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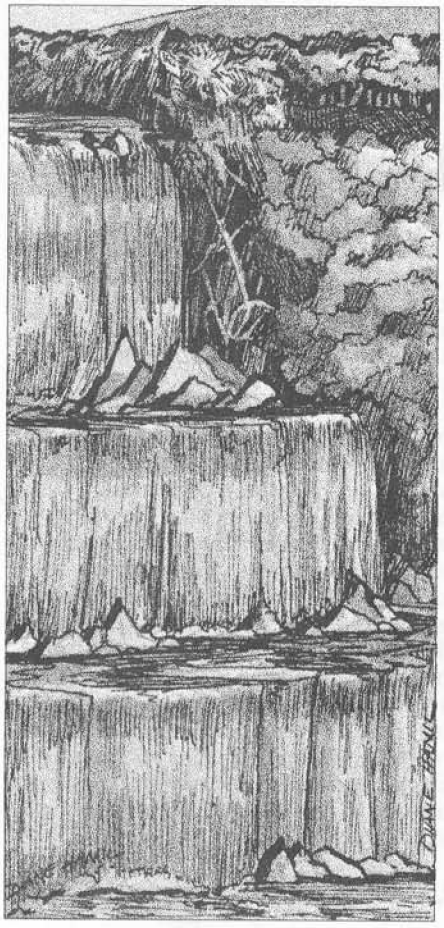
ÆSHEBA: GREEK AFRICA



by
Robert J. Blake,
Frank Mentzer,
& Jeff O'Hare



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INTRODUCTION

ÆSHEBA: Greek Africa is a complete fantasy setting usable with any fantasy role-playing game system. After reading through the book, you can customize it for your own campaign in about one hour. You design the level of challenge yourself, by selecting the powers and abilities of the various inhabitants.

This book describes an entire continent. Several towns and cities, being convenient bases for the characters, are described in detail. The intrigue within and between these settlements can provide a wealth of information for building adventures. Most of the continent, however, is uncharted wilderness, awaiting the characters' forays.

No game details specific to any one system are given. Instead, space is provided in each monster description for you to insert creature statistics from your chosen game system. Monster data are given as functions of a fixed standard — a beginning adventurer — so it is easy to calculate (or, if you wish, simply select) these details.

GENERAL NOTES

Æsheba is an isolated island somewhere in a great sea. In terms of land mass, it is somewhat smaller than the continental United States. Æsheba's geography and climate are similar to those of modern Africa, but its civilizations are somewhat different because of its remote location. Lacking the Mediterranean cultures and commerce that so greatly influenced the development of northern Africa, Æsheba's human societies evolved independently, along different paths than the medieval European models that form the basis of most fantasy role-playing games.

This land is a lost realm, so far removed from the civilized world that it is little more than legend. Nomads, like the primitive natives of Africa, still roam its plains and grasslands, living as their ancestors did hundreds of years ago. A few of these tribes have settled in areas with fertile soil and turned to agriculture to support themselves; others are still hunters and gatherers.

The various pockets of civilization in Æsheba have thus grown up in relative isolation, without being influenced by more developed cultures until very recently. Settlers from a distant land much like ancient Greece have colonized the north coast and developed a small trading empire there. In the central part of the continent are the two largest cities in Æsheba — New Grecia on the east coast and Gloriosus on the west. Both are capitals of larger kingdoms that bear the same names. The southern section of the continent and portions of the interior are still uncivilized wilderness. Permanent human settlements are few, since most of the natives who live in these areas are nomadic.

To characters from a campaign with a medieval European basis, all the Æsheban people may seem backward, and their ways primitive. Even the magic they use may be practically incomprehensible to outsiders, since it is heavily dependent upon their religious beliefs. Nevertheless, the people are intelligent and quite civilized in their own ways. Characters who underestimate the abilities of the natives may encounter unexpected problems.

PREPARATIONS

You will need the following items to prepare this accessory for use:

a. A supply of character sheets for the game system you use.
b. The color map included with this accessory.
c. Extra paper for recording data on the new monsters given here.
d. Graph paper for constructing interior maps.
e. Your campaign notebook and world map.

GETTING STARTED

Once you have assembled all the necessary materials, follow the instructions given below, in order.

1. PLACE THE CONTINENT

Based on the information given in the General Notes section (left), you should choose a location in your campaign world that is (a) near the equator and (b) distant from the rest of the campaign activity. This placement need not be utterly precise, as yet; select an approximate area and feel free to adjust details later, as you see fit.

If your campaign already contains a civilization based on ancient Greece, that is the ideal starting point for contact with Æsheba. Otherwise, you should place such a culture somewhere on a coastal border of an existing continent. Consider this nation to be the homeland of the Greek colonists who settled the north coast of Æsheba. Though ideally this Grecian culture should also be developed in some detail (a task beyond the scope of this product), this is not a prerequisite. You need only treat it as a stopping point on the characters' journey — a stepping stone on the way to the more important goal of exploring the Æsheban wilderness.

2. GENERAL GUIDELINES

First, read the "Magic in Æsheba" section beginning on page 5. Many of the customs and practices of the Æsheban people are related to their system of magic. Once you understand the various options, you will be able to work out your own plan for designing adventures.

Next, read the section entitled "The Greek Colonies," beginning on page 19. This will give you a basic understanding of the history, economy, and government of the fledgling Greek trading empire on the north coast.

3. THE CIVILIZED AREAS

Read through the detailed descriptions of the four Greek colonies — Ios (page 26), Kythera (page 31), Milios (page 37), and Tegea (page 44). These sections describe the newest arrivals to the continent of Æsheba, and the city-states that they have built. Next, read the descriptions of the two kingdoms — Gloriosus (page 47) and New Grecia (page 56). These two high civilizations existed on the continent of Æsheba long before the foreign settlers arrived. Gloriosus is a completely native culture; New Grecia is a blend of the Æsheban native culture with that of the earliest Greek settlers. The city has elements of both civilizations, showing how the two combined and evolved into something entirely different.

4. PLAN ÆSHEBAN ADVENTURES

Review the Wilderness section (pages 75-96). This portion of the book describes the uncivilized areas of the continent — the southern portion and the interior. Descriptions of large regions noted on the color map are given in alphabetical order, with notes on important terrain features in each. Native tribes and new creatures that inhabit those areas are described in the appropriate sections. Don't worry about how to use the boxed monster data yet; that will be explained shortly (Step #6, right). For now, simply read the text to get an idea how the areas look and how the creatures and humans who live there behave. Should you wish instead to review the descriptions of all areas with a particular terrain type — desert, for example — consult the index on the inside back cover for page references.

This part of Æsheba awaits your development. When you are familiar with the continent, start developing adventures in those locations that interest you. By the time your players have explored the colonies and start to head off into the wilderness, you should be ready with clues leading to exciting adventures, problems, and puzzles, and of course rewards.

5. THE PEOPLE OF ÆSHEBA

Your characters will probably choose to explore the towns and cities of Æsheba first. Once you are familiar with the continent in general, go back through the "Important Citizens" lists in the Colonies and Kingdoms sections. Carefully read the role-playing notes on the warrior-kings of the Greek city states — Peisandros (page 40), Calter (page 30), and Eurypylos (page 34). These men have a significant effect on the activities in their respective towns. King Mgabwi of Gloriosus (page 54) and King Lykanthos of New Grecia (page 69) are also powerful leaders. The relationships between these five heads of state can be the source of many adventures.

Several named individuals in Æsheba have adventuring abilities: the three Greek kings, all the priests of Tegea (page 45), the pirates of the Kambian Marsh (page 82), the Kytheran Hill Bandits (page 87), plus Abul Essan (page 87), Lycas (page 69), Mubundi (page 54), Nimblus (page 70), Nwankwo (page 91), Sakhas (page 71), and Zimbutu (page 35). Create a character sheet for each of those people that you intend to use. Decide how powerful they should be, considering their positions, rivals, and stated abilities. Write down details about each (from your own game system) that will be needed during play. If you wish, substitute characters of your own that fulfill the same functions. The rest of the named people in the book are normal townsfolk with no adventuring skills. All are humans, though you may change this, if desired.

Next, read the "Native People" section beginning on page 73 for details of two native Æsheban races.

Now look through the city keys. Note the locations of important buildings, and any services that the characters may need, on the detail maps.

Finally, review the sample scenarios given at the end of each city description. With minimal development, these short adventures will get your players started in Æsheba.

6. CUSTOMIZE THE CREATURES

On a separate sheet of paper, create a beginning adventurer (warrior-type) according to the rules of your game system. Assume that the character is wearing no armor, and can withstand one blow from a longsword (for average damage) before death. No bonuses or penalties of any kind should apply. Record the following data for this basic character (BC):

B Rank
B Health
B Armor

Refer to the box on the right for definitions of these terms. Statistics are not given for people in Æsheba; you set their abilities as you like. Monsters are listed according to their natural habitats in the Wilderness Section (beginning on page 75). Each creature description includes a monster box for recording creature statistics. In each box are numbers that express the creature's Rank, Health, Attack capability, and Defense as percentages.

Each monster's Rank and Health are expressed as percentages of B Rank and B Health, respectively. Use the B Rank and B Health values that you have written down for the basic character to derive the Rank and Health of each monster. Record this data on a separate sheet of paper. All creature Health Ratings are averages; individual creatures may have ±50% of the given value.

The Atk value given in the monster box is the monster's chance to hit B Armor. Res is the chance that a warrior character of B Rank can land a blow on the monster. Both of these values are expressed as percentages.

If combat is not resolved with percentage dice in your game system, simply convert the percentages given to equivalent values based on the type of dice used. For example, each pip of a 20-sided die equals 5%. Therefore, a monster with a 60% Atk hits 12 times out of 20 (60% = 12 x 5%), so you must roll 9 or better on a 20-sided die for it to land a blow on a character with B Armor.

Any special abilities or magical powers the creatures have are noted in the box as well. Names given for the magical powers indicate only the desired effect, not specific spells.

Choose a creature whose statistics approximate those needed from your own game system and write the game data on your separate monster record. You may also use a creature of your own design, if desired. Magical powers listed in a monster box may be supplied in any number of ways — as spells, innate powers, or even magic items.

Example: Assume that B Rank = 1, B Health = 5, and B Armor = 9; assume also that you are converting percentages to a d20 system.

The Shadhavar (page 78) is described as follows. The calculations for its game statistics are as indicated below the monster box on the next page.

TERMINOLOGY

B Rank: Basic character's skill rank (if any).

B Health: The amount of damage the basic character can withstand before death.

B Armor: Basic character's defensive value (frontal).

Atk (attack): The percentage of the time the creature should be able to hit a character with B Armor.

Modes: The type of attack and damage inflicted per successful hit, expressed in terms of weapon equivalents.

Res (Resistance): The percentage chance for a creature to be hit by a warrior character of B Rank.

Attack Sequence: The number and type of attacks a creature uses per time unit of combat.

Avoidance Roll: The chance for a creature to avoid some or all effects of an attack. The avoidance roll may be replaced by an equivalent game mechanic or ignored entirely for game systems where the concept does not exist.

SHADHAVAR

Rank: 400% B Rank
Health: 360% B Health
Atk: 70%
Modes: 1 bite (two-handed sword)
Res: 35%
Def: Hide = leather armor
Special: Lures victims with music of horn

Rank: 400% B Rank = 4 x 1 = 4
Health: 360% B Health = 3.6 x 5 = 18 (±9)
Atk: 70% = can hit "B Armor" on 7 or better (d20)
Modes: 1 bite = damage as two-handed sword
Res: 35% = "B warrior" hits on 14 or better (d20)
Def: Hide = leather armor
Special: Creature can lure victims with the music of its horn (avoidance roll may apply)

ORGANIZATION

Descriptions of the civilized areas of Æsheba (i.e. permanent human settlements) begin on page 19, after the magic section. Since the characters will probably arrive on the continent via the north coast trading centers, the Greek colonies are presented first, in alphabetical order for easy reference. Next are the two major kingdoms — large areas on the east and west coasts. The capital cities of both kingdoms are described in detail, but the rest of the realms are left for you to develop as you choose.

Each section, whether colony or kingdom, starts with a brief discussion of the city, its history, defense, laws, and other pertinent notes. A detail map is given, followed by descriptions of those buildings that are important to the city functions or to visiting adventurers.

New Grecia (page 56) is the only city that has named streets. The building descriptions for that city are organized alphabetically by street, and consecutively by number code. Exterior details are given first, followed by interior notes. Thus, as characters stroll along a street, you can easily describe the outsides of the buildings they pass, using the added notes if they enter a building.

Usually only one business of each type is listed — one cobbler, one healer, and so forth. Realistically, there should be many people practising the same profession in each town, but space does not allow for complete details of them all. Add more citizens and building descriptions as desired.

After the notes on the buildings in each city is an "Important Citizens" section, giving personality sketches (listed alphabetically) for all the notable residents. Use this when characters have encountered a resident in the city. Mark your place in the book, and refer to the notes (in the citizens section) on the individual(s) encountered.

The Wilderness section is organized in a similar fashion. Major terrain features, such as mountain ranges, large plains, etc., are listed in alphabetical order for easy reference. Each area is described in general terms, with notes on specific points of interest, such as individual mountains, rivers, tombs, etc. Next come details of the creatures living in that area, along with monster boxes. (Boxes are given only for special creatures, not for normal animals.) Human tribes living in the region are described next. Finally, role-playing notes for any important residents are given in a separate section, similar to those in the city descriptions. If you are looking for information on a specific place, but are unsure where it would be in the book, consult the master index on the inside back cover. A pronunciation guide is also given there, since many Æsheban names will be unfamiliar to you.

THE CAMPAIGN

As you read through the city notes, you will find many relationships and bits of intrigue that can serve as springboards for adventures within Æsheba. With a bit of imagination, any of these can be built into scenarios. Develop these ideas as you see fit if your players take an interest in a local mystery.

Develop relationships between the citizens based upon what you read about their outlooks, positions, political affiliations, and personalities. Feel free to establish blood relationships where convenient, even with a player's character if that would create opportunities for good play.

Once the setup is completed, the players' interests and activities will direct your course. As the characters mingle with the townsfolk, hear rumors, have confrontations, etc., adventuring opportunities will develop naturally. Keep track of who the characters meet and how the encounters go; make notes in your separate records of friends or enemies made. And have townsfolk contact the characters for "normal" adventures and/or involvement in local politics. The fun is only beginning!

START

When you're ready to introduce the continent of Æsheba into your campaign, do so by means of news or rumors that vaguely refer to the "new lands" discovered far away. Exaggerate the details; tales of unguarded shrines of solid gold, fields of gemstones, and the like should appeal to the characters' greed sufficiently to entice them. If not, real evidence of treasures such as ivory and gold, brought back via normal trade routes, should do the trick.

Allow the characters to organize the trip themselves is they wish. If they are unsure of how to proceed, allow them to book passage on a vessel heading that direction. This undertaking is not a short or minor adventure, however; cautious players will investigate as many details as possible before starting a trip that will take weeks, or perhaps months. Be prepared to reassure them with verifiable locations for restocking provisions, and reliable connections if there is more than one leg to the journey.

The sea voyage to Æsheba should have multiple parts. One or more trips should take characters to a Greek-style civilization in some remote part of the campaign world, then a final voyage leads from there to the even more distant land of Æsheba, where that nation's colonies are.

If characters seek employment as a means of offsetting the expense of the journey to this new land, they could be hired by a trader (either in their native land or somewhere en route) to ride with and guard a shipment of goods throughout the long and dangerous voyage. Once they have reached Æsheba, they might be hired by one of the colonial traders for a mission in the kingdoms or the wilderness of the interior.

Bringing the characters into Æsheba at the colonies has several advantages. For one thing, the culture there is similar to their own, though probably considerably more primitive. Within these city-states, characters can obtain guidance from the colonists and familiarize themselves slowly with the more unusual aspects of native Æsheban culture. The colonies are also good places to exchange treasures for cash; most of the continent's recent trade with foreign lands is funneled through these city-states. The next stop should be the kingdoms or the wilderness.

When the characters are ready to depart, the colonies once again provide the route. Merchant vessels from foreign lands come into the harbors regularly, and the characters can probably board an outbound vessel within three to six months.

MAGIC IN ÆSHEBA

This section explains the differences between the magical practices of the Æsheban natives and the magic used by characters in your fantasy role-playing campaign. Almost all of the information herein is based on actual beliefs, customs and practices of real people in Africa two thousand years ago. Some modifications have been made, both to avoid offense and to make the material more usable in a game setting.

One basic assumption made throughout is that the magic described here really works in game terms. Since this concept is already inherent in your fantasy role-playing game, applying it here as well should present no problem. No proof of the reality of African magical spells, spirits, etc. has been presented; this has been left as a matter of individual or tribal belief. However, there is also no proof that such things are unreal. A belief in ancestral spirits may do no more than trouble the conscience of a visitor to modern Africa, but spirits may pose far more concrete and dangerous problems to a character in Æsheba.

Some references to the belief systems of actual tribes are given, beginning on page 15. These may be helpful should you wish to look for additional information about the practices described. There is also a bibliography on page 18.

As a final note, remember that the following details do not comprise an adventure. They are elements of an overall campaign setting in which you may create new, realistic, and exciting scenarios of your own.

USING MAGIC

Æsheban magic is created by methods unique to the people of this continent. Therefore, player characters in your game will find it difficult or impossible to create, modify, or negate Æsheban magical effects. Similarly, the natives will find the magic used by the characters to be a new and probably startling phenomenon.

Characters may, at the GM's discretion, be permitted to learn some of the magical techniques used by the Æsheban natives, given sufficient time for study and training. However, most such knowledge is kept utterly secret, not only from outsiders, but even from other natives. Magical skills are usually passed down from parent to child according to the rules of social organization (mother to daughter in a matriarchal society, and father to son in a patriarchal one). In some areas, a "sorcerer" might be willing to sell magical objects and/or secrets; but such individuals are often evil, and are not easily found.

Although many communities permit individual members to own magical items (also called fetishes), the rituals and substances used to create them remain secret. Even those who manage to acquire that knowledge must be properly trained before they can apply it, and the cost for such instruction is typically at least ten times that of the item itself.

Most types of Æsheban magical practices are intermixed with religion. This poses another barrier to the visiting student, because the beliefs are an integral part of the process of creating the magic. It is quite possible that an outsider who simply "goes along with" the local beliefs without fully adopting them may be unable to use any knowledge acquired through training.

HOW MAGIC WORKS

As GM, you must know the basis of Æsheban magic. Once you are familiar with the logic behind it, you can more effectively adjudicate the characters' attempts to deal with its effects.

PRINCIPLES

All Æsheban magic utilizes one or more of three fundamental principles: medicine, homeopathy, and contagion.

MEDICINE

Medicine is simply that — the art of combining certain natural substances to produce physical effects. This principle is classified as magic rather than science simply because the Æshebans use it as such. Medicines can enhance other magical practices, and vice versa. Plants are often used to create powders (medicines) that kill or cure. This is mundane magic, not based on the supernatural at all, and is thus the easiest type for outsiders to learn and use. The other two principles involve Æsheban religious beliefs, and work only when applied by a true believer.

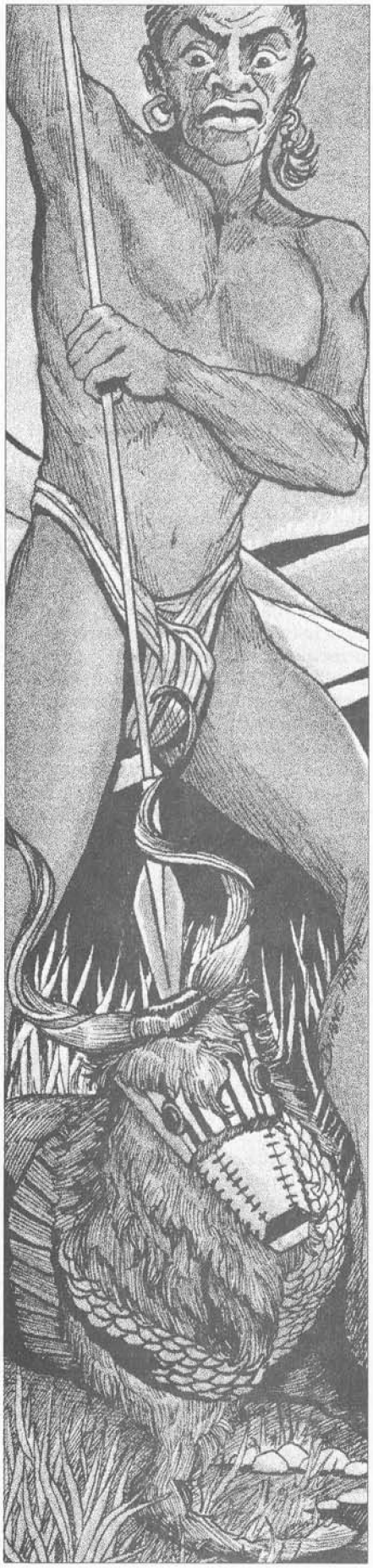
HOMEOPATHY

Homeopathy is the magical tenet that "like produces like." Normal items are used to imitate desired effects, and when the proper rituals are applied to guide the magical forces, those effects do in fact occur thereafter. For example, water thrown into the air falls like rain, and (through homeopathy) may cause rain to fall. Carefully drawing spots on the skin of an ailing person and then washing them off may, when accompanied by the right magic, cause the disease to be rinsed away with them. This principle is common in hunting rituals; an effigy of the target creature is slain in some way, and later the hunters slay the real animal in the same manner. Homeopathic magic usually has a notable failure rate, due primarily to its practice by amateurs (such as hunters) who do not have the proper skills. When used by a well-trained creator of magical effects, it is thoroughly reliable.

CONTAGION

Contagion is the principle that things once joined together remain so, and can affect each other. This is the basis of the infamous "Voodoo doll," though that device is a product of the West Indies (with roots in African methods). Contagious magic is used to make charms — devices that protect against various misfortunes. A garment or weapon once used by an enemy can become a powerful tool against him if it is subjected to the proper rituals and spells. However, the enemy must be made aware of the magic before it can work. This does not mean that the effects are nothing more than psychological phenomena. Magical energy is actually involved, but attuning the victim's mind to the magic is an integral part of the process. This may be accomplished by a signal or other simple communication, or by so blunt a means as presenting the magical device for the victim's observation. In any event, once the victim is aware of the intended effect, the magic takes hold.

A stranger to Æsheba might be the



target of contagious magic but be completely unaffected by it, simply because he does not realize it exists. For example, a player character who sees a device outside his hut — perhaps a stick wrapped with grass in an odd way — may simply ignore it, and be unaffected. But if the character realizes that this means a magical attack is in progress, the magic takes effect. In practical terms, characters should be considered ignorant of, and therefore immune to, contagious magic the first time it is used against them. However, any passing native who sees a device used to convey such magic will immediately realize the situation and may warn the characters, rendering them susceptible to its effects both then and in the future. The use of avoidance rolls to negate or lessen the effects is left to the GM's discretion.

SCOPE

Æshebans distinguish carefully between the use of personal magic, targeted at a single specific recipient, and public magic, which can affect many persons or things. Both types may be used for good or evil. In some groups, public magic is unthinkable, but personal magic is commonplace.

Good personal effects are used to satisfy the needs of a friend or client in some way, usually very specifically. Evil personal effects include a variety of curses, diseases, and misfortunes.

Good public effects may be produced to protect houses and villages, the contents of a particular structure, or even groups of people (though that is far more difficult). Those who can create such effects are viewed with suspicion, whatever their history or intentions, for such power could be turned to evil. Malignant public effects have the same targets, but produce the opposite results.

SPIRITS

Magic of the supernatural type (as opposed to "natural" magic) is an integral part of Æsheban religion. The following beliefs, which are listed in no particular order, are held by nearly all the natives of the continent.

1. The essence of a person is called his or her soul. When a soul separates from the body due to death (or sleep, see #5 right), it is called a spirit.

2. The Creator of All is a spirit of the highest possible rank (usually called the Great Spirit). All other spirits are called Lesser Spirits.

3. The spirits exist in a supernatural world called the Land of the Dead, a place neither good nor evil.

4. The Land of Dreams lies between the natural and supernatural worlds. It is a borderland that may be visited by both the living and the dead, but neither can pass through to the other side.

5. In sleep, a man's soul wanders as a spirit. Many believe that a sleeper should not be awakened suddenly, or his spirit might not find its way back. The spirits of dreamers often appear in the dreams of others. (In other words, when you dream of someone, that person's spirit has actually wandered past.) When the spirit is that of a dead person, he or she is usually trying to convey a message, which is often obscure. Professional consultation is usually required to find the meaning.

6. When a person's body dies, his spirit is usually reabsorbed by the Great Spirit, who uses it again as and when He desires. When a spirit is reborn into another person, it is almost always into the body of a descendant. The spirit's memories of the past life (or lives) vanish at birth, but identification can be made in other ways. The newborn child slowly develops some of the physical traits and habits of the ancestor, and the resemblance can easily be noted by anyone old enough to remember the deceased.

If the spirit is reborn as a creature other than human, it usually comes to rest in a specific animal. All such spirits from a given tribe or nation (a matter more geographic than political) inhabit the same type of animal — leopards, oxen, a specific type of monkey, or whatever. It is therefore forbidden to harm creatures of that species without first getting permission from the senior ancestral spirits. Otherwise, the hunters might accidentally slay one of their own ancestors, thereby greatly displeasing all the spirits.

7. Some very ancient spirits have been given special duties by the Great Spirit, and now represent and care for various parts of the natural world. These custodians may have general areas of authority (such as clouds, rain, or forests) or very specific duties (such as protecting a particular mountain, spring, or clearing).

8. Sometimes, for any of several reasons, the Great Spirit does not reabsorb the spirit of a dying person, so it must wander. Some of these independent spirits are destined to be reborn; others are spirits of people whose bodies did not receive a proper burial (such as those lost in the hunt, or in a fire). Others are simply malignant entities that have chosen to remain for their own evil purposes. These latter spirits can usually be put to rest if the mortal remains are dug up and scattered.

9. Any wandering spirit may be seized by a certain type of witchcraft and made an agent to harm the living. This capture may be accomplished either before or after death. Such spirits are called ghosts.

Troubles of all sorts are typically blamed on spirits and ghosts. In the most remote and primitive of the native Æsheban tribes, literally every misfortune has such a cause — from a volcanic eruption to stubbing a toe. Extensive contact with other peoples (such as through maritime trade) tends to lessen the strength of this belief, and the more liberal members of such tribes may admit that some ills have more mundane causes. But even they blame certain events on spirits — notably those misfortunes "caused" by human envy, greed, and hatred.

Sacrifices to spirits are common throughout Æsheba. The spirits of nature are worshipped everywhere, and shrines of recognizable types are dedicated to them both individually and as a group. Shrines built to honor ancestors vary in style according to the dictates of the spirits involved, and usually reflect the customs and beliefs of the tribe that constructed them.

In play, the abilities of spirits are usually determined by the game system you are using. Undead beings are common to most systems, and typically have any of a variety of innate abilities. When you select game details for Æsheban spirits, you may either use statistics and abilities of similar monsters from your game, or design entirely new ones. The latter option is recommended, since only the most powerful and/or malevolent free-ranging Æsheban spirits have traits that correspond to those of the classic undead monsters — i.e. possession, draining life essence, curses, and so forth. A lesser Æsheban spirit is more likely to pester a victim with its presence, causing illness or perhaps bringing a bit of bad luck (manifested through penalties to surprise, initiative, and/or attack rolls). More subtle effects may also occur at the GM's discretion, including hostile reactions from strangers, minor "accidents," inability to get along with one or more species of animal, etc.

MATERIALS

Various objects and substances are common to Æsheban magical practices.

MEDICINES

Magical Æsheban medicines are created from plant and animal fluids (sap, venom, blood, gall, etc.). The range of possible effects is wide, for these concoctions can induce or cure nearly every physical or psychological disorder known to man. Dysentery and leprosy are typical diseases that medicines can cause; fits and utter madness are also possible.

Medicines can be crafted as powders (usually blown toward or upon a victim), as ointments and fluids (to be placed or rubbed upon a part of the victim's body), or as smokable substances (administered via the victim's pipe). The process of making medicines is not detailed here, but it involves obeying specific rules — including what materials to use for utensils, what not to eat before or after the procedure, rituals to repeat during the process, and so forth.

Different types of medicines relate to specific phenomena, including:

- Arts & crafts
- Gardening & other minor agriculture
- Hunting & fishing
- Mystical powers (including dream interpretation)
- Natural forces (prevent rain, delay sunset, etc.)
- Protection from magical practitioners (witch, sorcerer, or evil-eye man, pages 8 & 10)
- Reproduction
- Social activities
- Sickness (affliction or cure)

Most medicines will affect characters in the same manner as they do native Æshebans, unless contagious magic is somehow involved also (see page 5). Adverse conditions induced by medicines can usually be negated by methods familiar to the characters, unless the substances in question were used in conjunction with a magical ritual. If other Æsheban magic is involved, the afflicted characters must seek the proper treatment.

Characters may wish to purchase medicines that will cure afflictions or enhance their abilities. For example, one such concoction might increase a character's strength or speed by 5% or even 10% for a period of two hours, though the imbiber would require complete rest for at least twice that long after the effect wore off. Likewise, a medicine might increase one ability score at the expense of another for a short time. Choose any such minor effects desired, but be sure to balance the benefit with an appropriate penalty. Costs for such medicines should approximate those of magical potions in your campaign.

A rub-on medicine of invisibility can be made by a skilled practitioner, but its efficacy is limited to actions that are legal. (That is, it simply fails to work on anyone engaged in illegal acts.) Its most common use is in blood feuds, which are officially declared and recognized conflicts between families or tribes. Characters might find such a medicine useful for conducting a spy mission, but not for practicing thievery.

HORNS

Animal horns are a common part of Æsheban medicine magic. They are usually tools of the sorcerer (page 10), anti-witch (page 10), and anti-sorcerer (page 12). The most commonly used horns are those of the cow, goat, and antelope. Rhinoceros horns are rare and powerful items, as are those of the nargash (page 93), partially because obtaining either of those types is quite difficult and dangerous.

Though horns are common to the medicine rituals, they are never used in conjunction with other magical principles. This is because the horn remains connected to the original being (contagion), and magic performed with such a horn might affect the species from which it came (homeopathy).

To prepare the horn for use, the practitioner must hollow it out and fill it with a magical mixture consisting chiefly of medicines, but often including other objects as well. These special materials vary according to the purpose of the mixture, of course, but are usually nature-oriented. Commonly used materials include pebbles from magical hills or mountains, shells from sacred or revered areas, water from certain streams (or certain parts of such streams), etc.

A horn used for evil magic is usually placed in or around the victim's residence. It then has maximum effect on the victim, and also affects others nearby with similar but less extreme results. Generally, the longer one is in the proximity of the horn, the more extensive the effect.

If a spider takes up residence in a horn (10% chance), the device gains a bit more power because there is a spirit (albeit a miniscule one) dwelling within it. But should the resident insect be a reincarnated human soul (5% chance), the horn becomes very powerful, acquiring an actual personality. Sometimes such a horn will even talk! The spirit within a talking horn requires regular sacrifices, but it can advise the owner and enable him to perform extremely accurate divinations. Occasionally a more powerful spirit, such as a free-ranging malevolent entity or a spirit of nature, may decide to take up residence in a horn (1% chance). These horns may produce even more spectacular effects than those

inhabited by normal human spirits.

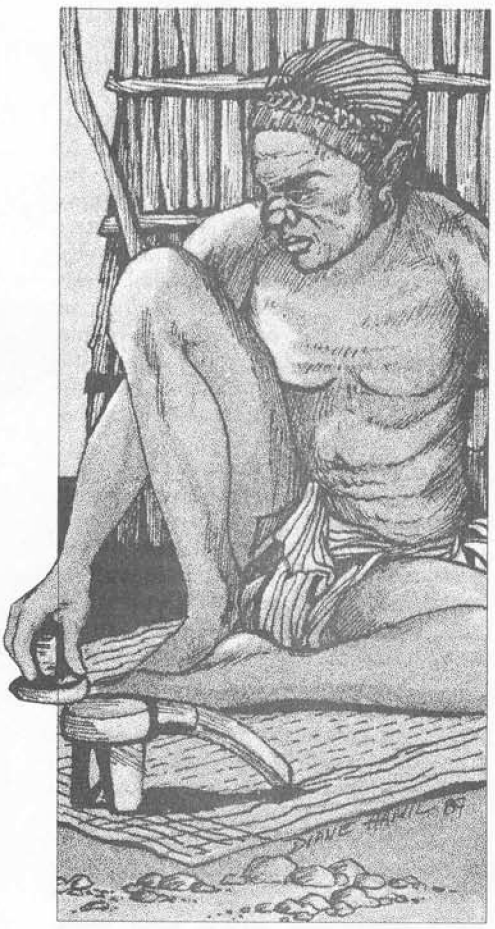
Any spirit who arrives to complicate the horn-sorcery is not under the control of the horn's creator. Since horns can combine spirit magic and sorcery, they are more than a bit risky to use.

Horn magic is quite complex. Characters wishing to learn it may do so, but even a character fully trained by a native practitioner will still have a 50% chance of failure with each attempt.

ORACLES

When Æshebans seek the guidance of spirits, they typically use one (sometimes more) of three common types of oracles: the rubbing-board, termites, or poison. In each case, a question is put to the oracle, and it responds with some yes-or-no indication.

The rubbing-board oracle is the most common type, and such devices may be found in many households. The rubbing board has two parts. The bottom piece is basically a tiny wooden stool with three legs of equal length and a longer, curved fourth leg upon which the user's foot rests to hold the device in place. The other part of the device is a duplicate of the top of the stool, with a simple handle attached. The user holds this second piece by the handle and rubs the top of the "stool" with it. The oracle's answer is "yes" if the top piece glides smoothly across the surface. A slight resistance indicates uncertainty; a sudden stop or great resistance means that the answer is negative.



To use termites as an oracle, the practitioner places a tempting piece of wood on or in a termite mound, and leaves it in place for up to half an hour. If the termites infest the wood, the oracle's answer is "yes;" if they ignore it, the answer is "no." Though this oracle is easier to use than the rubbing board, since it requires no devices, the fact that termites are living creatures introduces a variable. Certain types of wood, for example, will inevitably attract the insects, and termites are unlikely to feed at certain times of day. A person skilled with the use of termite oracles knows how to avoid such errors and achieve reasonable accuracy, but for the average Æsheban, termite oracles produce variable results.

The poison oracle involves the use of a professionally-crafted poison (medicine) composed of specific substances over which appropriate rituals have been performed. This poison is administered to some living creature, usually a small domestic fowl. Instead of phrasing the problem as a question, the practitioner makes a statement and asks the oracle to slay the fowl with the poison if that statement is true. The result is not considered valid, however, until it has been verified with another fowl. This second time, the oracle is asked to spare the bird if the statement is true. Both doses of poison must come from the same prepared batch. If the results are incompatible (i.e. both fowls die), the results are discarded, and the attempt is repeated. A second failure to resolve the issue indicates that the poison is unsuitable and another batch must be made. Since the poison oracle shows selectivity, slaying one fowl but sparing the other with the same poison, the final answer is considered absolutely valid.

BASIC ROLES

Each practitioner of Æsheban magic fits into one or more of six clearly defined categories, called "roles" hereafter. The role titles given below are game terms; the native practitioners who perform these functions may or may not use the same names. Though most of these people are capable of producing magical effects, some deal exclusively with certain types and applications.

Witch	Sorcerer	Detector
Anti-witch	Anti-sorcerer	Diviner

The functions and abilities associated with each role are described individually hereafter. In practice, however, two or more of these roles are often played simultaneously by the same person. One or two of these roles are missing from some Æsheban belief systems; see Systems of Magic (page 15) for possible combinations.

1. WITCH

A witch is a person, male or female, who uses supernatural magic. Witches usually appear to be perfectly normal humans, but their behavior is quite different from that of typical Æsheban natives. All witches have a black internal swelling called "witch-stuff," usually in the lower torso, that marks them, but this is only detectable by post-mortem examination.

The supernatural form of a witch is nearly identical to his or her normal form, except for a bright glowing light that emanates from all parts of the body. A witch in this form cannot truly fly, but can hover above the ground and travel more quickly than a running man. Witches instinctively know other witches on sight, whether they are in natural or supernatural form.

BEHAVIOR

Æsheban witches are almost always evil. In rare cases they may be amoral, but their motives are never good. They sometimes pose as normal people, and do not admit to their abilities except when dealing with customers. Even then they are secretive and cautious.

Witches have been known to help one another at times, and they never harm their own kind. Many are bound by a rigid social structure of their own in which the commoners are ruled by witches of royal descent — those who have famed and extremely evil witches perched in their family trees.

Witches are nocturnal, performing most of their evil magic by night. While they maintain their natural forms, they may dance, travel with night creatures, and perform abnormal acts (i.e. those not acceptable in a normal Æsheban community). Some tales attest that witches can cause the dead to leave their graves, after which the bodies are consumed either by hyenas (if decomposed) or by the witches themselves.

A witch may also assume supernatural form and go forth into the Land of Dreams to search for prey or to attend a gathering. Most of the activities of these witch-spirits are best left undescribed, in view of their disgusting and inhuman

habits. One example will suffice. If any witch can capture a spirit — ideally that of a slumbering innocent — and bring it to the meeting, then the assembled witches delight in tearing the victim's spirit to shreds and eating the parts. (If it is any comfort to the reader to imagine that spirits are bloodless, then by all means think so.) The victim's spirit reintegrates at some point and returns to the body upon awakening, but it invariably suffers some damage in the process. If the procedure is repeated, the victim may eventually die of spiritual damage.

If a character is thus attacked, apply progressively more severe penalties to some or all the the victim's ability scores to reflect the growing weakness caused by spiritual damage. The victim will remember horrible nightmares populated with ugly humanoids. Such attacks cannot be prevented by any magic the characters know; they must consult an anti-witch (page 10) for aid.

POWER

The witches' success with the supernatural is based directly on their rejection and inversion of the natural. The more unnatural they can become, the more power they will gain. The most powerful witches have unnaturally pale skins. They live with animals rather than humans, and their personal habits are vile at best. Cannibalism, incest, and other acts that directly oppose the standards of normal life are common to these individuals.

But even assuming diligence in these particulars, a witch must first have the innate ability to deal with the supernatural; otherwise only sorcery is possible, not witchcraft. This power is strictly an inherited trait, and it is linked to sex; the sons of a male witch have the ability, but his daughters do not. Similarly, a female witch can produce other female witches, but not male ones.

ABILITIES

Witches use supernatural powers augmented by more mundane tools such as medicines and spells. A witch can bewitch anyone except a more powerful witch, and can also kill or disable by magical means. Deaths caused by witchcraft are usually slow, since the magic often takes the form of an incurable sickness that gradually destroys the victim. Witches' spells have also been known to produce death, madness, deformities, and localized swellings.

A witch may force a victim to say whatever the witch desires. A common defensive spell prevents any bladed weapon, including both hand-held and thrown types, from harming the witch.

Some witches are also able to assume the forms of certain animals. Depending on the witch's location and education, the form may be that of a dog, goat, toad, snake, lizard, jackal, leopard, monkey, medium-sized wild cat, or any of various nocturnal creatures (bats, owls, and so forth). A person who dreams of such a creature may actually be facing a witch in the Land of Dreams.

TOOLS

In keeping with their utterly antisocial nature, witches usually own many unsavory items made of or from human body parts, especially bones (notably skulls and teeth). No other Æsheban magical practitioners use such items. Witches also use bad medicines (i.e. poisons) that are unique to witchcraft. Such concoctions are distinctively red or black — quite unlike the usual homogenous dappled mixture used in more common magic.

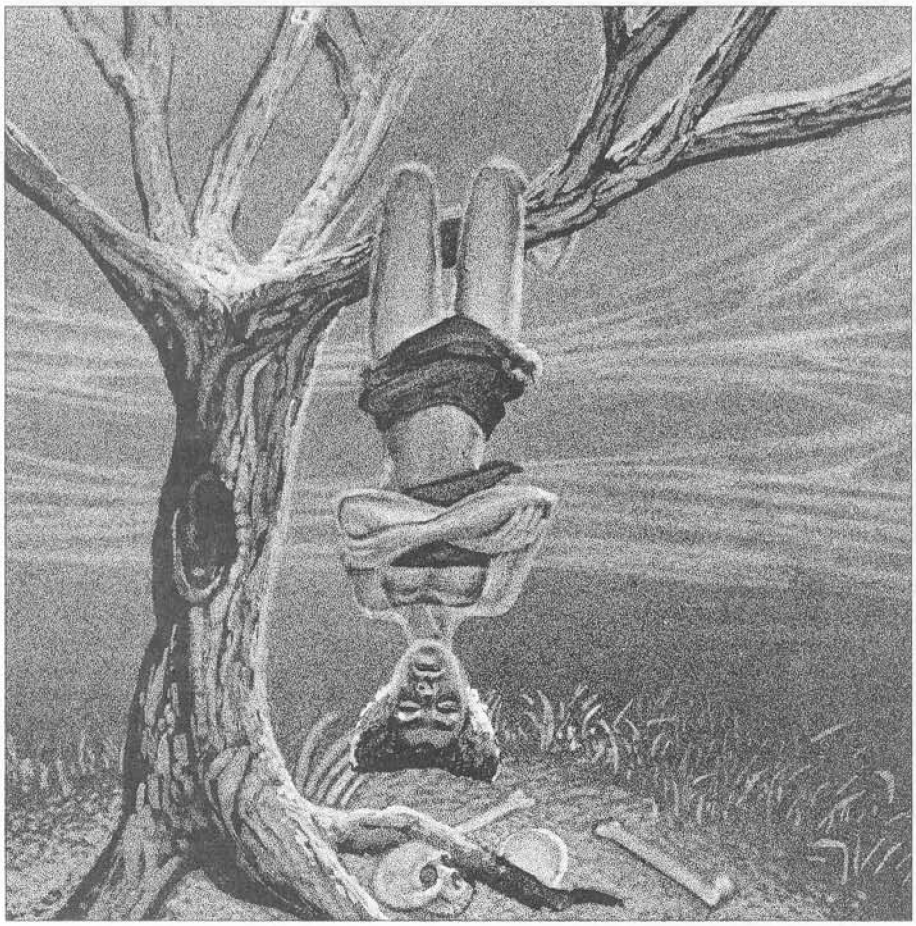
To utilize the magical principle of contagion, most witches keep several jars filled with parts of victims — hairs, scraps of clothing, etc. — about their residences for use in casting spells. Some magical devices, such as spear points, smoking mixtures, and so forth, deliver their effects when they enter a victim's body. Others need only be seen by the victim to trigger the magic.

A witch may specialize in supernatural magic, avoiding the use of objects that could lead to exposure. However, the witch usually maintains a secret cache of medicines and objects for use when absolutely necessary.

SERVANTS

Most witches have animal friends, but the more powerful ones have beasts that serve as actual allies and servants — familiars, to use medieval European terminology. The creatures most used by Æsheban witches are the so-called "night birds" of Æsheban magical society — owls, bats, and fireflies.

Some witches are able to acquire human servants as well. To do this, the witch kidnaps a person and replaces him or her with a false image. The image eventually sickens and dies — and is appropriately mourned and forgotten — while the real person is transformed into a zombie laborer, secretly serving the evil witch. An anti-witch (page 10) may be able to detect the duplicate as



such, but forcing the witch to return the victim is often a difficult process, requiring confrontation and/or negotiation.

EVIL-EYE MEN

A type of minor witch known throughout Æsheba is the evil-eye man. This person is able to focus supernaturally-powered ills on others by means of gaze alone. An evil-eye man may be evilly motivated, but not always; he is often merely a selfish person (certainly not good, but not overwhelmingly evil, either). He has the potential for witchcraft, but has not developed it for some reason. The phenomenon of an evil eye is not wholly under the control of the possessor, since its effects are produced by the gaze, not by any intent — nor can it be consciously stopped. Charms can be created to block the effects of an evil eye.

CHARACTERS AS "WITCHES"

Natives who have little or no contact with pale-skinned races may suspect such visitors of witchcraft, simply because of their appearance. If such a visitor creates magical effects, that suspicion will be verified. The offending character, and any of his allies, will probably be shunned and feared by the natives, who may hire an anti-witch (below) to deal with the situation. That person's first step will be to examine the character(s) (usually from a distance, but almost constantly) to find out more details. Meanwhile, word of this new "witch" will no doubt reach any real witches who live nearby. They will also investigate the situation, and when they discover that the character in question is not a witch, they may try to destroy this "fake."

2. ANTI-WITCH

This is a generic term (never used by Æshebans) that describes the function of this role. An anti-witch is a person who copes with witches and witchcraft, often on behalf of the victims. He or she must therefore be familiar with supernatural magic. An anti-witch may have the title of Witch Doctor, Witch-smeller, Witchfinder, or some other such name.

An anti-witch has none of the physical characteristics of a witch save one — that same odd internal swelling indicative of supernatural power. Anti-witches sometimes maintain public practices, especially in societies where witchcraft is relatively common. In other areas they may be reclusive. Anti-witches are always respected and often feared, since they can use power that is inexplicable to normal people.

Typical anti-witches can either remove the evil magic (as doctors), or deal with the witch involved, acting as the victim's agent. Anti-witches often perform elaborate rituals to commune with spirits, acquiring information about both the magic and the means by which it may be removed.

Anti-witch magic may fail for any of several reasons. For example, the power of a particular witch may be too great for the anti-witch to overcome. There are also some spells that can only be removed by original creator of the magic. In such cases, the anti-witch can act as an intermediary and negotiator between the victim and the perpetrator (or another more powerful witch). The victim must accompany the anti-witch throughout this process.

The anti-witch often uses a variety of devices, substances, and objects to attract the attention of spirits, or to appease them. Typical devices include magical whistles, bells, and horns, all of which are worn during ceremonies. Medicines, strange substances, and unusual objects are often kept at hand for use in spells.

CHARACTERS AS "ANTI-WITCHES"

Visiting characters are not often mistaken for anti-witches, but this may occur if dealings with spirits or other invisible beings are observed. Characters who travel and converse with invisible allies but show no signs of evil behavior may be viewed in this way. However, the mistake is usually rectified quickly, since the newcomers are unable to deal with true spirits.

3. SORCERER

A sorcerer is a person who deals with "natural" magic (sometimes called common magic), i.e. a type other than supernatural. A sorcerer is thus less powerful than a witch and not as feared, since the magic involved is somewhat comprehensible by comparison.

Sorcerers are far more common than witches, in a ratio of up to 100 to 1. This is primarily because some societies label as a sorcerer any individual who purchases or uses a magical device. "Real" practicing sorcerers who create magical items or effects are less common, but still far more prevalent than witches.

APPEARANCE

Sorcerers need not disguise themselves the way witches do, for they act and appear as perfectly normal people nearly all the time, except when they are actually casting spells. In many areas, however, sorcerers are shunned and feared, and are forced to live apart from their people. This ostracism produces changes in the sorcerer's appearance that are typical of hermits.

BEHAVIOR

An ordinary individual may become a sorcerer for any of various reasons. Some are simply evil and covetous of power; others may actually work for the common good of the community.

The sorcerer's behavior varies by individual motivation and circumstances. Those who are cast out of their communities predictably become bad-tempered and resentful, whatever their moral beliefs. An evil sorcerer may be able to hide his motivations and keep his trade a secret, though he will probably be less than cordial to visitors. But those who are openly accepted as tradesmen in the community may display exemplary behavior, and may hold other positions of responsibility as well.

ABILITIES

The benevolent sorcerer found in some groups creates magical effects for comparatively mundane purposes. Minor cures are common, as are charms for a multitude of purposes — love, protection from specific animals or effects, and so forth. Fertility is a popular topic, and standard magical procedures can enhance the chances for women to conceive children (or twins). Remedies for the effects produced by lesser spirits can be purchased with relative ease, since those are in the same general category as minor cures.

A powerful sorcerer may also have the rare talent of assuming another shape. If so, he can leave his normal body at home while his spirit materializes into some other form, such as that of a dangerous animal. This is risky, of course, since the death of the animal means the death of the sorcerer. If this occurs, the sorcerer's spirit is relegated to the wandering category — technically due to the nature of the death (as it is most unlikely that the animal body would be buried with human rites), but possibly reinforced by the sorcerer's evil. Also, any sorcerer capable of assuming another shape has some ability, albeit minor, with the supernatural.

TOOLS

All three magical principles (medicine, homeopathy, and contagion) are



used in the sorcerer's trade. Since sorcerers lack the witches' supernatural abilities, they use a variety of tools, by which they can be fairly easily identified. Medicines are the most common. An experienced Æsheban sorcerer is a skilled herbalist, able to find, identify, and use a wide selection of trees, shrubs, and grasses as ingredients for his concoctions. Medicines made from the blood and other bodily fluids of animals are also common, but when human or sacred fluids are used, the magic is black (evil). The nature of the mixtures in a sorcerer's pots varies by his motivation; good sorcerers rarely have bad medicines (black magic), while evil ones often have no other type.

Some sorcerers classify themselves according to their medicines: poison, powders, or herbs. Poison is medicine for an individual, and must be put on the food or skin to take effect. Powders, though technically poisonous, have other effects as well, and are directed at groups rather than individuals. When placed on the ground or sprinkled on a structure, they affect all who come near them. Finally, herbs can be brewed to make mixtures that cause illness or destroy the victim in ways other than simple poison does.

SERVANTS

Sorcerers often have animal agents, but are less limited in their choices than are witches, and may use almost any available creature. Unlike the witches' familiars, however, the sorcerers' agents are temporary employees. They serve under magical compulsion, usually only long enough to complete a specific task of short duration. If they are not freed thereafter, they may be able to break free by force and possibly harm the sorcerer. When their natural abilities are augmented by the sorcerer's power, such animals can penetrate the defense of common charms that successfully deter them in their normal state.

Powerful sorcerers can make doll-like images from clay and animate them. Evil sorcerers may even be able to animate the bodies of the dead, both animal and human, to act as their agents. The motive force in either case is a spirit, of course, although the sorcerer lacks the ability to communicate with it, and must be content with enslaving it.

CHARACTERS AS "SORCERERS"

Visiting characters who become accepted by the natives despite their differences, but who visibly use magical devices (as opposed to spells), may be labeled sorcerers. This should not produce any problems for them unless the magic is used for purposes which, to the natives, seem to be destructive or evil. If that occurs, an anti-sorcerer or anti-witch would probably be consulted.

4. ANTI-SORCERER

This generic role applies only in cultures where selfish or evil sorcerers are present. As with the term "anti-witch," the actual titles used may vary considerably. An anti-sorcerer is a person who creates magical effects that counter those produced by sorcerers. He negates the effect, but not the magic itself.

Anti-sorcerers are sometimes accepted community members, advertising their services openly. They are potentially full sorcerers, however, so they are often feared and sometimes respected. Being essentially the same as a sorcerer in all ways except motivation, an anti-sorcerer uses the same tools, but does not usually manipulate animals.

5. DETECTOR

As the role title implies, this person detects magic. He may be called a witch-smeller or witch doctor, but he cannot actually remove magic unless he performs another role as well.

A detector can usually find and identify the type of magic that was used to produce a particular effect, and can often name the person responsible, whether witch or sorcerer. Detection is usually a learned skill rather than an innate talent, and the process involves no tools or equipment.

If the creator of the magic is distant, the detector might only be able to identify the area from which it came. In that case he may offer the name of another consultant in that region.

The role of magic detector is an entirely benevolent one. Since the detector does not actually create magical effects, he is never shunned or feared in any way, and is often much in demand. This role is often combined with that of the diviner (right).

A detector is unnecessary when the source of magic is known. His services are usually quite inexpensive, and may be partially funded by the community in the form of regular donations.

CHARACTERS AS DETECTORS

Player characters may learn the skill of magic detection with proper instruction. Training takes several weeks, but is quite inexpensive.

6. DIVINER

Divination is the process of asking for supernatural guidance without intervention. Diviners communicate directly with the spirits and obtain information and advice from them. Æsheban spirits are common and active, and can directly influence the natural world through diviners. Since Æsheban magic and religion are thoroughly intermixed, this role is the most religiously oriented of all the magical practitioners. It is often combined with that of magic detector.

Diviners are common; even ordinary men can take up the role if they are guided by the spirits of their ancestors. The veracity of this guidance is what determines the success of a diviner, and thus his reputation. Those diviners who have been in business the longest are considered the most reliable, since they have repeatedly re-established the strength of their contact with the Land of the Dead.

A diviner uses one or more tools or procedures called oracles to receive information from the spirits. See page 8 for a discussion of the most commonly-used oracles.

CHARACTERS AS "DIVINERS"

Player characters who use divination magic of their own in Æsheba will have normal chances of success, as long as their queries do not involve Æsheban spirits or their activities. Any matters in which spirits are involved are shielded to some extent from character divinations due to the differences in the magic used. Some penalty (GM's discretion as to severity) should be applied to the chances of success in such cases. Penalties should vary according to the relative strength and/or number of spirits involved, but there should be some chance for error with any spirit, even one as small as a spider. Failure may produce no results or incorrect information, or the attempt may anger the spirits involved, leading to additional trouble for the characters.

Since the success of native diviners is so dependent upon Æsheban beliefs, player characters cannot acquire this skill without wholeheartedly adopting the Æsheban religion and customs. But even those who do so may be unable to produce results, since the spirits may not be interested in guiding them.

OTHER ROLES

Three role titles familiar to most readers but absent from the preceding

discussion are the Medicine Man, the Shaman, and the Chieftain.

"Medicine Man" is a generic term commonly used by outsiders who have little or no knowledge of Æsheban magic. To the local folk, it simply denotes anyone who uses medicines — substances to which magical power is attributed. Four of the six different roles described here commonly use such powders and liquids. Characters asking for the local medicine man may be led to a person of great ability and integrity, or just the reverse. However, the term does have a specific meaning when used within the context of a four-element magic system (page 17).

"Shaman" is another outsiders' term, usually applied to any native religious leader. It often implies a knowledge of medicines, but not always. The term does carry a connotation of the supernatural, so it is often applied to one whose magical dealings involve spirits, though it is general enough to apply to most practitioners. Since characters new to Æsheba will probably know nothing of the structured beliefs that enable natives to work magic, they may erroneously label any such practitioner as a shaman.

The Chieftain of a tribe or village is not involved in magic, by virtue of his position. The Chief may also be a magical practitioner of some sort, but if so, he clearly differentiates between that business and his political position as a head of state (however small the state may be). In the latter role, the Chief's job is to protect the group. Witchcraft and sorcery pertain to the community, not the state. The Chief may (and often does) appear in the course of an investigation of magical effects, but only to advise, not to conduct rituals.

REMOVING MAGIC

Any character who falls victim to Æsheban magic must cope with it by Æsheban means. "Normal" magical remedies — those familiar to and possibly known by player characters — will in most cases have little or no effect on ailments caused by native magic. For example, magical negation of poison is common to many fantasy role-playing games. But although the bad medicines of certain Æshebans are certainly poisonous, some are also more than that; they have been subjected to rituals and other specific procedures, and their effects can only be countered in certain ways. If the correct remedy is not found and applied, the poisonous medicine will eventually have its full desired effect, though this may be delayed to a small or great extent by applications of "normal" magic, at the Game Master's discretion.

Note that Æsheban spirits are an independent lot, not bound or ruled by supernatural elements (even deities) of the player characters' beliefs or magical systems. The best and only supernatural guidance offered to characters through such channels will be the names or titles of local individuals who are capable of dealing with the problem at hand.

If the characters do seek the proper local remedies for their ailments, the GM should try to be helpful, and be prepared to bend the rules a bit to ensure that they have some possibility of success. If the characters excitedly rush into a village and ask for a witch to cure their friend, the standard reaction of extreme hostility to that term should be tempered a bit, since the natives may realize the situation and discount the offensive wording due to the nature of the emergency.

Although the details and titles vary according to the magic system used, the following procedure for curing magical afflictions is generally followed throughout Æsheba.

1. Guidance
2. Identification
3. Removal

1. GUIDANCE

Afflicted characters must first consult a diviner. Through oracles and other means, the diviner can determine whether or not magic is actually involved, and if so, its approximate type: witchcraft (probably involving a spirit) or sorcery (probably involving medicines and/or spells). No other information is revealed. The fee for the divination can range from very little (pay for a half-hour's labor) to exorbitant (pay for a week's work), depending on the reputation and skill (and therefore veracity) of the diviner. The fee is set and paid before the divination is performed.

If the affliction is "normal" (i.e., not caused by magic at all), either stop here or skip to step 3 (page 14), which describes removal of natural afflictions by magical means. Otherwise continue with step 2 (Identification).

2. IDENTIFICATION

Which practitioner is needed for this step depends upon the results of the divination. If a spirit is involved, the victim should go to a detector capable of coping with witchcraft. Otherwise, a sorcerer or anti-sorcerer is the next step.

2a. SORCERY

A sorcerer or anti-sorcerer can usually identify with great accuracy the magical principle causing the affliction — medicine, homeopathy, and/or contagious magic. Whether or not the individual consulted will reveal this information depends on his skill and motivation. Nearly any such person (except those with evil intentions) can be induced to give aid, if the fee is high enough.

The practitioner may be able to identify the actual sorcerer responsible for the affliction if he can find (or is given) some material or device used in creating the magic. Horns are exceptionally revealing, since the methods of carving and filling them often leave traces which, to the experienced eye, can betray their users. Powders may contain substances known to be favored by certain sorcerers or plants that grow only in specific locales. In any event, these deductions are based on the knowledge and experience of the practitioner, and thus vary in amount and veracity according to those factors.

A skilled anti-sorcerer will perform these tasks for a fee from three to five times that charged by the diviner, again paid in advance of the services. A skilled sorcerer's fees are usually up to twice that. The fee for a consultant of limited experience may be no more than the diviner's — but you get what you pay for.

2b. WITCHCRAFT

A detector can, through rituals and magical tests, determine whether a witch is causing the problem. If so, the detector should be able to give the name and location of either that witch or an appropriate anti-witch (depending on the system in use) to handle the matter from here. If no witch is involved, a free-ranging spirit is probably responsible. In that case, its relative strength (a quantity the detector can learn) becomes the critical factor in effecting a cure. If the spirit is minor and not inherently evil, an anti-witch may be able to cope with it. The services of an actual witch may be required to handle a powerful or malevolent spirit, however. The detector might know of such a person, or might not; the witch recommended by the detector might be powerful enough to handle the problem, or might not. If the detector does not know of an appropriate practitioner, he will give some other clues (often hearsay and rumors) that may eventually lead to one. In any event, no guarantees are offered, and the risks are the victim's.

The fee for the detector's work varies considerably according to the situation,

but is always at least double that of the diviner. As a general guideline, the cost rises with the power of the entities involved, since the detector can be at risk in even limited dealings with them. The worst (and costliest) situation would be one involving a famed and extremely evil witch who has sent an utterly malevolent and powerful spirit. In practice, the detector usually questions the victim, estimates the most probable nature of the spirit, and names a fee, which must be paid in full before he begins. He may thereafter refund part of the fee if the spirit is less powerful than estimated, or may demand more in the reverse situation. Reputable detectors can usually be trusted to adjust the fee fairly; others rarely give refunds. In either case, any petitioner who refuses to pay the balance of a fee demanded may find that the detector has a better knowledge of witchcraft than he may have revealed . . . .

3. REMOVAL

Whether the motive force is witchcraft or sorcery, the actual cure may be performed by the same practitioner consulted in step 2 if that person has enough power and experience to do so. Otherwise, the victim may be referred to a more appropriate individual.

3a. SORCERY

The cure for afflictions caused by sorcerous magic varies by the power of the person who created them and by the effects themselves. The exact categorization of magical effects (minor or major) is left to the Game Master.

Minor afflictions, and all effects produced by sorcerers of relatively lesser experience and power, can usually be removed by the application of the proper counter-spells. This procedure is neither hazardous nor time-consuming, although it can be expensive if exotic materials are required. A good sorcerer or anti-sorcerer usually has a wide variety of substances in stock, and can often quickly produce a medicine or spell that will temporarily alleviate the condition. A permanent cure may require, for example, a root from the very tree whose sap was used to create the original magic. Acquiring such materials may require a journey; and the trek may be a dangerous one, not only for the usual reasons, but also because the searcher(s) must enter the domain of the sorcerer responsible. (The characters can save time and funds, and have some interesting adventures as well, if they offer to retrieve the necessary substance themselves — after the anti-sorcerer produces a temporary remedy for the affliction, of course.)

Some minor effects can be negated by as simple a means as burning down the house of the sorcerer who caused the problem. But although this is an acceptable recourse for natives, such deeds are likely to be viewed adversely if committed by outsiders, possibly resulting in prosecution by the other residents of the area, or even open hostilities. A character who has long dwelt among and been accepted by the natives might get away with it, provided that a sufficiently convincing explanation — preferably accompanied by proof and corroborating testimony from the consultants (diviner and anti-sorcerer) who conducted the investigation — could be offered to the local Chieftain.

If a horn has been used in producing the magic, the victim may be in luck, for as long as no spirit is involved, this type of sorcery is the easiest to remove. The horn's contents give immediate and concrete clues to the remedy, which even a relatively inexperienced anti-sorcerer can create, given such clear guidelines. If a spirit has inhabited the horn, however, the magic is major, and the procedure is far more complex (see below).

Certain major effects cannot be removed by the application of counter-spells. In such cases, the original sorcerer *must* be identified and then confronted by the victim. If given the choice of dying or removing the magic, even the most evil sorcerer will usually opt to survive. But he is entitled to payment for his services (no matter that he made them necessary in the first place) and will likely refuse to cooperate, even in the face of death, if not paid — and the procedure will probably be expensive.

If the victim pays to have the magic removed, the effect is dispelled. The sorcerer will probably harbor no ill feelings toward the victim. He may, for example, have been paid by a third party to create the effect, and may offer to betray that person for a higher fee — and perhaps use magic against him for yet more money. (Sorcerers are notoriously mercenary.) In any event, the former victim will have a powerful ally if he needs one (and can afford him).

If the victim slays the sorcerer instead, that also will dispel the magical affliction if the execution is properly done (see below). The victim has the legal right to do this, and will not be prosecuted by the community. However, the sorcerer's relatives are legally entitled to revenge, and may go to considerable lengths in this regard, especially if the sorcerer was supporting them in whole or in part through his success at his craft.

The method of execution is a critical factor in removing the magic. The victim must personally slay the sorcerer in a way that involves no magic, and without the aid of others. Similarly, the sorcerer must face the victim alone, and cannot be assisted even by his craft. The use of weapons introduces a variable. In game terms, if the victim uses a dagger-sized or smaller weapon during the battle, there is a 5% chance that the magic will not be removed. Hand-held weapons of larger size incur a 20% chance of failure, and any missile weapon, including a thrown spear, results in a 50% or even greater chance of failure. In this deadly duel, the more physical contact between the victim and the sorcerer, the greater the chance of removing the affliction.

If the victim kills the sorcerer with a weapon and fails to remove the magic, the GM may rule that the affliction cannot be cured, or may allow the victim to pursue some other course, such as an epic quest. Alternatively, the victim could try to contact the sorcerer's spirit via a witch or anti-witch and negotiate with it. The spirit might insist upon possessing the victim to effect a cure, causing additional problems. (See page 15.)

3b. WITCHCRAFT

Nearly every magical effect created by a witch has some relation to spirits and the supernatural. Some witchcraft causes a spirit to affect the victim directly; other types merely use spirits peripherally. The degree of the spirits' involvement determines the procedure used to remove the magic, and also the fee of the practitioner hired for that purpose. However, the fee for either creating or removing witch-magic is usually no more than twice that charged for anti-sorcery.

Whether the witchcraft afflicting the victim is caused by simple spells or more powerful entities, only a practitioner who is able to deal with the supernatural can remove it. This person may be an anti-witch (often called a witch doctor) or even another witch. In the latter case, the witch must be more powerful (i.e. more evil) than the one who created the magic, else there is no chance for success. This requirement obviously adds an element of risk. Also, an appropriate practitioner may be difficult to find, depending on the belief system in use. If such individuals are of less than benevolent motivation, the search for aid may lead to very murky and dangerous places, since characters must seek out the evil ones by following rumors (often false) and clues (often obscure). Even when such a person is found, his or her attitude is likely to be less than hospi-

table. But assuming that these barriers can be overcome, the business of dealing with the magic can begin.

Most witches and anti-witches have knowledge of simple sorcery. Sometimes such a practitioner may use medicines to effect a cure and not involve the supernatural at all. In this case, refer to Sorcery (3a, page 14) for the procedures used. The only difference is the possibility of supernatural retaliation should the witch decide to bring other magic into play, and thus the necessity for a different specialist; the procedures are essentially the same.

If the magic is not simple sorcery but still does not bring a spirit into contact with the victim, the witch or anti-witch may be able to counter the effect by combining other natural and supernatural means. A strong practitioner of either type might be able to counter the effect by spells alone, without bothering the spirits at all. Otherwise, he or she might contact the spirit(s) peripherally involved and, through sacrifices or bargains of some sort, convince them to remove the power of the magic, effectively negating it. If those spirits cannot be contacted, other spirits might be convinced by the same methods to intervene, producing similar results. The details of the sacrifices vary with both the power of the spirit (the primary factor) and the power of the witch who created the magic, i.e. the strength of that witch's control over (or relationship with) the spirit. See Horn Spirits right for suggestions. The spirits cannot, in any case, be turned against the witch controlling them.

As long as spirits are not brought into direct contact with the victim, another acceptable procedure is to confront the perpetrator directly. The "rules of engagement" are similar to those governing confrontations with sorcerers (page 14); the victim must pay or single-handedly slay the witch responsible for the trouble. The only difference is that the witch may use supernatural means to win the fight. The victim's chances are greatly reduced thereby, unless an ambush is laid or some other tactical advantage can be obtained.

A victim directly affected by a spirit has no recourse as simple as counter-spells or revenge. The spirit involved must be found and satisfactorily appeased, or no cure is possible. Such a spirit may be free-willed, or may be under the control of (or working in cooperation with) a witch.

If the spirit involved in the magic is of the free-ranging variety, it may agree to remove the affliction if an appropriate sacrifice is offered (see Horn Spirits, right, for suggestions). The witch or anti-witch aiding the victim can deal directly with the spirit, and can acquire the necessary information by using strange medicines, trance states, and other weird devices and rituals. The spirit may, for example, be induced to speak aloud through the mouth of the consultant, the victim, or a nearby skull. Conversely, it may not speak at all, but deal with the consultant through private mental communication.

The nature of the required sacrifice varies widely. Horn spirits will always accept a sacrifice (see below), but other spirits may refuse to be bribed in this manner. If this occurs, additional steps must be taken.

Spirits that will not cooperate by naming a sacrifice must instead be forced to possess the victim. The victim must consent, and the appropriate rituals must be completed. The procedure is typically possible only at a certain time and place, perhaps at a certain unholy shrine by the light of the full moon. Once the spirit possesses the victim, it becomes trapped in that body for a time, and the agent gains the advantage. A lesser spirit can be forced out into a designated vessel — an animal held at ready, or even (for very minor spirits) a simple earthenware pot. Once forcibly removed from the victim, the spirit breaks down and reveals its price (sacrifice), after which the usual procedure is followed. If not placated properly, however, the spirit can break free.

The most complicated situation occurs when the spirit has enough power to resist this forcible extrusion. If the spirit simply cannot be forced to leave the victim, and refuses to do so voluntarily at any cost, the practitioner must negotiate with it. In the usual compromise reached in such cases, the spirit agrees to stop causing whatever affliction is involved, but insists on maintaining residence. The victim must agree to tolerate this cohabitation by the spirit, and to make regular sacrifices to it. The victim and spirit may actually become friends and allies after a time, in which case the spirit provides occasional minor services — divinations, dream interpretation, a bit of good luck now and then, and so forth.

HORN SPIRITS

Whenever horn magic is involved in an ailment, a sorcerer or anti-sorcerer should be consulted first. If the horn is found to contain a resident spirit, only a skilled anti-witch who knows the appropriate ceremony can correct the problem. The procedure for placating a horn spirit is complex, and involves medicines, dances, and other rituals that require a large number of people. The anti-witch's tribe is usually gathered for the purpose. (Witches are rarely consulted in such cases, for they have trouble gaining the cooperation of normal people due to their anti-social behavior.) The victim undergoes a period of training beforehand, for he must repeat certain phrases and sing along at the appropriate times during the ritual.

If the horn spirit is a typical and minor sort, it is expunged by the ceremony, and can be ignored thereafter. If it can talk, the ceremony causes it to do so, forcing it to reveal its price — that is, what sacrifice it demands before it will release its hold on the victim. Such a sacrifice most commonly involves the death of a small or medium-sized animal of a specified type. However, the spirit may instead require the victim to perform some charitable act, such as making a donation to a needy family or tribe. In extreme cases, an item or being required for the sacrifice may be remote, as may the specified location of the sacrificial act. For example, a greater spirit might require that some epic adventure be undertaken to find a famous person (such as a witch, sorcerer, or chieftain), animal (an albino leopard, a five-legged giraffe, etc.), or object (the topmost rock on a holy mountain, a magical cloak of power, solidified water, etc.) and destroy it in a specified place (a volcano, a vast whirlpool, a lake in a desert, etc.).

When the named sacrifice has been made, the spirit is released, leaving the horn inanimate once again. To complete the remedy, the horn is burned, buried, or immersed in running water — whichever the anti-witch feels is most appropriate. Alternately, the anti-witch may choose to turn the spirit against the original creator of the horn magic, if he has the power and knowledge to do so (rare but not completely unknown).

Fees for dealing with horn spirits range from ten to one hundred times those of more mundane anti-sorcery treatments.

SYSTEMS OF MAGIC

Different groups of Æshebans have different religious beliefs. Since magic and religion are usually intermixed, the roles detailed thus far are represented in different combinations. These possible combinations, or systems, vary by the number of roles involved from only one to four or more.

The various magical systems described here break the practice of magic down into basic elements, according to the beliefs of the natives involved. A particular type of magical practitioner, possibly playing two or more of the basic

roles, is usually associated with each element. The reference table (below) summarizes the roles represented in each system and how they are combined in practice.

For your game, choose one system for each nation of native Æshebans. The people of the continent can be roughly organized into tribes and nations, although these are geographic rather than political groupings. An area of a single terrain type is often the home of one to four nations, and each nation usually consists of one to six tribes. Suggested systems for some nations detailed in this book are given with the descriptions of particular peoples, but you may choose any system that does not conflict with the information presented.

Construct variations in minor practices and beliefs for each tribe of a nation, but be sure that despite such differences, the essential system remains intact. Variations may include the specific tools, rituals, and materials used, but these should not significantly alter the basic roles involved.

Different nations, even those living in widely separated locations, may use the same basic system as long as they occupy similar types of terrain. Once the players become conversant with the systems in use and their relation to geography, they should be able to predict with reasonable accuracy the system of magic (and also of religion) that a newly contacted group is using.

ONE-ELEMENT SYSTEM[1]

This system is typical of natives who live in remote areas and have little or no contact with outsiders (non-Æshebans). It involves only three roles — witch, detector, and diviner — all played by the same person, called the witch. The core belief is that all magic is evil (i.e. black magic) and supernatural, and the only users of magic are witches. Compared to the other systems in use on the continent, this is a conservative and fundamentalist viewpoint. In intertribal contacts with those who believe in a more complex magical system, these folk usually think that others are accepting evil into their society by falling victim to liberalism and flawed thinking.

In the one-element system, some distinction is often made between semi-evil and totally evil witches. Both have supernatural powers, but the worst are totally anti-social and inhuman; others are merely on the road to that evil goal, and might (in some unknown way) be convinced to return to the path of good. These are the witches who confine their activities to "lesser" magic — notably divination and magic detection — and who are not absolutely known to cast spells, though they are often suspected of doing so.

Nearly anyone who believes in a one-element system can be convinced to reveal details about "witches" living nearby, but most such information is false. Accusations of witchcraft are not freely bandied about in the community, for it is a serious charge and, if proved false, can severely affect the accuser. But most people have grudges against others, usually based on trivial matters. Antipathy fueled by imagination (and occasional bad luck) can eventually produce informal suspicions of witchcraft, though such are only voiced in strict privacy unless proof can be obtained.

Thus, finding a real witch in a one-element system can be a difficult task. Questions asked about witches in public will be met with denial or condemnation of their existence. If the characters are suspected of associating with witches, they will be shunned, and possibly attacked as witches themselves.

ÆSHEBAN MAGIC SYSTEMS

Functions	Sources	Motivations
C Creation	N natural	A any
D Detection	S supernatural	E evil
R Removal		G good

Roles	Functions	Sources	Motivations
One element			
Witch/Detector/Diviner	C, D, R	N, S	E (A)
Two elements			
2a. Natural Magic			
Sorcerer	C,R	N	E (A)
Detector/Diviner	D,R	N	G (A)
2b. Supernatural Magic			
Witch	C	N,S	E
Anti-witch/Detector/Diviner	D,R	N,S	G (A)
Three elements			
3a. Evil dominant			
Witch	C,R	S (N,S)	E
Sorcerer	C,R	N	E (A)
Anti-sorcerer/Detector/Diviner	D,R	N	G (A)
3b. Good dominant			
Witch	C,R	N,S	E
Anti-witch/Sorcerer	C,R	N,S	A (G)
Detector/Diviner	D,R	N	G
Four elements			
Black Magic			
Witch	C	S	E
Sorcerer	C	N	E (A)
White Magic			
Anti-witch/Detector	D,R	S	G
Anti-sorcerer/Diviner	D,R	N	G

*A letter in parentheses indicates possible but uncommon motivations or sources; the preceding letter is usually prevalent.

TWO-ELEMENT SYSTEMS[2]

Two-element systems are found in two completely different variations. They differ in one basic belief: whether or not magic is of supernatural origin.

These belief systems are relatively rare. Though they are not as ultraconservative as the one-element system, all magic is kept in the hands of professionals. Most groups using a two-element system eventually evolve into accepting the use of magic (especially tools for minor divinations) by common folk. Some also come to accept a dualism of natural and supernatural magic (a major change of philosophy).

2a. NATURAL MAGIC

This system differentiates between the spirit world of religious belief and

1. Used by the Ukaguru tribe of Tanzania.
2. Used by the Nandi tribe of Kenya.

the mundane practices of man. The core belief is that all magic is produced by skilled craftsmen and is in no way supernatural. All magic is seen as potentially evil, though it may be used with good intentions. Spirits who involve themselves in the natural world are not subject to mere magic. No one deals with spirits in any way, except to accede to their wishes. They certainly cannot be coerced.

Between them, the two elements cover three basic roles: sorcerer, diviner, and detector. The latter two roles are usually handled by one individual, often known as a ritualist, religious leader, or some variation on the latter term. However, the sorcerer is almost always called a witch. This can lead to some confusion in dealings with the natives, since all other belief systems hold that witches use supernatural magic.

Such witch-sorcerers use their magic for selfish purposes, typically revenge or greed. They may also be motivated by sheer malevolence, though this is not common. These practitioners are not as feared as are witches in other systems, since their powers are limited and they are usually not quite as despicably evil. They are somewhat difficult to locate, but in this system, a magical effect can only be removed by the witch-sorcerer who created it, and these individuals must therefore be accessible to the community.

The detector/diviner combines good and evil powers for the benefit of the community. He is respected but feared, since he is a potential witch-sorcerer. As a ritualist and diviner, this person is responsible for a variety of things necessary to the group — bringing natural blessings (such as fertility and rain) and relaying the wishes of spirits. As a detector of magic, he can find traces of witchcraft (sorcery) when it exists, though he cannot negate the effects.

2b. Supernatural Magic

This system introduces the concept that magic can be evil (black) or good (white). It thus has users of both types — the witch and the witch doctor — who are in direct opposition. The witch plays that role alone; the witch doctor performs the functions of anti-witch, detector, and diviner. The witch may occasionally be called a sorcerer, especially when he uses medicines commonly, but even that magic is based on the supernatural.

Witches are utterly evil, and are believed to be the primary cause of all the world's ills. They conform to the classic archetype given in the role description — anti-social in every respect — isolated, hated, and feared. Their utterly malignant acts and motivations are inexplicable and contrary to nature. Luckily, their magic can almost always be negated by their good counterparts, so their services are almost never sought by normal people. Witches do, however, occasionally visit villages in the guise of travelers, temporarily adopting correct social behavior so they can obtain supplies or information.

The witch doctor in a two-element system is usually a respected member of the community, but often has some other function as well. Since he has magical abilities, however, he is not a religious leader, for he might be corrupted by evil.

Three-element System[1]

This is the logical evolution of either two-element system. Herein, sorcerers and witches are distinctly different in their methods. The two most common three-element systems in Æsheba differ by their overall balance toward good or evil. The title of sorcerer also denotes something different in each of the two systems — an evil magician in the first, but a good or neutral person in the second.

3a. Evil Dominant

This is the less common three-element system, and is typically limited to matriarchal societies. Witches and sorcerers are evil and archetypical of their role descriptions. The witch, having great power, is usually female; the sorcerer is usually male, and has less power. This reflects the female dominance in politics with a similar dominance in magic. The lone opponent of both the witch and the sorcerer functions as diviner, detector, and anti-sorcerer. The role of anti-witch is absent, for only a witch can remove witchcraft.

In this system, witches are reclusive and utterly evil. Sorcerers are somewhat more available (though they are still avoided and often despised), and may be either evil or selfish with evil tendencies. Their opponent is often called a witch doctor (though he is incapable of removing witchcraft), and is usually good. However, the witch doctor is often the object of fear and suspicion, for his sorcerous skills might be used for evil as well.

3b. Good Dominant

In the second and most common three-element system, the witch has the only evil role, but is totally dedicated to it in classic fashion. As in a two-element supernatural system (2b, left), witches are very hard to find. They may be either male or female.

The witch is opposed by an anti-witch (again either male or female), who can recognize and negate most forms of witchcraft. The anti-witch is also a sorcerer, however, and is generally known by that title. Though usually good, a sorcerer may occasionally work for selfish ends. Since his forte is anti-witchcraft, the sorcerous magic he produces is usually of minor power, often confined to medicines. Due to the power of this practitioner, he is nearly as hard to find as a witch.

The third element combines the roles of diviner and detector. This person is usually male and of respectable years, and may have a religious title of some sort. He tends to most of the magical needs of the community, but plays only an advisory role in the business of sorcery and witchcraft. He may (like the anti-witch) have minor powers of sorcery, though only of a defensive sort. This individual often has a public practice in a village, and may be a known and respected community leader.

Four-element System[2]

The four-element system is in many ways much simpler than the two and three-element types. A clear distinction is made between natural and supernatural magic, and each variety is neatly divided into factions for good (white magic) and evil (black magic). All six roles are strongly represented.

In the realm of natural magic, the sorcerer is the evil element, countered by a good anti-sorcerer who also takes the role of diviner. With respect to supernatural magic, the witch is of course the evil part, opposed by an anti-witch who doubles as a detector.

Although both sexes are represented in all roles when the Æsheban peoples are examined as a whole, there is fairly rigid stereotyping on a local basis. This is founded on the social system used. In a matriarchal society, for example, the roles of witch and anti-sorcerer are

1. Used by the Amba tribe of Uganda, the Azande of Sudan, the Gusii of Kenya, & the Lugbara of Uganda.
2. Used by the Bugisu of Uganda, the Zulu, & Traditional.

almost exclusively held by females, while the sorcerer and anti-witch are exclusively male. In a patriarchal society, the reverse is true.

None of the evil roles are ever portrayed openly; only those on the good side practice their crafts publicly.

BLACK MAGIC

Black magicians, the witch and sorcerer, are evil and secretive. Their services may sometimes be purchased, but first they must be found, and this can be a formidable task. In general, sorcerers are more easily found than are witches.

The abilities of the witch are exclusively supernatural and his activites are closely involved with the spirit world (Land of the Dead). No apparatus is used to create witch-magic, and proof of witchcraft is therefore quite difficult. The only foolproof identifier is the presence of "witch-stuff" (an internal swelling; see page 8) in the lower body. However, this is only detectable by post-mortem examination.

The witch usually works at night, going forth into the Land of Dreams to find and destroy spirit victims, leaving his or her physical body intact and apparently asleep. For that reason, this practitioner is often called a "night-witch."

Witches inherit their powers, which appear automatically (as an inborn trait) or through education in their youth. They do not freely choose to be evil, but are rather innately so. Their practices are so weirdly inhuman, utterly supernatural, and inexplicable that they are not normally blamed for bad luck or other "natural" ills.

The powers and traits of sorcerers (also called wizards or day-witches) are the reverse of those displayed by witches in all respects except for their common evil. A sorcerer must learn the craft, and must voluntarily choose the path of evil over good. Sorcerers deal exclusively with natural magic, but utilize all three principles (medicine, homeopathy, and contagion) in the process. Their motives are explicable, again in contrast to those of witches; sorcerers cast spells because of jealousy, anger, spite, and/or revenge — either theirs or their clients'. All accidents, misfortunes, and the like are blamed on the actions of sorcerers.

WHITE MAGIC

In direct contrast to the practitioners of black magic, white magicians are both good and readily available. They are likely to maintain well-known businesses in villages, and can easily be found and hired.

To counteract the supernatural attacks of witches, a witch doctor (sometimes called a witch-smeller) is available in most villages. In the role of anti-witch, this person can find out what spirits and/or witches are involved in a magical ailment and take appropriate countermeasures. The witch doctor converses with the spirits directly, and may use medicines to enhance the process. Using information gained thereby, the witch doctor can usually either cure the problem entirely or act as intermediary and negotiator on behalf of the victim. Witch doctors usually have excellent connections in the supernatural realm, plus some small ability to detect natural magic so that they can sort out those traces (if any) from their specialty.

A witch doctor often sells magical devices that affect spirits. Although spirits are not seen as the cause of the world's woes, they are somewhat capricious and liable to interfere with the natural world. Certain protective charms and other items can shield people from their actions. But since ancestral spirits are responsible for the survival of the group, the witch doctor obtains their cooperation in crafting magical devices that improve fertility. The spirits are encouraged to interfere in such matters, hopefully for the good of the community.

The medicine man performs the roles of anti-sorcerer and diviner. He specializes in negating natural magic, and has no power over the supernatural. Highly skilled with medicines, this person can produce an antidote for nearly any spell or effect that does not involve spirits.

Black medicines, here defined as those which counter the strong spells of sorcerers, can be made to order, and most of the components are kept at hand. White medicines are the biggest business, however, for they are made and sold openly to soothe ills and purify homes and items. The medicine man also creates magical devices usable by the layman, such as charms (for love, protection, etc.) and minor cures. The secrets of such devices can also be purchased, and it is by this means that many members of the community are typically able to create their own magical medicines and devices, though only of the most minor sort.

To round out his expertise, the medicine man usually has the ability to perform accurate divinations, using oracles and other tools to translate messages from spirits. Since he has no power over his sources, the medicine man must rely on strict rituals and strong medicines to enhance the veracity of the information.

IDENTIFYING SYSTEMS

Remember that the Æsheban system of magic arises from a culture and a belief system, not the other way around. One cannot simply ask a native what system is used, with reference either to religion or magic; not only is this impolite, but it can often be dangerous. To acquire such information requires tact, observation, and deduction.

Suppose that characters are seeking a person who can create, detect, and/or remove a magical effect that they have seen, or perhaps one of which they themselves have become victims. If they openly ask for a magical practitioner by one of the six basic role titles, the natives' reaction varies by the motivation of the local practitioner who uses that title. If that person is essentially good (G), then the natives should offer open guidance in a friendly manner. If the role may have any motivation (A), some suspicion will be evidenced, and the characters may be guided, ignored, or even shunned. Should the role be an evil one (E), however, the reaction will invariably be negative. At best, none of the natives will acknowledge the existence of such a practitioner; at worst, the characters may be feared, suspected of similar activities, and/or even attacked.

Be lenient with the characters the first time they make such a mistake. It will take time for them to learn the native ways.

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THE GREEK COLONIES

Twice in the past few centuries, hardy settlers from a distant land much like ancient Greece have stumbled upon the continent of Æsheba and colonized the north coast. These colonists are called Greeks in this accessory for convenience, though you need not retain that appellation.

HISTORICAL NOTES

The first Greek colony, established on Æsheban soil more than three hundred years ago, was destroyed. The four city-states now on the north coast have existed for only a quarter century.

THE FIRST COLONY

Three hundred twenty-five years ago, a Greek outlaw named Iklonos, sentenced to death for crimes against the state, escaped custody and set sail for the fabled continent of Æsheba with eight hundred of his followers. After months at sea, they finally found the mysterious land they sought. They settled at the base of the Muban Peninsula, and called their new home "Ios."

To call these newcomers "colonists" is charitable in the extreme, for most were rapacious, free-wheeling rogues and pirates. They were obsessed with the desire to become sackers of cities, like their ancestors before them. They were outcasts from Greek society who believed in neither government nor gods. These men and women sought to establish their own empire in this remote wilderness.

The settlers found a fertile coastline populated by unorganized tribes of dark-skinned natives — proud nomadic peoples who called themselves the Nimbassa and the Khufiri. The tribesmen were armed with primitive flint-tipped spears, and though they fought like demons, they were defeated and pushed southward. Iklonos demanded and got tribute in the form of food and slaves from the conquered tribes, and the chiefs were forced to swear fealty to the Greek leader to protect themselves from annihilation. The Ægyptians, a tribe of light-skinned people living on the northeastern plain, avoided the newcomers and were left in peace.

Iklonos renamed the continent "Æsheba." After the initial bloodshed of the invasion, the natives and the Greeks remained at peace for a generation. The native slaves were put to work planting crops in the hills around Ios, for the Greek warriors had no interest in agriculture. But as relations stabilized and the Greeks began to carve their own niche in this new land, the natives realized that they were not really subjugated peoples. The distances between Ios and the native settlements were so vast, and the Greek power base was so thinly stretched that it was impossible for Iklonos to keep the natives under control. Therefore, the Nimbassa and Khufiri became autonomous once again. Not only did both native tribes refuse to pay any further tribute, but the warlike Khufiri staged a daring raid on the slave pens of Ios and rescued many of their people. Afterwards, there were insufficient slaves left to work the fields, and the Greek colony faced starvation.

The resurgence of tribal power and influence was a dire enough catastrophe that Iklonos, self-proclaimed king of Æsheba, decided to seek the advice of an oracle. The interpreter of the oracle informed the king that Greek land would soon groan under the weight of black horses. This was strange, for there were no horses in Æsheba.

Iklonos took this to mean that the tribes had horses and were gathering for a major offensive that would sweep his empire into the sea. In a fit of rage, he led his warriors on a rampage to Lake Lakomba, a site sacred to the Nimbassa and Khufiri, and destroyed the small shrine of Kodulu, the native horse-god.

Satisfied that he had struck a telling blow, Iklonos returned to Ios in triumph, ignoring the warnings of his own priests about the dire consequences of desecrating native shrines in a land where the people drew powerful magic from unknown sources. The following year brought no native attacks, but the colony was plagued by various maritime disasters. Most of the ships that had brought the Greeks to Æsheba were lost at sea. Bafwana Bay, once teeming with edible fish, became barren of life. Massive storms relentlessly pounded the coast, destroying all the crops and washing away the fertile soil.

Iklonos, never a man of letters, had paid little heed to the myths of his own land. One such legend explained that the Greek gods had once fled from their homeland and sought refuge in an island paradise far across the sea to recover from a battle with giants. It was to Æsheba that the gods had come, and their cults were still active among the natives. As the Ægyptians worshipped Zeus in his guise of Ammon the ram, so the Khufiri worshipped Poseidon as Kodulu the horse. Iklonos never understood that Kodulu and Poseidon were one and the same, and that he had in fact profaned Poseidon's temple on the shores of Lake Lakomba.

The seers and holy men of the Greek colony finally prevailed upon Iklonos to make his peace with Poseidon for whatever sins he had committed to earn the sea god's wrath. The king went to the temple of Poseidon in Ios, carrying a large fish for sacrifice. But instead of humbly asking forgiveness, he vented his anger at the statue of Poseidon. Calling the god a spiteful, ungrateful weakling, he flung the sacrifice in the statue's face and turned to stalk out of the temple.

Just at that moment, the ground began to tremble. Buildings swayed and crumbled as the violence of the earthquake increased. The waters of the harbor boiled up, pounding the few remaining ships moored at the docks into driftwood.

Trying to keep his footing on the swaying portico of the temple, Iklonos caught a brief movement out of the corner of his eye. Some survivors of that awful day said it was but the rocking of the earth that caused Poseidon's statute to skid through the door of the temple, but the truly devout swore that the god inhabited his stony likeness and purposefully closed on the blasphemer. Reeling back in horror before the onrushing statue, Iklonos lost his footing and fell supine on the marble steps of the temple. He had time for one terrified scream before he was crushed. Those who rushed to lift the stone image from their lord's lifeless body were at a loss to explain how a mackerel could have been jammed so forcefully into Iklonos's mouth and nostrils.

The earthquake reduced Ios to rubble, then subsided. Survivors wandered dazedly through the wreckage, wondering what to do next. But Posei-

don was not finished with the town.

On a hill overlooking the harbor sat a young man named Nakadocious, a one-time cabin boy who had come to Æsheba as an unwilling passenger when Iklonos hijacked the ship on which he worked. This young scout saw a towering wall of water about 16 km (10 miles) offshore, speeding toward Ios with incredible velocity. Fully 60 m (200') high and black as a moonless night, the tidal wave rushed implacably toward Ios, with the harpies Celeno, Aello, and Ocypete riding the crest. Nakadocious ran to warn the survivors.

Only seventy-eight people escaped, including the scout. Those who tarried to collect their belongings were destroyed, swept away in a watery maelstrom of death. Some of those who survived that fateful day insisted that they had seen the likenesses of black stallions, spume flying from their flared nostrils, within the wave just before it crashed over Ios, obliterating any sign of man's existence there. Thus did Poseidon have vengence on Iklonos for his blasphemy, and the oracle proved correct, for Greek land did groan under the weight of black horses.

The small group of survivors moved southward, eventually joining forces with a native tribe called the Mokundi and settling on the east coast at what is now New Grecia.

RECOLONIZATION

Word of the obiteration of Ios eventually filtered back to the Greek homeland. None doubted that Iklonos had gotten what he deserved, but few relished the thought of establishing another colony, for Poseidon's wrath might not be fully spent. More than two centuries passed before the next attempt at colonization. Iklonos passed into legend, but the wealth of Æsheba hung like forbidden fruit on an unattainable tree.

The mysterious land was never completely forgotten, however. Nearly three hundred years later, two Greek warriors, Calter and Peisandros, were defeated in their attempt to capture the rich city of Tiryns. As punishment, they were exiled and forbidden to return to the homeland or set foot in any Grecian colony. The king of Tiryns generously allowed them to sail with whatever ships, goods, and supporters they had, for it would make little difference — they would no doubt perish somewhere in the open sea. With so few options available, the pair of would-be kings unhesitatingly set sail for the fabled land of Æsheba. Three thousand five hundred of their followers accompanied them on sixty well-provisioned ships.

Storms, disease, and malnutrition during the crossing cost the fleet five ships and more than five hundred people. But after two months at sea, the remaining fifty-five ships finally reached the north coast of Æsheba.

After briefly exploring the Kambian Marsh, the flotilla coasted into Bafwana Bay. They were surprised to find such a fine site totally devoid of settlement, and greedily claimed it for their own. They named their new city Ios, in honor of the original colony, but they had no idea that they were rebuilding on the selfsame site.

During the past three centuries, the Khufiri, still fierce nomadic warriors, had moved to the Eyasi Hills. The Nimbassa tribes still inhabited the Ngati Plain south of Ios, but theirs had become a more peaceful, agrarian society. Both nations had studiously had avoided the site of Ios since the disaster, for they considered it a place cursed by the gods. The new Greek settlers occasionally saw small bands of warriors watching them from a distance, but the natives could never be coaxed to come within earshot. In the villages, the elders heard the reports of new white-skinned settlers with a mixture of dread and bemusement. Surely the gods would strike down anyone who dared to set foot on that accursed spot.

Some of the colonists also feared that Poseidon was still angry, for sporadic earth tremors shook the coast. Calter had had the foresight to bring several priests with him, and he told them to use whatever means were necessary to divine what would placate Poseidon. After many nights of praying, sacrificing, and sleeping where the tides could wash over them, the priests reported that if Calter and Peisandros would each willingly sacrifice a body part, the god would be appeased.

The pair readily agreed. A huge ceremony was planned, and messengers were sent to invite the native tribes to attend. The Nimbassa and Khufiri sent delegations, for they were interested in seeing how these pale-skinned people would deal with the dictates of a god.

The day of reckoning dawned, and the two kings strode to the open hearth in the center of town. Peisandros, declaring that he was symbolically giving of his strength in honor of Poiseidon, cut a small lock of hair from his head and cast it on the fire. Calter, however, gave a more convincing show of piety. He readily took the ceremonial dagger from the priest, cut two fingers from his left hand, and flung them into the fire. The assembled Greeks and natives murmured their approval.

The earth tremors stopped, and the colonists began to build new lives. But the two kings were no longer equal in the eyes of the people. Outdone by Calter, Peisandros quickly realized he could not hope to prosper in Ios. After an abortive attempt to wrest total control from his former ally, Peisandros gathered all those still loyal to him, approximately twelve hundred strong, and set sail for points west, vowing to crush Calter and Ios by force of arms one day. He and his band eventually founded their own colony, which they called Milios, on the Gdyol Peninsula west of Ios.

Simple survival occupied the attention of both kings for the first year or two. Both established trade with the local natives. Miliosian explorers discovered Gloriosus, a large, highly civilized native kingdom on the west coast, at about the same time that Iosian adventurers made contact with the Ægyptians of the Bestopa Plain.

Six years after the founding of Milios, Peisandros dispatched Eurypylos, his second-in-command, southward up the Manduka to explore the interior. But Eurypylos harbored more ambition in his heart than Peisandros realized. Upon discovering the great confluence of rivers that form the Manduka, Eurypylos claimed the territory for himself rather than meekly reporting back to Peisandros. Thus was Kythera founded.

Meanwhile, scholars from Ios compared the legends of the Ægyptians with Greek myths and declared that the hills around the Lakomba River were holy ground. Temples to all the Greek deities were built there forthwith, and the tiny settlement of priests was named Tegea. Later, the Greeks discovered Lake Lakomba and added their own shrines to those of the natives on the lakeshore. The colonists settled down to live in peace with their neighbors.

This idyllic situation continued for many years. At last, four years ago, a happy coincidence brought new wealth and prosperity to the colonies. A merchant ship from a far-off land was blown off course. Hopelessly lost, the sailors eventually blundered onto the north coast of Æsheba. Finding a civilization of sorts at Ios, they traded their goods for the gold, ivory, gems, animal skins, and exotic native crafts that Calter offered. The exotic Æsheban goods brought excellent prices in the overseas markets, and foreign trade with Æsheba has nearly quintupled since that first encounter. Since the colonies are so remote from other civilized lands, however, the trading voyages are long and dangerous. Milios, with its superior harbor facilities, is now visited by one merchant ship every two months, on the average. The rate for Ios is one ship every three to four months. As a result of the increased

trade, both Greek colonies have upgraded their inns and services for visiting merchants.

GEOGRAPHY

The colonies are widely-spaced on the continent of Æsheba, but this is consistent with the Greeks' sense of independence and self-reliance. Each colony is self-sufficient and able to take care of itself, and the distance between them merely reinforces the sovereignty of each city-state.

Ten years ago, the Greeks built a road to connect Milios, Ios, and Tegea. There are also caravan routes connecting Ios with Kythera, and with the Æsheban Trail. There are no markers on these routes to direct travelers, but the paths are well-trodden and maps are available at Ios.

The terrain along the northern coast consists mostly of scrub-covered hills and grasslands. Small patches (up to 114 square kilometers or 100 square miles) of very arid, almost desert-like terrain dot the open plains around the colonies. Such areas are uncommon near the coast, but their frequency increases as one travels farther south. These wastelands were created by the original colonists under Iklonos, who ordered vast tracts of timber cut down for buildings and ships. Little did these original colonists realize that the trees they were cutting had taken half a millenium to reach what the Greeks considered normal size. The forests did not regrow, and once the trees and grasses that anchored the soil were gone, erosion set in and the ground rapidly took on desert characteristics.

The colonists destroyed much natural grassland to bring the virgin soil under cultivation, and this has also increased erosion from wind and rain. Great gulleys have been cut into the loose soil of the coastal hills by heavy winter rains, and when the dry wind blows from the south in the summer, the air is filled with rolling clouds of dust and sand.

CLIMATE

Northern Æsheba has a dry subtropical climate, akin to that of modern Spain and Greece. The northern grasslands are moderately fertile and reasonably well-watered, suitable for grazing and agriculture.

The summers in northern Æsheba are hot and the winters are mild. The sea moderates temperatures along the coast and up to 50 miles (80 km) inland, averaging 75° F (24° C) in the summer and 60° F (16° C) in the winter. Temperature fluctuations are greatest in the interior areas, including the Ngati Plain, the Tungu Lowlands, and the Bestopa Plain, where the temperature averages 90° F (32° C) in the summer and 50° F (10° C) in the winter.

Annual rainfall in northern Æsheba ranges from 15" to 35" (38 cm to 89 cm), but this is primarily in the coastal band described above. The interior regions are much more arid, ranging from 5" to 15" (13 cm to 38 cm) of rainfall annually.

FLORA & FAUNA

Plants flourish in great variety in the temperate, well-watered coastal areas. Evergreens (pines, yews, etc.) are common, but there are few deciduous trees. What trees there are do not grow in forests, but rather in small, scattered groves. Hardy date palms thrive even in the patches of desert, and pines grow along the banks of rivers and streams, creating ribbons of green in an otherwise dull brown inland landscape.

Various grasses grow in the hills around the colonies, providing forage for domesticated animals. The grasslands of the Ngati Plain to the south are better for grazing, but most of the colonists prefer to pasture their herds closer to home to minimize the risk of attack by predators.

The staple crop of the colonies, adopted from the natives, is the bean. Many hardy varieties of legumes are cultivated, and most are quite nourishing, though the colonists prefer to augment the bland flavor with exotic spices. Attempts have been made to grow such familiar cereal grains as wheat and barley, but so far the harvests have been less than satisfactory. Grain prices are very high, so the common people and slaves have learned to use flour made from pulverized dried beans.

One of the first things the colonists noticed in their new land was a distinct increase in the number and types of rodents and other vermin that infested their homes. The most common pests are mice and rats, the latter sometimes growing as large as cats. Rodent damage to foodstuffs and household goods is an ongoing problem. Domesticated cats, first presented as gifts to the colonists by visiting Ægyptians, have helped control this vexing situation. The Greeks treat cats well because they are valuable, though they do not assign them divinity, as the Ægyptians do.

Birds of many species are quite prevalent all over the hills and plains. Most of the common varieties are ignored, but a few of the predators have caught the attention and imagination of the Greeks. Hawks, falcons, and eagles are abundant, and the colonists highly prize them. Falcons are sacred to the Ægyptians, and the Nimbassa consider the eagle a god, so friction occurs whenever these people see one of their hallowed birds trussed up in captivity. A creature completely new to the Greeks is the ibis, a warm water wading bird with white and black plumage. The ibis is also sacred to the Ægyptians, as the embodiment of their god Thoth, and killing one is tantamount to declaring war.

Lions are drawn to the northern hills and plains by the presence of domestic cattle and sheep. The big cats seem to fear man, but they stalk the grasslands where the herds graze and catch an occasional easy meal when the herdsmen are out of sight.

The Greeks use domestic camels for overland trade. Expeditions are sent regularly to the Kurashi Desert to capture the animals, though many are now bred in captivity. Camels are valuable animals to Greek and native alike, though only the Greeks capture them in large numbers and train them for beasts of burden. Such behavior enrages the Khufiri, for they feel that wild things should be allowed to run free, not penned up and worked until they die from exhaustion. Occasionally, Khufiri warriors raid Ios, doing no damage to the town, but freeing any animals they can find.

Æsheba is home to snakes of many types, but the most deadly is the cobra. Though this hooded serpent is somewhat rare, its sudden appearance is enough to freeze the blood in even a brave man's veins. The cobra is the symbol of the Ægyptian goddess Wadjet, so although the Ægyptians do not welcome the creatures into their houses, they do treat them with reverence and respect. The Greeks, however, prize cobras for their skins, which make splendid belts and equipment straps.

Arachnids of many types live in the jungles, plains, and desert. Scorpions and tarantulas are quite plentiful, but they usually leave humans alone. A tiny desert scorpion can kill even a full-grown man with its poisonous sting. Tarantulas, though hairy and frightening to behold, do not have such a deadly bite. Both of these creatures plague the city-states. Giant versions, some up to 1 m (3') in length, have been reported by adventurers returning from wilderness treks, but fortunately these man-killers are very rare, and do not roam the coastal regions.

The Greeks are no strangers to insects, of course, but they never had to deal with such an abundance of six-legged creatures in their homeland.

Each year brings a plague of locusts, which can reduce a field of ripening crops to stripped stalks in a matter of hours. Birds that eat the locusts seem to be the best defense, but there are never enough birds to decrease the damage significantly. As if that weren't enough, termites eat up what little lumber there is, including expensive woods imported from other lands through Æsheba's new trading contacts. So far, nothing has proved effective in preventing the destruction caused by these voracious creatures.

The waters of the Iosian and Miliosian bays harbor an assortment of fish and other aquatic life. Fish and seafood constitute an important part of the colonists' diet, and fishing vessels can be seen in both areas every day.

NATURAL TREASURES

Various native goods are quite valuable in overseas markets, and can be sold in the colonies as treasure by adventurers. Set the values of such items to balance with the economics of your own campaign.

The Greeks regularly mount hunting expeditions for sport and profit, selling lion pelts to traders. Other animal parts, such as antelope horns and hide, and especially elephant tusks, are in great demand overseas, so the slaughter of such creatures is a profitable business. Elephants do not range into northern Æsheba, so the Iosians must rely on natives to acquire the precious ivory for them. Merchants from Milios trade for it with Kythera and Gloriosus.

Live animals and exotic birds are also valuable trade items, but the costs and perils of shipping make the price to the final buyer exorbitant. Thus only very wealthy foreigners can afford such things, and they must order them specifically and pay the asking price before an Æsheban animal hunter will even stand the risk of acquiring the desired beasts. This is especially true of requests for lions and other predators.

It was immediately apparent from their adornments that the natives had a ready source of gold and that they didn't think the bright metal was worth very much. The tribesmen like the look and feel of gold, and the ease with which they can work it, but since they cannot eat it or make tools and weapons from it, gold is of little use to them. The natives of the Zindor Plain (page 96) use a simple panning procedure to recover gold nuggets from the Owerri River. At first, they gave it away for next to nothing, but the avarice of the Greek traders became so obvious that the natives now demand, and get, a much higher price.

Gems, both precious and semi-precious, are found in the mountains of south and west Æsheba. The Greeks have searched for a source of gems in their own territory, but have found none to date. Therefore, they must rely on the various native tribes to collect them. Diamonds in particular are highly prized by foreign merchants, and the Zebia tribe (page 96) is currently the sole supplier of gems to the colonies.

Spices and resins, notably myrrh, cinnamon, frankincense, and acacia, almost count as currency, with myrrh being worth its weight in gold. Acacia is readily available in the Greek territory, but the other spices are brought in by native gatherers. The Ægyptians also supply spices.

Any new medicine is valuable, especially if it can actually cure a disease. The tribal witch doctors are very knowledgable in concocting various mixtures of herbs and extracts from plants. These infusions have a ready market in the colonies, and are exported in quantity.

The trackless tropical jungles of southern Æsheba hold many wonders, but the easiest to acquire are rare woods. Samples of several types have appeared in the colonial marketplaces, including ebony, mahogany, and several woods with special properties. There is wood so hard that one would swear it was iron, wood with the color and feel of gold, wood that sinks rather than floats, and wood with a strangely whorled grain and gemlike veins. Traders buy up all such wood, for if they can transport it safely, they can at least quintuple their investment at foreign markets.

THE MILITARY

The Greek warrior most commonly encountered in the Æsheban colonies is the hoplite, the GI foot soldier of ancient Greece. The Æsheban hoplite is outfitted in classic Greek style — feet shod with sandals, lower legs protected by metal greaves, and back and chest covered with a *cuirass* made of hardened leather, which provides protection from throat to waist. The wealthier warriors can afford metal armor, though it is heavier and hotter. A brief skirt of reinforced leather strips called *pteryges* is usually attached to the *cuirass* to cover the lower abdomen and hips, though some hard-bitten warriors, weaned on the tales of Homer, disdain such fripperies. The head is protected by a close fitting helmet of either hardened leather or metal, sometimes with a horsehair crest or plume to denote rank.

Each hoplite carries a spear (for thrusting or throwing) and a short



sword made of iron. A shield is often used for additional protection. The most common shields are the large, round or oval *aspis* and the familiar figure-eight design. Tower shields have fallen into disfavor, for they are too cumbersome.

The hand-crafted armor and weapons of a hoplite are very expensive, for raw materials and skilled craftsmen are rare in this frontier land. Prices for such items should be at least double the normal cost for your campaign. Ordinary weapons and armor are, therefore, rich prizes for the fighting adventurer.

The primary military organizational unit is the *phalanx,* a close-ordered formation that presents a bristling front of spear points to the enemy while protecting the warriors with overlapping shields. Though the phalanx is not very fast or maneuverable, its sheer momentum is capable of throwing an opposing unit into disarray. The phalanx is useful for fighting in only one direction — straight ahead — and is very vulnerable on its flanks, especially the right, since each soldier carries his shield on his left arm. Phalanxes seldom make flank attacks, for attacking an opponent's flank means exposing one's own.

Despite the shock value of a phalanx, the Greeks have been forced to do much fighting on an individual basis in Æsheba, since the natives do not fight in organized units. While this is more inefficient, the Greek warrior takes readily to the ancient form of combat because he is more likely to win fame and glory through individual feats than as part of a phalanx. Honor is as vital to the Æsheban Greek warrior as the air he breathes, and he will not shirk from a fight unless severely outnumbered.

The militias of the three major city-states also include slingers, javelinmen, and bowmen (armed with simple shortbows). The hoplites have no respect for these other soldiers; killing an enemy from long range is considered cowardly and unmanly. Still, commanders recognize the value of missile troops and maintain them in their forces. Archers are usually massed so they may fire a concentrated missile attack on the enemy's center forces. Javelinmen are reserved for fighting native spearmen and for other special maneuvers.

The colonists brought no horses with them, thinking that they would find some in Æsheba. Alas, horses were not native to this continent, so the settlers had to make do with the strangely striped native mounts called zebras. After some experimentation, they discovered that zebras could be trained to pull chariots, though they didn't take well to the bit and saddle.

Zebra-drawn chariots are used only as transporation into and out of combat, not as mobile fighting platforms. This represents a regression to a more Homeric style of fighting, but it fits well with the adoption of hero-to-hero combat. Individual warriors lavish much attention on their zebras and war cars, and the opponent's chariot and team are usually claimed as spoils of battle along with his armor and weapons. Most vanquished enemies are held for ransom or sold into slavery (see below), though some purists argue that it is better to slay an opponent than to let him live and fight another day.

SLAVERY

Slavery is common in Æsheba, and, though abhorrent to our modern thinking, is accepted as part of the natural order of life. Those who are capable of work, captured alive by an enemy, and not worth a ransom to their people become slaves, to be bought and sold at the will of their conquerors.

Racial differences are not really the issue, at least not the way we understand them. To be sure, the Greeks view the native tribes as inferior, but the feeling is mutual. The Khufiri, Nimbassa, and Zebia have both black and white slaves, as do the Greeks.

Individuals may purchase or sell slaves in the slave markets of any city-state except Tegea. The price for a slave varies tremendously and depends primarily on the skills and physical condition of the slave in question. Laborers in good health usually fetch the same price as a cow, but exceptionally beautiful women, strong warriors, or skilled slaves of either sex may be sold for up to one hundred times as much. Like any other traders, slavers come to Æsheba in search of profitable merchandise.

SHIPS

Both merchant ships and warships can be found in the harbors of Milios and Ios. Æsheban merchantmen are built to carry cargo, with wide beams and a pronounced sheer at the bow rising to a point that projects far above the water. The overall length is about 33 m (100'). The cargo area is quite large, and the center of gravity is low, making the ship very stable. A wickerwork shield runs the length of the hull to keep salt spray off the cargo.

Little if any room is provided for rowers, though there are ten to twelve oar ports on each side of the hull. Oars are only used for warping into or out of a harbor; the main propulsion is provided by the wind. Merchant ships have a single mast and yardarm on which a large, square sail is spread to catch the wind. The design makes it impossible to sail closer than 45° into the wind, so the ship must wait for a favorable breeze before setting out on a journey.

Warships are made with an entirely different design. The length of a Greek trireme (that is, a ship with three banks of oars per side) is about 35 m (105'), with a beam of only 3 m (10'). The bow, tipped with a bronze ram that barely skims the waves, is drawn down toward the water. The preferred means of attacking an enemy ship is to ram it, though it is quite common for two ships to pull close together for missile fire or boarding. If the oars of the two vessels become locked, hand-to-hand fighting between the crews decides the outcome of the battle.

The warship is built for speed and maneuverability, and though it can carry a sail, the mast is usually unstepped and sent ashore before a battle. Rowers provide its primary power, and a trireme can pack more than one hundred seventy oarsmen into its narrow hull. A common arrangement is 31-31-27 (top to bottom) on each side. The ship's maximum speed is about 21 kph (13 mph), a little faster than a modern racing shell. This speed can be attained from a dead stop in about thirty seconds, and maintained for perhaps as much as ten minutes before the rowers become exhausted.

Oarsmen on merchant vessels can be freemen or slaves, but only freemen are used in the wargalleys because a high degree of coordination is required to prevent the oars on a trireme from becoming entangled. Freemen are much more motivated to develop the necessary skill than slaves are.

Other common types of warships are the penteconter (one bank of oars per side) and the bireme (two banks per side). Both of these are about the same length as a trireme, but they obviously do not have the same manpower, so they are weaker ships in combat.

The compass is unknown, so Æsheban sailors endeavor to stay within sight of land at all times. Even though the sailors can navigate by the stars, they fear being caught on the open sea on a cloudy night and becoming utterly lost. This penchant for shore-hugging is an open invitation for piracy, but since pirates can sometimes be defeated, the Æsheban mariners prefer this option to certain death on the open sea.

CULTURE

The physical differences between Æsheba and the Greek homeland have

forced the colonists to alter many of their habits. Their inability to grow wheat and barley in quantity in the Æsheban soil has resulted in a radical change of diet. Since legumes do flourish in their fields, the Greeks have learned to make flour by pulverizing dried beans. Olive trees do not grow well here either, so the less wealthy colonists make do with palm oil.

Obtaining meat is not much of a problem; game is plentiful on the nearby Ngati Plain. However, it did take time for the colonists to get used to the taste of such native dishes as curried gazelle and lion paw soup. Slaves and criminals are fed a diet of flatbread and roasted rat, since rodents are so plentiful in the city-states.

The Greeks wear fewer and lighter clothes than they did in their homeland, especially when journeying through the hotter inland areas. Wool tunics rarely see the light of day except along the coast, where the sea breeze is strong. Many Greeks, male and female, have adopted the Ægyptian custom of wearing nothing save a woven grass kilt.

The effect of the Greek presence on the habits of the local natives has not been nearly as dramatic as the reverse. The colonists have no improvements to offer in terms of dress or diet, since what the natives already have is markedly better for this climate and terrain than anything the Greeks brought with them.

However, the natives are impressed with Greek weapons and armor, and with the way these newcomers practice war. The double-edged sword is gaining favor among the tribesmen as a close-in fighting weapon, for spears are worse than useless in hand-to-hand combat. The Nimbassa and Zebia tribes have experimented with fighting in phalanx formations, but the results have been less than successful, primarily because the native warriors do not have the discipline to fight in such a manner.

Worship of the Greek pantheon has not been widely accepted by the tribes, for their religious concepts are markedly different than those of the colonists. For the most part, the natives still pay homage to their ancestors and their primitive nature gods. A few who live within the Greek colonies have turned to worshipping the foreign gods, though they have trouble coping with the sheer number of deities to be pleased.

ARCHITECTURE

The settlers were unable to build the traditional wooden houses that were common in their homeland due to the lack of usable timber in the immediate area. Milios has access to a good supply of lumber from Gloriosus, but most of that goes for building ships. The standard colonial house is built of stone and roofed with a thick thatch of grass. Doors are wooden, and windows are usually openings covered loosely with animal skins. Many of the wealthier colonists have courtyards landscaped with tropical plants, and the finest homes have pillars outside and inside. All of the colonies have a few partially completed wooden buildings standing unfinished and apparently abandoned while the owners of the property await an expensive shipment of lumber from elsewhere on the continent.

THE MEGARON

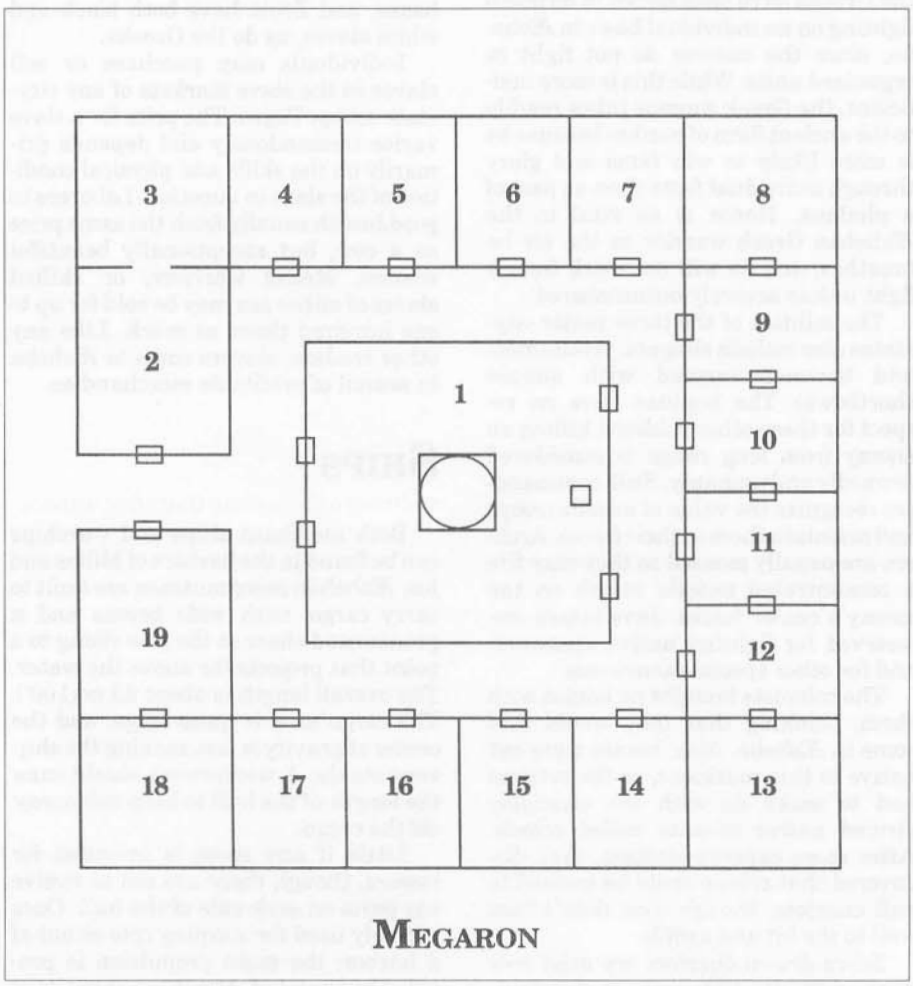
A megaron is the palace of a Greek king. Calter, Peisandros, and Eurypylos have all built such structures in their respective city-states. All three megarons are designed according to the floor plan below, differing only in such details as construction and decoration, as noted in the descriptions of the individual buildings. General information about the contents of each room is given below. You may customize any or all of these chambers as you see fit, bearing in mind the personality of the particular sovereign who lives there.

1. THRONE ROOM

All the king's official business is conducted in this room. The large circle is the city's sacred hearth, where tradition demands that a fire be kept burning at all times. The hearth is surrounded by four pillars that support the roof. The smaller square near the wall represents the throne itself. The two doorways flanking the throne are for the use of the king, his advisors, military men, etc. Strangers and guests must use the doors in the opposite wall.

2-3. KING'S ARMORER

The armorer uses Room 2 as his living quarters and Room 3 as his workplace. The latter chamber also serves as a storage area for extra armor and weapons, including any such items that have been stripped from fallen



MEGARON

opponents and claimed as spoils of war. The armorer is in charge of fashioning and maintaining all the weapons and armor used by his liege and the elite guards. Materials used are the finest available, as befits a king's entourage.

4-7. VIP APARTMENTS

Important visitors and citizens favored by the king are housed in these rooms, which have been furnished using funds from the royal treasury. All the quarters are comfortable — some are even luxurious. An invitation to stay in the megaron is a mark of distinction.

8-13. KING'S APARTMENTS

This large suite of rooms is for the private use of the king and his wife or consort. The rooms can be furnished as you see fit, but the suite should include one or two bedrooms, a reception area, a storeroom, and a dining area. There are at least four guards on duty in the hallway day and night.

14-17. ARTISAN'S APARTMENTS

These rooms can serve as more apartments for the king's trusted cronies, or as quarters and workspace for artisans, including jewelers, tutors, musicians, magicians, healers, and priests.

18. TREASURY

The wealth of the city-state is stored in this room behind a heavy locked door. The treasury door is trapped in all cases; the nature of the traps is left to your discretion. Two to five hoplites are on guard outside the door day and night.

19. LIBRARY

All written agreements and treaties pertinent to running the government are stored here, as well as the work of poets and other writers. The chief (and perhaps only) scribe is in charge of maintaining the records. Paper has been available since the discovery of Gloriosus, and that medium is now used almost exclusively. Records from earlier times were scratched into damp clay tablets, which were then hardened in a kiln. These tablets are stacked neatly in a locked cabinet.

LEGENDS

One common trait shared by the Greeks and the natives is their tendency to rationalize that which they do not understand by inventing legends, usually involving acts of the gods. Within the first decade after the Greek colonies were established, several new legends about the origins of various unusual plants and animals in this land had evolved. One of these, the story of the strange Æsheban striped horses, is given below as an example.

THE ORIGIN OF ZEBRAS

In an age long ago, when the gods still freely walked the face of the earth, Hades and Apollo were lounging in a corner of the palace atop Mount Olympus, hotly debating the merits of their respective horses. Hades boasted that the four black stallions that pulled his dark chariot were the bravest and fleetest of all horses, capable of blotting out the rays of the Sun and plunging the land below into blackest night. Apollo, whose four magnificent white horses pulled the Sun chariot across the sky, claimed this was impossible, for the light must be dominant. The recriminations and accusations flew thick and fast, and the two gods were about to come to blows when Zeus, tired of the squabbling, suggested a contest to prove who was right.

At dawn the next day, Apollo drove the flaming Sun chariot forth from the east, his team wreathed with white-hot fire. At the same time, Hades began his climb from the gates of the underworld in the west, his horses and chariot swathed in a cloud of inky blackness.

Upward they sped toward the zenith of the heavens, both the gods whipping their teams until the horses frothed from exertion. Poseidon watched with concern, for both the white horses of the Sun and the black ones of the night were his special creations.

Apollo and Hades reached the midpoint of the sky at the same time, both realizing only too late that they were on a collision course. The black horses of Hades and the white chargers of Apollo collided with such force that both gods were thrown from their chariots, which went careening off through the heavens. Zeus sent Hephæstos to save the Sun chariot so that the world would not be plunged into darkness.

With a groan, Poseidon watched the beautiful horses plummet to the earth. Determined that they should not perish for the folly of two gods, he reached up a mighty hand and caught the beasts in midair. He remolded their forms to create four horselike creatures, each striped black and white in memory of their forebears. He placed these new creatures, called zebras, on the wide plains of Æsheba, where they could grow and flourish out of reach of the two thoughtless gods.

TRADE RELATIONS

Trade with the native tribes is done on the barter system (trading goods for goods) since the natives have no use for minted coins. The Nimbassa and Zebia desire many common items the Greeks possess, like metal pots, glass bead decorations, and tools, and will gladly exchange rare and valuable items for these trinkets. The Greek traders can make an incredible profit when they sell the native merchandise to overseas merchants.

The Greek hoplites consider themselves superior to the native warriors, treating them with hauteur and arrogance. The natives are a proud people, and many of them, especially the Khufiri, would like to push the invaders into the sea, but the strong Greek military presence and the establishment of the citadels in Milios, Kythera, and Ios make this impossible.

The Greek traders, on the other hand, are more open-minded about the natives. This is not because of enlightened mentality so much as a deep seated desire for the wealth of gold, ivory, gems, and animal pelts the natives have to offer. The traders are full of praise for the tribesmen, hoping that their compliments and flattery will offset the bad impression caused by the arrogance of the hoplites.

There has always been trade in Æsheba amongst the tribes, but the demand for the riches of the Æsheban continent has increased tenfold with the appearance of the foreign merchants. Both Greeks and natives profit from the association, so while the more hawkish tribal warriors agitate for war, their village elders counsel against it, for the lifestyle of their people has improved through innovations introduced by the Greeks.

Traders either travel to native villages to conduct their business or entertain native delegations, laden with goods from the interior, that come to the city-states. Most Greek merchants much prefer the latter arrangement, since it is less dangerous, but the more adventuresome among them eagerly seek out the remote villages and tribes to bargain for lower prices and better merchandise.

Caravans move between the colonies regularly, but sea trade is the preferred means of commerce, since it is expensive to feed pack animals.See the individual colony descriptions for trade relations with each of the other settlements.

Ios

Ios was founded twenty-five years ago by the Greek exiles Calter and Peisandros. It is still the largest in terms of population, now some thirty-six hundred strong.

The majority of Iosian citizens are farmers who live outside the walls and support the town through agriculture. Those living in the citadel are primarily merchants, government officials, craftsmen, and people in service professions, such as innkeepers and tavern owners.

Ios has fallen on hard times since the establishment of Milios. The latter colony has better harbor facilities and its shipping lanes are much safer. With the opening of the Manduka as a prime trade route to the interior, Miliosian merchants have access to a greater supply of exotic native goods than they did before. Calter has arranged for Ios to receive some of that merchandise, but transporting it across the Ngati Plain is a lengthy and expensive process.

Government

Ios is ruled by Calter, one of the two exiled Greek soldiers who brought the colonists to Æsheba. The king is an absolute ruler, dispensing all justice, leading the army in times of war, and controlling trade with other lands. He consults regularly with Dolon, his chief advisor, on most matters of state.

Crime & Punishment

In addition to the standard laws against murder, thievery, and treason which are common to most civilized realms, Calter has established commercial laws to regulate shipping and caravan trade. Merchants must declare all goods that are brought into the city and consign them to an Iosian trader for export. Violators of this law are fined and imprisoned. Those convicted of other crimes are usually sold as slaves.

The Militia

Calter's army consists of one hundred forty-four hoplites, forty-eight archers, thirty-six slingers, and twenty-four javelinmen, organized into standard twelve-man squads. Commanders train their units rigorously in the use of weapons. Discipline is not extremely tight, but stiff penalties are imposed on any hoplite who fails to keep his armor gleaming, for such is part of the overall impression foreign visitors receive of the colony.

The Iosian navy is small, composed of a mere ten triremes. Four are usually on patrol along the coast at any given time; the other six are moored in the harbor (#12, page 29). Calter's shipwrights have had little success trying to build more ships, for the timber from the nearby Tobara Jungle is unsuitable for the purpose. The soft wood rots easily in salt water, and the thin, twisted trunks have insufficient girth to make proper planks. Better timber could be obtained from the interior, but Calter barely has enough able-bodied rowers to man the ships he has. The ten wargalleys are expertly commanded by experienced officers, and can hold their own against an equal number of ships.

Trade Relations

Of the four Greek colonies, Ios has the most direct contact with the Ægyptians. Although they are not very advanced technologically, these white-skinned people are highly intelligent. Eager for trade and knowledge, the Ægyptians flock to Ios. They offer spices in great quantity and often take money in return, for they are fascinated with the concept of coinage. Though their culture is still primitive, the Ægyptians are on the brink of a forward leap in civilization, and it is only a matter of time before they seek to establish ties directly with foreign traders. Calter is aware of this, and is doing everything he can, short of physical violence, to keep the profitable Ægyptian merchandise flowing through the Iosian markets.

Nimbassa and Zebia natives regularly journey to Ios to trade gold, animal skins, and captive birds for food and weapons. Though Milios is much closer to the Tungu Lowlands where the Zebia live, they prefer to make the long trek to Ios for trade because of frosty relations with Peisandros. Some Nimbassa have settled in Ios, hoping to gain an education and better the lifestyles of their people. An occasional Khufiri warrior may also visit the colony to trade animal hides for weapons, but this is rare — the antagonism between the Khufiri and the Greeks is strong. The Khufiri have butchered more than one Iosian patrol in the area they presently claim, and these attacks have been answered in kind by angry hoplites whenever they can surprise a band of the natives — women and children included.

Relations with Milios are icy, since the two city-states are in direct competition for the lucrative foreign trade. The Iosian king is constantly seeking new goods to attract more merchants.

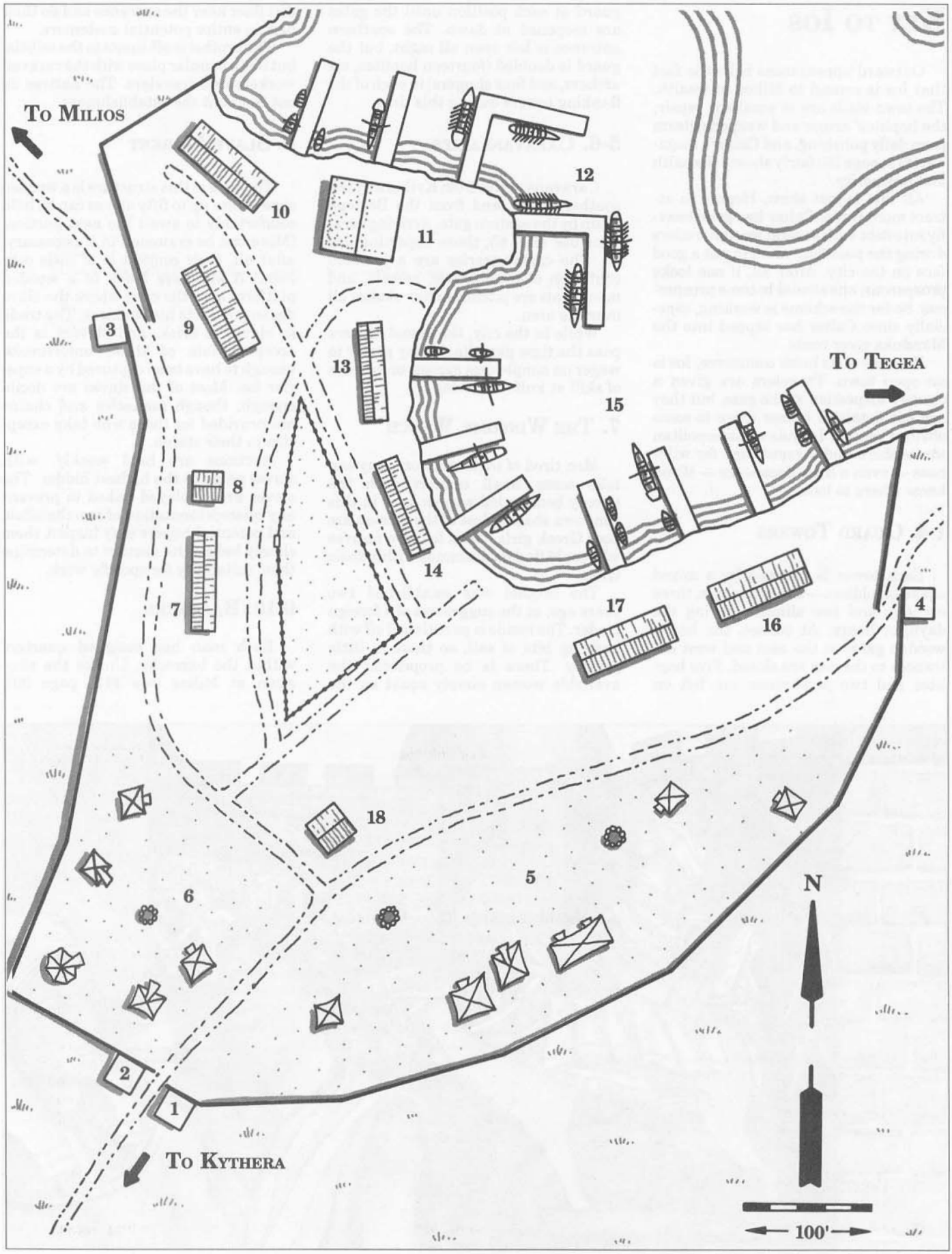
Calter views the establishment of Kythera as the death knell of Miliosian commerce. Merchants from Ios enjoy guaranteed revenue from the caravan trade with Kythera. Calter and Eurypylos are on the best of terms personally, and thus are able to work together well.

Ios also trades directly with New Grecia by sea, though ships can sail from that kingdom only twice a year because of the great whirlpool that blocks the harbor. The captains and crews of New Grecian merchant vessels stay in Ios as guests of Calter for months at a time, until it is safe to return.

Caravan routes also link Ios with the commercial traffic in the Zindor Plain. Merchants use this connection to obtain goods from New Grecia and Gloriosus. The Greek military garrison (page 96) doubles as a trading center.

Pirates

For the past few years, Iosian shipping has been plagued by pirates based in the Kambian Marsh. (See page 82.) Calter orders a trireme escort for merchant ships at sporadic intervals, hoping to intercept a raid, but the pirates' spy network is so good that they usually know when this will happen and do not bother such vessels. On the few occasions when the ruse has worked, the pirates simply rowed their rafts back into the marshes, where the huge, lumbering triremes were unable to pursue effectively. Calter does not have enough warships for full-time escort duty, for this would leave the harbor undefended. Therefore, most trading vessels must sail unguarded.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Key to Ios

Outward appearances belie the fact that Ios is second to Milios in wealth. The town walls are in excellent repair, the hoplites' armor and weapons gleam from daily polishing, and Calter's megaron (#11, page 29) fairly shouts of wealth and prosperity.

All this is just show. Hoping to attract more trade, Calter has gone heavily into debt with several foreign traders during the past four years to put a good face on the city. After all, if one looks prosperous, one should become prosperous. So far the scheme is working, especially since Calter has tapped into the Manduka river trade.

Because of its brisk commerce, Ios is an open town. Travelers are given a cursory inspection at the gate, but they are not detained unless there is some obvious reason. Ios has a cosmopolitan atmosphere and a reputation for wildness — even a little decadence — if you know where to look.

1-4. Guard Towers

Each tower is manned by a mixed squad of soldiers — seven hoplites, three archers, and two slingers during the daylight hours. At sunset, the heavy wooden gates at the east and west entrances to the city are closed. Five hoplites and two javelinmen are left on guard at each position until the gates are reopened at dawn. The southern entrance is left open all night, but the guard is doubled (fourteen hoplites, six archers, and four slingers) in each of the flanking towers during this time.

5-6. Caravansaries

Caravans arrive from Kythera by the southern gate, and from the Bestopa Plain by the eastern gate. Arriving caravans use area #5; those departing use #6. The caravansaries are a jumbled confusion of trade goods, camels, and men. Tents are pitched helter-skelter all over the area.

While in the city, the camel drovers pass the time gambling. They prefer to wager on simple dice games, or on tests of skill at knife-throwing.

7. The Winsome Wench

Men tired of their own company can take some small comfort with the twenty bedraggled women kept in this rundown shack. Most of the women are poor Greek girls, but a few are natives who could find no husbands within their tribes.

The brothel was established two years ago, at the suggestion of a foreign trader. The inside is partitioned off with hanging bits of sail, so there is little privacy. There is no proprietor; the available women simply squat on the dirt floor near the entrance and do their best to entice potential customers.

The brothel is off-limits to the militia, but it is a popular place with the caravan workers and travelers. The natives do not frequent the establishment.

8. Slave Market

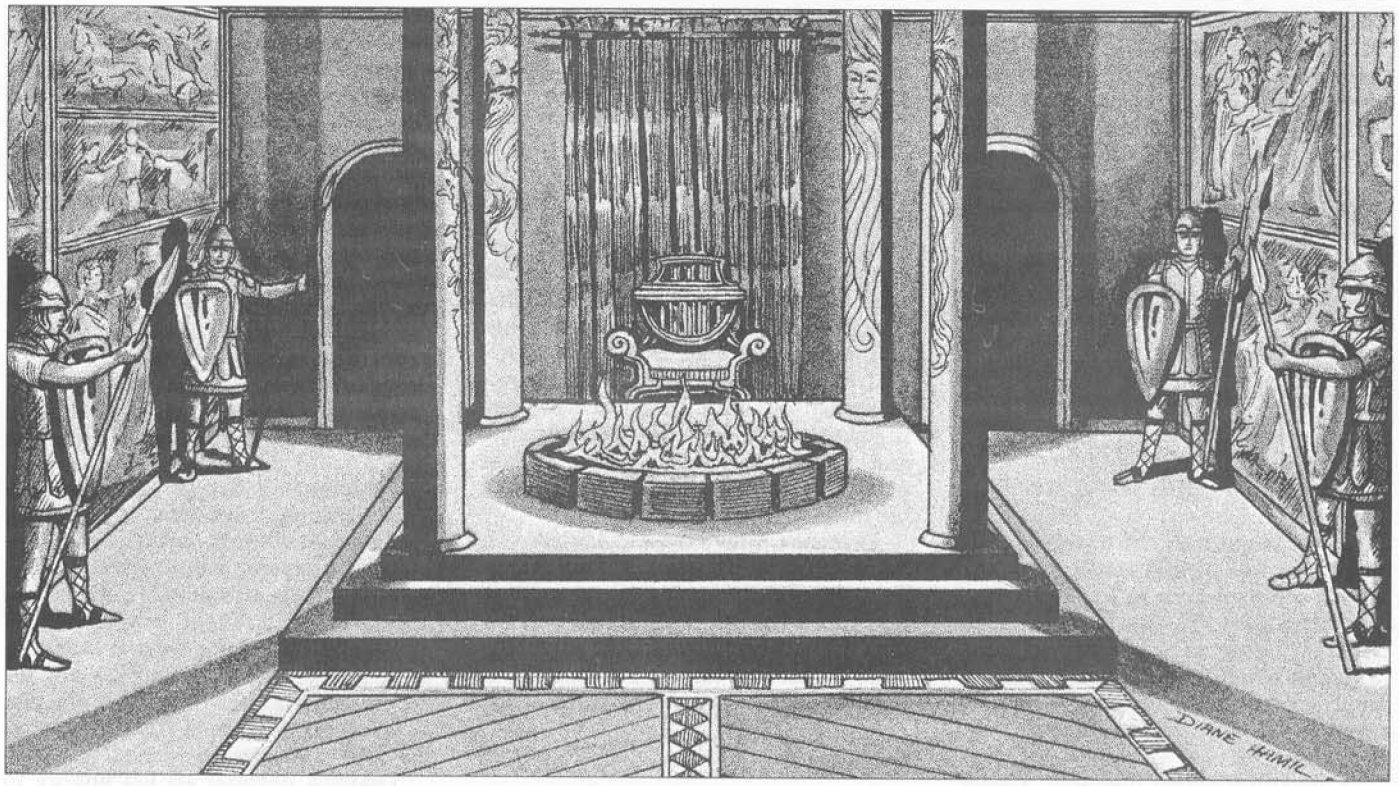
The base of this structure is a wooden cage where up to fifty slaves can be held comfortably to await the next auction. (More can be crammed in if necessary; after all, their comfort is of little concern.) A staircase leads to a wooden platform atop the cage where the slave dealer conducts his business. The trade in slaves is brisk, and slavery is the accepted fate of those unfortunate enough to have been captured by a superior foe. Most of the slaves are docile enough, though manacles and chains are provided for those who take exception to their status.

Auctions are held weekly, with slaves going to the highest bidder. The slaves are displayed naked to prevent any misrepresentation of merchandise, and potential buyers may inspect them closely before the auction to determine their suitability for specific work.

9-10. Barracks

Each man has assigned quarters within the barracks. Unlike the situation at Milios (see #13, page 39),





Calter's soldiers do not have to fight one another for their own turf. The area around the building is used for training.

11. Megaron

Calter's megaron is more lavish than the one his rival built in Milios. The entrance is shaded by a porch roof supported by finely wrought columns. The interior hallways are smoothly plastered and painted with ocean scenes in muted shades of blue and green.

The throne room itself is comparable to that of a fine palace. Expertly done murals of Calter's homeland decorate the walls on three sides, and the painting on the fourth wall depicts a glorious Ios. The throne is made of deeply carved, gilded ebony and stands on a green marble dais.

The central hearth is also made of marble, a costly blue variety quarried only in New Grecia. Four smooth, slender columns, one at each of the cardinal points, stretch from the base of the hearth to the ceiling. Each column is painted with a depiction of the appropriate wind god — Boreas on the north, Zephyrus on the west, Notus on the south, and Eurus on the east. The logs burned on the hearth are fragrant wood from the Khofari Jungle.

When Calter holds court, he is flanked by five hoplites, plus two natives — one representative each from the Nimbassa and the Zebia tribes. At his feet, in chains, are two Khufiri warriors. This display mutely shows visitors the benefits of cooperation rather than defiance, though the meaning is lost on foreign traders, some of whom cannot even tell that the four natives are from different tribes.

12. Wargalley Slips

Six of Calter's ten triremes are moored here at any given time; the other four are on patrol along the coast. Rope, extra sails and spars, and replacement oars are stored in sheds on the docks.

13-14. Warehouses

Incoming and outgoing goods are stored in these buildings. Each is a basic wooden shed, closed on three sides and open on the side facing the beach. Calter owns all three buildings, and he allows traders to use them free of charge. He refuses to supply guards, however, so the merchants must hire their own or risk pilferage.

15. Merchantmen Wharves

Up to fourteen merchant galleys can be moored here at any given time. Each wharf has a wooden crane to lift heavy items into and out of ships. Slaves crank the cranes by hand, and the crack of the overseer's whip is a common sound when ships are in port.

16-17. Warehouses

These two wooden buildings are used to store timber and stone for buildings within Ios and for export. Their construction is similar to that of #13 & #14.

18. Inn

This three-story mudbrick inn is a flea-bitten dive — a favorite hangout for ruffians and caravan workers. The tavern on the ground floor is jammed with customers day and night. Mud flakes off the brick walls constantly, filling the air with dust, and the floor is gritty with sand tracked in from the beach. A low counter across one end serves as a bar. Various "regulars" claim all ten of the tables, and they brook no trespassing, flinging any strangers bodily from their places and backing up their actions with knives if there is any protest. Naturally, bar fights are a daily occurrence.

The proprietor is an old Greek sot who seems to be in a perpetual alcoholic haze as he sloshes thin, sour wine into dirty clay cups. He has not been in his right mind for several years. Though usually friendly, he can explode in a fit of rage for no apparent reason.

19. Paddock

There isn't enough room for a permanent stable within the walls of Ios.

Twenty zebras are kept within this fenced, triangular area, and Calter maintains a guard of five hoplites to prevent theft. The zebras are harnessed in teams to pull Calter's chariot.

Important People

The following individuals hold positions of importance in Ios.

Calter

Residence: #11
Vocation: Warrior-King of Ios
Age/Height/Weight: 55/5' 5"/140 lbs.

Calter is quite old for a warrior. His black hair has turned steely gray, and his deep brown eyes reflect a vibrant, combative spirit. Though lame in his left leg (from a lucky sword thrust, he maintains), he will fight if duty calls. His left hand is missing two fingers, which he sacrificed to Poseidon (see Recolonization, page 20).

A smooth-tongued diplomat, Calter learned long ago that words can be as mighty as the sword and spear. He established peace treaties and good trade relations with the Nimbassa and the Zebia within a year after his arrival on the continent. Though privately disdainful of the natives, he never lets his feelings show when entertaining their delegations. Under his leadership, Ios has prospered.

Calter's diplomacy is the main reason that foreign merchants deal with the colonies at all. Æsheba is very remote from most of the world's civilized countries, and trading voyages across the open sea can be risky propositions. When the first foreign traders came to the shores of Æsheba, Calter presented them with gifts and lodged them in his own megaron. He negotiated prices for the ivory, gold, gems, animal skins, and other exotic merchandise of the interior, and arrived at mutually beneficial agreements with his guests. Once the foreign merchants realized that Æsheba was a potentially profitable port-of-call, however, they explored farther west along the coastline and discovered Milios. The fact that Ios must now compete with Milios for the limited space on foreign trading ships infuriates Calter.

The Iosian king's opinion of Peisandros is venemous at best. Calter does nothing to heal the strife between Ios and Milios, and he takes any opportunity to gain the upper hand over his rival in commerce. He would even welcome a war, for he fantasizes about dealing the death blow to his rival.

Dolon

Residence: #11
Vocation: Councillor
Age/Height/Weight: 42/5' 10"/190 lbs.

The urbane, cultured Dolon stands out among the commoners of Ios. His brown hair is kept carefully barbered, and most of his clothing is imported. He especially favors brightly-colored silks, though he has been known to wear robes of linen or dyed wool. Dolon wears several rings on each hand, and absentmindedly toys with them when pondering thorny problems. His speech is slow and deliberate, and nothing in his mannerisms or his black eyes betrays his inner feelings.

Dolon is Calter's trusted advisor — a man with a complete grasp of the changing politics between the colonies. He is farsighted enough to establish policies that will solve problems before they become crises. It is largely because of Dolon that the government runs smoothly.

Lethos

Residence: #11
Vocation: Priest of Hermes
Age/Height/Weight: 35/5' 11"/165 lbs.

Lethos is a very active young man, with the swarthy skin and hawk nose characteristic of the Greeks. His glossy black hair falls loosely about his shoulders, and his black eyes reflect sincerity and intensity of purpose. His rapid speech is usually accompanied by jerky, almost nervous hand movements.

Nisa

Residence: #11
Vocation: Queen of Ios
Age/Height/Weight: 45/5' 5"/115 lbs.

Nisa is a vivacious woman, still attractive despite her age. Indeed, she looks little older than thirty. Her honey-blonde hair falls in a cascade of curls, framing an oval face lit by dreamy brown eyes. Her clothing is the finest that Calter can afford, and she always wears some bit of expensive jewelry.

She was quick to accept Calter's proposal of marriage when it looked as though he would become a rich and powerful conqueror in their homeland. After his abortive raid on Tiryns, she had no choice but to follow her husband into exile. Nisa has not been pleased with her new life in this wilderness, and she blames her husband for their situation, though she is not foolish enough to berate him for failure publicly.

The queen has no interest in government whatsoever. In fact, she has no responsibilities at all beyond running Calter's household, for her husband does not fully trust her. Nisa can be mean and spiteful, and since she has so little to do in Ios, she delights in ruining anyone she considers an enemy, either financially or through public humiliation and disgrace.

Thalpios

Residence: #5
Vocation: Trader
Age/Height/Weight: 38/5' 5"/138 lbs.

Thalpios is a dirty little Greek who loves nothing more than money. He spends most of his time in the caravansaries buying and selling merchandise, so he pays little attention to his personal appearance. His light brown hair is usually almost black with grease and dust, and his dull brown eyes are set deeply into his skull, like those of a pig. His clothing is stained from sweat and the offal of the caravansaries.

Thalpios devoted all his energy to developing trade relations with the local native tribes, and he is on favorable terms with Eurypylos. He also serves as the fence in Ios for goods stolen by Scarphe (page 87) and the pirates of the Kambian Marsh (page 82).

Adventuring

Use the following scenario to acquaint the characters with Ios.

The King's Armor

Characters looking for adventuring supplies will be directed to the caravanseraies (#5 & #6, page 28). While they are there, a filthy caravan worker offers one of them a beautiful suit of Greek armor, chased with gold and imbued with magical protection. The price is not cheap, but it is a bargain for such a piece of work. The seller is Thalpios, and the armor is Calter's, stolen from the armory in the megaron.

If the armor is worn openly, it will be recognized (probably by a high-ranking militiaman), and the chase is on. If the wearer is captured, he could be banished, enslaved, or sent to the galleys.

But since the character is really innocent of the charges, he could offer to find the real culprit and bring him to justice. Thalpios will not be difficult to trace, but he will not reveal his source willingly. If the characters do find the thief (one of the pirates from the Kambian Marsh), they will be rewarded.

KYTHERA

Kythera of the Five Towers is a rough border town located strategically at the point where three great rivers — the Saknuru, the Kuanda, and the Suddani — join to form the mighty Manduka, which flows north into the sea. This location enables Kythera's king to control river trade with the people of the Zindor Plain and southern Æsheba.

The flow of treasure and native goods into Kythera is astounding. Some goods are floated downriver to Milios on cargo barges; the rest are loaded onto camels for overland treks to Ios.

The king of Kythera is a Greek soldier named Eurypylos. He was second in command to Peisandros for the first few years after landfall, but all that changed when the Miliosian king sent him up the great river with one hundred hoplites on a scouting expedition. When Eurypylos reached the confluence of the three rivers, he at once realized the strategic importance of the spot. The man who controlled this point could control all the river trade on the Manduka.

Knowing that Peisandros wielded little power so far from home, Eurypylos set about building a strong camp. He murdered the messengers who brought increasingly more urgent dispatches from his former lord and dumped their bodies into the Manduka. By the time Peisandros realized what was happening, Eurypylos was firmly entrenched in the new city-state of Kythera.

After some threats and minor skirmishing, the two leaders called a truce. Peisandros recognized Eurypylos's authority in Kythera and hammered out exclusive trade agreements with him to ensure a constant flow of goods up the Manduka to Milios. Eurypylos was quite satisfied with this arrangement, for it would soon make him wealthy.

Once hostilities had ceased, traders and craftsmen moved to Kythera with their families. Local natives, primarily Nimbassa, also moved into the citadel, and the settlement began to look more like a town and less like a fortress. The population grew to more than two hundred within six months.

The following year, a delegation arrived from Ios bearing handsome gifts and words of praise for Eurypylos, along with a proposal from Calter. If Eurypylos would see that at least 25% of all merchandise passing through Kythera found its way to Ios instead of Milios, Calter would guarantee the sale of those goods at a rate 5% above the current price paid by Miliosian traders. With a mercenary gleam in his eye, Eurypylos publicly burned the treaty with Milios and swore that henceforth Kythera would be a gathering place for traders of both northern colonies.

When Peisandros learned of Eurypylos's duplicity he was beside himself with rage, but his options were limited. He could either permit free trade on the Manduka, or mount full-scale attacks against both Kythera and Ios. This latter choice was impractical, for although he might be able to take one or the other, he could not conquer both, and he would have to leave Milios practically defenseless to obtain even a partial victory. In the end, he accepted the situation with such good grace as he could muster. Though the flow of goods along the Manduka is no longer what it was that first year, Peisandros still grows wealthy. But he has not forgotten, nor has he stopped plotting ways to take Kythera away from Eurypylos.

GOVERNMENT

Eurypylos is an absolute monarch, and he shares his authority with no one. However, he does respect the opinions of his friend and advisor Zimbutu, chief of the Nimbassa village within the citadel. The chief is responsible for negotiating trade agreements with the local natives, and often leads military patrols. The king personally dispenses justice and handles the business of government.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

Kythera is a rough place, and only the laws dealing with major crimes, such as murder and treason, are enforced. The city guards usually turn a blind eye to street fighting, petty theft, and disputes between traders. However, the penalties for those convicted of serious crimes are harsh. Execution is the most common sentence, though offenders who are deemed strong and able may be impressed into military service, for Kythera has many enemies.

While Peisandros dispenses harsh justice merely to impress and intimidate visitors, Eurypylos does so out of necessity. His underlings would be all too happy to overthrow him and claim Kythera's riches for themselves if they thought they could. Eurypylos is well aware that any sign of weakness could be his downfall.

MILITIA

The total military force in Kythera consists of one hundred five hoplites, thirty archers, ten javelinmen, and fifteen slingers, armed and armored in the same fashion as those at Milios, plus fifty Nimbassa warriors. The natives prize Greek armor, especially the helmets, but prefer to use their own spears and hide shields for lightness and speed.

NATIVES

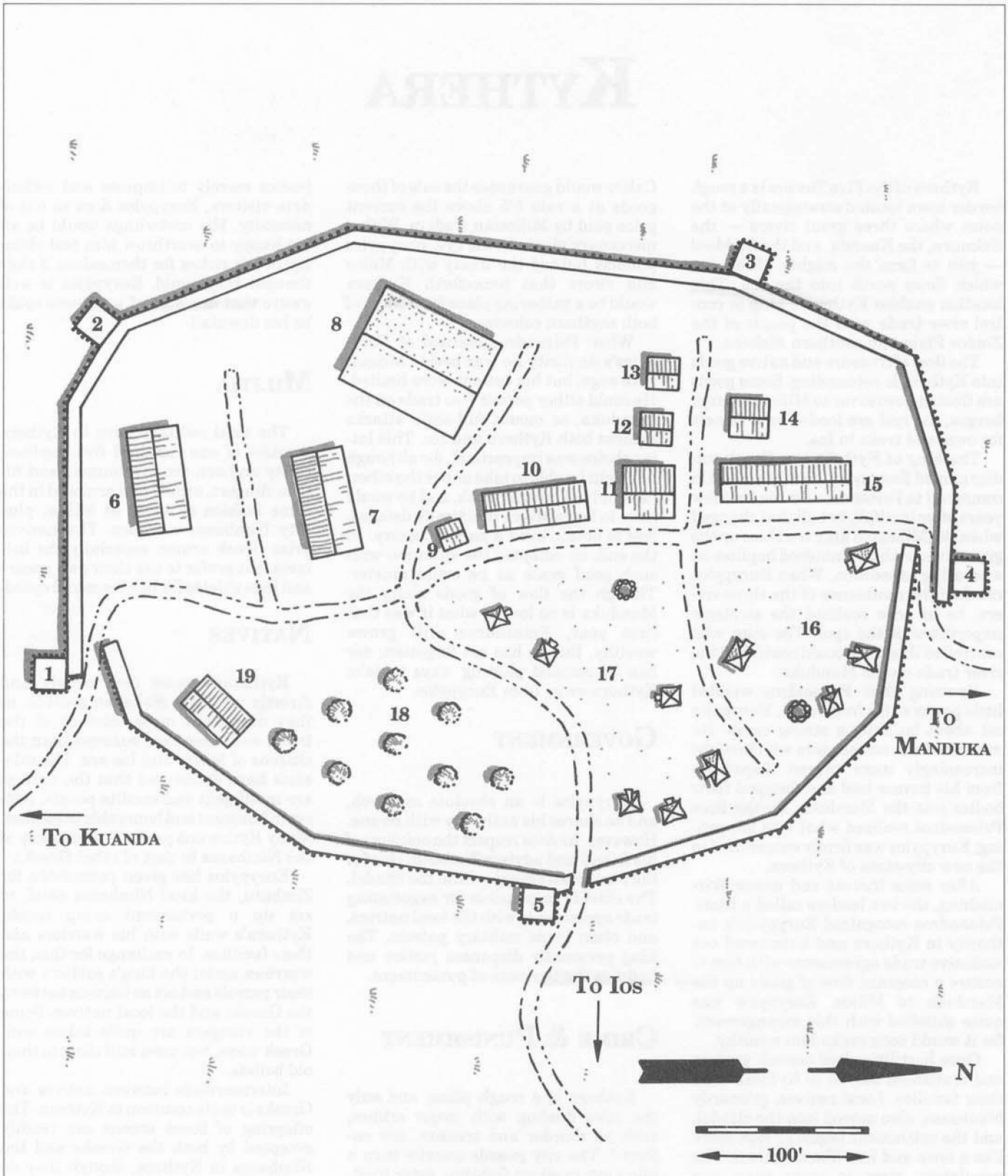
Kytherans must deal closely and directly with the Æsheban natives, so they are much more tolerant of the tribes and their local customs than the citizens of Milios and Ios are. The colonists have discovered that the natives are intelligent and erudite people, honest in business and honorable in combat. Many Kytherans prefer the company of the Nimbassa to that of other Greeks.

Eurypylos has given permission for Zimbutu, the local Nimbassa chief, to set up a permanent camp inside Kythera's walls with his warriors and their families. In exchange for this, the warriors assist the king's soldiers with their patrols and act as liaisons between the Greeks and the local natives. Some of the villagers are quite taken with Greek ways, but most still cling to their old beliefs.

Intermarriage between natives and Greeks is quite common in Kythera. The offspring of these unions are readily accepted by both the Greeks and the Nimbassa in Kythera, though they do encounter bigotry when they visit the other Greek colonies.

BANDITS

Presently, Eurypylos has more pressing problems than Peisandros rat-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100'

tling his sword in the north. There are several groups of bandits, both native and Greek, in the hill country around the town. The most rapacious of these bands is led by Scarphe, a renegade hoplite from the Kytheran army. Scarphe's men never attack Kythera itself; instead, they prey on cargo barges traveling the Manduka and caravans to Ios. (See page 87 for details.)

To ensure the safety of the goods within his territory, Eurypylos sends soldiers to patrol along the caravan routes and riverbanks every day. Peisandros does not yet know about Scarphe, but if he did discover the situation, he would certainly try to contact the bandit leader and work out an arrangement detrimental to Eurypylos.

TRADE RELATIONS

Kythera trades actively with both Milios and Ios, though Peisandros is not at all happy with the arrangements. Casos, the Miliosian representative, is treated with all due respect in Kythera, but watched constantly. Relations with Ios are considerably more relaxed.

Eurypylos is on excellent terms with all of the local native tribes, thanks to the diplomacy of Zimbutu and his sister Konga. The Kytheran merchants do not try to take unfair advantage of the natives as the traders from the northern colonies often do, so the tribesmen work hard to supply requested goods.

Two years ago, a young Kytheran mulatto discovered a pass through the Renegals near the source of the Kuanda. Some of the goods brought along the road between Gloriosus and New Grecia are collected at the garrison (page 96), then taken overland to the Kuanda for transport to Kythera. Despite the proximity of the trade route to the river, exchanges of goods occur only a few times a year, for the mountain road is washed out and impassable during the rainy season. Eurypylos maintains excellent relations with both kingdoms.

KEY TO KYTHERA

The granite wall that surrounds Kythera's small citadel is 5 m (15') tall. Heavy wooden doors serve as city gates, controlling access at each of the three roads that lead into the city. Beside each gate is a stone tower, 6 m (20') square and 7.5 m (25') tall. Two more such structures face outward from the western wall. These five towers are the source of the city's appellation.

All of the residents live within the citadel, most in small, crude, grass or wooden huts. There is very little agriculture, though a few citizens do grow food in small gardens near their dwellings. The townsfolk obtain most of their food through trade with the Nimbassa tribes that inhabit the area.

1-5. GUARD TOWERS

Kythera is on perpetual alert because of the bandits in the nearby hills. Goods are not entirely safe inside the citadel either, for the concentration of so many riches in such a small place draws thieves like flies swarming to honey. Yet, even with the dangers, Greek traders regularly venture the risk to increase their wealth.

Each tower is manned by ten hoplites and five archers day and night. Caravans are admitted with only a cursory examination of their loads, but individuals are scrutinized and questioned more closely. If travelers cannot convince the guards that their business is legitimate, entry is denied.

6-7. BARRACKS

These buildings serve as quarters for the hoplites, archers, javelinmen, and slingers, along with their officers. Weapons and armor are stored here as well. The open ground around the barracks is used as a training field.

8. MEGARON

This megaron is crude compared to those of Peisandros and Calter, but it is much finer than the rude shelters comprising the majority of this hinterland town. The interior walls have been roughly plastered with mud, whitened with bird droppings, then crudely painted with scenes of the hills and rivers around Kythera. The central hearth is built of unworked stone, and its fire is tended regularly by a slave who knows that he will be executed should the flame ever die. Neither the distance from more civilized areas nor the mingling of cultures can persuade Eurypylos to abandon this old Greek tradition. The king conducts his court and handles all matters of business here.

9. SLAVE MARKET

Kythera's slave market holds infrequent auctions at random intervals, subject to the number of slaves available for sale. Most slaves are bought and sold in lots at the caravansaries (#16 & #17, page 34). This market serves the residents of Kythera who wish to purchase only one or two slaves at a time.

Slaves are kept in a pit, 3 m (10') deep, beside the auction block until they can be sold. The pit is covered with a rough grating made of saplings bound with vines. Conditions in the pit are subhuman — it is open to the weather and there are no sanitation facilities. Up to twenty slaves are kept there at any given time. New slaves are thrown down through a trapdoor in the grating. When it is time for the auction, a ladder is lowered into the pit so that the slaves can climb to the surface, where slavers await them with wrist manacles. The slaves to be sold that day are dunked in the Manduka before the auction, for a clean slave brings a higher price than a filthy one. After this mandatory bath, guards escort the slaves to the block.

10. WAREHOUSE

Goods brought into Kythera from the interior of Æsheba, either by caravan or by individual traders, are stored here after consignment to a merchant in Milios or Ios. Five hoplites stand guard around this building day and night.

11. INN

Although this inn is certainly below the standards of the hostelries in Milios and Ios, travelers to Kythera can find at least a clean bed, shelter, and even a hot bath here. The proprietor is friendly, though he doesn't know much about the doings in town beyond the common gossip that can be heard on the streets. Prices are predictably high. Messages left here for expected visitors will be delivered, but security is not the best, and guests are warned not to leave valuables unguarded in their rooms.

12. SPRING HOUSE

Eurypylos built his citadel around a natural spring that flows from a rock outcropping. Though there are a few cisterns in and around Kythera to catch the rain, this spring is the primary source of fresh water for the inhabitants. It also serves as a gathering place where friends can exchange gossip.

The spring house is little more than a roof supported by pillars, open on all four sides. A stone cistern, 1 m (3') deep, has been built around the spring so that water jugs can be filled more easily.

13. BOARDING HOUSE

Travelers desiring accommodations less opulent than the rooms at the inn may stay here for a correspondingly

lower rate. The log building isn't impressive, outside or inside. The interior is lit with a few smoky torches, and the grizzled proprietor looks quite capable of slitting a boarder's throat for a few coins. Despite his appearance, however, the innkeeper is not a murderer. In fact, he is a good source of inside information about Kythera and the surrounding countryside.

14. TAVERN

Kythera's only tavern is very busy when the caravansaries are full. The exterior walls are stone to a height of 4', topped with the grass walls and thatched roof typical of native architecture. There are a few tables inside, but no bar. Mugs and pitchers are passed across the top of a half-door from the storage area in the rear of the building. If the tables are full, additional customers must stand, or sit on the dirt floor.

15. WAREHOUSE

Trade goods from Milios and Ios are stored here, awaiting the next caravan to points south. These goods are consigned to Casos and Epicles, agents for Peisandros and Calter, respectively. Both men are willing to barter these items with individual natives, and they might even sell to other merchants.

16-17. CARAVANSARIES

Caravans never camp outside the walls, especially after dark. There is little organization in the caravansaries; both areas seem to be a hopeless confusion of bundles, animals, and cursing camel drovers. But everything gets sorted out properly without any help from outsiders, so Eurypylos has not tried to impose order.

Much of the trading in Kythera is done right here. Traders greet incoming caravans and barter for any desired goods. Iosian traders load the merchandise onto their camels and leave at daybreak, hoping to be out of the hills before nightfall, since bandit attacks are more common after dark. Miliosian traders have it a little easier, though no safer. Draft animals and native bearers carry goods down to the river bank and load them onto rafts for the trip downriver. The river current is fairly strong, but the rafts are easy targets for bandits.

18. NATIVE VILLAGE

The dwellings in the Nimbassa village are small, round huts made of grass woven into a wooden framework, with conical roofs of the same material. Each has a single entrance, which is sometimes covered with an old animal skin. There is no provision inside for a fire; all cooking is done outside.

19. TEMPLE OF THE HARVEST

The exterior of the temple is a mixture of Greek and native architecture. The walls and roof are made of grass, but the entrance on the northeast side has a thatched porch roof supported by two marble columns. The interior is bare except for a small altar.

While Demeter is sometimes treated as a minor goddess in the colonists' homeland, those who live this far from civilization worship her as their primary deity, since the food crops grown on the Ngati Plain by the Nimbassa are vital to the colony's very survival. Barafela is a Nimbassan nature spirit very similar to Demeter, and the natives living within the citadel worship her at this same shrine.

IMPORTANT PEOPLE

The following individuals hold important positions within Kythera.

CASOS

Residence: #11
Vocation: Peisandros's Representative
Age/Height/Weight: 40/5' 8"/180 lbs.

Casos has smooth, rounded features, with not a trace of hair or beard. He insists upon wearing the traditional robes of office, even in this hot climate. His short, pudgy fingers and thumbs are bedecked with rings of various styles. Casos's eyes are perpetually squinted, and he speaks with a pronounced lisp. He has an annoying habit of whistling under his breath, usually out of tune.

If the word "smooth" describes him physically, then "slippery" is an apt term for his personality. Naturally cautious, Casos is a born schemer. He promotes Peisandros's interests, though he is certainly not above increasing his own wealth in the bargain. Although his reputation is not the cleanest, he has proven instrumental in maintaining the flow of goods to Milios.

EPICLES

Residence: #11
Vocation: Calter's Representative
Age/Height/Weight: 37/5' 6"/150 lbs.

A somewhat shorter and younger version of Casos, Epicles has managed to retain his hair, which falls in greasy, black ringlets down to his shoulders. His coal-black eyes glisten with shrewdness, and his words, though spoken with clipped precision, are always liberally sprinkled with flattering platitudes.

Epicles provided the motivating force that broke Peisandros's strangle-hold on Kytheran trade. To show his appreciation for this deed, Calter has personally enriched Epicles to the point that the latter's personal ambition has been awakened. For some time now, he has privately entertained the notion of carving his own empire from the rich land of Æsheba. He feels that he may even have a potential partner in Casos. Should these two seek to control the majority of trade, the economy of the Æsheban city-states would be thrown into turmoil.

EURYPYLOS

Residence: #8
Vocation: Warrior-King of Kythera
Age/Height/Weight: 30/6' 1"/210 lbs.

The handsome king of Kythera is tall and muscular — the image of the ancient Greek heroes. His jet-black hair, which has been allowed to grow freely, shines from daily applications of flower oils. He sports a close-cropped black beard, and his brown eyes are those of a natural predator.

Not given to oration, Eurypylos rules through actions, not words. He is the final authority in Kythera, and he deals with lawbreakers swiftly and often brutally. Even so, he could be considered a benevolent despot. His application of the laws is fair, and his apparent harshness is necessary to maintain some kind of order in this wild border area.

Eurypylos does not feel that he owes any allegiance to Peisandros whatsoever. He was merely in the right place at the right time and had the foresight to snatch the opportunity presented to him. He doesn't hate the Miliosian king, but is none too fond of him either.

Eurypylos is very possessive of Konga, his native consort, and woe to any man whom he has reason — any reason — to suspect also desires her.

KONGA

Residence: #8
Vocation: Consort of Eurypylos
Age/Height/Weight: 25/6' 0"/150 lbs.

Konga is a statuesque Nimbassa woman with the pleasing features of that race. Her short hair is a glossy black color, and it is usually adorned with



some kind of orchid. Her brown eyes shine with the vigor of youth. Like most of the local Nimbassa women, Konga dresses only in a brief grass skirt. Her ankles, wrists, and neck are adorned with beaten gold rings.

Konga is Zimbutu's widowed sister, so she naturally came with him when their tribe settled within the walls of Kythera. Her match with Eurypylos was easily accepted by all concerned, and Zimbutu is especially proud of his sister's man, even though the relationship has not been formalized by any kind of ceremony as yet.

A child of the grasslands, Konga is not altogether happy with living behind the walls of Kythera, but she believes she is in a unique position to help her people. She has proven herself valuable to Eurypylos on several occasions in dealing with other tribes. What she feels for the king could best be described as lustful respect rather than love. Since polygamy is accepted among her people, she sees nothing wrong with men other than Eurypylos wooing her, though she knows that the king is a jealous man, so she never lets flirtation progress too far.

ZIMBUTU

Residence: #18
Vocation: Nimbassa Chieftain
Age/Height/Weight: 31/6' 3"/220 lbs.

Very tall and muscular, Zimbutu is the classic picture of a native warrior. His curly hair is cut short in the Nimbassa style, and his deep brown eyes reflect honesty and nobility.

Zimbutu laughs easily, and is well-liked by both Greeks and natives. The fact that he has chosen to live within a Greek citadel is troubling to other Nimbassa tribes, but this is offset by the respect he has earned through his courage as a warrior and his leadership as a statesman. His strength and stamina are legendary, and he is capable of running great distances without tiring.

Zimbutu has developed a close friendship with Eurypylos based on mutual respect and admiration. The two work together to create a comfortable lifestyle for their respective peoples.

ADVENTURING

Use the following scenarios to acquaint your characters with Kythera.

1. THE DEATH OF SCARPHE

This adventure is appropriate for any characters who have gained some measure of fame or notoriety through previous adventures. Upon hearing of their arrival, Eurypylos will invite them to sup with him in his private quarters. After plying them with good food and strong wine, he will offer them a tidy sum to capture or kill Scarphe.

If the characters accept, they have several options. If they simply go off into the wilderness to seek the bandits' lair, Scarphe will hear of the plot and send a band of twenty men led by Iphis, his second-in-command, to capture them. If the characters kill more than ten men, the remaining bandits will scatter, and Scarphe will move his camp immediately. If the characters surrender, they will be taken to Scarphe. The bandits have orders not to kill the characters, but Iphis may disregard those instructions if the characters cause any trouble.

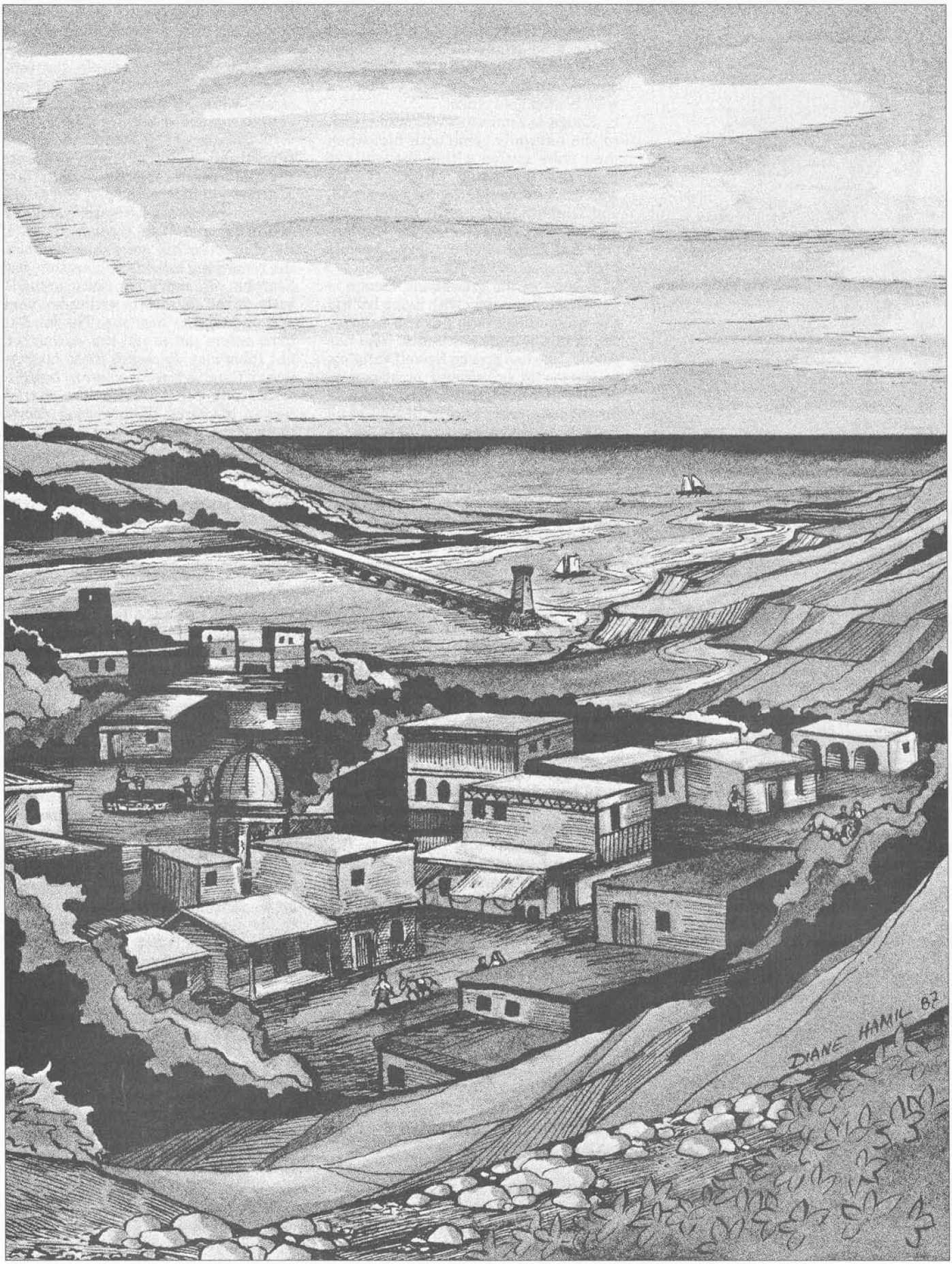
Scarphe will interview the characters in his camp. If they have shown themselves to be competent in battle, he will arrange for the party's best fighter to participate in a trial by combat with Iphis. Death is the penalty for losing. If the character wins, Scarphe will invite the party to join the outlaws. If they refuse, the bandit leader will order them put to death or sold into slavery.

The characters have a better chance of success if they set a trap. For example, they might capture a bandit and force him to divulge Scarphe's planned movements, but the captive will try to lie to them, fearing later retaliation from Iphis. A better option would be to disguise themselves as laborers rafting goods down the Manduka, or as camel drovers on their way to Ios. Either way, they would be certain to draw an ambush, with Iphis in the lead.

If Iphis realizes what the characters intend to do, he might be convinced to lead them to the bandit camp. Once they have killed Scarphe, Iphis will assume command of the remaining bandits and try to kill the characters. Whether or not he successfully eliminates the adventurers, Iphis will institute a reign of terror such as the region has never seen if he survives. Kythera's trade with the northern colonies will grind to a virtual standstill. If this occurs, Eurypylos will approach the characters once again to remove the menace.

2. THE SLAVE PIT

If a character is sold into slavery, either as a result of Adventure #1 or for breaking the law, the other characters will probably try to rescue their companion from the slave pit (#9, page 33). The slaves are guarded well, for they are valuable property. The other slaves will wish to be rescued as well, so the characters must plan the operation with care.


DIANE HAMIL 82

MILIOS

Milios, the largest city-state in the Æsheban colonies, is situated on a cliff on the west side of the headland known as the Gdyol Peninsula to the natives, or "The Lion" to the Greeks. The colony was founded twenty-four years ago by Peisandros, one of the two exiled leaders. The large natural harbor was ideal for fishing vessels, merchant ships, and the twelve triremes Peisandros had brought with him.

There was plenty of land nearby for farms, so most of the colonists spent the spring and summer plowing, planting, and cultivating. Peisandros spent the time overseeing the construction of a citadel near the harbor and establishing peace treaties and good trade relations with the nearby Nimbassa and Zebia tribes. The natives traded food, skins, gold, and uncut gems to the Greeks for weapons, tools, seed plants from the colonists' homeland, finished jewelry, and other items of value.

The colony prospered until the first winter storm, which brought devastating westerly gales that whipped up the normally calm waters of the harbor, sinking most of the vessels moored there. Such storms continued to plague Milios throughout the winter. Fishing operations ground to a standstill, and the colony was virtually undefended. Fortunately, no attackers appeared.

The following spring, Peisandros ordered a breakwater built to blunt the force of incoming combers. The seawall that now partially spans the harbor is constructed of rectangular wooden forms filled with waterproof concrete. The base was widened and strengthened by a backfill of rocks. A marvel of engineering, the seawall makes the harbor a relatively calm lake in even the wildest storm.

Exploratory vessels were sent west to map the coastline and search for other inhabitants. One such vessel discovered Gloriosus on the western coast, and returned with gifts for Peisandros from the king of that realm (see page 47 for details). Gloriosus had a ready supply of timber to trade, and Peisandros needed the lumber to rebuild his fleet. Trade relations were established between the two cities before the next winter.

Another two years passed before the king decided to explore the mysterious river Manduka. Peisandros sent Eurypylos, his second-in-command, up the mighty river with one hundred Miliosian soldiers to explore the lands south of the city. Instead of returning to Milios, Eurypylos set up his own colony, called Kythera. (See Kythera, page 31, for details.)

When a ship carrying merchants from a distant land entered the harbor more than two decades later, Milios was well established, and its population had more than doubled. Calter's efforts to establish trade relations with merchants from the nations across the sea brought income to Milios as well. Within the past few years, the volume of goods passing through Milios has quintupled. To ensure the safety of the ships moored in the harbor, Peisandros ordered guard towers erected along the seawall.

GOVERNMENT

Milios is still ruled by Peisandros, its founder. The king is an absolute ruler, though he does delegate some responsibilities to his advisors and to Dodona, his consort.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

The laws of Milios include the usual prohibitions against murder and thievery, plus harsh punishments for treason. Iron rings driven into the cliffs high above the harbor are used to bind such criminals, who are left there to die the slow death of exposure for their temerity in deceiving their lord.

MILITIA

A proud warrior, Peisandros maintains an army of one hundred fifty hoplites, thirty archers, thirty javelinmen, and fifteen slingers. There is a commanding officer for each fifteen men.

The officers maintain strict discipline; any small infraction of the rules is punishable by flogging. In actual combat, all units function as a cohesive whole, and all commands are swiftly obeyed. This highly organized military structure does not preclude independent actions by individuals, so long as personal heroics do not jeopardize the unit. The warriors eagerly seek opportunities, large or small, to display their skills in any battle.

Peisandros's Elite are second to none as a fighting force, and they are feared and respected throughout the Æsheban colonies. There is a very pronounced military presence within the citadel, with strutting and preening soldiers seemingly on every corner. The hoplites regard non-warriors as weaklings.

TRADE RELATIONS

The original schism between Ios and Milios has never healed, and since the two are in direct competition, a stony silence exists between the two leaders. Each city-state has ejected the other's representatives, though spies are always busy learning whatever they can from both.

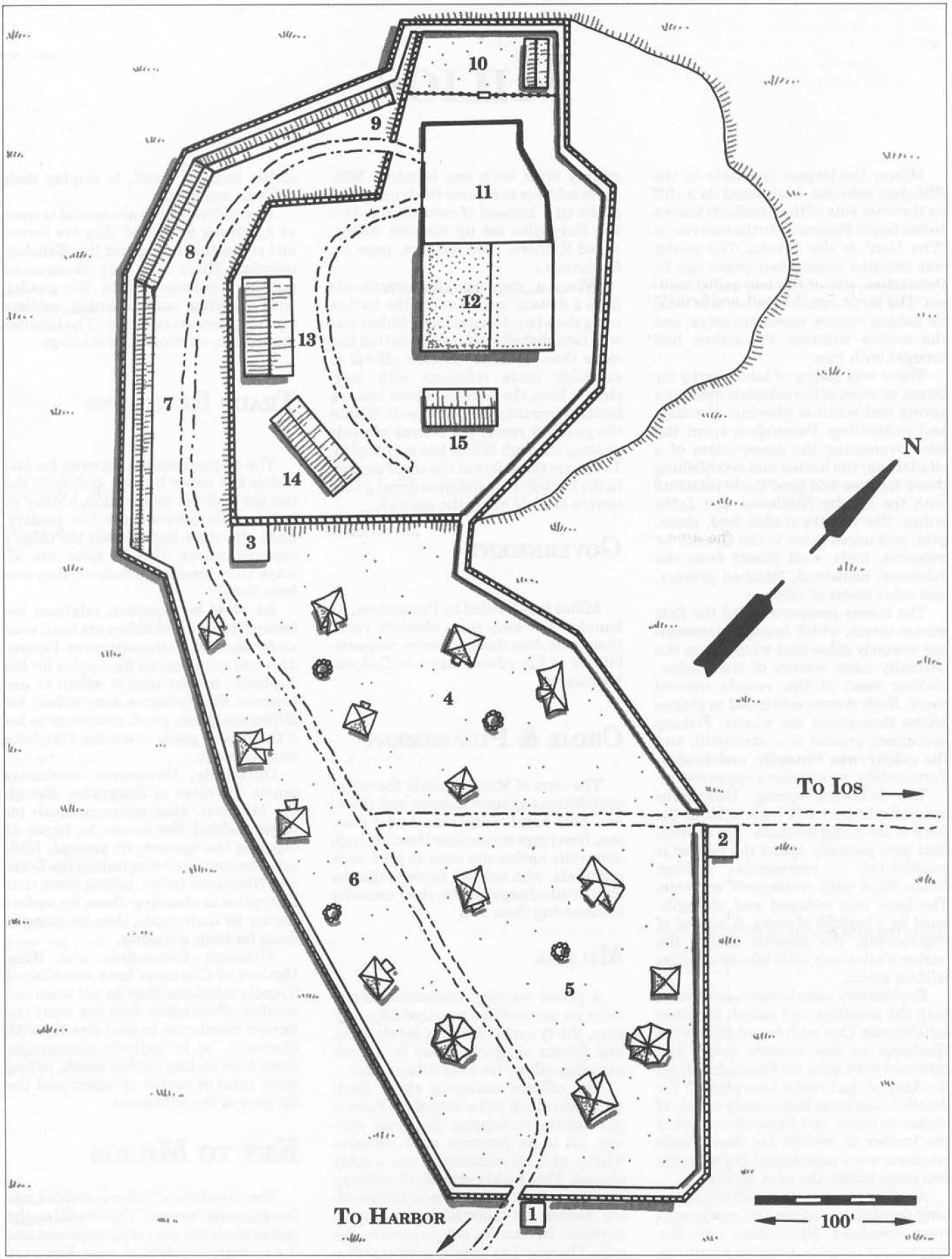
As could be expected, relations between Kythera and Milios are taut, even under the best of circumstances. Peisandros has not forgiven Eurypylos for his duplicity, but he cannot afford to antagonize the Kytheran king either, for Milios could lose much commerce to Ios if the flow of goods down the Manduka were to cease.

Outwardly, Peisandros constantly courts the favor of Eurypylos, though the Miliosian king sponsors much intrigue behind the scenes in hopes of toppling the upstart. At present, Miliosian emissaries are agitating the Zebia and Nimbassa tribes, telling them that Eurypylos is cheating them by underpaying for their goods, then laughing at them for their stupidity.

Although Peisandros and King Mgabwi of Gloriosus have established friendly relations, they do not trust one another. Peisandros does not want the foreign merchants to deal directly with Gloriosus, so he actively discourages them from sailing farther south, telling them tales of native savagery and the dangers of the wild coast.

KEY TO MILIOS

The city-state of Milios is divided into two separate "towns." The citadel on the peninsula is the seat of government and the primary residential area. But near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the harbor at the south end of the bay is a smaller settlement peopled by traders and dock workers who load and unload merchandise. It is here that characters who come to Milios by ship will arrive.

THE CITADEL

Through wealth brought by trade, the nearness of suitable quarries, and an abundance of slave labor, Peisandros raised a massive granite circuit wall, 5 m (15') tall and 3 m (10') thick, to protect his citadel. Each of the city gates in the wall consists of two wooden panels, each 3 m (10') wide, 5 m (15') tall, and 5 cm (2") thick, braced on the back with 10 cm (4") blocking. The gates are hinged to swing inward, and can be locked by dropping a square beam into brackets on the inside. Beside each gate is a stone guard tower, which stands 10 m (30') tall. The gates are opened at dawn and closed at sunset. If, for some reason, the gates must remain open after nightfall, an extra ten hoplites are detailed to stand guard, barring the entrances to anyone who does not have a pass signed by Peisandros or one of his agents. The king is afraid of bandits, and does not really trust the native tribes, even though most of them have been peaceful so far.

Each night, the guards light small watchfires at selected points throughout the city. All high-traffic areas, such as the caravansaries, are kept brightly lit to discourage crime. Larger fires are lit at the corners of the megaron (#12, right).

1-3. GUARD TOWERS

Each tower is manned by ten hoplites and five archers or slingers day and night. The headland is still a wild place despite the settling influence of the Greeks, so the king maintains guards around the clock.

Those regular visitors who are familiar to the gate guards on duty are admitted without question. No one else is allowed into the citadel without a pass from Peisandros himself or from one of the traders at the harbor. Passes are usually inscribed on a clay tablet. No pass means no entrance, and the guards will be more than happy to demonstrate their weapon skills on anyone who feels he does not need one.

4-6. CARAVANSARIES

Although most caravan drivers house their animals in the facilities near the harbor, space is also provided within the walls in an area called the lower citadel. There are few permanent structures here; hobbled camels and other beasts of burden roam freely among their owners' tents. The atmosphere is accented with the pungent aroma of dirty camel, and voices babble in Greek, pidgin Greek, and native dialects at all hours of the day and night.

Petty theft and violent crimes are commonplace in the caravansaries, and no one pays much attention to a brawl, except to bet on who will win. A corpse on the ground is just another obstacle to avoid. Five slaves clean up the worst of the refuse in the area each morning.

7-9. GALLERY APARTMENTS

As Peisandros's retinue grew, it became impossible to house all of his retainers within the upper citadel, so the king ordered the construction of ten gallery apartments behind the outside wall. Each apartment has a balcony overlooking the harbor some 30 m (100') below, plus four sumptuously appointed rooms used for cooking and sleeping. These amenities, all provided at Peisandros's expense, help to ameliorate any loss of honor the residents might feel at not living closer to their chief's side. Access to the gallery is from the path below via several staircases.

10. STABLES

Peisandros owns fifty fine domesticated zebras destined to pull chariots into battle. The lightweight wooden cars are used for transportation rather than as fighting platforms. Most have plain, unadorned wickerwork topsides, though the king's personal chariot has carved wooden panels chased with gold.

11. OUTER COURTYARD

A wall separates the lower citadel from the upper citadel, where Peisandros has his private quarters. The courtyard is simply an open place for travelers to refresh themselves at the small fountain before entering the megaron. Riders may keep their mounts in the military stables nearby.

In the courtyard, at least ten hoplites in plate armor are standing guard at all times. These men are part of the king's personal guard. Their sole duty, besides protecting the king's person, is to ensure that no one enters the megaron without a valid pass from Peisandros or one of his agents. Members of the royal household are permitted free access to the megaron, but no one else is admitted into the lord's presence without written clearance, and these guards almost rabidly enforce this dictum.

12. MEGARON

The walls of the throne room are painted with bright murals depicting the deeds of Peisandros as well as those of the gods. At least ten hoplites from the king's personal guard are always in attendance, their highly polished weapons and plate armor glinting in the firelight. The decor is meant to impress visitors with the king's wealth and power, and the display of armed might is indeed intimidating.

The hearth is a symbol of divine favor, and a fire is kept burning therein at all times. It provides light and heat, and is the natural gathering place for Peisandros's court. All diplomatic meetings are conducted near the hearth as a matter of tradition.

Delegates from other nations come here by appointment for official audiences with Peisandros. When such visitors arrive, the king is usually in the process of passing judgment on some criminal. The punishment he decrees is invariably swift and harsh. These little displays are carefully staged to coincide with the arrival of foreign delegations, to demonstrate that the king of Milios will tolerate no duplicity.

13-14. BARRACKS

These buildings house the fighting force of Milios. The soldiers in each unit eat and sleep together in whatever territory they can carve out for themselves. Obviously, there is much quarreling among the soldiers, but this is not as disruptive as it seems. In fact, the constant disputes are encouraged, for they serve to maintain each man's fighting instinct at a high edge, and to show the worth of his peers. Each man has only a small cot on which to sleep and a thin scrap of blanket to shield him from the chilly night air.

The open ground around the barracks between the megaron and the inner wall is a training area for work with the sword, javelin, bow and sling.

15. TEMPLE OF ARES

A man of war needs his god close, and Peisandros erected this temple, built of marble imported from Gloriosus, in honor of Ares. The spartan interior is dominated by a large statue of the Lover of War, and the walls are festooned with weapons.

On the eve of any planned battle, an ox is sacrificed outside the temple. Elatos, the haruspex, divines the future from the twists and turns of the beast's entrails. Omens deeply affect the psyche

of the superstitious soldier, and major battles may be postponed if the signs show that Milios has not gained the favor of Ares.

IMPORTANT CITIZENS

The following individuals hold positions of importance in Milios.

ALTES

Residence: #7
Vocation: Trader
Age/Height/Weight: 40/5' 4"/120 lbs.

Short and wiry, Altes is full of nervous energy. He has curly black hair, and a short black beard frames his sharp-featured face. His dark eyes are perpetually squinted against the glare of the sun on sand and water, and this gives him a sly, calculating look.

Altes is basically honest, though he is not above cheating stupid traders. Like any other merchant, he wants to get the most he can for the least expenditure, and he is a master at haggling and flattery. Altes is the most prosperous trader in Milios, and because he is careful to grease the king's palm liberally, he is accorded great respect by being allowed to live in one of the gallery apartments (#9, page 39).

Altes owns ten merchant ships, which shuttle his goods between Milios and Gloriosus. His profits are well over 1,000% because he trades bronze utensils and iron weapons to the Zebia along the coast for lumps of pure gold, rough diamonds, and animal skins.

BESA

Residence: #12
Vocation: Commander of Hoplites
Age/Height/Weight: 36/5' 10"/180 lbs.

Besa looks far older than his years. His body is a patchwork of old scars, and his full black beard hides a particularly hideous mark on the right side of his face. His eyes are light gray. Always armed and armored, his carriage and demeanor show that he is ready for a fight at any time.

The commander rose to his position through long association with Peisandros. There are rumors that he once was a bandit in the hills of his homeland, but this has never been proved. That he is a canny and fierce warrior cannot be denied, and he has the respect and admiration of all the soldiers.

Besa has his own command of fifteen hoplites, but in combat he gains the added responsibility of second-in-command to Peisandros. He assumes full command in the event that his king is forced to withdraw from battle.

DODONA

Residence: #12
Vocation: King's Consort
Age/Height/Weight: 35/5' 8"/130 lbs.

Dodona is a well-formed lady, though perhaps a bit too muscular for some men's tastes. She normally wears her straight, glossy black hair pulled back in a no-nonsense ponytail, and she favors durable leather clothing in this frontier town. Her olive eyes are narrow-set and hooded, and her mouth is drawn down in a perpetual frown. No one can recall ever having heard her laugh.

Dodona is as ambitious as Peisandros, and she takes an active part in his plans for war as well as for trade. She is skilled as a warrior herself, but this has not earned her the respect of the hoplites, the male ego being what it is. That she is a master of the bow causes the soldiers to scoff at her, but she can hold her own in sword and spear play as well.

Peisandros usually ignores the complaints of his men about Dodona's participation in military activities, though he will not tolerate any disrespectful comments made about her in his presence. She has proved to be a staunch ally and helpmate, and he has gradually delegated such authority to her that the two are effectively co-rulers of Milios.

ELATOS

Residence: #15
Vocation: Priest of Ares
Age/Height/Weight: 65/5' 6"/160 lbs.

Elatos is a rarity — a black-skinned caucasian. He is completely bald, and his deep brown eyes are sunken so deeply in his face that they seem to be no more than black holes. Elatos always dresses in a simple, short-sleeved robe dyed to a bright red hue, the color of fresh arterial blood.

The priest's background is mysterious, but many rumors of how he came to be blackened circulate around the night fires of Milios. The truth is that he was burned bald and black by the divine fire of Ares during a battle long ago, before the establishment of the Æsheban colonies. Elatos himself has never confirmed or denied this particular rumor, though he often stares into the flames of the sacred hearth in the megaron, a smile playing about his lips.

Elatos also serves as the haruspex, divining the future by examining the entrails of a sacrificed beast. This is an old art, and the veracity of the predictions is accepted by all the citizens.

The Nimbassa and other natives who encounter Elatos hold him in awe. That his skin is the color of theirs is proof to them that their gods hold him in high favor. In fact, the Khufiri insist that *their* god of war was the one who negrified him. Elatos is always honored when he visits their villages.

Peisandros cunningly uses Elatos as an emissary, attempting to take advantage of the natives' superstitious awe. But Elatos is his own man and deals with the natives in his own fashion, as he believes his god dictates.

GLAUCOS

Residence: #12
Vocation: Councillor
Age/Height/Weight: 75/5' 5"/140 lbs.

Glaucos is a stoop-shouldered old man with an almost completely bald head and a white beard that has grown to his waist. His clawlike hands are blotched with liver spots and badly gnarled by advanced arthritis. His skin is pale and thin, and looks as though it has been stretched too tightly over his old bones.

Although he seems to be nothing more than a decrepit, probably senile old man, his gray eyes belie that impression, revealing a lively intellect and an inquiring mind. Glaucos served Peisandros's father, then tutored the Miliosian king himself during the latter's formative years. He was forced into exile through that association with Peisandros. Glaucos despises the arid climate of Æsheba, which he feels will surely be the death of him, and yearns for the wooded hills of his homeland.

Glaucos is a consummate diplomat who knows how to deal with his countrymen. He quickly grasped the essentials of working with the native tribes, and has frequently had to force his wisdom on his hotheaded king, who has a propensity to agitate for war when skillful diplomacy is the better alternative.

PEISANDROS

Residence: #12
Vocation: Warrior-King of Milios
Age/Height/Weight: 50/5' 9"/180 lbs.

Peisandros is an imposing figure, whether clad in the cuirass and greaves of a warrior or in soft robes befitting the ruler of an important city. His hair has remained jet black despite his advancing years, and he keeps it close-cropped in the warrior style. Sea-gray eyes glitter in his face, making his features seem

set and cold.

A high-spirited and somewhat frivolous youth, Peisandros became a hard, bitter man after his exile. Rather than pining for that which he can never regain, however, Peisandros has devoted all his energy to making Milios the dominant city-state of Æsheba. His secret ambition is to create an empire that surpasses any other.

The king of Milios takes active command of his troops on the battlefield. His mind is agile and incisive, and his eyes sparkle as he closes in on the crux of a problem or springs the trap on a liar. Although he is not above chicanery and double-dealing himself, Peisandros will not tolerate lies from his underlings.

For all his cunning, Peisandros is an arrogant and imperious man whose blunt speech is ill-suited to the more delicate art of diplomacy. Peisandros fancies himself king of Æsheba, not just Milios. He maintains his position through force of arms, though his cadre of diplomats, led by Glaucos, serves to soften his words and dictates.

THE HARBOR

Not all the people in the area can squeeze into the citadel at night, so dock workers and sometimes even traders must fend for themselves beside the harbor. As the map below shows, the permanent harbor residents have erected a flimsy wooden barricade, made of old ships' timbers, driftwood, and rubbish, to afford themselves some measure of security.

The harbor is a busy place all day and far into the night. Merchant vessels must pass the breakwater and moor alongside one of the quays. If all the slips are full, ships may temporarily tie up on the breakwater itself, though this space is usually reserved for wargalleys.

Anyone is free to enter the harbor area, except large groups of armed men. The shoreline is usually choked with camels and donkeys, so movement is difficult and delays are certain.

1. THE FERRY

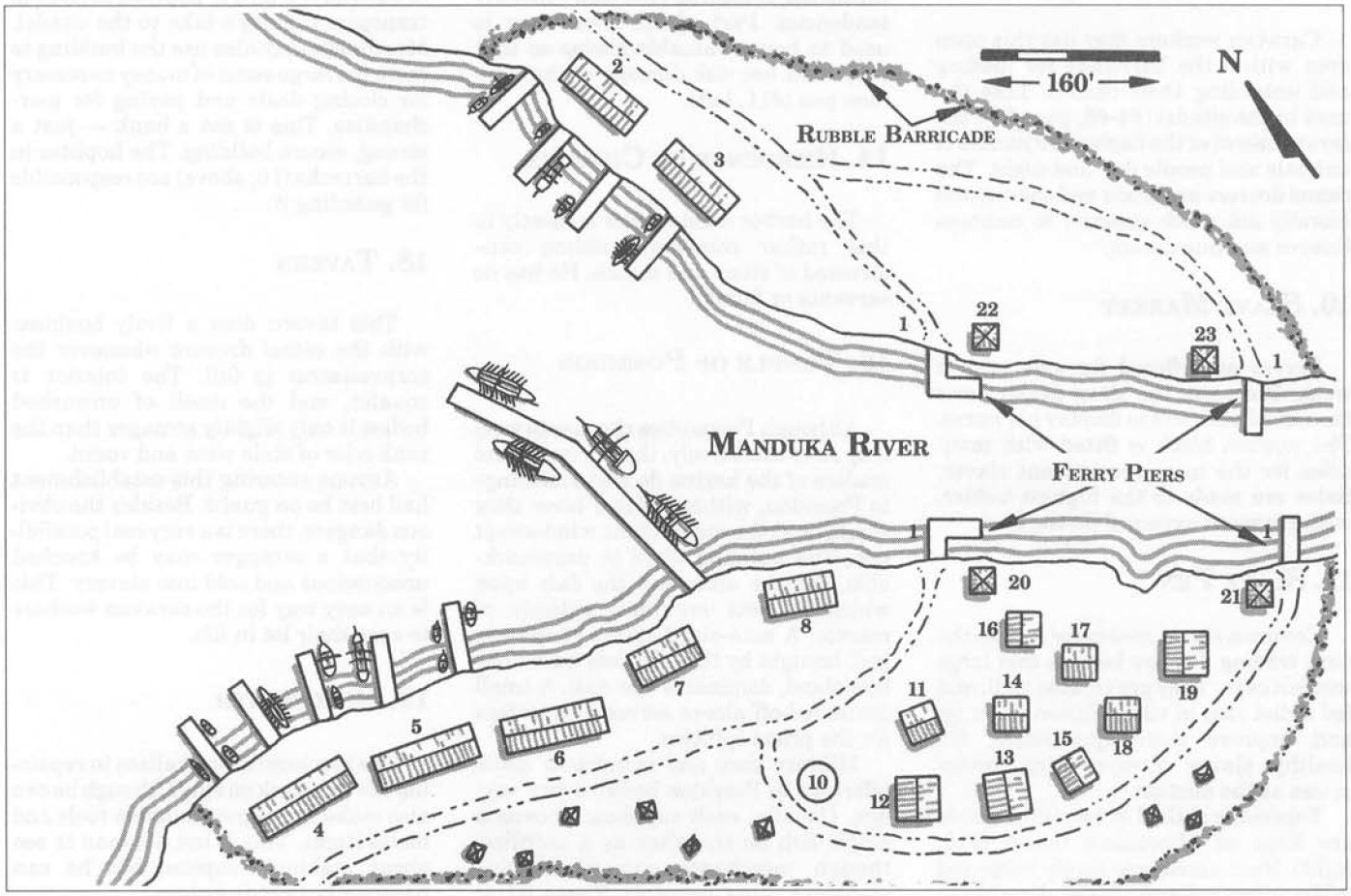
The banks of the Manduka are very marshy, and all attempts to build a bridge over the river have failed — the heavy bridge piers simply sank into the muck within a few weeks. Thus, a ferry has been provided for travelers to cross the river. Small boats or rafts are launched from a straight, upstream dock. They cross the river diagonally, borne downstream by the current, to the L-shaped dock on the other shore. Unloaded vessels are then pulled to the upstream dock for the return trip.

2-3. WAREHOUSES

Trade goods destined for the Nimbassa tribes are stored in these buildings until an outbound caravan is available to transport them. Colored glass beads, metal axes and knives, gold and silver armbands and bracelets, jars of wine, etc. are all items of value to the natives. Many of these goods are made in Milios, but some are imported from other colonies, or even overseas.

4-6. WAREHOUSES

Merchandise meant for export is stored in these structures. See Natural Treasures (page 22) for what could be found here. Those traders who maintain their own caravans and ships have their connections for obtaining merchandise on a regular basis. Speculators, who risk trading new merchandise in unfamiliar regions, hire ships as needed. Since they usually wish to buy only enough merchandise to suit their current needs, they come to these warehouses to look



over the contents and bid on desired items. Because some of the goods are so valuable, security is very tight.

7. NAVAL STORES

Extra spars and oars, sails, rope, and rigging for ships are stored here to refit Peisandros's wargalleys. The building is not guarded, but one to five sailors are usually inside collecting supplies at any given time. Only members of the fleet are allowed on the premises; intruders may find themselves at the wrong end of an oar if caught.

8. NAVAL BARRACKS

Galley captains and masters-at-arms use this building for their quarters when in port. Though the place looks like a barracks, the interior has been partitioned off to provide some privacy. The admiral of the fleet and other captains who have greatly pleased Peisandros have been awarded gallery apartments in the citadel. Common sailors bed where they can find space, often on the ships or in tents on the ground around the barracks.

9. CARAVANSERAI

Caravan workers may use this open area within the barricade for loading and unloading their camels. Like the ones in the citadel (#4-#6, page 39), the caravanserai at the harbor is a jumble of animals and people day and night. The camel drovers are crude and coarse, and morally not much superior to common thieves and murderers.

10. SLAVE MARKET

Slaves are offered for sale once a week. Hicetaon, the slave dealer, uses the raised platform to display his wares. The auction block is fitted with manacles for the more recalcitrant slaves. Sales are made to the highest bidder, with payment expected on the spot.

11. SLAVE PEN

Common slaves meant for sale on the next trading day are kept in this large wooden cage. They are treated well, and fed a diet rich in oils to fatten them up and improve their appearance, for healthy slaves always bring better prices at the auction.

Especially skilled or beautiful slaves are kept at Hicetaon's house (#13, right). Such slaves are rarely subjected to the added indignity of the slave block; instead, they are discreetly sold to wealthy Greeks in the citadel.

12. TAVERN

This tavern caters primarily to the sailors and the hoplite guards on harbor duty. The bartender serves his customers harsh, cheap wine made from locally grown fruits. Fights are common, and the walls bear the scars of past altercations. Drunkenness, however, is rare, since the punishment for an inebriated soldier or sailor ranges from extra duty to flogging. The tavernkeeper is a kindly soul who will cheerfully eject anyone who seems to have reached his limit.

13. RESIDENCE OF HICETAON

Hicetaon's stone house reflects how lucrative slave trading can be. The small porch has a roof supported by real marble columns (imported from Gloriosus). The roof is covered with red clay tiles in the traditional Greek fashion.

Visitors are received courteously by Hicetaon's body slave. Hicetaon is a gregarious man, and he welcomes all visitors, especially those who bring news of business opportunities.

The interior of the house is sparsely furnished, reflecting Hicetaon's miserly tendencies. Part of the lower floor is used to house valuable slaves so that they need not risk damage in the common pen (#11, left).

14. RESIDENCE OF CHROMIS

The harbor master lives modestly in this rather common building constructed of stone and thatch. He has no servants or family.

15. TEMPLE OF POSEIDON

Although Peisandros chooses to worship Ares exclusively, the seafarers and traders of the harbor do make offerings to Poseidon, without whose favor they would be at the mercy of the wind-swept sea. The building itself is unremarkable, but the altar and the dais upon which it rests are built entirely of marble. A man-sized statue of the sea god, brought by the colonists from their homeland, dominates one wall. A small curtained-off alcove serves as quarters for the priest Iphiclos.

Military men and merchants make offerings to Poseidon before every voyage. Usually, each supplicant burns a single fish on the altar as a sacrifice, though merchants sometimes give money or other treasure. These latter offerings are used to maintain the temple and support the priest. Any extra money is used to aid seafarers who have fallen on hard times.

16. BARRACKS

Peisandros keeps three squads of hoplites in the harbor area to man the guard towers beside the ferry (#20-#23, page 43). This building serves as living quarters for those soldiers. Each man has a pallet on which to sleep and a small chest for his personal possessions.

The hoplites assigned here are those who do not have the fighting skill and the ambition to gain posts with the elite citadel troops. Regular militiamen who are being disciplined for infractions may also draw temporary duty at the ferry. There are no heroes here, and although these hoplites do their duty, they are all rather sullen and uncooperative.

17. TREASURY

Peisandros demands a tithe (usually 10% of the declared value) on all goods shipped out of the harbor, as payment for maintaining the seawall and the guard force there. All money collected is kept here under lock and key. At the end of each day, a unit of hoplites arrives to transport the day's take to the citadel. Merchants may also use the building to store the large sums of money necessary for closing deals and paying for merchandise. This is not a bank — just a strong, secure building. The hoplites in the barracks (16, above) are responsible for guarding it.

18. TAVERN

This tavern does a lively business with the camel drovers whenever the caravansarai is full. The interior is squalid, and the smell of unwashed bodies is only slightly stronger than the rank odor of stale wine and vomit.

Anyone entering this establishment had best be on guard. Besides the obvious dangers, there is a very real possibility that a stranger may be knocked unconscious and sold into slavery. This is an easy way for the caravan workers to ease their lot in life.

19. BLACKSMITH

The blacksmith specializes in repairing the ironwork on ships, though he can also make and repair common tools and metal items. This is not the man to see about making weapons, but he can hammer out crude knives.

20-23. FERRY GUARD TOWERS

Five hoplites are stationed in each small tower from sunrise to sunset. They oversee the passage of boats and rafts, and act as messengers between the citadel and the harbor. No passes or fees are required to use the ferry, but greasing a guard's palm will ensure a speedy trip across the river instead of the usual seemingly endless wait while more "important" cargo, such as animal fodder, is ferried from side to side.

IMPORTANT CITIZENS

The following individuals hold positions of importance in the harbor area.

CHROMIS

Residence: #14
Vocation: Harbor Master
Age/Height/Weight: 41/5' 9"/250 lbs.

Chromis spends most of his time outdoors. As a result, he has skin the color of unpainted wood left too long in the sun and spray, and his brown eyes are pinched in a perpetual squint against the glare of sun on water. His graying hair is tied in a club at the nape of his neck.

The harbor master comes from a long line of sailors. He became friends with Peisandros years ago in their homeland, and willingly chose exile to avoid being separated from his comrade. He owns fifteen merchant ships, all of which Peisandros uses for his own private trading endeavors.

It was only natural for Peisandros to appoint his friend and most accomplished captain to the position of Harbor Master. Chromis's responsibilities include maintaining the harbor area, seawall, and wharfs, collecting the tithes from outbound traders, and making sure there are enough supplies for the fleet. He also issues passes to those who wish to see Peisandros.

Chromis is an honest, uncomplicated man. Though he strictly enforces his authority when dealing with harbor matters, no one has ever called him unfair. He shows no favoritism, except, understandably, toward Peisandros.

HICETAON

Residence: #13
Vocation: Slave Dealer
Age/Height/Weight: 37/6' 0"/190 lbs.

The slaver is not a pleasant-looking man. Squat and corpulent, he resembles a fat toad waiting for its next meal. His piggish eyes give his face a calculating look, and though his wealth enables him to have the finest of everything, his raucous voice and boorish manners betray his peasant upbringing. Hicetaon has always wanted to be a member of the upper crust. He cannot understand why he is shunned, despite his wealth.

Once a slave himself, Hicetaon managed to buy his freedom. Realizing that there was a potential for high profit in the slave trade, he went into the business from the other side, and has done well. Hicetaon has not forgotten his history, however, and he treats his slaves relatively well.

Hicetaon always gives Peisandros the pick of the lot at bargain prices, and frequently gifts the king with beautiful women and boys. Peisandros accepts the gifts, but has never invited Hicetaon to dine with him; in fact, the king goes out of his way to avoid the slaver.

IPHICLOS

Residence: #15
Vocation: Priest of Poseidon
Age/Height/Weight: 60/5' 6"/140 lbs.

Iphiclos is drawing to the close of a life spent in devotion to Poseidon. His long, white hair sprouts from his head around a central bald spot the size of a pomegranate. His brown eyes have the cloudy appearance of age, and he is afflicted with senility.

Iphiclos is a kindly man, more than willing to help destitute sailors who seek his aid. He also has the gift of prophecy, which was bestowed upon him by Poseidon. The priest's prophecies always have to do with water and always, eventually, come true. His visions come to him unbidden, so it is useless to ask him for predictions about specific matters.

ADVENTURING

Use this sample scenario to acquaint your characters with Milios.

BIRDS OF WAR

Peisandros wants to build a war fleet of triremes so that he can conquer the western and northern coasts of Æsheba. With this increased sea power, he hopes to force trade concessions from Gloriosus and convince Calter and Mgabwi to impose sanctions against Kythera.

The problem, of course, is that the timber available in the northern part of the continent is unsuitable for building ships. Peisandros already has a shipwright in Gloriosus constructing merchant vessels. As soon as they are completed, these ships are sailed, fully loaded, to Milios. Obviously, Peisandros cannot ask his shipbuilder to construct triremes openly. Therefore, he has struck a deal with several local merchants to buy the lumber themselves and transport it to Milios.

Altes is in charge of the project. Each trader preparing for a voyage to Gloriosus is given a prepaid order for lumber. Altes claims that he wants the wood to build a larger merchant fleet, which would increase the volume of trade between the two realms.

But King Mgabwi is no fool. He trusts Altes no more than he would a pygmy, realizing full well that the timber can be used to build sleek wargalleys as well as bluff-bowed merchant ships. Lumber shipments are being deliberately delayed to buy time, during which Mgabwi hopes to determine the real buyer's identity. Thus the project has not gone altogether smoothly. Peisandros suspects Mgabwi of duplicity, though he has no conclusive evidence.

A temporary shipyard has been erected beside the Miliosian harbor, and several huge, unfinished merchant ships squat on the shore. These are mere shells that serve to mask the real work of building the triremes, which takes place at night *inside* the empty hulls. When the wargalleys are seaworthy, they will be floated out the bows of the merchant shells, again under cover of darkness, and taken to a secluded bay some 52 km (20 miles) up the Manduka.

Visitors to Milios cannot help but notice all this shipbuilding activity and the large influx of new colonists. These settlers purport to be laborers or farmers, but they all have a nautical air about them. Actually, of course, they are sailors who will man the new triremes.

If the characters do not investigate the obvious mystery in Milios, allow them to see an unfinished trireme being rowed upriver while they are exploring the countryside. If they follow, they will discover ten more finished wargalleys in the small cove. They might decide to join the attack force, which would provide opportunities for them to fight sea battles and participate in shore raids. Alternatively, they might decide that this information would be valuable to Gloriosus. King Mgabwi would be most grateful for this intelligence, and would handsomely reward the characters, perhaps even offering them employment in his service. But Miliosian spies in Gloriosus would learn of the characters' treachery and report to Peisandros, who would mark them for death. They would never be safe anywhere Milios has agents or spies.

TEGEA

The small, irregular hillocks around the Lakomba River have long been considered sacred ground, even among the Greeks in their distant homeland. One of the ancient myths relates that when giants fought the gods, the latter suffered such severe injuries that they were forced to flee in disguise to a distant land and remain there until they regained their strength.

Soon after Calter and Peisandros landed at Ios with their followers, they were visited by Ægyptians from the Bestopa Plain. Through careful study of the local legends, the Greek scholars ascertained that the mouth of the Lakomba River must have been the very site where their own gods had sought refuge. Scholars and priests visited the area and claimed to be mystically smitten with the sanctity of the ground. They declared the location sacred and built temples on those hills deemed most blessed by particular deities.

GOVERNMENT

Tegea has neither a ruler nor a government as such. The priests of the temples direct the distribution of food and other supplies, and settle any disputes among themselves, for it would not be proper to bring any secular authority into Tegea.

THE TEMPLES

All of the shrines and temples at Tegea have been built according to the same basic plan; differences from the norm are noted in the individual building descriptions. Most have exterior columns carved from wood or stone and the stone walls and thatched roof typical of Æsheban Greek architecture.

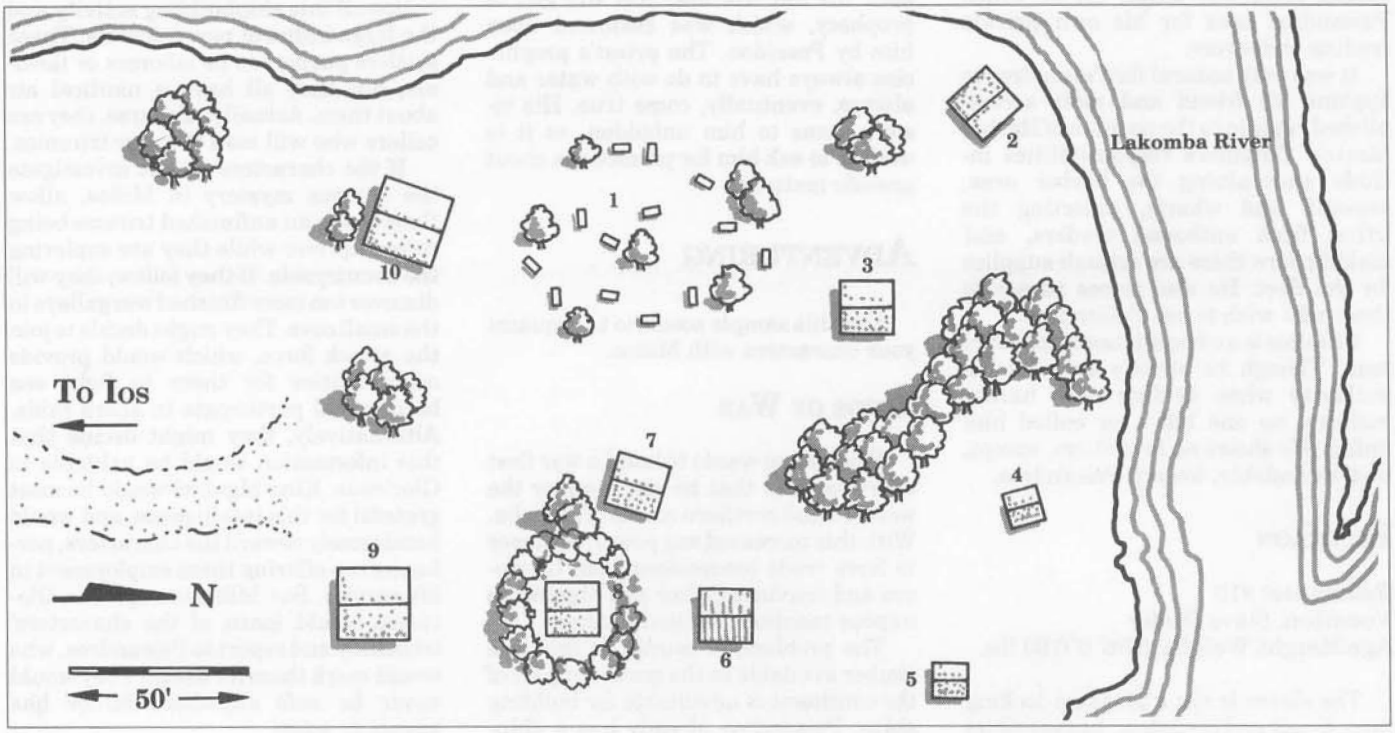
Each temple has a single entrance with a small porch. The porch roof is supported by columns. The interior is one large room, with an altar at the end opposite the entrance. A niche in the wall behind the altar holds a statue of the temple's patron god or goddess.

The living quarters of the priest or priestess in charge of the temple consist of a sleeping pallet and a small chest for clothing and other personal belongings in one corner of the room. This area is separated from the worship area by a simple woven grass screen. None of the priests or priestesses possess great wealth, so looting their quarters is a waste of time, not to mention sacrilege.

KEY TO TEGEA

The holy city has few residents, and its only industry is religion. The majority of the buildings are temples, and most of its permanent residents are priests. No wall has been built around Tegea, and no militia guards its citizens, for it would be sacrilegious folly to attack a city favored by all the gods. Since building sites were chosen on the basis of supposed religious significance, it looks as though buildings were scattered across the hills with no rhyme or reason. Tegea has no streets, but rather an unbroken greensward spanning the distance between buildings, thanks to the water supplied by the river.

Trees grow well in the fertile soil of the riverbank. The Greeks cut no timber from this sacred ground, however, except to build or decorate an occasional new temple, for any other use would be blasphemy. Each grove is dedicated to a particular deity, and carefully tended by



a priest. Because of this lush greenery, the Greeks feel that Tegea resembles their native land more than any other place in Æsheba does.

Farmers grow crops in the fertile tracts of land along the Lakomba River, and there is ample grassland in the hills and adjacent plains to pasture cattle, sheep, and goats. A portion of each farmer's yield is donated to the priests of Tegea each season, so the residents of the holy city never lack for food.

1. GRAVE CIRCLE

The scholars who came to Æsheba with Calter and Peisandros found dozens of ancient graves here — some native and some obviously Greek. Because of the holiness of the site, Tegea has become the preferred burial place for the Æsheban Greeks, but only the well-to-do can afford to have their loved ones' ashes brought here for interment among the mysterious old graves.

Stories circulate among the local Greek farmers of spirits that walk Tegea by night, but so far they have harmed no living creature. The truth of the matter is that the spirits of all those buried here in the holy ground, both Greek and native, are required to protect the site from desecration and its citizens from harm. Occasionally the spirits intervene more directly in the affairs of the residents, but such activities are completely benign.

2. TEMPLE OF POSEIDON

Though not the largest shrine in the city, Poseidon's temple at Tegea is considered by the colonists to be the most important sanctuary in Æsheba, for their livelihoods and fortunes depend upon the sea. It is the only temple built entirely of stone, complete with white marble columns and a tile roof, all imported at considerable expense. Inside, an artesian spring bubbles up into a stone fountain. The spring water has magical healing properties when used according to an appropriate ritual conducted by Dexiades, the temple's priest. Those who drink it are cured of any one non-magical disease afflicting them, and wounds washed with it are immediately healed. It is not an antidote for poison. The water loses all of its magical powers when removed from the spring.

3. TEMPLE OF HESTIA

This mediocre building houses what is perhaps the most important symbol of the Greek colonies: the sacred hearth fire. When Calter left his homeland in exile, he took with him two coals from the sacred fire of his mother-city, which he then used to kindle a new fire in Ios. Later, when the temples were established at Tegea, coals from Ios were used to light the official fire here. It is tended constantly and never allowed to go out, for the death of the fire portends the death of the colony.

4. TEMPLE OF APOLLO

This building is light and airy, as befits the tastes of its patron god. Apollo's statue is made of gilded bronze, and is flanked by a lyre, a bow, and a quiver with twenty golden arrows. All of these items are magical. When played by an accomplished musician, the lyre glows softly and produces music of unearthly sweetness that will hold all listeners within a 6 m (20') range spellbound while they hear it. The bow gives its user a +10% bonus to attack rolls, and the golden arrows will hit any part of the opponent's body specified (one use only, normal damage).

5. TEMPLE OF ARES

This small, squat building reflects the mean, petty side of its patron god. Inside, it is dark on even the brightest days, lit only by the blood-red flames of the vigil fire next to the altar. Weapons of all sorts hang on the walls, gleaming redly in the dim light.

6. HEPTAPOROS'S HOUSE

The seer's house is little more than a rotted grass shack. Heptaporos has lived here for more than a decade, disdaining offers of better quarters. A large, fenced-in area on the west side of the hut serves as a corral for the tools of his trade: sheep, cattle, and goats. A large flock of chickens lives in a separate henhouse. All these animals are bred especially for sacrifice and divination.

7. TEMPLE OF ZEUS

Three huge oaks, the trees sacred to Zeus, grow at the south corner of this ordinary-looking temple. The trees were very old when the Greeks first came to Tegea, so it was only natural to erect Zeus's temple beside them. The rustling of their leaves in the wind is thought to be the word of the god. Mulios, the high priest, spends most of his time sitting outside beneath the oak trees, acting as interpreter for the Oracle of the Oaks.

Inside the temple is a man-sized ivory statue of Zeus, carved from a single huge elephant tusk and chased with solid gold trim. The chamber is devoid of any other decoration.

8. TEMPLE OF ARTEMIS

The Temple of the Huntress is encircled by trees native to Æsheba. A few cyprus trees, brought to this continent as seedlings by the colonists, shade the entrance. Cyprus is sacred to Artemis, and the fact that the young trees are still thriving is proof that the goddess continues to favor this land. Wild animals of all sorts roam the grove freely, and since all such creatures are sacred to Artemis, slaying them is forbidden. The beasts are very docile, almost tame, and have never attacked anyone in the grove.

9. TEMPLE OF DEMETER

The Earth Mother is worshiped by both the Greeks and the local native tribes. Her shrine is built entirely of grass, coated with mud to lend some permanence to the structure.

Ceremonies observing the passage of the seasons are held here on the vernal and autumnal equinoxes and the summer and winter solstices. Animals, raised by Heptaporos, are sacrificed to appease the Earth Mother (known as Barafela to the natives) in hopes that she will grant favorable weather, bountiful harvests, and plentiful game.

10. TEMPLE OF ATHENA

Athena's temple was built on this particular spot when an owl, a bird not native to Æsheba, perched on a palm tree that used to grow here. This is the newest shrine at Tegea, built in the typical Æsheban Greek fashion. The interior is light and airy because of the open clerestory windows that completely encircle the building at the eaves. No statue of the goddess has been placed here yet, but one has been commissioned from a sculptor in Ios.

IMPORTANT PEOPLE

The following individuals hold positions of importance in Tegea.

DEXIADES

Residence: #2
Vocation: Priest of Poseidon
Age/Height/Weight: 55/6' 0"/175 lbs.

Dexiades usually wears a simple Greek tunic and a sea-green cloak the

same shade as his eyes. His light brown hair is crowned with a wreath woven from dried seaweed, and to ease the pain in his arthritic knees, he uses a trident as a staff. The many laugh lines around his mouth and eyes indicate that he is a jovial soul, though he conducts his official duties with appropriate solemnity. Dexiades is happy to serve his god.

When the fate of the first Greek colony was reconstructed by scholars through study of the native legends, Calter and Peisandros realized that they must be especially careful to honor Poseidon if they wished their people to survive in this land. Not surprisingly, therefore, the sea god's chief priest wields considerable power and influence in the colonies. All three Greek kings seek his wisdom and advice on any questions concerning sea or river trade, and his pronouncements are usually accepted, for no one cares to risk angering Poseidon a second time.

HEPTAPOROS

Residence: #6
Vocation: Seer and Haruspex
Age/Height/Weight: 65/5' 5"/90 lbs.

Twenty years of living in the same filthy grass hut have made Heptaporos appear far more ancient and frail than he really is. He wears a traditional Greek tunic and a brown woolen cloak. His white hair is gray with dirt, for he rarely bathes, and the lids of his milky brown eyes are red and encrusted with scabs from chronic infections. He is almost blind, but this doesn't seem to affect the veracity of his divinations.

Many people, both Greek and native, consult Heptaporos when they are in need of advice. He never refuses a request, even when the petitioner is unable to pay for his service. He is a less than genial host, however, often abandoning his client unceremoniously in his filthy hut while he wanders outside, muttering or humming under his breath, to collect an appropriate sacrificial animal from the stockyard.

Since coming to Æsheba with Calter and Peisandros, Heptaporos has become fascinated with the native tradition of divining the truth by poisoning chickens. He has practiced this method diligently and obtained dependable results, though he severely depleted the local supply of hens and roosters before he began to breed his own.

IANASSA

Residence: #10
Vocation: Priestess of Athena
Age/Height/Weight: 44/6' 1"/150 lbs.

Ianassa's golden hair flows halfway down her back, and her wise gray eyes shine with just a hint of the passion that the lovely priestess feels for life. She wears a sleeveless Greek tunic of light gray wool, with the lower portion cut to mid-thigh length. Ianassa is a practical woman, not given to flights of fancy. She is all business when conducting temple ceremonies, sometimes appearing almost dour. Ianassa is cool and reserved when dealing with strangers, though she will eventually reveal her fun-loving nature to those who trouble to become her friends.

Ianassa received her training in Greece, and willingly accompanied Calter and Peisandros into exile, feeling that it was her duty to establish the worship of her goddess in a new land. She moved from Ios to Tegea only one year ago to oversee the construction of Athena's temple in the holy city.

LIMNOREIA

Residence: #3
Vocation: Priestess of Hestia
Age/Height/Weight: 47/5' 4"/120 lbs.

The matronly priestess who tends Hestia's sacred hearth has grown somewhat stocky with the passage of years. She wears her graying black hair coiled tightly at the nape of her neck. Her brown eyes are warm and friendly, and she always greets visitors with courtesy and concern for their well-being. Limnoreia is prim and proper, displaying courtesy and good manners in all her dealings. She seldom leaves the temple, preferring to tend the fire and occupy her spare time with spinning, weaving, and other similar tasks.



MULIOS

Residence: #7
Vocation: Priest of Zeus
Age/Height/Weight: 93/5' 6"/100 lbs.

The venerable Mulios is quite ill, and does not have long to live. Bloody spittle often stains his long, snowy white hair and beard after his frequent coughing fits. He is almost totally blind, and so weak that he must be carried. Despite all this, his mind remains clear and sharp, so his interpretations of the rustling oak leaves in the grove behind the temple are still held to be the word of Zeus. Indeed, most people truly believe he is favored by the god, for how else can his long lifespan be explained?

ADVENTURING

Use the following sample scenario to introduce your characters to Tegea.

THE LAST PROPHECY

Nisa, queen of Ios, has disappeared. She has been kidnapped by Elatos on Peisandros's orders and hidden below the Temple of Ares (#5, page 45).

Calter arrives in Tegea to ask the oracles how to find her, suspecting that she has been taken by the pirates in the Kambian Marsh. Mulios is ill, so the king must seek advice from Heptaporos. While Calter and his men wait impatiently in the squalid hut, the old seer performs his office. The sky grows angry and dark as he works.

Just as Heptaporos is about to reveal her whereabouts, a bolt of lightning strikes him down — punishment from Ares for daring to reveal a god's plans. As he dies, he says, "The temple stone." Of course, he refers to the stone altar that conceals a secret door to an underground chamber in the Temple of Ares, though the priests will believe he meant the Temple of Poseidon (#2, page 45).

The characters may become involved as actual witnesses to this incident, or they may be hired to find Nisa after Calter returns to Ios. They must enter Tegea and locate the queen before Elatos can turn her over to the Khufiri, who will sacrifice her to their war god. Ianassa may help them, since her deity opposes Ares. Of course, Nisa's personality may make the characters wish they had left her to her fate.

KINGDOM OF GLORIOSUS

The kingdom of Gloriosus is a pocket of highly civilized native Æsheban culture. Its total population is currently eight thousand two hundred citizens and approximately two hundred transients — Greeks, natives, and adventurers. The capital city of Gloriosus, known by that same name, is situated on the western coast, north of the Owerri delta.

Originally, the city was nothing more than a collection of permanent tribal settlements. These villages merged over the course of decades into a central town surrounded by farmland. The fertile soil of the Owerri river delta yielded grain, beans, and vegetables in abundance. Once a stable food supply was thus assured, a more advanced culture began to develop. Log walls were erected around the central buildings to prevent raids on food stores and cattle by more primitive native tribes. The small kingdom grew slowly, as diseases and parasites took their toll on the population and the domestic animals. A talented young farmer discovered techniques for protecting crops from the locusts that devoured a significant portion of the food supply each year, and general famine became a thing of the past.

That same year, bumper crops resulted in the kingdom's first food surplus. The extra food was distributed to other tribes along the western coast of Æsheba. In return, the nomadic peoples gave the new kingdom animal skins, weapons, and medicines. Trade with the other tribes gradually expanded, and the young civilization stabilized and grew. Technological advancements, such as metal-working, were achieved through study and experimentation. At last, a written language developed, and historical events could be impressed onto clay tablets for posterity.

Adventurers from Gloriosus have explored much of central Æsheba over the centuries. Thirty years ago, one such group located the legendary kingdom of which the oracles hinted — New Grecia. The customs there were different, but the people were civilized and peaceful. Trade was established, though exchanges were sporadic for many years until a trail could be cut through the Khofari Jungle. That done, caravans could pass back and forth with reasonable safety. Gloriosus flourished, trading rare woods and foodstuffs to New Grecia for gems, tools, and marble.

Twenty-three years ago, explorers from Milios arrived in Embuku Bay near the capital. Eager for additional trade, Mgabwi, king of Gloriosus, sent gifts of timber and gems to Peisandros. Since the Miliosian king needed lumber to rebuild his fleet, he was quick to establish full trade relations.

This mutual cooperation continued, to the benefit of both nations. Four years ago, merchants from lands far across the sea came to Æsheba. With the increase in trading activity at Milios, the demand for goods from Gloriosus nearly quintupled, spawning a new class of merchants and the construction of additional warehouses.

King Mgabwi realizes that Milios is profiting from trading his kingdom's goods overseas. He plans to work out trade agreements with the foreigners independently of Peisandros — a move that will surely instigate hostilities between the two nations. Knowing this, the king has spent the past few years training his warriors and building wargalleys in secret, hoping to defend against sea attacks from Milios. Shipwrights of Gloriosus have adapted the Greek trireme design and made some improvements of their own. During the past few years, they have secretly built six triremes, and two more are currently under construction. Each of these ships bears a toothed bronze ram on the front, and moves half again as fast as the Greek version can with an equal number of oarsmen. The wargalleys are kept in a secluded cove off the Owerri River (page 92).

The majority of the people live in the countryside south of the city, where most of the kingdom's food is grown in the fertile soil of the Owerri delta. Those who live within the city walls are primarily merchants, craftsmen, guards, and people in service professions.

GOVERNMENT

Despite the advances of civilization, the old ways were never completely abandoned in Gloriosus. The king rules by divine right, though he does not inherit the crown through dynastic succession. Instead, ritual regicide is practiced, as it has been for centuries. The High Priest observes the omens and consults the oracles frequently during the king's reign to determine when the monarch should be replaced. On the appointed day, the High Priest kills the king in a special ceremony, and appoints a new one from among the people. Most kings rule for thirty to fifty years. This custom prevents the problems that can occur when a king is no longer fit to govern because of age or illness, and allows a truly inept king to be removed before he can do much damage. The new king inherits the wives and children of the old, and is entitled to the best of everything while he lives.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

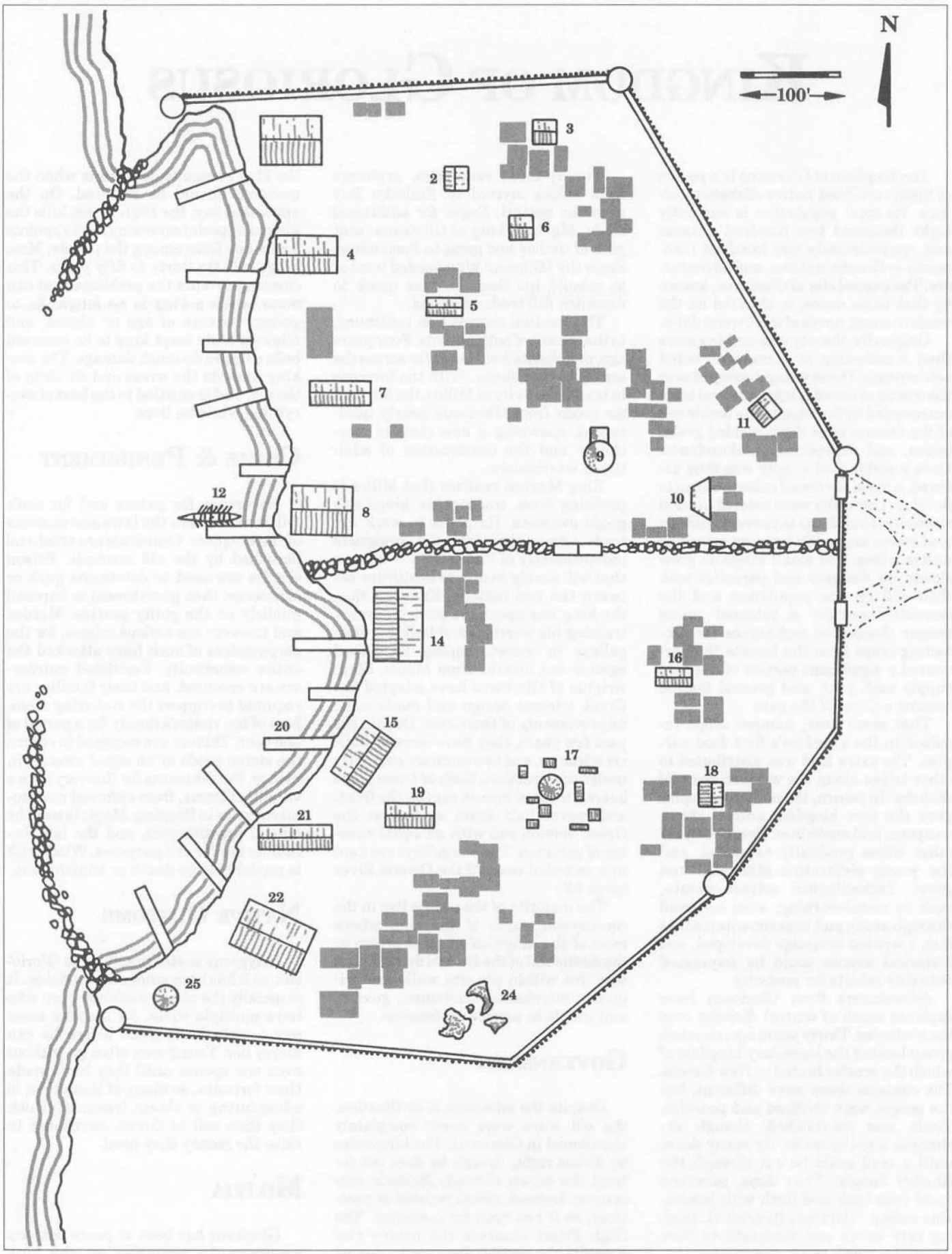
Reverence for nature and for one's fellow man colors the laws and customs of the kingdom. Criminals are tried and punished by the old methods. Poison oracles are used to determine guilt or innocence, then punishment is imposed publicly on the guilty parties. Murder and thievery are serious crimes, for the perpetrators of such have attacked the entire community. Convicted murderers are executed, and their families are required to support the surviving members of the victim's family for a period of one year. Thieves are required to return the stolen goods or an equal amount in money. Punishments for thievery take a variety of forms, from enforced community service to flogging. Magic is used by official practitioners, and the law forbids its use for evil purposes. Witchcraft is punishable by death or banishment.

NATIVE CUSTOMS

Polygamy is still practiced in Gloriosus, as it has been since ancient times. It is usually the older, wealthier men who have multiple wives, for a suitor must pay a girl's bride price before he can marry her. Young men often go without even one spouse until they have made their fortunes, so many of them turn to adventuring to obtain treasure, which they then sell to Greek merchants to raise the money they need.

MILITIA

Gloriosus has been at peace with its neighbors for centuries, so the king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maintains no standing army. The fifty soldiers who comprise the city guard are responsible for maintaining order. The guards operate on rotating shifts and, except for those stationed at the Pharos (#25, page 53) and the lookouts at the towers (see map, page 48), most of the guards have no specific posts.

Should the need arise, King Mgabwi can raise an army of fifteen hundred men in two to three days, for Gloriosus has mutual defense treaties with the tribes in the Zindor Plain. In such a case, the city militiamen, who are also trained as commanders, would assume officer positions, directing the native wariors in battle. This force would not be nearly as organized as the colonial Greek militia, but the sheer ferocity of the warriors, coupled with their access to trained elephants and other beasts, would make them formidable opponents.

RESOURCES

Granite is quarried from the hills north of Gloriosus, and marble from cliffs within the jungle itself. A ready supply of timber is available in the Khofari Jungle, including precious ebony and mahogany. All of these building materials are trade commodities.

HARBOR

This harbor is still undergoing extensive construction. Not being able to take advantage of a natural landfall like the harbor at Milios, engineers have had to do extensive alterations to create a viable port. Rocks and other natural barriers have been removed from the shoreline, and new breakwaters have been built to afford the harbor some needed protection.

KEY TO GLORIOSUS

Most of the homes are built of wood or mudbrick, though some of the more important ones are made of granite, which is quarried from the Renegal Mountains. Since the arrival of the Greeks in Gloriosus, a stone wall 5 m (15') tall has been constructed to divide the city into two parts. In the northern half live the king, his advisors and priests, and other important citizens. The southern half, called Bundolo, is reserved for non-citizens, including the Greeks and local natives. (See page 51.)

Much new construction is in progress to accommodate the city's burgeoning trade. Slowly but surely, Gloriosus is becoming a commercial center that will serve the entire western half of Æsheba. So far, however, the streets in both sections of town remain little more than dirt paths. None of them have been named, for the citizens know the area well. They give directions by referring to landmarks, such as particular buildings or unusual features of the landscape.

THE CAPITAL

Access to the northern half of the city is strictly limited. Only known residents are admitted without passes, for King Mgabwi does not wish to risk Greek spies learning of his growing military fleet. He champions this separatist policy to his people under the guise of xenophobia, claiming that the Greeks are barbarians (which, in many ways, they are) and should not be granted the full benefits of citizenship. Except for those few whose faces are known, therefore, unguarded foreigners on the streets of the city are viewed with thinly-veiled suspicion, and passing citizens may offer to escort them to their destinations.

1. KING'S PALACE

This large, two-story stone structure and its outbuildings occupy nearly a full city block. The exterior of the central palace is decorated with carvings of jungle birds, and two huge elephant tusks frame the entranceway. The main doors are made of solid ebony, decorated with ornate carvings and silver inlay.

These doors open to reveal an interior courtyard paved with flagstones of smooth green-veined marble. Masses of tropical flowering plants bloom in carefully tended garden plots. A colonnade, designed by visiting Greek architects, rings the courtyard and separates it from the lavish interior chambers.

The rooms inside the palace include ten sleeping chambers for the royal family, a private chamber for the king's consort, a common room for his other wives and children, guest rooms, an interior sunken bath built of marble and fed by an underground spring, and a magnificent audience hall. The king's throne is carved from a single huge block of ebony and inlaid with gold. A fine leopard skin is draped over it to show the king's dominion over beast as well as man. King Mgabwi greets all delegations in this room, and negotiates treaties through his translators.

Behind the main building is a single-story stone kitchen, where all the food is prepared for the royal household. A fenced pasture separates the kitchen from the stables where the king's domesticated zebras are kept.

2. HIGH PRIEST'S HOME

Similar in design to the other stone homes, this immaculate two-story house has been well tended. Mubundi loves to entertain, so he keeps his guest rooms in readiness. Trees that bring forth a variety of delightful citrus fruits grow in the garden behind the house.

3. CONSTRUCTION CAMPS

The city engineers are attempting to dig a trench that will connect with a natural spring in the Khofari Jungle. The construction of this primitive aqueduct is but the first step in a plan conceived by Mikos, the Greek architect, to bring indoor plumbing to Gloriosus. Paid laborers live on the site in tents made of animal skins. They cook their own food over small fires and seldom venture away from the camp.

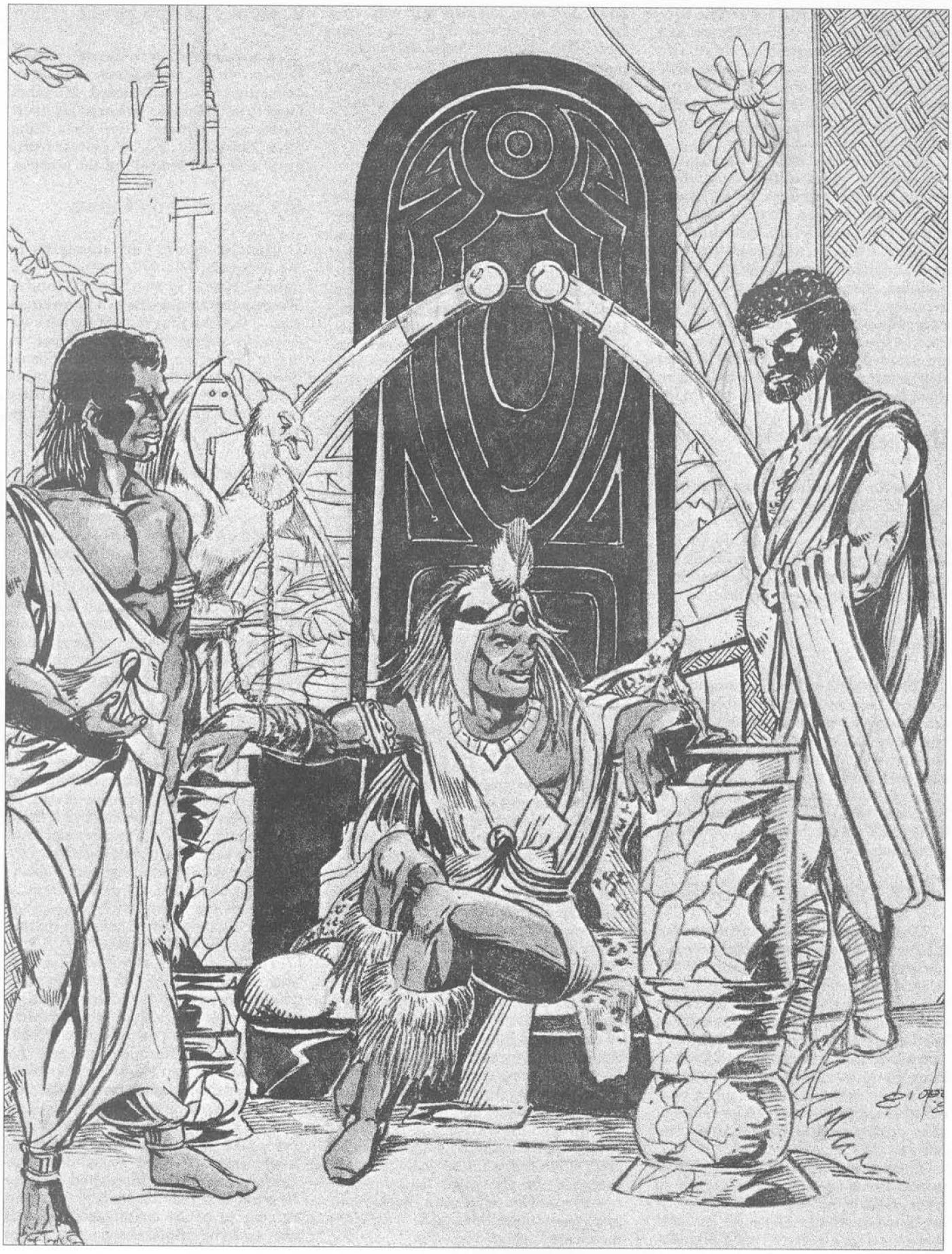
4. WAREHOUSE

Greek-style clothes, sandals, and uniforms are stored in this one-story mudbrick building. Most of these garments were sent by Peisandros as gifts to the city of Gloriosus. The citizenry was not impressed. Although the warehouse is open to the public, very few residents have taken any of the clothing — most prefer their own light robes to the odd tunics worn by the Greeks.

5. BARRACKS/JAIL

Thirty-six of the city guardsmen live in this two-story mudbrick building. The men sleep four to a room on cots. In the middle of the lower floor is a large dining room where the soldiers and commanders take their meals together. Two Greek warriors, refugees from Peisandros's harsh justice, are part of the militia. They are tolerated by the other guards, for they have caused no trouble since they have been here.

To the left of the barracks is a single-story stone jail with four holding cells. There was no need for such a structure in Gloriosus before the Greek colonists came. Justice was meted out to offenders in traditional form, and the price for crime was paid on the spot. The Greek traders and soldiers who visited the city, however, were prone to carousing and picking fights with each other and with the local citizens. Punishing the Greeks might have offended Peisandros and caused unnecessary bloodshed, so King Mgabwi ordered this secure building erected to house troublemakers until they could be shipped back to their colo-



nies with the next trading voyage. Those who have been jailed are not welcome in Gloriosus again.

6. MERCHANTS' HALL

This two-story stone house was built three years ago as a meeting place for Miliosian merchants. The traders were impressed with the gesture, though the real purpose of the building was to keep the Greeks who had to visit the main city under tight surveillance.

Kitia, the leading merchant of Gloriosus, has made her fortune trading with the Greeks. She chairs all discussions of tariffs and trade agreements. Androcles, a Miliosian spice merchant who lives in Bundolo (right), has an office in the hall, and is responsible for maintaining the records of all transactions with the Greeks.

7 & 8. WAREHOUSES

These single-story mudbrick buildings are the storage area for the city's supply of dried food. Grain, dried fruits, corn, preserved meats, and dried beans are kept here to feed needy families, as well as for rationing in case of famine.

9. TEMPLE OF FORGIVENESS

The major church in Gloriosus is a round stone building, fashioned to resemble a native hut. The floor is made of closely-fitted blocks of green-veined marble obtained from the cliffs in the nearby jungle. The walls are slabs of granite, carved into a rounded shape and fitted together with marvelous workmanship so that the joinings are all but invisible. In the center of the 5 m (15') high ceiling is a window of amber-colored glass, which diffuses the sun's light to fill the interior with a golden glow. The inside of the temple is stark and simple. There is no altar, but frescoes painted on all the walls show scenes of nature and the wilderness.

Individuals who have suffered setbacks can come here to determine how they can change their fortunes. Those who suspect that they have offended their ancestors may ask Mubundi, the high priest, or one of his assistants, to consult the oracles for them.

Gifts of money to support the priests are left outside the entrance. This money has been disturbed only once throughout the history of Gloriosus. A Greek from the first official Miliosian delegation picked up the coins from the doorway, thinking that someone had simply lost them. When the perpetrator of this sacrilege was discovered, there was a call for his execution, but the king opted for leniency. Since then, the temple has been closed to foreigners.

10. COURT

This two-story stone and mudbrick building serves as the central meeting hall for King Mgabwi and his advisors. The large central chamber is open to the public. It is used as an assembly room for the weekly ceremonies at which justice is meted out to criminals, after the official diviners have consulted the oracles to determine the truth in each case. The courtroom is looks much like an amphitheatre, with the magistrates' bench at one end and tiers of seats running along the remaining three walls.

Nubimo, appointed to the position of magistrate by King Mgabwi, hears all cases. He is empowered to impose any non-lethal punishment, but the king himself must attend and pass sentence if capital punishment is involved.

The magistrate understands that foreigners are often ignorant of local laws, and is usually lenient with troublemakers from other lands who commit minor crimes. Those found guilty of misdemeanors are usually imprisoned until an outgoing ship can take them to Milios. But if the charge is murder or espionage, or if the individual on trial is a repeat offender, even foreigners are subject to the full judicial process and the same punishments as citizens found guilty of such crimes.

11. THE NICKED EDGE

This was the first public building ever erected in Gloriosus. In the early days, when the city was nothing more than scattered settlements, a stone basin was built around the natural freshwater spring that bubbled up through the ground on this spot. Later, a thatched roof supported by four poles was erected over the fountain to keep dust and dirt out of the water. The spring was a natural gathering place, and eventually a small building to store refreshments was constructed beside it. This shack was rebuilt and remodeled several times over the passage of decades, until it eventually became the single-story stone tavern that it is today.

Ownership of the tavern has changed hands a number of times. The current proprietor is Barendus, who won the establishment in a dice game. He himself has little use for the business, so he leaves the daily operations to his daughter Zella.

The front courtyard is shaded by two rows of palms. There are wooden tables and benches inside and in the courtyard for patrons. Two ornately carved marble benches flank the front door. Inside, the building is naturally cool. The water from the spring bubbles its way through an impressive series of carvings and decorative rock formations before spilling gracefully into a marble basin on the south wall of the main tavern area. Travelers who visit the Nicked Edge customarily stop to wash the dust from their faces and hands at the basin before settling down for a cool drink.

12. THE SQUINTING EYE

This refurbished Greek wargalley appears to be the city's sole military protection against possible invasion from the sea. But though the Squinting Eye is a mighty vessel, it could never prevent a full scale invasion attempt from one of the Greek colonies. The ship was gained in trade with Milios ten years ago. The captain of this proud vessel is Boboro.

BUNDOLO

The Greeks and other foreigners who trade with Gloriosus are permitted to live in temporary accomodations in the southern half of the city. This settlement was named Bundolo by the natives who used to stay here during visits to the city in the days before the Greek colonies appeared in the north, and this original name is still used. Bundolo is separated from the main city by a granite wall.

This small, now primarily Greek community serves as the trading center of Gloriosus. The Greeks are not citizens of the kingdom, and therefore are not permitted to own homes within the city. Fifty wooden homes have been built in Bundolo to house those who must spend several weeks at a time in Gloriosus gathering merchandise for a return voyage to the colonies. The visiting Greeks who need a place to live may rent these houses from their individual owners. They may conduct their business freely here in Bundolo, but they are not permitted to enter the north part of the city without passes from either the king or the captain of the guard. Passes may be obtained by applying at the Custom House (#19, page 53) or the marketplace (#17, page 52). It takes at least one full day to process such a request.

Visitors with one-day passes are escorted to their destinations by polite guardsmen who do not let them out of sight. Some few residents of Bundolo, including Androcles and Mikos, have permanent passes. These special guests have the run of the city.

Androcles, a resident Greek spice merchant and leader of this small subcommunity, lives in a fine single-story mudbrick house. Androcles is permitted to "govern" Bundolo by the standards of his people, so long as the citizens of Gloriosus are not disturbed. Androcles has the right to speak for any foreigners on trial at the court (#10, page 51).

Though the Greek colonists staying at Bundolo are not treated as equals by the citizens of Gloriosus, they have made great strides. Androcles has won a permanent position keeping records at the Merchants' Hall (#6, page 51) in the main city, and has been instrumental in getting two Greek hoplites appointed to the city militia.

Bundolo is an open community. Foreigners are not permitted to own land or buildings in Gloriosus, so residents must pay rent to the individual owners of the properties. Many of the city's more enterprising citizens have established businesses that cater to the tastes of the Greeks in Bundolo, including taverns, brothels, and even a temple to the Greek deities.

13. BUNDOLO GATE

A gate set in the middle of the wall provides limited access to the northern city beyond. There are four guards on duty at the gate around the clock. No foreigners are admitted to the main city without a pass. Foreign ships arriving in Gloriosus are directed to the docks at Bundolo.

14 & 15. SHIPWRIGHTS

The shipping business is the most prosperous industry in Gloriosus, as well as its hope for growth and communication with other nations. The shipwrights are revered by the citizenry, perhaps second only to the masons. Four different buildings near the harbor are dedicated to the shipbuilding industry.

After a few years of buying lumber from Gloriosus, Peisandros realized that it would be more efficient to build merchant ships in Gloriosus and sail them, fully loaded, back to Milios. To that end, he dispatched Triato, a Greek shipwright who had studied in some of the finest cities of their homeland, to supervise the construction. Triato's work is highly respected, and he gets along well with the shipwrights of Gloriosus. They take notes on his designs, which flatters Triato immensely. (Actually, of course, the other shipwrights intend to apply the information to building Mgabwi's warships.)

Dexter, a sailor turned shipping magnate, also hails from Milios. He runs two of the four commercial shipbuilding ventures here in Gloriosus. Two triremes and four merchant vessels are under construction in his sheds.

Dexter has agreed to build two more triremes for the defense of the western coastline, but the work has been proceeding very slowly, with many setbacks, for four years now, and the ships still are not completed. These delays, of course, are in compliance with the direct orders of Peisandros, who does not want to see Gloriosus too well-defended. The Miliosian king realizes all too well that the north coast monopoly on overseas trade might depend on his ability to subjugate Gloriosus, should its king attempt to establish his own trade relations with foreign merchants.

16. TEMPLE OF THE PANTHEON

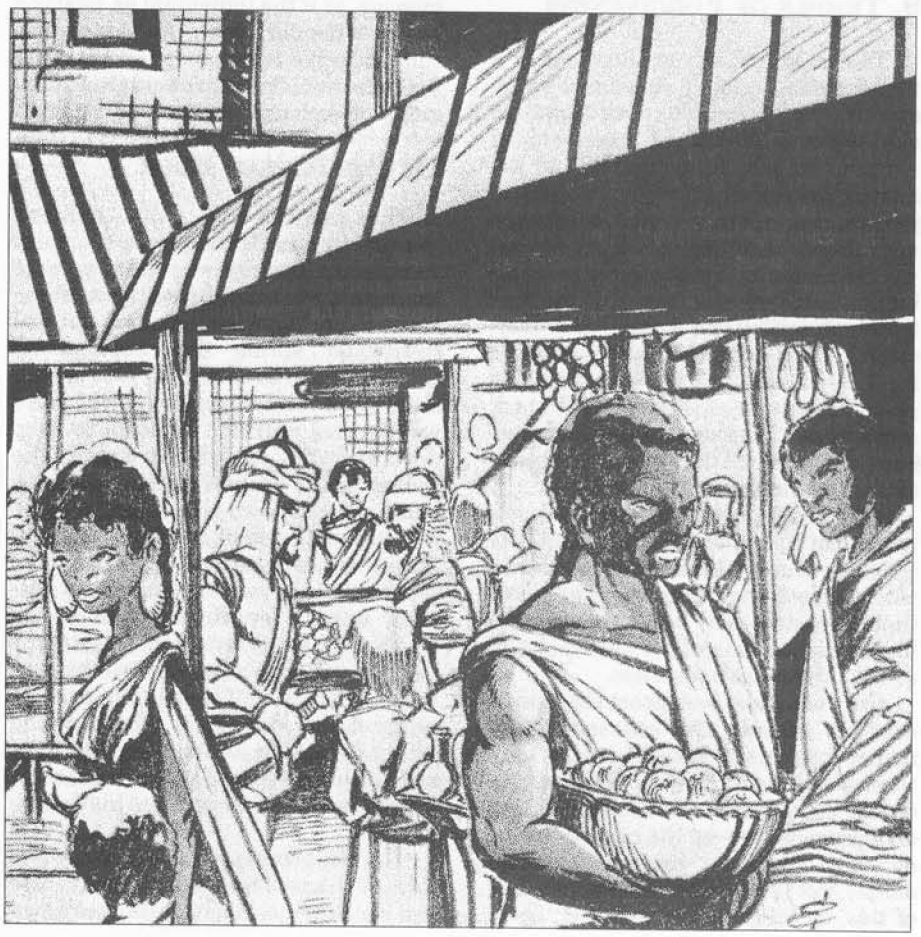
The residents of Gloriosus allow the Greeks to conduct their barbaric worship ceremonies in this Greek-style edifice in Bundolo. Stone statues of Zeus, Hera, Poseidon, Ares, and several other Greek deities, along with a few native gods revered by the local tribes, are on display in the gardens surrounding this two-story mudbrick temple.

Ramsur, the charlatan who originally built this temple, has turned it into quite a showplace. In the front courtyard is a shallow pool surrounded by palms and marble benches. The atmosphere is quiet and peaceful.

Ramsur has set himself up very comfortably in the back rooms that serve as his living quarters. Soft pillows and thick rugs are scattered over the floor, and exquisite carved mahogany furniture is placed tastefully throughout the apartment. Most of these furnishings were purchased with money donated to the temple by wealthy Greek merchants. Recently, Ramsur has converted to the Greek faith (see his description, page 55). He is slowly selling off his personal belongings and using the money to refurbish the temple.

17. MARKETPLACE

Small tables, draped with animal skins to shield them from the sun and rain, are crowded into this open shopping area in Bundolo. Space is at a premium since the establishment of overseas trade, for every farmer and craftsman in the region brings his wares here for the Greek merchants to examine. Fruit, vegetables, spices, clothing, weapons, horses, livestock, fish, and vir-



tually anything else can be bought here from producers. Pickpockets frequent the area, following prosperous-looking buyers until they stop to haggle over prices with tradesmen, then stealing their purses.

Six militiamen are posted to watch over the entire marketplace and ensure that order is maintained. In addition, three Miliosian inspectors — Memnon, Pindar, and Klytus — wander the area to settle disputes between buyers and sellers and arrange for shipment of goods to Milios. Since the size of the Miliosian merchant fleet has not yet caught up with the increased demand for goods from Gloriosus, cargo and passengers must be booked onto departing ships four to six weeks ahead. Memnon, however, purposely underbooks vessels, then takes bribes to "slide" more merchandise and passengers into each ship during the week before its departure.

18. The Dark Smile

This two-story brick and stone building is the newest addition to the city. Gloriosus had no brothels until the Greek traders arrived; the very concept was foreign to the beliefs of the citizens. This establishment, owned by Kitia, caters to visitors. Nine young women, all daughters and nieces of Greek colonists, are employed here.

19. Custom House

This three-story stone building is located near the seashore. Two militiamen stand guard outside the entrance. The two tax inspectors, both city employees, assess a 10% duty on all goods brought into or shipped out of the city. The guards prevent any trouble, and during hours of heavy traffic, they help collect taxes and ensure that the inspectors are doing a fair and equitable job.

20. Dock

The largest dock, made of stone, is centrally located on the shore. Merchant vessels are permitted to tie up here for safety. Fisherman use the simpler wooden docks that have been erected along the length of the harbor.

21 & 22. Warehouses

The masons and engineers use these two-story stone warehouses to store the building materials for all their construction projects within Gloriosus. Massive slabs of granite and marble, rolls of rope, tools of all sorts, pulley wheels, and other implements are kept here.

23. Rental Homes

These comfortable wooden homes with thatch roofs have been built to house visitors. Each is owned by a citizen of Gloriosus, who financed the construction. The owners are permitted to charge whatever rent they wish, but the rates are usually quite reasonable. Most of the structures are simple, featuring a courtyard, a reception area, a men's dining room, a women's room, storage areas, and one or two sleeping rooms.

24. Brickyard

Several natural mudpits were exposed during excavations for some of the city's earliest permanent structures. The ready supply of mud made bricks the building material of choice for decades. Though most of the buildings are made of stone now, mudbricks are still favored for temporary structures.

Paid laborers gather warm mud from the pits in buckets, which are then attached to the ends of long sticks and carried, across the shoulders, to the brickyard. There, other workers mix straw with the warm mud by hand and press the mixture into wooden brick molds. The packed molds are placed out in the sun to dry.

The potters use the mud from the pits as well, for it is rich in red clay. Pottery made in Gloriosus brings a good price in the markets of Milios.

25. Pharos

This three-story mudbrick lighthouse doubles as a guard post, and is constantly manned by five guards and five archers. The day watch keeps an eye on the open sea and incoming weather conditions. The night watch does the same, and tends the signal fire as well.

Important People

The following individuals hold positions of influence in Gloriosus.

Androcles

Residence: #23
Business: #6
Vocation: Spice Merchant
Age/Height/Weight: 43/5' 5"/214 lbs.

This fat, jolly little man is the current leader of Bundolo. He has gained the trust of Kitia, the leading merchant of Gloriosus, and she allows him to work inside the Merchants' Hall (#6, page 51) keeping records of all transactions. Androcles is impressed with the culture and level of civilization displayed by the residents of Gloriosus, and he feels that his fellow Greeks could learn much from these people.

Barendus

Residence: #11
Vocation: Proprietor/Nicked Edge
Age/Height/Weight: 47/6' 4"/225 lbs.

Barendus is a tall, beefy fighting man with dark brown skin, brown eyes, and curly black hair. He was once an adventurer, and he accompanied Kitia on that historic journey to discover the lost kingdom of New Grecia.

Many of the foreign visitors to Gloriosus consider Barendus a lout and a drunk. This false impression leads them to accept his offers to play dice or cards — much to their economic detriment. Not only can Barendus hold his liquor well, he also has an uncanny instinct when it comes to gambling, and rarely loses unless he wishes it. He never cheats — his own skills are more than sufficient to keep him financially solvent. He won the Nicked Edge (#11, page 51) in a card game.

Barendus has thought about settling down to run the business, but hasn't done so yet. He often disappears for weeks on some overland expedition or sea voyage, leaving his daughter, Zella, to run the tavern.

Boboro

Residence: #12
Vocation: Captain/Squinting Eye
Age/Height/Weight: 51/6' 0"/161 lbs.

Boboro has deep brown skin and black hair that he wears in braids. He has a squinting left eye that accounts for the name of his vessel.

The captain wears knee-length breeches of stout linen, and usually goes bare-chested. He walks with a limp — a constant reminder of some long-ago sea battle. Boboro is a good seaman and a marvelous tactician.

Dexter

Residence: #23
Business: #14
Vocation: Shipping Magnate
Age/Height/Weight: 36/5' 7"/186 lbs.

Dexter has straight black hair, which he wears tied back with a leather thong.

His green eyes are cold and calculating, and his high cheekbones and overhanging brow give his face an aristocratic look. He wears a short black beard with no mustache.

Dexter was a Miliosian sailor until he injured his knee in a battle eight years ago. Since then, he has decided to make his fortune in shipping. He has been living in Bundolo for several years, building merchant vessels for Milios. He has contracted to build wargalleys for King Mgabwi, but he routinely sabotages those operations on the orders of Peisandros. Dexter has not yet discovered the secret shipbuilding operation on the Owerri.

The merchant is normally brusque, though not insulting. His favorite subjects are money and ships.

KITIA

Residence: #1
Business: #6
Vocation: Merchant
Age/Height/Weight: 58/5' 5"/182 lbs.

Kitia was trained as a warrior in her youth. She helped to carve the trail through the Khofari Jungle to open a trade route with New Grecia. Though she is still strong and skilled with a sword, she has become rather stout with advancing age. Short gray hair frames her wide face, and her stern black eyes reflect her no-nonsense attitude.

Kitia is King Mgabwi's aunt, the sister of his late mother. Her youngest son, Mubundi, now holds the office of High Priest. Kitia rarely interferes with politics, and she is unaware of the secret war fleet on the Owerri.

After she retired from the militia eighteen years ago, Kitia used her savings to finance a successful foray into the Khofari to bring back ivory, which she sold to the Miliosian traders at a high profit. She has been the city's leading merchant ever since. Kitia now handles most of the commerce between Gloriosus and New Grecia, assuming the risk of sending caravans through the wilderness with valuable merchandise. Kitia spends two months each spring in New Grecia, planning caravans and negotiating prices for the upcoming season. She is usually looking for caravan guards, and may offer such employment to adventurers.

KLYTUS

Residence: #23
Business: #17
Vocation: Shipping Regulator
Age/Height/Weight: 42/5' 8"/153 lbs.

Klytus has black hair framing a growing bald spot on the top of his head. His black eyes are bright and intelligent. He normally wears red robes of the type favored by citizens of Gloriosus rather than the Grecian tunics of his fellow regulators, Memnon and Pindar.

Born in the Greek homeland, Klytus studied for many years to become a scribe. As part of Peisandros's household, he was forced into exile with his master. Klytus was not pleased with the situation, and he made his feelings known to Peisandros, who gave him this new assignment in Gloriosus, to their mutual satisfaction.

Klytus books goods and passengers onto ships departing Gloriosus. His balding head can usually be seen bent over a piece of parchment at his table near the entrance to the marketplace (page 52). He occasionally overbooks a ship to accomodate an extra passenger, but he does not accept bribes for this.

MEMNON

Residence: #23
Business: #17
Vocation: Shipping Regulator
Age/Height/Weight: 35/ 5'10"/174 lbs.

Memnon's already swarthy skin has grown even darker through constant exposure to the hot sun. His black hair is cut short, and he wears a full beard and mustache to hide a scar from some long-ago battle. His black eyes gleam brightly at the prospect of a bribe.

Memnon claims that he was once a fighter in the army of Peisandros back in the Greek homeland. This is true, but he was also the spy who informed the king of Tiryns that the raid was coming. Instead of receiving a reward from the victorious leader, however, Memnon was branded a traitor for betraying his commanders, and given the choice of exile with Calter and Peisandros or death. He chose the former, and neither colonial sovereign has ever suspected the truth about his part in the raid.

To be on the safe side, Memnon gravitated to Gloriosus on the tails of the initial west coast expedition. He has remained there, out of the Miliosian king's sight, ever since.

MGABWI

Residence: #1
Vocation: King of Gloriosus
Age/Height/Weight: 45/6' 4"/254 lbs.

Mgabwi is big and muscular, with curly brown hair and no beard. At the age of eighteen, he was chosen by the high priest to succeed the previous king. He has ruled wisely and well, for he is a highly intelligent and cultured man. He never takes unnecessary chances, often portraying his precautionary measures as superstition or customs so that visitors will not become suspicious.

Kitia, the king's aunt, was an adventurer when he took the throne. Now she is the most successful merchant in the kingdom. Her son, Mubundi, is the High Priest and the king's closest friend. King Mgabwi always listens to Mubundi's advice and keeps the priest advised on all important matters of state, such as the secret war fleet, so that the information may be passed along to the next king.

Mgabwi has twelve wives and thirty-two children, all of whom live in the palace (#1, page 49). His consort died recently, and he has not yet appointed another wife to that position.

The king has a natural gift with languages, and can speak the native tongue of Gloriosus, plus all native languages used by the tribes on the western coast. He learned Greek within the first six months of contact with Milios, though he pretends that he does not understand it, for he prefers that the Greek delegations think him an ignorant savage and speak freely in his presence. He works through translators in all matters involving Greeks.

Though he usually prefers to wear fine red robes of soft texture, Mgabwi dresses up in skins, feathers, and outlandish native garb to greet the Greek delegations, for that is what they expect of a savage.

MIKOS

Residence: #23
Business: #3
Vocation: Architect
Age/Height/Weight: 32/5' 6"/142 lbs.

Mikos has long brown hair bound with a cord at the nape of his neck, and his eyes are the clear green color of the sea. An architect from Milios, Mikos has gained the friendship of King Mgabwi. Mikos is an honest man, whose sole love in life is building.

The king is quite taken with Greek architecture, with its airy style and open construction. He has provided Mikos with funds and laborers to construct new housing in the city. If this goes well, Mikos will be permitted to renovate the king's palace within two years.

MUBUNDI

Residence: #2
Business: #9
Vocation: High Priest
Age/Height/Weight: 25/5' 9"/190 lbs.

Mubundi wears a pale yellow robe and six necklaces made from the shells of ostrich eggs. The latter are symbols of his rank. He winds bright green feathers into his long, curly black hair. His deep brown eyes shine with mirth, for he is young and full of laughter.

It is Mubundi's task to watch the omens and determine when the king must die. When that time comes, the priest himself will choose a new ruler, then step down from his position. Mubundi is fond of his cousin Mgabwi, and would put off the gruesome task as long as possible.

Mubundi is the youngest son of Kitia, the king's aunt. The position of High Priest became his after the deaths of his two older brothers, for it always belongs to someone within the royal family. Mubundi enjoys his work. Since he is responsible for the spiritual guidance of the people, he is permitted to offer counsel to the king and advise him of the people's best interests. Mubundi does not trust the Greeks, but feels that trade with them is good for Gloriosus in the long run. He is aware of Mgabwi's secret fleet on the Owerri.

NGOURO

Residence: #5
Vocation: Captain of the Militia
Age/Height/Weight: 32/6' 6"/297 lbs.

This huge fellow is rumored to be descended from the Zimbobo (page 79). As a young man, Ngouro turned to thievery to support himself and his sisters after their parents died. After a year of stealing livestock, he was caught and brought before King Mgabwi. Once the punishment was over, the king put Ngouro in charge of the militia, and he has held that post ever since.

Though not especially intelligent, Ngouro is fair and good-natured. In fact, it was he who suggested that the king build a storehouse for surplus food and use it to feed needy families. The guards in his command are forbidden to harm the citizenry, and Ngouro will take to task any man who does so. The mere sight of the guard captain is enough to convince most criminals to surrender without a fight, thereby reducing the need for actual violence to bring miscreants under control. Ngouro has no quarrel with the two Greek guardsmen in his garrison so long as they do their jobs.

NUBIMO

Residence: #1
Business: #10
Vocation: City Magistrate
Age/Height/Weight: 62/5' 1"/100 lbs.

Nubimo is short, bald, and stoop-shouldered. Once a rug merchant, he was appointed to the position of city magistrate by King Mgabwi. The king thought Nubimo would be fair, while Ngouro thought he might be merciful.

So far, Nubimo has done a good job on both counts. The magistrate is quite intelligent and not easily fooled. He tends to be lenient with foreigners unless they are repeat offenders.

PINDAR

Residence: #23
Business: #17
Vocation: Shipping Regulator
Age/Height/Weight: 19/5' 8"/152 lbs.

The youngest of Bundolo's three shipping regulators, Pindar has long brown hair, which he wears loose around his shoulders. His clear green eyes show the confidence of youth. His manner is brash. Pindar never takes bribes to alter shipping schedules, and is unaware that Memnon does.

RAMSUR

Residence: #16
Vocation: Temple Caretaker
Age/Height/Weight: 43/5' 4"/133 lbs.

A slight weasel of a man, Ramsur is a charlatan who tried to cash in on the dubious piety of the Greek merchants. He invested in a few trading ventures and raised a tidy sum, which he used to construct a Greek-style temple in Bundolo. Since then, he has been collecting offerings. When he had enough to leave town, he planned to sail to a foreign land, where the populations were larger and the pickings easier.

However, on the final night of the last full moon, while sitting in his room and counting his money, Ramsur had a vision of a beautiful, pale-skinned goddess dressed in a Greek-style white robe. She told Ramsur to mend his ways and return the money to the Temple. Ramsur has been converted to the Greek faith and is slowly returning all his ill-gotten wealth. He will tell anyone who will listen about the vision, though not about the stolen offerings.

TRIATO

Residence: #23
Business: #15
Vocation: Master Shipwright
Age/Height/Weight: 38/6' 0"/210 lbs.

This brawny, brown-haired man has studied from some of the best teachers in the world. He is bold and brash, for he is sure that he's the best designer of ships these savages have ever encountered.

ZELLA

Residence: #11
Vocation: Bartender/Nicked Edge
Age/Height/Weight: 16/5' 3"/115 lbs.

Zella is the daughter of Barendus, the bar's current owner. She has deep brown skin and hair, and her eyes are large and gentle, like those of a doe. Although Zella is quite lovely by any standards, she is no delicate flower, and is not shy about cursing right along with the sailors. She has won many an arm-wrestling match with her patrons, despite her petite size.

ADVENTURING

If the characters decide to explore Gloriosus, choose one of the following adventure suggestions.

1. ACCUSED!

When a merchant grabs a Greek thief in the marketplace, the thief blames a passing citizen of Gloriosus. Not knowing what to do, the militiaman on the scene throws both of the accused parties in jail until a decision can be reached.

When news leaks out to the residents, the city is in an uproar. The Greek is a known thief, while the citizen is kin to Kitia and the king.

The characters may be drawn into the conflict as witnesses to the actual theft, or as possible accomplices to one or the other of the accused. If the characters help the Greek, they will lose whatever friends they have in the city. If they help the citizen, the Greeks will turn on them. Some days you just can't win.

2. THE NIGHT WATCH

Merchants are quietly hiring adventurers to watch over their barges at night, to make sure no "accidents" happen before their voyages up the Owerri. The characters are offered such employment. If they accept, a band of thugs tries to sabotage whichever vessel the characters are watching. If the thugs are successful, the characters will be disgraced, and will have to find the perpetrators to reclaim their honor. If the characters fight off the thugs, the merchant will offer them a bonus if they'll go along on the trip upriver to ensure the safety of the barge.

Kingdom of New Grecia

The seventy-eight Greeks who survived the disaster at Ios more than three hundred years ago moved southward, hoping to escape Poseidon's wrath. They could not settle in the Ngati Plain where the Nimbassa and Khufiri roamed, for those tribes were still quite hostile. Nor would the Ægyptians in the Bestopa Plain accept these barbarians among them. So the band of refugees pressed south and east, avoiding the barren Kurashi Desert. More lives were lost during the treacherous climb through the Renegal Mountains that marked the boundary of the land they knew. The apelike nargash and the pterodactyls that made their nests in these peaks preyed on stragglers.

Sixty-nine beleaguered people finally won through the Renegals to reach the isolated valley called Lowandhi, or The Land Between. As they looked down from their vantage point in the mountains, they saw a primal jungle, and beyond that, a vast open grassland stretching as far as the eye could see.

Unfortunately, the Greeks were not alone in this paradise. A large band of fierce warriors from a native tribe called the Mokundi had camped at the base of the Renegals while on a hunting expedition. When the Greeks appeared atop the mountains, the Mokundi had just succeeded in bringing down one of the huge tyrannosaurs that inhabited this valley. The Greeks, remembering vividly that all the other black-skinned natives in this land wanted to exterminate them, felt that they were faced with yet another curse of the gods. The Mokundi had never seen fair-skinned men before, and they feared that the Greeks were devils or witches coming to destroy them. The two groups immediately set about trying to kill one another.

The Greeks, though haggard and worn from their ordeals, had superior firepower with their arrows, slings, and heavy spears. They also had the advantage of higher ground, for they were still in the foothills of the Renegals, while the natives were fighting from positions on the valley floor. But although the Mokundi were armed with only light spears and throwing knives, they had a larger contingent of warriors. Every Mokundi who fell to the Greeks was replaced by two more.

The fighting continued for many hours, and both sides suffered heavy losses. Taking advantage of the terrain, the Greeks were able to trigger rockslides that crushed whole groups of the natives. Later, however, a rear attack by an enraged nargash occupied the attention of the Greeks, allowing the Mokundi to gain a temporary foothold in the hills. The natives were eventually beaten back, but not before two dozen Greek warriors had been killed. The Mokundi sent messengers back to their tribe calling for reinforcements, which arrived within a few hours.

Kunara, the queen of the Mokundi, came to the site of the battle with her warriors and joined them in fighting the invaders. On the eve of that day, she went into her tent and prayed for an answer, for too many of her people were being killed by the savage white-skinned intruders. Eventually, she fell into a fitful sleep. During the night, she was visited by the greater spirit Okalwi, the Wise One, who appeared in the form of a young gazelle grazing outside her tent. The gazelle asked Kunara to climb on her back, and when the queen complied, the two set off on a long journey.

While they traveled, Okalwi told the queen that neither the people of the land nor the savage invaders could ever win this battle. If they continued to fight, they would only succeed in destroying one another. Okalwi urged Kunara to merge her tribe with that of the Greeks to form one people, who would rule the land for a thousand years.

At first Kunara refused. But when Okalwi took her into the future and showed her the destruction in store for both groups if the fighting continued, the queen finally agreed. The gazelle jumped back to the present and came to a stop. Kunara climbed down and found herself outside the tent of Nakadocious, who had become the leader of the Greeks. Startled awake, Nakadocious leaped to attack. But he was so taken by the beauty of the native queen that he stilled his hand. The two discovered that they could understand one another's languages. They talked until dawn, and finally agreed to marry, sealing the bond between their peoples. In the morning, peace was proclaimed.

Of course, not all their people immediately agreed to the joining of the races. There was opposition on both sides. Some were willing to call a truce, but felt that the intermingling of the races would doom both to extinction. Others wanted to continue the fighting to determine which race was truly superior.

Many of those who could not come to terms with this new proposal left the valley to fend for themselves, either joining with bands of marauders or struggling for a living on the Batuna Plains. Other dissenters stayed to work in the joint kingdom, keeping their separatist beliefs to themselves.

The Mokundi led the Greeks to a large village of ramshackle grass huts near the eastern coast, where the job of survival began in earnest. The first order of business was to secure the site. A large wall, made of stone and bricks, was erected around the settlement for defense.

Shortly after the new community was established, the Greeks built a ship and sailed out into the Ogoue-Eval waterway. The vessel was lost, but survivors from this expedition reported a huge whirlpool in the channel between New Grecia and the Isle of Dengi. The Greeks interpreted this as a sign of Poseidon's curse on those who had escaped death at Ios. The vortex prevented shipping and effectively cut off the option of sea travel along the coast. However, fishing boats could still ply their trade within the small harbor at the mouth of the Ianogo, so long as they did not stray too far out to sea.

After some initial squabbles, the two groups became as one, and soon skin color was a matter of no consequence. Following the example of their leaders, the Greeks and Mokundi intermarried. The offspring of these unions developed into a third race, whose members had fine tan complexions and features that showed elements of both parent races. These mulattos were seen as being favored by both the Greek gods and the native spirits, and within two generations they had become a highly respected upper class.

Occasionally, however, a child of such a union was born with a blotchy or off-colored complexion. Of course, this skin patterning was simply another possible genetic result of the racial mixing. But the people of Lowandhi did not understand this, and these children were ostracized and tormented, for they were viewed as proof of the gods' displeasure over the match of their parents. Eventually, all of the blotch-skinned mulattos

were granted full citizenship when one such outcast saved the life of Crown Prince Quentis.

The offspring of Kunara and Nakadocious continued to rule the kingdom, with succession passing to the eldest child, male or female, of each generation. The dynastic line has ruled wisely and well.

Through the years, separatists in New Grecia have occasionally banded together in cults, seeking to overthrow the reigning monarchs and set things aright. Both Greeks and Mokundi have formed such groups, but they have never worked together.

In general, both peoples benefited greatly from this joining. The Greeks shared their methods of farming, metalworking, construction, tool-making, and dyeing. The Mokundi offered their knowledge of the land, animals, and plants, plus native medicines and magic. But perhaps the most important thing the Mokundi gave the Greeks was a way back to the gods. Reverence for the spirits was so important to the Mokundi that many of their Greek spouses returned to regular prayer and meditation as well. Some Greeks revered what they remembered of their own gods, while others began to follow the ways of the Mokundi. It mattered not, for all the gods were appeased, and the kingdom prospered.

The citizens of New Grecia were relatively isolated in this remote valley. Once they had stopped fighting each other, they had no other enemies, so war became a thing of the past. The people plowed the land and planted crops, which grew well. Once their own survival was assured, the New Grecians cleared a road along the coast to facilitate trade with the tribes to the south.

The Greeks gradually introduced the natives to the art of masonry, since many types of stone could be quarried from the Renegals. In turn, the Mokundi showed the Greeks how to weave the pliable grasses that grew in the Lowandhi Valley to make temporary grass shelters and thatched roofs.

The kingdom flourished in relative isolation until thirty years ago, when it was discovered by adventurers from Gloriosus. The New Grecians were pleased with the opportunity for more trade, and the king sent gifts for his counterpart in Gloriosus. Trade between the two kingdoms was sporadic until laborers could clear a road through the Khofari Jungle. Since then, caravans have been crossing the continent regularly with trade goods. New Grecian traders have established such trade relations as are practical with Ios, for Calter's diplomacy has impressed them, but they have no particular interest in doing business with the other Greek barbarians.

Government

New Grecia is currently ruled by Lykanthos, a direct descendant of Nakadocious and Kunara. He has done an excellent job running the city, and the trade agreements that he has negotiated with Gloriosus and Ios have proved quite lucrative for the kingdom.

The king of New Grecia is an absolute ruler, and his word is the final law on all matters, domestic or foreign. However, the monarch shares the responsibility for generating legislation with all the citizens through a group called the Assembly, whose members vote on matters of law and policy. The results of their deliberations are then presented in the form of suggestions to the king, who may either approve them into law or veto them altogether. This system has worked well for the past three centuries, for the kings and queens of New Grecia have always tried to work with the people, and not go against their wishes in important matters.

The Greeks introduced this enlightened concept, based on the style of government in their homeland, shortly after the joining of the two peoples. The Mokundi liked the idea, but they insisted that their ancestors should have a voice in the government as well, for no Mokundi ever did anything of importance without consulting his forebears through the oracles. At first, the Greeks considered this nothing more than superstitious "mumbo jumbo." But many of the suggestions that the Mokundi attributed to their ancestors seemed to have real logic and wisdom behind them, so the Greeks began to relent. At last a compromise was reached, and the system upon which the two peoples agreed more than three hundred years ago remains in force to this day.

Every New Grecian citizen, alive or dead, has the right to a voice in the Assembly. Provisions were made so that each of the departed might have a vote in all matters of state. Every ancestor who has passed since the joining may vote through a surviving family member. Those ancestors who had died before that time can have a voice (through any descendant), but not a vote. One person in each family holds all the ancestral "proxies" for departed relatives. Only ancestors are given proxy votes; living family members are not permitted to vote in absentia. As can be imagined, this system requires quite a lot of record-keeping, so a special government office was created for the task.

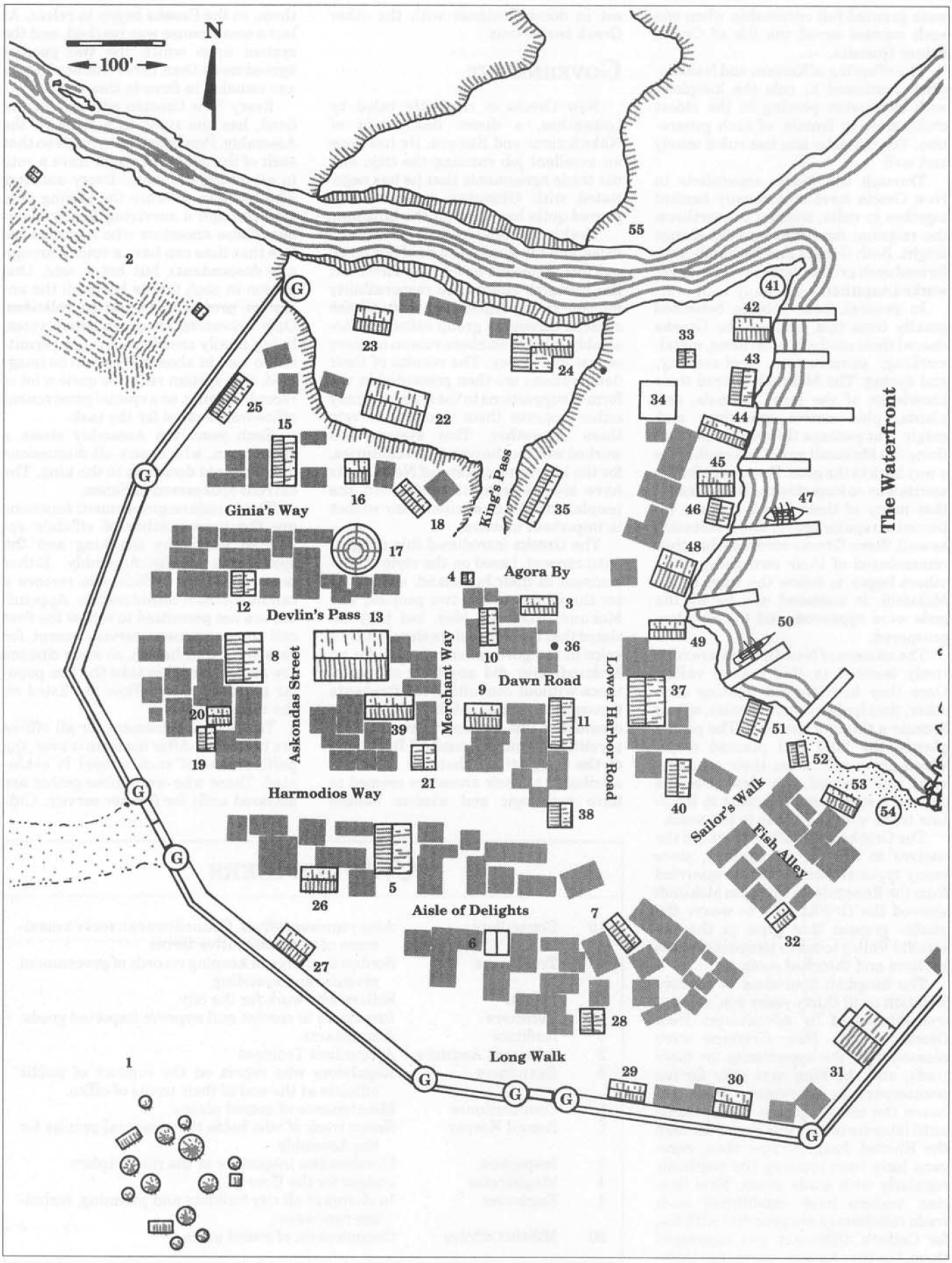
Each year, the Assembly elects a spokesman, who chairs all discussions and presents decisions to the king. The current spokesman is Senex.

The mundane government functions are the responsibility of officials appointed jointly by the king and the spokesman of the Assembly. Either person's veto is sufficient to remove a candidate from consideration. Appointees are not permitted to refuse the first call to government service except for reasons of poor health, so some citizens are always forced to take the less popular positions. City offices are listed on the table below.

Terms of appointment for all offices are two years. After his term is over, the performance of each official is evaluated. Those who were incompetent are declared unfit for further service. Citi-

City Officers

10	Councillors	Area representatives. Councillors can serve a maximum of two consecutive terms.
4	Treasurers	Scribes in charge of keeping records of government revenue and spending.
10	Poletai	Sellers who work for the city.
3	Recievers	Inspectors to receive and approve imported goods.
6	Auditors	Accountants.
2	Assistant Auditors	Accountant Trainees.
3	Examiners	Regulators who report on the conduct of public officials at the end of their terms of office.
1	Commissioner	Maintenance of sacred places.
1	Record Keeper	Keeps track of who holds the ancestral proxies for the Assembly.
3	Inspectors	Merchandise inspectors at the marketplace.
4	Magistrates	Judges for the Court.
4	Engineers	In charge of all city building and planning, including roadways.
20	Militia Officers	Commanders of guard units.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Askondas Street
Merchant Way
Agora By
Dawn Road
King's Pass
Lower Harbor Road
The Waterfront
Sailor's Walk
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Aisle of Delights
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zens who have performed well are eligible for additional terms, though they are not forced to accept them.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

New Grecia's laws are similar to those of most enlightened societies of the time. Murder, treason and witchcraft are punishable by death. Penalties for lesser crimes, such as thievery, range from fines and imprisonment to loss of a hand.

All accused criminals are entitled to a fair trial at the Assembly Hall (#22, page 63). A magistrate hears cases and decides upon appropriate sentences.

THE MILITIA

New Grecia has been at peace with the neighboring tribes to the south throughout its three hundred twenty-five year history. Therefore, no standing army is maintained here. One hundred fifty-four guards serve as a police force for the city, but these men and women have little military training, and they are poorly armed. The guards patrol the city streets in groups of five, breaking up fights and performing arrests as needed. Ten guards are assigned to the marketplace alone, for the increased trade in recent years has spawned an organized Thieves Guild, whose members prey upon wealthy traders.

THE HARBOR

The harbor is still underdeveloped compared with those of the Greek colonies to the north, but it is sufficient for the residents — no major shipping can be done here anyway because of the whirlpool in the channel. As if that weren't enough to discourage sea trade, a series of shoals and reefs extends more than a mile from shore, creating a hazard to incoming ships if the captains do not know how to avoid them. Some say these ridges were once mountains, but the whole range was submerged by Poseidon in his outrage after the survivors from Ios settled here.

Although these hazards do block shipping, they also serve as an excellent natural defense system. New Grecia has never been successfully invaded or attacked from the sea, despite various attempts. (Calter and Peisandros, upon hearing of New Grecia from the traders at Gloriosus, each sent triremes and merchant vessels to the lost city. Both kings intended to either initiate trade or conquer the city, depending upon its apparent naval strength. Both Calter and Peisandros believed that King Mgabwi had lied about the whirlpool to keep the profitable New Grecian merchandise coming through his own city. Neither king's ships ever returned.

Twice each year, during the equinoxes, the whirlpool disappears completely for a period of twelve to eighteen hours, leaving the channel waters placid and flat. The exact duration of this calming effect varies from year to year, though it has always been within this span. At these times, trading vessels laden with goods are dispatched to Ios. The captains and crews stay there as guests of Calter until it is time to return, always leaving at least a week early, to ensure that they can catch the "window" of calm in the channel.

RELIGION

Native spirits and versions of the Greek gods are worshipped together in New Grecia. Most citizens pay homage to both. According to Greek custom, the temples are decorated with marble statues of the various deities. However, the local sculptors prefer to depict the merging of the two religions. Therefore it is not unusual to find statues of Greek gods walking with animals that represent the nature spirits of the Mokundi.

The citizens of New Grecia find their religion everywhere. The beliefs of these people are a superstitious mixture of fetishes, idealism, and reverence. Everything from the way the wind blows to the amount of mud on the street may have some portent. Trees, goats, snakes, the sun, and a host of other objects all have religious significance to the man in the street. The people are always on the lookout for omens, for the gods can be notably capricious and intolerant. Such beliefs explain the continued existence of soothsayers and oracles.

SLAVERY

The slaves of New Grecia enjoy much finer treatment than those in most other parts of the world. Many of the slaves actually earn wages for their work, and may eventually buy their freedom. This system gives the slaves incentive to work while their masters are not about.

But although they are treated in most respects as paid laborers, the slaves are not free people. Slaves are the property of their masters, and may be bought and sold as such. They may not refuse to do whatever work their masters demand of them, whether or not they are wage-earners. They are not entitled to full rights of citizenship, though each slave is permitted 3/5 of a vote in the Assembly.

Some owners rent their slaves to the city or to other citizens on a temporary basis. The city rents hundreds of slaves to perform mundane tasks, such as clerking for the councillors, calling citizens to Assembly meetings, or just keeping the streets clean. In such cases, the master takes a percentage of the fee for himself, and the slave is allowed to keep the rest.

If a slave is robbed or somehow wronged while working away from home, his owner can go to the law for him and prosecute the offender. This is true even if the slave was doing public service work on the city payroll. Any slave who is mistreated by his master may bring suit to the local magistrate. If abuse can be proved, the owner will be forced to sell the slave to someone who can take better care of his property.

New slaves come from many sources. Some people are born into servitude, to slave parents. Others become slaves — families trying to settle their debts may sell their children into slavery, or freemen may be illegally pressed into service. Some sixty percent of all slaves in New Grecia, however, are spoils of foreign wars, purchased from Ios.

KEY TO NEW GRECIA

New Grecia stands on the site of the original Mokundi settlement. The city currently has a population of nearly twelve thousand citizens, five thousand slaves, and six hundred transients (traders from Gloriosus or native delegations from the south). During the past three centuries, New Grecia has undergone tremendous growth and development. The city wall is still sturdy and sound, for it is kept in good repair. Archers are stationed in the towers along its perimeter, but it has yet to be used for defense against an actual siege.

Guard posts are marked on the city map (page 58) with a "G." Each of these positions is manned around the clock by two militiamen.

The roads are still primarily dirt byways between the buildings. One of the first beautification projects of the second century was the planting of palm trees along the streets to provide pleasant scenery plus some welcome shade from the hot sun. The streets of New Grecia were all named more than fifty years ago by order of a king who had visions of planning a city like those in Greece. The names are still in use. Building descriptions are given both in numerical order and alphabetically by street, for easy reference.

Most of the homes are made of stone or wood. Types of architecture vary, but

elements of both Greek and native styles are present. The finest homes have indoor plumbing made from bamboo pipes. A simple underground sewer system routes wastes to the sea. The citizens get water from private wells or from the public spring.

Outer Area

Corinth Way is the major land route for transporting goods to the tribes in the south. It ends at the west gate.

1. Native Village

Many natives from the southern tribes visit New Grecia, seeking to improve their lifestyles. Since most have no money when they arrive, they hire themselves out as laborers within the city. Many of these natives feel uncomfortable living in stone buildings, so they are permitted to live rent-free in a small village just beyond the city walls. Most of the current residents are Bushmen, but at least three other tribes are represented here as well.

The villagers build traditional grass huts, either circular or oblong (quonset style), depending on the tribal background of the particular resident. Cooking is done outdoors to minimize the risk of fire. The natives obtain their water from a nearby spring and carry it into the village in buckets.

Once each week, the residents gather in the center of the village to discuss any problems that have arisen. Though he is certainly not a chief, Warusa, a Bushman, has been appointed the village spokesman. He handles all internal complaints and acts as the village's envoy to the Assembly in New Grecia.

2. Farms

Most citizens of New Grecia actually live outside the city walls. Extensive tracts of land have been cleared and devoted to agriculture during the past three centuries. So far, the food supply has kept up with the rapidly expanding population of the kingdom, for with proper management, the naturally rich soil of the valley brings forth bumper crops year after year.

New Grecian law states that any citizen who cultivates the ground and brings forth food for three years in a row may keep all the lands so tended. Therefore, many of the poor natives who come to New Grecia end up as farmers.

Corn and other grains grow well here, as do vegetables and beans. The farmers break the ground with ox-drawn plows, then cultivate by hand. At harvest time, slaves are rented from owners within the city to pick the crops.

Agora By

This street leads past the marketplace, which is called the agora.

3. Agora

This is the main commercial area of New Grecia, where vendors sell their wares directly to the public. Intermixed with actual shops are temporary booths consisting of tables or small raised platforms draped with hides.

Several different inspectors move throughout the marketplace from dawn till dusk to ensure that business is done in a responsible manner. The sitophylakes, or grain-guards, watch over the measurements of grain and regulate the daily prices. Two metronomi (weight measurers) test the scales for proper balance. Finally, several agoranomi (market guards) examine produce and vegetables for freshness and quality.

Several people claiming to be diviners also travel through the marketplace, pushing carts containing caged birds, rubbing boards, and other devices used to consult the spirits. These diviners offer to help buyers make their decisions, or to aid people in distress. A few of them are actually skilled with their art, though most are charlatans.

The Thieves Union preys upon merchants who shop at the agora, so ten city guards patrol the marketplace watching for pickpockets.

4. Fruit Sellers

Fresh produce and vegetables are brought into New Grecia daily from the fields or the Khofari Jungle and sold in these five open stalls. Melons, squash, bananas, plaintains, coconuts, pineapples, palms, dates, figs, olives, citrus and other assorted fruits are available at competitive prices.

Aisle of Delights

The concept of a brothel was introduced to the Mokundi by the Greeks. Now, anything to tempt or tease can be bought on this thoroughfare.

5. House of Lycas

Lycas has only recently opened this two-story stone brothel. All twelve of his women are wage-earning slaves originally purchased from Ios. Until they can buy their freedom, they are available for sale at the right price. Lycas also employs three tall, obese eunuchs to watch over the house and keep the women out of trouble. He actually enjoys this business and wants his ladies to be happy.

On the ground floor is a tavern and restaurant. The women live on the upper floor. Each has a private room equipped with everything from plush pillows to a plunge bath. Unlike #6 (below), this brothel is open only to men.

Behind the house is a stable with eight stalls. Fresh hay and clean water are provided daily. Grooms tend customers' mounts while their owners partake of the services inside.

6. The Smiling Nymph

Not as clean as the House of Lycas, this two-story mudbrick brothel appeals to demented individuals. Each customer is offered a pipe filled with strange powder upon entering the dimly-lit waiting area on the ground floor. A clerk takes requests, and when an appropriate slave becomes available, the customer is led to an interior room.

Sakhas, the propietor of this establishment, mistreats his slaves regularly, but none have ever escaped to inform the authorities. His stock is replenished twice annually by shipments from Ios. He follows all city ordinances, and keeps his operations within the law. Some of the militiamen are his best customers. There is a secret entrance to the catacombs (#55, page 67) in the proprietor's office on the ground floor.

7. Scribe

Prodikos operates his business out of this one-story mudbrick building. Inkpots, pens, parchments, and other tools of the trade are spread out on his stained wooden workbench.

Though all but a few citizens can read and write, there is still a need for a scribe to convey official messages. Prodikos can write in the languages of New Grecia and Gloriosus, plus Greek and nearly a dozen foreign languages.

Behind the scribe's home is a shed wherein a few household items are stored. There is a secret entrance to the catacombs (#55, page 67) in the floor.

Askondas Street

This street was named for the adventurer who first brought back ivory from the nearby jungle.

8. Temple of Zeus

This three-story stone temple, built in the classic Greek style, has a row of columns supporting the porch roof and a large statue of Zeus in the pediment. This is the primary center of public worship in New Grecia. The area around the temple is landscaped with beautiful tropical plants. Behind the building are more practical gardens, in which the priests grow all sorts of delicious fruits and vegetables for their meals.

Inside, the main worship chamber is ornate. Carved pillars line the room on both sides, and all the furnishings and wall decorations have been done in gold leaf. On one wall is a fresco of a man striking the head from a gorgon; on another is a scene showing a twisted and deformed man hammering out a sword on a glowing anvil. The goblets and candlesticks on the altar are all made of the finest silver.

All citizens meet here to pray on festival days, though small worship services are held daily for the more pious. Offerings to the great god are given to the priests, who place any cash or valuables in a secret depository in one of the interior columns.

In one of the rear chambers is a small library stocked with non-magical scrolls. A few of these describe great wars or religious events from before the joining. The other rooms are living quarters for Josiphos, the old priest who presides over the temple, and his two assistants, Nabel and Metis.

Dawn Road

This small street faces due east. People strolling along its length in the early morning are greeted by the first rays of the sun.

9. Spice Merchant

Kellas sells his imported spices and scents from this two-story mudbrick building. Recently, he also began exporting herbs and spices brought to him by the natives from the southern tribes.

10. Granary

Oswela sells feed for livestock and grain for baking from this open-ended wooden building.

11. Counting House

This new, four-story mudbrick building is the closest thing New Grecia has to a modern-day bank, for it serves as both a depository and a loan house. Merchants who need money quickly to close a business deal can borrow from the fund here, as long as they promise to repay the loan in full, plus 10% interest, within thirty days. The money is kept in a locked room on the top floor.

Devlin's Pass

This street was named for a Greek general who was killed during the great battle that brought about the joining.

12. The Silver Cup

This two-story wooden tavern is frequented by the militiamen. The courtyard behind the building is paved with flagstones and furnished with tables and benches to accommodate overflow customers. Exotic plants hang everywhere in baskets.

Inside, the common room looks light, airy, and spacious, even though tables have been packed in tightly. Several other rooms are available at a small fee for private meetings, or for use when the weather is inclement.

Helena, the bartender, serves fine wines of all sorts, and sometimes even beer imported from Ios. She works for her uncle Naxides, who owns the building. Her two teenage daughters, Ilana and Vinia, also work in the tavern.

13. Militia Barracks/Jail

This two-story mudbrick building houses one hundred thirty of the city guardsmen. The remaining twenty-four guards are married, and live in private homes. The guards sleep in common rooms, each of which can hold approximately twenty sleeping pallets. Food is provided twice each day in the large dining hall on the ground floor. There is a private well behind the building.

The jail is adjacent to the barracks, and there is a doorway connecting the two. Six secure cells are available to hold those arrested for crimes within the city until they can be brought to trial at the Assembly Hall (#22, page 63).

Currently, the guard force is composed of volunteers. In case of emergency or war, however, all citizens and slaves below the age of forty-five may be called into military service. Those avoiding this call can be prosecuted or even slain. Of course, all militiamen are compensated for their government service, whether they come willingly or not.

King Lykanthos is the supreme commander of the city militia. He can exercise this office at any time, and he comes to the barracks frequently to inspect his troops. Usually, however, he allows his captain, a young man named Philip, to run the outfit. Philip has a loyal lieutenant named Damon to whom he delegates some command responsibilities.

Fish Alley

This section of town is where the fishermen make their homes. The smell of fresh and rotting fish is quite pungent throughout this area.

14. Fishermen

Though all citizens are considered to be equal in New Grecia, some are more equal than others. Those on the lower end of the scale make their living as best they can. The sea provides a bountiful catch for the poor fishermen who have congregated in the southeast section of the city, close to the beach where they can freely launch their boats.

The fisherfolk live in simple, well-kept, one-story homes. Most are built of wood or mudbricks. In the center of each home is one large family room. Adjoining rooms, including the kitchen, sleeping quarters, and storage areas, connect directly with it.

The streets of the Fish Alley area are narrow and close together. Nets are stretched from house to house to dry in the sun, and all sorts of fishing paraphernalia is in evidence. Though the inhabitants are gossips who regularly stick their noses into one another's business, they are very close mouthed when dealing with non-fishermen.

Ginia's Way

This narrow avenue was named in honor of the last New Grecian queen, mother of Lykanthos.

15. House of Healing

Fourteen healers with different specialties operate out of this two-story stone building. Some are Greek-style surgeons with no magical powers; others are witch doctors or priests who heal through native medicines and rituals. Patients familiar with the services offered here may request a specific physician or witch doctor; strangers are assigned the first healer available. Fees depend upon the nature of the problem and the materials needed to effect a cure. The healers regularly compare

notes, and sometimes trade patients, like doctors in a modern group practice.

The building is rectangular, with an enclosed courtyard where patients wait to see their physicians. Clerks talk with the patients in the courtyard about their complaints, then assign them to appropriate healers.

Sixteen doors lead from the waiting area to the individual examining rooms. These chambers are stocked with liniments, mendicants, medicines, bandages, oils, ointments, and healers' tools. Surgery is performed in the operating room at the rear of the building, though such is only done as a last resort. Saws of various sizes line the walls around the stone table in this room.

Some of the healers are willing to make house calls; others operate only out of the House of Healing. The surgeon Demionos also does emergency field surgery on wounded city guardsmen, and in his free time, he tours the city to comment on health and sanitation.

16. Residence of Garentis

This ornate two-story stone home is one of the finest private residences in New Grecia. Instead of the exterior columns that surround most expensive New Grecian homes, Garentis has planted palm trees around his house.

Visitors are greeted by a slave dressed in white. Two fine marble statues, one of Zeus and one of Hera, stand in the tiled foyer, and exquisite tapestries hang from the walls.

Garentis enjoys having guests for dinner. Although he normally eats from stoneware plates, he prefers to use beaten gold cups and saucers for entertaining. His household staff consists of four young slaves, all of whom he purchased in Ios. Garentis pays to have them educated so that they will be able to make a proper living after they buy their freedom.

The merchant prefers to keep a large sum of money in his house for transactions conducted outside normal business hours. His ready cash is hidden in a large coffer beneath the stairs. The coffer is made of marble, and it can only be opened with a key hidden in a vase behind the statue of Hera. No one else knows the location of the key, and Garentis always makes sure that he is alone before removing it.

17. Arena

A fondness for athletic competitions was one trait the Greeks and the Mokundi had in common. Accordingly, this large stadium was built only a few years after the joining. Since then, it has been remodeled several times.

All land-based athletic competitions are held here. Tiers of seats surround a large, central playing field ringed by a dirt track used for racing events. The stands have a total seating capacity of three thousand.

At both ends of the field are dressing rooms and preparation areas, complete with individual wash basins, a plunging pool, and sweat baths. Animals to be used in the games are held in a pen behind the northern section of fencing. In the center of the field is a huge sculpture, mounted on a marble dais, that depicts all the important deities of the Greek pantheon, with representations of the native spirits around the perimeter. The statues face outward, so that there is at least one deity looking in any given direction. It is traditional for each of the participants to offer a sacrifice in front of the statues before the day's games begin. The best sacrifices are items that are somehow special to the people or tribes involved — such as a branch from a tree that grows in the home village of a native team.

Games can be held at any time, though most are scheduled for weekends and holidays. Trials of personal combat are very popular, as are sporting events. Among the competitions held here are boxing, wrestling, discus throwing, javelin tossing, and high jumping. Local natives from the Batuna Plain use the arena for their own tribal competitions.

Any citizen may participate in regular games, and slaves may do so with permission from their masters. Women are permitted to participate on an equal footing with men, though the crowd sometimes does not approve when a female wins over her male challengers.

18. School

All children between the ages of five and sixteen are required to attend the city-supported school. This one-story building has an open courtyard surrounded by small groves of trees, where students can study individually.

The children are assigned to small groups for lessons. In any one group, the age difference is no more than three years. Illiteracy is almost unknown in New Grecia, for the youngsters are instructed in reading and writing as well as philosophy, music, and recitation. For most citizens of New Grecia, education is a process that continues throughout life.

Promising students may opt to stay on and become teachers. The head tutor is Miletos.

Harmodios Way

Harmodios was a master mason who died fifty years ago, when a slab of granite fell from a pulley and crushed him.

19. Goldsmith

Shellas is one of six goldsmiths in New Grecia. In his one-story stone workshop is a small-scale smelting operation and forge. The smith refines gold, silver, and copper ores, then shapes and molds the pure metals into fine jewelry of intricate design or utensils, such as plates and goblets.

At any time, Shellas has approximately 350 gold coins worth of precious metal ores and 500 gold coins worth of refined metals and finished jewelry in his shop. The ores are useless to anyone except another craftsmen, so he does not keep these under lock and key, as he does the finished products.

The goldsmith lives in a two-story wooden home next to the shop. The house is simple in style and tastefully decorated.

20. Jeweler

New Grecia's leading jewel merchant, Menander, lives and works in a three-story wooden building. He deals in the finest gems, securing them in marvelously ornate settings which are produced by his neighbor, Shellas (#19, above). Most of these gems come from mines in the Renegal Mountains, but some are imported from Ios.

Menander uses the ground floor of the shop to conduct his business. He greets customers personally and offers them wine, tea, and cakes before taking their orders.

The jewels are kept in a secret compartment beneath an urn in the jeweler's office. A grass viper, the deadliest snake in Æsheba, is kept in the compartment with them. The viper's bite is very poisonous and instantly fatal. Menander wears a heavily lined glove that covers his entire arm when he removes his gems. This security measure has protected the jeweler's merchandise from thieves to date.

21. Theatre

This outdoor entertainment area consists of a simple raised proscenium stage faced by rows of curved benches carved from wood. To the right side of the stage is a small preparation area for the players.

The stage itself is equipped with two painted backdrops, which can be raised or lowered as needed. There is no act curtain to mask scene changes.

The stage belongs to the city, and any citizen may use the facilities. The space must be booked four to six weeks in advance of the performance date, and there is a small fee to cover cleanup after the show.

Performances include poetry readings, mime, musical concerts, and dramas, both tragedies and comedies. Most plays written by New Grecians are either wholly Greek or wholly native in style. A few playwrights have blended elements of both for more contemporary settings, but such plays are less popular with the public than the "historical" types, for the New Grecians are proud of their past.

Visiting troupes of actors occasionally book the stage for a short run of performances through a citizen sponsor. This usually occurs during festival times, when foreigners are present. Often the people are too drunk to notice whether the performance is any good or not. Once, however, after a particularly horrible play, the stage was stormed by irate theatregoers, so four militiamen are now posted to guard the theatre during every performance.

King's Pass

This broad street winds up Vigilant Hill to the king's palace.

22. Assembly Hall

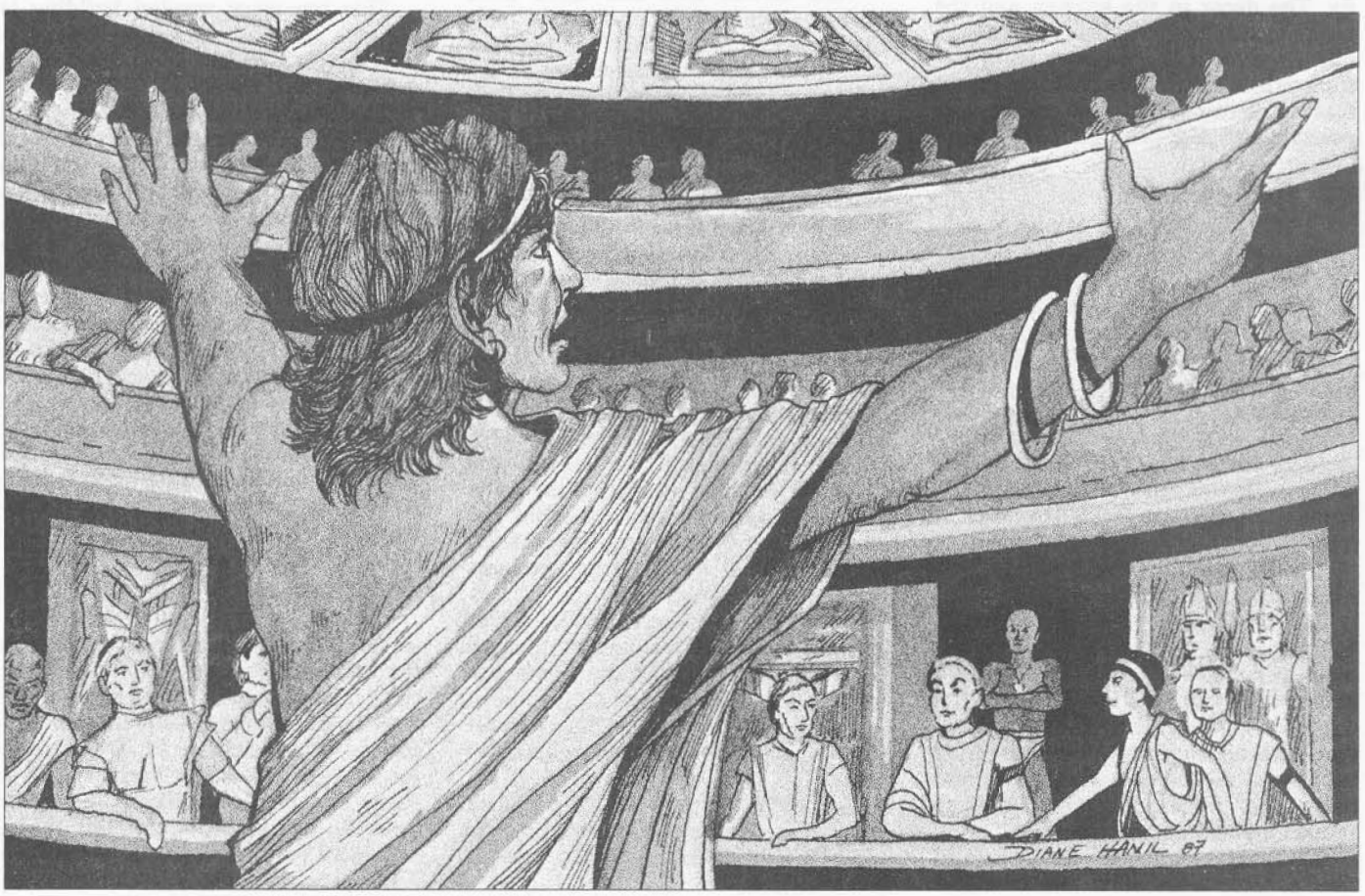
The four-story Assembly Hall is located atop Vigilant Hill. It is built entirely of blue marble quarried from the Renegal Mountains. The design is based on that of similar structures in the Greek homeland — a rectangular building surrounded by a colonnade. All the exterior columns are covered with carvings of human faces. Above the entrance is a triangular pediment, which holds white marble statues of Greek deities with lions, tigers, and other wild creatures that symbolize the physical incarnations of native spirits.

The inside is one large meeting room, much like a theatre. Three tiers of seats along the walls encircle a central debating area. Hundreds of human faces are carved into the walls and all other exposed stone panels. These faces and those on the exterior columns are likenesses of those ancestors who are entitled to vote in the Assembly. (See page 57 for details.) Each time a citizen dies, a sculptor is commissioned to add a face to the Assembly Hall, so that the departed may see and hear the debates. The carvings are remarkably lifelike and detailed.

Proponents of new laws debate the issues in the center of the floor. Any citizen may ask for the floor and speak his peace on the subject at hand before a vote is taken. This method of legislation takes much time in such a large city, but the decisions reached are usually sound.

Regular meetings of the Assembly are held forty times a year, and each takes a full day. All important functions, such as passing new laws, banishing a convicted criminal, or expanding foreign trade are discussed in Assembly. Citizens are paid one gold coin per day for attendance at Assembly meetings to ensure that a sufficient number of citizens appear, and to compensate them for losing the income from a day's work. Slaves are paid a value equal to 3/5 of a gold coin for each day they participate. Town criers, usually rented slaves, walk the streets to announce upcoming meetings and remind citizens to attend.

Public criminal trials are held each week in the Assembly Hall before a jury of ten citizens and a magistrate. The jury reaches a decision on the guilt or



innocence of the accused based on the evidence offered (including the results of poison oracles or the statements of official diviners). The magistrate then passes sentence. Crimes of high treason or espionage require the king's direct involvement in the judicial process, but the magistrates handle all other civil and criminal proceedings. Juries are composed entirely of volunteers who are paid one gold coin per day for their trouble. No citizen may volunteer more than twice per year.

23. Residence of Senex

This three-story stone house belongs to the spokesman of the Assembly, Senex. His house is nearly as grand as the palace, but that isn't good enough for Senex, who believes that he is entitled to the best of everything.

Senex built his home to mimic the palace in design and layout. However, the effect is not nearly as breathtaking for visitors, for the spokesman unfortunately has no taste. The small enclosed courtyard features atrocious overgrown greenery and several risqué statues. Of the four sleeping chambers on the ground floor, two have private sunken baths decorated with pink and green mosaic portraits of Senex and his family. The decor in the kitchen and the men's meeting room is less pretentious, but the clashing colors have an unsettling effect on visitors. All the rooms feature paintings with unexciting composition and poor perspective.

24. Palace

This impressive four-story marble edifice atop Vigilant Hill is the home of King Lykanthos. A stone wall surrounds the palace and grounds, and four guards are always posted at the gate. Orchids hang from the branches of the citrus trees that line the long path leading to the front entrance. The seal above the doorway is a wolf, half black and half white — the symbol of Nakadocious and Kunara. Visitors are greeted by Zarritza herself.

Inside, graceful white pillars surround the inner courtyard. The garden is well tended and has bloomed nicely this year. Simple statues and a few stone benches surround the reflecting pool, which takes up the center of the courtyard. Paintings, tapestries, statues and other works of art are tastefully positioned throughout the palace, and baskets of fresh-cut tropical flowers impart a sweet scent to the air.

The king's throne room on the ground floor is faced with white marble slabs. Rugs of leopard and tiger skin cover the floor, and the furniture is carved from the finest mahogany in the nearby jungle. The king's throne was hewn from a single piece of pale blue marble and set with sappires. When Lykanthos holds court in this room, he is attended by fifteen trained warriors (not part of the city guard), his official diviner, and his translator.

The rest of the ground floor is divided into six guest rooms (each with a private sunken bath built of pink marble), plus the kitchen and the men's dining room. The women's dining room is on the second floor; it doubles as a sewing and weaving room. The second and third floors house the king's personal staff in luxury. Lykanthos's private chambers occupy the entire top floor. The house is a true showplace, displaying all the finest that New Grecia has to offer.

Long Walk

This is the longest street in New Grecia. It runs the length of the city wall, from Fish Alley to Ginia's Way.

25. Sculptor

New Grecia now has more than twenty sculptors, for marble is realtively easy to obtain from the Renegal Mountains, and the merchants at Ios will buy all the stautary that New Grecia can export. This sprawling, one-story brick workshop is the home of Bertram, the sculptor who receives the most commissions from the king.

Huge slabs of fine marble in various colors surround the shop. Bertram does most of his work outdoors, where there is more room and better light. There is usually a crowd around the building, for Bertram's abilities with the chisel are truly amazing. Currently, he is working on a life-sized statue of Lykanthos leading his men into the southern lands.

Inside, sketches for upcoming pieces litter the worktables. Tools of the trade have been tossed carelessly about the yard and the shop. It appears that the sculptor has at least a dozen projects underway simultaneously.

Bertram occasionally does secret projects for merchants or adventurers who wish to have secret compartments put into stone, wooden, or clay containers. He carved the urn in which Menander, the jewel merchant, keeps his valuables (#20, page 62). The price of his work is high, and the price of his silence about such matters is higher still, but he can be trusted to keep his word once it has been given.

26. Weapons Master

Rintos makes and repairs weapons and armor for the city guards in this one-story stone smithy. The weapons master can make spears, knives, swords of various types, and some of the more exotic native weapons as well, though he has little call for the latter except from fighters in the arena. Rintos employs a native assistant named Ruaga.

27. Plowmaster

Tytos is one of six plowmasters in New Grecia. In his single-story mudbrick shop he does general smithing work — making plowshares and other farm implements. Near the forge stands a massive anvil. Tongs, hammers, and other tools hang on the walls.

Characters looking for a smith can find this place simply by following the sound of Tytos's hammer ringing on metal. The plowmaster can custom-make adventuring gear, but there is little call for such items in New Grecia, so characters must describe exactly what they want.

28. The Kraken's Blood

This two-story wooden building is perhaps the most dangerous tavern in New Grecia. The Blood is a hangout for ruffians and thieves.

The air inside is close and smoky, and most of the clients prefer it that way. The furniture is made of dark wood from the northern forests. Watered-down rum, wine, and ale are served here, along with poorly prepared food. This is an excellent place for characters to pick up rumors of criminal activity, either in the city or on the high seas. Three female slaves work as serving women for Græfix, the propietor.

A small storage shed behind the building contains cheese, wine, and smoked meat. The stable beside the shed has four stalls filled with fodder. Behind the fourth stall is a hidden entrance to the catacombs (#55, page 67).

29. Cobbler

This one-story mudbrick building is the home and workplace of one of the city's fifteen cobblers. Ferin makes footwear by hand to the customer's specifications. Most citizens of New Grecia prefer light shoes, so Ferin stocks a ready supply of sandals. In his spare time, he makes boots, hobnail shoes, and more exotic footgear for export to Ios, where it is resold to foreign mer-

chants. Bits of leather, hobnails for joining, eyelets, and laces are strewn all over the long worktable in the single room of the cottage. Ferin sleeps on a pallet in the corner.

30. TANNER

New Grecia's nine tanners have been relegated by law to the south side of town, where the smell of their tanning chemicals and dyes will not offend the general populace. The city guards patrol this section of town regularly, for criminals see the tanners' acid pits as an excellent way to dispose of bodies.

This one-story wooden building is the home and workplace of Vaxisa, the leading producer of dyed leather. A number of boiling pits have been dug in the ground behind the house and filled with dyes or caustic substances. Vaxisa first soaks the skins in the tanning chemicals to soften them. After they have been pulled into shape and dried, he dips them into dyes, for colored leather brings a good price at the markets.

31. CREMATORIUM & CEMETERY

A mysterious tropical disease took hundreds of lives shortly after the establishment of New Grecia. The Greeks, who had had some experience with plagues before, built this one-story stone crematorium on the outskirts of town to burn the bodies of the deceased, so that the contagion would not be spread. The concept of cremation horrified the Mokundi, for they believed that all the unburied dead would become wandering spirits.

At last, a compromise was reached. After consultation with the ancestral spirits, a powerful Mokundi witch doctor claimed that he could bind the wandering spirits to the crematorium, making them unable to harass the living. The binding spell he prepared used the principles of homeopathy and contagion. Sticks to represent the spirits were tied to a small mud block with hairs from the deceased. The block was placed on the floor inside the crematorium and warded with spells to keep living people (especially witches) from disturbing it.

The mass cremation did take place, and within a year the plague was over. The witch doctor's binding spell held, and the spirits of the victims were confined to the crematorium where their bodies had been burned. Some were reincarnated in their descendants, and peacefully lived out another cycle of life, but many still remain in this building. The binding spell will hold as long as the crematorium stands, or until the mud block is removed.

Most of the citizens shun the building, but diviners occasionally go there to speak with the spirits of their ancestors. Witches see the crematorium as a potential source of servants, and many have tried to set the spirits free. None have been successful so far, since the witch doctor's magic still prevents witches from entering the building.

Beside the crematorium is a cemetary, where the dead are buried properly in clay coffins or huge pottery jars. Bodies of slaves are consigned to deep pits that act as group burial sites.

A few wealthy residents of New Grecia have their departed loved ones embalmed before burial, in the style of the Ægyptians. These preserved bodies are laid to rest in above-ground vaults in the cemetary. Only the dead are buried in these vaults, however; New Grecian residents do not hold with the Ægyptian practice of burying live spouses and servants with the departed.



32. THE GOLDEN TRIDENT

After the fishermen sell their day's catches to the fish markets and secure their boats at the docks, they head for this two-story mudbrick tavern, where they while away the afternoon telling stories over mugs of ale. The common room is furnished with rough-hewn wooden tables and benches, and decorated with fishnets and lobster traps. The rear portion of the first floor serves as storage area for liquor and other supplies. Bagrat, the tavernkeeper, lives alone on the second floor.

Bagrat serves his customers fine ale, whiskey, and rum. When he can get them, he keeps fresh limes and oranges in baskets on the bar for his patrons. His serving wench is a native girl from the village (#1, page 60). She doesn't take kindly to lewd offers from sailors. If a customer propositions her, she will box his ears soundly, then direct him to the Aisle of Delights.

LOWER HARBOR ROAD

This road runs the length of the harbor, below Vigilant Hill.

33. HOUSE OF SHENUS

This tiny one-story wooden house is badly in need of repair. Shenis is kept busy at the stockyard while his father lies ailing in bed. Demionos makes regular house calls, but there is little that he

can do, for the man's affliction is magical — the result of dealing with a witch and being unable to pay for his services. He refuses to see the witch doctors at the House of Healing (#15, page 61), for the witch has threatened to kill his son if he reveals the source of his illness.

34. Stockyard

Sellers who don't wish to display their livestock at the auction area can keep cattle, pigs, sheep, or mules here in numbered pens. Fourteen-year-old Shenis watches over the yard and feeds the animals. The boy's father actually owns the stockyard, but the old man is ill and confined to his bed (see above). Shenis is well liked by the city guards, so no one tries to take advantage of him.

35. The Brickyard

The soil of this coastal region is rich in clay, and it makes excellent bricks when mixed with the proper amount of straw. The mud and straw mixture is pressed into molds and dried in the sun, then baked in a kiln. The clay is also used to make fired pottery — primarily plates, cups, and bowls.

The brickyard is run by the city. Thirty-two wage-earning slaves are employed here, plus one freeman who acts as overseer.

36. Soothsayer

Cragasti the soothsayer can be found at this site day or night, sitting on a heap of old clothes and refuse. She is gifted with the Sight, and can predict the future. Many citizens have offered to take her in or build better quarters for her, but Cragasti has always refused. She prefers to live on the street, where she can be in tune with the city. She subsists entirely on her customers' donations.

37. Auction Area

This single-story wooden building has a large raised dais at one end for the auctioneer. After paying all appropriate duties, merchants can display their wares in the auction area. Four city guards are posted to prevent theft. Auctions are held daily in the afternoons.

38. Trader

This one-story wooden building is the home and workplace of Axiola, a young trader who brokers goods. Inside is a simple wooden table littered with inkpots, records of transactions, and shipping orders. Axiola will match sellers with buyers for a small percentage of the merchandise, or an equivalent value in money.

Merchant Way

As its name implies, this avenue was once a main thoroughfare for business.

39. Public Baths

This single-story mudbrick facility offers two large bathing pools, one for men and one for women. Both are fed by an underground spring. Several small atria, open to the sky but surrounded by high walls, are available for those who wish to sunbathe in privacy. The rear chambers include a sweat bath, basins for washing, a plunging pool, and an anointing room for spraying oneself with fragrances and oils.

Sailor's Walk

This short street leads past Fish Alley to the Waterfront.

40. Poseidon's Net

The residents of Fish Alley come to this small, one-story wooden temple each day to pray for a good catch. At the north end of the single room is a simple wooden altar. Above it is a niche in the wall that holds a likeness of Poseidon carved from mahogany. In the statue's hand is a single large pearl, donated by a fisherman who found it inside an oyster that he pulled from the harbor. Except for that, the temple has no finery, for such might anger the god or cause him to turn away from his people. The priest, a retired fisherman named Conris, lives in the loft with his wife.

The Waterfront

Although there is no actual street here, the residents of New Grecia refer to the seashore as though it were such.

Most of the wooden docks in the harbor look shoddy, but they are sturdy enough to withstand daily use by fishing boats. Some of the larger docks, including two that belong to the city and four that are the property of private individuals, are built of reinforced stone.

Any citizen may use the city-owned docks, though vessels bringing foreign delegations to New Grecia on official business are, of course, given precedence. The private docks are the sole property of their owners, and trespassing is punishable by law. Occasionally an owner will give permission for another person to use his dock, but this is done only on a case by case basis.

Teregas, the dockmaster, works with the city guards to make sure that business at the harbor runs smoothly. He lives in a small, one-story wooden hut near the Pharos (#41, below).

41. The Pharos

This lighthouse, built of stone and mudbrick, stands six stories tall. At the top is a huge bowl filled with firewood, which is kept lit all night to mark the offshore shoals and reefs that present a danger to fishing boats and other incoming vessels.

Ghenna, the keeper of the beacon, lives with his son inside the lighthouse. The two of them have contrived a gadget to haul firewood up to the top of the lighthouse and dump it into the bowl continuously. A long loop of chain is attached to a wooden framework as tall as the lighthouse itself. Ghenna places firewood in buckets affixed to the chain while his son operates a treadle that powers the machine, pulling the chain around so that the buckets dump their loads into the bowl atop the tower.

42-44. Shipwrights

Fishing boats and an occasional merchant vessel are built in this area. These large two-story warehouses hold building materials for the shipwrights. Two of the buildings belong to Karon Styl, a foreign businessman. He oversees all the work, but allows those he has hired to handle the actual construction. A huge winch and pulley system has been erected on the beach in front of #42 to lift ships out of the water for refitting. Styl has a staff of twenty-six workers here, including four native apprentices from the village (#1, page 60).

Milais Garentis owns the other warehouse. This affable merchant has all the ships he needs and would like to close his shipwright down, but that would place him at the mercy of Styl — an unenviable position at best — should any of these vessels meet with disaster.

45. Warehouse

Kellas uses this two-story wooden warehouse to store the many exotic perfumes and fine spices that he imports and exports through Ios. The air in here is laden with spice dust and is close

to combustion. A sign on the door warns visitors not to bring in lighted torches. There is a hidden entrance to the catacombs (#55, page 67) beneath the floor.

46. Warehouse

This single-story mudbrick building contains wood, cut stone, tools, and other building materials.

47. The Silent Wake

The proudest sailing vessel in the harbor is the Silent Wake, a merchant ship owned by King Lykanthos and captained by Minos. The Silent Wake makes regular runs to all ports on the eastern coast. Minos refuses to visit Ios, however, for he fears a confrontation with his former pirate allies.

48. Warehouse

Grain and other food products imported from the south are stored in this two-story wooden building until they can be transported to the granary (#10, page 61) or the fruit sellers (#4, page 60).

49. Warehouse

This low, single-story stone structure contains melons and other local produce for export to the south. The building and its contents belong to Milais Garentis.

50. The Ill Wind

This merchant ship is owned by Milais Garentis. Its name refers to the fact that the winds never seem to favor this vessel, and it is often behind schedule. Saronides is the captain of the Ill Wind.

51 & 52. Warehouse

Fine linens and other household items are stored in this two-story wooden building. This is a central receiving area for goods imported from Ios by New Grecian merchants.

53. Custom House

This four-story stone structure was originally built in expectation of a significant sea trade, but the few ships that are able to navigate Ogoue-eval while it is calm do not bring sufficient merchandise to warrant maintaining such a huge government office. The building is still structurally sound, but no effort is made to keep it attractive.

The Custom House has never been used for its original purpose. Those goods imported by sea are inspected at the docks by Jeris and his men, and duties are assessed on the spot.

The original name is still used, however — a fact that visitors find highly confusing. A seafood market has been established on the ground floor, and the entire building smells strongly of fish. The second floor is rented out as sleeping space for transients at low prices. All that is provided for the fee, however, is floor space in a large open room — no sleeping pallets, food, or privacy are available. The third floor serves as storage space for abandoned merchandise collected from the docks. These items stay here indefinitely, gathering dust and cobwebs, until claimed — which can take a long time, considering that most people have forgotten such a storage area even exists. The top floor is unused, but may be rented from the city.

54. Sea Watch

This guard post is located on a small hillock overlooking the open sea. The two guards posted here watch the harbor for any signs of trouble, such as fishing boats that are beginning to stray too near the whirlpool in the channel. They also announce a weather forecast, based solely on conditions viewed with the naked eye, every three hours.

Underground Area

The founders of New Grecia discovered a cave complex below the city in the course of their excavations. The only natural entrance is on the east side of Vigilant Hill, just north of the Ianogo River.

55. The Catacombs

The natural caves under the city were connected with various New Grecian buildings via tunnels to provide an escape route should the city ever need to be evacuated. As time passed, they were forgotten by all except New Grecia's criminals. Currently, the newly-formed Thieves Union is using this cave complex for a hideout.

The natural tunnels form a network under the whole city. The thieves must dig out any new exits they want, but the passageways themselves are already quite suitable for their purposes. Thieves can hide in this complex for months without being discovered.

Nimblus, the head of the New Grecian Thieves Union, has set up shop in one of the larger caves. He currently has thirteen trainees, both men and women, working in the city. Their primary focus at present is to obtain enough operating capital to stock their hideout with food, then set up a network of information. While on the streets, each member watches for non-union thieves plying their trade. These lawless rogues are offered a chance to join the union. If they refuse, they are hunted down and killed.

Important People

The following people hold positions of importance in New Grecia.

Axiola

Residence: #38, Lower Harbor Road
Vocation: Trader/Adventurer
Age/Height/Weight: 24/5' 8"/162 lbs.

This young, energetic trader has dark skin, black hair, and green eyes. He moves quickly and efficiently, for he dislikes wasting time.

Axiola has become quite adept at turning a profit, and he advises the king on potential trade agreements with the other civilized nations of Æsheba. He would like to explore the potential for establishing direct trade with foreign merchants, but so far this has been impractical because New Grecia's harbor can be accessed so rarely.

Axiola can arrange shipments, payments, transports and schedules for individual merchants. Adventurers often bring their unusual treasures to him, for if he cannot find a local buyer, he will purchase the items himself for fair prices and sell them to foreign merchants through his connections at Ios.

Bagrat

Residence: #32, Long Walk
Vocation: Bartender/Golden Trident
Age/Height/Weight: 43/6' 2"/235 lbs.

Bagrat is a massive man with a light tan complexion and amber-colored eyes. He has a wooden leg to replace the one he lost, reportedly during an encounter with a sea monster off the coast.

The bartender affects a gruff manner when dealing with his customers, but he is actually quite willing to help strangers. He knows most of the gossip in this end of town, and will report rumors as such if he has no personal knowledge of the situation in question.

Bagrat will extend credit to fishermen who are down on their luck.

BERTRAM

Residence: #25, Long Walk
Vocation: Sculptor
Age/Height/Weight: 68/5' 5"/242 lbs.

New Grecia's most popular sculptor is a short, round fellow with a ring of white hair surrounding his bald head. His fleshy jowls quiver when he speaks, and his voice is a nasal whine.

Though Bertram has become dotty and forgetful in his old age, he has lost none of his skill with the chisel. He is pleasant and honest to a fault.

CONRIS

Residence: #40, Sailor's Walk
Vocation: Priest/Poseidon's Net
Age/Height/Weight: 36/5' 10"/162 lbs.

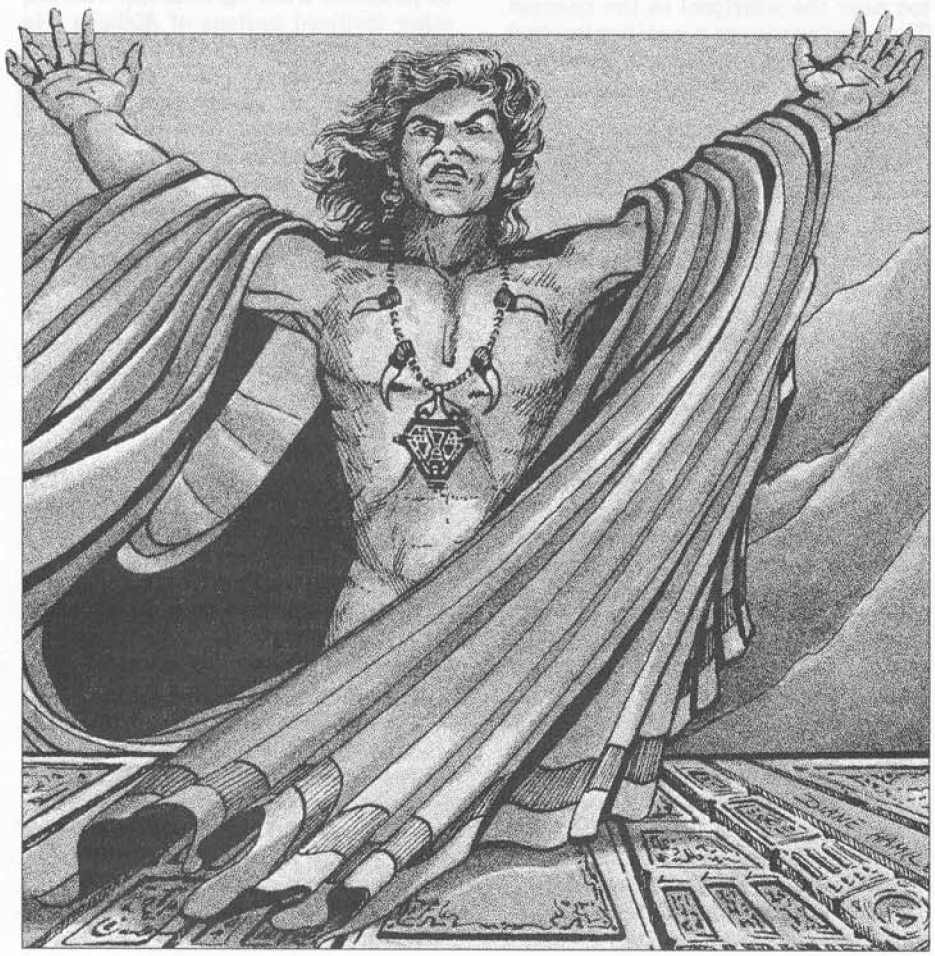
Once a fisherman, Conris became a priest of Poseidon after his fishing boat was blown into the whirlpool during a sudden storm. While he was underwater fighting for air, the god spoke to him, directing him to take up a new life. When he washed up on shore, he discovered that the priest at the temple had just died. Conris wasted no time taking over the position and refurbishing the tiny building.

Though Conris's hair is white, his face is unlined and pleasant. The priest is a bit of a troublemaker in town, always insisting that any problems are the result of Poseidon's continuing anger with the people whose ancestors profaned his temple at Ios centuries ago. Conris claims that when the citizens successfully appease the god, the whirlpool will disappear forever, and New Grecians will be allowed to sail the seas.

CRAGASTI

Residence: Unknown
Business: #36, Lower Harbor Road
Vocation: Soothsayer
Age/Height/Weight: 74/5' 2"/91 lbs.

This blind, feeble old woman has the power to see into the future. She describes events that she says "may occur," though there is an 85% chance that whatever she sees will actually come to pass unless preventive action is taken. She knows a great many things about the city, its people, and current events, but she does not dispense this information freely. Even money cannot persuade her to divulge what she knows if she doesn't like the petitioner's aura.



DAMON

Residence: #13, Devlin's Pass
Vocation: Lieutenant/City Guard
Age/Height/Weight: 29/5' 7"/158 lbs.

This handsome young man has light brown skin, brown hair, and black eyes that shine with merriment. When he so desires, he can project a commanding presence.

Damon is the second-in-command to Philip, the captain of the guard. His primary duty is ensuring that all guard posts are manned, and that all guard rotations go smoothly. Damon is betrothed to Ilana, the daughter of Helena.

DEMIONOS

Residence: #15, Ginia's Way
Vocation: Physician
Age/Height/Weight: 61/5' 6"/147 lbs.

Demionos is a stooped, balding man with steel-gray hair and black eyes. He is married and has one nine-year-old daughter.

The physician was trained by his father in surgical techniques passed down from Greek tradition. Though he knows much about how contagion is spread, he is not adept with powders such as the medicine men use to cure disease. He can, however, stitch wounds and amputate limbs quite efficiently.

Demionos genuinely cares about his patients, and will do all he can to keep them well and healthy, directing them to a medicine man at the House of Healing if their wounds are infected. He has no magical curative talents.

FERIN

Residence: #29, Long Walk
Vocation: Cobbler
Age/Height/Weight: 26/6' 4"/215 lbs.

This fellow has blotchy skin and long, curly black hair, which he tucks back with wooden pins to keep it out of his way. His deep voice is pleasant and musical, and he is always polite.

Ferin is a skilled cobbler, and can make any footgear described to him if the raw materials are available.

GARENTIS (MILAIS)

Residence: #16, Ginia's Way
Vocation: Merchant
Age/Height/Weight: 39/5' 2"/225 lbs.

Garentis has skin the color of coffee and black eyes. He wears a full dark

beard, which he keeps trimmed close to his face. He has managed to turn his meager holdings into quite a large sum by financing the risky semi-annual shipping expeditions to Ios. His foresight has brought him good returns, despite the problems with Iosian pirates, and he has increased the size of his merchant fleet to compensate for early losses on the high seas. Garentis is now the richest man in New Grecia, and financial advisor to the king.

New Grecia's wealthiest merchant is unmarried and has no children. He is a kind man, willing to reduce his prices for necessities so that the poorer folk will not have to starve. He charges correspondingly higher prices for luxuries, but no one complains. He also donates regularly to a fund for the needy.

GHENNA

Residence: #41, The Waterfront
Vocation: Lighthouse Keeper
Age/Height/Weight: 73/5' 4"/146 lbs.

The keeper of the Pharos is a cranky old man with pale brown skin, long white hair, blue eyes, and a long scar across his face. He has one son, an intelligent lad with blotchy skin who lives with him in the lighthouse.

Ghenna does not like visitors, so he rarely allows anyone inside his home. Anyone who disturbs him is subjected to a lengthy speech about invading an old man's privacy.

GRAEFFIX

Residence: #28, Long Walk
Vocation: Proprietor/Kraken's Blood
Age/Height/Weight: 28/6' 0"/182 lbs.

Graeffix has blond hair, cream-colored skin, and cold brown eyes. On his neck is a strawberry birthmark, and he doesn't take kindly to remarks about it. He is stronger than his medium build would indicate, much to the chagrin of would-be attackers. The pinky is missing from his left hand, and the wound appears to have been cauterized poorly.

The barkeep at the Blood greets newcomers to his tavern in a friendly manner, pretending to be afraid of the ruffians who comprise his usual clientele. He tries to get new customers to explain their presence there, so that he can report to Nimblus.

HELENA

Residence: #12, Devlin's Pass
Vocation: Bartender/Silver Cup
Age/Height/Weight: 44/5' 4"/110 lbs.

Helena is a middle-aged widow with wrinkles in her once-lovely light tan face. She has graying brown hair and brown eyes.

She spends her mornings cleaning the tavern, then opens her establishment for business at noon. She tends bar herself, serving ale and fine wine, plus non-alcoholic beverages for those natives who do not believe in drinking. Occasionally she has imported beer available, though that is an expensive refreshment here. She has two daughters, Ilana and Vinia.

ILANA

Residence: #12, Devlin's Pass
Vocation: Tavern Maid
Age/Height/Weight: 16/5' 3"/100 lbs.

Ilana works as a serving maid for her mother, Helena, at the Silver Cup. She has green eyes and straight black hair, which she wears in a braid. Her skin is a smooth chocolate color. She is engaged to Damon, a lieutenant in the city guard.

JERIS

Residence: #53, The Waterfront
Vocation: Customs Inspector
Age/Height/Weight: 34/5' 11"/200 lbs.

Jeris has blotchy skin, sandy brown hair, and black eyes that dart all about while he speaks. He has pinched features and a long, beaklike nose.

As Customs Inspector, Jeris is responsible for assessing and collecting duties on all imported and exported merchandise. He is suspicious of white-skinned strangers, and will try to charge them double the normal tax for goods brought into the city, by land or sea.

JOSIPHOS

Residence: #8, Askondas Street
Vocation: High Priest/Temple of Zeus
Age/Height/Weight: 66/5' 10"/173 lbs.

The high priest of Zeus has grown pudgy and soft with advancing age. His dark hair still has very little gray, but his face is creased with many wrinkles. The old priest has become forgetful, so he goes about his duties slowly and methodically to ensure that he will not miss some important task.

KELLAS

Residence: #9, Dawn Road
Vocation: Spice Merchant
Age/Height/Weight: 36/5' 9"/167 lbs.

Kellas is an average, unassuming man with medium brown skin, hair, and eyes. He has a highly developed sense of taste, however, and can identify the spices used in food with a single bite. Brewing poisons and making antidotes for them is his hobby, and he grows various exotic and deadly plants in the yard around his home.

LYCAS

Residence: #5, Aisle of Delights
Vocation: Proprietor/House of Lycas
Age/Height/Weight: 24/6' 1"/165 lbs.

Lycas is a tall, scrawny, blotch-skinned man with black hair and a huge, bulbous nose. He remodeled an old building that he inherited from his father to create the finest bordello in New Grecia. Lycas takes care to ensure that the slaves who work for him are happy, for miserable workers do not convince customers to return.

Lycas is also the second-in-command of the Theives Union, though he does not ply this trade within the walls of his brothel.

LYKANTHOS

Residence: #24, King's Pass
Vocation: King of New Grecia
Age/Height/Weight: 46/6' 4"/215 lbs.

Lykanthos is a tall man with black hair, brown eyes, and a flawless, dark cream-colored complexion. He has a commanding presence, partially because of his deep, rich voice. He looks quite impressive as he walks through the city streets in his royal robes of forest green, with his guards and advisors clustered around him.

The king was the second child born to his royal parents. He has two brothers and one sister. His elder brother is a merchant with no designs on the crown; the younger one is a blotch-skinned idiot who lives in the Temple of Zeus (#8, page 61), where the priests can look after him. The king's sister, four years his junior, is an adventurer. She is currently leading a patrol in the south.

Like most of New Grecia's previous rulers, the king is a politician rather than a warrior. He takes great pride in what he has accomplished so far, including opening new trade routes to the north, south, and west, and he looks forward to maintaining a model society here in New Grecia.

Lykanthos is a shrewd man, intelligent enough to seek the wisdom of his advisors when he does not completely understand a situation. He is a decisive leader, beloved by his people.

The king is not yet married, but he has been courting Zarritza, the head of his household staff. He trusts her implicitly, and seeks her advice on matters of state as well as magic, for she is a qualified diviner/detector and an astute judge of character.

MENANDER

Residence: #20, Harmodios Way
Vocation: Jeweler
Age/Height/Weight: 67/5' 4"/132 lbs.

A small, thin, wizened man, Menander has dark brown skin and completely white hair. His black eyes glitter with intelligence, for he is blessed with a shrewd and calculating mind.

As the leading jeweler of New Grecia, he knows his business and seldom travels without a magnifying glass. He is a quiet, studious fellow who often goes unnoticed in a crowd, so he knows much about the current activities in town.

METIS

Residence: #8, Askondas Street
Vocation: Priest/Temple of Zeus
Age/Height/Weight: 31/6' 1"/179 lbs.

The assistant priest at the Temple of Zeus has light brown skin, black hair, and brown eyes. He walks with a purposeful stride, and his usual expression is a scowl.

Metis does not like the "dark ones" from the southern tribes, for they are not true believers in the powers of the Greek gods. He is involved in Senex's plot to overthrow the king, so he regularly reports "omens" designed to embarrass Lykanthos.

MILETOS

Residence: #18, Ginia's Way
Vocation: Teacher/Philosopher
Age/Height/Weight: 52/5' 10"/182 lbs.

Miletos has skin of a smooth chocolate color, deep brown eyes, and shoulder length hair, which he keeps tied in a ponytail. He is responsible for the education of the New Grecian children, and he takes his position seriously.

MINOS

Residence: #47, The Waterfront
Vocation: Captain/Silent Wake
Age/Height/Weight: 40/6' 0"/195 lbs.

Five years ago, this one-eyed pirate from the Kambian Marsh sailed down the eastern coast of Æsheba with a small crew on a stolen Iosian vessel, hoping to attack a New Grecian ship coming out of port. He fell victim to the whirlpool in the channel, losing his ship and his entire crew. Minos himself washed up onto the shore, and was taken to Lykanthos after he had recovered. The pirate confessed the whole truth, and the king pardoned him on the condition that he would stay on as captain of the king's new merchant ship, the Silent Wake.

Minos has made an honest effort to bury his past and stay out of trouble, but trouble always seems to find him. He is weak-willed, and quite susceptible to bribes and other coercion. Minos has a bit of a rivalry going with Saronides as to whose ship is the better vessel.

NABEL

Residence: #8, Askondas Street
Vocation: Priest/Temple of Zeus
Age/Height/Weight: 15/5' 8"/156 lbs.

Nabel has pale brown skin, brown hair, and clear blue eyes. His voice is surprisingly deep and well-modulated, and he is careful to maintain proper decorum when performing holy rites.

The youngest priest in the Temple of Zeus enjoys working in the church, and he does his best to measure up to his elders. He adores Josiphos, but doesn't fully trust Metis.

NAXIDES

Residence: #12, Devlin's Pass
Vocation: Proprietor/Silver Cup
Age/Height/Weight: 48/5' 6"/152 lbs.

Naxides used to be an adventurer until he lost a leg during a fight with a nargash in the Renegal Mountains twelve years ago. A passing caravan from Gloriosus picked him up, cauterized his wound, and returned him to New Grecia. He had gained considerable treasure on his expedition before that unfortunate incident, and he bought the Silver Cup with the profits. Since then, he has lived at home, content to let his niece Helena run the establishment and support him.

NIMBLUS

Residence: #55, Underground
Vocation: Head of Thieves Union
Age/Height/Weight: 26/6' 3"/225 lbs.

Nimblus is big and loud. He pretends to be a simpleton, though he possesses a cunning mind. He has brown hair, which he rarely washes or combs, and green eyes.

He is the motivating force behind the recent formation of the Thieves Union, and he runs the small organization with an iron hand. An accomplished pickpocket and strong-arm man himself, he recruits other thieves and trains them personally. Nimblus currently lives in a cave within the catacombs.

OSWELA

Residence: #10, Dawn Road
Vocation: Merchant
Age/Height/Weight: 37/5' 7"/141 lbs.

Oswela, an average-looking man with dark brown skin and black eyes, maintains the granary. He purchases grain from the outlying farms around the city and stores it for later sale. What he cannot sell to the residents, he ships to the native tribes in the south.

The merchant hates to see hunger, and will gladly give a bit of grain to any starving people who come to his establishment at the Agora.

PHILIP

Residence: #13, Devlin's Pass
Vocation: Captain of the City Guard
Age/Height/Weight: 27/5' 11"/164 lbs.

The captain of the guard is a sturdy young man with light brown skin and clear hazel eyes. He is honest, upright, and not susceptible to bribes. He is stronger than he appears, for he maintains a strict regimen of diet and exercise to keep himself in good physical condition.

He takes his position seriously, residing in the barracks with his men since he is not yet married. Philip has taught the guards everything he knows about handling weapons in combat, but unfortunately his own education has been sorely lacking in this respect.

PRODIKOS

Residence: #7, Aisle of Delights
Vocation: Scribe
Age/Height/Weight: 46/5' 3"/135 lbs.

Prodikos is a short, nearsighted man with prematurely gray hair and pale skin. He is constantly squinting, which causes his customers to wonder how he can possibly be as good a scribe as his reputation warrants. Only when he has a pen in one hand and gold in the other does his eyesight clear up.

Prodikos is willing to compose any document so long as there are some coins in it for him. Senex is currently

paying the scribe to create reports that will "prove" the king guilty of malfeasance in office.

Rintos

Residence: #26, Long Walk
Vocation: Armorer
Age/Height/Weight: 72/5' 10"/163 lbs.

This grey-haired old weapons master wears the scars of numerous battles. When he was a fighter in the arena, he worked with all the different weapons used by the native tribes as well as the standard Greek swords and spears. He has hired Ruaga, a native boy from the village (#1, page 60) to be his assistant.

Sakhas

Residence: #6, Aisle of Delights
Vocation: Proprietor/Smiling Nymph
Age/Height/Weight: 35/6' 0"/155 lbs.

There is a yellow tinge to the procurer's light tan skin, which most people think indicates the displeasure of his ancestors, though he refuses to consult the oracles about it. He has a high voice and a very nasty temper.

Sakhas is a hard, cruel man, and he has no qualms about killing a slave who has disobeyed him. He is seriously thinking of taking up witchcraft, for his father before him was a witch. To that end, he has been experimenting with homeopathy and contagious magic in the basement of his brothel, using his slaves as subjects.

Saronides

Residence: #50, The Waterfront
Vocation: Captain/Ill Wind
Age/Height/Weight: 38/6' 1"/169 lbs.

Saronides, a pale-skinned descendant of Greek dissenters, is the captain of Garentis's fine merchant vessel. He is a veteran sailor, and he would rather be at sea than in port.

The captain obeys the merchant's orders to the letter unless in his judgment the circumstances dictate otherwise. He never fights the pirates from the Kambian Marsh when he visits Ios, though he is almost always forced to turn over a portion of the valuable merchandise he carries to the rogues.

Senex

Residence: #23, King's Pass
Vocation: Spokesman of the Assembly
Age/Height/Weight: 52/5' 8"/174 lbs.

Senex is a paunchy bureaucrat with light tan skin, dark brown hair, and hazel eyes. He speaks with what he believes is authority in his voice, though to most people it sounds like posturing.

No one is more impressed with Senex than he is himself. Considered a pompous windbag by most, he is actually an opportunist who believes that he should be king, for he is distantly related to the royal line. He is currently involved in a plot designed to discredit Lykanthos and remove him from office. (See Adventure #1, page 72, for details.)

Shellas

Residence: #19, Harmodios Way
Vocation: Blacksmith
Age/Height/Weight: 33/5' 10"/176 lbs.

Shellas is a brawny, dark-skinned man with light brown hair that hangs over his ears and eyes, so that he must constantly brush it to the side. He is quite open and friendly with strangers, and his greatest joys in life other than his work are drinking and wenching. He is not a man to be trusted with a secret, for alcohol loosens his tongue quickly.

Shenis

Residence: #33, Lower Harbor Road
Business: #34, Lower Harbor Road
Vocation: Stockyard Boy
Age/Height/Weight: 12/5' 4"/122 lbs.

This bright young lad has dark brown skin, black hair, and black eyes. He runs the stockyard for his ailing father. Should his father pass away, Shenis plans to leave New Grecia in search of adventure.

Styl (Karon)

Residence: #42, The Waterfront
Vocation: Merchant
Age/Height/Weight: 30/6' 3"/198 lbs.

Styl has dark brown hair and skin and glittering black eyes. No one is quite sure who he is or where he came from; he simply appeared in the city four years ago, at about the same time as the first New Grecian merchant ship returned from Ios. Actually, he was an escaped Iosian slave who had stowed away on the ship. When it came into port, he sneaked into the city and took up residence in the crematorium. While he slept there the first night, a malevolent spirit (one not bound to the building) possessed him. Since then, he has been quite successful in business, for he is sufficiently ruthless to ensure a good return on his investments by whatever means are expedient.

The primary source of Styl's not inconsiderable wealth is his shipbuilding concern. His greatest rival is Milais Garentis, and Styl would do anything to put him out of business.

Teregas

Residence: The Waterfront (near #41)
Vocation: Master of the Docks
Age/Height/Weight: 41/5' 11"/132 lbs.

Teregas is a thin, dark-skinned fellow with blue eyes and a nervous twitch at the corner of his mouth. As master of the docks, he knows everything that happens in the harbor. He chooses to live near the sea, for he has always loved the water.

Tytos

Residence: #27, Long Walk
Vocation: Plowmaster
Age/Height/Weight: 35/5' 6"/165 lbs.

This short, muscular fellow has light brown skin and hair, and friendly black eyes. He enjoys his work, and is quite creative, often inventing new metal tools to make farm life easier. He has been experimenting with curved metal shoes for horses, but has not perfected the idea yet.

Vaxisa

Residence: #30, Long Walk
Vocation: Tanner
Age/Height/Weight: 47/5' 7"/162 lbs.

The tanner is a stout man with black hair and hazel eyes. His skin color is patchy, but this is because it has been bleached in spots by the tanning chemicals with which he works. Vaxisa has stubby hands, and his fingers are stained with dye.

He is a quiet, reserved man, who enjoys the relative solitude of his work. He is not accustomed to company, and can be rather rude to guests, though he intends no offense.

Warusa

Residence: #1, Outer Area
Vocation: Village Spokesman
Age/Height/Weight: 56/5' 7"/165 lbs.

Warusa is the spokesman for the native village outside New Grecia's walls. It is his responsibility to settle any village problems he can without

government intervention. He speaks for the village in the Assembly, though he is not permitted to vote.

ZARRITZA

Residence: #24, King's Pass
Vocation: Head of Palace Staff
Age/Height/Weight: 29/5' 10"/135 lbs.

Zarritza has a dark brown skin and hair and expressive green eyes. She plans the meals for the king and his household, oversees the cooking, and organizes the slaves into a cohesive work force to keep the palace clean and pleasant. She is also responsible for all the decorating and landscaping around the building.

Zarritza is also the king's courtesan, though both of them endeavor to keep that fact a secret. Unbeknowst to most people, Zarritza is a fully trained diviner/detector, and she advises Lykanthos on matters concerning magic.

ADVENTURING

This section lists some of the plots and plans currently in progress within New Grecia.

1. THE AGE OF SENEX

Senex is plotting to overthrow Lykanthos and assume the throne on the basis of his distant relationship with the royal family. To accomplish that, he must ensure that all of the king's siblings perish in "accidents" before the coup. He may try to hire the characters to track down the king's sister or older brother, both of whom are away in distant lands to the south, and dispose of them. He is not as concerned with the younger brother at the Temple of Zeus (#8, page 61), for Metis, his ally there, can take care of that young man if his succession becomes an issue.

Once this has beeen done, Senex will institute one of the following plans. He is in no hurry, for he must not arouse the suspicions of the people.

Plan A: Senex will request that the characters meet with him at his home to discuss a job. After a good meal, he will propose that the characters retrieve an amulet for him from the vault of the jewel merchant, Menander. If they are successful, he will threaten to expose them as thieves unless they agree to assassinate Lykanthos, making the crime look like an accident.

If the characters make the attempt, Zarritza will have them brought to the palace the following day, whether or not they were successful. She suspects foul play, and wants to hire the characters to investigate. If they refuse or fail to catch the culprits, she will use her magical powers to assess them, and thereby discover the truth.

Plan B: Senex will launch a campaign to smear the king politically. While Lykanthos is away renegotiating a trade agreement with a southern native tribe, Senex will issue an order, in the king's name, that all foreigners within the city should be imprisoned. This, of course, includes merchants from Ios and Gloriosus, the natives from the village outside the city walls (page 60), and the characters. The prisoners will be kept in a dungeon for twenty-four hours with no explanation, and then released. Senex will continue to inconvenience the foreigners from time to time, raising the ire of all visitors. The merchants will lose large sums of money through new taxes and duties. Soon, all of the citizens will be complaining about these edicts and demanding that Lykanthos step down. Metis, the priest at the Temple of Zeus (#8, page 61), will assist Senex by reporting signs of impending doom should Lykanthos be allowed to remain as king.

If the plan should backfire, Senex will say that he had heard rumors that foreigners would try to assassinate the king, and was trying to keep the peace.

2. THE SLAVE TRADERS

Certain unscrupulous people have been kidnapping natives from the village (#1, page 60) and from other villages along the coast, and selling them as slaves in Ios. This practice is against the law, but the city guards have not yet been able to catch the perpetrators.

A group of natives led by Warusa comes to lodge a protest with Lykanthos. The king puts out a call for adventurers to investigate the matter. People new to the city are his first choice, for they can more easily infiltrate this band of brigands than his own guards could.

The slaves are being captured and kept prisoner in one of the warehouses (#46, page 67) near the docks until they can be picked up by a ship called the Zephyr and smuggled out at the calming of the channel, which will occur next week. The Zephyr is currently in port at Baktolo (see page 75), a native village on the southern section of the east coast.

Sakhas the procurer is the man behind the slave ring. He uses his newfound powers of witchcraft to bewitch the victims so that they will accompany his men willingly at the proper time.

If the characters refuse the king's offer of employment, they can still become involved. As they are walking down the street, an old man will run up to the characters and appeal to them to save his daughter, who left home with some men moments ago. He offers the characters all of his worldly wealth to rescue the girl. (You may decide how much this really is.)

3. THE SPIRITS

Noticing the strangers in town, Sakhas approaches the characters in the guise of a trader to offer them a mission. The witch wants the characters to enter the old crematorium (#31, page 65) and retrieve a small mud block with sticks tied to it. He claims that this device is part of a spell against him, and that the characters will be doing a good deed. Actually, of course, the mud block is part of the magic that has bound the spirits of plague victims to the crematorium for more than three hundred years. Sakhas is interested in freeing them so that he can recruit them as his servants.

The witch explains that the mission must be performed by night so that no one will see the characters enter. He says that the block is warded by magic, but the characters can pass through the wards if they try. He instructs them to ignore any warnings or feelings of foreboding that they may experience, for those are merely illusion.

When the characters enter the building, they will feel as though they are being watched. The spirits have a palpable presence that even those who are not sensitive to the supernatural can feel. Characters who approach the mud block will feel ghostly fingers pushing them away from it. They can, however, push through and pick it up. As soon as it is disturbed, a few of the old, brittle hairs will break, releasing some of the spirits. A few of these will begin harassing the characters, causing them bad luck and accidents for many weeks thereafter.

When they return the block to the Sakhas, they will be paid and thanked. He will destroy the device according to proper rituals, releasing all the spirits bound thereby. Sakhas will successfully recruit several of them as his servants, and more disappearances of natives will result. (See #2, right.)

Zarritza, the king's diviner/detector, will quickly realize what has happened, and identify Sakhas. She will advise the king to hire adventurers to stop him. If the characters accept this mission, they must contact the spirit of the witch doctor who originally bound the spirits to the crematorium for advice on reinstating the binding.

NATIVE PEOPLE

This section describes two races of people unique to Æsheba: the Bushmen and the Pygmies. The negroid peoples who inhabit most of the continent are not described; consult your local library for information.

BUSHMEN

In Æsheba, Bushmen can be found between the Nebbi and Okoli Jungles, in the northern Gwalo Plain, and in the Lumbasa Hills. They dwell nowhere north of the Renegals. The Æsheban (correct) name for this race is the San; only the Greeks call them Bushmen.

APPEARANCE

The San are short, with both sexes averaging only 144 cm (56") in height. They tend to be taller where they have intermarried with Negroes, and in such cases the men are taller than the women.

These folk have light yellow to brown skin. Where they have mixed with Negroes, the color ranges from yellow to reddish brown. The skin is dry and lean with little adipose (fatty) tissue; it tends to wrinkle even in young individuals.

The body hair of the San is black, short, and very fine, and is only thick on the scalp and eyebrows. Some men have rudimentary beards and mustaches. Only very old individuals have gray hair, and baldness is unknown, although some San do shave parts of their heads. Their hair lies in tight "peppercorn" coils that allow the scalp to show.

The San have small, broad heads with low crowns. Their faces are broad and flat, often rectangular in shape, with normal or slightly prothagonous (protruding) jaws. Their noses are low and broad with splayed nostrils. The eye openings appear narrow because of the thick upper lids and epicanthic folds. The lips are thin, but everted mucous membranes make them look thicker. The ears are short, broad and lobeless.

San have short, slender limbs (but not so short as to seem dwarflike) with prominent joints. Their lean bodies have a corded or ropey appearance.

The San usually wear animal skins, but they use some wild plant fibers as well. The male wears a triangular skin around the hips. In cool weather, a short skin cloak (*kaross*) is tied over the right shoulder, covering the back and chest but leaving the left shoulder free. A round bag containing small items and supplies is carried at the left hip. Larger items are placed in a longer bag, which is carried over the left shoulder.

The female wears a short hanging apron, sometimes ornamented with beaded or leather tassels. Women (especially older ones) often add a rear apron tied around the waist or even shoulders. A married woman always wears a long *kaross* tied at the waist, to form a pouch for carrying belongings or children. Bands of beads are worn in the hair or used as necklaces or bracelets.

Washing is unknown for either sex. Faces and bodies are often rubbed with fat, and sometimes dusted with sweet-smelling powder (*buchu*), which the women grind from aromatic shrubs.

Some women and young people paint their faces, but only for important ceremonies. The two most common colors are red (from clay), and black (from charcoal). These substances are mixed with fat and dabbed on with the fingers.

WEAPONS

The chief hunting weapon of the San is a crude wooden bow with a string of sinew or plant fiber. The arrows are always poisoned and the tips are often barbed with quills. The poison is usually derived from plants, but other substances are also used — notably snake venom (particularly from the puff adder), mineral poisons (usually arsenic), and toxic substances derived from insects. The exact type of poison preferred varies from one area to another. Some reed arrows have reversible tips so that the hunter can carry them safely.

The San also use spears (obtained from other tribes) and round-headed throwing sticks for killing small game and birds and for fighting their enemies. A variety of snares and traps are also used for hunting.

SOCIETY

The San are nomadic hunter/gatherers. Several bands dwelling close together and speaking what they regard as the same language often consider themselves a tribe, though no San has any obligation to the tribe and there are no overall leaders. Each such group nevertheless has a descriptive name by which its members differentiate themselves from other peoples. Most of these names include a word that translates as "The People" or "The Perfect People." Some typical tribal names are: The Bush People (from whence the term Bushman is derived), The People of the Lake, or The People of the Hills.

The basic unit of San society is the hunting band, which typically consists of 20-30 individuals. Bands usually have their own descriptive names, derived from where they live or some other notable detail. Hunting bands typically contain people who are related to each other, usually through the male line.

The kinship system of the San does away with some terms familiar to us. The people that we would call grandparents are simply father and mother to everyone descended from them, regardless of generation. Such descendants are all considered brothers and sisters. There are terms for "brother of my father," "child of my sister," etc., but these terms do not define the exact relationship between two such people.

Land is owned in common, about 1,140 square kilometers (440 square miles) per band. Visitors are allowed to enter, but not to hunt. They may take water, but only after obtaining the local chief's permission. (Such requests are never refused.) Violations of these customs lead to confrontation or war.

Each individual owns whatever he or she makes or gathers, and may dispose of these things as desired. Food is always divided up between members of the band, but the owner does the dividing. Although land is held in common, an individual may stake a claim over a particular patch of wild plants or anything else that looks promising. The finder places a marker — usually an arrow or ornament — and goes on his way, expecting to return thereafter and find the marked spot undisturbed.

Breaking a taboo or custom is assumed to bring bad results automatically — anything from a bad hunt to being changed into a frog. For civil infractions such as theft, adultery, or homicide, punishment is the responsibility of the injured party. Murderers

are killed. A thief is confronted, killed if he doesn't produce the stolen goods, and reproached even if he does.

TRADE

Within their bands, the San barter for various items. Each San is actually self-sufficient, but occasionally they find it more convenient to trade their surplus goods for needed items instead of making or gathering their own.

The bands barter with Negroes for pots, baskets and metal implements, offering ostrich shell beads, salt, honey and other foods in exchange. Any such barter deal requires a good deal of haggling, as neither group has a fixed system of weights and measures.

DWELLINGS

Encampments are usually made three or four miles from the nearest water, to avoid scaring the game away. When the game in one area has been depleted, the whole band moves on.

Dwellings are temporary, made of grass and branches. They are usually arranged in a circle, with the chief's to the east. The style of the dwellings varies according to the time of year. In the dry season, simple lean-tos of branches and grass suffice. In the rainy season, "beehive" huts with frameworks of bent branches and tightly woven grass walls are constructed to keep the rain out.

PYGMIES

These people dwell in the Khofari, Soutoubou, and Nebbi Jungles. The pygmy population of Æsheba totals more than fifty thousand, but the number belonging to any single group rarely exceeds fifty.

The ancestors of the pygmies lived in the grasslands of the great plains areas, but were driven into the forest by drought. Once within the rain forest, certain natural mutations already present in the race gained survival value, and were spread by natural selection.

APPEARANCE

Pygmies are universally known to be short humans, but their differences from "normal" Æsheban natives extend far beyond mere stature. Pygmies have simply retained Man's original height — about 150 centimeters — while the rest of humanity grew larger over the space of about ten thousand years.

In proportion, the heads and bodies of pygmies seem larger than normal, but their legs (particularly the lower segments) are short. The hands and feet are often distorted, and the short face appears pushed in. The nose is short and wide, and the eyes often protrude. The arms are long in proportion to the legs.

Pygmy skin color varies in the brown ranges, the usual being a dark reddish-brown. The eyes around the pupils are always white, as in the Caucasian race, not flecked with melanin as is common amongst Negroes. The hair is very similar to that of negroid natives. Most males have an abundance of body hair, primarily on the chest and face.

Pygmies have large, normal teeth (proportionate to their heads), but dental problems are common. It is a rare pygmy indeed who can boast retaining even a few teeth past the age of thirty.

Clothing is entirely crafted from forest resources. Vines are used to make nets, ropes, and straps. Large broad leaves may be used for temporary clothing, though leather goods are preferred.

Most tools used by the pygmies are temporary, limited to shards of wood that may be briefly shaped for a specific purpose. They may carry bone implements with a variety of uses.

All the members of a pygmy hunting band use a common principal weapon. For some, this is the bow; others use spears, and some use nets. Most pygmies carry two or all of these weapons, however.

Pygmies often carry several poisoned arrows. Mild venom may be brewed from several plants native to the Æsheban jungles, or a more virulent type can be distilled from the perspiration of a certain toad. In any case, however, the poisoned missiles are reserved for enemies, and are never used for general hunting. The pygmies have no unnatural resistance to poison, and fear it as much as anyone.

THE COMMUNITY

Pygmy society lacks the organization found in Negro tribes. They have no chiefs or other leaders, no ritual specialists, and recognize no ruling elders or ancestral spirits. Their "tribes" are more accurately hunting bands, averaging about fifty in number (counting all men, women, and children). However, the number in a band may range from three to thirty nuclear families.

Despite a lack of designated leadership, the pygmy tribe maintains a strong unity; its members realize that the survival of the group depends on the performance of the individuals. They make their decisions by pure democracy, discussing matters around the evening campfire and implementing the will of the majority.

Each band of pygmies occupies and hunts within a designated territory, usually defined by obvious natural features such as rivers. The areas are usually ample, so there is little or no intertribal conflict amongst the race.

Pygmy culture is universally of the nomadic hunter/gatherer variety. A tribe will move its camp every few weeks, going to another portion of its designated territory.

When other Æshebans move into the hunting territory of a pygmy tribe, the intruders are contacted and advised of the situation, but are usually not molested, for their presence can be beneficial — usually more so to the pygmies than to the newcomers. Typically, a pygmy tribe trades for domestic crops. In return they offer their services as hunters, and also as spies or scouts. Metal goods are also of value, especially items for hunting (such as arrow and spear heads).

The usual result of this symbiosis is that the settled tribe becomes semi-dependent on the meat provided by the pygmies, while the latter remain self-sufficient, enjoying the plantation foodstuffs as delicacies. The pygmies may become dominant and belligerent, and may even indulge in extortion and petty theft. This typically continues until the settled tribe either attacks the pygmies or moves away. Such a resolution is atypical, however, and only arises when the pygmies actively dislike the newcomers. Settled tribes often get along well with indigenous pygmy hunting bands, and may maintain a good relationship for many lifetimes.

All Æsheban pygmies employ the same basic language, but dialects can vary its syntax and terms considerably. Linguistic variation is often introduced when pygmies form symbiotic relationships with immigrant tribes of other races, whereupon many terms used by the newcomers are adopted.

The beliefs of the pygmies differ from all others in Æsheba. They do not practice magic of any sort, and none of the systems described on pages 15-18 should be applied to them. Nor do they follow the polytheistic practices of the Æsheban majority (the Negroid tribesmen) or the Greeks. The pygmies loosely worship the rain forest itself, considering it the source of all life. Since they deal with the forest on a very pragmatic level, the pygmies regard it as their affectionate parent — father, mother, or both — who will provide for them, whatever happens. If invaders harm the forest, the pygmies provide a first line of defense, but will not suicidally defend the place; a greater and more proper revenge will come from the forest itself.

WILDERNESS

This section describes the vast, uncivilized wilderness of Æsheba. Descriptions of large regions and terrain features are given alphabetically by the names used on the color map. Specific points of interest within those regions are given in the appropriate sections. Creature descriptions and monster boxes are embedded in the text that describes each creature's natural habitat. A final section describing residents (humans or other intelligent, social creatures) has been added for those regions that are inhabited.

BATUNA PLAIN

The great flat area dominating the southeast portion of Æsheba is known as the Batuna Plain. It is bounded on the west by the Dawani Hills and the Itimba Mountains, and extends east to the ocean. A northwest arm extends between the Koboro Mountains and the south Renegals. Along the coast, the fertile Lowandhi Valley lies to the north, and the Fouguma Shelf to the south.

Farming has only recently begun to show a presence here. Most of the plains natives are hunters who do not make long-range plans for food. However, with innovations brought by New Grecian explorers, some of the tribes have settled near the coast and begun growing their own crops.

The wildlife of the Batuna Plain is similar to that of the great Ngati Plain (page 90). See that section for details.

BAY OF XAMIDE

An ancient and unusual rock formation lies underwater, about 46 m (50 yards) offshore. Half-covered by sand, several huge, elongated, hexagonal crystals of black basalt protrude about 3 m (10') from the murky bottom. Each is about 1.3-2 m (4'-6') across, and the whole grouping is tilted slightly, at perhaps 5° from true vertical, angled toward the northwest. The local natives have no idea that this exists.

This mineralogical oddity is nearly identical to the formations that make up the isle of Joss. (See page 95.) Furthermore, the two are pointed toward each other. Whether this is merely an accident of geological history or some ancient remnant of a past civilization is left for the imaginative game master to decide. Perhaps the two sets of crystals are part of a sophisticated device for communication, or even travel, across the 5,200 km (2,000 miles) of land between them. Another notable point is that Mt. Ghanza, the great isolated peak of the Khofari, stands along the line between the two points. This could also be part of the same system.

ISLE OF XACASSA

This tiny island off the southeastern coast of Æsheba has long sandy beaches and a balmy climate. Some of the world's loveliest orchids grow here.

But despite its beauty, Xacassa is uninhabited. The plains natives believe it to be the home of a malevolent spirit, for bad luck has befallen everyone who tried to settle there. The problem is actually a horn spirit. On a large tree in the middle of the island hangs a carved nargash horn, abandoned here by the sorcerer who created it decades ago. The spirit residing in this horn is ancient, powerful, and evil. The horn can talk and produce several magical effects (GM's choice). It has used these powers to drive settlers from the island.

BAKTOLO

This outpost was established by the plains natives as the transfer point for goods being shipped to New Grecia. Since the southern section of Æsheba is open to sea travel, merchandise is brought here by ship, then loaded onto camels for the overland trip north.

Baktolo is a small community, only slightly above the village classification. It is inhabited by a mixed group of natives who have abandoned hunting for a more agrarian lifestyle. A three-element (good dominant) magic system is suggested for this area.

A few New Grecian and Greek craftsmen, primarily shipwrights and other builders, have recently settled in Baktolo. They are working together with the natives to fortify the village and make it a viable trading center for this part of the continent.The town is an excellent base for adventurers who wish to explore the southern part of Æsheba.

The characters may come to Baktolo from New Grecia, on the trail of Sakhas's slave ring (page 72). Garvin and Spacci, two Greek traders, are the slaver's Baktolo connection. Several slaves are currently bound and gagged in the hold of their ship, the Zephyr.

When the characters arrive, N'gorro, the chief of Baktolo, will ask their help with another problem. A giant lion has been prowling the area by night and attacking citizens. So far, all of its victims have been Greeks. Civil unrest is growing as rumors circulate. The most popular theory is that the lion is a spirit that has come to drive out the "pale ones." N'gorro wants the characters to stalk the lion and kill it if possible.

In fact, the lion is a spirit — a malevolent entity that has appropriated the body of the chief's son, Sawasi. (See Sawasi, page 76, for details.) The creature attacks Greeks simply because they are easier prey than the natives.

RESIDENTS

The plains people are of Negroid stock, and have customs and beliefs typical of most native Æsheban tribes. Many are still hunter/gatherers, but some have settled in the Baktolo region and become farmers.

All of the following people can be found in Baktolo. Some are natives; others are transients involved in current activities there.

GARVIN

Vocation: Slaver
Age/Height/Weight: 28/6' 2"/182 lbs.

Garvin is a huge, powerful man with muscular arms and a barrel chest. He has long black hair and green eyes that glitter in his tanned face. A scar runs down the right side of his face and twists his mouth, making it appear that he is always smiling.

The slaver came to Æsheba with the exiles when he was a child. He went into partnership with Spacci, another independent merchant, and they set up shop in Baktolo. Spacci is the brains of the operation; Garvin supplies the brawn.

Garvin doesn't like the slave trade, but he does what Spacci tells him. If

cornered, however, he will gladly double-cross his partner.

N'GORRO

Vocation: Chief of Baktolo
Age/Height/Weight: 41/5' 9"/157 lbs.

The chief has deep brown skin and eyes, and he keeps his short black hair covered with a traditional native headdress. N'gorro was the first chief in the southlands to encourage trade with the pale-skinned northerners. He envisions Baktolo as a large trading center if a few more contacts can be established.

SAWASI

Vocation: Chief's Son
Age/Height/Weight: 16/5' 8"/155 lbs.

Several weeks ago, Sawasi was awakened suddenly during a dream in which he faced a malevolent spirit. The spirit possessed his body, leaving Sawasi's spirit to wander in the Land of Dreams. The new Sawasi was silent and withdrawn, but no one noticed the change, for the chief's son had always been quiet and studious. At night, the spirit leaves the boy's body sleeping and materializes into the form of a lion, but it always returns before dawn.

SPACCI

Vocation: Slaver
Age/Height/Weight: 32/5' 4"/141 lbs.

Spacci is a runt of man, with a thin mustache and two blackened teeth. His smile is an evil leer, though he is very polite to all strangers.

Garvin actually kidnaps the victims; Spacci plans the strikes and arranges regular trade to cover their illegal activities. Spacci is aware that Garvin has reservations about the morality of their profession, but he has been able to allay the big man's fears so far. If he suspects that Garvin has double-crossed him, he will flee rather than fight.

BESTOPA PLAIN

The flat grasslands between the Lakomba River and the eastern coast of Æsheba are home to several native tribes. The Nebbi Jungle provides the inhabitants with sufficient lumber to satisfy their modest building needs, but more importantly, with rare spices, which they trade to the Greeks. The Lakomba River flows north from the lake of the same name. Lake Lakomba is considered holy ground by natives and Greeks alike. See the separate entry (page 88) for detailed notes.

General information on the wildlife native to the savannah of the Bestopa Plain is given in the entry for the Great Ngati Plain (page 90).

RESIDENTS

The Bestopa Plain is inhabited by several tribes of Negroid stock, plus one peaceful nation of light-skinned people who call themselves Ægyptians.

ÆGYPTIANS

These people are analogous to predynastic Egyptians (circa 300 B.C.), but their culture is far more primitive. Although they embrace the same high ideals as their counterparts in the real world did, they live at just above subsistence level, supporting themselves primarily through agriculture.

The Ægyptians are light-skinned and of medium height (average 173 cm or 68" for men). Their hair grows in thick waves, and its color ranges from medium brown to black. They wear feathers in their hair to represent rank.

Both men and women wear simple skirts made from woven grasses, which are abundant in the wetter portions of the plains. The men's garments are the length of a kilt (mid-thigh); the women's are longer, extending to the knee or mid-calf. The men are tattooed with various signs and symbols representing their patron deities.

The Ægyptians build permanent communities with populations of approximately five to fifteen hundred. Each such town is called a "nome," and the ruler is the "nomarch," or prince, of the region. A nome is surrounded by a mud wall with reed parapets. Inside are single-story houses built of light wood and wickerwork. The dominant central structure is the shrine of the local god or goddess. Each nome has a patron deity, and through the centuries a mythology has evolved that ties all the independently-developed gods and goddesses into a cohesive whole.

Ægyptians believe in an afterlife, and they take great pains to preserve the bodies of their dead. They are horrified at the Greek and native customs of cremation and simple burial.

Though the Ægyptians are normally peaceful people, they can defend themselves if attacked. A warrior's standard weapons include a stone-headed mace, a lance tipped with flint, a long, recurved bow, arrows with stone tips, curved flint knives, wooden throwing sticks, and lassos made of palm-fiber rope. Ægyptians disdain the use of armor, finding it too hot and cumbersome.

The Ægyptians are intelligent and well-spoken, and they have a basic understanding of astronomy and mathematics. Their knowledge of healing is so advanced that Ægyptian physicians are sought out in preference to all others to treat the mysterious fevers and illnesses that afflict Æshebans.

The Ægyptians find the Greeks crude and barbaric, and consider them a people out of touch with the gods. They grudgingly respect the Greek warriors, though they feel the emphasis placed on war in the colonies deters true understanding of life and the cosmos. They respect the Greek scholars and priests in Tegea (page 44), but feel that the three warrior-kings — Calter, Peisandros, and Eurypylos (pages 30, 40, and 34) are a waste of food and air.

BOTSHARI DESERT

The Botshari is nestled just east of the Djibi Mountains near the southern tip of the continent. The western Botshari, at the foot of the range, is utterly lifeless — a morass of sand that grows deeper as fierce sandstorms pull down and grind pieces of the Djibis into dust. The desert gradually becomes more temperate to the east and north, eventually blending into the Gwalo Plain.

Animal life of the Botshari includes scorpions (both normal and giant-sized), small desert animals such as sand rats and snakes, and some predatory birds — at least in the western reaches. Sand demons (see page 86 for description) are also found here.

The water table lies just below the barren surface, so some hardy plants are able to grow in the eastern and northern sections, where the sandstorms are not as devastating. A few native tribes have also been known to survive in this harsh terrain, but since most folk prefer the easier life on the nearby Gwalo Plain, the desert residents are usually outcasts or criminals.

CAPE LOBA

The southern Gwalo Plain meets the ends of the Djibi and Itimba mountain ranges at the southern tip of Æsheba, known as Cape Loba. This wealthy area boasts many operations, profitable fishing, and a fairly large population.

The land around the cape is fully cultivated, and its fields provide a variety of crops to round out the people's

diets. The residents also obtain some fresh meat by hunting, but the game in the cape region has been thinned greatly of late, as land has been converted to farms. Meats other than fish are therefore delicacies in the cape region.

At the bases of the Djibi and Itimba Mountains are rich deposits of iron, copper, silver, and gold ores. The cape people operate two active mines, 390 and 520 km (150 and 200 miles) from Cape Town. The raw metal ores are excavated from caves, brought out in ore carts, and separated for smelting and processing. Oxen then tow the refined metals from the digs to Cape Town.

BUNZI & YELBAWA

These two tiny islands lie just off the tip of the cape. The local fishing industry has its headquarters on Bunzi. The total fleet is composed of nearly eighty vessels, ranging in size from mere canoes to full two-deck sailing ships.

CAPE TOWN

The settlement indicated at Cape Loba on the color map is generally called the Cape Town, though it is actually three independent cities, each having a population of more than two thousand. Each city belongs to a different tribe of natives, and is separated from the others by log walls. Heavy wooden gates control access between them.

Each city has an import tax, an export tax, and other levies, which are applied to all goods passing through the gates. Trade between the cities is thus expensive and minimal. All three cities maintain their own governments, of course, and are in all ways independent. When referring to the cities, the natives simply add their own tribal names, e.g. "Ufe Cape Town" (see below).

RESIDENTS

The cape region is home to three nations — the Ufe, the Kokoto, and the Mossa. All share the same basic beliefs, including their right to control the wealth of the region, and although their progress has not been marred by open warfare, the situation has never been stable. The Ufe are closely related to the people of the southern Gwalo Plains, and claim to have been the first colonists of Cape Loba. The Kokoto people maintain that they defeated the Ufe long ago, and that the latter gave them half the region in exchange for their mercy. Finally, the Mossa claim to have lived in the southern Itimbas forever and to have foraged in the cape lowlands while the other two tribes were still living in trees.

All three of these claims are true, though the last is slightly exaggerated. Thus, the ancestral spirits of the three tribes have not reached a clear agreement about the rights to the land. The turmoil continues, and may never be settled — especially since the "winners" of the argument will be in the minority, and may suffer retaliatory measures.

The temporary solution to the problem has been a form of socialism. Although the proceeds of all the local industries are owned by (and divided evenly amongst) the three nations, the joint efforts of all the people are applied to the tasks at hand. Those best able to farm, fish, mine, etc. are assigned those duties by the national councils.

If characters visit the region and impress the natives with their wisdom and/or power, they will be pressed for their opinions about the ownership situation. Those unwise enough to take sides will probably become unpopular with two of the native groups, and may be forced to leave the region in less than ideal circumstances.

CHOBU ISLES

The group of seven large islands and dozens of tiny ones northwest of the Æsheban mainland is utterly dissimilar to the continent, both geographically and culturally. The principal islands are (from west to east) Ramuda, Bouka, Chobu, and the "Four Kings" (aka the Fassi Isles). The whole is generally called the Chobu island group, though some Æshebans call it the Ramudas.

The islands are characterized by white, sandy beaches, expanses of lush tropical growth, rolling hills, and few mountains. In short, the isles are much like modern Hawaii. The climate here can best be described as balmy. However, during the rainy seasons (ninety-day periods in early spring and autumn), fierce hurricanes batter the shores, causing widespread damage.

CHOBU ISLAND

Mt. Chobu, the island's only volcano, is nearly dormant. Small lava flows are usually the extent of its activity, though a short eruption of more pyrotechnic nature occurs every few years. The Black Beach of Chobu is composed not of sand, but of powdered lava.

FASSI ISLES

The two outer Fassi isles are actually the peaks of underwater mountains. The inner two were produced by coral formations, and are lightly settled at best. The waters around the Fassis are very treacherous, for the coral reefs just under the surface are quite capable of disemboweling vessels that hit them.

Some of the people who live on the outer Fassis have amassed an impressive collection of flotsam from shipwrecks. Others, who have become adept at diving, collect debris from the ocean floor. As a result, the dwellings and businesses of the islands are decorated in a most unusual fashion, with many odd items hanging on walls, from rafters, and so forth. Thousands of gadgets, their original purposes unknown to their current owners, are displayed in this manner. Visitors may find nearly anything — mundane or magical — decorating the buildings here.

RESIDENTS

The race that dominates the islands is of Mongoloid stock. These folk are not indigenous to the Æsheban mainland, and no one has determined how they came to be here. They engage in some cattle ranching, and produce crops such as sugar cane, rice, tropical fruits, etc.

The islanders are monotheists, believing in a single Creator who dwells in the depths of the sea. They are openly derisive of spirits, multiple gods, and other elements of Æsheban and Greek religions. In fact, they are intolerant of other beliefs of any sort, and can become quite unpleasant when presented with any argument on this topic.

Though the islanders trade with Milios on rare occasions, they tend to avoid the continentals for the most part — probably because of the great disparity in religious beliefs. Some of the wiser folk also fear the eventual claims on their decorations that will no doubt arise once they are found. Thus, the islanders prefer to remain aloof, enjoying their own lifestyle and hoping to avoid change for a long, long time.

DAWANI HILLS

The rugged Dawani Hills connect the south (deep) Renegal Mountains with the southern Itimba range. The hills form a descending ridge, with the highest reaching the great Lake Plateau, and the lowest protruding from the Batuna Plain to the east.

This region is virtually unexplored. The people of the upper plateau and the lower plains avoid the hills, preferring travel over the gentler terrain nearby.

Amidst the Dawani, eroded and

tucked away in secluded locations, are the remains of an old and highly advanced civilization, as yet undiscovered by the locals. The cause of its downfall, and even the characteristics of the people who built it, are long lost.

Characters wishing to explore this region will have to contend with the predators that roam these hills, including the vicious shadhavar.

SHADHAVAR

Rank: 400% B Rank
Health: 360% B Health
Atk: 70%
Modes: 1 bite (two-handed sword)
Res: 35%
Def: Hide = leather armor
Special: Lures victims with music of horn

These carnivorous antelopes are adapted for life in the rough terrain of the Dawani Hills. Each adult shadhavar has a single curved horn, branched like that of a stag, growing from the center of its forehead. The horn is hollow, and when the wind blows over it, sweet music, like that of pipes, is produced. Other mammals (including humans) find the sound almost irresistable, and are drawn toward the hungry shadhavar.

The horn of the shadhavar is worth as much as a huge diamond among the native tribes, though no one has ever determined how to coax the spellbinding music from one.



DENGI ARCHIPELAGO

The large island group east of New Grecia is an archipelago that encircles the waterway called Ogoue-eval almost completely, leaving only a southern entrance and a small eastern channel. Several of these islands are actually the peaks of an underwater mountain range that extends well into the Ogoue-eval, making any shipping hazardous.

The waters between Dengi and its neighbors to the south are shallow, and other small islands occasionally appear within this region because of volcanic action. Ijebi and Wumm, the islands north of Dengi, are part of the Okoli Peninsula formation, and are described in that section (page 92). The channel between those islands and the Dengi group is deep and turbulent.

Ntua and Yeli, Dengi's first southern neighbors, are actually the top of one large mountain that stretches up from the ocean floor. At low tide, it is actually possible to wade most of the distance between the two islands! Tikko and Taa are part of this same underwater range. The sea bottom south and west of Taa drops sharply to form the only safe channel between Ogoue-eval and the ocean.

DENGI

Dengi is the largest island in the archipelago. The isle attracts very few visitors, primarily because of the great whirlpool and dangerous shoals of Ogoue-eval. Mt. Etuka, though still a semi-active volcano, offers minimal threat. The lava from its eruptions usually flows to the south and east, away from the rest of the island. The entire southern peninsula of Dengi was created by lava flows long ago. Natural evolution has since enabled the porous rock to support normal vegetation.

The sheltered Bay of Dóe would be an idyllic harbor, but the Dengi people do not go anywhere. To them, it is merely a secure fishing area.

MAGAN

This mass of rugged rock projected from the waters long before Mt. Etuka created the southern peninsula of Dengi. Thanks to that development, however, it is now separated from the larger island by only a few hundred yards of shallow water. No natives live on Magan's inhospitable 87 square km (13 square miles), but the Dengi people come here regularly to partake of the island's wealth. Magan means "gold" in most Æsheban tongues, and the place is quite properly named. Just below the ash-covered surface of Magan lies a mass of auriferous quartz — thousands of tons at the very least — produced by a hydrothermal vein. Pyrite (fool's gold) is also common here. The natives can easily differentiate between the two minerals, but a greedy looter may find that half his booty is worthless.

The natives of Dengi have learned how to mix a compound of crushed crystals and plants that imitates weak hydrofluoric acid. This removes the quartz crystals after only a few days' soaking, freeing the malleable golden metal for use in jewelry and other decorations.

NTUA & YELI

Neither of these islands has any human residents. Ntua is dominated by the volcano that gave it birth. Fumaroles dot the landscape, and volcanic smoke and fumes issue forth constantly from these holes and crevices. More than twenty craters break the island's surface, varying in size from dozens to hundreds of meters across. Some are only the remains of past volcanic activity, but many still vent their vapors as the magma below churns restlessly.

Tiny Yeli is hardly more than an outgrowth of Mt. Ntua. Amongst its vegetation, however, is a small yellow-green plant with dull grey flowers. This plant is sometimes called the Grey Power, or the Flower of Life. The pollen released by the flowers will, when inhaled by a living being, cure any and all diseases and neutralize all poisons. The pollen can even cure diseases produced by Æsheban medicines and magic, completely removing even supernatural elements of the enchantments.

Common side effects of the pollen include nausea, unconsciousness, severe hallucinations, or a combination of those effects, lasting for three to thirty hours after the pollen enters the body. Other possible (but rare) side effects include changes in skin color, loss of hair, and even blindness.

The Flower of Life is unique to Yeli, and its pollen is only present during full moons in the spring and autumn. It collects on the flower's tiny reproductive parts. Collectors must carefully brush it off, flower by flower, into a container. This requires careful handling, and it takes at least two hours to gather enough to treat one person. If the pollen is not kept in sealed containers of a completely neutral substance (such as glass), its potency vanishes within twenty-four hours.

The Flower of Life itself is tough, stringy, and nearly inedible. It is a carnivorous plant distantly related to the fly-trap. With its spiked leaves, the plant ensnares and digests insects to supplement the meager diet it obtains from the ash and infertile soil of Yeli.

TIKKO & TAA

These islands are very similar to Dengi in terms of terrain and climate.

Near the tip of Tikko's western peninsula is an extensive ruin of an ancient city. Covering approximately 8 square km (3 square miles), the ruin is now nothing more than broken shards of statues, collapsed stone buildings, and piles of rocks worn smooth by the rain. However, diligent adventurers may find access to the underground portions of the city, where a few relics of this lost civilization are preserved. This ruin has been left for you to design as you wish.

RESIDENTS

The natives who live on these islands are all of Negroid stock, but their civilizations have evolved quite differently.

DENGI

The human residents of Dengi are few, numbering only a thousand or so. They are typical of most Æsheban Negroid tribes in appearance, customs, and beliefs, even though they have been isolated here for many generations. This similarity is due primarily to regular contact with the mainland natives by way of the spirit world. In fact, the Dengi people's supernatural connections are so solid that spirits are invited to, and partake of, regular meetings and festivals held on the islands. (A three-element good-oriented magic system is suggested.)

Visitors to Dengi will doubtless first notice the abundance of gold possessed by these folk. The Dengi have more of this substance than they can use. They are not naive people, however, and they can bargain quite shrewdly with visitors. They seem to be well aware of the gold's current value in the Greek city-states (thanks to information from their supernatural allies). Nevertheless, they are not overly possessive about the metal. If some is stolen, they may not even demand its return — though they will force the thieves to leave.

DENGI APES

Only a few decades ago, the gorillas of the island jungle were experimentally contacted by the spirits of the Dengi ancestors, and were thereby thrust into close contact with humans. Though unable to speak, these remarkable apes have learned a sign language consisting of more than three hundred words, by which they can communicate with their human neighbors quite effectively. The simians are of the variety sometimes called "mountain" gorillas, with long silky hair, relatively short arms, and strikingly humanoid feet.

This alliance of humans and gorillas makes the combined population of the island a respectable fighting force, for each group has learned many techniques from the other. In defense of their territory, these joint forces have driven off pirates, invaders, explorers, and many other hostile visitors.

OTHER TRIBES

Unlike the people of Dengi, the natives living on Tikko and Taa have very little contact with spirits, and have become a fragmented, primitive people. Most of them are fishermen, venturing out in small canoes with barbed spears and nets to gather food. The Tikko tribes are somewhat more civilized than those of Taa; the latter do not often risk the thirty-mile voyage to Tikko.

DJIBI REGION

The southwest edge of Æsheba is called the Djibi. This region includes the coastal shelf, the 2,330-km (900-mile) mountain range, and the 335-km (130-mile) stretch of northern hills that ends at the Tondo River.

The coastal plain features an excellent climate — the coolest on the continent — and fertile land that supports a variety of crops. The many trees and bushes of the hill country offer a variety of nuts and berries, as well as ingredients for medicines.

DJIBI MOUNTAINS

The Djibis stand at the edge of the Gwalo Plain. Many passes separate these widely spread peaks, except in the southern stretch, where the mountains seem to cluster in defense against the ocean storms. This density has been a primary factor in the creation of the Botshari Desert.

There are no human villages in the Djibis, but several clans of the legendary Zimbobo live in the mountain caves.

ZIMBOBO

Rank: 1,000% B Rank
Health: 800% B Health
Atk: 95%
Modes: 1 weapon (short sword x 5)
Res: 30%
Def: Hide = banded mail
Special: Spits slime to ensnare opponents



These black-skinned giants are native to the Djibi Mountains, but they like to travel, so tribes of them may be found throughout Æsheba. Like all intelligent creatures, individual Zimbobo may be good, evil, or neither.

Adult Zimbobo are at least 6 m (20') tall, and each has the strength of ten normal men. They are usually armed with clubs, though they can also spit a sickly blue-green slime up to 30 m (90'). This goo will entrap the target on a successful hit, preventing all movement and attacks until it is removed.

The Zimbobo are also capable of shapechanging. They often masquerade as normal natives, or even trees.

MT. GOGODO

About midway along the range between the Botshari and the Tondo River stands the huge and quite active volcano known as Mount Gogodo. Its peak is currently at about 2,070 m (6,800') above sea level, but this figure varies, rising with the addition of more ash and lava, or falling whenever a major eruption removes the top. The mountain's base spans more than 52 km (20 miles).

This volcano is worshipped by the local natives, and regular sacrifices do indeed seem to abate the violence of its eruptions. Several ornate shrines built on its lower slopes have remained untouched by lava flows, though slight damage is sometimes caused when the earth shakes. It is quite possible that a powerful and/or supernatural being may dwell in the depths of the mountain, or at least may have some influence over its activity. If so, the spirits may offer some clues to this mystery.

RESIDENTS

Nearly one hundred tribes, primarily of Negroid stock, dwell along the coastal shelf. The northern hill country of the Djibi is also comparatively densely

settled. Tribes in this area enjoy excellent hunting, for game is plentiful due to the proximity of both the Tondo and the Khofari. Wild goats and dogs roam the grassy slopes, and the hill people domesticate many of these creatures.

EYASI HILLS

The hill country surrounding the Lakomba River is fertile and green. Groves of trees cover the slopes of these rolling hills, and game is abundant.

MT. QUEMBA

At the south end of the hill region is Mt. Quemba, a single peak that stands 11,423' tall. The mountain is capped with snow most of the year. Its long, gradual slopes on the east and south sides make it easy to climb, and a favorite target for adventurers.

The Khufiri (see below) obtain most of their iron from Mt. Quemba. They believe that a particular spirit protects the mountain, so they are always careful to offer the proper prayers and sacrifices before taking any of the raw ore.

RESIDENTS

The dominant tribe of the Eyasi Hills is a fierce group of nomads called the Khufiri. Other natives settle here from time to time, but the warlike Khufiri eventually drive them away.

KHUFIRI

The Khufiri are tall and slender. The men of the tribe are all very athletic; any weaking is put to death if he cannot complete the tests of manhood at the annual coming-of-age ceremony. Khufiri warriors let their hair grow naturally, sometimes shaping it into spikes by applying mud and allowing it to dry. They usually wear no clothing at all.

The Khufiri have learned to smelt iron for weapons. The typical warrior carries a 3 m (9') bladelike spear, plus several daggers and slings. When the warriors charge into battle, they set up a fearful howl to panic their opponents.

When moving to a new camp, the Khufiri typically send their warriors into the target area first, to frighten away or kill anyone who may be living there. As soon as the site is secure, the families erect low tents made of tanned antelope hide. Five to ten tents are pitched in a rough circle around a central fire pit, and there can be ten to twenty such circles in an encampment. When the food supply has been depleted (usually after about one month), the Khufiri pack up their tents and move on, driving their animals with them.

The Khufiri respect the Ægyptians, for the latter have excellent physicians who are always willing to treat injuries and illnesses in return for meat and skins. The Khufiri chiefs would cheerfully declare war on any people who harm their peaceful neighbors.

FARANHU LAKE

The largest body of fresh water in Æsheba is Faranhu Lake, nestled within the ring of the Koboro Mountains. Fed by streams from those peaks, the lake waters dribble slowly out to form the Faranhu River, which cascades over a waterfall at the northern gap in the mountains, and thereafter joins the Ianogo for its final passage to the sea.

The shores of the lake are clogged with tall reeds, trees, and other freshwater plants that help to cleanse the water. Therefore, despite its slow currents, the lake has not become stagnant.

Many small islands dot Faranhu Lake, but the Fosa Isles are the largest and most permanent; others vanish during the rainy season.

RESIDENTS

Some tribes have settled the southern shores of the lake, but a few, known as the Dahlo, reside in the wilder northern area within the Koboro ring.

DAHLO

These natives came to the highlands from the Batuna Plain, and are distantly related to the people of Baktolo. Young Dahlo males venture to the Fosas as part of a rite of passage, wherein each boy proves his worth by slaying a predator (such as a cheetah) without weapons.

THE FOSA WITCH

An aged female witch lives a solitary life on the largest of the Fosas. She is said to be the last of an extinct tribe that once lived on the plateau, and she is certainly not Dahlo. Her powers are said to be exceptional, though none of the tribesmen will admit to any accurate knowledge about this. A slight curl of smoke from her cooking fire is a common sight at dusk, visible from a distance of 104 or more km (40 or more miles).

FOUGUMA SHELF

The narrow and sparse coastland along the east edge of Æsheba's southern tip is called the Fouguma Shelf. The land here is dry, and it supports only sparse vegetation. The wildlife is the same as that on the Batuna Plain.

RESIDENTS

Several Negroid tribes dwell in this area, making a modest living as hunters, but their culture is stagnant when compared to most others on the continent. They have nothing of value to trade, so their contact with the more advanced tribes from the Batuna Plains or nearby Cape Loba has been minimal. Their belief system is also comparatively backward. (A two-element natural magic system is suggested.)

Three of the Fouguma tribes are on the verge of extinction. All have been stricken by personal and group calamities of notable frequency and severity. Animals evade their snares; the few fruit trees and bushes in the area have been stripped by migrating birds; disease after disease has broken out, and the women ruin dinners repeatedly. The villagers are indignant; they have committed no serious sins, and have even recently cleansed themselves of evil magical practicioners (two men and two women in all) with the aid of specialists from other villages. And yet, something seems to be bent on their demise.

Bring the characters to the shelf in search of fabled treasure. Once there, they will also fall prey to bad luck (GM's choice as to type). The natives will ask them to put things right, and offer rewards. The causes of the ills can be found on the slopes of the nearby Itimba Mountains. (See page 81 for details.)

GWALO PLAIN

The Gwalo dominates the southern portion of Æsheba. The great Khofari Jungle lies immediately to the north, and the transitional area between the two is heavily populated. The Djibi and Itimba mountain ranges form the west and east boundaries (respectively) of the Gwalo Plain. The Gwalo reaches around the barren Botshari Desert, providing easy access to Cape Loba.

The average elevation of the plain is about 915 m (3,000'). It slopes down to the south, merging smoothly with the low Cape Loba area. Another broad

slope fills the northeastern arm of the Gwalo, reaching up to the high plateau region. This is bordered on the west by an ever-steepening cliff that separates the lakes area from the Khofari Jungle.

General notes on the wildlife native to the Gwalo Plain are given in the entry for the great Ngati Plain (page 90). The race known as the Leontine (below) are an atypical addition to the fauna.

LEONTINE

Rank: 600% B Rank
Health: 480% B Health
Atk: 80%
Modes: 2 claws (short sword) & 1 weapon
Res: 35%
Def: Hide = chain mail

In the vast, open savannah of the Gwalo roam the magnificent leontine. With the head and upper torso of a man or woman and the body of a lion, this creature resembles nothing so much as a fierce centaur. Male Leontine have dark hair, which rings the face and lightly covers the upper body, except for a bushy row running the length of the spine. The females have long golden hair similar to that of human women, and little or no hair on the torso. Both sexes have light bronze skin and tan or brown fur on the lower body.

The leontine, though wary of humans, are intelligent and can speak their own language, plus a few basic phrases of several tribal tongues. If approached in a non-threatening manner, the leontine can be quite helpful to any travelers who can communicate with them. Natives often obtain good advice about survival in the open plains from these creatures.

Leontine are omniverous, but they prefer freshly killed meat. They use no weapons to hunt, relying on their own natural abilities and instincts to obtain food. The leontine charge through the veldt more swiftly than gazelles to seize their prey and wrestle it to the ground, then devour it ferociously. The males carry spears, but these are used primarily for defending against humans.

Nomadic by nature, the leontine treat the entire veldt as their home. Few in number, they travel in proud couplings. No young have ever been seen in the wild. The leontine roam the grasslands for ten months out of each year, avoiding the major settlements of mankind. For the remaining two months, all the leontine disappear into a secret glen deep in the Khofari Jungle, where they go to bear their young. (See page 84.)

RESIDENTS

The tribes of the Gwalo are many, and most are typical of Æsheban native cultures. The majority are hunters, though several have evolved into modest agricultural societies. There are thousands of villages, but few permanent towns. The only non-Negroid humans in the region are three tribes of nomadic Bushmen. (See page 73.)

HEADLANDS

The northern tip of Æsheba is generally called the "Headlands." This term covers a variety of geographical features, including two peninsulas.

GDYOL PENINSULA

The western peninsula, called Gdyol by native Æshebans, encircles Yanenga Bay, and ends with the islands of Naboudo and Ukata. All of this terrain is under cultivation by the Greek citizens of Milios, which lies on the west side of the Gdyol. The colonists call this peninsula "The Lion," in honor of their king, though its resemblance to that animal is difficult to detect.

MUBAN PENINSULA

The eastern peninsula, the Muban, is also marked by some hills, though these are not as high or closely packed as those on the Gydol. The Greek city-state of Ios is situated on the eastern side of this formation, beside Bafwana Bay (called the Iosian Bay by the colonists). The Muban likewise ends with two islands — Nyoumba and Ogbomoka, both of which have been settled by Greeks.

ITIMBA MOUNTAINS

The southernmost portion of the long mountain chain that separates the Gwalo Plain from the southeast coast is called the Itimba range. These mountains catch much of the rainfall that passes over the plain, thereby contributing to the dry climate of the Fouguma Lowlands to the southeast. The Itimbas reach heights of 1,830-2,130 m (6,000'-7,000') above sea level.

THE OLD ROAD

Along the eastern slopes of the Itimbas is an earthen roadway. Portions of it are in ruins, but most sections are still usable. For most of its length, the road winds around the mountains about 455 m (1,500') below the peaks, descending only for broad gorges, most of which are spanned by rickety bridges.

Although this road runs the length of the chain, about 2,070 km (800 miles) in all, there are no access routes connecting it with Cape Loba or the Batuna Plain. The surveying and grading of the surface were obviously very professionally done, long ago. Many trees are now growing in the roadway, and much work would be required to remove them before wagons could pass. Nevertheless, the road is a boon to those who travel on foot, and even standard mounts may easily traverse all but the worst sections. The only serious flaws are the occasional damaged sections; the unexpected absence of a bridge may necessitate miles of backtracking.

Some portions of the trail still show ruts where heavy wagons once passed. This road was once used to move ore from the dozens of mines that were operated within the Itimbas, for the entire mountain chain is riddled with rich veins of silver, gold, and other metals. But of the civilization that squeezed these resources from the mountains, nothing remains except this highway.

The remains of hundreds of old structures still lie along the mountain road. Though most are enshrouded in vegetation, a few can be seen through the undergrowth. Most of these ruins are simply stone chimneys standing next to rubble, or mere earthen traces that suggest the outline of a simple house. A few buildings have one or two walls still standing, and most of these shelters are now claimed by families of monkeys or even forest carnivores.

Two structures — perhaps 50 km (20 miles) apart — are still intact. These identical log houses, built fairly recently, are the homes of the only human inhabitants of these mountains. Place them as desired within the range.

RESIDENTS

The people who live in the Itimbas call themselves the Sundi (a word meaning "king who has regained his throne").

SUNDI

The Sundi "tribe" consists of four powerful sorcerers (two men and two women) who were ejected from the Fouguma Shelf. The men came to the mountains first and met when they tried to take shelter in the same ruined building. Both had been victims of nearly

identical circumstances. They became friends and assisted each other in building dwellings, exploring, and generally stabilizing their existence. When the women arrived together, the four declared themselves a tribe and paired off.

From certain outcroppings in the mountains, the sorcerers can look down upon their previous villages and deliver retribution from afar. As a quartet, they have succeeded in doing far more damage than they ever could have singly.

The villagers of the Fouguma Shelf need heroes (such as the characters) to save them from this plague of sorcerers. Clues to the source of the trouble are few, but long-term observation and careful investigation should reveal that lights, fire, or other spectacular effects are sometimes visible on the mountains. Although some villagers may suspect that these phenomena are connected with their problems, none dare investigate. Characters will find this an excellent chance to show their mettle, since the four sorcerers are powerful, very evil, and quite skilled in their black arts.

KAMBIAN MARSH

On the coast between Tegea and Ios, the ocean casts a narrow arm inland. This small, shallow waterway, called Fafanga Inlet, feeds into the Kambian Marsh. The swamp has small pools of stagnant water, bits of soggy land overgrown with vegetation, and a maze of shallow channels. Flies and mosquitos are common, and most carry disease.

This was the first location that Calter and Peisandros considered for their settlement, but when their flagship drew close to the shore, the noisome vapors of the swamp beyond became all too apparent. They quickly branded the place a gate to hell and, holding their noses, sailed farther west along the coast and founded their colony at Ios.

RESIDENTS

Although the Kambian Marsh is an inhospitable place to live, a band of pirates, lured by the presence of so much commerce nearby, has settled there. The pirates are a mixed lot. The group consists of renegade Greeks, plus a few Nimbassa and Khufiri warriors with a taste for the sea. These ruthless men and women prey on the Iosian sea trade.

The pirates navigate the marsh on rafts made from bundles of reeds, poling them through the shallow channels and swamp grasses. Even fully loaded, the draft of such a vessel is mere inches.

The journey from the marsh to Bafwana Bay is a long one, so preparations for such a trip can take one to three days. Each raft is loaded with enough provisions to support five men for one week. The food is covered with large mats made of woven reeds, which double as shields for the pirates in case of missile attack. Jugs of pitch, which bubbles up naturally from tar pits deep within the marsh, are stowed aboard each raft, along with a supply of arrows.

PIRATE TACTICS

The pirates got their idea for the raids from the fact that the Greeks preferred to sail within sight of land as much as possible. Their trading vessels used to skirt the shoreline of Bafwana Bay, dropping anchor at night to avoid ramming the shore when there was insufficient moonlight to navigate.

One night, the pirates paddled their rafts silently up to a ship at anchor and painted the hull with pitch. At dawn, the sailors were greeted by a horde of pirates standing on rafts with torches in their hands. The pirate captain offered not to burn the ship to the waterline if the captain turned over half of the goods he carried. He refused, and the pirates carried out their threat.

Although Calter tried to prevent further attacks by providing trireme escorts for some merchant vessels, similar incidents continued to occur. At last the Iosian merchants, horrified at the loss of ships and unable to rebuild quickly because of the wood shortage, began scheduling their ships to enter and leave Ios at full moon, so that they could sail through the night.

This reduced the losses for a while, but the pirates simply changed their tactics. Now they attack vessels in open water, though still usually by night. Fifty to seventy pirates participate in each strike, rowing their rafts out into Bafwana Bay to intercept the desired ship. Once they are within bow range, the pirates hail the merchant vessel, demanding that specified goods be handed down over the side of the ship to a waiting raft. If the ship's captain refuses to turn over the merchandise, or tries to attack any of the rafts, the pirates will dip their arrows into the pitch and light them with torches, then fire the flaming shafts into the ship from all directions until the vessel is engulfed in a blazing inferno.

Incoming merchant ships from overseas are even more at risk than the Iosian vessels, for the pirates can resell the foriegn goods in the colonies for much better prices than they get for domestic merchandise. The first foreign merchant whose ship was besieged refused to comply with the pirates' demands. He survived the fire, only to find himself stranded in Æsheba for months while he tried to get lumber to rebuild. Based on the reports of their spy Troikos (page 83), the pirates decide which ship to strike, avoiding any that are scheduled for a trireme escort. The pirates usually do not risk attacking more than two ships at a time, especially if wargalleys are involved. Instead, they turn and flee back into the marsh, where the lumbering triremes cannot follow because of the shallow channels and the choking foliage. Even pursuers on rafts become lost in the maze.

The pirates raid incoming ships for merchandise, which they sell through disguised agents in Ios. Easily identifiable items are sold to Nimbassa tribes in the Ngati Plain. Outgoing ships are most often raided for their provisions, since the pirates do not grow their own food, and for treasures such as ivory or gold, which are fenced in Ios.

PODARGOS

Vocation: Pirate Leader
Age/Height/Weight: 28/5' 9"/200 lbs.

Podargos has had a rough life so far, as is evidenced by the network of scars crisscrossing his body. His black hair hangs in a greasy mass around his shoulders, and the rest of his face is framed by an equally dirty black beard. His left eye was put out in some long-ago fight, and the empty socket is filled with a large emerald — a gift from Udimba.

Podargos is well-versed in the use of dagger and sword, but he is even more skilled as a sailor. Few ships escape his raids. He is hard and even a little cruel. This attitude is not the result of perversity; it is necessary for survival here.

No one in Ios or Milios knows the identity of the pirate leader. Ten years ago, Podargos was a trireme captain in Calter's service, presumed lost at sea after a particularly violent storm. He washed ashore at the Fafanga Inlet and was rescued by the pirates living in the marsh, who nursed him back to health. The pirates were a fractious, disorganized lot in those days, and Podargos rose to become their chief after demonstrating his leadership capability, excellent grasp of waterborne tactics, and larcenous heart. Podargos is quite happy as a pirate, and has no interest in leading a more normal life.

UDIMBA.

Vocation: Pirate
Age/Height/Weight: 30/6' 0"/200 lbs.

Udimba is a typical Khufiri warrior, though he is rather ugly by anyone's standards. Rebellious by nature, he was ostracized from his tribe for frequent, gross violations of Khufiri laws. With no place to go, Udimba ended up in the marsh, where he joined the pirates.

Despite his warrior skills, Udimba is not really accepted by his new comrades. He is sly and two-faced, and though honesty is not prevalent among thieves, trustworthiness is a requirement in the pirate band. Udimba often fails to perform his duties and earns the wrath of Podargos. If a woman is among the spoils of a raid, Udimba invariably claims her as his share.

TROIKOS

Vocation: Spy
Age/Height/Weight: 29/5' 8"/150 lbs.

Troikos has naturally swarthy skin that has been darkened still more by long exposure to the harsh Æsheban sun. Though he is a Greek, he can pass for a native from a distance. His black hair is very curly, and his black eyes reveal nothing of his thoughts or emotions. Troikos dresses in garb befitting his current persona — sometimes nothing more than a brief skirt of woven grass, sometimes full native dress, or even the costume of a hoplite.

During a spying mission, Troikos speaks little but listens very closely to all conversation around him. He avoids physical encounters of any sort if at all possible. If he feels that his identity may be compromised, he stages the death of his current persona and adopts a different disguise. Troikos is certainly capable of murdering anyone who discovers his true identity or his mission, but he knows that such a drastic measure is more likely to complicate the situation than rectify it.

Troikos journeys to Ios every few days to gather information on upcoming shipments and trireme movements. His efforts are a key factor in the pirates' success so far. He normally wears a disguise, and he is known in Ios by at least a dozen different names.

KHOFARI JUNGLE

Separating Gloriosus from the southern and eastern parts of the continent is the dark and forbidding Khofari Jungle. Lush with thick vegetation, this immense tropical rain forest forms a natural barrier which, coupled with the Renegal Mountains, has so far prevented any mass migrations of people from the northern areas of Æsheba to the vast Gwalo Plain. The Khofari is virtually impenetrable, especially to unskilled travellers.

Millennia in the past, the ocean extended across this entire region. The Djibi and Itimba mountain ranges were only a series of rugged islands. Coastal erosion produced the great cliff that is now visible at the Khofari's eastern edge. As the ocean receded, its gradually expanding beaches became the long, gentle slopes that now characterize the Gwalo and Batuna Plains.

The eastern edge of the southern Khofari is clearly defined, for the jungle collides with the base of the great cliff that marks the central plateau (page 88). This cliff is unclimbable by normal means because it tilts inward at its base.

The jungle once extended nearly to the western shore, but a natural disaster many centuries ago — perhaps a huge tidal wave — left a heavy deposit of pebbles, shells, salt, and other debris atop thousands of square miles. The jungle receded out of the afflicted area, and its edge is now about 105 km (40 miles) inland, nearly 260 km (100 miles) at one point. The coastal plain is not a fertile area, and its soil supports only occasional shrubs. Passage across this barren shore is relatively easy, except for the complete lack of fresh water along the 905-km (350-mile) stretch between the Owerri and Tondo river outlets.

The lush Khofari Jungle is supported by two large river systems. In the north section is the mighty Owerri, beginning along the base of the southern Lumbasa Hills and eventually forming a vast and fertile delta region along the central western coast, where it finally flows into the sea. (See the separate entry, page 92, for details on the Owerri.) The southern system includes three named rivers. Streams from the plateau run down to collect in Lake Taharu, the start of the Aloma River. This winds about through the southern Khofari, and is joined by the Lunka as it heads north, eventually emptying into the Tondo, which has its source at Mt. Ghanza. From there the river flows past the hills marking the onset of the Djibi range, and empties into the sea.

Mt. Ghanza and the Tondo River mark the traveler's passage from the northern jungle to the southern portion. The south Khofari is wetter and denser than the north section, and this becomes notable within a few miles of the Tondo.

Adventurers wishing to explore the Khofari can ride a cargo barge up the Owerri from Gloriosus, or they may enter the jungle from the Gwalo or Zindor Plains.

Panthers, lions, giant scorpions, tarantulas, and carnivorous apes all seek their prey in this primal jungle. There are two creatures, however, that are native to the Khofari and exist nowhere else in the world.

ARACHNE

Rank: 400% B Rank
Health: 360% B Health
Atk: 70%
Modes: 1 bite (short sword)
Res: 40%
Def: Hide = scale mail
Special: Acid

The giant spiders of the Khofari Jungle were dubbed arachne by the first Greek adventurers who saw them. Their favorite food seems to be the Monkey People (page 84), though they will attack any warm-blooded mammal.

The arachne have only a base intelligence. They have no language, though they do seem to understand one another's chittering. Each huge, dark red spider measures approximately 3 m (9') from head to rear, and weighs more than 450 kg (1,000 pounds). Adult arachne have green spots on their bodies — camouflage that helps them hide.

Arachne make their homes in the lower branches of trees, weaving intricate webs of almost invisible sticky material to catch their prey. Most such webs stretch between two trees, attached to the branches above and the ground below. Unsuspecting creatures that blunder into the webs are stuck fast. (Characters stuck to the web may roll against their strength on percentile dice each time unit to break loose; otherwise the web must be cut or burned to free them.)

Once a creature is entrapped in the web, the arachne wraps it in webbing to immobilize it, then injects acid into this cocoon. The acid slowly breaks down the



body tissues into liquid form. This process takes nearly two days to complete. The spider then opens the cocoon and drinks the liquified nourishment inside. Obviously, the acid has no effect on the webbing or the spiders themselves.

Arachne acid is collected by the natives of the Gwalo Plain for use on arrows and spears, for it retains its corrosive effect when removed from a dead spider with appropriate care.

MONKEY PEOPLE

Rank: 200% B Rank
Health: 160% B Health
Atk: 60%
Modes: 1 claw (short sword)
Res: 40%
Def: Hide = scale mail

The highest civilization in the Khofari is that of the Monkey People, a race of semi-intelligent simians who live in the branches of the highest trees. They speak only their own language.

The Monkey People stand no taller than 1 m (3') and are very thin, with spindly arms and legs. Their bodies are covered with golden brown fur, and their faces are ringed with longer white or grey fur. Their tails are short and stubby, and appear to serve no function.

The Monkey People do not live in villages in the traditional sense, though a whole clan may build nests in a single huge tree. Each nest consists of sturdy sticks jammed into the top branches of trees to provide a reasonably flat surface, approximately 2 x 2 m (6' x 6') in size. Piles of grass and leaves on this "floor" serve as beds.

The Monkey People are omnivorous, eating whatever they can catch in the trees. They have also been known to hide in the lower branches and reach out to grab unsuspecting animals, or even people, on the ground. If two or more Monkey People successfully hit the same individual, they can haul a human-sized victim into their tree, where they will kill and eat it quickly.



Though certainly akin to the nargash (page 93), the Monkey People should in no way be confused with their vicious cousins. These little creatures are neither brazen nor heroic. They will flee at the first sign of any opposition, always preferring to look for a weaker victim rather than fight for their prey. Their sole natural enemies in the treetops are the arachne.

ÆSHEBAN TRAIL

Thirty years ago, adventurers from Gloriosus on a year-long campaign discovered New Grecia on the east coast. Laborers from both nations set about the monumental task of clearing a road through the jungle to facilitate trade. After five years of controlled burning and chopping, the Æsheban Trail was complete. This is now the major trade route for overland shipping between New Grecia and Gloriosus. (See the Zindor Plain entry, page 96, for details about the military garrison on the trail.)

MT. GHANZA

The mountain reaches nearly 2,440 m (8,000') skyward and stands alone, unaccompanied by even the smallest hills. The vertical spires of its peak are themselves more than 150 m (500') long. These spires were once lava, which hardened in this position after the now-dormant volcano gave its last eruption. The softer outer earth of the slopes was mostly volcanic ash, and eventually it eroded away, leaving these needles as the only traces of the past.

LAKE TAHARU

For the last two months of summer, the leontine (detailed in the Gwalo Plains entry, page 80) all migrate to a secluded glen deep in the Khofari. This idyllic spot, where a waterfall splashes gently into Lake Taharu, is the ancestral home of the leontine, and they must return here to bear their young each year. Any humans entering the glen will be considered intruders, and the leontine in the vicinity will do their best to slay such interlopers.

During her stay in the glen, each female will give birth to one or two cubs. The parents care for the cubs until they can be weaned. Then, two or three of the older females are chosen by the entire pride to stay in the glen and raise the children. The mates of these females also remain behind, acting as guardians and providers.

Behind the waterfall, in a crystalline grotto, is an altar carved from ebony. Upon it stands a life-sized obsidian statue of a splendid lion. This grotto is called the Cave of the Black Lion, and the site is holy to the leontine.

In their mythos, the Black Lion is a god who will return to earth one day to usher in a new age, when the animals will once again rule the land, becoming the masters of man. But the reign of the beasts will be a benevolent one. Man will be humbled, for he will finally see the folly of trying to kill and domesticate those of the land.

The statue of the Black Lion weighs more than 1,350 kg (3,000 pounds). Its eyes are huge, perfect rubies, each 15 cm (6") in diameter. Ivory inlay marks its snarling teeth. The six whiskers on either side of the Lion's muzzle are spun from gold, and around the statue's neck is an amulet set with rare jewels. The entire statue is worth a king's ransom.

If the necklace is removed from around the Black Lion's neck, the statue will come to life. It will attack ferociously, making quick work of trespassers with claw and fang, though it will not harm any leontine present. After the intruders have been killed, or after fighting for ten minutes, the Lion will lapse back into a suspended state.

Should intruders succeed in stealing the necklace, the leontine will track the thieves until they have recovered their sacred item and slain the perpetrators of the crime. The leontine can find the necklace wherever it is hidden.

RESIDENTS

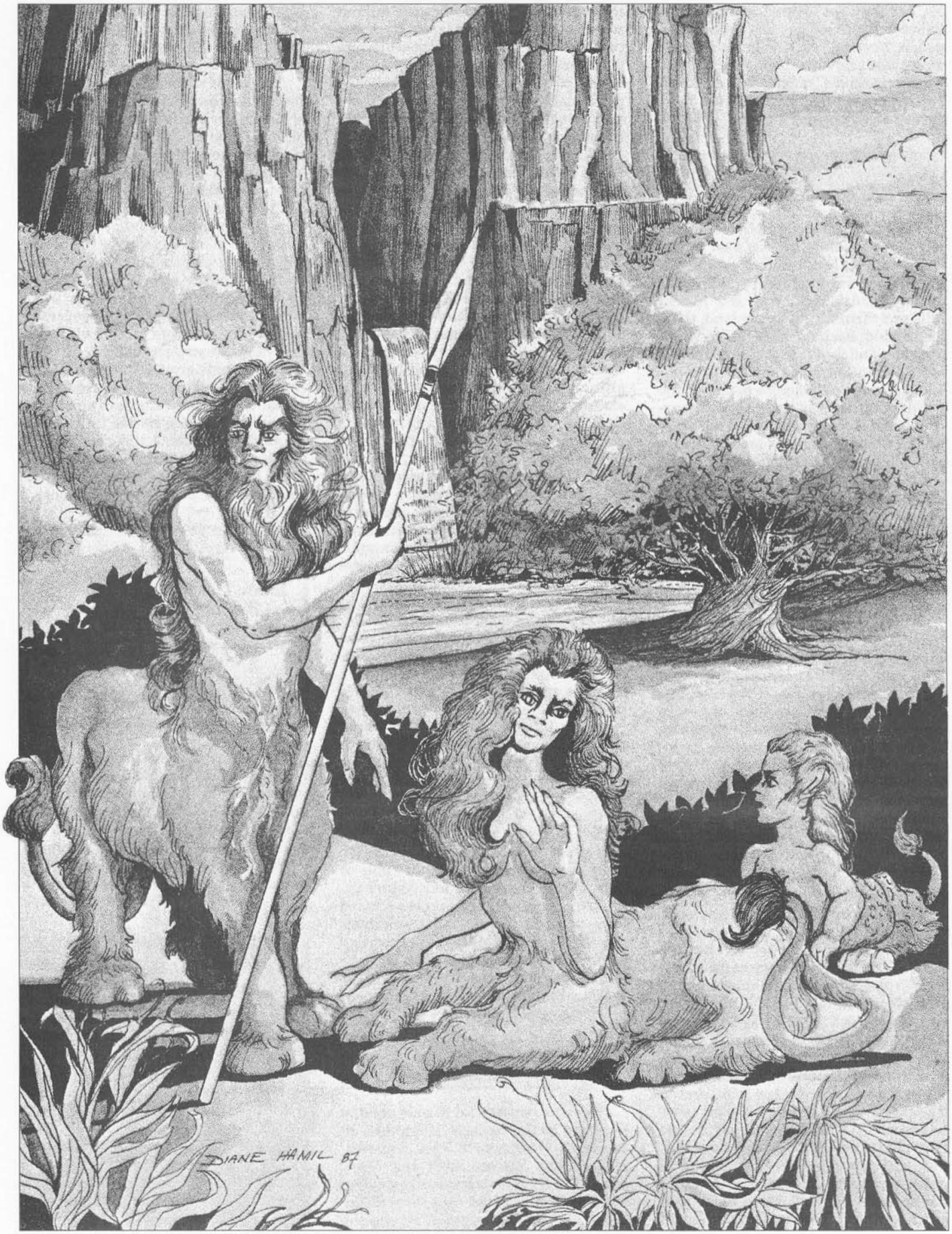
The tribes that inhabit the Khofari are of different racial stocks, and have little contact with other humans outside their immediate areas. Trade between the nations is almost non-existent.

KENI

The Lumbasa Hills are inhabited by the Keni nation, seven tribes of Bushmenoid stock. (See page 73.) The Keni are willing to trade with the farmers from Gloriosus and the natives from the Zindor Plain who make regular forays into the jungle. Professional adventurers who come looking for gold and magical treasures are not as welcome, for they carry little of value to offer in trade.

PYGMIES

The pygmies of the Aloma region number more than three thousand in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all, but they are divided into dozens of tribes and clans. They are not a united people; instead, each tribe stubbornly maintains its independence. These people welcome outsiders and trade opportunities. See page 74 for more details on the pygmy culture.

KOBORO MOUNTAINS

The odd ringlike formation of mountains immediately to the west of the Lowandhi Valley is known as the Koboro range. Highlighted by tall, steep peaks of stark rock, with few nearby hills and virtually no fertile land, these mountains encircle the famed Lake Faranhu and feed it with their runoff. A large gap in the range southwest of the lake provides easy access to the region within the ring, as does a much narrower and steeper pass to the north.

The western Koboros mark the edge of a plateau that reaches west to the Deep Renegals and south through the lakes region (page 88). Many of these peaks reach a towering 3,660 m (12,000') above sea level, or some 1,525 m (5,000') above the plateau. By contrast, none of the eastern Koboros are higher than 2,610 m (7,500'). There is snow atop the Koboros year-round.

Wildlife is plentiful on the mountains. The upper regions are home to snow leopards, great hairy apes, and a few other creatures equipped for cold and high altitudes. Below the tree line, at 2,745 m (9,000'), animals are more populous; mountain goats, panthers, and even small herds of grazing mammals may be found. A few nargash (page 93) have also migrated to this area but they are not numerous.

RESIDENTS

The dominant residents of the upper Koboros are members of a hybrid species in whom features of humans, apes, and bats have merged. They call themselves a term meaning "high people," but the natives of the plateau have named them Wuk-wuks, after a sound they make.

A Wuk-wuk is a bipedal humanoid, usually about 1.3 m (4') tall and very stocky — nearly 1 m (3') across at the hips and chest. Batlike wings stretch from hips to underarm, connected all along the upper body and arm, and to the lowest of three fingers. The other two fingers and opposing thumb provide good digital dexterity. The feet are apelike, and the four toes can be used to grasp and carry objects. The creature has no claws, but its fingernails are usually kept sharp. The wuk-wuk's pointed teeth grow in rows. Outer ones fall out regularly and are replaced by those behind. Unfortunately, wuk-wuks appear very similar to some other-planar beings of legend and religious belief — particularly certain demons — and are thus usually feared and/or persecuted by visiting adventurers who see them.

Wuk-wuks are omnivores, able to digest almost anything organic, though they prefer fresh meat and leaves. Their favorite food is nargash. They commonly obtain water by eating snow.

The wuk-wuk is not capable of true flight, but can glide for an indefinite period by simply extending its arms and leaping from a high peak into the wind. It is able to sense and follow air currents quite effectively, and may travel large distances by gliding slowly downwards, then using a powerful updraft to regain altitude and repeating the process. It also uses its wings for camouflage when sleeping or hiding, by clasping its hands across its forehead. In this position it appears very similar to a rock.

Wuk-wuks are actually very intelligent, but reclusive. They wish to discourage visitors and prefer to minimize the amount of truth known about them, so they deliberately act like animals when other intelligent creatures are nearby. In the presence of humans, they will only say "wuk-wuk" repeatedly; but by varying the tone, intensity, and inflection, they convey much information to others of their kind, such as the presence and characteristics of intruders.

Some wuk-wuks have supernatural powers, and are able to converse with (and even influence) spirits. They do not practice sorcery, however; the individuals who have these powers communicate with the spirits by mental means alone, with no rituals or paraphernalia.

These creatures do not live with their mates, so a lair will contain traces of only a single creature. Females carry their young until the latter are able to soar, climb, and forage independently. Wuk-wuks gather regularly in secluded lofty caves to discuss important matters. They are currently very concerned about the encroaching human civilizations, especially New Grecia, and fear the eventual corruption of the continent in the name of Progress.

KURASHI DESERT

This vast wasteland of arid sand is bordered by the Renegal Mountains on the south. On the north, east, and west, it gradually merges with the Ngati Plain. The Kurashi is gradually moving. Over the course of the next several centuries, it should migrate across the Ngati Plain as the wind blows sand to the northeast. It will probably come to rest around the western and southern sides of the Eyasi Hills.

The sands of the Kurashi are mostly the usual brown and tan, but the desert is marked by white stripes in dozens of places. These are the result of crumbling gypsum outcroppings, sand from which is strewn in a single direction by the prevailing wind.

Caravans traveling between Ios and New Grecia cross the burning sands of the Kurashi on a regular basis, one about every month. Many never reach their destinations, for a band of fierce raiders preys upon this desert trade. Merchants planning such a venture often hire adventurers to ride with their caravans as extra protection.

Nothing can grow in the dry soil of the Kurashi except a few palm trees at the oases. Wild dromedaries are among the few animal species native to the area. Small desert rodents and carrion birds also manage to survive in this wasteland. But by far the most dangerous creatures here are the sand demons.

SAND DEMONS

Rank: 1,500% B Rank
Health: 1,200% B Health
Atk: 95%
Modes: 1 bite (short sword x 4)
Res: 20%
Def: Hide = plate & shield

These creatures are huge lizards that resemble gigantic crocodiles. An adult measures 8 m (24') from snout to tail, and has a long, bony ridge running the length of its spine. Its flat, webbed feet allow it to move quickly over the sand.

Sand demons are carnivores, preying upon camels and the smaller desert animals. The creatures do not stalk their



prey; instead they burrow into the sand and lie in wait for unsuspecting victims to pass. Their huge jaws can make short work of even a full grown camel.

SAKNURU RIVER

The Saknuru collects waters from the central-western Dry Renegals and flows north to feed the Manduka river system. Small shrubs and desert plants along the river's course show that this terrain is not nearly as dry as the sand-filled central and eastern desert.

Located in the western reaches of the Kurashi, the Saknuru survives by a combination of unusual circumstances. First, its banks are primarily rock, so they absorb very little water. But second and most noteworthy, the river itself often dives below the surface of the land, flowing through underground tunnels carved by millions of years of erosion. This renders the Saknuru unusable as a route for travel, of course, but opens up many possibilities for adventure. The subterranean channels are by no means fixed, being eroded from the porous sandy rock. and old branches of the underground river, now dry or nearly so, may lead to additional tunnels.

RESIDENTS

Although there are no permanent human settlements in the blasted Kurashi, a horde of bandits roams the hot sands. There are forty-seven men and women in this gang.

The bandit leader, a warrior named Abul Essan, maintains absolute control over the Kurashi. He and his men rarely leave any survivors after a caravan raid, for they believe that killing their opponents cleanly is far more merciful than leaving them to die in the Kurashi. The bandits have accumulated quite a treasure trove during the past few years.

The take from each raid is divided into two parts. Whatever can be used immediately is taken to their camp (see below); the rest is stored in the Tombs of the Ancients (page 94). The exact location of this cache is known only to Essan and a few of his trusted lieutenants.

Though the raiders are semi-nomadic, they do maintain one permanent camp at a small oasis deep within the desert. Their families live here while the bandits are conducting their raids. The oasis is a beautiful spot, with date palms surrounding a pool of clear, cold water.

ABUL ESSAN

Vocation: Bandit Leader
Age/Height/Weight: 37/6' 1"/192 lbs.

This proud desert warrior has deep brown skin and brown eyes. His black hair is cropped short, and on his head he wears a gold circlet set with a single large emerald. A double-edged sword is thrust through a huge golden sash tied around his dark green tunic, and he carries daggers concealed in his clothing.

Essan is an expert fighter and horseman, and has personally trained all his men. The bandits are armed with longswords and spears. Each has a 10% bonus to all attack rolls, except Essan himself, who has a 20% bonus.

KYTHERAN HILLS

The hills north of Kythera are rugged, with patches of heavy forest. There are no roads, and the soil is very rocky. Predators, including panthers and leopards, stalk their prey in these hills.

RESIDENTS

The bandits who bedevil Kythera's trade live in these hills, within easy striking range of the caravan routes and the river traffic on the Manduka. No Kytheran patrol has ever found the bandits' hideout, for Scarphe, the leader, seldom camps in the same place for more than two or three days at a time. He sends out his own scouts to watch for Kytheran patrols, and his spies within the Greek colonies keep him informed of scheduled shipments.

IPHIS

Vocation: Bandit
Age/Height/Weight: 25/6' 4"/225 lbs.

Iphis is was born to Greek parents in Ios, but since joining Scarphe's band, he has gone totally native in his manner of dress and outlook. His only clothing is a brief loincloth made from the skin of a lion. He shaves his straight brown hair close to his skull and usually covers it with a headdress of feathers. Feathered circlets adorn his arms and ankles.

Iphis is crude and vulgar, with a decided taste for cruelty. He enforces his will through fear, and tortures those who dare to disobey him.

He is very adept with native weapons, such as the long Khufiri spear. He often darkens his already swarthy skin when preparing for a raid so that he appears to be a native warrior. Through the use of a magical growth potion he brews, Iphis can double his height, and he is often mistaken for one of the legendary Zimbobo. (See page 79.)

SCARPHE

Vocation: Bandit Leader
Age/Height/Weight: 28/5' 9"/155 lbs.

Scarphe's brown eyes reflect avariciousness as well as great strength of character. The bandit leader is rather scruffy-looking from his years of living in temporary camps in the wilderness. In deference to the climate and the natives with whom he deals, he has adopted elements of native dress, wearing animal skins over his Greek tunic and the tuft from a lion's tail on a belt at his waist, as a talisman.

Scarphe was with Eurypylos at the founding of Kythera, but he and twenty hoplites under his command deserted their king to seek their fortunes. The fact that he has been branded a renegade and outlaw bothers him not a whit.

Though necessarily hard simply from the nature of his chosen lifestyle, Scarphe is a just man, and has earned the respect of his followers. He steals for profit, however, and sees no percentage in helping his fellow Greeks. Scarphe is a highly trained and skilled warrior and an expert tactician.



He chose Iphis for his second-in-command because of the latter's tactical skill and courage. But Scarphe is wary of his underling, for he knows that Iphis plans to be leader someday if he can garner enough support from the men. Scarphe turns a blind eye to the acts of cruelty committed by his second, for he knows that such will only make the bandits less likely to join Iphis.

LAKE LAKOMBA

Lake Lakomba is a sacred place to the Greeks as well as the local natives. Fifteen years ago, a band of Iosian adventurers discovered the lake and the native shrines around it. While they slept that night on the shore, the Greek gods visited them in dreams. The priests affirmed the sanctity of the ground, and the Greeks added their own shrines to those already there. None of these tiny grass huts are full temples, but each houses some item sacred to its patron deity — an oak branch for Zeus, a sprig of cyprus for Artemis, and so forth.

RESIDENTS

Ten years ago, two sisters on a pilgrimage from Milios discovered a small cave near the point where the river flows out of the lake. They took shelter inside the cave for the night, and there they found a natural hot spring that intermittently shot forth steaming water and noxious, intoxicating fumes. The vapors from the spring put them into a trace, during which they spoke directly with the gods and learned of things to come. The events they had seen in their joint vision came to pass, and the sisters realized that the cave was an oracle. Ever since, the two have lived here beside the lake, serving as caretakers of the holy ground. They are supported by the priests at Tegea, who send shipments of supplies upriver regularly.

The sisters trade duties at random intervals; one sits beside the cave entrance to interpret the oracle for visitors while the other tends the shrines around the lake. Anyone wishing to consult the oracle must approach the woman at the cave, cross her palm with a few coins or a bit of food, and then ask a question. The sister retires to the cave and begins chanting. After breathing the vapors for ten to forty minutes, she emerges and gives her reading, usually couched in simple rhyme.

Visitors who come to consult the oracle always stop to pay their respects at the appropriate shrines. The natives are more frequent visitors, though they rarely use the oracle, preferring to seek the wisdom of their ancestors through more traditional means.

HYRIA & IAIRA

Vocation: Priestesses of the Oracle
Age/Height/Weight: 41/5' 6"/110 lbs.

Lake Lakomba's only two permanent residents are identical twins. Both ladies have graying brown hair that hangs in lank strands about their shoulders. Though Greek by birth, they have adopted native dress. They wear identical grass skirts and necklaces made of shells. Personal hygiene is not a high priority with them, and both could do with a thorough scrubbing. No matter how repulsive they might be physically, however, their silvery blue eyes are totally captivating. Even the most insensitive lout can readily see that these two have been touched by the gods.

The two sisters interpret the oracle differently, and sometimes their pronouncements are diametrically opposed. Iaira always reads the oracle correctly, but Hyria gives a false message about 75% of the time, for she is mentally unstable and often speaks of her own delusions rather than the divine knowledge imparted by the vapors. The oracle can only be consulted once about any given problem, so most supplicants who know the situation are careful to ask advice on one or more inconsequential matters before broaching the subject about which they have come, hoping to determine through logical questioning which sister is dispensing divine knowledge that day. Both are apt to give their interpretations in the form of riddles that make little sense until examined in depth.

LAKES REGION

A long, broad plateau spans the region between the Renegal and Koboro Mountains, and between the Khofari Jungle and the northern Itimbas. These highlands blend into a gentle downward slope to the Batuna Plain on the east and to the Gwalo on the southwest, but steep cliffs separate the plateau from the Khofari. The altitude of the southern part, around Lakes Nsokko and Sikabisa, is about 2,440 m (8,000'); that of the north section, between the mountain ranges, is about 2,285 m (7,500').

Water from the Itimbas collects to create Lake Nsokko, the southernmost of the continent's large inland bodies of water. Since the upper plateau is almost perfectly flat, Lake Nsokko is shallow. The Ianogo River flows slowly from there to begin a seven hundred mile trek to Ogoue-eval. The lakes called Sikabisa and Muranwi are more accurately just broad areas of the river, albeit dozens of miles across at their widest spans.

The plateau lakes and the surrounding area support a variety of creatures, including crocodiles, hippos, and assorted fish and water birds. The grazing animals of the lake highlands include gazelles, zebras, buffalo, and cattle. The browsers (feeding on the shrubs, rather than the grasses) include wart hogs, a few herds of giraffe, and many rhinos. The predators found here are not indigenous to the area; they have either wandered up to the plateau or come here on the trail of migrant game. These carnivores are primarily leopards and cheetahs, plus some lions.

IANOGO RIVER

The waters of the Ianogo are blue, clear and remarkably refreshing. There are two waterfalls which break up the gentle flow of the Ianogo and disrupt any attempts at profitable river trade. Once past those points, the land slopes gradually once again, and the Ianogo is quite normal and well-behaved where it crosses the Æsheban Trail. Slightly beyond that it is joined by the Ogun, then finally empties into the sea. Animals inhabiting this river include crocodiles, wading birds, and fish, plus one type of dangerous creature.

LULLUBAS

Rank: 700% B Rank
Health: 560% B Health
Atk: 85%
Modes: 1 special (hypnosis + drowning)
Res: 15%
Def: Hide = plate & shield
Special: Hypnotic chant

The lullubas are malevolent river creatures that devour unwary travelers. They produce a hypnotic chant by manipulating water and bubbles through their mouths, creating a sound that blends with the natural ripplings of the river. This mystical music draws intelligent creatures toward the rushing water, where they see visions of their hearts' desires. Once their victims are within arm's reach, the lullubas drag them down to the river bottom (no attack roll needed if the target is under the spell). Victims drown in eight minutes if not rescued. The lullubas store their victims for future meals.



The skins of these monsters refract light, allowing them to blend perfectly with their watery surroundings. The lullubas have no control over this phenomenon; that is, they cannot choose to become visible while underwater. In the depths of the Ianogo, however, the darkness reveals them to be haggard-looking female humanoids with stringy hair, sharp teeth and nails, emaciated bodies, and webbed hands and feet.

The natives who travel on the river constantly slap the water with their oars to disturb the rhythms of the chant (+10% bonus to avoidance roll).

WATERFALLS

The river starts to narrow and accelerate as it reaches the base of the Deep Renegals, and the water cascades down Rainbow Falls to reach the north plateau. This waterfall was so named by the first New Grecian explorer who saw it. The water drops nearly 167 m (500'), kicking up quite a spray when it hits the pool below. The sunlight is mirrored off the flat, shiny rocks surrounding the falls, then refracted back through the water droplets in the air, producing a brilliant display of color.

The natives consider Rainbow Falls an area of great power. Legend has it that those who bathe in the pool directly below the falls are infused with the mighty strength of the rushing waters. This effect has been noted on some natives, but outsiders gain no benefits.

Farther north, where the two mountain ranges start to converge, is another waterfall. This one is called Tornaqa's Drop, named for a malevolent spirit of treachery and deceit. The waters of Rainbow Falls are very loud and can be heard quite a distance upriver, but Tornaqa is virtually silent until an unsuspecting boater is almost upon it.

A human carried over Rainbow Falls might survive, since the drop is straight and the water at the bottom is deep. Tornaqa's Drop offers no such chance, since the waters cascade over three separate falls on their way down the cliff, roaring over jagged outcroppings of sharp rock. No one has yet survived this 267 m (800') plunge.

Although the river is quiet and convenient for travel along much of its route, the waterfalls do pose a problem. All goods shipped along this waterway must be unpacked at both of those points and moved onto land, portaged around the falls, then reloaded to continue the journey. Because of the rocky terrain and hazardous conditions, changing even a medium-sized load normally takes more than six hours at Rainbow Falls, and eight hours at Tornaqa's Drop. Even with these delays, the Ianogo is the fastest route, but the load changes are expensive and wasteful. Therefore, most goods from southern Æsheba are shipped overland.

RESIDENTS

Although the plateau has less rainfall than the surrounding areas, the three broad lakes of the Ianogo abundantly provide for the natives.

ZANJI

Migrant tribes from the Batuna Plain were the first settlers in the region, and their descendents comprise the dozens of tribes of the Zanji nation, more than twenty-one thousand people in all. These folk are unusually tall, averaging about 178 cm (70") for women and 193 cm (76") for men, and are thus easily identifiable. The tallest people in the Zanji tribes are said to be closer to God, so they become the leaders and (due to some unusual customs involving rights of propinquity) produce the most children. Over the years, the average national height has risen accordingly.

The plateau people look on most visitors with great suspicion, for they fear that outsiders might try to stay. For centuries, all attempts by others to settle the fertile plateau have been met by Zanji resistance, ending in open warfare whenever the invaders failed to retreat before more subtle hints.

Their xenophobia and possessiveness aside, the Zanji are a culturally advanced and basically good people. Their beliefs in religion and magic, though left to the game master's choice, should be sophisticated and well-defined. The Zanji welcome contacts with others, and often assemble large trading expeditions to visit the plainsfolk. The characters will most likely encounter the Zanji in one of those areas, since the highlands are not easily accessible.

LOWANDHI VALLEY

When the Ianogo River leaves the pass between the Koboro and Renegal Mountains, it enters a broad, flat plain that extends from there to the eastern coast. The river waters rise over their banks in the rainy season, forming new and more direct rills to the sea. The sediment from these outpourings has left the earth of the north Batuna Plain black with rich riverbottom loam, amazingly fertile and arable. This is the Lowandhi Valley, site of the Kingdom of New Grecia. The local residents have converted most of the valley to cropland and pasture for their animals. (See page 56 for detailed notes on New Grecia.)

MANDUKA RIVER

The largest river system in Æsheba is the Manduka, which stretches from Yanenga Bay to the Dry Renegals. The Greek colony of Kythera is located where the broad Kuanda is joined by the Suddani and the trickling Saknuru to form the Manduka. About 650 km (250 miles) downstream, it is further supplemented by the Shubali, and wends its way through the Kytheran Hills into the coastlands.

The Saknuru is the smallest of the Manduka's tributaries, and the most extraordinary. It is described in the Kurashi Desert entry (page 87).

The Shubali is the acknowledged boundary between the Tungu Lowlands and the great Ngati Plain. It is in the vicinity of this river that the nature of the vegetation changes, as the characteristic plains growth becomes more dense, and other, more fragile plants appear. The land starts its gradual descent to the sea within a few miles of the Shubali's northern edge.

The Suddani was once a route for travel and shipping between the Omaru Lowland and the Gdyol Peninsula region. With its primary source streams quite near a major pass in the Dry Renegals, the river provided a convenient and direct route. This traffic was severely interrupted several years ago when Mt. Sokoda erupted, changing the course and character of the Suddani. The hardened lava made large sections of the river too rocky for convenient use, forcing overland "portage" through more than forty miles of rugged terrain.

The Kuanda River is the largest of the Manduka's suppliers, and it now bears the brunt of the commercial traffic between Kythera and the Zindor Plain as well. A series of twisted passes pro-

vides a connection between the northernmost edge of the Khofari Jungle and the Kuanda's source. Merchants from Gloriosus and New Grecia ship goods to Kythera by this zigzag route.

The river water is usually rather brown in color, but it is safe to drink. The current is fast, except in the broad Tungu portion of the Manduka, but there are no rapids. The river is a natural highway for trade goods from the interior, and river traffic is moderate all year long as cargo barges make their way from Kythera to Milios and back again. Bandit raids are common in the hill region (page 87).

MONGU JUNGLE

In the Wet Renegals, the southern slopes of Mt. Zala mark the onset of a dense jungle called the Mongu. This area reaches from the mountains nearly to Ogoue-eval, and is fed primarly by the Zebola River in the east and the Ogun in the west. The nearby island of Ulinda is covered with dense growth very similar to that of the Mongu.

Since the establishment of New Grecia less than 780 km (300 miles) away, the Mongu has suffered. Wandering hunters deplete the game near its fringes, and adventurers pose a deadly threat, since most show no concern for what effect their activities may have on the environment or its denizens. Explosions and fires have scarred the outer Mongu, and the more timid animals have fled to the central jungle. This has in turn caused an intense battle for survival in that portion, as an overpopulation of prey and predators struggles to re-establish a proper balance.

OGUN RIVER

The western feeder of the Ogun is quite impressive. The underground streams that form this rivulet pass near the huge, deeply submerged magma bubble that feeds Mt. Zala. The cooling, condensing steam joins the hot water as it bubbles out of the mountains, forming a boiling stream that supports no life until it has cooled, after miles of flow. The rain forest growth near this part of the river is extremely dense, flourishing in the hot, steamy climate.

RESIDENTS

Because of the ecological crisis described above, few natives live in the western Mongu. The central part is also very dangerous for the same reasons. Only the eastern jungle remains home to a few tribes. Most of these are of typical Negroid stock but there are a few pygmies as well. Many of those who once flourished throughout this region have now migrated to the nearby Okoli, seeking to keep their old ways, or adapted to life in the lowlands.

NEBBI JUNGLE

The western portion of the Nebbi begins as light forest and slowly grows thicker, not becoming true jungle for nearly 104 km (40 miles). The eastern Nebbi, near the seashore, reaches to within four or five kilometers of the coastline, leaving only a narrow strip of sand a few meters wide at some points.

The portion of the Nebbi that lies south of the Sobola River looks markedly different from the rest. The jungle begins quite abruptly on all sides except the south, and the trees and other plants grow more densely here than they do in any part of the north jungle. This thick growth is small in both area and stature. The lower Nebbi hovers on the brink of extinction, for the rainfall from the west makes the passage across the Wet Renegals in just barely sufficient quantity to maintain the existing plant life.

TSHO & ZOBI

These tiny islands lie just offshore, northeast of the jungle. Both are uninhabited. Zobi, the island farther from the mainland, was once the site of a huge shrine to spirits now long forgotten. Occupying most of the island's 13.5 square km (2 square miles) of rocky surface, the ruins of this vast edifice are still quite impressive. Toppled and rotting wooden statues still bear traces of the fine craftsmanship used to create them. The fallen walls and arches of stone were once part of several buildings — some of great height — but the techniques for their construction are known to no modern native Æshebans.

Although the rubble offers no encouragement to the casual scavenger, a few holes lead down to basements and secret rooms that still hold a few treasures of the highly advanced people who lived here. This area has been left for you to develop as you see fit.

NGATI PLAIN

The Great Ngati Plain fills most of central northern Æsheba. It reaches north past the Kambian Marsh to Bafwana Bay. The Shubali River is generally accepted accepted as its western edge. The Bestopa Plain is similarly connected to the eastern Ngati, with Mt. Quemba and Mt. Zala defining an approximate boundary. The Kurashi Desert and the Renegal range border the southern Ngati Plain.

The following notes apply not only to the Ngati, but also to other areas of the same topography and vegetation, including the Bestopa (northeast), Zindor (central), Gwalo (south central), and Batuna (southeast) Plains. If your game system includes details for savannah or plains, most can be applied to the Æsheban setting.

The large mammals of the plains are the most visible and the most quintessentially Æsheban animals on the continent. The most numerous of these are the four-footed herbivores that gather in large herds and wander over the entire plain, going wherever water and food are easiest to find. These animals fall into two general categories: grazers that feed on the grasses, and browsers that feed on the trees and shrubs. However, no animal fits perfectly into either category, as they all tend to eat what they can get — especially during a drought.

The wart hog and the giraffe are normally browsers. The grazers include the gazelles, the wildebeest (or gnu), kudu, bongo, zebra, giant eland, Æsheban buffalo, wild humped cattle, and the quagga (a wild ass that looks quite a bit like a zebra, except that its foreparts are striped in white and reddish brown, its hindquarters are gray, and its legs are white). Most of the grazers are timid animals, depending on speed and numbers for safety. An entire herd is likely to stampede away from any danger that the animals smell, hear or see. Some, however, such as wild cattle and buffalo, are more aggressive.

Less numerous, but equally well known, are the plains predators, particularly the big cats — lions, cheetahs, and leopards. The cats share the plains with some equally efficient hunters, including hyenas, jackals, and the Æsheban wild dogs. Although the former two are generally considered scavengers, they will hunt and kill prey when there is no carrion available. The hyena is an efficient and fearless hunter that will attack almost anything, even lions.

One primate, the baboon, also lives on the plains. Several different species of this ground-dwelling monkey live in different parts of the region, surviving primarily because of their intelligence and social organization. The less obvious plains dwellers include rodents, carrion and hunting birds, insects, and arachnids.

Among the birds, the most notable are the flightless ostrich, the carrion-eating pelican, and several types of vultures. These birds soar on thermal currents all day, looking for dead or dying animals and keeping an eye on other vultures. When one spots food, it promptly descends, and others join it in follow-the-leader fashion. It seldom takes more than fifteen minutes for a flock of hungry vultures to descend on a dead or stricken animal.

The most notable insect is the termite. These creatures build large rock-like nests that protrude several feet from the ground. Termites are very important to the Æsheban ecosystem; not only do they provide many animals with food, but they also break down dead plant fibers and condition the soil, much as do earthworms of other continents.

Another significant pest is the tsetse fly, a large, bustling brown insect much like a horsefly. It is the main (but not the only) transmitter of sleeping sickness (trypanosomiasis). This disease is usually fatal to non-native humans and domesticated mammals, although several days or even months may pass before the victim finally dies. The flies inhabit all except the driest plains regions (they do not breed in areas that receive less than thirty inches of rain per year), but they are usually not a problem during the winter dry season.

Of the snakes that dwell in the plains, most are innocuous, feeding on rodents and small birds. Others are venomous, like the spitting cobra, the black mamba, and pit vipers (which resemble rattlesnakes, but without the rattle). The 7.6 m (25') rock python is difficult to ignore when it makes an appearance.

RESIDENTS

Various Negroid tribes make their homes on the Ngati Plain, but the Nimbassa are by far the dominant nation.

NIMBASSA

These semi-nomadic people have medium brown skins and brown eyes flecked with melanin. The men wear animal skin loincloths belted at the waist. The women wear full, colorful dresses of beautifully tailored light cloth, even for daily chores. Clothing is optional for all children under the age of ten, though most wear some garments when visitors or strangers come to call. This practice has developed in deference to the odd customs of the Greeks.

In battle, the Nimbassa paint their skins with bright colors to strike fear into their opponents. They likewise mark their bodies before a hunt, but in this case, the patterns are designed to blend with the surroundings and camouflage the hunters.

The Nimbassa value jewelry, primarily for the prestige it bestows upon the wearer in the community. All Nimbassa wear necklaces and earrings, and some have rings and bracelets as well. The typical warrior wears both a fine gold chain he has received in trade and a more traditional shell necklace.

The tribes move only every third or fourth year. Men build homes for their families by weaving long-stemmed grasses in and out of a latticework of small twigs. The roofs are thatched in a similar manner. The result is a well-ventilated house that remains remarkably cool even in the intense heat of summer. These grass-covered huts are grouped around a water hole or lake.

Men and women share the work equally, according to individual skill. Women hunt alongside the men, while men sometimes stay at home to see to village matters or raise the children. Each tribe has a few domesticated farm animals that provide milk and eggs, but the Nimbassa prefer to hunt their meat in the wild.

The warriors take great pride in their weapons, seeing their spears as extensions of their own physical power. Like the Khufiri, Nimbassa warriors carry iron-tipped spears and knives. Each hunter decorates his spear and shield with feathers to mark it as his property.

The Nimbassa are ruled by a queen. She wields great social power, but is not a religious figure. She is responsible for all major decisions. The current queen, Nwankwo, has opened up new avenues of trade with the Greek colonists, and this has become the major source of revenue for the people of the central Ngati Plain. Since the Nimbassa have no system of money, they deal soley in barter, offering skins, fine carvings, tools, weapons, native wear, fresh vegetables and grain, and meat.

The Nimbassa have had little trouble with the "pale ones," so they treat them as equals. The tribesmen are open and friendly, willing to meet and interact with the Greeks and the other tribes.

NWANKWO

Vocation: Queen of the Nimbassa
Age/Height/Weight: 57/5' 10"/148 lbs.

The queen is still a strong, beautiful woman, despite her advancing age. A proud warrior, Nwankwo wears a powerful talisman around her neck — a leopard paw she took after killing the animal in unarmed combat. She is a



thinker as well as a warrior, and gets along well with the warrior-kings of all three Greek city-states.

Nwankwo has personally negotiated all her tribe's trade agreements with the Greek colonists, since she speaks for all of her people. She arranges native escorts for Greek merchants who wish to trade directly with small Nimbassa clans living in remote areas.

OGOUE-EVAL

The great eastern bay about which the Dengi Archipelago winds is called Ogou-eval (which translates as "the malicious long-armed water spirit") or "The Channel." In the midst of the northern Ogoue-eval is a vast whirlpool. Its vortex is nearly 26 km (10 miles) across, but it produces currents that affect the waters at twenty times that distance.

This whirlpool was first discovered more than three hundred years ago, when the survivors of the disaster at Ios came to Lowandhi Valley and joined with the Mokundi tribe to form New Grecia. Its existence has always been attributed to Poseidon's wrath.

Oddly, the whirlpool disappears entirely twice each year at the equinoxes

for twelve to eighteen hours each time. During this "window" of calm, New Grecian ships set sail for Ios.

Although a whirlpool is a natural phenomenon, usually produced by large ocean currents that collide or pass near each other, the location of this one renders a natural explanation impossible. Strong currents do indeed flow toward the whirlpool, one from the south (between Taa and the mainland) and one from the east (between Dengi and the Okoli peninsula), but no current seems to *leave* the bay.

All that water must be going somewhere. Its actual destination is left to the game master, but the only possible choices are (a) another world or (b) some other part of this world. In the first case, the world may be in some other dimension or plane of existence. This option must be accompanied by a similar displacement of water from another world to this one, else this planet is in the process of drying out. The second option may involve either magical displacement or nonmagical movement on a large scale (such as by tunnel). The cause of any such displacement is probably supernatural, involving powerful beings or deities (such as Poseidon, cited by the Greek colonists).

Note that the direction of the whirlpool's current will be determined by the location of Æsheba in the campain world, and by the direction of the planet's rotation. Assuming a "normal" planet (rotating counter-clockwise when viewed from above the north pole), if the whirlpool is south of the equator, the rotation will be clockwise. This is also true if both factors change (northern placement on a world with reversed planetary rotation). If one of those factors changes and not the other, the direction should be counter-clockwise. If the whirlpool is located on the equator, its direction of rotation may change each time it stops!

OKOLI REGION

The peninsula and jungle just north of the Dengi Archipelago are called the Okoli. Much of this "jungle" is more accurately a blend of woodland and dense undergrowth, on its way to becoming a true rain forest. The prevailing winds pick up moisture from Ogoue-Eval and deposit much of it here.

The fertile peninsula region will probably be partially cleared and developed soon, due to both the overpopulation of New Grecia and the pressures of opening a sea route around the northeastern part of the continent. Therefore, this jungle is probably doomed.

WUMM & IJEBI

These islands off the south shore are part of the same land formation as the Okoli Peninsula. Travel from there to the isles is unhampered by the currents of the great whirlpool of Ogoue-Eval, for the channel is shallow and full of shoals. Swimming is not recommended, however, because the waters are also full of sharks.

Ijebi is nearly flat; the highest hill is 14 m (45') above sea level. Vegetation is moderate, almost sparse, due to the lack of topsoil. The natives who live here survive by combining their fishing with industrious cultivation of a few necessary plants.

In complete contrast to the larger isle, Wumm is marked by huge, rocky spires, thrust upward from some underground fault. Perched on the only flat section of the island, perhaps 84 square m (100 square yards) of horizontal surface atop one spire, is a rough stone house (see below).

RESIDENTS

The native population of the Okoli region is rising quickly. Those fleeing the Mongu (page 90) but wishing to maintain their way of life have descended upon this area, and are currently fighting about the rights to the territory. Some have already tried to settle, failed, and departed for the Nebbi Jungle to the north.

LORDS OF WUMM

Three years ago, a party of adventurers — three married couples — came to Milios from a distant land. They made the long trek to New Grecia. Following obscure clues and references, they eventually came to the isle of Wumm and found a huge oyster bed just off its southern edge.

The six adventurers have been industriously working the bed ever since. They live in the stone house atop the spire, but they also have another dwelling on the edge of the peninsula. All of them are known to the natives of the area, since they must trade regularly for provisions. Their work is nearly complete; they have amassed more than 5.7 cubic meters (60 cubic feet) of pearls in all sizes and qualities. If they can get this treasure back to their homes and restrain their greed enough to dribble it out slowly, so as not to depress the markets, they should be able to live in wealth for the rest of their lives.

This situation can be used to build an adventure if desired. For example, the characters might be sent in search of a particular pearl of unusual size and color, which is now in the possession of these adventurers. The six would prove dangerous adversaries in a face-to-face fight, for their party is well-balanced and extremely capable. However, they might be convinced to part with the pearl in exchange for some other service, at the GM's discretion.

OMARU LOWLANDS

The fertile lowland along the central west coast is known as the Omaru. It is bounded by jungle to the north and south, the Soutoubou and Khofari (respectively), and by the West Renegals to the northeast (which, on this side, are anything but "Dry," although they are called this by natives even here). The Æsheban Trail connects the Omaru Lowlands with the central Zindor Plain.

The Omaru spur of the Dry Renegals nearly divides the lowland, extending almost to Embuku Bay. A notable feature near the end of the spur is the Spike, a tall, narrow mountain only 1,035 m (3,400') tall but nearly vertical in its upper section. The Spike provides a convenient point of reference for travelers in the area.

The natives dwelling along the edge of Embuku Bay live in huts that stand 3-5 m (10'-15') above the ground on stilts. This is merely practical, since the bay acts as a funnel for tides. The difference in water level between high and low tide may exceed 3 m (10') at times, and wave action often carries the water up to a mile inland over the nearly flat terrain. The vegetation in this area is thus limited to types that tolerate salt water.

The isle of Gana at the north edge of the bay is unsettled, for it has no source of fresh water.

The kingdom of Gloriosus dominates the region between Embuku Bay and the Owerri delta. See page 47 for detailed notes on this civilization.

OWERRI RIVER

The source of the Owerri is an underground stream that breaks the surface deep within the Khofari Jungle. From there, the river flows westward through the rain forest to the sea, ending in a fertile delta on the western coast. The waters of the Owerri are green and murky, and the flow is sluggish. Pygmy hippos and crocodiles make their homes in the wider, shallow stretches.

Each spring, the Owerri floods its banks in the delta region, irrigating the

surrounding area and depositing a fresh layer of silt over the land. This fertilizes the soil, making it rich for planting.

The natives from the Zindor Plain pan for gold at the source of the Owerri, for the rushing waters bring nuggets out of the ground and deposit them in the bottom of the river. The water also carries many dissolved minerals, which give it a notably bad taste.

Cargo barges from Gloriosus travel the Owerri regularly, carrying workers who will disembark somewhere upriver and gather tropical fruits for sale in the city. On the journey into the jungle, the barges are rowed or towed by oxen driven along the bank. After the produce has been loaded, the current carries the vessels back to the delta. Adventurers wishing to explore the jungle may ride along for a small fee.

RESIDENTS

King Mgabwi of Gloriosus, fearing that Milios may attack his kingdom by sea, is secretly building a war fleet for defense. The six triremes already completed are moored in a small, sheltered cove near the bend of the river.

The shipwrights in charge of the project have built a small village in a clearing on the shore. Three more vessels are currently under construction in a large wooden shed set back from the riverbank. Fifteen soldiers protect the settlement from predators.

The hidden cove and village cannot be seen from the river, though occasionally the sound of trees falling in the forest can be heard. The soldiers will attack strangers on sight, attempting to capture or kill them. If the militiamen can take the intruders alive, they will transport them via cargo barge back to Gloriosus and hand them over to the king, who will decide their fate.

RENEGALS

The Y-shaped range of tall mountains that trisects the continent is called the Renegals. Most of these mountains rise at steep angles, making climbing very hazardous. The slopes are difficult enough to negotiate when the mountains are stable, but some of the peaks are still active volcanos. These may erupt at any time, spewing forth hot lava and shifting the ground for miles around as though an earthquake were in progress.

The Renegals are rich in minerals, particularly gemstones. Large deposits of obsidian lie close to the surface, and hard, sharp spikes of the black stone jut upward out of the soil on the mountainsides. The rocky outcroppings on the slopes are jagged and hard, and razor-like splinters will split off when any stress is applied. Travelers who slip and fall on a slope in the Renegals can suffer considerable damage from being flayed alive on the treacherous rocks. The Nimbassa call these mountains "Devil's Teeth."

The eastern portion of the chain, stretching from the Kurashi Desert to the Nebbi Jungle, is usually called the Wet Renegals because of the abundant rainfall and generally hospitable conditions. The east Renegals reach their highest point near the Mongu Jungle, with peaks in that area averaging about 3,050 m (10,000') above sea level.

The west Renegals, reaching from the Tungu Lowlands past the Kurashi Desert to the center of the continent, are usually called the Dry Renegals. This term literally applies only to the northern slopes beside the desert, and is entirely incorrect in the western end of the range. The mountain chain branches in the vicinity of the Omaru Lowlands, and the relatively short range there is called the Omaru Spur.

The southern arm of the range, starting at the pass dividing the east and west Rengals and extending south to the plateau (at Lake Sikabisa), is called the "Deep" Renegals. Though not as high as the peaks in the other parts of the range, these mountains are much wilder and more unpredictable. Rolling, passable sections suddenly give way to tall, jagged peaks with no easy crossings. The individual mountains are only 1,220-2,130 m (4,000'-7,000') tall, but since they rise from land already at 915-1,525 m (3,000'-5,000') above sea level, their peaks are still relatively lofty.

The Renegals are partially covered with pines and other hardy trees. There are gaps in the forest where the largest deposits of obsidian lie, for the soil does not adhere well to the smooth stone.

The creatures that inhabit these mountains are adapted for high altitudes. Besides various hardy species of birds and rodents, the only creatures that seem at home in the Renegals are the deadly nargash.

NARGASH

Rank: 600% B Rank
Health: 480% B Health
Atk: 80%
Modes: 2 claws (dagger) & 1 horn (short sword)
Res: 30%
Def: Hide = banded mail



The dreaded nargash, also called horned apes, are well adapted to life in the Renegals. The thick padding on their palms and soles gives them excellent traction on the slopes, and their heavy, matted grey fur affords protection against injury should they slip or fall on the spiky stones.

An adult nargash stands almost 2 m (6') tall and may weigh up to 680 kg (1,500 pounds). The creatures can walk upright on their stubby legs, though their long, muscular arms drag along the ground. Each nargash has a single horn protruding from its forehead and a row of quills, like those of a porcupine, running the length of its spine. Nargash horns are valued by the Nimbassa and other tribes because they are particularly suitable for use in horn magic.

The nargash are intelligent enough to make and use weapons — usually clubs made of wood or bone studded with sharp bits of raw obsidian.

MT. CUBANGA

At the juncture of the Renegals and the Omaru Spur stands Mt. Cubanga, the tallest mountain in Æsheba. It rises 5,610 m (18,410') above sea level, towering 1,525-2,440 m (5,000'-8,000') above the surrounding mountains. Cubanga is always capped with snow and ice and shrouded in clouds. All the local natives consider it an extremely holy place.

PHOENIX

Rank: 1,200% B Rank
Health: 1800% B Health
Atk: 95%,
Modes: 2 claws (two-handed sword) & 1 bite (sht. sword x 3)
Res: 10%
Def: Hide = enchanted plate
Special: Magic (GM's choice)

The phoenix, a unique bird more than 6 m (20') tall, with a 12 m (40') wingspan, makes its home atop Mt. Cubanga. Its golden head and iridescent feathers of gold, lavender, scarlet, and blue evoke the splendor of living flame.

This fabulous bird has an incredibly long lifespan, perhaps as much as twelve hundred years. When it senses the end of its long life approaching, it sets about building a huge nest of aromatic spices, such as myrrh and cinnamon. At dawn on the last day of its life, it sings its death song to the rising sun, whose rays kindle the nest into an aromatic pyre. After the nest and bird are consumed by the fire, the phoenix is magically reborn from its own ashes to start another life cycle.

The phoenix is incredibly wise, and reputedly has much knowledge to offer anyone who can speak with it. Most humans, however, are more interested in obtaining samples of its flame-hued plumage, which can be used to make powerful magic items that will bestow long life and good health on humans.

VOLCANOS

The only active volcano in the Dry Renegals is Mt. Sokoda. Its eruptions are not violent, but they occur regularly and feature lava flows of considerable magnitude. Rock spewed from this 3,050 m (10,000') peak has added substantial volume to the hills immediately east of it which, like most lava fields, are smooth and utterly devoid of life.

Mt. Zala, located near the Mongu Jungle, is usually quiet, but it has produced violent eruptions in the past. The cone of the volcano itself is at a height of 2,800 m (9,200') above sea level.

Unbeknownst to the human residents of this area, there is a huge mass of submerged magma stretching from Mt. Zala nearly to the Kurashi Desert. This hot lava could break out in the central Renegals at any time. Already steam (resulting from underground streams contacting the magma) issues forth from many cracks along the range, sometimes billowing out of caves as if produced by some huge dragon.

PTERODACTYL

Rank: 500% B Rank
Health: 400% B Health
Atk: 75%
Modes: 2 claws (short sword)
Res: 35%
Def: Hide = scale mail

The natural enemies of the nargash are the leather-winged pterodactyls that make their nests high on active volcanos. The warmth of the ground helps incubate the eggs while the parents are hunting. (This arrangement works well until the volcano erupts, burying the eggs and the nest under molten lava.)

These prehistoric flyers are not nearly as plentiful as they once were, primarily because the nargash consider their eggs quite delicious. The awesome pterodactyls are capable of devouring a nargash in one bite. A few of the huge flyers have been captured or killed outright in battle, but no one has yet succeeded in taming one.

TOMBS OF THE ANCIENTS

These tombs, located in the dry Renegals near the Kurashi Desert, are the burial places of the ancient Ægyptian rulers. Centuries ago, when the Kurashi was a fertile grassland like the the Ngati Plain, the Ægyptian race lived here in fine cities. Eventually, the encroaching desert drove the people northward, and they resettled in the Bestopa Plain, where their descendants still live today. Through the years, the remains of the old cities were buried by the desert sand. Nothing remains of that original civilization now except these tombs, which were hollowed out of a mountainside in the Dry Renegals.

The entrance to the tombs is a natural cave in the side of a cliff. Abul Essan's treasure (see page 87) is buried in the ground to the left of the entrance. The location is unmarked. The treasure cache consists of four chests containing gold, silver, gemstones, jewelry, and many other items of value. Paintings on the walls above the cache depict the brave deeds of the Ægyptian kings.

At the rear of the cave is a stone door. Runes of warning in the Ægyptian language are etched into the rock wall to warn off intruders. The seal on the door has been broken.

Anyone opening the door to the inner chamber will activate the illusion that protects the tomb. The six gold-inlaid sarcophagi in the central chamber will appear to open, and illusionary mummies wrapped in rotting bandages will step out. These images will speak a message of warning in the Ægyptian tongue, then return to their sarcophagi.

Actually, these ancient rulers are truly dead. Their bodies have been properly embalmed and will not reanimate. Inside each of the six sealed sarcophagi is a mummy. All these mummies are protected by a powerful curse — anyone who touches one will die instantly. (An avoidance roll should apply.) Bronze pots containing gems and jewels are placed around the chamber. There are ancient weapons hanging on the walls, but all of these are rusted and unusable.

There is still one active threat in the tombs, however — a powerful and malevolent Æsheban spirit of a witch man who sought to be a god. Two hundred years ago this witch, whose name was Ogou-olon, attempted to slay the rightful king with his dark powers, but was defeated. Banished from his tribe, Ogou-olon made his way into the Renegal Mountains.

The witch wandered for many days. At last, having been wounded by a nargash, he took shelter in a cave facing the Kurashi Desert. On the walls were paintings depicting people in grass skirts paying homage to a king. From these, Ogou-olon correctly deduced that this cave must lead to a royal burial place. Thinking that he had discovered spirits he could control, he broke through into the inner tombs where the dead Ægyptian monarchs slept.

Ogou-olon's presence activated the illusion. The witch could not understand the language, but he thought the images were spirits. He left to gather materials, then returned again, planning to gain control of the spirits and make them his slaves. This time he touched one of the bodies, and the death curse took effect.

But the witch's hatred was strong, and the Great Spirit chose not to reabsorb his essence. Ogou-olon is now a malevolent spirit that inhabits the inner tomb, still seeking to destroy its ancient enemies. If characters sleep in the cave, his spirit will appear to each of them in a dream as a horrid, decayed Negro with white paint on his face and body. If Ogou-olon's spirit manages to possess a character, that person will acquire the witch's powers and his ambition to return to the Zindor Plain and assume his place as king.

SOUTOUBOU JUNGLE

The Soutoubou lies between the Tungu and Omaru Lowlands along the west coast of Æsheba. North of the jungle are the bay and river called Uambo.

Although most of the Soutoubou's mass is similar to other Æsheban jungles, the growth in the western section is perverse. Most of the trees grow in a zigzag or even corkscrew formation, as though twisted by some unseen force. Many of their upper leaves are blackened or shiveled.

The local natives claim that this part

of the jungle is infested with evil spirits who are powerless to do more than warp the vegetation as long as humans stay away. In reality, the odd effect has a simple ecological explanation; the western edge of the Soutoubou is constantly subjected to sea spray. This saline assault produces a characteristic thinning of the upper branches, and severely stunts the growth of all exposed plants. Furthermore, the winds tend to remain constant in speed and direction for a time before they shift, which has caused many of the trees to grow in odd ways.

RESIDENTS

The Soutoubou region is thinly settled because of the rumors about evil jungle spirits.

PYGMIES

Two tribes of pygmies have taken advantage of the other natives' superstitious awe, and dwell undisturbed in the western Soutoubou. They number no more than fifty in all, and are a reclusive, secretive people. See page 74 for details on pygmy culture.

MUTOKE

The area around the mouth of the Uambo River is home to four tribes (some three hundred natives) of the Mutoke nation. These folk are typical of other lowland and plains tribes.

TOBARA JUNGLE

Three hundred twenty-five years ago, the Tobara was much broader, extending well into the nearby hills and nearly to Fafanga Inlet. But the first Greek colonists, led by Iklonos, cut incredible amounts of timber to build their ill-fated city and its navy. Although these depredations stopped after the colony was destroyed, the jungle never regrew, for its water sources in the nearby hills had been diverted, both by nature and by mankind. Now, only small, spindly trees grow where the mighty jungle once was. The wood of these trees is soft and prone to rot — totally unsuitable for building — so the newest set of Greek colonists has left the Tobara alone.

The city of Milios is but three days' ride from the jungle, and traffic has increased greatly in the past few years. Except for animals, however, the Tobara is uninhabited.

TUNGU LOWLANDS

The vegetation on this coastal plain consists primarily of grasses and scrub, though the Shubali River valley has some light woods. The land is fertile, and much of the area is under cultivation by the Zebia tribe (see page 96).

GBONDO BAY

Adjacent to the Tungu coastal lowlands and sheltered by the Imbondi Peninsula is Gbondo Bay. The waters of this inlet are warm and quiet, and several Zebia tribes make their homes here.

One small cove in the mainland coast near the seaward end of the bay is the preferred egg-laying site of leatherneck sea turtles. These reptiles arrive four times each year, at the midpoint of each season. The turtles are large; the length of the shell alone is typically 2 m (6'), and the flippers often span 2.4 m (8') or more. They arrive on the beach in the evenings and depart before dawn. Each lays fifty to one hundred eggs, which hatch in seven weeks. The young turtles emerge together and dash for the water, but more than 80% are usually killed and eaten by sea birds before they reach the bay. The survivors escape to the ocean, and will inevitably return years later to produce more young. Any humans or animals who attempt to raid the turtles' nests risk the wrath of the local Zebia tribes, who aid the turtles both by protecting the eggs and by harassing the predatory birds at hatching time.

Unfortunately, the unique characteristics of Gbondo Bay are threatened by the changing nature of the peninsula that shelters this cove (see below).

IMBONDI PENINSULA

This strip of sandy land is well on its way to becoming an island. Tidal erosion destroys 0.6-1 m (2'-3') of the seaward coast each *month*, and waves channeled past the island of Uma strike the base of the peninsula with great force. The leeward side of the peninsula is fixed, for the quiet waters of Gbondo Bay do not erode it significantly. In only a decade or two, the lower peninsula will be severed by the waves, and turbulent sea water will rush into the south end of the bay. The exact effect on the area is unpredictable, but the changes will be major.

FOGI & UMA

These two islands lie just off the northern Tungu coast. Fogi is a moderately fertile area that houses a complete culture. (See Snake People, below.) The isle of Uma, at the northeastern tip of Fogi, is uninhabited.

JOSS

This tiny isle is entirely alone, unaccompanied even by reefs or shallow waters, let alone other islands. It is almost entirely composed of vertical jet-black basalt columns, which are distinctively hexagonal in cross-section. Each such crystal is 1.3-2 m (4'-6') across, and projects 0.6-6 m (2-20') from the water. The whole is tilted slightly, at perhaps 5° from true vertical, angled toward the southeast. This island supports no life forms whatsoever.

An almost identical set of crystals lies beneath the waters in the Bay of Xamide, off the Batuna Plain. (See page 75 for details.)

RESIDENTS

Several tribes live within the Tungu area. The most promient of these comprise the Zebia nation, though one other notable tribe, the Snake People, lives on the isle of Fogi.

SNAKE PEOPLE

Upon the isle of Fogi dwell several tribes of natives who have strong physical and religious ties to snakes — specifically boa constrictors, which are non-poisonous. These folk worship snakes, and they are reincarnated into snake forms after death. Different tribes are affiliated with different varieties, including the sand boa, rosy boa, and (most commonly) the emerald tree boa.

Many Fogi natives can assume the forms of such snakes, though this is strictly a nocturnal activity. While the snake-form of a young Fogi native is usually no more than 1.3-1.6 m (4-5') long, an adult's form may exceed 5 m (15'). One particular tribe hereditarily produces the leaders of all the other tribes because its people can assume the forms of water boas (anacondas), which are usually 6.5-12 m (21-40') in length.

While in snake form, these folk feed on frogs, mice, rats, squirrels, and other small game. All have a singular ability to hiss quite loudly, audible to a range of 30 m (100'). This can have the effect of causing fear in listeners, resulting in paralysis (in life forms of low intelligence) or fast retreat. (Avoidance rolls should apply, but one should be made for the hiss of each snake.)

The snake-people of Fogi are not known to be frequent visitors to the

mainland, but they do in fact often journey to the Tungu region, where they spend their nights in snake form.

ZEBIA

This tribe inhabits the coastal plain northwest of Kythera. The ancestors of these people were nomads, but they settled down in permanent villages about two hundred years ago. The Zebia are not warlike, though they can hold a grudge for hundreds of years.

Zebians are short (though not as short as pygmies) and wiry, with an average height of 160 cm (63") and weight of 45 kg (100 pounds). Their skin color ranges from medium to deep brown.

The average Zebian village is a collection of grass huts erected haphazardly. Each hut is built in the shape of a half-hemisphere, with the open side facing east. The village is communally held; no one claims ownership of land or buildings. The fields and herds are also the property of all.

The society is matriarchal, and lineage is traced through the mother's side of the family to a mythical common ancestor. A three-element (evil dominant) magic system is suggested.

The Zebia have no knowledge of metal-working, so they carve stone into weapons and utensils. Even a shapeless lump of metal is a valuable commodity to them, and they eagerly trade the bright stones (raw diamonds, rubies, and sapphires) that they collect from secret caverns in the Renegal Mountains for items crafted from bronze, tin, and copper. The Greeks, naturally, take full advantage of this native ignorance, belittling the value of the stones.

WARIZI PENINSULA

The elongated bay between the Nebbi and Okoli Jungles in eastern Æsheba is called the Mucacara. It is formed by the jutting Warizi Peninsula. This fertile lowland is home to several native tribes, although predators from both jungles and the nearby Renegals present a constant problem. The large open plain east of the bay is dominated by a few tribes of Bushmen. (See page 73 for details on this culture.)

On a point just north of the mouth of the bay stands a huge and incomplete statue, nearly 25 m (80') tall. It is made of finely crafted stone blocks varying in size from 0.3 to 1 m (1' to 3') per side. Apparently abandoned during its construction, the statue depicts only the legs and lower torso of an Æsheban native. Certain ornaments at the waist and ankles indicate that the subject was probably of royal birth, but no details offer any clues as to the identity, or even the tribe, of this individual. The colossus can be climbed with relative ease, for cracks between the blocks offer good footholds.

A few sea birds have nests on the flat top of the statue, just above the waistline of the figure. These creatures will not hesitate to defend their modest realm by attacking intruders.

WESTERN ISLES

Few islands mark the western coast of Æsheba. This is due in part to the overall formation of the continental land mass; its western edge drops off sharply to reach the deep ocean bed less than 2.5 km (1 mile) offshore. The isolated isles of Joss and Gana are described briefly in the Tungu and Omaru Lowlands sections, respectively (pages 95 & 92). The only other western islands lie just west of the great Khofari Jungle.

WITBOUVLI & RUKRUK

Witbouvli is covered with light woods, stony outcroppings of no great height, and an abundance of bird life. The seaward shoals of the island are home to many shellfish, and avian scavengers feed on the harvest at low tide.

Rukruk is similar to Witbouvli in most respects, except that it is much smaller and has no trees at all.

Both of these tiny islands are uninhabited. The natives of the coastal lowlands generally avoid them, fearful of the thundering sounds that occasionally emanate from this direction. In fact, the noise is produced about ninety minutes before high tide when incoming waves enter the caves near the waterline, trapping air pockets with noisy results.

ZINDOR PLAIN

The Zindor Plain lies between the Khofari Jungle and the central Renegal Mountains. At approximately 975 m (3,200') in altitude, it is the highest plains region on the continent. The western portion slopes downward to meet the northern Khofari, which is 150 m (500') above sea level. Northern access to the Zindor is limited to a broad but desolate pass in the Renegals, opening into the eastern reaches of the Kurashi Desert. The pass to the east, through the Deep Renegals, is narrower but far more hospitable, with many creeks and abundant vegetation. Two routes depart the plain westward. One closely follows the Dry Renegals and leads to a difficult pass just east of Mt. Cubanga. The other, of course, is the man-made Æsheban Trail.

GARRISON

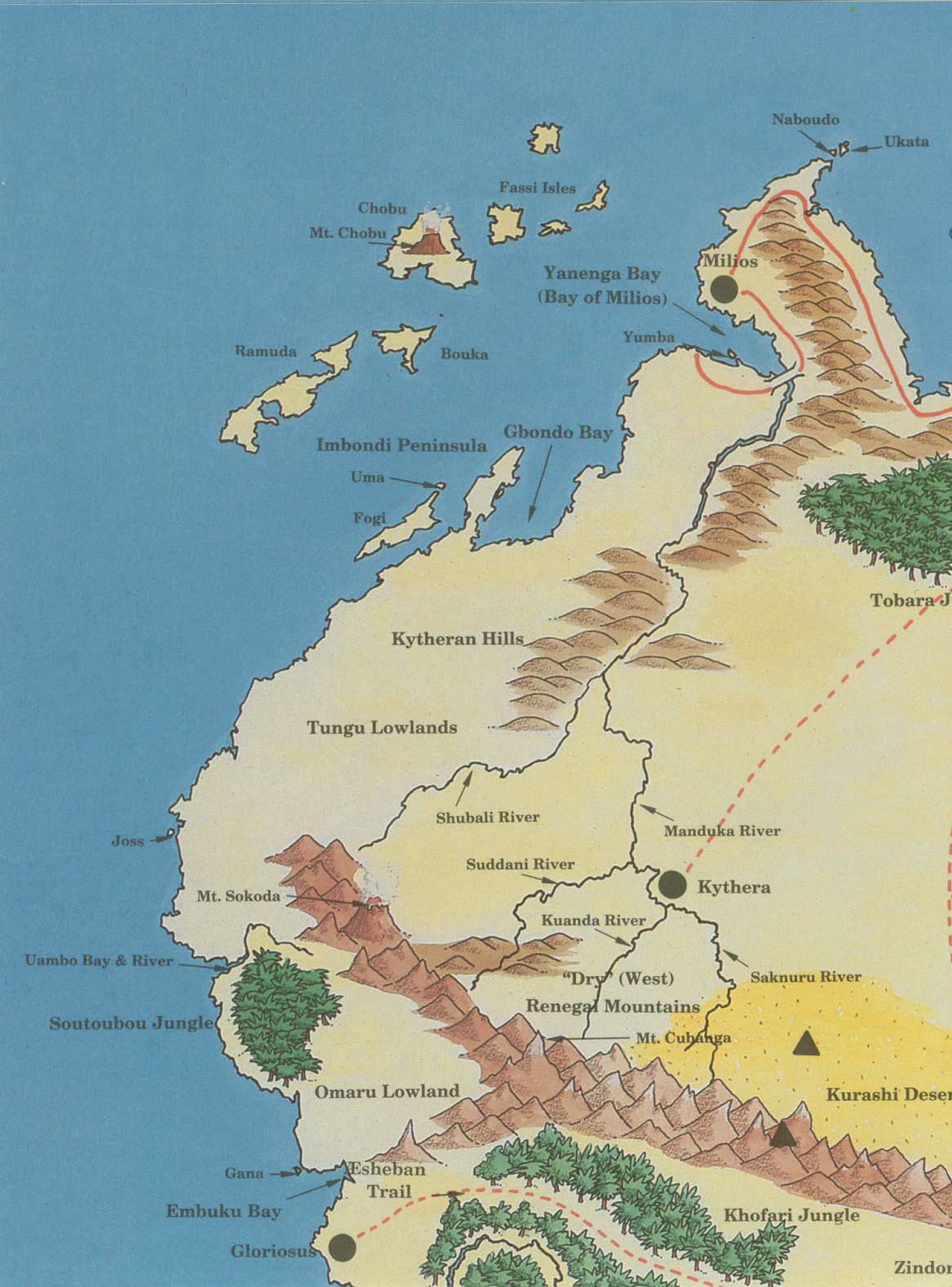
With the permission of the native king, New Grecia, Gloriosus, and Kythera have jointly established a military garrison to protect the native villages from possible bandit attacks. Sixty men are assigned here, twenty from each city. Each soldier works on a three-month cycle — one month here and then two in his home city. Antony, a weathered hoplite from Kythera, is the permanent captain of this outpost.

RESIDENTS

Several Negroid tribes have settled in the northern portion of the plain, living in grass huts clustered around a natural spring that bubbles out of the mountains. Their economy has progressed from agrarian to mercantile because of their location on a major trade route and the value of their goods. These natives trade regularly with New Grecia, Gloriosus, and Kythera, exporting ivory and tropical fruit from the Khofari, gold panned from the Owerri River, gems from the Renegals, and bronze tools, weapons, and utensils.

The tribes were already trading their goods to New Grecia and Gloriosus when the Greek colonists arrived in Æsheba. Aristo, a Greek trader from Kythera, has since taken over the crude mining operation and doubled its efficiency by organizing the work force. Natural caves have been expanded to reveal deposits of various minerals, including copper and tin ores, plus rubies and sapphires of excellent quality. The natives remove the minerals with hand tools. The stones are packed raw for shipping, while the copper and tin are smelted into bronze in crude forges. The mines are very rich, and should continue to produce for many years. Aristo takes 25% of the revenue from the sales, distributing the rest to the natives.

Caravans moving along the Æsheban Trail between New Grecia and Gloriosus must come through the native settlement anyway, so it is no problem for them to stop and pick up consignments of native goods. To ship merchandise to Kythera, Aristo loads the goods onto mountain ponies for the journey over the Renegals to the source of the Kuanda. There, the goods are placed on cargo barges and sent downriver.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Owerri River
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Witbouvli
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Lunka River
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Awwa
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Gwalo Plain
Botshari Desert
Itimba Rang
Fou
Cape Town
Cape Loba
Bunzi
Yelbawa
Town or City
Other Important Feature
Trail & Road
Bridge
Jungle
Hills
Mountain & Volcano


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New Grecia
River Faranhu
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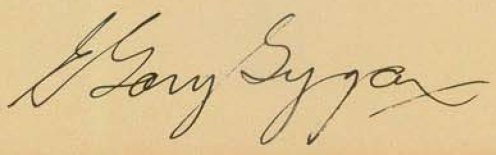

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