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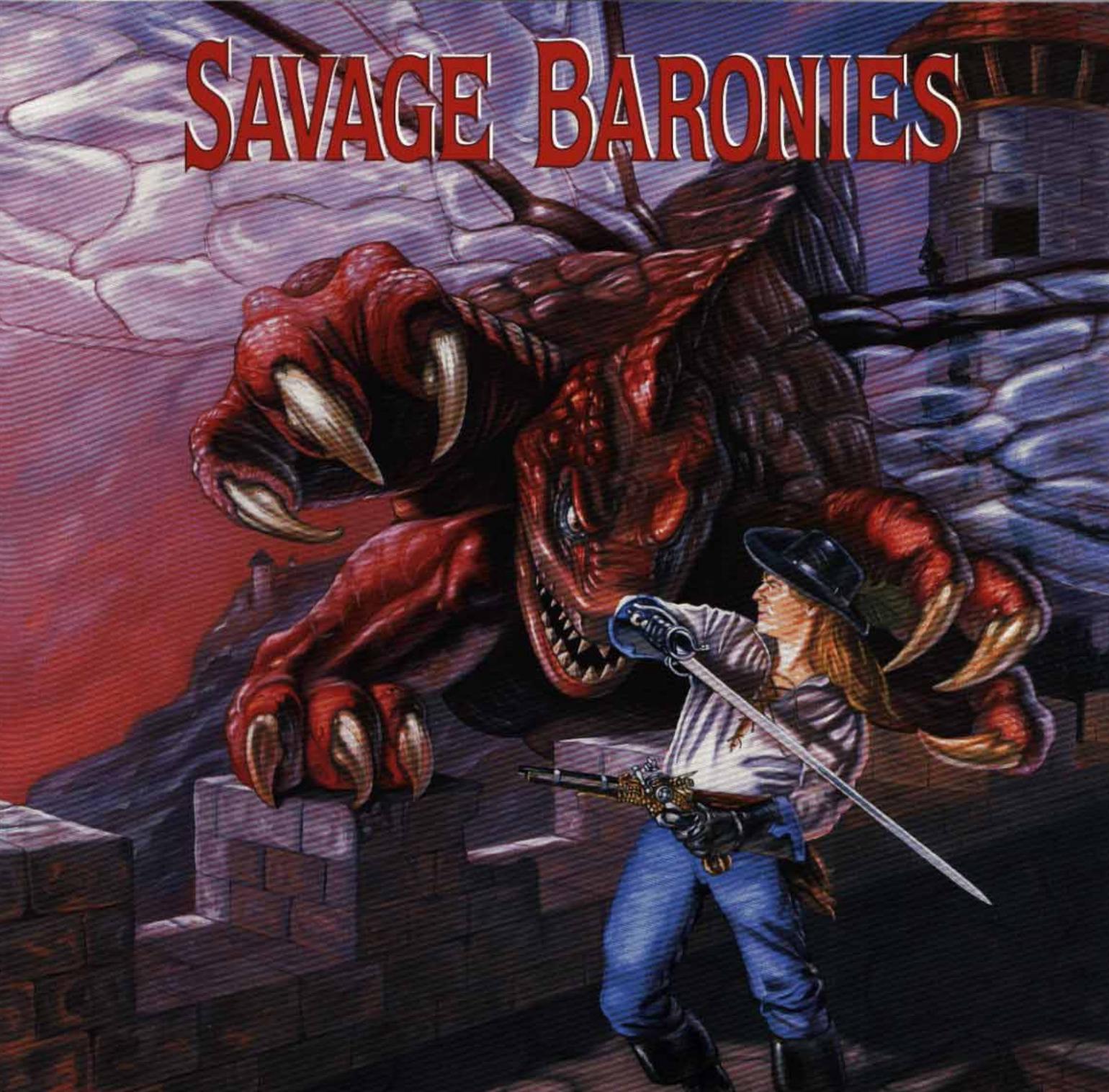
SAVAGE BARON

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SAVAGE BARONIES



Book I: The Savage Baronies

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

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Savage Baronies

Book I: The Savage Baronies

Designed by Tim Beach
Original Creation by Bruce Heard
Edited by Jonatha Ariadne Caspian
Musical Advice by Ky Hascall
Cover Art by Allen Pollack
Original Cover and Model Concept by Paul Jaquays
Model Construction by Henry Higginbotham
Interior Illustrations by Randy Post and Dee Barnett
Cartography by David C. Sutherland III
Graphic Design by Dee Barnett
Typography and Production by Nancy J. Kerkstra

Thanks to the following, for ideas, feedback, and support:
David Gross, Andria Hayday, Tim Brown, Lester Smith,
Angela Clay, Colin McComb, Rich Baker, Sue Weinlein,
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TSR, Inc.
201 Sheridan Springs Road
Lake Geneva
WI 53147
U.S.A.



TSR Ltd.
120 Church End
Cherry Hinton
Cambridge, CB1 3LB
United Kingdom

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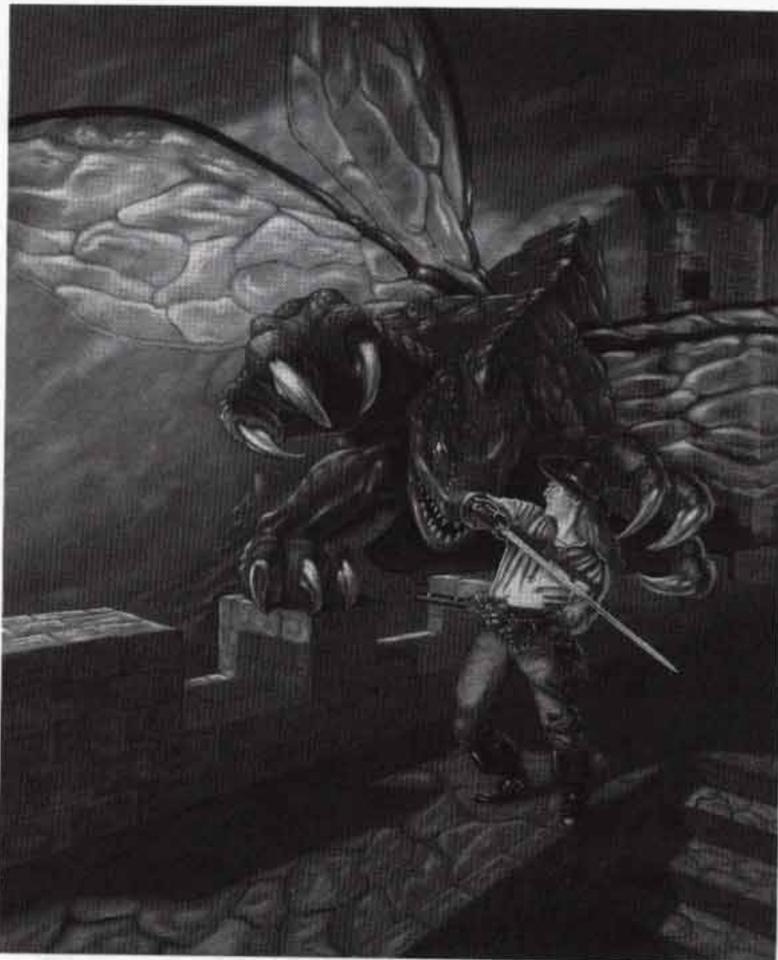
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Savage Baronies

By Tim Beach



Book I: The Savage Baronies

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INTRODUCTION

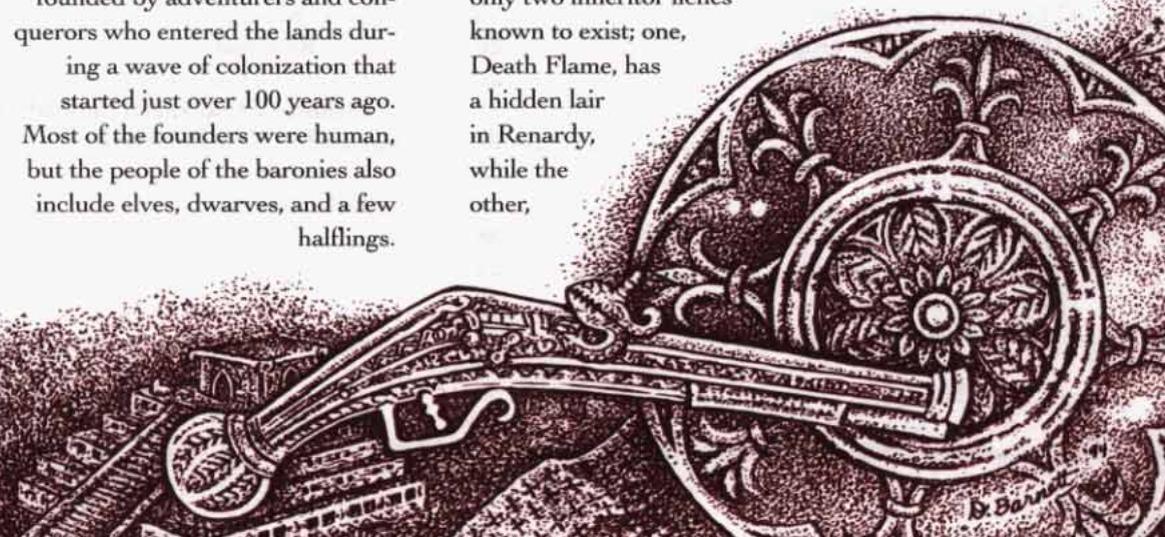
This material supplements the RED STEEL™ campaign set (stock number 2504), which describes a cursed setting known as the Savage Coast. The information contained herein is written for use with the RED STEEL campaign, and makes many references to that source, which offers details about the land's curse, the new player character races and kits of the region, and the special equipment of the Savage Coast. *The Savage Baronies* details the homelands of most humans of the Savage Coast, lands in which many adventures begin, from their people and governments to their international relations and how they are affected by the Red Curse. The Savage Baronies are nine small, independent nations that occupy the eastern reaches of the Savage Coast, on the western shores of the Gulf of Hule. None of the baronies is much more than a century old; they were founded by adventurers and conquerors who entered the lands during a wave of colonization that started just over 100 years ago. Most of the founders were human, but the people of the baronies also include elves, dwarves, and a few halflings.

The introduction gives an overview of the peoples of the Savage Baronies and the customs and prejudices they observe, their treatment of the Red Curse and other threats, and their general environment.

Chapter One gives a comprehensive history of the region. The next few chapters describe each of the baronies in detail. Of the nine small states, six are coastal nations, while three are landlocked. Chapter Two discusses the strongest sea powers among the baronies, Vilaverde and Texeiras.

Chapter Three discusses Narvaez and Torreón, lands of mercenaries, which supply soldiers for hire to many of the nations of the Savage Coast. The next chapter describes three "enlightened" states, those baronies that are least repressive and most advanced: Almarrón, Gargoña, and Saragón. The fifth chapter covers the two remaining baronies, Guadalante and Cimmaron, homes of the Gauchos.

The sourcebook ends with a short appendix, which offers two new monsters unique to the Savage Coast. These creatures are the cursed one and the inheritor lich. Cursed ones are found more often in the Savage Baronies than elsewhere on the Savage Coast. There are only two inheritor liches known to exist; one, Death Flame, has a hidden lair in Renardy, while the other,



Doomrider, is said to ride through the Savage Baronies. Both are formidable enemies for any group of player characters.

The other booklet in this set is an adventure, *Divided We Fall*. In it, adventurers are asked to stop an invasion. The lands of the Red Curse await brave individuals willing to bring hope to a sundered land.

People of the Savage Baronies

The vast majority of the inhabitants of the Savage Baronies are humans, descended primarily from Ispans who colonized the area a century ago. (Over time, the Ispan colonists split into two groups, Verdans and Espans. The vowel shift delineates the "birth" of a distinct cultural group.) Natives, of Oltec descent with strains of Nithian and Traladaran ancestry, have also entered the mix. Some natives have remained isolated, but the majority have intermarried with Ispans.

In addition, human colonists from Yavdlom have intermarried with both Ispans and natives in Vilaverde and Texeiras, while colonists from faraway Ylaruam have intermingled with the people in Saragón. These different influences have created modern baronial inhabitants who have very mixed ancestry. It is rare to find a human who is of "pure" descent from any one race. However, there are a few Ispan households, notably some of the older noble families, who have avoided interbreeding with natives for the last few generations. Some natives also consider themselves "pure," not realizing their Oltec blood was mixed long ago with Nithian.

The result of this crossbreeding? Humans of the Savage Baronies tend to be moderately dark-skinned, and red overtones caused by the Red Curse are very common in the baronies. Most humans have straight, black or deep red hair.

Besides humans, there are also elves, dwarves, and a few halflings in the Savage Baronies. Elves are most common in Torreón, where they make up a significant portion of the population, but they are also prominent in Narvaez; a few elven families are scattered throughout the other baronies. Dwarves are common in Cimmaron, but seldom found in the other baronies; a handful still live among the elves of the Montoya district in Narvaez. Halflings are more often found in Cimmaron than any other barony, but they are not common even there.

In addition, turtles live in some of the southern baronies, notably Cimmaron and, to a lesser extent, Almar-

rón and Narvaez. Other races, including lupins, rakasta, goblinoids, or lizard-kin visit throughout the baronies, but families from those races almost never settle down here. Lupins are the most frequent visitors to the region, and are common sights in Vilaverde and Texeiras. Note that Herathians, most in disguise, can be met throughout the Savage Baronies.

Prejudices

In general, the people of the baronies are tolerant of folk who are different, having come from such a diverse background themselves. The least tolerant nation is Narvaez, and there are individuals in each barony who dislike outsiders. While discrimination because of race is rare, there are prejudices among the people of the Savage Baronies.

For the most part, humans, elves, dwarves, and halflings are considered equals in the Savage Baronies. They mingle freely, and they generally get along well with one another. People from other nations might be viewed with curiosity,

but are also treated kindly. Visitors from the furred races (lupins and rakasta) are considered equals as well, though some more insular peasants, unaccustomed to seeing such folk, might view them with fear.

Goblinoids, having caused many problems for the baronies over the years, are usually met with disgust, fear, or anger. They are seldom welcome in the towns and cities of the Savage Baronies, because they usually come to raid or steal. The presence of a goblinoid, even a peaceful one, in a town might well cause a fight.

Lizard-kin and the races of the Orc's Head Peninsula are rarely seen in the Savage Baronies. On the infrequent occasions when they do visit, they are subject to close scrutiny. Their odd appearances make them a fearful sight even to the more educated people of the baronies. However, because they are an unknown quantity, individuals are usually given a chance to prove themselves and are judged on their individual merits. They remind many people of the peaceful turtles found in the southern baronies.

Turtles are a special case. While not derided because of their race, they are sometimes looked down upon because they are peasants. Like other peasants, including most natives and the poor, turtles are often characterized as slow and lazy, unwilling to work for a better life. Laziness is a great sin to Baronials, most of whom are staunch believers in the power of a person to achieve whatever he or she desires.

The attitude toward turtles typifies the wealth-related

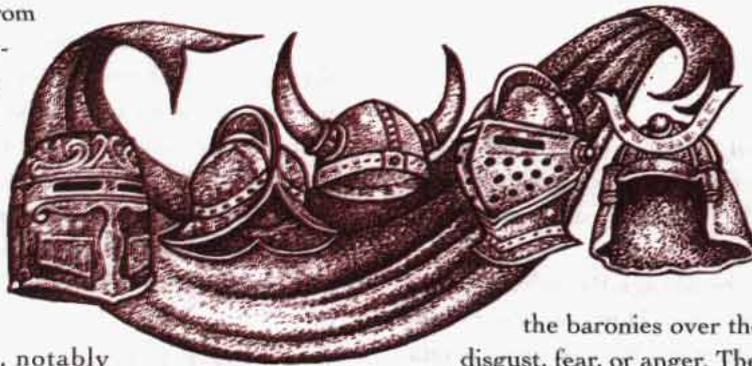


Table 0.1: Frequency of Character Type by Homeland

Character	Barony								
	Vil.	Tex.	Torr.	Narv.	Garg.	Alm.	Sar.	Guad.	Cimm.
Common Person	01-70	01-70	01-70	01-70	01-75	01-75	01-67	01-68	01-65
Warrior	71-85	71-80	71-85	71-85	76-82	76-85	68-76	69-84	66-85
Rogue	86-94	81-95	86-88	86-88	83-90	86-91	77-84	85-90	86-90
Wizard	95-97	96-98	89-92	—	91-95	92-95	85-94	91-94	91-94
Priest	98-99	99	93-96	89-98	96-98	96-99	95-98	95-99	95-98
Other ¹	00	00	97-00 ²	99-00 ³	99-00 ⁴	00	99-00 ⁴	00	99-00 ⁵

1. Psionicist (if allowed), multiclass, dual-class, and others allowed by the DM.

2. Mostly multiclass elves and half-elves.

3. Mostly dual-class humans. No psionicists, even if allowed in the campaign. Includes wizards and druids.

4. About half of these are psionicists if the class is allowed by the DM.

5. Mostly multiclass dwarves and dual-class humans.

prejudices of Baronials. Many, but not all, members of the nobility look down on those who are less fortunate. The middle class, including merchants, crafters, and adventurers, tends to view peasants with disdain. Peasants envy the wealthier folk, but often forget or repudiate their origins if they come into money, looking down on those who remain peasants.

Character Classes

To help color in the details of this portrait of Baronials, a short discussion of character types is included here. The description of each barony also includes a discussion of the characters of that land.

The majority of people in the Savage Baronies are common folk, without a character class. However, the ratio of adventurers to commoners along the Savage Coast is relatively high: perhaps one in four people has an adventuring background. The ratio in the Savage Baronies is about the same, if not a little higher.

In the baronies as a whole, warrior classes are more popular than all others; perhaps half the people with adventuring backgrounds are warriors of some kind. Rogues are also common, making up about a third of the adventurers. The remainder is split more or less evenly between wizards and priests, with a few psionicists and dual-class or multi-class characters mixed in. The approximate percentage breakdown for each barony is shown in Table 0.1.

The Swashbuckler is the most common character kit in the Savage Baronies. Baronial culture is typified by the hot-blooded, dashing, independent character armed with rapier and rapier wit. Most often found in Almarrón and Gargaña, swashbucklers are also relatively common in Saragón and among the seafarers of Vilaverde and Texeiras. These dashing blades are uncommon in Torreón and Narvaez, and rare in Guadalante. Swashbucklers can be encountered as wanderers, as special army units, and as pirates.

Local Heroes are also common in the baronies, and Inheritors are more often encountered in the baronies than anywhere else. Nobles are found in Vilaverde, Texeiras, Guadalante, Narvaez, and Saragón; they are uncommon in Cimmarron and Torreón, rare in Gargaña, and all but nonexistent in Almarrón.

Warrior types include Gauchos, common in Guadalante and Cimmarron; Honorbound, usually duelists, encountered throughout the baronies, but especially in Cimmarron; Myrmidons, prevalent in Torreón and Narvaez; and Defenders, who are uncommon in most baronies and very rare in Narvaez. The Militant wizard kit and the War Priest kit are both common for characters of those classes. Most rogues of the baronies are Swashbucklers, though some are Local Heroes, Scouts, or Bandits.

Conventions

Despite cultural differences, the Savage Baronies have many commonalities, ranging from language to dueling conventions. Even in the things they have in common, Baronials compete; inhabitants of each land believe that their accent or dialect is more pleasing than others, that their variations of the dueling rules are more noble, that their coinage is better. The following text points out many similarities, to which few Baronials willingly admit.

Clothing

The people of the Savage Baronies usually wear simple, light, cotton clothing, though suede and leather are popular among the middle and upper classes, and especially with Gauchos and Swashbucklers. Swashbucklers and nobles also wear silks and velvets. Even the poorest people tend to wear at least one brightly-colored item of clothing, and Swashbucklers are often positively vibrant in appearance.

Clothing is a status symbol among adventurers and the upper classes, and good taste in dress is considered a virtue in baronial society. It is not unusual for an adventurer to carry spare clothing, for occasions when he or she wants to impress someone.

Languages

The common tongue is used by a majority of the people in the Savage Baronies, as well as in other places, like the city-states, Robrenn, Eusdria, Renardy, and Herath; it is known by traders and travelers in southern Hule and the northern settlements of Yavdlom, as well as among turtles and in Belayne. The other peoples of the Savage Coast and surrounding areas seldom speak common. Even in areas where the common tongue is widely used, the common folk often speak another language.

Commoners in Vilaverde and Texeiras speak Verdan, while Espa is used by most people in the other Savage Baronies (except Cimmaron). Espa and Verdan have about a 50% commonality with common, and with each other; a speaker of Espa understands about half the speech of someone speaking Verdan or common. The DM might allow a character who knows one of the three languages to acquire both the others with the expenditure of only one proficiency slot. Renardois, the language of upper class lupins of Renardy, has about a 25% commonality with each Espa, Verdan, and common, so someone who speaks one of or more of those three languages can understand about a quarter of what someone says in Renardois.

Though most demihuman languages are not used on the Savage Coast, elvish is standard among the upper classes of Torreón, where it is considered the language of diplomacy, etiquette, and romance. Both human and elven nobles of Torreón speak elvish, as do any who wish to impress those nobles. While nearly all demihumans have been fully integrated into human culture, it is not impossible to find isolated individuals who know their ancient racial tongue. For example, some elves and dwarves of the Montoya district in Narvaez still use the old tongues.

Thyatian (common) script is used for common, Espa, Verdan, elvish, and many other languages of the coast, including Renardois. While there are slight variations in script according to the language, such as accent marks and other pronunciation guides, the letters of common script are easily deciphered, even though the words they spell may not be. The commonality of languages applies to this written word as well; for example, someone who can read common can pick through about half of a text written in Verdan.

Pronunciation

Though there are differences, the languages of the Savage Baronies are based on real-world Spanish and Portuguese. Since these languages may be unfamiliar to the reader, a pronunciation guide is included here.

In general, the vowels of these languages are pronounced in the Latin style, as follows:

- a *ab* as in father.
- e *eb* as in pet. (ranging to *ay* as in fray).
- i *ee* as in clean (sometimes *ib* as in hit).
- o *o* as in boat.
- u *oo* as in boot.

When two vowels appear together, they are often rolled together. For example, the correct pronunciation of Narvaez is *Nabr-vab-ayz*. Said quickly, however, it sounds more like *nabr-vize*, the last syllable rhyming with *vize*. The combination “*ão*” generally appears together, and is pronounced with a final nasal sound: *ab-obn*.

As for consonants, the letter “*j*” is almost always pronounced in the same way as the letter “*h*,” but possibly a bit more forcefully. The symbol “*ñ*” is pronounced almost like “*ny*,” so that *señor* is pronounced almost like *sen-yor*. Finally, the “*r*” is often lightly trilled. The symbol “*ç*” is approximated by “*ts*,” so *Leãoça* is pronounced *Leb-ab-OH-tsa*.

These pronunciations are approximate. The actual sounds tend to be more elegant than these guidelines might lead one to believe. Readers are encouraged to listen to native speakers for true pronunciations.

Nomenclature

As astute readers have already noticed, when someone or something comes from one of the Savage Baronies, it is referred to as “baronial.” For example, a “baronial long sword” is a long sword made in one of the nine states; a “Baronial” is any person from one of these small nations. The people of the baronies are often referred to as *Los Guardianos*, “the Guardians,” because they defend the Savage Coast from Hule and other powers. There are also other classifications that refer to smaller groups of people or things.

People are sometimes referred to according to the language they speak. Inhabitants of Vilaverde and Texeiras, who speak Verdan as a native language, are sometimes referred to as *Verdans*. Individuals from the other Savage Baronies are sometimes called *Espans*, because of their native language. Note that these terms generally apply only to humans, but are sometimes used to identify an elf, dwarf, or halfling from one of the baronies (as in “I was robbed by an Espan elf”).

Each nation also has ways to refer to the people and items from there. Those from Texeiras are called “*Texeiran*,” while

those from Vilaverde are known as "Vilaverdan." Since the cultures of these two states are so closely related, items as well as people are sometimes called "Verdan," especially when their exact origins are unknown. Texeirans are more easily offended on this score, because the word Verdan is too similar to Vilaverdan. The people of Texeiras prefer to be called Texeirans instead of Verdans, and prefer the same for items of their manufacture—and woe betide the fool who refers to a Texeiran settlement as a "Verdan colony."

The other baronies have adjectival forms of their names; some have risen more from convention than from linguistic logic. People from outside the baronies sometimes refer to items from the Espan-speaking states as Espan; Baronials seldom do this. Adjectival forms for individual states follow:

Torreón: Torreóner
 Narvaez: Narvaezan
 Almarrón: Almarróñan
 Gargoña: Gargoñan
 Saragón: Saragóner
 Cimmaron: Cimmaron
 Guadalante: Guadalantan

Examples include "That is a fine Cimmaron wheel lock," "I was ambushed by Cimmarrons," and "We hired Torreóner mercenaries."

In the baronies, the translations of place names seldom sound as romantic as the names themselves. For example, while "Serra Sanguinea" translates as the still-interesting "Bleeding Mountains," "Mina do Sul" has the descriptive, but rather boring, translation "South Mine." Most place names in the baronies are descriptive, and refer to something commonly seen in that area, or sometimes just to the first thing an explorer noticed when he or she arrived there.

Like place names, personal names are often descriptive, and it is not unusual for Baronials to use nicknames as well. For example, the literal translation of "Miguel Hernando de Montoya" is "Miguel Hernando, of the Montoya district." The ruler of Vilaverde is Jorge o Temerário, or "Jorge the Intrepid." Many names refer to an individual's home, while others declare some facet of personality.

Money

The people of the Savage Baronies use the same monetary standard as presented in the *Player's Handbook* (unless the Savage Coast is placed into a world with a different standard). Except for Guadalante, Texeiras, and Vilaverde, each barony mints its own coinage, but sizes are reasonably similar, so a Cimmaron copper piece is worth the same as a Torreóner copper piece.

A copper piece is commonly known as a *centa*. A silver piece is a *dies* (*dee-EHS*). The uncommon electrum piece is referred to as a *medio*, while a gold piece is called an *oro*. The rare platinum piece (minted only in Cimmaron or outside the baronies) is called a *real* (*ray-AHL*).

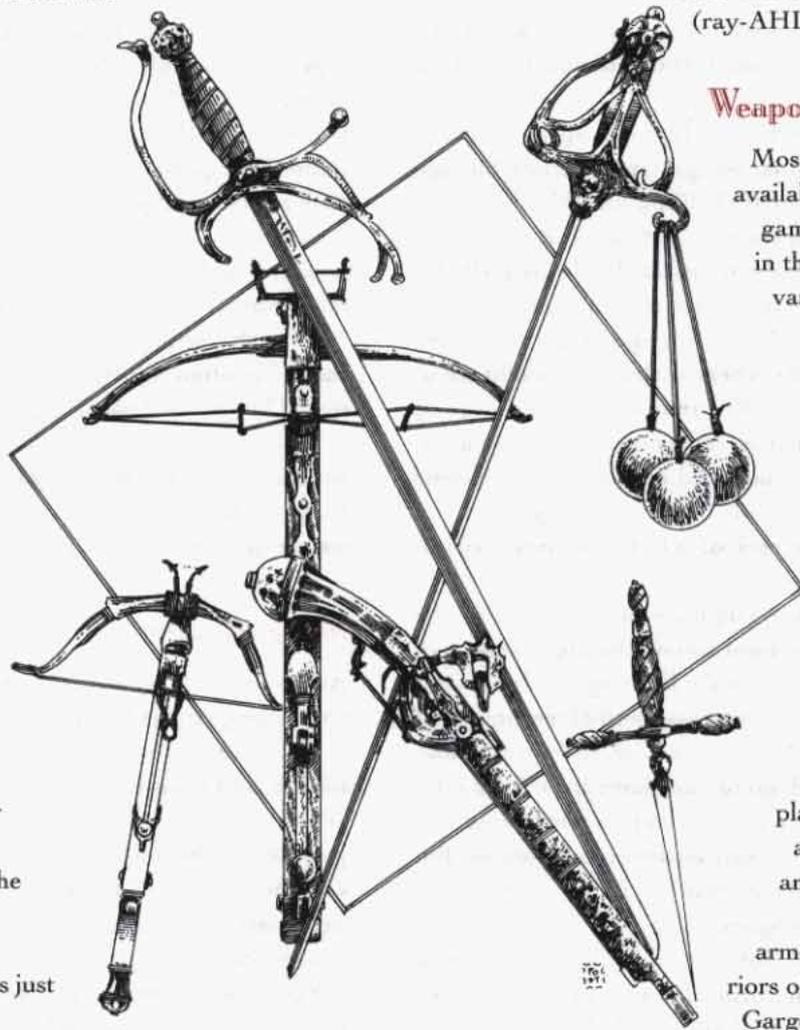
Weapons and Equipment

Most equipment and weapons available in a standard AD&D® game campaign can be found in the Savage Baronies. Items vary in popularity, however, depending on the exact barony.

For example, plate mail is reasonably common in Narvaez, and is found among the nobility in Torreón, but it is rare in the other baronies, even among the nobility. Field plate and full plate armor are rarely seen in the baronies, though a few Narvaezan nobles own suits of full plate. Chain mail, ring mail, and scale mail are popular among mercenaries of Narvaez and Torreón; these armors are also worn by warriors of Almarrón, Saragón, and Gargoña. Leather and studded

leather armor are the types most likely to be found in Vilaverde, Texeiras, Cimmaron, and Guadalante; heavier armors are avoided by seafarers of the sea powers, while in the homes of the gauchos, heavier armors are avoided by mounted warriors.

Heavy armors are also avoided in Cimmaron because firearms are common, and their impact negates the benefits of armor. Cimmaron County is known for making and



exporting *smoke powder* and wheel-lock pistols. These weapons are frequently seen in Cimmaron, and less commonly carried in Guadalante, Vilaverde, Texeiras, and the nation of Renardy. Firearms are rare in the other baronies and in the other nations of the Savage Coast.

The development of firearms has not diminished the popularity of other missile weapons. Hand crossbows are popular among the upper classes in Almarrón, Saragón, and Gargoña; because hand crossbows are reasonably common in the baronies, one can be purchased there for only 40 oros (gold pieces), rather than 300 gold pieces as listed in the *Player's Handbook*. Likewise, quarrels for a hand crossbow can be purchased for one dies (silver piece) each.

Larger crossbows, both light and heavy, are popular among the mercenaries of Narvaez and Torreón, the militias of Almarrón, Saragón, and Gargoña, and among the seafarers of Vilaverde and Texeiras. Short bows are popular with peasants throughout the baronies, and long bows with adventurers.

Gauchos of the Savage Baronies swing bolas. Bolas are also used by hunters in all baronies except Vilaverde and Texeiras. A lasso is a common weapon in Cimmaron, and is also found in Guadalante, Almarrón, and Saragón.

Blades are by far the preferred melee weapons of the Savage Baronies. The rapier is the favored armament of the Swashbuckler, so it is common in Vilaverde, Texeiras, Almarrón, Saragón, and Gargoña, and less frequently seen in the other baronies (rapiers are rare in Guadalante). Sabres are also popular with Swashbucklers, as they are with Gauchos; the sabre is common in all baronies except Torreón and Narvaez. Rapiers can be fitted with basket hilts, more common to sabres; however, in the baronies, a rapier is likely to have a swept hilt, an elegant handguard with the same game effects as the basket hilt.

Swept hilts are sometimes found on short swords as well. Both short swords and long swords are common in Narvaez and Torreón. These weapons tend to have more ornate hilts and guards than their counterparts outside the baronies. It is not unusual to see a forward-angled or curved guard on a long sword.

Daggers and similar weapons are also very popular among Baronials, particularly peasants. Swashbucklers prefer such arms as second weapons, wielded in the off hand opposite a sabre or rapier; the main-gauche is a popular complement to a rapier. Gauchos like daggers because they have many uses; they even duel with daggers on occasion. Bandits like concealable knives, and daggers are affordable by peasants.

Red steel weapons are popular in the Savage Baronies; while the metal is not readily available, it is still much more common in the Savage Baronies than elsewhere. Related materials, such as *steel seed* and *smoke powder*, are common in the Savage Baronies (especially in Cimmaron County), as is *vermeil*.

Dueling

A favored activity, dueling is a popular way to settle disputes in the baronies, especially among Swashbucklers and Honorbound, and to a lesser extent, among Gauchos, nobles, and peasants. While practised in Renardy, Bellayne, Herath, and Eusdria, dueling is most common in the Savage Baronies. Several different weapons can be used in dueling, and the exact rules of a duel depend on the weapons used, local laws, and to an extent, the principals fighting. This information supplements the details given in Chapter Seven of Book Two of the RED STEEL™ campaign set.

For a duel to occur, one person must issue a challenge to another; the challenge usually includes the type of weapon to be used in the duel. Once the challenge has been issued, the other party can decline, but runs the risk of being branded a coward, something few Baronials would tolerate. If both parties agree, and there is a witness to the agreement, time and terms for the duel are set, and the duel can take place legally.

Dueling with Firearms

This is common in Cimmaron, where Honorbound, Gauchos, and commoners are known to duel with pistols. Pistol duels in Guadalante are less frequent, and usually involve Gauchos or commoners. In Vilaverde and Texeiras, duels with wheel-lock pistols are about as common as in Guadalante, but likely to occur between Swashbucklers. Firearms dueling is more rare in the other Savage Baronies, where it is usually limited to members of the nobility (since they are often the only ones who can afford wheel-lock pistols). In Torreón and Narvaez, mercenaries sometimes duel with pistols, but most prefer swords.

Because death is often unavoidable in a firearm duel, due to the heavy damage the weapons can inflict, all the Savage Baronies have laws requiring at least one witness for a firearm duel. Seconds are acceptable and encouraged; these people can serve as witnesses, and can initiate a subsequent duel if a primary participant is wounded. When a firearm duel involves at least one member of the nobility, or takes place in Torreón or Narvaez, an area must be marked for the duel. As long as participants obey the laws of dueling, neither participant is legally accountable for the wounds or death of the other participant.

The principals stand facing each other, about 10 yards apart, and begin the duel; both dueling and quick-draw proficiencies can have profound effects on a duel, as can initiative rolls. A duel officially ends when both participants have fired once. This might mean the battle is fought to the first wound, or to the death; it could even mean that a duel ends with no wounds.

Any subsequent attacks on opponents are not sanctioned by dueling laws; it is bad form to attack a wounded opponent. However, if one party is wounded, or neither party has been hit, both participants can agree to a second duel. If this is done, a second can stand in for a wounded primary, with no loss of honor for the primary.

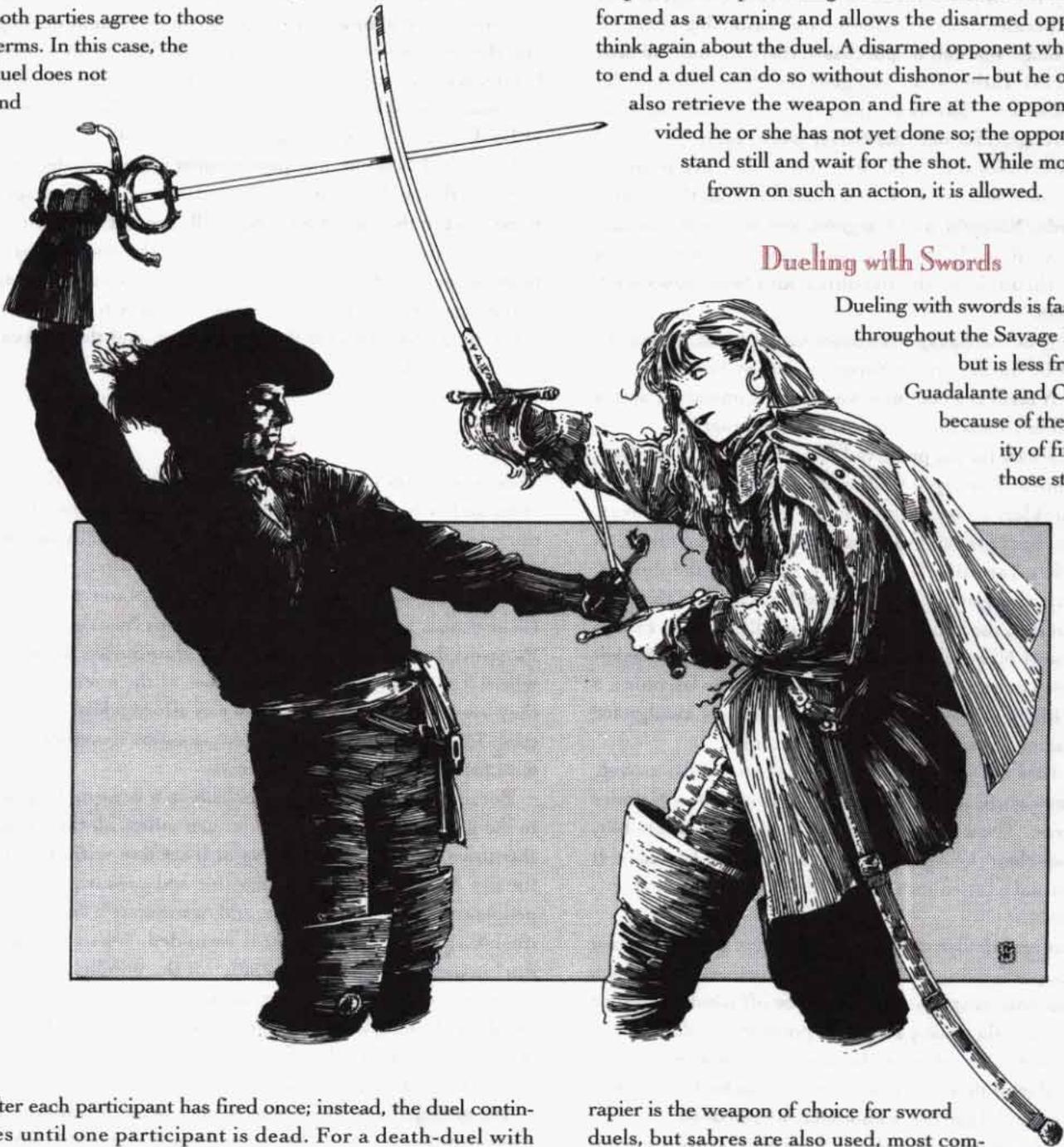
Note that in Guadalante and Cimmaron, it is legal to declare a firearm duel to the death, if both parties agree to those terms. In this case, the duel does not end

around after the first shots are fired (if both survive the initial volley). Duelists can seek cover or move closer, but must attack only by firing pistols.

In firearm duels, a participant can make a called shot to disarm an opponent. If the shot succeeds, the other duelist is disarmed. In a Cimmaron or Guadalante death duel, this can be deadly, because disarming is a legitimate action and requires no pause in the proceedings. In other nations, a disarm is performed as a warning and allows the disarmed opponent to think again about the duel. A disarmed opponent who chooses to end a duel can do so without dishonor—but he or she can also retrieve the weapon and fire at the opponent, provided he or she has not yet done so; the opponent must stand still and wait for the shot. While most people frown on such an action, it is allowed.

Dueling with Swords

Dueling with swords is fashionable throughout the Savage Baronies, but is less frequent in Guadalante and Cimmaron because of the popularity of firearms in those states. The



after each participant has fired once; instead, the duel continues until one participant is dead. For a death-duel with firearms in Cimmaron or Guadalante, each participant usually carries two or more pistols. While the initial shot must be fired from the standard facing position, since these nations do not require a marked area for the duel, participants often move

rapier is the weapon of choice for sword duels, but sabres are also used, most commonly in Vilaverde, Texeiras, and Guadalante. Long swords are used among mercenaries in Torreón and Narvaez, but are seldom seen in duels in the other baronies.

A sword duel requires a marked area, except in Vilaverde or

Texeiras, or when duelists fight aboard a ship. A marked area can be either a circle drawn in the dirt outdoors or a specific room indoors. In Texeiras and Vilaverde, duelists can define an area for the duel if they choose; this can include anything from a drawn circle to an entire town, and it is not unusual to see a duel range over great distances in these states.

Death duels cannot be declared in Almarrón, Saragón, or Gargaña, but are allowed elsewhere. Of course, any duel can result in death, regardless of whether or not the initial challenge called for those terms. A witness is necessary to confirm the proceedings if a sword duel results in death; otherwise, the winner of the duel can be considered a murderer.

Since sword duels have been known to drag on an hour or more, some duelists name a witness as a mediator; the mediator can call for regular breaks, at which time participants can be healed or replace weapons without fear of attack. In a mediated duel, breaks are typically called after every 10 minutes, and last two minutes each. Note that if a weapon snaps during fighting, the participant can still replace it, but might need to put him- or herself at risk to do so. However, because a sword duel is considered an honorable endeavor, a participant might allow his or her opponent to replace a dropped or broken weapon, out of courtesy.

Seconds are allowed in sword duels, but serve little purpose. They watch an opponent's seconds for cheating, carry replacement weapons, or heal a wounded primary. A second never replaces a primary in a sword duel. However, it is not unusual for a second to challenge someone who defeats his or her primary.

The standard procedure for a sword duel includes declaration and acceptance, after which the duelists set a time and place for the duel; once they arrive, they briefly state their grievances, salute one another, and begin to fight. However, it is not unusual for a sword duel to follow immediately after declaration and acceptance; Swashbucklers are notoriously impatient in regard to dueling.

Dueling with Daggers

This type of duel also encompasses similar weapons, including knives, main-gauches, and stiletos. Never considered by nobility, and seldom fought by Swashbucklers, dagger duels are popular among commoners of all the baronies, as well as among Gauchos. An Honorbound forced to duel a peasant likely uses a dagger out of courtesy.

Dagger duels seldom follow general dueling procedures. For example, a dagger duel might be declared by someone pulling a dagger and threatening an opponent; if the opponent draws as well, the two fight. Crowds commonly gather around these fights, and the area of the fight might be marked by a circle of spectators. A dagger duel is usually assumed to be to the death, or until both participants agree to stop.

Treachery is frequent in dagger duels. After the duel, the law seldom becomes involved, but if it does, a witness or two usually comes forward to testify that a duel was formally declared, to the death—whether or not it really was.

Other Forms of Dueling

Generally speaking, duels in the Savage Baronies are conducted only with firearms or blades. On occasion, a character might name a hand crossbow, but he or she risks ridicule by those who favor firearms. Duels with melee weapons other than blades are simply not performed; no Baronial would accept such a duel, or even imagine suggesting it. Note that this prevents most priests from participating in weapon duels.

However, it is possible to duel by means other than weapons. For example, two people could agree to an unarmed duel, using rules for punching, wrestling, or even martial arts. Though martial arts are uncommon in the Savage Baronies, wrestling and boxing matches are not unknown. There are no laws regarding contests of this sort; participants set their own terms, but can use sword dueling rules as an example.

Duels are also possible using spells or Legacies. These contests are also left mostly to the participants. Offensive spellcasting in public is generally frowned upon in the Savage Baronies, but is illegal only in Narvaez. In spell duels, the duelists set their own rules; since spell duels are not recognized by law, participants can be held accountable for damage to people and property.

Duels with Legacies usually occur only between Inheritors. As mentioned in the description of Inheritors from the RED STEEL™ campaign set, an Inheritor can officially challenge another Inheritor. This conflict proceeds like a regular duel, but one Inheritor cannot refuse the challenge of another. Inheritors set the terms of the challenge, including time, place, length of challenge, and allowed weapons. Quite often, a challenge between Inheritors is fought using no weapons but the participants' Legacies. These challenges occur with some regularity throughout the Savage Baronies, and often draw a crowd because pyrotechnics are likely. Such challenges are supposed to follow dueling laws, with witnesses and marked areas, but since Inheritors themselves take care of those who violate the code of the challenge, all baronial governments except Narvaez ignore violations of the dueling laws between Inheritors.

Duels with Legacies are seldom fought between people who are not Inheritors. However, it can be done, and requires witnesses and a marked area for official sanction by the local government. The duel generally proceeds until death or surrender. As long as the duel has been declared and witnessed, participants are immune to prosecution for wounds or other damage inflicted, unless they damage private property or harm a nonparticipant.

The Immortals

Los Guardianos revere several Immortals, this setting's equivalent to deities. Five Immortals are venerated throughout the baronies: the Ambassador (Masauwu), the General (Thor), and the Judge (Tarastia), as well as Milan (Mealiden Starwatcher) and Valerias. Some baronies have local patrons as well.

The Ambassador is regarded as the patron of diplomats and politicians, those who seek to win by intrigue rather than by open warfare. The General, in contrast, is the patron of war, bravery, and honorable treatment of the enemy. The Judge is the representation of justice and the inspiration of duelists; she is the patron of Honorbound duelists and helps those who seek honorable vengeance.

Milan likes bold, mocking, light-spirited adventurers, and is a patron of seafarers and Swashbucklers. Valerias is dedicated to romance, passion, and emotion; she is a figure of both love and war. Valerias is a patron of Gauchos and Swashbucklers, as well as other passionate men and women; she is the inspiration for duels and wars, and represents the reason to come home. Valerias is attracted to tragic love stories.

Other Immortals of the Savage Baronies include Kagyar and Al-Kalim. Kagyar is revered in Cimmaron, where he is the patron of artifice and the master of firearms. Al-Kalim is venerated in Saragón; imported by Ylari settlers a century ago, he is the patron of scholarship, tolerance, and courage. Al-Kalim is the favorite of sages and wizards, as well as warriors who favor strategic planning.

Narvaez also reveres two Immortals, Ixion and the Inquisitor (Vanya). Ixion is the center of the Church of Narvaez; he is the sun, fire, life, power, and wisdom, and is seen as the one Immortal worthy of true veneration; religious persecution has been carried out in his name. The Inquisitor is seen as Ixion's avenging servant; she represents pride and the correctness of beliefs, seeks vengeance against those who do not follow the way of Ixion, and punishes those who stray.

In Vilaverde, Texeirias, and Torreón, the Inquisitor is revered as Faña. She represents war and pride in those states, where she is the patron of warriors and the representation of self-defense and of vindication, especially reprisals against those who deliver insults.



The Red Curse

As mentioned, the Red Curse has existed in baronial lands since well before they were the Savage Baronies, indeed, long before it was even known as the Red Curse. Until a year ago, the Red Curse was confined to a few isolated spots in the baronies: in valleys and swamps, on certain hills, in selected caverns, and even in the plains in some regions. For the most part, these cursed areas were avoided, especially by people native to the land. However, the Ispan colonists and their descendants have not avoided the curse, but have studied it.

At first, Baronials affected by the Red Curse simply suffered its effects, acquiring a Legacy and becoming Afflicted. Wizards, priests, and sages studied the affliction, but were largely unable to help its victims. Then *cinnabryl* was discovered in what would eventually become Cimmaron; years later, a smith of Torreón discovered the properties of depleted *cinnabryl*, and named the substance *red steel*.

Cinnabryl and Red Steel

For almost 80 years, *cinnabryl* has been mined in the area now known as Cimmaron County. Deposits were discovered in Terra Vermelha slightly over 40 years ago, and two mines in that region have been operated by Vilaverde for more than 10 years.

Red steel, once an extreme rarity because of the low demand for *cinnabryl*, has become much more common with the recent spread of the Red Curse. Since there are three *cinnabryl* mines in and near the Savage Baronies, that substance and its derivative *red steel* are more common in the Savage Baronies than anywhere else. In addition, the city-state of Slagovich trades *cinnabryl* to the baronies in return for *red steel* weapons.

In the baronies, most users of *cinnabryl* are nobles, merchants, mercenaries, or adventurers. The drive to obtain *cinnabryl* is a primary motivation for people to become adventurers, so they can make enough money to afford a steady supply of the metal.

Most traffic in *red steel* and *cinnabryl* is controlled by Inheritors. *Cinnabryl* is most common in Texeiras, Vilaverde, Cimmaron, and Saragón, and less likely to be found in the other baronies. *Red steel* is most common in Texeiras, Cimmaron, Saragón, Torreón, and Narvaez, less common in most of the other baronies, and rare in Guadalante. The related substance of *smoke powder* is most common in Cimmaron, somewhat less common in Guadalante, Vilaverde, and Texeiras. Narvaez and Torreón are trying to acquire large amounts of *smoke powder*, and have been experimenting with building large guns; none have yet been successful.

Inheritors

There are many Inheritors in Saragón, including the leader of the Order of Crimson. Inheritors are common throughout the other baronies as well, except for Narvaez, where they are considered outlaws. Inheritors are hated and feared by the peasants of Torreón, who blame them for keeping *cinnabryl* out of their hands, causing many of them to become Afflicted.

In other baronies, Inheritors are accepted. Many are considered heroes; others are recognized as villains. Frequently Inheritors, especially warriors, are famous in the baronies; a town enjoys claiming a heroic Inheritor as its own, for the notoriety.

The Afflicted

As mentioned, numerous Afflicted live in Torreón, where peasants are too poor to buy *cinnabryl*. Most of these Afflicted have never used *cinnabryl*, so their defects are relatively mild. Afflicted also exist among the poor of other baronies.

In Torreón and most other baronies, Afflicted live in small enclaves isolated from other people, but there are exceptions. In Torreón, many Afflicted join the ranks of mercenary units; they make an effective fighting force, with the added factor that their appearance often surprises (and sometimes disgusts) opponents. In Narvaez, there are few Afflicted, because the church distributes *cinnabryl* and *maintain* spells. Those who are Afflicted are usually moved into small camps within the towns and villages, where they are attended by clergy.

In Almarrón, Saragón, and Gargoña, the rare Afflicted are generally cared for by family or friends. However, some Afflicted cannot stand the thought of being seen by others, and run off to live solitary existences in the wilderness. It is also possible to seek a cure for Affliction in these three states, especially Saragón, but such a cure is expensive, requiring *cinnabryl*, two castings of the *remove curse* spell, and healing. In addition, the cure may not be completely effective.

All baronies except Narvaez, Almarrón, Saragón, and Gargoña have villages formed by Afflicted individuals. Very often, Afflicted are shunned; in response, many gather to build enclaves where they need only traffic among themselves. For the most part, these are squalid shacks of cast-offs and forgotten remnants, but a few are clean, well-built, and well-kept. Afflicted villages typically boast fewer than 30 people, and are located away from main roads and trails. Common folk are happy to avoid villages of the Afflicted. People in these villages seldom hold Inheritors in high regard, even Inheritors who become Afflicted.

Threats

The Savage Baronies face many threats to their continued existence, both internal and external. Most threats have been around for decades, and Baronials have established ways to deal with them. However, as evidenced by the last decade and several other incidents throughout history, there are occasional surprises that call for extraordinary measures. Most of these troubles are detailed in the RED STEEL campaign set; what follows serves as a quick reference regarding the individual threats.

Hule

The Sanctified Land, Hule, is a nation run by its clergy. The leader of Hule is the Master, a mysterious dictator who leads the nation's veneration of Bozdogan (or Loki), patron of deceit and mischief. Political intrigue within Hule often leads the Master to start an external conflict to unite his people and bring temporary stability to his nation again.

Hule is a repressive and

often aggressive state. While currently at peace with the other nations of the coast, Hule sends spies in many directions and regularly launches small plots to upset stability in foreign regimes.

The Yazak Steppes

The Yazak Steppes are home to many tribes of goblinoids, notably the so-called "great tribes." The Hupkur, composed of hobgoblins and ogres, are the strongest and best-organized tribe, but they are located far from the Savage Baronies. The Huptai, a tribe of hobgoblins and goblins, are also powerful and also far away from the baronies. A recent alliance between Dankut (orcs and trolls) and Kuttai (orcs and goblins) has many Baronials worried; the alliance is close enough to strike, and any alliance between great tribes is cause for concern, because such an alliance

is almost always a prelude to invasion. The closest great tribe to the baronies are the goblin Gosluk; members of this tribe raid into the baronies with some regularity.



The Yazi

The Yazi are goblinoids of the coastal regions. Most prominent of them, at least to observers in the Savage baronies, are the gnolls of El Grande Carrascal and goblins of the Badlands. Gnoll lands have borders with Almarrón, Saragón, Gargoña, Cimmaron, and Guadalante; these nations suffer the gnolls' presence in the region to keep their neighboring baronies from gaining territory in El Grande Carrascal. Gnolls are actually relatively civilized; they both negotiate and engage in honest trade, and they do not immediately attack humans or demihumans.

Goblins are another matter. They are warlike, but recent losses to Cimmaron and other nations keep them in line for the most part. There are occasional rumors that Badlands goblins have commerce with Gosluk of the Yazak Steppes, but the veracity of such suppositions is questionable.

Other Nations

The baronies have few problems with nations other than Hule. Of course, relations between the Savage Baronies and the city-states on the eastern Gulf of Hule are fractious, because both groups vie for control of the seas. The baronies effectively block commerce between the city-states and the rest of the coast, and pirates based in Vilaverde and Texeiras are known to raid ships from the city-states. The city-states occasionally discuss banding together to destroy the navies of the baronies. Fortunately for the baronies, the city-states are about as likely to work together as are the Savage Baronies themselves.

The baronies also trade with nations of the Savage Coast, and they maintain colonies and outposts in these distant lands. These western nations do not have effective navies, other than Renardy and Eusdria, and even those nations cannot stand against the sea wolves of Vilaverde and Texeiras. In addition, the other coastal nations depend on Texeiran and Vilaverdan shipping for much of their commerce, so they do not want to disrupt such shipping. Though there are occasional difficulties, the nations of the Savage Coast tend to be on friendly terms with the baronies.

Renardy in particular has close ties with the baronies, especially Torreón, and to a lesser extent with Almarrón, Saragón, and Gargoña. The Renardois have adopted several of the styles and conventions of Los Guardianos, from their form of government to their swashbuckling style and dueling conventions.

The nations east and south of the city-states, such as Yavdlom and distant Thyatis, are too far away to be of concern to the Savage Baronies. It is possible that Yavdlom might send more colonists or expeditions to the region, but Yavdlom is peaceful, so the possibility represents a trading opportunity more than a threat. Similarly, it is barely imaginable that ships could show up from Thyatis and try to reclaim the Savage Baronies, because the Thyatian government sent out the original expeditions more than a century ago; Narvaez might even agree to work with them. However, it is unlikely Thyatis would be willing or able to devote the time and manpower necessary to tame and reclaim the other, fiercely independent Savage Baronies.

Internal Strife

The Savage Baronies have often been their own greatest threat. Conflicts within a barony, and clashes between baronies, are all too common. Internal conflicts are discussed in the entries for each barony.

As for conflicts between baronies, Torreón has periodic disagreements with Vilaverde and Texeiras over *cinnabryl* deposits in Terra Vermelha; because Almarrón's former dictator hired Torreóner mercenaries to enforce his will, Almarrónians sneer at Torreón. Narvaez does not get along well with any other baronies, particularly Saragón, which it regards as a haven for heretics and the spawn of chaos. Narvaez also wants to compete with the Vilaverdan and Texeiran navies, which escalates tensions there.

Except for their problems with Narvaez, the sea powers get along with all the other baronies—except each other. Texeiras and Vilaverde are competitive, and their ships often come into conflict. Texeiras grants letters of marque, sanctioning privateers to prey on Vilaverdan shipping. Likewise, ships from Vilaverde attack Texeiran ships, whether they have letters of marque or not; the Vilaverdan government has been known to grant a retroactive letter of marque to captains who make port in Porto Preto after having already raided shipping for some months.

Except as mentioned, the other Savage Baronies get along with their neighbors. In particular, Gargoña maintains neutrality in most conflicts. It is not unusual for a Gargoñan delegate to the Signatory Council to be elected leader of the council.

The Environment

The Savage Baronies lie between 30° and 35° north latitude, about the same as Georgia and South Carolina in the United States of the real world. The climate is warm temperate to subtropical. Overall, this climate is favorable for human habitation. The weather is seldom harsh; it snows in the northern baronies as often as once a decade. Rains come with some frequency, though most downpours soak the coasts rather than traveling far inland. Storms are not uncommon, and the coastal baronies suffer occasional hurricanes. Flooding occurs each year with runoff from the mountains, but is seldom cause for worry.

The natural flora and fauna of the region includes those lifeforms now found in the real-world Americas, such as kudzu, tomatoes, potatoes, maize, plains grasses, deer, alligators, armadillos, prairie dogs, turkeys, and eagles. Monstrous lifeforms of the baronies include many creatures from the *MONSTROUS MANUAL™* accessory. However, there are few lycanthropes on the coast, and intelligent creatures are limited primarily to goblinoids and those races mentioned as PC races.



CHAPTER ONE

HISTORY OF THE BARONIES

To understand the diverse forces that affect the current Savage Baronies, it is helpful to learn about the history of those cultures. Several peoples have lived in the region now known as the Savage Baronies, and each has left a legacy of some kind, some through their descendants, some through their ruins and artifacts. In addition, the Red Curse has had a profound impact on the lands of the eastern Savage Coast. According to the calendar of the baronies, the current year is A.C. 1010, which is 1,010 years after the crowning of the emperor in the ancestral lands of the baronial humans.

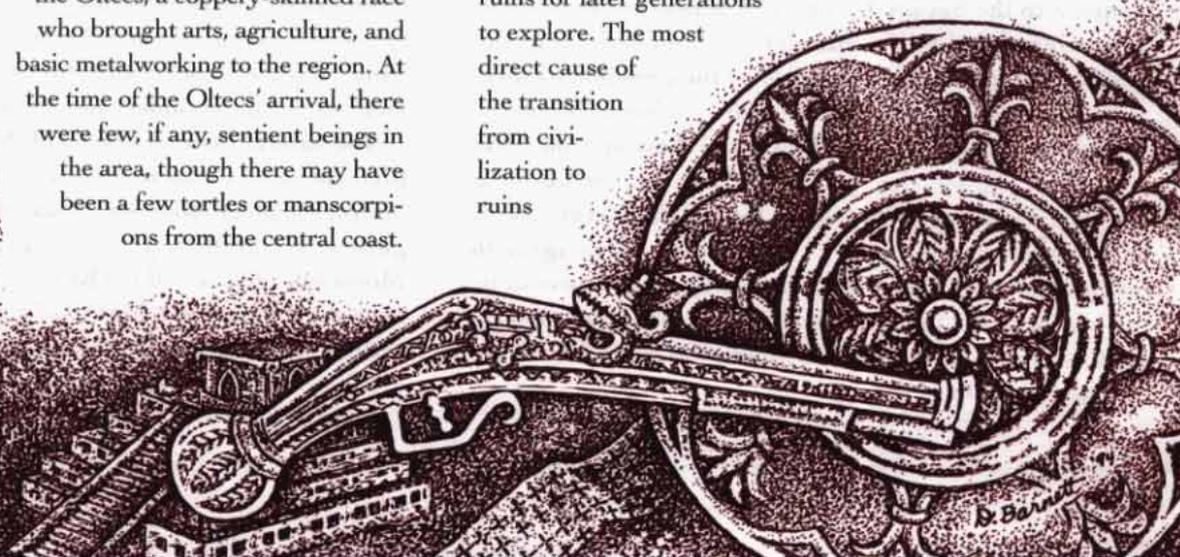
Before the Baronies

Approximately 4,400 years ago, the first humans arrived in the area that would become known as the Savage Baronies. Driven by war from their eastern homeland, these people were the Oltecs, a coppery-skinned race who brought arts, agriculture, and basic metalworking to the region. At the time of the Oltecs' arrival, there were few, if any, sentient beings in the area, though there may have been a few turtles or manscorpions from the central coast.

In any case, Oltecs quickly became dominant in the eastern portion of the Savage Coast, and established settlements along the central coast as well. Oltecs never built cities, but they did have ceremonial centers that included step pyramids, giant stone heads, and statuary. They built edifices of earth and stone. The Oltecs' largest structures were of earth; little evidence remains of their locations, except for some oddly shaped hills in the baronies. There are a few stone pyramids in existence, but most disappeared as later natives took the stones for their own construction.

About 3,300 years ago, elves arrived in the region, migrating from the Serpent Peninsula, which lies on the eastern side of the Gulf of Hule. Like the Oltecs, elves settled the eastern and central coast. Elves did not affect the existing local culture in any significant way; they built settlements near human villages, and traded with them, but did not intermingle with them.

Elves and Oltecs held sway in the area for almost a millennium. While they occasionally fought each other and faced internal squabbles, they built extensive civilizations, creating what would eventually become ruins for later generations to explore. The most direct cause of the transition from civilization to ruins



was the arrival of a horde of goblinoids from the Yazak Steppes. This occurred about 2,300 years ago.

The elves and Oltecs were decimated by the goblinoids; though they had dealt with minor raids before, mounted goblinoid hordes represented the first truly organized external threat that either elves or Oltecs of the region had ever faced. Some elves and humans remained in the area, but both races fell to savagery and avoided their once-thriving settlements.

About 17 centuries ago, another group of humans arrived in the region. These were Nithians, sent to the Savage Coast by their pharaohs to explore and colonize. These dark-haired, dusky-skinned people settled along the eastern and central coast, expanding their proud empire over the region. Nithians captured what savage tribes they met, the only remnants of the humans and elves who once dominated the area. Some savages were kept as slaves, and interbreeding was not unknown (though it was much more common between humans than between humans and elves). Along the central coast, Nithians came into conflict with manscorpions, driving all of them to the far west. Turtles were largely ignored by the Nithians, perhaps because they were still rare on the eastern coast.

Unfortunately for the Nithians, their culture was the target of the Immortal Thanatos' malicious manipulations. Thanatos maneuvered the people into conspiring against their pharaoh, and into irritating numerous Immortals. About 1,500 years ago, several Immortals banded together to destroy the Nithians, and eradicated them entirely, leaving as tangible evidence only a few pyramids and artifacts in the area. The Immortals destroyed all memory of the Nithians as well. The cultural legacy of art and philosophy that humans, elves, and turtles of the region absorbed over their contact with the vanished race is now most often believed to be Oltec, along with the pyramids. Alternate theories suggest these ruins belong to some other culture of the Savage Coast, such as wallaras (who never actually settled east of the Orc's Head Peninsula).

At the time of their destruction, the Nithians had just created a powerful magic in the region, laying the foundation for Legacies and for *cinnabryl* and *red steel*. About the same time as the eradication of the Nithians, conflicts on the Orc's

Head Peninsula caused other Immortals to take an interest in the region, and place curses upon the land and its peoples. These curses and the magic of the Nithians combined to produce the affliction known as the Red Curse. However, powerful mages in the far west were able to confine the effects of the Red Curse—to those lands that would later become known as the Savage Baronies.

Both humans and elves who remained in the region after the destruction of Nithian civilization suffered from the effects of the Red Curse. Many fled. Others discovered that the Red Curse did not exist everywhere, and avoided the cursed areas. Those who stayed were joined by communities of dwarves who migrated to the region not long after the Red Curse began. As with the elves and humans, some dwarves fell, some left, and some adapted.

Over the next few centuries, little of note happened. In the west, the mage states unified to form the nation of Herath; in the east, turtles had a brief flirtation with civilization. About 1,000 years ago, turtles built a few settlements along the eastern coast, and initiated trade with

the small dwarven colonies, and some elven and human tribes as well.

Turtle civilization fell about 900 years ago, when another horde of goblinoids swept down from the Yazak Steppes.

Dwarves, elves, and humans were also hurt by this horde, and were prompted to establish permanent (and fortified) settlements. None of these settlements were very large, but villages appeared throughout the eastern portion of the coast.

Humans of this time had mostly Oltec ancestry, with a slight Nithian influence, and were thus rather dark-skinned.

In approximately the year 450, another wave of human colonists arrived in the area; these were Traldar, descendants of Nithians and light-skinned Neather, and thus lighter-skinned than those humans already living along the Savage Coast. The Traldar formed several city-states on the eastern side of the Gulf of Hule; those settlers who traveled to the western side were mostly absorbed by the populations already living there (lightening the average westerner's skin tone). The nations of the central coast—Robrenn, Eusdria, Renardy, and Bellayne—were all founded at about this time.



Timeline

Following is a timeline of events pertinent to the Savage Baronies. Most dates are approximate.

BC 3500 In the Atruaghin Plains far to the east, the Azcans break with the Oltecs, and the two groups war.

BC 3400 To avoid the ongoing war in their homeland, some Oltecs migrate to the Savage Coast, settling the eastern and central shores. Manscorpions and turtles already live along the central coast, and aranea and wallara civilizations flourish on the western end.

BC 2500 Elves arrive in the region and settle the eastern and central Savage Coast. They live alongside, but not among, Oltecs.

BC 2000 Elven and human mages settle in the forests of the western Savage Coast, supplanting aranea; they name their land Herath. Enduks are created on the Orc's Head Peninsula and begin building the civilization of Nimmur.

BC 1700 Goblinoids settle in the Yazak Steppes.

BC 1300 Goblinoid hordes decimate elven and Oltec civilization. Those humans and elves who remain fall to a savage, semi-nomadic existence.

BC 700 Nithians arrive on the Savage Coast. They interbreed somewhat with Oltecs. Elves of the eastern coast establish settlements in and around what will eventually become Torreón and Narvaez.

BC 500 Herath wars with Wallara; manscorpions betray the enduks and take possession of Nimmur; Nithians disappear, leaving little evidence other than a few relics and pyramids. The Red Curse is created, but confined by Herathian mages to portions of the eastern Savage Coast.

BC 450 Dwarves arrive along the eastern coast and build small colonies.

BC 150 Turtle civilization rises on the central coast.

1 The first Emperor of Thyatis is crowned.

100 Goblinoid hordes sweep the coast again. Turtle civilization falls, and humans, dwarves, and elves remaining along the eastern coast are prompted to build permanent settlements.

450 Traldar arrive in the region. They establish several city-states on the eastern shores of the Gulf of Hule. Traldar who settle on the western shores are absorbed into existing human cultures descended from the Oltecs. Humans of the eastern coast begin to establish permanent villages and begin to intermingle with elves of the region.

500 Humans move into the areas that will eventually become Eusdria and Robrenn; some elves and dwarves ally with these humans. Lupins and rakasta form permanent settlements along the central Savage Coast, in lands that will eventually become Renardy and Bellayne.

The Savage Baronies

Beginning around the year AC 900, another wave of colonization came to the Savage Coast. This brought many more humans to the region, primarily a large expedition from the Thyatian Empire, far to the east. Sent by Emperor Gabrionus IV, the people who came to the Savage Coast were from a particular ethnic group among the Kerendan people of the Empire, the Ispans. Like other Kerendans, Ispans were olive-skinned, dark-haired, and fond of efficiency and fighting ability; unlike other Kerendans, Ispans also possessed a fair amount of wanderlust.

Ispans settled along the western shores of the Gulf of Hule. They founded villages, and from these, adventuring expeditions ventured inland. Some expeditions were lost, but several returned with great riches, gained from raiding ancient ruins, trading with gullible natives, or robbing horrid monsters. Many adventurers founded villages of their own, claiming domains around them; most called themselves barons, equating themselves with landholding nobles from their faraway homelands.

No less than 20 petty baronies were founded in the first two decades after the Ispans came to the Savage Coast. In most cases, the baronies absorbed natives into their cultures, intermingling local blood and philosophies with the more Thyatian culture of the coastal villages. Other colonists also arrived and intermarried with both Ispans and natives; dark-skinned humans from Yavdlom settled in what would eventually become Vilaverde and Texeiras; copper-skinned people from the faraway desert Emirates of Ylaruam settled in what would become Saragón. The Ispans eventually split into two peoples: those who called themselves Verdans, who merged with the people of Yavdlom and formed the naval powers of Vilaverde and Texeiras, and those who styled themselves Espans, who made up the other baronies. The Espans chose to differentiate their new culture from their old, colonial roots with a vowel shift from an initial "I" to initial "E"; the shift persists to this day.

The early baronies fought among themselves, and many fell. Others merged, either through conquest or through diplomacy. About 25 years ago, the baronies stabilized into those nine states currently known as the Savage Baronies. Though the modern baronies still squabble, each is sturdy enough to survive minor threats. More importantly, they usually have enough foresight to put aside their arguments and unite against major threats. However, getting them to cooperate is no easy task.

A little over 40 years ago, a few states cooperated diplomatically to avoid a war; this resulted in the Treaty of Tampicos. This famous treaty, initially signed by Torreón, Texeiras, Vilaverde, and Hule, defined mining rights in Terra Vermelha, the Red Lands. In addition, the Treaty of Tampicos covers claiming land and defining borders in general. Those who have

signed it—Hule and all baronies except Narvaez—are known as the Signatory States, and their representatives can meet in informal council to discuss disputes and other problems. While the decisions of this Signatory Council are not binding, member baronies usually obey such decisions to avoid conflict with a majority of the other baronies. Hule seldom sends delegates to conferences, and often ignores any decisions except those contained in the original Treaty of Tampicos.

The Coming of the Curse

A century ago, the Red Curse was confined to scattered areas of the eastern end of the Savage Coast. A twisted monster occasionally came scabbling or oozing out of the cursed areas, but few humanoids fell to the Red Curse, because they had learned to avoid the lands under the curse. Ispan colonists discovered the Red Curse, but, unlike earlier inhabitants, these colonists neither succumbed to nor avoided the Red Curse. Instead, they fought it and studied it, and eventually found ways to protect themselves from it.

A few people even settled in the cursed lands. While some died, others came back *changed*, many granted magical Legacies, some twisted with deformities. These individuals were studied by scholars, mages, and priests in the nascent baronies, and ways were found to slow the progress of the curse, first through spells, and then with *cinnabryl*.

About a decade ago, in response to an invasion from Hule, Los Guardianos began experimenting with *cinnabryl* and power gain, and the first vials of *crimson essence* were produced. The affliction, previously called just “the curse,” became known generally as the Red Curse, as its effects became more widely known and more people began experimenting with its power. None knew why its effects were confined only to certain regions.

Baronials were aware of the nation of mages, Herath, at the western end of the Savage Coast, but they paid little attention to it. None realized it was the mages of Herath who confined the Red Curse to its limited areas of effect. Then, about one year ago, disaster struck: magic the world over suddenly failed completely, for several days. During this time, the capitol of Herath was sacked by goblinoids, and the magical protections were destroyed. By the time magic was restored, the Red Curse had spread to cover almost the entire coastal region. People of the region know the Red Curse spread greatly during the troubles, but except for the Herathians, they do not know why; most attribute it to the wrath of the Immortals, which they also blame for the multitude of wars that have occurred over the last decade.

For the most part, the people of the Savage Baronies were able to deal with the Red Curse. They had learned enough about it to know how to protect themselves—though not all could afford to obtain *cinnabryl*. Since the spread of the Red

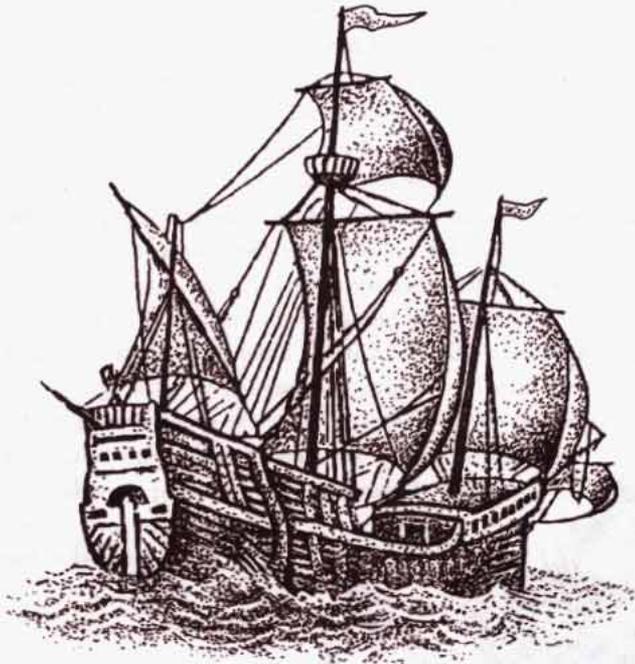
Curse, Inheritors, *red steel*, and *cinnabryl* have all become more common, particularly in the Savage Baronies. Commerce has increased in the baronies, and class stratification has become even more pronounced.



Timeline of the Savage Baronies

Dates are precise in this timeline.

900 A new wave of colonists begins to reach the eastern Savage Coast, including people from Ylaruam, Yavdlom, and the Thyatian Empire. They bring feudalism and class structure. Adventurers begin to establish domains that eventually develop into the Savage Baronies, and absorb the elven, dwarven, and human cultures already in the region. Settlers discover the Red Curse, but decide to stay anyway. A few halflings also begin to arrive on the Savage Coast, and are absorbed into local cultures.



902 The Barony of Narvaez is founded along the coast by an expedition of Ispan people from the distant Thyatian Empire. Narvaez claims a great deal of land, from the Claw Peninsula to the Bay of the Siren (Baia da Sereia), including land already occupied by human, elven, dwarven, and turtle inhabitants.

903 The Dominion of Vilaverde is founded by Ispans and people from Yavdlom.

905 Nueva Esperanza (New Hope) declares independence from Narvaez.

906 Dwarves and elves in lands claimed by Narvaez declare themselves the Barony of Montoya.

908 The State of Copetez is founded in the plains.

909 The Barony of Montejo is founded inland from Narvaez; the Dominion of Tanaka is founded by people from Yavdlom.

913 The Barony of Narvaez splits between two heirs; the northern section remains Narvaez, and the southern portion becomes the Barony of Sotto.

915 The State of Aranjuez is founded in the plains near Montejo.

916 The Barony of Cristobal is founded several miles north of Narvaez.

921 The inland State of Escudor breaks from Sotto.

926 The Barony of Rivera is founded within Sotto, causing a small civil war; Rivera achieves independence.

929 The State of Teixeiras is founded along the eastern part of the Bay of the Siren.

930 The Barony of Marino declares independence from Narvaez, claiming the western shores of the Bay of the Siren.

931 A *cinnabryl* mine is discovered near Nueva Esperanza. Sages discover its protective value when used against those affected by the Red Curse, but others discover that it harms those unaffected by the curse. *Cinnabryl* is known, but not generally coveted. At this time, depleted *cinnabryl* is discarded after use.

934 The Barony of Gargoña is founded in western Sotto; after a short civil war, Gargoña is granted independence.

935 The Barony of Quimeras declares independence from Narvaez.

936 Sotto declares war on Gargoña; after a few months, Gargoña conquers Sotto and absorbs all but the southern portion, which organizes into the State of Almarrón. The official name of the culture of all baronies except Vilaverde and Teixeiras is changed from Ispan to Espan; the language spoken is Espa.

937 Narvaez attacks Quimeras and Montoya, and reabsorbs both after a short war.

939 To encourage internal consolidation, Almarrón strikes south and takes over Nueva Esperanza and surrounding territories.

940 The Barony of Alcazar is founded near Cristobal.

941 The Barony of Torreón is founded south of Cristobal and Alcazar.

942 A human smith in Torreón experiments with depleted *cinnabryl*; she discovers its usefulness and names the substance *red steel*. A few small weapons of *red steel* are produced.

947 The State of Bigotillos is founded north of Copetez.

948 Dwarves near Nueva Esperanza begin experimenting with *steel seed* found in the local *cinnabryl* mine. When they accidentally mix it with *vermeil*, they stumble upon the formula for *smoke powder*. They begin searching for ways to use the new substance.

951 The Barony of Babosas is founded east of Vilaverde.

957 The first arquebus is constructed in Nueva Esperanza; a function for *smoke powder* has been found, but it is rarely used because of the dangers.

958 Teixeiras conquers the Barony of Marino and the Dominion of Tanaka.

962 The Barony of Los Elegidos is founded north of Torreón, Alcazar, and Cristobal.

963 Yazi gnolls attack Saragón and Aranjuez.

966 Montejo and Aranjuez unite diplomatically to form the Barony of Saragón.

967 The Barony of Morales is founded just north of Torreón, between Cristobal and Alcazar.

968 Torreón wars on its neighbors, conquering and absorbing Morales and Alcazar; Cristobal and Elegidos are weakened but do not fall. Elite Torreóner warriors use swords of *red steel*, the first recorded instance of that metal's use in a large battle.

969 Torreón discovers deposits of *cinnabryl* in Terra Vermelha, and moves to take over those lands; to forestall a possible war over mining rights, diplomats gather and form the Treaty of Tampicos, which is signed by Torreón, Vilaverde, Texeiras, and Hule.

970 Elegidos disappears without a trace.

971 Babosas is conquered and absorbed by Hule.

975 The wheel-lock pistol is developed in Nueva Esperanza. Certain leaders, including a warrior named Cimmarron, encourage the secret production of the weapon.

977 Almarrón conquers and absorbs Escudor, then turns north and initiates hostilities with Gargoña and Rivera.

978 To help defend itself from Almarrón, Rivera agrees to be absorbed into Gargoña. While Almarrón is distracted, Nueva Esperanza begins hostilities; Cimmarron's pistoleers make quite an impression.

979 The revolution in Nueva Esperanza continues, led by General Cimmarron. Almarrón and Gargoña end hostilities, and both ratify the Treaty of Tampicos.

980 Armed with a wheel-lock pistol and a *red steel* sword, General Cimmarron leads his forces to victory over troops from Almarrón at the Battle of Hondo; his followers declare him Earl Cimmarron, and Nueva Esperanza becomes the center of the newly independent Cimmarron County. Dissatisfied with recent leadership, the people of Almarrón revolt against their leader and overthrow him. Making use of old Traladaran philosophies, they establish a democracy.

981 Cristobal relinquishes claims on its holdings, except for one tower and a few square miles of land; the Lord of Torre Cristobal gives up the title "Barón" but maintains independence from other powers.

984 Saragón ratifies the Treaty of Tampicos.

985 Copetez and Bigotillos unite through marriage; the lands are merged to form the State of Guadalante. Guadalante ratifies the Treaty of Tampicos.

986 Doña Esperanza comes to power in Gargoña and leads her state into peace, beginning a policy of neutrality regarding all the other baronies.

990 Cimmarron ratifies the Treaty of Tampicos.

992 The Treaty of Cortesillas, between Guadalante and Saragón, solves the question of watering rights for cattle between the two nations.

994 Almarrón faces a time of troubles. An opportunist seizes control of the state and declares himself dictator of the nation.

997 *Cinnabryl* is discovered in Slagovich; it is mined and traded to Torreón, Texeiras, and Cimmarron for *red steel*.

999 The first vial of *crimson essence* is produced by an alchemist in Saragón. The secret spreads to a group of adventurers, who become the first of the Inheritors. Some of the Inheritors rise to power in the Brotherhood of Order and the Friends of Freedom. To balance them, other Inheritors join the Neutral Alliance.

1000 The Immortals begin a conflict that eventually begins to affect mortals throughout the world.

1001 The Inheritors face internal conflicts and reorganize the aligned societies (the Brotherhood of Order, the Neutral Alliance, and the Friends of Freedom) into the three Orders of the Inheritors (the Order of the Ruby, the Order of Crimson, and the Order of the Flame).

1005 Prompted by attacks from Bellayne, the goblinoids of the Yazak Steppes begin unifying. Robrenn attacks and irritates the Yazi goblinoids.

1005 An internal holy war begins in Narvaez. The church of Narvaez unifies the factions by providing an external enemy: the other Savage Baronies. Narvaez carries its Inquisition to the other baronies.

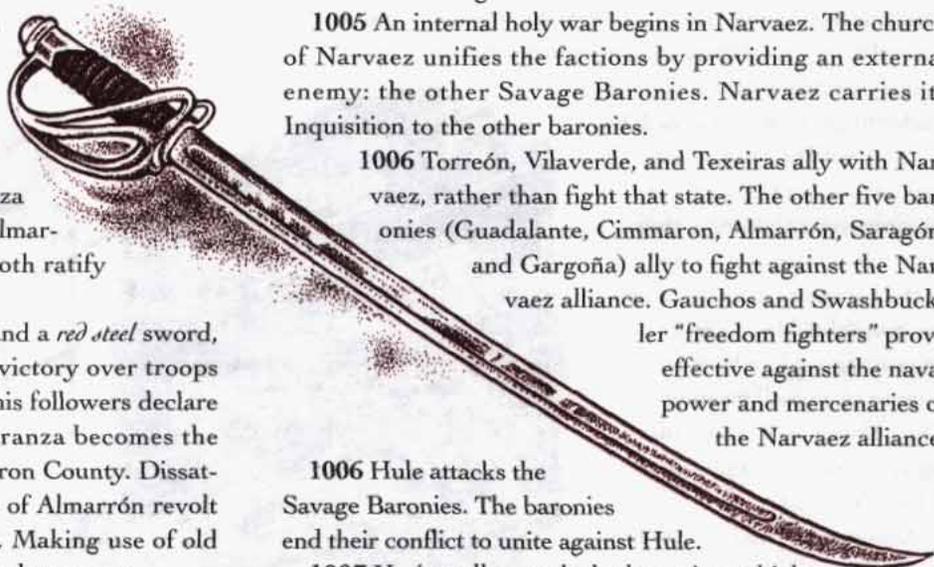
1006 Torreón, Vilaverde, and Texeiras ally with Narvaez, rather than fight that state. The other five baronies (Guadalante, Cimmarron, Almarrón, Saragón, and Gargoña) ally to fight against the Narvaez alliance. Gauchos and Swashbuckler "freedom fighters" prove effective against the naval power and mercenaries of the Narvaez alliance.

1006 Hule attacks the Savage Baronies. The baronies end their conflict to unite against Hule.

1007 Yazi gnolls attack the baronies, which have been severely weakened by previous conflicts. The Master of Hule sets a curse on his enemies, inflicting floods and other natural disasters on the Savage Baronies.

1008 The Savage Baronies again enter into border conflicts. Turtles and other peasants revolt. In Almarrón, rebels oust their dictator and install a Barón descended from their former noble rulers. The Colonial Revolt begins, and many colonies rebel against their parent states. Yazak goblinoids attack throughout the Savage Coast.

1009 Magic stops working, and Yazak goblinoids sack the distant capitol of Herath. Though magic is restored a few days later, the Red Curse has spread across the coast.



Inheritors of the baronies begin introducing *cinnabryl* throughout the coast, while taking control of most of the *cinnabryl* mines as well.

1010 The present.

Unification?

More than a few people have suggested that the problems of the Savage Baronies could be solved if they became united under one ruler. While this idea is attractive to many Baronials, including a majority of the barons, no head of state is willing to give up power.

For now, the closest thing to a unified government the baronies have is the informal Treaty of Tampicos council, the Signatory Council. In practice, this group has no real authority to make or enforce laws, and serves merely as a forum for airing arguments that could affect all the baronies if not curbed.

Each of the nine Signatory States (Hule and all the baronies except Narvaez) is allowed to send one delegate to the council, along with whatever assistants the delegate feels he or she needs. The leader of the Signatory Council is selected each time the council meets, from those delegates who attend. Typically, the selected leader is someone with experience, and someone with no vested interest in the dispute at hand. The council leader is seldom a man or woman of great charisma.

It is possible, that were a charismatic leader to arise on the council, he or she would be elected to serve many times, and actually begin to carry some authority. However, the charismatic individuals of the baronies (many of whom are Swashbucklers, a few Inheritors) seldom have an interest in council meetings. Thus, the council is an unlikely source to provide unification for the baronies.

Another potential road to unification is warfare. For decades, rulers in the Savage Baronies have considered extending their rule to adjoining areas. Several have been successful—compare the number of states that once existed to those that exist now. However, the current group of baronies has lasted for a quarter of a century, and none seem to be in danger of falling. While border wars and other difficulties occur with regularity, if such conflicts were to escalate to the point

of complete conquest, chances are other baronies would involve themselves either as mediators or reinforcements, to prevent any one state from becoming too powerful.

In addition, each of the current baronies has attained a unique cultural identity. Vilaverde is a sea power, Narvaez holds many religious fanatics, and Guadalante is home to free-spirited gauchos. Trying to bring these diverse cultures together to agree about national policy is a task for Immortals. Los Guardianos tend to be fiercely independent and patriotic, and their leaders also reflect those attitudes.

Another possible way to unify the baronies is through marriage. For example, since all of the states pass on national leadership through inheritance (except possibly Cimmaron, where the policy is under question), if heirs to two baronies were to marry, their child might inherit both baronies. Baronesa Esperanza of Gargoña has managed to marry two of her children into other ruling families, one in Narvaez and one in Saragón; while these marriages have helped her keep the peace, they have not yet provided heirs capable of ruling both states. The problems with this form of unification are 1) the prospect is risky, because someone two generations down the line might not be a capable leader for a larger nation; 2) if planned between radically different baronies, supporters of independence might assassinate potential heirs; 3) there are few heirs in the baronies, and fewer of marriageable age; and 4) the delicate diplomacy required to arrange such a marriage is difficult for the people of the baronies to master.

There are some baronies that might be able to cooperate, were events to fall into place, and who could conceivably unite. Vilaverde and Texeiras are not so different; Cimmaron and Guadalante are similar; and the three “enlightened states” of Almarón, Gargoña, and Saragón have much in common. Any of these three groupings could unify into a larger nation under the right circumstances.

To sum up, while total unification is a possibility, it is an unlikely one. If a charismatic and powerful leader were to arise among the baronies, perhaps he or she could unite two or more of the lands; if heirs married, some pairs of states might unify. However, the independence and cultural diversity of the people would likely prevent most unions from lasting for very long.





CHAPTER TWO

VILAVERDE AND TEXEIRAS

Sometimes called the Sea Powers, Vilaverde and Texeiras are the strongest naval powers on the entire Savage Coast. They are rivals who, with their strong seafaring presence, virtually control the western half of the Gulf of Hule. The two states often clash with the aggressive eastern city-states, especially Hojah and Slagovich, and to a lesser extent, Zvornik.

Like the humans of the other baronies, those in the Sea Powers are primarily Ispan descent, mingled with Oltec, and with a few traces of Nithian and Traladaran blood. In addition, the people of the Sea Powers have interbred for decades with settlers from Yavdlom. This peaceful nation, located south of the rain forest on the Serpent Peninsula, is inhabited by tall, ebony-skinned humans with traces of elven blood. The people of Yavdlom are governed by a divinity, a group of seers and prophets who guide the nation, while nobles enforce the various laws of the land. Though the peaceful aspects of Yavdlom culture have done little to cool the hot blood of Guardianos with whom they have intermarried, the present culture of the Sea Powers does revere seers and prophets.

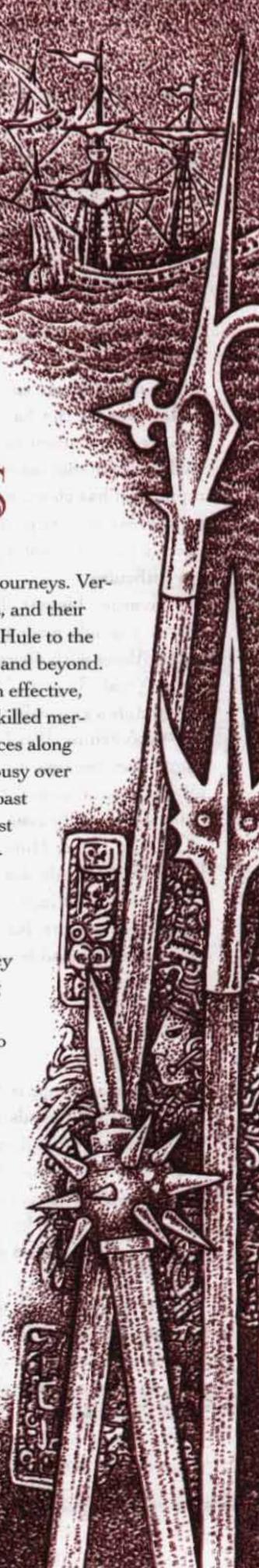
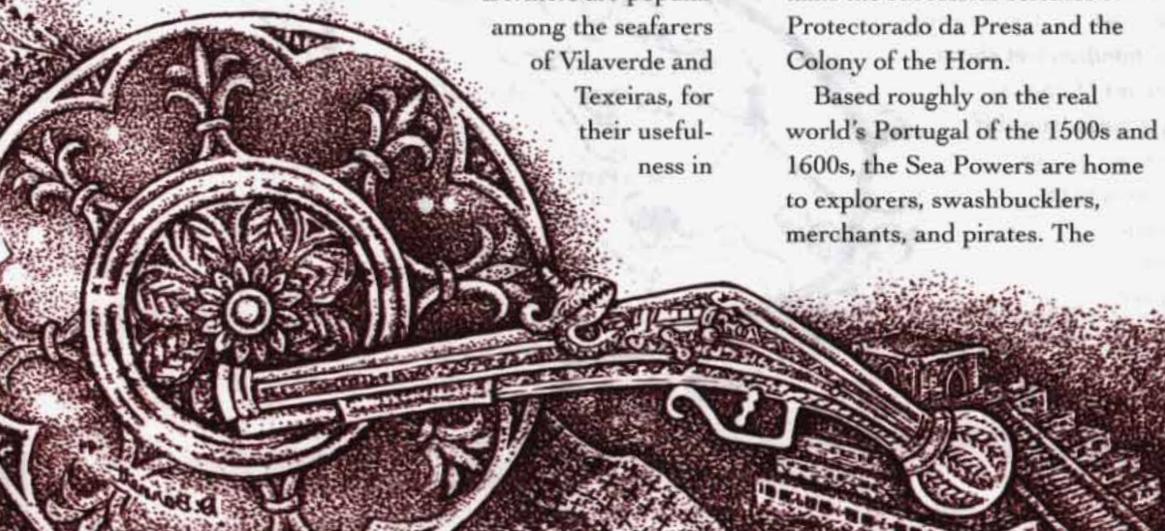
Diviners are popular among the seafarers of Vilaverde and Texeiras, for their usefulness in

predicting the weather on seafaring journeys. Verdans make many long ocean voyages, and their ships have traveled from the Gulf of Hule to the far side of the Orc's Head Peninsula and beyond.

The Sea Powers, besides having an effective, ocean-based fighting force, are also skilled merchants; they carry goods to many places along the Savage Coast. Despite some jealousy over the Sea Powers' control of Savage Coast shipping, the other nations of the coast value the transportation, communication, and commerce provided by the ships of the Sea Powers.

In addition, Vilaverde and Texeiras are known for the colonies they have started in various places along the coast. Vilaverde's colonies include Terra Leãoça and O Bastião das Tartarugas; the nation recently granted independence to its colony of Porto Escorpião. Texeiras maintains the successful colonies of Protectorado da Presa and the Colony of the Horn.

Based roughly on the real world's Portugal of the 1500s and 1600s, the Sea Powers are home to explorers, swashbucklers, merchants, and pirates. The



people of Vilaverde and Texeiras are a proud folk who form a distinctive political unit among the Savage Baronies; when they ally, none can stand against them at sea. Because few Savage Coast nations are without ports (Saragón and Guadalante), the threat of naval retaliation is enough to keep other nations from molesting the land holdings of Vilaverde and Texeiras. Both countries prefer the title "Barón" for their lords.

Domínio de Vilaverde

Vilaverde is home to a high-spirited people who travel widely across the Savage Coast. Among other nations, Vilaverde is known as a haven for pirates and outlaws, a lawless realm that cares little for civilized society. While this reputation has elements of truth, the dominion is not quite as lawless as it is painted. Its independent people are fiercely patriotic, willing to unify to defend Vilaverde from any difficulty.

Vilaverde's biggest challenge is the defense of its eastern border, the only place Hule has direct contact with the baronies. Along with Terra Vermelha and the eastern reaches of the Yazak Steppes, Vilaverde might seem a flimsy obstacle to Hule's expansion into baronial territories. However, the Vilaverdan fleet is an effective deterrent to Hule's aggression, because it could easily destroy Hule's navy and all its coastal assets. Four years ago, Huleans met and defeated a hastily assembled Vilaverdan force at the Battle of Burdūr; before Hule could take advantage of the victory, however, Vilaverde destroyed most of Hule's shipping ability in two battles in the inlet near Karakoy, and also sacked several settlements. Rather than risk its other coastal properties, which it had believed well-defended, Hule withdrew from Vilaverde.

The Nation

Vilaverde's landscape is dominated by grasslands, broken by cultivated farmlands, ragged forests, and a few hills. The nation is geographically divided down the center; a few miles inland from the coast, the land sweeps upward to a plateau several hundred feet above sea level. This slope, known as O Grande Escarpament, is essentially a miles-long cliff edge. The cliff is broken in many places, with gentle slopes leading down to the coastal lowlands; these breaks allows ready travel from lowlands to highlands in every sector of Vilaverde.

Vilaverde has existed for more than a century. Its bor-

ders have been relatively constant during that time, with occasional minor setbacks and conquests. Vilaverde has never absorbed or conquered another state, nor has another state ever owned, absorbed, or broken away from Vilaverde.

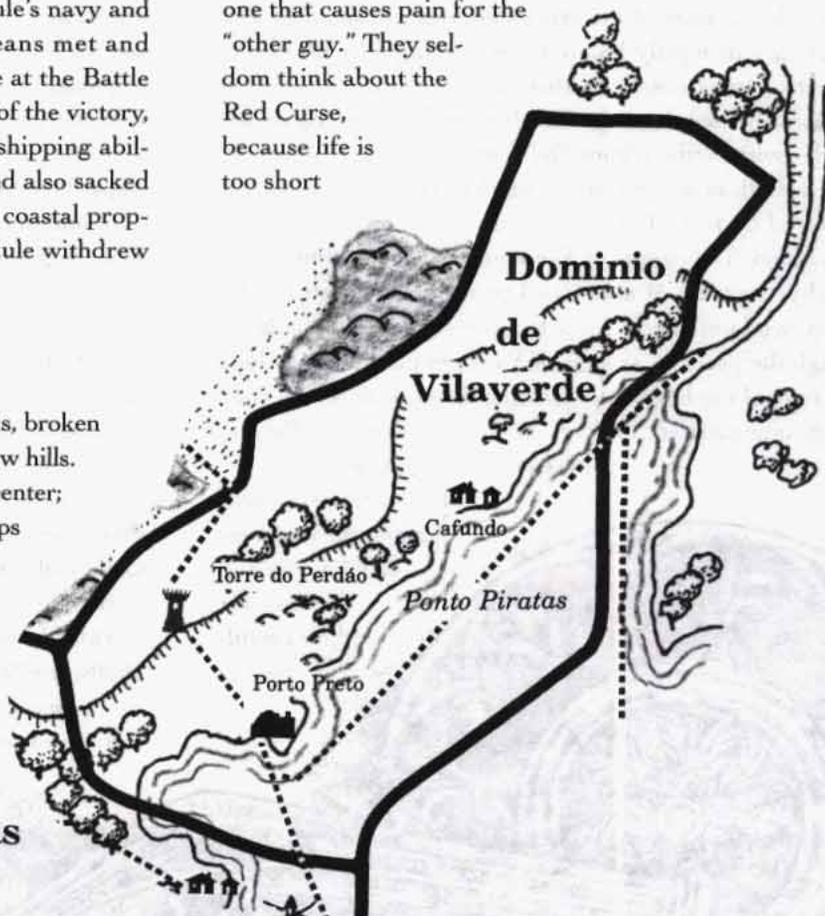
The People

Vilaverdians are known as explorers, adventurers, thieves, pirates, and whalers. The typical citizen encountered in Vilaverde is a boisterous, swashbuckling fighter, though Swashbuckler rogues, Nobles, and Local Heroes are relatively common as well. Spellcasters are uncommon, and most mages of Vilaverde are Swashbucklers who prefer a flashy style of magic. Feared on all seas, Vilaverdians are a light-hearted, high-spirited people whom others regard as highly audacious.

The Yavdlom background of the Vilaverdians gives them great respect for divinations. Since most divinations are used at sea, the effects of the Red Curse do not muddle the results too much. Fortune tellers are common in the settlements, and are usually consulted before important ventures. Vilaverdians are great believers in fate and luck, and they enjoy testing both with games of chance.

The Red Curse

Vilaverdians view the Red Curse simply as a hazard of life, one that causes pain for the "other guy." They seldom think about the Red Curse, because life is too short



to spend worrying about that which Fate has already planned; whatever happens, happens. Afflicted in Vilaverde are mostly ignored by other folk, because their visages are unpleasant and depressing. In response, Afflicted band together to form their own communities, where they blithely ignore the various deformations of their neighbors, acting as if everything is perfectly normal.

Industry and Trade

Vilaverde brings in money through whaling, shipping, and a little raiding. The people of Vilaverde are skilled whalers, and the seas off their coast are home to an abundant supply of whales. The Vilaverdan fleet also engages in trade all along the Savage Coast, carrying goods from port to port; Vilaverde controls most sea trade with Herath and Bellayne, and has a monopoly on trade goods out of Nimmur, the far-western homeland of the manscorpions. Its other customers include some ports in Renardy and Robrenn.

To protect and expand their commerce, Vilaverdians explore constantly. They have built numerous settlements and outposts along the coast, including three fairly large and successful colonies (Terra Leãoça, O Bastião das Tartarugas, and Porto Escorpião). Most of Vilaverde's holdings are no more than small forts or fortified villages used for commerce and navigation, spread out further west on the Savage Coast, as well as on the coast of Davania, the continent far to the south. Vilaverde once established a small colony on the Arm of the Immortals, Porto Maldição.

Vilaverde controls the only two large *cinnabryl* mines so far discovered in Terra Vermelha. They use most of the *cinnabryl* internally, reducing the number of Afflicted in Vilaverde. But they export significant amounts, primarily to the other baronies and to Eusdria. Vilaverde also conducts heavy trade in the *red steel* gained from use of *cinnabryl*.

Religion

While not overly religious, the Vilaverdians do venerate the Immortals, especially Milan, Valerias, and Faña. The Ambassador is favored over the General; the Judge receives little reverence, because leading an honorable life is not an overriding concern to most Vilaverdians.

The Ruler

Vilaverde is ruled by Barón Jorge "O Temerário" de Vilaverde. Baron Jorge "The Intrepid" is a charismatic human fighter with the Swashbuckler kit. Barón Jorge is 55 years old, but shows little sign of his age. He is proud, quick, and fit, still able to hold his own in a sword duel.

While a dynamic and dashing individual, Barón Jorge is also a profound thinker who cares deeply about his nation and the welfare of his people. He is ruthless in protecting Vilaverde.

Barón Jorge's rule is supported by an oligarchy of wealthy sea captains, many of whom achieved wealth through piracy. These captains and their families are the land's ruling class, the nobility of Vilaverde. A Captains' Council, made up of representatives of the ruling families, serves as an advisory board to Barón Jorge; the Captains' Council also decides who is admitted to the nobility, based on their activities, wealth, attitude, and bribes. While it is said that any native can rise to the nobility in Vilaverde, few are actually admitted by the council; despite bribes and corruption, the council does take pains to insure that those chosen have some semblance of noble bearing, knowledge of etiquette and grasp of politics. Currently 22 families are considered nobility; each holds a seat on the Captains' Council. The council is growing slowly, with a new seat added once every two or three years. On occasion, a family is destroyed or disgraced and removed from the council; these scandals occur once every four or five years on the average.

The Captain's Council meets once a month to conduct its own business and to offer advice to Barón Jorge. While the baron is not obligated to act on its advice, he always considers council recommendations closely, because he knows the Captains' Council represents the most powerful families in Vilaverde.

Technically, all of Vilaverde and its entire colonial holdings are the property of Barón Jorge. However, he grants indefinite leases to noble families. The nobles mediate over local disputes and act as custodians of their (leased) estates. In return for the use of the land, they are obligated to provide ships and warriors for the protection and enrichment of Vilaverde.

Barón Jorge has two heirs. His eldest son is Don Jorge, ruler of Porto Escorpião, a colony which Barón Jorge



recently granted independence. The baron's second son is Don Fernando, who represents the baron's family on the Captains' Council. Since Porto Escorpião was granted independence, there has been some speculation as to who will inherit Vilaverde when Barón Jorge dies. The baron has not yet stated his preference.

The Capital

Porto Preto, a town with 9,800 permanent residents, serves as the capital of Vilaverde. A notorious pirate haven, Porto Preto is also the home port of a large fleet of armed merchant ships. It is heavily defended, as are all other towns in this region.

The residents of Porto Preto are overwhelmingly human, though there are a very few established families of demihumans and lupins. However, Porto Preto hosts many visitors of widely varied races. Most townspeople are merchants and laborers, including a large number of innkeepers, tavern owners, dockworkers, shipwrights—all those whose livelihood involves keeping a navy afloat and reasonably happy. Farms surround the town, and their produce decorates Porto Preto's open markets regularly; some foodstuffs are sold in town, and a small percentage is purchased for export to other nations.

Porto Preto is an exciting town with a spirited nightlife. Intrigue lurks in alleys, rogues are common, and duels occur several times a day. More than a little dangerous for the unprepared, Porto Preto is a place where a new experience awaits around every corner.

Other Places of Interest

Tiny hamlets with fortified keeps dot the Domain of Vilaverde. While most are too small to appear on the map (and are left for the DM to design as desired and needed), the larger and more important places are briefly discussed in the following text. Vilaverde's colonies are also discussed in this section.

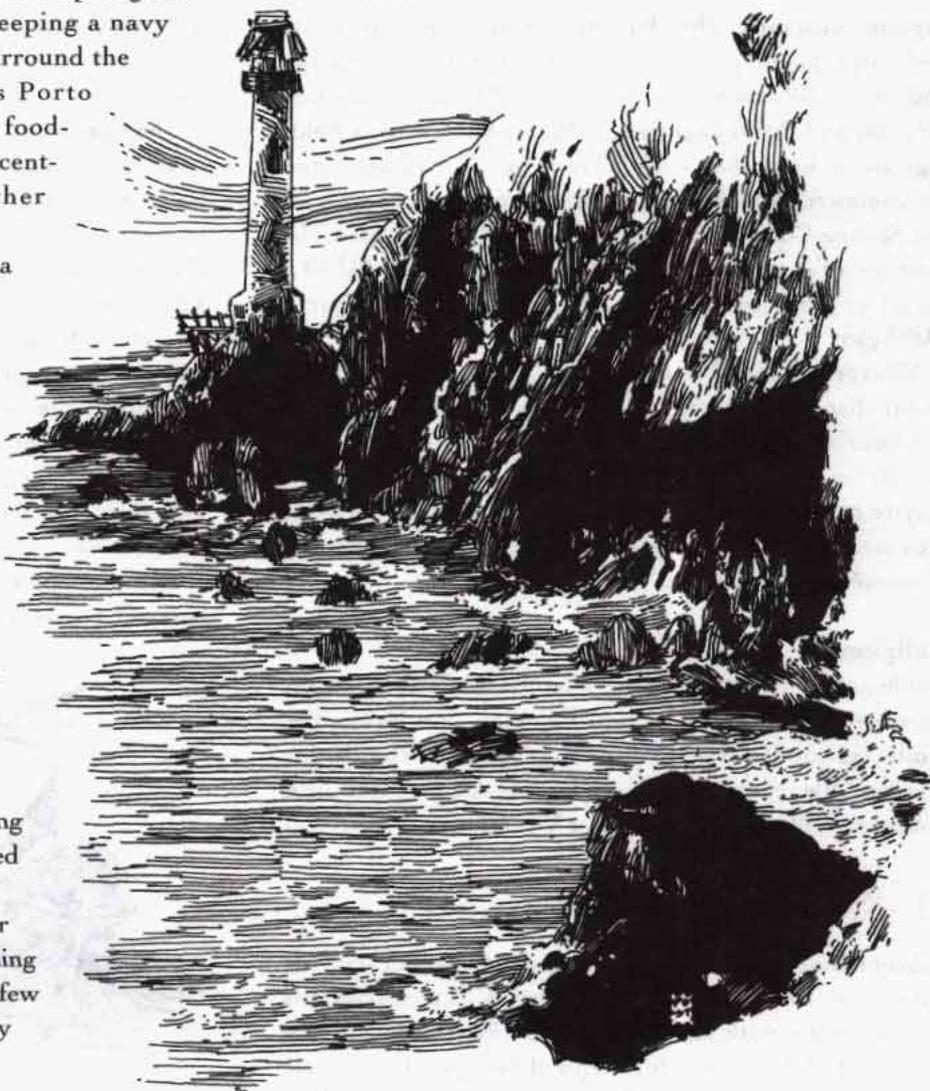
The village of Cafundo is the only other major settlement in Vilaverde. It is a farming and fishing village with a population of a few hundred humans. Cafundo is a quiet, busy place.

Torre do Perdão, the "tower of the lost one," sits at the edge of O Grande Escarpament, where a major break in the cliff has allowed a road to be built from Porto Preto to the mines in Terra Vermelha. Once a major stopover on this important trade route, the tower was sacked in the recent wars. Formerly garrisoned with soldiers, Torre do Perdão now stands empty, waiting for someone to clear out whatever bandits and monsters have moved in, and enable Barón Jorge to devote resources to rebuilding it.

A few miles off Porto Preto's waterfront lies the site of a major naval battle some 30 years ago. The conflict was between Texeiras and Vilaverde. More than 40 sunken ships rest here and in the surrounding waters. While some have been ransacked, others lie at the bottom of the sea with untouched treasures—and hidden dangers.

O Bastião das Tartarugas (Bastion of the Turtles)

This small Vilaverdan colony claims several square miles of beaches and cliffs. It is named for the only settlement, a



foreboding castle perched high on the windswept cliffs. The castle is home to several dozen humans, and staffed by a like number of turtle peasants. A complicated system of winches and pulleys allows provisions to be hauled up the cliff with relative ease; from the castle, goods are sent on to settlements in Robrenn.

Terra Leãoça

This Vilaverdan colony sits on the western Savage Coast and borders Bellayne and Herath. Established to control naval access to the city of Theeds in Bellayne, Terra Leãoça enforces Vilaverde's quasi-monopoly on sea trade in the region. Bellayne's ships are allowed passage to the trade routes, but they pay dearly for the privilege.

Vilaverde maintains a strong military presence at Rocha dos Gatos (the "Rock of the Cats"), a large fortress and a port for Terra Leãoça that garrisons Torreóner swordsmen and rakasta outcasts. The colony also operates a sulfur mine and a lighthouse. It encompasses the ruins of Espora-Verde and two villages, Três Corações and Postera; the latter are both centers for commerce with Herath. Espora-Verde was a tower sacked by goblinoids in the recent wars. It has not yet been rebuilt.

Terra Leãoça receives quiet support from the Great Magus of Herath, because it is costly to Bellayne, helping keep that nation from threatening Herath. In return for the support, the Vilaverdians allow Herathian merchant ships to sail through the colony's territorial waters without interference.

Porto Escorpião

This small state, on the western coast of the Orc's Head Peninsula, consists of little more than a castle and a lighthouse. Established as a Vilaverdan trading post, it was granted independence about two years ago, when Vilaverde recalled troops and relinquished official control of the colony.

Don Jorge de Vilaverde, son of Barón Jorge, runs Porto Escorpião. In an effort to cut costs and to bring veteran soldiers back to Vilaverde in times of trouble, Barón Jorge gave his son complete control over the holding; several troops remained loyal to Don Jorge, and stayed in Porto Escorpião. While Don Jorge appreciates the political necessity of the decision, he understandably feels abandoned, and wonders whether he continues to be heir to all his father's holdings, or if Vilaverde will be inherited by his brother, Don Fernando. While Vilaverde and Porto Escorpião maintain trade and cordial relations, the relationship between father and son has become strained. So far, Don Jorge has remained loyal, but he is impatient for an answer regarding his status.

Porto Maldição

This former colony consists of the village of Mato Grande and a fortress with the same name as the colony. The small holding on the Arm of the Immortals declared independence when Porto Escorpião was released. Since Porto Maldição is small, far away, and of little importance, Vilaverde released it too, without a second thought.

Estado de Texeiras

Like Vilaverde, Texeiras is home to a well-travelled, high-spirited folk. Though also viewed by most Baronials as a home for pirates, Texeiras is recognized as having legitimate merchants. While Vilaverde takes what it wants, Texeiras earns its possessions and trade, in most people's minds. Ironically, Texeirans are less often considered thieves by outsiders simply because they are more subtle about their practices.

The people of Texeiras are a little less boisterous than those of Vilaverde, but are just as independent and proud. In fact, Texeirans are even more patriotic than Vilaverdians, to the point where they hear insults in even the mildest of criticisms.

The Nation

Most of Texeiras is forested, though the state includes grasslands and abundant farmland as well. Forests are carefully protected, because they provide the wood for Texeiran ships. Texeiras claims a small portion of O Grande Escarpament, the grasslands that border Terra Vermelha. Situated around the Baia da Sereia, Texeiras is shielded from the worst of the weather in the region.

Texeiras was founded 80 years ago along the eastern edge of Baia da Sereia. Almost 30 years later, it absorbed the Yavdlom colony of Tanaka, which had occupied Cabo dos Cãos, now the eastern end of Texeiras. In the same campaign of conquest, Texeiras took over the barony of Marino, which had earlier broken from Narvaez to claim the western shores of Baia da Sereia. Narvaez has threatened once or twice to take back the Marino lands, but has never broken the naval supremacy of Texeiras. At the moment, Texeiras is on reasonably good terms with Narvaez.

The People

Texeirans, like Vilaverdians, are known as explorers, adventurers, whalers, and privateers. The typical person encountered in Texeiras is more likely a thief than a warrior, usually a charismatic Swashbuckler with expensive tastes and a suave demeanor; the Local Hero, Noble, and Honorbound are also common kits. While warriors and wizards are common in Texeiras, rogues are much more common here than elsewhere in the baronies. Citizens of Texeiras are subtle enough about their thievery that people generally

believe them to be an honest, hard-working folk.

The more worldly people of the Savage Coast have learned to be cautious in what they say about a Texeirano, Texeiras, or any product that state. Texeirans have been known to suggest duels if someone offers too low a price for their goods. Texeirans are a proud lot who try to avenge any insult against them, real or imagined.

The Red Curse

Like Vilaverdians, Texeirans seldom think about the Red Curse. Life is too short to dwell on something so depressing. Texeiras boasts a thriving trade in *cinnabryl*, so Afflicted are relatively uncommon. Texeirano enclaves of Afflicted tend to stay rather cheerful and are well-maintained, like those in Vilaverde; deformations are ignored by the inhabitants of the enclaves.

Industry and Trade

Texeiras' main exports are wood and *cinnabryl*. Most timber exports go to Vilaverde and Renardy; Texeiras knows that Narvaez wants to build a fleet to rival its own, so it usually finds excuses to not sell wood to Narvaez.

Cinnabryl is imported as well as exported. Most supplies in Texeiras come from Slagovich, from small deposits in Terra Vermelha, and from trade with Vilaverde (usually in return for wood). Narvaez relies on Texeiras for most of its *cinnabryl*. Texeiras also trades in *red steel*, especially in return for *cinnabryl* from Slagovich.

Texeiras has a strong merchant fleet to protect its trade routes, and has established numerous outposts along the Savage Coast. These include two important colonies, Protectorado da Presa, near Renardy and Eusdria, and the Colony of the Horn on the Orc's Head Peninsula. Texeirano crews consist mostly of swashbuckling rogues, and are supplemented by Torreóner mercenaries who serve as marines.

The Texeirano fleets are responsible for much of the commerce along the Savage Coast. They carry trade goods to all the nations of the coast; Eusdria in particular is a consistent trading partner. It is usually Texeiras that trades with the city-states, and with Robrenn as well.

Religion

Like the Vilaverdians, Texeirans are not overly religious; they revere Milan, Valerias, and especially Faña. They hold the Ambassador in high esteem, but the Judge and the General are considered less important. The Texeirano veneration of Faña provides common ground with the people of Narvaez, who know her as the Inquisitor.

The Ruler

The ruler of Texeiras is Barón Bartolomeu "O Calvo" de Texeiras. Baron "Bart the Bald" is a retired adventurer, a human Swashbuckler thief now in his early 60s. The baron's wife died some years ago, leaving him without an heir. There is much speculation as to whom he will name to take his place; the front-runner seems to be Domínica da Solidão (see Protectorado da Presa later in this chapter), but many believe Barón Bart will choose some unknown who impresses him with daring and honor. More than a few adventurers have tried to gain his attention and praise with their activities.

Texeiras functions on a strict hierarchy. The baron claims the top position; the governors he has appointed to different regions (internal and external) are the next level, and considered nobility. The majority of Texeirano nobles deserve their titles,

because Barón Bart is a shrewd judge of character. He is considered a competent leader by the people of Texeiras.

The Gulf of Hule

The overall structure of the government is something like a thieves' guild, and the baron has numerous spies, assassins, and other agents in his service. These help Barón Bart keep track of his holdings, international events, and his followers. They also allow him to manipulate others for the good of Texeiras.

Barón Bart is in a difficult position because he must maintain his borders against powerful neighbors. All of them covet his rich capital, his fleets, and his colonial holdings. The barony's overall population and land forces remain rather light in comparison with its neighbors. So far, diplomacy, bribery, and skillful use of political manipulation—or assassinations—have maintained the status quo.



The Capital

Boa Mansão, with its population of 8,700, is by far the largest settlement in Texeiras. Besides being the center of government, it is also the center of commerce and culture. Most merchandise brought through the region, including loads of *cinnabryl*, passes through this town. Far less rowdy than its Vilaverdan counterpart, Boa Mansão is a town with museums and theaters, as well as inns, taverns, and businesses devoted to shipping and commerce.

The citizens of the capital are mostly human, though there are a few permanent residents representing each of the demihuman and humanoid races of the Savage Coast. As in Porto Preto, most inhabitants are merchants and laborers, though there are a large number of artists and crafters as well.

Boa Mansão is a reasonably quiet place; since commerce is so important to the nation, and the capital is the center of that commerce, outright thievery is frowned upon within the town. Most Texeirans know better than to rob someone in the capital; many thieves in the town actually try to prevent robberies and muggings. If a robbery does occur in Boa Mansão, the town's extensive thieves' guild can usually find the perpetrators and return stolen possessions to their owners, giving the town a reputation as safe. This allows Texeirans to work on much more subtle and elaborate schemes than simple robbery.

Other Places of Interest

Besides the capital, Texeiras has only one major settlement, the village of Velha Navalha on Cabo dos Cãos. Primarily a fishing village, Velha Navalha also boasts small garrison of Torreóner mercenaries and a few ships. In case of an attack, these military forces are intended merely to delay any attackers while a message is sent to the capital for reinforcements.

Until recently, there were two other important villages in Texeiras, Porto Punhal and Vila

Franca. Both villages were sacked by swashbucklers during the recent wars. They have not yet been rebuilt, though a few Afflicted have moved to Vila Franca and are trying to gain a charter for government from Barón Bart.

Off the coast near Vila Franca lies the site of a naval battle, fought just over 50 years ago between Texeiras and Marino. Marino's hopes of independence ended here. Most sunken ships in the area have been thoroughly searched, but a few might have treasures.

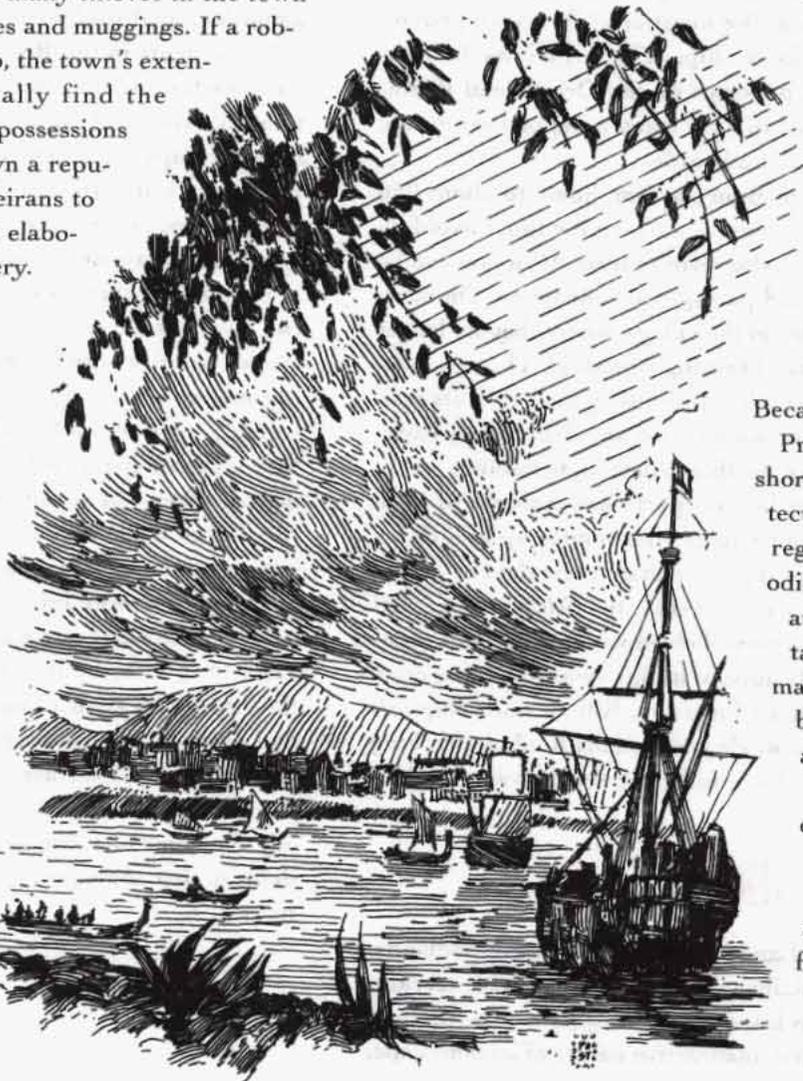
Protectorado da Presa

This domain consists of two large islands (Ilhas Gémeas, the Twin Islands) and a fair part of Cabo das Baleias (the Cape of Whales), located south of Renardy and sharing a border with Eusdria. During the recent wars, the Protectorado da Presa declared independence from Texeiras. The situation escalated into a small civil war, and the colony's major settlements were razed. To end hostilities, the colony was granted near autonomy, but is still considered the property of Texeiras.

The main settlements in the region are imposing fortress Praça Forte de Texeiras, and well-defended Torre Cruzada. Both villages, Solidao and Porocá, and the town, Porto do Sul, remain in ruins.

Because Protectorado da Presa's shores are now short on land-based protection, ships patrol the region constantly, periodically relieving crews at the colony's important lighthouses. Permanent settlements are beginning to develop around the two mining camps on the cape. One mine produces opals, the other silver; these are important assets for Texeiras, and are well-guarded.

The leader of Protectorado da Presa,



the lord of Praça Forte de Texeiras, is actually a lady, Domínca da Solidão. A charismatic Honorbound fighter, she led the rebellion against Texeiras, but is wise enough and has enough supporters in Boa Mansão that Barón Bart felt it would be unwise to remove her. The two leaders came an agreement about the colony's status that seems to satisfy both parties. Some Texeirans speculate that in return for Domin_ca allowing the colony to remain part of Texeiras, the baron has named her heir to Texeiras. Neither leader has chosen to comment.

The Colony of the Horn

Located on the upper western tip of the Orc's Head Peninsula, the Colony of the Horn consists of a village, a fort, and several square miles of relatively barren land. The tip of the Horn is also known as Cabo do Macaco, the Cape of the Monkey. The land here shades from grassland to sand dunes, but the colony also boasts some rich plantations.

Fortaleza da Boa Vista is a small fortress, but it has a substantial military force, composed of about 200 Torreóner mercenaries, a like number of Texeiran ground troops, and about a dozen ships. The fort allows Texeiras to maintain a strong presence on the Orc's Head Peninsula, which is rumored to have many untapped resources, as well as ancient treasure hoards.

The small village of Bom Jardim, home to about 250 people, has become known as a haven for those avoiding the Red Curse. Those who recover from Affliction can go there, if they can afford passage, to convalesce. On occasion, adventurers retire in the village, where they no longer have to worry about obtaining *cinnabryl*. Though Bom Jardim is a quiet place, it is jealously guarded by its residents, perhaps half of whom have an adventuring background and are more than able to defend themselves.

Probably the most famous part-time resident of Bom Jardim is Killian, a privateer who ranges up and down the coast, never spending more than a few days at a time in the cursed lands. Killian's ship, the *Selwynn*, is named for a lost love, a golden-eyed elven woman of gentle manner and surpassing beauty. With his swashbuckling crew and his Texeiran letter of marque, Killian raids ships all along the Savage Coast. He is especially fond of attacking ships from Narvaez to remind the state how pitiful its naval forces are.

Terra Vermelha

Also called the Red Lands, this area consists of badlands, rocky hills, scrub plains, and other inhospitable terrain, including an active volcano, Serra Sanguinea, the Bleeding Mountain. Despite the unattractive nature of its landscape,

Terra Vermelha is the object of fierce competition. Claimed by both Vilaverde and Texeiras, the lands hold many small, scattered deposits of *cinnabryl*. Although few deposits last long enough to provide their claimants with any significant advantage, this *cinnabryl* is nevertheless a flashpoint between the two baronies, as well as the other bordering nations, Torreón and Hule.

Vilaverde currently operates the only two large mines in Terra Vermelha. Scouts and prospectors from Texeiras and Torreón roam constantly, occasionally finding deposits of *cinnabryl*. Torreón, with its strong military, is in the best position to overrun Terra Vermelha and seize its treasure. However, the Treaty of Tampicos keeps the nations in line, more or less.

The treaty states that the first nation to raise its flag above a desired mining site gains the right to mine there. To raise a flag, a messenger must bring the news to his or her nation's ruler, then return with an official delegate and a mining writ. This first step is the most dangerous, since rivals often kill envoys so their own flags can be raised first. More than once have armies clashed over a treacherous ambush or a falsified writ.

Settlements in the Red Lands include the two official Vilaverdan mines, Mina do Sul and Mina do Norte (South Mine and North Mine), and two nearby, less-savory camps. As their names suggest, southern Campo-Ladrão is home to bandits looking for other nation's prospectors, and northern Campo dos Ogros bolsters its might with ogre mercenaries.

Brigands, goblinoids, and foul monsters also reside in the Red Lands. Some of these inhabitants can be persuaded to work with forces from one of the four neighboring nations, for outrageous fees. However, none are terribly loyal and all tend to switch loyalties whenever they receive a higher offer. Like most natives of Terra Vermelha, when not accepting mercenary pay—and sometimes even while they are—these raiders prey on miners, caravans, and border villages.

One of the more interesting features of the Red Lands is the ruined city known as Antro do Dragão, the Dragon Den. Originally built thousands of years ago by Oltecs, the city shows signs of later habitation by Nithians, elves and dwarves. The city remains in remarkably good condition for its age, because no one has spent enough time in it to cause too much damage. Whether the place is actually the home of a dragon or not remains speculation; it is definite that some powerful creature guards the city and its riches.



CHAPTER THREE

TORREÓN AND NARVAEZ

The humans of these baronies are primarily of Ispan descent, with strong traces of Oltec blood, and lesser admixtures of Nithian and Traladaran ancestry. Narvaez and especially Torreón is also home to many elves. Dwarven families reside in some districts of Narvaez, and a few members of other races are residents of larger settlements of the two states. The people of both states are stereotyped as brave and passionate, and are reputed to be fine warriors.

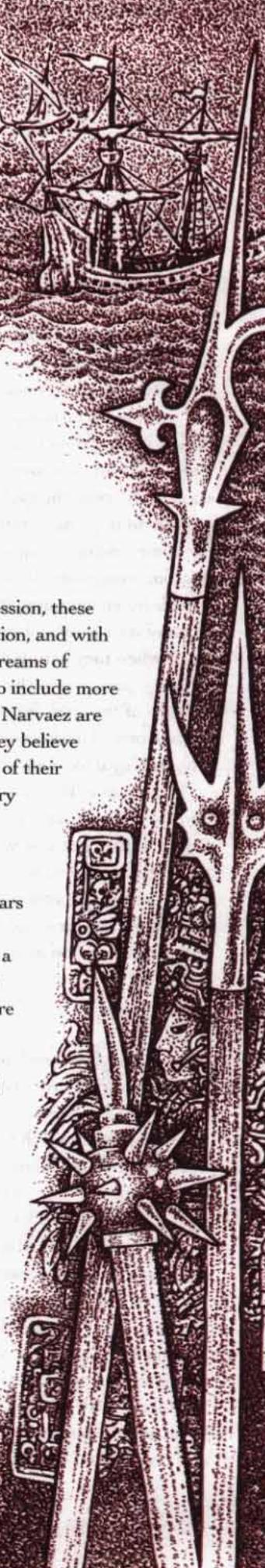
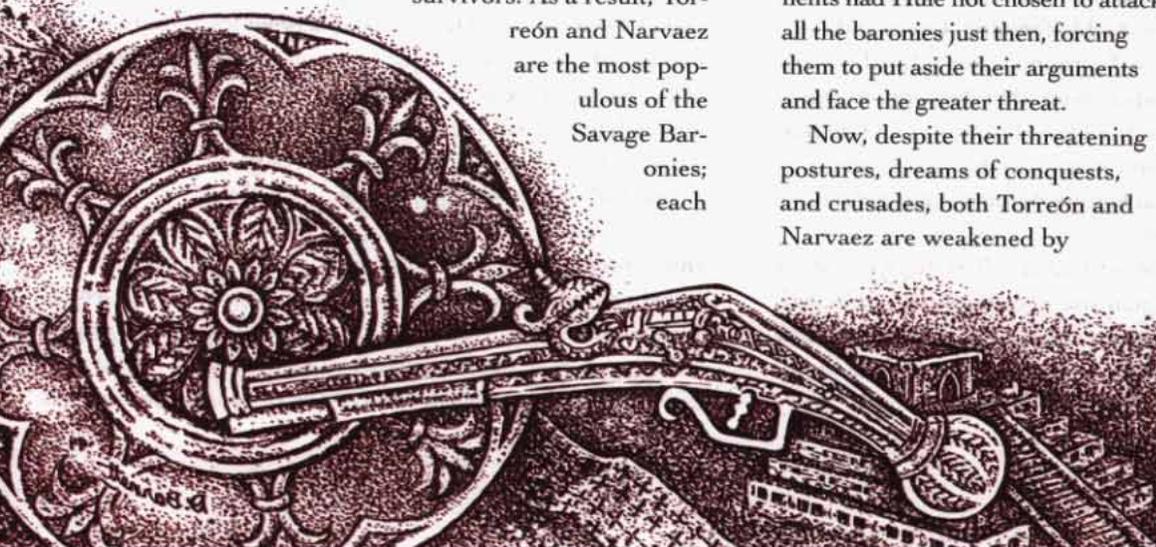
Torreón and Narvaez are known as lands of mercenaries, for they supply professional soldiers to other nations of the Savage Coast. Torreóner mercenaries are known for their loyalty and skill; Narvaezan mercenaries are valued for their fierceness and high standards. Sellswords of both nations are considered skilled professionals, well worth the money required to hire them. While the people of the Sea Powers dominate the oceans with their navies, these states have land forces to be reckoned with.

Each of these nations also has a long and violent history of wars and conquests that have allowed them to achieve their present status. The harsh conditions of the border lands has made their people tough survivors. As a result, Torreón and Narvaez are the most populous of the Savage Baronies; each

covers a comparatively large area.

Because of their histories of aggression, these states are often viewed with trepidation, and with good reason. The ruler of Torreón dreams of expanding her nation's boundaries to include more resources and riches. The leaders of Narvaez are clergy of the Immortal Ixion, and they believe theirs is the only true religion; many of their more assertive members want to carry the flame of Ixion least as far as the other baronies, even if doing so requires force of arms. Narvaez mounted such a crusade only five years ago; Torreón joined Narvaez, as did the Sea Powers. Only by presenting a united front (and exploiting the able generalship of some fine leaders) were the remaining baronies able to stave off the military might of these four nations. Narvaez and its allies would probably have worn down its opponents had Hule not chosen to attack all the baronies just then, forcing them to put aside their arguments and face the greater threat.

Now, despite their threatening postures, dreams of conquests, and crusades, both Torreón and Narvaez are weakened by



internal problems: poverty cripples Torreón and unrest within the clergy paralyzes Narvaez. Both states try to build and consolidate their forces so they can one day achieve their goals. If those goals were more similar, there would be few obstacles to keep the two states from unifying into a force against which no others could stand.

Baronía de Torreón

This land is respected for its mercenaries, who travel to all parts of the Savage Coast, and notorious for its poverty. The majority of Torreón's people are poor, barely managing to eke out a living by farming. Those who are able become mercenaries, leaving their poor families behind to fight—and sometimes die—in someone else's war. Most mercenaries earn enough to break the cycle of poverty that enslaves them, but seldom do they make sufficient extra to send hard coin home for family; maintaining weapons and equipment is not a luxury, but a necessity. Instead, sellswords help their family and friends by encouraging them to become mercenaries as well, passing on rumors of opportunities and putting in a good word when they can. It is a Torreóner aphorism that gaining fighting prowess is the best way to break away from the poverty of the land. Since most Torreóner mercenaries come from deprived backgrounds, they are unwilling to lose steady pay, and loyal to those who supply it.

Thus, while Torreón is a poor land, it is also reputed to produce the most steadfast mercenaries on the Savage Coast. Other nations welcome Torreóner mercenaries for their reliability, but worry at the thought of those same mercenaries being turned against them. The existence of so many fighting men and women in Torreón strengthens the nation's reputation as a formidable military presence.

The Nation

One of the few land-locked baronies, Torreón is built around the rich river valley of Rio Guadiana and its tributaries, Rio Frio, Rio Torrentes, Rio Tuntos, and Rio Fangoso. Beyond the rich farmland of the river valleys, most of Torreón's hills and flats are thickly forested. Grasslands ripple only in the east, where Torreón shares a border with Texeiras and Terra Vermelha. Note that Torreón occupies the higher ground above the cliffs known as O Grande Escarpament to the east and overlooks La Escarpadura in the west. This geographical feature defines—and defends—Torreón's southern borders.

Torreón has had a violent history. The first political entity to appear in this region was the Barony of Cristobal, founded in 916 on Rio Torrentes. Almost a quarter century later, some successful adventurers decided to settle down and created the Baronies of Alcazar (in 940, along Rio Fan-

goso) and Torreón (in 941, where Rio Guadiana cuts through La Escarpadura). Later still, the Barony of Los Elegidos was established to the north, along Rio Tuntos, and the Barony of Morales in the center, at the junction of Rio Frio and Rio Fangoso.

The founding of Morales created a problem for Torreón, because Morales was laid out in a position where it could control river traffic between Torreón and the other small baronies. With an eye to preventing future problems, Torreón attacked Morales; to settle ongoing border conflicts, Torreón also attacked all its other neighbors. Torreón conquered Morales and Alcazar, and extended its holdings to the north, east, and west, weakening Elegidos and Cristobal as well.

Torreón then consolidated its gains, rapidly building several settlements to control extensive portions of the river valleys. A couple of years later, Elegidos disappeared completely and mysteriously, removing a threat from Torreón's northern border; a decade after, Cristobal relinquished its claims of being a barony. Torreón left the remnant of that barony, Torre Cristobal, as a buffer between itself and the goblinoids of the Yazak Steppes. The tower served to blunt the most recent invasion attempt before being destroyed.

Since consolidating, Torreón has been an aggressive, somewhat expansionist nation. Its baroness, Doña Isabel, plans to continue building her armed forces in the hopes of someday conquering both Texeiras and Terra Vermelha. Her military build-up has wrecked the local economy through excessive taxation.

The People

Torreón has a racially mixed population; about one-third of its people are elves. Half-elves are also common, numbering about one-sixth of the total population; in total, half the people in Torreón have some elven blood. The rest of the population is human, leavened by a very few faces of other races. Torreón's violent history and prevalent poverty attract few people from other nations to emigrate (it's hard to imagine a Torreóner native as a model of "the good life"), leaving humans and elves to the lands they have inhabited for centuries. The humans of this nation are not as mixed-blood as in other baronies; here, people of primarily Oltec descent are quite common, while those of Ispan descent are not often seen, nor are those with mixed Oltec and Ispan ancestry. Perhaps as many as one-half of Torreón's population are Afflicted.

The common people of Torreón are farmers, but many of those farmers have fighting experience. Torreóners are known to be brave, passionate, hot-tempered, and proud. Like the people of Texeiras, Torreóners are quick to suggest a duel over the smallest offense. The hardships of the borderlands have produced generations of tough and ruthless

soldiers in this barony.

Warriors are common in Torreón, with the Myrmidon kit seen most often. Some Honorbound, Swashbucklers, Local Heroes, and Gauchos are also seen, as are a few Defenders devoted to Faña. The nobility is small in Torreón, so the Noble kit is uncommon. Most of the nobility of Torreón is elven, and the rest is human of pure Ispan descent.

Torreón also has a fair number of Militant wizards and War Priests. There are few rogues in Torreón, which lacks the large population centers and the wealth needed to support them. Most Torreóner rogues are Scouts or Swashbucklers; the latter kit is also used by most Torreóner wizards. There are some Inheritors in Torreón, but they keep to the larger towns or the company of nobles, because Inheritors are despised by peasants and Afflicted in Torreón.

The mercenaries of Torreón are reliable and reasonably priced; a typical fee is one oro (gold piece) per person per week, with a bonus percentage allotted for experience, so most common mercenaries in the company actually earn about five dies (silver pieces) per week. There are several well-organized mercenary companies in the barony, each of which follows a skilled captain. These mercenary captains gather for an Assembly once a year to discuss issues important to them all, such as payment scales and employment opportunities. Individual captains also meet whenever their companies happen on one another. A person who wishes to form a company of his or her own must go before the Assembly, where the current captains vote on the applicant. If approved by a simple majority vote, the applicant can recruit a mercenary band and seek employment. The captains approve only those individuals who they believe will uphold the honor of Torreón and obey the Assembly's decisions.

Torreóner mercenaries prefer not to fight against other companies of Torreóner mercenaries, but they will do so if ordered by their employers. However, employers should realize that if they order such a battle, leaders of the involved Torreóner companies meet before the battle, and allow any mercenaries who have friends or relatives in the



other company a chance to refuse combat, without loss of honor or pay. All Torreóner mercenary captains adhere to this policy, a fact that is known to most potential employers across the Savage Coast.

Note that some mercenary companies are composed of only Afflicted. Their prices, leadership, and attendance at the Assemblies are the same as for standard companies. Afflicted companies are shunned in polite society, but are known to cause dread and disgust in their enemies, sometimes giving them a psychological advantage.

The Red Curse

The Red Curse is a constant threat to the people of Torreón. While citizens in the larger towns do their best to ignore the curse, a very large proportion of the people in Torreón—as much as half—are Afflicted. Some Afflicted join mercenary companies; most others live in small enclaves. Small size, however, does not guarantee small incidence. Afflicted enclaves are found everywhere in Torreón: ragged sections in towns and villages, tiny farming villages along rivers, and hidden camps in forests and hills.

The people of Torreón never forget the Red Curse, and those who are able go to great lengths to avoid it. Afflicted here are not like those in the Sea Powers, able to pretend they are normal, at least when among other Afflicted. The

Afflicted of Torreón feel they are under a curse; they hide themselves from view and avoid contact with most other people, even other Afflicted, in effect shunning themselves before others can.

Industry and Trade

Torreón's biggest export is mercenaries, who serve as military forces, as castle or fortress guards, and as marines on Texeiran ships. The government receives a small share of all money earned by mercenary companies with headquarters in Torreón.

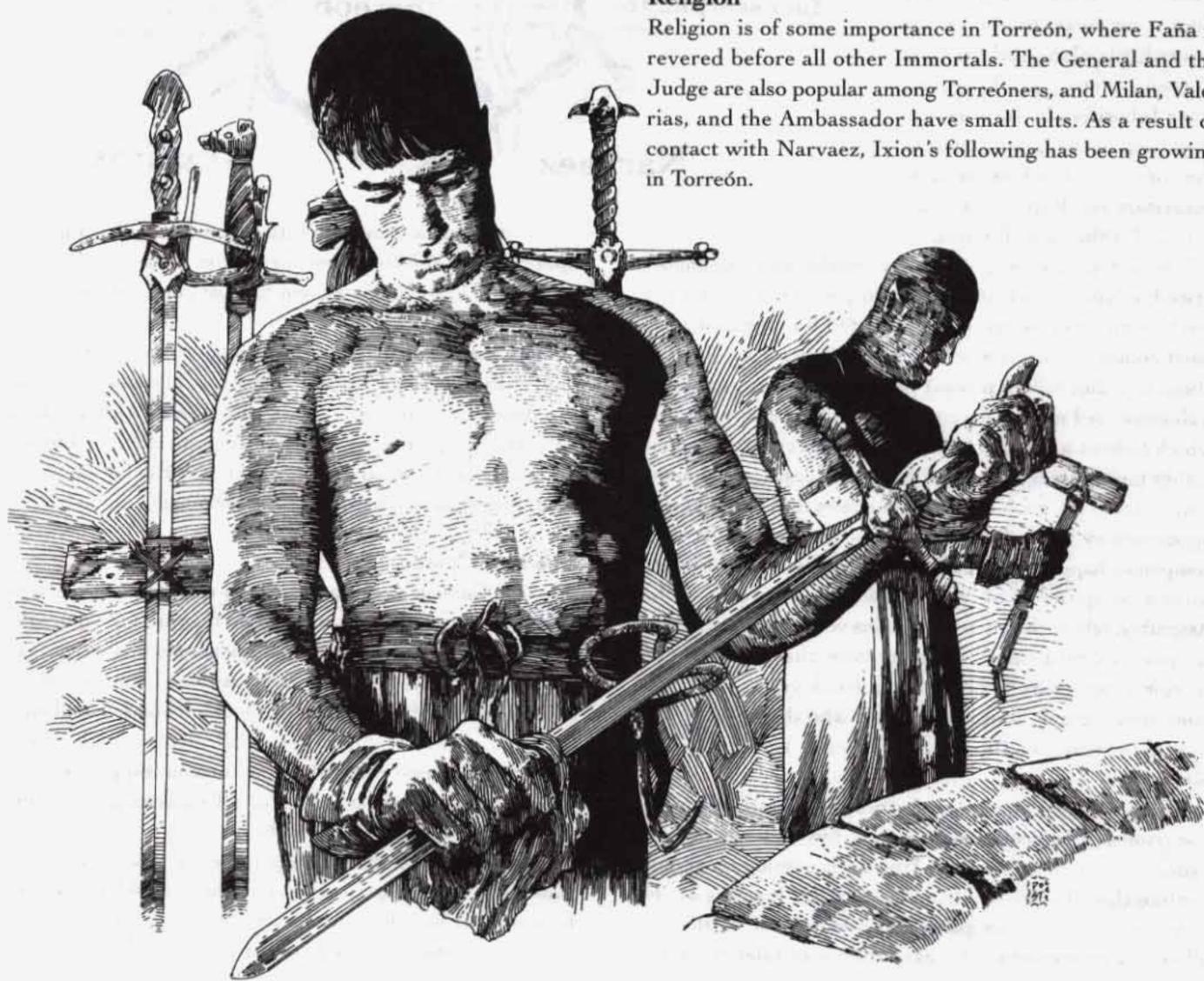
Torreón also exports some wood and food, as well as a little *red steel*. This state gets most of its *cinnabryl* from Terra Vermelha, where Torreón scouts and prospectors roam constantly, or by trading *red steel* with Slagovich. Torreón, home of the person who "discovered" *red steel*, has stockpiled the material for years. In addition, Torreón's mercenary companies, which use quite a lot of *cinnabryl*, also retain a sizeable amount of *red steel*. The government of Torreón takes a por-

tion (about 10%) of this *red steel* as taxes, giving the barony an ample supply of the magical metal. Mercenary companies use the rest of their *red steel* to arm themselves. Torreón's capital, Ciudad de León, harbors a famous Guild of Swordmakers whose *red steel* weapons are prized throughout the Savage Coast.

Torreón's best trading partner is Renardy, with which an overland trade route is maintained. Torreón exports *red steel*, weapons, and mercenaries to Renardy, as well as wood for ships and a small amount of *cinnabryl*. In return, Renardy provides wine, food, and finished goods. Torreón has also begun acquiring *smoke powder* from Renardy, which gets it from Cimmaron, in hopes of building *smoke powder* cannons; the cannons have not yet proved successful. Torreón also imports *smoke powder* from Gargoña and some directly from Cimmaron, often in exchange for food. By using several sources, Torreón hides the sum of its acquisitions.

Religion

Religion is of some importance in Torreón, where Faña is revered before all other Immortals. The General and the Judge are also popular among Torreóners, and Milan, Valerias, and the Ambassador have small cults. As a result of contact with Narvaez, Ixion's following has been growing in Torreón.



The Ruler

Torreón is ruled with an iron fist by Baronesa Isabel “La Terrible” de Torreón y Morales, a human noble in her early 30s. The baronesa has been in charge of the state since the death of her father when she was in her early teens. She had to withstand political intrigue in order to survive, and this has only made her more ruthless in her approach to politics.

Doña Isabel plans to build an army of conquistadors and eventually take over Terra Vermelha and Texeiras. To raise funds, Doña Isabel instituted many new taxes on her people, driving many of them into poverty. Though the poverty has hurt the people of Torreón, it has also encouraged them to become mercenaries, or to enlist in the baronesa’s armies.

Doña Isabel needs most of her troops just to guard the outer limits of her territory against bandits or goblinoid raids. The remaining troops enforce collection of her unpopular taxes among the population. Torreón probably has an army large enough to take over Terra Vermelha right now; however, because of the recent wars, Torreón wants to hold off on the attack and consolidate its forces. After all, an attempt to take over Terra Vermelha would break the Treaty of Tampicos, probably causing the other baronies to ally against Torreón. The only loose cannon Doña Isabel hopes for is Narvaez, which has long been on friendly terms with Torreón and could probably be counted as a supporter.

Doña Isabel’s driving ambition is to be able to leave a good inheritance for her heirs—even though she does not yet have any children. Doña Isabel’s heir presumptive is a younger sister, Rosa, a lovely girl in her early 20s. Though the baronesa recognizes the need for a successor, and despite her greedy and power-hungry style, she harbors fantasies of marrying for love, and would be happy to shunt to her sister the political responsibility of marrying to produce an heir.

If Doña Isabel’s family should die out, the succession would pass to her elven advisor, Augusto, who has counseled her family since the barony began, and who was a companion of the adventurers who founded both Alcazar and Torreón. Augusto is a Noble fighter who is not quite two centuries old, and who could potentially rule Torreón for another two centuries.

Like Augusto, many other nobles of Torreón are elves, and most have been around since before any of the Savage Baronies were founded. The early inhabitants of Torreón came to an agreement with the prominent elven families of the area, and have always considered them

part of the barony’s nobility. For this reason, the preferred language of the nobility, and of diplomacy and etiquette, is elvish.

The Capital

The capital of Torreón is Ciudad de León, a town of 7,400 that sits on the state’s southern border. Slightly more than half (approximately 3,800) of the townsfolk are elves. More than 1,000 half-elves live here, and most of the other citizens are human. Ciudad de León is home to most of Torreón’s nobility, though each other town and village in the barony boasts one or two noble families. Besides the nobility, the capital also houses numerous merchants, crafters, and soldiers, as well as a small labor force consisting mostly of poor Afflicted.

Ciudad de León is an orderly town, safe because of the squadrons of soldiers that patrol its streets.

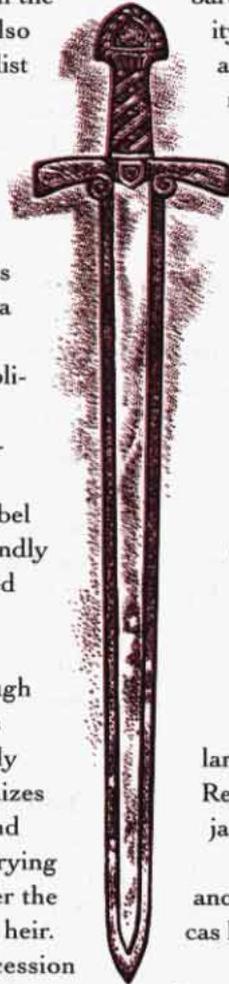
The townspeople live according to districts, so nobles live among nobles, merchants among merchants, and so forth. The Afflicted are in this manner kept from mixing with high society in Torreón.

Other Places of Interest

A town of 6,800, Ciudad Morales lies in the center of Torreón. It is a major trading center for the barony; most of its people are merchants, crafters, and laborers. The barony also has six major villages: Casanegra, a town of retired soldiers named for the recently ruined tower near which it was built; Puebla de Alcázar, a farming village that is a headquarters for prospectors and expeditions headed into Terra Vermelha; Villavieja, a farming village that is one of the largest producers of food in the Savage Baronies; Pueblo Real, a village devoted to farming and forestry; Las Guajacas, a farming village in which the entire population of over 500 individuals is Afflicted; and Las Chambas, another trading and farming center. Note that Las Guajacas houses the largest concentration of Afflicted anywhere in the Savage Baronies, possibly on the entire Savage Coast; it is a somber and eerie place, where haunted people go about in masks and cloaks, even during the hottest days. An air of depression lies thick over Las Guajacas, and few visitors stay for long.

Torreón also has two major forts, Castillo Grande and Torres Calientes, both of which help defend the state’s western borders from goblinoids. Castillo Grande sits on La Escarpadura, its towering form overlooking Ciudad de León and serving as a deterrent to make Narvaez think twice about invading its northern neighbor.

Torreón also owns several sets of ruins, most from the



recent wars: the villages of Chiquitin and El Lugar, both deserted settlements (most buildings are still intact), their populations drained to support the war; the fortress Fortaleza, sacked by goblinoids and rumored to be a storehouse of treasure protected by traps and vile monsters; and two towers, Torre del Duende and Bastion de los Caballeros, both ruined by Hule. Torreón would like to rebuild these two towers, as well as the one at Casanegra, and has been looking for bold adventurers willing to reclaim them.

Baronía de Narvaez

Although Narvaez is a larger barony and has a higher population than its neighbors, its people still suffer from excessive taxation by a brutal rulership. In addition, Narvaez endures the Inquisition, which appears unexpectedly to check the loyalty of commoners and nobles alike, to ensure their devotion to Ixion.

Narvaez is known for its mercenary forces, but is also seen as a dangerous nation that wants to thrust its patron Immortal—and his accompanying Inquisitor—upon the other nations of the coast. The nation has no real allies, though it gets along reasonably well with Torreón, Texeiras, and Gargoña.

The Nation

As does Torreón, most of Narvaez sits along a river valley; the barony's lands run mostly to farmland and forest, broken by small ranges of hills. The land is very fertile in Narvaez, supporting good farming.

Also like Torreón, Narvaez has had a long and bloody history. It was the first barony founded along the Savage Coast, and is the only one ever officially chartered by the distant government of Thyatis. Narvaez once stretched all along the western coast of the Gulf of Hule, from La Escarpadura in the north to the Claw Peninsula in the south. This claim covered land on which humans, dwarves, elves, and turtles were already living, and included the lands now known as Cimmaron, Almarrón, and Gargoña, as well as part of present-day Texeiras.

Three years after Narvaez was founded, the southern tip of the barony, on the Claw Peninsula around Nueva Esperanza, declared independence. This area eventually became Cimmaron. A year later, another small area broke away from Narvaez, declaring itself the Barony of Montoya; lands held by elves and dwarves, Montoya included what is known today as Castillo de Los Hidalgos and the nearby range of hills.

In 913, Narvaez was split between two heirs; the north, including most of the present-day barony, remained Nar-

vaez. The south, including present-day Almarrón and Gargoña, became the Barony of Sotto. Sotto had a very rocky history, most of which is detailed under Gargoña and Almarrón.

Narvaez remained relatively stable until 930, when the Barony of Marino splintered off to form on the western shores of Baia da Sereia; Marino remained independent until it was conquered by Texeiras in 958. In 935, the Barony of Quimeras declared independence from Narvaez, claiming the land from Ciudad Quimeras to La Escarpadura. Narvaez had had enough, and began building military forces. In 937, Narvaez attacked both Quimeras and Montoya, and after a short war, reabsorbed them both. Most Montoyan dwarves fled to other places, but the elves remained to become fully integrated into the population in Narvaez.

By the end of these hostilities, Narvaez established approximately the same borders it still holds today. The military build-up however, continued, the growing number of troops helping Narvaez retain its territory for more than 70 years. The barony has remained relatively peaceful, a threat for the large part unrealized, concentrating on fortifying its holdings and building power.

However, five years ago, an internal theological dispute escalated into holy war in Narvaez; to unite the feuding factions, Barón Hugo declared external enemies. The northern states of Torreón, Texeiras, and Vilaverde allied with Narvaez against the remaining baronies. This manufactured war was supplanted by a greater threat when Hule attacked all the baronies, and was later postponed again so the baronies could deal with increasing goblinoid raids. For the last year or so Narvaez has been peaceful, but other baronies still remember the attempted conquest, and many consider Narvaez an enemy.

The People

Like the people of Torreón, the folk of Narvaez are brave, passionate, and easily offended. The hardships faced by Narvaez forged a people both rugged and pitiless. Narvaezans are also devoutly religious, or at least act devout, to avoid being persecuted by the state's elite troops, usually known as Los Matónes ("the bullies," with slang connotations of "killer" and "rat"). In addition, natives of Narvaez feel superior to other Guardianos, because they are confident in the righteousness of their religion, and because they are the oldest of the Savage Baronies—some go so far as to say, the only legitimate barony.

The people of Narvaez are mostly human, though elves are common, and some dwarves and half-elves make homes here as well. A few turtle peasant families remain, scattered widely throughout Narvaez, living as peaceful farmers. Members of other races are usually only visitors. Economi-

cally, Narvaezans are mixed; while many are peasants, a substantial middle class (which includes the clergy here) also exists, as does a relatively large nobility.

Like Torreón, Narvaez is known for its mercenaries. Warriors are common here; clerics are the next most common character type, then rogues. There are practically no wizards or druids in Narvaez, because they are considered heretics to Ixion and have been outlawed. Multi-class and dual-class characters are more frequently encountered than wizards or druids.

In Narvaez, the most common kit is Myrmidon. War Priest, Local Hero, and Noble are also relatively common, and Swashbucklers, Honorbound, Gauchos, and Scouts are seen as well. Inheritor and Defender are not legal professions in Narvaez, nor are they welcome—but sometimes such characters are seen in Narvaez anyway. Swashbucklers have a special place in Narvaez; considered lawbreakers by the government, they are often heroes to the local peasants and merchants. Swashbucklers enjoy thwarting the schemes of the church and of Los Matónes.

The mercenaries of Narvaez should be handled like those of Torreón, with three exceptions. First, there is no Assembly; a mercenary captain must be granted a charter through the church before building a company, and all companies are responsible to the church. Second, there are no Afflicted among Narvaezan mercenary companies. Third, some Narvaezans become mercenaries simply so they can travel to other lands and avoid religious persecution.

The best Narvaezan mercenaries are sometimes asked to join Los Elegidos (the correct title of Los Matónes), who answer directly to the baron. The current leader of Los Elegidos is Angélic de Ariéla, an elven Swashbuckler ranger from a tiny elven settlement in Bosque de Los Ojos. Though she takes her job seriously, Angélic secretly harbors more liberal views than most of Los Elegidos. She is reasonable in her attitudes and is actually a nice person when allowed to relax; she has been trying to curb the penchants for violence, bullying, and persecution found in so many Matónes. Despite Angélic's efforts, most of Los Elegidos remain little more than thugs.

Los Elegidos have also begun spreading rumors about Angélic, claiming that she is a sadistic punisher who can use "elven ways" to painfully wring information from even the strongest person; while this is untrue, the threat of someone

Saragón



even worse than the average member of Los Elegidos has worked to loosen many a tongue.

The Red Curse

The people of Narvaez believe the Red Curse to be Ixion's punishment for those who are not devout followers; in some ways, they are correct. It is the clergy that distributes *cinnabryl* to the needy, but the church relies more on *maintain* spells to keep people healthy. Those who do not see their clergy regularly are thus most likely to become Afflicted. When a citizen manifests an Affliction, he or she is moved to one of the special enclaves outside the state's major settlements, maintained by Ixion's followers.

The Afflicted of Narvaez believe they are being punished for some transgression, and spend much of their time trying to atone by serving Ixion. Many Afflicted become priests themselves, but Afflicted priests usually

retreat to monasteries or serve in otherwise isolated capacities; they are not allowed to become part of the church hierarchy.

Industry and Trade

Fertile Narvaez trades food for *cinnabryl*, usually with Texeiras. Excessive food exports have occasionally provoked famine and peasant revolts. The barony also exports mercenaries, and like Torreón, earns a percentage from all companies based in Narvaez.

Besides *cinnabryl*, Narvaez is currently interested in buying wood for ships and *smoke powder* to experiment with

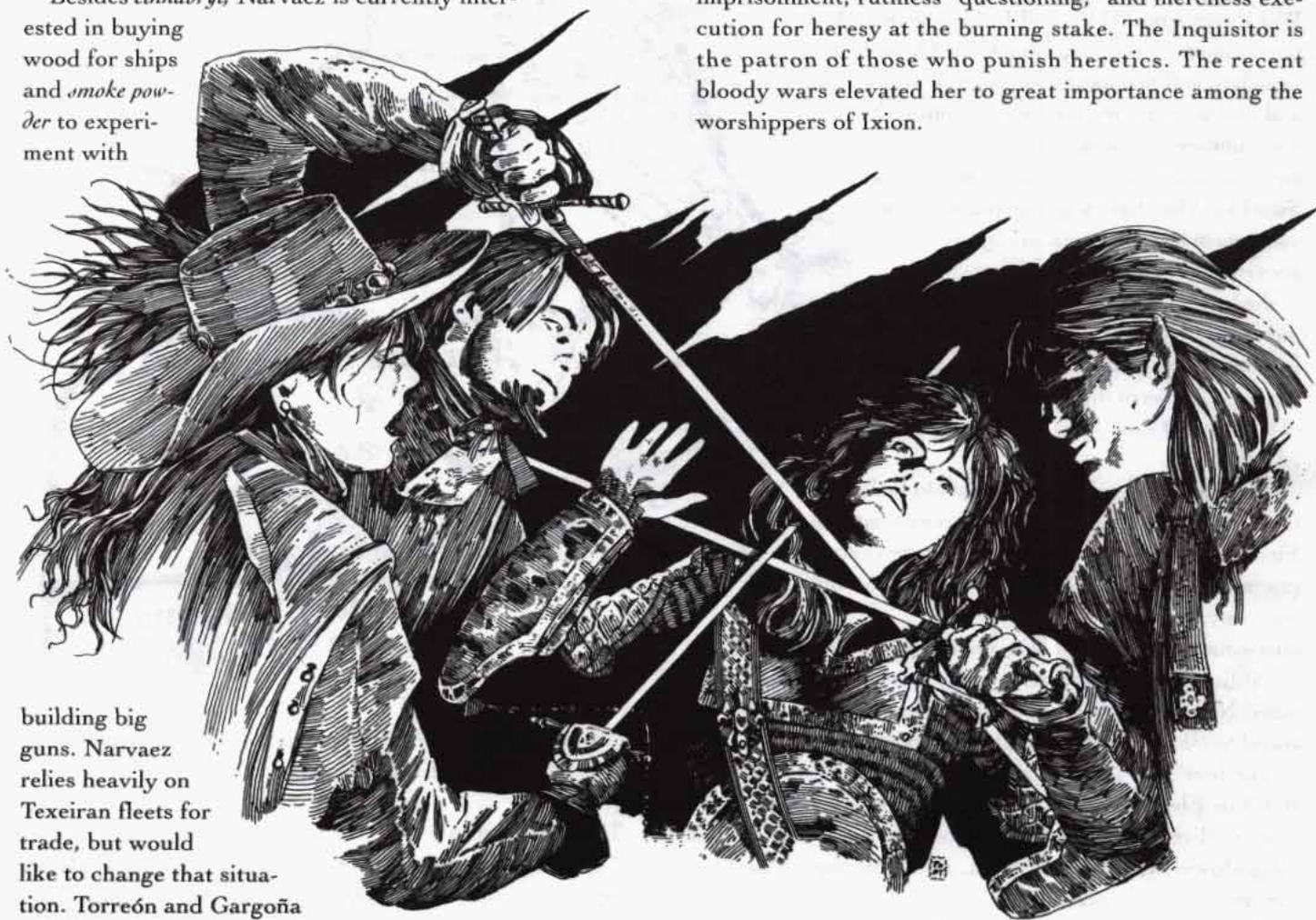
building big guns. Narvaez relies heavily on Texeiran fleets for trade, but would like to change that situation. Torreón and Gargoña are also trading partners of Narvaez, Torreón supplying wood and Gargoña supplying some *smoke powder*.

Religion

Narvaez is the only barony in which religion is an important aspect of life, and it is of utmost importance. Narvaezans are profoundly pious followers of their Immortal patrons, in particular Ixion, who is regarded as higher ranking than all other Immortals. The Inquisitor is also revered, and the General, the Ambassador, and the Judge are all considered lesser

powers who are worthy of some respect. Narvaezan Swash-bucklers also worship Milan and Valerias.

Knights of Narvaez commonly go on quixotic quests to retrieve holy artifacts or bring the good word (with the help of their mighty swords) to faraway natives. One such "recovered" artifact now lies at the Grande Catedral de Ciudad Quimeras, a heavily fortified spot and the center of constant pilgrimages. Ixion's philosophy is taken excessively seriously in Narvaez, to the point where anyone suspected of the least irreverence risks prompt imprisonment, ruthless "questioning," and merciless execution for heresy at the burning stake. The Inquisitor is the patron of those who punish heretics. The recent bloody wars elevated her to great importance among the worshippers of Ixion.



The Ruler

Barón Hugo "El Despiadado" de Narvaez y Montoya holds the reins of statehood in a tight grip. Baron Hugo "the Merciless" is a human War Priest of Ixion who controls the church as well as the nation; the baron's leadership of Narvaez is not threatened in the slightest. A man in his late 40s, Baron Hugo directs most of his efforts to foreign affairs, such as building a warfleet to break the Sea Powers' hold on shipping.

The baron has a devoted wife and four children. His

eldest daughter, Catalina, four years ago ran off with Señor Crístobal, Baron of Guadalante, one of the leaders of the Gauchos who razed Ciudad Quimeras during the recent wars (see "Other Places of Interest" in the following text). Catalina apparently became so enchanted with the suave Gaucho that she married him without her father's permission or knowledge. Naturally, Baron Hugo was infuriated at his daughter for allying with the enemy, and he has never sent a dowry to Señor Crístobal, despite periodic requests.

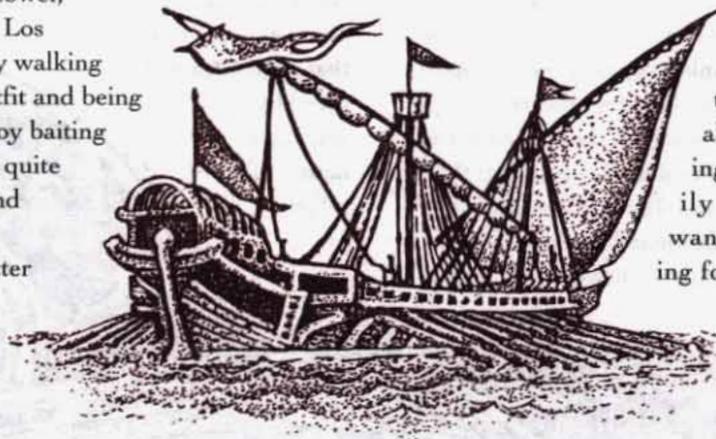
Baron Hugo's oldest son, Monte, recently turned 20. Monte has a lovely young bride and is the obvious heir to the rulership of Narvaez. The baron's third child is another son, Julio. Just a year younger than Monte, Julio has married the daughter of the baronesa of Gargaña. Baron Hugo's youngest, Damita, even though still in her teens, promises to be one of the most manipulative women to ever live in the baronies.

Baron Hugo does not get along well with the other barons, and his is the only nation that has failed to ratify the Treaty of Tampicos.

The Capital

Puerto Morillos is a large town with a population of 12,300, the closest settlement to an actual city in the Savage Baronies. It suffered a devastating attack by Swashbucklers of the southern baronies during the recent war, and much of the city burned. The ruins are now home to Afflicted and rogues, though the government is trying to clean up and restore the area and to chase out the riffraff.

Though a bustling center for commerce, Puerto Morillos is one of the most boring towns on the Savage Coast. Los Matónes watch for anything out of the ordinary and are quick to stop any disturbance. The general attitude of townsfolk is subdued, and the only true excitement occurs when a Swashbuckler decides to cause it, whether by making a speech from a church tower, by challenging a member of Los Matónes to a duel, or just by walking around in an outrageous outfit and being friendly. Swashbucklers enjoy baiting Los Matónes, and many are quite skilled at the witty banter and flashy swordplay needed to embarrass the thugs; the better blades are also fleet enough



to evade capture if things go wrong. It is not unusual for Swashbucklers to wear masks in Puerto Morillos, though such a thing is, of course, illegal.

Other Places of Interest

There are three major villages in Narvaez: Almavegas, a quiet and well-protected farming village; Paz del Sol, a major trading center built where an important trade route crosses the Rio Guadiana; and Punto-Eseobar, another trading center that handles most commerce with Texeiras and Torreón. There are also two exceptionally large castles in Narvaez: Castillo Blanco, the oldest baronial structure still standing; and Castillo de los Hidalgos, once the capital of Montoya, now a formidable barrier between Narvaez and Saragón. Ruins smudge the Narvaezan landscape, including the remains of Ciudad Quimeras, a town that once served as the capital of the Barony of Quimeras, and Los Peregrinos and Peunte-Guadiana, once important fishing villages; all three towns were sacked in the recent wars by Gauchos from the southern baronies. Numerous hamlets and tiny farms too small to be military targets survive throughout Narvaez.

Nearby Lands

Outside the baronies themselves there are a number of interesting geographical features. Colinas Grutescas are the badlands east of Narvaez; Baron Hugo does not believe these lands to be worth claiming, but rumors circulate of cavern networks that hide ancient settlements and great treasures. Pirates and other bandits are known to seek shelter in the region.

The ruins of Torre Crístobal, located west of Torreón along Rio Torrentes, also spark interest in taverns and around campfires. The first lord of Crístobal claimed the area around the tower as a barony in 916; 65 years later, his granddaughter relinquished the title of Baron and

gave up her family's claim to surrounding lands, while still maintaining independence. The tower was ruined by goblinoids about two years ago, and remaining members of the Crístobal family can occasionally be found wandering the Savage Coast looking for a few stalwart adventurers to help them reclaim their tower.



CHAPTER FOUR

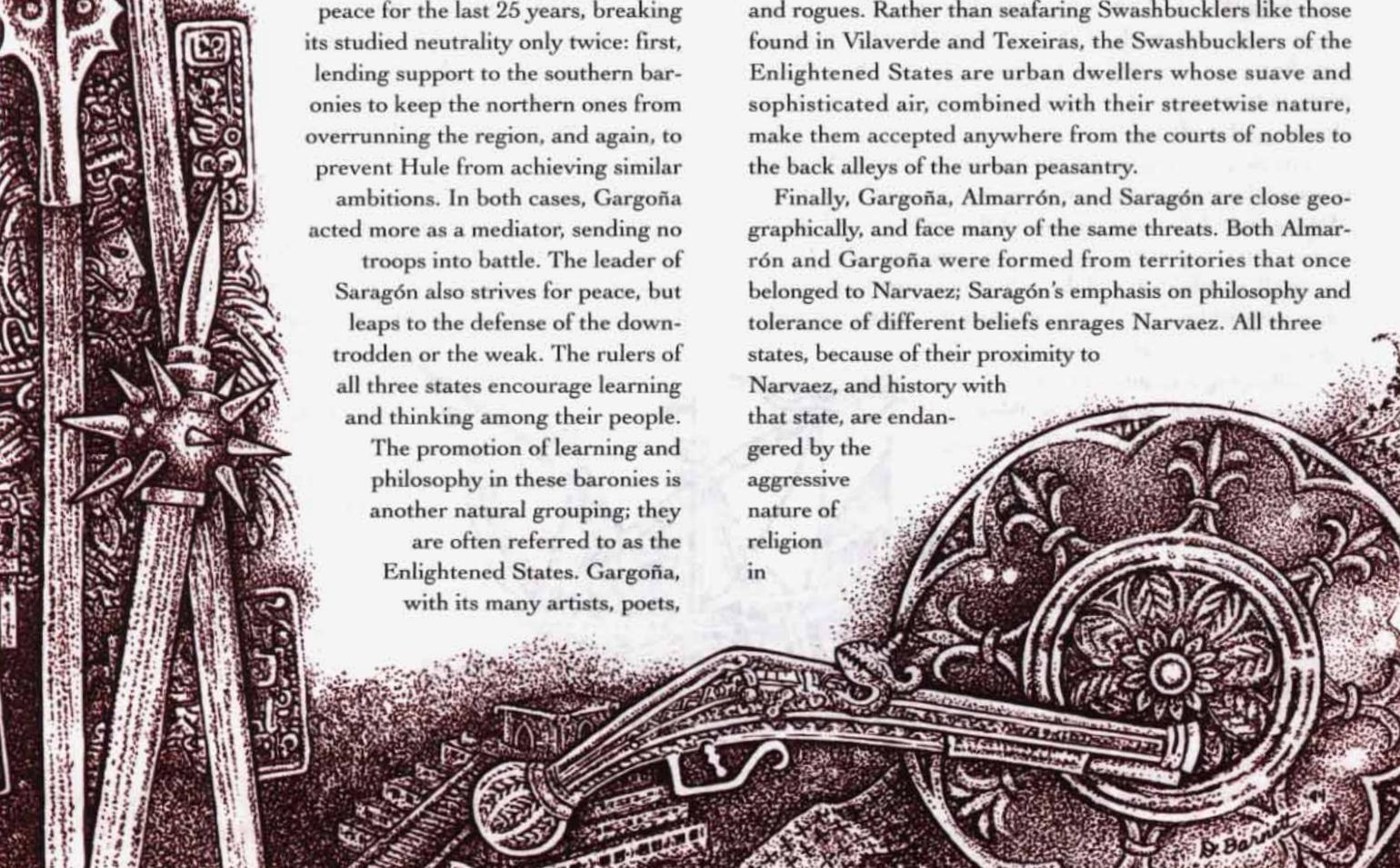
GARGOÑA, ALMARRÓN, SARAGÓN

These three states are grouped together for several reasons. Their governments are the least tyrannical among the Savage Baronies. Almarrón was actually a democracy for a time before it became corrupt, and the worst dictator in the history of the Savage Baronies took power. The people have recently restored a member of the old nobility to power, and he is a fair and just ruler. Gargoña has remained at peace for the last 25 years, breaking its studied neutrality only twice: first, lending support to the southern baronies to keep the northern ones from overrunning the region, and again, to prevent Hule from achieving similar ambitions. In both cases, Gargoña acted more as a mediator, sending no troops into battle. The leader of Saragón also strives for peace, but leaps to the defense of the downtrodden or the weak. The rulers of all three states encourage learning and thinking among their people. The promotion of learning and philosophy in these baronies is another natural grouping; they are often referred to as the Enlightened States. Gargoña, with its many artists, poets,

and philosophers, is called the cultural center of the Savage Baronies. Saragón is also a center for thinking and learning, home to many sages and scientists. While Almarrón is, after long darkness, just beginning on the road to enlightenment, the state is already becoming known for its fine crafters. All three states encourage the use of magic, and Wizards are more common here than elsewhere in the baronies.

Besides the comparative proliferation of wizards, these three states also have a tradition of swashbuckling warriors and rogues. Rather than seafaring Swashbucklers like those found in Vilaverde and Texeiras, the Swashbucklers of the Enlightened States are urban dwellers whose suave and sophisticated air, combined with their streetwise nature, make them accepted anywhere from the courts of nobles to the back alleys of the urban peasantry.

Finally, Gargoña, Almarrón, and Saragón are close geographically, and face many of the same threats. Both Almarrón and Gargoña were formed from territories that once belonged to Narvaez; Saragón's emphasis on philosophy and tolerance of different beliefs enrages Narvaez. All three states, because of their proximity to Narvaez, and history with that state, are endangered by the aggressive nature of religion in



Narvaez (though Gargoña suffers a much lesser threat because of its peaceful nature).

The Enlightened States tend to think themselves just a little bit better than the other baronies, and perhaps they are. They are the center of baronial culture, states that desire peace and encourage freedom, and the baronies most likely to achieve a peaceful unification.

Baronía de Gargoña

Gargoña is the mildest of the Savage Baronies. Its ruler, Doña Esperanza, has worked for peace and has given her people a secure and almost prosperous life for the past 25 years. Though Gargoña would probably be unable to resist an invasion, the nation is less of a target than some because of its neutrality. Since it is at peace with its neighbors, Gargoña is protected from hostilities initiated beyond the Savage Baronies, as Saragón, Narvaez, and Almarrón shield it from any overland threats, and the navies of Vilaverde and Teixeiras block threats from the sea.

Gargoña is recognized as the center of culture in the Savage Baronies. Since the state is politically neutral, its scholars are sometimes invited to other nations to serve as advisors or teachers. Most Baronials think of Gargoña as a pleasant place—but some wonder about the fortitude of Gargoñans themselves; they are not seen as people of action.

The Nation

Gargoña is primarily farmland, though dense forests lie along most of the state's borders. A large swamp, Delta de Pozaverde, helps protect the nation from ocean-borne threats, its shallow waters keeping deep-keeled sailing ships from the interior. Skiffs powered by oar or pole ply the waterways of the delta, ferrying commerce to and from seagoing ships.

Like so many of the other baronies, Gargoña has had a history of conflict and sorrow. As mentioned in the last chapter, Narvaez peacefully split into two states in 913: remaining Narvaez in the north, it became the Barony of Sotto in the south. Sotto was never a stable barony; it existed for less than a quarter century and faced near-constant crises during its short existence.

In 921, the State of Escudor declared independence from Sotto. The tiny nation, built around Castillo de Tordegena, was released by Sotto without a fight and remained independent until it fell to an expanding Almarrón, as detailed below.

Five years later, the Barony of Rivera followed suit; it included Ciudad Real, the Delta de Pozaverde south of Rio Maldito, and several square miles of land within Sotto between the river and the present-day border of Almarrón. Sotto objected to this further splintering, but was forced to

release the barony after a short civil war.

Another eight shaky years passed before the Barony of Gargoña broke from Sotto. When founded, Gargoña encompassed only the land west of Las Navas, to the present-day border of Saragón. Again Sotto tried to force the rebellious area to remain united, and again Sotto failed. Gargoña was granted independence in 934. Still, Sotto harbored ill-will toward Gargoña, and declared war on the tiny barony in 936.

Despite its size, Gargoña was better organized and fielded a more effective fighting force than its parent barony. By the end of the year, Gargoña had not only defended its original claim, but conquered northern Sotto down to the Sierra Borgosa hills. Gargoña allowed the southern portions of Sotto to reorganize independently; they formed the State of Almarrón.

Gargoña and its new sibling barony remained at peace for just over four decades, consolidating territory, and initiating trade. Gargoña became a stable and reasonably prosperous small state. However, in 977, Almarrón attacked and absorbed Escudor, then turned north and attacked Gargoña and Rivera. To resist the Almarrónian forces, Rivera and Gargoña negotiated a merger, keeping the name Gargoña, in 978. This stronger Gargoña was at least able to hold back Almarrónian advances, while within the aggressive state, Nueva Esperanza took advantage of Almarrón's distraction to declare independence. Almarrón sued for peace with Gargoña in 979.

Gargoña rebuilt its war-trampled borders, and in 986, Doña Esperanza came to power. The baronesa began a policy of neutrality regarding all other baronies, sealing alliances diplomatically, and through astutely arranged marriages. Gargoña has remained at peace ever since. Even when Gargoña allied with the southern baronies against the northern in the recent wars, Doña Esperanza was able to maintain relative neutrality. Aided by her familial relationship with the baron of Narvaez (her daughter is married to Don Hugo's son), Doña Esperanza eventually negotiated the peace that allowed the baronies to cooperate against their larger common enemy, Hule.

The People

Though most inhabitants of Gargoña are human, their tolerant attitude recognizes other races as equals, and the barony includes settled families from all races of the Savage Coast, even a few peaceful lizard-kin and goblinoids. The typical Gargoñan is an artist, poet, or scholar, yearning for adventure and seeking inspiration. Warriors, rogues and wizards are all popular character types. Priests are less common.

The Swashbuckler is the most encountered kit of Gargoña, and many wizards use the Mystic kit. Defenders, Honorbound, and Scouts have their places, as do the rarer Nobles, Local Heroes, and Gauchos. The Local Hero is the

kit most often used for clerics and druids in Gargoña.

The people of Gargoña are dreamers, generally optimistic but given to occasional fits of melancholy. They enjoy their reputations as scholars and artists, but are quick to point out that such skills do not make them any less able in a fight.

The Red Curse

The Red Curse is seen as a great malaise by the people of Gargoña, and is the subject of many stories, plays, and treatises. Still, the detrimental effects of the curse are rarely found in Gargoña, and Gargoñan Afflicted are rare. While Gargoña's clergy might not be large, it is devoted, and the priests of Gargoña make regular use of *maintain* spells to help people avoid the Red Curse's effects. The nation also imports some *cinnabryl*, most of which is purchased and used by those who have chosen an adventuring career.

The few Afflicted Gargoñans remain with their family and friends, who usually try to raise enough money to seek a cure. Most Gargoñans are eventually cured of Affliction, at the cathedral in Ciudad Real; those who are not cured, including a few

poets who never seek a cure because they believe the angst of the Red Curse provides them with better inspiration, live on Isla del Cayo, off Gargoña's coast.

Industry and Trade

Gargoña's major exports include artists, scholars, and diplomats. Ciudad Real maintains a university; while classes are given without cost (the school is supported by the government), students agree to tithe a portion of their wages to Gargoña for the rest of their lives. Many of Gargoña's skilled scholars work abroad as headmasters, tutors, or political advisors. While most remain in the baronies, graduates can be found in all nations of the Savage Coast, except for Herath and the lands of the lizard-kin.

Gargoña also exports works of art, from paintings and sculptures to music and poems. Its people have made their own tools and instruments for decades, but are beginning to import items of superior quality from the crafters of Almarón. Gargoña also produces boats driven by oars or poles, and supplies some *smoke powder* (from Cimmaron) to Narvaez.

Gargoña's major imports include small amounts of *cinnabryl*, some food, and mercenaries. *Cinnabryl* usually comes from Vilaverde, food from Torreón, Narvaez, or Saragón. The mercenaries, mostly from Torreón but including a few

companies from Narvaez, aid Gargoña's mediocre militia in policing the barony.

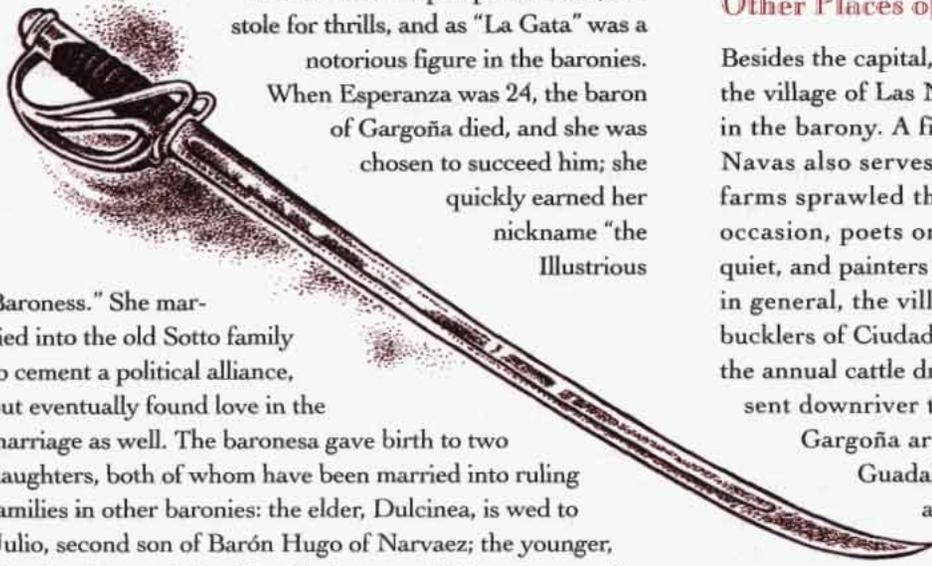
Religion

Many of the "enlightened" folk of Gargoña consider religion a foible to be avoided. Still, Valerias has a large following in Gargoña, and both Milan and the Ambassador are respected as well. The General and the Judge have a few stalwart followers, and temples devoted to Al-Kalim and to Ixion have appeared recently in the barony. Though Narvaez is pleased to see a few converts in Gargoña, they frown at the tolerance Gargoñans show for many Immortals.

The Ruler

Baronesa Esperanza "La Ilustre" de Sotto y Rivera rules the nation of Gargoña. Descended from the noble family that once ruled Rivera, this well-educated lady came to power in Gargoña almost 25 years ago. Very few know it, but she was once a thief with the Local Hero kit. Bored





with the life of a pampered noble, she stole for thrills, and as "La Gata" was a notorious figure in the baronies. When Esperanza was 24, the baron of Gargoña died, and she was chosen to succeed him; she quickly earned her nickname "the Illustrious

Baroness." She married into the old Sotto family to cement a political alliance, but eventually found love in the marriage as well. The baronesa gave birth to two daughters, both of whom have been married into ruling families in other baronies: the elder, Dulcinea, is wed to Julio, second son of Barón Hugo of Narvaez; the younger, Caterina, is married to Claudio, baronet of Montejo, one of the nobles of Saragón.

Now nearing 50, Doña Esperanza is considering whom she should name as her heir; while Dulcinea is more intelligent, her husband has a reasonable chance to become baron of Narvaez. This could unite Narvaez and Gargoña (if Dulcinea inherits Gargoña); it could also destroy Gargoña's neutrality and drag Gargoña into the periodic conflicts of Narvaez. The baronesa is leaning toward naming Caterina the heir; while perhaps not as scholarly as her sister, Caterina is brave and charismatic. Besides, if her husband Don Claudio should come to lead Saragón (a distinct, if unlikely, possibility), the alliance between Saragón and Gargoña would be considered good for all parties involved.

While Gargoña has been free of wars and revolts, prosperity has had the concurrent effect of dulling the military's responsiveness. The baronesa relies primarily on a large and loyal, albeit mediocre, militia, backed with seasoned mercenaries from Torreón. Active troops garrison the capital and are stationed near the remains of Castillo de Pardalupe. The latter force is less concerned with Saragón than with Yazi raids.

The Capital

Ciudad Real is a large town with a population of 11,700. Famous for its generous patrons, the capital is a haven for literature and the arts. Many fine artists, poets, and philosophers have come to Ciudad Real and flourish in the philanthropic atmosphere. Ciudad Real is the heart of Gargoña's culture, and in turn, the heart of the culture of Los Guardianos. Ciudad Real is home to many interesting and unusual people; visitors can find entertainment in inns and taverns, can visit theaters or even talk to philosophers. Musicians often play in the streets, entertaining for their own pleasure, but accepting tips given to them by passersby.

Other Places of Interest

Besides the capital, the only major settlement in Gargoña is the village of Las Navas, the backbone of food production in the barony. A fishing village of about 800 people, Las Navas also serves as a produce depot for the dozens of farms sprawled throughout the Rio Maldito valley. On occasion, poets or philosophers come to Las Navas for quiet, and painters come to capture bucolic landscapes, but in general, the village is empty of the artists and Swashbucklers of Ciudad Real. Gauchos flood Las Navas during the annual cattle drive that brings stock to be butchered or sent downriver to the capital; however, the Gauchos of Gargoña are a little less rough than those found in Guadalante and Cimmaron, less prone to fights and more open to music and other cultured pursuits.

Las Navas lies on a route between the capital and the ruins of a proud castle. Like so many forts, towers, and castles in the baronies, Castillo de Pardalupe was sacked during the recent wars. It fell to the same formidable band of Yazi gnolls that laid waste to Castillo de Tordegena in Almarrón. Doña Esperanza has sent militia, Torreón mercenaries, and more than one party of adventurers to reclaim Castillo de Pardalupe. However, monsters seem firmly established in the castle. No matter how often they are cleared, more arrive within days. In fact, Castillo de Pardalupe has become home to a deepspawn (described in the MONSTROUS MANUAL accessory); this vile creature lurks in the lowest sublevels beneath the castle, and constantly replenishes the monsters found there.

Another place of interest is Isla del Cayo. The small island, once no more than a low coral reef, is now home to several tiny farms and a few small communes of Afflicted. The Afflicted of Gargoña have chosen this island for self-imposed exile. Here, they can live off the land and stare at the sea and sky, wallowing in the angst and sorrow that many hope will give them inspiration for great works of art. The island sports a lighthouse on the eastern tip; it is run by a small family of Afflicted fishers who have lived there for decades. Down the coast from Isla del Cayo is the site of a naval battle of the recent wars. Several Almarrónian and Texeiran ships lie under the waves.

Bosque de los Ojos, the "Forest of the Eyes," is a light forest that sits on the border of Gargoña and Narvaez. Rumored to be haunted, the forest is home to many unusual denizens, including more than a few monsters. The thick swamp of Delta de Pozaverde provides haven for a few bandits and is rumored to be the resting place of several pirate treasures.

Estado de Almarrón

Almarrón's character is a mystery to many people of the Savage Coast—even to its own inhabitants. The state has gone through many ideological upheavals, and has recently decided to try a new direction. First organized in 936, it was ruled for decades by a noble family, which led it through many struggles with other nations. Radical changes in sentiment and philosophy led to a democracy for a time, but corruption felled that experiment. From the chaos, a dictator rose to power. Most recently, the dictator was overthrown, and a member of the nobility was installed again as the nation's leader. The current baron wants to lead his state to learning and enlightenment. Since Almarrón has gone through so many changes, outsiders do not know what to expect in policy or in reaction to outside events. The inhabitants and even the ruler are sometimes confused themselves.

Almarrón has always been reclusive; this inward focus has not changed with its new leader, and lends a general lack of knowledge about the state. Like many Guardianos, Almarrónians have the reputation of hot-blooded Swash-bucklers. Traders have noticed the new government is encouraging quality crafts to increase the nation's output of fine marketable goods. With no other information confirmable, everyone is waiting to see what happens.

The Nation

Much of Almarrón's territory is rocky, inhospitable hill country, but a large, fertile plain occupies the heart of the nation, and supports a majority of the population. Forested slopes and cliffs guard Almarrón's shores.

Almarrón, like so many other baronies, has had a bloody history. Organized from the confused southern portions of Sotto when that barony fell to Gargoña in 936, Almarrón faced difficulties from the very beginning; its people were disorganized and its nobles inexperienced. To help consolidate his new nation, the first baron of Almarrón unified his people in a crusade against the southern holdings of Nueva Esperanza, conquering that area in 939. The singularity of purpose forged in the conquest of Nueva Esperanza helped hold the state together for almost four decades.

About 15 years before the founding of Almarrón, a small barony called Escudor had broken away from Sotto; when Almarrón emerged from the division of Sotto, Escudor was its neighbor. Unfortunately, Escudor's existence cut off Almarrón's access to the best route inland, and Almarrón blocked Escudor's route to the sea. Many disagreements simmered between the two states, and one finally boiled over into a war in 977.

Almarrón defeated Escudor; inspired by its victory, Almarrón immediately turned north to initiate hostilities with Gargoña and Rivera. Here it was not so fortunate, or perhaps it was simply better matched. The two states merged to resist Almarrón's aggression. On top of this, while war progressed in the north, the people of Nueva Esperanza began an internal war for independence. Led by their General Cimmaron, the people of Nueva Esperanza won their fight for freedom in 980.

The long years of tension and culminating defeats so disgusted the general populace that the people of Almarrón rose up and overthrew the baron and the old nobility. They embarked on a democracy, using old Traladaran writings as a basis for their government. Almarrónians managed their experiment for almost 15 years. But revolutionary fervor had slain or exiled the most experienced leaders (the nobility); the people elected to office fell prey to indecision, endless argument, and greed.

In 994, poverty and hot tempers threatened to destroy Almarrón from within. Don Esteban, Señor Alcade, the mayor of Ciudad Tejillas, intervened. Using the city's garrison, the mayor ousted rival factions, installed himself as dictator, and named himself "El Salvador" (the Savior). His self-proclaimed title was technically true, because he did save Almarrón from complete collapse. However, he then initiated policies that made him very unpopular.

First, he seized what he perceived to be the nation's most important asset: the silver mines in Sierra del Plata, mines that supplied silver for coinage to many other nations. Don Esteban also established taxes on the state's other exports, including coffee and tobacco, and much of the wealth went directly to his own coffers, rather than into a national treasury.

The people of Almarrón resented the usurper and his odious tyranny. The poorest peons ran from the dictator's tax collectors and Torreóner mercenaries. Many bands of insurgents were formed, some dreaming of restoring the old democracy, others loyal to the old baron's still-living son, Barón Maximiliano de Almarrón y Escudor.

In 1008, after 12 years under the dictator, rebel forces were able to take advantage of general unrest and defeat Don Esteban's troops. The dictator was removed from power, and Barón Maximiliano was established as the leader of Almarrón. Don Esteban still lives, and he tries to sway people by claiming to be a commoner who kept the state out of the hands of the nobility. However, Maximiliano is a just ruler, and the people are ready to give the nobility another chance.

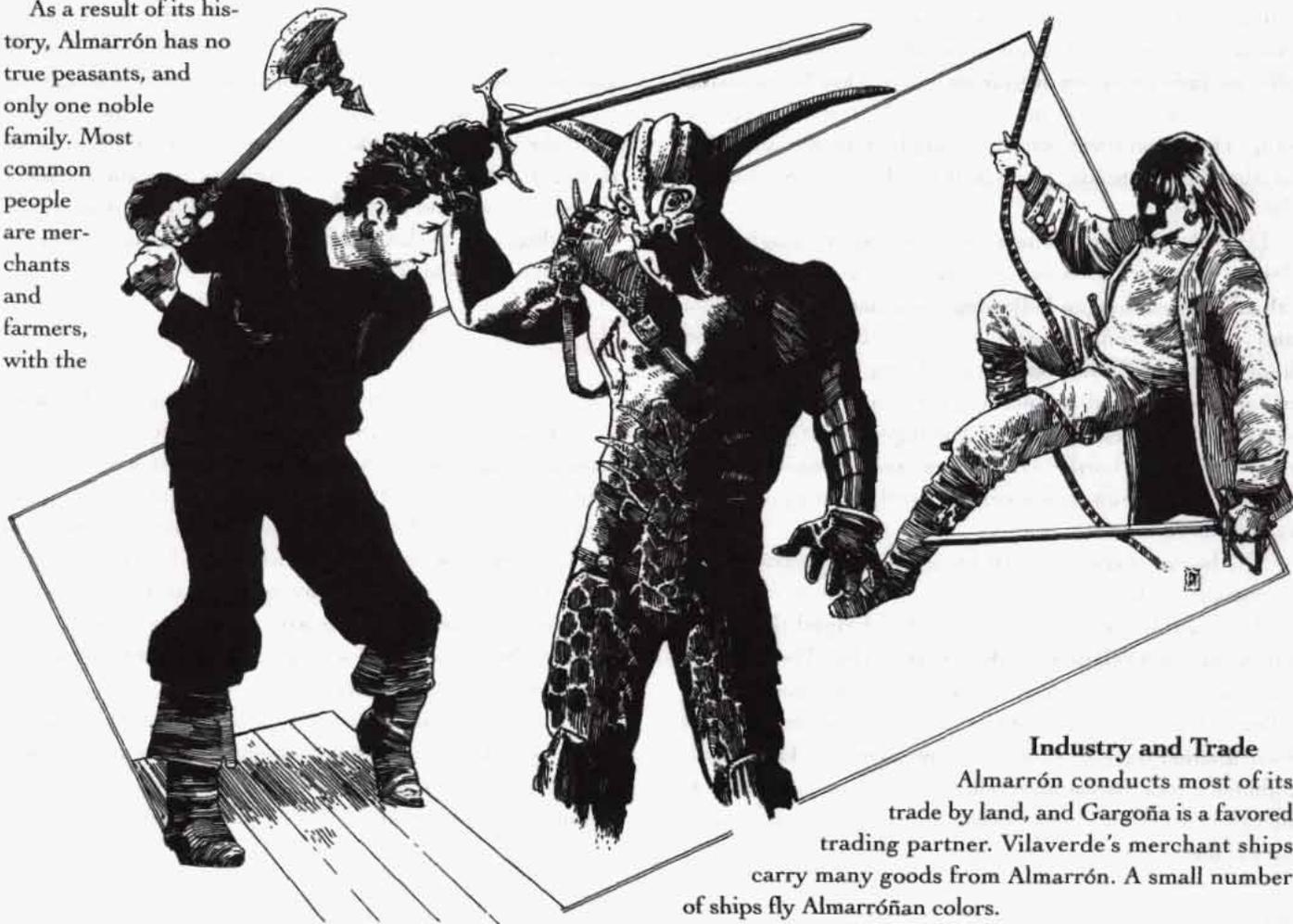
The People

Almarrón is a nation of humans, though there are a few families of demihumans scattered across the state. The

people of Almarrón are poor, and they are tired of war. Many remember the nation's old democracy as a time of trouble; these are just as happy to avoid politics and allow their noble baron to lead.

However, the older inhabitants have lived under several political systems, and as a democracy they were free; they have not forgotten that heady feeling. Under Don Esteban, they lost much of their freedom, and that chafed—to the point of revolution. Now, these older citizens have a strong desire to remain free; having experienced the upheavals of the past, they know they can survive them if they must. Fortunately, the new baron respects their viewpoint.

As a result of its history, Almarrón has no true peasants, and only one noble family. Most common people are merchants and farmers, with the



baron offering incentives to establish a "class" of craftspeople. Those interested in adventuring are mostly warriors, though rogues and more than a few wizards and priests also take up the lifestyle.

As one might expect of a freedom-loving people, there are many Swashbucklers among Almarrónians. There is also a high number of Local Heroes; many of these helped overthrow the dictator and have moved on to adventuring careers. Honorbound, Gauchos, and Scouts are encountered with some regularity in Almarrón.

The Red Curse

The worst effects of the Red Curse are not prevalent in Almarrón. One of the ways Don Maximiliano has won support is by distributing *cinnabryl* to the people. The baron has used the captured treasure hoard of Don Esteban to purchase this protective metal.

Most people of Almarrón choose to not think about the Red Curse; they dismiss it as something that harms others. The few Afflicted who do live in Almarrón stay with their families and friends, and are not judged harshly simply because of deformities. A cure for Affliction can also be purchased in Ciudad Tejillas.

Industry and Trade

Almarrón conducts most of its trade by land, and Gargoña is a favored trading partner. Vilaverde's merchant ships carry many goods from Almarrón. A small number of ships fly Almarrónian colors.

Almarrón's main imports are food from Saragón and *cinnabryl* from Vilaverde. The state's primary exports are silver, tobacco, and coffee. Most of the nation's coffee is exported to Hule and Yavdlom, via Vilaverdan ships. Since the baron started encouraging crafts, Almarrón is beginning to export a few fine, finished goods, such as furniture, clothing, and jewelry.

Religion

As is the case in most baronies, religion is not terribly important in Almarrón. The Ambassador is venerated by a majority of the citizens. Milan and Valerias are popular, especially among Swashbucklers and other adventurers. Veterans of the revolt that overthrew Don Esteban favor the General. The Judge receives attention from those whom Don Esteban's rule oppressed.

The Ruler

Barón Maximiliano de Almarrón y Escudor is an intelligent human and a charismatic leader; he is a fighter with the Noble kit. The baron is not quite 30 years old, born just after his father was removed from power. Don Maximiliano was raised a good person, and his pride was tempered by exile. The baron spent his early years in Saragón, returning to Almarrón a decade ago to lead freedom fighters against the dictator.

Don Maximiliano is best described as an enlightened despot, ruling with a firm hand, but so far avoiding the pitfall of overtaxation, and allowing a fair amount of freedom and learning among the people. Though Don Maximiliano hopes to capture Don Esteban and bring him to trial, most of his troops are tied up guarding urban areas, trails, the silver mines, and the Castle of Tordegena that wards the nation's western border against Yazi gnoll raids. Still, Don Esteban has been unsuccessful finding support for a counter-revolt.

The baron is friends with Don Luis de Manzanas, an important noble in Saragón, and an Inheritor as well; this, and his familiarity with the state, has helped the baron establish good relations with Saragón. Don Maximiliano has also cultivated the friendship of Doña Esperanza, ruler of Gargoña; that noblewoman regrets she does not have another daughter for the baron to marry. Don Maximiliano is looking for an intelligent and beautiful wife, so he can leave strong, smart heirs to care for Almarrón after he has died.

The Capital

Ciudad Tejillas, a town of 4,200, is located at the mouth of the river that runs through northern Almarrón. The capital is a center for commerce, and it has a fine fishing fleet as well. Don Maximiliano encourages regular celebrations to commemorate important events. This has raised morale in the city. Ciudad Tejillas is a lively place once more, filled with fine taverns and inns, even sporting a theater and a museum. Though the people of the capital are hard workers, the boisterous enthusiasms of both local and visiting Swashbucklers make for an exciting

nightlife. Still, the town is fairly safe; the adventurers who live in Ciudad Tejillas are protective of its people and its reputation.

Other Places of Interest

There are two large villages in Almarrón: Costella, a farming village that also engages in forestry and supports the silver mines in Sierra del Plata; and Paso Dorado, a trading, farming, and fishing center located upriver from Ciudad Tejillas. Castillo de Tordegena, on Almarrón's western border, was once a proud castle vital to Almarrón's defense. Almost destroyed by Yazi gnolls during the recent wars, Tordegena has still not been restored for habitation. A small garrison camps nearby, and occasionally picks through the ruins to roust whatever has taken up residence there. However, the baron would like to find an experienced group of dungeon explorers willing to enter the castle and its many underground levels, to determine whether it is worth rebuilding, and to clear out whatever vermin have taken up residence in the last couple of years.

Baronía de Saragón

Saragón has quite a reputation among the Savage Baronies and along the entire Savage Coast. First, it is known as a haven for sages, scientists, wizards, and other scholars. Second, Inheritors initially came to prominence in Saragón, and the state is still home to many, including the leader of the Crimson Inheritors, Audra the Masked. Third, Saragón is the buffer that protects many of the coastal nations from the Yazak goblinoids; this is partially due to the *careta de la barrera*, the *barrier mask*, a magical item fully described in the adventure *Divided We Fall*.

History is important to the proud, able folk of Saragón, and a favorite topic of study. Saragóners make good leaders because they are schooled in strategy, tactics, and military history. Many noted adventurers hail from Saragón.

The Nation

When most people picture Saragón, they think of the fertile, river valley farmland of Rio Maldito and Rio Copos. But the barony also encompasses wide grasslands ranged by cattle, and deep woods, including part of Bosque de las Sombras, the Forest of Phantoms. Saragón is very flat, mostly rolling prairieland, with just a few hills in the east.

The first Ispan settlers in this region formed the Barony of Montejo in 909. They were cattle herders, and they built Las Manadas as their capital. Six years later, other colonists founded the State of Aranjuez, claiming the land around

what would come to be known as Rio Maldito, the Cursed River. The people of Aranjuez were from distant Ylaruam, a land of genies and desert riders.

The both settler groups discovered they were not the first occupants of the region. Each encountered human natives of primarily Oltec descent, but with a heavy admixture of Nithian blood. These natives had not merely interbred with Nithians, but had learned their philosophy and arts as well, and retained the culture even after the Nithians were eradicated. Ispan and Ylari settlers, in turn, intermarried freely with these natives, giving rise to a dark-skinned people with an intriguing philosophical mix.

Both Montejo and Aranjuez were peaceful states, and they got along well; commerce began early between

Guadalante

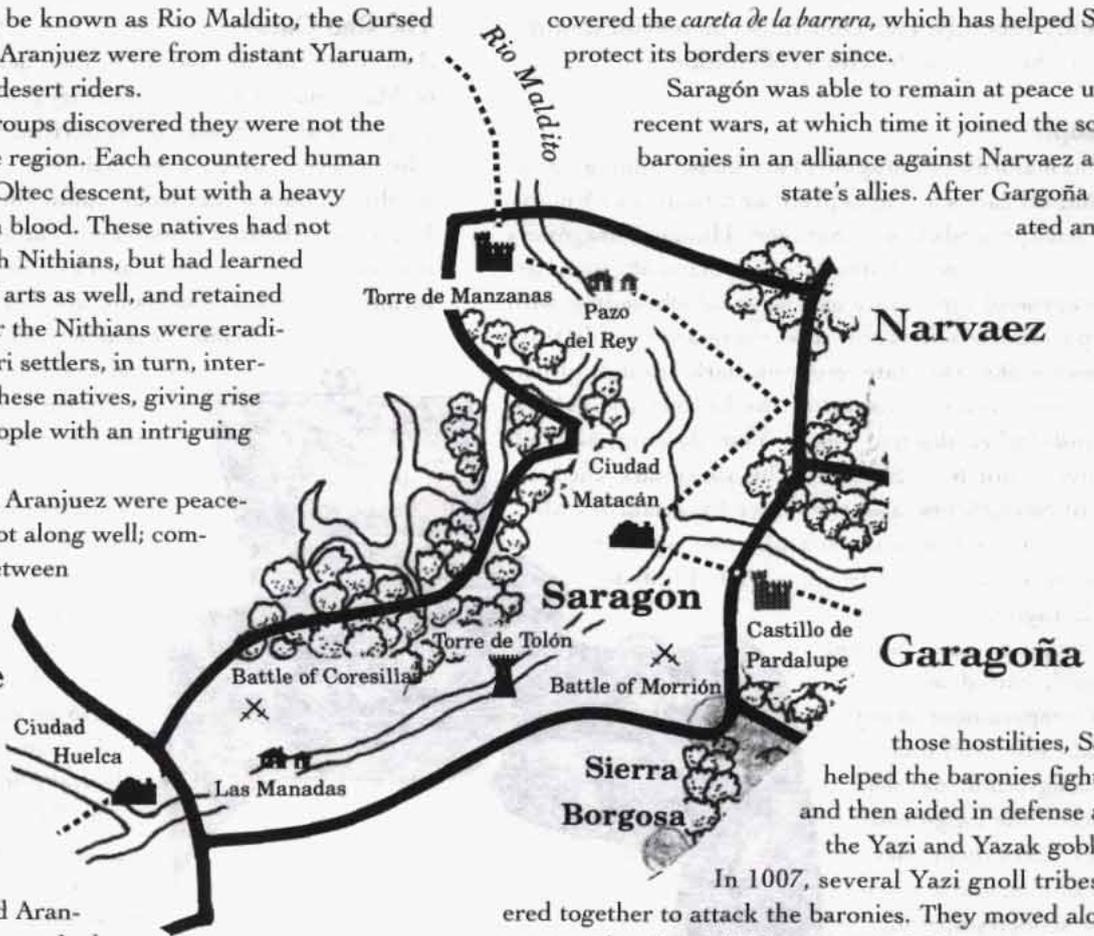
them, the states cooperated for defense, and their people mingled.

In 962, Yazi gnolls attacked Montejo and Aranjuez; the two baronies worked together to defeat the invasion. The humans met the gnolls in the forest west of their baronies; their battle, more a set of individual skirmishes, ranged through hundreds of square miles of woodland. Eventually the humans defeated the gnolls, but so many lives were lost that the river draining through the forest ran with blood. These reddened waters earned the river its nickname Rio Maldito, the Cursed River, a name that eventually stuck and became official. Similarly, the forest became known as Bosque de las Sombras, the Forest of Phantoms, in memory of the people who died there.

After the battle, Montejo and Aranjuez began serious diplomatic talks that resulted in their merger, in 966, into the Barony of Saragón. Saragón has been reasonably peaceful since then, the quiet allowing its sages and scientists to flourish. Peace has been punctuated by conflict, of course: Saragón and Guadalante disagreed over watering rights for cattle, leading to the Battle of Coresillas in 992, when Gauchos of the two nations met on the plains near Las Manadas. Several brave men and women from both states died that day, with no clear winner. Fortunately, cooler heads soon prevailed, and the two nations settled their dispute diplomatically, with the Treaty of Coresillas, also in 992. Not long after this, some brave adventurers dis-

covered the *careta de la barrera*, which has helped Saragón protect its borders ever since.

Saragón was able to remain at peace until the recent wars, at which time it joined the southern baronies in an alliance against Narvaez and that state's allies. After Gargoña negotiated an end to



those hostilities, Saragón helped the baronies fight Hule, and then aided in defense against the Yazi and Yazak goblinoids.

In 1007, several Yazi gnom tribes gathered together to attack the baronies. They moved along the western borders of Almarrón and Gargoña, destroying Castillo de Tordegena in Almarrón and Castillo de Pardalupe in Gargoña.

Saragón was unable to muster forces in time to help the defenders of those castles, but soon after lured the gnolls into Saragón. Because they wanted to defeat the gnolls, not simply chase them away or worse, drive them back into Almarrón and Gargoña, the Saragóners forsook the protection of the *careta de la barrera*. Under the leadership of Don Claudio de Tolón, baronet of Montejo, and Don Luis de Manzanas, baronet of Aranjuez, Saragóner troops soundly defeated the gnolls at the Battle of Morrión. They were aided by Sir John of Cimmaron, who led unexpected cavalry reinforcements into the battle at a critical time.

Yazak goblinoids attacked throughout the baronies over the next two years, but were unable to get into Saragón (or through to Almarrón or Gargoña) because the *careta de la barrera* was once again in place. Unfortunately, when magic failed for a week in 1009, so did the magical mask; some patient goblinoids who had stayed in the area chose that time to attack Torre de Manzanas, and almost levelled it, while Don Luis was at the capital. The baronet spent the next few months reclaiming, cleaning, rebuilding, and expanding his tower; the restoration

ended only recently, and Don Luis commemorated the opening of his new castle with a celebration.

The People

The great majority of Saragóners are human, though as in Gargoña, all races are accepted, and families of many diverse backgrounds live in Saragón. Human Saragóners are generally browner-skinned than humans of other baronies because of their more extensive interbreeding with native populations. Beyond this, there are two distinct skin-tones within the state: medium-dark families of primarily Ispan descent, found in the barony's southern areas; and darker-skinned folk of Ylari descent, most of whom live in northern Saragón. This racial mix, the tolerance of Saragóners, and their love for wizardry all serve to irritate the more zealous among Narvaezans, who would love to bring their Inquisition to Saragón.

The people of Saragón tend to be quick-witted and as fiery of temperament as any Baronials; however, their Ylari background, and the influence of the long-dead Nithians, gives them tolerance of others, and a reverence for scholarship and storytelling. Saragóners are also insatiably curious about their world and the myriad things in it; they seek to analyze, learn, and understand. Their culture has given rise to countless astronomers and to outstanding mathematicians. Many Saragóners follow the path to arcane knowledge, becoming wizards or alchemists.

Besides wizards, warriors (especially rangers) and rogues are also common; priests are less likely, but druids study in Saragón in addition to clerics. Saragón is where the first vial of *crimson essence* was created, so it was home to the first Inheritors. The land still has many Inheritors, and Swashbucklers and Local Heroes are also common. Saragón is the only Enlightened State with a large nobility; the Noble kit is used here as well. There are Gauchos, Honourbound, Defenders, and Scouts. Wizards become both Militants and Mystics, and clerics are usually War Priests or Local Heroes. The 12th-level druid for the Savage Baronies, a human named Kalil, lives in Bosque de las Sombras, often attended by other druids. There are also a few Myrmidons from Saragón. Adventurers are more common in Saragón than in most of the baronies.

The Red Curse

Just over a decade ago, Luis, then heir to the title baronet of Manzanás, led an adventuring group that uncovered a prophecy about power to be derived from the Red Curse. The group of adventurers paid a Saragóner alchemist to produce a potion that would allow them to manipulate the Legacies of the Red Curse. For a rather high fee, the alchemist concocted the first vials of *crimson essence*; he sold the formula to the adventurers for another large sum.

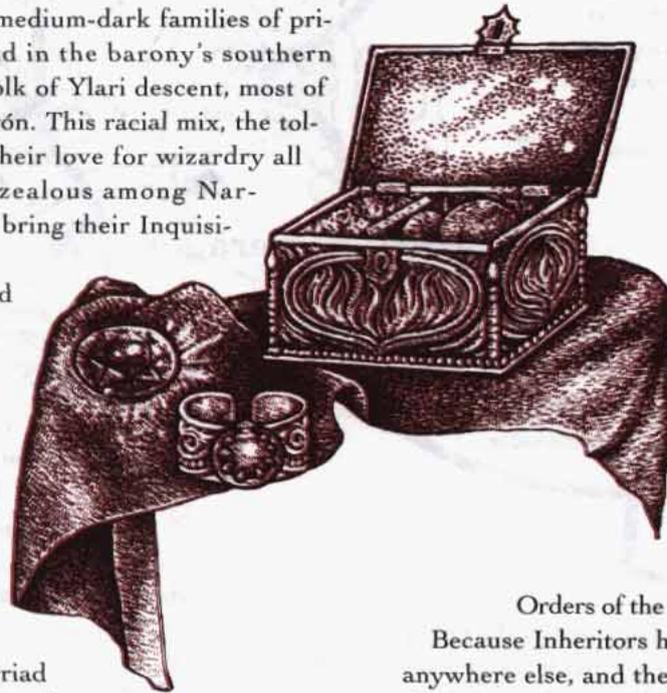
While the potion was being readied, these 11 adventurers trained themselves to accept the power of the Red Curse, and when they imbibed the *crimson essence*, they became the first Inheritors. Eventually, the group split up because of differing philosophies. Some belonged to the Brotherhood of Order, while others held memberships in the Friends of Freedom. When Inheritors began to rise to importance in both groups, others, including Luis, joined the Neutral Alliance to balance things out. Eventually, Inheritors came to take over all three groups, which two years ago became the three Orders of the Inheritors: the

Orders of the Ruby, of Crimson, and of the Flame.

Because Inheritors have existed in Saragón longer than anywhere else, and there are more of them in this barony than elsewhere, both *cinnabryl* and *red steel* are common in Saragón. Most *cinnabryl* is imported through the Inheritor network, outside of normal trade routes, though it is rumored there is a secret *cinnabryl* mine in Saragón, possibly deep beneath Torre de Manzanás. *Red steel* comes from depleted *cinnabryl*, and most is gathered by Inheritors.

While *cinnabryl* is relatively common in Saragón, and it is distributed fairly to those who need it, Inheritors encourage the use of *maintain* spells for most people, to reduce the number dependent on *cinnabryl*. This policy is effective, because Saragóner Inheritors take pains to explain to people exactly what *cinnabryl* does, and why it is better for many of them to never use *cinnabryl*, rather than use it and then risk running out.

The people of Saragón are well-educated about the curse, and even most children understand about its effects and course. Instead of a cause for fear, the Red Curse is an object of study in Saragón. Afflicted are rare here, and those Afflicted who live in Saragón are readily accepted by their families and friends. A cure for Affliction can be obtained, for the right price, in any major settlement in Saragón.



Industry and Trade

While Inheritors carry on a brisk trade in *cinnabryl* and *red steel*, this exchange takes place outside of normal commercial channels, and does not count toward the barony's exports and imports.

Saragón's primary export is knowledge. The state's sages and scholars answer questions for visitors and, via letters, for all nations of the Savage Coast. Consultations carry a fee, and those fees are taxed, enriching the nation. Saragón is largely self-sufficient, so it imports little, though artwork from Gargoña and crafts from Almarrón are both popular. Saragón usually trades food to those states in return, and supplies food to Cimmaron as well.

Religion

While few people of Saragón are truly religious, all the Immortals typical in the baronies are revered here. The Ambassador, the General, and the Judge, as well as Milan and Valerias, receive about equal respect. The Ylari Immortal Al-Kalim is also popular in Saragón, and his high regard

for scholarship has helped lead Saragóners to their present cultural level.

The Ruler

The leader of Saragón is Barón Balthazar de Montejo y Aranjuez. The baron is a human Noble, and is an experienced wizard. Don Balthazar has ruled the barony for almost 20 years and is nearly 80 years old. He is a wise ruler who encourages equality and freedom of thought among his people. Don Balthazar has followed the path of Saragón's previous rulers to make his barony prosperous and peaceful, while still maintaining its ability to defend itself from attackers.

Saragón has a fair militia, and, in addition, can call upon its Gauchos for defense in times of trouble. Saragón also hires Torreóner mercenary lancers to patrol the borders and take care of small groups of intruders, especially Yazi gnolls who sometimes raid the fertile Rio Copos region. In addition to soldiers, Saragón also has an artifact of great power,



an ancient Oltec mask known as the *careta de la barrera*, the *barrier mask*; this item is the face depicted in the center of the graphic treatment that starts each chapter in products for the RED STEEL campaign. Described fully in the adventure *Divided We Fall*, the mask can strike fear into any force of more than 100 hostile intruders who cross the border intending to do harm. The device has twice prevented armies from Narvaez from invading Saragón, which is fortunate, because Los Matónes of Narvaez would certainly create havoc in Saragón. The Oltec artifact can also generate a field of force around a manor or tower to negate all transportation spells such as *dimension door*, *passwall*, *teleport*, *gate*, etc.

Saragón has an unusual style of government. Its baron is advised by a triumvirate, the baronets of Montejo, Aranjuez, and Saragón. The baron meets regularly with his advisors. The other nobles (or their representatives) meet once a month in Ciudad Matacán, where they establish policy for the realm. Unlike leaders of other baronies, the baron of Saragón is obligated to follow rulings of the Parliament of Lords. While the baron can (and does) make day-to-day policy decisions, these can be overturned by Parliament. The baron considers his options carefully before making decisions, and Parliament deliberates before overturning them, to preserve the unity of the government.

Parliament also ratifies inheritances, deciding whether the child of a noble is truly worthy of a title before passing it on (material inheritances are not the concern of Parliament). Likewise, a member of Parliament can nominate a commoner to join the ranks of the nobility; a nominee must receive a two-thirds vote of Parliament to be accepted (at which time he or she must begin attending, or sending a representative to, Parliament).

The speaker of Parliament is the baronet of Saragón, currently Doña Angelíta de Matacán. If she is unable to attend, her duties can be filled by one of the two other baronets, the baronet of Montejo (currently Don Claudio de Tolón) and the baronet of Aranjuez (currently Don Luis de Manzananas). As mentioned previously, these three baronets are advisors to the baron of Saragón.

When a baron dies, Parliament chooses a replacement from among the three baronets. When a baronet dies or is promoted, a potential replacement is nominated by the baron, and must be approved by a simple majority of Parliament. The baronet titles are tied to regions, not specific locations: Aranjuez must come from the north, Montejo from the south, and Saragón from the center.

The baron of Saragón assumes the titles “of Montejo and of Aranjuez” regardless of his or her previous residence, to represent the unity of the state. Doña Angelíta is favored to become the next leader of Saragón, though Don Luis has

support as well; most members of Parliament consider Don Claudio too young and inexperienced. As previously noted, Don Luis is an Inheritor, one of the first; many members of Parliament feel this potential conflict of interest makes Don Luis unsuitable for the post of baron.

Note that an important rival and enemy of Don Luis is a former Inheritor named Balazar—not to be confused with Barón Balthazar, who is a close friend. Both Don Luis and Balazar appear in the adventure *Divided We Fall*, and are described thoroughly there.

The Capital

Ciudad Matacán has a population of 6,600 mostly human citizens, but members of all Savage Coast races reside here. The capital is a safe town, quiet during the day. However, Ciudad Matacán boasts a university and several schools, and the students tend to get a little boisterous after sunset. Most inhabitants of the capital are scholars of one kind or another, though merchants and adventurers are common as well.

Other Places of Interest

Except for the capital, the only settlement in Saragón larger than 100 people is the village of Las Manadas, a center for about 900 farmers and Gauchos. There was another village in Saragón until four years ago; Pazo del Rey had a population close to 300 before it was razed by a small force of Afflicted Torreóner mercenaries at the behest of Narvaez. The scene related at the beginning of the RED STEEL campaign set describes Don Luis de Manzananas’ journey to Pazo del Rey, and his encounter with one of the Torreóner mercenaries, whom he first mistook for a villager.

Other prominent sites of Saragón include Torre de Manzananas, actually a castle owned by Don Luis, baronet of Aranjuez; and Torre de Tolón, a tower that serves as home to Don Claudio, baronet of Montejo. Both fortresses are important to the defense of Saragón, and their lords are often (as now) nominees for the baronet positions. Barón Balthazar was once lord of Torre de Tolón, and is Don Claudio’s granduncle.

The battle sites of Saragón are also worth note. The largest is certainly Bosque de las Sombras, the Forest of Phantoms, said to be haunted by those who died in 963, when humans from Saragón and Aranjuez united to defeat raiding Yazi gnolls. Another marks the Battle of Morrión, where Saragón avenged Almarrón and Gargoña by slaying the Yazi gnolls who had destroyed Almarrón’s Castillo de Tordegena and Gargoña’s Castillo de Pardalupe. A much smaller site is the Battle of Coresillas, where Gauchos from Guadalante and Saragón met over water rights.



CHAPTER FIVE GUADALANTE AND CIMMARON

These two states are unique among the Savage Baronies because of the cultures which have risen within them. Though their people have the same fiery temperaments as the other Guardianos, the people of Guadalante and Cimmaron apply their passions in different ways.

Sometimes known as Lands of the Gauchos, Guadalante and Cimmaron are concerned much more with the land than the sea. Instead of smooth, swashbuckling rogues, these two states have rough, range-riding warriors. The frontier feel is much more prominent in these two states than elsewhere in the Savage Baronies; the people are a little rougher, and perhaps a little tougher, than the dandies and courtiers of the other baronies.

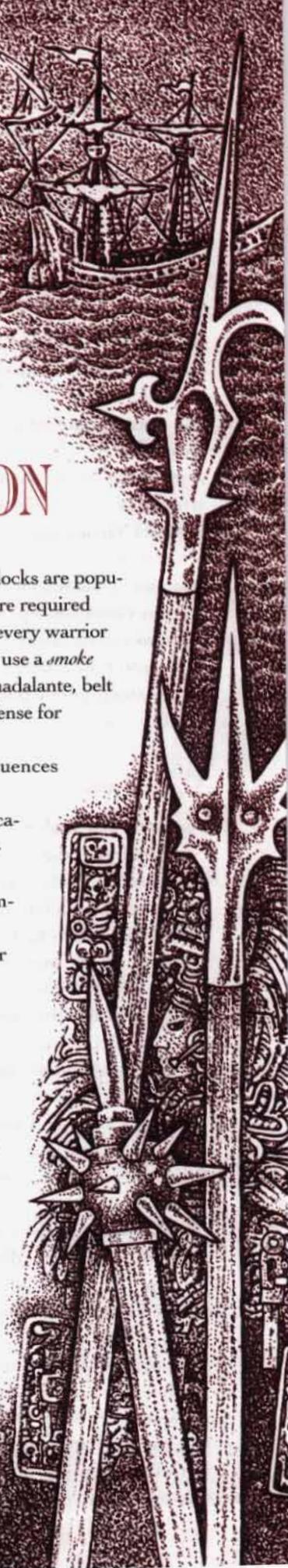
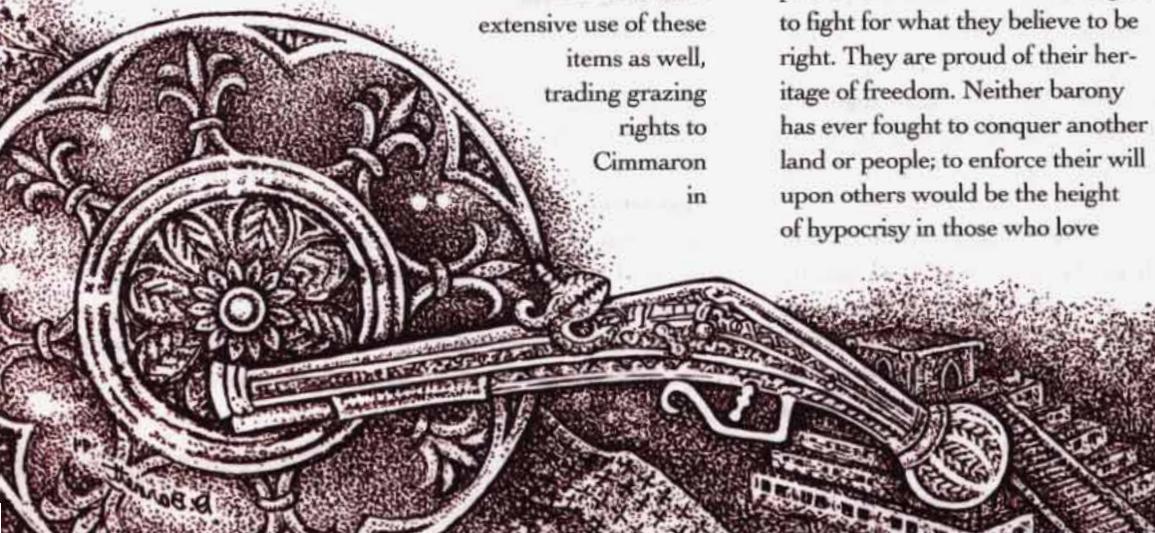
While Vilaverde and Texeiras have the strongest navies in the baronies, and Narvaez and Torreón have the strongest infantries, Guadalante and Cimmaron have the most impressive horsemen. The *gauchos* of the plains, brought together to fight for their freedom, make formidable light cavalry units.

In addition, Cimmaron is considered the home of *smoke powder* and wheel-lock pistols; Guadalante has made extensive use of these items as well, trading grazing rights to Cimmaron in

exchange for weapons. While wheel locks are popular with many Swashbucklers, they are required equipment among *Gauchos*. Almost every warrior of the two small states knows how to use a *smoke powder* weapon. In Cimmaron and Guadalante, belt pistols are the preferred personal defense for many people.

The ubiquity of firearms also influences dueling styles in these two states. While *smoke powder* weapons are occasionally used for duels in other baronies, duelists of Guadalante and Cimmaron have become famous simply because they are skilled shots. Other baronies prefer the sword for its elegance, but firearms—and sometimes daggers—are the weapons of choice here.

Personal bravery and honor are very important to the people of these lands. Guadalantans and Cimmarons pride themselves on their willingness to fight for what they believe to be right. They are proud of their heritage of freedom. Neither barony has ever fought to conquer another land or people; to enforce their will upon others would be the height of hypocrisy in those who love



freedom so well.

Guadalante and Cimmaron would be likely to unify—if either state saw any need for it. Their ideals are comparable and their people similar; their governments are friendly to one another. However, both nations are fiercely independent and proud; both feel they are doing fine as they are.

Estado de Guadalante

Guadalante is the most loosely organized of the Savage Baronies. It has only two real population centers, and encompasses mostly open grassland, with a few haciendas and camps scattered across the countryside. Baronials outside of Guadalante and Cimmaron tend to think of Guadalante less as a nation and more as a large ranch. This attitude is irrevocably altered in those people who attempt to attack Guadalante or trespass on its lands; the Gauchos of Guadalante are fiercely proud of their nation, and do all they can to maintain its rights and power.

Most Guardianos picture Guadalantans as crude ruffians with no appreciation for the finer things in life. For the most part, they are correct; the typical Guadalantan would rather sleep under the stars than in a bed, and does not practice “civilized” manners.

The Nation

Fertile farmland along the banks of the Rio Copos and Rio Negro relieves the monotonous expanses of Guadalantan grasslands. Guadalante also claims a small portion of the Sierra Desperada hills on its southern border.

The barony has had a relatively peaceful history, at least in regard to the other baronies. Guadalante was founded in 985 when the States of Copetez and Bigotillos were united through the marriage of their heirs. Copetez had been founded around Ciudad Huelca in 908, and Bigotillos was established north of Rio Copos in 947. The two states seldom quarreled, because there was enough rangeland to go around. The rulers of the two states often communicated, and their children’s match was one of love. When Maria of Copetez married Guillermo of Bigotillos, their parents happily relinquished control of the entire united domain to the newlyweds. The two ruled together, and when Guillermo died, Maria passed the domain on to her son Dante and his wife. Guadalante has been lead by a married couple ever since.

Except for periodic troubles with Yazak goblinoids to the north and Yazi gnolls to the southeast, Guadalante has had few conflicts. One such was a disagreement with Saragón over watering rights, an argument that came to a head at the Battle of Coresillas, but was soon after solved with the Treaty of Coresillas. The only other conflict

Guadalante has had with another barony came just four years ago, when Guadalante allied with the other southern baronies to resist the depredations of Narvaez and that state’s allies. Guadalantan Gauchos proved the effectiveness of cavalry against ground troops in the few battles fought between the baronies before Hule’s invasion united them all.

The People

Nearly all Guadalantans are human, but there are a very few demihumans living within the nation’s borders. Turtle peasants occasionally work on the haciendas; lupins and rakasta are not welcome in Guadalante because they tend to spook horses. Goblinoids are discouraged as residents, but peacable merchants occasionally visit for trade. Few lizardkin have ever strayed into Guadalante, and the Guadalantans find them fascinating when they do visit.

Guadalante is home of the Gauchos, free-spirited wanderers of the pampas. Gauchos can be recognized easily by their calf-high boots, puffy pants, ample shirts, and broad hats. These range-riders are almost always armed, and usually carry at least a dagger and a wheel-lock pistol; bolas, javelins, and lances are common as well. Gauchos seldom wear armor. In peacetime, most Gauchos raise cattle and live in the pampas in large, usually fortified, haciendas.

Guadalante has a higher proportion of adventurers than most of the other baronies, and a higher proportion of warriors as well. There are a few rogues, wizards, and priests to leaven the mix. The most common kit in Guadalante is, of course, the Gaucho. Local Heroes are common, and there are also some Honorbound and Nobles; Swashbucklers, Myrmidons, and Defenders are rare in Guadalante. Those Defenders who do live in Guadalante are usually devoted to the General, though Valerias is quite popular as well. Most Guadalantan wizards are Militants; their clerics are usually War Priests. Both the Scout and the Bandit are popular among Guadalantan rogues.

The Red Curse

Guadalante gets most of its *cinnabryl* from Cimmaron, but imports barely enough for the nobility, wealthy merchants, and adventurers. Most common folk rely on *maintain* spells from local clergy, and many become Afflicted. As in the majority of the Savage Baronies, Afflicted are shunned in Guadalante. However, since the nation is wide open, there are plenty of places where “normal” people are miles away; several haciendas in Guadalante are run entirely by Afflicted. Those Guadalantans unaffected by the detriments of the Red Curse tend to ignore the curse; most look upon the Afflicted as something less than human.

Industry and Trade

Some *red steel* and *cinnabryl* is imported into Guadalante, but the barony's major import is *smoke powder*. All these substances are obtained from Cimmaron, which is Guadalante's main trading partner. The landlocked nation also deals with Saragón, mostly for finished goods of Saragóner and Almarróñan make. Occasional trading takes place between Guadalante and Robrenn, especially for the lumber with which wealthy Guadalantans build their homes (poor inhabitants build their houses of mud bricks). Some weapons from Renardy and Bellayne are also imported.

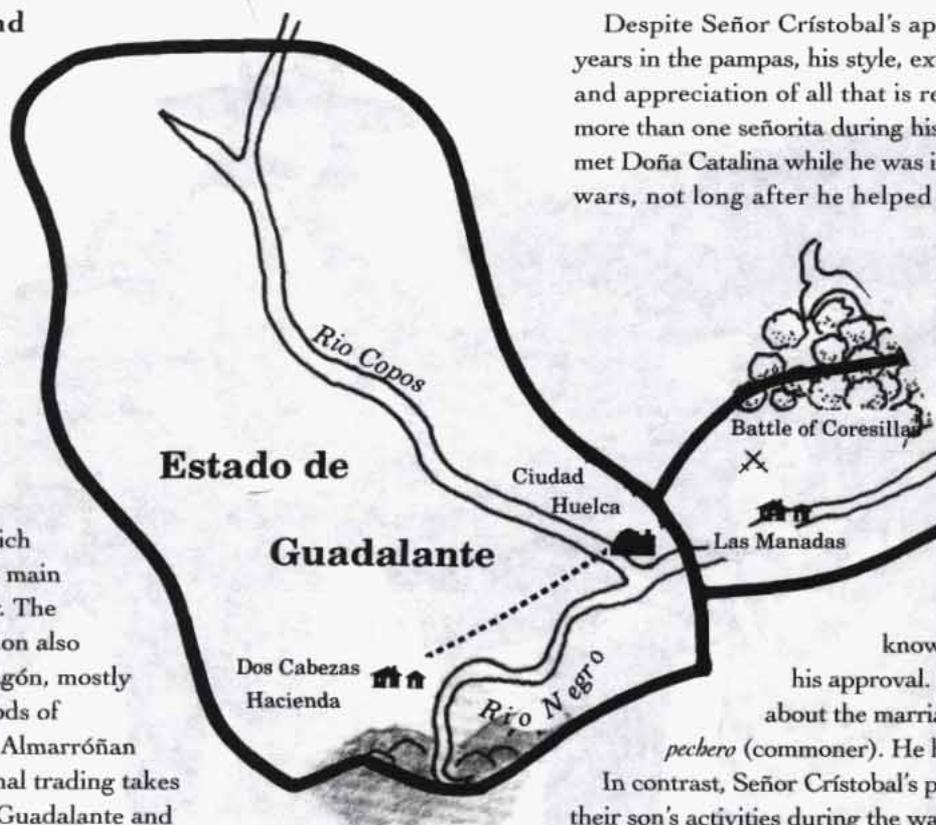
Guadalante's only major exports are horses and beef, but these go to all the baronies; some horses are also traded to Robrenn, and beef to Renardy and Bellayne.

Religion

Guadalantans care little for religion as a rule, but Valerias and the General are especially favored, and the Judge is well-respected. Milan and the Ambassador gain little attention from tough Guadalantans, who consider those Immortals to be too weak.

The Ruler

Guadalante is an oligarchy ruled by the more prominent families among the cattle traders. These are Guadalante's nobility—perhaps a bit rougher than most Baronial nobles, but nobles nonetheless. The current rulers of Guadalante are Señor Crístobal "El Barbudo" de Bigotillos y Copetez, and his wife, Doña Catalina de Bigotillos y Narvaez, the daughter of Barón Hugo of Narvaez. Señor Crístobal "The Bearded" is a rather peaceful if boisterous ex-adventurer; though a member of the nobility, and possessed of the gaucho spirit, Señor Crístobal grew up among common folk and is a ranger with the Local Hero kit.



Despite Señor Crístobal's apparent roughness from his years in the pampas, his style, extravagance, sense of humor, and appreciation of all that is refined in life have charmed more than one señorita during his visits to other baronies. He met Doña Catalina while he was in Narvaez during the recent wars, not long after he helped ravage Ciudad Quimeras

. Despite Señor Crístobal's actions (or perhaps because of them and to spite her father), Doña

Catalina became smitten with the noble

gaucho and secretly married him, without Barón Hugo's

knowledge and certainly without his approval. Barón Hugo was not happy about the marriage and views Crístobal as a *pechero* (commoner). He has refused to send a dowry.

In contrast, Señor Crístobal's parents were pleased with all their son's activities during the war, and after he was married, abdicated in favor of Crístobal and Catalina.

After some brief difficulties with Saragón, and despite the friction with Narvaez, Guadalante is at relative peace with the Savage Baronies. This leaves Yazí and Yazak incursions as Señor Crístobal's main concerns. However, the Gauchos are more than willing to defend their land. Armed with wheel locks and lances, they are well suited to combat in the vast grasslands. They are the most mobile military force in the baronies.

The Capital

Ciudad Huelca has a population of 6,300, mostly farmers, merchants, crafters, and laborers. It is a sleepy town—at least, during the daytime. In the evenings when the Gauchos ride in, especially nights when cattle drives end at the capital, the town becomes a veritable maelstrom of activity, with business roaring in the taverns and more than a few fights. Most merchants and crafters lock up their storefronts (and their daughters and sons), and wait for the town to return to normal when the sun rises again.

Other Places of Interest

Guadalante has only one other major settlement, the village of Dos Cabezas Hacienda, built up around a large manor owned by one of the noble families. The village has a population of more than 300 peasant farmers. But it is



known more as a gathering place for the Gauchos of southern Guadalupe. As in Ciudad Huelca, Dos Cabezas Hacienda is usually quiet, but the atmosphere becomes decidedly more rowdy when Gauchos or Bandits ride into town. Duels, fistfights, and public drunkenness are more common here than in Ciudad Huelca, and only the law enforcement specialists (mostly Honorbound) sponsored by the local nobles keep things from falling into complete anarchy.

The majority of Guadalupe's population lives in fortified haciendas scattered across the grasslands, or are practically nomads who camp wherever they end their day. Any hacienda worthy of the name supports between 20 and 50 permanent residents, and might have as many as another 20 range-riders.

Cimmaron County

Cimmaron is unusual in many ways, and culturally dissimilar to all the other Savage Baronies, though it does share a few characteristics with Guadalupe. Cimmaron's state language is common; while people in most other baronies speak common and either Espa or Verdan, only about one-third of Cimmarons speak a language other than common (usually Espa). All Cimmaron place names are now rendered in common.

Besides the language difference, Cimmarons have distinctive views and habits that set them apart from other Baronials. Their leader prefers the title Count over Baron (though his people have begun to call him a duke), and the state is called a county. Cimmaron is where *smoke powder* and firearms were developed on the Savage Coast; the people of

Cimmaron have a fondness for wheel-lock pistols and prefer them above all other weapons for dueling. The people of Cimmaron dress differently, preferring suedes and leathers, and tending toward darker, rougher, heavier clothing than that found elsewhere in the baronies. Cimmarons are rarely seafarers, even though theirs is a coastal state. While most Baronials are tough, many are light-spirited as well; this is not true in Cimmaron, where the toughness of the people has a cold edge to it, like the edge of a dagger. Finally, Cimmaron *feels* like an uncivilized frontier, a place where people are trying to tame an unruly wilderness and the hostile natives who live there.

Most other Guardianos avoid Cimmaron as too uncivilized a place. This suits Cimmarons just fine, because they tend to view the other Baronials (except for Guadalantans, whom they respect) as pampered dandies.

The Nation

Cimmaron is blessed with a good mix of terrain types, from grasslands and farmlands to forests and hills. The soil here is not as fertile as in the other baronies, and Cimmaron tends to appear dry and inhospitable. Those plants that do grow in Cimmaron seem stunted to the eastern eye, and the animals of Cimmaron are skinny compared to specimens found in the other Savage Baronies.

The first modern colonists to come to the Claw Peninsula actually arrived a couple of years before the Ispan wave. These colonists were members of the Brotherhood of Order (also known as the Lawful Brotherhood), the philosophical “ancestors” of the Inheritors of the Order of the Ruby. The Brotherhood originated in the city-states on the other side of the Gulf of Hule. Its colonists located the first Brotherhood outpost at the present site of Old Fort, at the tip of the peninsula.

These colonists were soon followed by shiploads of adventurers from many different parts of the world, particularly Ispans. The first Ispan settlement, then in the lands claimed by Narvaez, was Nueva Esperanza (New Hope), which eventually became known as Smokestone City. Nueva Esperanza declared independence three years after the founding of Narvaez, and was allowed to secede without a fight. The people of Nueva Esperanza got to know those of the Brotherhood, and they began a peaceful trading relationship. They also signed a mutual defense pact,

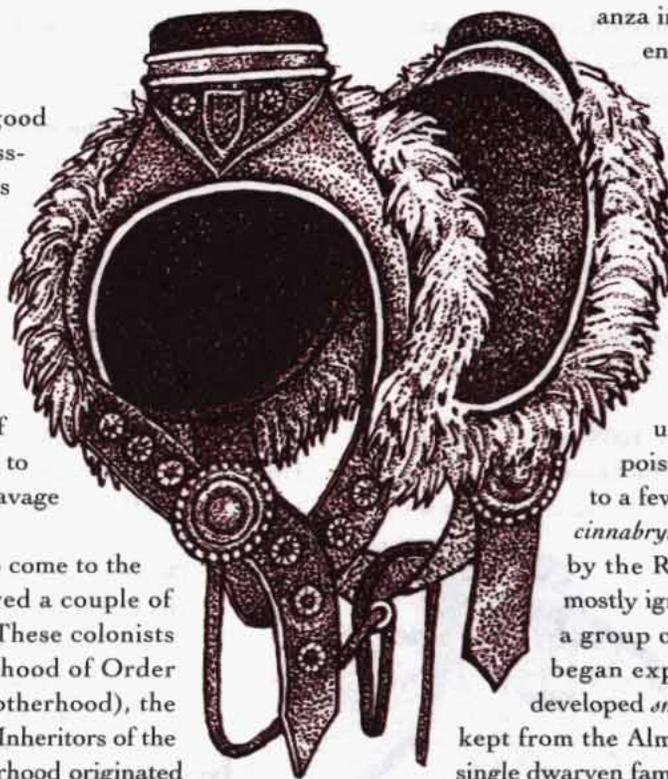
and soon Lawful Brotherhood trading posts, defended by Nueva Esperanza warriors, appeared along the coast. Occasional influxes of colonists from the city-states, and of disaffected Baronials from the north, caused rapid growth along the Savage Coast. Native turtles and dwarves, and a few halfling settlers from far to the east, also joined this odd alliance.

The State of Almarrón was founded in 936; it grew out of the southern remnants of the Barony of Sotto, which was conquered by Gargoña that year. Almarrón needed something to unify its people, so it decided to give them a common enemy in the people of Nueva Esperanza and the surrounding territory. Almarrón’s leaders rallied their people by characterizing the colonists from the city-states as undesirable *gringos*. To “claim the land for the Espan people,” Almarrón attacked Nueva Esperanza in 939, and quickly took over the entire Claw Peninsula. Some of the Brotherhood of Order went into hiding, while a small sect became the LB Trading Company and maintained many of the group’s trading posts.

A *cinnabryl* mine had been discovered near Nueva Esperanza a few years before Almarrón’s conquest; the inhabitants told the Almarróñans that the unusual metal was worthless and poisonous. This was quickly proven to a few Almarróñans who tried to wear *cinnabryl* jewelry—and became affected by the Red Curse. Thus, the mine was mostly ignored by the conquerors. In 948, a group of dwarves working in the mine began experimenting with *steel seed* and developed *smoke powder*; again, the secret was kept from the Almarróñans, and remained with a single dwarven family, the Smithy clan.

These dwarven smiths, in their quest for a good use for *smoke powder*, invented the arquebus in 957. This time the secret got out to the Almarróñans, but they ignored the “toy” because of its dangers and inaccuracy, preferring to stay with swords. *Smoke powder* weapons were mostly forgotten, but a young Smithy became enthused about the project almost 15 years later, and with the help of a halfling jeweler named Westron, developed a wheel-lock pistol in 975.

They demonstrated their weapon to a man named Cimmaron, one of the leaders of a growing movement to throw the Almarróñans out of Nueva Esperanza. Cimmaron was impressed with the weapon and nicknamed it the S&W



after its inventors; he encouraged its secret production. While the nickname never caught on, several of the weapons were produced over the next couple of years, and *smoke powder* was stockpiled as well.

In 977, Almarrón conquered the tiny state of Escudor, then initiated hostilities with Gargoña and Rivera to the north. This was the opportunity Cimmarron and other leaders had been waiting for, and in 978 they began a rebellion against Almarrón. Cimmarron's unit, most armed with wheel-lock pistols, made quite an impression on the Almarrónian soldiers and were able to rout many of them. In 979, Almarrón ceased its war with Gargoña and turned its full attention to the rebels. Many insurgents lost their lives during a disastrous battle at Old Fort, the site of the original Lawful Brotherhood trading post, after refusing to yield to vastly superior Almarrónian forces.

However, in 980, the self-appointed General Cimmarron led his soldiers to many small victories. His major victory came at the Battle of Hondo, when Cimmarron led his last soldiers in a desperate charge to break the Almarrónian ranks, carrying a wheel-lock pistol and a *red steel* sword, and rallying his troops with the cry "Remember the Old Fort!" The remaining Almarrónian troops left the area, and Cimmarron's followers promptly declared him Earl and named the newly-freed region Cimmarron. Nueva Esperanza was renamed Smokestone City, to break further from old Ispan ways, and became the capital of independent Cimmarron County.

Old General Cimmarron died in 1008 fighting Yazi goblins from the Badlands at the battle known as Longhorn's Last Stand. He was succeeded by his son, John, who is the

small nation's current ruler. Except for a minor Turtle Revolt just after he took office, and a few problems with Yazi goblinoids, Sir John has had a peaceful two years in charge of Cimmarron.

The People

Cimmarron's population is mostly human, though dwarves are common, and halflings (mostly stouts) are more frequently seen here than elsewhere on the Savage Coast. Like other Baronials, Cimmarrons are independent, self-sufficient, and proud; like Guadalantans, they are rough, fond of firearms, and comfortable on horseback. However, the similarities end with those characteristics. The people of Cimmarron tend to be tougher and cruder than those in the other Savage Baronies; even their clothing is heavier.

The Swashbuckler mentality is not present in Cimmarron, and native Swashbucklers are rare indeed, found mostly among those Cimmarrons who choose a life at sea. The typical person carries a wheel-lock pistol and does not hesitate to use it to defend his or her honor or life. Adventurers are more common here than in any other barony. Warriors, especially rangers and paladins, are likely to be encountered in Cimmarron, again more so than in any other barony. Warriors are usually Gauchos, Honorbound (duelists), and Local Heroes, though Defenders and Myrmidons are found too, as are a few Nobles.

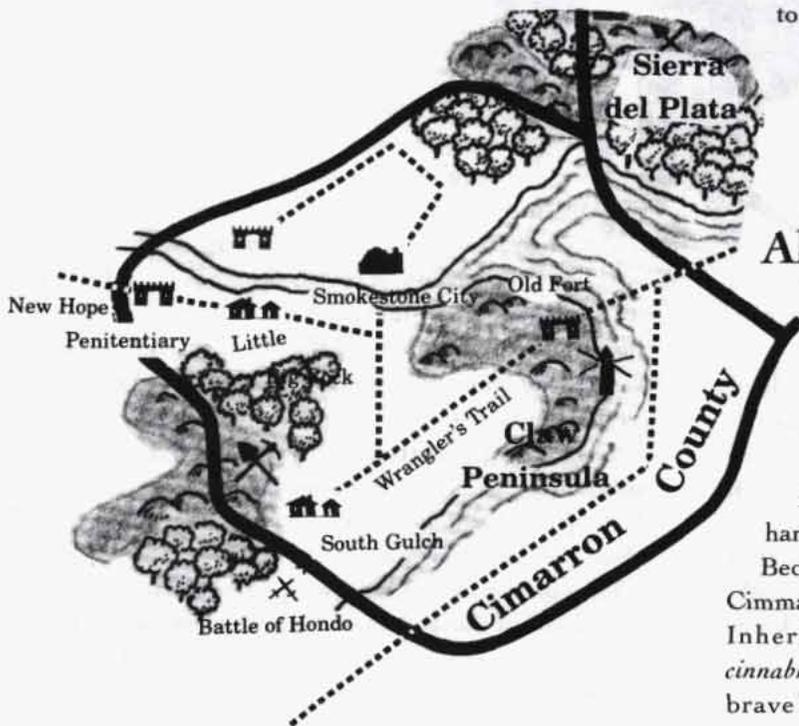
Rogues are also found in Cimmarron, most with the Scout or Bandit kit, though there are a few Local Heroes, and even a rare Swashbuckler or Noble. Bards with the Local Hero kit travel the countryside, stopping in small hamlets to entertain with their guitars in return for a meal and a place to sleep.

There are some wizards and priests in Cimmarron, the vast majority with the Local Hero kit. A few are War Priests and Militant wizards. Psionists, if allowed in the campaign, are as rare in Cimmarron as in most of the baronies. Multiclass dwarves and dual-class humans, usually a warrior class combined with something else, pop up more here than most places.

Almarrón

Many citizens in Cimmarron, not just warriors, carry firearms. Most are wheel locks, some new, some handed down from a parent or other relative who fought in the war for independence. Occasionally an old arquebus is handed down from long ago.

Because of the proliferation of *smoke powder* weapons in Cimmarron, Inheritors of any type are rare in the barony. Inheritors occasionally visit to engage in trade for *cinnabryl*, *red steel*, or even *smoke powder*. A few especially brave Inheritors live in Cimmarron, but they avoid the



public. An Inheritor would be foolish to take part in a firearm duel, and risks being branded a coward when he or she rejects such a challenge.

The Red Curse

The Red Curse has long been known in Cimmarron, and is an accepted part of life. *Cinnabryl*, *steel seed*, and *smoke powder* were all discovered or developed in here, and are also readily embraced. Since *cinnabryl* was once discarded after depletion, before *red steel* was discovered, small stocks of *red steel* lie around in unexpected places. Cimmarrons understand the Red Curse as well as anybody, and recognize its progress.

While *cinnabryl* is common in Cimmarron, the metal does not always make it into the hands of peasants. Though local clerics use *maintain* spells to protect their flocks, there are still Afflicted in Cimmarron. Most are peasants, so they are routinely ignored anyway by members of the upper classes. Afflicted here, as in some of the other baronies, remove themselves to small enclaves to spare their friends and families the burden of dealing with them.

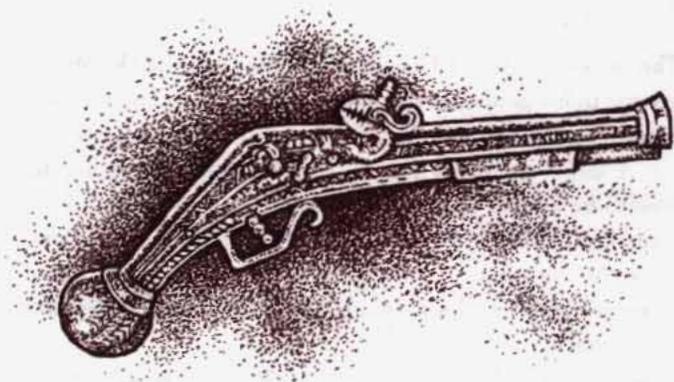
Industry and Trade

Cimmarron's main home industries include taverns (usually called saloons in Cimmarron) and gambling. The state depends on revenues from these endeavors instead of heavier taxation, and still pulls in a good amount of money. Even better, collecting revenue from saloons and gambling halls means the tax burden is shared by visitors to the small nation as well as natives; property and necessity taxes do not have this advantage. Smokestone City features a huge tavern and gambling hall called the Red Steel Saloon.

Smokestone City takes its name from the deposits of coal nearby; the coal mines produce fuel to heat the many forges of Cimmarron, and provide a valuable export. Thanks to its strong dwarven tradition, Cimmarron's forges turn out weapons and basic metal implements; many of these are exported.

The nation's large *cinnabryl* mine is located near the village of South Gulch. A smaller operation near Smokestone City does not produce enough metal to be called a *cinnabryl* mine. Its mother lode is *steel seed*, used to make *smoke powder*. Cimmarron exports great quantities of *cinnabryl*, *smoke powder*, and *red steel*.

Cinnabryl is shipped to several other baronies, especially to Texeiras and Vilaverde for transport to other states. Through the Sea Powers, Cimmarron is the largest exporter of *cinnabryl* to the nations of the central Savage Coast: Eusdria, Renardy, and Bellayne. Cimmarron also imports some *cinnabryl* from Slogovich in return for *red steel*. The Sea Powers buy *smoke powder* from Cimmarron, but exports of the explosive also go to Torreón, Renardy, Almarrón, Gargoña, and Saragón. Note that Renardy sends some of its *smoke*



powder on to Torreón, and Gargoña trades some with both Torreón and Narvaez. Cimmarron imports food, especially from Torreón and Saragón, in return for some of its *smoke powder*.

Most of Cimmarron's trading takes place by overland routes through the LB Trading Company, now a powerful commercial enterprise based in Smokestone City. The company's traditional concerns include exploration, mining, wheel lock manufacturing, ale production, and general trading of merchandise in the Gulf of Hule region. Though the LB Trading Company conducts most trade by wagon (Sir John, leader of Cimmarron, once drove for them), it also employs a few small ships. Fortunately, the company's good relationship with Texeiras and Vilaverde (attained through *smoke powder* trade), means the sea wolves have little cause to worry their ships.

It should be noted that the LB Trading Company has no official relationship with the other descendants of the Lawful Brotherhood, the Inheritors' Order of the Ruby. Still, the two groups are reasonably friendly. It is not unusual to see a Ruby Inheritor guarding an LB Trading Company wagon. In addition, the LB Trading Company helps Inheritors obtain supplies of *cinnabryl* and *red steel*, and (with astute advisors) maintain control over those supplies.

Cimmarron as a nation has never imported mercenaries from Torreón or Narvaez. On occasion, a landowner or merchant has hired mercenaries to guard possessions, but these sword-wielding warriors-for-hire are seldom a match for the pistol-toting Bandits, Gauchos, and Honorbound of Cimmarron.

Religion

Religion holds little importance to most Cimmarrons, who tend to be irreverent at best. Still, the General is recognised by many as an inspiration to the state's own General Cimmarron. Valerias is respected as a patron by Gauchos, and the Judge is very popular among Honorbound. Milan and the Ambassador are barely acknowledged by most Cimmarrons.

The Ruler

The present ruler of Cimmaron is Sir John of the Wain, known to his people as the Duke of Cimarron. He is a cool, unwavering paladin, a skilled duelist with the Honorbound kit. A larger-than-life figure, Sir John hardly seems the type to be a head of state. He earned his nickname "of the wain" (or "of the wagon") driving for the LB Trading Company. During his time with the company, Sir John had many adventures; these escapades have become legendary in Cimmaron.

When Sir John's older brother, Patrick, was killed at Ciudad Quimeras during fighting in Narvaez in 1006, John was recalled to Smokestone City to become the official heir, and to learn all he could of government. Sir John's father, General Cimmaron, died in 1008 at Longhorn's Last Stand, leading his tiny force of Cimmaron irregulars against hordes of Yazi goblins. John became the Earl of Cimmaron in 1008.

Sir John remains fit and active. He is still prompt to lead a posse after a bandit leader, or to mount a campaign against Yazi gnolls from El Grande Carrascal in the north, or Yazi goblins from the Badlands in the west.

He typically dresses in rough can-

vas trousers, an open cotton shirt, and a wide-brimmed hat. He is seldom seen without his pair of fine wheel-lock pistols.

Since the death of his father, Sir John has shown a particular hatred of goblins. Over the last two years, he has overseen the construction of Fort Whitestone, strategically placed at the end of the Bugle Trail on the edge of the Badlands. A desolate cavalry outpost, Fort Whitestone sends out regular patrols to look for goblinoid raiders and other drifters and thieves.

Sir John fought at his brother's side in 1006, during the war with Narvaez. He also distinguished himself as a leader at the Battle of Morrión in Saragón in 1007. Since becoming leader of Cimmaron, he has won several significant victories against the Yazi. In response to his heroism, the noble families of Cimmaron recently declared him a duke. This titular elevation is a point of contention with other rulers of the Savage Baronies, who sarcastically refer to Sir John simply as "The Duke." So far, Sir John has been successful at keeping Cimarron a county in title, and has never tried to put himself above the other rulers, which has lessened tensions.



Sir John is also uncomfortable being called a duke, and with the power he has inherited as well. Though there are other nobles in Cimmaron, and each one oversees an estate or settlement of some kind, they have little power outside their own lands. Sir John's word is absolute; he can grant someone a title, or can remove someone from the nobility. He can open trade relations or end them by declaring war. Recently, Sir John created a national constabulary. Some members are stationed in settlements, others wander the state; all are Honorbound. Constables report directly to Sir John and enforce the laws of Cimmaron, sometimes by arresting perpetrators, sometimes by initiating a duel and ending the criminal's life. Though Sir John has done well so far, he hopes he is wise enough to continue handling the pressures facing a head of state.

Sir John would like a wife, preferably someone with whom he could discuss decisions important to Cimmaron. A ruggedly handsome man in his late 30s, he is considered by some to be the most eligible man in the baronies, though Barón Maximiliano of Almarrón and Baronet Luis of Saragón would also be considered a fine catch by almost any Baronial woman.

For now, Sir John's heir is his younger brother, Morris, a 25-year-old man who has recently been serving as John's ambassador to the other baronies, so the two of them can learn about the overall political atmosphere in the baronies. Sir John's brother also has a son, Marion, a boy being educated in Smokestone City by a tutor from Saragón.

The Capital

Smokestone City has a population of 11,500; roughly half are humans, and perhaps a third are dwarves. Over 1100 halflings make their home in Smokestone City, as do about half that number turtles. The remaining 2% of the population are elves, lupins, and members of other races found on the Savage Coast.

Because of the forges common in the town, and the coal smoke they generate, Smokestone is a dark place; soot sifts onto everything, even recently-washed surfaces. The people of Smokestone are friendly in a rough sort of way, and always happy to see visitors stop by and sample the local offerings. There are some unsavory elements in Smokestone, and more than one fight has started between a tough Cimmaron Gaucho and a flamboyant Texeiran Swashbuckler. Fortunately, most sailing ships make port at Old Fort, and Swashbucklers are seldom seen in Smokestone City. The LB Trading Company handles most of the commerce that comes through Smokestone City, including overland and river trade.

This town is known for its rowdy nightlife, which centers around its saloons and gambling halls. The largest and most popular establishment of that sort is the Red Steel Saloon;

people claim there is a duel in front of the saloon at least once a day.

Other Places of Interest

Aside from the capital, there are four major settlements in Cimmaron: South Gulch, Little Big Rock, Old Fort, and New Hope Penitentiary. South Gulch is the home base of many *cinnabryl* miners, as well as turtle peasants and a few Bandits and Gauchos. Little Big Rock is another trading center, but is also a farming town and a resting place for Gauchos.

Despite their names, Old Fort and New Hope Penitentiary are thriving settlements as well. Old Fort, built on the site of the original Brotherhood of Order outpost, is a military port and houses a garrison of troops. Old Fort is also a central meeting and trading location for the human and turtle farmers in the area. New Hope Penitentiary was built by the Almarrónians and named after the city of Nueva Esperanza, which has since become Smokestone City (the Penitentiary didn't follow suit). Besides a large jail, New Hope Penitentiary is also houses many farmers and those support personnel needed to keep the jail functioning, and to defend it from occasional attack.

LB Trading Posts

Besides locations inside Cimmaron, there are also LB Trading Posts all across the Savage Coast. In many ways, locations are considered Cimmaron colonies, though the company is technically independent of the government of Cimmaron. There are small posts in many cities and at various points along the coast, but the LB Trading Company's largest interests are the Free City of Dunwick (south of the eastern tip of Renardy) and Richland, located in the far west on the Grass Coast, north of Trident Bay and the Orc's Head Peninsula.

Dunwick

Dunwick started as an outpost of the Brotherhood of Order, then became a trading post when part of the Brotherhood became the LB Trading Company. Today, the company owns or finances many businesses in Dunwick, a city of about 22,000 people. Slightly more than half of Dunwick's population is turtles, but there are also large numbers of humans, lupins, and rakasta, and representatives of all the races of the Savage Coast, including goblinoids, lizard-kin, phanatons, wallaras, and even a handful of manscorpions. The trade in Dunwick is lively. Most of the LB Trading Company's holdings employ turtle workers and are protected by Texeiran ships and Torreóner sellswords. Having such a large interest in Dunwick gives the LB Trading Company a fractional cut of Texeiran commerce with Renardy.

Richland

Much smaller than Dunwick, Richland is a town with about 2,300 residents, including humans, turtles, and shazaks. Located far from the more civilized lands, Richland is largely self-sufficient as far as the production of food, weapons, and various other necessities. The LB Trading Company owns most of Richland, and through a deal with Texeiran shipping, uses Richland as a center for gathering exotic goods from the Orc's Head Peninsula and points north and west. Materials are shipped from Richland to the rest of the Savage Coast for sale, which pleases both the Texeiran merchants and the LB Trading Company. Since Richland is not within the cursed lands, it also serves as a residence for those wishing to avoid the effects of the Red Curse, and as a hostel to speed their recovery from those effects.

El Grande Carrascal

This area lies between Cimmaron, Almarrón, Saragón, and Guadalante. Though the title refers primarily to the cactus scrub in the region, common usage of the name includes badlands, hills, desert, and more—all the land outside the borders of the baronies, east of the Sierra Desperada hills, and north of the New Hope River. Home to gnolls and humanoid bandits, El Grande Carrascal is a dangerous place.

There are several camps of gnolls in this region; the major tribes are Long Legs, Chiriquis, and Dead Yuccas. While the Long Legs are a savage tribe, the others named trade with humans of the region, and are willing to negotiate. When humans brought horses to the Savage Coast almost a century ago, gnolls adapted quickly and have become skilled riders; they have bred spotted horses that work hard in scrubland conditions. Many Yazi gnolls are said to have an almost telepathic connection with their mounts (and should be considered Beast-Riders by the DM).

The Long Legs were able to unite all the El Grande Carrascal gnoll tribes, major and minor, about three years ago, and they led a violent horde to attack many of the baronies. These gnolls destroyed two castles, one in Almarrón and one in Gargaña, before they were defeated by Saragóner forces (aided by Cimmaron cavalry) at the Battle of Morrión. In late 1008, their alliance fell apart after they were defeated by Cimmaron

troops under Sir John, at the Red Creek Battle. Having lost too many of their people, the gnoll tribes went back to a reasonably peaceful existence—except for the few remaining Long Legs, who still raid now and again.

An interesting site in El Grande Carrascal is Buenos Viente, an ancient, ruined town, possibly Traladaran in origin, and named by later Ispans who found it. Buenos Viente stands in the middle of the cactus scrub, a well-preserved set of buildings that appears to have once held more than 3,000 inhabitants. Most of the buildings are made of fired clay, and so have stood up to the ravages of time. Those who have explored the town report eerie voices, like echoes of half-heard conversations. The place seems to be haunted, a true “ghost town.”

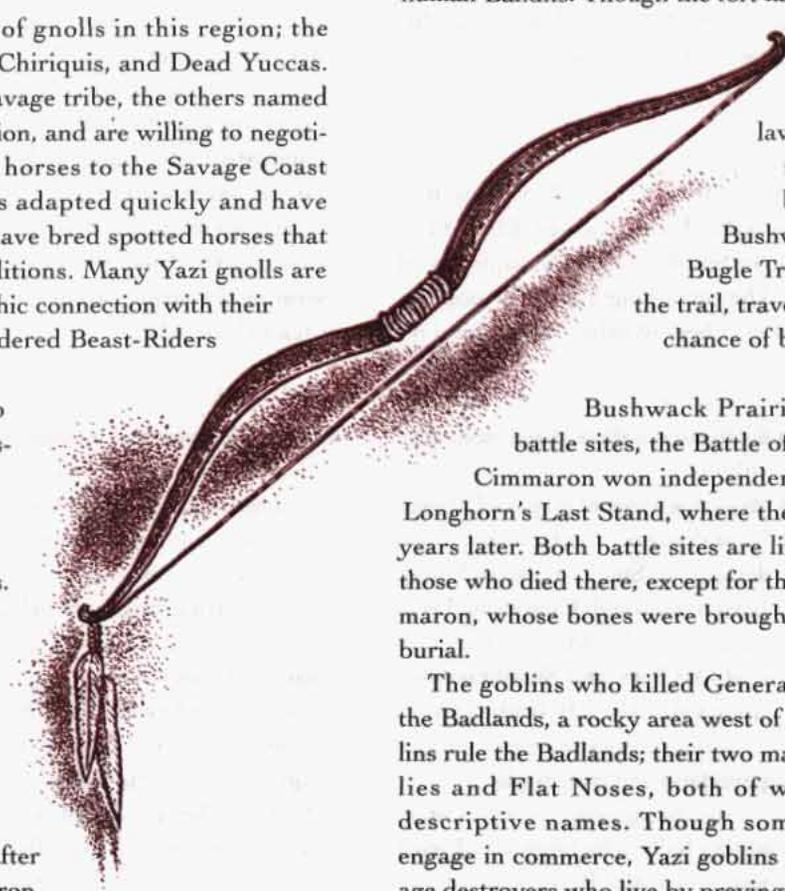
Bushwack Prairie and the Badlands

Bushwack Prairie, named for the bandit ambushes so common there, encompasses the grasslands just west of Cimmaron. Buffalo and wild horses roam the southern portions of the prairie; camps of Gauchos and Bandit encampments are found throughout the region. Fort Whitestone sits at the western edge of Bushwack Prairie, at the edge of the Badlands, and sends out regular patrols to watch for goblin raiders and human Bandits. Though the fort has reduced the number of

Bandits in the region, there are still more than enough of the lawless men and women to make people think twice before traveling through Bushwack Prairie, even along Bugle Trail (although, at least on the trail, travelers have a much better chance of being rescued by cavalry charging over the hill).

Bushwack Prairie includes two notable battle sites, the Battle of Hondo, where General Cimmaron won independence from Almarrón, and Longhorn's Last Stand, where the general met his end 28 years later. Both battle sites are littered with the bones of those who died there, except for the few, like General Cimmaron, whose bones were brought back to Cimmaron for burial.

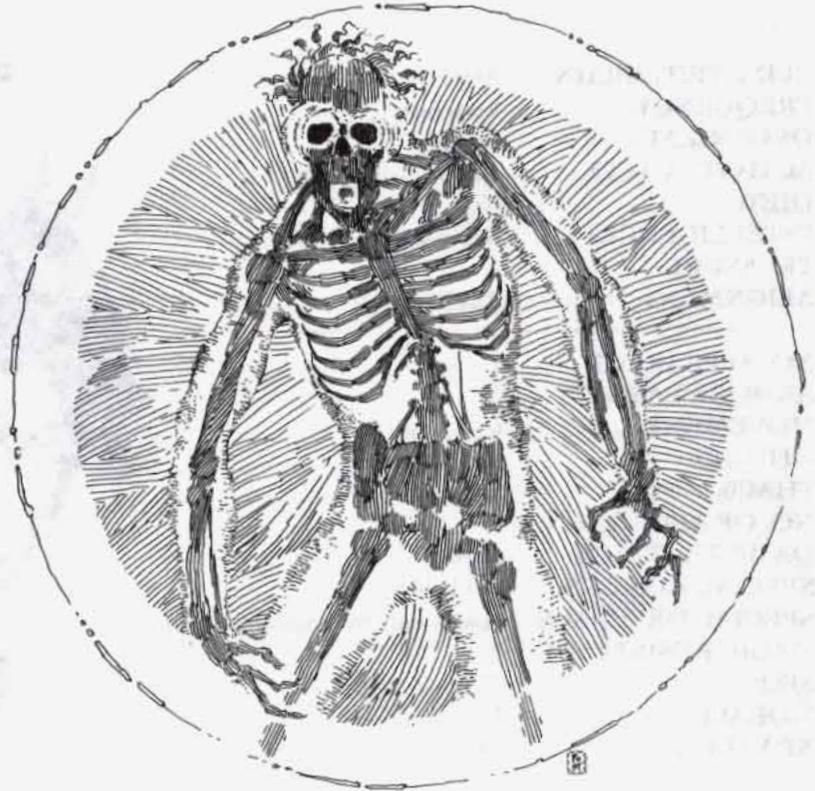
The goblins who killed General Cimmaron came from the Badlands, a rocky area west of Bushwack Prairie. Goblins rule the Badlands; their two major tribes are Black Belies and Flat Noses, both of which have accurately descriptive names. Though some Yazi gnolls actually engage in commerce, Yazi goblins of the Badlands are savage destroyers who live by preying on others.



Cursed One

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	<i>Cinnabryl</i>
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic neutral

NO. APPEARING:	1-4
ARMOR CLASS:	2
MOVEMENT:	15, Fl 15
HIT DICE:	6
THAC0:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d8
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Depletion of <i>cinnabryl</i>
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Struck only by magical weapons
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	25%
SIZE:	M (4'-7' tall)
MORALE:	Champion (15-16)
XP VALUE:	2,000



A cursed one is an undead created when a person dies of attribute loss caused by the effects of the Red Curse. In some cases, the onset of the Red Curse causes the loss of enough ability points to lower one or more of an individual's ability scores to 0; the individual dies, and unless special measures are taken, rises the next night as a cursed one. A cursed one must constantly search for *cinnabryl*, which can temporarily relieve the pain suffered by the undead creature.

A cursed one appears insubstantial, a faint, reddish, skeletal silhouette inside a translucent red specter. The monster's eyes are gaping pools of darkness.

Cursed ones sometimes speak in lamenting whispers that do not quite register meaning, but sound like snatches of an almost-heard conversation.

Combat: Part of a cursed one exists on the ethereal plane, making it impossible to hit the thing without a magical weapon of some kind. Cursed ones can detect both *cinnabryl* and *red steel* within 10 yards. While they hunt *cinnabryl*, they are visibly frightened by *red steel*, which can strike them. A cursed one destroyed by anything other than a *red steel* weapon forms again after 24 hours; only *red steel* can permanently end a cursed one's existence and send it on to true death.

A cursed one can absorb *cinnabryl* only by assaulting someone wearing it, so when it detects the substance, it rushes forward to attack. A cursed one strikes by overlapping the body of a *cinnabryl*-wearing target with its insubstantial essence; this requires a normal attack roll against the victim's standard Armor Class. A cursed one cannot succeed against someone wearing a suit of *red steel armor*, which blocks it.

If the attack is successful, a simultaneous hot and cold sensation that is the cursed one's essence floods the victim's body, sapping 1d8 hit points from the victim. In addition, a successful attack by a cursed one allows the undead creature to deplete *cinnabryl*. Any *cinnabryl* worn by the victim is

instantaneously depleted by one ounce (one week's worth) on a successful hit. If the victim has less than a week's worth of *cinnabryl* left, the victim suffers an appropriate number of days of the Time of Loss and Change (if the cursed one hits a character with only two days' worth of *cinnabryl*, the victim suffers five days' worth of the Time of Loss and Change).

A cursed one drains as much *cinnabryl* as it can for as long as it can, changing victims as necessary and stopping only when none of its potential victims are wearing *cinnabryl*.

A cursed one is immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells and Legacies, as well as all mind-affecting attacks.

Habitat/Society: A cursed one lives a lonely existence, suffering constant hunger and pain that be relieved only by *cinnabryl*, and then only for a few fleeting moments.

A few villages that were struck especially hard by the Red Curse gave rise to dozens of cursed ones. Cursed ones are not confined to their area of origin, but can roam free, traveling where they please in the darkness. They wander at night, and can move in darkened areas during the day. Fortunately, cursed ones are completely powerless and immobile, though also invisible and intangible, in the sunlight. If the sun's rays touch them, they freeze in place and fade into nothingness, leaving their consciousness to watch whatever passes through that area until the sun sets.

Cursed ones generally travel far from the area of their demise, to avoid memories that could add to their pain.

Besides feeding a cursed one *cinnabryl*, which is a temporary and somewhat foolish option, nothing can be done to help the creature, except for putting it out of its misery.

Ecology: Unlike most other undead, cursed ones have some effect on the ecology, uselessly depleting protective *cinnabryl*, and keeping the magical metal out of the hands of those who could be helped by it.

Lich, Inheritor

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Supra-genius (19–20)
TREASURE:	A
ALIGNMENT:	Any evil

NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	0
MOVEMENT:	6
HIT DICE:	15
THACO:	5
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d10
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Struck only by magical weapons
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (4'–7' tall)
MORALE:	Fanatic (17–18)
XP VALUE:	15,000

These vile undead creatures are the remnants of high-level Inheritors who sought to increase their power to great degrees. Through arcane alchemical processes, they transform from living beings to undead monsters of great power. They were originally Inheritors of at least 15th level. Fortunately, because Inheritors are so uncommon, inheritor liches are extremely rare; only two are known to be currently functioning on the Savage Coast, one in the Savage Baronies and one in Renardy.

The appearance of an inheritor lich varies widely; the basic visage is that of a skeletal humanoid, like a standard lich. Unfortunately, many non-human races could also choose this evil path. Each creature has a unique form, warped by the detriments of each of its Legacies. Thus, an inheritor lich with *Armor*, *Sight*, *Burn*, *Projectile*, *Grow*, *Weapon Hand*, and *Detonate* could have scales; bony eyestalks that hold eye sockets a few inches from its face; a red glow in those eye sockets, skin that is hot to the touch, and flames issuing from its mouth; a hollow, open-ended horn in the center of the forehead, from which small, spiky, bone projectiles can be fired; arms twice as long as normal; and a hand elongated into the shape of a bony sword. In addition, small objects near the inheritor lich explode at random intervals. While the overall "body" is still skeletal and desiccated, quite often those bones are not normal shapes.

An inheritor lich is usually dressed in clothing reminiscent of its former life, perhaps armor for warriors, or robes for wizards. The materials are generally of high quality, though they may be roughly used. Since the most ancient inheritor lich is no more than a decade old, its possessions as yet show little sign of decay, but might be frayed from travel or combat.

Combat: Unlike other liches, an inheritor lich has no qualms about entering battle against enemies. Still, an inheritor lich is likely to have servants and allies, some undead, some monstrous, perhaps even a few normal humans or humanoids.

Inheritor liches lack the magical aura that makes low level crea-



tures flee in terror; still, their appearance and deadliness usually cause at least the more intelligent low-level beings to flee. An inheritor lich is a formidable opponent.

Since the creature was once an Inheritor of at least 15th level, that being had seven Legacies before its transformation. No inheritor lich of greater power has ever been encountered; some sages speculate that such a creature's power is limited by the transformation process, but others claim no more powerful inheritor lich has been encountered because no inheritor of greater power has attempted the transformation—yet. The DM must determine which Legacies a new inheritor lich possesses; use the tables in Chapter Three of the RED STEEL boxed set *Campaign Book*. As a lich's Legacies determine its exact appearance—the creature always manifests the detriments of its Legacies—these details should be determined before an inheritor lich is encountered.

An inheritor lich prefers to attack with its Legacies when such an action is appropriate, and possible. Use of the Legacies follows the same restrictions as normal (a maximum of three times per day, etc.). Further, an inheritor lich is immune to the offensive effects of Legacies it possesses. For example, an inheritor lich with the *Burn* Legacy does not take damage from that Legacy, even when another person uses the Legacy against the lich. The creature is still affected by other aspects of the Legacy. For example, if a lich uses *Senses*, benefits are normal; if a creature uses *Separation* to detach an eye (in a lich's case, a glowing sphere about the size of a normal eye), that eye can still suffer damage if it is attacked.

As well as Legacies, an inheritor lich retains character-class abilities from its former life: a lich that was once a wizard, priest, or bard can cast spells; one that was once a thief can move silently,

hide in shadows, and backstab. The abilities a creature possesses are those of a 15th-level character of the appropriate class. Finally, a lich might carry weapons and equipment from its former life. Note that wearing armor does not improve a lich's Armor Class, though it enjoys the benefit of any magical bonuses of that armor. Other protective items can better the creature's Armor Class. Also, since an inheritor lich is not especially vulnerable to *smoke powder*, as living Inheritors are, a lich can carry a wheellock pistol.

Besides its Legacies, class abilities, and possible weapons and magical items, an inheritor lich also has a dangerous touch. If an inheritor lich touches an opponent, the target suffers 1d10 points of damage. In addition, the victim must make a successful saving throw vs. death magic, or suffer the effects of one day of the Time of Loss and Change, as if he or she had stopped wearing *cinnabryl* (explained in Chapter Three of the RED STEEL boxed set *Campaign Book*). It does not matter if the victim is now wearing *cinnabryl*, or has never worn it; any target who fails a saving throw loses one point from the appropriate ability score (or scores) and changes according to his or her Legacy's detriment. If a victim has no Legacy, roll on Table 3.1 of the RED STEEL campaign set to determine one. Note that a character with multiple Legacies suffers the Time of Loss and Change for all Legacies simultaneously, and so might lose several points from ability scores and change in several ways. This attack does not deplete a target's *cinnabryl*, but bypasses it entirely.

Individuals who have one or more ability scores reduced to 0 (or less) by the lich's attack die. The next night, the victim rises as a cursed one. The lair of an inheritor lich might hold several cursed ones, remnants of former victims. Note that since an inheritor lich has no use for *cinnabryl*, and cannot be harmed by cursed ones, a lich might feed *cinnabryl* to the cursed ones to quicken its transformation into *red steel*.

Recovery from touch-enforced Affliction happens as for standard Affliction, with two changes. First, reversal begins immediately after the victim receives a *remove curse* spell, provided he or she is wearing *cinnabryl*; there is no delay. Second, a system shock roll is not necessary to reverse the transformation; a victim can always recover completely from the enforced Affliction of a lich's touch.

An inheritor lich has formidable defenses. Like a standard lich, it is immune to *charm*, *hold*, *sleep*, *enfeeblement*, *polymorph*, *insanity*, and *death* spells, as well as cold and electrical effects. An inheritor lich can be turned as if it were a normal lich.

While it is difficult to defeat an inheritor lich in combat, actually destroying it is harder still. An inheritor lich hides its life essence in some item made of *red steel*. The item can be an amulet or talisman made originally from *cinnabryl*, then depleted into *red steel*, or it might be a *red steel* weapon or piece of armor. For complete destruction of the inheritor lich, the item that holds its life essence must be utterly destroyed. Simple melting is not sufficient to utterly destroy a *red steel* item; it must be subjected to a *disintegrate* spell or similar power (the *Detonate* Legacy, for example, fragments an item enough that it is considered destroyed). If an item is merely melted and reformed, the life essence remains in whatever new piece contains the largest fraction of the item's *red steel*. If the item housing a lich's life force is not destroyed, the lich reconstitutes by transferring part of its life essence to the next available corpse.

Habitat/Society: Liches are solitary, and this is no less true for an inheritor lich. The creature creates a lair in a fortified place, such as a fortress, a cavern, or deep underground. The inheritor lich,

having been an adventurer before its transformation, realizes that its presence is like a magnet to adventuring parties. Thus, in general, an inheritor lich tries to hide its presence and keep the location of its lair secret. Still, an inheritor lich has caused its transformation in a quest for power, and power is nothing if it is not used.

Therefore, an inheritor lich sometimes releases rumors into the nearby area, hoping to encourage parties of low-level adventurers to come after it, so it can rob them of their lives and their possessions. An inheritor lich usually tries to meet adventurers somewhere other than its lair, in case any of its opponents live through the battle, or the lich needs to retreat. An inheritor lich might also try to create a web of intrigue around itself, using spies and subtle manipulations to exert control over the people and events of a given region.

An inheritor lich is a being with little respect for life, one that does what it must to accomplish its goals. While it is remotely possible an inheritor lich of good alignment could come to be, the ambitions that lead a character into such an existence are not conducive to any alignment except evil.

The inheritor liches known to currently exist spend most of their time involved in these quiet machinations, but they also study the effects of the Red Curse, and of *cinnabryl*, *red steel*, and related substances. If it is persuaded to talk, or if some sort of a journal kept by the creature can be found, an inheritor lich can be a great source of information regarding the curse, the Legacies, and the magical substances. While the attitudes of an inheritor lich depend on the events of its life and subsequent undeath, the creature might hate living Inheritors, or might feel nostalgic if it meets a member of the same order to which it once belonged (if it belonged to an order).

Like living Inheritors, these liches often have colorful nicknames, but with a more morbid twist. The two inheritor liches currently known are Death Flame, who when human was one of the first Inheritors, and Doomrider, a former Inheritor wizard who has a nightmare for a mount.

Ecology: While an inheritor lich has left its natural existence behind, it can still have a profound effect on local ecology, by gathering riches, killing others, and causing destruction. Control of its environment is one of the goals typical of an inheritor lich, so the creature by definition affects local ecology in some fashion. While it does not consume or produce in a natural manner, an inheritor lich can create and destroy, and does so to extend the reaches of its power.

To become a lich, an Inheritor must first construct the item that will hold his or her life essence; this must be done by the prospective lich, never by a second party. Ideally, the *red steel* used for this item was worn by the individual as *cinnabryl*. The Inheritor must create a difficult alchemical preparation, again personally. This potion is something like *crimson essence*, but also holds other materials, such as *steel seed*, fine-ground *red steel*, herbs, blood, and miscellaneous costly items of arcane origin. The exact formula is a secret known only to a few, but might be found in the journals of those who have attempted the process. Like *crimson essence*, the potion must be bathed in the magic of depleting *cinnabryl* for several weeks. When ready to become a lich, the Inheritor imbibes the potion. The individual must make a successful system shock roll or die; otherwise, he or she becomes a lich, and immediately enters the Time of Change, transforming according to the Legacies possessed. No points are lost from ability scores when the Inheritor changes, and some are actually gained.

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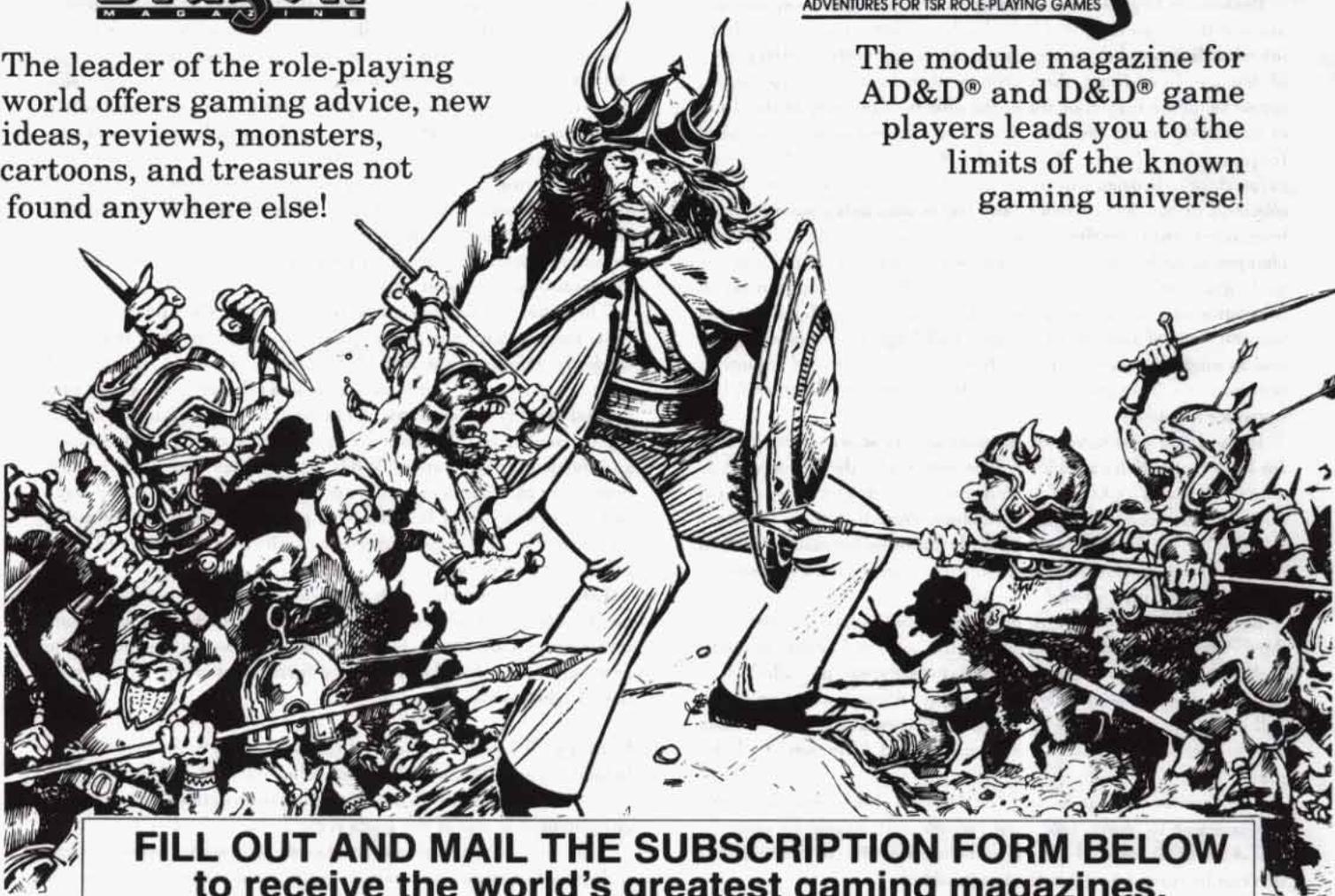
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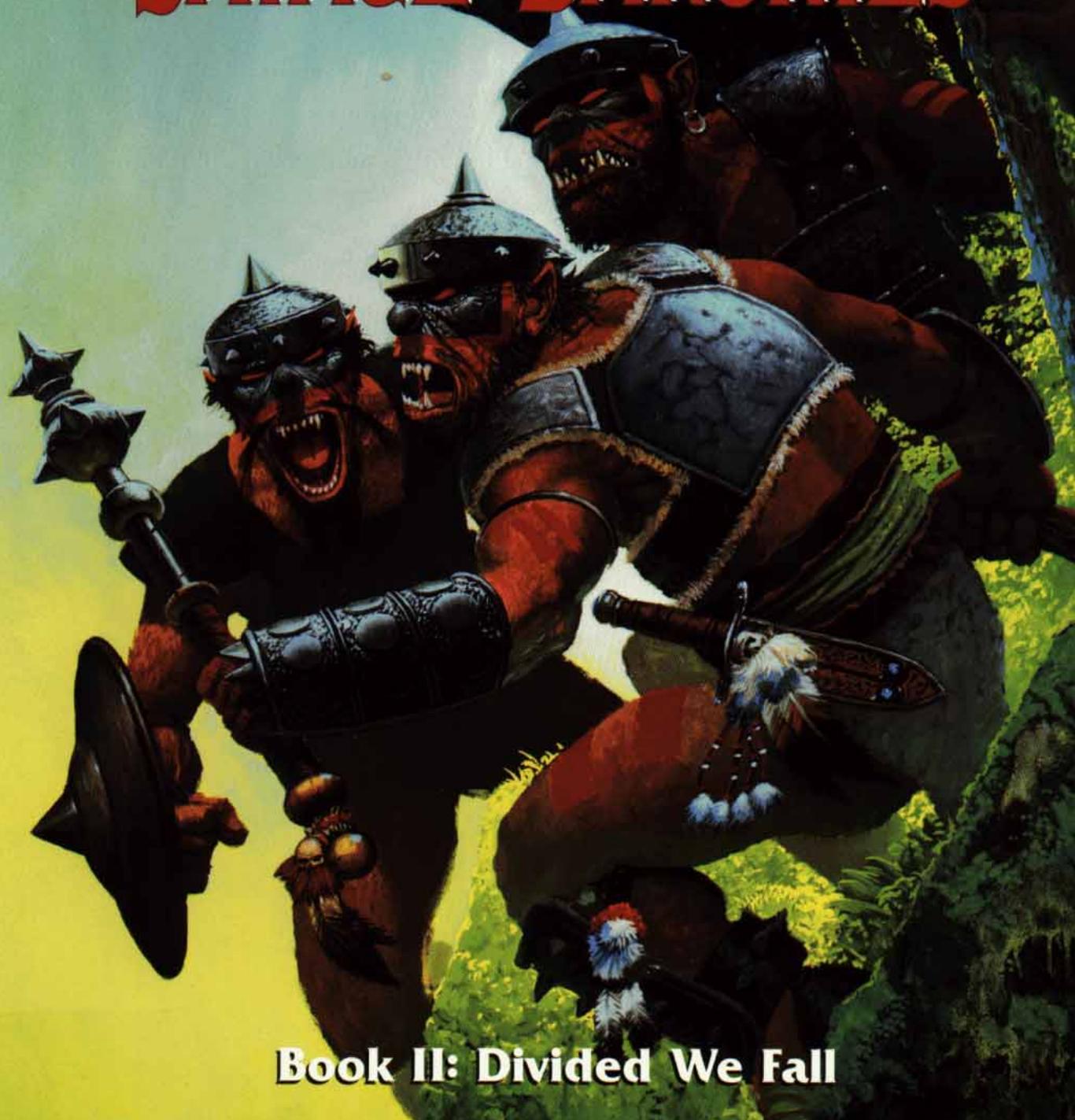
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Designed by Tim Beach
Plot Assistance by David Gross
Edited by Jonatha Ariadne Caspian
Cover Art by Keith Parkinson
Interior Illustrations by Randy Post and Dee Barnett
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TSR, Inc.
201 Sheridan Springs Road
Lake Geneva
WI 53147
U.S.A.



TSR Ltd.
120 Church End
Cherry Hinton
Cambridge, CB1 3LB
United Kingdom



BACKGROUND

Divided We Fall is an adventure set in the Savage Baronies region of the RED STEEL™ campaign setting. Many specific details about the area are provided in the larger book of this sourcebox, appropriately titled *The Savage Baronies*. Though the RED STEEL campaign setting is required, that entire setting and this adventure can be placed into any campaign world. The Savage Coast, home to the RED STEEL campaign, has a designated location within the world of Mystara, but the RED STEEL boxed set offers advice for placing the Savage Coast in other campaign worlds if the DM so chooses. To run this adventure, the DM should be familiar with both the RED STEEL boxed set and the information contained in *Savage Baronies*, especially with the Red Curse and the Legacies it causes.

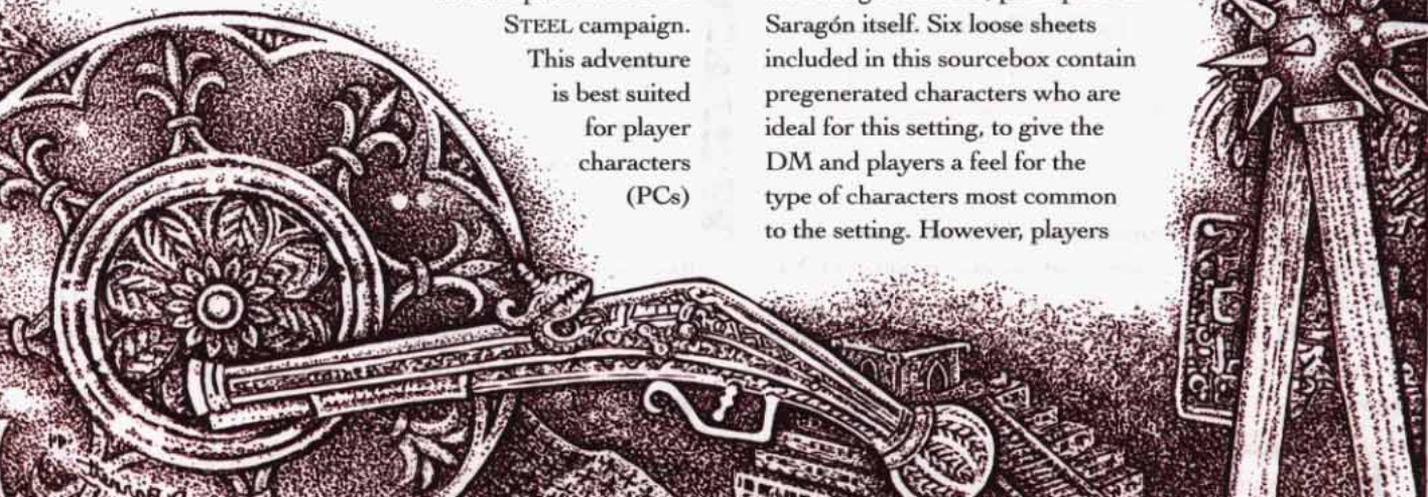
So this adventure can be used easily in any world, all the monsters in it can be found in the MONSTROUS MANUAL™ accessory. However, monsters from other sources, such as the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® appendix for the MYSTARA™ campaign world, might add more flavor to the setting and provide surprises and greater challenges for the PCs; the

DM should feel free to add monsters and challenges unique to the world in which he or she has placed the RED STEEL campaign.

This adventure is best suited for player characters (PCs)

of levels 4-6. Because the majority of the monster opponents in the adventure are relatively weak goblinoids, the DM has room to adjust the danger of the adventure to suit slightly higher or lower level PCs. Characters of higher level can still enjoy the adventure as long as the DM increases the number of opponents or substitutes more powerful opponents during combat encounters. Most of the role-playing and non-combat encounters are challenging to PCs of any level. Lower level characters can have considerable difficulty overcoming the combat and other life-threatening obstacles of this adventure, and they have little chance of defeating Balazar, the main villain. Take care not to force lower-level PCs into combat with opponents they cannot defeat.

The adventure begins in the barony of Saragón, and most or all of the PCs should be from one of the Savage Baronies, perhaps even Saragón itself. Six loose sheets included in this sourcebox contain pregenerated characters who are ideal for this setting, to give the DM and players a feel for the type of characters most common to the setting. However, players



should be encouraged to use PCs of their own design. If the pregenerated characters are not used as PCs, the DM can feel free to use them as NPCs, or as replacement characters in the event that a PC is incapacitated or even slain.

It is possible to import characters from other settings; characters from far lands should find the Legacies of the local people to be extraordinary, unsettling—perhaps even frightening. Be sure to emphasize the strange nature of the region and its inhabitants to any foreign PCs. Encourage them to role-play their outsider status.

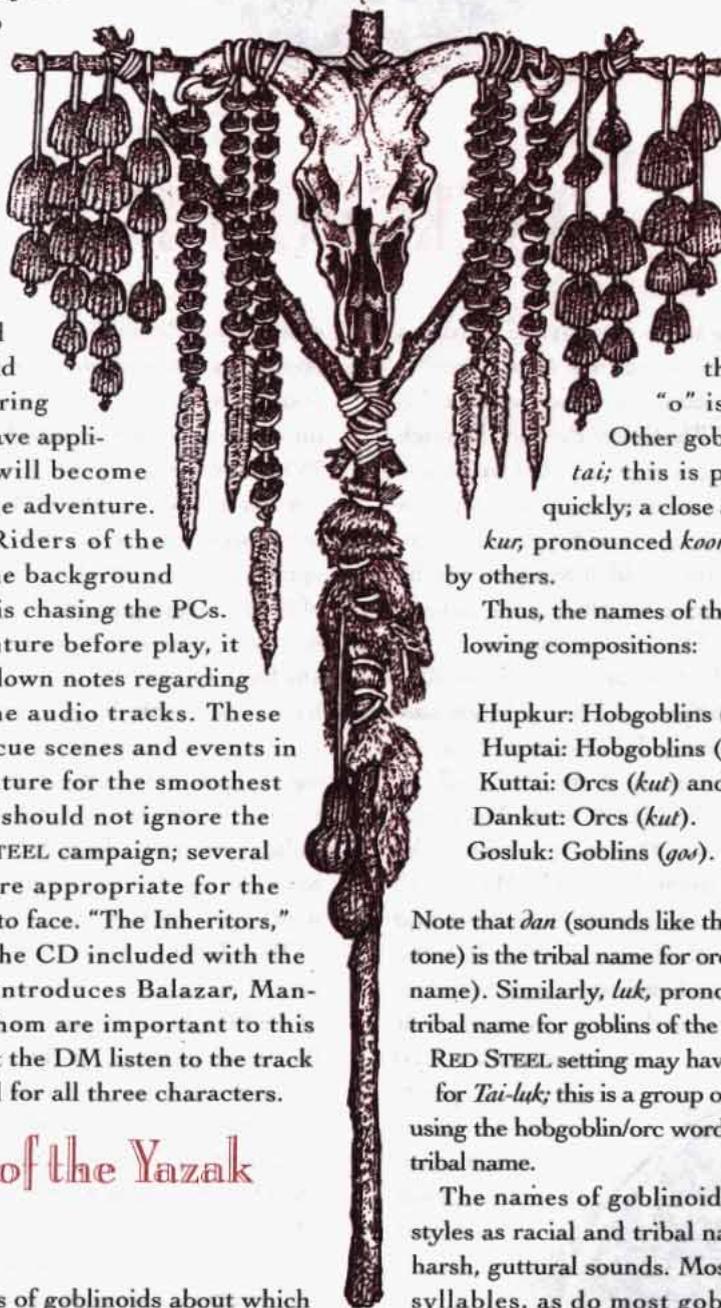
Special Note: The Audio CD

This sourcebook includes an audio CD with background music that can be used to add a little flavor to an adventuring session. Most of the tracks have applications to the action that will become obvious as the DM reads the adventure. For example, the track “Riders of the Yazaks” can be played in the background when a horde of goblinoids is chasing the PCs. As the DM reads the adventure before play, it would be worthwhile to jot down notes regarding the mood and content of the audio tracks. These notes can be matched with cue scenes and events in different parts of the adventure for the smoothest audio experience. The DM should not ignore the original CD from the RED STEEL campaign; several of the tracks on that disc are appropriate for the adventure the PCs are about to face. “The Inheritors,” one of the audio tracks on the CD included with the RED STEEL™ campaign set introduces Balazar, Manzanos, and Miguel, all of whom are important to this adventure; it is suggested that the DM listen to the track thoroughly to get a better feel for all three characters.

The Goblinoids of the Yazak Steppes

There are two major groupings of goblinoids about which people of the Savage Baronies must be concerned. The Yazi include gnolls of El Grande Carrascal and goblins of the Badlands. Though Yazi goblinoids are a constant problem, they are a lesser threat than the goblinoids of the Yazak Steppes.

The Yazak Steppes are home to several types of goblinoids: goblins, orcs, hobgoblins, and ogres; trolls are also found in the steppes. Yazak goblinoids are organized into five “great tribes”: Gosluk, Dankut, Huptai, Hupkur, and Kuttai. The most organized are Hupkur and Huptai, tribes dominated by hobgoblins. However, Gosluk, Kuttai, and Dankut are all closer to the Savage Baronies—and Kuttai and Dankut have recently formed an alliance.



A Note About Goblinoid Names

To hobgoblins, the name for their race is *bup*, with the “u” sound pronounced the same as the “oo” in *book*.

Orcs call themselves *kut*, with the same short “u” sound. The name goblins give themselves is *gos*, in which the “o” is long, rhyming with *gross*.

Other goblinoid races refer to goblins as *tai*; this is pronounced *tab-ee*, but said quickly; a close approximation is *tie*. Ogres are *kur*, pronounced *koor*, both among themselves and by others.

Thus, the names of the five great tribes have the following compositions:

- Hupkur: Hobgoblins (*bup*) and Ogres (*kur*).
- Huptai: Hobgoblins (*bup*) and Goblins (*tai*).
- Kuttai: Orcs (*kut*) and Goblins (*tai*).
- Dankut: Orcs (*kut*).
- Gosluk: Goblins (*gos*).

Note that *dan* (sounds like the “a” in *want*, with a nasal overtone) is the tribal name for orcs of the Yazaks (*kut* is the racial name). Similarly, *luk*, pronounced as the word *look*, is the tribal name for goblins of the Yazaks. Those familiar with the RED STEEL setting may have noticed a marking on the map for *Tai-luk*; this is a group of downtrodden goblins, who are using the hobgoblin/orc word for themselves, plus the goblin tribal name.

The names of goblinoid individuals follow the same styles as racial and tribal names, with short syllables and harsh, guttural sounds. Most names have only one or two syllables, as do most goblinoid words; they have an uncomplicated language. Several acceptable syllables are suggested in the following text, and the DM should feel free to come up with others as needed. These 50 syllables can be mixed or used alone to create goblinoid names, insults, or other words.

Table 1: Goblinoid Word Components

<i>baj</i>	<i>kal</i>
<i>bek</i>	<i>kez</i>
<i>bil</i>	<i>kig</i>
<i>boz</i>	<i>koð</i>
<i>bup</i>	<i>kub</i>
<i>ðag</i>	<i>laj</i>
<i>ðez</i>	<i>lep</i>
<i>ðij</i>	<i>lig</i>
<i>ðok</i>	<i>loz</i>
<i>ðut</i>	<i>lub</i>
<i>gaz</i>	<i>paz</i>
<i>gep</i>	<i>peb</i>
<i>gið</i>	<i>pij</i>
<i>gok</i>	<i>pog</i>
<i>guj</i>	<i>pul</i>
<i>bab</i>	<i>taj</i>
<i>bet</i>	<i>tep</i>
<i>big</i>	<i>tik</i>
<i>bok</i>	<i>tog</i>
<i>buj</i>	<i>tuz</i>
<i>jaj</i>	<i>zad</i>
<i>jeg</i>	<i>zet</i>
<i>jit</i>	<i>zil</i>
<i>jod</i>	<i>zog</i>
<i>juz</i>	<i>zub</i>

History of Invasions

Goblins and their kin have lived in the Yazak Steppes for almost 3,000 years. Over twenty centuries ago, their hordes destroyed the elven and Oltec civilizations of the region, forcing both elves and humans back into a savage state. When the Red Curse was created about 1,500 years past, goblinoids took little notice, content in their raids and occasional wars against too-encroaching humans. When the turtle civilization grew large enough to seem a real threat, goblins swept down from the steppes once more. What few pockets of human and demihuman culture remained shrank to fortified, permanent settlements. But they weren't vanquished.

Those fortifications remained and swelled, first with the arrival of Traldar colonists, then again with immigrants from Ylaruam, Yavdlom, and Thyatis. Yet the goblinoids seemed content to let these petty baronies be. After all, they fought among themselves, first over territory, later over mining rights to *cinnabryl*.

Now, with the spread of the Red Curse and the Legacies tempered by *cinnabryl*, the goblinoids realize, too late, that the current coastal civilizations have become too powerful to be swept away as the ancient elves and turtles were. But, among goblins, pride is greater than wisdom. One powerful leader

could still lead them to ride down from the steppes once more.

Enter Igor Balazar.

Balazar and the Gosluk

Balazar became an Inheritor a few years ago; over the past two years, he has had a couple of run-ins with another Inheritor, Don Luis de Manzanas, baronet of Aranjuez in Saragón. Balazar has considered the baronet his mortal enemy ever since Don Manzanas refused to surrender his *cinnabryl* to Balazar. Upon Don Manzanas' refusal, Balazar challenged him; the baronet suggested they meet the next day, at which time Balazar broke the Code of the Inheritors by attacking then and there, violating the sanctity of Don Luis' home and proving himself a thorough villain by confronting his host—in front of his guests.

Unfortunately for Balazar, Miguel Hernando de Montoya, castellan to Manzanas, was present to help defend his lord. Firing his *smoke powder* pistol at Balazar, Miguel instantly depleted the attacking Inheritor's remaining *cinnabryl*, forcing Balazar to undergo the Time of Loss and Change, as described in Chapter Three, Book I of the RED STEEL™ campaign set. Instantly and painfully transformed into a grotesque brute, Balazar retreated from Torre de Manzanas, swearing revenge on Don Luis and Miguel.

What neither Don Luis nor Miguel know is that after Balazar's retreat, the transformed Inheritor traveled far from Saragón, horrified by his new appearance and furious in his defeat. Wandering the wilds north of Torre de Manzanas, Balazar eventually encountered a small raiding party of about 20 Gosluk goblins. Thinking the mutated Balazar a particularly ugly ogre, the goblins at first tried to enlist his service. When he refused with great hostility, the goblins attacked him.

The three who survived were quite agreeable when Balazar demanded that they take him to their chief.

Six months later, Balazar had established himself as a chief among the Gosluk, murdering his way up their hierarchy of personal power and ruthlessness, then leading them into raids against the neighboring Kuttai orcs and goblins. Between the fear he inspired in his troops and his powerful Legacies, Balazar led the Gosluk in military strikes so brutal and frightening that many Kuttai were quick to agree to an alliance in order to stop the fighting.

The Dankut orcs have been allies of the Kuttai, but their chieftains distrust Balazar and have been hesitant to accept the Gosluk as allies, despite the Kuttai's alliance with them. If Balazar is able to lead the Gosluk and Kuttai in victorious raids against the humans of the Savage Baronies, however, he may be able to unite more tribes. If so, the Savage Baronies will face a horde of monsters the likes of which have not been seen there since the fall of Oltec civilization.

One man stands between Sir Balazar and conquest.

Don Luis de Manzanás

The common residents and soldiers of Saragón consider Don Luis de Manzanás a noble of the highest degree, a man of character as well as station, a hero to the entire barony. Yet many nobles of Saragón and the other Savage Baronies consider Don Luis a clever schemer, bent on advancing his own position by whatever means are handy. In this particular case, the locals are exactly right: Don Luis is a nobleman in the truest sense of the word.

Honorable and altruistic, Don Luis strives to defend not only his own barony but also the entire Savage Baronies region. His attitude is exemplified by his actions at the Battle of Morrión just three years ago, when he helped lead Saragóner forces against Yazi gnolls that had razed castles in Almarrón and Gargaña, avenging the losses

suffered by those two baronies. Given the mistrustful climate of the Savage Baronies, it is easy to see how such a man is misunderstood. But the baronet is not just a victim of envy and ordinary human mistrust; the artifact he uses to defend Saragón and all the baronies exacts a price for its use. It is the source of much of the distrust and suspicion which has so far kept Don Luis from rising above his current status. For more information on the effects of this artifact, see the description of the *careta de la barrera*, the *barrier mask*, in Appendix III.

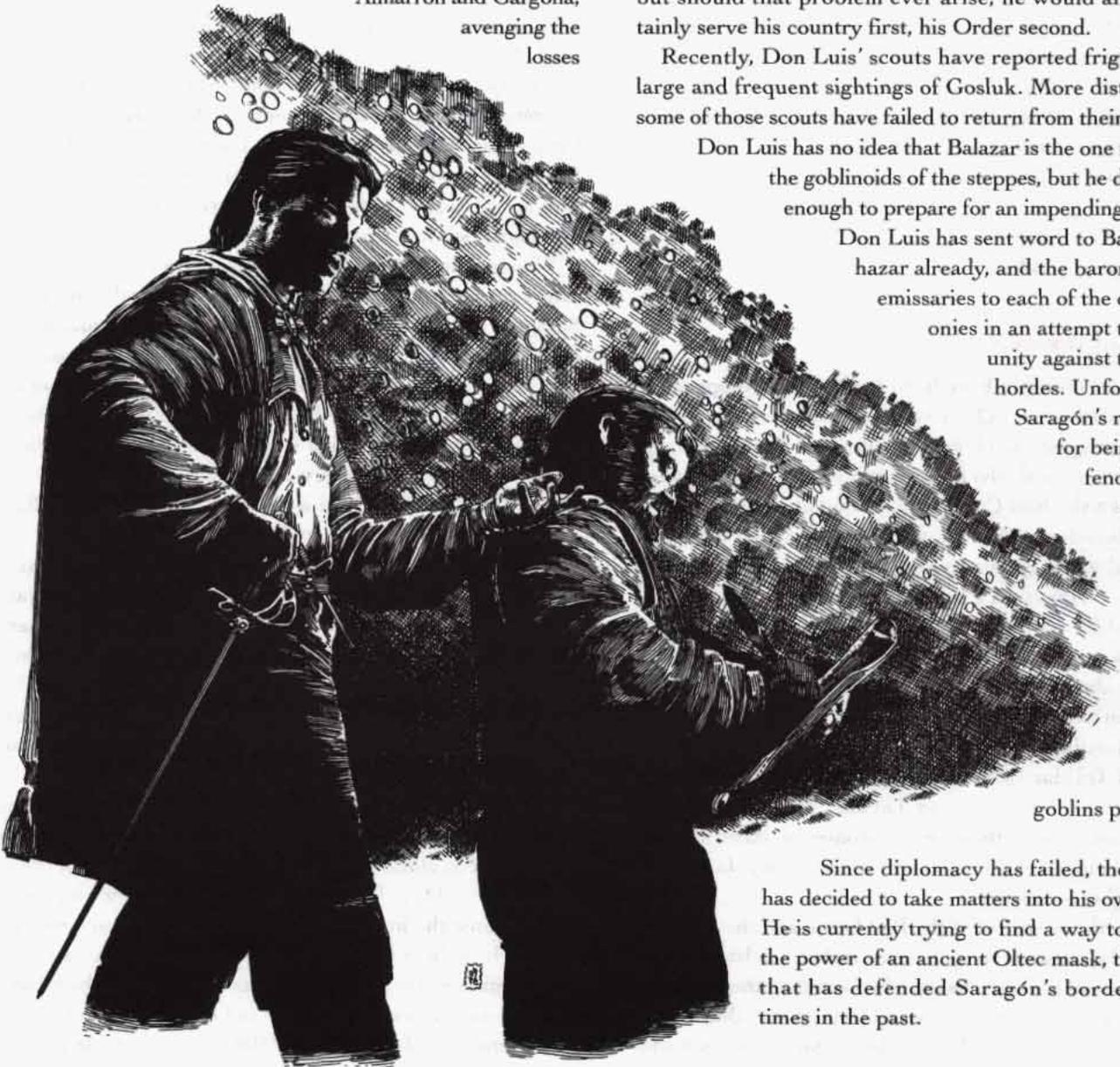
As a member of the Inheritors' Order of Crimson, Don Luis strives to control and distribute *cinnabryl*. As a retainer and advisor to Barón Balthazar de Montejo y Aranjuez, he serves the barony; as lord of the northernmost citadel he also directly protects Saragón and its people. Fortunately, the baronet has never faced the dilemma of divided loyalties; but should that problem ever arise, he would almost certainly serve his country first, his Order second.

Recently, Don Luis' scouts have reported frighteningly large and frequent sightings of Gosluk. More disturbingly, some of those scouts have failed to return from their missions.

Don Luis has no idea that Balazar is the one mustering the goblinoids of the steppes, but he does know enough to prepare for an impending invasion.

Don Luis has sent word to Barón Balthazar already, and the baron has sent emissaries to each of the other baronies in an attempt to achieve unity against the goblin hordes. Unfortunately, Saragón's reputation for being able to fend off large invasions has left even the more sympathetic baronies with little fear that the goblins pose a real threat.

Since diplomacy has failed, the baronet has decided to take matters into his own hands. He is currently trying to find a way to increase the power of an ancient Oltec mask, the device that has defended Saragón's borders many times in the past.



Careta de la Barrera: The Barrier Mask

Saragón has remained safe from foreign invasion largely because of the *barrier mask*, a powerful Oltec artifact which can repel invading armies of 100 or more beings. Most residents of the Savage Baronies believe that Barón Balthazar, the ruler of Saragón, keeps the *mask* in the capital city of Ciudad Matac_n. Barón Balthazar could not be more pleased at this misconception, for the artifact's powers, while considerable, are less than commonly believed.

The *barrier mask* must be brought very close to an approaching force for its powers to affect the invaders. Thus, Barón Balthazar has entrusted the artifact to Don Luis, whose stronghold is strategically placed to deploy the *barrier mask* quickly against invaders from either the Yazak Steppes or the barony of Narvaez, the two clearest threats to Saragón. Secondly, Barón Balthazar wishes personally to avoid the effects of the *mask's* curse, which he learned of through astute divinations. Though the baron does not especially wish ill on Don Luis, he does worry about potential conflicts of interest should the charismatic noble become baron. Thus, entrusting Don Luis with the mask serves two purposes at once: protecting the barony from invaders, and keeping the baronet from being considered heir to Saragón.

While the *barrier mask* has allowed Don Luis to keep Saragón from being invaded by its more aggressive neighbors, he fears it may not work against such a huge horde as is now threatening. While sending scouts to investigate activity from the Yazak Steppes, Manzanas also charged sages and bards with researching a means by which the artifact's power could be enhanced or complemented. These efforts bore fruit nearly a year ago when one of the bards in the baronet's employ returned from his travels with a promising legend.

The legend suggested that the *careta de la barrera* is only part of a larger artifact created by the ancient Oltecs. Each Oltec city crafted one portion of a mannequin meant to represent a patron Immortal. At a great celebration in honor of Oltec unity, they planned to assemble the totem and forever defend their lands from invaders. Unfortunately, the invaders came far too soon, sweeping away the last remnants of Oltec civilization before they could assemble the artifact which might have protected them.

Don Luis' scouts have been charged with investigating any ancient Oltec ruins. As this adventure opens, one small scouting party has recently discovered just such a ruin.

The *barrier mask* is described in Appendix III and is pictured at the top of every page that begins a chapter in the books of this sourcebox.

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs begin the adventure while traveling through a small village near Torre de Manzanas. While there, they encounter the lone survivor of one of Don Luis' scouting parties. If they give her aid, they learn that she and her companions found an ancient Oltec ruin Don Luis suspects may contain an artifact capable of enhancing the power of the *careta de la barrera*.

If the PCs bring the survivor, Maria, to Don Luis, they are offered the opportunity to complete her mission by traveling to the ruins and recovering the new artifact.

When they return, the PCs should also report on any Gosluk activity they witness.

There are actually two ruins near the location the survivor described; one of the ruins is Oltec, but the other is a much more recent structure built by Traladarans. Worse, a large band of Gosluk and Kuttai goblinoids have made camp in one of them while they search for the artifact themselves. Fortunately, the goblinoids are mistakenly searching the wrong ruin.

The PCs can find the ruin which contains the artifact either by searching the area or by rescuing another surviving scout who was captured by Gosluk. The captive, Orlando, is being held in the Traladaran ruins by Gosluk and Kuttai goblins. Once saved from the goblinoids, Orlando can lead the PCs to the correct part of the Oltec ruin and warn them of the dangers inside. The PCs must explore the ruins, find the artifact, and escape before the goblin and orc hordes arrive. When the PCs are about ready to leave the area of the ruins, Balazar arrives with a group of elite Kuttai orcs; not far behind him, a huge horde of goblinoids advances. The great horde includes Gosluk and Kuttai, and even a few Dankut who have been enticed into coming along. The alliance of three great tribes, even for a short time, bodes ill for the baronies.

If the PCs are successful, they can return to Torre de Manzanas in Saragón, where Don Luis can add the power of the *bracers of forbiddance* to that of the *barrier mask*, and turn aside the approaching horde just in time. Balazar and a small group of elite orcs manage to slip through the barrier, however, and attack Don Luis in an attempt to destroy both the baronet and the barrier. Weakened by using the artifact, Don Luis is vulnerable to Balazar, and only the player characters can save the baronet from certain death at the vengeful hands of Balazar.





CHAPTER ONE

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

The action of this adventure begins in the tiny hamlet of Escudo, a few miles northwest of Torre de Manzanas in the barony of Saragón. The player characters need not be natives of Saragón, but most should be native to the Savage Baronies.

To explain why the PCs are traveling through this tiny town together, the DM can either integrate this adventure into an ongoing RED STEEL™ campaign, or use one of the following adventure hooks.

- If any PC is a native of Saragón, Escudo can be his or her hometown. Perhaps the party is traveling here simply so the PC can visit with relatives. Alternately, the DM can include a message from the PC's family in the adventure before this one, summoning the PC home because of a wedding, funeral, or other important event in the family.

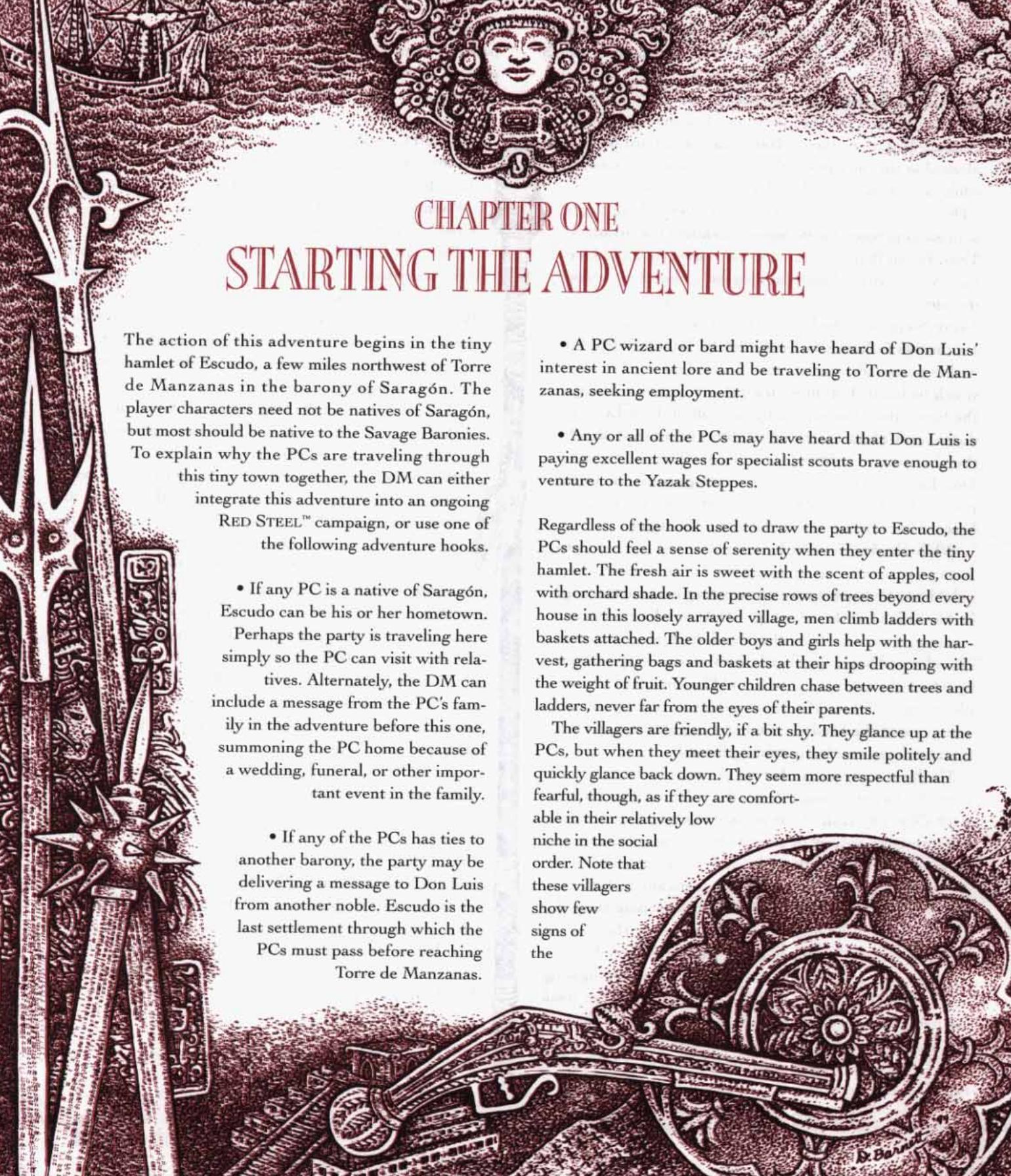
- If any of the PCs has ties to another barony, the party may be delivering a message to Don Luis from another noble. Escudo is the last settlement through which the PCs must pass before reaching Torre de Manzanas.

- A PC wizard or bard might have heard of Don Luis' interest in ancient lore and be traveling to Torre de Manzanas, seeking employment.

- Any or all of the PCs may have heard that Don Luis is paying excellent wages for specialist scouts brave enough to venture to the Yazak Steppes.

Regardless of the hook used to draw the party to Escudo, the PCs should feel a sense of serenity when they enter the tiny hamlet. The fresh air is sweet with the scent of apples, cool with orchard shade. In the precise rows of trees beyond every house in this loosely arrayed village, men climb ladders with baskets attached. The older boys and girls help with the harvest, gathering bags and baskets at their hips drooping with the weight of fruit. Younger children chase between trees and ladders, never far from the eyes of their parents.

The villagers are friendly, if a bit shy. They glance up at the PCs, but when they meet their eyes, they smile politely and quickly glance back down. They seem more respectful than fearful, though, as if they are comfortable in their relatively low niche in the social order. Note that these villagers show few signs of the



Red Curse, because the local priest protects them with *maintain* spells.

As long as the PCs are friendly, the villagers greet them pleasantly. They are used to scouts and the occasional wanderer, but for the villagers themselves, most travel is between the Escudo and the Tower; they rarely go beyond the world defined by the trail that connects the two. If questioned, the villagers are full of local gossip, but little useful information. Some sample dialogue follows; try to work this information into a conversation between a villager and a PC, rather than simply dropping the data on the PCs without a context. The PCs could strike up a conversation with any of the hamlet's inhabitants, but remember that most of them are a little shy at first, so the statements below will not be the first thing to pop out of someone's mouth.

- "The soldiers patrol all the time. Even though we are near the edge of the barony, we're safe from goblins and bandits."
- "Harvest has just begun, and we will work hard for at least another week before festival. You should stay for La Festiva de Manzanas at the Tower. All the villages will bring their best food and wine, and all the best minstrels will visit."

- "Don Luis is truly a noble man. He has devoted his life to protect the barony, even though he is also a member of the Crimson Order. Such a man is important to everyone here, especially the accurséd."

The PCs can buy food and drink, and they can barter or pay for lodging in one of the homes, but there is no inn or tavern here. Villagers tell anyone inquiring about supplies or equipment that they should visit the little market at Torre de Manzanas, about two miles southeast.

The Lone Survivor

Just before the PCs leave the village, or as soon as the players begin to lose interest in role-playing with the villagers, the DM should bring the first of the important NPCs into the adventure. The PCs hear a distant cry that disrupts the tranquility of the little village. It is a boy, running out into the fields beyond the northern orchards. None can make out what he is saying, but his gesture can only mean, "Come here!"

Assuming the PCs look beyond the boy, they can see he is running northwest toward a lone rider. Together, rider and mount are a black silhouette against the yellow fields. But even from this distance the PCs can see that a humanoid figure is slumped behind the drooping neck of the horse, exhausted or dead.



If the PCs make no move to follow the boy, a nearby woman calls out, "Manuel! Stay back from the stranger!" If the PCs do not act now, a man and a teenaged boy grab staves and run after Manuel. If the PCs still refuse to follow, one of the other laborers suggests that the rider may bring trouble. "Won't you go see what it is? We are a simple people, and surely no lone rider would challenge such as you." If nothing else, the PCs should see the survivor, Maria, as Manuel and the other villagers lead her horse into the village.

Maria is in bad shape. Slouched forward to allow her mount to support most of her body, she is barely able to clutch her horse's mane. Somehow she finds strength to hang on, though the PCs can see she has been wounded on the shoulder and the side, probably by arrows. Her trousers are slit above the knee to reveal a crude, blood-stained bandage, her thigh swollen round beneath it. As she nears the village, she lifts her dusty face to rasp weakly, "Water!"

The rider is Maria Cordoba, one of Don Luis' scouts and (she thinks) the last survivor of a group that discovered an ancient ruin in the near foothills of La Pampa Rica (territory west of Saragón, unclaimed by humans). Maria suffers from arrow wounds and dehydration, but what threatens her life is the poisonous sting from a manticore. If the PCs apply sufficient healing to restore Maria to half her hit point total *and* give her water, she can talk a little.

She speaks in a gasping voice, her eyes unfocused, and tries to get the PCs to swear to complete her mission: "Please! Swear to complete ... my mission. My life is gone ... the poison. Swear to me!" Most PCs should be reluctant to swear to complete an unknown mission, but rash promises epitomize the Swashbucklers so common in the Savage Baronies, and Maria is most definitely a damsel in distress. Any requests that Maria explain the mission in more detail before a PC accepts are met with impatient protests: "There is no time! My life ... it slips away. Swear it!" She has nothing more to explain if no one will take her oath, though she will ask to be taken to Don Luis.

Should any PC swear to complete Maria's mission, she calms considerably and continues to speak: "The ruin—we found it! It is not far ... 50 miles, perhaps. Tell Lord Luis ... we searched for the artifact. There were ... monsters in the ruin, but we ... escaped. Then Gosluk ambushed us ..." The woman coughs, and she calls for water again.

A PC with either the healing or the herbalism nonweapon proficiency can use knowledge of either skill to examine Maria; a successful proficiency check confirms that Maria is indeed doomed if the poison in her system is not neutralized. Any successful use of the knowledge of herbalism (that is, another proficiency check) informs the player character that only magic can neutralize the poison this late in its course. If a

priest character casts a *neutralize poison* spell upon her, Maria is saved from death, and healing her to her full hit point total restores her to some vitality; if this occurs, she insists that she go directly to Don Luis to report. If, as is likely, no PCs are priests or can cast a *neutralize poison* spell, the party can still save Maria by taking her immediately to Torre de Manzananas, which is only a few minutes away by horse, and can be reached in perhaps half an hour of just walking.

Maria Cordoba, Scout Thief: AC 8 (leather); MV 12; 3rd-level thief; hp 16 (1 at present); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1 (rapier); AL NG; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 11. Maria should not need her thieving skills in this adventure; if for some reason she does, the DM can invent them as appropriate or use the average scores listed in the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide (DMG)*.

Equipment: rapier, leather armor, light crossbow, bolt case with no crossbow bolts remaining.

The PCs may wish to escort Maria to Torre de Manzananas themselves, send a messenger to summon help, or perhaps even leave her with the villagers.

If they choose to take her to the Tower, the PCs must devise a way to carry her there, as she no longer has the strength to remain on horseback. If the PCs request a cart to carry Maria, the villagers provide one. It might also be possible for someone on horseback to carry her, if she is somehow secured.

If the PCs send a messenger to Don Luis, then Miguel Hernando de la Montoya, the baronet's dwarven castellan, appears within about half an hour to fetch Maria, bringing a priest and a unit of six soldiers. Miguel introduces himself with haste and courtesy, and requests that the PCs accompany him to Torre de Manzananas. Miguel is a bit brusque, because he does not understand why the PCs did not bring Maria directly to the tower, rather than make her dangle by a thread of life.

If the PCs choose to leave Maria with the villagers and then proceed to Torre de Manzananas, when they arrive and tell anyone what has happened, Miguel, a priest, and six soldiers rush out to retrieve the scout. Neither Miguel nor Don Luis thinks much of the PCs in this event, and unless they express a convincing reason for their unchivalrous actions, the PCs will not be asked to complete Maria's mission. How could they be expected to help an entire nation if they cannot help one needy woman?

Meeting Manzananas

When the PCs arrive at the citadel with Maria, guards meet them before the open drawbridge. As long as the PCs are not hostile, the guards respond in a friendly, if some-

what formal, manner. When the PCs get close enough, the guards recognize Maria at once, apprehend the situation immediately, and allow the PCs through the gate while initiating a shouted summons for the castellan (Miguel). If the PCs are already accompanied by Miguel, Miguel shouts for Don Luis.

In any case, it should not be long before Don Luis himself appears. The baronet is a handsome man in his late 30s; he appears young and vibrant, but has just a touch of gray at his temples, the result of too much stress in his adventuresome life. As mentioned, Don Luis is an Inheritor of the Order of Crimson; in fact, the baronet was one of the first 11 Inheritors, and led the adventuring group that caused *crimson essence* to be invented (see the material on Saragón in Book I of this sourcebox). Don Luis' description and statistics appear in Appendix II, his tower's in Appendix I.

The first concern of Don Luis (and Miguel) is to save Maria's life (assuming the PCs have not delayed so long as to make this impossible; the exact amount of time Maria can survive is left to the DM, but the DM should not be afraid to be harsh with PCs who procrastinate). Don Luis has a skilled healer as part of his staff; the guards call for the healer at the same time the baronet is notified, and both healer and lord arrive within a minute or two.

The healer is skilled in both the healing and herbalism

nonweapon proficiencies, but he quickly realizes these will not be enough for Maria; as soon as he assesses the situation, the healer asks permission of Don Luis to get a magical potion (actually a dose of *Keoghtom's ointment*) from the baronet's stock of such things. Don Luis readily agrees, and he asks the PCs to help move the girl to a comfortable room inside the tower while Miguel runs off to get the magical ointment. The ointment is enough to save the scout, but she is exhausted from her ordeal, and falls into a deep sleep as soon as her wounds have been tended.

Manzanas the Man

Statistics for Don Luis are given in Appendix II of this adventure, as are statistics for Balazar. The DM should become familiar with these statistics for use whenever they are needed. The DM should take special note of the baronet, his role as an Inheritor, his personality, and his alignment (neutral good).

At all times, Don Luis carries himself with an air of nobility, and of compassion. As soon as Maria is under the able care of the healer, he turns to business with the PCs. However, he occasionally sends for word about the girl's condition, until he is reassured that Maria is on her way to recovery.





The baronet begins by introducing himself to the PCs and taking them to his study, where he

offers them wine or water, whichever they prefer. Don Luis comes quickly to the point, but in a friendly and open manner, asking the PCs why they were in the area, how they happened to find his scout, and anything she might have said to them. One hopes the PCs relay the important information they gained from Maria, namely that she discovered the ruins, that the site lies about 50 miles away, and that she and her companions were attacked by Gosluk goblins. If for any reason the PCs do not provide this information to Don Luis, it is only a short time before Maria wakes from a restful sleep and gives basically the same information to her lord that she tried to give to the PCs. Even if the PCs do tell Don Luis all they know, he talks to Maria and hears about the manticore and the fact that there are two sets of ruins located close together in the area she was scouting.

Once Don Luis discovers the status of Maria's mission, he feels a sense of urgency: if goblins are close to the artifact, someone must go retrieve it quickly before the goblins take it or destroy it. Don Luis interrogates the PCs further, trying to determine their trustworthiness. If all the PCs swear to undertake an important mission and keep it secret—before they hear anything about the mission—Don Luis tells them a little of the story, not wanting to disclose the whole tale in case they are captured or should somehow turn against him.

Don Luis explains that he has spent the last few years searching for an ancient Oltec artifact, a set of magical bracers. These bracers will help protect their wearer from damage—or so it is believed. He suspects they are an ancient form of *bracers of defense*, which might have powers other than simple protection.

While what he says is basically true, it is not the whole story. Under no circumstances does Don Luis tell them more at this time. That the bracers are part of a set, along with the *barrier mask*, is a secret he wishes to keep for now.

Note: Due to the effect of the *barrier mask* on Don Luis, any PC of noble birth gets an odd, very subtle feeling that the baronet is not to be trusted. If the PCs act on this, perhaps questioning the castle guards and servants, all answers indicate that Don Luis is a wonderful person; the mask's effects apply only to other nobles. No amount of questioning or study leads to an explanation for this feeling.

A Little Help

If the PCs agree to help Don Luis, he suggests that Miguel go along with them. The dwarf knows a little about the mission, and should be able to recognize the bracers, having studied Oltec artifacts with the baronet. Miguel is eager to help, especially if there are any women in the adventuring party. The DM should play up Miguel's usefulness as much as possible.

Though he may appear comical (the concept of a dwarven Swashbuckler is a bit amusing, after all), Miguel is a quite capable individual. He can guide the PCs on their mission, give them information, and come to their assistance in combat.

The PCs might suspect that Miguel would be going along to keep an eye on them, which is entirely true. Don Luis trusts Miguel implicitly, and knows he will do his best to bring the bracers back to Torre de Manzanas. But Miguel's task is not to watch the PCs and insure their loyalty, so much as it is to see to their safety so the bracers can be retrieved. If the characters show the slightest hesitation, Don Luis conceals none of his reasoning for wanting Miguel to go along. The DM should make every effort to portray Miguel as trustworthy and potentially helpful, so that he can give them more clues about the bracers later on. Besides, he's an engaging character. If the PCs refuse to take Miguel, the baronet does not force them to do so, but instead provides a map marked with the suspected site of the ruins.

Note: If Miguel is used as a player character, the DM has to add a little more backstory for the adventure. First, at the beginning, Don Luis sends Miguel to Escudo to debrief (and of course, treat) Maria and hear what she has discovered. Miguel heads back to his lord, bringing the PCs as well. After Don Luis tells the adventurers about the mission, he pulls Miguel aside and gives him the real story of the artifact. When and if Miguel tells the other PCs is up to his player.

A Change of Focus

It is possible, and perfectly acceptable, for the DM to change or expand the adventure. There are several reasonable options for expansion. Two portions of the story have taken place without the PCs, and both segments could be turned into side adventures that involve the player characters.

The first part of the story that went on without the PCs is the overall search for pieces of the Oltec artifact, the search that led to Maria's discovery of the ruins to the west. If the DM wants, the impending goblinoid invasion can be moved back several weeks or even months of game time. The PCs can search the countryside, having a wide variety of encounters, perhaps checking through several ruined Oltec sites. They might find clues in the sites that, when deciphered, lead them to the ruins described in this adventure. This mini-campaign would require that the PCs be told more about the nature of the quest, such as the existence of the several parts of the ancient Oltec artifact, so they know what they are trying to find.

While the PCs are visiting various ruins, most outside barony boundaries, they can notice increased goblinoid activity themselves, rather than simply being informed the

goblinoids are building toward an invasion. The PCs can also witness an increasing brutality among the goblinoids, and the slow start of the alliance between Gosluk and Kut-tai. As the PCs report these things to Don Luis, he becomes more and more concerned. Finally, as things come to a head, the PCs are sent to meet another group of adventurers in Escudo, to discuss the search's progress. This meeting becomes the encounter with Maria. Now the PCs have a much greater involvement in the story.

A second direction for expansion is the quest to unify the baronies to face another horde of goblinoids. In *Divided We Fall*, Don Luis has already failed this quest; in an expanded adventure, the PCs could have a go at it, traveling to the various baronies to negotiate some sort of defensive pact, or simply to convince other heads of state to recognize the existence of the threat. The reactions of the other Baronial leaders would vary widely.

The leaders of Gargoña and Almarrón are initially well-disposed toward Saragón; despite some natural resistance because they feel safe behind Saragón, they are likely to commit soldiers or advisors. Likewise, Guadalante and Cimmaron are friendly with Saragón, and people of action as well; they would not hesitate to commit cavalry units if the existence of a threat were proven to them. Torre_n wants any alliance to pay for the participation of its mercenaries; Narvaez is perfectly happy to let the Enlightened States be overrun by goblinoids, and so would ally only if it saw proof that goblinoids threatened it directly. The Sea Powers have little commitment to an inland war, but likely join in if several of the other baronies do, to maintain good trade relations with everyone.

The two missions could be combined as well, so that while the PCs visit the different baronies, they also search through local Oltec sites and talk to sages about them. This variant might also lead to a completely different adventure ending. Logically, if the baronies discover that someone is manipulating the goblinoids, they'll hire a group of brave adventurers to find and kill the behind-the-scenes leader. Most likely this assignment pushes the PCs into a confrontation with Balazar long before he returns to the Savage Baronies.





CHAPTER TWO

THE PCS' MISSION



Once the PCs have agreed to Don Luis' request, they are allowed to outfit themselves from the armory and enjoy reasonable credit from the marketplace. Allow the PCs to equip themselves with any supplies listed in the *Player's Handbook*, up to a total cost of 100 gold pieces per PC. Normal equipment can be obtained from the market,

basic weapons are available from the citadel's smiths, and leather or chain mail can be acquired as well. Don Luis also has a supply of *cinnabryl*, but he asks the PCs to pay for it; if he has been impressed with the PCs, the baronet charges them Inheritor's prices for the magical metal. Though Don Luis has several *red steel* weapons, these are hidden in a secret armory, and he does not release them to the PCs. Don Luis is also willing to supply horses to any PCs who do not have them, as a loan only, to speed the PCs on their way.

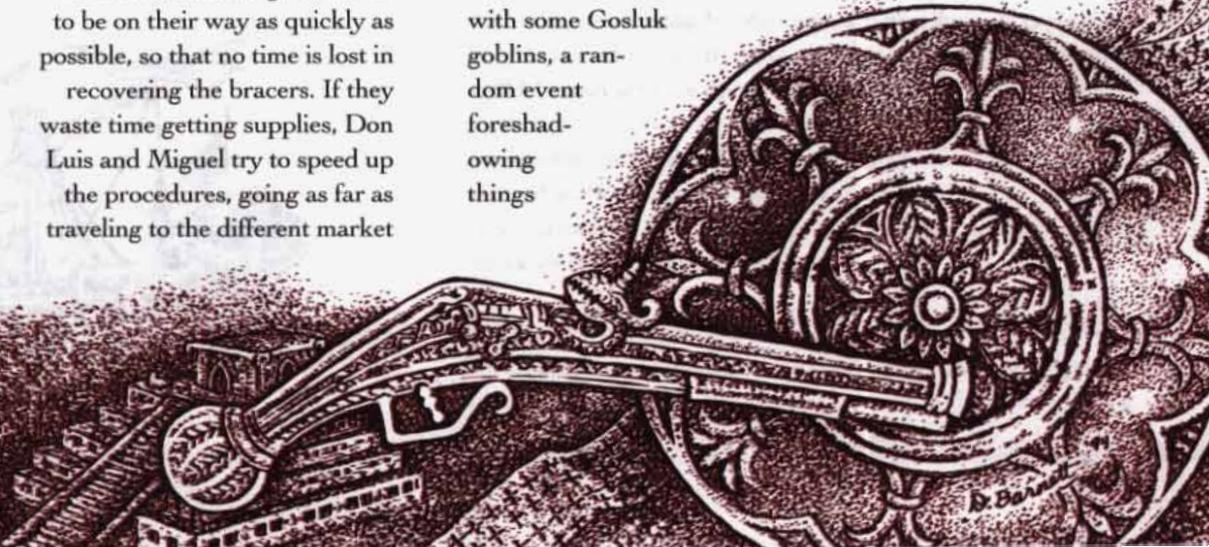
The baronet encourages the PCs to be on their way as quickly as possible, so that no time is lost in recovering the bracers. If they waste time getting supplies, Don Luis and Miguel try to speed up the procedures, going as far as traveling to the different market

stalls themselves to get the goods. Don Luis is pleasant to the PCs unless they waste a lot of time, in which case he becomes snappish.

Once the PCs are ready, they should head off toward the ruins. If Miguel is not accompanying the PCs, Don Luis makes sure they have a map (Handout #1) to the approximate location of the ruins. He also passes on some information from Maria: There are two sets of ruins, each on a hill, and within sight of the other set of ruins. If necessary, the baronet can also describe Oltec architecture, which uses step pyramids, giant stone heads, and intricately carved statuary. When all preliminaries are done, Don Luis wishes the adventurers luck and sends them on their way.

This section is the real "meat" of the adventure, during which the PCs face danger, find treasure, and, one hopes, use a little strategy. The first part of their journey, across the grasslands of La Pampa Rica, should be relatively uneventful; the PCs are headed almost due west from Torre de Manzanas, and while they might have a few encounters, none are important to the progress of the adventure.

After they reach the hilly lands, the PCs have an encounter with some Gosluk goblins, a random event foreshadowing things



to come. After the PCs move on, they come to the two sets of ruins; when they become able to see the ruins, they should notice goblinoids encamped around one. The other set of ruins appears uninhabited, and is the one the PCs want to explore.

The PCs need to make several decisions at this juncture: should they attack, should they sneak in, etc. They might also know about a human prisoner (Maria's partner Orlando) in the goblin encampment, and need to decide what to do about him. Eventually, the PCs should search one or both sets of ruins to find the *bracers of forbiddance*, which are located in the Oltec ruins (not the ruins with the goblinoid camp). At about the time the PCs recover the *bracers*, or when the DM feels they have spent long enough looking, a great goblinoid horde, led by Balazar, approaches from the northwest. The ideal situation is for the PCs to try to warn Saragón, running just ahead of the horde until they reach Torre de Manzanas.

As this part of the adventure progresses, the PCs can come to realize that the goblinoids represent a very serious threat to the Savage Baronies. By the time they encounter the large horde of goblins at the end of this section, the player characters should be feeling the urgency of the situation and should be ready to fall back to Torre de Manzanas. Be sure to give the PCs every opportunity to run; they are not meant to actually face the goblin horde they see here, merely to retreat ahead of it to warn Don Luis.

La Pampa Rica

Following a map or Miguel's directions, the PCs should not take long to cross these grasslands to reach their goal. The first portion of the PCs' journey is through cultivated fields and patrolled lands. The PCs have no adverse encounters in these areas, but the DM may wish to include short role-playing encounters with workers in the fields, Gauchos, military scouts returning from patrol, or other characters that might give the setting a greater sense of reality.

Once the PCs cross the border of Saragón, the fields give way to savannahs, then eventually to rough hills. The PCs risk encounters with wild animals, bandits, and even Gosluk outriders. If the party is powerful enough to withstand a few incidental encounters on the way, the DM should feel free to include them. A short random encounter chart is included if the DM wants to use it; the short adventures from the RED STEEL boxed set can also be used if the PCs have not experienced those encounters previously, and the DM is encouraged to experiment with favorite monsters, perhaps giving them Legacies.

Remember that these encounters, like the role-playing encounters mentioned above, are diversions that add color to the adventure setting. They are not intended to pull the PCs away from the main adventure, or to kill them.

1d4

Roll Encounter

- 1 **Gosluk Goblin Scouts (5):** Int Low (5–7); AL LE; AC 6; MV 6; HD 1–1; hp 5 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (short sword); SZ S; ML 10; XP 15 each.

This is a small scouting party that could serve as a sort of warm-up encounter.

- 2 **Aurumvorax (1):** Int Animal (1); AL N; AC 0; MV 9, Br 3; HD 12; hp 47; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 (bite); SA 2d4 claws for 2d4 damage each; SZ S; ML 19; XP 9,000.

This monster prowls in hilly ground. It does not really want to fight, which is probably fortunate for the PCs, but it attacks if approached or pestered.

- 3 **Gauchos (6):** Int Avg (8–10); Al N; AC 8 (leather armor); MV 12 (18 on light warhorses); HD 1; hp 7 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger) or 1d10+ (wheel-lock horse pistol); SZ M; ML 14; XP 15 each.

These are cattle herders wandering the range, or possibly camped for the night, depending on when they are encountered. Each gaucho has a horse, and there are several cattle nearby. The gauchos are peaceful, but willing to become rowdy if insulted. These gauchos live outside the cursed lands and do not have Legacies.

- 4 **Prairie Dogs (10):** Int Animal (1); AL N; AC 8; MV 12, Br 2; HD 1/2; hp 2 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SZ S; ML 8; XP 7 each.

This encounter can be played for humor, but can have serious repercussions. As the PCs are riding along, they begin to notice prairie dogs popping up from nearby holes; while the animals do not attack unless bothered, their dens are a hazard. If the PCs don't take precautions in this region, each horse has a one in six chance of stepping into a hole; if this happens, the rider must calm his or her mount, or it has a one in twelve chance of breaking a leg and being unable to continue. Otherwise, it is relatively easy to extricate a horse from a hole.

The Gosluk Goblins

The party's first real encounter with Gosluks is in the grassy valleys leading up to the hills where the ruins are located. Goblins have paused in a small valley, and are not visible until the PCs come over a small rise. The goblins have alert scouts, and spot the PCs at the same time the party sees them, unless the PCs have taken precautions like sending out a stealthy scout.

This is purely a combat encounter to show the PCs that the goblins are not at all shy about attacking humans, as they would be normally; they mean business. If one of these goblins is captured, he tells the PCs that his friends have a human prisoner back at the ruins. If it does not look like a goblin will be captured, and it serves the plot, the DM can even have one of the goblins mention the prisoner during combat, either bragging about the captive, or yelling to his compatriots to "get another one to take back to the ruins!" Though goblins usually speak their own language, several of them have learned rough common in order to communicate more easily with Balazar; this allows them to communicate with the PCs as well.

If Miguel is with the adventuring party at this time, and the PCs do well against the goblins, exhibiting reasonably honorable behavior, Miguel takes them into his confidence and tells them about the artifacts, including all he knows about the *barrier mask* and the *bracers of forbiddance*.

Goblins (13): Int Low; AL LE; AC 6 (10); MV 6; HD 1-1; hp 5 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (by weapon); SZ S; ML 10; XP 15 each.

Goblin leader (1): Int Low; AL LE; AC 6 (10); MV 6; HD 1; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (by weapon); SZ S; ML 10; XP 15 each.

Worgs (14): Int Low; AL N(E); AC 6; MV 18; HD 3+3; hp 17 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SZ M; ML 11; XP 120 each.

Two Ruins

Following Maria's directions, Don Luis' map, or Miguel's leadership, the PCs eventually arrive at the area Maria described. There are two hills here, both dotted with scrub vegetation and boulders, and gouged by ravines. The clearly recognizable ruins of a Traladaran outpost stand on the higher, abandoned hundreds of years ago after a devastating Gosluk raid. The lower hill is more a plateau; on it, invisible to cursory examination, are the half-buried remains of a much older ruin, this one a devastated Oltec temple.

When the first Traldar pioneers traveled to this region, they established a series of small fortresses meant to protect their claimed lands from goblinoid raiders. It was not long before those raiders laid siege to the fortresses and scattered most of the Traldar. These ruins mark the location of a fortress which took nearly two years to construct, but which stood for less than a year before it was razed to the ground.

The two ruins lie within sight of one another, and as the PCs approach, they can clearly see goblins around the ruins on the higher hill. The PCs are correct if they believe that any activity in the Oltec ruin is visible from the Traladaran ruin; they must do something about the goblins, or sneak in and out of the Oltec ruin with either speed or magical concealment. The PCs might also be aware there is a human prisoner, Orlando, and must decide what to do about him; if they do not yet realize he exists, he becomes visible on a close approach to the ruins of the Traldar citadel.

Note that if Miguel is with the PCs when they see the ruins, the dwarf makes a remark or two. He recognizes the costumes of the Yazak goblinoids, and when he sees Gosluk and Kuttai together, he says something like, "The Gosluk, they are no problem; they raid, they go away, they are weak. The Kuttai, they are no problem; they raid, they go away. Seeing Kuttai and Gosluk together, that is a bit of a problem, but not one that is insurmountable. Thank goodness the Dankut are not with them."

The main concern of the PCs is getting past the goblinoids, either by avoiding them or fighting them. In regard to their approach to the ruins, the PCs have three broad options.

- **Stealth.** The PCs can sneak in and rescue Orlando or sneak into the Oltec temple to recover the *bracers*, or both. If the PCs are very careful, they might pull off a stealthy approach, but there is bound to be noise when the PCs find the mantichore guarding the *bracers* (unless they use magical silence to block the sound from reaching the goblins, such as by casting *silence, 15' radius* across the mouth of the mantichore's cave). If the goblins hear the PCs fighting the mantichore, they send patrols over until eventually a large group of goblins and orcs surrounds the well, waiting to take on the winner of the fight.

- **Attack.** The PCs can try to kill or rout the goblins and orcs. This option is viable; after a few goblinoids die, both Kuttai and Gosluk think better of their rather shaky alliance and run away to leave their former allies to their fate.

- **Wait.** This option does the PCs no good. The goblins wait, too—until reinforcements show up, in the form of several hundred more goblins and orcs, with Balazar. When the horde shows, Balazar briefly prowls around the two temples, kills the mantichore, recovers the *bracers*, and leads the horde to attack Saragón.

The Ruined Citadel

The Traladaran ruin is the only one the goblins and orcs have yet explored. They are aware of the older ruins, but consider them useless. The goblinoids have made their camp within the scant shelter of the two remaining fortress walls while they explore those few chambers of the dungeon so far revealed.

Both Gosluk and Kuttai goblins camp here, along with a unit of Kuttai orcs. The two tribes are currently allied, though lingering hatreds and suspicions remain. Fights between members of the two tribes are not uncommon, and to diminish the chances of a serious conflict, the unit chieftains have divided the area into four discrete patrol quadrants.

While several goblins and orcs stand watch outside, a small group representing both Gosluk and Kuttai explores the dungeon chambers below. A few goblins and orcs rest inside the walls, and two Gosluk goblins guard a human prisoner.

Among the tumbled stones of the Traladaran ruin are worked blocks, some of which are carved with recognizably foreign designs. Any PC who makes a successful ancient history proficiency check identifies these marks as Oltec and knows the Oltec civilization fell thousands of years

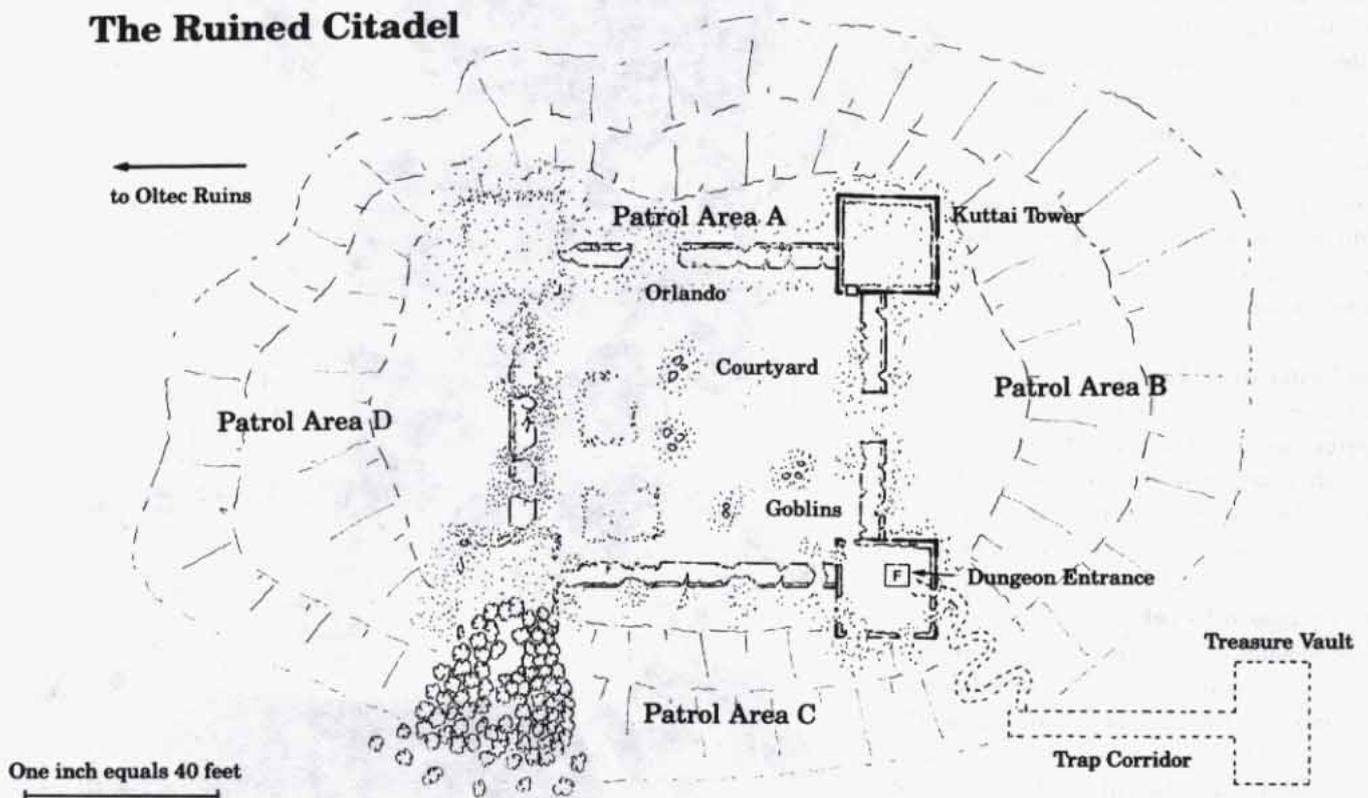
ago—if it is not simply the stuff of legend, as some scholars argue. These blocks were taken from the Oltec ruin by the Traldar and placed in their own construction, probably for decoration.

When the PCs get close enough, they can see into the fortress—through the wall, through the ancient gate, or over the top of the rubble, depending on the angle from which they approach. In any case, they can see a human is being held prisoner inside. If Miguel is with the PCs, he recognizes Orlando, Maria's partner. Maria assumed Orlando died with the other members of their small scouting party, but the goblins actually knocked him unconscious and captured him. Note that Miguel insists on rescuing Orlando; a romantic, Miguel has noticed that Maria and Orlando are smitten, and believes they must be reunited for true love.

Patrol Quadrants

A: Gosluk Goblins. A walking patrol of four goblins surveys this area. These goblins are alert, but pay more attention to the Kuttai goblins that patrol nearby, anxious to make sure the Kuttai do not receive some extra privilege that Gosluk do not. The goblins walk the perimeter of their open, grassy area, sometimes stopping to look back at the Kuttai.

The Ruined Citadel



B: Gosluk Goblins. A lone goblin stands guard here while his two companions sleep at his feet. PCs who can approach with stealth may be able to dispatch this lone guard quietly. In addition, the goblin's position cannot be observed from the ruins, which is why two of the guards are able to get away with sleeping.

C: Kuttai Goblins. A walking patrol of three goblins watches this area. These goblins walk close together, and patrol back and forth at the edge of their designated area. While the goblins are visible from the citadel and so cannot be killed without raising an alarm, PCs might sneak by in some brush at the edge of the patrol area, if they wait until the goblins are headed the other way. Of course, the Gosluk goblins in area A may see stealthy PCs if their mistrust leads them to look this way at the right moment.

D: Kuttai Orcs. Four orcs patrol this area. Each is stationed in a corner of the designated area, and every few minutes they all rotate to the next post, to insure they are all awake and alert. These orcs cannot be bypassed safely without great luck or magic.

Approaching the Ruined Fortress

The best way for PCs to approach the fortress is through area B, though Areas A and C have advantages as well. Area D cannot be penetrated by stealth alone. The party's best chance for success depends on their abilities; if they have several stealthy members, an approach through area A or C might be in order. If the party is unsubtle, their best bet might be to attack quickly, hoping to distract the goblins from attacking Orlando until he can be rescued.

The Remaining Tower

Kuttai orcs claimed the tower as their headquarters, and the Gosluk did not protest, since they had explored it earlier and found it boring. The tower is mostly featureless, and a collapsed upper level leaves it open to the sky.

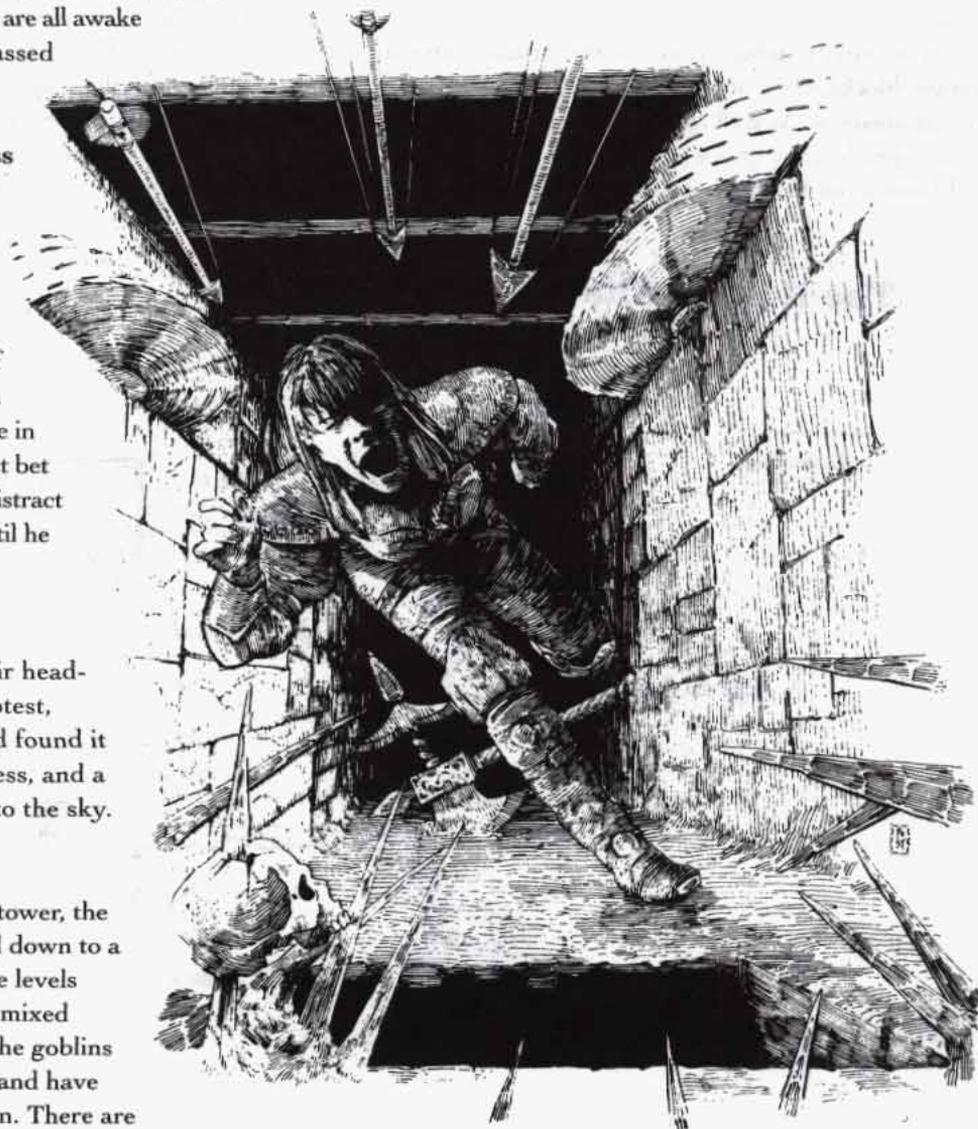
The Dungeon Levels

In the remains of the citadel's second tower, the orcs found a hidden trap door that led down to a two sublevels. Rather than explore the levels themselves, the lazy orcs sent down a mixed party of Kuttai and Gosluk goblins. The goblins have been inside for about two hours and have not been heard from since they went in. There are

two reasons for their silence.

First, the upper sublevel is 100 feet below ground, and can be reached only by going through a twisted little passage; like people larger than goblin-size, sound does not travel well through this narrow passage. Only one person can fit in the tiny tunnel at once; goblins can fit rather comfortably, but orcs and humans would have difficulty moving in the tunnel.

Second, the goblins reached a long corridor below the surface; the corridor has brick walls and a cobblestone floor. As the goblins advanced along this corridor, they began setting off a series of mechanical traps. Three goblins, a Gosluk and two Kuttai, lie dead. The other three goblins, one Kuttai and two Goslucs, stand or sit in the middle of the corridor, unsure what to do. When they tried to retreat back the way they came, another trap went off, injuring one of the remaining Goslucs. Now they are scared to move, and are trying to think of a way out without set-



ting off even more traps. The rivalry between the two tribes keeps these three goblins quiet; each hesitates to show weakness in front of the other tribe, such as howling for help from the surface.

If the PCs venture into the sublevels, their passage through the twisted corridor is uneventful and relatively easy, if slow. However, once the characters reach the deep corridor, they face two dangers: traps, and goblins. The goblins shout threats from the middle of the corridor, and heedless of the traps, rush to attack characters who come toward them. Use standard goblin statistics, except that one of them has only two hit points remaining.

Whenever someone moves in the corridor, whether walking, running, or maneuvering to attack, there is a one in six chance of a trap going off. The corridor is loaded with several different types of trap, and most are self-loading and repeating. There are darts that shoot from the walls; blocks that drop from the ceiling; spikes that jut from the floor; blades that swing out of the wall; axe blades that swing like pendulums across the corridor; and any others the DM cares to add. A character who sets off a trap must make a successful saving throw vs. paralysis to avoid its effects, or take 1d6 damage (regardless of the type of trap). While it might be possible for a thief to go through the corridor and disarm the traps, there are always the goblins to worry about. At the DM's discretion, it might be possible for the PCs to negotiate a truce while one or more of them try to disarm traps—but it is suggested that the DM just have some fun with traps going off throughout melee to liven things up a bit. If a thief does try to disarm the traps, there are 82 (!) different mechanisms to be disabled.

If the characters make it through the corridor to reach the room at the end, they find the door easy to open. Inside is a treasure hoard guarded by a wight. The exact contents of the treasure hoard are up to the DM, but should be based on the wight's treasure type (B) and the needs of the campaign.

Wight (1): Int Average (9); AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 4+3; hp 26; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA energy drain; SD spell immunities, hit only by silver or magical weapons; SZ M; ML 14; XP 1,400.

Courtyard

The remaining "courtyard" is nothing more than the outline of the original walls with partial remains of two of those walls. Against the interior of one crumbling barrier lie the off-duty Gosluk goblins. Against the other wall, almost 40 feet away, two Gosluk goblins guard Orlando, who is tied hand and foot and leans propped against the cold stone wall. The goblins guarding Orlando pay little attention to

him, only occasionally glancing in his direction, sometimes going for minutes without checking on him. Orlando's guards are more interested in playing knucklebones and keeping an eye on the Kuttai.

Rescuing Orlando

Fortunately for Orlando (and the PCs), rescuing him is not difficult for a careful and stealthy party. The goblins have foolishly placed him near a rather large hole in the wall, so after eliminating the one wakeful goblin in patrol area B, the PCs can climb up behind Orlando. Orlando is tied up, but is not closely guarded (the perimeter guards are supposed to make sure he cannot escape). As long as the PCs are quiet, they can release Orlando from his bindings with little trouble, and spirit him away.

Orlando, Gaucho Ranger: AC 8 (leather); MV 12; 3rd-level ranger; hp 19 (6 at present); THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); AL CG; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 12.

Equipment: leather armor. Orlando's other equipment (a wheel-lock pistol, bolas, and so forth) was taken by the goblinoids and is miles away.

Goblins (34): Int Low; AL LE; AC 6; MV 6; HD 1-1; hp 5 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (by weapon); SZ S; ML 10; XP 15 each.

Goblins, leader's henchmen (5): Int Low; AL LE; AC 6; MV 6; HD 1-1; hp 7 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (by weapon); SZ S; ML 10; XP 15 each.

Goblin leader (1): Int Low; AL LE; AC 6; MV 6; HD 1; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (by weapon); SZ S; ML 10; XP 15.

Wolf, Worg (39): Int Low; AL NE; AC 6; MV 18; HD 3+3; hp 14 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SZ M; ML 11; XP 120 each.

Orcs (13): Int Average; AL LE; AC 6; MV 9 (12); HD 1; hp 6 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (weapon); SZ M; ML 12; XP 15 each.

Orc Leader (1): Int Average; AL LE; AC 6; MV 9 (12); HD 1; hp 8; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (weapon); SZ M; ML 12; XP 15.

Boar, Steppe (14): Int Animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 5; hp 30 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SZ L; ML 10; XP 270.

The Oltec Temple

Far more ancient than the Traladaran fortress is this nearly-buried ruin of an ancient Oltec temple built in honor of some long-forgotten Immortal.

The ruins consist of a giant human head carved from stone and standing 15 feet tall; a small stone pyramid with steps up all sides and an open platform on top; and a deep “cenote,” a natural well about 30 feet in diameter. The water in the well is several feet below the edge of the pit, and is only about 10 feet deep. A cave opening is exposed in one side of the cenote’s wall. Climbing down the wall is not difficult if a rope is used; the side is smooth and a little wet, giving a thief or other character a –10% chance to climb down safely without a rope or climbing equipment.

The *bracers* are deep in the cavern—but so is a manticore. This creature has declared the treasures of the cenote for its own, having discovered and claimed the lair about three months ago; it fights to the death. The rest of the treasure is left to the DM’s discretion, based on the manticore’s treasure type (E), and the requirements of the campaign. The manticore does not have any *cinnabryl*, *red steel*, or related materials.

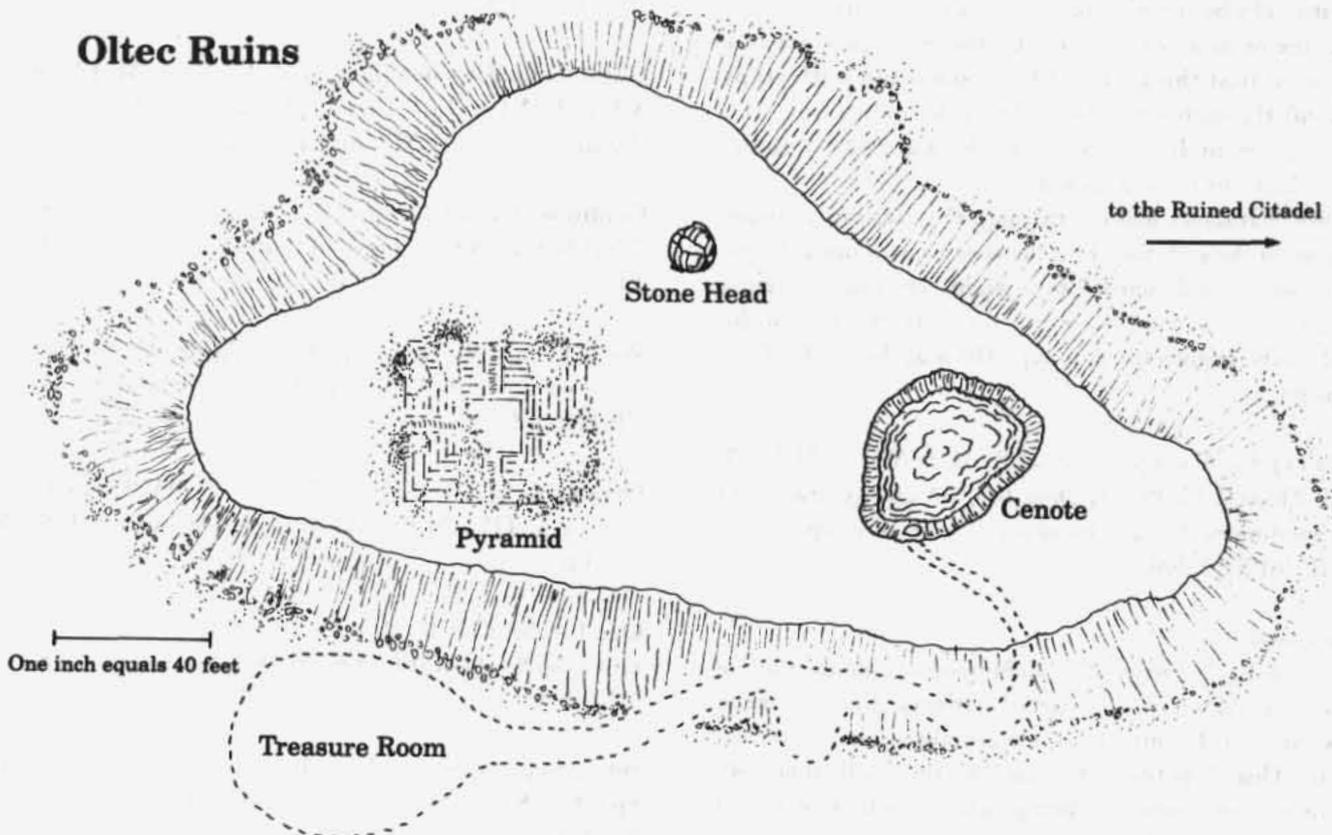
Manticore (1): Int Low; AL LE; AC 4; MV 12, Fl 18 (E); HD 6+3; hp 34; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d8; SA poison; SZ H; ML 14; XP 975.

Escaping the Horde

While the PCs are dealing with the ruins and their inhabitants, a great horde of orcs and goblins approaches from the west. In addition, a sort of “advance horde” precedes the main body. Led by Balazar, this advance party should arrive at the ruins at about the time the PCs have decided to leave after recovering the *bracers*.

Ideally, after getting the *bracers*, or defeating the goblins and orcs at the ruins, or some combination thereof, the PCs would exit one set of ruins. Looking to the west, they would see a few goblins, perhaps 20, come over a hill, causing the PCs to think something like “oh no, not again.” Then they see more goblins come over; then a few more and a few more, until a wave of about 200 orcs and goblins comes over the hill and approaches the ruins. This should encourage the PCs to leave rather quickly; if they do, the horde pursues them all the way back to the border of Saragón, barely stopping to rest, always in sight just a mile or two, or less, back.

Even if the PCs do not recover the *bracers*—if they fail against the manticore or just delay too long, or whatever—the advance hoard still arrives, and the PCs are still forced to flee. If they have not gotten the *bracers*, then Don Luis simply must hold back the horde with just the *barrier mask*. Of course, unless Miguel came with the PCs and was able to



explain the connection between the *bracers* and the *mask*, the PCs may not realize how important the *bracers* really are.

At this point, the PCs can see Balazar as he approaches. If Miguel is with them, he explains what he knows of the confrontation between Balazar and Don Luis. If one of the PCs is an Inheritor, that character stands a chance (based on an Intelligence check) of recognizing Balazar as a renegade Inheritor.

If Miguel is with the group, he frowns and shakes his head when the hoard approaches. If asked what the problem is, he replies with something like, "I said the Gosluk were no problem, it was true. And the Kut-tai, the same, no problem. Even when together, they can be defeated. Unless the Dankut join them. Well, those are Dankut. Three of the great nations have united and nothing can stand against them now." Miguel is right; Balazar has managed to unite three tribes, at least temporarily. Despite his sudden depression, Miguel become just as abruptly enthusiastic if the PCs make any reasonable suggestion for dealing with the situation (such as rushing

back to warn the baronet).

The statistics for the goblins and orcs follow; Balazar's statistics are found in Appendix II.

Goblins (134): Int Low; AL LE; AC 6; MV 6; HD 1-1; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (by weapon); SZ S; ML 10; XP 15 each.

Wolf, Worg (134): Int Low; AL NE; AC 6; MV 18; HD 3+3; hp 18 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SZ M; ML 11; XP 120 each.

Orcs (49): Int Average; AL LE; AC 6; MV 9 (12); HD 1; hp 6 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (weapon); SZ M; ML 12; XP 15 each.

Boar, Steppe (49): Int Animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 5; hp 30 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SZ L; ML 10; XP 270 each.

Option: The Noble Sacrifice

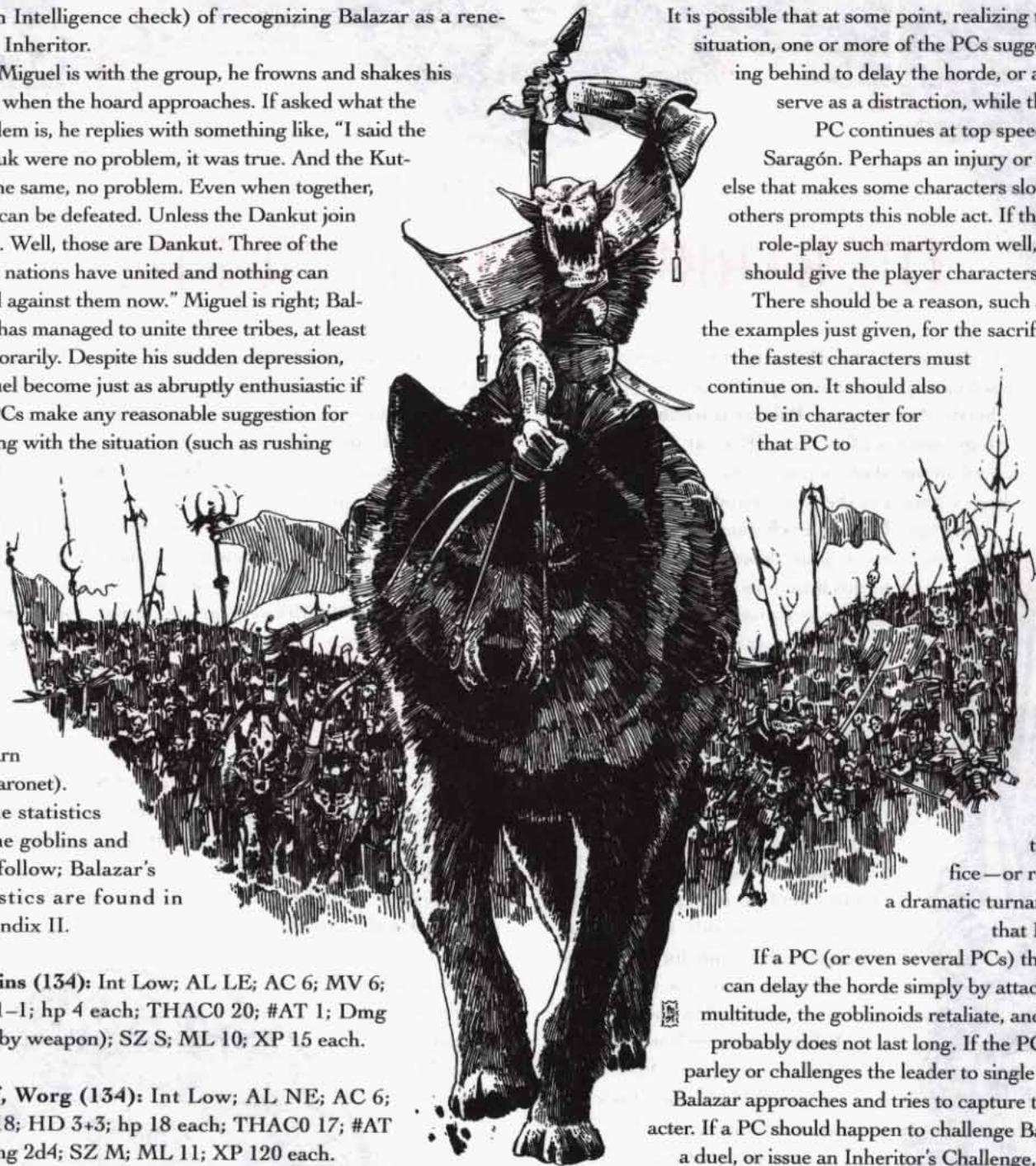
It is possible that at some point, realizing their dire situation, one or more of the PCs suggests staying behind to delay the horde, or at least to serve as a distraction, while the fastest PC continues at top speed toward Saragón. Perhaps an injury or anything else that makes some characters slower than others prompts this noble act. If the players role-play such martyrdom well, the DM should give the player characters a break.

There should be a reason, such as one of the examples just given, for the sacrifice, and the fastest characters must continue on. It should also be in character for that PC to

make the sacrifice—or represent a dramatic turnaround in that PC's life.

If a PC (or even several PCs) think they can delay the horde simply by attacking the multitude, the goblinoids retaliate, and the PC probably does not last long. If the PC tries to parley or challenges the leader to single combat, Balazar approaches and tries to capture the character. If a PC should happen to challenge Balazar to a duel, or issue an Inheritor's Challenge, Balazar refuses and orders his goblins to take the PC prisoner.

Balazar has lost his standing as an Inheritor, and has never cared for the rules of dueling, so he feels no need to accept a challenge. If the PC or PCs allow it, they will be taken prisoner and brought along to Saragón and the climactic encounter.





CHAPTER THREE

THE BARRIER AND THE HORDE

In this section, the PCs return to Saragón, pursued closely by the leading edge of the goblinoid horde. At this point, Balazar is leading his orcs only, and the 50 of them (Balazar and 49 orcs) are all mounted on steppe boars—giant, specially bred versions of the more mundane boars found elsewhere. The player characters should arrive less than an hour ahead of Balazar, giving Don Luis little time to discover how to use the *bracers of forbiddance* by deciphering the marks on them.

Once Don Luis figures out how to use the *bracers of forbiddance* in conjunction with the *barrier mask*, he puts them on and goes to the top of his central tower. From there, the baronet can see the approaching goblinoid horde and direct the magic of the artifacts at them. Unfortunately, while Don Luis is turning back the horde of thousands, Balazar slips through with an elite force of about 50 orcs, a force too small to be affected by the artifacts. Whether he uses both the artifacts or only one, Don Luis is successful in turning back the main horde. However, the effort drains the baronet's energy,

until he is so weak he can barely stand. It is at this time that Balazar launches an attack against Don Luis. While his elite orcs assault the castle, Balazar flies above the melee to attack the baronet directly. Miguel is busy leading the castle's defenders, so it is up to the PCs to save the baronet from certain death—or worse.

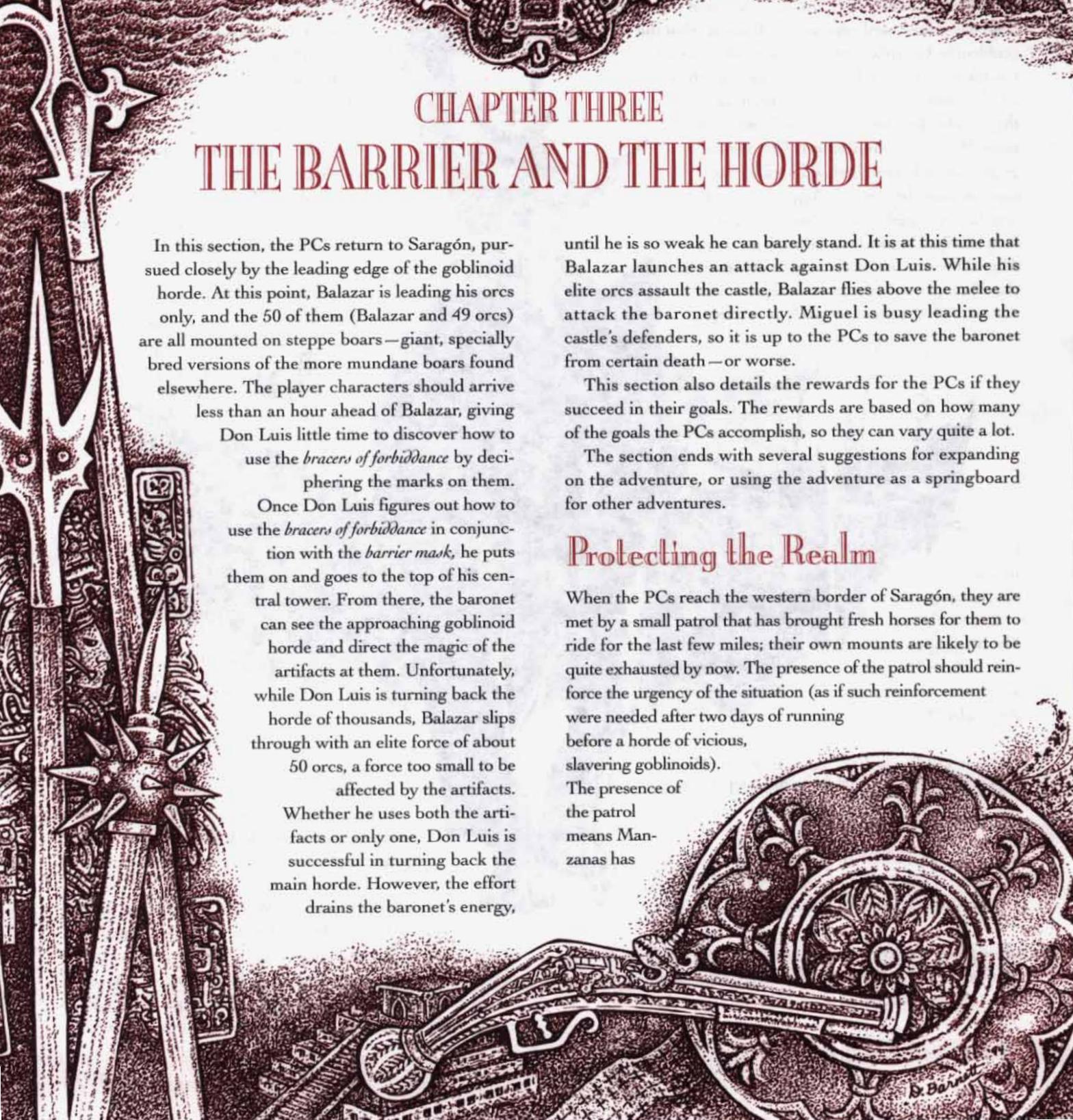
This section also details the rewards for the PCs if they succeed in their goals. The rewards are based on how many of the goals the PCs accomplish, so they can vary quite a lot.

The section ends with several suggestions for expanding on the adventure, or using the adventure as a springboard for other adventures.

Protecting the Realm

When the PCs reach the western border of Saragón, they are met by a small patrol that has brought fresh horses for them to ride for the last few miles; their own mounts are likely to be quite exhausted by now. The presence of the patrol should reinforce the urgency of the situation (as if such reinforcement were needed after two days of running before a horde of vicious, slaving goblinoids).

The presence of the patrol means Manzananas has



received reports from scouts, and considers it vital that the PCs shave even a few minutes from their arrival time. The patrol encourages the PCs to hurry, wishes them luck, and then runs as far as they can to avoid the goblinoids themselves.

At Torre de Manzanas

When the PCs reach Torre de Manzanas, they see that it has been prepared for war. When they were here before, there were markets set up outside, and people were seen all around the castle. Now, all the commoners and merchants are inside the castle, and defenders can be seen at several points along the walls.

Don Luis meets the PCs at the gate when they ride up, and he asks immediately for the *bracers*. If the PCs do not have them, the baronet turns very grim and says, "Very well. We will do what we can." He then turns sharply, and stalks back to his tower, leaving the PCs to their own devices; they are welcome to help the defenders of the castle, but Don Luis would not care if they simply left and never returned.

If the PCs have the *bracers of forbiddance*, Don Luis thanks them and praises their bravery—and speed. He takes the bracers and goes into his tower, where he can use an ancient book to decipher the pictographs on the *bracers* and learn about their precise function. If the PCs should try to hold out for more money or anything like that, the baronet will not shed a tear for the PCs after he orders his archers and pistolers to shoot them down.

As Don Luis goes inside with the *bracers of forbiddance*, he offers the PCs the opportunity to rest—they have certainly earned it—or to help defend the castle's walls. Either is acceptable, but hopefully the PCs are willing to aid in castle defense, so they don't miss the climax of the adventure. Besides the baronet's full-time healer, who the PCs met before, Don Luis has also brought several clerics to the tower, and the PCs can receive any healing attention they need before the battle begins.

The PCs are welcome to help prepare castle defenses, and can choose their own posts if they desire. If they do not have a preference, Miguel asks them to guard the gatehouse, and to possibly be prepared for a counter-charge from the castle if it is needed.

Not long after Don Luis disappears into his tower, Balazar and the orcs arrive. If the characters have a good vantage point, in the far distance behind Balazar and the orcs, the larger goblinoid horde can be seen.

Balazar's Return

During the next part of the adventure, the NPCs come to center stage, but this should not be a reason to keep the PCs from playing. If they want to jump in with an action at any

time, the DM should improvise as needed to accommodate the players' actions.

Balazar slows as he approaches, and the orcs stop about a hundred yards from the castle gate. Balazar rides forward a little, and he throws back his cloak to reveal his hideous form.

If nothing has happened to Miguel, the stalwart dwarf calls out to Balazar as he approaches, and the following conversation takes place.

Miguel: Ah, Balazar, it is so good to see you. My pistol shot seems to have improved our looks. You are most handsome now.

Balazar: Dwarf, you were less than I before, and you are still nothing. Go, dog, and tell your master that I am here.

Miguel: Ah, well, the last time I did that for you, you followed me. I think perhaps I should wait here with you this time, but I will send someone to speak to Don Luis de Manzanas, and ask him if he has time to look at some interesting garbage that has floated up to the castle.

Balazar: Dwarf, I hate to admit it, but you did hurt me when I ... visited before, and for that you will die slowly, after you watch me kill your beloved "lord of the apples." I do have one thing to be thankful for, you know. At least when you shot me, I did not become as repulsive as you.

At about this time, Don Luis arrives, walking onto the top of his keep's central tower. The baronet is wearing the *bracers of forbiddance* (if he has them) and has the *barrier mask* under one arm. The conversation continues.

Don Luis: Balazar. I see that neither your beauty nor your attitude has improved since we last met. And you have allies. How is it that a proud Inheritor can sink to such depths?

Balazar: You should know, Apples. You selfishly kept me from your *cinnabryl*, saving it for your ... peasants. But after I have slain you, I will have your *cinnabryl*, as well as theirs.

Don Luis: Balazar, you bore me. I do not know if there are still parts of the Inheritor's Code that you have not broken, but you are certainly an Inheritor no longer. Nothing you can do will surprise me, and I am beyond being offended by you. Attack if you must, and we will end this.

With that, Don Luis dons the *barrier mask* and looks to the west, raising his arms slowly to the sky. Balazar waves his followers to attack, and the orcs charge forward on their warboars to assault the castle walls. The baronet continues to concentrate on the distant goblinoid horde, and a brilliant flash of white light appears in the west; those looking in that direction can see the goblinoid horde come to a stop. If they continue to watch, they see panic spread through the goblinoid ranks; mounts rear up, and individuals begin turning and fleeing. The horde begins to turn, and in smaller clumps, the goblinoids head back to the west. Scouts later report that various tribes fell against each other during the rout.

Don Luis, in the meantime, slumps to his knees, drained. He pulls the *barrier mask* from his face, gasping, and falls forward a little, catching himself on one hand, while holding the *barrier mask* in the other. Balazar chooses this moment to attack the baronet.

Suddenly, Balazar unfolds great, bat-like wings, having just activated his *Fly Legacy*. Balazar flies into the sky and toward Don Luis, who, in his weakened state, does not notice. Once he reaches a height of 30 yards or so, Balazar activates his *Missile Legacy*, firing three glowing, crimson missiles at the baronet. Don Luis cries out in pain and drops the mask. Balazar's laughter echoes over the battlefield, and he pulls two wheel-lock pistols from his belt and flies toward his foe. Since he no longer has to worry about their effect, Balazar has been practicing with the wheel-locks, and he is obviously intending to use the *smoke powder* explosions to drain Don Luis' *cinnabryl* and hurt him in the same way Balazar himself was hurt months ago at Torre de Manzananas.

It is now time for the PCs to attain glory or suffer ignominious defeat. Miguel is too busy with the orcs to go to Don Luis' aid, and it is up to the PCs to save the noble lord of Torre de Manzananas.

If the PCs have already started toward the tower and Don Luis, they can get there before Balazar, who is moving in slowly to savor the pain he is causing his enemy. If the PCs have not already started to move, they arrive after Balazar reaches Don Luis. Balazar, laughing, takes the baronet's *cinnabryl talisman* and tosses it aside, then raises his wheel-locks, but rather than pointing them at the lord, he just holds them nearby. If necessary to give the PCs a little more time to get there, Miguel uses his own *Fly Legacy* to fly to the tower after Balazar; but Miguel is no match for the Afflicted former Inheritor, and is soon severely injured by Balazar.

Despite having his visible talisman removed, Don Luis is still wearing *cinnabryl*, on an ankle bracelet. He has enough *cinnabryl* in his "spare" to last for three weeks and two days; he can withstand proximity to three pistol shots before entering the Time of Loss and Change on the fourth shot. Note that since Balazar is close to the defenseless lord, he can use his wheel-locks to shoot the PCs, and the explosions still drain Don Luis' *cinnabryl*.

What happens now is up to the PCs. However, it is strongly suggested that Balazar be allowed to live through the battle, so he can become an enemy of the PCs and a longterm villain for the campaign. Balazar's potential future plots should be most intriguing, and it would be a shame to lose such an interesting villain too early in the campaign.

And the Goblins

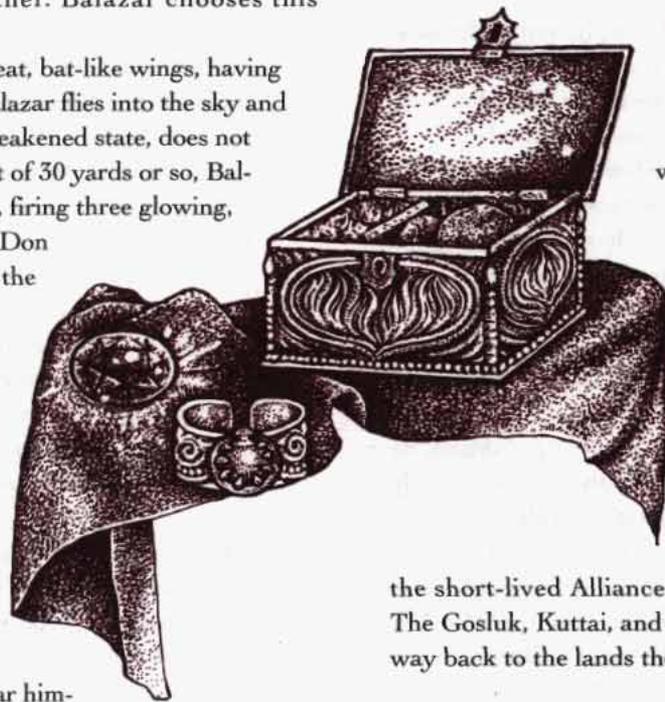
Don Luis successfully turned back the main horde of goblins and orcs attacking from the west. If he did so with only the *barrier mask*, the *mask* is now ruined; this could have serious repercussions for Saragón. If the baronet used both *barrier mask* and *bracers of forbiddance*, both items survive the encounter. Those orcs who came through with Balazar fight tenaciously with the defenders of the castle. If Balazar dies, the orcs lose their confidence and run away. In any case, after this debacle,

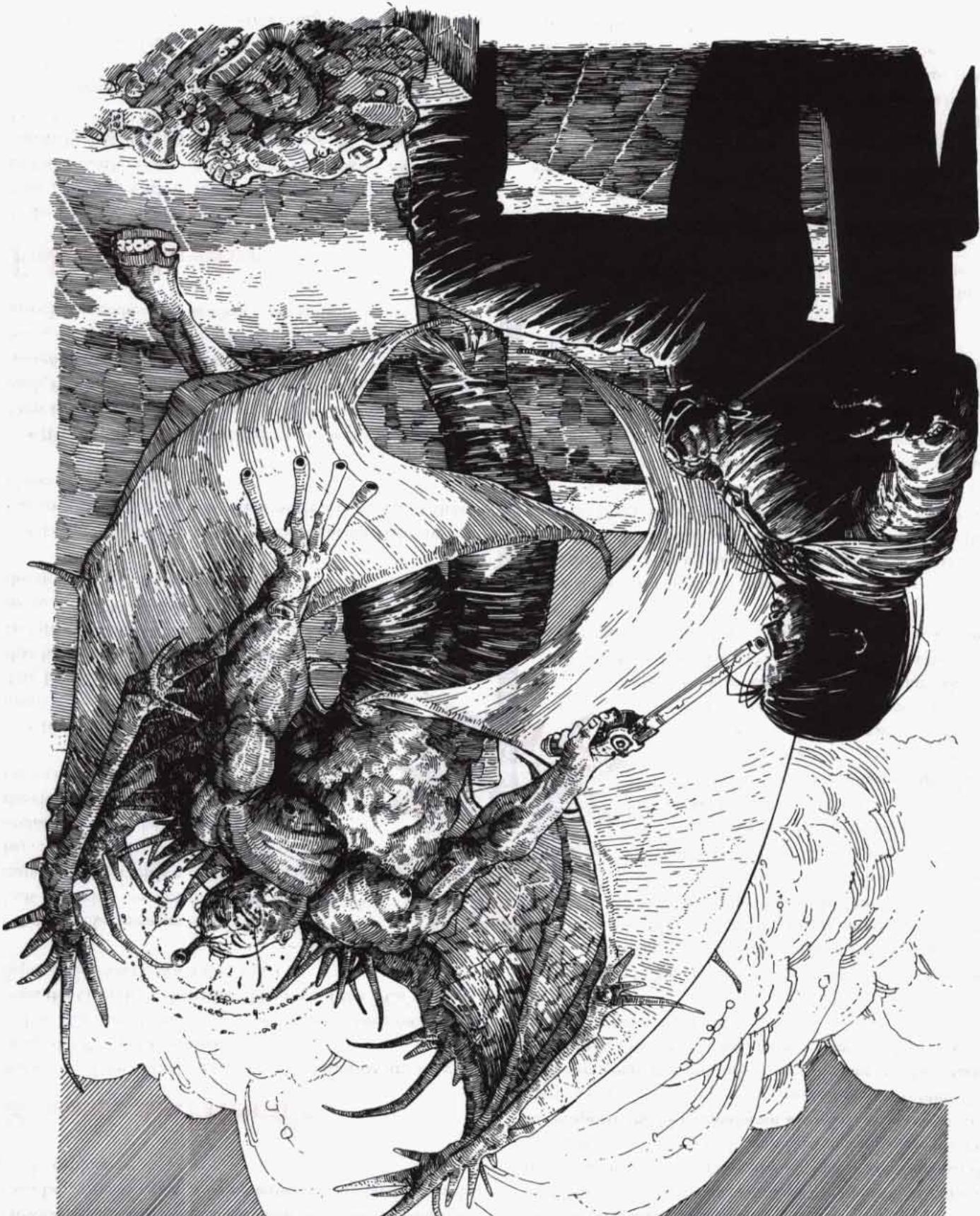
the short-lived Alliance of Three Tribes comes to an end. The Gosluk, Kuttai, and Dankut all leave, quarreling all the way back to the lands they normally roam.

Option: Noble Sacrifice, Part 2

Once again, it is possible that the PCs come up with a couple of ideas for meeting death head on. For example, one of them might suggest that he or she wear the *barrier mask* and the *bracers of forbiddance*, rather than Don Luis. Don Luis would be reluctant to try this, but might be convinced by a good argument; for example, if the PCs suggest that Don Luis is needed to fight Balazar, and that it is the baronet's right to kill Balazar, he might be convinced to let someone else don the *mask* and the *bracers*. The items can be used by anyone, but Don Luis allows only another Inheritor, someone of noble blood, or possibly a very patriotic Saragóner, to use them.

Another possible sacrifice a PC could make is to give his or her *cinnabryl* to Don Luis to prevent the blasts of *smoke powder* from sending him into the Time of Loss and Change.





A few minutes without *cinnabryl* (supplies can be readily replenished after the battle) does not cause harm to anyone. However, an Inheritor who gives up his or her *cinnabryl* to Don Luis runs the risk of being adversely affected by *smoke powder* explosions.

Rewards and Results

Assuming Don Luis lives and the goblinoids are driven away, the PCs get a reward.

The PCs can, of course, keep any treasure they recovered from the Gosluk or the ruins. The rest of the PCs' reward depends on exactly what they did.

- If the PCs recovered the bracers, Don Luis rewards them with 5,000 gold pieces, transported in a finely carved chest depicting harvesters working industriously in rich orchards surrounding Torre de Manzanas; the chest is worth an additional 500 gold pieces if the PCs care to sell it.

- If the PCs rescued Orlando, Don Luis awards each PC an apple tree in his best orchard. The PC can have all the produce from that tree that he or she desires, and can rest in its shade at any time. In addition the tree will be known by the adventurer's name (as in "Miguel's tree"), and the commoners will know the story of the PCs' valor.

- If the PCs helped Don Luis by fighting Balazar, the baronet rewards each of them with a weapon of their choice made out of *red steel*.

- If an Inheritor PC killed Balazar, or if the PCs allowed Don Luis to deliver the final blow, the baronet rewards each PC with an eight-ounce talisman (not an amulet) of *cinnabryl*. The talisman is emblazoned with the crest of Saragón. Don Luis also asks each of the PCs to become associate members of the Order of Crimson.

Future Adventures

If the PCs succeeded in recovering the *bracers of forbiddance*, Don Luis may wish to reward them not only with treasure but also with continued employment. After all, Miguel worked out so well, why not hire a few more adventurers? Don Luis could become a patron to the PCs, giving them a base of operations and a real purpose in between more mercenary ventures. Alternately, the baronet is willing to release Miguel from his service from time-to-time, if the PCs wish to lure the swashbuckling dwarf away on an

adventure farther from home.

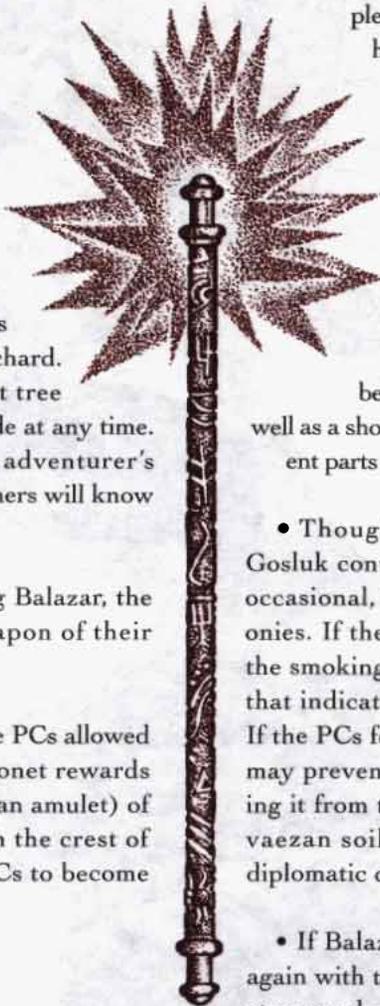
Here are just a few ideas for creating new adventures near Saragón and La Pampa Rica:

- Don Luis is ordered to extend the borders of Saragón to the northwest, creating a greater buffer zone against the Yazak hordes. To this end, Don Luis commissions the PCs to recapture the lost Traladaran fortress, then stay to command a garrison to protect the place while it is rebuilt. The DM can easily expand into sublevels beneath the citadel, populating them with traps, treasure, and perhaps undead or subterranean monsters.

- The PCs may wish to explore around the Oltec temple for more treasures, including the intangible but highly regarded treasure of knowledge about the Oltec culture. Again, the DM can expand the temple ruins to include more levels, traps, monsters, and treasures. Some of the ancient Oltec relics may be worth huge sums to the nobles of Saragón, who are especially interested in ancient magical lore.
- The PCs might go on a quest to recover all the rest of the parts of the great artifact to which the *barrier mask* and the *bracers of forbiddance* belong. These would include sandals and a skirt, as well as a short cloak. The DM can determine what the different parts do, and what they might do if they are all united.

- Though the great horde has been turned back, Gosluk continue to patrol La Pampa Rica and make an occasional, small-scale incursion into the Savage Baronies. If the PCs patrol for goblinoids, they might find the smoking remains of a hunter's campsite, with a trail that indicates the marauding goblins entered Narvaez. If the PCs follow the trail into Narvaezan territory, they may prevent the destruction of a farmstead by defending it from the goblinoids. But once discovered on Narvaezan soil, the PCs must parley carefully to avoid diplomatic disaster.

- If Balazar lives, he continues to plot. He might try again with the goblinoids, probably concentrating on the stronger hobgoblin nations of the central Yazaks. He might instead turn more directly to the baronies, perhaps seeking a cure for the Affliction, and maybe showing up somewhere like Narvaez, where he makes a secret pact to help Barón Hugo against the Enlightened States (secret to hide Balazar's involvement, but also to hide Barón Hugo's commerce with an Inheritor). Another possibility is for Balazar to make a deal with Doomrider, the inheritor lich of the Savage Baronies—or even to eventually become an inheritor lich himself.



Appendix I: Torre de Manzanas

Torre de Manzanas (the Tower of Manzanas) is a high citadel consisting of a central tower shielded by two defensive walls. It is all new construction except for the central tower. Its name refers particularly to the central tower, but people speak of the whole citadel as the Tower of Manzanas.

The citadel serves as refuge for all the local villages in time of war, but it also provides a base for all the patrols along the northwestern border of Saragón. Those few merchant caravans which travel so far west use the tower as a layover, opening their wares for sale to the local residents when they come.

Don Luis administers justice from his great hall, passing judgment on anyone below the rank of nobility. Any case in which a noble stands accused of a crime must be deferred to the court of Ciudad Matacán, and the judgement of Barón Balthazar.

See the accompanying map for the layout of the Torre de Manzanas.

1. Towers

On the eastern towers crouch large catapults, each with plenty of large stones. Ballistas, generally aimed at the outer bailey, are found on the western towers, along with several ballista bolts. Additional ammunition, along with arrows and crossbow bolts, as well as flammable oil and other defensive equipment, is stored in the lower level of each tower.

2. Walls

The brown stone outer walls of the citadel are 15 feet tall and 10 feet thick. They stand upon a hard earthen palisade reinforced with mortared stone, so the total height of this outer defense reaches 25 feet from the surface of the filled moat, 35 feet from the bottom.

3. Moat

Don Luis' grounds servants are especially careful to keep the moat clean of algae and other growth, draining the moat once every two or three years in order to remove the weeds that thrust between the stones that line its sides and bottom. An area 15 feet beyond the outer edge of the moat is kept clear of grass and other foliage, and the groundskeepers have spread a rough gravel over this margin.

These precautions do not mean that Don Luis is preoccupied with the aesthetic appeal of the moat. Instead, they allow the defenders of the citadel secretly to release flammable oil into the moat when under siege. When invaders come close enough to set ladders and rams, the defenders need only drop lit torches into the moat to create a sudden, temporary ring of fire around the citadel without fear of starting a grassfire.

4. Gatehouse

The outer gate is an iron-bound wooden drawbridge. Its lower (outer) side is covered in red hide from fire lizards, highly resistant to flame. Behind the drawbridge stands an iron portcullis, the gate proper, and then a second pair of doors, also iron-bound and secured with three heavy bolts when closed.

The gatehouse boasts a very special defense: a unit of soldiers with wheel-lock pistols. Since the lord of this citadel is an Inheritor, however, the soldiers are especially careful with these weapons. In fact, it is forbidden to practice with them when Don Luis is in residence (which is most of the time). Even during an active defense of the citadel, the sergeant in charge of the pistoleer unit must be sure that Don Luis—or any Inheritor guest of the citadel—is not nearby when the soldiers fire their weapons.

5. Outer Bailey

The outer bailey is usually free of flammable constructions, except for the tents and awnings of the little market each morning, and with the exception of the jaques.

6. Barracks

Stucco walls, square windows, and red-tiled roofs are the simple extent of these structures. The interiors are only somewhat less utilitarian, as officers have their own small rooms and the soldiers share a long dormitory of bunks and footlockers interrupted by an occasional table for games and conversation. Only a few soldiers (the night watch) will be found here sleeping during the day, except during the hour after high noon, when two shifts of the day watch take turns for a brief siesta.

7. Drill Field

Here is where the soldiers engage in marching, weapons drills, and archery practice. Sometimes targets are set against one wall, backed by thick bales of hay to prevent the arrows from passing through the targets and breaking on the stone. But these bales are always removed immediately after practice, and returned to the stables in the inner bailey.

8. Jaques

The location of these latrines changes over the course of the year. Every two months, soldiers dig another pit and move the wooden structure to its new location, dredging and then filling in the previous pit. This work is given to soldiers who have earned their officers' displeasure.

9. Little Market

Every morning, some of the local farmers and vintners, crafters and bakers, butchers and tinkers travel to Torre de Manzanos to set up stalls in the outer bailey. Not everyone arrives every day, some visiting just once or twice each week. But on any given day, the market offers most common goods and produce. Soldiers and other residents of the citadel supplement their diets with treats and special meals bought from the little market, and people from all around the area visit to buy, sell, or trade.

10. Inner Bailey

Even more secure than the outer bailey, this area houses servants, artisans, garrison captains, and Don Luis himself.

11. Stables

Large and utilitarian, this building consists mostly of wood but has a stone foundation and a tiled roof. All of the castle's horses are stabled here, though usually half to three-quarters are out on extended patrol at any one time. The stablemaster is a woman named Estelle, and though she is not a soldier, she carries herself in a curt and military manner. Upon meeting Estelle or any of her assistants, rangers and PCs with the animal handling proficiency will feel comfortable turning over their mounts to the stable hands.

12. Craft Hall

A huge area cluttered with worktables, shelves, cabinets, and a myriad different tools, this hall serves as home and workplace to the crafters of the citadel. A shoemaker, an armorer, two potters, a tinsmith, a woodcarver, and half a dozen other artisans all labor for Don Luis and the garrison. One day each week the artisans devote to themselves, creating goods they can then sell at the little market for cash or trade.

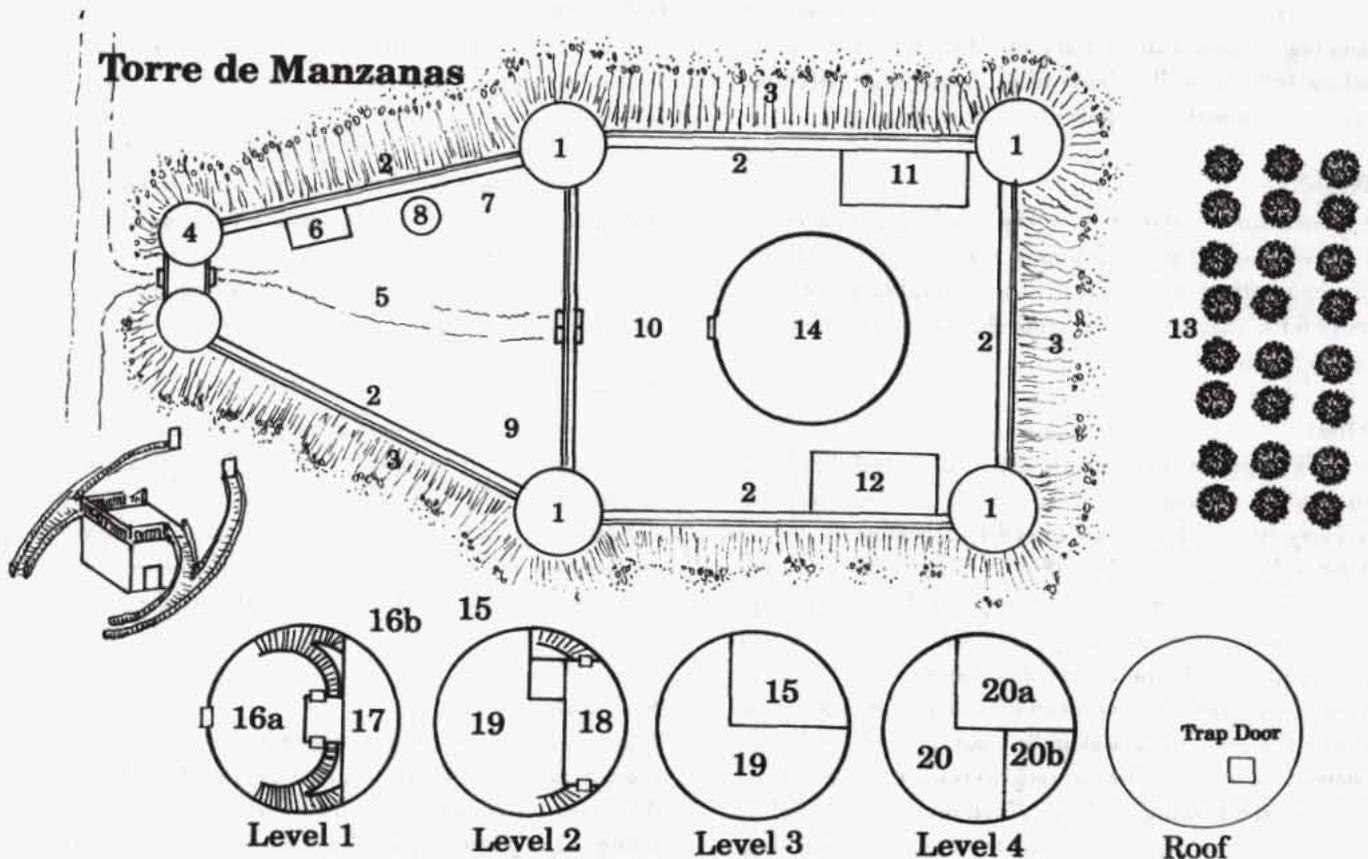
13. Orchards

These are the main orchards that give this district its name ("manzanas" means "apples"). Though there are orchards throughout the countryside, such as in Escudo and several other hamlets, these orchards are said to produce the best fruit.

14. Central Tower

This construction houses many of the essential components of the castle, and is Don Luis' home. The first structure built on the site, this was the original Torre de Manzanos, and has served Don Luis' family for four generations.

This edifice stands about 70 feet tall, plus the wall surrounding the roof. The interior is divided into four stories. The central tower holds the rest of the areas described here.



15. Storage

These rooms vary from fully-stocked pantries to unused armories. The DM should feel free to give these rooms greater detail if the PCs feel the need to snoop about the citadel.

16. Great Hall

All meals are served in this large hall, which also passes as the court and main audience chamber for Lord Manzanas. The ceiling is 25 feet above the floor of the lower great hall.

16a. Lower Great Hall

This area is crowded twice each day with soldiers and servants who come to the great hall for their meals. The lower chamber is comfortable but rather plain, except for festivals and celebrations. Sweeping stairways lead to the upper great hall and on up to the second floor.

16b. Upper Great Hall

Its floor 15 feet above the floor of the lower great hall, the upper chamber is reserved for officers and guests, all seated within 20 feet of the lord's own table.

During celebrations, such as the one Don Luis threw to commemorate the reopening of his tower, musicians are seated in the northern part of this chamber. One of the possessions of which Luis is rather proud is the harpsichord in this area. There are no more than a half-dozen harpsichords in the Savage Baronies (a notable example being the one used to entertain people in the Red Steel Saloon in Smokestone City, Cimmaron). Don Luis takes good care of this beautiful instrument, which is said to be the finest on the entire Savage Coast (though certain Renardois would disagree).

17. Kitchen

Three huge ovens and one tremendous central stove dominate this room. Preparation tables, banks of pots and skillets, cutlery racks, and shelves for tableware fill much of the rest of the room. At any time of day, three or four cooks are busy baking bread or preparing dishes to be cooked later in the day. A few hours before dinner and

again before supper, the room is crowded with cooks and other servants who prepare, serve, and clean up after meals for all of the tower's residents and all the barracks' soldiers.

18. Inner Hall

When Don Luis wishes to give a private audience or to confer with his officers, this is the room he uses. It is comfortable and well appointed with rich oak and leather furniture, fine oil paintings in frames of silver, and a candelabra which reflects a canopy of stars against the dark ceiling.

19. Bedrooms

Varying in size and luxury, these rooms range from simple dormitories, which house commoners during times of war, to sumptuous chambers fit for the most pampered of noble visitors. The DM should feel free to elaborate on the description of these rooms if the PCs have cause to explore them.

20. Lord's Rooms

Don Luis de Manzanas is not unsociable, but he does enjoy his privacy; little would it surprise those who know him that he keeps his personal rooms away from those of his servants and guests.

20a. Bedroom

Don Luis enjoys creature comforts as much as any man, but he confines almost all of his to this room. Part bedroom, part library, part office, this large area is where the baronet spends most of his time each day. His officers are permitted to interrupt him here, though none but the most intimate and trusted of visitors are invited within.

20b. Secret Vault

It is here that Don Luis keeps the *careta de la barrera*, resting on a pedestal in a central position of honor. The baronet also keeps his *red steel* and *cinnabryl* in this room, as well as some of his other prized possessions. A secret door behind the mask's pedestal leads to a stairway rising up to the roof of the tower.



Appendix II: Non-Player Characters

Don Luis de Manzanar

12th-Level Male Human Inheritor Fighter

STR 15
DEX 12
CON 12
INT 14
WIS 15
CHA 17

Hit Points: 72

AC: 5 (chain mail)

Rear AC: 5

Unadjusted THAC0: 9

Height: 6'2"

Weight: 188

Hair/Eyes: Red-black/Reddish brown

Skin: Dark, ruddy

Age: 37

Alignment: Neutral good

Weapon Proficiencies: Rapier (specialized), bolas, main-gauche, two-weapon style specialization, sling, two-handed sword, long sword.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Redsmithing, weaponsmithing, legacy lore, ancient history, reading/writing (common), military tactics.

Languages: Common, Espa (native language), elvish, Verdian, Renardois, Herathi.

Legacies: Webcasting, Crimson Fire, Missile, Reflect, Armor, Detonate

Quote: "Our place is to protect the people and the land from those who would harm them. It is our privilege and our honor."

Description: The baronet is a virile man who stays physically fit, though his hair shows a little gray at the temples. Because of his long association with the Red Curse, Don Luis has red skin and hair, and his eyes glow red; even his teeth have acquired a red tinge.

Don Luis has accomplished a great deal for a man his age. Just over a decade ago, he led a group of adventurers to the conclusion of an epic quest that took them across the Savage Coast. Most of them had spent enough time in cursed lands to acquire a Legacy, and they were some of the

earliest people to use *cinnabryl* with regularity.

During their long quest, the group had discovered a set of notes that hinted at hitherto unknown properties of *cinnabryl* and *vermeil*. The adventurers hired an alchemist and commissioned him to research the notes and find a way to use the substances to attain greater power. At the same time, the 11 adventurers worked with other portions of the manuscript, training their minds and bodies to accept more of the power of the curse, to turn it into something beneficial. After a year of research and experimentation, the alchemist came up with the first vials of *crimson essence*. One of Luis' companions volunteered to test the potion; in drinking it, she became the first Inheritor. One by one, the others tried the potion, and one by one they gained an additional Legacy.

As the next two years passed and the group continued to adventure, they continued to learn about their powers, and they tested the limits of those powers. They also began to grow apart; some belonged to the Brotherhood of Order, and some to the Friends of Freedom. The Inheritors began to rise through the ranks of those organizations; Luis and a couple of other Inheritors, including one named Audra, joined the Neutral Alliance in an effort to balance the power of Inheritors who had devoted themselves to law and chaos. Each of the three aligned organizations stood on the brink of destruction at that time, with flagging membership, and a loss of enthusiasm.

The Inheritors gave the groups new vitality, and they also allowed other members of the three groups to become Inheritors as well. Eventually, Inheritors were in charge of all three groups, and the situation between the groups was becoming untenable, with new frictions generated every day. Eventually, the Inheritors of the three groups all agreed to meet; this was the first Grand Conclave, and it was there that the Code of the Inheritor was put into words and written down. Luis was instrumental in the growth of the Order of Crimson, but soon retired to a less active role in the organization, so that he could devote time to his homeland. His friend Audra the Masked is the current leader of the Order of Crimson, and lives in Saragón.

During his adventures, Luis had become friends with an old wizard named Balthazar—the baron of Saragón. When the seat of baronet of Aranjuez came open, Barón Balthazar asked Luis to fill it. He agreed, and has served faithfully as advisor to the baron for the last five years. Luis has been a good advisor to the baron, and a good defender of the realm of Saragón.

Always one of the first to offer to protect Saragón, Don Luis has distinguished himself several times. Now, Barón Balthazar has entrusted the safety of the nation to the baronet in the form of the *barrier mask*.

Igor Balazar

9th-Level Male Human Inheritor Fighter

STR 17
DEX 8
CON 7
INT 9
WIS 4
CHA 5

Hit Points: 61

AC: 4 (*bracers of defense, AC 4*)

Rear AC: 10

Unadjusted THAC0: 12

Height: 7'6"

Weight: 388

Hair/Eyes: Crimson/Blood red (has a third eye)

Skin: Pale, blotched, inflamed

Age: 26

Alignment: Chaotic evil

Weapon Proficiencies: Long sword (specialized), harpoon, morning star, battle axe, footman's pick, wheel-lock pistol.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Redsmithing, weaponsmithing, legacy lore, curse lore, ancient history

Languages: Common, Slagich (native language), Yazaka, Herathi. Before becoming Afflicted, Balazar knew elvish, Espa, Rakastayne, and Nimmurian.

Legacies: *Acid Touch, Missile, Strength, Fly, Find*

Quote: "If I want something, it is mine. Who are you to keep it from me?"

Description: Balazar is from Hojah, one of the city-states on the eastern side of the Gulf of Hule. Rumored to be part Hulean, Balazar was abandoned as a child in the streets of Hojah. He learned to take care of himself by taking what he needed, and he made himself strong enough to do just that. The ever-ambitious Balazar journeyed to the Savage Baronies when he was quite young. There, he was affected by the Red Curse, but managed to acquire some *cinnabryl* to curb the effects—by murdering a merchant and stealing his *cinnabryl*.

Not long afterward, Balazar met a man called Lord Flame. An infamous Inheritor, Lord Flame saw a kindred spirit in Balazar and convinced him to join the Order of

Inheritors, specifically Lord Flame's own order, the Order of the Flame. Convincing Balazar was easy, for he saw the way of the Inheritor as a path to power.

At first, Balazar followed the Code of the Orders of the Inheritors; after a while, though, he tired of simply lording his power over others. He wanted more. Balazar joined a group of adventurers who went to attack Doomrider, one of the Inheritor liches. Balazar wanted knowledge from the lich, and thought that joining a knowledgeable adventuring party, in the guise of helping them in their task, would be the way to go about it. Eventually, the adventurers met Doomrider and the lich's servants, a pack of cursed ones. The adventurers never got close to Doomrider, and Balazar was unable to get close enough to pledge his fealty to the lich before Doomrider had left the adventurers to suffer at the touch of the cursed ones.

The other adventurers died, but Balazar managed to last until sunrise, when he escaped. However, most of his *cinnabryl* had been depleted by the curse ones. Desperate, Balazar approached the first person he saw and asked where he was, and where he could find *cinnabryl*—fast!

The other traveler informed Balazar that he was near Torre de Manzanas, home of an Inheritor—in fact, Don Luis was throwing a party that very night. Growing more desperate by the minute, Balazar went to Torre de Manzanas, and demanded *cinnabryl* from Don Luis. The baronet refused, and driven over the edge, Balazar lashed out, breaking the most important Inheritors' Code: he attacked another Inheritor in that person's home. He would be declared an outcast, a renegade, and hunted by all Inheritors.

To protect his lord, Don Luis' dwarven assistant shot Balazar, from close range. The proximity of the *smoke powder* explosion consumed what little *cinnabryl* Balazar still had, and it ... transformed him, into something no longer quite human. Swearing revenge, Balazar burst through a window and disappeared into the night.

After spending a lot of time away from civilization, including some in a deep cave, Balazar concluded he could use his transformation, and that he must make Don Luis pay for what had happened. Balazar went into the Yazak Steppes and became the leader of a tribe. He is there the beginning of this adventure.

Since his rapid transformation into an Afflicted, Balazar looks truly hideous. Because of *Strength*, he is larger than normal, with one exceedingly large arm, and muscles bulging in random places. From *Fly* he has bat-like wings; from *Missile*, long, tube-like fingers. Thanks to *Find*, he has a third eye, located on an eyestalk on his forehead, as well as a slightly forked tongue. Because of *Acid Touch*, he drools a brownish and slightly acidic liquid.

Appendix III: New Magical Items

Careta de la Barrera: The Barrier Mask

The *barrier mask* is a large ceremonial mask of ancient Oltec design. Carved from an unusual wood and treated with special magical preparations, the mask appears to be made of stone. The *mask* is large and intricately carved. Wearing it is fatiguing because of its size and weight, and because it exhausts its user. The *barrier mask* normally resides on small pedestal in the uppermost level of Torre de Manzanas.

History

Two millennia ago, the various Oltec cities had reached a plateau of civilization and culture on the Savage Coast. At peace with each other, they had only to defend against outside invaders to know lasting prosperity. To this end, the high priests of Ixion devised a plan to unify the Oltec cities and honor their patron Immortal at the same time.

Artisans in each city were to create portions of a ceremonial mannequin representing Ixion. Then, the greatest wizards of each city were to imbue their portions with great magic, powers which would allow the completed mannequin to defend all Oltec cities against invasion.

For months the artisans labored, and for months after the wizards toiled, imbuing the various pieces of the totem mannequin with protective magic. At last their work was finished, and all that remained to do was the great assembly. Alas, for all of their foresight, the Oltec priests had underestimated the aggression of the goblinoid tribes of the Yazak Steppes. Before the totem could be assembled, goblins and orcs descended with a fury, decimating Oltec cities across the coast.

Some priests, artisans, and wizards who had worked toward creating portions of the totem were able to hide their work from the invaders. Others are said to have destroyed their portions lest they be captured. Yet some certainly fell into goblin or orc hands and travelled far away. All that is certain is that the *barrier mask* and the *bracers of forbiddance* are not the only parts of the original totem. Whether others still exist and what their powers may be, none can say.

Campaign Use

The *barrier mask* currently belongs to Don Luis of Saragón. Depending on the results of this adventure, it may have been destroyed, or Don Luis may also have the *bracers of forbiddance* in his tower. If the *barrier mask* survives this adventure, it is sure to be coveted by the other baronies. If it is destroyed or stolen, then Don Luis no longer suffers the effects of its curse.

Powers

Constant. A person wearing the *barrier mask* is immune to all mind-affecting spells and psionic effects. In addition, the wearer is immune to visual illusions simply because there are no eye holes in the mask.

The *barrier mask* also generates a field around the structure in which it rests, negating all transportation spells (*dimension door*, *passwall*, *teleport*, etc.) into or out of the affected structure.

Invoked. The character who wears the *barrier mask* can at will create a huge, invisible wall of fear 100 miles long (50 miles to either side of the mask), and project it up to five miles away. Any hostile group of 100 or more beings is struck at once with irresistible fear of the wall and all that lies beyond it. Individuals in groups of fewer than 100 beings are allowed a saving throw vs. spells to resist the wall's effects, but even they must make a saving throw with a -4 penalty or flee. Beings struck with fear by the *barrier mask* flee as quickly as possible and refuse to return to where they encountered the wall for 100 days.

A character who associates with the *mask* for a full year is advanced to 12th level in his or her chosen class, regardless of any restrictions. Characters of 12th or higher level are unaffected.

Curse. The user of the *barrier mask* always evokes suspicion and distrust among his peers, no matter how altruistic his acts or how selfless his motives. Though the character may use the artifact to save an entire country, anyone of the same social standing views the user as a power-hungry schemer. Thus, if the *barrier mask* is used by a noble, he or she is suspected by other nobles; if used by a commoner, the character is met with distrust by other commoners. This curse was an intentional effect created by the makers of the artifact, to prevent people from coveting the item.

In addition, the user of the *barrier mask* is exhausted for a full turn after using it, unable to attack, defend, or move for the next ten minutes.

Means of Destruction

The *barrier mask* can be destroyed only by use. If ever activated to repel a horde of more than 10,000 creatures, it first begins to crack, then ultimately splinters and disintegrates as it fulfills its function.

Bracers of Forbiddance

A pair of thick gold bracelets, these are meant to be worn on the forearms. By themselves, they act as *bracers of defense*, AC 2 and prevent all non-magical missiles from hitting the wearer. When worn in conjunction with the *barrier mask*, the bracers increase the effectiveness of the *barrier mask* by ten, allowing it to affect hordes of up to 100,000 individuals without harming either component of the artifact.

A lone *bracer of defense* has no magical properties.



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Bridget O'Kayne

5th-level Female Human Honorbound Paladin

Strength 14
Dexterity 15
Constitution 16
Intelligence 13
Wisdom 13
Charisma 17

Hit Points: 38
AC: 4 (chain mail, Dexterity)
Rear AC: 5
Unadjusted THAC0: 16

Height: 5'2"
Weight: 85 pounds
Hair/Eyes: White/blue
Skin: Pinkish white
Age: 25
Alignment: Lawful good

Weapon Proficiencies: Wheel-lock belt pistol (1d8/1d8, +1d8 whenever an 8 damage is rolled), wheel-lock belt pistol specialization (+2 on attack rolls at point blank range of 6-15 feet, can fire before initiative if weapon is loaded and cocked and a target is in sight), rapier (1d6+1/1d8+1), main-gauche (1d4/1d3 +1 to disarms, punch for 1d3), light horse lance (1d6/1d8, double damage if used from a charging mount).

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Dueling (17), etiquette (17), heraldry (13), quick draw (15), gunsmithing (10), land-based riding for horses (16), blind-fighting.

Languages: Common, Ranax (native language), Espa.

Legacy: *Sight*. Use of this Legacy allows Bridget to accurately shoot even invisible opponents.

Paladin and Honorbound Abilities: detect evil within 60 feet, +2 on saving throws, immune to disease, lay on hands, cure disease, aura of protection from evil, turn undead, +4 bonus on attack rolls vs. undead.

Magical Items: 22 charges of *smoke powder*, *red steel rapier*, *cinnabryl amulet* (6 weeks left), 10 *red steel bullets*, *gloves of missile snaring*.

Other Possessions: 3 wheel-lock belt pistols, main-gauche, light horse lance, chain mail, firearm repair kit, finely carved case for wheel-locks, waterskin, red circle emblem (Honorbound).

Bonded Light War Horse (Argentino): Int Semi (4); AL N; AC 7; MV 27; HD 4+4; hp 30; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1d4/1d4; SZ L; ML 11. Argentino is a silvery-gray stallion about 2 years old.

Quote: "Justice must be upheld."



Description: Bridget is a pretty young woman with close-cropped hair. She is typically seen wearing gray trousers, a white blouse, black vest, and black boots. Around her waist she wears the white sash of the Honorbound. Her red circle is of *red steel* with a silver star in the center, as is becoming standard for the government-employed Honorbound of Cimmarron; she typically wears the badge on her vest. When adventuring or traveling, Bridget adds chain mail and a wide-brimmed white hat to her gear; a tabard over the chain mail is the resting place for her badge.

The daughter of a Robrenn father and a Cimmarron mother, Bridget was raised in Cimmarron with her brother Killian. Killian left to join a sailing crew when Bridget was eight years old, but Bridget stayed on and became an Honorbound like her mother. Bridget rode with Sir John of Cimmarron during the recent wars. When John came to power in Cimmarron, Bridget was one of the first Honorbound chosen to be a Cimmarron Constable. Not assigned to a specific area, Bridget wanders Cimmarron upholding the law and dispensing justice. John also encourages her to travel to other Baronies, as a sort of goodwill ambassador.

Bridget prefers her wheel-lock pistols over all other weapons, but is a capable duelist with rapier or main-gauche as well. She considers the use of her magical *gloves* to be dishonorable in a duel.

Nina Alhabashi

6th-level Female Human Inheritor Priest

Strength	17
Dexterity	12
Constitution	15
Intelligence	12
Wisdom	16
Charisma	13

Hit Points: 31

AC: 2 (plate mail and shield)

Rear AC: 3

Unadjusted THAC0: 18

Height: 5'9"

Weight: 155 pounds

Hair/Eyes: Black with coppery-red streaks/black

Skin: Dark, very ruddy

Age: 25

Alignment: Neutral good

Weapon Proficiencies: War hammer (1d4+1/1d4), bolas (1d3/1d2, entangle, requiring a Strength check to get free), sling and bullets (1d4+1/1d6+1).

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Ceremony for Al-Kalim (16), Reading/writing common (13), curse lore (11), Legacy lore (11), herbalism (10), healing (14), ancient history of Ylaruam (11), storytelling (12), artistic ability for pacing storytelling (16).

Languages: Common, Espa (native language), elvish.

Legacies: *Amber Paralysis*, *Armor*, *Fight*, *Projectile*. When Nina activates the *Armor* Legacy, small, silvery-red scales cover her skin, starting at her face and head and moving rapidly to her feet. For *Projectile*, Nina's fingernails grow large and can be fired as missiles.

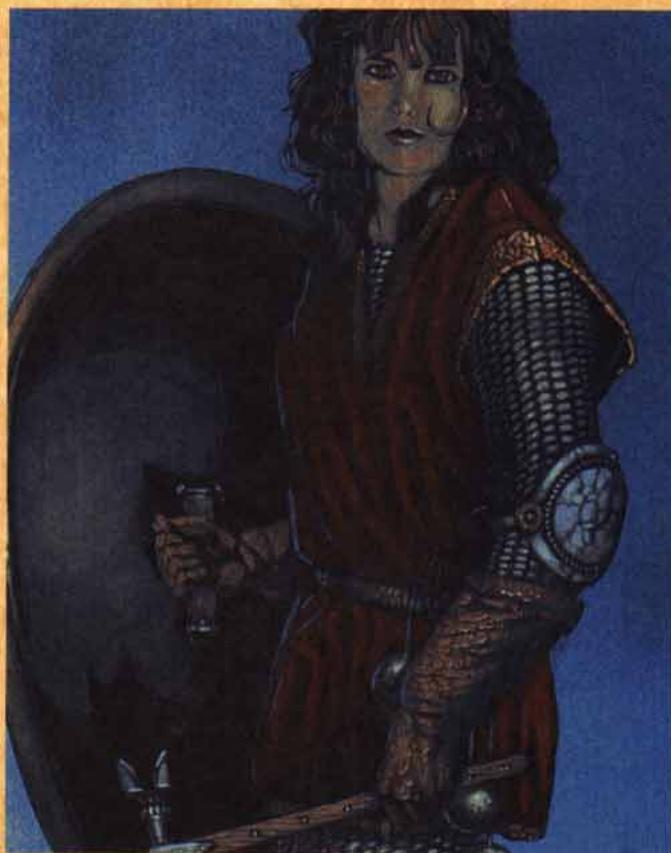
Priest Abilities: Nina can cast spells (five 1st-level, five 2nd-level, two 3rd-level) and turn undead. She reveres the Immortal Al-Kalim.

Magical Items: *Ring of free action*, *red steel war hammer*, *cinnabryl talisman* (nine weeks and two days left), *crimson essence* (eight days until completion).

Other Possessions: Sling and 24 bullets, 2 bolas, plate mail, crimson tabard without decoration, paper, pen, ink, herbs, bandages, 3 days' rations, waterskin, lantern, tinderbox, 2 flasks of oil.

Quote: "I use my Legacies to help, not to harm."

Description: Nina is a pretty, dark-skinned woman of primarily Ylari descent. Raised in Saragón to revere the enlightened ways of Al-Kalim, she eventually decided to



become a priest for that Immortal. She met Don Luis de Manzanas as she was about to begin her adventuring career, to spread the word of learning and art. Don Luis convinced Nina to become an Inheritor of the Order of Crimson, a choice that she has never regretted.

Generally serious and scholarly, Nina has a quiet sense of humor that relies mostly on intellectual jokes and clever stories. Nina is a competent poet and storyteller, using her artistic flair to cover an occasional missing plot element or contrived rhyme. Her favorite stories are those told to her by her grandmother, stories of genies, viziers, and other things not often encountered on the Savage Coast.

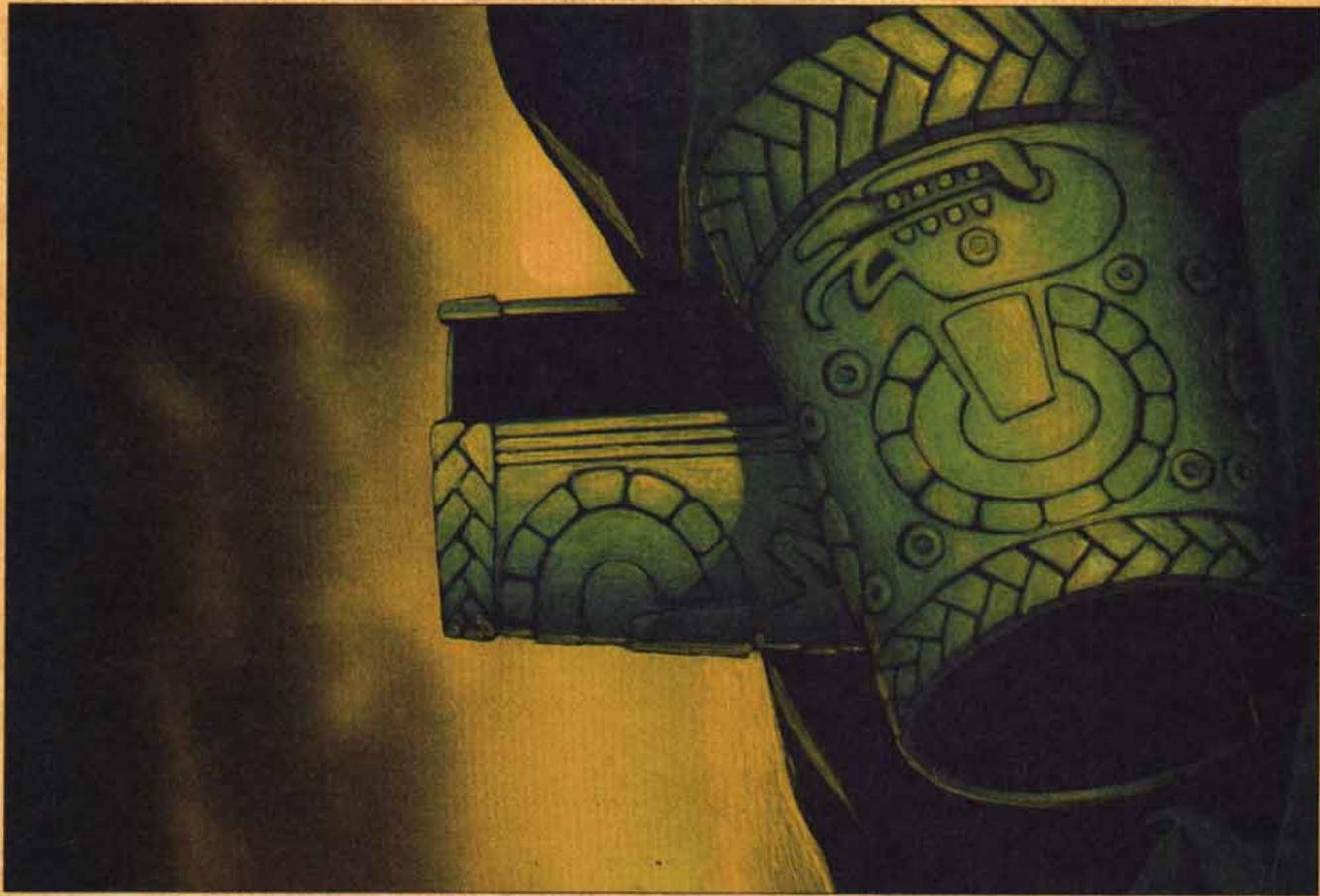
Nina is open and friendly, and she travels throughout the Savage Baronies telling people about the Red Curse, *cinnabryl*, and the Inheritors. She and others like her have done much to gain acceptance for Inheritors, especially in Saragón. Nina is curious about the world and tries to learn something wherever she goes. She enjoys adventuring, especially when the events can be used as a good story.

Nina uses her Legacies as necessary, but prefers to solve disputes peacefully. Her favored weapons are her bolas and her warhammer. Note that one week's worth of Nina's *cinnabryl* will be drained each time she is within 2 feet of a *smoke powder* explosion (such as that produced when firing a wheel-lock pistol).

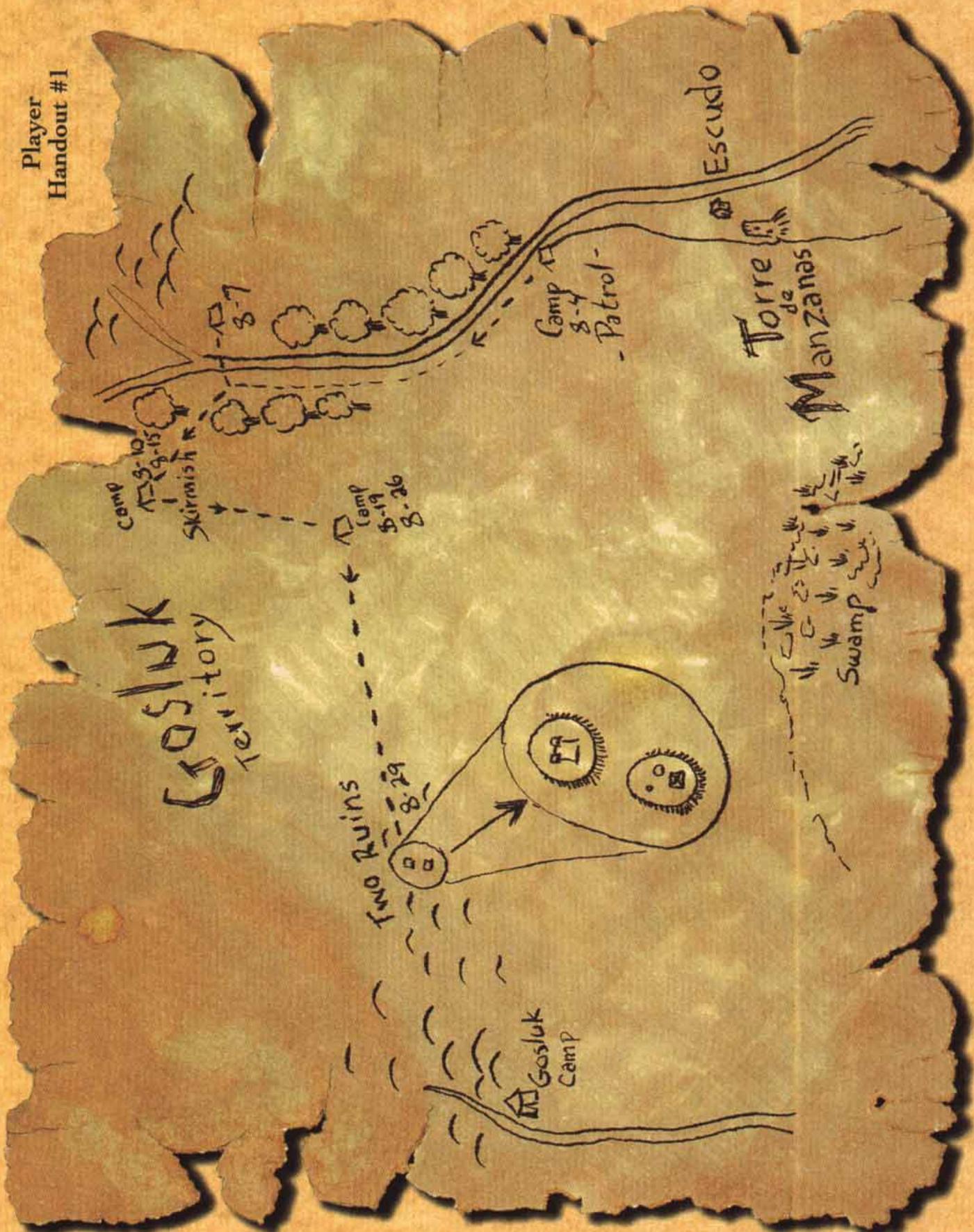
The Barrier Mask



The Bracers of Forbiddance



Player
Handout #1



Miles Killian O'Kayne

4th/5th-level Male Human Swashbuckler Fighter/Mage

Strength 18/03
Dexterity 13
Constitution 15
Intelligence 17
Wisdom 10
Charisma 14

Hit Points: 32
AC: 4 (*cloak of protection +4*, Swashbuckler)
Rear AC: 6
Unadjusted THAC0: 17

Height: 5'10"
Weight: 162 pounds
Hair/Eyes: Blond/Green
Skin: Tan
Age: 29
Alignment: Chaotic good

Weapon Proficiencies: Rapier (1d6+1/1d8+1), rapier specialization (+1 to attack rolls, +2 damage with rapiers), main-gauche (1d4/1d3 +1 to disarms, punch for 1d3), wheel-lock horse pistol (1d10/1d10, +1d10 whenever an 8 or 10 damage is rolled), ambidexterity, two-weapon style specialization (can fight with 2 rapiers, or rapier and main-gauche, with no attack penalty to secondary hand).

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Etiquette (14), tumbling (13), singing (14), seamanship (14), navigation (15), read/write common (18), gunsmithing (14), spellcraft (15), dueling (14), quick draw (13), curse lore (16).

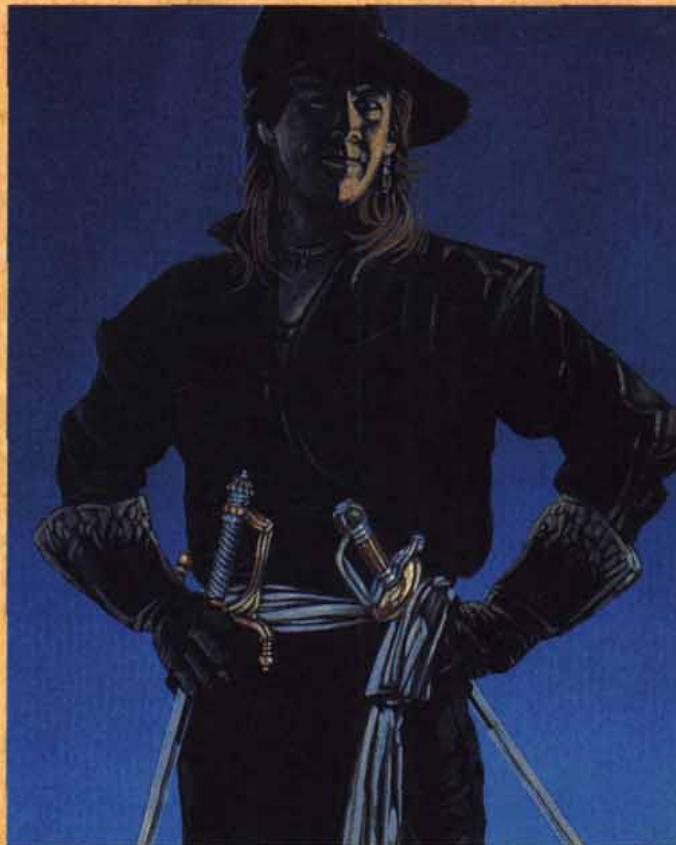
Languages: Common, Ranax (native language), Espa.

Legacy: None. Killian has never spent enough time in a cursed area to acquire a Legacy.

Spell Book: First level: *alarm, armor, cantrip, charm person, color spray, protection from evil, read magic, sleep, unseen servant*. Second level: *alter self, continual light, glitterdust, levitate, protection from paralysis, ray of enfeeblement*. Third level: *dispel magic, gust of wind, hold person, non-detection, protection from normal missiles*.

Magical Items: 12 charges of *smoke powder, red steel main-gauche, cloak of protection +4, Killian's cane*. The *cane* is a family heirloom, an elegant sword cane of black wood with a silver hawk's head. It can release a *rapier +2* or act as a *footman's mace +2*; if a charge is spent, the user's Dexterity increases to 20 for 1 turn.

Other Possessions: Rapier, 2 horse pistols, firearm repair kit, finely carved case for rapier and wheel-locks, serrated utility knife, oaken whistle, pen, ink, paper, grooming kit, 2 changes of fine clothing, wineskin.



Quote: "Why should I suffer from the Red Curse simply for the sake of gaining power I don't need?"

Description: This dashing fellow is usually dressed in black and green: black leather boots, trousers, and gloves; green silk shirt and hair ribbon; and silver and emerald earring. While his appearance is important—it helps maintain his suave image—he is not afraid to get dirty in the pursuit of adventure.

The son of a Robrenn father and a Cimmaron mother, Killian was raised in Cimmaron with his sister Bridget. Seemingly born with wanderlust, Killian became a cabin boy on a Vilaverdan trading ship when he was 12. When the Red Curse spread, Killian avoided cursed regions and studied the curse; since then, he has been very careful to never spend more than two weeks in a cursed region, and so has never acquired a Legacy. He maintains a residence in Bom Jardim, in the distant Colony of the Horn, but spends most of his time on the ship he captains, the *Selwynn*, named for a lost love. Killian has two mortal enemies: Donovan Keir, a pirate captain, and Angelic de Ariéla, captain of Los Matónes in Narvaez.

Killian prefers to use his wheel-locks first, his rapiers second, except in duels. He also keeps his spells ready in case he should need them.

Miguel Hernando de la Montoya

6th-level Male Dwarf Swashbuckler Thief

Strength	17
Dexterity	16
Constitution	16
Intelligence	13
Wisdom	13
Charisma	13

Hit Points: 32

AC: 2 (magical leather, Dexterity, Swashbuckler)

Rear AC: 6

Unadjusted THAC0: 18 (15 with rapier because of kit)

Height: 4'5"

Weight: 153 pounds

Hair/Eyes: Black/Blue

Skin: Dark, ruddy

Age: 68

Alignment: Chaotic good

Weapon Proficiencies: Rapier (1d6+1/1d8+1), main-gauche (1d4/1d3, +1 to disarms, punch for 1d3), wheel-lock belt pistol (1d8/1d8, +1d8 whenever an 8 damage is rolled), two-weapon style specialization (can fight with two rapiers, or rapier and main-gauche, with a -2 attack penalty with secondary hand).

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Etiquette (13), tumbling (16), tightrope walking (16), gaming (13), blind-fighting.

Languages: Common, Espa (native language), Renardois, Ranax, elvish.

Legacy: *Fly*. Miguel's wings resemble those of a butterfly, at once incongruous and strangely fitting on this swashbuckling dwarf.

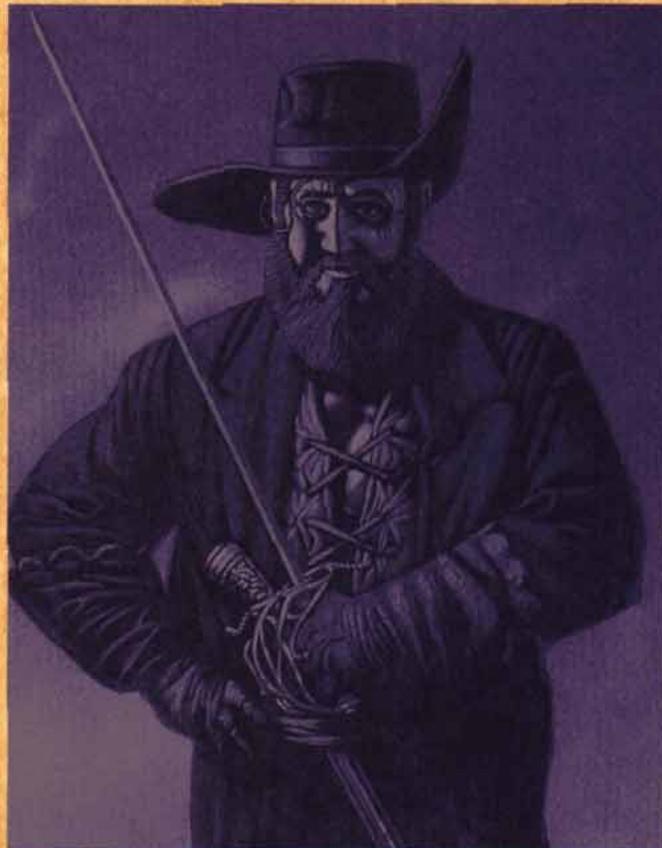
Thieving Skills: Pick pockets 55%, open locks 55%, find/remove traps 55%, move silently 25%, hide in shadows 25%, detect noise 25%, climb walls 80%, read languages 20%, backstab for triple damage.

Magical Items: *Rapier +1*, *leather armor +2* (designed to allow wings to come out), *cinnabryl amulet* (4 weeks and 2 days left), 10 charges of *smoke powder*.

Other Possessions: Rapier, main-gauche, 2 belt pistols, 50' silk rope, grappling hook, thieves' tools, tinderbox, 1 day's rations, waterskin, 2 flasks of oil, leather belt with compartments for thieves' tools, grooming kit, 4 changes of fine clothing including cloak and feathered hat.

Quote: "A rescued damsel in every port."

Description: Witty and charming, Miguel has "a way with



women." In fact, he is currently wooing women in several ports: Enid, whom he rescued from insanity; twins Katrina and Karmen, whom he rescued from a thieves' guild; Lyra, a mysterious woman he rescued from captivity; Lolita, a mysterious woman he "rescued" from her husband; and many more. He is always gallant and chivalrous in the extreme, and he refuses to take unfair advantage of anyone.

Miguel has served aboard trading ships all along the Savage Coast. He likes adventuring, because it gives him the opportunity to impress people, especially ladies, and supplies him with enough gold to live in high style. Miguel's most recent job has been as castellan for Don Luis de Manzanas of Saragón. It is Miguel's responsibility to defend Don Luis' life and property, and it is his pleasure to entertain the noble ladies who visit.

Miguel prefers to fight with two rapiers, or with rapier and main-gauche, but he always keeps both of his wheel-locks loaded in case they are needed. He is careful about using them near Inheritors, since he recently fired one to save Don Luis and several of his party guests. Miguel saw the unpleasant effects that a *smoke powder* explosion can have on Inheritors when it affected Balazar. Miguel doesn't regret Balazar's condition, though. The brute certainly had it coming.

Gloriana de Rondalla

5th-level Female Elf Swashbuckler Enchanter

Strength	13
Dexterity	16
Constitution	16
Intelligence	17
Wisdom	10
Charisma	16

Hit Points: 21

AC: 0 (*bracers of defense AC 4*, Dexterity, Swashbuckler)

Rear AC: 4

Unadjusted THAC0: 19

Height: 5'6"

Weight: 97 pounds

Hair/Eyes: Reddish brown/brown

Skin: Reddish tan

Age: 121

Alignment: Neutral good

Weapon Proficiencies: Saber (1d6+1/1d8+1, +1 to disarms, punch for 1d3), stiletto (1d3/1d2, +2 on attack rolls vs. plate mail, ring mail, or chain mail).

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Etiquette (16), tumbling (16), navigation (15), storytelling (16), acting (15), reading/writing common (18), blind-fighting.

Languages: Common, Verdan (native language), elvish, Renardois, shazak, Yazaka, tortle.

Legacy: *Speed*. Gloriana enjoys using her Legacy to enhance her melee combat ability.

Spell Book: First level: *burning hands, cantrip, detect magic, hypnotism, jump, light, phantasmal force, shocking grasp, sleep, spider climb, taunt*. Second level: *darkness 15' radius, forget, invisibility, know alignment, levitate, Melf's acid arrow, mirror image, pyrotechnics, rope trick, Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter*. Third level: *blink, clairvoyance, dispel magic, flame arrow, fly, hold person, phantom steed, suggestion, water breathing*.

Magical Items: *bracers of defense AC 2, wand of fire, cinnabryl amulet (3 weeks and 3 days left), red steel stiletto*.

Other Possessions: Saber, 50' silk rope, grappling hook, 50' string, tinderbox, 3 flasks of oil, pen, ink, paper, 10 pieces of chalk, signal whistle, wineskin, 2 days' rations, grooming kit, 3 changes of fine clothing.

Quote: "Are you prepared to defend yourself? Perhaps you would care to test your skill against my blade."



Description: Gloriana is a vivacious young elf, with an engaging smile and a fine sense of humor. She tends to dress in blues and white, with embellishments of silver; she often wears suede and lace. While Gloriana enjoys life at sea, she is equally comfortable in forests and cities.

Originally from Torreón, Gloriana sought the adventuring life to avoid the poverty of that state. She learned some skill in magic from her grandfather, then went to Vilaverde, where she joined the crew of a trading ship. The ship occasionally engaged in piracy, so Gloriana was able to gain experience rather quickly.

Gloriana is known as a storyteller, always able to tell tall tales or old myths and legends to entertain. Gloriana likes the swashbuckling life, and is an incorrigible flirt who enjoys rescuing men from difficult situations. She has romanced several of the eligible bachelors of the Savage Baronies, but does not wish to settle down anytime soon.

Gloriana prefers to use magic in combat when possible, but is also competent with a sabre. She enjoys flashy spells and flourishing maneuvers with her sword and stiletto. She has also experimented a few times with using a rope to swing across short distances to attack; it seems to impress people.

Francisco del Carrascal

5th-level Male Human Gaucho Ranger

Strength	13
Dexterity	16
Constitution	17
Intelligence	15
Wisdom	14
Charisma	13

Hit Points: 43
AC: 5 (studded leather, Dexterity)
Rear AC: 7
Unadjusted THAC0: 16

Height: 5'6"
Weight: 141 pounds
Hair/Eyes: Black/green
Skin: Ruddy tan
Age: 22
Alignment: Chaotic good

Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger (1d4/1d3), bolas (1d3/1d2, entangle, requiring a Strength check to get free), wheel-lock horse pistol (1d10/1d10, +1d10 whenever an 8 or 10 damage is rolled), sabre (1d6+1/1d8+1, +1 to disarms, punch for 1d3), light horse lance (1d6/1d8, double damage if used from a charging mount).

Nonweapon Proficiencies: land-based riding for horses (21), direction sense (15), weather sense (13), leatherworking (15), animal training for horses (14), survival for deserts (15), hunting (13), tracking (14).

Languages: Common, Espa (native language), Yaz, Yazaka.

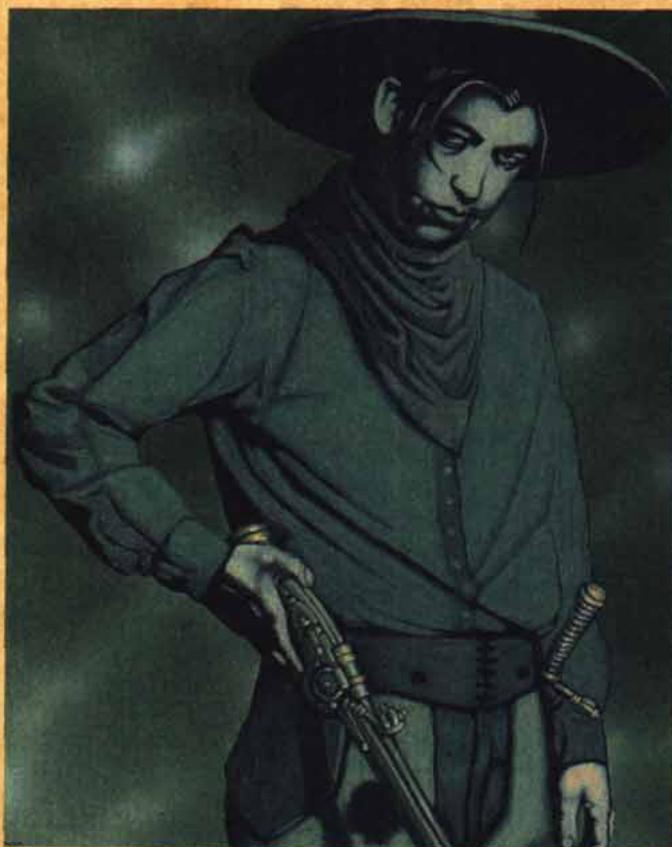
Legacy: *Create liquid.*

Ranger Skills: Hide in shadows 31% (15% in non-natural surroundings), move silently 40% (20% in non-natural surroundings), adverse reaction to and +4 to attack rolls vs. goblins, animal empathy.

Magical Items: 12 charges of *smoke powder*, *cinnabryl amulet* (7 weeks and 5 days left), *armbands of hunting*. Cisco was given his armbands by an old Yazhi shaman who wanted to help Cisco; the feathered *armbands* act as *bracers of archery*.

Other Possessions: 2 wheel-lock horse pistols, dagger, 2 bolas, sabre, light horse lance, long bow, blanket, tinderbox.
Light warhorse (Rapido): Int Animal (1); AL N; AC 7; MV 24; HD 2+2; hp 16; THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg 1d4/1d4; SZ L; ML 7.

Quote: "I'd rather be riding in the pampas."



Description: Cisco, as he is usually called, is an unkempt young man who can barely stand to remain indoors more than an hour at a time. He usually wears trousers, chaps, and a cotton shirt, along with a bandanna and a wide-brimmed hat.

When Cisco was a child, he was captured by Yazhi gnolls from El Grande Carrascal; the gnolls raised him as a slave. He acquired a Legacy early, before the Red Curse had spread over the entire coast; this helped him to eventually earn full tribal membership, when the gnolls deemed him worthy (his tribal name is "Watermaker"). Cisco was Afflicted as a child; after reaching adulthood, he returned to human lands and was able to get a full cure for his Affliction. He then moved back to Guadalante, where he found members of his family, and became a Gaucho. The skills he had learned from the Yazhi served him well in the pampas.

Cisco is a crude man, much more at home among nature—or even among gnolls—than among other humans. He is one of the few Gauchos who does not automatically hate Yazhi gnolls, since he was raised by them. Black Belly and Gosluk goblins caused occasional problems for his tribe, and Cisco learned a hatred of goblins from the gnolls.

Though skilled with wheel-lock and sabre, Cisco prefers the longbow and dagger for hunting. This proud man never backs down from a challenge.



Yazak Steppes

Yazak

Plakt

Goblin Territory

Gatorbone River

Hupkur Territo

Kingdom of Cay

Kingdom of Shazak

Kingdom

Bay

Kingdom of Ator

Aeth

Gour ash

Alzooq

Stonesturst

Seminster

Theeds

Pinkerstoke

Rocha dos Galos

Marsu

Mons on Plecy

Kingdom of Bellayne

Wallara

Ruins of Nazareth

Asgarath

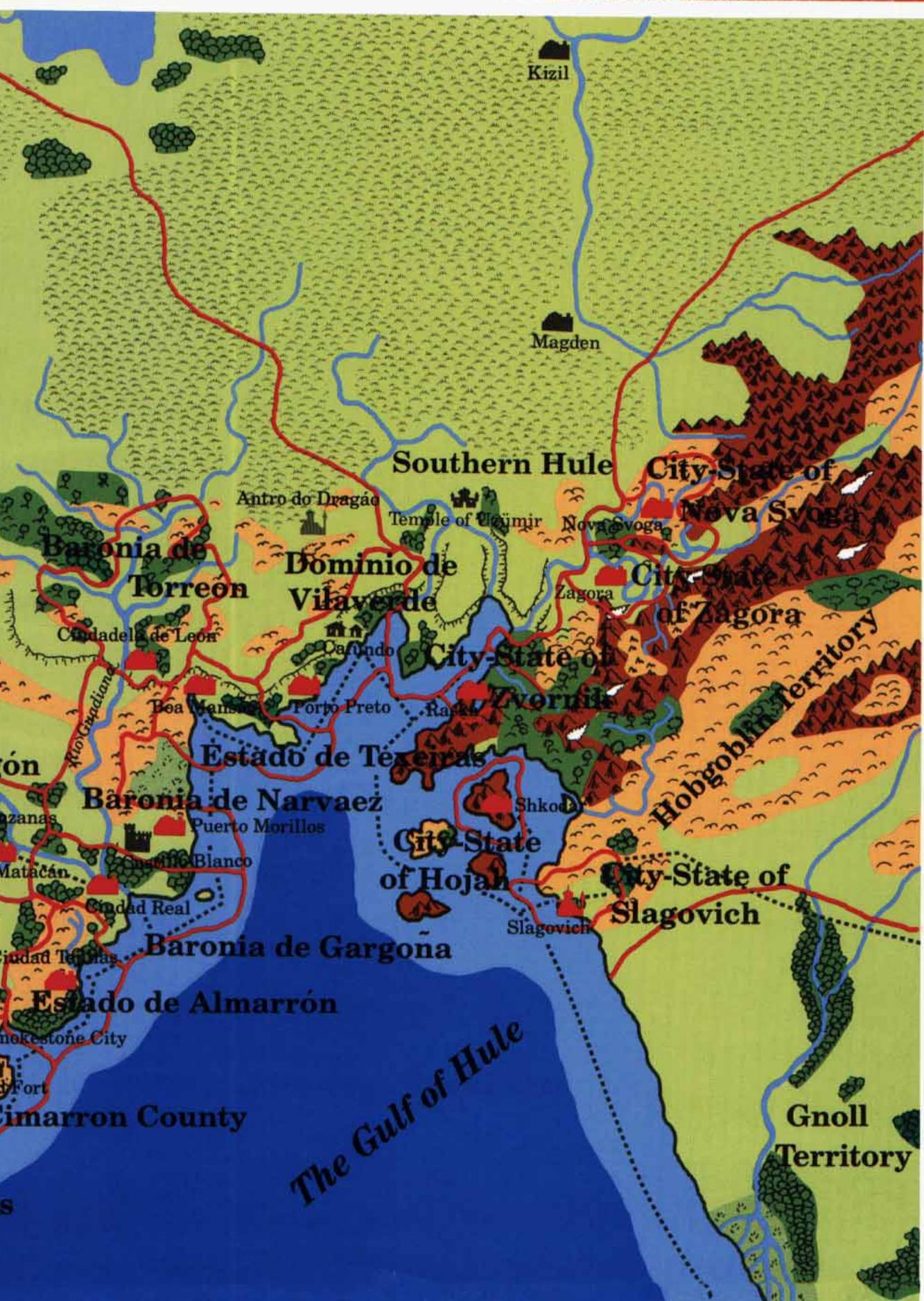
Mad

Endsley

Sea Serpents

row Sea





	Clear
	Grassland
	Swamp
	Hills
	Mountains
	Volcano
	Desert
	Plateau
	River
	Ocean
	Light Forest
	Forested Hills
	Heavy Forest
	Jungle
	Capital
	City
	Town
	Village
	Palace
	Castle
	Fort
	Tower
	Ruins
	National Borders
	Shipping Lanes
	Trails
	Roads



The Serpent Peninsula



The Arm of the Immortals

Yalu Bay

The Grass

The Trident Isles

Colony of the Horn (Taseiras)

Fortaleza da Boa Vista

Bom Jardim

The Horn

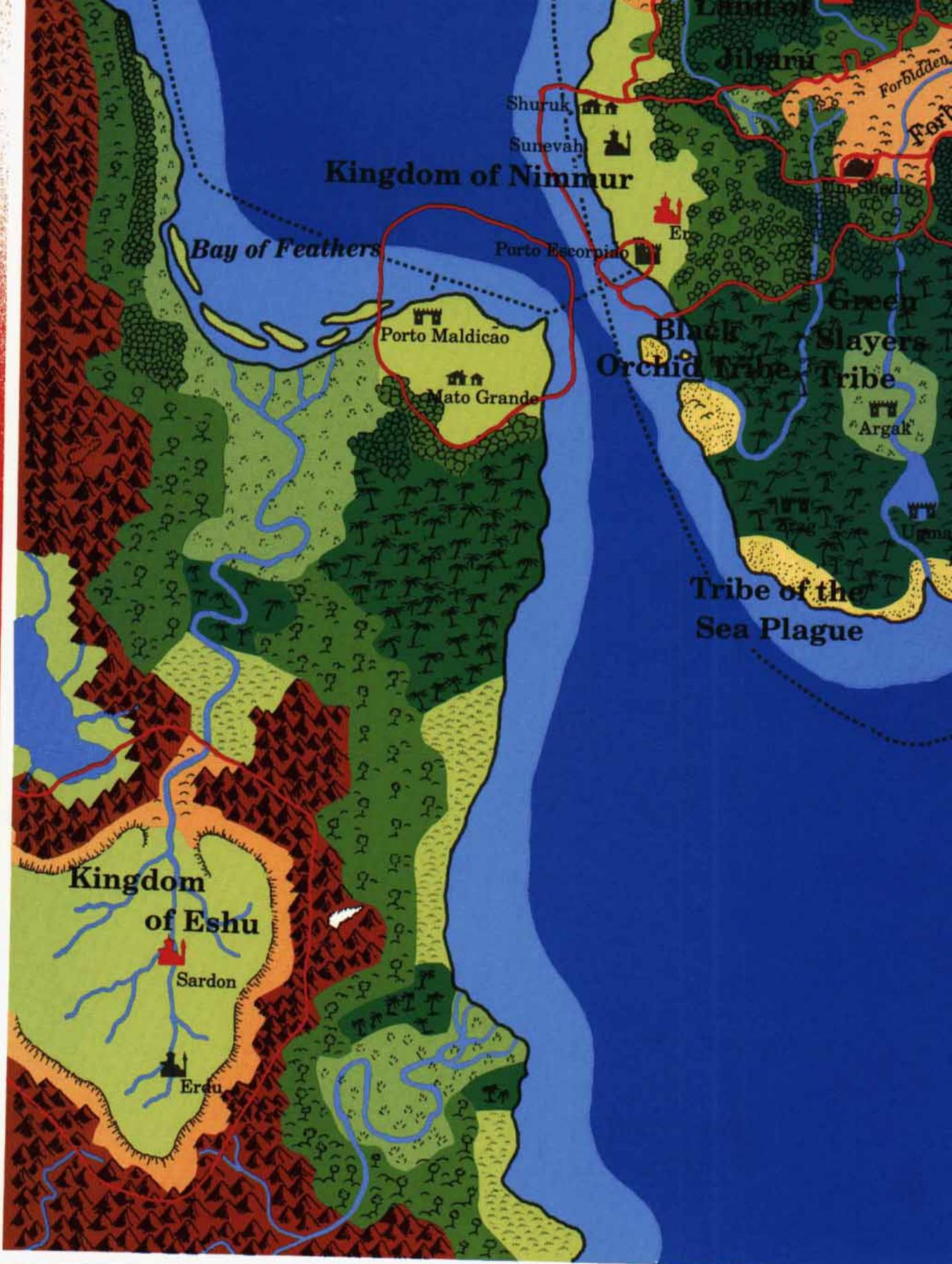
Mosquito Land

Jerruch River

Agá River

Grey Swans

Préuve (Renardy)



Kingdom of Nimmur

Bay of Feathers

Porto Maldicao

Mato Grande

Shuruk

Sunevah

Black Orchid Tribe

Green Slayers Tribe

Tribe of the Sea Plague

Kingdom of Eshu

Sardon

Ereu

Forbidden

Land of Jilyana

Argak

Ugma

Proteccion da Presa
(Texeiras)

Izondian Deep

GE COAST

Western

uals 90 Miles



Highland

Nezhey

Shahav

Terra Leoca (Vilaverde)

The Choke

Shavraim

Kingdom of Herath

Kingdom of Herath

Tribe of the Death

Tribe of the Storm Bringers

Western Sea

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