finally, Orsium in the south. Urvanyar was crushed when the Howling Dragon, a potent mystic whose draconic form was that of a screeching dragon wind, defeated Urvanyar at the Battle of Zeranós. His eyes and heart were taken and given to the Golden

Vuranostum

When Argoom the Shadow Rider terrorised Dara Happa and stole away unborn children, Vuranostum chased the demon into Hell and then out of it. He faced Argoom in the wilderness and sent lightning from his eyes to pierce the demon's darkness armour and shatter its soul into a billion fragments that caught the winds and were gone. In his wisdom, Vuranostum learned to distinguish between the Good and the Ordinary people, and he invented the four classes that still exist in Dara Happa: the Nobles, the Citizens, the Half-Citizens and the Newcomers. Vuranostum defeated the cannibals who attacked Raibanth. In Yuthuppa he awoke Dayzatar and sent emissaries across the entire empire in search of the remaining cities, bringing Alkoth back into the fold.

Khordavu

Khordavu assembled and wore the imperial regalia and was pursued by many enemies because of it. When Anitirius anointed Khordavu, the emperor sent for all his enemies: Kills for Life, the Flesheaters and the Monster Army. Kills for Life protested at Khordavu's enthronement and was killed by a spear that was thrown by the sun. Khordavu commanded the Monster Army and the Flesheaters against each other and the Monster Army prevailed. Its leaders surrendered to Khordavu and explained that their own gods were preparing to leave the underworld and would create a procession for Yelm's return. Pleased by this, Khordavu granted the Monster Army mercy and divided it into four quarters. The uz were sent to the north; the mostali were sent to the east; the aldryami were sent to the west; and the dragonewts were sent to the south. The leaders of the army became the World Council of Friends and Dara Happa's empire now reached across the entire world, instituted by Khordavu's justice.

Khorzanelm

The Complete Emperor, Khorzanelm ruled the entirety of the empire as defined by Murharzarm, and did so through the Ten Precepts of Learning. Through this rule the World Council of Friends was incorporated into the empire and, in 111,375, he led the finest people of the empire in the Prayer to Yelm and was rewarded by the appearance of the Celestial Emperor, the One God. Yelm praised the earthly emperor who had created unity and justice and the finest people of the land were regaled by the Choir of Heaven. All those who heard the Heavenly Choir's song gained wisdom and insight. Their lives forever after were blessed and under Khorzanelm's reign Dara Happa was the greatest empire that ever existed. This event has become widely known as the Sunstop.

All this was possible because a new god, Nysalor, was born, and walked amongst mortals. Nysalor was an incarnation of Many Gods and through that multiplicity peace and prosperity was granted to all. Khorzanelm's wisdom continued and the emperor created the dual religions: Yelm Imperator, which only the finest people who had heard the Heavenly Choir's song could follow, and Nysalor Fireheart, which brought the same justice and prosperity to all people regardless of their station.

Erzanestyu

Erzanestyu was blessed with sublime wisdom. When the Citizens and Half-Citizens rioted because they were unhappy with their station, Erzanestyu quelled their uprising not with warriors but with reason. He created the Senate so that all might have a voice in the empire, and brought back the toga so that all would dress in similar ways. Erzanestyu did many such things, all the time calling back to Murharzarm's principles and Khordavu's grace. The people saw his wisdom and exercised their own; thus was Erzanestyu great, and so were the seventeen families who honoured him great.

Denesiod

Denesiod was the son of a mortal woman and the god Raibamuth and thus a demigod. To pass the first nine of the Ten Tests, Denesiod conquered many enemies of the empire, gaining the help of priests and priestesses to accomplish his victories. To pass the last of the Ten Tests Denesiod called upon the Old Gods of Dara Happa to assist his enthronement, but he did not do so out of arrogance or injustice; he made his call because he was a demigod and had that right. Denesiod killed his challenger for the empire, Vindekeln, and was proclaimed 'The Emperor of New Light'.

Dismanthuyar

Dismanthuyar is remembered as the last human emperor before the coming of the Golden Dragon. He was a poet and a scholar, and, when dragons tried to interfere with his enthronement they were destroyed by sunspears.

He was a Good Man in Bad Times. After he became emperor the dragons invaded. Dragonewts rose up from the south and the Eternal Dragon Ring came out of Dragon Pass to lead them. Dismanthuyar met the Dragon Army on three fields of battle. At Alornik both armies lost a third of their strength. At Zeranos each army lost half of what remained. It was also at Zeranos that the hero, Urvanyar, battled the Howling Dragon which dropped from the sky like a fireball, and killed it, but was crushed in doing so. Urvanyar's eyes and heart were taken, and he became a blind wanderer. At the third battle, at Orsium, both armies were destroyed and in desperation the Dragon Army called down the Golden Dragon to defeat Dara Happa.

Dismanthuyar would not be cowed by the immensity of the Golden Dragon, which used tricks and lies to convince him it was part of Yelm's noble court. These tricks and lies would have killed Dismanthuyar had his own justice not saved him and the emperor was plucked from the battlefield by Yelm himself. This left the Golden Dragon in charge of the battlefield with none to challenge him. It took, and passed, the Ten Tests, and so became emperor.

Of Dismanthuyar, we know only his tragedy. He went to Yuthuppa to call upon the great magics of the priests but was betrayed and given to the dragonewts, who showed Dismanthuyar such dreadful secrets that he died in terror. The Golden Dragon emperor, as a gesture of its justice and mercy, allowed Dismanthuyar's body to be burned according to the funeral rites accorded to all emperors of mighty Dara Happa.

Dragon Sun which, finally, descended from the heavens, claiming to have been a consort of Yelm since the Dawn Age. Dismanthuyar faced the Golden Dragon Sun at the Battle of Orsium but was removed from the field by Yelm's own intervention, leaving the path clear for the Golden Dragon Sun to take the Ten Tests and pass them, despite lacking the human faculties to identify and name the Imperial Regalia.

And so Dara Happa became a part of the Great Dragon. Under the Golden Dragon Sun emperor (who had, by now, conceived a daughter) Dara Happa is under the control of the EWF although, attempting to emulate Dara Happan justice, the Golden Dragon emperor has allowed the worship of the Solar pantheon to continue, as long as its draconic nature is acknowledged. The Body of Yelm, first realised by Elmexdros, is considered to be present in the curling coils of the Golden Dragon that drapes itself around the Imperial Footrest.

Dara Happa - Geography

Dara Happa follows the Oslir River for 600 kilometres, its key cities built either on one of its banks or straddling the river's inexorable course. The core lands of the empire occupy the broad plain to either side of the river, dipping gradually towards the Keniryan sea in the north. Dara Happa's southern border is marked by The Plough Line, separating the empire from the kingdom of Saird. The Plough Line marks a geological, geographical and mythical divide. North of the Plough Line Yelm's influence, and that of his celestial servants, is ensured; beyond it Yelm has no influence and other gods, specifically those of the Storm Pantheon, have dominion. The colour of the land, the quality of the soil and the power of the gods undergoes an abrupt shift at this juncture. Dara Happans acknowledge that the Plough Line marks the outermost point of Yelm's direct influence, but consider his power extends much further through the ministrations of those who spread his holy word into other lands.

The Oslir

The Oslir River is not a natural river but a powerful and capricious goddess that is held in check through her own obeisance to Yelm's rule and the powerful magic exercised by the gods of the Solar pantheon. Oslir is

a giver, taker and mover of life. She is the mother of many of Dara Happa's lesser gods and is the estranged bride of the war god Shargash. The course she cuts is of her own determination and this determination is reflected in the character of Dara Happans.

Oslira's currents are stable because she wishes them to be so. If angered her currents become turbulent and dangerous and, if she so chooses, the direction of her flow can reverse. Her greatest anger manifests in the flood although she has only exercised such rage once, resulting in the cleansing of those parts of Dara Happa that had lost their way during Yelm's death.

A myriad of irrigation channels siphon life-giving water from Oslira, feeding the rice paddies that stretch, like a patchwork quilt, across the entire river basin. Oslira feeds many underground streams and springs offering fresh, crystal clear, sweet-tasting water of such purity that Dara Happans find the water elsewhere in Glorantha to be barely palatable. They also know that, if Oslira wished it, she could make her water into venom to poison her enemies.



Naturally the Oslir is the major trade avenue of Dara Happa. Association barges and river-ships stalk its length, which is free from rapids, waterfalls and other disruptions to smooth water-borne trade. Certain Associations ally themselves closely with Oslira allowing them to use river magic to speed-up the progress of their vessels irrespective of prevailing conditions.

The river abounds with fish and other aquatic life – all being children and servants to the River Goddess. The species found in the Oslir are unique to Dara Happa and everything that can be caught in the water, from fish to weeds, is perfectly edible and of unsurpassed quality – as long as Oslira remains happy and pacified.

Climate

Dara Happa enjoys long, hot, balmy summers and cold, dry winters. Rainfall is modest and occurs mostly during the spring months, but in the winter Dara Happa grows cold, especially in the north where Valind, the Ice God, exercises greater power. The warmth of the spring and summer is relatively uniform, purely as a result of Yelm's munificence. Yelm ensures his people are comfortable but also that the yearly cycles reflect the waxings of the Celestial Court, which rests and sleeps as the year draws to a close.

In the winter the Celestial Court rests and so Valind's icy fingers caress the land, attempting to coax Oslira north to his realm. Every year Oslira refuses, and so Valind becomes angered and tries to freeze her solid with blankets of cold air that descend across the plains causing frosts and patches of ice to float along Oslira's length, like dragonscales. In some years dark clouds – Valind's breath – scud towards the central plain bringing blankets of snow with which to cover the land. This is yet another trick of the Ice God; Valind believes that if the world is covered in white Oslira will forget where she lives and come north in search of somewhere else. But Oslira, bound by her pact with Yelm, and tied inexorably to both Lodril and Shargash, remains steadfast. Eventually, she knows, Valind will grow tired and the Celestial Court will awaken.

Winds are light and predominantly from the north, but Oslir's river magic means that the predominant direction does not hinder shipping and trade along the river's course. The winds, which originate from Valind's realm, are not the product of Orlanth's Storm Tribe and

are only allowed into Dara Happa if they obey Yelm's laws, which Antirius and Lodril enforce. Therefore strong winds and gales are unknown in Dara Happa: the air currents of Dara Happa, like everything else, acknowledge and obey Yelm's supremacy over nature.

The Hinterlands

Stretching out from the river banks the land is marshy and low-lying, perfect for water animals and bird life. Rice paddies occupy the entire length of the Oslir, worked by the lower cast families of the rice producing Associations. Inland the terrain is dry and mostly flat, punctuated by croplands, grazing meadows and orchards. Because Lodril lives underground – and has done since being driven there by the Flood – the land is very fertile despite giving an appearance to the contrary.

Low hills mark the outer edges of Dara Happa, but these are regions of good shelter and grazing, and wealthy noble families have estates here which act as winter refuges when Valind's grip increases as the Celestial Court rests. As Dara Happans are predominantly an urban people the hinterlands are sparsely populated. One can cross from river to hills without encountering a single soul although there are occasional pockets of habitation, small villages clustered around a shrine or temple, that belong to families who have, in some way, become isolated from the cities. This happens when a League or Association is disobeyed and a family is excommunicated, forbidden to live within the vicinity of true power. The residents of these exiled villages understand the justice in their position but do not necessarily like it. Their temples and shrines are therefore dedicated to lesser gods of the Celestial Court and, sometimes, even dedicated to outlawed gods such as Sedenya. Urban Dara Happans tolerate these practices because Yelm's power has been guaranteed since his Glorious Re-ascent and the outlaw gods pose no threat to the Celestial Court.

Yet there is a danger, either misunderstood or wilfully ignored by the Dara Happan nobility. These exiled settlements are perfect territory for draconic conversion and the Hunting and Waltzing bands of the EWF have made great progress in revealing the exiles draconic inner selves. Dragon worship is usually surreptitious, but it is not uncommon to see the shrines and temples decorated with draconic imagery that is hastily covered when true-blooded, devout Solar worshippers happen to pass through.

The People

Dara Happans are completely defined by two things: their long and turbulent history and the continued presence of Yelm and the Celestial Court, which has triumphed even over death. Dara Happans take the view that, just as Yelm conquered death, so can they conquer any adversity no matter how powerful, threatening or dangerous. Dara Happans never accept defeat, although they will accept a certain degree of domination, as long as that domination offers justice, equity and, above all, continued recognition of the Solar gods. Where a superior force attempts to deny or subvert these things, Dara Happan belligerence, resistance and, eventually, rebellion is guaranteed.

All Dara Happans are taught that pride – in oneself, in one's family, in one's League and Association – is a true virtue. Pride creates effort and effort creates prosperity. The Dara Happan that is without pride (such as the folk of Darleep) is without direction and purpose and therefore cannot fully serve the glory of the empire or heed Yelm's calling. So, invaders and occupiers might control Dara Happa's material assets, but the virtue of pride means that the Dara Happan spirit can never be fully dominated. In this way Dara Happans have resisted, and eventually triumphed over, many potential long-term conquerors: the Ram People, the Monsters of the Kazkartum era, and Carmanian insurgency. Even under the rulership of the Golden Dragon and the insidious nature of the EWF and Golden Dragon Society, Dara Happans retain their fundamental faith and spirit. Occupation is merely a temporary state of existence; Yelm's will, demonstrated through pride and innate resilience, ensures that Dara Happa will prevail when the invaders have been wiped completely from Glorantha.

And this self-belief and natural arrogance will prove to be an absolute Dara Happan truth. In the long years to come, when the Middle Sea Empire and EWF have both ceased to exist and become nothing but resented memories, Dara Happa will still prevail throughout Peloria and will eventually form the basis of the dominant force of Glorantha's Third Age: the Lunar Empire.

Physiology

Dara Happans are typically tall, of regal bearing, stocky of build, and with a natural elegance that is a direct

result of their relationship with the ruler of the universe. Their skin is burnished to an almost golden hue and their hair – thick and luxuriant – is either blond or light brown. Eyes are brown or amber, and the facial bone structure is strong and imposing. The Dara Happan nose is a distinctive feature; well defined – almost chiselled – and, in certain aristocratic families, hooked with impressive, flaring nostrils. The eyes are typically heavily lidded and slant downwards at the temple. Lips are thin crescents, and the jaw-line strong and purposeful. Almost without exception Dara Happans are striking in their appearance, from the humblest serf through to the wealthiest aristocrat. A Dara Happan abroad is immediately recognisable, and that all important personal pride means that very few Dara Happans ever dare to deny their heritage or origin.

Personality

Pride is of the greatest importance to Dara Happans, and every Dara Happan can list his family and League lineage for many generations, and will do so at any opportunity when engaging with foreigners. Declaiming lineage in this way asserts the natural supremacy of Dara Happans over other peoples but is never delivered with purposeful arrogance. Dara Happans know and understand humility, but they do not care to make it the basis of their nature. With such an extensive and noble history, Dara Happans expect to be *granted* respect, but do not immediately demand it.

After pride all Dara Happans believe firmly in order and status. Both were defined by Yelm and the gods of the Celestial Court accepted the order and status Yelm conferred upon them. So it is with Dara Happans. They expect every person to know and accept their place in life and society and are intolerant of those who seek to deny or over-play their station. If status and station are questioned, then Yelm's authority is undermined, and this is why Dara Happans can be, and have been, dominated throughout their history. Improving one's station is highly desirable, but denying the station one has been granted is unacceptable, for it is Yelm's Will.

All Dara Happans believe in *justice*, which is not the same as freedom or equality. Justice is Yelm's justice, which means receiving that to which one is entitled according to one's station and through one's deeds. Yelm ordered the cosmos because it lacked order and was in a state of war. His justice established places and

positions, and to each place and position certain values and expectations are accorded. Dara Happan justice is therefore predicated on expecting no *more* and no *less* than one's entitlement. Denying what a man is entitled to is injustice; denying one's position is unjust. The Dara Happan notion of justice includes the concept of hospitality, but precludes charity. A good and just Dara Happan is hospitable to anyone who comes to his house or who seeks help; but hospitality does not automatically grant entitlement. A peasant seeking refuge in the house of a noble will be welcomed but will be given a stable floor to sleep on, bread to eat and water to drink. It is not the peasant's right to expect more, but neither is he expected to accept anything less.

Neither do Dara Happans possess any intrinsic notions of obligation. It is just to listen to the needs of others, but no Dara Happan is ever obliged, save by dint of station, to offer help. The only exceptions to this general rule of obligation is in League and Association dealings, where obligations are a part of membership and belonging. But outside of these artificial institutions, no man is obliged to any other, although justice must always be seen to be done.

All Dara Happans are devout in their faith, but rarely to the point of zealotry. Yelm rules the universe and this is understood, but Yelm does not rule through bigotry or single-minded doctrine. The Celestial Court consists of many beliefs which are integrated through Yelm's wisdom and justice. Thus there are many ways of looking at the world and many ways of acting. Dara Happans accept these differences and do not, as a rule, seek to enforce them on others. Yelm's Way is perfect; it needs no dogmatism or enforced acceptance to prove its perfection. Those who pursue a zealous agenda or attempt to force their beliefs on others are viewed with deep suspicion by all Dara Happans. The EWF, for all its guile and single-minded pursuit of the draconic ideal, seeks to persuade and demonstrate; not to deny or indoctrinate, and this is why it has been successful in drawing Dara Happa into its wider, draconic empire. The God Learners, on the other hand, accept no faith but their One True God and his prophet, Malkion, and are prepared to stamp this belief on all those they encounter. This is fundamentally unjust in Dara Happan eyes and the reason why the God Learners have made few inroads into central Peloria.

In their general outlook Dara Happans are open, as honest as their station entitles them to be, and fond of

laughter at the right times. Despite their aloof physical appearance Dara Happans are welcoming and good company, but maintain a calm reserve when the situation demands it. They are not prone to irrational outbursts or violent rages. Dara Happan anger manifests itself as a cool rebuke followed by a dignified withdrawal. Dara Happan happiness is the abundant use of sly wit, subtle jokes as dry as the desert sands, and a playful chiding that echoes Lodril's earthy humour. Vulgarity and lewdness is disdained, but every Dara Happan harbours a bawdy streak that emerges slowly in the right company and circumstances.

Society

The Emperor Vuranostum created the Four Peoples, the four castes, of Dara Happan society: the Nobles, the Citizens, the Half-Citizens and the Newcomers. These castes are founded on the principles laid out in the Gods' Wall, which is itself arranged into four rows.

Nobles

Those descended from Murharzarm and other emperors. Nobles are entitled to own land, raise armies, form Leagues and define Associations. They are entitled to worship the gods of the First Row of the Gods' Wall and to lead others in worship. Nobles may take the Ten Tests of Empire and are expected to lead the other castes in the respectful worship of the emperor, who is blessed of Yelm.

Nobility usually equates to wealth and few Dara Happan nobles are poor. Money is represented by property and a family presence in at least two of the major cities. Nobles marry within their own caste and employ others to have dealings on their behalf with the lower castes. Nobles make the law but are not considered to be above it. From the Noble cast, justice emanates, and the head of every noble family must strive to be as perfect as Yelm whilst embodying the nature and character of the god he venerates.

CITIZENS

All who live in the cities are Citizens. They are entitled to own their own property, pursue their own profession, and to earn a living as long as the appropriate dues are paid. Citizens may marry into the Noble caste if they can prove their suitability by passing the Ten Tests of Dignity which are:

- To support oneself and one's family
- To have been a good a just citizen
- To have committed no crime
- To have no debt
- To have incurred no dishonour
- To have told no lie
- To have withheld no truth
- To have wronged no man
- To have been hospitable
- To have completed or created something of worth

Citizens are entitled to worship the gods of the second row of the Gods' Wall and to hold station in the temples of their gods. Citizens may not make laws, but they are entitled to ensure that laws are just.

Half Citizens

The rest of Dara Happa society; the peasants, artisans, farmers and those without land or a defined lineage, are Half Citizens. Most do not live in the cities but are entitled to do so if they can pass the Ten Tests of Dignity and be sponsored by a citizen. They are expected to do the bidding of Citizens and Nobles, but may expect a fair and just reward for doing so. They are entitled to hold land and property outside the cities, as long as their holdings do not eclipse those of the Noble who owns or controls the region where they live. Half Citizens can marry within their caste or into the Citizen caste, but must seek the approval of a Noble first. Half Citizens cannot make laws or ensure they are just, but always have recourse to the law whenever they have been wronged.

Half Citizens are entitled to worship the gods of the third and fourth rows of the Gods' Wall.

Newcomers

A Newcomer is anyone not born in Dara Happa or who does not have a Dara Happa ancestor within two generations. Anyone who worships a god not represented on the Gods' Wall is a Newcomer.

Newcomers may rent, but not own, property in a city until they become a Citizen, either through marriage or through conversion to the Solar pantheon. Newcomers may not make laws or see that they are just but, like Half Citizens, are entitled to the law's justice whenever

they have been wronged. However, Dara Happa justice always favours Half Citizens, Citizens and Nobles above Newcomers.

Newcomers are expected to pay taxes and dues in the same way as Citizens and Half Citizens, and may make the same use of a city's facilities. They may not erect shrines or temples to their own gods within the walls of any Dara Happa city, although they may observe their gods' holy days and feast days regardless of where they live.

Women in Dara Happa Society

Dara Happa is firmly patriarchal and women's roles are clearly defined: they are the possession of their husbands, father or brother and, whilst they may be considered as part of one of the four castes, they occupy no positions of authority or influence in any of them. Women bear children, tend the hearth and look after the needs of their men. They do not lead worship, even in female Solar cults, and they do not have any rights to make or ratify laws.

Yet the truth is rather more blurred. Dara Happa women, despite their place in society, can be remarkably forthright. Many women of the noble houses exert a considerable degree of influence through their husbands and sons although, naturally, such influence is never publicly acknowledged. Whilst having a reduced status – effectively being an extension of their husband or father – women are venerated as home-makers and personifications of beauty. The Dara Happa empresses, for example, are considered to be every bit as divine as their husbands and are considered the mothers of the entire empire, attracting homage from male and females alike. Likewise noblewomen are accorded respect despite being possessions, because through them all lineages must be determined. The ambition of every good Dara Happa man is to find a wife who will be dutiful, beautiful, clever (but not too clever), bring a good dowry, and bear strong, healthy sons, and good, healthy daughters that can be used to marry into other families, hopefully with a higher standing.

Dara Happa women are respectful of their place and these traditions. Commanding power behind the scenes can be far less dangerous than wielding it openly. Women teach their daughters to watch, listen and act with subtlety so that when the time comes, they will know how to control their husbands through the Five

Ways of Womanhood: Love, Lust, Duty, Wisdom and Childbirth. Each of the Five Ways is used differently, and every woman who desires to be more than a mere chattel learns how to employ the Five Ways to ensure her position and profit from it.

Women may worship any of the gods appropriate to their caste although it is traditional for women to worship the female gods. Those women who favour the Ways of Love and Lust gravitate towards the cult of Uleria, which is the only cult that has priestesses rather than priests.

Appearance and Customs

Traditionally Dara Happan men neither shave nor cut their hair. Hair and beards, when they grow long, are styled into oiled or waxed ringlets using a curling iron, and may be trimmed to keep the edges of the hair perfectly straight or to cut the design into something aesthetically pleasing. Women also wear their hair in tightly curled ringlets, but arrange their hair into towering piles rather than wearing it long or flowing.

Dress is very important to all Dara Happans. The base garment is the tunic, for men, and the shift, for women, a loose-fitting gown of cotton or linen, usually undyed. The length of the tunic or shift, like the length of all Dara Happan garments, is determined by caste and status within it. The higher the caste and the higher the status, the longer the reach of the garment. Those of the highest rank wear a tunic or shift that reaches to the base of the ankle; lower ranks wear shorter clothes.

A toga is worn over the base garment by the upper echelons of Dara Happan society when engaged on official business. This is a length of linen, wool or silk that is wrapped around the body to form both an upper jacket and a lower skirt, gathered at the waist by a belt or sash. The cut, colour and design of the toga's fastening is dependent on the League the individual belongs to, and every design and style is unique. It is forbidden to wear the toga fashion of any League one is not a member of, and the League designs are catalogued and checked to ensure this tradition is maintained.

Further dress layers are optional, but include top robes, jackets (length, again, depending on status), shawls, drapes and upper skirts for both sexes. Hats are popular

with men and worn as part of League regalia. Veils and headscarves are favoured by women.

Amongst the lower castes, trousers are favoured over skirts and kilts. Trousers, being considered 'low dress' can be of any length, and immediately mark someone as either Half Citizen or Newcomer.

Footwear is either a pair of open-toed sandals, secured by leather laces that wrap around the ankle and calf, or, when outside the city or engaged in a great deal of walking, sturdy, calf-length boots. Women traditionally wear sandals or go barefoot, often wearing ankle-bracelets decorated with small bells of bronze or silver.

Jewellery is fashionable with the Citizens and Nobles; ear-rings, nose-rings, lip-rings and eyebrow rings being common features in both men and women. Tattoos are shunned, seen as being the marks of barbarians, although temporary skin designs of henna or non-permanent ink are sometimes worn for League and Association rituals. Most designs represent the Solar pantheon – sun bursts, sacred animals and so forth.



In the city it is customary for all men to carry a dagger which may be worn openly. Keeping a dagger concealed is not illegal, but is considered to be poor manners and unjust – a man has a right to know what weapons his enemy has! Swords and spears can only be carried by martial Leagues that have the necessary dispensation from the emperor, and only militia and the army can carry polearms or bows.

Greeting someone of one's own caste is done with a nod of the head and pressing the palm of the right hand to the heart. Greeting someone of the lower caste requires nothing more than a nod of the head. When in the presence of the Imperial Family, one must drop to the knees and bow once, after which one may stand, but the head is to be kept bowed until instructed to raise it or act with ease.

Personal space is very important to all Dara Happans and it is poor manners to invade it. Personal space is considered to be half a metre in radius from the heart; entering that personal space without invitation makes Dara Happans very uncomfortable and is likely to attract an angry rebuke.

Other Dara Happan customs include:

- Lower castes may never cross a threshold unless invited
- Higher castes always enter before lower castes
- Yellow may only be worn by Nobles and Citizens
- Only women may wear rings on their thumbs
- Food is eaten with the right hand only
- A good, loud belch signifies appreciation of a meal
- A small amount of food is always set aside for the gods
- Slaves and servants may be slapped but never whipped
- Nobles consider unnecessary displays of flesh unseemly
- Never declaim one's lineage too loudly, no matter how lengthy and illustrious
- Always walk on the left
- Only raise one's voice when calling for silence
- Never admit to failure or defeat, but acknowledge when an opponent has won the day.

Language

Dara Happans speak two main languages: Solar Pelorian and Lower Pelorian.

Solar Pelorian is the language of Nobles and Citizens. It is used for official documents, high address, conferences, and all formal exchanges. It is a fast, flowing tongue with a cuneiform script that was devised by the Celestial Court to describe the harmony of the cosmos. Half Citizens generally understand Solar Pelorian but are forbidden to use it.

Lower Pelorian is the standard, conversational tongue derived from Solar Pelorian. It is a clipped, brusquer version of Solar and, whilst being considered the tongue of the Half Citizens, is widely used in every day speech by all castes.

A third language, *City Common*, is a mixture of Lower Pelorian and several Theyalan languages. It is essentially a traders' language used sparingly when dealing with Newcomers who do not speak either of the main languages with any great fluency.

Diet

Pelorian rice, a starchy, hardy grain, is the staple of every Dara Happan meal, regardless of caste. It is eaten boiled but is also fried and baked, mixed with cream, and formed into cakes. Flatbreads are a dish for Half Citizens; lengths of unleavened bread cut into squares and folded to form a pocket for rice and vegetables.

Fish from the Oslir forms the bulk of the protein, and the fish Oslira provides are always fat, succulent and flavoursome. Fish is usually steamed or lightly grilled, flavoured with lemon, almond and river herbs.

Meat is less common, and the preserve of the Nobles and wealthier Citizens. Beef and pork are the most popular meats; mutton, lamb and goat are never eaten – the latter due to its association with brood, and the former two because the Ram God led its people against Dara Happa centuries ago. Eating the carcass of one's enemies is seen as the mark of the digijelm – not loyal Dara Happans.

Fruits and vegetables abound: lemons, oranges, dates, figs, pomegranate and olives being very popular. A sauce made from pureed river spinach and black olives is a favourite condiment.

The Leagues and Associations

The Leagues and Associations came into being shortly after the emperor Erzanestyu instituted the Senate and named the seventeen families as being the Great Families. Under Senate direction the seventeen families adopted a separate function and so became the first Leagues. Dara Happans require three things to feel secure: *station*, so that they know their place in society; *rules*, so that they know how they must live their lives; and *justice*, so they know that Yelm's laws are being applied as they should be. The Leagues and Associations institute these three requirements perfectly and together they permeate Dara Happan society and bind it into a rigid whole.

Leagues comprise of families who share the same or similar function or profession. Skills and knowledge are traded between members of the League and this creates a path towards perfection. Families within a League may specialise in a particular aspect of their vocation, and they are encouraged to attain mastery of that specialisation; other families remain content to

function simply and mechanically, safe in the mutual support of the League. Leagues protect their members' interests fiercely but do not seek to do-down the interests of competing Leagues. Instead Leagues diversify and specialise to maintain their distinction and no two leagues offer the same function in the same way.

When Leagues of different functions ally to support each other, Associations are formed. The number and diversity of Leagues within an Association defines its power and influence but other factors are important, such as age, the status and prestige of its Leagues and the reputations and stations of the families involved. Associations are not permanent entities; League membership can be transitory and some Associations are formed to achieve specific ends. Once achieved the Association dissolves or becomes something else. But, for the most part, Associations are long-lived entities that develop their own codes of ethics, values, power structures and, sometimes, mythologies. Whereas Leagues are determined by function, Associations are defined by more abstract forms: political or religious goals; mercantile or military ambitions; veneration of a particular deity or cult.

Long standing Associations – those with considerable influence and history – control parts of Dara Happan cities. These Imperial Associations have achieved permanence simply through continued existence and it would be difficult to see them dissolving, although their goals and values may have changed considerably over the years.

Associations constantly seek to improve their status and this means attracting the membership of the most prestigious Leagues. Whenever a League breaks from an Association, or an Association dissolves, emissaries from Associations interested in attracting the League's membership make formal approaches and a period of intense negotiation begins, often with rival Associations entering a bidding war. Inter-Association wars are not unknown in Dara Happa, either as ambitious Leagues aim to set rival Associations against each other, or because underhand tactics are used to secure a particular League's membership.

The Associations and Magic

At a crude level, the Leagues and Associations can be likened to cults. Each has its rules of conduct and membership, and in some cases membership of a

The Seventeen Functions

- Agriculture
- Architecture
- Breadmaking (Cookery)
- Building
- Ceramics (Jewellery)
- Diplomacy
- Irrigation
- Justice
- Land Trade
- Learning
- Metalworking
- River Trade
- Security
- Textiles
- Viticulture
- War (Warriors and Mercenaries)
- Worship

particular cult is essential to join the Association. Leagues have levels of membership with particular duties tied to each level, and every League and Association maintains a series of myths explaining how it came into being, its place in the world, the powers it commands and how it differs from others performing a similar function.

Each League teaches a range of Folk Magic (see page 93 onwards of *The Players' Guide to Glorantha*) spells to its members; simple charms and incantations that have been developed over centuries to assist the League's work or in response to specific needs. Associations have developed more magic to assist in securing their position, either divine spells granted by the gods or rune spells offered as part of an Association owning and integrating a particular rune.

Every person, being a member of a League, is taught a total 3+1D3 Magnitude of Folk Magic, and 1D3 specific spells for their Association.

Common Folk Magic Amongst the Leagues
The types of Folk Magic taught by Leagues are below, including a selection of new Folk Magic spells.

Advocacy – Mindbright, Silver Tongue

Agriculture – Crop Grow (+5% bonus to Lore (Plant) per point of Magnitude when commencing planting), Identify Herbs

Architecture and Building – Mind Bright, True Line (+5% bonus per point of Magnitude to Engineering or Mechanisms when designing or figuring out mechanical/engineering/architectural principles),

Cookery – Identify Herb, Sure Taste (+5% bonus to any cookery skills, plus the dish is guaranteed to never burn or overcook)

Ceramics and Jewellery – Bronzsmith (similar variants exist for each specific metal or material), Silver Tongue

Diplomacy – Insight (+5% bonus to Perception for each point of Magnitude when the spell is used to determine the motive or agenda of others), Silver Tongue

Irrigation – Spot Snare, True Line (see above)

Justice – Insight (see above), Wisdom of Antirius (+5% bonus to Influence or Perception per point of Magnitude when trying to convey advice, or when trying to get to the heart of a moral dilemma)

Land Trade – Mindbright, Silver Tongue

Learning – Mindbright, Speed Read (allows the caster to absorb the meaning of five pages of text in one second per point of Magnitude).

Metal Working – Bladesmith, Bronzsmith

River Trade – Silvertongue, Water Way (increases Boating or Shiphandling by 5% for each point of Magnitude)

Security, War – Strongarm, Surefoot, Swordstrike

Textiles – Pure Weave (+5% to any Craft skill associated with textiles per point of Magnitude)

Viticulture – Crop Grow, Sure Taste (see above)

Rune and Divine Magic for Associations

The magic an Association uses benefits all its members and is used to enhance the Association's social position. Generally every Association teaches three or four spells, a mixture of rune and divine magic appropriate to its aims. When deciding the spells an Association has access to, consider:

- Cult associations and Runes possessed by the cult
- The Association's broad and specific aims
- The member Leagues

Association Skills

In addition to magical benefits, and in much the same way as cults, Associations teach skills to their members, either through the League members or through tutors and trainers hired specifically for the purpose. A benefit to the Association system is that training is generally free to its members, since the Association's aims are deemed to be benefiting from offering the training, and costs to support training are generally absorbed in the membership fee each League has to pay as part of its membership conditions.

League Dress and Association Devices

Every League adopts a uniform. This is some form of distinguishing clothing unique to that League's members. It might be as simple as the colouration of a robe, a style of hat, or the cut of the sleeve, or be deliberately ostentatious such as strikingly designed clothes that assert the League's existence and status. This is the one area in which the notoriously aloof and conservative Dara Happans allow themselves some calculated breaks from tradition (although the uniform itself is a highly traditional form of symbolism).

Association membership is more subdued. Associations are not always permanent institutions whereas Leagues are. The regalia denoting membership of an Association are therefore some form of agreed insignia that can be worn on the clothing as a device, rather than a particular style or colour of clothing. Badges, patches, brooches, necklaces, circlets and torques are the traditional methods of displaying affiliation with an Association.

It is illegal for someone to wear the regalia of a League or Association they do not legitimately belong to. Every League and Association is registered in Raibanth at the Glorious League and Association Registry the precise nature of the regalia documented and a sample submitted for the registry archive. Registry agents are schooled in the membership, lore and traditions of the many different Leagues and Associations and make frequent spot-checks on individuals to ensure that the traditions of these peculiar Dara Happan institutions are not being corrupted. Questions might be simple ('Who is the current chairman of the Swamp Sifters League?') through to the more challenging ('List every family of the True Dragon Chroniclers living within Yuthuppa'). If an adequate answer is not given, the Registrars have the power to arrest the culprit. Nobles can expect to be released with a fine and a Shame Mark placed against their real League's records. Enough Shame Marks and the League itself is fined a substantial sum in gold. Lower castes can expect anything from a fine through to imprisonment or public corporal punishment depending on the severity of their transgression.

Sample Association and Leagues, with full benefits and dress codes, are provided in the *Cults and Associations of the Sun* chapter.

The Cities

It is misleading to term them cities. These are the clumsy footprints of their gods, treading an unenlightened path that we are destined to clarify. People might live and move in these footprints, much as insects might move in the footprints of a giant, and some of these insects have a kind of purpose. It is our duty and right to show them the scale and nature of the footprint. Only in draconic wisdom can they hope to find their way.

— Lorenkarten the Mile, to the Eternal Dragon Ring

Dara Happan cities are architectural marvels built to Murharzarm's Grand Scheme ensuring the sacred principles of Yelm are forever eminent. With the exception of Alkoth, every city is surrounded by a vast, square wall, its top formed into stepped battlements and with a mighty square tower at each corner.

Every city has a main gate leading directly into the Processional. The main gate is a huge arch lined with countless ceramic tiles coloured for the quarter the city resides in. The tiles are decorated with bas reliefs depicting the passage of the Celestial Court, always headed by Yelm in a golden chariot. Following these decorations from city to city one finds that they tell the story of Yelm's glorious re-ascent from the underworld, having vanquished Death. Each archway and gate is a breathtaking architectural feat that cannot fail to inspire those passing into the city.

North of the gate is the Processional, leading to the ziggurat located at the city's centre. The processional is flanked on either side by representations of all the gods of the Solar pantheon, the highest gods being located closest to the ziggurat (which represents Yelm) and the lesser gods represented closest to the gate. Each representation is a statue set atop a building-sized plinth of dressed stone. Each plinth is hollow and within is a shrine to the god set above it. The Processional is therefore an entire temple leading up to the greatest

temple of all and everyone entering a Dara Happan city knows precisely where to offer worship and how far they may proceed along the Processional.

At the centre of each city is a ziggurat dedicated to the major deity associated with that city. Yelm's temple is the Imperial Footrest in Raibanth. Lodril's is the ziggurat of Akuturos; Shargash's is in Alkoth. The ziggurat of Yuthuppa is shared by Antirius and Buserian: the Word of God and the Word's transcriber.

Each city is divided into quarters, for the four directions Yelm determined as one of his first acts as ruler of the cosmos. Every quarter supports a particular function or set of functions and each quarter is divided into a further four quarters where specific functions are based. Thus every city is comprised of sixteen functions, and every quarter is controlled by an Association. Controlling Associations are known as Imperial Associations and they have the power to allow other, lesser Associations to operate within their quarter, as appropriate to their quarter's function. Gaining the trust and support of an Imperial Function is therefore of primary importance to every Association operating within Dara Happa. For an Association to lack a presence within a city quarter is to lack status – and status is everything to the Dara Happa noble tradition.

Whilst the rule of quarters dominates Dara Happa cities there is a fifth administrative division: the ziggurat itself. Ziggurats are not controlled by the Associations because they are controlled by the emperor himself. The priests who control the ziggurat are ultimately answerable to the Imperial priesthood of Yelm in Raibanth, and Raibanth's priesthood is answerable directly to the Golden Dragon.

No ziggurat is as grand or awe-inspiring as the Imperial Footrest but each is still a marvel to behold. The ziggurats have either five tiers or ten, depending on the status of the god worshipped, and every tier has a set of stairs located in the precise centre of each side of its square and the number of stairs is divisible by ten without fail.

The base tier is home to the servants and slaves serving the temple. The second houses the temple administration. The third tier houses the temple guards and the fourth tier the priesthood. The fifth tier is home to the governor of the city and his family.

Within each tier are dozens, if not hundreds, of shrines to the different aspects of the god the temple venerates. Priests come and go continually, as do those worshippers permitted to worship there. Worshippers with the highest social status worship in the upper tiers although only noble families are ever permitted to worship at the ziggurat. Dara Happa social importance is therefore a complex combination of wealth, League membership, Association membership, representation within a city quarter and then where in the ziggurat it is permitted to worship. Advancing in one – either through deeds, donations or imperial favour – leads to an increase in station in the other components of the status assembly. The aim of every person in every family in every League in every Association is ascension. To be closer to Yelm.

Akuturos – The City of Dirt

Akuturos was home to Lodril and was one of the Ten Cities built under Murharzarm's decree. It was a fine place, despite its name, producing the finest crafts anywhere and at anytime in the empire's glorious history. All that came to an end with the Flood, when Akuturos was swept away, imprisoning Lodril deep underground where his household was beset by the demonic, shadowy, *dehori* and the *digijelm* – the hated *uz*.

Akuturos is in the far west of Dara Happa between the borders of Dara Happa, Darjinn and Pelanda. Little remains of Akuturos in the present-day; parts of the old city wall still stand, forming a rough perimeter, but it is easy to see where the waters crashed through, hurling huge boulders of stone which now litter the countryside, perched precariously on top of each other where Lodril tried to fend them off. Inside the city walls are the ruins: old, crumbling walls, the outlines of walls, huge heaps of rubble and, in the centre, the broken and tragic pyramid of rubble that was Lodril's ziggurat.

It is a truly forlorn place. Akuturos cannot be rebuilt whilst Lodril is kept beneath the ground even though the flood dissipated long ago. Between Lodril's underground domain and Akuturos's ruins is the domain of the *dehori* and they still plague the surface remains of the city. They cannot – and dare not – surface during the daylight hours because Yelm would pierce them with sunspears, but at night, Akuturos is their playground. As soon as darkness descends, the shadows in the rubble coalesce and gain substance

The Towers of Dara Happa

The Dara Happans are well known for their love of tall towers stretching into the sky. What is less known is that there are three basic styles of Dara Happan towers, each style associated with one of the ancient cities.

The Star Towers Of Yuthuppa

The highest are the 100 (10x10) *Star Towers* of Yuthuppa, that stretch so high that they enter the Sky World. Also called *gates from heaven and to earth*, the upper reaches of these towers literally connect with the Sky World. This is not by virtue of their actual height but through magical means inherent in their design. These tall, elegant, slender spires are wonders of Dara Happan architecture. Each Star Tower consists of three parts: a base, a shaft, and a viewing gallery. The shaft is either conical (tapering at the top), cylindrical (a circular shaft) or polygonal (with edges, as opposed to cylindrical). Some believe there is a deep significance to the number of sides.

Stairs circle the inside of the shaft in a counter-clockwise fashion as one ascends, providing the necessary structural support for the highly elongated shafts. Openings at differing intervals show certain constellations during the year. The gallery is an open balcony which encircles the upper sections where the Star Seers watch the heavens. It is often covered by a roof-like open lattice canopy and adorned with ornamentation, such as decorative brick and tile work, cornices, arches and inscriptions. The gallery is actually a temple that opens into the Star World, even without ceremony.

At each opening, and atop each tower is a torch of the Envyuthic Guild - remarkably, this light never manages to outshine the night sky above the city. During the daytime, the 100 Star Towers glow visibly and the pattern of the stars is that of when the city was built and includes stars that are no longer visible.

Each Star Tower reveals a specific celestial myth. On certain days of the year, pilgrims go to specific towers which are enchanted with momentous events and powers. On the given date, the openings of the tower reveal the specific celestial entities which are in the given myth - and always reveal some aspects which are not given in the spoken or written tales. As a result, the towers are all officially named as a specific date. Commoners also know the story of the tower and call it by that title. For example, the Tower of the Eight Lights reveals secrets associated with Burburstus and the Virtue Stars. The diameter of the base is 32 cubits in width, while the gallery is little more than 6 cubits wide. The mundane height of the tower is an impossible 400 cubits.

The Ziggurats Of Raibanth

In the center of Raibanth is located the Footstool of Yelm, the Selshena. It was created when Yelm lowered the Staff of Justice from the Sky to the Earth - where it approached the earth up rose the Footstool, and from atop that rose the sheer Tower of Yelm. The Footstool is an immense ziggurat, a ten-tiered stepped pyramid with facings of colorful glazed brick of celestial significance. The Sacred Processional Way of Raibanth leads from the Triumphal Road to the Footstool - the Way is lined

with walls covered with decorated glazed brick. The ziggurat rises some 200 cubits high, with large stairways providing access up to the fifth-tier. A sacred stairway leads to the highest level and the Tower of Yelm. The top tier is the temple and all-seeing throne of the Emperor.

The Tower of Yelm rises from the top tier into the Sky World. It is not of this world, although to commoners and foreigners it often appears to be a ten sided polygonal shaft, a single elaborately carved piece of steadfast rock, which is so hard no tool can cut it. A spiral staircase ascends from the Footstool to Kelastan, the Throne of Yelm. The Tower is Ledareeshata, the Pillar of Light, who connects the Above and Below. None but the Emperor dare try to ascend the Tower.

Raibanth has many lesser ziggurats as well - homes for the gods of the Celestial pantheon, such as the Eight Sons or of Raibamus with its great stone statue of the Citymaker. Most cities of Dara Happa have constructed ziggurats in emulation of the Footstool. For example, the Great Tower of Sankendavu in Orlentos, the Sacred Bastion of Yunirtos, the Ziggurat of Kavlostos and the once grand Temple of Heaven and Earth in Yukorvikoth are all architecturally based on the Footstool.

The Enclosures Of Alkoth

The Alkothi contribution to Dara Happa architecture is the Enclosure. The Temples of Shargash are officially called Enclosures, for they are unlike any temples to other gods. They are high walls decorated with hundreds of heads and skulls of the slain enemies of the city. They are entirely open to the sky, except for a few small buildings where the attendants live and supplies are kept. The inner walls of the temple are covered with scenes of the Underworld where the Dead Gods sit and suffer. Otherwise, Alkoth has no real tall towers, just squat and fat ziggurats. The so-called Great Ziggurat of Alkoth is a squat, terraced red ziggurat that is the fortress-residence of the Red King of Alkoth and was originally constructed by Eusibus.

The Towers Of DARA NI

The original settlers of Dara Ni were a Darjinni folk who followed the Manimati First Dynasty kings. The name literally means Dar's people's Valley (or Red-Earth people's Valley). At the Dawn they were ruled over by the Hirenmador and fought over by the Hyalorings. Dara Ni was a main battleground in the wars between the High Council and the Warlords, and later between the High Council and the Dara Happa Empire. It has been ruled by Heortlings, Talastarings, Syllilans, Alkothings, the EWF, the Dara Happa Empire and others. As a result, it is a diverse mosaic of competing, conflicting and often violently feuding cultures.

The city lords of Dara Ni have built *groves* of tall stone pillars to appease the aldryami of Rist since the Darkness. During the Second Age, rich families have constructed their own tall towers, partially for religious purposes, partially for offensive and defensive purposes during the many internal feuds that wracked Dara Ni. Scores of tall narrow towers were built, some rising more than 220 cubits. Atop most towers is a grove sacred to the Red-Earth goddess of the valley and of Rist.

and horror as the dehoru creep up from their hell-hole domain and seize the night, turning it into something malleable, ravenous and terrifying. Damned souls cast out of Hell by Shargash are sometimes dragged up to the surface to be tortured and tormented amongst Akuturos's ruins, set loose by the screeching dehoru, and then hunted until shortly before dawn, when the soul is caught and torn to shreds, its agonised screams fading as the sun strikes the ruined stones and the dehoru sink back to their realm.

Physical prey is a delight to the dehoru, and they will forget any souls they are tormenting to chase living flesh and blood instead. Being caught in the ruins of Akuturos at night is therefore incredibly dangerous. Despite having bodies composed of darkness they can inflict physical damage and then meld again with the shadows. Only trolls, with their Darksense, can see where dehoru lurk and are unafraid of them; as darkness creatures themselves, the uz find it easy to spot and catch dehoru and eat them – fresh dehoru being a particular delicacy for Great and Mistress Race trolls alike. Appropriately enough, dehoru fear the uz and will not attack them unless they feel sure they can win the fight.

Dehoru are susceptible to all magic using the Darkness rune and sustain double damage from any spells or weapons that have been blessed with it.

Akuturos gives every impression of being dead and the dehoru's presence reinforces it, but many secrets lurk in the city's dark depths. This was, after all, Lodril's home and the artisans who lived with him were the greatest of Dara Happa. Deep beneath the remains of the ziggurat, accessed via a maze of tunnels and collapsed passageways are the sacred forges of Lodril where he, and his workers, crafted the most exquisite of things – all of prime utility, perfect in their form and function – and all valuable beyond compare. Present day Dara Happa artisans are some of the best in Glorantha but the workers of Akuturos surpassed even the greatest. Hidden in the subterranean forges are weapons of perfect balance and beauty; chariots of speed, grace and elegance; armour that can turn the sharpest spear point or the truest sword thrust. And not just treasures of battle: jewellery, pottery, ceramics, wicker-work – all are there to be found, if the dehoru guardians can be bypassed or killed.

Any true emperor of Dara Happa (or his appointed representatives), with the right knowledge and the will to do so, can Heroquest to the depths where Lodril is held hostage. His aspect, Lodril the Artisan, battles constantly against the goddess Dehore herself, attempting to reawaken his slumbering co-workers. This knowledge has been lost to the imperial line and is suppressed by the Golden Dragon Society which fears the havoc Lodril would create if he were to arise and rebuild Akuturos, for it would strengthen Alkoth and provide the very weapons of Shargash and his Hellmen. If Akuturos was to be rebuilt, it would act as a signal of rebellion against the EWF and that is a risk the Golden Dragon Society will not take. Shargash is powerful enough; Akuturos and Lodril would make him invincible.

Dehoru

Dehoru is a standard name for any creature born of the darkness deity Dehore. Here, the dehoru are the Shadow Thieves. Shadow thieves are neither pure spirits nor solid creatures, dehoru are composed of darkness and shadow, assuming terrible, three dimensional forms that can take almost shape. Man-sized, bipedal creatures are favoured, with hideous snarling faces of shadow, eyeless



and leering, clawed limbs reaching out for either souls or meat. They have no recognisable language, save for their sickening, snuffling grunts and ear-cracking, high-pitched screams as they sense prey is close.

Like shades, the darkness elementals, dehori can douse small lights, such as candles or lanterns and can hide objects within their volume. A dehori may engulf an area equal to its SIZ.or less. Anyone engulfed by a dehori is deprived of their senses: touch and hearing are numbed (–75% to Perception skill tests based on those senses), sight is impossible and the freezing air even muffles the sense of smell (–50% to Perception skill tests based on smell). Dehori block the Traits of Earth Sense, Life Sense and Night Sight automatically.

A slain dehori has a percentage chance equal to its POW to leave behind a Darkness rune in its remains.

Dehori are semi-corporeal and sustain only half damage from normal weapons. Weapons inscribed with the Darkness rune, or made from iron, inflict double damage.

CHARACTERISTICS

STR 2D6+4 (11)
CON 2D6+1 (8)
DEX 4D6 (14)
SIZ 2D6+6 (13)
INT 2D6 (7)
POW 3D6 (11)
CHA 1 (1)

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	–/5
4-6	Left Leg	–/5
7-9	Abdomen	–/6
10-12	Chest	–/7
13-15	Right Arm	–/4
16-18	Left Arm	–/4
19-20	Head	–/5

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Claw	45%	1D4+1

Special Rules

Combat Actions:3

Strike Rank: +11

Movement: 4m

Traits: Darksense, Lifesense

Skills: Perception 30%, Persistence 45%, Resilience 45%, Stealth 35%

Combat

Dehori attack with claws and, when engulfing a victim, *fearshock*. Fearshock is a direct assault on the victim's psyche, presenting him with images of the dehori's hellish chthonic realm - so terrible that, in the most extreme cases, they may cause instant death.

When a dehori uses fearshock on a victim, it matches its Persistence against the victim's Resilience in an opposed test. The Dehori Fearshock Effect table determines the result.

Dehori Fearshock Effect

Result	Outcome
Dehori Succeeds, Victim Fails	Victim collapses for 20 minus CON rounds and must roll a successful Resilience test or die.
Both Fail	Victim is Demoralised (as the Rune Magic spell). The effects last for 20 minus CON rounds.
Both Succeed	No effect on creatures with normal INT. Creatures with fixed INT are Demoralised (as the Rune Magic spell) for 20 minus CON rounds.
Dehori Fails, Victim Succeeds	Victim unaffected, cannot be targeted again for 24 hours.

A dehori can only use fearshock on a given victim once per round. Unconscious beings are immune to fearshock.

In addition to the fearshock attack, dehori generate an aura of intense cold. This causes no damage to creatures near the dehori (though they can certainly feel it), but it does damage creatures wholly or partially engulfed by the dehori. Every round a dehori is engulfing a victim, the victim takes 1 hit point of cold damage to one of the locations engulfed by the dehori. Armour and protective clothing are helpless to prevent this damage.

If the dehori has enough Combat Actions, it may combine fearshock and freezing in the same combat round.

Alkoth

Alkoth deviates from the essential nature of Dara Happa cities. First, its wall is a perfect, unbroken circle of jade, the torque of the war god Shargash, cast down to Glorantha, and forming a direct portal to Hell. Second, Shargash himself lives within Alkoth's wall; he is far more than a mere representation and his influence is a tangible presence affecting everything within the jade enclosure. Third, the city is ruled by three separate kings that, in different ways, acknowledge the existence of the emperor but pursue, first and foremost, Shargash's agenda. Therefore Alkoth is both a part of the Dara Happa empire and separate from it.

Alkoth's walls are utterly impenetrable and its people are implacable. The creatures of the underworld live side by side with the Alkothi, their sinister appearance and half-dead nature posing no concern to the humans with whom they cohabit. All humans within Alkoth are considered to be ritually dead themselves, and this strange state of being inures them to the walking dead and demons haunting Shargash's holy city.

For all its strange nature Alkoth is very much a Dara Happa city, observing the traditional Dara Happa customs (Shargash has ever been a dutiful brother). Its nature and reputation means it is rightly feared; Alkothi have no fear of death and relish the opportunity to enter completely Shargash's underworld, taking with them as many foes as they can.

Alkoth receives a fuller description in the *Green Walls of Hell* chapter.

Darleep

The sleepy city of Darleep was part of the original ten cities but is now considered to be part of Kostadi although it is governed and administered by the Enemy of Monsters Conclave, a Dara Happa Association specialising in long-term administrative projects.

Darleep's history has been turbulent. Between 110,112 and 665, a time known as The Empty Emperor era, Darleep was seat to several inhuman overlords that controlled southern Dara Happa in the wake of the death of the emperor Manimat. A seat of perpetual chaos, Darleep became home to monsters and demons, and the human populace was forced into debauched and



dreadful ways, some of which are recorded in graphic detail in the blasphemous and outlawed Red Book of Mohvistus. The people worshipped evil gods in evil ways, either by force or choice, and built several large temples to their festering deities north and south of the city. The hero, Vuranostum, brought his Heroband to liberate Darleep and fought the Battle of Six Heads to free the city. Then he sacked the temples of evil, slaying everyone he found – human and monster – to end their corruption. At the northern temple, a spiked parody of a ziggurat, Vuranostum faced the Insect God, which grew human heads from its antennae, and spent three days and nights fighting the monster. When it was slain Vuranostum tried to destroy every image of the foul thing but one inscription, carved deep into the floor of the temple, refused to be destroyed and it perpetuates even now, growing up through a huge slab of rock.

With the rule of monsters broken Darleep returned to Yelm and became a good centre of trade, ruled by the Farmers Collective since the city stands in the middle of excellent farm land and produces wheat, corn and other crops that are sent to all the cities of Dara Happa. Yet despite its liberation, something mournful infects the people. The Darlappi are dour, hard working, and

desperate to please, walking around with bent heads and little personal pride. There is little spirit in Darleep, and if left to its own devices it would simple fold into apathy, eventually to crumble. As a consequence of this miserable state of affairs Darleep has always been open to challenge. It passed peacefully into Kostadi hands in early 800, but Kostadi has displayed little interest in the place. In 111,866 a combined army of Carmania and the EWF annexed the city meeting little resistance. Control passed to the Golden Dragon Society and in 111,900 the Society appointed the Enemy of Monsters Conclave, a Golden Dragon Society offshoot, to rule the city.

Were it not for the fine farmlands surrounding Darleep, it would be largely forgotten by the empire. Even the Enemy of Monsters Conclave has been unable to shake the apathy its citizens display although it has not stopped trying. The entire city is engaged in a deep meditative project to lift its ennui with compulsory meditation ceremonies held at sunrise, noon and sunset, Conclave members guiding the people in a series of contemplative rituals that are designed to regress the city's collective subconscious back to the time when it was ruled by monsters in a bid to lift the depression.

The Conclave has determined that Darleep is cursed by some deep magic. Certain sections of the populace become outgoing and forthright when reliving the blasphemous rituals their ancestors were forced to practice during the Insect God's rule. Once these regressive meditations have finished, the depression returns.

There are now several theories as to what to do next. One League of the Conclave declares that the northern temple which still bears the graven image of the Insect God must be consumed by a dragon. The Golden Dragon emperor is too pure to do such a thing, so the Kunuvyar League believes that the whole city must become a dragon – a miniature form of the EWF Great Dragon Project – and do the devouring itself. The Sonuvius League, which controls public affairs, disputes this approach, and believes that dragonewts must be brought to the city so that the Insect God can be treated as part of the dragonewt Orxilius Ritual and its image consumed that way. The most drastic treatment is proposed by the First League of Emerald, which maintains that, to achieve closure, the citizens of Darleep must return to the monster worship of their ancestors and raise the Insect God from hell so that it

can be slain by a member of the Eternal Dragon Ring. The people of Darleep, confused and forlorn, plod through their daily lives, deeply troubled by all these conflicting plans, but unable to summon the will to accept one or reject them all.

The secret to restoring Darleep's energy and pride does not lie in any of the draconic solutions the Enemy of Monsters Conclave mistakenly pursues. In considering complex solutions the Conclave has continually overlooked the obvious. Nowhere in Darleep is there a temple to Erisa. Building a temple of healing will begin the healing process for the people, purging their black, ancestral memories with no need for draconic transformation. The second part of the solution does revolve around the Insect God but requires no return to its worship. Darleep is awash with insects of every shape, size and type. They infest grain sacks and mattresses, spoil wine, and skitter through the walls. Ridding the city of insects would allow Erisa healing rituals to cleanse Darleep of its enforced fug of insouciance. Finally, if the stone bearing the graven image of the Insect God is moved to Alkoth, Shargash himself will devour its blasphemy with a single swallow, and Darleep's curse will be lifted.

Elempur

Now a sacred ruin Elempur is the most southerly of the Dara Happa cities. Once it was the home of the Urengeri who worshipped the god of the city, Urengerum. In the time of Anaxial, Urengerum and his followers protected the southlands of the empire from invaders and Urengerum discovered the secret of the bow, which he taught to the Urengeri. The Urengeri went on to become the greatest archers of Dara Happa, being able to fire with speed and accuracy from the back of the fastest horse or swiftest chariot.

Elempur was finally besieged in the reign of the emperor Urvairinus by the Ram People, led by the mendacious Ram God which had a pelt of pure iron. Urengerum was advised by the emperor to use wisdom rather than force in his dealings with the Ram People, but the Ram God could not be reasoned with and negotiation descended swiftly into battle. The harsh magic and the iron weapons of the Ram God meant that Elempur was overwhelmed and burned. The Urengeri were dispersed and Urengerum went to the underworld to seek Yelm himself for counsel.

In the end, the Ram God was defeated by Urvairinus and Shargash, and Shargash used the Ram God's body to prevent the invasion of Valind from the north. However Elempur was in ruins and its people scattered across southern Dara Happa and Darjinn. Urvairinus decreed that Elempur should never be rebuilt and he offered Urengerum sanctuary within Raibanth.

Many of the Urengeri moved north to be close to their city god, but many remained behind. They were mindful of Urvairinus's decree that Elempur should remain ruined and did not rebuild it; instead, they built a fresh settlement around the ruins. The name Elempur therefore relates to the ruined city; the city surrounding Elempur is known simply as the Gate to Elempur. Here the descendents of the Urengeri still live, protecting the southern border as they always have, and maintain Urengerum's memory with small shrines and ziggurats.

The city is a ramshackle place with a half finished look to it. The wall is low by Dara Happa standards and made from poorly dressed stone that belies its strength and solidity. Directly inside the main gate is the five tiered ziggurat, again of a ramshackle appearance, dedicated to Urengerum and Urvairinus. The perimeter of the base is carved with a detailed telling of the battle against the Ram God and Elempur's fall. The frieze is only partially finished because the Urengeri do not believe that Elempur's story is completely told. They firmly believe that Urengerum will return to rebuild Elempur and, when that day comes, the frieze will be finished.

A smaller ziggurat stands next to Urengerum's temple; this is dedicated to Urengerum's aspect of Sagittus the Archer of Wisdom. Urengerum was given the bow by Yelm and he taught its use to the Urengeri. The Cult of Sagittus is therefore a martial cult specialising in archery and it produces Dara Happa's finest archers. Every member of the cult – which is most of the city – carries a bow and learns to use it from an early age. Mass drills of bow craft and archery practice are held in the square behind the temple, with hundreds of targets being used by hundreds of archers and speared with countless arrows. The archers of Elempur are practicing for a war they know will come – a war that will see Urengerum come down from Raibanth in a chariot of gold to lead them into battle against whatever enemy Dara Happa defines.

The Ruinous Guild

Elempur is controlled by the Ruinous Guild, an Association dominated by the Sagittus Cult and three separate mercenary Leagues that hire out their services both within Dara Happa and south of the Plough Line. The Ruinous Guild scored remarkable successes against the Ignoble Tribe of Sath which was ravaging northern Saird, laying waste to its infantry with wave after wave of arrows guided by magic and prayer. Once the Sathites were pinned to the ground by arrow shafts, the Ruinous Guild sent in its chariots to mow down the survivors, ensuring that only one Sathite survivor could tell tale of how this vile tribe of heretics and chaos worshippers was destroyed.

The Ruinous Guild is most certainly warlike but is adept politically. The Rose Petal League consists of scribes and advocates who, having studied the teachings of Urvairinus and Antirius extensively, understand the true nature of political will and use it to full effect, especially when dealing with the Golden Dragon Society.

There is little understanding of the EWF in the city, and little love for it. Elempur is very much Urengerum's land and no amount of draconic guile or flattery will overcome that zeal. The Golden Dragon Society has tried, offering gifts of magic and the return of Urengerum to the city, but the wisest of the Urengeri know that the EWF would return a draconic version of Urengerum and Sagittus, and that is unthinkable.

Beyond the low, straggling streets of the unnamed city are the ruins of ancient Elempur. The ground is as black as pitch, and deep, crescent craters – the mark of the Ram God's iron hooves – encircle the perimeter of the ruins. These craters are three metres deep and bite cruelly into the earth. The ruined buildings are scorched and blackened, some of them smoking still, centuries after they were wrecked. The ruins cannot support life of any kind; only a god or demigod can enter the devastation and survive, and so the people maintain their distance, but are certain that Urengerum will come, one day, to rebuild his city. Regular

processions of priests traipse north to Raibanth to worship at the shrine to Urengerum, seeking signs of when this day will be. In recent days the priests have reported stirrings that suggest Urengerum is preparing for something. The EWF is aware of these stirrings, and the Golden Dragon Society has agents watching both the Sagittus and Urengerum priests abroad in Raibanth, and the city of Elempur, in a bid to discover what is behind the excitement.

Elz Ast

Nestled in the Thunder Delta Elz Ast is a true Dara Happa city conforming to the Murharzarm ideal. The Inner City is much like Yuthuppa and Raibanth; close, regular streets surrounding the central, mighty ziggurat, alive with Association business and veneration of the Solar pantheon. The outer city, which is the province of Half Citizens and Newcomers, is where the life

blood of Elz Ast flows. The thriving port serves both the Keniryan Sea and the Oslir River, with vessels of all shapes and sizes vying for mooring space alongside the massive, curving quayside that sprawls across the north eastern edge of the delta.

Elz Ast serves many places. Merchants from Rinliddi sail down the Arcos, braving the river pirates of Birin, to trade at Elz Ast, and trading ships from Karasal and Pelanda stream along the Poralstor River and across the Thunder Bay bringing foreign delights to Elz Ast's massive floating markets. People of all creeds mingle in the Outer City and Elz Ast allows the shrines of hundreds of foreign gods to be erected along the quayside – as long as a donation is made directly to the Oslira temple, making the Cult of Oslira exceedingly wealthy.

Oslira's worship dominates Elz Ast. Her ziggurat commands the skyline of the Inner City and there are

Defeat of the Thunder Lizard

When Yelm was killed and forced to live in the underworld it was possible for all manner of hideous gods to invade the world. The Thunder Lizard had twenty legs and twenty heads and claimed to be twice as powerful as Yelm had ever been. It came from the far north, swallowing entire countries as it lumbered towards Dara Happa, intent on eating all the gods who had not followed Yelm into the underworld.

Only Oslira, angry that she had been left behind, stood in the Thunder Lizard's way. She would not move and spat at each of the twenty heads trying to poison the Thunder Lizard with her Blue Serpent venom. Seeing that the Thunder Lizard simply drank the poison and was strengthened by it, Oslira called upon her husbands, Lodril and Shargash to help her, but Lodril was deep underground and Shargash was pre-occupied with hauling the Ram God's carcass north to stop the ice god. Oslira stood alone against the Thunder Lizard.

First she spat her venom. Then she spat sea serpents, but the Thunder Lizard ate them. Next she spat Words of Insanity but the Thunder Lizard was deaf and idiotic and could not understand them. The Thunder Lizard ate the Sovereign Island which was a gift from Lodril and made the remains into its teeth, one for each head. Angered beyond measure, Oslira coiled her whole length, draining the whole of Dara Happa dry, and whipped it at the many-headed lizard. This the lizard could not withstand and ten of its heads were crushed. With the remaining heads it tried to bite Oslira's tail and succeeded in biting it into three parts, which became Arcos and Poralstor, river serpents in their right. All three serpents then coiled around Thunder Lizard and dragged it beneath the water, where they drowned it. The ten heads fought for air, but Oslira sucked all the air into her body, denying them life.

And so the Thunder Lizard died, and its body is now the Thunder Bay and its teeth are its islands. Oslira unwound her coils, returning water to the empire, but she let Arcos and Poralstor remain, and these are now the Head-Tail rivers that join with Oslira and keep the Thunder Lizard from awaking.

countless shrines to the River Goddess in both Inner and Outer cities. She is worshipped in many aspects: The Blue Serpent; the River Mother; the Engulfer; the Cleanser; the Bringer and Taker of Life. She is worshipped as both a wife of Shargash and Lodril, and every cult acknowledges and propounds her domination of the Thunder Lizard which is buried beneath the water of the Thunder Bay, its teeth, which have formed the islands of the delta, poking out as the only evidence of its existence.

The ruling Association of Elz Ast is the Oslir River Union and wields almost total power. Over fifty Leagues are members and there is no service the Oslir River Union cannot provide from within its ranks. It effectively rules the Inner City but three smaller Associations govern the three Inner City quarters: The Poralstor Union, the Arcos Union and the Elz Land Association. Each controls trade and trade relations with the communities of the respective river and, in the case of the Elz Land Association, all land-based trade within the Inner and Outer cities. All are rich and powerful, acknowledging the Oslir River Union's supremacy but maintaining their own importance by sending numerous emissaries into Pelanda, Rinliddi and Kostadi to ensure Dara Happan influence is spread far and wide.

The Inner City is run to strict Murharzarmic codes with the Associations working in concert to ensure that Yelmic devotion is maintained, even though a dragon sits on the Imperial Footrest. The Inner City's chief concern is the maintenance of Elz Ast's domination of the delta and the lands along the Poralstor and Arcos Rivers. For this reason the four Associations promote pragmatism over pride and take a very practical approach to government. Toleration breeds co-operation, and co-operation breeds contentment. As long as the many cultures congregating in Elz Ast behave with respect and pay their dues, Elz Ast is happy to allow them to practice as they wish, within reason. Elz Ast is, as a result, a harmonious and just city that is far more welcoming of strangers than any other in Dara Happa. Dara Happan ways and traditions are maintained with rigour, but Newcomers, especially, are given more leeway and understanding than in the more orthodox cities such as Alkoth, Yuthuppa and Raibanth. A more liberal view of society is permitted in Elz Ast, even going so far as to tolerate brothels, sponsored by the Cult of Uleria, in the outer city. As

long as the brothels remain discreet and pay their dues to the Oslira River Union, a semi-blind eye is turned to their activities (but not the income generated, which is considerable, especially from Pelandan and Darjinni merchants and traders).

The Golden Dragon Society has little influence in Elz Ast but this is deliberate. EWF influence is exerted through the small but powerful Imperial Fountain Adherents, a draconic organisation venerating Aroka, a True Dragon that is known as the Imperial Fountain of Peace. The Imperial Fountain Adherents believe that Oslira is Aroka's tail and that the rest of the dragon is healing its body beneath the Keniryan Sea having been slain by the Thunder God, Orlanth. The myth of the Thunder Lizard is proof, to them, that Oslira is an aspect of Aroka and that, through the Great Dragon Project, she will be reunited with the rest of her draconic body. The Imperial Fountain Adherents are led by Lorenkarten, The Above and Beyond. He teaches that one can become a True Dragon by starting small and becoming great. The Adherents therefore cleave to Lorenkarten's Ten Step Path of Immanent Mastery and believe that their leader is both Oslira and Aroka in human form – a perception Lorenkarten, who adopts human appearance, does little to dispel. Currently Lorenkarten resides in Alkoth where he advises the Red King, but his acolyte, Judaragarang, a Carmanian mystic deemed a heretic in his own lands, guides the Imperial Fountain Adherents in the veneration of Aroka and Oslira in both her Dara Happan and draconic interpretations, thereby guaranteeing the toleration and co-operation of the Elz Ast Associations.

The Inner City of Elz Ast

The Inner City is divided into four, roughly equal quarters. The Oslir River Union controls the north west quarter and the Oslira ziggurat, dominating the centre of the city. It owns all the buildings in the quarter and permits no other Association to operate within it. The buildings are uniformly grand with sweeping facades, intricate architecture, numerous friezes depicting Oslira's myths, numerous shrines and water features set into peaceful squares between the buildings.

At the centre of the quarter is the imposing River Union building, a three-tiered, rectangular ziggurat surrounded by a deep moat and crossed by a single,

highly decorated footbridge that leads to the approach stairs. The moat is surrounded by palm trees and sphinx, the face of each sphinx depicting the face of one of the past Oslir River Union chiefs. Only Nobles of the Oslir River Union are permitted entry to the River Union Building. Security is provided by the fierce Avhentir League which developed the impressive Ten Cuts Technique of scimitar combat. Avhentir guards patrol the wall of the lower storey of the building, their bright red turbans and heavily curled beards, threaded with red beads, marking them as devotees of Oslira's aspect of Wife of the Devourer, and so affiliated with Shargash. All River Union business and policy emanates from this grand structure, and it is considered the absolute heart of the power within Elz Ast. It is said that a network of secret water-filled catacombs, shared with the Oslira ziggurat, contains the River Union's treasure and is patrolled by ludoch and aquatic demons loyal to Oslira.

The north east quarter of the Inner City is controlled by the Arcos Union. The buildings lack the grandeur and ostentation of the north west quarter but are still wealthy and well appointed, decorated with blue slates and stones arranged into stepped patterns. Several of the Leagues belonging to the Arcos Union have strong ties with Rinliddi and so avian motifs are common throughout the architecture and there are several small shrines to Vrimak and Surenslib, the Heron goddess. The headquarters is in the tower-like structure projecting from the roof of the Vrimak temple. The upper level of the tower is the pigeon coop where the Arcos Union's messenger pigeons roost, and the outside of the roost is smeared in their excrement. The tower has four sides, narrowing towards the summit, and at each corner a gargoyle in the shape of a different bird watches over the four directions of the quarter.

The messenger birds of the Arcos Union are famed throughout Dara Happa for the tenacity. As their god, Voastup, has no presence on the Gods' Wall, she cannot be worshipped directly within the Inner City of Elz Ast, but a small shrine exists to her in the coop itself and every message sender, before despatching a bird to brave the wild air and aerial predators, leaves a small donation and prayer to Voastup out of courtesy and a desire to see their bird reach its destination safely.

In the south west quarter the Poralstor Union holds sway. A mixture of Pelandan and Dara Happan families it effectively breaks the social codes by integrating Nobles and Newcomers, but such are the riches brought by this bending of the rules, the Oslira River Union turns a blind eye to its structure. The Poralstor Union is dynamic and rich. It displays its wealth with little modesty, adorning its buildings with rich fabrics, precious metals, and brilliantly painted friezes depicting Yelm and Oslir's various glories.

The Poralstor Union offers a unified face to the city but is rife with internal division. The Pelandan view of trade differs markedly from the Dara Happan, not least in embracing certain draconic aspects of Oslira. The Emanestos and Jhovinda Leagues are no longer on formal speaking terms and communicate solely through mediators of the Ashartcha League (the wise counsel of the Quarters' Association, which is based in the Outer City). These divisions are deep and most likely unhealable, but still the Poralstor League maintains its public persona and remains an exceedingly powerful force in northern Dara Happa and the Poralstor river valley.

The south west quarter is governed wisely and quietly by the Elz Land Association. An ancient group of pure Dara Happan families which can trace its ancestry directly to Anaxial, the Elz Land Association knows the geography of the Dara Happan interior intimately. It maintains many secret roads (several of them magical) that were created by Anaxial following the flood and grants access to those traders who are prepared to swear a complicated oath (drafted by Antirius) never to reveal the roads' existence to anyone. The three trading Leagues of the Elz Land Association are quietly, phenomenally, wealthy, able to move around Dara Happa silently and at great speed. The Elz Land Association keeps its extraordinary wealth very well hidden on the seventh island of the Thunder Delta. A magical road starting from the Lokarnos ziggurat in the south west quarter, connects the island and mainland. The treasure rooms are guarded by magically animated sphinxes of bronze, their claws tipped with iron. Anyone not wearing the jewelled hatpin of the Elz Land Association is immediately attacked by the sphinxes – not that anyone from outside the Elz Land Association has ever attempted to deprive the Association of its treasure.

The Outer City of Elz Ast

The Outer City sprawls down to the harbour and encompasses it. Home to all castes it is a maze of tightly winding streets, dark back-alleys, huge, paved squares and the many, many shrines to gods from all across Peloria. It is ostensibly governed by the Quarters' Association, a powerful knowledge-based Association that has connections all across the empire. The Quarters Association makes no claims on the government of Elz Ast, leaving that to the Oslir River Union, but it considers the city to be its spiritual and administrative home. The Association venerates Buserian and the Buserian ziggurat overlooking the main square of the outer city is both temple and headquarters for the Quarters' Association.

The Outer City has no strict district divisions and therefore it departs from the typical model of a Dara Happa city. Yet neither is it disordered. The Quarters' Association knows who is based where, who is renting what, and what is being traded in the street and floating markets. The semblance of disorder serves the Quarters' Association very well, since the four Associations of the Inner City are forced to deal with the Quarters if they are to make any headway in the Outer City. The arrangement is long-standing and advantageous to all. The Inner City Associations do not have to deal directly with Newcomers and Foreigners, and the Quarters' Association can operate without undue interference.

The floating market occupies a specially built lagoon running east from where the river meets the Thunder Delta. It is impossible to count the vessels that are moored in the lagoon, but there are many hundreds, possibly in excess of a thousand. The barges, boats and ships bob in the water, and are connected by an intricate network of wooden walkways forming a seamless series of paths through the expanse of boats – ideal for those who do not wish to get their feet wet. Just about anything tradable can be found in the floating market; food through to weapons and armour. There are very few trading restrictions and even those that exist are policed with laxity. The floating market is quiet only at night when the traders sleep amongst their goods before beginning to trade again at dawn, when the whooping of herons in the marshes to the south of the lagoon summons them back to business.

The harbour is a sweeping arc of stone built by the Mozamamat League four centuries ago. The Mozamamats were absorbed by the Elz Land Association soon after the harbour's completion and administration was ceded to the Quarters' Association at the same time. Overlooking the harbour is the Light Pillar, a beacon of stone almost half a kilometre high that pulses with the energy and light of the sun marking Elz Ast's position on the Thunder Delta and acting as a guide for ships that brave the treacherous currents of the bay to reach the harbour. The Light Pillar is, of course, magical, but no one in the city knows the source of the magic and so it is considered to have been touched by Yelm himself and is a shrine to every sailor who values safe passage and firm ground at the end of a voyage.

Finding a mooring space in the busy harbour is always a difficult business. Experienced boat captains send a message to the Quarters' Association before attempting to land so that a mooring place at the quayside can be



Notable Taverns of Elz Ast Harbour The Murharz Arms

A sprawling venue mimicking the ziggurats of the city, this three storey, tiered tavern specialises in wines and grain spirits. Each floor deals with a separate selection of drinks and a favoured past-time of sailors and traders is to 'Do the Descent', where one begins drinking at the top floor, sampling each of the wines and spirits on offer, doing the same down through each floor. The experience is said to closely mimic the sensations felt when entering Alkoth for the first time, including the hangover.

Zham's

Two rooms sandwiched between shrines to a minor, unidentifiable grain goddess, and to Uleria, Zham's serves cheap beer in cheap surroundings. Hookahs burning fruit-infused tobacco wads are clustered in the central, cushion filled pit, and a mouthpiece can be rented for a few coppers. Despite its cheap façade and watered beer, it is a popular, convivial place, frequented by members of the Quarters' Association Leagues.

Lodril's Rest

An underground drinking hole and shrine to Lodril. This place serves earthy, gutsy ales from up river. A prayer to Lodril is offered with each drink. Those who refuse or who forget are ejected from the premises.

Irast's Home from Home

Serving good food and offering dormitory rooms, this inn offers decent accommodation at reasonable prices. Irast is a Yuthuppan with a sly sense of humour and a compulsion to ensure the comfort and happiness of even the most disagreeable guests. His patience and perpetual smile is the stuff of legend. His twelve daughters, each amazingly beautiful, tend the rooms and maintain the kitchen, their faces hidden behind veils of dark green gauze. Irast is desperate to marry them all to the wealthiest people possible, so far without success. No guest at the Home from Home leaves without Irast first having described, in considerable detail, the charms and talents of all twelve daughters.

arranged ahead of time. Traders associated with the Associations of the Inner City have permanent mooring points along the stone and wooden jetties projecting into the bay from the quayside, but negotiating progress through the throng of vessels is difficult even for those with a guaranteed mooring spot.

At the north of the harbour are the Builders' Docks. Elz Ast is noted for its boat building skills and here is where both river ships and sea-going vessels are built and repaired. The Builders' Docks are controlled by the Elezza Builders, an Association of four families specialising in all things water-borne. The docks are always a riot of construction and repair, on the water and in the dry-docks. The four families making up the Elezza Builders have their properties overlooking the docks and, behind the line of low houses, are the

modest dwellings of the Haulers, the Half Citizens who undertake almost all the craftwork for the Elezza. The Elezza are canny negotiators and strict with their regimes. The Haulers are worked hard and incessantly, Elezza task masters checking and rechecking building and repair work to ensure it meets their incredibly high standards.

Birin - Pirate Enclave

A constant thorn in the side of Elz Ast is the pirate enclave of Birin, a miserable walled city standing on the banks of the Arcos within Rinliddi territory. The Birin have forsaken the bird worship of the Rinliddi and venerate a goddess of their own devising who was supposedly destroyed by Yelm when he returned from the underworld. The Birin blame the Dara Happans for



destroying their goddess and the Rinliddi for not protecting her.

The pirates mount raids on the river ships that stray too close to the banks of their dingy little city. Their fast, single-sailed cutters pursue the cumbersome trade ships all the way into the Thunder Delta using their expert knowledge of the currents and rocks to drive their quarry aground before attacking with spears and swords. Survivors are hauled back to Birin where they are ransomed or become slaves.

The EWF has made no moves against the pirates of Birin because they have doubted the value of converting them to the draconic path, and outright destruction would involve committing resources to a prolonged siege of the Birin enclave. However the Elz Land Association and Arcos Union has decided that enough is enough and are massing their own force, swollen with mercenaries, to march overland and take Birin from the west. The EWF has shrugged its shoulders at the plan and committed no troops of its

own, but is keen to see how the attack develops so that they can move their own draconic proselytisers into Birin quickly once the pirate rule is broken.

Notable People of Elz Ast

Vareshnyu Ahmut is the high profile and noted 'fixer' of the Outer City. The street-side diplomat for the Quarters' Association he knows anyone and everyone worth knowing in the Outer City and is a mine of information concerning the comings and goings of the merchant traders, the many Leagues of both the Inner and Outer cities, and all manner of surreptitious goings-on in and around the area. Vareshnyu expects to be paid for his information, but also happily pays for what he does not know but should. He does not view this as corruption, but a simple recognition of his ability to seamlessly broker information that will likely influence deals and prices elsewhere.

Moamir Bevenyar is the public face of the Oslira River Union. Like Vareshnyu (whom he detests), Moamir is an expert on the wheelings and dealings of the Inner City, particularly concerning the four Inner City Associations. He has a vile temper and is paranoid about being late for any engagement, the thought of which encourages a sweat and tendency to panic. But for all his paranoia his communication skills, when he is calm and in control, are second to none.

Argenyar Argen commands the Inner City militia, loyal Shargash cultists that are part of the Oslira River Union. Argenyar is an expert in chariot and spear combat, having completed the infamous Outer City Marathon three times as victor. He secured his position as leader of the militia by delving into the depths of Akuturos to defeat many dehori and emerge with The Spear of Heroes which he keeps at his side at all times. Argenyar is a pragmatic warrior, much preferring poetry and astrology to the arts of war, but is far more adept at the latter than the former. He has sworn never to marry until his Spear of Heroes has served a true hero of pure Dara Happa destiny.

Muhendar Nahib is the ill-mannered Pelandan speaker for the Unaligned Traders Association, a loose confederation of Newcomer merchants of the Outer City. His constant demands for access to Inner City trading links makes him deeply unpopular throughout

Elz Ast but the Newcomer merchants support his tenacity and plain speaking despite the disdain he receives from the Quarters' Association and Oslira River Union. The Imperial Fountain Adherents find him a fascinating character that has so far resisted conversion to the Way of Aroka despite his obvious draconic sympathies.

Mernita – The Turning City

Mernita was destroyed in the distant reign of the emperor Lukarius. When Yelm's brightness disappeared, the Mernitans turned to the worship of the goddess Lesilla, who claimed to be the rightful sun, and a false sun shone above their city. When Lukarius required the support of all the cities, Mernita denied it, forcing Lukarius to call upon the Antirius Precepts to assert true, solar authority. Because Mernita was unjust and beyond the True Law, Lesilla, the false sun, fell flailing to the ground, destroying the city.

All that remains of Mernita is a mound of scorched rubble, around which are clustered many disparate villages that remain outside the Law of Dara Happa. These apostates maintain that Lesilla can – and will – be revived to a glory greater than Yelm. The villages are squalid, unfulfilled settlements that scavenge amongst the rubble of the old city desperately trying to piece together the remains of their goddess, finding scraps here and there, but are otherwise godless. True Dara Happans shun Mernita, believing it to be a testament to the folly of denying Yelm's rulership of the cosmos. The Mernitans, dismally optimistic, argue otherwise, and stoically refuse to integrate with the Solar way, preferring to cling to a string of prophecies a variety of rag-tag mystics have propounded over the centuries since Mernita's destruction.

This is ripe territory for draconic interference. The Mernitans refuse to believe in anything but Lesilla's wronged purity, but the Golden Dragon Society has spent a great deal of time studying ancient records of Mernita's history in the unassailable Tomb Libraries of Alkoth, and believe that they have found a way of establishing Lesilla's draconic lineage. Their aim is to demonstrate to the Mernitans that Lesilla is a consort of the Golden Dragon emperor, who has, himself, been deliberately misunderstood but has, nevertheless, prevailed.

The Mernitans, for their part, are difficult to convince, but Dara Happa's rejection of Mernita is merely greater fuel for the EWF's zeal. The villages surrounding the rubble mound dare not raise temples to Lesilla either above ground or below it, but the Golden Dragon Society is in the process of proving that temples do not need solid foundations to be effective. The charismatic Lady Forlorn, an aspirant to the Eternal Dragon Ring, has taken her Hunting and Waltzing Band into the Mernitan community with the sole objective of proving Lesilla's draconic nature and bringing the ostracised villages, one convert at a time, around to the draconic truth.

The Lady Forlorn believes that success in Mernita will elevate her to the Eternal Dragon Ring. She also believes that the complete conversion of Mernita and Lesilla to the draconic path will result in the city being rebuilt from the ground-up, and become a Foundation City for the EWF in Dara Happa. As Mernita is close to the Pelandan border and Elz Ast, it is considered of strategic importance to the EWF, if an irrelevance by the bulk of Dara Happans.



DARA HAPPA



The villages' resistance to outside interference, either by Wyrmfriends or elsewhere is being steadily eroded thanks to the Lady Forlorn's persistence. Four of the villages have embraced Lesilla's draconic aspect and are preparing the goddess's return. The central belief is that Lesilla is the rightful inheritor of the Celestial Throne, Yelm having displayed the ultimate weakness in succumbing to an ignoble death. His ultimate re-ascension is an irrelevance. This belief is inherently heretical to Dara Happans as it creates a matriarchal concept of empire that cannot, in any way, be reconciled with traditional belief. Proof of Lesilla's inner dragon would pose a direct challenge to Yelm's ultimate authority as it would further strengthen the Golden Dragon's position as a representation of Yelm's draconic aspect. The arguments are complex but of crucial importance for Dara Happa's future. Lesilla's own re-ascension with a draconic heart would drive a schism through Yelmic doctrine and, with the Golden Emperor's draconic nature in full evidence, a new Solar regime will undoubtedly emerge, cementing the EWF into the heart of the Dara Happa empire. The Golden Dragon emperor and Lesilla would effectively form a union of male and female rule – a fundamental challenge to the order of the cosmos.

Few realise what the Wyrmfriends hope to achieve amongst the ruins of Mernita. They have forgotten the heresy its people committed with their worship of Lesilla the False Sun. But I see the Wyrmfriend's plan and tell it to you now. To raise the False Sun in draconic image; to marry that image to the Dragon Emperor; and then for this heretical union to rule the universe.

We, as Dara Happans, cannot allow this blasphemy. Lesilla must die and so must the Golden Dragon emperor. If we do not kill both, the order of our universe will crumble and from its rubble will arise the Wyrmfriend's Great Dragon, ready to pour flame across the land from Elz Asf to the Ploughline.

That is the choice we face.'

— *Karvanyar, emergent hero of Dara Happa*

Nivorah

One of the seven sacred cities Nivorah, like Mernita, rebelled against the emperor Lukarius claiming it had better gods to worship and new directions to follow. However, when the Ram People had destroyed Elempur and marched north to destroy Nivorah, Urvairinus defended the city and so it persists to this day.

Nivorah acknowledges its blessed existence and is now a loyal city of the empire, venerating Urvairinus alongside the other gods of the Celestial Court. It is a proud city with fine walls and many shrines and temples to the solar gods. The shrines to Urvairinus are found in the five tiered central ziggurat where he is worshipped as Nivorah's eternal protector. The sons of the city are schooled in the teachings of Urvairinus and taught the ways of war he employed; that is the use of spear, shield and phalanx to present an impenetrable wall to Dara Happa's enemies.

The Golden Dragon Society has been unable to convert the Nivorahnites such is the devotion to Urvairinus. Even its best attempts to prove a draconic aspect have met with collective shrugs of indifference. The four Associations governing the city do so through the four-fold philosophy Nivorah has adhered to since the defeat of the Ram People: loyalty, defence, justice and honour. The heads of the four Associations meet in the conclave known as the Fifth House to ensure their agendas are complementary and that the entire city acts as one, single, Association.

The Golden Dragon emperor therefore poses a dilemma to Nivorah. On the one hand the city must remain loyal to the emperor, and so the Golden Dragon is acknowledged as Dara Happa's ruler; however the logic of justice dictates that the Golden Dragon is, perhaps, a false emperor that lied to pass the Ten Tests. To deny the Golden Dragon's rule would be to act dishonourably, and yet the dragon represents a weakness of defence against outsiders.

Nivorah's approach is therefore to cleave ever more closely to the worship of Urvairinus, so avoiding accusations of dishonour, injustice and disloyalty, whilst remaining defensive through its martial teachings. The four Associations are inwardly focused rather than outward looking. Nivorah must concern itself with its own affairs, and adjudicate them wisely, rather than following what could be false agendas and an unjust path.

Nivorah's people are thus some of the most tight-lipped in the whole of Dara Happa. No Nivorahn will ever say or do anything that could be construed as disloyalty to the emperor, but if the regime changes they are amongst the first to offer tribute and spears in the defence of the empire. Nivorahns have a motto: *A Single Spear Turns An Army* and this how they view themselves. Distanced from Raibanth Nivorahns see themselves as the empire's defiantly loyal spear ready to challenge whenever a challenge is called for. Nivorah cannot raise the kinds of armies Alkoth can field, but it produces devoted, loyal, brave warriors who cleave to a warrior-emperor's traditions. Such is the true Dara Happan strength.

New Gold Dream (Dragonewt City)

Located on the eastern bank of the Oslir and in sight of Yuthuppa, New Gold Dream is a concentration of spiralling towers of gold-coloured stone breaking from the pasture, each tower engraved with draconic symbols and runes. All windows face towards the temple of Yelm and the entire settlement is dedicated towards the veneration of the Golden Sun Dragon, but not the sun. There is no Dara Happan solar imagery anywhere in New Gold Dream, and Yelm's name is never mentioned. To those Dara Happan's suspicious of the dragonewts' motivation, and sure of their heresy, the absence of Yelmic veneration is proof of it.

New Gold Dream offers hope to dragonewts exiled from the draconic way. On the orders of the Inhuman King of Ormsland any sundered dragonewt who comes to New Gold Dream and successfully passes the New Ten Tests will be restored to the draconic cycle. The New Ten Tests are a series of fearsome ordeals designed to test the capacity for Right Action and might almost amount to an earth-bound HeroQuest. Failure results in death for the dragonewt, but success results in immediate reincarnation at the Crested stage, with all memories of their past life expunged.

Thus the city is a magnet for dispossessed dragonewts from across Ralios and even into Dragon Pass. With them come human Wyrmfriend pilgrims. Word has spread that the Golden Sun Dragon performs miracles on a daily basis to those who prostrate themselves at its feet and offer to convert to its worship. The Wyrmic Solar Way organisation is a group of miracle-receivers who enthusiastically guide human arrivals at New Gold

Dream in the ceremonies necessary to receive a miracle (for a fee), pointing to all the sundered dragonewts who have been swept back onto the draconic path as proof (for a further fee). Maulharik Brighteye leads the Wyrmic Solar Way, inciting hatred from ardent Wyrmfriends and Old Ways Traditionalists alike. He has become something of an expert on the solar/draconic relationship having obtained a dense text from Kustria that is undoubtedly of God Learner origin. He quotes chapter and verse in the human quarter of New Gold Dream, leading the growing rag-tag army of miracle-seekers in prayer, song and dance. His methods are dangerous. He proposes integration with the dragonewts (who must surely be the Golden Sun God's children) and preaches against the Wyrmfriends. Agents are undoubtedly moving against him: The Golden Dragon Society wants to silence his heresy; the dragonewts want to avoid taint; and the God Learners want their book back.

New Gold Dream is under the auspices of the Ruler dragonewt Empires Rise and Fall. He is less prone to sleeping than most Ruler dragonewts and maintains a visible presence, sitting at the top of a thick dragonewt plinth in the centre of the city, adopting a pose that mimics that of the Golden Sun Dragon. He sees all that happens and likes little of it. His communication with the Inhuman King of Ralios is constant and dreamlike; he is instructed not to intervene until told. His gaze is thus malevolent and knowing. He sends Nobles across New Gold Dream to watch the humans flocking into the new city and to ensure that the New Ten Tests being undertaken by the sundered dragonewts is every bit as arduous as it should be.

The chief speakers to the humans are the Noble dragonewts Araana'thal and Laht'anaara. The former's hide is blue whilst the latter's is red. They engage in enthusiastic discourse with humans and Maulharik Brighteye in particular, offering typically cryptic and unhelpful insights into the solar/draconic relationship that are more a hindrance than a help. The dragonewt rune is being worn by many of Maulharik's faithful, tattooed into place by Araana'thal whilst Laht'anaara walks on its hands around the disciple. Some are then led away and invited to take the New Ten Tests, which Maulharik considers to be the ultimate blessing. No one is sure what happens to these people, but one eagle-eyed pilgrim has noted a slight increase in the Crested dragonewt population. Perhaps Maulharik's wishes for closer integration are being granted, but not in ways he might welcome.

Raibanth

'Gaze upon the Imperial Footrest. Gaze upon it and tell me now that Great Yelm has no dominion over the universe!'

Klurius Lockspinner, Merchant of Saird

Raibanth. The Imperial City. Murharzarm's seat. Centre of the Empire. There is no greater city in the whole of Glorantha. Yes, there are larger cities and yes, there are cities with taller buildings, but no other city is as old or was raised by its god. No other city was designed to provide its ruler with a complete, unbroken view of his kingdom. Raibanth stands at the heart of Dara Happa and stares unflinchingly around it with the purest majesty. Raibanth *is* Dara Happa.

At the centre of it all is the Imperial Footrest. A ten-tiered ziggurat with ten thousand steps leading to its summit. Half a kilometre in width its white marble is bathed in the gold of the sun and each tier raises it closer to heaven. Ascending the Imperial Footrest is to leave behind the mundane world and climb into the Celestial realm itself. Yelm built the Footrest and Antirius blessed it in the generations thereafter. The one who has taken nine of the Ten Tests ascends its ten thousand stairs to stand on the edge of heaven and is cloaked with the mantle of empire by Antirius himself. The Imperial Footrest is no ordinary, mortal building; it is the word of Yelm rendered to solid form and placed in the centre of all that is blessed and sacred to him.

And around its base are the four quarters of the city Murharzarm built upon becoming emperor: mighty Raibanth. The streets of each quarter are straight and pure, measured out by the servants of Lodril and planned according to the Celestial Plan. Every building is in the shadow of the Imperial Footrest but none is hidden from the sun even when the shadows are at their longest or the clouds of the Rebel Gods have reached their thickest. Raibanth, City of Temples, is Yelm's city, the city of white gold, the holiest city anywhere in the world. None who see Raibanth can deny its power or position; none who gaze upon the Imperial Footrest can refuse to be moved by its glory and majesty.

A river runs through it, glorious Raibanth. Oslira snakes her way through the empire and the Imperial Footrest straddles her course in testament to Yelm's dominion of these lands. The waters running through the city are the purest and sweetest of anywhere in Dara Happa, for Oslira must always acknowledge Yelm's mastery of her. She does so willingly, of course, and only once has she been forced to rise up in anger. In that great flood the whole of Dara Happa was engulfed by Oslira's anger and the streets of Raibanth were buried beneath the Oslir's turbulent waters but, even in those bleak days, the brilliance of the city shone through the murky waters acting as a beacon to guide Anaxial's course through the deluge. Raibanth was completely submerged and only the Footrest escaped drowning, but, when the waters subsided, even though many places had been battered or swept away completely, Raibanth emerged intact but cleansed of all impurities.

Coils of the Golden Dragon Sun

Thirty two years ago the Golden Dragon defeated the armies of Dismanthuyar and Urvanyar. The old emperor deposed, the Golden Dragon climbed the Imperial Footrest, taking the Ten Tests as it did so, despite lacking the human faculties requisite for any emperor. Here is what it did:

- On the first tier it assumed human form and made three declarations of great Dara Happan significance. It promised to rule wisely, with justice and with honour. It clothed its nakedness in a loincloth thus demonstrating it was a *moral* being.
- On the second tier it bathed its clawed feet in fire which became the sandals of protection, demonstrating that the Golden Dragon would never touch the *impure*.
- On the third tier it clothed itself in the sun's radiance which became the Vestments of Disclosure, proving it had the robes to rule.
- On the fourth tier it paused whilst its champion, Isgangdrang, brought forth a great bow with arrows of gold; so did the Dragon prove it had a Weapon of Distance with which to protect the empire.

- At the fifth tier it commanded all below to worship Yelm and its words became a girdle of command, proving it had the strength of rulership.
- On the sixth it turned its horns into a crown of power, showing it understood the Crown of Wisdom.
- On the seventh tier it paused and blessed the Four Quarters and the lands of the Half Citizens, and it summoned forth a Half Citizen to act as part of its counsel, demonstrating that it wore the Low Crown of Rule.
- On the eighth tier created an orb of fire with its breath, so that the light of empire would burn brightly throughout the land.
- On the ninth tier it raised the Sceptre of Justice from its tail and challenged any present to prove it was a false emperor. None stepped forward, proving that the Golden Dragon was a just and truthful being.
- The Golden Dragon flew to the tenth tier, proving it could fly and had dominion of the Middle Air. And as it settled around the throne the light of Antirius broke through the clouds and wreathed the dragon in the holiest of light, proclaiming it emperor.

The entire empire sang its name and gave it praise. Fifty five emperors had come before the Golden Dragon and all had been human; the Golden Dragon, by taking the Ten Tests and naming the Imperial Regalia as it ascended the Footrest proved that a being in transcendence could become emperor also.

The Golden Dragon then allowed its coils to uncurl and it rested its head on the Throne of Empire so that it might see every part of its new realm. Its legs stretched to the seventh, sixth, fifth and fourth tiers, and its tail curled around the second and first so that it fully embraced the Imperial Footrest. At the ziggurat's base, arranged according to their station and allegiance, were the Golden Dragon Society, the Eternal Dragon Ring, the Nobles of Dara Happa and the highest ranked of the allies and Newcomers. All gave their praise and only a handful murmured any doubt.

From the Eternal Dragon Ring Lord Great Burin led a woman, clothed and veiled in the purest gold. Together they ascended to the fourth tier and Lord Great Burin proclaimed the woman to be **Sharmanasthar**, daughter of the Golden Dragon. Her beauty was undoubted and her smile was as radiant as Erissa's. She healed the Dara Happans wounded in the previous day's battles and called upon the empire to know peace.

Finally the Golden Dragon emperor spoke. *'I have revealed my daughter to you all as a sign of my trust in the empire. She has taken the blessings of Erissa and knows the Heart of the Sun. She shall be married to a mortal man, if a mortal man can pass the Tests I set for him, and that man shall be my Heir. My empire shall know a Great Contest to find the one who will ascend these ten thousand stairs when I have changed my form once again to become a True Dragon, so that I might rule Heaven as Yelm's wisest, most infinite counsel.'*

Raibanth Now

The Golden Dragon has allowed every tradition of the empire, and all Murharzarm's Laws, to remain unbroken in Raibanth and beyond. It has called for one simple thing: for every man, woman and child in the empire to acknowledge its place as emperor and to serve it as they would any mortal emperor.

The Nobles who had been defeated in the great battles with the EWF have had their lands and stations restored and Raibanth has been given back to the people. The Golden Dragon remains curled around the Imperial Footrest, but it has taken human advisers from both the Nobles of Dara Happa and the most learned of the Golden Dragon Society. The temples of the Celestial Court, in the Imperial Footrest and outside it, know a greater glory than they have known since the reign of the emperor Khordavu. There is greater prosperity amongst the people and the Associations are wealthier than they have ever been. Dara Happa's mundane business thrives and Raibanth is firmly at its heart, watched over by the Golden Dragon Sun and his mixture of Dara Happan and Wyrnish disciples.

Sharmanasthar, the Golden Dragon's daughter, resides in the fifth tier of the Imperial Footrest, mid-way between her father's seat and the reality of Dara Happa. She is as modest and dutiful as any



Dara Happa woman even though she was not born of the empire and is a demi-god; she has no cult and exercises no power, but Dara Happa's womenfolk accept her presence without question and, from across the empire, men have come to take the tests that would see them secure Sharmanasthar's hand in marriage. All have failed. Some – many - have died, and their names and likenesses have been carved onto the Husband's Wall on the fifth tier of the Footrest. But Sharmanasthar remains unmarried and no one in five years has come forward to take the tests of the Golden Daughter Contest.

Lokastuman and the Cults

All power emanates from the Imperial Footrest. In its tiers are lodged the priesthoods of the following gods:

- Antirius (Imperial Shrine)
- Dayzatar (Imperial Shrine)
- Dendara (Major Temple)
- Golden Dragon (Emperor/Personality Cult)

- Murharzarm (Imperial Shrine)
- Obduran (Transcended State Aspect; an EWF cult and a major shrine)
- Oslira (Blue Dragon, Imperial Consort Aspect)
- Polaris (Imperial Shrine, Dragon Star aspect)
- Raiba (Major Temple – Raibanth's city god and son of Murharzarm)
- Yelm (Draconic Aspect, Major Temple)

The priesthoods for the Footrest temples and shrines live, worship and work in the first tier of the ziggurat; the temples and shrines occupy the tiers above and are spread throughout the ziggurat with the temples of Yelm and the Golden Dragon occupying the highest reaches. The Golden Dragon administers the entire priesthood via the word of Lokastuman, who was the Half Citizen summoned to the seventh tier of the ziggurat during the Golden Dragon's taking of the Ten Tests.

Lokastuman was born a humble man but his ascent to power within the ziggurat has been rapid. Raised up from lowliness by the Golden Dragon emperor Lokastuman is now privy to the emperor's thoughts and feelings, and has been given the title of 'Single Voice – High Priest of Imperial Antirius, First Dragon Scale'. His position represents the complete amalgam of Antirius and draconic wisdom. His vestments are of the finest materials and within the ziggurat his word is law, since it emanates from the mind of the emperor and not his own. Lokastuman dictates the directions of worship and teaching not just for the Imperial Footrest but for the whole of Dara Happa. He holds status not just in the Solar cults but is also deeply initiated into the draconic beliefs of the EWF. Studying the teachings of Obduran the Flyer at the knee of the Golden Dragon itself, he is thoroughly indoctrinated into the mysticism of the EWF but maintains strong beliefs and direction in the Solar gods. He is happy for the countless priests below him to administer to the Solar gods in the traditional ways and offers scant direction, save in those matters that require the intervention of the emperor. All the priests answer to Lokastuman and he alone has the right to appoint and remove priests from office. He strides the ziggurat with unconcealed authority, draped in robes of draconic gold, clutching in his right hand the Staff of All Words, made for him by the Golden Dragon, and, in his left, a bag of purple cloth that is secured to his belt by strands of silver chain. The Staff is valuable but a symbol only; the bag, however, contains the heart and

eyes of Urvanyar, taken by the Golden Dragon when it defeated him in battle.

The Imperial Court and the Golden Dragon Sun

Quite separate from the Associations and daily administration of the city, the Imperial Court occupies the Imperial Footrest tending to the high affairs of the empire and the specific directions of the emperor, as articulated through Lokastuman. The Imperial Court consists of advisers, emissaries, high priests, Wyrmfriends, and the leaders of certain Associations that are considered to be in favour with the emperor.

It is an eclectic mix, threaded with cliques, private agendas, petty rivalries and attempts to rise in esteem. In the reign of any other emperor the Court would be more clearly structured and less prone to politicking and social ascent, but this is the Imperial Court of a dragon, not a human emperor.

Yet the Golden Dragon is not a True dragon. Despite its appearance and undoubted power, the Golden Dragon was once a human mystic, Hurarbargarten, of mortal nature, and tied to his mortality like any normal human. In the earliest days of the Golden Dragon Society Hurarbargarten founded the Yelm Dragon cult which was popular under the emperor Elmxedros and many flocked to its worship, elevating Hurarbargarten's standing in the Eternal Dragon Ring and leading directly to his ability to assume his own draconic aspect. However, Hurarbargarten's transcendence is only partial, like that of every member of the Eternal Dragon Ring. The Golden Dragon represents the potential of the draconic path, but not its entirety. In its mind are the thoughts of a human, albeit bent to higher concerns and enlightened, to a degree, to the nature of the cosmos.

The Golden Dragon can perceive, but not enter, that peculiar realm occupied by the True Dragons. It can see the Hero Plane and the Gods Plane but cannot reach either without the continued use of magic and deep philosophical contemplation. It is tied to the mortal realm and is therefore vulnerable; it wants to become a True dragon but, as long as it concerns itself with mortal requirements, such as the pursuit of power (no matter how great that power might be) it will be forever a symbol of draconic potential without ever achieving that ultimate capability.

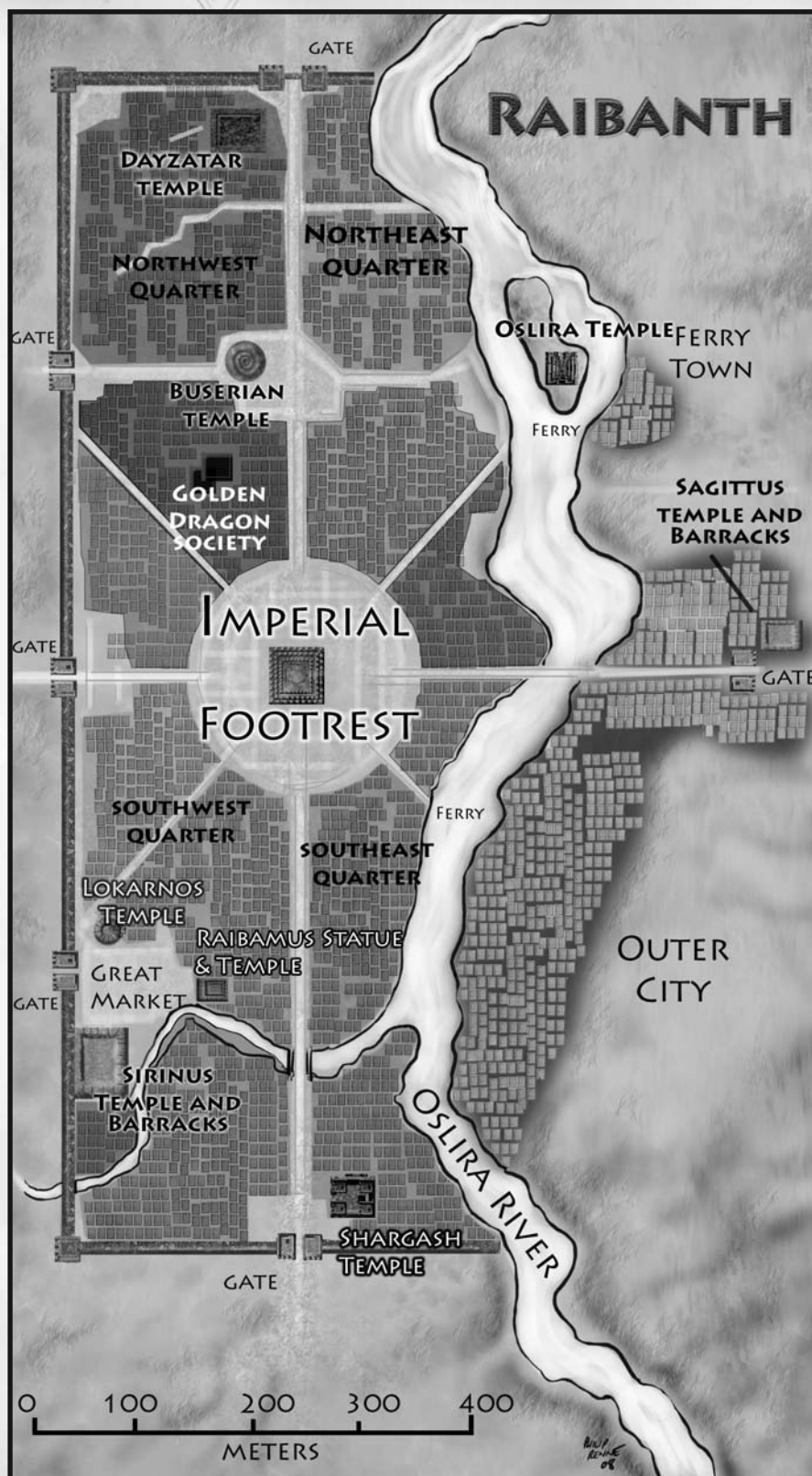
This vulnerability is therefore manifest in the Imperial Court and those it chooses as its advisers. The Golden Dragon gives the impression of being close to Yelm but it is an illusion, just as its completion of the Ten Tests was an illusion. Illusions are powerful things because they deceive the mortal senses and instil wonder and awe where, really, disappointment should exist. The Golden Dragon has been supremely successful in the illusions it creates and this is why it stole the heart and eyes of Urvanyar, because that particular mortal could not be deceived. Karvanyar possesses his father's insight. He does not see a True Dragon, as does everyone else; he sees a façade of power and knows it is inherently weak. That weakness will be exploited and the Golden Dragon Sun senses this, but even in draconic form it is limited in what it can do. To pursue a single mortal personally would be to expose its façade to the entire world, and so the Golden Dragon must continually act through mortal agents, articulating its will in subtle, veiled ways to maintain the impression of greatness.

The Design of the City

Raibanth follows the course of the Oslir River, but it is the river that conforms to Raibanth's topology, and not Raibanth that is constrained by the river's course. The Oslir forms the natural eastern defence for the city, making a wall unnecessary. As the goddess Oslira is bound to Yelm's service, she is therefore bound to Raibanth's defence. The Oslir flows wide and deep along the eastern side of Raibanth. A large, lozenge-shaped island is home to Oslira's temple and ferrys and small boats play the length of the river moving goods and people up and down the city boundary.

Thick stone walls border the city on the northern, western and southern sides. The walls are twenty five metres high, made of thick, yellow stone and crenulated along their length. Five main gates punctuate the walls; the North and South gates open onto the Processional, the divine thoroughfare of the city, whilst the three gates of the west wall offer more traditional entry to the city. A sixth gate, on the eastern side of the city, marks the territory of the Sagittus temple and is a ceremonial show of strength rather than a much needed walled defence.

The walls mark the Inner City; the regions where the Associations and Nobles of Dara Happa hold sway. Beyond the walls, surrounding them on all sides, is



the Outer City – a mixture of simple houses and slum dwellings where Citizens, Half-Citizens and foreigners dwell. Here the streets are narrowed and cramped, noisy and dusty, but comparatively safe. This contrasts with the four quarters of the Inner City where grand houses of marble cluster around peaceful courtyards filled with fountains and lush gardens.

The Inner City operates on the Murharzarmic tradition of quarters, even though the quarters do not form perfect squares any longer, owing to centuries of expansion by successive emperors. In length the Inner City is 1,100 metres (or ‘kets’ as Dara Happans know the measurement) and its width fluctuates according to the course of the river.

And, at the centre of Raibanth’s Inner City, surrounded by a circular open area, paved with marble, is the Imperial Footrest, Selshena, spiralling upwards to Heaven and culminating in the Throne of Heaven, from which Dara Happa’s emperors can see the whole of Glorantha. The Footrest captures the eye and holds it; its dizzying rise dominating the skyline and dwarfing all around it with its majesty.

Major Temples

The temples of the major gods of the Solar pantheon are carefully placed within Raibanth, reflecting their place in the celestial court. Minor shrines are scattered across the city, but the central temples, emulating the glory of the Footrest, are as described here.

Buserian

Located in the north west of the city, and precisely equidistant between the North Gate and the Imperial Footrest. The Buserian temple is under the effective control of the Buserian priesthood in Yuthuppa, but its observatory at the top of the ziggurat is one of the finest in Dara Happa and the astrologer seers ostensibly work for the Oslir River Union, advising on auspicious celestial configurations cross-referenced against the huge, brass-plated Almanacs of Zhar which lend insight to any and all questions, based upon the movements of the stars. The gout-troubled, pock-marked hunchback Ranethiyus leads the astrologer seers and is considered to be the best who has ever lived – possibly even being a direct son of Buserian.

Dayzatar

Located close to the north gate in the city’s north west, the Dayzatar temple is enthralled to the Imperial Footrest and the Golden Dragon Society. Its High Priest, Mutheculus Tiedtongue, spends long days in study and contemplation, trying to forge an insight into the draconic relationships Dayzatar must embody; he remains to be convinced, and this frustrates him because, of all Yelm’s brothers, Dayzatar’s nature is the most logical, in mythic terms, to conclude. If Dayzatar does possess a draconic aspect, it should be easy to reconcile, and the Golden Dragon emperor’s presence is clear proof of that – yet something conclusive eludes Mutheculus, and so he is an unwilling sceptic, occasionally swayed by rambling missives sent by Lokastuman, but ultimately defied by a lack of mythic evidence.

Dendara

Dendara’s temple is located in the Imperial Footrest where it is a series of impressively tiled rooms of shimmering blue, green and orange, bas reliefs of Dendara’s service to Yelm lining the walls, floors and ceilings. The entire temple exudes calm; even the angriest person feels relaxed as they stride through the temple’s halls. Sweet-smelling incense and vast urns filled with freshly cut flowers complete the sense of serenity and peace.

Lodril

Lodril’s temple resides outside the walls of the city because Lodril himself resides outside Heaven. In Raibanth, Lodril is worshipped in his aspect of earth-shaker, heralding the approach of Dara Happa’s armies by causing the ground to rumble and split around the defences of the enemy. His temple is a crude (by Dara Happan standards) ziggurat of red earth and ochre tiles, surrounded by the simple dwellings of his most devout and faithful worshippers. The earth around Lodril’s temple is rich and incredibly fertile; any plant of any kind prospers here, and Lodril’s worshippers maintain small gardens of diverse fruits, vegetables and flowers with which to sustain themselves.

Lokarnos

In the south west of the city the Lokarnos temple and, before it, is the Great Market. The temple is a grand ziggurat of pale stone and jade tile, adorned with the wheel motif of Lokarnos and under constant visitation for merchants and tradesmen hoping for Lokarnos’s blessing and favour.

Murharzarm

The temple of the First Emperor is within the Imperial Footrest and is sacred to the emperor and the Imperial Court. Countless smaller shrines are found throughout the city, but the central temple is naturally located within Yelm's glory. The temple is, on the face of it, a simple series of narrow rooms adorned with countless carvings of Murharzarm's myths and deeds. But, behind many of these immense, stone friezes are ten secret rooms known only to the priesthood and a select few. Each secret room contains one of the huge, bronze, gold and iron-bound books written either by or for Murharzarm. Each book contains the First Emperor's wisdom and knowledge; every law and rite that Murharzarm received from Yelm and put into practice to forge Dara Happa. Only the most devout may study in these secret areas; only those most faithful to the current emperor are allowed to ever know of their existence.

Oslira

The Oslira temple is an impressive five tiered ziggurat standing on the river island in the north west quarter of the city. It is reached by a ferry crossing the river between Ferrytown and the Inner City, pausing at the temple. The entrance to the temple is flanked by two sphinxes with serpent heads of blue marble and gold quartz, representing the union of Oslira and Shargash as the warrior-mother of Land and Water. The temple is built of alternating blocks of yellow sandstone and blue marble, bronze friezes depicting Oslira's myths fastened to the bottom tier of the temple. The observant notice that, when the reflected rays of the Imperial Footrest strike the Oslira temple, every representation of the goddess stirs and flows around its brass panel, as though attempting to hide from the light. This is not, as some believe, Oslira demonstrating her obeisance to Yelm, but a direct reaction of the temple to the draconic influence infused into the reflected sunlight. Oslira has no wish to be enthralled to the Golden Dragon and her representation, even fixed in bronze, attempts to flee its influence.

Raibamus

The great statue of Raibamus, Murharzarm's son and god of the city of Raibanth, stands on the south west quarter of the city, a twenty metre-high carving of this most perfect of Dara Happan men. In the plinth supporting the statue is the simple temple that few, these days, frequent.

The statue of Raibamus always faces in the direction of the city's next threat; in the time of Dismanthuyar it looked to the south, where the armies of the EWF gathered. These days, many have noted, the statue faces towards the Imperial Footrest itself, sightless, but all-seeing eyes, watching the form of the Golden Dragon emperor intently.

Sagittus

By rights Sagittus is the city god of Elempur but, disembodied from his city he resides now as one of the city's defenders. The Sagittus temple and barracks is located on the eastern road close to the eastern gate where the faithful archers of Raibanth command excellent views around the city.

Shargash

The basalt ziggurat, made from stones brought north from Alkoth, stands at the south gate of the city, on the eastern side of the road, mirroring Alkoth's geographical orientation with Raibanth. The temple is a gloomy place that seems to absorb the light of the Footrest but not reflect it. As the Sagittus temple guards the east and north of the city, so the temple of Shargash guards the south and west; but it does so with Hellmen and the grim-faced, black-armoured warriors of Alkoth's



Elevens. Those who do not worship Shargash (and there are few of these in Raibanth) give the Shargash temple a wide berth. Its bleak, dark stone is painful for true Dara Happans to gaze upon, unless they have lived in Alkoth. And, as many suspect, the ziggurat of Shargash is, in reality, a section of Hell transplanted to the overworld, but tamed by being in the presence of Yelm's radiated glory from the Footrest.

Urvairinus

The final guardian of the city is Urvairinus. His temple stands by the city wall and guards the south west gate. The ziggurat is both a place of worship and the barracks of the Association of Holy Swords, which runs the affairs of the south west quarter. The temple adjoins the city wall, merging into the stones so seamlessly that the temple and barracks structure appears to grow from Raibanth's defences. A marble and bronze statue of the great Urvairinus stands watch over the courtyard before the ziggurat, his spear pointing threateningly towards the south.

The Associations of Raibanth

Each quarter of the city is in the shadow of the Footrest but always bathed in the rays of the sun. Each quarter is governed by a single Association although other, smaller, associations operate under the aegis of the chief Association.

North West Quarter

In the north west quarter the Golden Dragon Society controls all. No other Associations are permitted to operate there, although emissaries and advisers may come and go freely and there are no restrictions on trade. Those who have converted to the draconic path may join the Golden Dragon Society and find station within it, but ultimately the Society answers not to the Golden Dragon emperor, but to the Eternal Dragon Ring. The head of the Golden Dragon Society is Khorvanathu Talon Son, an apostate priest of Dayzatar but now given completely to the draconic path. His mind is bent into complex angles defying logic and with this incredible intellect he co-ordinates the activities of the Golden Dragon Society across Dara Happa. He communes with the Eternal Dragon Ring, meditates at the shrine of Obduran in the Footrest, and takes audience with the emperor every tenth day. He surrounds himself with many agents and spies, so that he might know the empire's secrets and

report these back to those who need to know them, but ensures that he has first meditated on the nature of the secrets and prepared plans to accompany their revelation. All Hunting and Waltzing Bands at large in Dara Happa are commissioned by Khorvanathu and the information they acquire is channelled back to him. His agents, servants, bureaucrats and bodyguards occupy the north west quarter of the city and then filter through the other quarters as their duties dictate. Khorvanathu himself lives and works in the Golden Dragon Society ziggurat at the centre of the quarter, protected by a fierce cadre of Wyrms' Talon Disciples who act as his personal guard and were appointed by the Eternal Dragon Ring.

North East Quarter

The north east quarter is administered by the Ten Fold Fellowship. Consisting of ten Leagues, the Fellowship brokers information and learning as its foremost commodity, but ostensibly co-ordinates all trade within Raibanth as its primary activity. Despite its fundamental adherence to the Solar pantheon, it maintains the status quo of the populace and has within its quarter the public temples of Dendara, Lokarnos, Raiba and Uleria. The Fellowship is responsible for the civil peace of the city but not its protection. Its League members are the ten great families of the empire, which wax and wane but are, in the reign of the Golden Dragon emperor, stable and united, focused on gathering knowledge and controlling the well being of the empire according to purist Yelmic teachings. Its offices are within the temple of Lokarnos, which has several underground floors safeguarded from prying eyes and unsound minds, not least of which are the agents of the Golden Dragon Society.

The Ten Fold Fellowship has representatives across Dara Happa but its chief focus is on Raibanth and Yuthuppa, close to the Imperial heart. It is led by the High Council of Ten, the heads of the ten League members. The High Council's leader and foremost spokesman is Berenavus the Remarkable, a consummate diplomat and expert on Antirius and Buserian teachings who co-ordinates the workings of the Association through his seven attaches. Berenavus is genial, wise and keyed into the machinations of the Golden Dragon Society. He views their rivalry as a great game with the Imperial Footrest as the prize. However he knows perfectly well that direct antagonism of the Wyrms' Talon Disciples would be to threaten Dara Happa's ultimate stability and so

he is keen to foster good relations and maintain the appearance that the Ten Fold Fellowship is nothing more than an esoteric society with the capability of good governance and service to the Golden Dragon emperor. Whilst he wants to see Dara Happa restored to Dara Happans in its entirety, he is cautious when it comes to notions of open rebellion. Dara Happa has suffered defeat at the hands of the dragons once already and further war with them would be disastrous for the empire's long-term harmony.

South East Quarter

The Oslir River Union, based in Elz Ast, governs here, dealing with trade between the major cities of the empire. Its work is supported by six smaller trade Associations, including the Quarters' Association, which strengthen its position and assist in channelling communications up and down the river. Its leader is Cuthanyar Ironsun, leader of the Ironsun League of mercenary traders that offer protection to all vessels plying the Oslir's course. He is fundamentally opposed to draconic rule and, if he did not occupy such a high position, would make trouble for the EWF; indeed he did just this in Elz Ast and was duly removed to Raibanth where the sheer presence of the Wyrmfriends keeps him in check.

The seven Associations based in the south east quarter work closely together and closely with the Ten Fold Fellowship. They try to limit direct dealings with the Golden Dragon Society to an absolute minimum, using the Ten Fold Fellowship to broker on their behalf whenever possible. The Oslir River Union bases itself in the Oslira temple and all Association business is conducted there under the watchful gaze of the immense Blue Serpent statue that hangs from the ceiling of the third tier of the ziggurat. Also located in this quarter are the temples of Buserian and Dayzatar.

South West Quarter

Controlled by the Association of Holy Swords, the quarter is dominated by the garrison which watches over the Processional and the main gate to the city. The Association of Holy Swords is dedicated to the joint worship of Murharzarm and Urvaairinus; it consists of four martial Leagues, each specialising in a particular method of combat but content to cede overall control to the generalship of the Association's guiding council.

The Holy Swords are sworn to protect Raibanth and its emperors. They claim to be above political concerns and focus exclusively on promoting the city's security. The Holy Swords are, essentially, the army of Raibanth and, if Dara Happa needs to unite to fight a common enemy, the Holy Swords are responsible for mustering all the other martial Associations throughout the empire to form the Dara Happan army – a task requiring both diplomacy and freedom from any overt political leanings.

It is a relatively young Association, formed from those Nobles who fought the Golden Dragon before it became emperor, but consider Raibanth's seat as the holy city to be above mundane politics. Each head of its four Leagues has sworn to the emperor to protect the city at all costs, but, crucially, none has sworn to necessarily protect the emperor. For this reason the Association of Holy Swords appears to be truly neutral and it takes great care to act without any bias towards either EWF or pure Dara Happan political interests. Its members focus on the veneration of Murharzarm and Urvaairinus, honing their combat skills in regular displays of prowess in the immense courtyard of the garrison and patrolling the city walls decked in their fine helmets and breastplates of polished bronze with kilts of deep purple and midnight blue.



The four Leagues of the Holy Swords are:

- House Mhujir – descendents of the Sagittus worshippers of Elempur and masters of archery
- House Yutharic – spear and shield masters, their shield wall has never been broken
- House Oajinn – swordsmen and philosophers, experts in the Straight Blade technique of Urvairinus
- House Jennesus – charioteers and experts with sling and javelin

The Association sprawls across the entire quarter, spilling out of the barracks and into the residential areas where each League has its own House base. Holy Sword members consider themselves an elite and behave with appropriate arrogance. Of all the Associations in Raibanth they are the only one to cross Association boundaries freely as they patrol the city and parade through its streets, regular displays of military finery demonstrating Dara Happan military discipline at its best.

The south west quarter is home to the temples of Lodril, Polaris and Yelmalio. Lodril is worshipped in his aspect of earth-shaker, heralding the approach of Dara Happa's armies by causing the ground to rumble and split around the defences of the enemy. Polaris, worshipped from the summit shrine of the Murharzarm ziggurat, guides the strategies of the Holy Sword commanders by outlining his plans in the movements of the stars. Yelmalio, Yelm's son, is worshipped in his aspect of youthful warrior, and his cult is that of all young members of the four leagues as they learn the discipline necessary for a fully-fledged Dara Happan soldier.

The rest of the quarter is residential. Nobles, primarily, but also prosperous Citizens and Newcomers who have earned themselves the patronage of the Imperial Court.

Outer Raibanth

The city of the Citizens and Half Citizens sprawls along the eastern bank of the Oslir, south of the Sagittus temple. Here life goes on as it does in every other Dara Happan city, even though the outer streets are in the all-encompassing shadow of the Imperial

Footrest. There are stores, workshops, inns, taverns and local shrines. A few Nobles have property in the outer city to maintain their influence, but otherwise it is the realm of the common people. This is a city of minor Leagues and Associations, mundane intrigues, simple plans and humdrum daily life. Like Elz Ast in the far north people from Kostadi, Rinliddi and Darjinn come to trade and work amongst the native Dara Happans.

Wymfriends and Dara Happan Golden Dragon Society converts live, work and play alongside the traditionalists. Life is settled now, three decades after the upheaval that brought the Golden Dragon to power. Life is good in outer Raibanth. Its position at the heart of the empire is secure and the dragon emperor a constant, visible sign of this security. Stirrings of rebellion are confined to the odd muted comment in the corners of taverns and inns, quickly hushed when those concerned realise that to return the Golden Age of Dara Happa a dragon must be killed. Almost all believe this to be impossible and, underlying the thoughts of insurgency, there exists a tacit acceptance of how things are and what would be lost if the Golden Dragon was removed from its seat of power: security, stability and the compromise between the Solar and draconic ways.

Ten Tests Passed (Dragonewt City)

The city of Ten Tests Passed appears to be a far more traditional dragonewt colony. Carved into the hills overlooking the route between Yuthuppa and Elz Ast it is a settlement populated primarily with Beaked and Crested dragonewts with only one Noble and one Ruler. The Ruler slumbers in the deep chambers of the new city whilst the Beaked dragonewts excavate and build in the hills around it. The Crested dragonewts scour the hills and uplands for stones conforming to particular geometric properties known only to them whilst undergoing their Orxilius meditations. The Noble dragonewt, Thal'raana, simply spends its time conveying the Ruler's dreamed orders and has little time for interaction with non-dragonewts.

The colony is given over to receiving those dragonewts returned to the draconic path in New Gold Dream. It has a new clutch of birth-eggs in the chambers

The PROCESSIONAL

'Coming from a simple city like Darleep I was unprepared for this majesty. First, the towers on each side of the outer gate, huge and regular with their tiered bafflements and the gleaming figures of armoured Holy Swords watching out for this great city's safety, their spears glittering in the sun. I stated my name to the commanders, presented my lineage and then my business, and waited patiently as my refinue did the same. 'Go with the grace of Yelm and his Dendara,' said the commander, his beard smelling of sweet oils, threaded with warrior rings, 'and tread lightly. You may worship at any of the shrines that you will see along your path and all our gods are represented here. In doing so you present your respects to the city and the Celestial Court.'

I thanked him and we followed the path through to the inner gate where two larger towers flanked our progress. It was shaded and cool in that inner gate, the blue and gold tiles of the buildings decorated with images of Most Holy Yelm and his ten brothers and sons and, above them, etched in a relief of gold, images of the Dragon, the sun anointing its head like a diadem. We paused to prepare ourselves and some of my entourage could barely contain their excitement at finally, finally entering the greatest city of the entire world. I drew myself up, adjusted my hat and led my people forward through the archway.

My breath was stolen.

Golden light spilled across the broad avenue before me. Yellow and white stone rose to either side, so brilliant in its splendour that it hurt my eyes and I was forced to shield them. On both sides were plinths of stone, as large as any building, and atop them a statue to one of the gods. The lesser gods were first, of course; Surenslib and Yesendos, Heron and Boat Builder, facing each other, heads bowed in the glorious grace of Yelm's holy light. Their statues dwarfed us, and all around people filed into and out of the shrines built into each plinth. Durbaddath and Sagittus followed, Sagittus with his immense bow and sorrowful countenance. We walked slowly, treading as lightly as the commander had asked of us, and I gave two of my people permission to offer prayers at the shrine of Selshena.

The gods greeted us. I could imagine how Yelm must have felt as he descended to this most holy kingdom, the gods giving thanks to him as they seemed to give thanks to us as we trod the Processional. All around was marvel and grace, and I knew peace in my heart, but it was only when I dared to pause and truly survey this great city that I sensed the true might of Dara Happa.

As the plinths of the gods continued I realised that before us was the lowest part of the Footrest. I had taken it for just another wall of the inner city, but now I realised that these were the very tiers of empire. Larger than the outer walls of any city, that first tier of gold and white stone seized my attention and would not release it. I craned my head as far as I could and still I could not see the Footrest's summit. Either the light from above was too bright or it was too high to perceive, but I know that the Footrest ascends into heaven and here was I, a mere mortal, witnessing this for the very first time. I allowed myself to weep then, because I knew that if I tried to contain my wonder any longer I would burst. Around me others were doing the same; some threw themselves to the floor and remained prostrate until their aching knees forced them to stand once more.

We continued along, passing the shrines of the Gods of the Earth: Oria and Everina watching us; great Gerendetho, a spear of granite in one titan's fist, standing proud and reverent in the Footrest's shadow. I formed my own prayers in the shrine of Morkartos, for as the leader of my party I knew it wise to thank the

Foreman of the gods for bringing us safe to Raibanth. My prayers finished I enquired of the priest how to find the house of the Quarters' Association and he instructed me to follow the Great Bridge to our right, and to look for the temple of Buserian and then follow its shadow sun wise. I thanked him and stepped once more into the light, taking my place amongst the ranks of gods, standing in the shadow of Yelm's almighty temple, bathed in his light and grace.

Something moved across the tiers of the ziggurat. Something large and something for which I was wholly unprepared. I knew it was there, of course, but the wonder of the Processional had blinded me to its existence. A great tail, golden like the sun, scales as big as shields, shifted and then settled. Above it was the huge musculature of a leg, and my eyes followed its crooked length until I could see the vast clawed foot, resting on the second tier. A claw that gleamed pure white and was sharp enough to sunder entire armies. I was gazing on the form of the Emperor himself. The rest was hidden from view by the sharp angles of the ziggurat, but this was enough for me and I was forced to avert my eyes. I could not, and did not, want to gaze any longer on that immense creature for fear of my heart, eyes and soul being captured forever.'

– Yuthunyar Firetrader, Noble Merchant of Darleep, on his first visit to Raibanth.

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surrounding the Ruler although the first reincarnations are not expected for some time. The regime here is strict, ensuring no dragonewt will fall from the draconic path ever again. Some of the Crested dragonewts that migrate up from New Gold Dream are strangely deficient in the basic dragonewt instincts and Thal'raana is having to spend time ensuring they fully understand the needs of Orxilius so they might pursue the draconic path with dedication and rigour.

Outsiders, unless they are dragonewts, are not welcome in Ten Tests Passed. Beaked dragonewts wielding klanths and riding demi-birds quickly drive away the curious and the lost. The settlement has gained an unhealthy reputation amongst the human settlements scattered along the Yuthuppa/Elz Ast route and they are fearful of some wyrmish plot to devour the entire region.

Yuthuppa

Yuthuppa means 'Ship of God', and that is what the city was. In Anaxial's reign, when the great flood engulfed the world, the emperor built the great ship that saved the good and just of Dara Happa and brought them to safety. After the flood, Yuthuppa was the capital of Dara Happa for a long time, and its decks and rails

were disassembled to form the walls and buildings of the city that now occupies the Mound of Herustana, overlooking the Oslir from the east bank of the river.

Yuthuppa confirms to the sacred design of Dara Happan cities. At its centre is the ziggurat, named the Tower of Yuthuppa, and at its summit is the great dome that was built by the emperor Manarlavus who sought to enshrine Antirius as its celestial emperor. In reality two gods were enshrined: Antirius, who had to be coaxed into accepting this as a seat of wisdom, and Dendara, who helped protect the city from the army of monsters that threatened it whilst Antirius was absent.

Yuthuppa is thus the city of Gods. It is also the city of the Star Seers who, from the Tower of Yuthuppa, used the patterns of the stars to identify the gods and their actions, and wrote these patterns into almanacs made of brass and bronze. Through observation and record the Star Seers identified the First Forty Nine gods; those gods that could be relied upon to be present in the night sky at all times, and so were wholly loyal to Yelm. Temples to each of the forty nine were raised in Yuthuppa and the priests and astrologers conduct worship in them still.

But most worship is given to Buserian, who was foremost of the stars and gave the Lore of the Stars to the Star Seers. Yuthuppa is located directly beneath the Pole Star which is fixed in the sky dome and around which all stars dance. Buserian's Frame is the name given to the circular grid that all Star Seers use to track and record the patterns of the stars, and, over time, Yuthuppa's streets have been altered to reflect the Frame with the many temples being built on the appropriate intersections. Yuthuppa's earthly presence reflects the celestial dance perfectly and, as such, is the home of all Dara Happan wisdom and lore because it mirrors the perfection of the cosmos.

The Holy League of Scrutiny

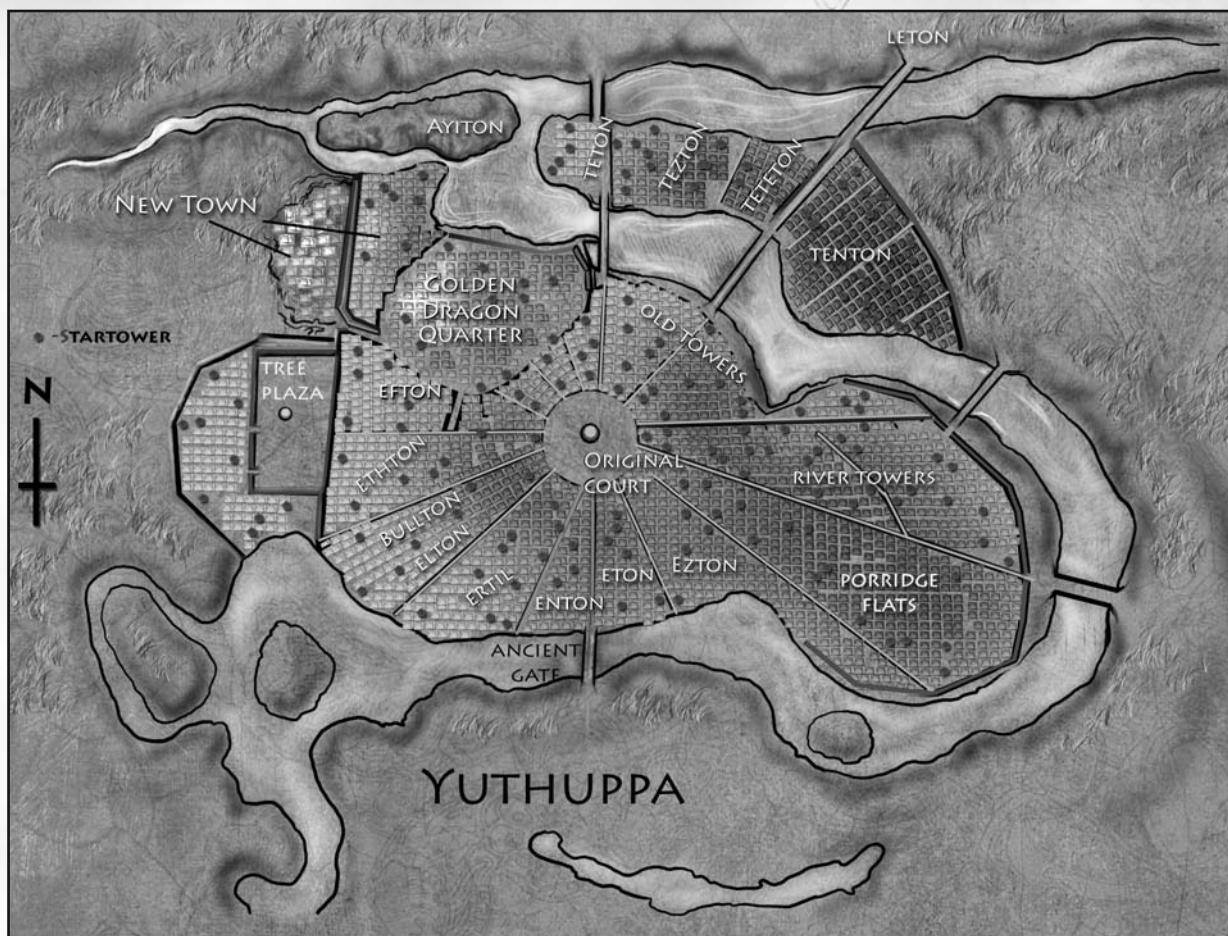
Every League of Yuthuppa is allied with a god, a star and a position in the celestial dance. The Leagues form the Holy League of Scrutiny, which is concerned with the continued interpretation of the movements of the heavens and how the stars influence events across Glorantha, not just Dara Happa.

The Leagues do not have names but numbers. The First League, for instance, studies and venerates Polaris, Star One; the Fourth League studies Oropum, Star Four, the Goddess of Guidance. Each League is expert in the myths and movements of their star and understands the interrelationship with the other stars. The wisdom and learning of the League is enshrined in its almanac, and the Leagues are protected by the Star Spears of Alkoath, Shargashi mercenaries who have been employed to protect Yuthuppa since the days of Anaxial. Every League's house is protected by ten Star Spears who, whilst loyal to Shargash, are perfectly loyal to the wisdom of the stars.

Astrological and religious activities are inseparable in Yuthuppa. The Star Seers dominate all activity and religious ceremonies are conducted according to a mixture of Antiric and Buserian precepts. To study the stars is to study the gods and vice versa. The Yuthuppanns have learned much about Dara Happa's gods through the study of the Sky Dome and have been able to develop a certain degree of prophecy through the accurate forecasting of the movements of certain stars through the various radials, quadrants and houses of Buserian's Frame.

The EWF is somewhat sceptical of the Star Seers' work. Draconic cosmology dictates, quite literally, that the stars are a fraction of the scales upon the hide of the Cosmic Dragon and this allows them to plausibly argue for the draconic nature of the Solar pantheon. However the Star Seers, and especially the adepts of Buserian, dismiss the draconic parallels, pointing to the unpredictability of the dragonewts that have congregated in and around Yuthuppa as proof that the draconic system of belief is erratic. The stars, they maintain, move according to a complex pattern because that is how Yelm has ordered the universe. Any relation to draconic patterns is purely coincidental.

As a result, the Golden Dragon Society has scant representation on Yuthuppa although its spies and agents keep careful watch on the discoveries and theories of the Star Seers. Astrological study is no match for enlightened insight, but, as the EWF is all too aware, the relationship between Dara Happans and the Solar pantheon is incredibly strong, and all



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information, no matter how it has been obtained, is important and essential.

Temples in Yuthuppa

Over fifty temples are found in Yuthuppa, ranging from small, street-side shrines through to the major temples held within the Tower of Yuthuppa's ziggurat. Any god on the Gods' Wall that has a sky dome representation (in other words, is a star) has a shrine of some form in the city. The major gods are, naturally enough, fully represented with attendant priesthoods: Yelm, Antirius, Dayzatar, Lodril, Shargash, Lokarnos, Buserian and so forth. The entire third tier of the Tower is dedicated to Buserian, much of which is the Buseric Library, a curious mixture of reading room, book repository and temple where ardent scholars study, write and pray in almost complete silence, watched over by the Arch

Scholar Pulendemos Nightfever, a short-sighted but sharp-minded individual who is both chief librarian and high priest of the Buserian cult.

Whilst the study of the stars predominates in Yuthuppa the city's origins are not neglected. The Temple of Anaxial venerates the old emperor as Dara Happa's saviour from destruction when the great flood swept away all that was corrupt in the world. The temple resembles a great reed boat shaped in stone, stylised waves of marble carrying the structure through the streets. Within the temple follows the deck plan used by Anaxial, the walls of each floor depicting the Roster, which, in a fabulously ornate frieze, shows the order of boarding of every person and creature taken on board the ship as Oslira's fury raged through the empire. Animals, benign monsters, demi-gods, gods and humans are represented. The very last figure of representation is Anaxial himself, being carried into the boat by Yelm,

The Sky Dome of Glorantha Day and Night

The length of day and night varies, depending upon the time of the year. Days are longer and warmer in the summer, and the sun itself is brighter, being at its brightest on the Solstice. Nights are longer and colder in the winter, and the sun is dimmer.

The Sky Dome's Movement

The Sky Dome moves in a direction called *Domewise*. Looking upwards at the Sky Dome from the surface world the stars rotate from the east to the north, from north around the west, from west to south and then south to east. Observing any single star throughout the course of a night, it would move around the sky in a dome-wise direction. In the course of the year, the Dome makes one complete dome-wise rotation. Each night at sunset, the stars are slightly dome-wise from where they the previous night.

The Sky Dome also tilts back and forth each year, along the north/south axis. Two unmovable hinges, the Gates of Theya and Rausa, permit the Sky Dome's tilt, and the gates have remained unbroken and immobile since the world was first created. Each day the sun leaves Theya's Gate and travels across the dome, setting in Rausa's Gate; at night the planets and stars do the same, chasing a similar course to the sun.

In the summer the dome dips to the north revealing stars along the southern horizon which are not visible in the winter - these are the Summer Stars. In the winter, the dome tilts so that the southern edge dips below the horizon, revealing the Winter Stars along the northern horizon.

seated aboard the Sun Throne, which became the boat's tiller. The Temple of Anaxial is a temple of great holiness and a visit to its decks is considered essential by all who come to Yuthuppa no matter what their business. In recent years the Golden Dragon Society has requested that a dragon be added to the great frieze but the High Priest, Auranthyar, has resisted. None of Anaxial's texts mention dragons as part of the Roster. The Golden Dragon Society argues this is because Anaxial was clearly a modest man who had embraced his draconic aspect; Auranthyar argues it was because dragons are the most corrupt of all species and were beyond saving – words that are clearly heretical to the Wymfriends.

The streets of Yuthuppa are thronged with the faithful, the devout and the scholarly. Lectures on the movements of the sky dome are frequently held in the public auditorium in front of the Tower of Yuthuppa, and scholars debate, argue and declaim on street corners, in front of shrines, and in the small taverns serving the weak, sweet reed tea the area is noted for. The weight

of knowledge and learning hangs heavily in the air; passing into Yuthuppa one is immediately struck by its scholarly air and the constant hubbub of discussion.

The EWF in ᠋ᠳᠠᠷᠠ ᠬᠠᠫᠫᠠ

The Empire of Wyrms' Friends has held a presence in Dara Happa since the Golden Dragon Society found its first foothold in the empire under the invitation of Elmexdros, who sought to realise the Body of Yelm in ways similar to the realisation of the Great Dragon to Be. The Golden Dragon Society's influence was, at first, a subtle thing, based on genuine curiosity and mystical enlightenment, but became gradually more forceful as Dara Happs embraced its philosophical and mystical methods. As its power consolidated, and the EWF sensed that Dara Happa would become a crucial part

of the Great Dragon Project, more of its supporters took root in the cities and its philosophical influence became political, militaristic and forceful. When Dara Happan emperors questioned the Golden Dragon Society's motives and teachings, it became expedient to engineer either their abdication or annihilation. When this policy was challenged by the likes of Urlikarelm and Dismanthuyar, war became inevitable.

The EWF did not hesitate to summon forth the direct intervention of its most powerful weapon – the Eternal Dragon Ring and, faced with this fearsome draconic onslaught, supported by Alkoth's Hellmen armies, Dara Happa was forced to capitulate, leading to the Golden Dragon Sun ascending to the Imperial Footrest. For more than thirty years Dara Happa has lived under a combination of draconic and Solar guidance, with the EWF acting almost as a benevolent dictatorship, allowing a semblance of Solar autonomy through the preservation of the old religion and the Association and League structure.

Senior EWF mystics therefore occupy key advocacy positions within the Imperial Court, surrounding themselves with only those Dara Happans who have loyally converted to the draconic path, whilst shaping it in Solar terms. The populace is free to go about its business as normal, although agents of the Golden Dragon Society watch closely for dissent and stamp it out with ruthless, zealous efficiency. Criticism of the Golden Dragon is treated as a capital crime – as is criticism of Yelm's Solar/Draconic duality which, as the Golden Dragon emperor proves simply by occupying the Imperial Footrest, is Yelm's *true* nature.

Dragonewts, unseen in Dara Happa since the World Council of Friends, have built their own strange cities along the banks of the Oslir and sometimes frequent the streets of Raibanth where they pay homage to the Golden Dragon emperor. Dara Happans regard the dragonewts with suspicion and uncertainty, never sure if the Eravssarr offer a threat or genuine proof of the Golden Dragon's divinity. The dragonewts provide no answers and feel under no obligation to do so, although those Tailed Priests that act as speakers for the dragonewt colonies offer their own, enigmatic interpretations of Yelmic Lore which fascinate Associations such as the Vital Words of Antirius. They

speak of Yelm the Infinite, citing his birth, death and rebirth as precisely the lifecycle dragonewts follow. Some dragonewts claim Yelm is, himself, a dragonewt and the sun is his birth-egg. Others hurl curses at Lodril for falling from the path to enlightenment and seek to free him from his underground prison so he might be reborn into a Crested incarnation.

Those members of the EWF who hail from elsewhere in Glorantha pay lip-service to the ways of the Dara Happan empire by affecting its modes of dress, customised by their own, gaudy, draconic vestments. Dara Happans who have converted to the draconic way display their affiliations with greater subtlety, incorporating draconic motifs into their League dress codes, or plaiting their beards and hair into the complex knotted arrangements introduced by the Eternal Dragon Ring during Elmexdros's rule.



The Eternal Dragon Ring

The general direction of the EWF is governed by the Guiding Council of Dragon Pass, but the ultimate architects of the Great Dragon Project; the ones who truly represent the potential of the draconic path, are those who form the Eternal Dragon Ring.

These individuals are students of the enigmatic Obduran the Flyer, the one mystic who has transcended the mortal to become a True Dragon. His students have mastered some of Obduran's teachings and manifest incredible powers, including the ability to assume draconic form, but cannot, as yet, be considered True Dragons. These Great Dragons of the Eternal Dragon Ring are the true powers behind the EWF. They shape its strategies and, when necessity demands it, intervene in its plans, creating and commanding armies of truly terrifying proportions wherever the EWF's need is greatest.

Knowing that the conquest of Dara Happa would require the direct subjugation of gods, the Eternal Dragon Ring involves itself directly in Dara Happa affairs. The Golden Dragon Sun is a member of the Eternal Dragon Ring, as is Lorenkarten the Mile, who has made it his business to study and manipulate Oslira from his base in Alkothe. Others have intervened in the wars that defined the present regime: Isgangdrang, the Diamond Storm dragon and Lord Great Burin, the vomiter of armies. In their human guises they opt for humble simplicity and graciousness – all the more beguiling for when dealing with those who are embarking on the draconic path or who still need to be convinced of the journey. In their draconic form they are formidable opponents but in terms of their mystical maturity, whilst being far ahead of anyone else within the EWF, are still lacking the true insight to achieve full, draconic, immortality.

Isgangdrang

Known also as the Perfect Uprising, Isgangdrang charted the Right Left-Hand Path which is considered the perfect, practical path for all humans to follow if they seek True Dragonhood. Isgangdrang is a highly active member of the Eternal Dragon Ring, frequently to be found at large in Dara Happa. He maintains human form and, whilst capable of achieving a draconic aspect, has never used it. Now that Obduran the Flyer has transcended mortality Isgangdrang is considered the leader of the Eternal Dragon Ring and has achieved the status of demi-god, being worshipped as Drang, the Diamond Storm Dragon.

Lord Great Burin

The Destroyer of Evil and Sorrow. The warlike Burin follows the Path of Unstruck Sound which eradicates carnal and mundane desires in favour of pure draconic thought which is alien to the human mind. When the God Learners sent their armies against the EWF in 111,842, Lord Great Burin assumed his draconic form and swallowed the sorcerers' spells, and then vomited up the EWF's dead soldiers to crush the God Learner forces decisively at the Battle of Dero van. Much of Burin's time is now spent in deep meditation in his secret sanctuary somewhere in Dragon Pass, but from time to time he walks abroad to seek new converts to his Ten Step Path of Unstruck Sound.

Lorenkarten

Known also as the Above and Beyond and the Source of the Waters, Lorenkarten believes that all humans can become dragons by starting small and working towards greatness – his Ten Step Path to Immanent Mastery. Lorenkarten has a special relationship with the True Dragon Aroka, draconic lord of all waters, and, as such, maintains a special understanding of Oslira. He is the foremost representative of the Eternal Dragon Ring in Dara Happa (save for the Golden Dragon emperor) and currently resides in Alkoth where he advises the Red King.

Obduran the Flyer

The Eternal Dragon Ring's leader, Obduran achieved complete transcendence from mortality in 111,803, when he assimilated the Absolute. All winds in Glorantha ceased on that day, leaving the world becalmed. Wise beyond measure, Obduran spent two centuries in meditation, deep in philosophical discourse with the True Dragon Arangorf, and so discovered the Orlanth Dragonfriend revelation (although the Yelm Dragonfriend revelation has, thus far, eluded him). As a transcendent being, Obduran is worshipped as a god in the EWF, and no longer has dealings with mortals directly, preferring to channel his thoughts through the Eternal Dragon Ring.

Hurarbargarten

Leader of the Golden Dragon Society, Hurarbargarten became the Golden Dragon more than thirty years ago after studying extensively in Raibanth and Yuthuppa. He engaged philosophers and scholars, Star Seers and priests, in a bid to form the cult of Yelm the Dragon, even though Obduran had failed to prove the Yelm Dragon Revelation. When it became clear that Dara Happa sought to rid itself of the Golden Dragon Society, Hurarbargarten underwent his single Empty Riddle meditation and transformed into the Golden Dragon, leading the EWF armies against Dismanthuyar and eventually becoming emperor. Hurarbargarten has long since lost the will to resume human form, but his daughter, Sharmanasthar, provides the essential link to his mortality.

Varankol the Mangler

Isgangdrang's student, and a great hero of the EWF, Varankol is leader of the Aramites, a savage band of boar-riding mercenaries from Tuskwood. He rides to battle on Gouger, a vast demonic boar, wielding his twin axes, Hower and Scraper. He is the cruel, vicious aspect of the Eternal Dragon Ring, epitomising its ruthless inner heart, and is beyond the ability to transcend. However, for striking terror into the Middle Sea Empire, he and Lord Great Burin are the greatest weapons of the Eternal Dragon Ring.

DARA HAPPAN CHARACTERS

Dara Happa Stir is best played with Dara Happan characters. The God Learners and Old Ways Orlanthi do not have any influence in the mighty Dara Happan Empire and neither would be chosen by Yelm to assist Karvanyar's destiny in overthrowing draconic rule. Characters from Rinliddi and Saird are equally viable for use in the campaign.

In this section Dara Happan character creation is explored, expanding on both basic *RuneQuest* character generation and the Dara Happan-specific sections of *The Players' Guide to Glorantha*. The next chapter, *Cults of the Sun*, provides an expanded overview of the Solar pantheon and forms a crucial section of the development of rounded Dara Happan characters.

Dara Happan Society

Dara Happa is strictly patriarchal. All lineages can be traced back to Yelm and the importance of males in society is therefore divinely commanded. Sons are favoured over daughters; brothers over sisters. Women are essentially treated as commodities: to marry two houses or families together; to bear children (males, preferably); to tend the home and hearth; and do the bidding of their fathers, brothers and husbands faithfully, diligently and obediently. The most prestigious occupations and social positions are therefore occupied explicitly by males. Only a man (and a nobleman, at that) has any intrinsic rights to property. Only men may worship the key gods of the Solar pantheon – women have their own gods reflecting their place in Dara Happan society. However, it is, perhaps, important to note that Dara Happans are not inherently misogynistic. The various goddesses (with the exception of Uleria) are held in the utmost esteem, and Dara Happan women are loved deeply by their men. But their social position is fixed by Yelm's divine law and that law cannot be transcended. Both

YOUR DARA HAPPA MAY VARY

The character creation guidance presented below is geared towards male exclusivity. Despite the obvious implications for sexual equality in roleplaying, an authentic Dara Happan campaign should be focused on men and the characters will be male. Of course Games Masters may bend or break this rule to promote female characters if they wish but it will lack that *true* Dara Happan authenticity.

men and women understand and accept this socio-sexual delineation and are disdainful of cultures such as the Orlanthi and the EWF, both of which accord far greater equality to females.

Most Dara Happans are deeply urbanised. Every noble lives within the walls of the great cities of Dara Happa and the most prestigious and influential families reside within the capital, Raibanth, and the second city, Yuthuppa. The peasantry lives outside the city walls, but close to them, and are viewed with an undisguised scorn and disdain by all city dwellers, although their necessity to society is not in question.

Dara Happan Culture

Dara Happan civilisation is modelled precisely on the mythical organisation of the Solar court, displayed for all to see (and therefore beyond denial in its truth) in the immense Gods' Wall of the Castle of Dugoloth, the most holy site in the entire empire. The nobility are direct descendents of Yelm and being able to trace one's lineage directly back to Murharzarm defines and establishes the status of both the individual and the

family in society. The senior nobility and the Imperial household can claim to be within four generations of Yelm and therefore hold the divine right to rule.

Notions of justice and order – specifically, Yelm’s order – are of paramount importance to all Dara Happans. The universe works when it is internally harmonious and obedient to its own laws. When those laws and that harmony is placed under threat, then so is the stability of the universe. This is why all other cultures are inferior to the Dara Happan. The God Learners and the Empire of Wyrms’ Friends both seek to introduce selfish discord into an ordered universe, tampering with nature in ways that are, ultimately, destructive (and Dara Happans demonstrate remarkable prescience in this regard). The Old Way Traditionalists embody the Dara Happan respect for tradition but are wilfully belligerent, constantly challenging the natural order of things and then finding, usually to their regret, that in their haste to challenge they have brought about self injury. These, the dominant cultures of western Glorantha, are thus flawed and naturally inferior. Only the distant Kraloreli come close to exhibiting similar cultural traits to the Dara Happans although, Yuthuppan scholars note, Kralorela too has been infected by the insidious influence of both the God Learners and Wyrms Friends.

Dara Happans are deeply artistic. Images of their gods and emperors adorn the inside and outside walls of temples and public buildings in every part of the empire. The iconography is striking in its detail, its structure, and its formality. The stories of the gods and the past heroes of the empire are displayed for all to

see, created both for aesthetically satisfying reasons and to continually reinforce the importance of the immensely old, immensely superior and immensely complicated Solar pantheon. Representations of the gods and their myths adorn everything, from huge, wall-filling tableaux through to the simplest drinking or eating vessel. The image of the sun – Yelm’s visible authority – is found everywhere, as are the creatures and habits Yelm holds sacred: the bull, the horse and the domination of both his foes and the Rebel Gods that have continually sought to usurp Yelm’s rule.

Dara Happans are obsessed with the number ten and iconography is arranged to reflect this, the perfect number and its multiples. There are ten members of the Solar court; one takes the Ten Tests to become emperor; ten thousand stairs in the Imperial Footrest; ten cardinal virtues for behaviour; and so forth. To all Dara Happans ten is a propitious number and is reflected throughout the empire in some way, shape and form.

Characteristically Dara Happans are proud, arrogant, and utterly convinced of their cultural superiority but are, at the same time, a very traditional, conservative people. Change for change’s sake is viewed with deep suspicion (if not outright hostility) and the traditions and practices established by the first, great emperors of Dara Happa, especially Murharzarm, are considered to be the only proper ways of doing things. To go against tradition is to invite disorder and threaten justice; Dara Happans typically go to great lengths to maintain traditional behaviours in order to preserve the universal justice Yelm brings to the universe.

Dara Happan Background

Background	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills	Starting Money
Dara Happan	Influence +10%, Lore (World) +10%, Persistence +10% Pick One +10% Boating, Evaluate, Dodge, Perception, Riding, Sleight, Sing, Stealth Pick Two +15% 1H Spear, 2H Spear, 1HSword, 2H Sword, Bow, Dagger, Rapier, Shield, Staff	Language (Native) +50%, Lore (Regional), Lore (Theology) Pick One Craft, Dance, Language, Lore, Play Instrument, Shiphandling	4D10x100 silver

Creating a Dara Happan Character

Character creation follows the standard *RuneQuest* procedure.

Characters for *Dara Happa Stirs* use the Dara Happan Cultural Background presented on page 61.

Dara Happan Cultural Background

This is a civilised culture with the nobility living within the precincts of one of the great cities of the empire, irrespective of their attitude towards the EWF.

Noble Standing

All characters are members of the nobility but, naturally, there are divisions even within the noble caste. Each character needs to establish the standing of his family by rolling 1D10 on the Nobility Table.

Standing

Denesiod, Erzanestyu and Khordavu were all emperors who founded one of the great Dara Happan dynasties.

Khordavu is the oldest, and most auspicious, dynasty, which spanned 479 years and had twenty three emperors in total. The Erzanestyu Dynasty ruled for 193 years and had twelve emperors. Denesiod is the most recent dynasty and includes the emperor Dismanthuyar. It held power for 188 years and had 10 emperors.

Whilst there should be no technical social difference between the same ranks of different lineages, this is not so in practice. Khordavians view themselves as superior to Erzanestyans and Erzanestyans see themselves as superior to Denesiodans. Thus, a minor Khordavian noble will always see himself as socially equal, if not superior, to a high-ranking Denesiodan.

Likely Cult Membership

These are the cults most likely to be followed, but this is by no means a strict listing.

Starting Money

This is the amount of ready cash a character has to hand or can raise in a short space of time without much difficulty. Note that Dara Happan nobles tend to deal almost exclusively in gold, which is, of course, Yelm's metal. Silver is considered a base currency in the empire – the coinage of the lower classes.

Nobility Table

1D10	Standing	Likely Cult Membership	Starting Money
1	High Ranking Nobility. Of the Denesiod Line	Dayzatar, Lodril, Shargash, Golden Dragon	6D6 x 200 Wheels
2	Middle Ranking Nobility of the Denesiod Line	Antirius, Arraz, Shargash, Golden Dragon	4D6 x 100 Wheels
3	Low Ranking Nobility. Of the Denesiod Line	Avivorus, Buserian, Enverinus, Lokarnos	2D6 x 50 Wheels
4	High Ranking Nobility. Of the Erzanestyu Line	Dayzatar, Lodril, Shargash, Golden Dragon	6D6 x 200 Wheels
5	Middle Ranking Nobility of the Erzanestyu Line	Antirius, Arraz, Shargash, Golden Dragon	4D6 x 100 Wheels
6	Low Ranking Nobility. Of the Erzanestyu Line	Avivorus, Buserian, Enverinus, Lokarnos, Erissa	2D6 x 50 Wheels
7	High Ranking Nobility of the Khordavu Line	Dayzatar, Lodril, Murharzarm, Shargash	6D6 x 200 Wheels
8	Middle Ranking Nobility. Of the Khordavu Line	Antirius, Dayzatar, Arraz, Murharzarm, Shargash	4D6 x 100 Wheels
9	Low Ranking Nobility of the Khordavu Line	Zaytenaras, Reladivus, Buserian, Murharzarm	2D6 x 50 Wheels
10	Minor Noble Family with no clear lineage	Any Middle or Low Ranking Cult	2D6 x 25 Wheels

5 copper Spokes = 1 silver Hub
20 Hubs = 1 gold Wheel

Suggested Professions

The professions for Dara Happan characters have been altered slightly from their standard *RuneQuest* counterparts. The professions of *Honour Duellist* and *Tenth* have been reproduced from the *Players' Guide to Glorantha*; the profession of *Eleventh* is new.

Courtier

You one of the elite noble families employed in service directly to the emperor, acting as an adviser perhaps, a ceremonial functionary or an emissary who carries with you a small part of the emperor's authority. You are therefore an agent of the Imperial Court rather than being one who simply attends the emperor's whim.

As a Courtier you have been tested to ensure that you are sympathetic towards the Empire of Wyrm's Friends and will not willingly go against their wishes or agendas. Over the years you have proved your faithfulness, perhaps at the expense of your standing in the eyes of other Dara Happans. In return the EWF has allowed you to pursue your Dara Happan lifestyle as freely as you wish, as long as you continue to acknowledge the Golden Dragon as your rightful emperor.

Diplomat

Working on behalf of your League or Association you act as an emissary to other Leagues and Associations and also to the EWF, whenever co-operation with the Wyrmfriends is necessary. As a result you are well versed in the politics of the empire and can count many notable individuals amongst your acquaintances.

Naturally your role requires precise discretion and the ability to communicate fluently at the highest of social levels, and always with the utmost honour and courtesy. People trust you. Sometimes they have little option.

Eleventh

The Elevens are elite warriors of Dara Happa, formed in the reign of Vanyoramet when it was necessary to protect the empire from those who might invade through the shattered Dome of the Sky. In Vanyoramet's time

the Elevens were so-called because they were misfits and criminals who could not work together, but in time they became an elite and evolved into a noble order of warriors. The Elevens have fought on behalf of Dara Happa at every key battle in the empire's history. Now, in the time of the Dragon Emperor, every Eleventh must either swear an oath to serve the Golden Dragon or be sent into exile (to Saird, Carmania or Rinliddi, perhaps). What did you do?

Honour Duellist

You are an old-minded member of the Dara Happan tradition, remembering back to the days of single-weapon duels for glory and family honour. With the expansion of the EWF into Peloria the old duels are far and few between, but you still hold dear to this tradition. Should a foe cross your path and not agree to the sanctions of a duel, your skills with a blade are no less potent in a free-formed skirmish.

When not engaged in the noble pursuit of supporting honour through blood, you serve the Leagues and Associations with your weapon skills as a freelance agent, wearing the League's regalia and the Association's insignia with the same pride as any other Dara Happan, but your essential skills are in defending the honour of both in whatever capacity the League or Association requires it.

Lord

You have achieved significant status in society and own land that yields rent from the working castes. Due to your position in the League and Guild you have been accorded the title 'Lord' meaning that you are recognised as someone who commands the respect of others and have people sworn to your service.

Mercenary

There are many mercenaries Leagues active in the Oslir River valley. The city of Alkoth provides mercenaries to the EWF, for example, whilst Elz Ast specialises in for-hire warriors who guard the Oslir shipping. The various temples, especially in Yuthuppa, hire mercenaries from certain Leagues specifically for temple guard duties. In Dara Happa, the mercenary is considered to be a useful and worthwhile profession attracting little of the stigma sell-spears find elsewhere in the world.

MERCHANT

The merchant Leagues are a powerful force throughout the empire, controlling all trade and commerce within Dara Happa. A merchant League gathers together trading families working in different commodities allowing a considerable consolidation of power. The more intrepid Leagues venture outside the Oslir River valley to trade produce with those beyond Yelm's great bounty and thus spread the word of the sun far and wide.

Physician

The students of the merciful goddess Erissa are the physicians and healers of Dara Happa. Noble physicians treat those within their own caste, and the various physician Leagues are some of the oldest and most noble in the whole of Dara Happa.

PRIEST

A Dara Happan priest might serve the traditional Solar pantheon, or tread the mystical paths espoused by the EWF. Some, those of the Golden Dragon cult, combine traditional worship with draconic mysticism. Either way, the Dara Happan priesthood wields much power throughout the empire. Every priest has visited the Gods' Wall and knows the places and positions of the one hundred gods. Every priest has trodden the ten thousand steps of the azure processional to stand at the foot of the Imperial Footrest and gaze up at the form of the Golden Dragon.

Scholar

There is an accepted scholarly tradition in Dara Happa because there is much to study and learn. The great libraries of Elz Ast, Alkoth and Yuthuppa contains secrets of the like unknown in Glorantha and researching the accumulated knowledge of so many emperors and gods takes lifetimes. Scholarly Leagues trade information and learning in the same way that merchants trade rice, timber or fish and they occupy a noble position in Dara Happan society.

STAR SEER

Star Seers are astronomers and astrologers, experts in the myths and ways of Dara Happa's star gods. Men of learning, they study all the constellations, but it is typical for them to pick a single constellation that they choose as their patron. Through the study and veneration of their particular deity, they gain an understanding of the ways of their god and an insight into its myths. Their studies are recorded in almanacs, huge books bound in bronze or brass and quite often written in code.

Long study of the stars has made the Star Seers slightly strange by normal Dara Happan standards. If playing a Star Seer character, choose one of the following habits.

- Always ask for the birth date of anyone you meet, and then spend 1D4 days preparing an astrologically accurate birth chart to determine their personality. Always use this chart to influence how you dealing with that person
- Always speak in a mystical tone, full of allegory, reference to obscure star myths, and portents of doom
- Never carry a weapon of any kind
- Never drink alcohol
- Never eat meat
- Never harm another human being
- Never make a decision without first consulting the stars, spending an inordinate amount of time in doing so.

Tenth

The Tenth are the magic-wielding runecasters commanding significant bureaucratic power within the empire, even though they have rejected the existence of the Golden Dragon as emperor and are thus outlawed. Tenth are the direct administration from the highest-ranking nobles, and they are the gears in the Dara Happan war machine that will hopefully one day grind the Dragons out of Peloria. As a Tenth you have been taught and sheltered much of your young life to learn as much mystic knowledge as possible, but your responsibility is to return supreme power to Yelm through any means necessary.

Leagues and Associations

Dara Happa is filled with Leagues and Associations with both being every bit as important as cults in defining Dara Happan character and purpose.

Every family, and therefore every character, belongs to a League. A League is a group of families sharing a similar focus or profession. Therefore, the League a character belongs to will be largely determined by the profession he has chosen. His League means that he knows people from other families within his League and can call upon them for help and assistance as required.

League Influence (New Advanced Skill. Base = INT+CHA)

The strength of standing a character has within his League is determined by a new Advanced Skill for Dara Happan characters called League Influence. The League Influence skill determines how easy it is for the character to gain his League's support in terms of:

- Finding/obtaining information
- Securing direct and indirect help
- Persuading other League members to do something
- Gaining credit from within the League

Essentially the higher the League Influence skill, the stronger and higher the character's status within the League. Games Masters should always consider the League Influence skill's rating whenever a character is engaged on League business or dealing with other members of his League.

The base value for the League Influence skill is the character's INT+CHA Characteristics. Apply the following modifier based on Noble Standing: High Ranking +30, Middle Ranking +20, Low Ranking/Minor +10.

Associations

Leagues gather together into Associations. Associations are temporary alliances between Leagues based on mutual benefit. Some Associations are very long-lived and may even be classed as permanent institutions whilst others are short-term partnerships formed to achieve a specific goal. Membership of an Association works in a very similar way to membership of a League, but the resources available within the Association are spread across the functions represented by the different members.

Every Dara Happan character has an Association Influence skill that works identically to the League Influence skill but is used when engaged on Association business and when dealing with other Leagues in the same Association. The beginning value of the Association Influence skill is half that of the League Influence skill, rounded up. The two skills are completely independent and are increased separately.

League Dress and Association Devices

Every League adopts a uniform. This is some form of distinguishing clothing unique to that League's members. It might be as simple as the colouration of a robe, a style of hat, or the cut of the sleeve, or be deliberately ostentatious such as strikingly designed clothes that assert the League's existence and status. This is the one area in which the notoriously aloof and conservative Dara Happans allow themselves some calculated breaks from tradition (although the uniform itself is a highly traditional form of symbolism).

Association membership is more subdued. Associations are not always permanent institutions whereas Leagues are. The regalia denoting membership of an Association is therefore some form of agreed insignia that can be worn on the clothing as a device, rather than a particular style or colour of clothing. Badges, patches, brooches, necklaces, circlets and torques are the traditional methods of displaying affiliation with an Association.

To wear a particular league's or association's regalia whilst not a member is illegal, see page 24.

Dara Happan Professions

Profession	Basic Skill Bonuses	Advanced Skills
Courtier	Influence +15%, Lore (World) +5%, Perception +5%, Sleight +5%	Pick Two Courtesy, Lore (Dara Happan Art), Lore (Imperial Court), Lore (EWF), Lore (Philosophy), Play Instrument
Diplomat	Influence +20%, Lore (World) +10%, Perception +10%	Pick One Courtesy, Dance, Language, Lore (Dara Happa), Lore (Imperial Court), Lore (League and Association), Lore (EWF), Oratory
Eleventh	Athletics +5%, Influence +5%, Riding +10% OR Driving (Chariot) +10% Pick Two +10% 1H Sword, 2H Sword, Shield, Spear, Driving (Chariot)	Pick One Courtesy, Dance, Language, Lore (Dara Happa), Oratory, Play Instrument
Honour Duellist	Athletics +10%, Dodge +10%, Persistence +5%, Resilience +5% Pick One +10% 1H Sword, Dagger, Shield, Spear	Pick One Courtesy, Lore (Dara Happa), Lore (Heraldry)
Lord	1H Sword +10%, Influence +15%, Persistence +5%, Riding +10%	Pick One Courtesy, Lore (Dara Happa), Lore (League and Association)
Mercenary	Lore (World) +10% Pick Two +15% 1H Axe, 1H Flail, 1H Hammer, 1H Sword, 2H Axe, 2H Flail, 2H Hammer, 2H Sword, Bow, Polearm, Shield, Spear Pick Two +5% Athletics, Dagger, Dodge, Driving, Evaluate, Resilience, Riding, Unarmed	
Merchant	Evaluate +20%, Influence +10%, Lore (World) +10%	Pick One Language, Lore (Commerce), Lore (Logistics), Shiphandling, Survival
Physician	Evaluate +5%, First Aid +20%, Lore (Plant) +10%, Perception +5%	Healing
Priest	Influence +15%, Lore (World) +5%, Persistence +10%	Lore (Theology), Runecasting ¹
Scholar	Evaluate +5%, Lore (World) +15%, Persistence +10%	Any two Lores
Star Seer	Influence +10%, Lore (regional) +10%	Lore (Astrology), Lore (Solar Theology)
	Pick Two +5% First Aid, Influence, Persistence	
Tenth	Evaluate +5%, Influence +10%, Persistence +5%	Lore (Nobility), Runecasting ² , Runecasting (Other) ³

¹ Choose one of the following: Death, Fertility or Fire. The character has integrated that rune and has that rune's Runecasting skill. See the Rune Magic chapter of RuneQuest for more details.

² Choose one of the following: Air, Cold, Earth, Fire, Heat or Water. The character has integrated that rune and has that rune's Runecasting skill. See the Rune Magic chapter of RuneQuest for more details.

³ Choose one of the following: Beast, Earth, Man or Spirit. The character has integrated that rune and has that rune's Runecasting skill. See the Rune Magic chapter of RuneQuest for more details.

CULTS AND ASSOCIATIONS OF THE SUN

This chapter discusses the cults of Dara Happa and provides examples of ten Associations and their corresponding Leagues.

Cult, League and Association membership is essential to the *Dara Happa Stirs* campaign. Each of the characters involved in the rebellion against the Golden Dragon Emperor and the EWF must be, at the very least, an initiate of one of the following cults, all discussed in *Cults of Glorantha volume I*:

- ◉ Buserian
- ◉ Dendara
- ◉ Elmal
- ◉ Erissa
- ◉ Golden Dragon
- ◉ Gorgorma
- ◉ Lodril
- ◉ Lokarnos
- ◉ Oslira
- ◉ Shargash
- ◉ Urvairinus
- ◉ Yelm subcults (but not Yelm directly)
- ◉ Yelmalio

In addition this chapter provides several new cults of the Solar pantheon suitable for *Dara Happa Stirs* adventurers:

- ◉ Alkor
- ◉ Antirius
- ◉ Dayzatar
- ◉ Murharzarm
- ◉ Raiba
- ◉ Sagittus

The Gods' Wall

The most holy place in Dara Happa is the Gods' Wall, which lies sixteen kilometres north of the capital, Raibanth, and can be reached simply by following the Triumphal Way out of the city and walking until one reaches the cliff face known as either the Castle of Dugoloth or Eggarlodril (Lodril's Sculpture).

Inscribed into the cliff face, some sixty four metres in length by twenty three metres in height, are representations of all the myriad gods of the Solar pantheon, arranged in order of their rank and importance. It was made by Lodril who carved it at the very start of the world, when Yelm became the ruler of the Universe and everything was blessed. Yelm, descending to the world, raised the Imperial Footrest and accepted his enthronement as emperor. He then traversed the lands, moving in a straight line that is the Triumphal Way, creating the processional with each gracious footfall. The way was paved by the one hundred deities of the pantheon and Yelm was so pleased to see his rulership acknowledged in this way that he instructed Lodril to commemorate it.

Lodril created the first seal of the empire and pressed it into the living rock, leaving behind the imprint of that procession in all its glory. Each and every god represented in the Gods' Wall swore on oath of compact – the Compact of Rule – that acknowledged Yelm as emperor of all. By swearing the oath the gods agreed to act according to their own natures but always to obey the will of the emperor. Thus was harmony established.

The stone of the cliff is made from the rock known as Steadfast; a rock so dense and tough that nothing, save adamantium, can damage it. This is how the wall

and its carvings have withstood wars, earthquakes and even the great Flood, when Oslira rose in anger and swamped the world. In fact, just prior to the flood the Demon Kings, who ruled Dara Happa for a brief time, had painted over the Gods' Wall with their own foul creations, but the Flood merely dissolved their blasphemous attempts to hide the truth of the universe and so Oslira restored the wall to its proper glory.



A curiosity of the Gods' Wall is that it displays some deities that have not yet come into being or who had come into being at the start of Yelm's rule over the universe. Experts in these matters, such as Plentonium, scribe to Emperor Khordavu, patiently point out that, as emperor of All and Everything, Yelm is perfectly capable of knowing which deities are to come as the empire's boundaries and wisdom spread to encompass new lands, with new gods accepting the Compact of Rule and bowing before the majesty of Yelm Imperator.

The Gods' Wall is divided into five sections.

Ezelveztay and the Solar Court

The first section, on the far right of the wall, represents Ezelveztay, which is the One Before the One, and the Solar Court; that is Yelm and his nine siblings: Arraz, King of the Sky People; Ashartcha, Keeper of Wisdom and Ruler of the Compass; Dayzatar, the Invisible Wisdom; Indarthrad, Keeper of Insight; Kelastan, the Living Throne; Ledareeshata, the Pillar Goddess; Lodril, God of the Earth and the Below; Nemarthshar, Keeper of Strength; and Vanarthurd, Keeper of Sovereignty. Only the emperor and his direct line may worship these gods and only the emperor may worship Yelm directly.

The next four sections depict the one hundred deities swearing the Compact of Rule. Each section is a row of twenty five gods, ranked and ordered according to their importance within the pantheon.

First Row – Gods of Above

The first row depicts the Gods of Above, those gods that may be worshipped by anyone in Dara Happa and to whom oaths can be sworn. The gods are:

MURHARZARM

The first emperor of Dara Happa. Also known as the Keeper of the Surface World, the Guardian of Justice and Right Order and the Patriarch of the Empire. Murharzarm is Yelm's son and, as foremost of the gods in the processional, he is rightly given the most important place in the row.

The Ten Planets

These ten gods represent the eight sons of Yelm and two additional gods who command the Harmonious Realm of the Sky. They are Zaytenaras the Transcendent; Buserian the First Priest; Reladivus, Master of Serenity; Shargash, the Master of Strength and War; Derdurnus, Master of Brilliance; Deumalos, the Master of Sovereignty; Falsoretus, Master of Transformation; Verithurus, the Master of Wisdom; Ghevengus, Master of Action; and Ghelotralas the Messenger to Below.

The Intruder Gods

These gods used trickery and cunning to gain entrance to the Harmonious Realm and they are held responsible for the Sky's fall because what they represent is falsehood and destruction. Uleria is the goddess of Lust but was once a goddess of Love. Oaths sworn to Uleria are of no consequence save for whores, who work her magic. The second Intruder is Umatum, Uleria's son, who killed Murharzarm and is the father of monsters.

The remaining gods in this row of the Gods' Wall represent the avian deities and several portions of Yelm. The avian deities, much revered in Rinliddi, are: Vrimak, God of Eagles; Avarnia, Goddess of Quails and all small birds; and Tholm, the God of Falconry. The other gods are Antirius, the Word of Yelm; Berneel Arashagern, the food of the eagles; Avivorus, God of the Spear, Erekos, Goddess of the Upright Jar; Shafesora, Goodess of the Rain, Fertility and Plenty; Nasakos, Goddess of the Sharing Jar; Polaris, Keeper of the Stars; Ourania, Goddess of the Sky; and Oropum, the Goddess of Guidance.

Second Row – Servants of the Gods of Above

The servant gods are worshipped throughout Dara Happa despite their lower status in the Solar hierarchy. They are all deities concerned with service, labour and prosperity and they act as protectors, aides, companions and workers for the gods of the First Row.

First comes Entekos, the Highest Goddess. She is clothed in the winds and clouds and is the queen of the air. The next four goddesses – Arira, Naveria, Lesilla

and Koveria, are all women's deities representing the four stages of womanhood: innocence, wives, mothers and grandmothers.

Next come the ten sons and servants of Lodril – the workers. They are led by Mohenjar, who is unafraid of any task and always prepared. Then comes Morkatos the Foreman, Perandos the Digger, Pererlotil the Digger, Navestos the Harvester, Urder the Worker, Morurder the Boss, Alfostios the Cooper, Ostevious the Carpenter, Venurtera the Potter and Urdera the Carrier. Both Venurtera and Urdera are goddesses.

The remaining gods of the second row are those who, in some way, served the Celestial Court and Dara Happa. They are:

- Enverinus: A portion of Yelm and the Dara Happan God of Fire.
- Hyraos: God of Harpers and musicians
- Erissa: Goddess of Healing
- Lokarnos: God of Merchants
- Ertelenari: The rebellious Goddess of Bears
- Oroypsus: The God of Pleasure and Good Living
- Yarm Plant: In some backwater regions of Dara Happa, the Yarm Plant is revered as a God
- Ulkamoon: God of the Club
- Galgareng Goddess of Gryphons

Third Row – Gods of the Earth

Each god represented here has some earthly influence that is considered, in the eyes of the Solar Court, to be in some way demeaning or base. In Dara Happa, such prejudices have been largely ignored, often for practical reasons, and the Gods of the Earth are worshipped across the empire.

- Gerendetho: Lord of the Earth. Not worshipped greatly in Dara Happa, but highly venerated amongst the Kostadi where he is the Father of Kostad.
- Dendara: Goddess of Women, Marriage, Obedience and the Household. Yelm's chosen wife and so mother of all. Despite being ranked as an earth god, this is purely for reasons of obeisance to Yelm; in all practicality she is highly revered.

- Denegeria: The Daughter. Denegeria was kidnapped by Darkness rescued and released by Yelm.
- Injerina: The Good Sister – counterpart to Bosjerina.
- Oria: Great Goddess, Mother of Earth. All plants and animals are claimed to come from her.
- Bosjerina: The Bad Sister
- Everina: Goddess of Rice. She is one of the Four Great Nurturers of Dara Happa and a popular goddess amongst the Half Citizens of the Oslir plains and lowlands.
- Vergenari: Goddess of Pigs. Another of the Four Great Nurturers of Dara Happa.
- Pela: Goddess of Barley, Grains. Third of the Four Great Nurturers of Dara Happa.
- Biselenslib: A Goddess of Alkoth.
- Deseeti: A God of the Club.
- Thilla: Goddess of Yuthuppa.
- Busenari: Goddess of Cattle
- Memenari: Goddess of Motherhood.
- Selshena: Goddess of the Center. She prepared the ground for Yelm's descent to earth, and so is sometimes known as the Footstool.
- Vantestos: The God of Government and Rulership
- Sagittus: God of the Bow. He is also called Urengeri, and is the displaced god of Elempur.
- Durbaddath: God of Lions.
- Ergesh: God of the Slaves.
- Uryarda: The Goat Goddess.
- Leafy Plant: A divine accoutrement of Erenbaya.
- Erenbaya: Goddess of Vegetation, especially Trees.
- Tree: Another accoutrement of Erenbaya.
- Surensliba: Goddess of Herons. Greatly revered amongst the Darjinni
- Yestendos: God of Reed Boats. He is a companion of Surensliba

Fourth Row – Gods of Below

Divided into Good Gods, Bad Gods and Tortured Victims, the Gods of Below are considered to be unfit for the pure to worship. The exception is Oslira who, through several exhibitions of her power, demonstrated her importance to the empire and earned her place as a full goddess.



Many of the Bad Gods are worshipped in Alkoth, where they are seen as servants of Shargash and so classified as Good Gods, because Shargash keeps them in check.

The Good Gods

- Oslira: The River Goddess and Blue Serpent. A wife of many higher gods and causer of floods.
- Fish: Oslira's accoutrement.

The Bad Gods

- Varnaga: God of Crocodiles. An accoutrement of Oslira, but hated by Yelm and all Dara Happans.
- Rakenveg: Trickster God. Also noted for being the god of carrots.
- Netta: Goddess of Night and Keeper of the First Hell.
- Veskerele: The Faceless God and Keeper of the Second Hell

- Natha: Mother of Murder, an assassins' goddess
- Deshlotralas: Keeper of the Third Hell
- Annara Gor: The Hag, also a Keeper of the Third Hell
- Deshkorgos: The Monster Man, Keeper of the Fourth Hell
- Sakkar: God of Fear
- Jajagapa: Dog Headed God and the snarer of souls.
- Sanama: Goddess of Snakes
- Bakoka: Goddess of scorpions and Scorpion Men. Known as Bagog outside Dara Happa.
- Mahaquata: The Bat Goddess of Death
- Gerra: Goddess of Sorrow
- Gorgorma: Goddess of Horror

The Tortured Victims

All these gods are being punished for various sins – some against Yelm and some against the cosmos. All

of them escaped from hell during the Great Darkness and some attempted to create their own realms in Glorantha.

- Gamara: The Howling, Armless monster.
- Annilha: A bat demon and sister of Lokarnos.
- Oralanatum and Walindum: A pair of petty, foreign gods who sought to emulate the Higher Gods.
- Rashorana: Another evil goddess
- Erlandus: A god of sexual excess and the husband of Erlanda.
- Kazkurtum: The Empty Emperor, the Worthless Ruler, the God of Nothingness. Kazkartum ruled in Dara Happa for a time, besetting the empire with monsters.
- Bijiif: The pile of dust that Yelm became when killed.
- Jokbazi: The Broken God.

Viewing the Gods' Wall

'Stepping into the gorge was to step in the footsteps of the gods and, as I had been unprepared for Raibanth's glory, so was I unprepared for the sight of the Gods' Wall. To think that Lodril created this! To think that all these gods have stood in this place, giving their thanks to Yelm!

I went slowly up to the wall. At first it seemed a simple thing, crudely carved, but as I approached I began to hear, in my mind, the distant chanting of the gods, some in praise, some forlorn, as they called Yelm's sacred names. At the far end I came to the grouping of the Celestial Court and fell immediately to one knee to give praise. The carvings are elaborate here, detailed and rich, and I could, without a doubt, sense their power as they brought Yelm amongst those who must give him their service.

After many minutes I walked along the wall, reading the inscriptions, and finding that many of the carvings have been adorned with paint and pigment, lending colour and vitality to each of them. On some of the gods I noted that wyrmish images had been painted or inked – swirls, scales, wings and claws. If the gods resented these trappings, then their likenesses did not display any noticeable displeasure.

But the greatest moment of my life came when I found the representation of Lokarnos, the patron god of my family and League. As I knelt to offer prayers, his face turned towards me and his hands moved in blessing. I heard my name and then the names of my father, grandfather and ancestors being intoned by the god, stretching far back into times our family can no longer recollect. His hands moved as though the very rock was alive, and when I glanced towards Lukarik, my half-brother, I saw that he, kneeling before the likeness of Sagittus, was, like me, weeping as his god spoke to him as mine spoke to me.'

— Yuthunyar Firetrader, Noble Merchant of Darleep.

The Solar Pantheon and the Draconic Path

The Golden Dragon Society's principle aim is to reveal the draconic aspects of every god in the Solar pantheon thereby proving draconic supremacy of the cosmos. To the EWF and its converts the arguments are academic; but where traditional Dara Happan beliefs are concerned, the exercise is of crucial importance.

Much Solar mythology reflects draconic mythology with clear parallels between the order of the cosmos and draconic mysticism. Before becoming the Golden Dragon, Hurarbagarten outlined these parallels in the text now known as *The Book of the Sun*, which is kept in the crypts beneath the Imperial Footrest. In it Hurarbagarten details each god represented on the Gods' Wall and explains the specific draconic parallels. At the end of each entry is a formula, derived from the astrological movements noted by the Star Seers of Yuthuppa, which, when contemplated using either the Path of Unstruck Sound or Ten Step Path techniques of draconic meditation, presents the draconic name of each god. Hence, it can be proven that Oslira is an aspect of Aroka, Dayzatar is an aspect of Arangorf, and so forth.

In this way many converts to the Golden Dragon Society were made from previously pure-strained, traditionalist Dara Happans, including the emperor Elmexdros. But many more considered it a heresy, not least the emperor Elmatryan, who proved it be so and was duly deposed by the Red King of Alkoth and Lorenkartan the Mile.

Since then, there have been no forceful demonstrations of a single, draconic solar way because Hurarbagarten became the Golden Dragon and successfully passed the Ten Tests, proving his theories without the need for further calculations and mystical interpretations. However, scepticism still lives in the hearts and minds of many, who simply cannot reconcile the supposed draconic nature of the Yelmic gods.

The resulting tension has been handled with considerable aplomb by the Golden Dragon Society. To attempt to crush Dara Happan traditionalism would serve only to encourage overt rebellion; it is also not the EWF's style. Only the God Learners attempt to assimilate and then crush differing religious positions, whereas the EWF has always maintained that enlightenment reveals all truths. Obduran the Flyer's transcendence to True Dragon status is clear proof of this, and so the Golden Dragon Society maintains a patient course when dealing with Dara Happan traditionalists, continually pointing to Obduran's example whilst gently referring to *The Book of the Sun* and Hurarbagarten's own apotheosis.

There thus three strains of belief in Dara Happa: the Traditionalists, who remain true to the Celestial Court and the teachings of Murharzarm; Solar Draconic Converts who accept that each and every god of the Gods' Wall has a draconic aspect, but that different degrees of manifestation are in evidence; and then finally, those who maintain their traditionalist beliefs but are happy to accept the evidence of Hurarbagarten and Obduran and so accept general draconic principles as a way of maintaining justice and harmony within the empire.

New Cults of the Solar Pantheon

The following cults take their magic from several separate *RuneQuest* books.

Rune spells in standard text are taken from the *RuneQuest* main rules; Divine spells from the *RuneQuest Companion*.

Spells in italics are taken from the *RuneQuest Spell Book*

Spells marked * are taken from *Cults of Glorantha Volume 1*

Spells marked ** are taken from *Cults of Glorantha Volume 2*

The Worship of Yelm

Only the emperor and his household may worship Yelm directly. All Nobles may worship Yelm indirectly through the Yelm subcults described in the Cults of Glorantha Volume 1, pages 64 onwards. Half Citizens and Newcomers may join Yelmlio.

Alkor – City God of Alkoth

Alkor is the son of Shargash and is the city god of Alkoth. He is the fertility aspect of his father and, in that aspect, Alkor married Biselenslib and then Oslira. Alkor is born of the torque Shargash cast to the ground so that he could make war on the emperor's enemies and his most important task is to bring Shargash's blessings of birth and fertility to the people of Alkoth, who took sanctuary inside the torque. He receives all of the ash left from offerings to his father and places them in the enclosures where they are blessed. During the planting seasons, Alkor presides over the fertility rites and spreads the ash over the fields and rice paddies much as Shargash spread his seed among the many earth goddesses he lay with. These rites complete Shargash's cycle: Destruction, Purification, Rebirth.

Alkor's second aspect is as the god of the city of Alkoth and all within the Jade Wall are his responsibility. Alkor sees to the efficient running of the city and brings Shargash's fertility to all within the Jade Enclosure: people, animals and the bureaucracy. His High Priest is the Green King of Alkoth and together they ensure Alkoth's prosperity on the surface of Glorantha just as Shargash secures it in the underworld. Whilst all within Alkoth are considered to be dead, Alkor is very much a god concerned with life, and it is to him that the wives and widows turn to for solace when their menfolk head off to war.

Runes
Fertility, Law

Worshippers
Citizens of Alkoth, farmers.

Worshippers' Duties

Offer worship to Alkor in exchange for his bounty and plenty. Abide by his laws so that Alkoth will prosper in all things and in all ways.

Son of Jade (Initiate) Membership

Requirements: All born within Alkoth's walls are eligible. Sons of Jade must know Lore (Plant) or Lore (Animal) at 40% or greater.

Cult Skills: Lore (Animal), Lore (Plant), Lore (Bureaucracy)

Cult Rune Spells: Endurance, Heal

Common Divine Magic: Bless Crops*, Bless Home*

Brother of Jade (Acolyte) Membership

Requirements: Standard

Father of Jade (Rune Priest) Membership

Requirements: Standard



Special Benefits

Members of the cult of Alkor are given a box of ash taken from the Sacred Hearth in the Alkoth temple. This ash, when rubbed into any wound, provides 1D3 points of magical healing. Sons of Jade have enough ash for three uses; Brothers of Jade have enough for six and Fathers of Jade have enough for ten. Supplies are replenished when the cult member advances in rank.

Associated Cults

Shargash: provides Ignite, Cremate Dead* and Inspire Worshippers*

Antirius – The Lesser Sun

When Yelm was killed there was no light, and so Antirius came forth as the Lesser Sun, bringing with him Yelm's residual wisdom and the precepts that would permit the rule of Dara Happa in his absence. The Word of Antirius continued Yelm's truth throughout the Great Darkness, challenging the evil gods that rose from hell and threatened to change all that was good. A creation of the Doom Conjunction, Antirius is pure justice and reason when all around is chaos and lies. When Yelm returned from death Antirius continued to exist so that Yelm's justice would become twice-fold, and all emperors who have succeeded in the Ten Tests are presented with the Cloak of Majesty by Antirius's own hand. He is therefore a God of Emperors and Just Men, offering good advice and clear direction even when the way forward is shrouded in uncertainty.

It is traditional to offer sacrifices of cattle to Antirius when his advice is sought. The cattle must be of the right colour: white for truth, brown for justice and a combination of colours where both virtues are present. In return Antirius sends his divine light to illuminate the clearest path although it is down to the worshipper to accept the wisdom offered.

His draconic aspect is considered, amongst the Wyrmfriends, to be the breath of the Cosmic Dragon which is itself golden and infallible.

Runes

Law, Light and Truth

Worshippers

Star Seers, Nobles, Scholars

Worshippers' Duties

Remain true to the Solar way, act in a just manner at all times, adhere to the truth in all things.

Sun Blessed (Initiate) Membership

Requirements: Standard. Sun Blessed must have Language (Solar Pelorian) at 50% or greater

Cult Skills: Influence, Courtesy, Lore (Law), Lore (Antirius Theology), Persistence

Cult Spells: *Bearing Witness*, Detect Lie, Light

Common Divine Magic: All

Special Divine Magic: *Elder Knowledge*, *Fateful Omen*, *Halo*, *Sunspear*

Sun Talkers (Acolyte) Membership

Requirements: Standard.

Sun Seers (Runepriest) Membership

Requirements: The Sky Dome Priest must have achieved 90% or more in Lore (Law) or Lore (Antirius Theology) or Language (Solar Pelorian).

Special Divine Magic: *Justice is Served*

Sun Spears (Runelord) Membership

Requirements: Standard

Divine Magic: *Judgement*

Special Benefits

Members of the cult of Antirius are blessed with his serene light. The skin and hair glows as though struck by the sun regardless of the weather. The glow increases in brilliance as one increases in rank in the cult. This has the detrimental effect of imposing a penalty on Stealth tests by -10% for each rank held in the cult (so Sun Spears are at -40%). However, the Influence test benefits by a bonus of +10% for each rank held.

Sun Seers and Sun Spears may convert to the cult of Antirius Imperator (see Cults of Glorantha Volume 1) if they so choose. They lose the benefits of the Lesser Sun cult, but gain all those of the Imperator cult.

Associated Cults

Buserian: Provides Detect Magic and Glamour

Arraz the Sun Servant: Provides Fight Disease

Dayzatar

Yelm's brother, Dayzatar is the Pure God who remained in the Sky Dome after Yelm came to touch the ground. He is the leader of the Aesthetic Assembly, which embodies perfection, and those who strive towards perfection in their own lives offer him worship. His dominion is the Sky Dome and all within it obey his laws which were created with the agreement of Yelm.

Dayzatar's worship is generally confined to Star Seers and Yuthuppan priests, who possess the astrological knowledge to be able to interpret his perfection in human terms; however any who pursue perfection might invoke his name or call upon his magic given the right cult affiliations.

Members of the cult strive for perfection in all things in their lives. Dress and personal grooming as always immaculate. Perfect symmetry in clothing and action is constantly sought. Individuals with perfectly symmetrical facial features (CHA 17 or higher) are actively sought as members of the cult because they are believed to have been touched by Dayzatar himself.

Sky Dome Observers (Initiate) Membership Requirements: Sky Dome Observers must undertake the Five Tests of Truth to prove they are honest and just. This is abstracted as a Persistence test at -20% and the donation of 100 silver.

Cult Skills: Influence, Lore (Astrology), Lore (Astronomy), Lore (Antirius Theology), Persistence

Cult Spells: *Bearing Witness*, Detect Lie, Light

Common Divine Magic: *Elder Knowledge*, *Fateful Omen*, *Halo*, *Sunspear*

Special Divine Magic: Star Frame

Sky Dome Charters (Acolyte) Membership Requirements: Standard.

Sky Dome Priests (Rune Priest) Membership

Requirements: The Sky Dome Priest must have achieved 90% or more in Lore (Astronomy) or Lore (Astrology).

Divine Magic: *Justice is Served*

Sky Dome Travellers (Rune Lord) Membership

Requirements: Standard

Divine Magic: *Judgement*

Special Benefits

All members gain an almanac and a robe. The almanac has the owner's birth chart inscribed into the copper cover. The robe is midnight blue in colour and decorated with a representation of the star frame. As the member ascends in rank, constellations are stitched into the robe in silver thread. Sky Dome Traveller cloaks are garments of sheer, celestial beauty. At Charter level the robe provides 1AP of protection, at Priest 2AP and at Traveller 3AP. There are no skill penalties for these AP.

Associated Cults

Buserian: Provides Detect Magic, Glamour and Celestial Divination

Murharzarm

The First Emperor and beloved of Yelm, Murharzarm created Dara Happa and established its first cities. All laws and traditions spring from Murharzarm's words and deeds, and whilst he is a god of emperors he is also a god of all Dara Happan traditionalists and has defied any attempts to codify a draconic aspect.

Murharzarm was Yelm's son, though mortal, and he created Dara Happa. His teachings were captured by the Buserian scribes of his day and collected into the Ten Teachings – one hundred and ten scrolls that outline what makes a good Dara Happan and how the empire should be run, mirroring the perfection of the Celestial Court. Murharzarm is worshipped both as the founding emperor of Dara Happa and as a god; he is therefore entitled to occupy one of the primary positions on the Gods' Wall, and all worshippers of Murharzarm expect to be treated as First Amongst Equals.

Murharzarm's cult is open to all Nobles. It teaches pure, Dara Happan tradition, expecting its members to live their lives as Murharzarm lived his: with honesty, integrity, justice and rule. In current Dara Happa Murharzarm's worship is not as widespread as it once was, but it is ardent in Elz Ast, Raibanth and Yuthuppa.

Runes

Fire, Man, Mastery

Worshippers

Nobles, military commanders, heads of Associations and Leagues, those with serious political aspirations.

Worshippers' Duties

Embody pure Dara Happan ideals. Accept no other form of life. Venerate the gods of the Celestial Court. Restore the empire to Murharzarm's kin and defend it from its enemies.

Initiate Membership

Requirements: All initiates must be Dara Happan members of the Noble caste and be in good standing.

Cult Skills: Influence, Lore (Dara Happa), Lore (Murharzarm's Ten Teachings)

Cult Spells: Fireblade, Thunder's Voice

Common Divine Magic: True Spear

Third Imperial Son (Acolyte) Membership

Requirements: Standard

Special Divine Magic: Light of the Heavens

Second Imperial Son (Rune priest) Membership

Requirements: Standard

Special Divine Magic: Noble Mantle, Radiate

First Imperial Son (Rune lord) Membership

Requirements: Spear or Sword skill 90% or higher; must dedicate 1 point of POW permanently to Murharzarm's memory

Common Divine Magic:

Special Divine Magic: Noble Mantle, Radiate

Special Benefits

Worshippers gain Murharzarm's protection from outsider magic. Initiates gain a +10% bonus to resistance tests; Third Imperial Sons gain +20%, Second Imperial Sons gain +30% and First Imperial Sons gain +40%.

Associated Cults

Yelm provides Cloud Clear

Lodril provides Earthwarm

Raiba provides City Harmony (Raiba)

Raiba, City God of Raibanth

Raiba is the spirit of Raibanth, created by Murharzarm when the city was raised, and sealed to Dara Happa with the building of the Bridge of Luxites that spans the Oslir River. Raiba is thus both 'above' and 'within' Oslira, allowing the City God to control Oslira's inherent power whilst being tied to her nature.

In the time of the Golden Dragon Society Raiba's worship has been effectively sidelined; spiritual protection of the city falls to the Golden Dragon and worship is confined to certain Leagues who patrol Inner Raibanth, and various Dara Happan traditionalists who refuse to let Raiba's influence be diminished simply because the dragon occupies the throne.

Raiba's worshippers are circumspect and low-key. The great shrine to Raiba within the Imperial Footrest is off-limits to most worshippers, and so countless tiny shrines have sprung up across the city: blocks of stone, small ziggurats of pebbles, and so forth. Worshippers offer whispered prayers and through them Raiba prevails.

Runes

None

Worshippers

Raibanth citizens

Worshippers' Duties

Protect the First City, maintain Dara Happan Purity, never forget that the city protects and endures.

Initiate Membership

Requirements: Initiates must speak Solar Pelorian at 90% or greater and have been residents of Inner Raibanth for at least two years. An initiate's first duty is to create a new shrine to Raiba and consecrate it with water from the Oslir.

Cult Skills: Lore (Raibanth)

Common Divine Magic: Consecrate

Acolyte Membership

Requirements: Standard, plus acolytes must have been resident in the city for at least 5 years.

Cult Skills: Lore (Raibanth)

Common Divine Magic: City Harmony (new Divine Spell, see page 79)

Magistrate of Raiba (Rune Priest)

Membership

Requirements: Standard, plus Magistrates must have been resident in the city for at least 10 years.

Cult Skills: Lore (City Secrets)

Common Divine Magic: *Protection of the Gods (Raiba)*

Champion of Raiba (Rune Lord) Membership

Requirements: Standard, plus Champions must have been resident in the city for at least 15 years.

Common Divine Magic: *Penitent Sacrifice*

Special Benefits

Members of the cult gain a bonus to their Influence when using it within Raibanth. Initiates gain a +10% bonus to Influence tests; Acolytes gain +20%, Magistrates gain +30% and Champions gain +40%.

Associated Cults

Oslira provides Command Naiad and Command Undine

Murharzarm provides Noble Mantle



Sagittus, God of Archers

Sagittus is the Dara Happan God of Archery. Before becoming the Archer, his name was Urengerum, the city god of Elempur, but it changed when the god descended to the underworld to find Yelm and seek his advice on how to defend his people from the predations of the Ram God.

Followers of the cult are trained to become master archers. The cult is popular throughout the Dara Happan tripolis of Raibanth, Yuthuppa and Alkoth, even though Sagittus is a patron god of Elempur. Its popularity, although of limited influence, is as a result of a plan first put into practice by Emperor Urvairinus. This plan was for every Dara Happan man, Noble and Commoner, to take part in his army, and this plan has been perpetuated, in varying degrees, throughout history. The cult's enemies include those who associate with the spirits of the ancient Ram People; the deities of the digijelm (trolls) are also hated for the many blows struck against the Empire.

This cult is centered around the Great Temple in Raibanth, with major temples in Elempur, Alkoth and Yuthuppa. Small shrines to Sagittus can be found in nearly every Yelm temple in the Oslir valley. The court position of Imperial Archer for Dara Happa is always filled by a Rune Lord of Sagittus.

Runes
Air, Motion

Worshippers
Archers and warriors from across the Dara Happan armies.

Worshippers' Duties
Become masters of the bow. Defend the empire. Defeat the Ram God and its associates. All worshippers are banned from learning the spell Darkwall or any other spell that hinders sight.

Marksmen (Initiate) Membership
Requirements: Standard. All candidates must succeed in tests in the skills of Bow Attack, Craft (Fletcher) and Dodge. The sacrifice of a lamb at initiation is mandatory.

Cult Skills: Bow, Lore (Sagittus), Perception

Cult Spells: Firearrow, Multimissile

Common Divine Magic: *Acute (Sight)*

Bow Master (Acolyte) Membership
Requirements: Bow Masters must have 90% in any Bow Attack, Solar Pelorian and three of the following skills: Perception, Lore (Animal), Craft (Fletcher), Craft (Bowyer), Dodge. They must have been initiates in good standing for five years and must prove they are capable of teaching others how to use the bow. Bow Masters are expected to dedicate 90% of their time and income towards the cult with teaching a fundamental part of this time. Bowmasters receive a gilded bow (for ceremonial purposes only), various regalia, and, usually, a command position in whatever auxiliary unit the shrine is associated with.

Cult Spells: Pierce

Common Divine Magic: *Airway, Keen Sense (Sight)*

Imperial Archer (Runelord) Membership
Requirements: As for Bow Masters, but the Imperial Archer must have distinguished himself in battle in defence of the empire. Furthermore he must have undertaken a pilgrimage to Elempur and spent ten days and ten nights alone in the ruins in contemplation, abstracted by successful Resilience, Persistence and Lore (Sagittus) tests.

Cult Spells: Pierce

Common Divine Magic: *Airway, Keen Sense (Sight)*

Special Divine Magic: Bow of Dominion (new spell, see below)

Special Benefits
All members of the cult can parry missile weapons launched at them with any other weapon instead of just a shield. Additionally they gain a bonus to Dodging missile attacks: Marksmen gain a +10% bonus to Dodge tests; Bow Masters gain +20%, Imperial Archers gain +40%.

Associated Cults
Urvairinus provides Extension and Heal Wound

New Solar Divine Spells

Bow of Dominion (Sagittus)
Duration 15, Magnitude 2, Touch

The spirit of Sagittus is channelled into the caster's bow, transforming it into a devastating divine weapon for the spell's duration. The caster's Critical range is doubled, arrows fired from the bow ignore all mundane and natural armour (magical armour protects as normal).

City Harmony (Raiba)

Area Special, Duration: Concentration, Magnitude 1, Permanent, Progressive, Resistance (Persistence)

City Harmony can only be cast in the city. Every point of Magnitude affects a 3m radius and cause those affected to become passive and relaxed, ceasing any violence or confrontational activity. It counters emotion affecting spells such as Demoralise and Fanaticism if the emotion spell is weaker in Magnitude than the City Harmony casting.

Star Frame (Antirius, Buserian)

Duration 15, Magnitude 1

Even with the sun at its highest the constellations of the Sky Dome are revealed to the caster allowing him to perceive the stars and the framework they form according to Antirius's laws. By spending a few minutes in contemplation of the Star Frame all Lore skills are *doubled* for the spell's duration.

Associations and Leagues

Ten separate Associations and Leagues are provided below. Many more exist, but the selection given here offers a good range of examples for use in Dara Happan stories.

Oslira River Union

Representing the Leagues plying the Oslir River, the Association of Oslira venerates the river goddess above all others and benefits from specific river magic that lends the Association command over the entire river. The Association has been under the scrutiny of the Golden Dragon Society in recent years, due to the presence of Lorenkarten the Mile in Alkoth. This Great Dragon commands his own influence over Oslira and although the Association and Lorenkarten have not come into conflict, relations are strained at best. The Association of Oslira is based in Elz Ast but

has representation in each city of the empire, usually based close to, or in, the Oslira temple.

Device: The Blue Serpent snaking across the sun emblem of Yelm.

Divine Magic

All divine spells provided by Oslira.

Rune Magic

Liquid Constrictor, Undine Form

Skills Taught

Boating, Shiphandling, 1H Weapon (Scimitar), Lore (Oslir River)

Avhentir League

A warrior order providing city protection within Elz Ast, as well as inland mercenary functions for overland traders and adventurers. Avhentir League members are closely associated with Shargash and Murharzarm cults although anyone with a flair for combat is welcomed to the ranks. The League has a fierce reputation for being uncompromising in battle, especially against digijelm and raiders from Rinliddi. It has an active anti-draconic stance but takes care not to allow its policies influence the Oslira River Union's overall position in society.

Dress: Orange coat worn over a white tunic and trousers. The coat is embroidered with a scimitar across its back.

The Ironsun League

A martial order responsible for protecting both the river and its traders from harm. The main base is in Raibanth but with representations in Elz Ast and Yuthuppa. The Ironsun League also maintains hostels and way stations along the entire length of the Oslir, located at ten kilometre intervals. These outposts maintain shrines to Oslira, Murharzarm and Urvairinus as well as offering lodging and food to all who are prepared to pay. Association members gain a 10% discount.

Dress: Blue robes worn over orange kilts.

Cogs of Lokarnos

Merchant adventurers skilled in the ways of the river and exceedingly knowledgeable about its inhabitants, especially in the remote southern stretches where Darjinn river pirates prey on boats bound for Alkoth.

Dress: Bright blue tabards worn with pleated kilts of purple and gold trim.

The Association of Harmonious Intent

An old Association, its five Leagues are known as the Land Leagues because they are named for the five Golden Age kingdoms when all within Dara Happa was harmonious and peaceful. The Association intends to restore this golden age in whatever way, and by whatever means, it can. This typically means driving the EWF from Dara Happa but extends to conquering Darjinn and central Pelanda, placing the Association at odds with Carmania.

The Association maintains very strong links with the cult of Murharzarm.

Device: A pair of scales surmounting a measuring stick ('khet') embroidered onto the right sleeve of the over garment.

Divine Magic

All divine spells known to Murharzarm's cult.

Rune Magic

Good Fortune, Heal, Protection

Skills Taught

Influence, Perception, Lore (World), Lore (Dara Happa)

The League of Eskervonlath Perfection

A League of solar mystics who strive to emulate the perfection of the Solar court without impinging on the divine perfection of the emperor.

Dress: A shirt of dazzling white cotton, a representation of the sun stitched into the fabric between the shoulder blades.

The League of Jarasanian Action

Warriors and mercenaries who, taking the same mystical approach as the League of Eskervonlath Perfection, seek to become masters in their chosen weapons and means of warfare.

Dress: A necklace of bronze or gold. An over-robe of heavy black linen stitched with dark green trim.

The League of Mastinic Transformation

To restore the Golden Age the land must be transformed. This League of scholars seeks the sacred, hidden knowledge that will allow the Celestial Court to manifest once more in Dara Happa.

Dress: The robe skirt is cut in an asymmetrical design rising on the right hip. The left hand side of the skirt is pleated four times.

The Most Brilliant Suvarian League

The Suvarian nobles of Yuthuppa represent the Solar brilliance through diplomacy and harmonious interaction with many other Associations across the empire.

Dress: A skull cap of vibrant red and yellow. The sleeves of robes and shirts are dyed with identical colours.

The Serene League of Zarkos

Each family of the Serene League has achieved a perfect understanding of one of the gods found in either the first or second row of the Gods' Wall and uses its knowledge to effect transformation within its own territories.

Dress: The constellation of Zarkos embroidered in silver on the right breast of every robe and shirt.

The Far Cry Society

This Association represents internal Dara Happan diplomatic efforts, providing a vital liaison between the Golden Dragon Society, certain, errant, EWF mystics (in other words, the Eternal Dragon Ring), and those Associations that have no truck with the Wyrmfriends. Its member Leagues are skilled in the cross interpretation of Solar and draconic principles and are backed by the intense militarism of the Far Cry Mercenaries – for those times when straight diplomacy requires a harder edge.

It has minor representation in Raibanth but is most active in Alkoth where the Dead Emissaries have negotiated keenly with Lorenkarten the Mile.

Device: The Golden Trumpet of Yelm

Divine Magic

Soul Sight, Spiritual Journey

Rune Magic

Glamour, Golden Tongue

Skills Taught

Courtesy, Influence, Lore (Dara Happan Traditions)

Far Cry Carriers

Adventurer diplomats active across Dara Happa, this is a League of skilled communicators and arbitrators who have a keen understanding of numerous political situations and their consequences. Well connected with the Golden Dragon Society, the Carriers are viewed with suspicion by Dara Happan traditionalists.

Dress: Saffron robes worn with straight skirts. The skirts are typically adorned with swirling patterns of green, orange and blue, reflecting the complex interactions of land, river and heaven.

Far Cry Mercenaries

A small league of warriors sympathetic to both Dara Happan and draconic paths. Far Cry mercenaries have good connections with the cult of Sagittus and the Sun

Dragon cult. They offer armed support to the Far Cry Carriers, the diplomats of the Association.

Dress: Similar to the Far Cry Carriers, but with a green jacket worn over the main robes.

The Dead Emissaries

Alkothi diplomats and courtiers of the Red King, the Dead Emissaries represent both the intentions of the Far Cry Association and Alkoth as a city-state. The emissaries claim to be loyal to both traditional Dara Happan values and draconic progression. For some reason, the dragonewts resident in Dara Happa refuse to have any dealings with any other diplomats or emissaries.

Dress: Black robes worn over white, pleated kilts. The greater the number of pleats, the higher the standing in the League.



The Golden Dragon Society

The Golden Dragon Society is the political representation of the EWF in Dara Happa. Its members are EWF traditionalists, Dara Happans who have embraced the draconic way without reservation, and dragonewts from the dragonewt nests centred around Dara Happa. The Golden Dragon Society makes a habit of assimilating those families and Leagues that are rejected or shunned by other Associations, taking advantage of their alienation to convert them to the draconic path. Members are allowed to worship either draconic or Solar cults, but must recognise the legitimacy of the Golden Dragon emperor and the draconic nature of Yelm as a condition of membership. Once a League has made this recognition, which takes the form of a complex vow and oath (in Auld Wyrnish), its conversion to the draconic path is complete and the League elders are automatically taught certain dragon dances and magics.

The Golden Dragon Society pretends to exercise a benevolent influence over Dara Happan society, but its members occupy such high positions that its true nature – the effective government of Dara Happa – is in no doubt. Despite the wars marking the end of Dismathuyar's emperorship, the Golden Dragon Society has refrained from open, internal conflict with the traditional Dara Happan Associations in order to maintain its benevolent pretence. Golden Dragon Society agents operate far and wide in Dara Happa, Darjinn, Rinliddi and Kostaddi, usually in the form of Hunting and Waltzing Bands, making new converts at every opportunity. The Society espouses the dualism of Solar and draconic, with the ascendance of the latter as proof of Yelm's intrinsic, draconic nature. The Golden Dragon Society believes that the Sunstop during Khorzanelm's rule marked the start of Yelm's acknowledgement of a True Dragon aspect.

Naturally enough the Golden Dragon Society has extremely close ties with the cult of Sun Dragon.

Device: The dragon swallowing its own tail, set above a blazing crown of the sun.

Draconic Magic

Become Draconic Wyrms, Bone Ridges, Bone Singing, Brand Traitor, Combat Meditation, Draconic Prophecy, Flamesight, Inspiration, Lesser Fire Resistance, Mystic Sight, Royal Grace

Skills Taught

Artistic Expression, Courtesy, Dance, Draconic Illumination, Influence, Lore (Solar Draconisation), Martial Arts

The Golden Dragon Society has no separate Leagues in the traditional Dara Happan way, although many families are devoted members to its teachings, accepting different aspects of its canon in different (and sometimes conflicting) ways.

The Quarters Association

This is an old, highly respected and powerful Association that comprises of four Leagues, each being named for one of the four Overseers named by Yelm when he defined the universe. The Quarters association aims to represent the whole ethos of Dara Happan society, including its draconic aspects, in a balanced and inclusive way. It welcomes Nobles, Citizens, Half Citizens and Newcomers alike, and promotes tolerance and justice through understanding, co-operation and trade.

Despite this somewhat eclectic philosophy it cleaves closely to traditional Dara Happan teachings, drawing inspiration from the Anaxial and Khordavu dynasties. It tries not to reject strict Murharzarmic teachings, but finds its general ethos steering away from the rigid codes that have made Dara Happa often impenetrable to outsiders.

Device: A compass rose, made of gold or bronze, worn on the breast, lapel or hat.

Divine Magic

Heal Body, Heal Wound, *Fidelity*

Skills Taught

Courtesy, First Aid, Healing, Influence, Lore (Dara Happan Traditions)

Ashartcha League

Keepers of Wisdom, the Ashartcha League are scholars and Tenths based in Elz Ast.

Dress: The left sleeve is always coloured in alternating stripes of brown and orange. The hem of the robe is always black.

Indarthrud League

Keepers of Insight, the Indathrud League are physicians based in Elz Ast and Riabanth.

Dress: A conical, brimless hat with a green band at the base.

Nemarthshar League

Keepers of Strength, this the mercenary League providing protection to the rest of the Quarters Association

Dress: Arms are never covered. Every hem of the garment is stitched with a red and blue zig-zag.

Vanarthurd League

Keepers of Sovereignty, this is a League of noble traders who deal exclusively in the knowledge of the Ashartcha and Indarthrud.

Dress: A robed skirt with ten pleats, each alternate pleat stitched with the rune of Yelm.

The Ring of Impenetrable Jade

Based in Alkoth, the Ring of Impenetrable Jade seeks to promote Alkoth's fortunes despite its contrary nature as a city of the dead. The Leagues involved in the Ring are drawn from both Solar and EWF sympathisers. The nominal head of the Ring is the Green King although he has little to do with day to day affairs and involves himself only when disputes or major decisions need ratification.

Device: A ring of jade, chased with gold, worn on the index finger of the right hand.

Divine Magic

Consecrate, Extension

Rune Magic

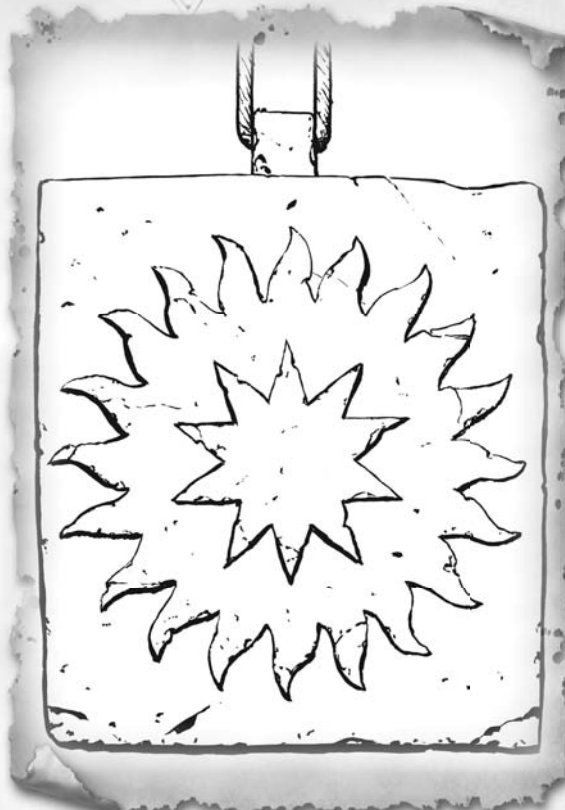
Glamour, Golden Tongue

Skills Taught

Courtesy, Influence, Lore (Alkoth)

The Brand

Warrior-monks of Alkoth the city god who believe that their deity's place in the Solar pantheon is sadly maligned. Rumoured to be heavily influenced by members of the Eternal Dragon Ring.



Dress: Hooded robes of jade-green and ash-black linen, pleated at the front and rear.

The Trace

A League of Alkothing diplomats charged with wandering far and wide to represent Alkoth's interests and discover what the outside view of the jade city truly is. The Trace describes Alkoth only in its mythical significance rather than in its grounded reality, maintaining that this is the only way it can be accurately described. Those who have visited Alkoth following meetings with The Trace have been somewhat shocked to learn of the city's real nature.

Dress: A silver torque worn on the left wrist, and a sash of brilliant cloth-of-gold tied in a strange double knot around the waist.

The Glaive

A League consisting of mercenaries, honour duellists and strategic specialists who seek to strengthen Alkoth's military position, despite its already impregnable nature. They do this by including Hellmen amongst their ranks in a bid to frighten any would-be enemies.

Dress: A short, green and black tunic with yellow stitching at the hem. Sandals are always dyed black.

The Ten-Fold Fellowship

A trading association that brokers knowledge, secrets and mysticism as much as it brokers solid merchandise, the Ten Fold Fellowship has ten Leagues as part of its membership. Whenever a League leaves, the Fellowship disbands officially, but pursues new membership so that it can restart. Where the trade for physical product is concerned, the Fellowship specialises in jewellery and ceramics, all made to the secret and well-guarded Power of Ten formula which claims to have been devised by the Ten Worker Gods and is the fundamental sequence for the Imperial Regalia. Knowledge of the Power of Ten formula could, ostensibly, lead to the creation of a completely new regalia to supersede that used in the Ten Tests of Empire; hence, the Golden Dragon Society is always keen to uncover the essential nature of the code, thereby preventing any but Golden Dragon Society members from taking the Ten Tests. So far, the Power of Ten has remained a mystery, locked in the well-hidden, well-protected tomes that the Ten Fold Fellowship controls.

League membership depends entirely on discretion and wariness of the draconic path. The Fellowship has never rejected outright the legitimacy of the Golden Dragon, and for this reason its existence has endured; but it never accepts any League that has been, or is, part of the Golden Dragon Society, or has displayed any desire to fully embrace the draconic path.

Device: A ten pointed star set against the sun.

Divine Magic

Soul Sight, Spiritual Journey

Rune Magic

Endurance, Fate

Skills Taught

Perception, Lore (Dara Happan Traditions), Lore (Diplomacy)

The Human League

Humanitarians who seek to reintroduce the Dara Happan traditions to those who have become disillusioned with the draconic path, the Human

League is a combination of healers, mystics and fundamentalist priests. Its central doctrine is that the draconic path is too difficult for the average person to tread and leads only to distance from Heaven.

Dress: A simple toga of red cotton, fringed with gold, and blue sandals. Human League members typically carry staffs painted red.

The Brotherhood of True Worth

A mercantile League trading in astrological knowledge and insight, it is extensive in Yuthuppa and has close links with the cult of Dayzatar. All its activities are based on a combination of astrological projection and complex numerology, the latter being based completely on codes found within the Power of Ten formula.

Dress: Robes of midnight blue, decorated with stars of silver.

Fellowship of Astral Realisation

The Fellowship basis its scholarly activities on fully codifying the Power of Ten formula. It is dedicated to the formula's study through both mystical insight and martial training. Its members are therefore Star Seer Warriors, skilled in the Ten Step Martial Way, a martial art based on the movements of the constellation in the Sky Dome. Practitioners of the combat style usually chant aloud the governing mantras of the Power of Ten formula as they engage an enemy.

Dress: Blue and yellow togas cut into a distinctive, asymmetrical style and embroidered with encoded Solar Pelorian mantras based on Dayzatar's teachings.

The True Dragon Chroniclers

A society formed in the past fifteen years dedicated to reconciling the solar and draconic pantheons through detailed study of both dragonewt and draconic behaviour, in conjunction with a highly controversial study and reinterpretation of the Gods' Wall. The True Dragon Chroniclers are relatively small by Association standards but have gained the membership of several Leagues in recent years as the power and majesty of the Golden Dragon emperor has been steadily embraced.

Device: A signet ring of bronze cast in the shape of a dragon eating its own tail.

Rune Magic
Dragon Breath, Dragonscales

Skills Taught
Lore (Dragonewt)

The Scaled Friends League

A League of merchant families based around Raibanth who have embraced the draconic tradition and established tentative trade links with the dragonewt cities that have sprung-up in the area.

Dress: A dragon embroidered along the left sleeve of the green robe, its maw engulfing the shoulder.

The Sun Golden Society

The League of priests conducting the research and reconciliation into the Gods' Wall; blamed for defacing certain rows of the tableau with garish draconic imagery.

Dress: A dragon rising from an egg, embroidered to the left breast. The hems of sleeves are stitched with an elaborate (and incorrect) variation of the OUROBOROS mantra.

Gold Scale Questers

The Raibanth-based mercenary families who have dedicated themselves to understanding draconic mystical combat techniques. Reviled and feared in equal measure.

Dress: The right sleeve of every garment is dyed black and is precisely half the length of the left sleeve, which is stitched with gold.

The Unquestionable Society of Lodril

An Association of master artisans and merchants that are as earthy and base as the god they venerate. The Unquestionable Society produces and trades all items that value function over form and the only decoration to adorn any Unquestionable Society is Lodril's seal: a highly stylised representation of Lodril's face that renders the item unbreakable. The magics involved in making the seal are known only to the Association's members, but counterfeit versions of Unquestionable Society goods nevertheless find their way into Dara Happan markets, usually carrying anti-breakage magic that is as inferior in its power as the items are in their quality of workmanship.

The mercantile League of the Society marks all its contracts with an inscribed version of the Lodril seal, making each contract an inherently irrefutable binding contract. Those Leagues trading regularly with the Unquestionable Society are happy to accept these terms, but those who believe they can renege on the deal find ruination visited upon their business and subsequent business dealings. The Golden Dragon Society and the True Dragon Chroniclers avoid Unquestionable Society contracts with the same, slippery hatred usually reserved for God Learners.

Device: A stylised version of Lodril's face

Divine Magic

All divine magic available through the cult of Lodril.

Rune Magic

Detect (Metal), Repair

Skills Taught

All Craft skills.

The Venerable League of Potters

Potters, vase and urn makers.

Dress: Simple robes of earthy shades, secured with a wide leather belt set with ten brass studs.

Elz Ast Carpenters' Formulary

Carpenters, boatwrights and shipwrights

Dress: As for the Venerable League of Potters, but matched with a leather apron studded with ten brass studs.

Lodril's Travellers

Mercantile League, running both overland caravans and river convoys. The Travellers trade only Association goods, shunning any others. 'Gaudiness is not Godliness' is their motto. The Travellers are renowned for exceptional punctuality.

Dress: As for the Venerable League of Potters, but matched with a leather coat studded with ten brass studs.

Drivers' Society

Camel breeders to the Travellers, the Drivers' Society are expert caravanserai and frequently employ Avhentir League mercenaries for protection.

Dress: As for the Venerable League of Potters, but matched with a leather cap and belt studded with ten brass studs.

Vital Words of Antirius

An Association of advocates and scroll-makers, the Vital Words of Antirius is dedicated to chronicling the complete Law of Yelm in a work it calls The New Book of the Sun which, when finished, will set out every law, precept, precedent and variation with perfect clarity. Despite its name the Association venerates Buserian as much as it venerates Antirius, and its members study draconic mysticism to be sure that a complete interpretation of Yelmic Law is being prepared. Where doubt exists over how Yelm's word or the word of the emperor should be interpreted, the Vital Words of Antirius can be relied upon to offer the definitive interpretation.

In its quest to locate every possible piece of Yelmic canon, the Association makes regular use of adventurers and covert agents to locate and obtain information. League members therefore include those skilled in spying and theft as well as advocacy and scripture, and the secrets of every other Association are considered fair targets for the Association's endeavours.

Device: The Great Celestial Eye of Antirius set into a ziggurat

Divine Magic

All divine magic available through the cults of Antirius.

Rune Magic

All rune spells available through the cults of Antirius

Skills Taught

All Dara Happan Lores, Solar Pelorian.

Friends of the Beholding Eye

Buserianic scholars and cartographers who claim to have mapped the whole of Dara Happa and must now map both Heaven and Hell. It seeks adventurers to voluntarily enter the various hells of Alkoth, scrolls and quills in hand, in order to compile accurate notes.

Dress: Short tunics of green cotton worn with togas of orange, trimmed with small bells.

Preceptors of the Spoken Word

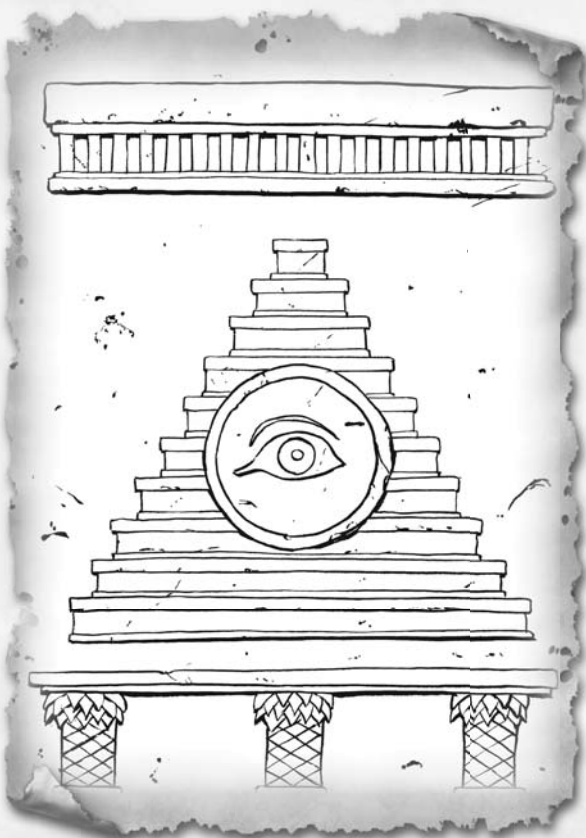
Calligraphers, chroniclers and advocates, the Preceptors are experts in Yelmic, Antirian and Murharzarmic laws. Their great libraries in Yuthuppa and Raibanth are foremost repositories of Dara Happan history and learning.

Dress: Long, black, sleeveless coats worn over white robes. Every Preceptor wears a gold or silver headband.

Antirius Adventurous League

A League of adventurer scholars, the Antirius Adventurous League is akin to a full adventuring cult with a distinctly scholastic agenda. They are as keen to hire new adventurers as they are to send their own, especially those adventurers who value learning and truth above treasure and glory.

Dress: Functional tabards of blue and green worn with pleated kilts of black and silver trim.



A POOR WOMAN'S SON

111,909, *Sea Season*

It starts with three things: a ball of mud, the dragonewt who finds it and the dream the dragonewt has when it turns its Byzantine mind to contemplating the mud ball. Here is how it begins.

One fine morning, whilst grubbing for secrets by the bank of the Oslir River, a dragonewt calling itself I See Stories turned-up a mud ball. It was not large, perhaps the size of a good, ripe plum, but it was very round and clearly hollow – not made all of mud as mud balls usually are. I See Stories contemplated the mud ball for several days, sitting there by the river, pondering on whether taking it back to the nest would be Right Action or not. Eventually it decided it would be Right Action and so the dragonewt popped the mud ball into its pouch and continued looking for more secrets. It found none, and so returned home.

I See Stories decided that it would have a dream, because that seemed like a fine thing to do after going grubbing for secrets, and so the dragonewt closed its eyes and went forth in its mind to the dream places. It dwelled there a while, had its dream, and then returned to the mundane world. At once it went in search of tools with which to write, for I See Stories was of the Priest stage and quite capable of this form of communication. Here is what it wrote.

It copied the letter several times and then went forth into the great and splendid city of Raibanth, bowing to the Golden Sun Dragon who occupies the Imperial Footrest, but otherwise I See Stories was occupied with its task. It stopped at several houses and delivered a copy of the letter to each. Then, because it had done its own errand, the dragonewt went back to its nest and waited until the appointed time.

Greetings.

I am called I See Stories and I am a dragonewt.

You should come to meet with me at sunrise on the east bank of the Great Snake River, where the three bushes form a triangle, in two days time because it would be a Good Thing to meet and because I have an errand you must run for me. This is a very important errand and it cannot be entrusted to either a Crested or a Beaked dragonewt so humans it is. My name is I See Stories.

I can promise you that you will not be eaten or harmed. I can promise you that you are the Right Person for the errand because I have dreamed it and dreams do not lie. It is not a long errand and it is not a short errand. But it is an errand. You must do this errand for me because I have dreamed it and dreams do not lie. I will meet you in two days time. You will recognise me and I will recognise you.

Regards,

I See Stories

PS: I am a dragonewt.

A poor womans son

The Appointed Time

Each of the characters has received a copy of I See Stories' letter. They are bound to be perplexed because it is odd for dragonewts to write and even more odd for them to write invitations to humans. No one saw the letter being delivered and investigations draw a complete blank. It is possible that some guard or underling has seen a dragonewt or two abroad in Raibanth but, in these days of the Golden Sun Emperor and his Wyrmfriend allies, it is hardly remarkable. Magical tests on the letter confirm it is genuine, but written in a strange kind of ink that defies categorisation. The Great Snake River is the mighty Oslir, although only dragonewts would ever refer to it as such. The place where the 'three bushes form a triangle' is easy enough to locate and, at the appointed time – sunrise - the characters arrive to find I See Stories waiting for them.

The dragonewt is a tailed priest. Its skin is bright yellow and covered in irregular patches of dark green. Its neck wattle is a dull-red, like the mud of the riverbank, and its tail is long and very splendid. It sits in the lotus position with one arm wrapped around its eyes. It hums to itself a strange tune that rises and falls but is quite pleasant to listen to. I See Stories does not move until all the characters have assembled and then it removes its arm from across its eyes, stops humming and regards the characters in turn for a very long time. Finally, it speaks.

'Hello. I am I See Stories. I am a dragonewt. I can speak to you because I have reached that part of my path where I am permitted to do so and this is a Good Thing because through speaking we can learn very much indeed. But not today.

'I had a dream recently and you were in it. Yes, all of you. And some others, but mostly you. In the dream I desired to have a Prayer Box made by one of the woodworkers of the city and you went to fetch it for me and I was very pleased with it. So that is your errand. You will go to the woodworker who lives in the third village of the west bank south of the Footrest. You will ask him to carve for me a Prayer Box. I do not know



what prayers I will put in it yet. Probably none. But I shall have the box all the same.

'I will pay you for your time. Here is gold. You do not use gold to pay for the Prayer Box. You pay with mud. See – I have some mud here.'

The dragonewt produces the mud ball it found whilst grubbing for secrets. It also gives each character a single gold coin that has the symbol of Yelm on one side and the symbol of Dendara on the reverse.

'When the Prayer Box is ready bring it to me here. I will know when it is ready because I will dream it.'

And, with mud ball and gold dispensed and the errand described, I See Stories returns to its meditations, this time standing on its hands with its tail wrapped around its eyes; it does not enter into any further discussions and hums to itself, oblivious to any attempts to engage it in further conversation.

Overcoming Objections

The proud people of Dara Happa do not like to be commanded or used as errand runners, especially for the likes of dragonewts. Whilst the payment of gold might be enough of an incentive to engage the characters, some may be sceptical or suspicious of the dragonewt's motives, preferring to take the mud ball and gold and go about their usual business without bothering to trouble themselves with lowly carpenters and things such as Prayer Boxes (which are a common fetish amongst the Low Folk of the Dara Happa river valley, and disdained by the more highly cultured people of the cities). If such objections are raised, here are some ways of countering them.

- Although they have been chosen to run 'an errand', Tailed Priest dragonewts are powerful mystics amongst the dragonewt people. Whilst their behaviour is still bizarre by human standards, they are the most communicative of any dragonewt stage and are generally considered to be trustworthy.
- The dragonewt is effectively placing itself in the characters' debt by engaging their help. Dragonewts do all they can to avoid being in debt, so this errand is clearly of some importance.
- Dragonewts can offer great rewards of magic and knowledge to negate their debt. These pieces of gold might herald more substantial rewards (even though the gold is still a substantial payment).
- Dragonewts are said to be the beloved of the Golden Sun Dragon. Whilst the characters may have few sympathies with the draconic emperor, he is still the emperor. This could be a cunning test that, if not completed, has repercussions for those still faithful to Yelm, rather than those faithful to the EWF who occupy Dara Happa.
- If any of the characters decide to consult the priests of their cult(s) before undertaking the task, they find that every priest, despite the involvement a dragonewt, can find nothing but auspicious omens when contemplating what I See Stories is asking to be done. Perhaps the dragonewt is genuinely interested in

traditional Yelmic values? If so, then it should be encouraged, rather than hindered.

Essentially any major objections need to be overcome. Dara Happa's future hinges upon it.

The Mud ball

The mud ball is a globe of baked red mud about the size of a large plum or a small apple. The indentations of the maker's thumbprints are evident on its surface, but the object is not a fine work of art by any means; simply a ball of rolled and pressed riverbank mud with a rough surface and no finesse. It is also hollow and rattles if shaken.

The mud ball is an intensely magical object. It was created at the same time as the Gods' Wall by Lodril and at Yelm's instruction, and was hidden in the wall itself, perhaps as part of the carving. When the Great Flood engulfed the world, it ripped many impurities from the Gods' Wall and dissolved them, but not the mud ball, which it washed across the land and deposited it where the dragonewt found it. The mud ball is therefore as old as the world and formed from Lodril's own hands and for a singular purpose foreseen by Yelm himself.

It resists any detection magics cast upon it. Neither can it be cracked, split or opened by any of the characters, even if struck by weapons, hurled at a wall with force, submerged in boiling water, or blasted with the most powerful divine spells. The characters may assume this is dragonewt magic but it is not. The magic protecting the mud ball is of an ancient and potent kind that none of the characters have the ability to penetrate, and only two individuals in the entirety of Glorantha can overcome.

The mud ball contains seven clay torpedo-like pellets, about the length of a fingertip. Etched onto each pellet are a series of impossibly small letters in Solar Pelorian. The script is unintelligible to the characters, and only two men can read and understand what they say. A detailed explanation is unnecessary, but a summary of their import is essential.

- The first pellet proclaims that only a true heir to the Imperial Throne, a true son of Yelm, can open the mud ball. Thus the reader stands in the presence of greatness.

- The second pellet identifies that the Son of Yelm is of humble status but noble blood.
- The third pellet outlines that the Son of Yelm will command great armies to reclaim the Sacred Lands
- The fourth pellet describes how vows will be made and broken.
- The fifth pellet describes how old enemies shall be embraced but new ones made
- The sixth pellet describes how the Ten Tests must be taken to prove to all in the world that the Son of Yelm is who he claims to be.
- The seventh pellet describes that those who brought these messages to the Son of Yelm are the Seven Servants reborn.

The Seven Servants

In 111,221 Khordavu became the first emperor since beloved Manimat to wear the Mantle of Sovereignty which had been pursued by the empire's many enemies and great evil. Donning the mantle Khordavu claimed his greatness and so was attended by the greatest men of the land: heroes from Alkoth became his bodyguard; the most learned priests of Yuthuppa became his religious counsel; and the Seven Servants became Khordavu's agents in the world and did his bidding, helping him to dispense Great Wisdom and Justice.

This is a profound status for the characters. Although they have lived their lives oblivious to their true natures, they are the Seven Servants reborn, just as Karvanyar is the true emperor reborn. The characters are identified, when the mud ball is opened, as people of destiny – those who assist and enact the will of the emperor. And, even if the characters are not precisely seven in number, it is an irrelevance, because Khordavu had, in effect, many servants who were deserving of the title.

Finding a Carpenter

I See Stories is quite specific about where to find the carpenter: the third village of the west bank south of the Imperial Footrest. There are many small villages clustered around Raibanth, each hugging the riverbanks on either side of the Oslir, each home to the farmers and artisans considered to be the Low People of Dara Happa, forbidden to worship any of the gods in the first row of the Gods' Wall (that is, the chief gods of Dara Happa. See pages 18 to 19).

The villages are simple affairs of adobe houses, roofed with reeds, forming grids of narrow streets around the main well or a small market square. The people work and act in simple ways, always bowing towards the Ziggurat of Raibanth (if not necessarily the Dragon Sun Emperor) and being as cheerful and as hospitable as they can, in honour of Lodril, who, like them, took pleasure in the low and simple aspects of the world.

The third village of the west bank south of the Imperial Footrest is known as Urderanth because the god who looks after the village is Urder the Worker. His representation is everywhere, pressed and scratched into the sides of buildings and, most importantly, into the two pillars of stone that form the gateway to the village. Urder's representation is a simply clad figure who walks away from a representation of another god, carrying a grain flail in one hand and a basket in the other. On the left-hand pillar the other god represented is clearly Lodril. On the right-hand pillar the god is clearly the Golden Sun Dragon. Urderanth is keen to demonstrate its full acceptance of its status in the eyes of gods and emperors.

The people of Urderanth go about their chores and tasks diligently and cheerfully. They are naturally polite and deferential to any who are clearly of higher standing than they, and the characters do not experience any difficulty or belligerence amongst these people. Anyone questioned readily points out the home and workshop of the carpenter – a pair of connected buildings on the far side of the village, set away from the river. If they ask about the carpenter before approaching his dwelling, the characters learn some or all of the following, depending on the success of an Influence, Oratory or similar test.

- The carpenter has been in Urderanth for as long as anyone can remember
- His name is Galoumesh, which is not a local name
- He is *very* religious – uncomfortably so, but he is no priest
- He is considered quite mad. He frequently rambles and wails for no reason anyone can fathom
- He is blind, but that does not prevent him from working wood, although his son does help him
- He claims to have wandered the world before becoming a carpenter, but he says little of his travels
- His wife, Aivendir, is stunningly ugly, but a good soul nonetheless. She is well-liked in the village
- His son, Kavoumesh, is as handsome as his mother is ugly. How did *that* happen?

Galoumesh's Workshop

A pair of simple adobe dwellings, each a single storey, each with a traditional sloping roof, are separated from the rest of the village by a simple picket fence. A few goats and some chickens peck and scratch around the yard and bundles of timber, neatly stacked and tied, are piled at one end.

The larger of the two buildings is the family residence. The smaller is the workshop. It has a pair of large, sturdy wooden gates for its door, one of which is open. The sound of sawing, hammering and chiselling emanate from within. Sitting outside the workshop in a wicker and wood rocking chair is an old, old man. His face is deeply creased by both age and the weather, and his empty eye sockets are covered by a grubby linen bandage. His hands are restless, scratching and shuffling, wringing together. His thin, parched-looking lips murmur unintelligible words. There is a look of great sorrow on this old man's face; great sorrow and great hardship.

This is the man who calls himself Galoumesh. It is not his real name, but it is the name he has used for the past thirty two years in order to hide from his enemies. Galoumesh's real name is Urvanyar and every true Dara Happan knows the name well. For Urvanyar was the son of Dismanthuyar, the last human emperor to occupy the throne before the coming of the Golden

Dragon. Urvanyar battled the Golden Dragon and was defeated. His heart and eyes were taken from him, so that he could not take the Ten Tests and challenge the dragon for the emperorship; his father, the much loved poet emperor, was slain outright.

Urvanyar wandered away from Dara Happa and into obscurity. He relied on charity and became a blind beggar, travelling down the river and across the mountains, reaching as far as Ralios before wandering back to his homeland. For ten years he wandered as a beggar, before coming at last to the villages on the outskirts of Raibanth where he met Aivendir who showed him the greatest kindnesses. They settled in Urderanth and had but a single son, named publicly as Kavoumesh, but in truth he is called Karvanyar, again so that Dismanthuyar's slayers will not find him.

Aivendir knows of her husband and son's importance and has spent her life in the firm belief that they will continue to live as simple people here in this simple village. She wants nothing but peace for them all. However, she is no fool. When the characters arrive that strange sense only women possess alerts her that the world about her is going to be shattered. Her understanding of what the characters represent and what they will become means she dislikes them immediately, turning her normally radiant and kind temperament impatient and shrill.

Kavoumesh is inside the workshop, repairing a cart when the characters arrive. He continues working whilst they talk with his father.

Talking With Galoumesh/Urvanyar

When approached Galoumesh looks up with unseeing eyes and asks for the characters to name themselves. Next he calls for Aivendir and asks her to describe each of the characters in detail. The characters should be struck by Aivendir's ugliness but more so by her kindness. Any character who successfully uses a Solar Pantheon Lore skill (with a +40 bonus to members of either the Dendara or Gorgorma cults) understands that Aivendir embodies the qualities of both Dendara and Gorgorma in one body and is therefore a woman of special talents. Similarly, Aivendir, as she describes each character to her husband, begins to realise their true nature and is disturbed by it. She becomes terse and irritable and, as she completes her final description,

runs back inside the house in tears, unable to look upon the characters any longer.

‘Truly puzzling,’ the blind man says. ‘Yet you did and said nothing to offend her that I could tell. You had better state your business and be quick about it. I would not have my sweet wife upset, if your presence here upsets her.’

Galoumesh listens to whatever the characters tell him carefully. He is dismissive of the dragonewt (‘All tricksters!’), and dismissive of the request for a Prayer Box (‘I have several gathering dust and mouse droppings at the back of the workshop’). But, when it comes to discussing payment and the characters speak of the mud ball, or gives it to him, Galoumesh falls silent for a long time. The characters might also notice that the sounds of woodworking from the workshop have stopped. Finally he holds out his hand and asks for the ball to put in his palm, if the party has not already given it to him. He weighs it, rattles it and shakes his head.

‘If I had the means of producing it, I would weep a river of tears for this. For it was brought to you by the tears of a goddess.’ He turns his head and calls for his son.

Karvanyar Revealed

Kavoumesh steps out from the shadows where he has been watching his father. He is a tall man, lean and strong, with long blond hair and an immaculately trimmed beard. His face is angular and impressive, giving an immediate impression of both trust and confidence. He carries a hammer in one hand and a long, sharp chisel in the other. He watches the characters intently but does not greet them. Rather he crosses to his father. The two men do not speak, but Galoumesh holds out his palm to show the mud ball. Kavoumesh nods, takes it, and, before any of the characters can do anything (or, if they are swift enough, he threatens them with his weapons), he presses the mud ball into the empty socket of his father’s left eye.

Galoumesh closes his lid over the mud ball and a cracking can be heard. He gasps – but not in pain – and covers his right eye socket with his palm. There is a further sound of grinding and, when Galoumesh removes his palm, the characters can see that, in the empty socket, are the seven pellets that were contained in the mud ball. The old man tilts his head forward and lets the pellets spill forward into the hand of his son.

‘For thirty years or more I have hidden, and hidden my son from the world,’ he says, in a strong, steady voice. ‘The name of Galoumesh is no longer needed. Neither is the name of Kavoumesh. From this day hence I am Urvanyar again, and you, my son, are Karvanyar!’

Each character should be allowed a Lore test to grasp the significance of the blind man’s words and how easily he broke open the mud ball. No magic could have injured that device – none save the touch of the gods themselves. Making a successful Lore test (using either Solar Pantheon Lore or World Lore) the characters know that they are standing in the presence not of an old, blind carpenter, but of a wronged warrior who opposed the Dragon Emperor and its minions when the throne of Dara Happa was wrestled from men. The hazy halo of Ezelveztay, the light of the One Before the One, forms around the heads of both Urvanyar and Karvanyar, clear for the characters to see. But for now, only the characters can see the Ezelveztay halo; it is invisible to those who have not pledged an oath of compact with either hero.



The Seven Servants Revealed

Karvanyar reads the inscriptions on each pellet silently and, when he is finished, he looks up to the characters and smiles broadly, as though he has been granted true enlightenment. 'Great Antirius wrote these words,' he says, 'and Great Lodril protected them. Graceful Oslira took them from hiding, and now the Seven Servants who once served Khordavu have brought them to me and my father. Friends, I and my father welcome you on this, the day of our awakening. A day that calls to mind that day when Yelm in all his glory ascended back to the heavens after he was slain by the rebel gods!'

This is a pivotal moment for the characters. The hand of Yelm is touching them, raising them from their mundane existence and placing them in a position of semi-divine service. What the characters are witnessing is the awakening of a Hero who will challenge the usurper Dragon Emperor. Every hero requires aides, companions and supporters, and fate has singled out the characters to be these people. If the characters do not share in the immediate epiphany of Karvanyar and his father, Karvanyar explains how he views things over a simple, but delicious meal, Aivendir prepares and serves in the main house.

'My father challenged the Dragon when it came to claim the Imperial throne,' he says in the candlelight. 'He took his warriors into the fields of battle south of Raibanth and beat the Dragon's champions. When he faced the dragon itself it used magic and trickery to steal both his eyes and his heart so that he would be forever unable to take the Ten Tests of Yelm and ascend to the throne himself. With no heir, the true emperor, Dismanthuyar, my grandfather, was weakened and the Dragon destroyed him. That is how he claimed the throne. Yes, he took the Ten Tests and passed them all, but only through low cunning and trickery. Your presence today is the sign my father and I have been waiting for. The sign that the gods are ready now to strike back at the hated Dragon Empire which tries to make us all into wyrms. You have come here and been revealed as those who will aid me in preparing for the Ten Tests. But there are other challenges that

must be faced, and these will be things I may not be in a position to face personally. In Khordavu's time the Seven Servants acted in the name of the gods and the emperor to achieve Yelm's will. That, my brothers, is the purpose of our meeting. You are those companions. Today, we have all been awoken. We are the rays of a new sun that will bring horror to the Scaled Ones. A new dawn for Dara Happa. Together my friends, we can reclaim these lands.'

The speech is eloquent and moving. Any characters still doubting that they have a part to play in a great destiny may attempt to resist Karvanyar's Influence (90%). If they are still unmoved, Karvanyar offers this.

'There is an irony in that you were brought together by the dream of a dragonewt. That one of my enemies should have an unwitting part in this is proof to me that you are the Seven Servants. If you are not, then I will make you a prayer box and you should take it back to the dragonewt, for that is the honourable thing to do. Yet I am willing to wager that the dragonewt will either have changed its mind about the box, or have already forgotten it altogether. When Yelm sends Antirius to declare the truth, Antirius works in strange and oblique ways. Trust in me, and, my friends, you shall be a part of a new empire that is good, just and honourable.'

Cult Epiphany

A character's cult membership can be used to determine how he grasps the truth of these revelation.

Worshippers of Lodril, Dayzatar and Antirius understand immediately that what Karvanyar says is true and they should offer him their allegiance. Worshippers of Dendara, Lokarnos, Buserian, and Elmal may require more proof before accepting what they have heard. Worshippers of Gorgorma and Shargash may be quite sceptical and require a good deal of persuasion.

Karvanyar, aided by Urvanyar, is quite prepared to debate for many hours to gain the characters' support, arguing eloquently whilst Urvanyar provides fascinatingly detailed accounts of the battle with the Golden Dragon that could only come from one who was there and suffered in the way he suffered. As a final token of proof Urvanyar opens his shirt to display the huge, circular scar on his breast where the Golden Dragon reached in and stole his heart. If anyone listens to his chest, no heartbeat can be heard.

The Oath Swearing

Karvanyar insists that everyone present should swear an oath before Yelm, acknowledging his rule over the universe and pledging to restore the rightful emperor of Dara Happa to the throne.

*I swear to kneel before Yelm's Good Grace
I vow to restore justice and balance in the world
I give my oath to rid the Oslir Lands of false prophets
I swear to fight for the true lineage of Murharzarm
I pledge to make the Dragon my enemy
I vow to drive the Dragon's allies from my lands
I give my oath of service to the true emperor of Dara Happa
I give my oath of service to my colleagues and friends
I give my oath of service to the peoples of Dara Happa
I give my oath of service to Yelm, his Brothers, and the Light Eternal*

Karvanyar and Urvanyar swear the same oath. Aivendir, watching quietly from a corner, weeps soundlessly as she sees her husband and son lost to a greater destiny.

Swearing the oath binds the characters to all the relationships it contains and to all the other oath takers, including Karvanyar and Urvanyar. If the oath is broken then the character becomes an opponent of Karvanyar and the Seven Servants, and may be subject to Karvanyar's punishment. Only Karvanyar can release a character from their oath without incurring disgrace.

Benefits of the Oath

Each character gains the magical ability of Oath Friend. By expending a single Magic Point he knows the location of *any* of the oath takers, irrespective of distance. The ability also allows Karvanyar to

summon any or all of the Seven Servants to him through a simple, mental command. Failing to heed the summons can be construed as breaking the oath, unless the character has a good reason.

Each character also gains the spell Sunbright (*Cults of Glorantha, volume I, page 94*).

Karvanyar dismisses the characters, explaining that he and his father must now make plans for the next steps to be taken; he will summon the characters via the Oath Friend ability they now share. Before the characters depart he beckons them into the workshop. On the workbench is the piece of carpentry Karvanyar had been working on when the characters arrived: it is a Prayer Box. An ornately carved box, 30cm by 20cm by 10cm, which is used by priests of the Solar pantheon to carry their holy prayer scriptures. The box is decorated with the symbols and representations of the Celestial Court on the sides, and on the lid is a representation of the World Pillar, surmounted by the Ezelveztay. As Prayer Boxes go, this is an exquisite piece of the work; beautiful in its simplicity, but breathtakingly detailed. Karvanyar tells the characters to take the box to the dragonewt. He then embraces his new friends in turn and bids them to wait for his call.

Returning to I See Stories

Whenever the characters decide to return to the place where they first met the dragonewt, bringing the Prayer Box with them, they find I See Stories waiting. This time the dragonewt is wearing a very fine robe of brilliant blue and a headdress of summer flowers. It is also accompanied by two fierce-looking Beaked dragonewts, each bearing a klanth. The warrior dragonewts look aggressive, and, if any of them is challenged or threatened, they react aggressively, but otherwise say and do nothing.

'It is a fine prayer box,' the dragonewt says, not even bothering to inspect what the characters have brought. 'I shall keep the dreams of the Inhuman King in it and take them out every eight hundredth day and polish them until they are quite dull.' I See Stories hands the box to one of the Beaked dragonewts. 'So, this is how the End begins,' it says. 'Very curious, but most

Ends have some kind of beginning although not all Beginnings have some kind of end.'

And, with that, I See Stories turns and walks away, accompanied by its bodyguards. The dragonewt's part in Karvanyar's saga is done; it has no further part to play in the events that will unfold.

Awaiting the Summons

It is four seasons before Karvanyar summons the characters back to him and in this time there is room for small adventures and mundane responsibilities. Karvanyar has given no instructions as to what the Seven Servants are expected to do for him, so the prudent course of action, for now, is do nothing.

Karvanyar is not idle. He moves around Dara Happa going up river and down, out towards Talastar and then over the river towards Rinliddi. He is constantly on the move. Urvanyar remains in Urderanth with Aivendir.

One morning in Dark Season the characters are summoned not by Karvanyar but by Urvanyar. His summons comes as a frail, desperate calling for help. Karvanyar is too distant to return to the Raibanth region in time; the characters need to go Urvanyar's aid.

Urvanyar and Aivendir are found in their home in Urderanth. Aivendir is anxious and Urvanyar is angry and upset. It transpires that a Dragon worshipper visited them the previous day, claiming to be looking for someone to make him a new cabinet as a wedding gift to a friend. Despite Urvanyar's hatred for those who are members of the EWF or collude with them, the discussion was civil enough and Urvanyar agreed a piece to be made when his son returns. The visitor arose and thanked him, but, as he said his goodbyes, he did not use the name Galoumesh but Urvanyar's real name, thus betraying his true purpose.

'The Dragon knows I am alive,' Urvanyar growls. 'Which means that he will try to kill me. He also knows I have a son, and so he will try to kill Karvanyar too. This village is safe no longer. We need a place of safety and secrecy and we must go at once!'

There can be little doubt that Urvanyar's suspicions are correct. The Empire of Wyrms' Friends and those Dara Happans who worship the Golden Dragon Emperor will go to extreme lengths to silence their old enemies. Urvanyar represents a threat to the Golden Dragon's rule, and therefore a threat to the EWF. The characters must act quickly.

Enter the Dancers

The EWF has mobilised one of its Hunting and Waltzing bands operating within Dara Happa. The Sun Dragon Dancers venerate the Golden Dragon with evangelical fanaticism and are murderously obsessed with protecting the EWF's outlying territories, sensing that the Dragon Empire is in danger of fraying at its outer edges. Their immediate goal is to capture Urvanyar. Killing him would not be prudent as it would create a martyr (and possibly a powerful spirit or demi-god) and further Karvanyar's cause. Capturing and holding Urvanyar gives the EWF leverage over its enemies; that is the Dancers' principal aim. The EWF hopes that, by holding Urvanyar, Karvanyar can be bartered with.

As the characters reach Urvanyar, the Dancers are already on their way from Raibanth, prepared to kill anyone who gets in their way. They know of Urvanyar's old exploits as a leader of armies and therefore the threat he poses to the EWF. The Dancers are also trouble-shooters for the Eternal Dragon Ring, the true power behind the might of the EWF as all its members have transcended to either semi or true dragon status having studied under the legendary Obduran the Flyer.

Menakai is the leader of the small group and he is well known elsewhere in Glorantha but few in Dara Happa are aware of him. The Dancers use omens and signs to determine the likelihood of their success, and they are therefore somewhat reckless in their approach. As capturing Urvanyar alive is the principal aim, their tactic is to try to separate him from the characters and then have Essuira hold him whilst the others beat-off any resistance. They cast their draconic magic well in advance of any confrontation, so their various magical abilities are always ready for deployment.

Menakai Ourost

An apostate Orlanthi who has fully embraced the draconic way and believes that all cosmologies save for the draconic are a heresy. Menakai is the enigmatic leader. He goes everywhere naked, with every single inch of his body covered in swirling, cryptic, mystical tattoos wrought by dragonewts in Dragon's Eye. He serves the EWF with a smile, either whilst evangelising or whilst killing. He has not slept in fifteen years and his eyes will no longer close. When not issuing instructions to his group he chants to himself incessantly in Auld Wyrnish.

Essuira the Grave

Menakai's taloned lover, she hails from the Hydra Mountains and is unswerving in her devotion to the Great Dragon Project. She has had many lovers within the EWF and with her sure and guiding hand each has gone on to greatness. Her core belief is that every soul she takes becomes a whorl on one of the scales that will form the Great Dragon's hide. She is the only member of the Dancers who understands the complex significance of the tattoos covering Menakai's body and that is why she is his lover.

Oolam the Twisted

A hunchbacked menace from Kostadi who has waking visions so powerful that he believes he is engaged on a perpetual Heroquest of which his mundane existence is but one, long stage. His true hatred is for Malkioni, but he is convinced Yelm and the Solar deities are all part of the Malkion scheme for a single, unified concept that must be crushed at all costs. His dedication to the draconic way is unswerving: before joining the Dancers he served Lord Great Burin at the Battle of Deroval, an experience so ecstatic that it triggered his waking visions of draconic magnificence.

Hss'th

Hss'th (pronounced Huss-THE) is a beaked dragonewt of Absolute Circuitous Fortuity that believes it owes a huge debt to Oolam the Twisted and so follows him everywhere, fighting with him and his colleagues where necessary and acting as an enigmatic servant and trouble-shooter for the rest of the time. Hss'th prefers to skitter around on all fours whenever it can, making a peculiar hissing sound and rolling in dirt. When not

doing this, Hss'th spends days in meditation, staring at either the sky or the ground, depending on conditions known only to itself.

In a fight Hss'th always waits for the first round of combat to finish whilst it decides if participation is Right or Wrong action. A successful Right Action test sees Hss'th fight mercilessly with its colleagues. If the test is a failure, it simply meditates, oblivious to what happens around it, even if attacked. The rest of the Dancers are perfectly at ease with Hss'th strange ways; indeed Menakai often meditates alongside the dragonewt.

The Ambush

The characters have to get Urvanyar and Aivendir to safety. Precisely where that is, is down to the characters. They should be encouraged to spend a little time thinking through where they will go and how they will get there. What they do afterwards can be decided later.

The village has few ways in or out. It is surrounded by open scrubland to the north, west and south, and on the east the land shelves down to reed beds, marsh and then the Oslir River. The Dancers are approaching from the south, making use of the scrubland bushes and rocky outcrops as cover for an ambush, if needed. They hope to take Urvanyar on the road as this is the easiest option, but the Dancers do not waste time; they strike wherever the opportunity appears.

If the characters dither or procrastinate, then the Dancers make their attack in the village itself, splitting up so that they can surround Urvanyar's dwelling, using the village buildings as cover.

If the characters take the river, they need to negotiate the marsh and reed beds. Movement is slowed by one half as this terrain is crossed, and Athletics tests are needed to prevent from stepping into a deep marshy area and getting stuck fast for 1D8 Combat Actions. At the river, they need a boat. There are a few coracles used by village fishermen arranged further downstream but a coracle takes only one passenger, and there are only three coracles. The Dancers follow along the river bank as far as they can, throwing magic to incapacitate their quarry. Oolam and Menakai are happy to pursue the party into the water if necessary.

If the Dancers Succeed...

The Games Master's task is therefore to arrange the ambush and attack and run its course. The Dancers want Urvanyar alive but have no concern for the lives of anyone else. If they successfully capture Urvanyar they make a rapid escape to their Safe House which is an underground temple in the dragonewt city of Ten Tests Passed (see page 51). The Dancers hold Urvanyar for six days, awaiting the advice of the Eternal Dragon Ring. That advice is to take Urvanyar from Ten Tests Passed to the city of Alkoth where he can be held, literally, in Hell itself.

This gives the characters opportunities to pursue the Dancers, following them to either Ten Tests Passed, down river to Alkoth (the Dancers take a river barge to the city of Shargash), and then into Alkoth itself. This final option is particularly effective as it adds a further test for the characters who will be sent to Alkoth anyway in a later chapter.

Giving chase and fighting for Urvanyar's return should not be easy. The Dancers are skilled and challenging foes operating with the full backing of the Eternal Dragon Ring. If they get to Alkoth Urvanyar is given into the care of Lorenkarten the Mile, a powerful draconic mystic who figures later in this saga. If they are caught in Ten Tests Passed, the dragonewt city, the Dancers call upon dragonewt allies to contain the characters whilst they make good their getaway. The characters therefore find themselves in battle with powerful dragonewt characters. See Ten Tests Temple, below, for an overview of the Dancers' lair in the dragonewt city.

If the Characters Protect Urvanyar...

Despite their power, the Dancers are not fools. If bested they tactically retreat to consider their options. The Dancers will bide their time and seek other ways of capturing Urvanyar and gaining their revenge on the characters at some point determined by the Games Master. Their success depends purely on the amount of effort the characters put into securing Urvanyar's safety.

Protecting Urvanyar needs to figure highly in whatever the characters plan as part of this scenario. Some options for consideration:

- The characters can call upon their Leagues and Associations for favours. Safehouses with guards and magic can be secured if the characters can successfully negotiate terms with a League or Association. This may prove to be a formidable task: gaining such help implicates a League and Association in an act of rebellion against the Golden Dragon emperor and not all Leagues will welcome this degree of involvement – although some clearly will. Much depends on the League and Association choices defined by the players when their characters were created. But it is a worthwhile option for consideration for several reasons. First, Leagues and Associations have the resources to offer the kind of protection Urvanyar needs from the predations of the Eternal Dragon Ring – or can negotiate them with other Associations. Secondly, dependent on allegiances and attitudes, League and Association support for the rebellion Karvanyar plans is vital, so Karvanyar himself would favour such an option and support it. Alliances made at this point will serve very well later in the campaign.
- The characters can keep matters secret and make their own arrangements, using their family connections to keep Urvanyar safe. This has similar implications to League/Association involvement but at a more local level and requires the characters to make security arrangements themselves. As an option it offers opportunities for the characters to involve themselves in setting up an effective, secure environment for Urvanyar, perhaps as a temporary measure, whilst better arrangements are negotiated with Leagues and Associations.
- A third option is to find Karvanyar and take Urvanyar to him. At this stage in the campaign Karvanyar is wandering Dara Happa in secret, learning all he can about the situation in each city of the empire. He moves stealthily using a variety of different aliases, going one from Association to another, from Elz Ast to Nivorah, learning all he can about the Golden Dragon's strengths, weaknesses, extent of influence and plans. He creates allies and enemies in equal measure but learns much about the EWF influence in the

empire and begins to draw his plans against it. Finding him is not a difficult task for the characters as they have the ability to locate him wherever he is, but reaching him may take time, depending on where, in Dara Happa, he happens to be working. Once found, Karvanyar makes secure plans for his father's safety and is grateful to the characters for keeping Urvanyar safe all this time. But, whilst the characters search for Karvanyar they remain vulnerable. The time they take searching for, and reaching Karvanyar, is used by the Dancers to find the characters and launch another attempt to capture Urvanyar, taking him directly to Alkoth.

Whatever the direction events take, Karvanyar eventually summons his Seven Servants to meet him in the wealthy house of a sympathetic merchant who lives on a private estate several kilometres east of Yuthuppa. Karvanyar wants all the news the characters can offer and imparts his own. He also prepares them for the task ahead, as described in the next chapter.

Game Master Resources

This section provides resources necessary for running this chapter of the Dara Happa Stirs story: statistics for the various non-player characters involved and background detail on the base of the Dancers in Ten Tests Passed.

The Dancers

The Sun Dragon Dancers are an elite Hunting and Waltzing band. They do not leap to rash decisions and they do not accept defeat lightly. Despite their mystical nature they are of a single mind: absolute devotion to the draconic way and nothing, *nothing* is allowed to get in the way of it.

Menakai Ourost

Menakai's tattoos come to life in combat, chasing across his body and disrupting his natural shape. This affords him a natural defensive advantage and anyone engaging Menakai in single combat suffers a -30% penalty to all attacks.

Characteristics: STR 14, CON 15, SIZ 13, INT 16, POW 17, DEX 14, CHA 13

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/6
4-6	Left Leg	-/6
7-9	Abdomen	-/7
10-12	Chest	-/8
13-15	Right Arm	-/5
16-18	Left Arm	-/5
19-20	Head	-/6

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Longspear	112%	1D10+1D2 4/10
Dagger	89%	1d4+1+1D2 4/6

CA: 3 **SR:** +15 **Move:** 4m **MP:** 17

Skills: Acrobatics 60%, Athletics 65%, Boating 33%, Courtesy 51%, Dance 67%, Dodge 80%, Draconic Illumination 74%, Driving 30%, Evaluate 44%, First Aid 36%, Influence 40%, Language (Theyalan) 68%, Language (Auld Wymish) 70%, Lore (Animal) 34%, Lore (Dara Happa) 35%, Lore (Dragon Pass) 65%, Lore (Orlanthi) 56%, Lore (Plant) 48%, Lore (World) 52%, Martial Arts 94%, Perception 64%, Persistence 63%, Resilience 66%, Riding 40%, Sing 18%, Sleight 27%, Stealth 52%, Throwing 76%, Unarmed 95%

Equipment: Longspear, dagger, shoulder bag containing herbs, charms and fire making kit.

Runes Integrated: Motion, Disorder (Increased Movement, Strike Rank)

Draconic Magic: Become Draconic Wym, Combat Meditation, Draconic Regeneration

Essuira the Grave

Essuira is alarmingly alluring. Given the opportunity she seduces before using her talons to inflict huge damage on her victim. She is also the only person who knows that Menakai's tattoos are a complete myth relating to the True dragon, Aroka. Even Menakai does not know this. It is Essuira's special talent to be able to accurately define the mystical significance of any pattern, design, symbol or tattoo that she comes across.



Characteristics: STR 11, CON 13, SIZ 10, INT 16, POW 19, DEX 15, CHA 19

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/5
4-6	Left Leg	-/5
7-9	Abdomen	-/6
10-12	Chest	-/7
13-15	Right Arm	-/4
16-18	Left Arm	-/4
19-20	Head	-/5

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Utuma	87%	1D6 8/12
Dagger	72%	1D4+1 4/6

CA: 3 **SR:** +15 **Move:** 4m **MP:** 19

Skills: Acrobatics 41%, Athletics 40%, Boating 20%, Courtesy 67%, Dance 75%, Dodge 56%, Draconic Illumination 91%, Driving 20%, Evaluate 71%, First Aid 40%, Influence 75%, Language (Theyalan) 45%, Language (Auld Wyrnish) 61%, Lore (Animal) 24%, Lore (Dara Happa) 28%, Lore (Raios) 65%, Lore (Plant) 37%, Lore (World) 41%, Martial Arts 82%, Perception 72%, Persistence 66%, Resilience 58%, Riding 31%, Seduction 95%, Sing 78%, Sleight 41%, Stealth 63%, Throwing 31%, Unarmed 66%

Equipment: Dragon bone Utuma, dagger, rune-carved dragon-bone arm-ring (contains three dragon-blood crystals that acts as a 24MP total Crystal of the Dead), backpack containing herbs, supplies and fire making kit.

Runes Integrated: Motion, Dragon (Increased Movement, Enhanced Mystic Sight)

Draconic Magic: Combat Meditation, Sight From The Marked Palms, Draconic Regeneration, Dragon Claws, Dragon Flight

Oolam the Twisted

Oolam rarely sees the mundane - most of his life is experienced from a mystical viewpoint instead, and never so vibrant as when in battle. This effect is so strong it can manifest to the point where a mythical significance is given to the combat, granting the hunchback a myth-related advantage or even a disadvantage. The God-Learners would dearly love to capture and study Oolam for this unique ability.

Characteristics: STR 20, CON 17, SIZ 16, INT 15, POW 14, DEX 13, CHA 8

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/7
4-6	Left Leg	-/7
7-9	Abdomen	-/8
10-12	Chest	-/9
13-15	Right Arm	-/6
16-18	Left Arm	-/6
19-20	Head	-/7

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
War Maul	121%	2D6+1D6 4/12
Bone Dagger	77%	1D4+1+1D6 4/6

CA: 3 **SR:** +14 **Move:** 4m **MP:** 14

Skills: Acrobatics 36%, Athletics 63%, Boating 22%, Courtesy 30%, Dance 63%, Dodge 61%, Draconic Illumination 70%, Driving 37%, Evaluate 33%, First Aid 57%, Influence 29%, Language (Theyalan) 44%, Language (Auld Wyrnish) 59%, Lore (Animal) 28%, Lore (Dara Happa) 58%, Lore (Kostadi) 66%, Lore (Plant) 37%, Lore (World) 40%, Martial Arts 92%, Mythic Challenge 63%, Perception 69%, Persistence 71%, Resilience 87%, Riding 42%, Sing 15%, Sleight 43%, Stealth 52%, Throwing 67%, Unarmed 76%

Equipment: Bone-sung War Maul from the tail of an oversized Clubber (Ankylosarus), Bone dagger formed from a shell spine of the same beast, backpack containing herbs (several with magical hallucinogenic qualities) and supplies.

Mythic Challenge: During combat Oolam may use his Mythic Challenge ability in an Opposed Test (Resist(Lore-theology)) to try and establish both himself and his opponent into a mythic role. Normally this would be a myth of a dragon fighting and overcoming its foes. For the target of the spell it is an experience akin to partaking in a holy day ceremony.

Mythic Challenge results for Oolam are on the table at the bottom of the page. The result is applied to all contestable rolls against the opponent.

Runes Integrated: Earth (Decreased damage from physical attacks)

Draconic Magic: Skeletal Strengthening, Scaled Skin, Earthquake, Dragon Strength

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A gold and amethyst dragonewt warrior. Student of the Empire of Wisdom.

Characteristics: STR 22, CON 18, SIZ 21, INT 16, POW 14, DEX 12, CHA 15

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-2	Tail	6/8
3-5	Right Leg	6/8
6-8	Left Leg	6/8
9-11	Abdomen	6/9
12	Chest	6/10
13-15	Right Arm	6/7
16-18	Left Arm	6/7
19-20	Head	6/8

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Klanth	101%	2D6+1D6 4/12
Utuma	87%	1D6+1D6 3/8
Chokin	56%	1D6+1D6 1/1
Long Bow	91%	2D10+1D6 2/8

Mythic Challenge Results

Critical Success	+30% modifier	Oolam visualises a core myth
Normal Success	+15% modifier	Oolam visualises an appropriate myth
Failure or a draw	No effect	
Fumble	-30% modifier	Oolam visualises a myth that puts him at a disadvantage

CA: 3 SR: +14 Move: 4m MP: 14

Skills: Acrobatics 42%, Athletics 74%, Boating 15%, Courtesy 30%, Craft (Dragon bone) 33%, Dance 65%, Dodge 61%, Draconic Mysticism 70%, Driving 30%, Evaluate 33%, First Aid 45%, Influence 29%, Language (Auld Wyrnish) 88%, Lore (Draconic Theology) 58%, Lore (Draconic Wisdom) 67%, Lore (Plant) 25%, Lore (World) 45%, Martial Arts 73%, Perception 76%, Persistence 66%, Resilience 84%, Riding 50%, Right Action 66%, Sing 44%, Six Enlightened Steps 89%, Six Enlightened Cuts 57%, Sleight 37%, Stealth 57%, Throwing 82%, Tracking 51%, Unarmed 66%, Utuma 55%

Armour: Natural hide. No skill penalty

Equipment: Klanth, Utuma, shoulder belt with pouches for chokin and supplies. Dragon Long Bow and dinosaur skin quiver holding 25 arrows.

True Dragon Dances: The Six Enlightened Steps, The Six Enlightened Cuts.

Draconic Magic: Become Draconic Wyrm, Blood Alchemy, Bone Singing, Bone Ridges, Deafening Cry, Disease Resistance, Fire Claws, Scaled Skin, Skeletal Strengthening, Summon Flame

Ten Tests Temple

The Dancers base themselves in the dragonewt city of Ten Tests Passed (see page 51 of the Dara Happa Chapter). The base is a series of interconnected caves in the hills close to the chambers occupied by the Crested dragonewts that are returning to the draconic path. Ten Tests Passed is unwelcoming to non-dragonewts; Beaked dragonewts patrol the area and deal harshly with intruders. The Dancers are welcome only because Hss'Th is one of their kind and if the dragonewt is not with the Dancers for any reason, Ten Tests Passed is unsafe for them – despite their draconic allegiances.

Six caves form the base. The largest, central cave is reached by a passage sloping down into the hillside at a steep incline. The remaining five caves radiate from the central cave like spokes from a wheel. Each is rough-walled, dug from the hillside with crude tools,

and connected by a short passage to the central cave. The four caves of the Dancers contain a few material possessions but are otherwise bare (aside from rush mattresses for sleeping). The Dancers travel light and use this base only when necessary.

If Urvanyar is captured by the Dancers he is brought here and imprisoned in the sixth, unused cave. The Dancers provide fresh reeds for bedding and some scraps of food (cold, glutinous rice) and stale water to drink. Any rescue attempt involves bypassing 3D6 armed and unsympathetic Beaked dragonewts (see page 60 of *Dragonewts – A Guide to the Eravssarr* for sample Beaked statistics). These guardians intend to delay, at the very least, the characters whilst the Dancers make good their escape, heading for the river and thence to Alkoth.



SEEING OUT THE GODDESS

Karvanyar summons the characters to meet at the estate of Revunarus Starwise, several kilometres to Yuthuppa's east. The estate is large and filled with olive trees, fruit orchards and fields filled with crops. Revunarus's slaves work the crops happily; he is a just master and a fair merchant and also a ranking member of the Dayzatar cult. As the characters approach the main house the observatory tower is clearly evident, a tall, narrow spine of stone attached to the far end of the building.

After being greeted by house servants and offered refreshments, the characters are shown into an interior courtyard, paved in a fine blue mosaic depicting astrological symbols and formulae. A fountain bubbles peacefully at the centre and there, reclining on thick cushions of silk are Karvanyar and Revunarus.

Karvanyar introduces the characters and explains why he has summoned them to Revunarus's home. 'Revunarus knew my father and has no sympathy for the Wyrmfriends. Furthermore he has studied the stars extensively over the years and has witnessed patterns in their movements that are auspicious omens for our cause.' Then, Revunarus, stroking his fine, greying beard, continues the story.

'The stars show a great conjunction is near. The Wyrmfriends know it and so do all who are faithful to traditional Dara Happa ways. I have referenced the pattern of the conjunction against the great almanacs in Yuthuppa and determined that certain events, of which I cannot speak here, are brewing. If we are to assert our strength against the Golden Dragon, if we are to contemplate rebellion, then we must do so now. Dayzatar himself is orchestrating our response.'

Despite this somewhat cryptic explanation, Karvanyar explains that three things need to happen. First, a certain Wyrmfriender agent in the ruined city of Mernita needs to be stopped. Second, allies need to be made

in Raibanth and Yuthuppa – men who will, when the moment comes, mobilise against the Golden Dragon emperor. Third, Karvanyar needs to marry.

'Whilst I am a commoner, I cannot command rebellion. Whilst I am a commoner, I cannot challenge for the empire. The Golden Dragon emperor has decreed that whoever passes certain tests, which mirror the Ten Tests of Empire, may claim his daughter as his bride and so become the heir to the empire. I intend to take these tests and I need you, my Seven Servants, to help me.'

The tasks the characters need to undertake are outlined below.

Assassinating the Lady Forlorn

In the villages surrounding the ruins of Mernita, the Lady Forlorn creates draconic converts in a bid to raise the broken goddess Lesilla. Lesilla was sundered by Antirius when she challenged Yelm's rule before his reascension. The EWF has determined that her draconic aspect can be raised, restoring the goddess to life in a draconic form. Karvanyar and Revunarus believe, rightly, that the Lesilla Dragon and the Golden Dragon would marry and rule as emperor and empress, thus destroying the laws of Yelm and cementing the EWF's power in Dara Happa for good.

'The Lady Forlorn must die,' Karvanyar says. 'She must not raise Lesilla. If Lesilla rises Mernita will be rebuilt and Yelm's authority challenged with a vigour that would rock heaven's foundations. It pains me to ask this of you, but I ask you to become her assassins.'

Killing the Lady Forlorn accomplishes two things. First, it prevents Lesilla's rebirth. Second, it sends a clear message across Dara Happa that the EWF can be challenged and its schemes thwarted. Such symbols are essential to gaining allies.

Forging Alliances

The political situation in Raibanth is uneasy. The Golden Dragon Society meddles and one of the ruling Associations is uncomfortable with the situation. Emissaries are needed to go to Raibanth and bring news of Karvanyar's return to those who would, undoubtedly, support rebellion.

'When I come to Raibanth to contest the Dragon's daughter's hand in marriage, many forces will try to stop me. I need you, my Seven Servants, to pave the way. You will need to act in secret and you will need to be discreet in your dealings. The Golden Dragon Society is watching all who enter Raibanth and would seek to capture anyone who knows me.'

The Golden Daughter Contest

The third action is for Karvanyar to declare himself as a contesting husband for the Golden Dragon's daughter. This can be done with a simple message which will be delivered through the allies Karvanyar hopes to make in Raibanth.

'The tests of the Golden Daughter Contest are not unlike those of empire and some I must undertake alone. Yet there are some that I will need you to undertake on my behalf because no single man can succeed. Of these tests, we will speak no more now; once my entry to the contest is announced, I can reveal more.'

If Urvanyar has been captured in the previous scenario and taken to Alkoth, Karvanyar explains that it should be considered a fortuitous event. 'The things I need you to do to help me win the Golden Daughter Contest will take you to the City of the Dead,' he explains. 'That is when you will rescue my father.'

Preparing for the Tasks

The characters are invited to stay at Revunarus's estate for several days in order to learn as much as they can about the tasks they must undertake in Mernita

and Raibanth. Karvanyar leaves at dawn the next day, heading south, although he does not say where. Revunarus acts as Karvanyar's emissary in preparing the characters.

First, they are told the story of Mernita's fall so that they will understand they nature of the goddess they must prevent from being reborn. See the nearby boxed text. Learning of this myth increases all characters' Lore (Dara Happa) by 15%. Once this is done he gives the characters a spear, made from gold, and tipped with a point of iron, inscribed with the Death rune. 'This spear was forged from a shard of Lesilla. Karvanyar retrieved it from the Blue Moon Plateau and had the Death rune carved into it so that Lesilla can be killed.'

Second, the characters are told of the one who must be convinced to become Karvanyar's ally. Cuthanyar Ironsun, leader of the Ironsun League, is opposed to the EWF but is sworn to defend Raibanth, and thus the emperor, and he will not willingly break that oath. 'He must be convinced otherwise. He leads the Ironsun mercenaries who garrison the city and offer protection to the Oslir River traders. You must bring him proof that Karvanyar is Urvanyar's son and convince him that, when the time is right, Karvanyar will return to restore the empire to human hands. Whilst Cuthanyar might be easy to convince, others in the Ironsun League will not be so readily swayed.' Revunarus has some experience with the Ironsun League and Cuthanyar in particular, The advice he provides offers insights into the relationships between the Raibanth Associations and Leagues, giving each character a +10% bonus when employing Influence or Lore tests in their dealings within Raibanth.

Revunarus proves to be a genial and open host but he refuses to elaborate more on what he has deduced from the stars. His house is the characters' house for the duration of their stay and when they are ready to leave he gives them food and drink for their journey along with any small, sundry items of equipment the characters might need.

The Myth of Lesilla

In the dark days, when Yelm was deposed, all manner of false gods who should have remained in their place took it upon themselves to challenge the order of the Cosmos.

One of these gods was Lesilla, the False Sun. She mimicked Antirius and made laws that were like his but lacked wisdom and justice. She appeared to the people of Mernifa and offered them light in these times of hardship and they were fooled. Temples were built to her and sacrifices made. She gained power and arrogance, which she gave back to the city. At first, Lesilla had been a goddess of harvests and grain, but many things changed and became wrong when Yelm died, and so it was with Lesilla.

Eventually the Emperor Lukarius came to the Imperial Footrest and restored Yelm's rule through the guidance of the Antirius Precepts. He called for all cities to acknowledge Antirius as the True Sun and send tribute. Some did, but some withheld and Mernifa was foremost amongst them. 'We have a new goddess now,' the people of Mernifa said, 'and we give our tribute to her. What right has Lukarius to demand from us?'

Lukarius looked to Mernifa from the Imperial Footrest and saw that Lesilla had placed herself in the sky above the city. He commanded her to relent to the word of Antirius and she laughed. Next he commanded her to behave like a sun, if that was what she was, and obey the laws of the cosmos, which are immutable. Lesilla replied by turning her back and shining more brightly on Mernifa. Finally Lukarius commanded that she take a different form and ascend to the sky dome so she might become part of the Patterns; she refused.

So the emperor called to Antirius to restore justice, because all around was disorder. The people of Mernifa had adopted false ways and new traditions. They had made women equal to men and priestesses led the worship instead of priests. All was wrong and Antirius saw this but Lesilla was blind to it. She believed that by making the people happy so would the cosmos accept her, but the cosmos does not work in this way. 'Yelm will return,' Antirius said, 'and you must prepare for that.' But Lesilla had lost her respect for Yelm and she gave Antirius little alternative.

Antirius called for Shargash to restore justice. Shargash rose from Alkoth and drew his Bow of Anger and notched his ten Arrows of Fury. He fired at Lesilla and struck her ten times in each of her ten faces. The goddess split in agony, her ten shards flying to the corners of the empire and her body tumbling to the ground in a ball of flame that ruined the city and destroyed its people. She, the False Goddess, lay prone upon the city, stretched out dead, and her colour was seen to be the cyanotic blue of a corpse. Such was the violence of her fall that she broke into pieces. Her torso fell to the east, where the rotting maggots inside her matured like flies, and are the flying froths of the Blue Moon Plateau. In the west her head formed the Yalp Mountains. In the north her arm became like ice as it entered the realm of the Cold God, and in the south her parts turned to dust which was scattered on the winds.

Mernita

Reaching Mernita means sailing down the Oslir for seven days. The ruined city is in the west and two days inland. Revunarus provides the characters with a reed boat and some of his slaves to act as the oarsmen. As the boat nears the mooring place where the characters must disembark, they see that the soil is black like ash and the plants thrive on it. The vegetation is lush and abundant, nourished by the charred remnants of Lesilla's body. The ground remains this way for the rest of the journey; black and amazingly fertile so that the bushes are twice their expected size and trees far higher than tress of their type should be, with dense canopies blocking out the sun.

All manner of hungry creatures lurk in the dense bush the characters must traverse. Griffins with stunted wings are foremost amongst the carnivores and at least one of these fierce beasts attempts to make a meal of the party. They are denied flight, but are savage hunters nonetheless, able to climb into the trees and drop-down on likely prey shrieking as they fall.

Griffin with Stunted Wings

Characteristics: STR 28, CON 22, DEX 22, SIZ 28, INT 6, POW 13, CHA 7

Griffin Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-2	Right Hind Leg	3/11
3-4	Left Hind Leg	3/11
5-7	Hindquarters	3/12
8-10	Forequarters	3/12
11	Right Wing	2/6
12	Left Wing	2/6
13-14	Right Front Leg	3/11
15-16	Left Front Leg	3/11
17-20	Head	3/11

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage
Bite	65%	1D8+1D12 / 2
Claw	75%	1D6+1D12 / 4

CA: 4 **SR:** +14 **Move:** 6m **MP:** 13

Traits: Formidable Natural Weapons, Night Sight

Skills: Athletics 80%, Dodge 40%, Persistence 80%, Resilience 70%, Survival 60%, Tracking 50%

Armour: Tough Hide (AP 3, no Skill Penalty)

City of Cinders

Ploughing through the undergrowth surrounding Mernita saps the energy. It is humid, hot and sticky. Insects buzz constantly around the characters' heads, biting any available exposed flesh. The water of the various small streams has a burnt taste and is unrefreshing, and all around the characters are aware of creatures watching with sullen intent.

The city's remains are two days into this unpleasant jungle. Surrounding what is left are the villages formed by the Sundered Pilgrims, those who worshipped Lesilla before Shargash killed her and who have devoted their lives to her return. The villagers have completely fallen



Seeing Out the goddess

from the true Dara Happan path; men and women share status and there is little justice in any of the villages that protect the ruins. The Mernitans know that Lesilla is alive in all of them, and each Pilgrim carries a different amount of her body. Those with the greater share are the most powerful and command the most magic, and they tend to be women.

Mernita itself is a cone of ash, cinders and rubble a hundred metres high that dominates a clearing in the jungle of some eight hundred metres. It exudes a burnt stench constantly and the winds blow dark ash into the air so that it settles on hair, clothing and skin, causing minor itching and irritation. Surrounding it are the six villages; loose clusters of buildings made from the dark cinders of the ruins and wood cut from the forest. The buildings are lop-sided, leaning in towards the cone of destruction, with none more than a single storey in height. Each village comprises of fifteen to twenty dwellings, with the people hollow-eyed, suspicious and taciturn. When not scrabbling through the cone of cinders they skulk in their miserable hovels unless summoned by the priestesses and the Lady Forlorn and her disciples to engage in worship of Lesilla, attempting to rejoin the parts of the goddess every single person contains. These rituals involve the villages engaging in long, slow, elaborate mystical dances, followed by group meditation, led by the priestesses and guided by the Wyrmfriends. The villages are entranced when engaged in the rituals; oblivious to their surroundings as they delve deep within themselves to touch the portion of Lesilla they contain, developing its draconic aspect.

The rituals last hours. When complete the villagers file back to their dwellings whilst the priestesses and the Wyrmfriends go into the cindered remains of Mernita and engage in their own, private meditation designed to create the egg from which Lesilla will be reborn. Released from the rituals the villagers are spent, physically and emotionally, being able to do little save feed themselves and rest. When the characters make their assault on the Lady Forlorn, they have nothing to fear from the villagers after a ritual has taken place. However if they choose to make their move whilst a village-wide ritual is in progress, the villagers can be commanded by the Wyrmfriends to act defensively and do so without question, laying-down their lives, if necessary, to preserve the priestesses and the Wyrmfriends. The Lady Forlorn is unconcerned by any

villagers' deaths; their bodies still contain the living parts of the goddess and can be taken into the ruins of Mernita to contribute to the goddess's rebirth.

The Lady Forlorn

So called because of her perpetually wearied expression and demeanour, the Lady Forlorn is a devout member of the Golden Dragon Society who has studied the Oslir River Valley region extensively following her conversion to the draconic path when the Dragon became emperor. Mernita's fate always fascinated her and, the more she studied, the more she came to the conclusion that Lesilla was not dead but merely sundered. A year ago she finally managed to persuade the Golden Dragon Society to permit her to take a Hunting and Waltzing Band into Mernita in order to make converts. This is important to the Lady Forlorn but of greater importance is establishing Lesilla's resurrection along purely draconic lines.

Throughout her year amongst the villagers she has established that each person contains a physical aspect of the sundered goddess. She has been intent upon converting villagers to the draconic way, along with the piece of the goddess they hold. In this way Lesilla's dragon aspect is being realised piece by piece and the Lady Forlorn is now in a position where the draconic elements far outweigh the goddess's previous nature. Reassembling Lesilla now will result in a draconic goddess fit to act as the Golden Dragon's empress. Not only that, the Lady Forlorn would find considerable favour within the Eternal Dragon Ring and perhaps even be elevated to its ranks.

Not all the villages are enamoured of the draconic revelations the Lady Forlorn has brought. Some cling to the old ways, believing Lesilla can be raised through basic adherence to the old rituals and prayers. Lady Forlorn knows otherwise; the old rituals of the minor gods and goddesses cannot transcend the draconic power now suffusing Dara Happa. As more of the villagers realise this, through meditation and learning a variety of draconic dances, so Lesilla's draconisation draws near.

In a few days' time the Lady Forlorn intends to lead all the draconic villagers into the cinders of Mernita and have them perform a single, unified dance within the ancient ruins. That dance will turn the ruins into

an egg; and in that egg the faithful will merge into a single, embryonic version of draconic Lesilla. After three days the egg will hatch and Lesilla will be reborn, her first act being to devour the unfaithful who refused to accept the draconic path.

The Lady Forlorn does not intend to become part of the goddess; indeed she cannot because she carries none of Lesilla inside her, but she can become Lesilla's high priestess, forging a new cult venerating the new dragon-god and leading it into a union with the Golden Dragon Sun. The Lady Forlorn is now almost frenzied with the anticipation of the forthcoming ceremony.

The Lady Forlorn, Wyrm's Hand Triumphant of the Conclave of the Third Reptilian Eye Rotund and round-faced, with wide, saucer-like eyes, rosy cheeks and a small, sad mouth. Her breasts are vast and pendulous, her hips wide and motherly, but she moves with the fluid, serpentine grace of an accomplished draconic mystic, her long, unruly auburn hair flowing around her like a halo. She is a Wyrm's



Hand Triumphant and venerator of Isgangdrang and Obduran the Flyer, but is intent on forging her own path to greatness.

Her daily magical ritual is always to prepare her four Draconic spells in advance for use during the day. She also carries a vial of Regeneration potion, created through her Blood Alchemy spell, attached to a gold chain which she wears around her neck, the vial nestling safely in her ample bosom.

Characteristics: STR 8, CON 13, SIZ 11, INT 16, POW 23, DEX 17, CHA 16

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-5
4-6	Left Leg	-5
7-9	Abdomen	-6
10-12	Chest	-7
13-15	Right Arm	-4
16-18	Left Arm	-4
19-20	Head	-5

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Dagger	49%	1d4+1-1D2 4/6

CA: 3 **SR:** +17 **Move:** 4m **MP:** 23

Skills: Acrobatics 38%, Athletics 51%, Dodge 38%, Draconic Illumination 80%, Evaluate 53%, Influence 65%, Language (Solar Pelorian) 85%, Language (Auld Wyrmish) 79%, Lore (Animal) 28%, Lore (Dara Happa) 67%, Lore (Plant) 37%, Lore (World) 52%, Martial Arts 70%, Perception 74%, Persistence 85%, Resilience 49%, Sing 48%, Stealth 29%, Throwing 30%, Unarmed 32%

Armour: She shuns normal armour, relying on her Scaled Skin spell to provide protection.

Runes (Integrated): Dragon, Runecasting 55%

Rune Magic: Call the Dragon (*RuneQuest Spellbook*)

Draconic Magic: Blood Alchemy (Regeneration), Cold-Blooded, Draconic Prophecy, Scaled Skin

The Hunting and Waltzing Band

Lady Forlorn is accompanied by her three handmaidens – all experienced EWF proselytisers specialising in the conversion of abeyant faiths, each one a Wyrms' Face Believer of the Conclave of the Third Reptilian Eye. None of the handmaidens are particularly keen fighters but they are loyal to Forlorn's plan and equally excited by the prospect of witnessing the birth of a new dragon goddess. Threats against Lady Forlorn meet with as much magical and physical resistance as the handmaidens can muster; and, as these are experienced Hunters and Waltzers, magical capability is substantial.

☾ Muhrmata

A shrewish young woman from Ralios born within the dragonewt city of Absolute Circuitous Fortuity, she is all sinewy worry and bony arrogance. She follows the Lady Forlorn because she is a born follower of greatness. The draconic path provides everything Muhrmata needs from life and she is eager to achieve transcendence so that she might serve the Cosmic Dragon as a handmaiden just as she serves the Lady Forlorn. She believes that everyone should be followers who know their place and maintain it; only a handful are destined for greatness. In this sense she would make a good Dara Happan, but her soul is utterly gifted to the draconic path and she would entertain no other way.

Characteristics: STR 9, CON 9, SIZ 10, INT 12, POW 16, DEX 13, CHA 9

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	2/4
4-6	Left Leg	2/4
7-9	Abdomen	2/5
10-12	Chest	2/6
13-16	Right Arm	2/3
16-18	Left Arm	2/3
19-20	Head	-/4

☾ Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Shortsword	32%	1d6-1D2 3/8
Dragon Claws	66%	1d6+3-1D2 4/3

CA: 3 **SR:** +13 **Move:** 4m **MP:** 16

Skills: Acrobatics 34%, Athletics 40%, Dodge 46%, Draconic Illumination 45%, Evaluate 31%, Influence 29%, Language (Solar Pelorian) 27%, Language (Theyalan) 77%, Language (Auld Wyrnish) 36%, Lore (Animal) 29%, Lore (Dara Happa) 15%, Lore (Dragonewt) 33%, Lore (Plant) 25%, Lore (World) 40%, Martial Arts 36%, Perception 33%, Persistence 31%, Resilience 36%, Sing 27%, Stealth 41%, Throwing 25%, Unarmed 12%

Armour: Muhrmata wears leather across her bony frame, dyed blood red. -12% skill penalty

Runes (Integrated): Fate. Runecasting 37%

Rune Magic: Fate, Doom (*RuneQuest Spellbook*)

Draconic Magic: Deafening Cry, Dragon Claws



Suleia

A demure Kralori woman with a shaven scalp and extensive draconic tattoos that run around the back of her head. Her lips always carry a knowing smile and her eyes sparkle with the beginnings of inner draconic knowledge. She speaks rarely and usually only when leading a meditation, believing spoken language to be a base and inarticulate variation of true dragon speech. When she does have something to say, it is always in Auld Wyrnish. Despite her deeply mystical outlook, she is also a romantic and keen to experience mortal love before achieving transcendence. Any character with a CHA of 15 or higher attracts her attention, and she must succeed in a Persistence test to prevent herself from falling in love – an emotion she cannot articulate in words, and so must articulate through physical expression.

Characteristics: STR 7, CON 11, SIZ 9, INT 14, POW 16, DEX 17, CHA 17

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/4
4-6	Left Leg	-/4
7-9	Abdomen	2/5
10-12	Chest	2/6
13-15	Right Arm	-/3
16-18	Left Arm	-/3
19-20	Head	-/4

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Shortsword	62%	1d6-1D2 3/8

CA: 3 **SR:** +16 **Move:** 4m **MP:** 16

Skills: Acrobatics 51%, Athletics 53%, Dodge 40%, Draconic Illumination 42%, Evaluate 30%, Influence 31%, Language (Kralori) 89%, Language (Auld Wyrnish) 77%, Lore (Animal) 24%, Lore (Kralori) 55%, Lore (Plant) 29%, Lore (World) 44%, Martial Arts 93%, Perception 42%, Persistence 61%, Resilience 30%, Sing 17%, Stealth 32%, Throwing 41%, Unarmed 25%

Armour: Black leather corset chased with gold leaf draconic patterns. -4% skill penalty

Runes (Integrated): Dragon. Runecasting 44%

Rune Magic: Dragontail (*RuneQuest Spellbook*)

Draconic Magic: Draconic Strength, Sight from the Marked Palms

Suleia is a student of the *Way of the Reptilian Predator* and practitioner of the *Graceful Blur of Movement* draconic dance (see Magic of Glorantha, page 19). This dance doubles her Dodge critical range to 01-08 and means she never Gives Ground in combat.

Elouisa

A pouting, obese ball of petulant arrogance, Elouisa styles herself on Lady Forlorn although her mane of dark hair is dyed with crimson and white streaks. She is disdainful of all non-draconic cultures and treats the villagers of Mernita with a snarling contempt that even Lady Forlorn finds reprehensible. Elouisa hails from Dragon Pass and was raised in the city of Orin Jistrel, the unruly daughter of an insane Osseus Circle prosel r. She has clearly inherited some of her father's madness; it is her habit to attempt to outstare everyone she meets, matching her Persistence against that of her opponent in a bid to see who flinches first. She rarely loses, such is her force of will.

Characteristics: STR 12, CON 14, SIZ 15, INT 9, POW 14, DEX 8, CHA 8

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	2/6
4-6	Left Leg	2/6
7-9	Abdomen	1/7
10-12	Chest	1/8
13-15	Right Arm	2/5
16-18	Left Arm	2/5
19-20	Head	-/6

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Dagger	75%	1D4+1+1D2 4/6

CA: 2, SR: +9 Move: 4m MP: 14

Skills: Acrobatics 16%, Athletics 20%, Dodge 28%, Draconic Illumination 59%, Evaluate 46%, Influence 38%, Language (Theyalan) 90%, Language (Auld Wyrnish) 51%, Lore (Animal) 26%, Lore (Dragon Pass) 71%, Lore (Plant) 32%, Lore (World) 30%, Perception 36%, Persistence 95%, Resilience 28%, Sing 20%, Stealth 16%, Throwing 20%, Unarmed 20%

Armour: Leather greaves and vambraces; voluminous robes with ample padding. -10% skill penalty

Equipment: Bone Sung Dagger

Runes (Integrated): Law, Runecasting 70%, Mastery, Runecasting 63%

Rune Magic: Fanaticism, Thunder's Voice

Draconic Magic: Incinerating Breath, Sense Surface Thoughts, Universal Deflection (Magnitude 4)

The Priestesses

Each village has a priestess – those who manifests the greatest of Lesilla's shards and are thus destined to rebuild the dissolute goddess. Of the six priestesses four have been completely converted to the draconic path and lead their villages in the rituals designed to awaken the draconic Lesilla.

The remaining two priestesses, Uolmatha and Aulandra, are struggling to retain the purity of their villages. As more have adopted the draconic path it has become apparent to even the most devout Lesillan disciple that the draconisation of the goddess is at hand. Uolmatha and Aulandra are, however, determined to remain true to the pure vision of their goddess. Each day Lady Forlorn and her handmaidens beckon away a few more of their villagers to take part in the draconic rituals and each day Uolmatha and Aulandra attempt to drive the Wyrmfriends away with insults and hurled rocks, but to little avail. Like all the villagers Uolmatha and Aulandra are hostile to outsiders, but if outsiders can help rid Mernita of the Lady Forlorn's influence, the two priestesses are prepared to accept help.

Uolmatha

An elderly, sharp-tongued harridan, Uolmatha's left hand side is withered and frail, but her vile temper more than compensates for any physical disability. She commands the second village, and the village is built on the exact place where Lesilla's ankle fell when she was sundered.

Characteristics: STR 6, CON 10, SIZ 9, INT 15, POW 12, DEX 8, CHA 8

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-4	Right Leg	-/4
5-6	Left Leg	-/2
7-9	Abdomen	-/5
11-12	Chest	-/6
13-16	Right Arm	-/3
17-18	Left Arm	-/2
19-20	Head	-/4

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
None		

CA: 2 SR: +12 Move: 3m MP: 12

Skills: Acrobatics 8%, Athletics 12%, Dodge 16%, Evaluate 86%, Influence 88%, Language (Solar Pelorian) 90%, Lore (Animal) 66%, Lore (Dara Happa) 45%, Lore (Lesilla Theology) 99%, Lore (Mernita) 101%, Lore (Plant) 78%, Lore (World) 10%, Perception 66%, Persistence 89%, Resilience 18%, Sing 10%, Stealth 24%, Throwing 6%, Unarmed 14%

Lesilla Effects: Gleam (Magnitude 2), Halo, Mirage, Shaft of Light

Lesilla's Magic

The villagers' magic is of divine origin and powered by the part of the Lesilla each carries within his or her body. Women naturally carry more than men. For every 3 points of POW (6 points for males), a Mernitan villager has one of Lesilla's Effects, rolled randomly on the table below. These magical effects do not cost any Magic Points to cast and have a Magnitude of 1. If an effect is rolled twice, its Magnitude is doubled. The effect is cast on a successful Persistence test. If the Persistence test is a critical success, double the effect's Magnitude. The effects can be cast once per day. Full descriptions of all the effects can be found in the Divine Magic section of the *RuneQuest Spellbook*.

Lesilla Worshipper Magical Effects

1D10	Effect	Summary
1	Eclipse	The caster controls night and day, choosing whether it is midnight black or midday bright in an area equal to ten times his POW in metres for the duration of the spell.
2	Gleam	Cast onto weapons. Anyone wielding a weapon under the effects of <i>Gleam</i> has the parry and Dodge skill tests against its attacks reduced by – 15% due to the dazzling light. A weapon or item under the effects of Gleam cannot benefit from <i>Bladesharp</i> , <i>Bludgeon</i> or similar spells.
3	Halo	The caster's head is wreathed in a halo of blinding, divine light. Anyone trying to attack the target with a melee attack must pass a Resilience test or avert their eyes at the last second, suffering a -25% penalty to that attack. However, any Ranged combat skill tests made against the target while the spell is in effect are made with a + 15% bonus.
4	Inflammable Curse	Any non-organic item that is successfully enchanted by this spell is considered to be extremely flammable forcing it to suffer <i>double</i> normal damage from and fire or heat-based sources.
5	Light of the Heavens	This spell allows the caster to barrage a single target with the heat and fury of the sun. The target must resist the spell or be caught in the oppressive heat of the beam, suffering 1 level of Fatigue for every Magnitude in the spell immediately. Additionally, the target caught by the beam will need to pass a Resilience test at – 15% or be struck blind for 2D6 hours by the intense light.
6	Mirage	The caster creates a convincing mirage of something desired by the opponent. Whatever form the mirage takes; it draws the target in that direction for as long as the spell remains active, or if the target interacts with the real world in a contrary way.
7	Radiate	This effect gives the caster the ability to enchant a person or item (such as an arrow) with the power of the sun. Sunlight is summoned into being around the object in a 10 metre radius that lasts until the spell expires. This area not only dispels any form of darkness or shadow introduced to that area automatically but it also imposes a – 15% blinding penalty to skill tests made by sighted creatures.
8	Shaft of Light	This effect grants the caster's target to be bathed in a gentle beam of sun or moonlight in almost any situation. As long as the target is not totally encapsulated in magical darkness or a completely seamless material, this beam will find them and illuminate them and the 1 metre area around them.
9	Smite	This effect allows the caster to smash into a target with the power of the cult's faith. Anything targeted by the spell that fails its resistance roll suffers 1D4 points of unpreventable damage to every hit location per Magnitude of the spell.
10	Taskmaster	As long as the caster remains in line of sight with a number of lower ranked or affiliated cult members equal to or less than the Magnitude of the spell, they receive a + 10% bonus to any Craft, First Aid, Heal, or Mechanisms skill tests made at the caster's behest.

Aulandra

As young and sensuous as Uolmatha is old and frail, Aulandra's hair is the colour of the setting sun and her eyes a piercing green. She is ambitious and nobody's fool; she can see that the Wyrmfriends are working a powerful deception. She is willing to be party to any scheme that defeats the Lady Forlorn and returns Mernita to its true path.

Characteristics: STR 11, CON 12, SIZ 10, INT 14, POW 15, DEX 14, CHA 17

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/5
4-6	Left Leg	-/5
7-9	Abdomen	-/6
10-12	Chest	-/7
13-15	Right Arm	-/4
16-18	Left Arm	-/4
19-20	Head	-/5

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Spear	40%	1D8 2/5

CA: 3, **SR:** +14 **Move:** 4m **MP:** 15

Skills: Acrobatics 30%, Athletics 30%, Dodge 45%, Evaluate 70%, Influence 78%, Language (Solar Pelorian) 90%, Lore (Animal) 31%, Lore (Dara Happa) 40%, Lore (Lesilla Theology) 75%, Lore (Mernita) 90%, Lore (Plant) 38%, Lore (World) 12%, Perception 54%, Persistence 48%, Resilience 28%, Sing 30%, Stealth 28%, Throwing 16%, Unarmed 18%

Lesilla Effects: Gleam, Inflammable Curse, Light of the Heavens (Magnitude 2), Taskmaster

The four other priestesses are now firmly set on a draconic path. They have learnt a certain degree of Draconic Illumination from the Hunting and Waltzing band and have participated in the Dragon Goddess Rebirth dance devised by the Lady Forlorn; it is the fully ritualised version of this dance that will transform Mernita's ruins into an egg and raise Lesilla's dragon form.

The four loyal priestesses view the Lady Forlorn and her handmaidens almost as demigods. These Wyrmfriends have awakened in them an aspect of existence they never believed possible and shown that Lesilla can be returned to life simply by accepting the draconic part that lies in everyone's hearts. Any threats against the Lady Forlorn and her handmaidens will be readily countered by all four of these loyal priestesses.

Houlamatha

High Priestess of the first village, Houlamatha is considered to be the foremost of Lesilla's faithful. She is filled with hatred for the Solar pantheon for what was done to Lesilla and this anger has been used by the Wyrmfriends to turn her to the draconic path. Houlamatha believes that a reborn Lesilla will be strong enough to kill Yelm completely and become the One True Sun, enslaving Antirius, Dayzatar and Shargash. This righteous anger makes her powerful but also vulnerable to manipulation; the Lady Forlorn has snared Houlamatha by promising that a True Dragon – which is what Lesilla will become – can destroy gods (even though this is untrue).

Houlamatha recognises the spear given to the characters that will kill Lesilla, if she sees it. She knows it is the only thing capable of killing the goddess and does everything in her power to take it and destroy it.

Characteristics: STR 9, CON 12, SIZ 10, INT 13, POW 18, DEX 12, CHA 12

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/5
4-6	Left Leg	-/5
7-9	Abdomen	-/6
10-12	Chest	-/7
13-15	Right Arm	-/4
16-18	Left Arm	-/4
19-20	Head	-/5

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Dagger	42%	1D4+1-1D2 2/5

CA: 3, SR: +13, Move: 4m MP: 18

Skills: Acrobatics 24%, Athletics 24%, Dodge 28%, Evaluate 63%, Influence 80%, Language (Solar Pelorian) 85%, Lore (Animal) 21%, Lore (Dara Happa) 30%, Lore (Lesilla Theology) 102%, Lore (Mernita) 100%, Lore (Plant) 26%, Lore (World) 18%, Perception 44%, Persistence 51%, Resilience 30%, Sing 24%, Stealth 24%, Throwing 18%, Unarmed 18%

Lesilla Effects: Eclipse, Halo (Magnitude 2), Shaft of Light, Smite

Kaumantha

A non-descript woman who has taken to shaving her head in the style of Suleia, Kaumantha sees the potential for a new cult to emerge when Lesilla is reborn with herself, rather than Houlamatha, as the high priestess. Her ambition in this regard is quite murderous; she sees the old Houlamatha as a hindrance to the possibilities Lesilla's draconic will undoubtedly bring.

Characteristics: STR 12, CON 9, SIZ 11, INT 12, POW 15, DEX 13, CHA 10

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-4
4-6	Left Leg	-4
7-9	Abdomen	-5
10-12	Chest	-6
13-15	Right Arm	-3
16-18	Left Arm	-3
19-20	Head	-4

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Staff	48%	1D8 3/8

CA: 3 SR: +13 Move: 4m MP: 15

Skills: Acrobatics 26%, Athletics 26%, Dodge 26%, Evaluate 42%, Influence 71%, Language (Solar Pelorian) 79%, Lore (Animal) 22%, Lore (Dara Happa) 28%, Lore (Lesilla Theology) 96%, Lore (Mernita) 90%, Lore (Plant) 28%, Lore (World) 17%, Perception

37%, Persistence 58%, Resilience 27%, Sing 20%, Stealth 28%, Throwing 24%, Unarmed 24%

Lesilla Effects: Halo, Light of Heavens, Mirage, Smite (Magnitude 2),

Uosthama

An argumentative, sourly ambitious woman who hates her sister priestesses with a passion, Uosthama has developed the belief that Lesilla's draconic aspect is not a transcendence or true rebirth, but a merely a transitional stage to something else. Uosthama has experienced vivid dreams that show Lesilla being reborn, dying, and then being reborn once again but this time draped in a cloak of blood red and leading the world to a new order of being, accompanied by her seven sisters. Uosthama believes that the six priestesses of Mernita, and one other, are destined to become those seven sisters, and that the draconic path is an essential stage in the overall transition to the Red Goddess. For all her venom towards her sister priestesses, Uosthama is remarkably prescient in her visions. Lesilla's ultimate destiny is far more complex than simply embracing the draconic – but all that lies far, far in the future.

Characteristics: STR 9, CON 16, SIZ 12, INT 16, POW 18, DEX 11, CHA 12

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-6
4-6	Left Leg	-6
7-9	Abdomen	-7
10-12	Chest	-8
13-15	Right Arm	-5
16-18	Left Arm	-5
19-20	Head	-6

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Staff	51%	1D8 3/8

CA: 2 SR: +14 Move: 4m MP: 18

Skills: Acrobatics 22%, Athletics 22%, Dodge 22%, Evaluate 52%, Influence 66%, Language (Solar Pelorian) 80%, Lore (Animal) 32%, Lore (Dara Happa) 32%, Lore (Lesilla Theology) 94%, Lore (Mernita) 93%, Lore (Plant) 32%, Lore (World) 30%, Perception 77%, Persistence 48%, Resilience 32%, Sing 24%, Stealth 22%, Throwing 20%, Unarmed 18%

Lesilla Effects: Gleam, Radiate (Magnitude 2), Smite (Magnitude 2),

Brelintha

The youngest of the four draconic priestesses, Brelintha has completely embraced the draconic path, seeing in a variety of dreams that Lesilla's role is to advance the ascension of the Great Dragon to Be, bringing with her all those who have been loyal and true to her previous, flawed persona. She has listened to the Lady Forlorn and the handmaiden's tales of the Eternal Dragon Ring's exploits, and the wisdom of the Guiding Council, and wants to be like them. Her dedication has been rewarded: the Lady Forlorn has taught Brelintha the draconic dance to invoke Draconic Prophecy, thereby sealing Brelintha fully into the ways of the Wyrmfriends.

Characteristics: STR 8, CON 10, SIZ 8, INT 15, POW 14, DEX 16, CHA 14

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-4
4-6	Left Leg	-4
7-9	Abdomen	-5
10-12	Chest	-6
13-15	Right Arm	-3
16-18	Left Arm	-3
19-20	Head	-4

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Dagger	38%	1D4+1-1D2 3/8

CA: 3 SR: +16 Move: 4m MP: 14

Skills: Acrobatics 32%, Athletics 32%, Dodge 32%,

Draconic Illumination 30%, Evaluate 29%, Influence 67%, Language (Solar Pelorian) 59%, Lore (Animal) 31%, Lore (Dara Happa) 22%, Lore (Lesilla Theology) 89%, Lore (Mernita) 91%, Lore (Plant) 31%, Lore (World) 15%, Perception 41%, Persistence 60%, Resilience 25%, Sing 19%, Stealth 32%, Throwing 16%, Unarmed 24%

Lesilla Effects: Inflammable Curse, Light of Heavens (Magnitude 2), Taskmaster

Draconic Magic: Draconic Prophecy

Events in Mernita

The characters arrive during a period of intense excitement. The converted villagers, led by their priestesses and the Wyrmfriends, are engaged in increasingly deep-rooted rituals in preparation for the rebirth of the goddess Lesilla. The two unconverted priestesses and their own villagers skulk and sulk, knowing that they are largely powerless to alter the course of events. They want to see Lesilla reborn; but not as a dragon. The atmosphere in Mernita is thus a strange mixture of almost electric anticipation and sullen disapproval. The air is charged with potential and significance; the characters, becoming increasingly attuned to Great Destinies through their association with Karvanyar, can immediately sense the importance and peril inherent in what is happening in Mernita.

Outsiders are not welcome. The Wyrmfriends and their converts use their magic to drive away anyone who refuses to embrace the draconic rebirth of Lesilla. Petitions and personable attempts to influence the Lady Forlorn and her entourage fall on deaf ears. In two days time the converted villagers will file into Mernita's ruins, begin their final dance, and raise a goddess.

Preventing the Rebirth

The Lady Forlorn must be killed. If she is, there is no one to lead the dance and final ritual that will transform the converted villages into Lesilla. Lesilla might be reborn in some form, but it will not be draconic. The handmaidens and four priestesses do everything they can to protect the Lady Forlorn, so the characters need to be prepared for a tough fight if they do not use guile and wits to carry out their assassination.

The characters have two days to make the killing. If they fail, then the Wyrmfriends lead the converts into the cinder-strewn column of Mernita's ruins at noon on the second day after the characters arrive. The ritual takes several hours to perform and, unless it can be stopped, the ruins of Mernita becomes a magical egg at sunset and, at sunrise, hatches the draconic Lesilla. The only option the characters then have is to attempt to kill a dragon goddess. The spear they have been given is the only weapon capable of doing this, but even then, the fight will be a tough one. The Lady Forlorn and the handmaidens emerge from the rebirth ritual far stronger than before and turn their full fury on the characters.

Help from the Loyal

Uolmatha and Aulandra, if approached and persuaded, will help the characters in their fight against the Wyrmfriends. Successful persuasion requires the characters to offer robust assurances that Karvanyar, if he defeats the Golden Sun emperor, will recognise Lesilla's legitimacy and call upon Antirius to reassemble the goddess in her true image. If the characters agree to this undertaking, they can rely on the help of Uolmatha, Aulandra and their forty villagers to oppose the draconic converts.

MERNITA RABBLE

This rabble of villagers are far removed from the Dara Happan ideal and fully committed to Lesilla's resurrection. If their priestesses are threatened, or commanded by them, they fight with complete abandon and disregard for their own lives. Their battle ululation is 'Lesilla Lives! Live Lesilla!'

Characteristics: STR 10 CON 8 DEX 12 SIZ 13 INT 10 POW 12 CHA 13

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight	Nine
1-3	Right Leg	—	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
4-6	Left Leg	—	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
7-9	Abdomen	1	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
10-12	Chest	1	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
13-15	Right Arm	—	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
16-18	Left Arm	—	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
19-20	Head	—	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Shortspear	(32%)	1D8+0 3/8AP

CA: 2 SR: 11 Move: 4m MP: 12

Skills: Athletics 32% Dodge 9% Perception 34% Persistence 22% Resilience 25% Stealth 17% Throwing 24% Unarmed 15% Staff 44%

Armour:Part Leather

Lesilla Effects: Radiate, Smite

Note: Karvanyar will certainly consider petitioning Antirius when he becomes emperor, but he stops short of requesting Lesilla's rebirth until the Mernitans accept Yelm as their true God Emperor first, and swear to worship Lesilla as the minor fertility deity she truly is.

The Ruins of the Old City

This conical column of rubble, cinders and ash is nothing less than a blasted ziggurat. Over the centuries since the old city's demise the Mernitans have tunnelled into the ruin in a bid to unearth the sundered goddess. Multiple entry points at ground level are marked by rough arches excavated from the cinders and held in place by a framework of timber taken from the forest.

All is darkness within, and even after so long the stones exude a gentle heat – a combination of Antirius's wrath and Lesilla's dissolution. This radiation pervades all human life within the region, embodying the goddess's spirit in the Mernitans. The people labour under the impression that Lesilla is dead and her body trapped in the wreckage; in reality Lesilla lives in all those born in sight of her sundered temple although her physical body has been scattered far and wide.

The inside of the ruin is a maze of narrow passages twisting and turning, rising and falling, excavated by

the Mernitans. In some places it is necessary to stoop; in others one must crawl flattened between slabs of incinerated rock and vitrified timbers. All paths lead inwards towards the temple area; a rough oval clearing in the very centre of the cone where Lesilla's memory is served by the priestesses and has been for centuries. Here there is light from simple torches. In the centre of the temple area is a crude altar to the False Sun – a ball of blue marble that was spared the city's destruction. The temple area is large enough to accommodate hundreds. The walls around it are honeycombed by the crude passages leading through the ruins.

The temple area is where the Wyrmfriends lead the draconic converts on their final day as humans (if the rebirth ritual proceeds). The walls and ball of blue marble have been etched with draconic imagery – dragons, scales, crude scrawlings of the dragon rune. The entire area is heavy with mythic potential; the air is almost metallic to the taste, the stones pulsing gently with the possibilities of what is to come. All characters with an integrated rune can feel a distinct surge of magical energy although this is a simple response to the environment rather than being a palpable addition to the rune's power.

If the Lady Forlorn is Killed...

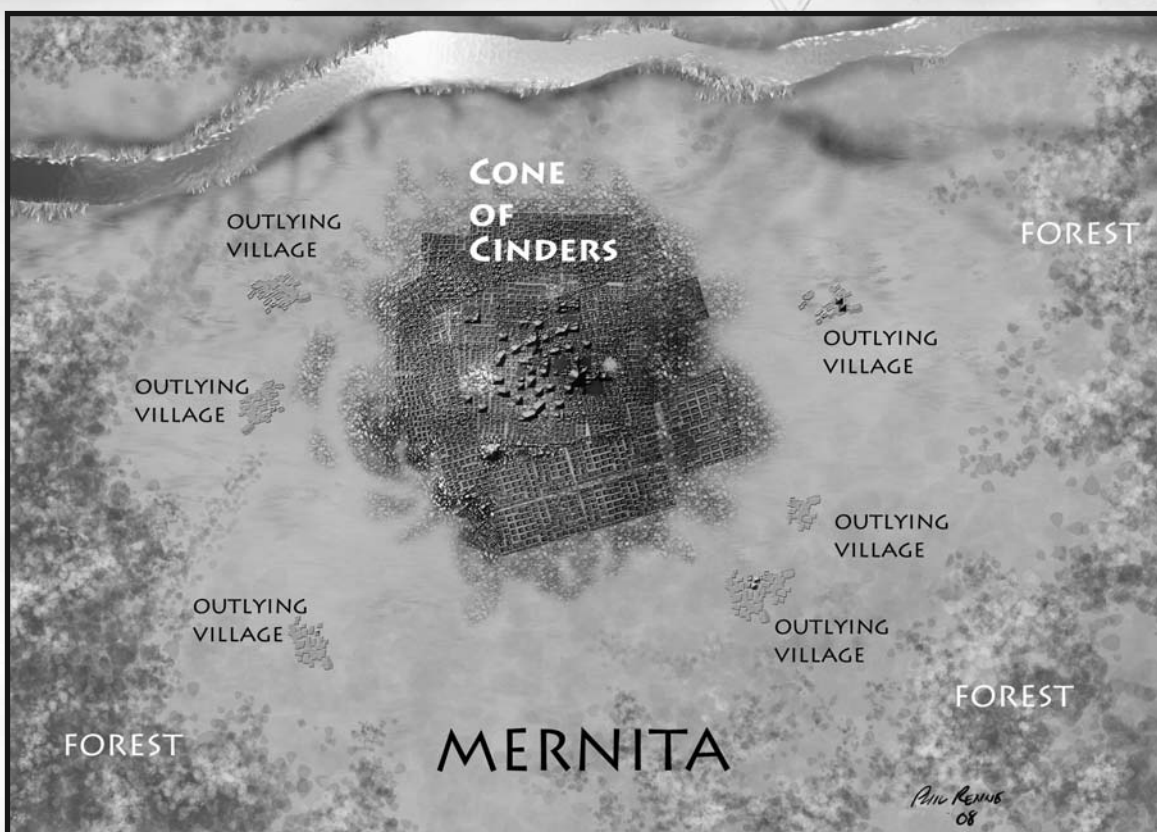
The handmaidens and draconic converts seek a howling, frenzied revenge, pursuing the characters with an insane fury through the jungle and towards the Oslir. Magic is hurled every which way and the dragon disciples seem to be consumed with a blood lust that is completely out of character with the meditative disciplines of the EWF's tenets.

The loyal priestesses take this opportunity to seal the ruined city. The villagers are galvanised to tear away the supports holding open the entrances to the ruin, bringing the arches crashing down. With the temple closed they isolate the draconic imagery. Next they turn on the handmaidens and draconic priestesses, hurling their own magic at these traitors to Lesilla's true way, intending to drive them from Mernita forever. If they can, they aim to capture the four priestesses so that they can be sacrificed to appease Lesilla's pure spirit, but the handmaidens are murdered outright. The entire city of Mernita descends into a frenzy of retribution – for the Lady Forlorn's death and the heresies committed in Lesilla's name.

Crawling through the ruins of Mernita gives a POW x2 chance of finding a random Rune. Roll on the below table to determine which rune is found, etched into a small lump of cinder stone.

Random Rune

1D20	Rune
1-4	Disorder
5-8	Fertility
9-12	Fire
13- 16	Mastery
17-20	Moon



The retribution of the loyal Mernitans is enough to distract the Wyrmfriends from their pursuit of the characters, but not until the characters have been forced to flee for their lives.

If the Ceremony Goes Ahead

If the Lady Forlorn is not killed – even if she is wounded – the villagers and four priestesses file into the ruins of Mernita and towards the temple area. As the sun reaches its zenith the Lady Forlorn and her handmaidens lead the congregation in a concentrated meditation in which the gathered chant the following words over and over: *Yoof Lesilla, Yoof Lesilla, Yoof Sedenya, Ouroboros Yoof Lesilla...*

As the chanting increases in intensity, so the dance begins, a swaying, rhythmic dance with the hands held slightly apart, arms rotating slowly at the elbows. Magical energy begins to manifest as a blue glow between the palms of the worshippers, spreading through the temple area until it bathes the ball of blue marble. This ritual continues for hours. The blue glow turns to a black discharge of energy which coalesces

around the marble globe, abruptly becoming a shaft of ivory light that lances skywards to strike the roof of the temple. This light engulfs the entire ruin, streaming through the passageways and every nook, chink and cranny. Anyone who has not embraced the draconic way is paralysed as the light strikes them and the paralysis remains until the ceremony completes.

Outside the ruins are bathed in the ivory light. Eventually it subsides, and the cone of cinders has been transformed into an immense, leathery, ivory-coloured egg. The egg is sealed completely but it emanates huge mystical energy causing severe headaches in all who try to approach it.

As the egg forms, the Mernitans inside become lost in the ivory miasma. The Lady Forlorn and her handmaidens continue their dance and chant, hands joined, as the Mernitans are absorbed and altered, creating a new, divine form of life. This new life is the goddess Lesilla reassembled and draconised. She does not fully manifest until the egg hatches at dawn the next day, and all within the egg are trapped until that point.

Lesilla Reborn

The shell of the egg ruptures with a sound like thunder at dawn on the third day. It fractures into two halves and a pale yellow light floods out. The Wyrmfriends stumble, exhausted, from the remains and if any of the characters have been trapped in the egg then they, too, are finally released.

From the yellow light a woman strides. She is naked and intensely beautiful. Her features are a perfect amalgamation of the faces of the four priestesses; her naked body perfection itself, save from being covered in fine draconic scales. A dragon's tail whips behind her, lashing idly from side to side. As she walks from the egg she increases in size so that, by the time she has walked ten steps, she is the same size as the egg, and her perfection has reached a terrible beauty. All beholding Lesilla must make Persistence tests at -40% to retain their wits and remain from either fleeing or falling prostrate before this reborn goddess.

Lesilla regards those who worship her with a mixture of love and disdain. Her female features begin to change so that they become more dragon like. Her arms extend and become wings; her neck extends and becomes serpentine. The female goddess becomes a dragon and she screams insults at the sun before taking to the wing and circling the skies above Mernita.

Lesilla-Draco, Draconic Demi-Goddess

Born of a draconic ceremony, Lesilla is intent now on finding a soul mate. The only creature worthy is the Golden Dragon emperor and that is where she heads, circling Mernita ten times and then flying towards Raibanth where she alights on the summit of the Imperial Footrest where she is wrapped in the arms of the Golden Dragon emperor, welcomed as his consort.

This is a momentous event if it is allowed to happen. Every principle and tradition of Yelm, Murharzarm and Dara Happa is openly challenged. The Dragon Emperor is receiving an empress – and no emperor has ever been so blatant in challenging Yelm's authority.

If the characters are to prevent this, Lesilla Draco must herself be killed, and this needs to happen before she can take to the wing and fly towards Raibanth.

Characteristics

Lesilla's human form characteristics are identical to those of her draconic form. This is a goddess, after all, and ungoverned by mundane biology.

STR 31, CON 33, DEX 18, SIZ 67, INT 25, POW 27, CHA 36

Lesilla Draco Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-2	Tail	8/20
3-4	Right Hind Leg	8/20
5-6	Left Hind Leg	8/20
7-8	Hindquarters	6/21
9-10	Forequarters	12/21
11-12	Right Wing	6/19
13-14	Left Wing	6/19
15-16	Right Front Leg	8/20
17-18	Left Front Leg	8/20
19-20	Head	6/20

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Bite	125%	1D10+3D12 / 4
Claw	95%	1D8+3D12 / 6
Tail	90%	1D20+3D12 / 8

CA: 3 **SR:** +16 **Move:** 6m, 10m when flying **MP:** 27

Traits: Dark Sight, Formidable Natural Weapons, Night Sight

Skills: Athletics 120%, Draconic Illumination 40%, Influence 150%, Lore (Dragon) 40%, Lore (Yelm) 100%, Persistence 90%, Resilience 90%, Tracking 110%

Armour: Dragon Scales (varies, no Skill Penalty)

Runes: Lesilla has integrated the runes of Light, Fertility and Mastery. She is also imbued with all the Lesilla Effects described on page 111, each with a Magnitude of 3.

Lesilla's joy at being reborn leaves her vulnerable. Until she is attacked she pays no attention to any of the mortals grovelling beneath or around her.

The spear given to the characters is inscribed with the Death rune and tipped with iron. If it strikes Lesilla it ignores the first 6 AP in any given location and strikes for 2D10 damage instead of the normal damage for a mundane spear. Lesilla retaliates with a combination

of physical attacks and magic, using her tail and claws to lash at assailants whilst using Smite at Magnitude 3 to deliver ranged, divine damage. She fights until any perceived threat is over, aided by the Lady Forlorn and the handmaidens. If the Lady Forlorn is killed by any of the characters, Lesilla is temporarily disorientated for 1D4 combat actions, unable to do anything. The two share a psychic bond in these early days of the goddess's rebirth and killing the Lady Forlorn is sufficient to cause temporary confusion in the goddess.

Killing Lesilla destroys her draconic body. Her divine essence is driven into the underworld where it must await a fresh attempt to resurrect her – something that will be impossible for many, many years.

Raibanth

The next task the characters need to undertake is in Raibanth where they must pave the way for Karvanyar's declaration as a contestant in the Golden Daughter Contest.

Their arrival in Raibanth is going to depend on the outcome of events in Mernita.

- If the Lady Forlorn was killed, the Golden Dragon Society is immediately aware of it but keeps its knowledge secret. Private meditations lead them to determine that agents of Karvanyar are behind it, and they sense the characters' presence in Raibanth; the Golden Dragon Society intends to apprehend them and either imprison or kill them.
- If Lesilla was awoken and subsequently killed, the repercussions are immediately felt in the Dara Happan capital. The city is alive with speculation that some form of dragon arose in the north but was destroyed. The Golden Dragon emperor, able to see all within the empire, knows what has happened and has the Golden Dragon Society mobilise its agents in readiness for the characters. However the Ironsun League, and Cuthanyar in particular, is already forming the opinion that a challenge to the Wyrmfriends is being prepared; it despatches its own agents to watch for those

who were instrumental in the Mernitan events, to bring them into a place of safety, and learn more of what is being planned. It is a chance for the characters to gain the ally in the city Karvanyar needs.

- If Lesilla reaches the Imperial Footrest then Raibanth is a curious place to be. Those who have accepted the draconic path are jubilant that a new, divine presence has come to ally itself with the emperor. Traditionalist Dara Happans see this profound development as a challenge to Yelm's supremacy of the cosmos and begin to speak, secretly, of how Dara Happa can recover. Agents and friends of Karvanyar will be welcomed amongst the traditionalists as they bring hope in the face of complete draconic supremacy.

Games Masters need to establish the atmosphere in Raibanth carefully and in line with what has happened in Mernita. The Golden Dragon Society is watching for Karvanyar's allies, and the traditionalist elements are seeking something to advance their cause. The characters are the key to all of this and occupy an extremely perilous position.

The description of Raibanth on pages 42 to 51 of the Dara Happa chapter will be essential for this scenario. What follows below is an outline of the key events the characters are likely to face when they enter Raibanth, along with descriptions of the citizens who may make life easy or hard for them.

The Outer City

Raibanth's outer city is a large and busy collection of traditional Dara Happa dwellings, workshops and stores in sight of the Imperial Footrest and walls of the Inner City. Here the characters can relax in relative anonymity because comings and goings in the outer city, which is the domain of Half Citizens and Newcomers predominantly, are unchecked. The characters' real business is in the Inner City, where the Associations have their headquarters, but time can be spent in the Outer City preparing the way for meetings to be held later.

With a little asking around and careful observation it is easy enough to locate a minor dignitary or official of the Ironsun League, usually around the quays lining

the Oslir River. With some successful persuasion the official can be convinced to arrange a meeting between the characters and Inner City representatives of the Ironsun League although he cannot promise that Cuthanyar will be present.

The Outer City is also a good place to pick up rumours of things happening elsewhere in the empire. Use the Rumour Table below to pick some information at random or tailor information to the characters' activities.

Raibanth Rumours

1D20 Rumour

- 1 Reports from Talastar indicate that Dorastor is raising an army of chaos, under the command of Ralzakark, to threaten the lands east of the Tobros Mountains. The regions of Bilini and Saird are taking these rumours seriously although none have dared to enter Dorastor to verify them.
- 2 Alakoring Dragonbreaker has emerged from hiding in northern Ralios and is heading towards the east. A declared enemy of the EWF, Alakoring is said to be able to slay True Dragons.
- 3 A hero calling himself The Poor Woman's Son is at large in Dara Happa. The Golden Dragon Society considers him to be a threat and is actively hunting both him and his associates, the Seven Servants.
- 4 A hideous water demon has broken free from Alkoth and attacks all shipping on the Oslir River between Alkoth and Nivorah.
- 5 The Star Seers of Yuthuppa have charted a great conjunction of the constellations of the Sky Dome, heralding a time of great tumult and calamity. The Golden Dragon Society has conducted its own meditations and discovered this to be simply the stirrings of the Grand Ancestral Dragon – there is no cause for alarm.
- 6 The wheat and rice harvest has been unusually poor this year. Prices are expected to double or triple.
- 7 The Golden Dragon Society is unusually active in the north east quarter of the Inner City. Hunting and Waltzing bands are being commissioned and sent forth into the wider empire. Khorvanathu and Lokastuman have spent two full days in conference with the Golden Dragon emperor.
- 8 Something strange and terrible has happened in Mernita. The Golden Dragon Society is supposed to know the truth but refuses to make what it knows public.
- 9 The Golden Dragon emperor has announced that the city god Urengerum may be returned to the city of Elempur within the year if the citizens of Elempur allow the Golden Dragon Society to establish a Waltzing House in the city. Urengerum, it is promised, is undraconic and the emperor seeks only to restore what is rightful to the people of Elempur.
- 10 The Uleria temple in the south of the Outer City is charging half price for its services for the next ten days.
- 11 The lower three rows of the Gods' Wall have been completely covered in draconic imagery by supporters of the Golden Dragon Society and the EWF.
- 12 The ghost of Dismanthuyar, the emperor preceding the Golden Dragon emperor, has been seen wandering the streets of the Inner City, seeking forgiveness for denying the Dragon emperor's divinity. His restless spirit can only be placated if those who still venerate his name accept the draconic precepts by learning to meditate at the shrine to Obduran the Flyer in the Imperial Footrest.
- 13 A schism is evolving in the members of the Ten Fold Fellowship of the north east quarter of the Inner City. Four of the Leagues making up the Fellowship are developing more overt draconic affiliations and seek a closer alliance with the Golden Dragon Society. The other families are resisting. The belief is that this schism may result in the Ten Fold Fellowship splintering and dividing the quarter.
- 14 The lens in the telescope of the Buserian Observatory temple in the south west quarter of the Inner City has cracked, rendering it useless. Replacement lenses are hard to come by. The temple is recruiting good men to venture into Ralios where the God Learners are said to be able to grind the best lenses in the world.
- 15 Mutheculus Tiedtongue of the temple of Dayzatar has emerged from a one hundred day prayer and meditation session. He claims to have developed a particular insight into certain Solar and draconic mysteries which he will reveal as a 'wedding gift'. No one has been able to determine what this cryptic statement means.

1D20 Rumour

- 16 More and more Newcomers are being welcomed into the Inner City as guests of the Golden Dragon Society. This is diluting Dara Happan purity and Dara Happan traditionalists are uncomfortable about the influx, despite the wealth, skills and magic the Newcomers bring. Most are from Darjinn and Pelanda, but others from further afield, such as Kralori, have been noted.
- 17 Rinliddi pilgrims are attempting to establish a new shrine to their bird god Raqqar, a raptor god of giant hawks found in the Elder Wilds. They need giant hawk feathers to consecrate the temple and the ones they brought with them have been stolen. They want the feathers back and are prepared to hire people either to find the thieves or venture back into the Elder Wilds to find new feathers.
- 18 A dragonewt priest has moved to the Inner City from Ten Tests Passed. It has situated itself on the ledge of one of the bridges crossing the river between the north east and north west quarters and performs a strange dance at sunrise and sunset but does not move otherwise. It calls itself 'I See Stories' but reveals nothing more about its plans or intentions.
- 19 One of the fabled war chariots of Urvairinus has been unearthed from the hills between Darleep and Alkoth. Its finder has reined it to four pure white horses and ridden across the Kostaddi border. The emperor considers this tomb-robbing and the Golden Dragon Society has offered a reward for the chariot's return. (Note: this is Karvanyar. Only a true heir to the empire would be able to find and retrieve one of Urvairinus's war chariots.)
- 20 Creatures of chaos have been sighted in the Yolp Mountains – broo and scorpionmen. Darjinni merchants are in Raibanth to petition the Ironsun League in the hope that they can buy mercenaries who will venture into the mountains to eradicate whatever chaos nests have sprung-up there.

It is up to Games Masters to decide on the relative truth and accuracy of these rumours. Some affect the campaign directly whilst others can be used to develop additional adventures and side-quests for the characters to become involved with. The references to the rise of chaos in Dorastor and the Yolp Mountains, for instance, are threats that, whilst currently distant, will be of crucial importance later in the campaign.

Entering the Inner City

Everyone coming into Raibanth must pass through one of the four gates and every gate is patrolled by Houses Yutharic and Oajinn of the Association of Holy Swords.

These elite warriors are notoriously loyal to whatever cause their leaders have pledged to serve, and, currently, it is to protect Raibanth and the Imperial Footrest. Holy Swords troops watch everyone approaching the city, check Association and League credentials, question mercilessly on what business a visitor may have, requesting names of sponsors, dates and locations of meetings, and so forth. They also question where people have come from.

Any mention of Mernita by the characters, for instance, causes the Holy Swords to detain them and send for a

Golden Dragon Society agent who questions further. Anyone determined to have acted against the EWF in any capacity is deemed a traitor and arrested. Prisoners are taken to the Golden Dragon Society ziggurat in the north west quarter where the prisoners are questioned individually and exhaustively by Khorvanathu Talon Son. Whether or not he gets meaningful answers from the characters is immaterial; they are bound so that they cannot use magic and locked in the cells below the ziggurat so that Khorvanathu can relay information to the Golden Dragon emperor and take counsel on what to do with the prisoners. It is effectively a moot point; treachery is punishable by death and, in the case of the characters, this means death by public stoning. If the characters cannot engineer their own escape, help comes in the form of Karvanyar himself – see Karvanyar's Return, below. Note, however, that the Holy Swords also inform the Ironsun League of any treacherous intruders, simply as a matter of prudent Association policy. The characters may therefore find themselves coming to Cuthanyar Ironsun's attention in a way they had not intended. Cuthanyar may visit the imprisoned characters and, depending on how they act, intercede on their behalf, offering to take them into the Oslir River Union's custody for deportation to somewhere well away from Raibanth. Cuthanyar has the power and presence to persuade even the Golden Dragon Society to agree to his wishes.

Getting into Inner Raibanth therefore requires a mixture of roleplaying and tests against Influence, Courtesy and any appropriate skills the characters can bring to bear. If the characters respond with violence, then it is countered with the Holy Swords' particular brand of zealous ferocity. A typical Holy Sword warrior is provided below; at least ten Holy Sword warriors with similar abilities are used to stamp-out any violent resistance.

Association of the Holy Swords Warrior Guards

These are highly disciplined warriors who fight as a co-ordinated unit, employing their magic judiciously and with little mercy. Their orders are to keep the enemies of Raibanth out of the city and if this means killing them, then so be it.

Characteristics: STR 16, CON 17, SIZ 13, INT 13, POW 12, DEX 16, CHA 10

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	6/6
4-6	Left Leg	6/6
7-9	Abdomen	3/7
10-12	Chest	6/8
13-15	Right Arm	6/5
16-18	Left Arm	6/5
19-20	Head	6/6

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Longspear	65%	1D10+1D2 2/10
Scimitar*	90%	1D6+3+1D2 4/10
Square shield	65%	1D6+1D2 10/18

CA: 3 SR: +15 Move: 4m MP: 12

Skills: Acrobatics 48%, Athletics 48%, Dodge 64%, Evaluate 39%, Influence 48%, Language (Solar Pelorian) 70%, Lore (Dara Happa) 22%, Lore (Raibanth) 90%, Lore (Urvairinus Theology) 55%, Lore Lore (World) 35%, Perception 40%, Persistence 35%, Resilience 55%, Stealth 39%, Throwing 70%, Unarmed 70%



Armour: Plate helmet, breastplate, vambraces and greaves. Leather and padded kilt. -39% skill penalty

Rune Magic: Befuddle 30%, Bladesharp 2 30%, Countermagic 30%, Detect Enemies 30%, Protection 2 30%

*The Holy Swords always have prepared Bladesharp at Magnitude 2 cast on their scimitars.

Assuming the characters do nothing to cause themselves to be unduly detained, they are permitted entry to the Inner City and are advised by the Holy Swords guards to pause awhile at one of the many shrines of the Processional to offer prayers to the gods and a donation of a few silvers to Raibanth's glory.

Inside the Inner City

The characters' instructions are to find the Ironsun League and meet with Cuthanyar. The Ironsun League is part of the Oslir River Union and its headquarters is in the south east quarter – a large building in the shadow of the Oslira Temple which is a combination of garrison and administrative centre.

Golden Dragon Society agents are actively searching for Karvanyar's associates. Again, the characters' actions and exploits determine whether or not the Golden Dragon Society identifies and pursues them. Golden Dragon Society agents are not bully-boy thugs; they are sly, careful servants of the draconic way not given to hysterics and shows of righteous violence. If the Golden Dragon Society identifies the characters its agents stalk them carefully for a few hours before arranging a back-street ambush with sufficient numbers to capture and disarm the characters quickly and quietly. They are then taken to the Society's ziggurat in the north west quarter for interrogation.

Golden Dragon Society Agents

Draconic Initiates with draconic magic at their disposal. They dress as wealthy Dara Happan citizens and nobles and convey themselves as such, but their agenda is to serve the Golden Dragon emperor and they do so with ruthless efficiency.

Characteristics: STR 13, CON 12, SIZ 12, INT 16, POW 14, DEX 14, CHA 12

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	1/5
4-6	Left Leg	1/5
7-9	Abdomen	2/6
10-12	Chest	2/7
13-15	Right Arm	-/4
16-18	Left Arm	-/4
19-20	Head	1/5

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Dagger	65%	1D4+1 4/6
Shortsword	60%	1D6 3/8
Fire Claws	80%	+1D6 damage

CA: 3 **SR:** +15 **Move:** 4m **MP:** 14

Skills: Acrobatics 38%, Athletics 28%, Dodge 66%, Draconic Illumination 38%, Evaluate 40%, Influence 50%, Language (Solar Pelorian) 80%, Lore (Dara Happa) 35%, Lore (Raibanth) 85%, Lore (Golden Dragon Society) 55%, Lore (World) 35%, Martial Arts 50%, Perception 70%, Persistence 35%, Resilience 55%, Stealth 79%, Throwing 38%, Unarmed 38%

Armour: Padded skirts, robes and hats. -7% skill penalty.

Rune Magic: Befuddle 30%, Countermagic 3 30%, Detect Enemies 30%, Protection 2 30%

Draconic Magic: Brand Traitor, Fire Claws, Sense Surface Thoughts,

The Ironsun Headquarters is a three-tiered building surmounted by squared ramparts that are draped with ivy and a variety of vibrant blooms. As a mercenary League the headquarters maintains guards at the main entrance who stop and question all entrants. The Ironsun League uniform is a dark grey tabard and kilt hemmed with orange; the guards wear bronze breastplates, vambraces and greaves and open-faced helmets. Their expressions are implacable and the only people allowed entry to the headquarters are known League members and those with an official appointment made in advance. Walking up to the headquarters and demanding to see Curthanyar is going to result in stern rejection (and neither can the guards be bribed).

However plenty of people enter and leave the headquarters on a regular basis and catching a League member and engaging in conversation is not impossible: Influence, Courtesy or Lore (Associations and Leagues) at a -30% penalty results in successfully engaging an Ironsun League member. Further similar tests, supported by discreet petitions from the characters, may be enough to gain them access to the headquarters.

Cuthanyar is not an easy man to see. He is busy from dawn until dusk on League and Association business, either conducting meetings and briefings in his offices, or attending the same elsewhere in the city. His personal secretary, a Citizen called Kalunzar, maintains Cuthanyar's diary and he is the person who needs to be convinced to gain access to the Ironsun League's head. Doing this requires more Influence tests supported by

polite persistence. Eventually Kalunzar finds a gap of thirty of minutes in Cuthanyar's schedule for that evening. 'But you will need to be brisk and concise,' Kalunzar says, 'Master Cuthanyar hates time wasters.'

The Ironsun League headquarters is abuzz with discussion. The mood is urgent and the characters see representatives from many Leagues and Associations scurrying to a variety of different meetings. They may, on a successful Perception test, spot Cuthanyar. He is tall, broad-shouldered, with a weary, creased face beneath a mane of golden hair and a neatly trimmed beard. He looks not dissimilar to Karvanyar and, indeed, they share an ancestry. Remarking on this resemblance adds +5% to any Influence or Courtesy tests the characters use when dealing with him.

The talk in the Ironsun League is of developments in Talastar. Chaos stirs in Dorastor and the Talastarings are nervous. As the Ironsun League protects the trade on the Oslir River it, too, needs to pay attention to what happens in Talastar. If Talastar cannot hold the forces of chaos then they are likely to spill through Darjinn and into Dara Happa. The Ironsun League is therefore in the process of receiving reports from across southern Peloria, assessing the threat, and issuing orders of its own for the protection of the traders using the river.

Meeting Cuthanyar

Cuthanyar meets the characters in his offices, a series of connected rooms on the top floor of the headquarters. Kalunzar ushers them into the reception area and goes to find Cuthanyar; when he is ready, the characters are summoned into the main suite where Cuthanyar is slumped behind a huge desk covered in maps, scrolls and other writing paraphernalia. He glances at the characters and awaits them to speak their names, lineage, League and Association credentials. He listens with slight impatience but if any character mentions either Revunarus the merchant, Urvanyar or Karvanyar it immediately attracts his full attention.

'What do you know of Urvanyar? What do you know of his son? Speak honestly, or you'll find yourselves delivered to the Holy Swords.'

Cuthanyar listens to whatever the characters tell them. Lies or fabrications are immediately spotted. Finally, he asks for proof that the characters are who they say

they. Any one of the following is sufficient to convince Cuthanyar:

- A detailed physical description of Urvanyar and Karvanyar – especially noting that Urvanyar is blind
- A description of the characters' exploits in Mernita
- Displaying the spear given to them by Revunarus
- Reciting the Oath taken when Karvanyar revealed himself for the first time (see page 94 of *A Poor Woman's Son*)

'So the rumours are true, then,' Cuthanyar says. 'Karvanyar lives and prepares to take his place in the game of destiny. The Golden Dragon Society hunts him – and you, too. And I suspect you have come here to persuade me to muster the Ironsun League to Karvanyar's cause, yes? Tell me. Why should I?'



The characters need to prepare some convincing arguments. The following facts help:

- Karvanyar intends to challenge for the Golden Daughter Contest
- He is travelling throughout Dara Happa and beyond seeking news, information and other allies
- Urvanyar is held captive – or held in a safe place (depending on the outcome of the attempt to capture him)
- The stars are entering a favourable conjunction; Revunarus has charted it
- Karvanyar aims to raise full rebellion, but he leads from the front and by example
- If Dorastor is rising in the west, Karvanyar will oppose it. Can the same be said of the Golden Dragon and the EWF?

Convincing Cuthanyar should not be easy, but neither is it impossible. Cuthanyar knew Urvanyar and is a true Dara Happan despite serving the Golden Dragon emperor. Eventually he agrees to do what he can. ‘But I can only do so much,’ Cuthanyar says. ‘It is not just the Ironsun League Karvanyar needs, but the support of the Oslir River Union and the seven great families. There are many contradictory views amongst them. Many hidden agendas. Sending you, his servants, to bring tidings will not be enough. I need Karvanyar himself to come forward and prove his existence. In Raibanth, that will be perilous. The Golden Dragon Society would see him dead.

Cuthanyar has one last piece of information and makes each character swear an oath to absolute secrecy. ‘It is also true that war is brewing in Dorastor. Ralzakark, king of broo, has formed an army that bears down on Talastar. The Associations of Dara Happa concentrate first and foremost on that threat; rebellion will be far from their minds. But if Karvanyar can assemble weapons to oppose chaos, he might win some hearts.’

It is clear that Cuthanyar will do what little he can to rally support to Karvanyar, but that Karvanyar himself must come forward. However he does provide the characters with a seal of the Ironsun League that grants free transportation aboard any river vessel that is protected by the League. The seal also grants sanctuary in any Ironsun League base or headquarters – most towns and cities along the Oslir have such establishments.

‘You should keep a low profile here in Raibanth. Do not venture outside unnecessarily. If you can, leave the city as soon as possible. The Golden Dragon Society will be looking for you. I will have my people create some diversions where we can, but my influence with the Wyrmfriends is very limited and I will not risk the tenuous relationship my League has with them.’

Cuthanyar Ironsun

A man of fifty summers or more. His face is stern and weather-beaten, his beard neatly trimmed and his long hair, thinning at the temples, oiled and worn in long ringlets. His voice is gravely, and his manner forthright, but he is not unkind and prides himself on being a just and honest man.

Characteristics: STR 15, CON 12, SIZ 17, INT 17, POW 15, DEX 14, CHA 15

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	1/6
4-6	Left Leg	1/6
7-9	Abdomen	3/7
10-12	Chest	3/8
13-15	Right Arm	1/5
16-18	Left Arm	1/5
19-20	Head	-/6

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Dagger	120%	1D4+1+1D4 4/6
Longspear	134%	1D10+1D4 2/10
Scimitar	118%	1D6+1+1D4 4/10

CA: 3 SR: +16 Move: 4m MP: 15

Skills: Acrobatics 71%, Athletics 70%, Courtesy 90%, Dodge 85%, Evaluate 85%, Influence 94%, Language (Solar Pelorian) 100%, Lore (Dara Happa) 95%, Lore (Raibanth) 95%, Lore (Associations and Leagues) 97%, Lore (Avivorus) 90%, Lore (World) 79%, Perception 85%, Persistence 87%, Resilience 80%, Stealth 41%, Throwing 83%, Unarmed 85%

Rune Magic: Bladesharp 1,2,4 90%, Countermagic 2,4 90%, Detect Enemies 80%, Protection 1,3 90%

Armour: Padded skirts and robes. -10% skill penalty.

Divine Magic: Gleam, Halo

Hunt the Seven Servants

As a parting gift Cuthanyar has Kalunzar arrange for the characters to use a safe house within the south east quarter, in sight of the Ironsun headquarters. Again the advice to leave Raibanth as soon as possible is given, or to lie-low if the characters are intending to remain.

The safe house is a simple, single-storey dwelling, quite comfortable. While the characters remain indoors, they are safe. If they leave for any reason there is a 30% chance that Golden Dragon Society agents spot them and follow them. If the Golden Dragon Society tracks the characters back to the safehouse, the building is placed under discreet surveillance with Golden Dragon Society agents watching it around the clock. Any opportunity to capture the characters is taken but is a matter of stealthy ambush rather than open confrontation. If the Golden Dragon Society agents find they need reinforcements, they shout as loudly as possible for Holy Swords guards to come to their aid – and, as the Holy Swords are sworn guardians of the city, their help can be relied upon, arriving within 3D3 combat rounds.

If caught and imprisoned by the Golden Dragon Society, the characters receive the direct attentions of Khorvanathu, the Society's head. Khorvanathu presents himself as an amicable, if firm, figure, who claims to have the characters' interests at heart. He wants to know:

- ◊ Who the characters serve
- ◊ What they know of a supposed 'hero' at large in the empire
- ◊ What part they played in the events at Mernita
- ◊ What business they have in the city and with Cuthanyar – is he the so-called hero?
- ◊ What they know of the happenings in Dorastor and Talastar – he claims to be certain that agents of chaos are at work in Raibanth

Khorvanathu knows that they serve Karvanyar. He also wants to use them as bargaining tools for when Karvanyar makes an appearance, which Khorvanathu knows he will, sooner or later. He makes it clear that the characters are considered to be traitors to the empire and deserving of being stoned to death, which they will be if they do not fully co-operate. One way of avoiding such a fate is to renounce all allegiances given to whatever cause they currently serve and turning to

the draconic path – accepting the grace and wisdom of the Golden Dragon emperor and the guidance of the Eternal Dragon Ring. Conversion to the draconic way is not going to save the characters: the Golden Dragon Society considers them to be far too dangerous, but it is offered as a sop to aid co-operation.

Karvanyar's Return

Whilst the characters have been busy in Mernita and Raibanth, Karvanyar has been busy in the hills of Kostaddi. He has visited an ancient treasure tomb and brought out a war chariot that once belonged to Urvairinus. Taming four, pure white horses from the meadows of Kostaddi he has teamed them with the chariot and is making his way swiftly towards Raibanth.

His arrival is a momentous event. Karvanyar, blazing like the sun aboard the sturdy war chariot, ploughs through the southern gates of Raibanth. Spears and arrows do not strike him and, strangely, few Dara Happa warriors can find the will to launch their attacks. He enters the city on the tenth day after the characters, and drives his chariot directly to the main stairs of the Imperial Footrest. Golden Dragon Society warriors spill forth to capture him, but Karvanyar, a halo of sheer divine brilliance around his head, utters a single word that blasts all Wyrmfriend assailants off their feet and shatters their weapons.

Lokastuman and Khorvanathu appear on a balcony of the first tier of the ziggurat and watch helplessly as Karvanyar leaps from his chariot. The horses bellow and whiny but remain where they are with a single command from Karvanyar. He brandishes a long spear in one hand, iron-tipped, and an iron broadsword in the other. If the characters have been captured by the Golden Dragon Society, he demands their immediate release. Khorvanathu, stunned by the incredible arrival of Dara Happa's hero, has no option but to oblige.

Naturally a huge crowd gathers as Karvanyar strides up the stairs of the ziggurat, moving with the grace and confidence of one born to ascend its levels. No one dares to attack him even though he makes straight for Lokastuman and Khorvanathu. When he reaches them, he smiles broadly. 'I would speak with the emperor and address the good people of Dara Happa,' he says politely and firmly. 'In the name of Murharzarm, Dismanthuyar and Urvanyar, I will not be denied my right.'

The Golden Dragon emperor does not stir as Karvanyar beckons the characters to stand beside him. He then turns to the masses assembled before the ziggurat.

‘I am Karvanyar, son of Urvanyar, son of Dismanthuyar, son of Khoranthus. I come here as your kinsman and ally. I pay my respects to the emperor and I offer my service to the mighty empire of Dara Happa. I come with tidings of peace despite the fact that war looms against us!

I also come to declare my intention as a contestant for the marriage of fair Sharmanasthar, as is my right as one of the noble blood of Dara Happa. I declare myself willing and ready to accept the challenges of the marriage contest as decreed by the emperor himself and to pledge to be an honest, loyal and dutiful husband and son if I prevail.’



Upon declaring himself a contestant in the Golden Daughter Contest, the immense bulk of the Golden Dragon shifts. Its head looms into view, descending from the summit of the Imperial Footrest and casting the south of Raibanth into shadow. Everyone, with the exception of Karvanyar, must succeed in a Persistence test at a -40% penalty to resist being awed by this incredible sight. The head snakes down and around until it is level with Karvanyar. Lokastuman and Khorvanathu fall prostrate but Karvanyar does not flinch. In a voice of pure beauty and reason, the emperor answers – the first direct words it has spoken since ascending the footrest.

‘You are indeed son of Urvanyar, a brave and noble warrior of great Dara Happa. You are indeed eligible to contest for my daughter’s hand in marriage. Your account of yourself is well-made. If you truly wish to enter this contest to become my son and heir, then you will kneel before me and accept my wisdom and rule.’

And mighty Karvanyar obeys. He kneels before the Dragon emperor of Dara Happa and bows his head. ‘I, Karvanyar son of Urvanyar, accept the rule, wisdom and justice of its emperor. May the blessings of Yelm, Dayzatar, Dendara and Zaytenaras be upon him.’ And, with that declaration, the Dragon emperor’s head moves slowly and steadily back to its place at the summit of the Imperial Footrest. Observant characters may notice that, having made his oath, Karvanyar has a wry smile on his lips.

Concluding the Chapter

Karvanyar is escorted into the Imperial Footrest by Lokastuman. Before leaving the characters he instructs them to wait for him at the Ironsun League’s safehouse. ‘We are all safe, even though we are surrounded by enemies. No agent of the Golden Dragon would dare to refute the justice of Yelm. Go in peace, my friends. Soon, we will have considerable work to do.

within the green walls of hell

This chapter concerns Alkoth, a city that is part of the underworld manifest on the surface of Glorantha. To most Dara Happans Alkoth is a physical reminder of the power of the gods; to the Alkothi it is a very real demonstration of their might. The characters must venture into Alkoth at Karvanyar's behest and this chapter details what they find and the challenges they will face.

Seven Servants go to Alkoth

After Karvanyar declares himself a contestant for the Golden Dragon's daughter he spends a day and night in the Imperial Footrest. When he emerges he comes to the characters at wherever they are staying and holds a conference.

'The emperor and his mouthpiece have described the challenges I must face if I am to win the hand of Sharmanasthar. I am to tame the Horse of Heaven that is found in the peaks of the Yolp Mountains. I am to slay the Dehori queen that rules the surface of Akuturos and mocks the emperor. I am also to assemble three great treasures: the Bridle of War, the Chariot of Rage and the Veil of Victory. These are gifts to be presented at the wedding ceremony – the Bridle of War to the wife, as a sign of the husband's duty to protect, and the wife's duty to let him; the Chariot of Rage to the emperor, to show the husband has the means to protect his wife; and the Veil of Victory to the bride's mother, to show that once the husband has fought and conquered, his wife will be hidden from the carnage he has wrought.

All three things are treasures of Shargash and are known as the Treasures of War. The Bridle of War was used when Shargash defeated the Ram God and hauled its iron carcass north to halt Valind's advance. The Chariot of Rage carried Shargash to war against the Unknowing Horde, and with it he trampled many

enemies. The Veil of Victory Shargash cast over the head of Sedenya the False Sun when she tried to take Yelm's place, and so made her blind to the world.'

All these treasures are in Alkoth. All are deeply sacred to the city; Alkoth will not part with any of them lightly – and it is the task of the Seven Servants to secure them and bring them back to Karvanyar whilst he embarks on the quest for the Horse of Heaven and to kill the Dehori queen. 'It matters little who completes each challenge; only that the challenges are completed in my name. I have other business in the Yolp Mountains, which is why I must venture there for the Horse of Heaven. The queen of the Dehori is a foe that requires special magic that you, my friends, do not possess. The Treasures of War, if you use cunning, are things you can obtain in my name, and that is why you must venture to Alkoth.'

But Karvanyar wants something else. He wants the characters to deliver messages of comradeship to the three kings of Alkoth, the Red King, the Green King and the Black King. He needs the characters to act as his emissaries to the city and secure their friendship in advance of the coming rebellion. If the characters can succeed in this, obtaining the Treasures of War will be easier (but by no means guaranteed). More importantly, it will help to turn Alkoth against the EWF – and the city's power and ferocity will be essential in mounting a rebellion.

Alkoth is precisely 100 kilometres south of Raibanth, surrounded by vast natural marshes and close to the Oslir's bank. The city is one kilometre wide, and its walls are of pure, green jade, 20 metres high and four metres thick, forming a perfect, circular enclosure around the community. The walls are completely and absolutely impregnable; from physical and magical attacks due to the living presence of the god Alkor who resides within the circle protecting everything he encloses. Moreover Alkoth *is* the armband. A god contains the city and protects the world from the followers of Shargash.

How Alkoth Came to Be - A Dara Happan Myth of Shargash's Denial

In the beginning there was a small and amusing god of the skies who was named Sentin. The skies, as everyone knows, are stable and harmonious, full of peace and stability. When the gods of the sky found any tiny piece of instability or fear or violence, they fed it to Sentin, who was the Eater of Garbage. It was harmless and amusing at first, but every morsel made Sentin stronger and greater. This was good, because the sky gods were finding more and more violence and instability, and they needed a bigger container for it. Thus Sentin grew even more rapidly, and after a time he became known as Shargash, the Great Terror, or the Great Devourer.

When Shargash the Devourer presented himself before the emperor and asked to make war on the Celestial Court's enemies, the emperor contemplated the request for a long time and then denied it. 'We must not make war on them unless they make war on us,' the emperor counselled. And Shargash roared, for he was prepared for war and considered attack the best method of defence. But in the face of Yelm's blinding reason, the War God had no alternative but to agree. Because he was obedient, Yelm rewarded Shargash with a torque of jade, to be worn around his arm, as a symbol of his obedience. And Shargash complied.

Each time Shargash saw a case for war, he sought Yelm's counsel and each time the emperor counselled restraint. When Shargash roared, the torque tightened, reminding the War God of his oath.

Later, when the Unseen Horde of Unknowingness mounted an assault against Heaven, Shargash knew he must strike before the Unknowingness destroyed everything. He plucked the torque from his arm and threw it to Lodril for safekeeping, promising to wear it again after the Unknowing had been defeated. Lodril placed the torque on the ground so that Shargash would see it and pick it up, but, after the Battle of Unknowing, Shargash was too distracted and forgot all about it.

And so the torque, which was called Alkoth and which contains Alkoth's spirit of impregnability, came to Glorantha. Later, when Yelm had been killed and Shargash ruled in his place, Alkoth became the enclosure for all Shargash's defeated enemies and, later, even for the friends, allies and Good Things that he destroyed.

Outside the walls are vast and fertile rice paddies—the marshes have been contained and controlled by Murharzarm's pacification. Inside the walls is Hell—Shargash's underworld realm. Shargash lives here, so the entire city is utterly magical. It is a portion of hell on the surface of Glorantha. Anything that threatens Alkoth, its people, or Shargash, feels the wrath of The Devourer. Alkoth has never been taken, never been plundered. Those who have tried to do so are now the Hellmen, doomed servants of Shargash, their souls transformed into living flame, their bodies consisting of cinders and ash, their wills bent entirely to the service of the Devourer.

The EWF in Alkoth

Turning Alkoth against the EWF will not be easy. Residing in the city is Lorenkarten the Mile, also known as The Source of the Waters. Lorenkarten is an exceedingly powerful draconic mystic who has, under the tutelage of Obduran the Flyer, completed the Ten Step Path of Immanent Mastery and is on his way to becoming a True Dragon. Lorenkarten is called The Mile because he has a draconic form that is a mile long. He also has special influence over the waters of the world, through his dedication to the True Dragon Aroka. As Alkoth has its own special relationship with the Oslir River, Lorenkarten has been welcomed to the

city and his presence has secured Alkoth's obedience to the will of the Golden Dragon emperor, and its pledge to aid the EWF in its long term endeavours.

If the Seven Servants are to prevail in their tasks, Lorenkarten will need to be dealt with – and he is not a foe who is easily defeated.

Reaching Alkoth

From Raibanth, the easiest way to reach Alkoth is by river barge. It takes two days to get to Alkoth, with an overnight stop at one of the small riverside villages that form regular staging posts along the Oslir. As the second day of travel begins to wane, the walls of the city appear against the southern skyline; an ominous ring of shimmering green twenty metres in height. Even on the brightest days there are storm clouds over Alkoth and no birdlife circles around it. Twisted spires point accusingly from behind the walls and in the centre an uneven ziggurat can be seen, leaning drunkenly to one side.

As the city nears, the atmosphere becomes oppressive, with a cloying feel to the air and an increased humidity that accentuates any weariness. Alkoth is not a restful place.

River traffic docks at a crude stone key outside the city. Rows of low stone buildings belong to the crews who load and unload the barges, and these stern-faced, taciturn men work silently to complete their tasks, moving goods from barges to carts and carts to barges. A road of uneven cobbles leads up to one of the city gates. This close, Alkoth's walls fill the vision and the senses. Alkoth's presence is tangible; it is the same fear one feels before a battle begins; the same mixture of terror, apprehension and expectation – daring one to approach yet repelling at the same time. Alkoth is not a welcoming place.

If anyone uses magic to glimpse the wall of the city they see, within the jade, millions of restless, writhing spirits, all guardians of the city, emanating absolute protection. Only a god could penetrate those walls; any mortal attempting to do so would risk immediate death, their soul becoming a plaything of the spirits whirling to Alkoth's commands.

Approaching Alkoth requires a Persistence test. If the test succeeds, the character, filled with understandable apprehension, may approach. If the test fails, the character is gripped by a complete dread of the city; he may either...

- Spend a number of hours equal to 100 minus his Persistence summoning the courage to enter (re-roll the Persistence test, with a +20% bonus)
- Or, enter immediately but suffer a –30% penalty to all skills whilst in Alkoth due to an unshakeable nervousness at the innate power of the place.

If the test is fumbled, then the character is too terrified to enter and must wait outside, doing his best to avoid gazing at the terrible, supernatural walls.

Entering Alkoth

There are no gates in the walls of Alkoth. Its points of entry are tunnels that lead a dozen metres underground, run beneath the wall, and then slope up to emerge in the city. The tunnels are wide, stone-lined and dry, and rune-covered. Footsteps echo ominously as the characters make their way along the arteries of dark stone, angling down on a gradual slope until, as the slope levels, they come to an area that is lit by guttering torches. Ahead is a large throne, on an obsidian base inset with skulls. Before it is a beheading block and, in front of the block, a basket for catching the severed heads. This is the Gateway to Alkoth.

Ritual Death

Only the dead may enter the underworld and, as Alkoth is a part of it, everyone who enters the city must die – ritually, if not physically.

Seated in the throne is the Overseer, a bald-headed, eagle-nosed man with a scalp covered in tattoos of dense black arcane sigils. His throne is made from human bone lashed together with human hair and his cadaverous hands hold a bronze mirror. To his side stands an armoured warrior of Shargash, muscles oiled and gleaming, his face concealed behind a scowling bronze mask of the Decapitator. The floor around the dais is covered in a layer of thick ash and cinders.



Each entrant is beckoned forward by the Overseer. "None who live may pass beyond my throne. You must die to enter Great Sacred Alkoth. Do you accept? What is your answer?"

Those who answer no (or who prevaricate) are ordered to leave the city by the way they came. Those who answer yes are called forward one by one. The warrior standing beside the dais tenses and the Overseer smiles grimly, gesturing with the bronze mirror. To either side of him the ashes and cinders stir and shift, forming up into a pair of Hellmen who seize the approaching character. Resistance is allowed and if the character breaks free from their grasp, the Overseer commands the character to either approach the beheading block or leave the city.

The Hellmen pull the character towards the beheading block and force him to kneel. Their mocking voices, sounding like rumbling belches of lava, echo in the victim's ears. His head is forced forward and

the Decapitator steps forward, bearing a huge axe fashioned from reeds. The axe raises ominously, then thunders down on the neck of the prostrate victim.

At this stage the victim must make a further Persistence test. Success means they suffer *one* of the below effects. Failure means they cannot mentally stand the anguish of this ritual ceremonial death and must flee the tunnels, unable to enter into Alkoth. The failing character suffers *all* the following effects.

- The pain of the reed axe is incredible, feeling to be of metal. His neck is severed and his head tumbles to the floor, rolling towards the feet of the Overseer, before all goes black.
- The character's life flashes before his eyes. During this intense, disturbing vision, Shargash himself, in the black and flame-wreathed aspect of The Devourer, takes the character's soul in his palm and consumes it whole.
- Shargash, having consumed the soul, vomits it back into existence and tosses it to an army of waiting Hellmen who use it as their plaything, before wreathing it in ash and making the soul into one of them.
- Hideous monsters of Hell rise up from the floor of the tunnel and fall upon the body and severed head, tearing both to shreds.

Games Masters should decide what lasting effects these visions have on the character. Profound, life-long nightmares, perhaps, or even a heightened sense of life, accompanied by elation at having passed such a terrible ordeal.

In truth, the reed axe causes no damage at all to the character and, once the ritual is completed, he is helped to his feet by the Hellmen and taken to the Overseer. The Overseer shows the character his own face in his bronze mirror, which is now devoid of facial features, indicating the submission of the self to death's domain, and says: 'And now you are dead. Pass into our city, Dead Brother.'

Hellmen

The Hellmen of Alkoth are a terrifying sight. Those truly dead souls claimed by Shargash are remade into human-shaped beings composed entirely of cinders and ash, their forms held together by Shargash's own breath, which is the very fire of the underworld.

Hellmen obey the commands of the Shargashi who summon them, carrying out their orders tirelessly, ruthlessly and to the letter. Their bodies grind, hiss and spit as they move, flame spilling through the cracks and fissures in their cinder and ash skin. Their eyes and mouths are gaping holes filled with the breath of Shargash and the air around them crackles with the unholy heat.

All Hellmen are immune to attacks based on fire, lightning and the sun. However they sustain half damage from mundane weapons and normal damage from attacks based on water or ice. Hellmen can be summoned by Shargash and Alkothi cultists who know the divine spell 'Summon Hellman'. Only the summoner call dispel a Hellman, or another cultist who knows the divine spell 'Return to Hell'

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	3D6+12	(23)
CON	3D6	(11)
DEX	3D6+3	(14)
SIZ	2D6+8	(15)
INT	1D3	(2)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	0	(0)

Hellman Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	2/6
4-6	Left Leg	2/6
7-9	Abdomen	2/7
10-12	Chest	2/8
13-15	Right Arm	2/5
16-18	Left Arm	2/5
19-20	Head	2/6

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage
Unarmed	50%	1D3+1D6
Weapon	50%+3D10	Weapon+1D6
Spit Fire	40%	1D6
Grasp of Fire	40%	Ignition, see below

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 3

Strike Rank: +8

Movement: 3m

Traits: Breathe Flame, Dark Sight, Formidable Natural Weapons, Night Sight, Poison Immunity, Athletics 35%, Resilience 65%, Persistence 100%

Typical Armour: Cinders (AP 2, no skill penalty)

Hellmen spit fire up to their POW in metres. The fire causes 1D6 points of damage. If a Hellman succeeds in a successful Unarmed attack, it can try to use its Grasp of Fire attack on its next Combat Action. The Hellman expels fire through the fissures in its hands attempting to ignite the flammable areas of the opponent's clothing or armour. If successful, the Grasp attack sets light to the victim and 1D3 locations adjacent to the one struck by the initial Unarmed attack suffer 1D6 points of damage per Combat Round until the fire can be extinguished. Armour offers no protection.



Divine Spell: Summon Hellmen

Magnitude 3, Permanent, Progressive
Cults: Alkoth, Shargash

On a successful Lore (Alkoth or Shargash Theology) test, one Hellman is summoned for every 3 Magic Points invested in the spell. The summoning is permanent until the caster dispels it, or the Hellman is dispelled by the Dispel Hellman spell. The summoner will not regenerate the invested Magic Points until the Hellmen have been released to whence they came.

Once cast, the Hellman forms itself within 1 Combat Round, rising from the ash to await its commands. Only the summoner can command the Hellman and it explicitly obeys whatever command it has been given until the task has been completed.

The caster must have access to one cubic metre of ash or cinders for every Hellman summoned, if he is outside Alkoth's walls. Priests of Alkoth and Shargath typically carry supplies of ash, taken from Alkoth, in highly decorative caskets, whenever they go into battle.

Divine Spell: Dispel Hellmen

Magnitude 3, Instant, Progressive, Resist: Resilience
Cults: Alkoth, Shargash

This spell destroys one Hellman for every 3 Magic Points invested in the spell. The Hellman can attempt to resist being dispelled by matching its Resilience against the dispelling caster's Lore (Alkoth or Shargash) in an Opposed test.

Alkoth Within

Those who pass the Death Ritual continue into Alkoth, following the tunnel which rises steeply and emerges on the surface within the walls.

Inside the jade walls the surface of the city has been built-up with layers of ash and cinder that raise it several metres above the corresponding ground level outside. Around seventy percent of the city is covered in buildings: dwellings, shops, workshops, taverns, temples and parade grounds – all the usual aspects of

a busy Dara Happan city, but one that is enclosed by the massive green walls and one where every single person is considered to be dead.

The Alkothi Dara Happans go about their daily business as in any other city, but amongst them are Hellmen and other creatures brought up from the underworld to serve their surface masters. Unless prevented from carrying out a task, or provoked, people need not fear attacks from these monstrosities although their presence in the cramped streets of the city is highly distressing for those of a fragile state of mind.

General Alkoth Encounters

The undead roam Alkoth's streets, conducting the business of their masters or their own design. Use the following Encounter Tables to determine the kinds of undead witnessed and the business they are engaged upon.

Encounter Table 1: Undead Creatures

1D20	Undead
1-2	Demon (see below)
3-7	Hellman (see Hellmen on page 132 of this chapter)
8-12	Skeleton or zombie (see page 117 and 122 of <i>RuneQuest</i>)
13-15	Spirit (see below)
16-17	Vampire (see below)
18-20	Wraith (see below)

Encounter Table 2: Undead Duties

1D20	Duty
1-3	Driving other, undead slaves
4-7	Fetching and carrying goods
8	Leading lost souls from Hell to reside in Alkoth for a while
9-10	On business of Alkor
11-12	On business of Black King
13-14	On business of Green King
15-16	On business of Red King
17	On business of Shargash
18	Torturing some doomed soul from Hell
19	Vicious and psychotic – attacks anyone in their vicinity
20	Wandering Lost in search of a route to death

Demons of Alkoth

These are not slaving creatures of chaos, but representatives and agents of Shargash who wield the Devourer's authority in the surface city. They may take any form – from the sublimely beautiful through the hideously monstrous – and they do not necessarily engage in acts that one might deem inherently evil. They are, however, immensely powerful creatures that, when Shargash commands them, form the infantry of his undead army.

To determine a demon's appearance, roll 1D3 to determine how many physiques the demon amalgamates. Then roll 1D100 on the Physiques table to determine the specific physiques.

Demon Physique Type

1D100	Body Type	Nature
01-04	Arachnine	Spider
05-08	Avian	Bird
09-12	Canine	Dog
13-16	Caprine	Goat
17-20	Cervine	Stag
21-24	Cancrine	Crab
25-28	Crocodilian	Crocodile
29-32	Equine	Horse
33-36	Feline	Cat
37-38	Glirine	Rodent
39-40	Hirudinal	Leech
41-44	Humaniform	Human
45-48	Insectile	Insect
49-52	Lupine	Wolf
53-56	Noctillionine	Bat
57-60	Octopine	Octopus
61-64	Pyridine	Butterfly
65-68	Piscine	Fish
69-72	Porcine	Boar
73-76	Ranine	Frog
77-80	Saurian	Lizard
81-84	Simian	Ape
85-88	Taurine	Bull
89-92	Ursine	Bear
93-96	Vermian	Worm
97-00	Vespine	Wasp

Next, determine the demon's status. On a 1D20 roll of 1 to 16, it is a minor demon; its statistics are as noted below. On a roll of 17 to 20 it is a major demon. Roll the statistics as for a minor demon and then *double* them.

Minor Demon Characteristics

STR	5D6	(18)
CON	5D6	(18)
DEX	3D6+6	(17)
SIZ	5D6	(18)
INT	3D6+6	(17)
POW	3D6	(11)
CHA	3D6	(11)

Every demon has a chance equal to its POW x3 of possessing 1D3 demonic features. Consult the overleaf table to determine what effects these features are.

Hit Locations

Demon hit locations depend on its physique. Select a Hit Locations table from *RuneQuest* or *RuneQuest Monsters* most closely resembling the demon's physique type or types. Remember to include locations such as wings and tails.

Demon Skills

Demon skills are figured in the same way as for any other *RuneQuest* character. Specific skill proficiencies depend on the business the demon is engaged upon. For minor demons, select three skills that are rated at 90%, 80% and 70% - these can be Basic, Advanced or Combat skills as Games Masters see fit. Major demons have six skills rated at 150%, 130%, 110%, 90%, 80% and 70%, again at the Games Master's discretion. The Demon Attitude table may assist to deciding how these skill values are allocated.

Demonic Features Table

1D100	Effect	Details
01-02	Absorbing	All opponents it comes into contact with are drained by 1D8 MP each combat action and are added as temporary Characteristic or Attribute points to the demon's; roll 1D10, 1=STR, 2=CON, 3=DEX, 4=SIK, 5=INT, 6=POW, 7=CHA, 8=MP, 9 or 10=roll twice
03-04	Acidic	Possesses acidic ichor which sprays whenever the skin is penetrated, causing 1D6 damage to the attacker
05-06	Agile	+1D8 DEX
07-08	Arms	Gain an extra pair of manipulation limbs from a random species or physique
09-10	Asymmetric	One half of the creature is larger, longer or taller than the other, double the Hit Points of locations in the larger side and halve the Hit Points of locations in the smaller
11-12	Beaked	Gain a bite attack inflicting 1D4+1 damage. Each additional incidence adds another toothed beak on a different location.
13-14	Beautiful	+1D8 CHA
15-16	Blind	No vision organs
17-18	Boneless	Can squeeze through any gap
19-20	Broadcaster	Any damage inflicted on the creature is felt by everybody within 5m, who suffer the psychological, but not physiological effects as if they had been wounded too
21-22	Chameleon	+1D8 x5% bonus to Stealth when hiding
23-24	Clawed	Gain a claw attack. Each additional incidence adds another set of claws on a on a different location; roll a d4, 1=1D6 damage, 2=1D8 damage, 3=1D10 damage or 4=1D2 damage
25-26	Climbing	Has a spider or lizard like ability to scale surfaces, +1D8x10% bonus to Athletics when climbing
27-28	Corroding	Weapons take 1D8 damage each time they strike the creature
29-30	Crystalline	Gain 1D10 Armour Points from a crystalline crust
31-32	Deaf	No hearing organs.
33-34	Disturbing	Creature is covered with unsettling forms, such as baby arms, or multiple eyes or mouths; gain an extra 1D8 Insanity points
35-36	Hatred	Creature possesses unreasoning hatred of a particular species and will attack on sight
37-38	Head	Gain an extra head (roll on the Creature Type table), each one gets an independent Persistence check against mental effects and can control the entire body if one head is incapacitated
39	Heart of Rune	The demon's heart is a randomly determined Rune. It is considered to have integrated the rune with all the benefits this would entail.
40-41	Horned	Gain a gore attack causing 1D6 damage. Each additional incidence adds another set of horns on a different location.
42-43	Icy	Radiates freezing coldness, injuring anyone within melee range; roll 1D4, 1=1D2, 2=1D4, 3=1D6 and 4=1D8 damage per round
44-45	Leaper	Has powerfully sprung legs, +1D8 x10% bonus to Athletics when jumping
46-47	Levitating	Has the capability to move over any solid or liquid surface without sinking or leaving tracks
48-49	Mimic	Changes into the shape of a creature it successfully touches, maintaining its own Characteristics, but assuming the locations and a duplicate image of the being contacted
50-51	Nerveless	Cannot feel pain, and does not suffer the ill-effects of serious wounds

1D100	Effect	Details
52-53	Obfuscating	Produces a cloud of mist that blinds observers, who must succeed in an opposed test of Perception against the Obfuscation's potency of 1D8x10% every combat action to observe the creature
54-55	Paralysing	Temporarily weakens the dexterity of an opponent by 1D8 DEX each successful hit
56-57	Poisonous	One unarmed attack inflicts a venomous poison with a delay of 1D8 combat actions and a potency of 1D8x 10%, which causes an extra 1D8 damage to the location struck
58-59	Regenerating	Recovers 1 Hit Point per round to every location, except for major wounds
60-61	Resistant	Invulnerable to one type of damage or weapon type; fire, cold, poison, disease, swords, spears, cudgels and so forth.
62-63	Roaring	Produces a thunderous sound which deafens listeners, who must succeed in an opposed test of Resilience against the Roaring's potency of 1D8x10% to avoid becoming temporally stunned for 1d8 combat actions.
64-65	Screaming	Horrible screams which terrify listeners, who must succeed in an opposed test of Persistence against the Screaming's potency of 1D8x10% to avoid gaining a temporary insanity
66-67	Spores	Produces clouds of spores. If inhaled the breather must win an opposed test of Resilience against the Spore's potency of 1D8x10% to avoid suffering 1D8 Hit Points to the chest every round until successful; as the spores gestate into worms, flowers, vines, etc that are coughed up, or grow out of their lungs
68-69	Stalker	+1D8 x5% bonus to Stealth when sneaking
70-71	Stench	Gives off nauseating odours that sicken inhalers, who must succeed in an opposed test of Resilience against the Stench's potency of 1D8x10% to avoid dropping prone and vomiting
72-73	Sticky	Secretes a strong glue or mucus of potency 1D8x10% which causes items to adhere to its skin, requiring a Brute Force Athletics test at a penalty of the potency to remove
74-75	Sting	Gain a sting attack causing 1D8 damage. Each additional incidence adds another stinger on a different location.
76-77	Strong	+1D8 STR
78-79	Swimmer	Has webbed digits and gills, +1D8x10% bonus to Athletics when swimming
80-81	Tailed	Gains extra unarmed attack, the damage is triple the creature's Damage Modifier but only for the purposes of calculating Knockback
82-83	Tentacle	Gains grapple attack. If successful then the tentacles Inflict Pain each combat action thereafter
84-85	Tongue	Gains grapple attack. If successful then the sticky tongue Immobilises the opponent, and they can be automatically bitten or swallowed the following combat action
86-87	Toothed	Gain a bite attack for 1D6+1 damage. Each additional incidence adds another toothed maw on a different location
88-89	Tough	+1D8 CON
90-91	Warded	Invulnerable to one form of material; steel, wood, stone, flesh and so on
92-93	Warped	One random location changes to that of a different species (roll on Creature Type table)
94-95	Weakening	Temporarily weakens the strength of an opponent by 1D8 STR each successful hit
96-97	Wilful	+1D8 POW
98-00	Wings	Gains bat, bird, butterfly or insect wings granting a Flying Movement equal to normal Movement

Demon Attitude

This table determines the demon's general attitude towards those it encounters.

Demon Attitude Table

1D10	Attitude	Game Effects
1	Amorous	The demon develops a physical attraction for anyone who tries to engage with it. It may become protective, jealous or lustful depending on how the encounter develops.
2	Argumentative	The demon delights in contradictions and argument. It does not become physically aggressive but may be verbally abusive. It certainly sticks to its own point of view, rejecting out of hand the most reasoned cases put to it.
3	Arrogant	The demon treats those who interact with it as worthless scum, unfit to occupy the same physical space as itself. If the character might be useful in some capacity then the demon might deign to engage, but is otherwise contemptuous of such an inferior, mortal being.
4	Dismissive	The demon dismisses, without any discussion, anyone who tries to engage with it. Not a team player.
5	Domineering	The demon seeks to use Influence or threats of violence to browbeat anyone it meets into some form of service.
6	Hostile	The demon is hostile to all mortals. It attacks immediately.
7	Intrigued	The demon expresses a huge degree of interest in the character's motives. It spends 1D3 hours engaged in deep and detailed questions. At the end of this period, roll again on this table to determine the demon's final reaction.
8	Neutral	The demon has no strong opinions one way or another. It simply goes about its business.
9	Oblivious	The demon is oblivious to mortal life, living in its own existential bubble.
10	Welcoming	The demon is open, friendly and willing to engage in conversation. Friendship may result.

Spirits

Many types of spirit abound in Alkoth. They manifest as whirling masses of protoplasm, ghostly figures, fragrant (or foul-smelling) winds or a combination of all of these. The nature of the spirit is determined below.

Spirit Type

1D10	Spirit Type	Details
1-2	Fear Spirit	See page 124, <i>RuneQuest Monsters</i>
3-4	Healing Spirit	See page 123, <i>RuneQuest Monsters</i>
5-6	Madness Spirit	See page 124, <i>RuneQuest Monsters</i>
7-8	Magic Spirit	See page 123, <i>RuneQuest Monsters</i>
9-10	Pain Spirit	See page 125, <i>RuneQuest Monsters</i>

Vampire

For statistics, see page 140 of RuneQuest Monsters.

The Alkothi vampire is a specific forms of demon who feasts on the blood of Shargash's enemies. Those who are in Alkoth are generally immune to a vampire's predations, but use the Demon Attitudes table, above, to determine how the vampire views anyone it encounters.

Wraith

For statistics, see page 149 of RuneQuest Monsters.

The wraiths of Alkoth are malicious spirits that have been imprisoned in the surface layer of hell and are denied entry to Shargash's domain. They are tormented by demons and frustrated at their fate. They always take the shape of a ghostly, ghastly form of their former body, and all of them are enemies of Shargash. They are always hostile when approached and lash out indiscriminately at anyone who strays too close to their sorrowing, furious forms.

Gods of the City

Shargash in his various aspects is presented everywhere. Enormous statues of obsidian and granite stand in plazas. Elaborate friezes are carved into the sides of buildings or into the bases of the plinths on which his statues stand. The Devourer is a human-headed, lion-bodied creature with a gaping, long-toothed maw, ready to eat friend and foe alike. The Destroyer leers with contempt, holding a different weapon in each of his twelve hands, trampling foes beneath his taloned feet. The Lord of War wears a general's insignia on his scaled chest, rides in a chariot drawn by scorpions and bearing a spear in one hand and a flail in the other. The Lord of Death and Rebirth sits upon a throne of skulls, his right hand making the sign of peace to his faithful, whilst his left points to the forge of destruction where newly reborn souls are guided out of the underworld and towards Yelm's symbol of the sun.

Alkoth's city god, Alkor, is represented in two forms; that of Alkor the City, and as a son of Shargash. In the former Alkor is represented as a circular ziggurat with Yelm at its crest. In the latter Yelm presents Alkor to Shargash with the god's body bent into the circular shape of the torque that is the city walls.

There are other gods represented throughout Alkoth, each as minor deities of the celestial court. Biselenslib is the foremost of these; a goddess of the city, and concubine to Shargash, she is represented as a fair Dara Happan woman clad in a short tunic standing within the torque. She is considered to be a goddess of the lower castes and women, posing as the herald of rebirth as souls blessed by Shargash emerge from the underworld. Alkoth is sometimes thought to be her womb. Vantestos, a god of governorship and rule, is depicted in friezes giving supplication to Shargash and Yelm as he concedes to their divine might. Jajagapa, the dog-headed hunter and catcher of souls, is depicted as one of Shargash's hunting hounds, bringing the doomed into the underworld. Ordinarily Jajagapa is considered a base god, not to be worshipped by Dara Happans, but in Alkoth there is a small cult dedicated to his veneration.

Alkoth has many, many temples and shrines, dedicated to the gods listed above. The temples to Shargash are all ziggurats of at least six tiers, and the Grand Ziggurat at the centre of the city has ten. The temples

to Alkoth are known as enclosures and are circular and open to the sky; the city walls in miniature. Temples to Biselenslib are pyramids with the entrance reached by ten steep steps; temples to Vantestos are square and enclosed, the centrepiece being a throne acting as the altar. The few temples of Jajagapa are merely ornate shrines tucked away in corners of the city, and usually identifiable by a net hanging across the doorway, there to catch the souls of Alkoth's enemies.

The Three Kings

Three kings rule Alkoth. The first two, the Red King and the Green King, are mortal, but accorded divine status as befitting kings of a Dara Happan city and therefore as minor sons of Yelm. The third, the Black King, is a true and terrible demigod. All the kings of Alkoth are duty-bound to serve the true emperor of Dara Happa and each has pledged allegiance, just as all gods have pledged allegiance to Yelm. However, the position of the Golden Dragon is not so certain. The Red King fully accepts the Golden Dragon's position and has taken Lorenkarten the Mile as one of his counsel. The Green King has certain doubts, but listens to the Red King's ministrations and then makes up his own mind – although it would be considered a rebellion (and therefore a heresy) to act against the Red King's wishes where matters relating to war and the city are concerned. The Black King follows only the path of Shargash and cannot be commanded unless Shargash wills it. For now, the Black King seems accepting of the Golden Dragon emperor but that is only because Shargash seems to ignore the situation. If Shargash should change his opinion, so would the Black King.

The Red King carries complete authority over all matters pertaining to war and relations with the wider empire. The current Red King is Doramus Eskatos and, like all Red Kings, he is both a masterful warrior, unbeaten by any foe, and a High Priest of Shargash following the Destroyer aspect. His palace is a massive, fortified edifice in the shadow of the Grand Ziggurat where he receives emissaries from the empire and administers domestic policy via his Tenth. The Red King must be alerted to all matters that concern the safety of the city and the wider possibilities of war in the empire or at its borders. He grants audiences to those who bring such news if they can prove that they act in the name

of the emperor, but his patience is thin. Furthermore, he is counseled by Lorenkarten the Mile, the Eternal Dragon Ring member sent by the Golden Dragon to act as his emissary to Alkoth. Lorenkarten has the Red King's full attention and dictates many agendas. His influence ensures that Alkoth supports the Golden Dragon emperor and the Red King is seemingly keen to embrace the full meaning of draconic mysticism under Lorenkarten's tutelage.

The Green King commands the fertility of the croplands outside Alkoth's walls and is the High Priest of Alkor in his aspect as both City God and Son of Yelm, and is also the champion of Shargash in his aspect of The Purifier. The Green King is Lukius Manaser and he tends to follow the Red King's line on all matters, although he has private doubts concerning Lorenkarten's assurances that Dara Happan ways are safe under the Golden Dragon's rule. The Green King commands the Elevens, the elite mercenary warriors of Alkoth, and he has their complete loyalty. His palace is fortified, like that of the Red King, and stands on the east side of the city, in the direct shadow of the wall. Before the palace is the huge parade ground where the Elevens drill each day. Every evening the Elevens hold martial contests to remind the city of their skills with spear, sword and bow, using live targets whenever possible of criminals and enemies of Alkoth supplied by the other cities of Dara Happa. These unfortunates are the only people entering the city who do not undergo the Ritual Death when entering Alkoth because, being used to hone the skills of the Elevens, their souls are claimed directly by Shargash to be turned into ghosts, demons or Hellmen, as the Purifier so decides when their souls are received in hell.

The Black King is the most enigmatic of all. He has no palace and wanders the streets of Alkoth. He is the mystical, inner world of Shargash and has been referred to as Shargash's soul made flesh. The Black King could be confused for a Hellman; his body is crusted with ash from head to toe, and he moves with a jerky, disconcerting motion that seems impossible for the human physique to perform. When he speaks it is usually in the secret tongue of Shargash, a hissing, crackling, aggressive tongue that has no known translation but is clearly of divine origin. Yet the Black King can, and does, communicate in perfect Solar Pelorian when the occasion demands it, although he

appears to find the language difficult to form after so long speaking in Shargash's secretive, contorted mode. Everywhere the Black King goes a gaggle of people follows, waiting for some kind of blessing or divine providence to fall from his ash-stained lips. He climbs onto statues and plinths, or the stairs of the Grand Ziggurat, and declaims at length in his peculiar tongue, attracting crowds from across all levels of society. His speeches are booming and portentous; unintelligible but strangely moving to all who listen. Occasionally his gaze falls on a particular person and he singles them out for a muttered prayer which is always joyously received. Many have attempted to determine the meanings of the Black King, but, aside from a consensus that his words are deeply, deeply mystical, no one has been able to fathom the true nature of his rantings.

The Black King also commands a frightening power. By uttering one word – RAKAPAS – he can disintegrate or dissolve anything that displeases him. This terrifying ability, a manifestation of Shargash the Destroyer's name for enemies, proves that the Black King is a demigod. This power is rarely used but always feared whenever the Black King pauses during one of his mystical orations.

Significance of the Black King for the Characters

The Black King is of prime importance to the characters for the following reasons.

- ⊙ First, the Black King knows that the characters represent Karvanyar, and that Karvanyar represents the True Emperor of Dara Happa. If he can be persuaded, the Black King will make presentations to the Red and Green Kings to prove the adventurers are who they say they are.
- ⊙ Second, the Black King is the only person, aside from Alakoring Dragonbreaker, who can deal as an equal with Lorenkarten the Mile. Even Lorenkarten the Mile is subject to the Black King's Rakapas power although the Black King would only use it against Lorenkarten in exceptional circumstances that threatened Alkoth or Shargash's mystical interests.

- Third, the Red and Green Kings, despite having considerable power of their own, would never cross the Black King without a fundamental reason. The Red and Green Kings control political and a certain degree of military power, but the Black King controls the soul of the populace. Furthermore, if the Black King wills it, every single Hellman raised in Alkoth would fight for him, irrespective of who summoned it. The Black King is Shargash's soul in Alkoth, and controls the balance of power there. He has the ability to seize power from both Red and Green Kings and secure Shargash's mystical dominion over the city – but he does not, because it is not clear if such a radical course of action would be of any true benefit.

Salutations for the Three Kings

The characters' first duty is to seek audience with each of the three kings and deliver Karvanyar's words of friendship. Naturally enough the three kings have already heard of Karvanyar's return to Raibanth and his entry into the Golden Daughter Contest. Each king has been waiting for Karvanyar to present himself to seek the Treasures of War and the fact that he has sent the Seven Servants instead causes mixed reactions.

- The Red King considers it an insult, but masks his displeasure.
- The Green King understands that Karvanyar has additional tasks to perform and warns the characters that what they must achieve in Alkoth will not be easy.
- The Black King is expecting the characters. He, alone, is unsurprised at Karvanyar's actions.

Gaining audience with the Red and Green Kings is a matter of patience. Neither is prepared to suspend their normal business to accommodate Karvanyar's representatives. To see the Green King the adventurers must wait 1D6 days before an audience is granted. They cannot approach the Red King without meeting the Green King first, and to see the Red King they must wait a further 1D8 days.

Audience with the Green King

Lukius Manaser, the Green King, meets the characters in the audience chamber overlooking the parade ground where the Elevens undergo their regular drills. He is a stern-faced, seemingly dismissive man, clad in green robes of traditional Dara Happan finery. Despite his demeanor he listens intently to everything being said although his eyes flick around the room, refusing the fix on the characters.

He has several questions for the characters.

- How will Karvanyar rectify the poor harvests Dara Happa has suffered?
- How will he pay the Elevens if the Green King agrees to support Karvanyar's cause?
- How will Karvanyar deal with the inevitable backlash of the Great Dragons of the Eternal Dragon Ring?
- What will Karvanyar offer the Green King as a personal reward for his support?



None of the questions have an easy answer. Some suggestions are:

How will Karvanyar rectify the poor harvests Dara Happa has suffered?

Dendara's blessings will be sought. Lodril will be freed to make the earth whole again and Lesilla, the False Sun, will be made to know her place as a goddess of fertility. Dara Happa's enemies will be ground into ash to make the land rich and fertile.

How will he pay the Elevens if the Green King agrees to support Karvanyar's cause?

The Elevens will be paid in victory and honour. Karvanyar's personal guard will be drawn from the Elevens and he will ensure that they are the first into the battles that will be fought in the near future.

How will Karvanyar deal with the inevitable backlash of the Great Dragons of the Eternal Dragon Ring?

As Urvairinus used reason and wisdom against his enemies, so will Karvanyar make the dragons see reason. If they will not see reason, then there is a way of breaking them.

What will Karvanyar offer the Green King as a personal reward for his support?

Alkoth's lands beyond the Enclosure shall be extended. New seeds and grain will be brought to the city walls and these shall make the finest crops for Alkoth's citizens.

If the answers the characters provide approximate the above, the Green King says that he will think upon the matter but will make no commitment one way or the other. Alkor must be consulted and Shargash placated. However the characters are given leave to remain in Alkoth as long as they abide by the city's laws and pay their respects at the temple of Alkor.

In the matter of the Treasures of War, Lukius Manaser is more forthright.

'The Treasures are there for the taking, if one can best the challenges Shargash has set to guard them. In my keeping is the Chariot of Rage and I will tell you how it is reached. By entering Alkoth you have become ritually dead. By pursuing the Chariot of Rage, you will need to travel into the very realms of the dead – and there is no guarantee of a return.'

The Green King promises to elaborate more on how the Chariot is reached once they have met with the Red and Black Kings – they are told to return when this is accomplished.

Audience with the Red King

Doramus Eskatos, the Red King, is more difficult to gain audience with but, eventually, agrees to give the characters audience. He keeps them waiting for hours in a succession of antechambers that several indifferent chamberlains usher them to. Finally, after many hours of waiting, with no refreshments being offered, he meets with them in his throne room.

The Red King, garbed in scarlet finery, is seated in a throne cut from a single, massive ruby. He is domineering and disdainful, continually interjecting and pulling petulant, contemptuous expressions. Neither is he alone. Seated quietly on the far side of the auditorium is a solitary figure, dressed in simple robes of shimmering silver that are almost liquid in the way they flow about his body. This is Lorenkarten the Mile. His expression is passive as the characters present themselves, but he watches and listens intently, although he does not say a word. If the characters enquire after his name the Red King turns on them with fury for their impertinence, but does not terminate the audience.

Like the Green King he has several specific questions.

- I have heard of war brewing. How is Alkoth and the empire threatened? Who is the enemy?
- Karvanyar might compete for the Golden Dragon's daughter's hand in marriage, but how can I be sure he does not plan something far more sinister? How can Karvanyar be trusted?
- Is the Golden Dragon emperor's position secure?
- You bring words of friendship. Why does Karvanyar not bring these words personally if he is so keen on friendship?
- Will Karvanyar, if he successfully marries the Golden Daughter, embrace the draconic path?

Suggested answers:

I have heard of war brewing. How is Alkoth and the empire threatened? Who is the enemy?

The enemy rises in Dorastor. It threatens the whole of the east. It respects no authority save its own.

Karvanyar might compete for the Golden Dragon's daughter's hand in marriage, but how can I be sure he does not plan something far more sinister? How can Karvanyar be trusted?

Karvanyar is a just and honest man. His word is his bond as a Dara Happan of noble blood.

Is the Golden Dragon emperor's position secure?

The Golden Dragon emperor has passed the Ten Tests. He is clothed in the radiance of Antirius and occupies the Imperial Footrest. He is secure by Yelm's wisdom, grace and justice.

You bring words of friendship. Why does Karvanyar not bring these words personally if he is so keen on friendship?

Karvanyar wishes no disrespect. He has gone in search of more information regarding Dara Happa's enemies. When he has it, he will bring news personally.

Will Karvanyar, if he successfully marries the Golden Daughter, embrace the draconic path?

Karvanyar is a man of duty and integrity. He sees the true way of things and embraces change where it is for the common good of all Dara Happs.

The Red King accepts each answer with a snort of derision. When the characters have finished he turns to Lorenkarten and asks his counselor if he has any questions. Lorenkarten has but one question and he delivers it in a polite, calm, even tone. 'Do *you* trust Karvanyar? Do you trust him with all your heart?'

He listens carefully to the characters' answers but makes no comment. If there is any distrust, even the slightest, in the characters' responses, he senses it. To hide any misgivings they might have, the characters need to make Persistence tests opposed by Lorenkarten's Draconic Illumination skill of 120%. If he succeeds, he senses immediately any failure in the characters' trust – although, for now, he says nothing.

On the matter of the Treasures of War, the Red King is prepared to talk. 'The Veil of Victory is in my keeping and I have gifted it to my First Wife. If you can convince her to give it to you, then I will not stop you, for that will be Shargash's will.'

Like the Green King, the Red King refuses to give the characters immediate information on the veil's location but tells them to return after they have met with the Black King. If the characters have already done so, they are told to return in three days; the Red King has other matters requiring his attention.

Audience with the Black King

The Black King's trust is highly desirable for the characters. But, as he has no palace and wanders the city, meeting him is as much a matter of chance as it is design. After meeting with the Red King 1D10 days lapses before the Black King is spotted in Alkoth's streets, either preaching in his strange, inhuman tongue, or wandering silently, pushing through demons, Hellmen and other undead as if they were inconsequential beings.

If the characters appear in any general audience the Black King conducts, he singles them out for one of his special blessings. If he is encountered casually in the street, he lapses into common Solar Pelorian to welcome them as the Seven Servants. However the Black King is not without his own agenda. If he is to aid the characters in any way, he has no questions, as have the other kings, but he does have conditions – and all three must be met in full.

- He wants at least one of the characters to convert fully to the cult of Shargash the Mystic and to act as his emissary to the new court Karvanyar will institute when he becomes emperor. The Black King does not care who this is, but it is a phenomenal undertaking since it requires a far more radical ritual death and rebirth than the standard entry requirement for Alkoth. The character will have to journey into the depths of Hell itself and emerge from the other side, just as the Black King has done. Such an undertaking breaks the human mind as it becomes a conduit for the esoteric mysticism of Shargash's inner secrets. It does, effectively, end a player character's life. Start a new Player Character.

- The Black King wants the Golden Dragon emperor's daughter to be brought to Alkoth to live, whatever the outcome of the marriage contest. He does not reveal why and this task may seem impossible for the characters to agree to, but it is actually better for the emperor's daughter in the long-run and the characters should realise this, in time.
- The characters are warned outright that 'Karvanyar makes easy promises and will do so for the Good of Dara Happa. Yet he will break them with equal ease, to its detriment.' He demands that each character acknowledges this as a fundamental truth and swear an oath to Shargash that they, as the Seven Servants, will do everything in their power to 'Keep every promise the Son of a Poor Woman makes from being broken'.

Once these conditions have been agreed to, the Black King reveals what he knows of the Treasures of War – that the Chariot of Rage resides in the true realm of hell and is in the possession of a god; that the Veil of Victory already serves one purpose but must be made to serve another; and that the Bridle of Victory secures one of Dara Happa's enemies held prisoner in the Grand Ziggurat. He can lead the way to the Bridle but, as servants of destiny, the characters must work out for themselves how to take it. Wherever the Black King goes he is trailed by Virenastys Ashencloak, the Black King's self-proclaimed disciple. See the description on page 144 on how this duplicitous Shargashi might hamper the characters.

Tea with the Great Dragon

Following their audience with the Red King, but before they have chance to return to him, the characters receive a message inviting them back to the Grand Ziggurat. The invitation is delivered verbally by a zombie servant which says, in an echoing, deeply disturbing voice of pain and misery:

'His Excellency, Lorenkarten, adviser to His Royal Majesty, the Red King, invites you to take tea with him in his chambers this evening.'

Once the message has been delivered the zombie collapses into a heap of rotting flesh before the characters' eyes.

Lorenkarten's chambers in the Grand Ziggurat are opulent in comparison with Alkoth's usual frugality. Draconic images are everywhere; across the neat drapes separating his living chamber from the sleeping area and, on a narrow pedestal of marble, there stands an alabaster statue of a wingless serpentine dragon curling its coils as it runs through the air. If the characters have not realised who Lorenkarten is, then the draconic relics in his private chambers soon reveal it.

Lorenkarten proves to be a genial host. He exudes smooth charm as he greets the characters, inviting them to sit whilst he prepares and serves a fragrant tea 'from the lands of the Kralori. My favourite blend,' he says as he hands a delicate cupful to each character. The tea is not poisoned and very refreshing, if strangely sweet.

After making idle chatter for a few minutes Lorenkarten comes to the reason for summoning the characters. 'I know of Karvanyar, of course. I know who *you* are. Dara Happa needs heroes; we face testing times and you have proved beyond doubt your loyalty and worth by coming to Alkoth to represent your master.

'But I wanted to speak with you to offer you a warning. You believe that Karvanyar will drive the Dragon from Dara Happa, yes? I know that he does. Well, we all need *something* to believe in. But I wanted to warn you that Karvanyar, for all his noble intentions, may not be the sun-haired hero you believe him to be. He wields great power and influence, but so do we who follow the ways of dragons and one thing we have learned is that the judicious use of power and influence only comes with time, maturity and consideration. Karvanyar is young, rash and headstrong, led by his untempered ideals. He is filled with promises that are easily made but far more difficult to keep.' He pauses to see what effects his words are having.

'If he plans to truly marry the Golden Dragon's daughter then he will have no option but to embrace the draconic way and become a part of the Great Dragon to Be. *No option at all.* He knows this truth but has perhaps not articulated it. Once the way of the dragon has been embraced then he will be blessed with much wisdom and he may make a fine and wise emperor. With time he may even make a fine and wise dragon. He will certainly learn much as the Golden Dragon's son, and under the emperor's tutelage ascend to great deeds.

An Acolyte Scorned

Virenastus Ashencloak has spent his entire life traipsing after the Black King, having been moved to the point of epiphany by one of the Black Kings unintelligible sermons twenty years ago. In that time Virenastus has acted as his acolyte, rallying supporters, carrying messages, and generally attending to the Black King's every need and whim (and there are many; a number unsavoury). He has done all this unbidden, unthanked and, largely, unrecognised but continues to do so because he firmly believes that, one day, he will be chosen by the Black King to become a true servant of Shargash the Mystic and be inculcated into the deep meanings of Shargash's true power. Virenastus hopes to do nothing less than assume the Black King's mantle and it is therefore with some alarm and jealousy that he watches the characters carefully – if and when they engage with the Black King and agree to what he wants.

Virenastus is a cunning, malicious fellow; quite the opposite of the Black King. He is prepared to lie, cheat and sour his way into power and if the characters appear to be becoming between him and his destiny, he acts to get rid of them. Virenastus uses a variety of techniques to do this:

- Spying for the Red King and Lorenkarten, reporting on what the characters want, do and agree
- Creating false leads and other hindrances for the characters
- Summoning Hellmen and other creatures of the underworld to harass and even kill the characters
- Finally, as a way of taking revenge on the Black King, he agrees to become a full member of the EWF at Lorenkarten's suggestion, embracing the draconic mysticism above that of Shargash and becoming a lackey of the Eternal Dragon Ring.

He is cunning, but not rash. He ensures that the characters always feel comfortable in his presence and does nothing to threaten them directly. He keeps his animosity under close control and even appears to help them from time to time in order to maintain the façade. Underneath this helpful veneer he is a seething mass of resentment and hatred. In truth he does not have the faculties to understand the true ways of mystical path, Shargashi or draconic, and is always doomed to remain unenlightened. He is, though, a competent magician and is prepared to use his magic to have his revenge on the characters.

Virenastus' Characteristics: STR 9, CON 10, SIZ 12, INT 14, POW 16, DEX 8, CHA 10

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-5
4-6	Left Leg	-5
7-9	Abdomen	-6
10-12	Chest	-7
13-15	Right Arm	-4
16-18	Left Arm	-4
19-20	Head	-5

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Club	27%	1D6 2/4

CA: 3 SR: +12 Move: 4m MP: 16

Skills: Acrobatics 16%, Athletics 20%, Dodge 22%, Evaluate 28%, Influence 51%, Language (Solar Pelorian) 90%, Lore (Dara Happa) 51%, Lore (Alkoth) 85%, Lore (Shargash Theology) 85%, Lore (World) 22%, Perception 23%, Persistence 26%, Resilience 25%, Stealth 16%, Throwing 20%, Unarmed 18%

Runes Integrated: Death, Runecasting 85%, Fire, Runecasting 77%

Rune Magic: Bludgeon 2 and 4, Demoralise, Fireblade, Ignite

Divine Magic: Crush 2, Sinews of Shargash

If, however, Karvanyar plans rebellion, you should know that we of the Eternal Dragon Ring will not hesitate to crush it. We do not fear mortals, nor do we seek civil war. But if pressed we shall break Karvanyar and those who stand with him as easily as a fox snaps the neck of a chicken. Alkoth will rise up against any who challenge the Golden Dragon emperor. You have seen the horrors it holds and it will disgorge them if the stability of the empire is threatened.'

Lorenkarten's eyes suddenly turn into the green, slitted orbs of a dragon. He seems to grow and lengthen, his silvery robes flowing outwards and forming glistening, watery scales across his skin. His head starts to lengthen and become serpentine, his arms and legs forming talons. He continues to talk as he effects his draconic transformation. 'I, Lorenkarten, command the waters through the power of Aroka. With a word from me Oslira herself will coil back and break her banks, as she did when Anaxial ruled. I will swamp Dara Happa with her writhing, venomous body, drowning all who oppose the emperor.'

His body now fills the chamber, pressing the characters up towards the wall. He is fully a dragon now; coiling, serpentine, a creature of awe and beauty that is silvery and glistening. His power manifest is immense – the full potency of draconic potential displayed for all to see. This is no illusion and not some kind of spell; it is a glimpse of Lorenkarten's true, draconic form.

The characters cannot escape because Lorenkarten fills the room but, just as his draconic form seems poised to crush them, he lets it lapse and returns to the human.

'I believed you should witness what I am. Only a few in Alkoth have ever seen my true form. You must go now. I wish you well in the challenges that face you as you try to gain the Treasures of War and, if you succeed, I hope you will heed what I have said of Karvanyar and help him to see reason, not *rebellion*. Go, in peace and with the grace of Aroka in your hearts.'

Witnessing the power of a Great Dragon may leave a lasting effect on the characters. Each must make a Persistence test. Those who *succeed* it are filled immediately with misgivings about Karvanyar's plans, whatever they may be. Lorenkarten's words carry truth and there is no doubting that this man commands the waters of the world through his deep relationship with Aroka.

Those characters who fail the Persistence test are awed and moved by Lorenkarten's demonstration of power. They receive the Draconic Illumination skill at a level equal to their POW Characteristic. This is not sufficient to turn them to the draconic path, but it is sufficient to impress in their hearts and minds the potential of the draconic way – the power inherent in all that stems from the Cosmic Dragon and can be realised, given the right purity of purpose and mind. If the Persistence test was fumbled, then the Draconic Illumination skill is at INT+POW.

URVANYAR?

If Urvanyar was captured by the Sun Dragon Dancers, he has been brought to Alkoth for questioning by Lorenkarten. At the end of the meeting with the characters, Lorenkarten returns the old, blind warrior to them 'As proof that I am not a monster.'

Urvanyar is shaken but unharmed. He says he was either drugged or placed under a spell because he has no recollection of how he arrived in Alkoth. Lorenkarten, he says, questioned him at length on Karvanyar's plans, 'But I told him nothing he did not already know, suspect or foresee,' he says, wearily. 'I faced Lorenkarten when Dismanthuyar was emperor and we battled the dragons together. I know what he is capable of doing and knowing. He is scared of Karvanyar – I know that much. Also, he is scared of something my son has planned, but even I do not know what that is and Karvanyar will keep such secrets very close to his heart.'

Urvanyar knows Alkoth from his days as a general of Dara Happa's armies, and he has friends here. Rather than be a burden on the characters he suggests that he stay with these friends who reside at the barracks of the Elevens, close to the Green King's palace. 'I will be safe there, I think, and I can offer you counsel if you need it. Fare you well in what you need to do.'

Searching for the Treasures of War

Others have come to Alkoth before to compete in the Golden Daughter Contest but none have succeeded; the Red King, in particular, knows that it will take exceptional skills and heroes to secure the Treasures of War and sees no particular reason to hinder the characters any more than will the challenges themselves.

Each treasure has several challenges associated with its successful completion. There is a logical way through these challenges, but the logical way is by no means the *only* way. The characters should be rewarded (though not without risk) for ingenuity of planning, reasoning and finding their own, innovative solutions.

The logical path is:

- Gain the Veil of Victory from the Red King's First Wife, the Scarlet Concubine
- Drape the veil over the Ram God to calm it, thereby taking the Bridle of War
- Use the Bridle of War to control the horses pulling the Chariot of Rage and lead the chariot from the underworld and into the city.
- The Ram God should then be teamed with the Chariot of Rage so that it can bring all three Treasures back to the Imperial Footrest,

If the characters have found favour with the Black King, he might hint at the sequence, but is unlikely to make it obvious. He may also give the characters a start by giving them his stinking, ragged, smoke-streaked cloak which can be used as a replacement for the Veil but from there on in, the characters need to face each challenge and overcome it to gain the prize.

The Veil of Victory

The Veil of Victory is worn by the Red King's foremost wife, the Scarlet Concubine. She resides in the Red Harem with the other wives and the characters need to gain entry and then either steal the veil or convince

the Scarlet Concubine to give to them. As one might expect, the harem is well guarded and the Scarlet Concubine is unwilling to part with a divine treasure.

The Veil also hides the Scarlet Concubine's ugliness and insanity from the world. She is a foremost servant of Gorgorma and her appearance and nature has twisted to mirror that of her goddess. The Red King cannot look upon her because to do so is to go mad. The Scarlet Concubine was, however, a gift from Shargash and so the Red King is powerless to remove her from his harem; he had to beg Shargash for the Veil of Victory so that he might enter the harem safely and still retain his wits.

Taking the Veil

When the characters return to the Grand Ziggurat, as instructed by the Red King, they are greeted by Lorenkaten in the royal audience chamber where they first met. The king is nowhere to be seen.

'His majesty has commanded me to outline the challenge before you. The Veil of Victory is in the trust of the king's foremost wife, the Scarlet Concubine (and no, I have never met her). You must know that the Scarlet Concubine is, herself, a demigoddess and so she deserves your absolute respect. To gain the veil you must convince her to give it to you. Whether she agrees or not depends on how you ask and what you offer in return.

The Scarlet Concubine commands the harem and no man, save the king himself, is permitted to enter it on pain of death without the Scarlet Concubine's permission. You will need that before you can even contemplate negotiating for the veil.'

He smiles an oily smile. 'I wish you every success, Seven Servants. This is a test for true heroes.'

The characters are given one day to prepare their plan, if they need it. Lorenkaten leaves them alone and does not eavesdrop. When they are ready, he escorts the characters up through the ziggurat to the third tier and the wing that houses the harem.

The entrance to the harem (a huge, marble archway with a thick, wooden door) is guarded by a single, massive, Shargashi guard. This giant of a man is completely bald, bare-chested, and wears loose-fitting, baggy trousers of red silk that are gathered at his ankles. On his left hip is a huge, sharp, scimitar.

The bodyguard, Vostos, has Sinews of Shargash prepared and ready to cast, boosting his physical strength and presence. His sword is enhanced with Bladesharp 5. If he needs assistance in a fight, he can summon a Hellman from a brazier of ash that is located just to the left of his guard station. He is mute, but is not deaf and not stupid. Aside from the Red King he is the only man who may enter the harem because he has been castrated, and the characters need to convince him, somehow, to enter the harem and seek the Scarlet Concubine's permission for the characters to enter.

If Vostos is attacked, he retaliates brutally. Anyone trying to barge past him is repelled with violent force. When he fights, he fights to the death. Death holds no fear for him; it will merely take him to his most beloved Lord, Shargash.

VOSTOS

Characteristics: STR 18, CON 18, SIZ 18, INT 10, POW 14, DEX 10, CHA 8

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-7
4-6	Left Leg	-7
7-9	Abdomen	-8
10-12	Chest	-9
13-15	Right Arm	-6
16-18	Left Arm	-6
19-20	Head	-7

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Scimitar	95%	1D8+1D6 4/8

CA: 2 SR: +10 Move: 4m MP: 14

Skills: Acrobatics 30%, Athletics 30%, Dodge 80%, Evaluate 10%, Influence 18%, Language (Solar

Pelorian) 60%, Lore (Dara Happa) 20%, Lore (Alkoth) 50%, Lore (Shargash Theology) 85%, Lore (Harem) 80%, Lore (World) 10%, Perception 40%, Persistence 45%, Resilience 55%, Stealth 20%, Throwing 60%, Unarmed 87%

Runes Integrated: Death, Runecasting 77%,

Rune Magic: Bladesharp 1,2 & 3, Demoralise, Ignite

Divine Magic: Crush, Sinews of Shargash, Summon Hellman, Dispel Hellman

Convincing Vostos requires the characters to argue successfully that it is Shargash's will that the Scarlet Concubine should permit them entry to the harem. Vostos views the world entirely in terms of what Shargash does and does not approve of. To abstract these negotiations, characters can pit the following skills (with applicable modifiers) against Vostos's Shargash Theology lore:

- Influence -40%
- Lore (Alkoth) -20%
- Lore (Dara Happa) -40%
- Lore (Shargash Theology) – no modifier
- Lore (Solar Theology) -30%

(Apply a bonus of between +5% and +15% for any roleplaying excellence the players bring to bear in their negotiations.)

For each failed attempt to persuade Vostos, the subsequent attempt suffers a further -5% penalty. If an attempt to convince him fumbles, then Vostos grows angry and summons a Hellman. He then attacks whoever made the fumbled attempt himself whilst the Hellman deals with the rest of the party. The fracas also summons 1D6+1 additional ziggurat guards, all with similar statistics to Vostos (but not the Divine Magic), who arrive within 1D6 combat rounds to assist Vostos in dealing with the characters.

If Vostos can be successfully convinced he offers a gargantuan grunt, a deep sigh and a shrug of mountain range shoulders, but turns and lumbers into the harem, returning a few minutes or an age later. He holds open the door, and allows the characters inside, shaking his head sadly.

The Harem

The Red King has eleven wives including the Scarlet Concubine, who is foremost. The harem is a room of red; red walls, curtains, rugs, floor and furniture. In each quarter of the room are huge cushions where the wives, clad in diaphanous gowns of red, smoky material, lounge languidly. The women are veiled but their beauty is undoubted. Each has a sorrowful expression as the characters move through and they avert their gaze as they pass. They do not enter into conversation; they may speak only to the Scarlet Concubine or the Red King, facing death if they speak with anyone else.

The Scarlet Concubine's area is easy to find. A heavy set of curtains, trimmed with black fringes, form an arch into a room suffused with deep red light. Within it the foremost wife resides, resting on a ziggurat of red wood surmounted by vast red cushions.

She is huge. Corpulent and unable to move she controls the harem and Vostos with mental commands. The Scarlet Concubine lounges, awaiting the characters, rolls of red flesh hanging over the edges of the cushions, fat, tree-trunk arms outspread and fat, tree-trunk legs, curled beneath a backside of mythical proportions.

Her face is hidden by the Veil of Victory. It is a huge stretch of shimmering gold cloth that radiates magic and power. The material obscures her features completely but she raises her head as the characters enter. 'State your business then leave, or die,' she says in a thick, languid voice.

The Scarlet Concubine is a demon demi-goddess. A daughter of Gorgorma and Shargash she worships the former and is a gift from the latter. The Veil of Victory restrains her powers and she wants rid of it. An ambitious, vengeful creature she would control the Red King if she could, but the Veil helps to keep her in her place as his wife. Her vows to both Gorgorma and Shargash mean that she cannot use her powers against her husband but she is still desperate to find a way around this geas. If she could, she would be the Red Queen of Alkoth, serving both Shargash and Gorgorma equally.

The characters may make all kinds of entreaties explaining why they need the Veil and she listens patiently to each, saying nothing. Finally, when they

are done, she speaks. 'Take it,' she says, 'if you will give me something in return.'

The Red Queen finds the following alternative gifts acceptable, suggesting them if they are not offered or guessed at by the characters:

- A pint of tears from each character (each character must think sorrowful thoughts and make a Persistence test. To sob uncontrollably until a pint of tears is generated requires three failures and takes several days. The Scarlet Concubine aids the process by sending dismal, saddening thoughts to the characters mentally
- The Black King's Cloak
- A sacrifice of 1 point of POW (taken in the form of a pint of blood) from each character
- A kiss upon the lips from each character

In the case of a kiss, this is demanded after the Veil of Victory is removed. It requires a Resilience test to deliver, if the character has maintained his wits (or, perhaps, lost them utterly).

When gifts are agreed upon, the character with the highest POW is invited to remove the Veil.

The Scarlet Concubine, being a demon and demi-goddess, is phenomenally horrific to gaze upon. Her features are gnarled, twisted, scorched and deformed. Her forehead is lined with lidless eyes, her nose a gaping wound in the centre of her face and her huge mouth filled with tiny, razor-sharp teeth. Her hair is made of strands of iron and copper which writhe with a life of their own.

Gazing upon the Scarlet Concubine is to invite insanity. Every character who glimpses the horror beneath the Veil must match his Persistence against hers in an opposed contest, suffering a -40% penalty. Consult the table below to determine the outcome.

Critical Success – the character resists flinching or gasping, remaining placid despite the awfulness of her appearance. He gains 1 point of POW permanently from the experience.

Success – the character averts his eyes as the ghastly face is revealed, but remains relatively unaffected. His dreams will be filled with images of the Scarlet



Concubine periodically for the next ten years, although she calls to him soothingly through those dreams.

Failure – the character is driven temporarily insane by the experience. He runs, howling, from the harem. Everything in Alkoth is ten times more terrifying than it was and he is forced to find a secluded, quiet spot, far from Hellmen, demons and zombies, curl into a fetal ball and sob, uncontrollably, for precisely ten days. If the character was the one who took the Veil, it is dropped as he flees the harem.

Fumble – the character is driven permanently insane. He is filled with uncontrollable desire for the Scarlet Concubine and she is delighted to accommodate his lust there and then. Coupling with her is like coupling with the fires of hell itself, but, his mind broken and bent to her will, he endures the agony. When they are finished the character is the Scarlet Concubine's mad and raving slave, tormented by continued lust for her divine body. He will never leave her side, becoming her love-slave until Shargash comes to claim his soul.

The Scarlet Concubine cannot be harmed by mortal weapons and neither can she be injured by Rune magic. Only Divine spells can inflict any form of damage. If attacked, she counters with her own magic, and mentally summons Viskos and 1D6+1 other, similar, guards to her aid.

The Scarlet Concubine

Characteristics: STR 29, CON 18, SIZ 27, INT 19, POW 25, DEX 4, CHA -20

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	3/9
4-6	Left Leg	3/9
7-9	Abdomen	3/10
10-12	Chest	3/11
13-15	Right Arm	3/8
16-18	Left Arm	3/8
19-20	Head	6/9

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
None		

CA: 1 **SR:** +12 **DM:** +1D12 **Move:** 1m **MP:** 25

Skills: Acrobatics 01%, Athletics 01% Dodge 03% Evaluate 100%, Influence 100%, Language (Solar Pelorian) 100%, Lore (Dara Happa) 80%, Lore (Alkoth) 100%, Lore (Shargash Theology) 99%, Lore (Gorgorma Theology) 100%, Lore (World) 5%, Perception 30%, Persistence 90%, Resilience 85%, Stealth 01%, Throwing 01%, Unarmed 01%

Armour: Rolls of flesh across her body. Metal, writhing hair. No skill penalty

Runes Integrated: Death, Runecasting 110%, Earth, Runecasting 90%

Rune Magic: Bladesharp 1, 2 and 4, Bludgeon 2 and 4, Demoralise, Slow

Divine Magic: Command Pain Spirit, Command Eunuchs, Command Skeleton, Command Zombie, Waste Loins

If (or when) the characters gain the Veil of Victory, they find it is almost weightless, despite being a sizable circle of some unearthly material. It is warm to the touch and very soothing; aggressive characters feel relaxed when handling the veil and aggressive thoughts and feelings are easily assuaged.

If the Scarlet Concubine has been appeased by one of the conditions described earlier, the characters are allowed to leave the harem safely, taking the veil with them. They have successfully secured one of the Treasures of War and Lorekarten, waiting for them at the entrance to the Grand Ziggurat, congratulates them. 'Shargash's treasures are not safe from true heroes, it would seem. Or, perhaps, Shargash is not the vindictive god Dara Happans claim him to be... who can tell?'

The Bridle of War

This is worn by the spirit of the Ram God which is chained in the bowels of the city, between the mortal world and the underworld. To be able to take the bridle the characters must be able to tame the Ram God and defeat its protectors. Whilst the Ram God is held within Alkoth it cannot cause any harm to the city, since it was mythically defeated and killed by Shargash and Urvairinus after it threatened Elempur.

The Ram God's Prison

Only the Black King can access the Ram God's prison. When he is certain the characters are ready to face the challenge, he leads them through the maze of Alkoth's backstreets until they arrive at a minor temple to Shargash Imprisoner. It is a squat, black building made of cooled lava and polished to a mirror's brilliance. It appears to have no door but when the Black King runs a palm across the surface of the mirror an archway forms, silently, from the polished stone. A steep, wide staircase leads deep into the earth beyond the archway and the Black King stands to one side, leering at the characters as they file through, whispering prayers in his peculiar language. He answers no questions about what they will find; he simply screws his grubby face into a sneer and waves them into the darkness beyond the city.

The stairs are narrow and steep. The passageway is dark and it turns pitch-black as the Black King seals the fissure behind them. If they have no light, each character must make a successful Athletics test to prevent from falling. If any character falls, he tumbles down the stairs for 1D6 metres, sustaining 1 point of damage to a random hit location for every metre fallen, ignoring any armour.

It is impossible to tell how far the stairs descend. Time seems to have lost all relevance. Each character must make three Resilience tests to prevent from gaining a level of fatigue as they negotiate the stairs. Eventually the stairs end in a wide, rough-hewn passage that curves to the left ahead of them. Frail torchlight offers some poor illumination from whatever is around the corner and the characters can hear the sound of snorting, stamping and bellowing.



The passageway opens into a vast, circular chamber. The chamber has no other exits and its ceiling is so high and dark as to be invisible, but the snorting and bellowing echoes around the chamber at an almost deafening level. It is impossible for the characters to make themselves heard above this noise and some form of non-verbal communication is needed.

In the centre of the chamber is a great pit. Within the pit is a gigantic ram, its four horns curving into vicious points. Its eyes blaze with fire and its black lips are pulled back to reveal immense, tombstone teeth and a black, flickering tongue. Its fleece is made of iron wire, thick and dark grey. It stamps and thrashes with its huge hooves, digging great gouges into the stone of the chamber floor. Even though it is not tethered it cannot escape the pit. Around its head and forequarters is a bridle made of brilliant silver light – and this is what the characters seek. The Bridle of War is secured by a buckle of polished iron, so big that it takes three men to haul it open.

And this is what the characters must do: climb onto the Ram God's back, open the bridle and remove it. If the Ram God is not calmed in some way, it is free to leave the pit and rampage through the chamber or up the stairs and into Alkoth itself.

The Ram God can be calmed in one of three ways:

- ◉ The Veil of Victory, draped over its head, immediately pacifies it. It ceases its struggle and can be commanded by whoever has placed the veil upon it, following as meekly as any sheep to a shearing.
- ◉ Offer it worship and dedicate at least three points of POW in the process. Each point of POW dedicated grants the worshipper a +10% bonus to an Influence test. If the Influence test succeeds in an opposed contest with the Ram God's Persistence, then the Ram God accepts the commands of its worshipper.
- ◉ Divine Intervention from Shargash or Urvairinus. Calling upon one or other of the gods to calm the Ram God results in an avatar of the god – a hunched, armour clad warrior of incredible proportions, in the case of Shargash; or a radiant, dazzling nobleman of human size

in the case of Urvairinus – appearing in the chamber and whispering to the Ram God. The Ram God devours the avatar but becomes calm as a result.

If the Ram God cannot be calmed, then the characters must brave its rage and try to release the Bridle of War. In doing so, they also release the god and will need to use their speed and wits to escape to the surface first where the Black King can use his own magic to keep the god sealed in its prison and Alkoth's streets free of its fury.

Releasing the Bridle of War requires three characters to leap onto the creature's back. This requires Athletics rolls at a penalty of -20% as the Ram God thrashes and stamps. Any character who fails the leap must make either a Dodge or Athletics test to avoid being trampled by the huge, flailing hooves. If the test fumbles, then the Dodge or Athletics skill is halved.

Once on the creature's back, it requires two Athletics tests each combat round, both at -20%, to remain in place. The first roll is for maintaining grip and balance; the second for unfastening the bridle. If the first test fails, then the character falls and must avoid the hooves, as described above. It requires three successful sets of tests from three characters to unfasten the Bridle.

The Ram God

Because the Ram God has been defeated in battle and mythically killed, it is a mortal creature and can be slain by humans – if enough damage can be mustered.

Characteristics: STR 35, CON 28, SIZ 40, INT 12, POW 20, DEX 22, CHA 1

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-2	Right Rear Leg	8/8
3-4	Left Rear Leg	8/8
5-7	Hindquarters	12/9
8-10	Chest	12/10
11-13	Right Front Leg	8/7
14-16	Left Front Leg	8/7
17-20	Head	10/8

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Hoof Trample	60%	3D6+1D12
Gore (Horns)	45%	2D8+1D12
Headbutt	35%	1D10+1D12

CA: 4 **SR:** +17 **Move:** 6m **MP:** 20

Skills: Acrobatics 40%, Athletics 70%, Dodge 20%, Evaluate 20%, Influence 10%, Lore (Ram God Theology) 200%, Perception 90%, Persistence 90%, Resilience 95%, Stealth 01%

Armour: Thickened skin and iron fleece of varying thicknesses across the body. No skill penalty.

Divine Magic: Command Sheep, Command Ram Spirits

If the Ram God is released from the Bridle but unpacified, it spends 3D6 rounds charging around the chamber, goring the walls and attempting to break free of its prison. It finally realises that the only way out is through the passage and up the stairs. The Ram God can modify its own SIZ to fit into the passageway and negotiate the stairs and it will trample, gore or headbutt anything that gets in its way, for the damage noted in its statistics.

If the Ram God reaches the top of the stairs before the characters, it breaks free into Alkoth and runs riot, striking at temples of Shargash and trampling citizens underfoot. The Green King dispatches the Elevens to deal with the god, and calls upon Shargash and Alkor to subdue it, which they do, but not until the Ram God has caused considerable damage to the city. Once captured, the Black King leads it, stamping and snarling, back to its prison where it will be rebound with bonds more powerful than the Bridle of War.

Using the Bridle and the Ram God

If the Ram God has been pacified (with the Veil or something else), the bridle can be taken or the Ram God led out of its prison as a meek, if huge, beast of burden. The god can be used to draw the Chariot of Rage; but, if the characters only emerge with the Bridle, it can be used to control the fiery horses that are currently teamed to the chariot.

Either way, securing the Bridle *and* the Veil are the key goals. The next involves securing the Chariot of Rage.

The Chariot of Rage

One of many war chariots Shargash used to crush his enemies, it has been stolen by the god Ergesh, who uses it now to ferry souls through hell. To obtain it, the characters must trick Ergesh into letting them take the reins, and must then tame the Horses of Fire that draw the chariot. Finally they must ride out of the underworld defeating the demon horrors that will try to prevent them from leaving, and ride through the streets of Alkoth as proof of the success of their quest.

To do all this, they must be prepared to enter hell itself. Alkoth is hell's outer realm – the First Hell; its most human, acceptable level. The chariot plies the routes between the First and Third Hells, the realm of demons and wraiths that, unless engaged on specific business, are hateful of the living.

The entrance to the Second Hell is via the Green King's palace. When the characters present themselves to the Green King, as instructed, he tells them that their very souls are at risk in this challenge. 'Your gods will not help you in hell, unless your god is Shargash. And to enter hell you must be prepared to sunder your souls from your bodies; only flesh born of Shargash can enter his realm although he is happy to accept any souls straying into his domain.

Assuming the characters accept this challenge, the Green King himself leads them into the grand and great shrine to Shargash at the centre of his palace. The shrine is an immense room of many pillars and columns, at one end a vast bronze statue of Shargash the Devourer, a demonic sphinx with mouth agape, a maul clasped in one paw and a scythe in the other. In front of the statue, fully ten metres across, is a pit that stretches down into the darkness.

'Throw yourselves into the pit,' the Green King says. 'Your bodies will remain here but your souls will travel.'

The characters must throw themselves physically into the pit whilst the Green King offers a prayer to Shargash. The prayer splits the soul from the flesh so it is the soul that casts itself down.

The characters must make a Persistence test to summon the courage to make the leap. If the test is failed, the character cannot partake of the quest for the Chariot of Rage. The spell cannot be resisted because this is Shargash's city and the characters are already ritually dead. If the characters have the Ram God in tow, it can pass straight into the pit as a result of its inherent divinity.

The Green King activates the spell as the characters step into the abyss above the pit. An intense sensation of cold is experienced as their souls part from their bodies, followed by severe disorientation as their souls descend but the physical bodies collapse to the ground. Then, the souls are in freefall, tumbling through absolute darkness whilst around them whirl countless human souls and other, more fearful essences.

The Second Hell – Viskerle's Realm

Eventually the characters see a dim light appearing below them. The light grows until it is a dim, grey circle that they plunge through. Around them is the Second Hell; a broad expanse of grey earth, with no apparent sky. Directly before them is a huge river – so vast that the farthest bank cannot be seen. The river is dark and sluggish, the water moaning as it forms eddies and contradictory currents. Around them are hundreds, if not thousands, of disembodied souls – Shargash's enemies and faithful alike – all making their way through the Second Hell to receive the Devourer's judgment.

Ruling over this land, and visible as a huge, faceless morass of magic and energy, is the god Viskerle, Keeper of the Second Hell. His form watches over the amassed souls and chooses which will be carried across the river and into the Third Hell. The amassed souls, some of which have been here for an eternity, moan prayers and platitudes to Viskerle, hoping to gain his favour for the next crossing. To remain in the Second Hell for any length of time is to suffer an eternal uncertainty which eventually becomes an intense and overwhelming fear. Some of these souls will never cross the river; others will have a rapid transit.

How long must the characters wait? That depends on what they do. If they wait patiently they will

wait forever. Viskerle has no opinion of them. If they successfully convince him to let them cross, he accelerates their progress.

The characters will not be amongst those who take the next crossing. Something appears on the horizon, growing in size as it moves nearer. It is a massive chariot of gold, traveling on wheels of emerald, and drawn by four horses made of fire, their hooves causing the water to turn instantly to steam, wreathing the chariot in a hissing mist. As the chariot approaches the bank, hundreds of souls surge forward, clawing at its side. All but a handful are suddenly hurled back as Viskerle roars his disapproval. The unlucky ones moan and wail as the fortunate clamber aboard the chariot.

The chariot's driver is the god Ergesh, Lord of Slaves. He is a huge, bronze coloured man with a flowing beard and bald skull. Around his arms are chains and around his waist a thick slave belt. The god hauls and struggles with the reins controlling the fiery horses; he bellows curses and threats as he fights to keep them from stampeding in random directions. He is angry and frustrated. As a god of slaves he is used to obedience and clear commands. He cannot truly control the horses and this frustrates him.

When the lucky souls have climbed aboard, Ergesh turns the chariot around in a clumsy arc and thunders back the way he came, vanishing into a plume of steam.

It may take days, seasons or years before he returns. His lack of control over the chariot makes his duties erratic. Roll 1D10 to determine how long the characters must wait for Ergesh's next ferry.

Ferry Wait Table

1D10	Wait for the Ferry
1-2	1D10 hours
3-4	1D10 days
5-6	1D10 weeks
7-8	1D10 seasons
9	1 year
10	2 years



Placating Viskerle

To gain passage when Ergesh returns the characters must convince Viskerle. If they do not, any attempts made to get onto the chariot are met with his wrath, forcing them to wait longer. To convince him of their worth, each character must:

- ⊙ Prove he is of honourable Dara Happan blood
- ⊙ Demonstrate, somehow, his allegiance to Yelm or Shargash
- ⊙ Explain his worth above the countless other souls waiting for Ergesh.

This can be abstracted as an Influence test for each character, with a -5% modifier to the skill for each of the above that are missed or omitted from the plea. However, if the character also mentions or stresses that he is engaged on a quest to free Dara Happa from the Dragon, or to support the true human emperor of Dara Happa, then award a bonus of between +5% and +15% depending on how impassioned and complete the explanation is.

Characters may attempt to convince Viskerle up to three times; after that, he loses patience completely with them and they are denied access to the chariot forever. If they succeed, they are allowed to be in the next wave of souls when Ergesh returns.

Taking the Chariot

Eventually Ergesh returns with the chariot, still struggling, still cursing. The souls make a mad scramble towards it and many are hurled back to the shore by Viskerle. The characters are amongst the lucky ones to be allowed on board.

Once into the Chariot of Rage the characters have to convince Ergesh to let them take the reins. Ergesh never admits defeat so pointing out that he is having trouble only strengthens his resolve. If, however, the characters point out how tired he looks, a successful Influence test means he hands over the reins albeit with a grumble and a growl.

The horses pulling the chariot are too strong for a normal human to control them. It requires at least three pairs of hands. To control the horses and successfully direct the chariot the characters need to make three successful Drive tests, using the highest Drive skill from amongst the characters doing the controlling. If the Bridle of War is used to calm and control the horses, the characters receive a +20% bonus to the Drive tests; if the Veil of Victory is also used then a further +10% bonus is available.

If the characters do not take the chariot to the far bank of the river, so that the souls onboard can disembark and continue their journey, both Ergesh and the souls become angry and violent, attacking and attempting to eject the characters from the chariot. If the characters complete the journey as Ergesh would, there is no further trouble and Ergesh, at the far bank, disembarks with the souls. 'That infernal chariot is yours, now. I have spent aeons transporting souls. Now it is your turn.' And, before the characters can protest, he leaps into the air and disappears, back to his home on the God Plane. Of course, the chariot is now under the characters' control and they are at liberty to return with it to Alkoth, their task complete.

Should the characters find themselves in a fight with Ergesh, his statistics are below. He seeks to throw the characters into the river using his Unarmed skill. As everyone here, with the exception of Ergesh, is effectively dead, no physical damage is sustained in the attacks. Landing in the river, though, sees the unfortunate soul being swept away into the Fourth Hell, Limbo, which is beyond the capability of the characters to reach.

Ergesh

Characteristics: STR 40, CON 20, SIZ 19, INT 10, POW 20, DEX 18, CHA 12

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/9
4-6	Left Leg	-/9
7-9	Abdomen	-/10
10-12	Chest	-/11
13-15	Right Arm	-/8
16-18	Left Arm	-/8
19-20	Head	-/9

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Unarmed	150%	See RuneQuest rules

CA: 3 SR: +14 DM: +1D12 Move: 6m MP: 20

Skills: Acrobatics 58%, Athletics 60%, Dodge 70%, Evaluate 40%, Influence 60%, Lore (Dara Happa) 80%, Lore (Slaves) 100%, Perception 30%, Persistence 60%, Resilience 80%, Stealth 40%, Throwing 200%, Unarmed 150%

Escaping Hell

Viskerle, the Keeper of the Second Hell, has other ideas. He does not want anyone leaving his domain – especially those who steal the only way of crossing the river. To prevent the characters from leaving he sends 1D6 Hellmen and 1D6 minor demons after the characters. Use the descriptions and statistics found earlier in this chapter. These monsters race after the chariot and try to board it and then throw the characters out of it. Physical attacks they deliver cannot kill the characters but they can subdue their souls into compliance – and pain is felt every bit as though wounds were delivered to mortal flesh. If the characters lose control of the chariot they are condemned to spend eternity on the banks of the eternal river, forever denied passage across it.

Outpacing the pursuing Hellmen and demons requires both combat and Driving tests. For every successful Driving test one demon or Hellman is left behind or trampled under the hooves of whatever beast pulls the chariot. If the Ram God pulls it, it can be commanded to attack the demons and Hellmen too.

The chariot ascends into the skyless grey above the banks of the river, the monsters clamouring at it in their bid to keep it in hell. Eventually the greyness is left behind but the Hellmen and demons continue their pursuit. It only ends when they have been outpaced by the chariot or when the chariot reaches the Green King's palace in Alkoth. The monsters cannot pass through and return to whence they came, empty handed.

Treasures of War Assembled

Back in the city the characters' souls are reunited with their bodies. The Green King congratulates them and, because the characters will not be aware of it, reveals how long they have spent in hell. Finally, as they have proved themselves capable of entering and returning from hell he confirms his support for Karvanyar. 'The Red King will follow me in this. The Black King needs no convincing. You have Alkoth's allegiance and, if Karvanyar succeeds in passing the Ten Tests of Empire, the three kings of Alkoth will kneel before him as our rightful emperor.

Lorenkarten's Treachery

Lorenkarten has no intention of letting the characters leave Alkoth with the Treasures of War. The characters' success – equaled by no other heroes before – has substantially weakened his influence in Alkoth and threatens the Golden Dragon emperor directly.

At some stage before the characters prepare to return to Raibanth with the Treasures, Lorenkarten seeks them out. His previous charm is replaced with steely menace. His eyes are those of a dragon; his mood dark. He radiates danger.

'You are fools to think you can help Karvanyar to challenge the emperor of Dara Happa,' he warns. 'You have proved yourselves brave and resourceful, but little else. Enjoy your triumph and leave here but do so empty handed. I will let you go in peace.'

He keeps to his word if the characters agree, but if not he grows truly angry. 'Oslira obeys me for I channel the power of the True Dragon Aroka, who gave her life. Defy me and I will command Oslira to rise from her slumber and devour you!'

Lorenkarten will not risk transforming into his full draconic aspect within the city because that would challenge both Shargash and Alkor – and even one as mighty as Lorenkarten cannot withstand the wrath of either god.

Yet Lorenkarten's threat to use Oslira is both arrogant and misguided. Oslira was once the bride of Shargash and, even though he discarded her, he is still her sworn protector. Anyone except himself attempting to influence

Oslira incurs his displeasure and Lorenkarten will be forced to flee Alkoth if he wants to remain alive.

So, a fitting end to this chapter is for Lorenkarten to make good on his promise to raise the river against the characters. As they sail for Raibanth the river starts to swell and grow to incredible turbulence. Magic to assuage Oslira fails and the goddess thrashes in her channel threatening to smash all water vessels within Alkoth's vicinity to smithereens.

Something causes the adventurers to turn to look towards the green walled city. Black clouds rumble above Alkoth as the water becomes violently unstable, throwing barges and reedboats across the water. It seems Oslira is about to smash the characters with her immense power, but then the most incredible sight is seen rising up from Alkoth.

A truly vast, silvery, draconic form rises above the city walls, thrashing and writhing, its great legs and tail thudding against the jade defences. The storm clouds descend and form a great, dark fist which seizes the silvery dragon by the throat, hauls it from the city and casts it, writhing, into the water. Oslira closes around the dragon, which roars as it is submerged. The waters continue to boil for several minutes but then become calm.

Lorenkarten the Mile has been ejected from Alkoth, his influence there broken. Shargash himself has cast out the dragon. Lorenkarten is not dead – but this single act has signaled the first movement of rebellion against the Golden Dragon emperor. Even though he is far away, Karvanyar sees this incredible sight and smiles, knowing that the City State of Hell itself is now loyal to him and him alone.

AS VAST AS EMPERORS

While the Seven Servants have been seeking the Treasures of War in Alkoth, Karvanyar has been travelling extensively in the lands of Darjinn and Talastar, seeking both further elements of the Golden Daughter Contest and certain allies for the struggle ahead.

Many months pass before Karvanyar summons the characters to him, a meeting arranged in the city of Massos, Darjinn's capital. Massos is a wild, exotic city, given to hedonistic pursuits of a kind shunned by the heartland Dara Happans. In a room in a tower tavern Karvanyar greets his servants as old friends, listens to the tales of their adventures and congratulates them on their success.

Two men are present throughout this meeting. The first's very presence sends shivers to any nobleman of Dara Happa or to any follower of Yelm. He is a tall, strong, thick-set and bearded man – but what is

most noticeable is that he is covered in the barbaric tattoos of Umatum, the Rebellus Terminus. His eyes burn with rebellion and barely contained violence. He remains silent until Karvanyar introduces him. 'This is Alakoring of Ralios,' Karvanyar says. 'He is our ally against the Dragon and against the foes rising in Dorastor.' The second man is a proud Carmanian nobleman, bearing the regalia of the Spolite Death God; 'Survilstar the Warlord, general of the Armies of the Shah,' Karvanyar explains. 'He too is our ally.'

After much discussion and reminiscence Karvanyar outlines his strategy. He intends to return to Raibanth, with the Seven Servants, and show he has passed the tests laid down by the Golden Dragon emperor and is worthy of marrying his daughter. Certain negotiations will follow, all designed to secure Karvanyar's loyalty to the Dragon, and Karvanyar intends to co-operate fully. Meanwhile Alakoring and Survilstar will be

Alakoring Dragonbreaker

Alakoring is already the greatest hero of the free Orlanthi and he is destined for even greater deeds. He is one of the mightiest magicians in Glorantha and is already thought to be an avatar of the Great God Orlanth. He has led the Orlanthi of Ralios in rebellion against the EWF and broken the back of the Dragon Empire there. Earlier this year, he flew a small army over the impassable Nidan Mountains and was received by cheering crowds of Talastarings who have sworn loyalty to him and then sacrificed to his god, Orlanth the Law.

Needless to say, to a Dara Happan, his presence here is both shocking and terrifying. He is a living avatar of the Great Rebel who killed Murharzarm and sent Yelm into the Underworld.

Survilstar the Warlord

Half-brother of Shah Samandar, Survilstar is the foremost war leader of Carmania, half-brother of Shah Samandar and ruler of the barbaric lands of Brolia and Anadikki in his own right. He was the first Pelorian leader to defeat the dragons at the Battle of the Three Dragons Fall in 905. He is supported by hazars and barbarian warriors who follow the grim Spolite god of War and Death Emgarvu, whom the Orlanthi and God Learners call Humakt.

rallying forces in Carmania and Talastar. ‘Our agenda,’ Karvanyar says, ‘is simple, but the ends complex. I must complete the marriage contest first to ensure that Alakoring and Survilstar can secure the alliance they will be seeking. You, my servants, will accompany me now to Raibanth so that we can continue our business with the emperor.’

The rest of the meeting is an opportunity for discussion and an exchange of information. Alakoring is interested in hearing of the Eternal Dragon Ring’s influence in Alkoth and what has happened to Lorenkarten. Survilstar is interested in what happened in Mernita. They give little away of their own plans, save some general information about what is happening in their own lands.

Talastar

An army of chaos, commanded by the broo king Razakark, is preparing for war. It is taking its time and Alakoring has led several skirmishes against advanced forces, inflicting heavy casualties. For now, Razakark’s army has been checked, but the broo will not be held in place for long. Dara Happa’s aid is essential to keeping Peloria safe.

Carmania

The EWF has made attempts to annex Carmania. Its army, led by Lord Great Burin, a Great Dragon warrior, has been held by Carmania through a combination of diplomacy and strong military action. Carmania needs Karvanyar to unite Dara Happa under a single banner if the EWF’s plans to expand its Dragon Project further west are to be thwarted.

Return to Raibanth

The return of Karvanyar and the Seven Servants to Raibanth is to be triumphal. Karvanyar successfully tamed the winged Horse of Heaven and he will ride this as his steed. The Seven Servants are to bring the Treasures of War in his wake, and their route will take in the many settlements – towns and minor cities – of the hinterlands and the Oslir. Karvanyar has already paved the way during his previous travels and now many Leagues and Associations are awaiting his return to Raibanth as a signal of momentous events.

The Horse of Heaven

This golden-maned horse is a creature of deep myth. Once Khordavu’s steed, it has a pair of golden wings and flies as gracefully as any eagle. Only one blessed of Yelm can command it, and Karvanyar does so with ease. For the return to Raibanth he rides along the ground but gives demonstrations of its aerial prowess every now and again to the noble families who gaze in awe at the creature.

The journey back to Raibanth takes several weeks. Karvanyar sets a stately pace and, as the group pass through the villages, towns and noble estates, the landed families offer hospitality and honour to Karvanyar and the characters. It is clear that there is a fresh mood in Dara Happa; Karvanyar’s rise is prompting many Dara Happans to question the entire legitimacy of draconic rule. The Golden Dragon emperor had always maintained that only a combination of draconic and Dara Happan sensibilities could control the empire but Karvanyar, a mortal man, is proving that to be a falsehood. As the characters move from one town or estate to the next, it becomes increasingly evident that the Golden Dragon’s power is being openly questioned. Some Association and Leagues, those aligned with the Golden Dragon Society, do not offer any kind of welcome, but neither do they try to hinder Karvanyar’s passing. This is clearly business that the Golden Dragon emperor intends to resolve himself, in one way or another.

News of their approach to Raibanth precedes them. As Karvanyar and the characters enter the outer city the road leading towards the main Inner City gate is lined with Dara Happans from all castes, the road strewn with palm branches as Karvanyar leads the way. Guards from the main city watch carefully, keen to prevent any trouble from breaking out – but the crowds are peaceful. Golden Dragon Society agents mingle with the well-wishers, stony-faced and alert for any acts that might be deemed seditious. Karvanyar does not act in any way that could be considered inflammatory; he acknowledges the well-wishers with grace and nods to the guard commanders as he passes. When he reaches the main gate, he dismounts from the



Horse of Heaven, bows before the Guard Commander, and requests permission to enter the city so that he can deliver to the Golden Dragon the treasures requested as part of the tests for the emperor's daughter's hand in marriage. Safe passage is granted and so Karvanyar and the characters enter Raibanth as heroes.

In their absence Cuthanyar has been actively attempting to rally support for Karvanyar within the city. He has been successful in convincing the Ironsun League and some of the smaller Associations, but the Golden Dragon Society has engineered a series of new laws to prevent open criticism of the emperor and the EWF. The atmosphere in the Inner City is therefore tense as the characters and Karvanyar make their way towards the Imperial Footrest. Many guards, bearing the regalia of the Golden Dragon Society, are in evidence, and the shrines lining either side of the Processional are decorated in flamboyant draconic imagery.

As the group approaches the Footrest they see that the emperor's head is obscured by the summit of the ziggurat, only its legs and tail on view. At the top of

the stairs leading to the first tier, Lokastuman, clad in his finest imperial dress, waits, flanked by the high priests of Yelm, Dayzatar, Raiba, Oslira and Lodril. The priests appear uneasy having to take second stage to Lokastuman, a commoner given status, but the One Voice of the dragon emperor welcomes Karvanyar's return graciously, inviting the hero and his companions to enter the Imperial Footrest and be welcome. The Treasures of War are to be taken to a safe place elsewhere in the Imperial Footrest and, if the characters protest, Karvanyar tells them to do as Lokastuman commands. 'The Treasures are for the emperor and his daughter. We are only temporary custodians,' he says.

Sharmanasthar, the Dragon's Daughter

Karvanyar and the characters are allotted private apartments on the second tier of the ziggurat and servants are assigned to them. They must wait here until the emperor himself summons them to begin the final stages of the Golden Daughter Contest. They are not confined to their apartments and may wander the first and second tiers of the ziggurat, worshipping at the inner shrines and admiring the incredible opulence and architecture all around them. Priests, nobles, courtiers and other officials conduct their business as normal, although few speak with the characters and there is a palpable tension in the air.

Whilst on their travels around the first and second tiers of the Footrest, the characters are aware of a group of women coming towards them. There are eight women in the group, all finely attired in dresses and shifts of gold, their faces veiled and their heads covered. In the middle of the group is a tall woman dressed in fine robes of black and gold. As her entourage nears the characters she stops and calls out to them. She wants to know if they are part of those who travel with Karvanyar and she introduces herself as Sharmanasthar, the emperor's daughter. Even though one of her handmaidens tries to persuade her to move along, protesting that they are already late for worship at the shrine to Dendara, Sharmanasthar will not be dissuaded and insists on spending a few minutes with the characters.

She has many questions. What is Karvanyar's background? Is it true he tamed the Horse of the Heaven? Is his father really blind? What of his mother? What happened in Alkoth? She bombards the characters with questions and listens intently to the answers but, eventually, the senior handmaiden persuades her that they must go to the Dendara shrine at once. Sharmanasthar reluctantly agrees but, as she moves away, calls over her shoulder; 'Take tea with me this evening on the garden terrace facing towards the east. I would speak with you more.'

If the characters tell Karvanyar of their meeting with Sharmanasthar he, too, is filled with questions. Is she beautiful? Is she gracious? Does she exhibit any of her father's draconic powers? Finally he agrees that they should take tea with her. 'I cannot. I am forbidden by the laws of Antirius to see her until her father agrees on the suitability of our union. But you may speak with her. Convey her my deepest respects, tell her I am forever her servant, and that I look forward to the day of our marriage.'

At the appointed hour one of Sharmanasthar's handmaidens comes to the characters' suite to guide them to the garden terrace. It is a wide, outside plaza, surrounded by beautiful flowers and hanging plants that cascade over the edges of the ziggurat creating a tranquil meeting place. Cushions have been arranged and a samovar of fragrant orange tea bubbles in the centre. Sharmanasthar's handmaidens welcome the characters and make them comfortable. Eventually Sharmanasthar herself arrives.

This time she is unveiled and her beauty is utterly dazzling. Her hair is long and like spun gold; her skin is like the finest porcelain and her lips ruby red. Her eyes are deep blue and highlighted with kohl to enhance their beauty. She is dressed in a robe of black and gold, intertwined dragons chasing along its hem and sleeves. She sits and accepts tea, and smiles a smile that illuminates the entire terrace with its warmth and beauty. She seems happy, carefree and genuinely pleased to be in the company of the characters.

Sharmanasthar's has the natural ability to command devotion and love. There is nothing magical about this; she is simply a woman of genuine serenity for all

her draconic heritage. Each character must test their Persistence against her Influence of 85%. All who fail find themselves feeling protective and not a little in love with this beautiful woman. Any character who has achieved some measure of Draconic Illumination automatically feels protective and does not need to test their Persistence. Sharmanasthar repeats the questions she did not get answers to during the earlier meeting. She listens to the characters' stories and is entranced, asking more questions about their adventures in Alkoth and elsewhere. Finally, talk turns to the wedding. When the characters offer Karvanyar's greetings, she is delighted beyond measure.

'I have waited many years for one to emerge who could pass my father's tests,' she says. 'There should be true peace between the empire of Dara Happa and the Empire of the Dragon. If we can bring that about through our marriage, then I will be, in turn, my husband's most loyal servant and dutiful wife. Now that you and I are friends, I know that life with Lord Karvanyar is my destiny and that it will be a happy one.'

The meeting ends with Sharmanasthar giving each character a gift – one of her long, golden hairs which has been fashioned into a complex, draconic knot. For Karvanyar she has made a larger knot from ten lengths of hair and placed them into a locket of silver which she asks the characters to give to him. None of the gifts carry any magic; they are honest, simple and beautiful tokens of genuine affection.

Hearts, Minds and Eyes

After three days of waiting in the Imperial Footrest, Lokastuman summons Karvanyar to the vast Hall of Murharzarm where the final negotiations for the Golden Daughter Contest will take place. Lokastuman is reluctant to allow the characters to join Karvanyar but is talked into doing so by the hero's powers of reason. Urwanyar, too, brought back from wherever he has been held, accompanies the party.

In Murharzarm's great hall – a fabulous expanse of gold marble, azure tiles and columns of brilliant white stone,

a golden throne has been placed in the very centre of the room. Above, hovering in the air, is a golden ball, representing Yelm, and in front of the throne a seat is prepared for Karvanyar (everyone else must sit on the floor). Guards line the walls, fifty in number, and the Treasures of War are brought into the hall through a set of huge doors on the far side of the room. After an hour of patient waiting, the doors open again and two figures stride into the hall. The taller is Sharmanasthar, veiled, and dressed in robes of orange and gold. Her left arm is linked with that of the other figure; a tall, slightly stooped man with a bald head. He wears only a simple toga of pure white; his feet are bare, and he walks unsteadily. Lokastuman, waiting by the throne, drops to his knee and bows his head, scowling at everyone else to do the same. The Golden Dragon emperor in human form, Hurarbargarten, has arrived.

Hurarbargarten is led to the throne by his daughter and he takes his place gingerly. Sharmanasthar sits on the floor at his feet and smiles across at the characters and Karvanyar. The characters may notice that Karvanyar barely glances at Sharmanasthar, but has his eyes fixed on the emperor. Urvanyar, standing at his son's side, grips Karvanyar's wrist tightly. Hurarbargarten commands everyone to relax. Heads rise and Hurarbargarten smiles. Perceptive characters may notice that Karvanyar does not wear the locket Sharmanasthar gave to them.

'All gathered, welcome to Murharzarm's Hall, the very place where the Ten Tests were unveiled and where he accepted the challenge of empire. We assemble here to witness Karvanyar's desire to become my son through the marriage to my daughter. We assemble here to heal old wounds and welcome a new era of peace for Dara Happa. Whoever challenges this intent challenges Yelm, whose grace watches over us all.' The emperor speaks slowly and deliberately, but his words carry sincerity. When he has finished, Lokastuman calls for the Treasures of War to be brought forward. Karvanyar explains their significance.

'These Treasures of Dara Happa are brought as gifts. Through the instruments of war, so may Dara Happa know peace. Through my efforts in assembling them, may the emperor know my strength and may

Sharmanasthar know my intention to protect her as my wife.' He then invites the Seven Servants to recount how the Treasures were retrieved, relating each adventure to the myths relating to their creation. Hurarbargarten listens intently, smiling. Urvanyar nods sagely from time to time. After all the stories have been told, the emperor summons Karvanyar to come closer.

'You honour me. Murharzarm, the First Emperor, presented those who honoured him with gifts also. In welcoming you as my son and husband to my daughter, you may ask of me a gift and I am obliged to present it. What would you have, Karvanyar, son of Urvanyar?'

Karvanyar does not pause. He looks Hurarbargarten in the eye and says, in a loud, commanding voice: 'You will give to me my father's eyes and heart, which you so cruelly took from him. He shall see and feel the emperor's presence here in this, Murharzarm's Hall!'

The atmosphere suddenly changes. Lokastuman emits a sharp cry; the guards become tense and grips on weapons tighten. Hurarbargarten smiles and bows his head. 'Then it shall be. This is a Just and Honest request, because your father has been denied his sight and his soul but has proved that a man can live this way without bitterness.' Karvanyar brings forward his father and together they stand before the emperor. Hurarbargarten presses one of his hands to Urvanyar's head and the other to his chest; then he murmurs a mantra in the Auld Wymish tongue and the two are bathed in a red light. When it subsides, and Urvanyar turns around, his eyes are restored and the man is filled with vitality and noble bearing, as his heart beats in his chest for the first time in more than 30 years.

Hurarbargarten is not finished. 'And for you, Karvanyar, I give you my daughter, Sharmanasthar. I give you also the right to be my heir. You shall be married tomorrow, at dawn, so that Yelm may bless the union with his first light, and so that the whole of Dara Happa will spend its next day in the glow of this new dawn!'

And with this proclamation, the emperor, his daughter and Lokastuman leave Murharzarm's Hall, whilst the characters, Karvanyar and the restored Urvanyar, return to their chambers.

If Lesilla is Consort

If the goddess Lesilla realised her draconic aspect and was successfully reborn, she is now the consort of the Golden Dragon emperor. Hurarbargarten plans to use the marriage ceremony between Karvanyar and Sharmanasthar as the opportunity to announce to the whole of Dara Happa that it now has an empress.

This announcement works in Karvanyar's favour: no emperor has ever taken a wife and placed her in a position of rulership. The announcement sends shockwaves throughout the empire, galvanising those who resent the Dragon emperor and readying them further for rebellion.

The announcement also shocks Sharmanasthar who, as a demi-goddess herself, has no wish to gain a goddess for a mother. Karvanyar uses the marriage between the Golden Dragon emperor and Lesilla as grounds for his own challenge, stating, quite rightly, that only Yelm has the authority to grant equal status between men and women. If the Golden Dragon is adamant in taking an empress, he cannot claim to have Yelm's authority and is therefore unfit to rule.

Like Father, Like Son

Karvanyar and Urvanyar retire to Karvanyar's rooms and spend the rest of the day in discussion. At one point, the characters hear raised voices, but the argument subsides as quickly as it begins. When Urvanyar leaves, he is grim-faced and pauses only to bid the characters a good evening. Karvanyar does not emerge from his rooms and refuses all attempts to engage him.

The characters have little to do save wait for the morning. If anyone follows Urvanyar, they find him wandering through the ziggurat towards the terrace where the characters had their meeting with Sharmanasthar. As the old man stands and ponders the stars above Raibanth, a figure emerges from the

shadows: Lokastuman, the emperor's mouthpiece. He watches the stars with Urvanyar for a while and, eventually the two men begin to talk. Only snatches of conversation can be heard. If the characters disturb the two, Lokastuman angrily departs, firing a sullen look at the characters.

Snatches of the Conversation

'Will you object? You should. I sense you see the truth, now that your eyes are your own.'

'I see betrayal. But not with my eyes.'

'Wisdom comes with experience. Folly comes with youth, no matter how heroic it seems.'

Lokastuman is attempting to persuade Urvanyar to object to the impending marriage. His argument is that Karvanyar will not behave as honourably as he claims he will. Urvanyar senses something of this, but to object to the marriage would be to break the time-honoured codes of Dara Happa betrothal law because all objections must be based on facts, not suspicions. Lokastuman knows that if Karvanyar does become heir to the Golden Dragon, his own position is threatened. Urvanyar, close as he is to Karvanyar, might be an ally of sorts.

But Urvanyar is troubled by what he knows of Karvanyar – not for Lokastuman – and that was the cause of their earlier argument.

If Lokastuman is challenged by the characters he can quickly summon plenty of loyal guards, and to challenge a priest of Yelm within Yelm's own house is tantamount to heresy – something the characters ought to understand implicitly. Lokastuman refuses to discuss what he was speaking about with Urvanyar and he dismisses the characters contemptuously, storming into the depth of the ziggurat, angry and resentful at the challenge.

Neither will Urvanyar speak with the characters. Despite the return of his eyes and heart Urvanyar is deeply troubled and in no mood for further talk.

A New Day Dawns

At dawn of the next day, Raibanth displays its finery and gathers at the base of the Imperial Footrest. The most important people of Dara Happa are closest to the ziggurat whilst the Processional in all directions is choked with people eager to see the union of Karvanyar and the Dragon's daughter.

Every noble house, League and Association is represented, garbed in the splendour of their ranks. Raibanth is transformed into a sea of orange, yellow, gold and vermillion. Torches blaze through the streets of the city, welcoming the first rays of Yelm which are emerging sluggishly in the east, a gash of red against an azure, twilight sky.

The soldiers of Raibanth line the walls of the city – City Guard, mercenary Leagues and Wyrmfriender soldier alike.

The High Priests of the city cults ascend the footrest in order of their gods' representation on the Gods' Wall. The city echoes to chants, mantras and prayers as thousands of voices lift in song. Karvanyar, clad in fine war gear of gold, bronze and silver, steps out onto the first tier of the Footrest to await his marriage. He carries on one arm a shield of burnished bronze. In his right hand is a spear, its tip covered in ribbons of silk to show peaceful intent. Urvanyar, beard and hair trimmed, clad in gleaming bronze armour, accompanies him. The characters too, are allowed to stand behind Karvanyar, their position as his servants and counsel acknowledged. From the opposite side of the ziggurat, Sharmanasthar also appears, dressed in a simple shift of white, her face veiled with gold, attended by her handmaidens. She gazes at Karvanyar who smiles and acknowledges her.

Finally a hush descends across the city. From on high the head and neck of the Golden Dragon emperor descends, its body shifting easily around the outside of the Imperial Footrest as it comes down to survey the assembled city. The dragon's eyes gleam with golden brilliance. Lokastuman, flanked by the priests of Lodril, Dayzatar and Murharzarm, steps forward and delivers a proclamation.

'On this day, we gather here to witness the union of Karvanyar, son of Urvanyar, son of Dismanthuyar, and Sharmanasthar the Golden. By the laws of Antirius, the Light of Heaven, and by the Glory of Yelm ReAscended, I call upon all those present to bless this union as Good and Just. If any here might make protest over the legitimacy of this union, then speak and speak now!'

For a moment there is silence, and then Urvanyar, to the horror and collective gasp of the crowd, steps forward.

'I, Urvanyar, son of Dismanthuyar, refuse to bless this marriage,' he says, in a strong, clear voice. 'My son is a Poor Woman's Son, and this daughter is a goddess. To bring earth and heaven together is an affront to Murharzarm and his father, Yelm!'

Karvanyar turns on his father angrily. Lokastuman offers a thin, barely perceptible smile. Below, the crowd howls in dismay.

However, Urvanyar's protestation is valid. Karvanyar has never been acknowledged as a Noble of Dara Happa, for all his heroism. Any character making a Lore (Dara Happa) test successfully understands this. Karvanyar argues with his father, pleading, and Urvanyar, tears in his eyes, explains that he is simply doing his duty in the face of Yelm's law, something the Golden Dragon emperor has failed itself to do.

Then, the unexpected happens.

The Golden Dragon's head shifts to one side and, in a single fluid motion, snaps down, its jaws clamping around Urvanyar. It shakes the old man once and casts his body from the ziggurat to land in the crowd, bleeding and unmoving. The head rises and the Golden Dragon surveys the city. In a voice of thunder it roars: 'And so perish all who challenge MY rule here!'

Karvanyar reaches up to the ribbons sheathing the tip of his spear and tears them free. The spear tip is of iron and, engraved into its head are the Runes of Death and Yelm. From the spear springs forth an incredible, intense light as the rays of the sun catch it. This is a

truly mythical weapon, something Karvanyar sought in the Yolp Mountains. Its head is forged from the shards taken from Yelm's body when he was restored to life and reascended to Heaven. The runes are of Yelm's blood. This is a weapon for the killing of gods, and Karvanyar wields it.

He lunges forward and drives the spear into the Golden Dragon emperor's left eye. This very act unleashes rebellion across Dara Happa.

The Battle of Raibanth

The following events happen almost simultaneously. Games Masters need to decide how the characters participate and resolve the details according to their actions.

Karvanyar battles the Golden Sun Dragon

The mightiest clash is between Karvanyar and the Golden Dragon. Man and dragon unleash terrible, divine and mystic magic against each other as they battle across the ziggurat. The characters can aid Karvanyar but only Karvanyar's spear can harm the Dragon. Guards loyal to the dragon rush across the ziggurat in a bid to kill Karvanyar, so the characters can be instrumental in holding them at bay with their own magic and military prowess.

Urvanyar's Death

Urvanyar lies at the base of the ziggurat, his body broken, dying. A group of six Wyrmfriend agents surge forward from the crowd to seize his body and tear it apart, hoping to regain the heart and eyes which may lend the Golden Dragon emperor strength. The characters can defend Urvanyar's body by fending off the enemies, aided by warriors from Cuthanyar Ironsun's League, who, loyal to Karvanyar and Urvanyar, fight shoulder to shoulder with the characters against the Wyrmfriends.

Streets of War and Blood

Loyal Dara Happans turn on Wyrmfriends. Soldiers of the Ironsun League draw their swords and spears and

battle the warriors and magicians of the Golden Dragon Society through the streets of Raibanth. People flee, screaming, as the violence escalates. The characters can help innocents to safety or aid the Dara Happans, united by Cuthanyar, to drive the Wyrmfriends and their sympathisers towards the banks of the Oslir.

The Devourer Consumes

Warriors of Alkoth, accompanied by Hellmen, wait at the gates of the Inner City to intercept Wyrmfriend troops who might try to gain entry or flee to safety. The Alkothi, led by the Elevens of the Green King, fight for Karvanyar and they fight with the full fury of hell itself. If the characters can get inside the ziggurat, they can retrieve the Treasures of War and use the Chariot of Rage to tear into the ranks of Wyrmfriend warriors, bringing the battle to the dragon.

Sharmanasthar's Safety

As the battle rages around her, Sharmanasthar is left alone as her handmaidens flee. Loyal Dara Happans, overtaken by bloodlust, surge forward to seize her. The characters know that she is pure of heart and an innocent in all of this. Karvanyar himself orders her to be kept from harm, and the characters can be compelled to save Sharmanasthar from the baying mob that scales the stairs of the ziggurat to vent its fury on the Golden Dragon's daughter.

Lokastuman's Desperation

Watching the horror of battle around him, Lokastuman is driven to rage and panic. Seizing a sword or spear from a fallen soldier he makes a random attack:

- Against Karvanyar, waiting until he can strike at the hero's exposed back
- Against Cuthanyar who is issuing commands to his troops from the stairs of the ziggurat and is similarly oblivious to ambush.
- Against one of the characters who, distracted by something else, presents an opportunity.
- Against some innocent civilian who is blocking his means of escape.

Lokastuman is intent on saving his skin. For thirty years he has known power thanks to the Golden Dragon emperor and he knows he has made many enemies in this time. He is prepared to launch a single, brutal attack and then try to escape into the crowd.

Running the Battle

Wyrmfriend battles True Dara Happan. Families and Leagues turn on each other. The air crackles with magic and screams; the clash of swords against shields echoes through Raibanth for hours. The entire city is plunged into chaos and rebellion as the EWF is finally challenged and taken by surprise. It is impossible for the characters to avoid the fighting as soldiers surge across the lower tiers of the Imperial Footrest and even some civilians snatch-up arms to defend themselves or take revenge. The battle should be run and described as a murderous confusion.

Cuthanyar and several other mercenary Leagues of Raibanth intend to hit the Wyrmfriends as hard as possible and drive them towards the Oslir River.

Priests of the Oslir River Union are already calling upon Oslir to cleanse the city of draconic influence and the waters flowing through the city swell and rage in anticipation. Groups of Golden Dragon Society warrior-mystics successfully cut through Dara Happan lines with dragon magic and brute force, whilst others are pushed from bridges and banks into the foaming, rising, river waters which have turned to poison. Hunting and Waltzing bands fight as the elite shock troops of the Wyrmfriends, including the Sun Dragon Dancers from 'A Poor Woman's Son', if they still live, so here is an opportunity for old scores to be settled.

On the ziggurat, Karvanyar battles the Golden Dragon alone. He uses both magic and his iron-tipped spear to parry the dragon's fierce thrusts, claw lashes and tail strikes. He is wounded and bleeding, but fights tirelessly, scaling the Imperial Footrest as he does so, driving the dragon higher. The Golden Dragon tries to break away and take to the wing but it seems unable to do so. Any character succeeding in a Perception or magical insight test of some kind sees the outline of vague hands, stretching down from the

As Vast As emperors



sky, wrapping themselves around the dragon's wings, pinning it to the ziggurat so that Karvanyar maintains his advantage. These hands are the Laws of Antirius, seeking to reassert justice over an emperor that, in killing Urvanyar and claiming its own might as more powerful than Yelm's Law, forfeited the right of rule.

If the characters can gain access to the treasures obtained for the Golden Daughter Contest, then the Horse of Heaven can be led onto the ziggurat so that Karvanyar can mount it and launches his attacks from the air on the back of the winged horse.

Golden Dragon Society Warriors

Typical warriors of the Golden Dragon Society, these Dara Happans are committed to the draconic cause wholeheartedly.

Characteristics: STR 9 CON 13 DEX 10 SIZ 16 INT 18 POW 15 CHA 9

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	4/6
4-6	Left Leg	4/6
7-9	Abdomen	4/7
10-12	Chest	4/8
13-15	Right Arm	4/5
16-18	Left Arm	4/5
19-20	Head	5/6

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Great sword	(69%)	2D8+0 / 4
Target shield	(69%)	1D6+0 / 8
Longspear	(29%)	1D10+0 / 4

CA: 2 SR: +14 DM: +0 Move: 4m MP: 15

Skills: Athletics 19% Dodge 41% Draconic Illumination 35%, Influence 24% Persistence 25% Resilience 73%, 1H Sword 69% 2H Sword 69% Dagger 25% Shield 69% Streetwise 29%

Armour: Scalemail: -29% skill penalty

Draconic Magic: Brand Traitor, Deafening Cry

Triumph and Aftermath

Karvanyar is destined to win this battle, but it is a long, hard fight. As he ascends the ziggurat the Golden Dragon, still battling hard but suffering many wounds, appears to be diminishing in size as its power wanes. Finally the wyrm is reduced in size to something approximating a man as the two combatants reach the ninth tier of the Footrest. Karvanyar plunges his spear into the dragon's head, releases it, and leaps onto the dragon's back, twisting his hands, somehow, around its neck, throttling the life from it. As it finally chokes

Dara Happan City Guards

Typical city guards found in Raibanth, Yuthuppa and Elz Ast. They are loyal to their League and Association, taking orders only from their commander. Dara Happan city guards are notably uncorruptable.

Characteristics: STR 11 CON 13 DEX 12 SIZ 15 INT 12 POW 14 CHA 12

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	3/6
4-6	Left Leg	3/6
7-9	Abdomen	3/7
10-12	Chest	3/8
13-15	Right Arm	3/5
16-18	Left Arm	3/5
19-20	Head	3/6

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Great sword	(57%)	2D8+1d2 / 4
Target shield	(57%)	1D6+1d2 / 8
Longspear	(57%)	1D10+1d2 / 2

CA: 2 SR: +12 DM: +1D2 Move: 4m MP: 14

Skills: Athletics 22% Dodge 31% Driving 29% Influence 27% Persistence 24% Resilience 57% 1H Sword 57% 2H Sword 57% Dagger 26% Shield 57% Streetwise 31%

Armour: Ringmail: -21% skill penalty

Runemagic: (Runecasting 35%) Bladesharp 2, Light

and dies, it tumbles from the Footrest, Karvanyar all the while holding onto its throat, slashing with his sword and inflicting terrible wounds. The dragon finally thuds towards the ground where it lies, dead. The battle rages around it for a while, but soon the clashing armies sense that the Golden Dragon no longer controls the Footrest and the fighting begins to subside. Cuthanyar, blood-caked, climbs to the third tier of the ziggurat and screams across Raibanth that victory is at hand.

A shaft of sunlight arches down through the clouds that have gathered above Raibanth. It strikes Karvanyar who suddenly seems to grow in size so that all can see him. Karvanyar calls that the Golden Dragon emperor is dead and that its empire is broken. The fighting starts to subside as the news filters through to the Wyrmfriends.

Karvanyar calls the Seven Servants to him so they can help him stand. He bleeds from many wounds and requires healing, but is filled with the inner strength of the Solar pantheon. As the fighting calms, he summons Cuthanyar to him and orders that the Wyrmfriends be given an option: surrender and know mercy, or continue to fight and know death. Cuthanyar calls this proclamation out across the city as the combined forces of Raibanth and Alkoth drive the Wyrmfriends onto the brink of the Oslir River.

Some choose death, finding it on spears, at the hand of spells or by throwing themselves into the poisonous waters of the Oslir. But many choose surrender and cast down their weapons. The Ironsun League and the Elevens round-up prisoners, driving them towards the garrison in the south west quarter of the city.

By evening it is all over. The EWF and Golden Dragon Society's rule in Raibanth is broken completely. Dara Happans that had sided with the Golden Dragon Society suddenly want to pledge full allegiance to Yelm, seeking to distance themselves from draconic influence. Hellmen stride through the city killing any recalcitrant Wyrmfriends who offer sporadic resistance.

As night falls, one name rings out across Raibanth. It begins as a murmur but becomes a roar as more voices join in: *Karvanyar! Emperor Karvanyar!*

The Fate of Many

What does Karvanyar do with those of the old regime that are left?

Lokastuman

Whilst not one of Karvanyar's priorities, the Seven Servants are sent to find him (if he has not been killed or captured already). He is found skulking in the basement of the Golden Dragon Society headquarters, attempting to assemble a disguise with which to flee Raibanth. When confronted he puts up token resistance but eventually throws himself on the characters' mercy. He pleads that the Golden Dragon emperor forced dragonewt scales into his eyes to blind him to the true Dara Happan ways but, now that the emperor is dead, he can see once more. He praises Yelm and the entire Solar court, grovelling as he does so. When taken before Karvanyar, he is condemned to lose his eyes, lest they become covered by dragon scales again, and be sent into exile beyond Dara Happa's borders.

Sharmanasthar

Karvanyar's erstwhile bride is treated with a little more dignity than Lokastuman, but only barely. When she is eventually brought before Karvanyar, it is made abundantly clear that, now the Golden Dragon is dead, Karvanyar has no need for a wife. He also has little interest in Sharmanasthar's fate, but protestations from the characters and Cuthanyar makes him a little more merciful. He finally agrees that Sharmanasthar is an innocent party but, as a member of the draconic way, she cannot be allowed to remain in Raibanth. The characters should recall that the Black King of Alkoth wanted her to reside in Alkoth, for reasons best known to himself, and, if Karvanyar is told this, he tasks the characters with taking her there. Sharmanasthar is filled with dread at the idea of residing in a city of Hell and uses her influence to try to sway the characters to take her somewhere else, or let her escape across the border to Kostaddi.

The Black King's insistence on her being taken into Alkoth's custody is so that Dara Happa has a valuable hostage (he knows the EWF will retaliate) and to contain Sharmanasthar's nascent powers. She is a demi-goddess and, with the tutelage of the Eternal Dragon Ring, would be transformed into a fearsome



foe rivalling Lorenkarten or Isgangdrang in power. The Black King wants to prevent that from happening – and the Green Walls of Hell will ensure it.

Golden Dragon Society Members and Sympathisers

Any Dara Happans who were members of the Golden Dragon Society, or sympathisers, are driven out of Dara Happa into Saird and Kostaddi. Some are executed; others are made into slaves. Karvanyar declares the Sun Dragon Cult a heretical religion and all its temples are put to the torch. Draconic imagery is erased from the Gods' Wall and anywhere else it is found. The precept of Yelm's draconic aspect is declared an absolute falsehood and anyone who promulgates the idea is automatically a heretic. Across Dara Happa the cities are purged of Golden Dragon Society influence in a series of violent pogroms. Villages and small settlements that had been converted to the draconic path are forced to recant their beliefs or be put to the torch. Many Half-Citizens and Newcomers flee Karvanyar's wrath, making for the safety of Saird and Kostaddi.

Dragonewts

Several dragonewt cities have sprung up throughout Dara Happa during the Golden Dragon's reign. At the very instant of the Golden Dragon's death, every single dragonewt, save those who have fallen from the draconic path, commits utuma, leaving the cities filled with thousands of dragonewt bodies. Those that are reborn within the Dara Happan cities file out and become a diaspora that winds its way south in an ever increasing line as more and more dragonewts join it. They do not speak, but they intone the OUROBOROS mantra as they trudge southwards, eventually leaving the empire and forming a new, single city, a few kilometres south of Elempur, but outside the Dara Happan border. This city, raised by strange magic, becomes a focal point for both dragonewts and the EWF. Its spires mock the ziggurats of the Dara Happan cities and its half-formed buildings are festooned with draconic imagery.

Urvanyar's Body

Karvanyar's father is given a full Dara Happan State funeral. A wicker boat is built in Elz Ast and brought down to Yuthuppa to be blessed by the priests. Then, in a solemn ceremony in Raibanth, Karvanyar sets light to the boat which is then pushed out into the river to make its way south towards Alkoth. A ten-day period of mourning is declared. During this time, Karvanyar's mother, who has returned to her old village, dies of a broken heart – knowing that both her husband and son are lost to her.

The Golden Dragon's Body

When the battle has died down and peace restored, the Golden Dragon's body still lies at the base of the Imperial Footrest. Karvanyar sends the Elevens to guard it from those who would mutilate it or take souvenirs of victory. Later, the body is moved to an area outside the Inner City, where Karvanyar leads members of the various Leagues of artisans in the dragon's dismemberment. Its skin and bones are used to fashion a new throne for Karvanyar, which is placed in the Imperial Footrest. Its head is mounted on the ninth tier of the ziggurat, gazing west, so that it can forever gaze on Yelm's magnificence as the sun rises. What is left, after Karvanyar is finished with it, is packaged into crates and sent south to the new city erected by the dragonewts, so that the EWF can see

what a true Dara Happan emperor does with pretenders to the Throne of Empire.

Despite his attempts to prevent pieces of the Golden Dragon being stolen by treasure hunters and trophy takers, remnants of the body still find their way into the hands of people across the empire. These fragments are a curse for those who hold them. Whoever keeps a piece of the dismembered dragon is beset by craven nightmares that build in intensity until, ten days later, the individual feels compelled to wander south, joining the dragonewt diaspora making its way to beyond the edges of the empire. There, unable to comprehend why, they find themselves giving their lives to the service of the EWF, even if they had been ardent traditionalists beforehand.

Lorenkarten and the Eternal Dragon Ring

After being cast from Alkoth, Lorenkarten makes his way out of Peloria to meet with other members of the Eternal Dragon Ring – Isgangdrang, Lord Great Burin, and others, to plan the retaliation against Karvanyar. The Eternal Dragon Ring is blessed with patience and it will be two years before that retaliation takes place. In the meantime the Eternal Dragon Ring musters an army of a strength and ferocity never before seen in Peloria in order to break Karvanyar once and for all.

One thing the Eternal Dragon Ring *does* do is send Hunting and Waltzing bands into Dara Happa to intercept, and rescue, Sharmanasthar. As previously mentioned, under the Eternal Dragon Ring's tutelage she can be elevated to a position of power rivalling that of her father and the other Great Dragons. The Eternal Dragon Ring is therefore adamant that she should not enter Alkoth: if she does, she will be lost to them forever.

Alakoring and the War Gods

Karvanyar summons Alakoring, and Survilstar a council of war. The characters are similarly invited. Here, he outlines the strategy necessary for withstanding the inevitable retaliation by the EWF and also for protecting central Peloria from the growing threat of chaos emerging in Dorastor. His intention is to raise two armies. The first, consisting mainly of Talastarings and other Orlanthi rebels under Alakoring's command, will guard the approaches to Dara Happa from the south and west. Survilstar will command the second army,

consisting of Dara Happan, Darjinn, Kostaddi and Carmanian warriors. They will strengthen the lands east of the Yolp Mountains. A third army, led by Karvanyar and consisting of a variety of troops drawn from the military Leagues, will defend the Oslir basin.

Alakoring agrees to the plan on the condition that Dara Happa supports a push directly into Dragon Pass, the EWF heartland; Karvanyar agrees.

Survistar demands territories in Pelanda and Darjinn that, he claims, are rightfully Carmanian; Karvanyar agrees again.

The characters have no immediate part to play in these plans, although, when war comes to Dara Happa the following year, there will be opportunities aplenty.

Karvanyar's Ten Tests

After the best part of four seasons dealing with the aftermath of the rebellion and rallying the War Gods, Karvanyar is ready to take the Ten Tests. The characters are to support him as he does so.

The Ten Tests take place in Raibanth, beginning at the base of the Imperial Footrest. The priesthoods of Dara Happa are represented in force, and the Red and Green Kings of Alkoth have made the journey to witness the attempt. The characters are to climb with Karvanyar as he ascends the ziggurat, pausing at each level to meet the challenges issued by the ten high priests of the Solar cults. Before he begins the Tests, Karvanyar tells the characters to prepare: some must dress for war, some for peace, and one must bring the Veil of Victory and the Bridle of War; he does not – in fact, cannot – reveal why.

The First Test

Karvanyar strips naked and climbs to the first tier. The High Priest of Lodril challenges Karvanyar to prove he is a moral man. To pass the challenge Karvanyar must don some form of clothing; one of the characters should donate a piece of his own to hide Karvanyar's modesty. When this done, the group may climb to the second tier.

The Second Test

The High Priest of Dayzatar challenges Karvanyar to prove that he is above impurity. He wears no sandals, and one of the characters needs to give Karvanyar his own footwear, showing that he rises above the impure earth.

The Third Test

The High Priest of Murharzarm steps forward and challenges Karvanyar to prove he is fit to rule. All emperors must have a robe, symbolising the Vestments of Disclosure. Karvanyar has none and so one of the characters should either donate his own robe or bring forth the Veil of Victory which Karvanyar may use in its place.

The Fourth Test

The Red King of Alkoth steps forward and, speaking with Shargash's authority, bids Karvanyar show that he can protect the empire at any distance. Karvanyar has no weapons, so one of the characters must donate either a bow, spear or javelin. Karvanyar can then protect the empire.

The Fifth Test

The High Priest of Dendara challenges Karvanyar to prove he has the strength of rulership. For this, Karvanyar requires either a set of vambraces or the Bridle of War, showing that he can rein and control his empire.

The Sixth Test

The High Priest of Zaytenaras challenges Karvanyar to display his crown, demonstrating his wisdom. He has no crown and nothing to adorn his head. One of the characters must donate something that can be formed into a halo or band and be placed around Karvanyar's head.

The Seventh Test

The High Priest of Ghelotralas, the Messenger to Below, challenges Karvanyar to call forth his counsel, demonstrating his understanding of Low Rule. Here, Karvanyar invites each one of the characters to step forth, proclaim his lineage, and swear to uphold the empire and the sanctity of Yelm for all peoples in the empire.

The Eighth Test

The High Priest of Derdurnus, Master of Brilliance, challenges Karvanyar to demonstrate how he will bring Yelm's light to all corners of the empire. Karvanyar requires fire of some kind and the characters must supply it – either through magic or in the form of the spear with which the Golden Dragon was slain.

The Ninth Test

For the penultimate test Karvanyar must prove he is a just and merciful being, as commanded by the High Priest of Verithurus, the Master of Wisdom. He commands one of the characters to draw his sword and then kneels before him. Karvanyar offers his neck and says: 'If ever I act without honour, justice, mercy or goodness, from this day forth, you must strike my head from my shoulders. If you feel I am without honour, then strike now.'

The Tenth Test

By now the characters have ascended so far into the sky that they have left the realm of Glorantha far below them and stand on the edge of heaven. The High Priest of Entekos, the Goddess of the Air, commands Karvanyar to fly to heaven, if he is truly the emperor. Karvanyar summons the Horse of Heaven, which soars up from the lower levels of the ziggurat and the characters must help Karvanyar to mount it.

Karvanyar takes to the air and circles the tenth level ten times. As he settles back to the summit the characters see that an immense brilliance is forming in the sky. The sky dome itself seems to part and the brilliance lances down, bathing the tenth tier of the ziggurat in blinding light. Karvanyar and the characters are forced to bow down before the intense light, but they are aware of a figure advancing. Antirius, the Light and Wisdom of Yelm himself, steps out of the celestial court and bathes Karvanyar in a cloak of pure and brilliant light. The god accepts Karvanyar's allegiance and offers the blessing of Yelm in return. Then, each of the characters is named by Antirius and his radiance bathes each of them, awakening in them the divine spirit that they had previously been unaware of. This is Yelm's true secret; that he is part of all. *In Every Man a Sun!*

Karvanyar has passed the Ten Tests. Word reaches the entire empire simultaneously and both he and the characters can see every part of Dara Happa with absolute and perfect clarity.

For the characters, their awakening is their ultimate reward for their service to Karvanyar. Each of them receives the following gifts:

- *One weapon skill is immediately raised by 100%*
- *One Lore Skill is immediately raised by 100%*
- *Each character gains Lore (Wisdom of Yelm) at INT+POW+50%*
- *Each character may choose two Divine Spells from the list below. This spell costs no POW in dedication and can be cast once per day on a successful Wisdom of Yelm test.*

Spells from Antirius

Amplify (RuneQuest Spellbook)
Antirius Precepts (Cults of Glorantha volume 1)
Behold (RuneQuest Spellbook)
Clear Skies (RuneQuest Spellbook)
Command Household
Disarm (RuneQuest Spellbook)
Eclipse (RuneQuest Spellbook)
Enemy Known (RuneQuest Spellbook)
Faithshield (RuneQuest Spellbook)
Faithstrike (RuneQuest Spellbook)

The characters are now also eligible to worship Yelm directly as they are considered servants of the celestial court. They will be viewed almost as divine beings by all Dara Happans, as long as they embody all the virtues of the emperor.

When the heroes descend, they are greeted with rapture by the thousands who have flocked from across Dara Happa to witness the new emperor's ascension. Ten days of feasting follow and in this time Karvanyar goes into seclusion to prepare for his official coronation which will take place in Yuthuppa. Naturally his Seven Servants will accompany him and, before leaving for Yuthuppa, Karvanyar gives them a gift for their families.

'Your families are granted the right to form their own Associations if they so wish. I grant them lands that were held by the Golden Dragon Society and the whole of Dara Happa will know that your kin are related to the Seven Servants because, without you, I could never have destroyed the Golden Dragon. Rest, now. Ahead of us lies a treacherous path and we must be strong to face it!'

An Ending?

This is a good, dramatic, place to bring the formal Dara Happa Stir campaign to a close. However, Karvanyar's story is not yet finished and neither are the characters' stories. In the course of the next few years, war is visited on Dara Happa and, as foremost of the emperor's council, the characters have their part to play.

The next chapter takes a long-term overview of the events between the years 911 and 920. It is not as detailed as the previous adventures in this book, but far more extensive. It is presented as a series of year-by-year scenario seeds, for Games Master to flesh-out as the mood or need takes them. It sees many political and military conflicts and is truly where Your Dara Happa May Vary.

LORDS OF WAR

This chapter is far more abstract in structure than the previous scenarios in the Dara Happa Stirs campaign. The key events of the next 9 years are described in overview – from 911 to 920 – with each description containing a set of scenario seeds for Games Masters to embellish for play if it is decided to take the characters deeper into the EWF's eventual demise in Peloria.

As most of these events concern large-scale battles Games Masters may wish to engage the characters in the command of armies, regiments or battalions; conversely the battles may form the backdrop to discrete missions the characters undertake, war raging around them. The specifics are left to Games Masters, but there are countless opportunities for adventure in these turbulent times.

Timeline

111,911: Karvanyar becomes emperor and is crowned in Yuthuppa

111,912: EWF forces attack into Lakrene; at the Battle of Zelfield, Alakoring drives them back to beyond the Plough Line.

111,912: Alkoth is besieged by Lorenkarten and the Eternal Dragon Ring. The siege lasts eight years.

111,912: The Carmanian army engages the armies of Dorastor on the Talastar/Darjinn border; chaos is defeated

111,913: Karvanyar reneges on his promises to the War Gods. The alliance with Dara Happa is broken.

111,913: Carmania marches into Darjinn and conquers the country. Karvanyar does not oppose the action.

111,913: Alakoring disappears, leaving the armies of the south leaderless.

111,914: Karvanyar leads the Dara Happan armies against the EWF in an attempt to break the siege of Alkoth. Dara Happa suffers a dreadful defeat.

111,915: The High Priests of Yuthuppa summon the Solar Council to analyse Karvanyar's actions. The Seven Servants are tasked with finding Alakoring and mending the War Gods' alliance.

111,917: Karvanyar and the War Gods are reconciled

111,918: Karvanyar secretly enters Alkoth and marries Shamanasthar. Carmania returns to the War Gods alliance.

111,918: Isgangdrang and Lord Great Burin join the siege of Alkoth. Karvanyar engages Isgangdrang in single combat and is nearly killed

111,919: Oslira is persuaded to reject her draconic aspect which is controlled by Lorenkarten the Mile. The river rises to engulf the EWF troops.

111,920: The Broken Back Battle. Alakoring unleashes his full dragon-breaking abilities and Karvanyar leads the final assault that drives the EWF from Peloria for good.

111,912 The Battle of Zelfield and the Siege of Alkoth

Despite being ejected from Dara Happa when Karvanyar slays the Golden Dragon emperor, the EWF forces regroup in Saird and summon dinosaur armies and Hunting and Waltzing bands from Dragon Pass and Ralios. Lorenkarten leads this reunification and he has two objectives in mind: punish the kings of Alkoth for his expulsion, and to liberate Shamanasthar from the Black King's protection so that she can be brought into the Eternal Dragon Ring and her draconic potential fully realised. Breaking Alkoth – the most potent symbol of Dara Happan military strength – sends a clear message to Karvanyar and Glorantha that the Wymfriends cannot be easily dismissed.

Alakoring the Dragonbreaker and Survilstar the Warlord, protecting the southern frontier, are effectively out-thought by the EWF. An EWF attack into Lakrene successfully diverts his attention from the main EWF force advancing on Alkoth. Dream dragons test his powers and prowess whilst dragonewt warriors from the displaced cities of central Dara Happa test his troops. Whilst Alakoring defends Lakrene, Lorenkarten moves the main EWF force into position around Alkoth. Realizing he has been outflanked, Alakoring launches a counteroffensive into Saird and the War Gods destroy the EWF flanking army at the Battle of Zelfield.

The Alakoringites

The followers of Alakoring are called the *Alakoringites* or sometimes the Alakoring Tribe. Orlanthi warriors, holy men and adventurers from across Peloria and Ralios (and beyond) flocked to the Dragonbreaker and acclaimed him their "Great King". The Alakoringites included many Carmanian adventurers and mercenaries, many of whom followed the war god Humakt. The Alakoringites worshipped many gods, but all held Orlanth to be King of All the Gods and the tribe's patron and protector.

At first Alkoth resists with typical ferocity, sending the armies of Shargash out to meet the EWF forces; however Lorenkarten, wise now to the magics employed in raising the likes of Hellmen and demons, employs his innate control over Oslira to swamp the Alkoth force. Surrender is offered by Lorenkarten but rejected by all three Alkothi kings. Unable to penetrate Alkoth's walls, and finding Oslira reluctant (or unable) to destroy her erstwhile husband's city by undermining its very foundations, the siege begins.

Within Alkoth, the Black King takes charge of the city's strategy. He persuades the Red and Green kings that surrendering Shamanasthar to the EWF would create a new, stronger dragon with a much purer understanding of the draconic/Solar relationship than

the Golden Dragon emperor ever managed to attain. Shamanasthar is treated as a princess whilst in Alkoth, wanting for nothing and insulated from the general horrors of hell that walk its streets. However the Scarlet Concubine, frustrated by the Golden Daughter's presence, schemes to make her husband, the Red King, have Shamanasthar killed and then take the war back to the EWF. Her schemes cause dissent between the three kings of the city and so Alkoth becomes paralysed. It has considerable reserves of food and water and can withstand a siege lasting decades, but with the three kings unable to agree a strategy for defeating the EWF, it can do little to break the Wyrmfriend's lines.

Scenario Seeds

Seven Against the River Goddess

As Lorenkarten commands Oslira to rise against Alkoth, several small Half Citizen villages on the eastern bank of the river are threatened by the rising waters. The Seven Servants must strike out to rescue the stranded villagers who, despite worshipping Oslira, are doomed to die by her hand if the Servants fail.

Dragonewts venerating Aroka, the Imperial Fountain, have a similar idea, but to sacrifice the villagers and not save them. The sacrifices will call forth Aroka itself – an explosion of water dragon that erupts from the Keniryan sea to the north and roars down through the Oslir basin engulfing all in its wake. The characters must therefore defeat the dragonewt priest and its Beaked bodyguards. Killing the priest is one option, but there are others:

- Convince the dragonewt priest, Oranafalast, that summoning Aroka is not Right Action. This is Oslira's territory and she should make the decision. If the characters are successful in this regard, the dragonewt priest calls upon Aroka to soothe Oslira and the waters subside, leaving the village unscathed.
- Appeal to Oslira directly. Any Osliran cultist can do this through divine intervention, but must also dedicate 1D4 points of POW to Oslira as a gift. The villagers provide a +20% bonus to this petition.

- Appeal to Lodril or Shargash to quell the rising river, again through divine intervention. Lodril sends his ten worker sons to fortify the banks around the village. Shargash scolds his wilful estranged wife and she sullenly subsides. Lodril requires the characters to assist in the building work, whilst the dragonewts try to destroy the flood defences. Shargash demands a blood sacrifice.

Oranafalast, Tailed Priest Dragonewt of Cult of Aroka

An emerald and amber priest with a bright red wattle and piercing green eyes. Oranafalast likes humans a great deal, especially deep fried. One of its traits is to speak in the third person and to address all males as Ustus, a name Oranafalast especially likes.

Characteristics: STR 11, CON 16, SIZ 14, INT 19, POW 18, DEX 10, CHA 23

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-2	Tail	3/6
3-5	Right Leg	3/6
6-8	Left Leg	3/6
9-11	Abdomen	3/7
12	Chest	3/8
13-15	Right Arm	3/5
16-18	Left Arm	3/5
19-20	Head	3/6

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
None		

CA: 2 SR: +15 DM: +0 Move: 4m MP: 18

Skills: Auld Wyrnish 90%, Athletics 41%, Dodge 30%, Draconic Illumination 60%, Evaluate 90%, Influence 75%, Lore (Aroka) 90%, Lore (Dragonewt) 85%, Perception 80%, Persistence 56%, Resilience 58%, Right Action 86%, Solar Pelorian 80%, Unarmed 30%

Armour: Natural hide. No skill penalty

Dragon Effects: Dragon Claws, Dragon Flight, Dragon Teeth, Dominate the Reptilian Mind, Disease Resistance, Flay Soul, Lesser Fire Resistance, Mystic Insight

True Dragon Dance: Dance of the Eternal Fountain (permits underwater breathing for minutes equal to POW)

111,912 Against the Armies of Chaos

Ralzakark the broo demigod finally sends his armies into Talastar, laying waste to all before it. The goal of the chaos horde is to conquer Dara Happa, extending the influence of its gods into Yelm's lands. Warlord Survilstar, at the head of the considerable forces of Carmania, completes the Curing Hunting Heroquest which makes his warriors immune to the vile diseases the broo bring with them.

The chaos infestation in Talastar ravages the populace. The local Orlanthi make valiant efforts with Storm Bull cultists launching tactical strikes against known chaos nests. The Black Mother of Ilbolga, High Priestess of Thed, is defeated in precisely this manner. In the Yolp Mountains the Talastaring resistance, driven there by the Wandering Plague Lord, joins forces with the Carmanian army led by Shah Samandar and Survilstar and co-ordinates counterstrikes that include warriors from the Dara Happan mercenary Leagues, Darjinn Jahara Peltasts and Carmanian hazars.

Ralzakark sends emissaries to the EWF in the hope of creating a combined army against Carmania and Dara Happa but finds his entreaty rejected for the lie it is. He turns his fury on the Carmanian army, unleashing the Rolling Monster. Despite this fearsome creature's presence and the death of the Shah during the battle, the War Gods inflict massive defeat on the broo, scorpionman and walktapus armies and push Ralzakark back through Talastar.

The Rolling Monster

A festering ball of chaos, the Rolling Monster is an accretion of Ralzakark's slain enemies so that it forms a huge (SIZ 80) rolling ball of flesh with countless mouths and grasping limbs that grab foes and draw them towards the many gaping maws peppering the obscene body. The thing rolls but slowly, constantly changing direction with no apparent directive. It shrieks, moans and hisses as it moves, leaving behind it a trail of putrescent slime and decay. Those unlucky enough to be killed are added to its bulk so that the Rolling Monster grows stronger and larger as it kills.

Destroying this vile thing of Primal Chaos requires courage and sustained magical attack. It is vulnerable to normal weapons but it is unaffected by Major Wounds and can only be stopped, once and for all, by fire. Consider the Rolling Monster to have 150 Hit Points and 8 Armour Points. Its attacks are area-based and it grasps at all foes caught in a 30 metre diameter on a roll of 60% or less, hauled up towards the waiting, gnashing mouths, that inflict 1D6 damage for each bite. Those seized by the Rolling Monster suffer 2D10 bites when pulled into its mass and, when dead, are then absorbed into the creatures ghastly bulk.

against their foes. Karvanyar will accept the petition politely but will leave it to the Seven to decide whether the Ram God is released.

If the Seven chose to free the Ram God, they must take the Bridle of War and find a way into Alkoth (which is now surrounded by an immense EWF army) and make their way into the bowels of the City. Against the active opposition of the demons the city, they must put the Bridle back on the Ram God (who was returned to Alkoth after Karvanyar's enthronement) and find a way out of Alkoth and escape the besieging EWF army. When the Ram is brought to the Talastarings and the Bridle removed, the Ram is miraculously transformed into three Blue Rams. With this deed, the Seven will gain the undying friendship of the Alakoringites and the respect of Idogatha the Sage, but earn the enmity of the Red and Green kings of Alkoth, the Yelm priests, and conservative Dara Happans everywhere.

Of course, the players can refuse, and by doing so gain the accolades of the Yelm priests and conservative Dara Happans everywhere.



Scenario Seeds

Releasing the Ram God

The Talastaring followers of Alakoring rudely petition Karvanyar and insolently demand the release of the Ram God from Alkoth. They claim that the Ram God is one of their ancestors "who has been cruelly enslaved by the demons of Alkoth." If the Ram God is freed, they claim, he will fight for the Talastarings

Entreating Chaos

The Seven Servants, under instructions from Karvanyar, are sent to meet the chaos emissaries Ralzakark has despatched to forge a peace deal with the Carmanian army. The meeting is to take place in a circular valley high in the western Yolp Mountains, a bowl where the gods once rested and told stories. The meeting place was chosen by Survilstar and agreed to by Ralzakark.

The chaos contingent is led by Relzelza, one of Ralzakark's countless sons and a general in the chaos forces. He is an antelope broo with six arms and wears the shrunken heads of his foes as a necklace (indicating his rank as a priest of Thanatar). He is accompanied by several advisers of untainted and tainted persuasions. Relzelza plays the accommodating host, although clearly uncomfortable at having to entertain enemies. He proposes the following:

- Talastar is to be divided equally between Carmania and Ralzakark. A great wall shall divide the two and peace will reign between them.
- In return Ralzakark will pledge the support of his armies, including the Black Mother of Ilbolga and the Rolling Monster, in the fight against the EWF.

The meeting lasts for two days. The Seven Servants are mandated to listen to what chaos offers and to look for the inherent lies any offer they make will undoubtedly contain. Relzelza appears plausible – even sincere – in what he offers, but one of his counsellors, a tall, thin, purple-skinned man with many body piercings, is clearly withholding information.

Whilst Relzelza appears to be trustworthy, the purple-skinned man is not, and he knows the characters suspect immanent treachery. Irrespective of whether or not the characters accept the deal the broo offers, they are attacked by a fierce horde of broo and must fight their way free from the basin.

Relzelza, Broo Doom Lord of Thanatar

A twisted and gnarled human body, with thick leathery hide, topped by an antelope's head with huge, sharp, twisted horns. Relzelza's eyes burn with the black flame of chaos and Thanatar's inner knowledge. He wears a necklace of shrunken, human heads around his neck; each screams out whenever he is threatened or attacked.

Characteristics: STR 15, CON 13, SIZ 15, INT 12, POW 10, DEX 14, CHA 7

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-2	Right Leg	3/6
3-4	Left Leg	3/6
5-6	Abdomen	3/7
7-8	Chest	3/8
9-10	Right Upper Arm	3/5
11	Right Middle Arm	3/5
12-13	Right Lower Arm	3/5
14-15	Left Upper Arm	3/5
16	Left Middle Arm	3/5
17-18	Left Lower Arm	3/5
19-20	Head	3/6

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Headbutt	80%	2D6+1D2
Broadsword	95%	1D8+1+1D2 / 2
Garotte	70%	1D2+1D2 / 1
Target Shield	88%	1D6+1D2 / 8

CA: 3 **SR:** +13 **Move:** 4m **MP:** 10

Skills: Athletics 61%, Dodge 60%, Evaluate 35%, Influence 45%, Lore (Animal) 50%, Lore (Thanatar) 90%, Lore (Plant) 30%, Lore (World) 25%, Perception 60%, Persistence 63%, Resilience 49%, Stealth 49%, Throwing 30%, Unarmed 30%

Runes (Integrated): Chaos, Runecasting 75%; Darkness, Runecasting 70%; Death, Runecasting 60%.

Armour: A mixture of toughened hide and mail armour. –6% skill penalty

Rune Magic: Bladesharp, Create Head, Darkwall, Summon Thanatari Guardian

Divine Magic: Consecrate, Dismiss Magic, Soul Sight.

The Purple Man, Servant of Primal Chaos

A rake-thin, purple-skinned man some two metres tall. His skin is covered in piercings which are connected by gossamer chains of iron. He smiles sweetly, a thick mucus of chaotic ooze dropping from his lips whenever he does so.

Characteristics: STR 9, CON 12, SIZ 21, INT 15, POW 18, DEX 11, CHA 6

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	-/6
4-6	Left Leg	-/6
7-9	Abdomen	-/7
10-12	Chest	-/8
13-15	Right Arm	-/5
16-18	Left Arm	-/5
19-20	Head	-/6

Weapons

Type	Weapon skill	Damage / AP
Dagger	75%	1D4+1+1D2 / 2

CA: 2 **SR:** +13 **Move:** 5m **MP:** 18

Skills: Athletics 23%, Dodge 20%, Evaluate 78%, Influence 71%, Lore (Primal Chaos) 88%, Lore (Plant) 30%, Lore (World) 35%, Perception 40%, Persistence 65%, Resilience 21%, Stealth 88%, Throwing 20%, Unarmed 10%

Armour: None. Immune to bronze weapons; sustains normal damage from Iron weapons and magic.

Runes (Integrated): Chaos, Runecasting 85%

Rune Magic: Skybolt

Dvine Magic: Fear, Extension.

The Purple Man has the Heart of Gold chaotic feature. His heart is a solid gold nugget worth 3,000 gold pieces.

111,912 The White Sun Lords

After performing once again the difficult rites that allow him to communicate directly with Yelm, Karvanyar asks how this communication could be easier. The Emperor is told to speak to Idogatha the Sage but he does not know of this person, nor does any member of his household. Karvanyar orders the Seven to institute a search for Idogatha.

Idogatha is found in Horvath, a small town north of Raibanth. He appears little more than a grinning commoner and is beloved by the peasants for his ability to deflate the pretensions of the nobility, including the Seven. He can, however, be persuaded to come to the Imperial Court. Idogatha fits surprisingly easily in at Court. Once there, he proves to have great knowledge that confounds and disarms the other advisors and is singularly adept at seeing through draconic lies. Karvanyar spends many days in discussions with this strange philosopher.

One day, Karvanyar announces a new rallying cry, "Every Man a Sun!" The old Yelmic priests are appalled but after the fall of Lokastuman, there is little they can do. Karvanyar brings Idogatha into his household, which he now collectively calls the "White Sun Lords."

Idogatha the Sage possesses tremendous knowledge, wisdom and insight that the players can draw on. He is serene, good-humoured, and quite witty. He teaches that change is necessary and eternal; that individualism is irrepressible; and that physical engagement with the world is necessary. He speaks of the Secret Doctrines of Osentalka the Perfect One and of the Insightful Teachings of Nysalor the Illuminated One. Idogatha is, in fact, an Illuminate; something that would be profoundly disturbing to any Orlanthi or Malkioni that became aware of it.

111,913: Of Promises Broken

At the High Council of the War Gods in Raibanth, Alakoring and Survilstar petition Karvanyar to make good on his promises to support an attack against Dragon Pass and to cede Darjinni territories to Carmania. He refuses both requests and angry confrontations result in the War Gods Alliance being broken. Alakoring leaves the Oslira valley, taking a mixture of Talastaring, Ralian and southern Pelorian warriors with him, leaving the southern border undefended and the siege of Alkoth unchecked.

Survistar returns to Carmania where, feted as a hero, he raises a new army that marches into northern Darjinn and seizes key territories; the capital of Darjinn, Massos, falls within days. In Darjinn, Karvanyar is viewed as an oath-breaker and morale throughout southern Dara Happa plummets.

Despite protestations from the Rune Lords of Urvairinus, Karvanyar refuses to accept that reneging on his promises to Alakoring and Survilstar was unwise. He maintains that the right time for his promises will be dictated by the stars, not by a mercenary's whim. Nevertheless, he sends emissaries to the south, east and west to find Alakoring and deliver fresh plans for relieving the siege of Alkoth. Many are lost in these expeditions.

Of Survilstar's treachery, Karvanyar is less forgiving. Refuge is given to the Darjinn diaspora who rebel against the Carmanian brand of monotheism. God Learner proselytisers from Ralios enter Darjinn secretly to brief against both the EWF and Dara Happa. The Malkioni HeroQuester Vanadrass the Illuminator intends to unlock the myths surrounding the Celestial Court and, in particular, Yelm's death and resurrection. Karvanyar sees the danger of this God Learner meddling and so sends the Seven Servants into Ralios and the temple of Hrelar Amali which, he learns through a HeroQuest of his own, contains secrets of the Rebel Gods' Lightbringer Quest and which will defeat Vanadrass's efforts to subvert Yelmic mythology. Vanadrass plans to substitute Yelm with Malkion and change the brothers and sons of Yelm into various saints of the Middle Sea Empire, thus creating a single, unified, solar monomyth.

Scenario Seeds

Hrelar Amali and the thwarting of Vanadrass the Illuminator

The temple of Hrelar Amali is near the Ralian city of Dangk and under God Learner control. The Seven Servants must gain access to the ruins of Hrelar Amali and undergo a simple HeroQuest of their own that prevents Vanadrass the Illuminator from meddling with the Lightbringers' Quest. This involves the characters forming alliances with Old Way Traditionalists within Dangk, whilst subverting the God Learner agenda, led by Bruyant Openwing (see *Glorantha: The Second Age*, page 128).

A temple of some kind has stood at the site of Hrelar Amali since The Green Age: first the Great Tree that was Flamal, then the temple built by Lhankor Mhy, and then smaller, more numerous structures of the Dangan Confederacy. The present ruins are a mixture of the remains of Lhankor Mhy's temple, and the Dangan temple complex. They stand atop the earlier remains of several much smaller shrines, many of them Hsunchen in origin, and even an incredibly ancient temple to Zorak Zoran, gnawed into the long-dead roots of the Great Tree. The area has always attracted the devout; from those who worshipped the First Gods, through to the streams of theists who, up until Hrelar Amali's annexation, regularly came here to pray and seek divine enlightenment. The God Learners have, in their arrogant contempt for theists, seized control of a deeply holy source and tensions run high. The area is surrounded by an earth and wood stockade, and patrolled by members of the Rightness Army, especially drafted to the temple for security purposes.

But the faithful still flock to Hrelar Amali, using Dangk as a base for the pilgrimage. The God Learners tolerate their presence, (regulating it with a ticketing system), since they offer the perfect opportunity for proselytising and conversion to Malkionism, and, of course, study by the Revealers. Theists, misguided as they are in the God Learners' eyes, have their uses. Bruyant believes it is necessary to allow theists access to Hrelar Amali because he is fascinated by the way the worshippers interact with the temple. He hopes that a particular prayer, spell or incantation may offer

that vital spark of enlightenment that reveals Hrelar's real nature, and he demands constant reports on what theists do, say and receive in return.

The main ruins of Herlar Amali are surrounded by smaller, beehive-like temples built by the Dangan Confederacy, using rubble from the Lhankor Mhy temple and petrified wood from the tree. They represent the descent of Yelm into Hell, after he was slain by Orlanth. The huge antechamber that leads up to the main temple represents Hell itself, and then the parade of circular temples represents Yelm's re-ascent, arming himself as he grew in strength, eventually returning to his prime position as Imperator and helping to defeat Chaos.

Most of the sun temples are ruined, but their beehive nature is obvious, and members of the Solar pantheon have no trouble recognising their nature. God Learners swarm, bee-like around these ruined hives, still documenting the God Script etched deep into every surface. Entry to the Hero Plane can be gained from any of these beehives.

Anyone using Hrelar Amali to access the Hero Plane arrives in the midst of a most grievous funeral. The characters find they are present at the funeral of Yelm himself. Vanadrass the Illuminator, in the guise of Eurmial the Trickster, tries to persuade Dendara, Lodril, Shargash. and Dayzatar that Yelm can be resurrected if he is worshipped as a Saint. Vanadrass has brought with him vestments of Malkion and he beguiles each god, in turn, to take one part of the vestments and wrap them around Yelm's body.

The Seven Servants need to argue their own case, convincing the gods to remain pure. But the gods grieve and Yelm's reason is denied to them. Vanadrass's arguments are compelling as they appear to restore hope; the characters must prepare their own, mythically-based arguments to convince the gods to reject the Malkioni vestments and trust in Yelm to reascend, restored by the Lightbringers.

111,914: Dara Happa Strikes

Karvanyar rallies the warrior leagues of Dara Happa and attempts to break the siege of Alkoth. A great battle is fought north of Alkoth and Karvanyar rides through the EWF armies in the Chariot of Rage which is pulled by the Ram God. He uses the weapons of Urvairinus and Yelmario to inflict massive casualties on the EWF whilst other Dara Happa heroes rage across the battlefield slaying Wyrmfriends without mercy.

The battle turns against Dara Happa when Lorenkarten assumes draconic form and engages Karvanyar in single combat. Karvanyar is gravely injured and the Dara Happs routed. The Seven Servants must rescue Karvanyar from the battlefield and take him downriver to the House of Erisa where he requires the Ten Spells of Healing to fully recover. When he regains consciousness, he recounts a vision he had where Yelm commanded him to fulfil his oath and marry the Golden Dragon's daughter; only she can help save Alkoth but cannot do so whilst still a maiden.

Scenario Seeds

Houses of Healing and Sacrifice

As the Seven Servants take Karvanyar north to the House of Erisa, they must defend the House of Erisa from a strike force of dinosaur mounted dragonewts, sent to capture Karvanyar during the long process of his healing. Accompanying a bodyguard unit of a thousand Dara Happa phalangites, they must try to hold a narrow pass through which the river runs, against ten times their number.

With good leadership, cunning tactics and powerful magic, they can hold up the EWF force for a day, but ultimately they are doomed. After huge casualties on both sides, night falls and the Seven Servants receive a dream sent from the planet Ghelotralas, warning of a flanking attack which will catch the defenders in the rear at noon, and reminding them of the virtue of self sacrifice.



The following dawn, the Seven Servants have an opportunity to inspire the remaining troops with an oration to stand no matter what, since every hour could make the difference between Karvanyar's survival or death. If they are successful the soldiers and their commander will pledge their lives to die to the last man. The commander however, orders the Seven to move further up the pass to ambush the divinely predicted flanking manoeuvre. If they follow orders, they will defeat the dragonewts in a terrible battle. But when they rush back to the main army, they will see the remaining few hundred troops following their commander's example, draw their swords and ritually commit suicide. As each man dies, a Sunspear of epic proportions flies down from the sky, incinerating dinosaurs and their dragonewt riders alike. The EWF force is shattered, allowing the Seven Servants to sweep the battlefield clean. On investigation, only the armour and weapons of the Dara Happan troops is found. Their bodies reduced to a fine ash.

Back at the nesting grounds of the dragonewts, the eggs of those consumed in the Battle of LightFall have also been burned to cinders. No dragonewt ever re-births from the blackened eggs again. The EWF pauses in its campaign to ponder what happened and mourn the spirits of those lost to the fires.

111,915 to 111,917 Days of the Solar Council

The first Solar Council, consisting of the High Priests and Star Seers of Dara Happa, convenes in Yuthuppa to discuss Karvanyar's actions. Karvanyar comes before them as a Poor Woman's Son once more and explains his vision. He retakes the Ten Tests and passes, becoming more powerful than before.

A great Carmanian army, led by the new Shah, Nadar, himself, comes to avenge the betrayal by Karvanyar. Karvanyar makes peace with the Shah by agreeing to pay an enormous tribute and swears a terrible oath to the Shah. However, the Carmanians still will not come to the aid of Alkoth; Nadar insists that Karvanyar find Alakoring before the Carmanians will help relieve the city of Hell.

The emissaries sent two years before have failed to find Alakoring, but from atop the Footstep Karvanyar sees him in the Underworld, a broken and tortured prisoner of Deshkorgos and his demons in the hell of Ershkintu. The Seven Servants are sent to rescue him. Travelling through Dragon Pass they encounter the Jrusteli spy and assassin, Mother Jheugar, who becomes an unlikely ally in their quest to free Alakoring. They must take the spark of his life from Shargash's Enclosure and bring it to Alakoring so that he might escape Hell.

When Alakoring returns, he is a true Hero and wields previously unknown powers of Orlanth. He reluctantly agrees to return to Dara Happa but insists that Karvanyar make good on his promises to assist an invasion of the EWF heartland. Karvanyar agrees

— but only if Hellmen and the Elevens of Alkoth can lead the assault. Alakoring must therefore help break the siege of Alkoth. He and Karvanyar are reconciled.

Scenario Seeds

The Strongbox of Shargash.

To fulfill Karvanyar's oath to Shah Nadar, the Seven must travel deep into the Underworld and make their way into Shargash's Final Enclosure. There the Purifier keeps the greatest treasures he has taken from the Living. The Seven and their allies must either persuade the Great Devourer to release the Spark of Alakoring, or they must steal it from his strongbox. Either path poses terrible dangers to the Seven, but Idogatha can teach them secrets that might give them a chance.

If they succeed, they must travel further in Hell to Ershkintu along the dangerous and dark paths shown by Karvanyar to bring the Spark to the wrecked remains of Alakoring. Once reunited with his Spark, Alakoring is restored and will leap to this world, bringing the Seven with him.

111,918: A Marriage Made in Hell

Karvanyar, Alakoring and the Seven Servants travel secretly to Alkoth and must find their way through the EWF siege lines surrounding the city. Within the walls of hell Karvanyar goes in search of Shamanasthar to complete the wedding aborted eight years earlier. The Scarlet Concubine, who has gained in power during the siege, attempts to wreck the nuptials. EWF agents are discovered lurking in Alkoth, attempting to find ways of breaking through the city walls.

Karvanyar and Shamanasthar marry in the Grand Ziggurat. Shamanasthar rejects her draconic lineage and embraces the Solar tradition. Outside, the Eternal

Dragon Ring feels its power weaken, prompting Alakoring to enter hell directly to force Shargash to break the siege once and for all.

Whilst Alakoring is in hell, Lord Great Burin and Isgangdrang arrive to join Lorenkarten at the siege. Lord Great Burin prepares to vomit armies of the dead to counter the expected emergence of Hellmen from Alkoth. Isgangdrang challenges Karvanyar to meet him in single combat outside the city walls. Karvanyar accepts the challenge despite his wife's council against it.

In the battle the heroes of Dara Happa and EWF clash. Karvanyar is nearly killed at Isgangdrang's hand and must be again rescued from the battlefield. The walls of Alkoth show signs of weakness and Lord Great Burin spews forth draconic armies to breach the city's defences.

Scenario Seeds

Wedding Nails

Preparations for the marriage of Karvanyar and Shamanasthar fall to the Seven Servants. The ceremony is to be low-key but still equipped with enough essential ceremony to make it a true, Dara Happan, Imperial Wedding.

The characters, in making preparations, face the following complications which they must somehow resolve successfully:

- The Green and Red kings both want the ceremony held at their respective palaces. Neither is prepared to compromise and each sends emissaries to petition the Seven Servants with favours and cast-iron reasons. Karvanyar wants the ceremony to be neutral politically but is unable to exert influence himself.
- The Scarlet Concubine learns of the wedding and vows to disrupt it. Her agents, drawn from the faithful who serve Gorgorma in Alkoth, try to scupper the wedding plans and even plot

to object to the marriage on the day, claiming Sharmanasthar is still a dragon's daughter. The characters must find a way of proving she is now loyal to Dara Happa.

- Word of the wedding leaks to the besieging EWF forces. Emissaries of the Eternal Dragon Ring pledge a war to end all wars if the marriage goes ahead.
- The characters must make arrangements for a wedding dress, a wedding banquet, and find a suitable gift for the groom to give to his bride. Such things that are truly appropriate are difficult to come by in a city of Hell.
- On the eve of the wedding Sharmanasthar is filled with doubt about her suitability as a wife and fears another rejection by Karvanyar. Similarly, Karvanyar doubts his suitability as a husband. The characters must soothe both sets of fears.
- A member of the Red King's harem claims Karvanyar came into the harem's inner sanctum and raped her using magic. The allegations are clearly preposterous but the Scarlet Concubine demands retribution – and the woman was certainly raped by somebody. Who was the culprit? Has the Scarlet Concubine fabricated the scheme to discredit Karvanyar?

111,919 – 111,920: Dara Happa Rages

Karvanyar recovers thanks to Alkor's healing magic. Shamanasthar converts fully to the worship of Oslira and undertakes the Blue Serpent HeroQuest which reveals her true aspect: as a daughter of Oslira; not a daughter of the Wondrous Mother of Many, as her father, the Golden Dragon, had claimed she was.

Alkoth and the Eternal Dragon Ring prepare for their final, decisive, confrontation.

Alakoring emerges from Hell, bringing him with him the Stormspear, the Liberating Bolt by which draconic illusions and lies are annihilated. He calls upon his followers and marches upon Isgangdrang's army which has headed up the Erinflarth to conquer Talastar and beyond. If the players chose not to release the Iron Ram, Alakoring is now accompanied by the three Blue Rams of Talastar on his return from hell.

Shamanasthar rouses her mother, Oslira, to attack Lorenkarten.

Karvanyar and the Seven Servants rally the Elevens to make a final charge against the EWF siege.

The Black King calls forth Shargash and the Ultimate Army of Hell.

In the first days of 111,920 the armies of Alakoring and Survilstar attack the army of Isgangdrang near Angry Lake in Aggar at the great Battle of the Three Armies. The night before the battle the EWF defenders sacrifice to Drang the Diamond Storm Dragon. That same night the Alakoringites offer the three Blue Rams of Talastar to Orlanth Orvanshagor. When battle begins in the morning fortunes waver until the screaming fire of Drang comes down from the sky, falling like a burning star upon one wing of the Carmanians. The loss is horrible until Alakoring fights it hand to claw and wind to wind, and strikes through its one weak place and kills it. The broken stone of the dragon still litters the Sparkling Lands of Aggar. The victory is costly but decisive. Drang was as powerful an entity as the EWF could summon, and it had failed against the magic of Alakoring. Isgangdrang, the most senior and powerful member of the Eternal Dragon Ring, is dead and his head a trophy of Alakoring. On the field of victory, the Orlanthi acclaim Alakoring the Great King of the Orlanthi and the peoples of Saird support him with tribute and warriors.

At Alkoth, Dara Happa prevails and the draconic influence in Peloria is broken for All Time.

Scenario Seeds

The Blue Serpent HeroQuest

As part of her conversion to the worship of Oslira, Sharmanasthar decides to try to realise her true heritage and, therefore, her true purpose in Dara Happa's fate. The Black King declares that the only way for this to be achieved is for her to undertake the Blue Serpent HeroQuest. The outcome of the quest will determine once and for all who Sharmanasthar really is. The Black King names the Seven Servants as the ones who must accompany Sharmanasthar.

The HeroQuesting rules found on pages 62 to 64 of *The Magic of Glorantha*, are used for this HeroQuest. The HeroQuest is a fundamental Dara Happan myth and takes place at the Oslira temple in the ziggurat of the Green King. Sharmanasthar uses her new-found Oslira Theology to enter the Hero Plane, but each character must make his own successful Lore (Theology) test to follow. If the characters are unable to use Lore (Oslira Theology) then a Lore (Dara Happa) or another Dara Happan cult theology test will suffice, but at a -40% penalty. The attempt to enter the Hero Plane takes place in a well-known temple, lending a +10% bonus to the tests. Any character failing the test cannot enter the Hero Plane and must remain without.

The First Stage – the Coming of Nestenos

As the characters and Shamanasthar enter the Hero Plane, they each undergo a monumental change. Shamanasthar transforms into a huge, writhing, Blue Serpent that cuts through the new lands surrounding it. The landscape is vaguely Dara Happan, but devoid of settlements or its usual landmarks. Shamanasthar has become Nestenos, the Blue Serpent that, in the God Time, threatened Yelm's rule. Nestenos rises and spits fury at the characters.

Each character has changed to become one of the gods of the Solar Pantheon. The persona each character assumes depends on which god they worship, or who

that god is related to if a minor god. Each character therefore takes responsibility for one of the subsequent stages of the HeroQuest; each has to face Nestenos and engage in battle, but be defeated. The aim of the HeroQuest is to literally re-establish Dara Happa, and this means Murhzarzarm must be the one to tame Nestenos.

The Second Stage – Lodril's Challenge

Nestenos submerges the earthworks of Lodril with her scales; his workers fight for air as they are submerged beneath the Blue Serpent's coils.

One character must become Lodril and wrestle the Blue Serpent. The character who becomes the Earth God should either be a Lodril worshipper or be the character with the highest Unarmed skill (not Martial Arts). The character uses his normal Unarmed skill, gaining a bonus of +5% for every 20% he has in Lore (Lodril Theology). He must use his Unarmed in an Opposed test against Nestenos's Unarmed skill of 75% and must do so five times. Lodril is allowed to win one or two of the contests, but he must lose the rest before the HeroQuest can advance. If the first character to become Lodril beats Nestenos, he is ejected from the HeroQuest and another character becomes Lodril, facing the same challenge. This process is repeated until Lodril is defeated by the Blue Serpent.

The Third Stage – Shargash's Challenge

With Lodril defeated the Blue Serpent cuts a path through the lands and towards Alkoth. Here, Shargash the Thunderer makes his stand, bringing with him one thousand drummers to try to frighten the serpent into a retreat. The character who becomes Shargash should either be a Shargashi cultist or the character with the highest Athletics (Brute Force) skill. The character, surrounded by one thousand demonic drummers, must pound on his drums a military tattoo so deafening that the Blue Serpent retreats. To do this, the character matches his Athletics (Brute Force) against Nestenos's Resilience of 80% in five opposed contests. He gains a +5% bonus for every 20% of Lore

(Shargash Theology) but must, again, win no more than two of the contests. If he does, he is ejected from the HeroQuest and another character takes Shargash's place until the Blue Serpent emerges as the winner, drowning the southern lands.

The Fourth Stage – Yelm's Challenge

One of the characters becomes Yelm himself – the character with the highest POW Characteristic, or one who worships Yelm or one of the Yelm subcults. Yelm attempts to use Justice to turn Nestentos away from swallowing the empire. The character must engage in five contests opposing the Blue Serpent's Persistence skill of 85% with his own Influence or Oratory skill, gaining a +5% bonus for every 20% he has in a Yelmic Theology. Once more, Yelm must lose, and ascend to Heaven through the power of his own innate justice to avoid being crushed by the Blue Serpent's coils.

The Fifth Stage – Murharzarm's Challenge

The final stage is for a character to become Murharzarm. This must be either a Murharzarm cultist or the one with the highest CHA characteristic.

The Blue Serpent advances on the Imperial Footrest where Murharzarm awaits it. It coils itself around his body and makes three separate attacks; the character must this time defeat the serpent in all of them. The attacks are as follows:

- The Blue Serpent seeks to Bite (80%) Murharzarm. Murharzarm must choose a combat skill and beat the Bite in an opposed contest. If he wins, he breaks the serpent's teeth.

- Next, the Blue Serpent seeks to Strangle (75%) Murharzarm. He must break the Serpent's hold with his Athletics skill.
- For the third attack the serpent tries to Paralyze (70%) Murharzarm with its gaze; Murharzarm must resist it with his Persistence.

When the Blue Serpent is defeated, the character needs to make one final, successful, Influence roll. If successful Lodril is commanded to dig a new course for the Blue Serpent and the Blue Serpent is persuaded to make it her home. She is overjoyed at this action and pledges her service to Yelm. The lands of Dara Happa become complete, and Shargash takes Nestenos as his bride. Nestenos changes her name to Oslira, and together with Shargash she gives birth to a golden haired daughter: Sharmanasthar.

The HeroQuest ends with Sharmanasthar's rebirth as a Golden Daughter of Dara Happa, not the Golden Daughter of a dragon. She arises as a demigoddess who can persuade her mother, Oslira, to ignore the commands of Lorenkanten the Mile. Furthermore, she can, with the power of her true father, Shargash, confront the likes of Lorenkanten on equal terms and defeat them.

For their part in the HeroQuest the characters who completed a stage successfully each gain 1D4+1 points of POW. They have channelled aspects of the gods and effectively given Dara Happa new birth through Sharmanasthar.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

This chapter offers guidance on the major non-player character personalities and motivations so that Games Master can present them as fully-rounded characters during play. As mentioned in the introduction, these NPCs do not have game statistics listed; however a guide is given regarding magical abilities and other powers.

Alakoring Dragonbreaker

A tall, proud Orlanthi with blue-black hair, a thick, but well kept beard, and sharp, fierce, brown eyes.

Alakoring typifies the Orlanthi nobleman. Proud, not a little vain, and most certainly rash and quick to anger; he is, however, a kind and stout leader of men who intends to protect the weak and see justice and law replace tyranny and dogma.

Born in Ralios (the region is unknown, but possibly Lankst) he followed the traditional warrior Orlanthi path eventually becoming a Wind Lord and travelling western Glorantha to gain wisdom and knowledge. During these travels Alakoring found himself HeroQuesting with members of the small but ardent Orlanth Dragonslayer cult. Undertaking the Drathdaw HeroQuest, in which Orlanth slays the Stone Dragon who tries to mate with Kero Fin, Alakoring emerged to find he had assimilated Orlanth's dragon-killing power. When dragonewts attempted to kill him, he slew the entire nest, including their eggs: so was the name Dragonbreaker given to him.

Few hate the EWF with as much passion as Alakoring. The same hatred of dragons that flowed through young Orlanth flows through Alakoring. He knows that dragons are contemptuous of humans and gods, and Alakoring hates contempt, believing in respect for all things, even things that are not understood. He

is therefore driven by the same passions that drive Orlanth: to drive away tyranny, to live as a free man; to honour the family and hearth; and to visit terrible vengeance (but never contempt) on one's foes.

Alakoring is quick to anger but equally quick to calm. He is fabulous company amongst friends, regaling all with tales of the gods and ribald jokes. Yet this masks an introspective side. He knows he has the power to kill dragons with a single blow – and has the courage to do so – but he is unsure how best to use it. Through his association with Karvanyar as one of the War Gods Alakoring learns his destiny is to take the battle to Dragon Pass and slay the rulers of the EWF in their



home territory. He is therefore driven in his beliefs and impatient with Dara Happans who are, to him, filled with self-interest and an arrogance that, if not controlled, will become contempt.

Magic

Alakoring's magic is typically Orlanthi. He knows Bladesharp, Cover of Night, Mobility and Thunder's Voice as rune spells, all at 100%. He has integrated the runes of Air, Mastery and Motion.

His divine magic is similarly potent: Command Sylph, Heal Wound, Flight, Lightning Strike, Shield and Wind Words, all at 100%.

Alakoring's Dragonbreaker power is derived from his HeroQuest. Whenever fighting anyone embarked on the draconic path, every hit he strikes is a Critical hit. When fighting dragons (Great Dragons and True Dragons), he channels Orlanth's spirit directly, appearing to increase in size and ferocity as he becomes the Storm God. Whatever weapon he wields channels Death and every blow he lands ignores the dragon's armour and is a Critical hit. He is immune to the effects of draconic magic.

Golden Dragon emperor

Although he plays a small role in the story, Hurbargarten, or the Golden Dragon emperor, is an important figure. A potent draconic mystic who studied under Obduran the Flyer he has studied the Solar myths extensively and drawn logical, yet mystic, conclusions between Yelm and the Cosmic Dragon; this is the source of his power.

As a human, Hurbargarten is an intense but wise and, almost, kindly man. He is not unsympathetic towards Dara Happans but is ultimately frustrated at their inability to fully accept the inevitability of a Solar/draconic union. When he realised transcendency it was natural for him to absorb his understanding of the Solar way into a draconic aspect, manifesting as the Golden Dragon.

As the Golden Dragon his influence is all pervasive

but largely benign. He is above mortal considerations and spends his time wrapped around the Imperial Footrest in deep contemplation of the relationship between Yelm and the Cosmic Dragon. The Golden Dragon Society, which he founded, acts in the Golden Dragon emperor's name only. He has left their material concerns far behind.

His legacy is his daughter, Shamanasthar. Through her, the Golden Dragon emperor hopes to heal the rift between the Solar and draconic paths. This is his only earthly concern; otherwise the Golden Dragon emperor is a symbol of draconic transcendence and wisdom. Yet for all his wisdom and powerful draconic form, the Golden Dragon is still a mortal being with a human soul. He is prone to flashes of arrogance and a belief in his own self-worth. This proves to be his undoing.



Magic

The Golden Dragon emperor knows all the draconic magic detailed in *The Magic of Glorantha* and is capable of casting it at Magnitude 20. As a fully realised mystic, he does so very rarely however, because its use diverts his purity back towards the mundane.

Karvanyar

Tall, with chiselled features and a shock of blond hair, Karvanyar epitomises Dara Happan noble manhood. He looks, and behaves, as heroes should; he is honest, forthright and fiercely loyal to the Dara Happan and Solar traditions. When he is awakened to his destiny, Karvanyar sets out to win hearts and minds first, establishing his name and presence far and wide before formulating his plan for regaining the throne from the dragon.



But Karvanyar is a flawed hero. Having not been raised in a noble home he lacks considerable maturity when it comes to exercising power. Karvanyar is quite prepared to use people to fulfil his heroic ideals. His destiny is more important than promises made to other people. Directions can and should be changed if it serves his personal ambitions. Karvanyar is stubborn, does not appreciate criticism, and is prone to change his mind without fully considering the consequences.

When he becomes emperor, he begins to mature and understand the responsibilities of a ruler. As a young man, consolidating his power, he is far more reckless. Ultimately, Karvanyar is a loner and he does not like to accept advice unless it is the sort of advice he wants to hear. But for all these failings he is a good, loyal friend with a fundamental belief in justice and the Dara Happan way. He is good at war and effecting surprising victories; he is not so good at making the right decisions for the good of all until he finds himself as emperor with the responsibility for an entire land beset by battle.

Magic

Before becoming the hero of *Dara Happa Stirs*, Karvanyar is a simple carpenter who follows no particular cult but pays respects to the Ten Sons of Lodril. His magic is mostly concerned with his trade.

When he realises his destiny, he worships Yelm directly as he travels through Peloria, and his magic grows with him. He knows the following divine spells: Heal, Light and Protection.

As he undertakes the Golden Daughter Contest, his personal powers, granted by Antirius, give him the powers of Command (Horse), Command (Troops), Cloud Clear.

As emperor, he is able to cast all divine magic associated with Sun and Fire cults, as this is channelled directly from Yelm

Lorenkarten

Lorenkarten's personal philosophy is that one becomes a dragon through starting small and gaining in power through experience, contemplation and ultimately rebirth. In this way he espouses the dragonewt lifecycle but in human form, and, through several rebirths, he has reached a state where he can transcend his human form and assume that of a mile-long dragon.

Lorenkarten has a natural affinity with water due to his veneration of Aroka, the Imperial Fountain. In a previous incarnation he HeroQuested in a bid to prevent Orlanth from slaying Aroka; Lorenkarten failed when he understood that True Dragons cannot be slain, even by gods, and welcome the experience of death so that they might be reborn. As a result of this HeroQuesting he absorbed some of Aroka's wisdom and now has the ability to command all water spirits to do his bidding. With subsequent rebirths his power

over water extends to the mightiest rivers; even the mercurial Oslira, whom he both loves and loathes in equal measure.

In human form Lorenkarten is a mixture of honesty and oily, watery charm. He is used to people heeding his wisdom; when they do not, he is happy to crush them because they can serve no true purpose. Despite his wisdom he works with selfish motives and as a consequence will never become a True Dragon because he is incapable of repairing the Broken Infinity – which all mystics must do of they are to ascend the mortal form and escape the strictures of Time.

Lorenkarten is very much the charming – almost friendly – villain, but he is no longer really human. His motives are alien to humans because he no longer shares human values. For all that, though, he is personable, incisive and, if accorded respect, even helpful.

Magic

Lorenkarten knows all the draconic magic detailed in *The Magic of Glorantha* and is capable of casting it at Magnitude 20. He is also capable of reincarnation if he submerges his body in water, drawing on Aroka's power to bring him back in a new body.

Lorenkarten commands all sources of water. Through sheer mystical concentration he can command a body of water to flow in a different direction, become motionless or drown enemies. Rivers, like Oslira, cannot be so easily commanded, but they are compelled to pause and listen to Lorenkarten, struggling with their own, draconic part, if they are to resist him. Where Lorenkarten controls a river, he can cause it to rise and flood although such control moves him further away from becoming a True Dragon.

Shamanasthar

The Golden Dragon's daughter was not conceived as a human child; she has no human mother, for she was born of a dragonewt egg in the city of Dragon's Eye in Dragon Pass after her father, Hurarbargarten, foresaw her creation in a dream whilst he quested for the myth of Yelm the Dragon. Her father believes she is a daughter of Yelm and the Wondrous Mother of





Many, mother of all dragonewts, and she has grown-up believing this herself.

Her natural beauty is astonishing; she is golden haired, perfectly proportioned, and ageless, even though in years she is old enough to be a great-grandmother. She is also blessed with wisdom and insight; her combination of Solar purity and draconic potential create a perfect balance between both paths. She is therefore kind but shrewd; graceful but tenacious; loving but capable of great anger when her loved ones are threatened.

The Golden Dragon emperor loves her but is a distant figure now; Shamanasthar lost her father when he adopted the Golden Dragon's form. She stays close to him because she understands his motives, perhaps better than he does. She also loves Dara Happa: its myths, its culture and its people. Even though women are classed as inferior to men, she understands the necessity of it and accepts that women must exercise their power in different, more subtle ways.

Shamanasthar is a very loving, trusting, demi-goddess. Treated with kindness and respect, she returns it tenfold. She genuinely likes Karvanyar and wishes to

become his wife; his betrayal is desperately painful for her and she seriously considers defecting to the Eternal Dragon Ring. However she realises that do so would be spiteful and so she resists, residing in Alkoth until, finally. Karvanyar comes to claim her.

She will be a great friend and confidant of the Seven Servants, relying on them for help and news, and acting as a guide and conscience when appropriate. Those who spend time with her come to love her deeply, and she repays that affection with her own, inimitable charm and grace.

Magic

Shamanasthar knows the following Draconic Spells from *The Magic of Glorantha*: Disease Resistance, Draconic Prophecy, Draconic Regeneration, Inspiration and Mystic Sight. All can be cast at Magnitude 8 and at 90%.

Additionally she knows the following spells as a worshipper of Dendara: Glamour, Bless Home, Command (Household).

Survilstar

Survilstar commands the Carmanian armies of the Shah, Samandar, in Pelanda and Talastar. An ardent monotheist he has little time for the Orlanthi or Dara Happan beliefs, but when it comes to protecting his territories from chaos, he is happy to make whatever alliances are necessary.

Survilstar is an aggressive, capricious man, untrusting of those who embrace many gods. However he hates the EWF far more, and spent his fair share of time in battle against the likes of Lord Great Burin and hordes of berserk warrior dragonewts. A man of little patience, he expects his orders to be obeyed without question and, naturally, it goes without saying that he is always right in his strategies.

Survilstar does not trust Karvanyar, but he likes him. He trusts the Seven Servants far more but, as Dara Happans, he finds them ultimately misguided. Alakoring he neither likes nor trusts, but his reputation as a dragon killer makes him a powerful ally, and so respect exists between them.



Survilar rarely speaks. When he does, it is as though barking orders. Dissent or disagreement is rewarded with his red-faced rage, but those who follow his lead are rewarded with heart-felt praise and public recognition.

Magic

Survilar has the runes of Mastery and Stasis fully integrated. He knows: Beams of Brilliance, Central Aim, Decimate, Enforcers' Lure and Frost Shield. He is an ardent worshipper of the Carmanian saint Askavius the Martyr who laid down his life for the Loskalm Diaspora as they fled the God Learners. His dedication to the saint gives him the divine spells of Mercy Killing and Valorous Stand.

Urvanyar

The son of the previous human emperor, Dismanthuyar, and father to Karvanyar, Urvanyar is a man abused by fate. He should have been emperor, but was denied it by the Golden Dragon; he should have been the hero to lead his people, but his son proved to be that instrument instead. Urvanyar has been forced to wait in the wings whilst a grand and bitter drama plays out before him.

He is therefore bitter and tormented. Forced to wander, blind and heartless for a decade, he literally lost his faith in the gods and only had it restored when he was nursed by his wife and Karvanyar's mother. Reduced from the highest position of nobility to one of the lowest of classes has not been easy for him, and Urvanyar bears a deep grudge against all those who have conspired against him.

He is therefore a difficult man to deal with. Sullen and argumentative, he clearly needs help but always rejects it, even when his suffering is clear. His bitterness makes him easy to manipulate although, given his natural stubbornness, he generally sees through attempts at beguilement.

Magic

Without a heart or eyes, Urvanyar cannot use any magic other than the simplest Folk Magic cantrips. He does understand mythical significance though, and he knows full well Karvanyar's purpose, power and destiny. Whilst he feels somewhat resentful of this, he is, nonetheless, proud of his son.



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