



**PRESENTS**

# **THE BLADELANDS CHRONICLES**



**WORLD BACKGROUND**

**VERSION 3.1**



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# I. Introduction

Bladelands is a pseudo-medieval, fantasy world based on a European geography. The action will all be set on a group of islands located where the British Isles are in the real world, these are the Bladelands of the title.

Players are not permitted to play characters from certain groups initially. For the time being there is no point pursuing this as you will not be permitted a character from these cultures. Some of these are excluded because their equivalent are to be found in the Bladelands (such as the Celtic Irish, Scottish and Welsh), some because we have plans for their development (such as the northern and Scandinavian nations – no Vikings). We do not have certain character groups in our world background at all. These include Africans, Indians, Steps Nomads (such as the Mongols and the Hun) or any Orientals (no samurai, ninjas or Kung-Fu masters).

Historically, characters may come from between the dark ages and the later medieval period. This is all pre-renaissance; we will not permit characters from the renaissance period or later.

When seeking inspiration for character ideas, we suggest you look at the following:

- Authors:
  - Raymond Feist about the Kingdom of the Isles (Magician etc)
  - David Eddings (Belgariad, Malorian etc)
  - David Gemmel (The Drenai Saga, Waylander etc)
  - George R. R. Martin (A Song of Ice and Fire)
- Films:
  - 13th Warrior (though we do not currently allow Norse player characters)
  - King Arthur
  - Lord of the Rings
  - Excalibur

All the characters entering play to begin with will be assumed to be very recent arrivals from the mainland areas. Characters will not be permitted who either come from the Bladelands or who have lived there for any period of time. The players will not know a great deal about the Islands and so it is best if their characters do not either.

**Please note that the Bladelands world is not a sexist one, in character there is no difference between male and female characters.**

## 2. Maps, Language and Dates

### 2.1. Map of the Known World



### 2.2. Language

The spoken and written language of the entire Known World is English. Different countries and different regions within countries will have their own regional accents and colloquial words, but in general everyone will understand English. This explains why everyone, even uneducated characters, arrives on the Bladefields able to communicate with each other and those they meet on the Islands. If you wish to have an accent appropriate to your country of origin you are free to do so (although please try not to make them too silly), but you are not obliged to do so. Similarly you are free to make up the odd colloquial word from your region – it does not matter if you cannot understand other people's colloquial words, even if they are from the same country as you, as the word they are using may be specific to their own region.

### 2.3. Date

The calendar of the Bladefields world starts at the time of the great cataclysm and forming of the Papacy, some 2,000 years ago. This date system was originally used solely in the Papacy, but has been spread across the known world by the churches, and is now used by most people for official purposes. Consequently the year in the game world is exactly the same as the year in the real world. Similarly, seasons, months and days of the week are named as they are in the real world.

## 3. Gazette of the Known World

*Player Characters may come from any of the countries listed in this section.*

### 3.1. Aragon

*Any Player Character may come from this country*

Much like the Spain of our world, Aragon lies at the western end of the mainland.

#### Overview

Aragon is a land divided. The death of the old King, Alphonse, three years ago has left the country with two Kings and a Queen. So far Aragon has not descended into civil war but the three children of the old King have begun to argue and it is said that all sides are beginning to hire mercenaries.

#### Geography

The country is currently divided into three lesser kingdoms; Valencia (the old capital) on the south coast, Portuoa on the north west coast and Andorona on the eastern boarder with Bretton (at the foot of the Pandoran Mountains).

The Pandoran Mountains have only one major pass through them and it is heavily guarded.

#### Flora and Fauna

The country has an abundance of fruits such as oranges and lemons and also several varieties of grapes. The country as a whole is very warm except the far north and in the Pandoran Mountains.

#### Society

Normally there would be a King who rules a feudal type state with nobles at the top and peasants at the bottom. There are currently three rulers who control Aragon and they are competing for the support of the nobles.

Aragonians are a very friendly people but can be quick to anger and have long memories.

#### History

Aragon was forged from a collection of city states and minor principalities by Don Rodrigo the Great about two hundred and eighty years ago. Since that time Aragon has been slowly growing in power.

After the death of King Alphonse three years ago, the kingdom was divided between his children. King Ferdinand controls Valencia, King Hanandez controls Portuoa and Queen Belicia controls Andorona.

#### Economy

The currency is Gold Doubloons but Gold Lions and Silver falcons are widely accepted.

The main export of Aragon is wine and horses. The horses of Aragon are said to be the finest in the world.

### 3.2. Bretton

*Any Player Character may come from this country*

Bretton is where modern day France would be. Please try not to have *outraaaaaageous* accents though.

#### Overview

Bretton is a land of contrast. From the rich north to the poor south only the nobles have it good and the peasants are getting fed up with it.

#### Geography

To the West are the Pandoran Mountains and Aragon. In the South East are the Middle Mountains and the Holy Lands of the Papacy. The East borders with the Essen Confederation. There are many rolling valleys which are ideal for vineyards and the land near the Eastern border is very fertile (and often contested).

The great River Salatine winds its way through the middle of the country providing a major route of commerce. The River Danue forms the border between Bretton and the Essen Confederation.

The capital city is Prisseux.

### Flora and Fauna

Bretton has weeded out most of the dangerous creatures from its land. Boars are still in abundance but are owned by the nobles and may only be hunted by them. Being a fertile land, most types of plants will grow and the peasant farmers take great pride in their variety of produce. Many varieties of grape grow in the rolling valleys.

### Society

Bretton is ruled over by King Louis. Most people consider him a weak ruler but also believe he is controlled by his mistress the Duchess Elizabeth (wife of Duke Brettal). The Duchess is ruthless however so no one speaks out against her. The nobles of Bretton live a life of luxury much to the annoyance of the peasants who are beginning to become restless. The nobles have not noticed this yet.

### History

Five hundred years ago Bretton was founded when the king of Brittony married the Princess of Remonia. The two great nations were united against the religious incursions of the Papacy (who were still recovering from a natural disaster). Since this time Bretton has stood solid in the midst of other nations rise and fall.

### Economy

The banks of Bretton changed their official currency to the Gold Lion and Silver Falcon about twenty five years ago. Since this time the nobles have become even more rich.

The main exports are wine, brandy and cheese.

## 3.3. Essen Confederation

*Any Player Character may come from this country*

The Essen confederation corresponds roughly to modern day Germany. Please no 'comedy' German accents.

### Overview

Made up from many small city states, the Essen Confederation is ruled over by an Elector Council. They then elect an overall leader for the next five years. Strength in numbers is their motto. Despite this the city states often quarrel and there are many mercenary companies who take advantage of this.

### Geography

Bretton lies in the West across the River Danue. Aetolia and Achaea are to the South over the Middle Mountains. South East is Thessaly and to the East lies the massive nation of Savolska.

The land is very fertile near the border with Bretton and the North East border with Savolska (both areas are often contested). It is said that this fertility is due to the almost constant rain. This is an exaggeration by the locals who seem to curse the weather as a national sport.

The main rivers are the Danue in the West and the Reichwasser which flows from the Middle Mountains near the border of Thessaly all the way to the northern coast. This is a major route for commerce.

The capital city is Sudenheim.

### Flora and Fauna

Once renowned for its giant black bears, these great beasts are now all but extinct. This was due to a fashion trend about ten years ago which saw much over hunting. Wolves are still a problem but their numbers are dwindling. The exception to this is the great Black Forest which covers almost a third of the country. This forest is home to many dangerous animals and there are even a few well hidden pockets of foulspawn (goblinoid creatures such as goblins, orcs, trolls, etc.). The Black Forest consists of fir trees near the mountains and turns slowly into deciduous trees as it progresses into the rest of the country.

### Society

The Essen Confederation is made up of twenty three smaller city states who have banded together for protection. The rulers of these cities are called the Electors. Every five years the Electors gather to vote in a new leader who they call the Lord Protector. The current Lord Protector is Boris Von Shuddenhauser and has been in power for four years. His rule has not been popular.



Despite banding together for protection the cities still fight amongst themselves but these are little more than skirmishes and are mostly fought using mercenary companies.

### History

Once the mighty nation of Tutonia until one hundred and sixty years ago when civil war tore the county to shreds. Almost a century of fighting finally ended when the nation of Savolska threatened to invade. The city states then banded together and stopped the invasion and have been working together ever since.

### Economy

The Gold Lion and the Silver Falcon have been the main currency for about sixty five years.

The main export of the Essen Confederation is beer and mercenaries.

## 3.4. Savolska

*Player Characters from this country are restricted – please contact the Character Ref if you wish to play a character from here.*

This country represents modern day Russia and Poland.

### Overview

Vast and sprawling as this country is the population is still quite small. Much of it consists of great forests or is too cold to properly inhabit. The people are as brutal as the climate.

### Geography

West of Savolska lies the Essen Confederation. To the South is Thessaly and to the South East is the ever dangerous nation of Anna-Troylia. In the North there is the great ice glacier and the Rhianos Mountains. The Serpent Spine Mountains run from the South East corner of Savolska all the way east to the edge of the world.

The North of the country is always cold but the South can vary wildly from frozen in the Winter to scorching in the Summer. In the East there are great forests which stretch to the edge of the world.

The capital city is Dimitrisgrad.

### Flora and Fauna

All manner of dangerous creatures live here. From wolf packs and bears in the forests to the great woolly beasts of the northern glacier. Also some foulspawn still exist in the far eastern forests.

Ogres are relatively common in Savolska and are used as slave labour. They are bred in captivity and kept sedate with drugs. Any ogres found outside their places of work are hunted down and killed in case they have gone rogue.

Fir trees make up the majority of the forests.

### Society

Savolskans are a miserable bunch. They are ruled over by Tsarina Ivanava the Cold. She rules with an iron fist and through the terror of her not very secret police called the Oprichniks. It is said that when her husband died her heart died with him and now nothing beats within her breast.

Technically the Tsarina is in power because of the nobles but this has changed and now the nobles fear her and what she might do next.

As well as the Savolskans, areas of Savolska are also inhabited by a travelling, nomadic people known as the Rom, much like the Romany folk of the real world. While Rom are found in other areas of the mainland, even as far west as Aragon, they are most commonly found in Savolska and the countries it borders. Generally considered to be second class citizens, they are often thought of as thieves and trouble-makers and encounter much prejudice wherever they go. Some have tried to fit in with local populations by settling down and marrying outside of the Rom, but this often makes their situations worse, not better, as “half-breeds” suffer even more prejudice. Others avoid the problem by constantly moving from place to place when the situation becomes unbearable.

### History

Once a nation of warring tribes, the nobles wanted to become prosperous like their neighbours to the West. They adopted the Western style of dress and culture but not until sixty years ago when a great leader called Dimitri Savol drew the nobles together did they truly stop being an unruly mob and become a powerful nation.

Five years ago Dimitri died and left his young wife to rule. She was seen by the nobles as a weak and easily controlled puppet but soon, transformed by genuine grief for her dead husband and forged by a desire to keep what he built alive, she became the tyrant of their worst nightmares.

### **Economy**

To prop up the economy of the new nation Dimitri had formed, Savolska adopted the Gold Lion and the Silver Falcon as their main currency.

The major exports are vodka and gold (of which they have several large mines).

Ogre slaves are never exported.

## **3.5. Papacy (the Holy Land)**

*Any Player Character may come from this country*

The Papacy is located in what would be Italy but has suffered horrific natural disasters in its past. It is the seat of religious power.

### **Overview**

Under the watchful eye of the Grand Pontiff and his Cardinals, the Papacy delivers religious edicts to the rest of the world. Religion is every where from the peasant hovel to the Court of Kings. The power of this nation is disproportionate to its size. This is religion on an industrial scale.

### **Geography**

To the North lies Bretton over the Middle Mountains. To the East lies Aetolia and Lake Rosewater (which is blessed each year by the Grand Pontiff). The islands of Hieronopolis and Tamerisily lie off the West coast and are home to many monasteries and religious sanctuaries.

The capital city is called DeTeronel (translates as the First City)

### **Flora and Fauna**

A warm climate means grapes and oranges. These grow everywhere but most of the grapes are used by the churches of DeTeronel. The only dangerous creatures are in DeTeronel and are kept for religious purposes.

### **Society**

The Cardinals elect a grand Pontiff who reigns until death when the Cardinals elect another one. All the people of the Papacy follow the words of the Grand Pontiff without question and are happy to do so.

The Cardinals are made up of a council of different churches. Each religion has three Cardinals and they elect the Grand Pontiff from their own ranks.

### **History**

Long ago some priests of the First came upon an idyllic spot in the middle of nowhere. So beautiful was this place that they decided it must be the land that those who worshipped wild places had been looking for since the beginning of the world. They settled and began to worship at a great rock that sat on a small hill. As they grew old and died their sons and daughters took over and so on. Each generation added to the area. First building a church in which to worship and then of course a town where their offspring could live. Priests of other religions came and saw that the area was indeed beautiful and also built their churches. Soon the town became a city and all religions had their main cathedrals there. The wild place had been tamed and blighted and the great rock sat in a park at the centre of all the cathedrals.

About two thousand years ago there was a great earthquake and a volcanic eruption which destroyed a lot of the surrounding country and covered the city in ash. The people saw this as the disfavour of the gods but the priests said that it was a great test. The people were persuaded and a new age of fanaticism was born when the small nations which surrounded the city were bought into the fold (often through invasion or threats). Eventually the different religions began to war with each other and the fledgling nation looked like tearing itself apart.

This war lasted ten years until a truce was called and the Papacy was formed.

Since that time the Cardinals and the Grand Pontiff have ruled their flock with a firm but even hand and, through religion, have influenced the leaders of the rest of the world.

## Economy

The Papacy is all in favour of unity and as such have been using the Gold Lion and the Silver Falcon for the last seventy five years.

## 3.6. Aetolia

*Player Characters from this country are restricted – please contact the Character Ref if you wish to play a character from here.*

Aetolia is situated in modern day Austria, Bosnia and Serbia. However it has an ancient Roman feel to it.

### Overview

Once a prosperous nation, Aetolia has never recovered from a catastrophe some two thousand years ago. Now the Aetolians are very introverted. They stick to old ways and endeavour to uphold this with a large military. National service is the only way to true citizenship.

### Geography

To the West lies the Papacy and Lake Idimus (called Lake Rosewater by the Papists). The North borders with the Essen Confederacy and the Middle Mountains. Achaea lies to the east and the two nations are often contesting their border. The country is mostly hills and mountains but the low lands in the south are fertile enough to support the nation.

The capital city is Vientra.

### Flora and Fauna

Due to the hilly nature of the country, the Aetolians breed a lot of sheep. It is said there are five sheep for every man woman and child.

### Society

Aetolia is ruled over by the Senate. This august body is made up from of ranks of nobility though in theory anyone can become a senator by their own virtues. Most spend at least some of their life in the Aetolian legions. Ten years secures true citizenship and twenty five years service provides a small pension. Citizenship means more rights (“if you’re not a citizen you’re little people”) and a better quality of life. Because foreigners cannot join the legions or become citizens they too are seen as ‘little people’. Aetolians are an introverted people but their ruthless efficiency makes them prosperous.

### History

Two thousand years ago there was a great cataclysm and inundation. The sea rushed in from the West and stayed, sinking the old capital (Venicia). While the priests in the Papacy convinced their populace that this was a test from the powers, the Aetolian Emperor was not so lucky. The people took the inundation as a sign that favour had been withdrawn and deposed him. A senate was formed and it has been this way ever since.

### Economy

The Gold Talon is the main currency of Aetolia. They view the Gold Lion and the Silver Falcon as poor currencies that are doomed to collapse.

The main export is wool and wool clothing.

## 3.7. Achaea

*Player Characters from this country are restricted – please contact the Character Ref if you wish to play a character from here.*

Located in an area corresponding to modern Greece.

### Overview

Much like its neighbour Aetolia, Achaea offers increased citizenship rights for military service. Unlike Aetolia it is ruled by a King called Tiresias. The people are more welcoming of foreigners. The military are renowned for their spearmen.

### Geography

To the West lies Aetolia with whom Achaea regularly clashes and swaps small areas of land. The North borders the Essen Confederation and the Middle Mountains and to the East lies the kingdom of Thessaly. The South lands of Achaea have large plains and rolling valleys which are ideal for vineyards.

The island of Sardis lies off the South coast and is controlled by Achaea.

The capital city is Mycenae.

### **Flora and Fauna**

Achaea has a lot of sheep (but not as many as Aetolia). Every area that does not provide land for food production contains vineyards.

### **Society**

Achaea is ruled by King Tireias. His rule is fair and the people prosper. There are long standing nobles in Achaea but just as many peasants join the army and drag themselves up from the ranks through perseverance and go on to become prominent figures in society. This in turn inspires the populace to excel.

### **History**

Much like its neighbours, Achaea was hit hard by the inundation. In a reverse of Aetolia, it swapped a senate for a dictator and him a king. During the confusion after the inundation a senator called Mycenon took control and his descendants rule to this day.

### **Economy**

The nation of Achaea is beginning to look to the future and so has adopted the Golden Lion and the Silver Falcon.

## **3.8. Thessaly**

*Player Characters from this country are restricted – please contact the Character Ref if you wish to play a character from here.*

Thessaly is modern day Romania and Bulgaria but in a ruined ancient Greek style.

### **Overview**

Broken by the second great cataclysm 200 years ago, Thessaly has lost its former glory. Once renowned for grand architecture, art and especially jewellery, Thessaly has become a backwater nation. Despite this, the people are pulling themselves into the current age and are adopting foreign ways.

### **Geography**

Thessaly is bordered by Achaea to the West, Sparta to the South, the Essen Confederation and Savolska in the North and their greatest enemy, Anna-Trolyia to the East. Much of Thessaly was destroyed or lost beneath the waves after the second inundation. The climate is cooler than Achaea and fewer vineyards prosper.

An inactive volcano called Mount Velaratt in the South has some unique mineral properties.

There are some good silver mines in Thessaly which is the one thing that helps this nation survive.

The capital city is Argos.

### **Flora and Fauna.**

Thessaly is the one place that a plant known as the Tree of Delphi grows, on the side of Mount Velaratt. From the sap of this tree is created an intoxicating incense called Delphinium Delight.

### **Society**

Thessaly is ruled by Queen Sharona and she is generally ignored by her court, who busy themselves running the country. Everywhere there are ruins of the once great Empire of Thessaly. These structures are a constant reminder to the general populace of just how far they have fallen. For years the Kings of Thessaly have tried to go back to the way things were but they did not have the resources to fulfil that vision. Now with Queen Sharona on the throne (who cares only about the next whiff of Delphinium) the royal court has an opportunity to make a new Thessaly. The people are beginning to see new hope for the future and have begun cultivating the whole of Mount Velaratt to create more Delphinium Delight for export (despite its illegality in most of the known world).

### **History**

Great stories are still told of the wonders of ancient Thessaly. Giant marble palaces, Works of art that can still be seen in the courts of foreign kings. Most of all Thessaly was famous for its jewellery. The crown jewels of the known world originated from Thessaly and with its silver mines it was one of the richest nations of antiquity.

The inundation changed this when in on fell swoop it drowned the heart of the people.

Always ready to take advantage are the Anna-Troylians who have a long standing feud with the Thessalians and after the flood they invaded. Fortunately, the inundation had adversely affected them as well and Thessaly did not fall. Instead the two nations exchanged blows to each other through minor border skirmishes and this continues to the present day.

### **Economy**

The royal court has adopted the Golden Lion and the Silver Falcon as the national currency. Queen Sharona has yet to notice this fact.

Their main exports are silver, jewellery (although it trades only on its previous good name) and Delphinium (which is illegal almost everywhere).

## **3.9. Other Minor Nations**

*Player Characters from this country are restricted – please contact the Character Ref if you wish to play a character from here.*

The following is a brief description of some other prominent yet smaller nations worthy of note.

### **Phonicia, Venicia and Padua**

These three islands are in the South sea. Officially this is the kingdom of Phonicia; Venicia and Padua are subject nations. They are renowned for their ships and sailors and trade with other nations along the coast of the mainland.

The ruler is King Polybus and the capital is called Tyre on the island of Phonicia.

### **Ithica**

A small island next to the Phonicians in the South Sea. Despite its small size it has never been conquered. This is because of its horsemen who can move across the island with astonishing speed to help repel their borders. Ithica is renowned for its fine horses but the people consider them a national treasure and never sell them.

The ruler is King Laertes and the capital is called Equestus.

### **Sparta**

Tucked away between Achaea and Thessaly it is a wonder that this small nation still exists. However, when one looks at the people of this tiny nation it is not hard to see why. The Spartans are a strong and disciplined warrior race. Coupled with the majority of the country being mountainous and easy to defend, it is no wonder that other nations shy away from invading. The main export of Sparta is warriors, which the rulers of other nations pay well to become elite guard or trainers for their troops.

The ruler is King Melanthius and the capital is called Lacedaemon.

### **The Minoan Kingdoms**

These are actually not kingdoms at all but rather a loose federation of city states. These cooperate in a loose alliance in order to prevent their common enemy, the Anna-Troylians, from invading and taking over the entire area. They are reinforced by a knightly order whose main keep is at the extreme end of their lands and stands as a bastion against invasion.



## 4. The Bladelands

*Player Characters may not come from any area of the Bladelands including the Shattered Isles.*

### 4.1. The Islands



## Overview

The Bladelands are at the very edge of the known world. Separated from the mainland by a wide stretch of treacherous and stormy seas, they are remote and inhospitable lands.

These isles are the most magical lands in the known world. Many travel to them to seek their destiny, or their fortune. Rich in resources both magical and mundane you would be forgiven for thinking that the Bladelands would be home to a thriving and civilised culture. But with the abundance of magic comes an equal measure of danger.

The most peculiar and defining feature of the Bladelands are the Bladestorms which descend on areas where large numbers of people gather together to fight, killing all in their path. This makes it impossible to gather large armies. For this reason the Bladelands are split up into much smaller fiefdoms than the kingdoms and countries that cover the rest of the world, since no one ruler can gather the fighting men necessary to dominate more than a small area of land. It is generally thought these Bladestorms are caused by the overabundance of magic in the Bladelands.

## Geography

The Islands are approximately where the British Isles lie in the real world separated from the mainland by the Stormy Straights. Rich in minerals, and precious stones/metals. Most territory is held by Keltoi tribes, with some land in the South and South East being held by foreigners.

There is only one port called Sanctuary access to which is controlled by the Guild of Navigators.

## Society

### Indigenous Peoples

The indigenous population of the Bladelands, the Keltoi are a primitive, warlike people. They have little technology but are able to craft simple goods to a very high level of skill, and make simple but effective weapons from the abundant natural resources. Many Keltoi artefacts, such as their intricately worked jewellery and decorated goods, are highly prized back on the mainland. They trade in bartered goods rather than coin, and live in simple wattle and daub huts in small settlements.

The Keltoi band together in tribes, each controlling a small area of land. They are a very warlike people, with constant small battles breaking out between neighbours. Indeed, fighting is one of the Keltoi favourite pastimes.

However, they lack the discipline of the mainland troops who invade their territory, and because of this much of the Southern and Eastern Bladelands have fallen into the hands of foreigners.

Despite their general hostility towards foreigners, the Keltoi will trade for some specific goods from the mainland. In particular they are very partial to wine, which they cannot produce themselves as grapes do not grow in the harsh Bladelands climate.

### The Foreigners

There is a steady stream of people who risk the dangerous crossing from the mainland to the Bladelands. Some who have fallen on hard times come to make their fortune from the treasure which rumour says can be found there. Some with secrets come to escape their past, sure in the knowledge that few enemies would follow them literally to the ends of the earth. Many die in the crossing, shipwrecked by the unforgiving storms which rage violently around the coast. Many more are swiftly killed by the harsh climate or the dangers that abound. Those who survive to carve a living from these harsh lands are amongst the hardest and most ruthless of the mainland society. The Bladelands are no place for the faint of heart. But many who come to these lands discover that the land changes them in ways they did not expect. They are a crucible, a melting pot, for people of all races, religions and temperaments.

The lands held by foreigners are split up into fiefdoms each of which is governed by a local Lord. Many of these are younger sons of mainland Lords who would rather risk the treacherous Bladelands in order to secure land to rule than join the priesthood or study magics, as is the usual fate for younger sons. Fiefs are also owned by organisations such as knightships, religious orders, guilds, etc... There is little fighting between Lords since each has enough to do keeping their lands safe from monsters and keeping the Kelts in line, and could not hold more land without larger armies that are impossible due to the Bladestorms. However, there is much political, social and economic wrangling between fiefdoms, as each Lord tries to get the better of his neighbours.

Most Lords keep a small standing militia or guard who help to keep the peace from day to day within the towns, and hire mercenaries to deal with the more major threats that often arise. Along the borders with the Keltic tribes more fighting is common, as new foreigners seek land of their own and the Kelts seek to reclaim the land taken from them. Usually when a new Lord arrives in the Bladelands seeking territory of his own, the new lord will lodge with one of the border lords for a time and gather local mercenaries to swell whatever troops have been brought from the mainland before embarking on a mission to carve out a fiefdom.

## History

Foreign excursions into the Bladelands are a fairly recent thing. A previous excursion into the Bladelands occurred about seventy years ago, but ended in tragedy when the storms closed in around the Bladelands and cut off all communications. The Guild of Navigators suffered great losses at this time.

The Bladelands is also the site of an ancient advanced civilisation, the ruins of which can still be found. Very little is known about this civilisation, and no ruins of similar type are seen anywhere else in the known World.

The Guild of Navigators have since recovered from their losses and have discovered a way to pass through the storms so that once again travellers from the mainland can explore the Bladelands.

## Economy

Much of the economy of the Bladelands is based upon its trade with the mainland. Keltic artefacts, magical items, artefacts from mysterious ancient civilizations, and the rich natural resources of the Bladelands such as precious gems and plants with magical properties, are all highly sought after back on the mainland. Because almost all of the legitimate trade must pass through Sanctuary, those provinces further from the port tend to be poorer, as goods are taxed by each province they pass through. This is somewhat ironic since most of the artefacts originate at these frontier provinces as the longer established provinces nearer to Sanctuary have already been stripped of their artefacts.

## Fiefs

The following fiefs have existed for some time and are relatively stable. New fiefs are constantly being set up in the border areas – many of them fall rapidly, over-run once more by the indigenous population and local wildlife.

Sanctuary – The only safe port for large ships in the Bladelands. Sanctuary was set up in the spring of 2004 when the Bladelands once more opened to traffic. All trade and travel to and from the mainland goes through Sanctuary. It is the most “civilised” of the fiefs, and is a substantial town with a large bridge across the wide, deep Dragon River. The lands immediately around Sanctuary have been cleared of the majority of the wild creatures and Keltoi tribes that once inhabited the area. Sanctuary is primarily controlled by the Merchants’ Guild, aka the Bank of Schwyz, although the Navigators’ Guild control travel between the Bladelands and the mainland.

The Vault – A large gold mine controlled by the Bank of Schwyz. They have closed off the entrance to the mine with huge Vault doors, making it almost impenetrable. Inside, as well as continuing the mining, they forge the Gold Lions which are the foundation of the currency on the Bladelands.

New Valencia – Founded by a group of Aragonians from Valencia.

Fort Alphonse – Held by the Knights of Don Rodrigo, and named in honour of the last true King of Aragon. Many of the Knights have left Aragon for the Bladelands in disgust at the current state of their home country, and a large number of them have ended up here.

Urbis Polybus – Set up by Phonecians, mainly to take advantage of trade between the mainland and the Bladelands. They export rare Keltoi artefacts and the magical herbs and minerals that are available on the Bladelands. Excellent seafarers they mostly transport their goods along the coast to Sanctuary. They cannot sail directly for the mainland because there is no harbour for deep water vessels – jagged rocks around the coast make it passable for small vessels only, and then only for very experienced sailors.

The Arena – Used as a training ground by the Sons of the Mountain, they capture foulspawn and other dangerous creatures from the surrounding area and pit them against their new recruits.

Dragon’s Ford – The first place where it is possible to ford the Dragon River. This is a Savolskan settlement mainly used as a staging post between Orc Town and Sanctuary. Creatures captured at Orc Town are brought here before being put on river boats bound for Sanctuary.

Orc Town – A group of Savolskans hunt in the lands around Orc Town, capturing foulspawn and shipping them back to Savolska as slaves.

The Mausoleum – A huge Keltoi graveyard, originally dedicated to the beings worshiped by the Keltoi. The Church of Rhianos has claimed this land and its priests devote their time to digging up the remains of the Keltoi and re-burying them according to the Church Law. It is a long and arduous job, not yet completed, but once it is the church have plans to build a cathedral there in honour of Rhianos.

New Venicia – Set up by a group of Aetolians. Named after the old Capital which sunk after the great cataclysm some 2,000 years ago.

Reich Bejorklund – Ruled over by the self-styled Baron Bejorklund, a very troublesome and aggressive leader. He intends to take and hold as much land as possible, whether from the natives or other come-overs. Thankfully to date the foulspawn, Keltoi and other creatures of the Bladelands have kept him occupied, but once he has subdued the more war-like locals his attention will do doubt turn elsewhere.



The Aerie – A heavily fortified stronghold, the Aerie guards the higher of the two major passes running north through the mountains from Sanctuary. Run by Lord Falconer, a minor noble from Breton.

Dursthalm – Head of a mercenary company from the Essen Confederation, Count von Durst decided he was fed up of working for others and fancied ruling somewhere for himself. His loyal group of mercenaries followed him to the Bladelands. Recently this fief has come under the control of the church of Rhianos.

Saltwash – Ruled by Lord Thomas of House Morreaux, one of the noble houses of Breton. Being a younger son from a poor branch of the family, Thomas decided to carve out land for himself in the Bladelands.

School Town – Founded by an extremist branch of the church of Rhiannan. The priests there are strong believers that their duty is to bring civilisation to the Islands, by force if necessary, and they are seeking to gather together all the local fiefs to make war on the Keltoi in order to save them from their savagery and lift them up to the state of civilised worshipers of the Powers. They also have extremely strong views regarding purity and see abnormality as the mark of evil – something which has brought School Town into conflict with the neighbouring fief of Saltwash.

Three Pillars – Set up by the Cult of Heracles. So named because it stands near a ruin which has 3 large pillars.

Four Pillars – Set up by the Cult of Hercules. So named because they wanted to out-do the Cult of Heracles, so built their own building with four large pillars at its corners, in a typical display of one-upmanship. These two fiefs spend the majority of their time competing with each other in almost every way.

## 4.2. The Shattered Isles

*While we do have pirates in the game it is important that we do not have Caribbean style, buccaneers and swashbucklers. These pirates are more Raymond Feist style (or possibly even Sinbad style) but definitely not skull and crossbones type, timber shivering pirates.*

The Shattered Isles lie between the mainland and the Bladelands. They are home to many pirates and raiders. Authorities from the mainland try to keep the pirate numbers down but there are just too many hidden coves and other hiding places.

### Overview

Between the Bladelands and the mainland is a treacherous and stormy stretch of sea, known as the Stormy Straights. In this inhospitable water there lies a chain of islands, the many coves of which give shelter to an unknown number of pirates, who make their fortune by raiding ships carrying expensive goods between the mainland and the Bladelands. It is a difficult and dangerous living, since the sea is unpredictable and the merchants vigilant, but the storms act as a shield as well as a danger, hiding the islands and pirate ships from the authorities who seek to make the shipping lanes safe.

### Geography

An Archipelago of small islands in the Stormy Straights between the Bladelands and the mainland. Many high exposed cliffs and small, concealed coves. Plenty of springs and sources of fresh water.

### Flora and Fauna

The stormy weather and high exposed plains on the islands make for open, scrubby land with stunted, twisted trees and shrubs. Seabirds of all varieties line the cliffs, and sheep can graze the more sheltered inland areas, but the islands do not have land fertile enough to allow much agriculture. As a result the pirates are reliant upon the ships they raid to provide them with the necessities of life as well as income and trade.

### Society

The pirate isles have many small port towns at the larger secluded coves that have a water source, where a small amount of trade occurs amongst pirates. Unsurprisingly there are many taverns and brothels at such places. Smaller coves are usually the preserve of a single gang of pirates, closely guarded and well defended. From time to time a Pirate “Lord” or “King” arises, banding together a number of gangs under their banner, and for a while the pirates will fight in a more coordinated fashion. Such things usually only last until the death of the most recent charismatic leader, however, at which point the various gangs splinter once more and revert to squabbling amongst themselves over the spoils of the ships they raid.

As well as pirating, much wrecking goes on, with wreckers luring unsuspecting ships onto the dangerous rocks surrounding the Pirate Isles during the frequent storms and bad weather.

### History

Little is known of the history of the Pirate Isles, since pirates have little interest in keeping history, but it is thought that the small islands had no indigenous population, but rather were populated over the years by opportunistic seafarers who had fallen on hard times.

## Economy

Based solely around the spoils of raids upon ships carrying trade items and goods between the Bladelands and the mainland, and the selling of such goods on the black market in both places.

## 5. The North Lands

*Player Characters may not come from the Northlands.*

### Overview:

These are the home of the feared Northmen. These people live for war and plunder, they call themselves the Skaa and the rest of the peoples fear them. In many ways they are a completely different race to the other peoples hereabouts. They are very large men and women. Their homeland is not fertile and it is extremely difficult to scratch a living there. As a result, they are forced to supplement their funds with the plunder they obtain from their raids.

### Geography:

Outside of the Northlands most people believe them to be a single group but in fact there are two distinct nations: Heimdall and Evrfrost. Racially both nations are pre-dominantly Skaa.

Evr frost is the northern part of the Northlands. Most of the land is permanently under a layer of snow and even where this is not true the permafrost means that the land is a poor producer of food.

Heimdall is slightly warmer with a more maritime climate but this goes largely unnoticed as the wind chill off the northern sea more than makes up for this.

The far north is covered by the great glacier and very few people ever go there.

### Flora and Fauna:

The north has a very low density of life but it is a huge land and so there is much life to be found, from the enormous bears (white polar bears, dire bears and the largest of all the massive cave bears) which are the primary animal predators, down through the large selection of wolves (timber wolves, dire wolves and winter wolves some of which can be as large as ponies) and in the far north are the Vortskavars (which translates as hairy giants or woolly mammoths).

There is a lot of timber, mostly evergreens, pines and firs dotting the landscape. The largest of the trees are true giants some three hundred feet tall. The Northmen used these to build their famous long ships.

In terms of intelligent life, there are quite a lot of foulspawn including ogres, trolls and orcs. The orcs are of particular note since the orcs of the north are particularly strong and deadly in battle having a warrior culture much like that of the Northmen but more primitive. Most of the rest of the mainland has rid itself of foulspawn but the northlands are one of their last great bastions.

### Society:

The Northmen are organised in many small clans and are warlike and excellent sailors and hunters.

Their culture is broken down into small family groupings which owe allegiance to a particular clan. Each clan is ruled by a “chief” or “king” but the titles are rather grand given the size of the groups. The land does not favour large groups since it is only the sheltered valleys that are able to support agriculture. The people supplement their diet extensively by fishing and hunting both of which are plentiful. Raiding neighbouring tribes is also an honourable way to make a living.

Many of the people of Heimdall are noted for their red hair although blond remains more common among them. Red hair is said to be a mark of the favour of the gods and that such a child is particularly blessed. The people of Evrfrost on the other hand are predominantly blond but with some dark haired blue eyed people amongst them.

They do not have access to sorcery since they do not have the learning discipline that this requires. They do have magics in various other forms, mostly gained by calling upon their gods.

### History:

The Northmen have raided the coasts of the mainland for centuries. Once they traded their skills as shipwrights but now they only raid. This is due to a great purge some one hundred and thirty years ago when a great war leader called Ulfred the bloodyhand tried to invade the Essen Confederation. An allied fleet of Essen and Savolskan ships drove them back to the northlands where it took years for their society to recover and deepened the mistrust between the Northmen and the rest of the world.

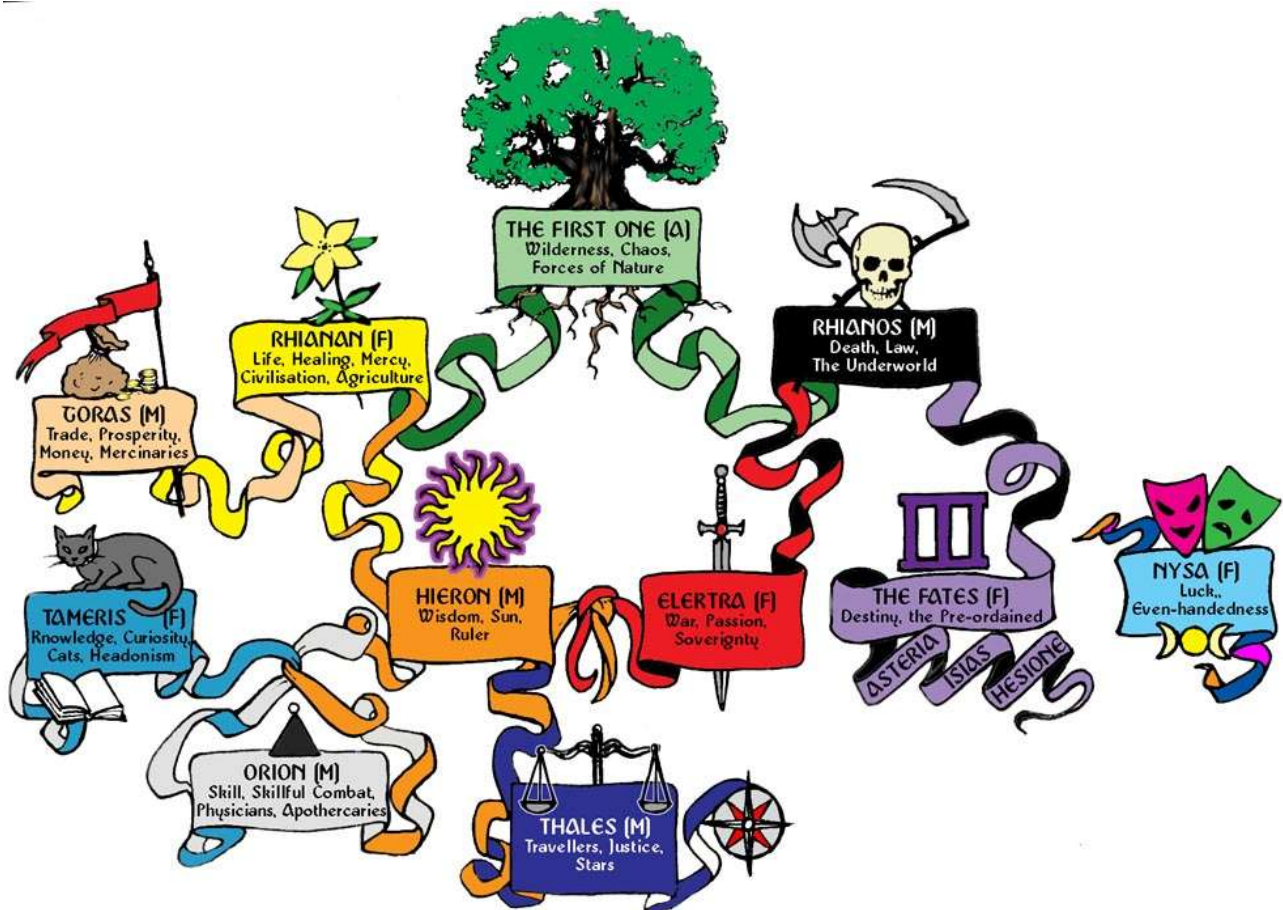
### Economy:

The Northman economy is based upon barter and services owed via family and clan to your king. They do value precious metals and other goods but coinage has not really taken on.

## 6. Powers and Faith

The religion of the Bladelands world is a pantheistic one. The Powers of the pantheon are co-operative, and generally all work together, although they may have their differences from time to time. Although some folk have a deeper and more unshakable faith in the Powers (represented by the True Faith talent), the Powers do undeniably exist, and are respected and worshiped to a greater or lesser extent by everyone on the mainland. While some may be going through the motions of their religion more out of habit than out of any particularly deep faith, there are no Atheists in the world. All characters should at least pay lip-service to the Powers, and none would think of being directly disrespectful to or about them for fear of invoking their wrath.

### Genealogy



### 6.1. The First One (A)

*Symbol: World Tree*

The primal essence from which all the Powers come. Neither male nor female, unnamed and unknowable, it governs the wild places where the forces of nature reign. Rarely worshipped exclusively as such, the First One is offered sacrifices by those attempting to placate its wild and chaotic nature. For example, sailors caught in a storm may pray to Rhianan for their lives, and travellers lost in the wilderness, at the mercy of the elements and wild animals, may pray to Thales to guide them to safety, but both would be wise to make sacrifices to the First One, in the hope that it will turn its attention elsewhere.

The First has few true priests, and those who do follow and serve it usually steer clear of the civilised lands. The church of the First is a small one and may be divided into two parts. The formal priesthood have received religious and doctrinal training. These priests are a great deal like the priests of other powers and have been ordained through a seminary. There also exist a number of wild monks and friars. These will be those who have received an epiphany and come to follow the First but who have not received any formal training. They are the wild men and women of the woods, hermits who shun the safety of civilisation to get closer to the pure essence of the First. Many who decide to serve this primal energy die at its mercy before attaining any sort of enlightenment. Those who do survive are often considered mad, and may indeed be so. Their appearance is dishevelled, their hair untamed, their clothing little more than rags. Most seek to avoid them, for fear of attracting the attention of the awesome power they serve. *(This latter group are unsuitable as player characters as their powers will be*

*severely restricted by a lack of training in the rites of the powers and their inability to interact with others may lead to difficulties in marinating such a character. Also please remember that we do not permit insane PCs.)*

The symbol of the First, often carved on wooden tokens or into trees in sacred areas, is the World Tree.

## **6.2. Rhianan (F)**

*Symbol: Summer's Wort (5-petaled yellow flower)*

Sprung from the First, Rhianan tempers the wild forces from which she came. She is the source of life, protectress of the civilised lands, patron of those who subdue nature's forces – farmers, sailors, etc – and of agriculture. She offers mercy and healing to those who call upon her, and is looked upon as the mother-goddess of humanity, who are often referred to as “Rhianan's children”. She represents all things feminine.

Her priests are known for their kind and gentle nature, and their abilities to heal. They believe in the sanctity of life, as a gift from their goddess, and so disapprove of violence or the taking of life before its natural end. They will offer mercy and sanctuary to those who ask it. They usually wear white and yellow, rarely bear arms, and often bear the symbol of the Summer's Wort, a small yellow 5-petaled flower which is a healing herb of great value to physicians for its antiseptic properties.

Rhianan governs the daytime, and the light half of the year, from spring to autumn equinox, when the days are longer than the nights. These two equinoxes are the major festivals for the priesthood of both Rhianan and Rhianos, who celebrate the hand over from brother to sister and back again each year.

## **6.3. Rhianos (M)**

*Symbol: Skulls, Scythes and Axes*

Brother of Rhianan, sprung from the same primeval forces, Rhianos is his sister's counterpart. Where she is the source of life, he governs death. Where she offers mercy, he enforces the strict rule of law. He awaits all at the end of their lives, and shepherds their spirits to the Underworld, which is his domain. As his sister represents beginnings, so he represents endings. As she represents the feminine, he represents the masculine. Without one, the other could not exist, and so Rhianos is not the negative force which he may at first appear. Without death, rebirth is not possible. Without endings, we can have no new beginnings. Prayers are offered to Rhianos on behalf of the spirits of the deceased, and as folk may pray to Rhianan for a good beginning to anything, from a journey to an apprenticeship, so they pray to Rhianos for successful conclusions to events.

Respected and often feared, his priests offer last rites to those who have moved beyond Rhianan's capabilities, to speed their spirits to their god, and are often instrumental in law-keeping. Rhianos wields a scythe in his right hand, and is missing three fingers from his left, which he cut with his scythe to grow into his daughters, the Fates. His followers often carry a scythe, long-handled axe or similar weapon, and tend to wear black. Holding up the thumb and forefinger of the left hand is a sign of Rhianos often used in greeting or blessing by his priests, or as a warding by lay-persons.

The night is Rhianos' domain, and he governs the dark half of the year, from autumn to spring equinox, when the nights are longer than the days. These two equinoxes are the major festivals for the priesthood of both Rhianan and Rhianos, who celebrate the hand over from brother to sister and back again each year.

## **6.4. The Fates – Asteria, Isias and Hesione (F)**

*Symbol: The number 3*

Daughters of Rhianos, grown from the three fingers he cut from his left hand, the Fates are not worshipped as such, although Rhianos' priesthood consider them messengers of their Power. They represent those things which are written – fated to be and, as such, unavoidable. One of their jobs is as harbingers of their father, appearing in various guises to those whose death is near. They also give warning of other pre-ordained events, both good and bad, but their cryptic messages are seldom clear. They usually appear as three women – maiden, mother and crone – although other guises are known. In general things which come in threes are seen as their work, and the number three is their symbol.

## **6.5. Nysa (F)**

*Symbols: Moon and Two Faces (happy and sad)*

Nysa is the antithesis of the Fates, who sprung into being in reaction to their creation. Representing the luck which can change even those things which have been written, she is often seen as random and unpredictable. Lady of luck both good and bad, she is even-handed, distributing both without favouritism. The moon, that most fickle of the heavenly bodies, is

her symbol. Her blessing can bring luck good or bad, often one disguised as the other. Indeed the phrase “Nysa’s blessings” has come to mean “mixed blessings”.

Her priests are as fickle as their Power, and seldom trusted as they are as likely to aid an opponent as their allies. They take their Lady’s mission to oppose that which is fated as their own, despising pre-destination of any sort. Seeking their aid in avoiding something prophesied by the Fates is dangerous, as they may change the outcome for the worse, rather than the better. They tend to wear bright, miss-matched colours, and may carry any sort of weaponry. Anything with two faces or two edges is considered a symbol of Nysa (coins, double edged swords, etc), but a particular symbol often used by her priests is that of the two faces of their goddess, one happy and the other sad, as well as symbols of the moon.

Only one thing is certain with the priesthood of Nysa – life around them is seldom dull, and always unpredictable!

## **6.6. Hieron (M)**

*Symbol: The Sun*

First son of Rhianan, created from the sun, which was a gift from her brother, Hieron is the wisest of the Powers. His marriage to Elektra conferred sovereignty upon him, and so he now rules the pantheon. As such he is the patron of kings, leaders and rulers of all types, who often look to him for aid in their reign. He is represented by the Sun, which rules the heavens, and from which vantage point he sees all that occurs in both the world and the Underworld (through which the sun travels during the night).

His priesthood are often taken as advisors by the rulers of the land, in an attempt to gain Hieron’s blessing and benefit from his wisdom, and so are in many powerful positions. They usually wear purple and gold, colours of royalty and the sun, and often carry staffs, topped with gold, symbols of the sun, or crystals which capture and reflect the sun’s rays.

Despite the exalted positions usually held by members of the priesthood they eschew personal wealth and pass all donations straight to the church. This money is then used to build vast impressive cathedrals, almost entirely coated in gold (the sun metal) with large carefully positioned windows and sky lights through which the sun’s rays shine at certain religiously significant times. They use these to determine the dates of their two most important religious festivals, the summer solstice, at which they celebrate Hieron’s supremacy, and the winter solstice, at which they perform sacred rites which guarantee the return of Hieron’s strength for the new year.

Rulers in neighbouring areas will often compete by making larger and larger donations to the Church of Hieron in order to get bigger and more impressive cathedrals built in his honour, and hence ensure that they are the most favoured ruler.

## **6.7. Elektra (F)**

*Symbol: Sword*

The daughter of Rhianos, made by him from a beautiful sword that he was gifted by his sister, Elektra is the embodiment of war and passion. She also represents sovereignty, and as such her husband rules. After great deliberation she chose to marry Hieron, as the wisest of the Powers, and so make him King of the pantheon. When Hieron was seduced by Tamaris Elektra was outraged. She swore vengeance on Tamaris, and on her son by Hieron, Orion, and they are still at odds. It is worth noting, however, that while the gods may be displeased at each other they have a very ‘us and them’ attitude, and will brook no insult from mortals. So while the priests of these Powers may try to avoid each other, or even engage in heated debates on the subject, they will not engage in direct confrontation for fear that all three gods may take offence and join forces against them.

Elektra’s priests are warriors to a man, courageous and often bloodthirsty. Their favoured weapon is the sword, and they usually wear red. Red haired people are often seen as marked by Elektra.

## **6.8. Goras (M)**

*Symbol: Money/ Coinage and a raised red flag (symbol of goods and services for sale)*

Second son of Rhianan, born of her fertile womb, Goras represents bounty, prosperity, trade, money, and those who sell their services. He is most often worshipped by merchants and mercenaries, and sometimes by farmers. He is worshiped by many who wish to profit, who will often build shrines or temples in his honour. Those who prosper – successful merchants, etc – are seen to be in his favour, and so may be asked to confer his blessing, or intercede with him on behalf of others.

The priesthood of Goras are renowned for their great wealth, which shows in their clothing and accoutrements, each priest attempting to outdo his brethren with the opulence of his outfit. They usually carry a long staff with a red sash or flag attached to the top, the universal symbol which announces that one’s goods or services are for hire.

## 6.9. Thales (M)

*Symbol: Scales and Compasses*

Son of Hieron, Thales came into being when his father cast a fragment of the sun into the night (meteor/shooting star). He wanders the night, leaving a trail of beacons behind him (the stars) that he might find his way home again, and as such he is the patron of travellers, who rely upon the stars to guide them. His priests are great astronomers and, having great knowledge of the stars, are also great navigators, and are often employed in that occupation. In his travels Thales uses the wisdom he inherited from his father to dispense fair justice to those he meets. Consequently his priests, who tend to travel the lands themselves rather than remaining in one place, are often called upon to mediate in disputes, and to help judge those accused of crimes. Note that Thales represents justice, as opposed to Rhianos, who represents law. His priests tend to wear midnight blue and white, and often bear scales, compasses and many instruments for the measuring of the positions of the stars.

## 6.10. Tamaris (F)

*Symbol: Cats and Books*

Tamaris was brought into being by her own curiosity. Always interested in learning new things, she has amassed a large store of knowledge, and is worshiped by those interested in gaining knowledge of their own. Her curious nature often leads her into difficult situations, and there are many amusing tales of her exploits. She is also known for her hedonistic lifestyle, and one of her favourite guises is a cat. Consequently all cats are creatures sacred to her, and often seen as her agents. She is at odds with Elektra after she seduced Elektra's husband, Heiron.

Her priests are known for indulging in hedonistic lifestyles, being fond of good food, fine wines (and other intoxicating substances), and wearing clothing of sensual materials such as silks and velvets. They are keenly interested in the acquisition of knowledge, and treasure knowledge for its own sake, having many extensive libraries.

## 6.11. Orion (M)

*Symbol: Triangle with a small circle above it*

The son of Tameris and Hieron, born of a tryst between them which angered Elektra greatly, Orion is the Power of skill. He represents skill in all things, including physicians, apothecaries, artists, musicians, and skilful combat. His great skill has allowed him to stay alive despite Elektra's fury at his existence.

Orion is worshiped by those who wish to increase their skill, in whatever field. His priests are a mixed bunch. As likely to be skilful warriors or master craftsmen, they have one thing in common – they all excel at their chosen profession.

Orion's symbol is a triangle with a circle at the top of it, symbolising his place at the pinnacle of whichever field he turns his mind to. His followers often wear a triangle, to show their allegiance to him and also to show that there are forever working upwards, towards being the best. Only those who attain perfection may wear the triangle with a circle above it. This symbol is conferred by the priesthood, who regularly hold competitions in many areas to determine who is the best in each field.

The largest of these competitions is the DeTeronel Games, held once a year in the capital of the Papacy. During the week long festival the best from across the known world gather to compete in almost every field imaginable, from competitive sports to arts and crafts and skills of all descriptions. This also forms the major festival of Orion, in celebration of his managing to avoid Elektra's wrath for another year.

## 7. Legends of the Powers

### 7.1. How the Powers came to be:

In the beginning there was only the First One. The forces of nature ruled, wild storms raged, and the world was dark.

From this wilderness came forth a brother and a sister, Rhianos and Rhianan. Perfectly alike in being, they were as two halves of a single whole. What Rhianan began, Rhianos would end, that Rhianan might begin again.

In her bounty, Rhianan brought forth man and woman, bird and beast. She tamed the wild lands and taught her children the ways of farming, and of agriculture, and how to sail the oceans and fish the seas. And as Rhianan gave them life, so Rhianos took it, guiding their spirits to the Underworld where they remain until Rhianan calls them once again. And so the cycle of life continues.

When Rhianan saw what his sister had created, he gave her a gift, the sun, to light the day and to bring warmth to the world. Rhianan was most pleased with her gift, and placed it in the heavens, breathing life into it, and so her first son, Heiron, was born. In this way, the day became Rhianan's domain, and the night Rhianos'. Heiron guides the sun across the heavens, and from his exalted position he sees all, which gives him great wisdom. He follows the path proscribed by his mother, so setting the rhythms of day and night, winter and summer, and when he is absent from the world he travels beneath it, to the Underworld, and so sees what occurs there, too.

In return for her gift, Rhianan gifted her brother with a sword, and a scythe. Rhianos took the scythe to be his own weapon, to reap the harvest which his sister had sown, but the sword was most beautiful in its deadliness, too wickedly beautiful to be a tool, and so Rhianos took some of the life which Rhianan had breathed into Heiron and placed it within the sword, and so his first daughter, Elektra, was born. As beautiful and as deadly as the weapon from which she had been created, Elektra was given to violent passions of rage and of love, so strong that they would influence all who came near her.

Rhianan's children prospered under her gentle care, and she decided she wished for another child of her own, so from her womb she bore her second son, Goras. Created of her bounty, he passed that gift on to her children, and gave them the gift of money, and taught them the skills of trade, that they might prosper further.

But the prosperity of Rhianan's children created much work for Rhianos, who must guide each spirit to the Underworld himself, and his daughter, Elektra, filled Rhianan's children with such passion that war and murder were rife, making matters worse still for her father. Being wilful as ever, Elektra would not aid him in his task, and so he decided to create three daughters of his own flesh who would be his aids. With his scythe he cut from his left hand the last three fingers, which grew into the Fates, maiden, mother and crone, who would do their father's bidding. He filled them with knowledge of his law, and all that was fated to be, that they might be its harbingers. They do their work mostly in the dark times that belong to their father. But Rhianos had neglected the natural state of all things to be in balance, as he himself was balanced by Rhianan. The creation of the fates brought an unbalance to the world, where all that was fated would come to pass by their actions, and as they were formed a fourth Power sprang into being, Nysa, who was their opposite. Where they wrote her father's laws and bidding, she would change it as she saw fit, sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse. In her aspect of the moon she brings some light to the night time that is the domain of the Fates and their father, but it is a fickle light, never constant, often concealing as much as it reveals.

One day it occurred to Heiron that he did not know what occurred in the world while he travelled the Underworld, and so he took a portion of his own light, and fashioned it into his son, Thales, and cast it into the darkness behind him, that his son might travel the night skies and tell his father of what occurred there, and so a great trail of light streaked across the darkness. Thales, being of the light, was confused by the darkness, and wandered across the heavens for many long years. Nysa's inconstant light was no guide to him, so he left behind him a trail of constant beacons, that he might find his way home again when his travels were done, and so the stars were formed. He watches the world during the darkness, and reports all he sees to his father. As he travels, he uses the wisdom he inherited from his father to dispense fair justice to those he meets.

Now it came to pass that Heiron looked down upon the world and saw the strife that was always left in Elektra's wake, and it seemed clear to him that many of the conflicts he saw were unwise. And so he went to visit Elektra, to speak with her about the wisdom of her actions. Elektra was used to receiving suitors, for all the Powers and mortal men thought her most desirable. Often she would take a consort for a short while, but would soon tire of them, for they were too enamoured of her power and her beauty to remain interesting for long. So when Heiron came to her she assumed he too sought her attentions. When instead of romance his talk turned to more serious matters, and indeed he chastised her for her actions as none but her father had done before, she was intrigued, and found his ability to resist her charms irresistible in itself. She decided that he was, indeed, the wisest of the gods, and most fit to rule them, and so married him, and Heiron agreed to this marriage for he saw in it a both a chance to use his wisdom to rule the Powers well, and also an opportunity to temper Elektra's passions with his own even headedness. And so it was that the age of warfare amongst Rhianan's children grew to a close, and war became much less common upon the Earth.



It is in the nature of life to be curious and as Rhianan created the first life, the curiosity in the hearts and minds of all things became manifest in Tamaris. Tamaris' curiosity is insatiable and legendary, and although it has caused her great troubles it has led to her amassing all the knowledge of the Powers, and of man. It was this curiosity that led her to wonder about the fire in the sun, and so she crept one night into Heiron's chambers, in her favourite guise as a cat, in the hope of basking in his warmth, and stealing a sliver of his fire for herself. Despite his attempts to resist, she wrangled her way into his bed and seduced him, incurring Elektra's great wrath, not only for seducing her husband, but for the added insult that while Heiron had been able to resist Elektra, he had not been immune to Tamaris' charms. From this union came a son, Orion, whom Elektra despises, as evidence to all of her husbands infidelity.

In Orion are combined his mother's knowledge with his father's wisdom, and from these two great skill was born. Orion is a master of any craft or art to which he turns his hand, and his skill has also proved most useful in evading the wrath of Elektra.

## **7.2. Other Legends:**

### **Tamaris and Heiron – Heiron's least wise moment!**

One warm spring day, Tamaris, in her favourite guise of a cat, lazed in the sunshine, and, as was her want, her mind turned to wondering about the nature of things. As she basked in the sun she wondered about its heat, and the fire that burned within it, and decided that she would investigate, for not only was she curious but surely it would be warmer nearer the sun, and she did enjoy the warmth of it upon her fur. And so it was that she made her way to Heiron's palace, and crept unnoticed through its corridors, slipping between the feet of those who passed in and out of its halls and through its doorways, until she found her way into Heiron's apartments.

Heiron was at first surprised and angered to find her in his chambers, but she purred softly and said "Surely, great King, you can spare a little warmth for one such as myself, for I am cold and your bright heat is a comfort to me. Please, let me be near you." And so, flattered by her words, Heiron allowed her to stay, sitting upon the floor as he reclined in bed.

He was nearly asleep when he felt movement beside him, and again he was angered to find her sitting upon his bed. But again she purred softly, and said "Surely, great King, you can spare a little comfort for one such as myself, for the floor is hard and these soft pillows are a comfort to me. Please, let me be near you." And again, Heiron was flattered by her words, and allowed her to stay, sitting upon the pillows as he drifted off to sleep.

Once again Heiron was disturbed by movement, this time next to him, for Tamaris had crept beneath the covers, and for the third time he was angered, but his protests now were dulled by sleep. He attempted to push Tamaris from the bed, but her gentle purring lulled him. His protests subsided as he felt the softness of her fur beneath his hands, and, still half asleep, he drew her closer to him. Finding his heat irresistible, Tamaris pressed herself against him, and before he knew it she lay beside him as a woman, still purring in pleasure, and without thinking he welcomed her into his arms.

At dawn Elektra returned to find Tamaris curled around her husband. Her wrath was great and she drew her sword to slay the woman, but as she uttered a terrible battle cry, Tamaris awoke, and before Elektra could strike she had changed once more into a cat and slipped beneath the bed. Ignoring Heiron's cries of protest, Elektra swept aside the bed, causing him to tumble to the ground, as she struck once more at Tamaris, but Tamaris was ever fleet, and slipped between Elektra's legs and out into the twisting corridors of the palace. Hearing Elektra's cries of anger reverberating behind her, Tamaris did not pause, but fled until she was safely away. It was not until she was sure she was safe that she paused to consider her trophy. For while Heiron had slept she had helped herself to a sliver of his fire, that she might never want for warmth again.

## 8. The Colleges of Sorcery

All player character sorcerers will have learned their craft before the game starts in one of the great colleges of sorcery on the mainland. There were originally six colleges but one was destroyed about two hundred years ago in a great cataclysm.

### 8.1. Olica

*Based in Bretton in the Middle Mountains*

Life and respect for life, balance, harmony. The college colour is gold.

Relations with non-mages tend to be extremely good. Most ordinary folk regard the college of Olica as the home of ‘white’ magic and Olican magi as good guys. Olican magi are generally accepted in the courts of the nobility all over the known world and it can be presumed that they will be similarly welcome in the Bladelands.

- Do Good Mages: Believe that Mages have a duty of care to other humans, that they should use their powers for the protection of and benefit of the rest of society. They see themselves more as servants of humanity, believing that with their power comes great responsibility.
- Machiavellian Mages: Think that Magic should be used for the best of the human race in the long run, but that the end justifies the means.

### 8.2. Dorondar

*Based in Aragon in the Pandoran Mountains*

Balance and neutrality, this college is motivated by a desire for learning and furthering magical knowledge. It is noted for its members skills in research and academia but also the healing arts. The college colour is white.

Dorondar has a closed policy to mage training; most Dorondan magi are the sons and daughters of other Dorondans. Dorondar also believes in cloistered training and it is not common for Dorondan magi to leave the safety and security of their college. This said they are extremely efficient at training and have the lowest failure rate when training young magi of all of the colleges so there are quite a few to be found outside the precincts of the college.

This insular nature has tended to cause the college to be viewed as standoffish and aloof. Ordinary people tend to be in awe of Dorondans, particularly for their extremely advanced skills in the arts of healing. Much sought after in the courts of the known world for their advanced learning and healing skills they are the most highly regarded tutors for noble children.

- Baby Thieves: Believe that all mage children should be raised within the houses, not by their “normal” parents, and go around cities, town and villages searching for them. It is rumoured that if their parents refuse to give them up they remove the children by force, or by stealth.
- ‘Aryan’ Mages: Have breeding programmes amongst mages to breed for children with more magical potential, & look down on Mage-Normal inter-breeding.

### 8.3. Xadamos

*Based in West Savolska*

Efficiency, success and power, this college motto would be “do what works”, they are masters of many of the darker arts. The college colour is blue.

Magi of this college are generally feared by the people of the known world and are not usually welcomed in the courts of their nobles. They are believed to be able to read the thoughts of everyone around them and to be able to control their actions. Generally people will avoid them, especially eye contact (which is believed to open you up to their mental powers). It is not uncommon for people to seek to burn a magi of this college if they can catch him on his own.

- ‘Academic’ Mages: Interested in magic for its own sake, and will pursue the knowledge of magic with little thought for the consequences.
- ‘Coercer’ Mages: Mages who control the minds of those around them for their own benefit, comfort and pleasure with no thought for the suffering that they cause.

*(Player characters are discouraged from coming from this college as they are unlikely to be able to fit into society without great difficulties and this may prove frustrating for a player.)*

## 8.4. Haringran

*Based in the Minoan Kingdoms*

Haringran is noted for its battle mages as well as for its tacticians. Based in the south, Haringran has been heavily influenced by the southern cultures particularly the Minoans and the Spartans. Honour, justice and peace are the bywords of this college. The college colour is red.

Highly unusually Haringranian magi have some experience in the more physical arts and it is possible for characters from this college to have access to more martial skills (and possibly at lower costs) than other magi. Interested players should contact the Magic Ref who will assist them. This training generally comes at a cost to their magical development and it is sad but true that Haringran is magically the weakest of the colleges (although this is not commonly known among non-magi and is never acknowledged by Haringranian).

The magi of this college are welcomed in the courts of the known world for the skills that they bring to the battlefield. Both magically and in terms of their tactical and strategic planning abilities Haringranians make great staff officers and are a formidable addition to any force.

Warrior Mages: Haringran is noted for mages who are also physically capable.

Academic Mages: Interested in knowledge of all things, rather than just magic – they see magic as a means to an end, and are interested in magic as a tool, and for what it tells them about the universe around them.

## 8.5. Justria

*Based in the Essen Confederation in the South Middle Mountains*

Justria is a secretive college producing many items of beautiful artwork and powerful enchantment. The college colour is green.

Justria is a reclusive college. They largely keep themselves to themselves. Justrian magi are often referred to as enhancers owing to their facility with the arts of artifice. Many of the greatest magical devices created since the time of the ancients have been produced by Justrian magi. The towers of Justrian sorcerers are renowned for their unusual construction. With the forces of magic and matter itself bending to their will Justrian magi are superb architects.

Justria is renowned for its scholars in the arts; its painters, sculptors, architects as well as its scientists, its engineers and mathematicians. It is not one of the more war like colleges.

While Justrian magi are welcomed in many courts as useful additions (particularly if they bring with them magical devices and wonders) they are generally not viewed as either as trustworthy as the Olicans or as useful as the Dorondans.

Scientist Mages: Justrians are often gifted at the scientific arts as well as the magical. Unfortunately this often brings accusations of unnatural pursuits. It is said that they seek to draw the life essence from creatures.

Artist Mages: Justrians are also renowned as artists. While their art is much sought after for its own sake, it is frequently the magical devices produced by their smiths that are most sought after. Like their scientific brothers they also seek to remove the life spark but through their art.

## 8.6. The Lost College, Virenar

*Was located in what is now the sea around Illium*

One of the colleges was completely destroyed, its members scattered and its arts lost. Their college colour was grey.

It was the destruction of this college which shattered the landscape in the south-eastern part of Europe. It is known that there was a college called Virenar and that it was destroyed some two hundred years ago when vast storms wracked the land and a hole was torn in the sky. The common people know only that the Virenan magi were slain by their own foul practices, dabbling in arts which man was not meant to know and that the other colleges now strictly control access to magic of all sorts to prevent a similar disaster from ever happening again.

## **9. Guilds**

The following is a list of some of the main guilds of the mainland. There are many other guilds but these are some of the more important ones. Guilds are a good source of training but often exact a tithe for membership.

### **9.1. The Merchants' Guild (The Bank of Schwyz)**

Once a collection of merchants, this guild has become very powerful because it funds nobles and kings. The guild purchased a small stretch of no-mans land in the middle mountains and declared it a country (which they called Schwyz). Schwyz lies between Bretton, The Essen Confederation, The Papacy and Aetolia. This was always a buffer between these four countries so the leaders of these four nations were happy to let the Merchants Guild move in.

The guild controls Gold Lions and Silver Falcons which in turn allows it to control much of the trade that happens in the known world. Naturally the guild is very interested in the Bladelands and has sent many representatives to acquire the new riches.

Most of the guild seniors and bankers are worshipers of Goras but the guildsmen who actually make things are often members of the church of Orion.

### **9.2. The Mercenaries' Guild (The Free Companies)**

More of a collection of important mercenary companies who have banded together to set prices and contracts. This guild is currently based in the Essen Confederation.

Each of the main companies has their own colours and flags but they often fly the red flag above their own colours to indicate they are for hire. It is not unknown for a company to march onto the field of battle without a contract (but with the red flag) and see which herald can get to them first with cash. The Bladelands offers many opportunities for mercenaries and the guild has set up a guild house in Sanctuary to oversee operations on the islands.

The Mercenaries Guild pays lip service to Goras and always has a red flag available when it needs to indicate that it is for hire. Most mercenaries consider it prudent to also honour Elektra (goddess of war). The guild will hire out to both sides in a battle but in this case casualties and prisoners can expect to be treated with care and be paroled off after the battle.

### **9.3. The Worshipful Guild of Surgeons and Barbers**

The guild has hospices across the known world and are relied on by kings and peasants alike. The Bladelands are no exception to this and a new hospice has been created in Port Sanctuary from where the guild sends out physicians and conducts training.

The Physicians Guild is very protective of its secrets. There are a few independent physicians but the guild goes to great lengths to either recruit or discredit them. The guild is rumoured to use any means to put particularly difficult non-members out of business but it is certain that the large number of deaths result of natural causes rather than direct action by the guild.

The guild seniors often worship Rhianan and Goras while the guildsmen just worship Rhianan. Hospices can be recognised by the red flag of Goras with the flower of Rhianan emblazoned on it.

### **9.4. The Guild of Navigators**

The Guild of Navigators are a specialised group of scholars who are able to safely lead ships through the deadly storms which surround the Bladeland Islands. It is also well known that without their help it is certain death to approach the islands beyond the shattered isles which lie between the mainland and the Bladelands. The guild is also knowledgeable regarding travel on land in the Bladelands, and their services are often sought by merchants and others with cause to travel.

Every ship's captain seeking to travel to the Bladelands will retain the services of a member of this guild in order to make the passage. The only place that safe passage can be made to reliably is the port town of Sanctuary.

At one time, many years ago, (actually about 70 years ago) safe passage could be obtained to a different port town, Haven. Unfortunately, the magical storms shifted and that link with that town was destroyed. The Guild of Navigators disappeared. Some were killed by angry nobles, some were lost to the storms. There followed a period during which no one was able to travel to the Bladelands. Recently, about twenty years ago, the Navigators began to reappear and it became possible once again to travel to the Bladelands. Everyone who travelled there before this 'sundering' has been lost and are assumed to be dead.

It is said that the Navigators possess magical abilities, but the colleges have taken no action against them. Everyone seems to know that they have magical powers but no one seems to have seen them using them.

## **9.5. Guilds on the Bladelands**

Although not nearly on the scale of many of the mainland guilds, the Bladelands are known to have their own guilds for men at arms, woodsmen, surgeons, apothecaries and merchants.

Membership of a guild usually guarantees reasonably competent tuition in your area of expertise, with specific information useful on practicing your art in the Bladelands, and access to tools of the trade that can often be hard to come by in these remote parts. Being certified as having a certain level of competence by one of the guilds will often make it easier to obtain good wages for your services.

The guilds of the mainland sponsor some of the guilds on the islands, ignore others and some seek to destroy them as competition. The most infamous example of the latter being the Worshipful Guild of Surgeons and Barbers who make it known to travellers that they have branches on the islands and that they continue to take a dim view of competition.

## 10. Knighthoods and other Warrior Orders

The following is a list of well-known warrior orders. Not all are official knighthoods but they have been compiled here for ease of reference. If you wish to play a member of one of these orders then please contact the character creation ref. to confirm.

### 10.1. Church Knights

Most of the Powers have orders of holy warriors who protect the interests of the church and the faithful. These orders range from small-unstructured collections of warriors and temple guards to virtual armies. All of these orders follow church strictures and religious observances. Collectively known as Temple Knights or Templars, the following sets out some of the better known:

#### Rhianan

Perhaps surprisingly there are a number of templar orders that serve the power of civilisation. Numbered among these are the Knights of Order and Peace. This knighthood is dedicated to spreading the message of the church into the wild places and providing protection for those who would bring order to the wilderness and civilisation to the savage. Several cells of these knights have been sent out to the Bladelands in order to provide protection to holy missions and ensure that civilisation may be peacefully promoted in the Isles.

The knights wear white sir coats over polished armour.

#### Rhianos

The lord of death is served by several knightly orders the most famous of which are the Guardians of the Pale. The name of the order stretches back into antiquity and it is not known where it originated. The Guardians hold their duty to be their most sacred charge and are said to fear nothing, since they serve the king of death itself. Once they have accepted a duty or task they will achieve their goal or die.

The knights tend to be poor since they have no need of wealth. They are not restricted from owning property but few of them both with much apart from their personal war gear.

The majority of the orders are foundlings brought up by the church and trained in the martial arts and mental discipline from an early age. They are noted for their indomitable wills and great piety. The tests to become a full Knight Guardian can only be accomplished by one who has no fear of death and possesses unswerving faith in Rhianos and the powers.

The Guardians dress in black armour (usually heavy armour) and bear the symbols of their church and their order openly. The people are completely terrified of them (as are most churchmen).

#### Goras

The church of Goras mainly uses mercenaries as Templars in keeping with the tenets of church doctrine. It is a great honour for a mercenary company to be picked for church duty (for which they are well paid). After a stint as a templar, a mercenary is allowed to place a small red bar upon his arms, one for each term of service. A currently serving unit may show the bar within a circle.

#### Hieron

The most famous of the knighthood of Hieron are the Kingsguard. This is an order of knights sworn to protect the Kings of the lands. Members of this order pledge to serve a particular king and then serve until death. Each king has his own specific livery for his knights but all use large shields – white with a sunburst emblazoned in the centre.

There are many famous stories of the heroism of the Knights of the Kingsguard. It is worthy of note that they will not fight each other but rather all join together to protect both kings when they come into conflict. They are also required to give good counsel and to act as diplomats for their king.

The Kingsguard may not own land or property, cannot marry or inherit and serve until they die. If their king dies they must return to their order or serve the new monarch.

#### Elektra

Elektra has a number of knightly orders as befits the power of war. She is extremely popular amongst chivalric knights, such as the Order of Flowers who pursue the games of courtly love but she is also popular amongst the more martial orders such as the Hessian or Teutonic Knights of Essen. These knights revel in the passion of battle and believe that the ultimate expression of their faith is a mad battle frenzy followed by slaughter and other excesses.

## **Nysa**

Nysa is served by no knights although there are rumours concerning a group calling themselves the Dark of the Moon. It is said that they are responsible for avenging any evil done to the church or the priesthood of Nysa striking from the shadows under cover of night. These rumours remain completely unsubstantiated.

## **Orion**

The power of skill is served by the Champions of Excellence. This order pursues martial skill as the peak of their personal demonstration of faith. Their aim is to show the world the virtues of their church through their skill in battle. Most of the order are ascetic and askew worldly things in the interests of perfecting their bodies and minds. They regard their honour as their most important possession.

The Champions are frequently found in the most dangerous places, fighting against impossible odds often for the apparently weaker side in a conflict. Many of these warriors may be drawn to the Bladelands as the ultimate test of their skills and abilities.

## **Thales**

Thales is served by several knighthoods, the most well known being the Poor Knights of the Crossroads and the Swords of Justice. The poor knights travel the lands protecting travellers from attack and settling disputes peacefully. They are known as the poor knights because they serve all who need them, may own no property and may only take what can be afforded and that they need. They are required to show humility and avoid conflict where possible. While frowned on by nobles for interfering in local politics they are generally much loved by the common man. They frequently die young and forgotten.

The swords also travel the lands, frequently on a circuit. These knights take an oath to protect the innocent and the helpless, to give fair hearing to all and offer only justice. They are required to champion the side of the just or avoid conflict. They are frequently appointed as judges or judicial champions by local authorities. Most often the younger sons of noblemen they are noted for only speaking the truth and for their fearlessness in battle. They are a glorious and generally popular knighthood.

## **10.2. Knights of Don Rodrigo**

Based in Aragon, this knighthood was founded by the great warrior who forged the country some two hundred years ago. They are noble in every sense of the word, being drawn from the noble families, and strive to uphold their honour and that of Aragon.

Loyalty to the ruler of Aragon is of the utmost importance. This leaves the Knights of Don Rodrigo with a problem as Aragon currently has two kings and a queen. Loyalty within the knights has been split and many have left in disgust (some seeking a noble death in the Bladelands rather than disgracing themselves at home).

In noble families of Aragon it is usual for the first child to inherit. The second child then joins either a church or the Knights of Don Rodrigo.

## **10.3. Knights of the Sun**

A loose collection of Bretton nobles who pose and look good rather than actually do any fighting. This knighthood spends much of its time jousting, showing off its wealth and indulging in ever more extravagant parties. Once known for being the most chivalrous in the world, these knights are now so rich that they hire lackeys to fight for them.

The exception to this rule are those knights who wish to be rich but cannot currently show their 'second rate' armour at the joust. Normally young nobles who have several older brothers or sisters, the Bladelands offers a chance for great wealth and many tall tales that will impress the ladies upon their glorious return.

## **10.4. Oprichniks**

The 'not very' secret police of Tsarina Ivanava of Savolska. Feared in their own country, horror stories are beginning to be told across the known world. Operating in small 'cells' of between six to twelve warriors, each group is directly controlled by the Tsarina. Upon her order they descend upon any town that dares to speak out against her and destroys it with such brutality that other local lords dare not complain.

Tsarina Ivanava will use any tactic or weapon she thinks will help keep her nobles in line. To this end she has despatched several Oprichnik cells to the Bladelands to secure some of the treasures it is rumoured exist there.

The Oprichniks are known for their long heavy black robes which are rumoured to be flame proof.

## **10.5. Knights of the Congregation of the Faith (Questioners)**

The Questioners are another 'not very' secret police. This time they are controlled by the Grand Pontiff of the Papacy. Their ranks are drawn from the other churches. Some are ordained priests while others are church knights. The Questioners operate within the Papacy and ensure the faithful make correct religious observances.

However they are known to operate in other countries as witch-hunters (much to the annoyance of the rulers of those countries). The Questioners consider it their divine duty to root out witches and heretics where ever they may be found. Some of the more hard line Questioners have travelled to the Bladelands to help the church missions convert the heathens and also follow up the many rumours of unclean magics.

The Questioners and the Colleges of Sorcery do not see eye to eye.

## **10.6. The Cult of Hercules**

### **The Cult in Aetolia (the Cult of Hercules)**

Legionaries from Aetolia compete annually for the right to join this elite group. Great sports games are held and much of the populace come to watch. These games are designed to show off the fighting prowess of the Legionaries and encourage every young person to become part of the Legion.

Members of the Cult of Hercules enjoy special privileges and respect strength and physical prowess (and virility). However they have a running feud with the Cult of Heracles who come from the neighbouring country of Achaea. Every five years the two cults come together for a grand games were they compete to see which cult is the stronger etc... These games often end in bloodshed. The Cult of Heracles won the last great games and with only a year until the next one, both cults are in full training to prove themselves.

### **The Cult in Achaea (the Cult of Heracles)**

This cult is much like the one in Aetolia (although members of both cults will firmly deny this). It has similar games and promotes strength and virility etc... Their members are drawn from the military but most of the populace come to watch the games. The great games are a source of much national pride.

### **Heracles / Hercules**

This ancient mythical hero is revered by many within the armies of both Aetolia and Achaea. After the great inundation two thousand years ago, much of the true accounts of the exploits of this hero were lost and had to be translated from foreign texts. Due to a spelling discrepancy the two cults were formed (or so it is said) and they have been competing with each other ever since.

## **10.7. Sons of the Mountain**

The warriors of Sparta are renown throughout the known world. The greatest of their warriors are called the Sons of the Mountain (although there are plenty of women in their ranks). Little is known of their training methods but the end result is one of unsurpassed excellence. The Sons of the Mountain can be identified by their black and white armour (usually leather).

## **10.8. Labyrinthine Knights**

Keepers of the mountain passes (with many small blind valleys) in the eastern Minoan Kingdoms. These warriors are constantly on the front line against the Anna-Trolians. They are a hardy group who spend much of their time in the mountains overlooking the great plains and the mountain passes ensuring that any invading army is spotted and dealt with before it becomes too much of a problem.

The great wealth and promise of ancient weapons has drawn some of these warriors to the Bladelands as they need all the resources they can get to keep out the advancing horde.



## II. Updates

This document has been adjusted for the republishing as version 3.1 but no significant modifications have been made.

The following is a list of changes between version 1.2 and version 1.3 of this document

Section 2 – The world map has been updated

Section 4 – A map of the Bladelands has been added

Section 4 – Information about Bladelands fiefs has been added

The following is a list of changes between version 1.1 and version 1.2 of this document.

Section 1 – List of influences expanded

Section 2 – Information on languages and dates has been added

Section 3.4 – Information on the Rom added

Section 6 – More general information about faith and belief has been added

The following is a list of changes between version 1.0 and version 1.1 of this document.

Section 2 – Map of the Known World added

Section 3 – Which countries are restricted to PCs has been clarified

Section 3.3 – The term “Foulspawn” has been defined for those unfamiliar with it

Section 6 – Powers genealogy diagram updated

Section 6.1 – Description of the Priesthood of the First updated

Section 7 – The word “Gods” has been replaced by “Powers”

Section 9 – Guild information added

Section 10 – Knighthood information added