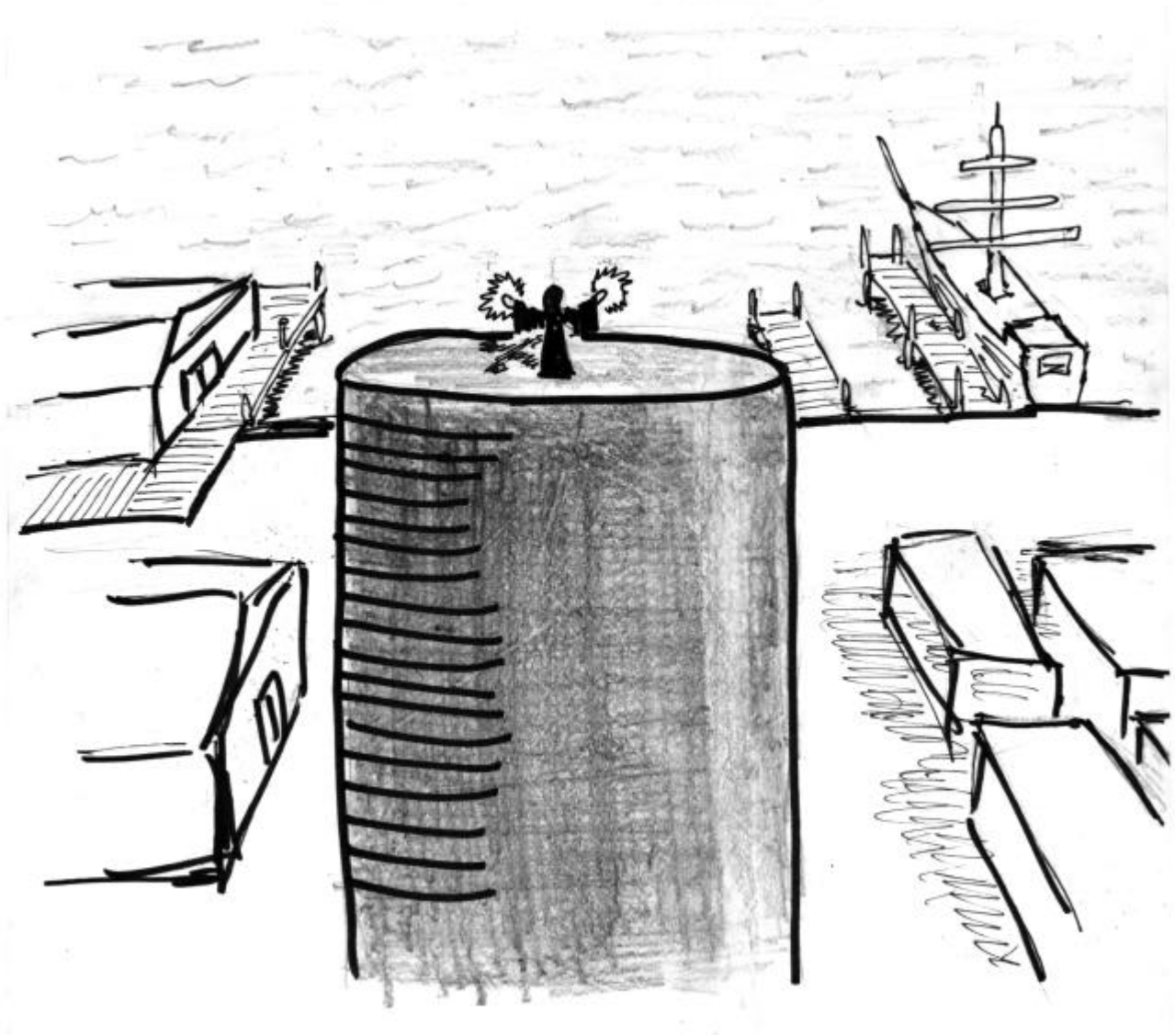


SAGA OF RAVEN'S NEST

Player's Guide





Contributors

Dedicated to the memory of Greg Rickards (10 March 2004)

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Contents

Introduction.....	4	Hob the Saint	16	Oemulhoc	26
History	5	Rafenor	16	Hill Tribes	26
The Old Era	5	Sabribar the Raven	16	Ibristha.....	26
Founding of the city (NE 0)	5	Magic	17	Yannem.....	26
The New Era (NE 1–65)	5	Elemental Magic	17	Irnoyrs	26
Rule of the Raven (65–190)	6	Necromancy.....	17	Hoedval	26
Years of Transition	6	Ceremonial magic	17	Galtrval	26
Democracy (NE 190–215)	6	Magic Resistance.....	17	Maigan.....	26
Reign of Terror (NE 215–218)	7	Religion	18	Nomads.....	27
New Freedom (NE 218 – 228).....	7	Tachean Faith.....	18	Nar-Gai	27
Aftermath.....	7	Temple Structure.....	18	Oranathra	27
New Era 229.....	7	Blue Nuns	18	Lower classes	27
Winter.....	7	Rithad	18	Half-castes	27
New Era 230.....	8	Breakaway Sects.....	18	Upper classes	27
Spring	8	Qualsadan Church	19	Raven’s Nest.....	27
Summer	8	Ecumenical Movement.....	19	Subetai and Athrai	28
Autumn.....	8	Church Structure.....	19	Subetai	28
Winter.....	8	Grey Knights	19	Athrai	28
New Era 231	8	Rarnduralm	19	Sword Peoples	28
Summer	8	Other Religions	19	Tachean Isles	28
Autumn.....	9	Ancestor Worship.....	19	Zhirase.....	29
Winter.....	9	Axudra	19	Thanica Peoples	29
New Era 232.....	9	Covenant of the Sword.....	19	Dal Cais	29
Spring.....	9	Fire Worship.....	20	Dal Haddrath.....	29
New Era 236.....	10	Local Cults	20	Del Garn.....	29
Autumn.....	10	Spiritualism	20	Urrud.....	29
New Era 237	10	Thanica Religion	20	Minor Powers	29
New Era 238.....	10	Bestiary	21	Caro Isles	29
Summer	10	Ancient Race	21	Esrid.....	29
Autumn.....	10	Animals	21	Hrieln	30
New Era 239.....	10	Dacasa	21	Klalvior	30
The Third Reign (NE 240).....	10	Gondosts.....	21	Ledaia	30
Summer	11	Grass tigers.....	21	Neme.....	30
Raven’s Nest.....	12	Horses.....	21	Wada	30
City locations	12	Hovri.....	21	The Enclave	30
Climate	12	Ponies.....	21	Appendix: GURPS.....	31
Economics	14	Zempir.....	21	Requirements	31
Law	14	Elementals	21	Characters	31
Drugs	14	Filain	21	Technology	32
Military	14	Flora	21	Weapons and armor	32
The Civic Guard.....	14	Cutgrass.....	21	Magic	32
Militia.....	14	Religi’s Kiss.....	22	High mana.....	32
The Marsh Guard.....	14	Giants.....	22	Rare Magic.....	32
Politics.....	14	Goblins	22	Ceremony required	32
Mayor and Government	14	Humans.....	22	True mages	32
The Nobility.....	15	Jrahir	22	Powerful mages	33
The Merchants.....	15	Kari-chac	22	Spirit plane.....	33
The Sea Traders Guild	15	Mutants	22	Common Spells	33
The Underworld.....	15	Shapechanges	22	Races	34
The Citizens	15	Undead.....	22	Humans	34
Religion.....	15	Vampyres	22	Mutants	34
Tachean Temple.....	15	Vashkoi.....	22	Vashkoi	34
Qualsadan Church	15	Known world	23	MINIATURES RULES	35
Other faiths.....	15	Languages.....	23	Characters	35
Magic.....	15	Haldor region.....	24	Combat.....	35
Major figures.....	16	Ancient Race	24	Spells.....	35
Bann Brokos.....	16	Cydoc.....	24	Skills	35
Genon.....	16	Cymraan	24	City	35
Heir of Sabribar.....	16				



INTRODUCTION

The Saga of Raven's Nest is a gritty world of low fantasy, with twenty years of gaming history documented in this player's guide:

The city of Raven's Nest was founded by the powerful wizard Sabribar the Raven over 240 years ago, when he used powerful magic to raise a featureless black tower from the surrounding swamps as his final stronghold. The fact that the most vibrant trading town of the region sprung up around the tower was of no concern.

On the other hand, the fact that Sabribar is still around is of concern to the citizens, however.

To start, here are a few of the things you will encounter in, the Saga of Raven's Nest:

- The ever-present shadow of the Raven's tower
- Human scoundrels & powerful magicians
- Followers & barbarians
- Undead & elementals
- Vashkoi lizardmen of the swamps
- Nobles & merchants
- Mutants bred in the sewers beneath the tower
- Churches & secret cults
- Commerce & politics
- Grey knights & ghosts

I hope you enjoy many hours adventuring in, the Saga of Raven's Nest.



HISTORY

Raven's Nest is a city with a short, but bloody history in the region of Haldor.

THE OLD ERA

The later centuries of the Old Era are often called the Age of Beasts, because quazi-human "beast men" ruled vast territories while the majority of humanity remained in slavery. Many events are too ancient to be accurately dated, and so must be given in approximate order:

The Enclave, a clique of magicians, founded a huge empire in the distant south. Whether the Enclave members, who always appeared in robes and masks, were beast men or true humans is a matter for conjecture.

Much of the Region of the Twin Seas was free of non-humans. These lands had long been inhabited by human savages, the ancient race from which the Cydoc and Cymraan are descended.

As a result of several waves of migration, dark-skinned peoples from the north gained control of the Asrarei River Basin and the western shores of the Inner Sea.

The Sword Peoples migrated into the region, and the Irnoyr barbarians occupied the north-eastern shore of the Central Sea.

Humans fleeing from the power of the Enclave settled on a chain of islands in the Central Sea. The Tachean Islesmen, as they became known, soon established a vigorous culture.

The Islesmen built up an empire by founding such colonies as Zhirase, Ledaia, Oran, Maigan, Peledhan and Iffre.

The town of Klalvior and several settlements on the island of Esrid came into existence at about this time.

The Dal Cais moved into the region. Later the Del Garn passed through their territory and seized lands further to the north.

The Enclave extended its borders, taking much of the savanna land previously occupied by nomads. Some of the displaced tribes migrated towards the Twin Seas, and one people, the Nar-gai, sought new territories north of the Skelyir Mountains.

The various minor states on Esrid united. Refugees from Esrid and colonists from Klalvior were instrumental in establishing Hrieln.

The Tachean religion began to fragment into competing sects. The Rithad sect, founded in response to visions experienced by the priest Rithar, denounced magic as a force for evil.

The Old Era ended with the catastrophic civil war which all but destroyed the Enclave.

FOUNDING OF THE CITY (NE 0)

A wizard known as Sabribar the Raven, fleeing northward from the ruin of the Enclave, came to a swampy, disease-ridden stretch of coastland known as the Morass. This place had long been dominated by the huge, aggressive, reptilian creatures known as Vashkoi, but Sabribar drove them back into the deeper recesses of the swamp.

He banished the disease and then built a tower and city on good land rising out of the Morass, or as some claim he used his mastery of earth and water magics to raise solid land out of the swamps upon which to build.

His retainers and the Oemulhoc, fisherfolk native to the region, were housed within this town, which soon became known as Raiam Evora (Raven's Nest). This was to be his citadel against the expected reprisals from other survivors of the Enclave; the fact that the settlement grew into a prosperous trading city was a matter of supreme disinterest to its founder.

Raven's Nest was ideally situated to develop into a major port, while Sabribar was capable of dealing with any crisis, from raids by the Vashkoi to a half-hearted invasion by the Islesmen.

The modern calendar starts from the fall of the Enclave (coincidentally the creation of Raven's Nest).

THE NEW ERA (NE 1-65)

The expected Enclave attack never came. In consequence, during the later decades of his unnaturally long life, Sabribar lost interest in the defence and administration of Raven's Nest. He retired to his tower at the centre of the city, and spent his time on magical experiments. For some undisclosed reason he was especially interested in evolving mutant creatures from animal and human stock. He passed all administrative duties over to various underlings, thus creating the nobility of Raven's Nest.

To prolong his life, Sabribar regularly has to undertake a Sleep of Renewal. During the first such sleep, in the year 9, he also completed his tower.¹

The empire of the Islesmen began to crumble. Zhirase, the most magnificent of the colonies, was destroyed by Cymraan savages. The Irnoyrs seized territory, including the town of Iffre. Oranathra grew so powerful as to be effectively autonomous.

A Tachean king fell under the influence of the fanatical Rithad sect. The Islesmen then waged war against most of the peoples of the region, in order to do away with magic and its practitioners.

¹ "Way back when.": by Team Vigilance, Sydcon 1995



Maigan rebelled, and the Tachean counterattack failed so badly that Maigan gained independence and established its own monarchy.

The Islesmen then turned their attention to Raven's Nest, but their invasion was soundly defeated by Sabribar. Raven's Nest survived early attempts at conquest by the Empire of the Tachean Isles and by the nonhuman Vashkoi. It went on to become the major trading power of the region. The Tachean faith grew at the expense of the Rarnduralm religion which Sabribar had introduced.²

RULE OF THE RAVEN (65–190)

Sabribar's interest in the administration and defence of his city declined. He granted powers and responsibilities to selected followers, who became the nobles of Raven's Nest. The Raven stayed in his Tower, conducting magical experiments in which humans were transformed into monstrous creatures. The motive behind these activities was unknown.

Following a revolution which greatly sapped the might of the Tachean Isles, the Rithad was outlawed. Oranathra and Peledhan found pretexts to break away, leaving the Empire in a shambles.

Not many years afterwards, Peledhan was conquered by Maigan.

First Maigan-Oranathra War: the former initiated the conflict, and gained territory at the latter's expense.

Oranathra established the colony town of Neme.

Sabribar was a vastly powerful wizard, but a disinterested ruler. He gave the city no help when in Year 134 an unnatural shift in the climate brought Raven's Nest close to starvation. Legend is that the unnaturally harsh winter was caused by an Archdemon and persisted right through the following year.

The Raven was too busy with his own concerns to help, and although the crisis passed, the citizenry now realised that Sabribar was totally disinterested in their welfare.

For a time, there were rumours that the archdemon had left the city a parting "gift": some form of curse. However, the Long Winter's main consequence was that everyone recognised Sabribar's disdain. Now he was hated by most of his people, though none of them felt strong enough to challenge him.³

The Athrai and Subetai migrated into the region, scattering all before them. The Cydoc gave up territory and the Sword Peoples relocated to their strongholds in the Talnmun Hills.

² "The Good and Unfaithful Servants": MacquarieCon 1990

³ "Winter's Shroud": Saga 1997

In response, the Cydoc united on several occasions. One of their rulers founded a port town named Dastark, which prospered and became a rival to Raven's Nest.

Neme won its freedom during an Oranathran civil war. Maigan became involved, sparking off the second Maigan-Oranathra War. Maigan aided a rebel leader, was defeated, and lost territory.

An ambitious chieftain organised the Irnoyrs into an aggressive raiding force. They succeeded in occupying Tache, but kept well clear of Raven's Nest for fear of Sabribar's magic.

Eventually a mysterious champion clad in grey robes and enchanted grey armour arrived at Raven's Nest and, to everyone's amazement, overcame Sabribar in combat. At the time it was universally believed that the Raven had been slain by the Grey Knight, but later events proved this assumption to be false.

YEARS OF TRANSITION

Democracy (NE 190–215)

With the defeat of Sabribar, certain nobles desired to rule Raven's Nest in his place, but while they argued among themselves the people acclaimed the mysterious champion as their lord.

This champion was one of the Grey Knights, an order of holy warriors who were utterly opposed to the Enclave and all its works. Priests soon arrived from the Knights' distant homeland, bringing with them the morally exacting Qualsadan faith, the worship of the God and Goddess of Creation. This became one of the two main religions of the city, competing with the easygoing paganism of the Tachean faith.

A crude form of democratic election for some governmental positions developed, with the annual Mayoral elections contested by various noble families and the aggressively independent Sea Traders Guild..

Meanwhile the Irnoyrs, emboldened because Sabribar's magical defenses no longer operated, launched a major raid on the city. The Grey Knight himself was slain and his enchanted armour stolen.

Freed from the Knight's moderating influence, the Sea Traders Guild of Raven's Nest demonstrated its power by sacking Dastark. As a result the alliance of the Cydoc tribes fell apart. The Del Garn then seized the town, which they renamed Dastir.

However, other Grey Knights visited Raven's Nest over the years. Each such arrival preceded some great danger, and most times the Knight stayed a while - winning any election he or she contested, and dominating the political life of the city.

The last sightings of giants reputedly occurred at about this time. Later reports were usually scorned, even by the credulous.



Eventually a young man travelled to Raven's Nest and identified himself as the original Grey Knight's son. To prove his claim he sailed to the homeland of the Innoys and won back the Knight's armour. Because many citizens believed that he was actually the original Knight reborn, this Grey Knight soon established control over the city, winning consecutive annual elections for a period of two decades.

The Innoys' raid on Maigan city proved disastrous for both sides. Soon afterwards the Tachean Islesmen drove the Innoys out of their territory, again at great cost to all involved.

Raven's Nest, by default the greatest power in the region, began to monopolise trade in both seas.

This period of stability and growth ended with the Knight's death. Soon various political factions were plotting against each other for control of Raven's Nest. The riots and faction fighting turned nasty, and civil war was narrowly avoided.

On the first anniversary of this Grey Knight's death, Sabribar the Raven returned. Supported by mercenaries and a veritable army of undead creatures, he seized control of Raven's Nest. However, many of his bitterest enemies escaped into the countryside; these rebels committed themselves to the death of the Raven.

REIGN OF TERROR (NE 215–218)

So powerful a spirit as Sabribar's could not be banished from the world by the simple expedient of slaying him. While in spirit form Sabribar learned the principles of necromancy, then raised himself from the dead. He returned to the city some 25 years after his death, conquering it with an army of mercenaries, mutated horrors and denizens of the grave. Now undead, Sabribar was far less human in outlook.

Sabribar's previous "harsh but fair" policy was replaced by a vengeful cruelty, an apparent determination to punish his people for their disloyalty. The Civic Guard, the city's wizards and the underworld were crushed in turn, while the Sea Traders Guild relocated to Esrid. Thereafter a magical barrier was established to prevent movement into or out of the city.

Thousands were arrested or subjected to Sabribar's bizarre experiments; perhaps a quarter of the population died, suffered imprisonment or disappeared in the space of three years, many of these victims becoming fodder for his insane experiments.

Aided by vengeful wizards who opened a way through the barrier, the rebels launched a surprise (suicide) raid on Raven's Tower. Nearly all of the attackers were slain, but so too was Sabribar, and this time his body was destroyed and the ashes scattered.

NEW FREEDOM (NE 218 – 228)

Aftermath

Sabribar's minions went into hiding and, using spells of mind control, attempted to turn the citizens against each other. It took a year to kill off most of the mutants and to locate the hidden Raven supporters who were casting malign magic against the city. The Raven's surviving minions then made contact with envoys from the reviving Enclave, and departed the region with several Grey Knights in pursuit.

Suddenly there were no Knights and no agents of Sabribar left in the city. Peace had returned at last. It lasted ten years.

Democratic institutions were restored, the Sea Traders Guild flourished, and Raven's Nest began to re-establish its old trade dominance. A treaty was negotiated with the Athrai, and these barbarians began to supply the city with mercenaries.

Raven's Nest was well on the way to recapturing the power and prestige it had enjoyed in 214. However, there had been changes in attitude: magic was barely tolerated, and the years of turmoil had bred a hardened, violent generation.

NEW ERA 229

Winter

After decades of inactivity within their marshland lairs, the Vashkoi finally stirred again. Late in year 229 they took advantage of the chaos caused by the upcoming Mayoral election. Bizarre, inhuman magic permitted agents to penetrate Raven's Nest, capture numerous Civic Guardsmen and replace them with 'puppets' under Vashkoi control.

About this time a new Grey Knight, Amnari, arrived in Raven's Nest, and put himself forward as a candidate for Mayor. Few doubted that the popularity of the Knights among the common people would assure his victory. However, it was the Knight's secret purpose to test the new political maturity of Raven's Nest; he would stand down in favour of whichever honest candidate did best.

Most candidates failed to live up to the challenge of fair behaviour. Some were disqualified, or even jailed. In the hunt for election funds the Treasury was robbed twice - once, allegedly, by the Lord Treasurer himself! In the general confusion the Vashkoi plot went undiscovered until much damage had been done.

The Grey Knight won the election and stood down in favour of Rafenor, a high priest of the Tachean faith.⁴

⁴ "Festive Season": Saga 1989



NEW ERA 230

Spring

At the beginning of Year 230, adventurous citizens of Raven's Nest and Civic Guardsmen alike prepared to invade the marshlands, intent upon dealing with the vashkoi once and for all. However, such efforts were initially ineffective - in a large part because of the behaviour of the new Mayor.

Rafenor had only competed for office at the urging of his beautiful and ambitious young wife, the priestess Narisa - and Narisa had died in the recent conflict. Heartbroken, Rafenor became increasingly unstable. First he threw the administration of government into chaos by taking off after the vashkoi himself. Later he attempted to outlaw the Qualsada faith, the religion of the Grey Knights.

Some who entered the marshlands did not find Vashkoi, but another - unexpected - evil. Dwelling in that same region, in apparent harmony with the human-hating Vashkoi, were beings resembling the vampyres of folklore. Having been discovered, these vampyres descended upon Raven's Nest itself, and there caused considerable mischief before the Grey Knights and the Qualsada priests destroyed them.⁵

His madness now evident to all, Mayor Rafenor was removed from power and put away. The Knight assumed political control once more, and began to plan a full-scale military campaign against the Vashkoi.

Summer

There was further evidence of the Enclave's renewal when one of their vastly powerful wizards appeared in Raven's Nest. Calling himself the Heir of Sabribar, he sought out a long-hidden artifact of Sabribar's (the Casket of Wonders), in the belief that activating it would bestow new gifts of magic upon him. In fact it killed him, and worked a remarkable transformation upon many of the city's wizards. Becoming living embodiments of magic, they caused much needless destruction before departing. This bizarre happening caused Amnari the Grey Knight to exile all practitioners of magic from the city.⁶

Autumn

A priest of the Wildchild (a Qualsadan deity) performed a Wilding: a mass exorcism, intended to banish the many malign spirits of dead citizens which

⁵ "Home and Away": Saga 1990

⁶ "The Power": Saga 1991

were creating a predisposition toward violence among the living. The ceremony succeeded, but had the dangerous consequence of weakening the hold which the spirit plane had over the ghosts of powerful entities like the Raven and the Heir of Sabribar.⁷

The Grey Knight was forced to make a choice between two threats: magic and the Vashkoi. Leaving Attard, Commander of the Civic Guard, to continue the war against the Vashkoi, the Knight set about tracking down the transformed wizards. Meanwhile, recent events had served to rekindle the citizens' smoldering hatred of all things supernatural. Many were provoked to an orgy of violence against anyone even suspected of magical ability.⁸

Winter

The war was brought to a successful conclusion, the Vashkoi only avoiding extinction by capturing a human water wizard and forcing her to sink the land between the city and their swampland homes. Two heroes emerged from this war: Guard Commander Attard, due to his leadership, and Bann Brokos of the Sea Traders Guild, due to his bravery. The city's remaining (ie. Untransformed) wizards performed successfully enough for their exile to be lifted.⁹

The recent actions of Amnari (ignoring the obvious Vashkoi threat in favour of the more esoteric danger posed by unexplained magic) had planted seeds of doubt in the minds of the common people; for the first time, they questioned the Grey Knights' role as benefactors. At the same time, most of the traditional political factions seemed incapable of recovering from the damaging scandals of the past few years. The Mayoral election at Winter's end had only three serious candidates. Although Amnari won, it was the narrowest victory ever recorded by a Grey Knight. Attard and Bann had both done well, and both had ambitions for the future.

NEW ERA 231

Summer

With the city barely recovered from the recent war, a new crisis emerged. A second Grey Knight arrived, bringing a sombre warning: an Enclave army was on its way. Panic ensued.

⁷ "The Evil That Men Do": NuCon 1991

⁸ "The Witch-hunters": Saga 1992

⁹ "Sword and Claw": Saga 1992



Autumn

Hoping to capture the city from within, the Enclave commander sent agents to attempt to revive Sabribar the Raven as their undead slave; meanwhile, certain citizens attempted to summon Sabribar's spirit into a living body, in hope that he would then aid the city against the Enclave. These rival groups battled on the spirit plane, and both plans apparently failed.¹⁰

Denied an easy victory, the Enclave army withdrew. Both Grey Knights naturally gave chase, intending to harry it out of the region.

Winter

With the Grey Knights absent, and most factions disgraced, the election had only two credible candidates: the war heroes, Attard and Bann. Each was an ambitious, forceful man with only a limited commitment to democracy; each was a potential demagogue. Guard Commander Attard won the election, but only by the smallest of margins. Rumours of vote-rigging spread throughout the city, provoking Bann Brokos and his supporters to anger. Winter ended with Raven's Nest on the brink of civil unrest. In that atmosphere of uncertainty, a second rumour spread through the city: supposed, one of the attempts to revive Sabribar had succeeded after all.

NEW ERA 232

Spring

Fear eased when the Raven did not in fact return - though there was a definite reminder of him, due to the sudden failure of some of the spells he had cast long ago to raise his city from the swamps. Attard's margin of victory had been so small that the magistrates staged a recount. This time, Bann won the vote, so he became Mayor instead. Attard was left with a difficult choice: accept his rival as Mayor, or flout the law after so many years of upholding it. Deciding to bide his time until the next election, Attard publicly acknowledged Bann's victory. This brought an end to the unrest.¹¹

Bann proved to be both a strong political man and a reformer. He pursued law-and-order issues, returned land to the peasants, and used a legal loophole to strip the nobles and other well-to-do citizens of much of their wealth. He then used this money to fund a war, leading an invasion into the lands of the Del Garn barbarians.^{12,13}

By year's end, many citizens were close to revolt. Fortunately for Bann, fanatics attempted to summon the ghost of Sabribar. Bann became the person most responsible for defeating and destroying Sabribar.¹⁴

One of the benefits of the conquest of Dastir was that many of the dissidents and criminals of Raven's Nest were either sent there, conscripted into the army, or went to seek their fortune - leaving Raven's Nest to scheme in peace.¹⁵

This and some successes in the war gave him enormous support. Initially, his power base had been the common people, rather than the nobility; many nobles had been hurt financially by his reforms. However, most nobles now accepted the situation and began looking for ways to benefit from it. Bann stood unopposed during the next Mayoral election; at his urging, the Mayor's term of office was extended to four years.¹⁶

Relatively few still opposed him; rival politicians, certain nobles, opponents of the war, idealists, opportunists. Those who cared about freedom, and those whose egos and ambitions would not let them submit.

By the summer of 234, the war was going so well that Bann decided to return home with much of his army. The rebels could only conclude that Bann was finally turning his attention to them. When rebels attempted to kill Bann at sea, he let news of his supposed death reach the city, knowing this would draw his enemies out into the open. As expected, various nobles and rebels squabbled over the rule of the city. When word reached them of Bann's survival, merely hours before he arrived with his fleet, they were forced to flee, joining those rebels already hiding out in the wilderness.

The winter of 235 was the 100th anniversary of the Long Winter's ending. A major celebration was planned. However, as the date approached, rumours of the archdemon's curse surfaced once more.¹⁷

Within the city itself, this was the end of any significant opposition to Bann Brokos. Only the city's criminals were uncommitted to Bann, because of his tough stance on crime. Even so, some of their leaders (such as Genon, the dominant crime lord) were willing to court Bann's favour, even if this meant withdrawing their protection from the weaker members of the underworld.

¹⁰ "The Devil You Know": Saga 1993

¹¹ "Shaking the Foundations": Saga 1994

¹² "The Great Experiment": freeform, Saga 1995

¹³ "Custodian": AD&D tabletop, Saga 1995

¹⁴ "The Last Gambit": Saga 1995

¹⁵ "Muddy Streets, Bloody Blades": Saga 1996

¹⁶ "City of Shadows": strong freeform elements, Saga 1996

¹⁷ "The Best Revenge": Saga 1997



NEW ERA 236

Autumn

As Genon begins to lose his grip on power in the underworld of Raven's Nest due to a failing body his rivals fight with each other over who will take his position. However they are betrayed and large portions of the underworld are destroyed by Bann's forces when they hold a grand meeting under the city to decide.¹⁸

NEW ERA 237

While he already has a wife and sons, Bann has announced that he is divorcing her and marrying a noblewoman, thus opening the door to becoming a noble of Raven's Nest himself. The price for this alliance is his conversion from the Qualsadan religion to the Tachean faith.¹⁹

NEW ERA 238

Summer

The status of Bann's previous wife and her children remain uncertain in Raven's Nest, and especially now so for his new wife has given Bann Brokos a son.

Beraidas ril Brokos, born in the middle of Spring this year, is a healthy child, showing all of the traits of the Brokos family.. loud, robust and strong. The city of Raven's Nest has welcomed this new heir to the Brokos family, all but a few, that is. For someone has taken it upon themselves that the child is a threat.. someone with a ruthless and cunning mind. That someone has managed to steal into the heart of the city, and from under the nose of armed and magical guards, stolen the babe. The city is in uproar.²⁰

Autumn

The era of Bann's rise also saw religious change. An ecumenical movement started in Raven's Nest resulted in the Qualsadan and Tachean churches accepting doctrinal compromises. In Year 238, delegations of Qualsadan priests from distant Inurria and Tachean priests from the Empire of the Tachean Isles came to Raven's Nest, to sort out this theological muddle.

They had a second purpose. The ghost of Sabribar had returned and was haunting his old stronghold, Raven's Tower. The general population was unaware of this danger, but rumours were starting to spread. Volunteers from among those who knew the truth prepared to enter Raven's Tower.

Faced with the pending return of the Raven, a spellcaster named Valscar sacrificed himself, allowing Sabribar's spirit to possess his body. In this way, Valscar had hoped to restore Sabribar to sanity, believing that only he could protect the city from the Enclave. However, through a quirk of fate, Valscar was possessed not only by Sabribar, but by Evansanon the Grey Knight. The two spirits warred with each other, but eventually began to merge.²¹

NEW ERA 239

The Del Garn people have suffered at the hands of Raven's Nest. Now their bravest warriors must undertake a quest to reclaim their past.²²

The Raven has returned to Raven's Nest, again implementing a harsh tyrannical rule. However many rebels still seek to defeat him, and return to city under the cover of the annual masked carnival, to reclaim the city.²³

A meeting of the Del Garn tribes has been called. Now that they have the Spear of Destiny they struggle to unite under a single leader.²⁴

THE THIRD REIGN (NE 240)

Mayor Bann and most of the government went into exile, as Sabribar the Raven began his Third Reign. The "new" Sabribar proved himself to be quite a strange mixture of Grey Knight compassion and his old ruthlessness. No one was quite sure how to behave, given the fact that Sabribar was the law and could mete out whatever punishment he chose. The Old Faith was re-established. Sabribar built up a large army, and there was an expectation that it would soon move against the government-in-exile, creating a bloodbath in which brother will be expected to kill brother, and friend to kill friend.

Meanwhile, the post of Mayor and the Council were retained. Those citizens ambitious or civic-minded enough to volunteer – and those unlucky enough to be

¹⁸ "The Crimes of Autumn": Mind Sports, October 1997

¹⁹ "A Marriage of Convenience": freeform, Saga 1998

²⁰ "Blood Brothers": AD&D tabletop, Saga 1998

²¹ "The Scourging of Raven's Nest": Saga 1998

²² "The Spear of Destiny": Pendragon tabletop, Conclave 1998

²³ "The King of Midnight": Conclave 1998

²⁴ "Dominion": freeform, Conclave 1998



drafted – found themselves try to administer a city that was sinking into madness.²⁵

Summer

Over the last few months something strange has started to grow in the city, something frightening. Abruptly the Raven returned, this time for real, this time no copy, this time no longer Undead, seeming to be in full power and full control of his own faculties. He dominated the town rapidly and utterly, and now seems devoted to some unknown purpose. Any who oppose him directly are no more. A small group of people gather together to try to determine what has happened, why, and what to do about it.²⁶

In foreign affairs, during this year there was concern for the mental health of the Emperor of the Tachean Isles, and much debate over his succession.²⁷

²⁵ “The Day Before Doomsday”: Pendragon, tabletop Conclave 1999

²⁶ “Regret” : AD&D tabletop, Conclave 1999

²⁷ “Succession”: freeform, Conclave 1999



RAVEN'S NEST

The city of Raven's Nest, or Raiam Evora as it was originally named, is a large vibrant trading city which was founded over 230 years ago by Sabribar the Raven. Sabribar is (was) a great and powerful magician who lived for many hundreds of years. He was considered harsh but fair.

CITY LOCATIONS

Raven's Nest is located in the midst of extensive swamplands on the southern shore of the Haldorar Sea.

The city is walled on three sides, with a large gate opening inland to the south. To the north, the city is opens to a deep harbor, with extensive docklands.

Dominating the city skyline is the Tower of the Raven, a foreboding black building that rises into the sky and could be built by nothing other than magic. Although the centrepiece of the city, the tower, and its surrounding moat filled with crocodiles (and worse), is avoided, or at least ignored, by the population of the city.

Leading south from the tower, to the main gate, is the wide, tree and statue lined, Avenue, with the wealthier quarters of the city to either side. To the west is the church quarter, containing both the Qualsadan church and the Tachean temple.

To the east of the avenue live the richest officials and nobles – and crime lords – of the city. The area features the extensive City Park, as well as several large estates.

Nestled in the south-east corner of the city, against the city walls and with easy access to the main gates, are the main guard barracks.

On the other side of the city, immediately to the north of the tower, is the large city Square. The square has easy access to the docks, as well as the main gate via the Avenue.

To the west of the square is the main cultural and entertainment area, including the city Amphitheatre. The Courthouse, Jail, and other city official buildings are also found in this area, where the western wall juts out.

Also fairly close to the square, but just to the east a little, is the most famous tavern in the city – the Bulging Barrel. Despite having changed ownership more times than people can remember, and having been burnt down even more times than that, the tavern continues to be resurrected.

As one progresses towards the docks, the standard of living progressively lowers. The north-eastern part of the city is dominated by slums despite the many efforts to clear out the quarter.

The north-western quarter, closest to the docks, is dominated by many warehouses (also the victim of

frequent fires). It also contains the headquarters of the Sea Traders guild.

Finally the docks themselves, always with ships coming and going, watched dutifully by the harbor master. The deep harbor is protected by a sea chain running from the western cliffs a fortified sentry island at the eastern edge of the channel.

Nestled outside the eastern wall, at the waters edge where the surround swamps drain into the Haldorar Sea, is the fisherfolk village, where the remnants of the Oemulhoc, the original inhabitants of the area, survive.

Further outside the city walls are farmlands, although they do not extend too far before the swamp takes over.

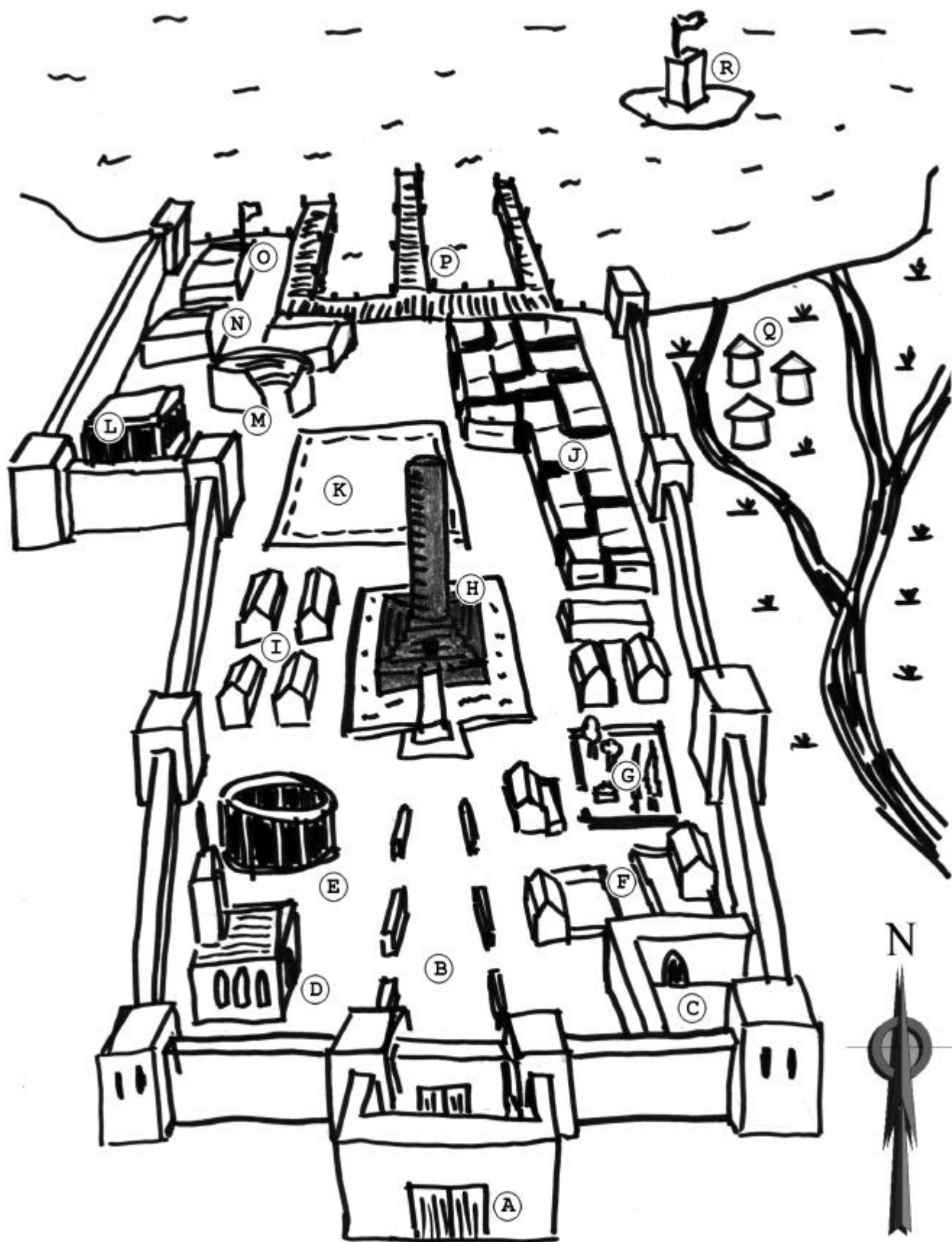
CLIMATE

Raven's Nest sits around the 40th latitude, south, and is situated amongst moors and swamplands. It is coastal and low-lying, however cold currents sweep past as the continue into the Inner Haldorar Sea.

The extensive use of magics in the area has permanently affected the weather patterns, which are now quite erratic.

City Location Key

- A - Main gate
- B - Avenue
- C - Barracks
- D - Qualsadan church
- E - Tachean temple
- F - Rich quarter
- G - City park
- H - Raven's Tower
- I - Middle class
- J - Slums
- K - Main square
- L - Courthouse & jail
- M - Amphitheatre
- N - Warehouses
- O - Sea Trader's Guild
- P - Docks
- Q - Fisherfolk village
- R - Sentry island





Raven's Nest experiences a wide range of climate. Although generally hot and humid, it can get cold enough during winter to snow.

Due to the presence of magic, one can never know what to expect.

ECONOMICS

Money consists of copper delsa and gold florens, and there are also silver coins.

The delsa is a large copper coin and the base unit of currency. Approximately one hundred of such coins would have a weight of one pound.

Silvers are a similar sized silver coin, worth ten delsa, whilst the floren is a smaller gold coin about half the size.

There are ten silvers to the floren, making a floren worth one hundred delsa. Gold and silver coins from other nations can often be exchanged by weight, for a fee.

An average wage would be around 5-10 florens per month, although a single floren is enough to keep a poor family for a month. The wealthier merchants, nobles, and priests can earn up to 50 florens per month.

LAW

Common Crimes include: Slander, Rackets (illegal businesses), including Arson, Blackmail, Black Market Alcohol, Corrupt Magistrates, Drugs (other than Tears), Prostitution (streetwalkers), Protection, Robbery, Smuggling, Swindling (and Thugging), Murder (of the lowest classes), and being a member of the Rithad.

Prostitution: Brothels are legal, although heavily taxed now. Bann has outlawed streetwalkers.

Street Entertainers: For the first time, these are being controlled. Every entertainer needs a license and must pass a test of skill.

Theft: Serious theft is punished by severing the right hand, or the head in the case of a second offence.

Major Crimes include: Use of magic that causes property damage, spying, working for the Enclave, and Murder (of the common class).

Capital Offences: Arson, murder (of the higher social classes), slave trading, treason, following the banned Rarnduralm faith, and trafficking in Tears are all capital offences in Raven's Nest. Recently use of magic that causes harm to a person has been added to this list.

In the past, during the reign of Sabribar insulting the Heavenly Hierarchy was a capital offence and treason included promoting democracy, however slave trading was legal. Also Sabribar's Will was the law. He could punish anyone at any time to any degree he chose, but he rarely exercised this right.

Drugs

Tears, the mind-burner, comes originally from the decadent Tachean Empire; it is banned. The street price for one vial is about 4 Florens.

Opiates are more common, but now also illegal. Street price is about 2 Florens per pouch.

MILITARY

The Civic Guard

The police force and primary army unit. The majority are trained as heavy infantry, using armour, spear and shield. Numerous archer units also man the city walls. The actual Guardsmen are trained, veteran warriors, but there are also part-time militiamen. The nobility comprise most of the officers.

Militia

Citizen conscripts, part of the Civic Guard. The Commander of the Militia is appointed for four years by the Commander of the Civic Guard.

The Marsh Guard

A small, highly trained group of scouts and rangers who watch over the marshes surrounding the city. The commander is appointed by the Council for a period of 4 years.

POLITICS

Mayor and Government

The city of Raven's Nest is ruled by an elected Mayor and some semi-hereditary office holders. The current mayor is Bann Brokos, a leading member of the Sea Traders Guild. Bann is a strong reforming ruler who wants to break the power of the aristocracy and return it to the merchants and common people. He has used his mayoral powers to institute a number of sweeping reforms.

The Mayor makes the laws that are ratified, or not, by the council. The council is made up of high offices (excluding the High Magistrate) and representatives.

The High Offices are: Mayor (head of council, with a casting vote, overall leader of the armed forces, and makes the laws); Lord Chancellor (and Deputy Mayor); Lord Provisioner; and Lord Treasurer. All these offices are elected once every four years. Recently the Commander of the Civic Guard has been added to the



Council (following pressure from Bann) - this position is elected every 6 years, but can be removed by the Council.

There is also one other High Office, which is not part of the Council, the High Magistrate. The High Magistrate hears appeals, and appoints Magistrates (who are appointed for life, unless removed for misconduct). The High Magistrate is appointed for life by predecessor, with two vetoes held by the City Council. There has only ever been one High Magistrate in Raven's Nest. He wrote the laws and constitution of the city. He is now a very old man and is retiring.

Representatives: Nobles (holder must be a noble, the head of each noble or gentry family has a vote); Merchants (holder must be a merchant, anyone who pays the fee to be a registered merchant has a vote); Artisan (holder must be an artisan, each shop, business owner or ship captain has a vote); Citizens (can be held by anyone except a noble, officially each citizen has a vote, in reality the nobles & merchants decide who will hold the position); Religious (the Qualsadan Bishop).

Recently the Tachean church has started agitating for either their own representative or some say over the religious representative. Also there has been popular support for a Peasant representative for many years, although this has not yet eventuated.

Appointed government positions include the military commanders, magistrates and Harbour Master. The Harbour Master is appointed by the Lord Provisioner for a four year term. The current Harbour Master has held the position for 24 years.

The Nobility

The aristocrats are descended from Sabribar's household servants or are people who have bought their titles more recently

The Merchants

Raven's Nest is a wealthy city. Its wealth is generated through manufacturing and trade. The merchants are not organised into a guild. Instead there are competing cartels.

The Sea Traders Guild

Unlike other merchants, the ship captains do have a guild, and this is it. The radical faction, led by Bann Brokos, has been successful in privateering.

The Underworld

Eighteen years ago, crime was controlled by an organised elite of crime lords - the Dons. Their power

has since been greatly weakened. The remaining criminals are the incompetent, the insignificant or the young upstarts.

The Citizens

Everyone else.

The military of the city (both Civic and Marsh guard) also often play a part in city politics.

RELIGION

Tachean Temple

The easy-going Tachean Faith has long been followed by the people of Raven's Nest. The city hosts a major temple, as well as members of several sects, including the Blue Nuns.

Qualsadan Church

Brought to Raven's Nest by the first Grey Knights, the more strict Qualsadan Church has gathered quite a following.

As head of the church, the Qualsadan Bishop plays an important role in city politics.

Other faiths

Many other faiths, including the banned Randuraim faith, and followers of the Rithad Tachean cult, can be found within the city - if one knows where to look.

MAGIC

Because of Sabribar, magic is hated by the populous. While magic is not outlawed, magicians are still distrusted.

Although feared by the people of Raven's Nest, the city itself is inexorably linked to the force of magic, and so draws many mages to it's doorstep.

The city only exists because it was raised from the surround swamps by magic, and is the (sometime) home of one of the most powerful wizards even known to live.

Magic is feared, but the degree of tolerance waxes and wains over time.



MAJOR FIGURES

Bann Brokos

Current Mayor of Raven's Nest, and leading member of the Sea Traders Guild. He has won the Mayoral election several times now, and has managed to have the term extended to four years. His popularity is still high with the majority of the town and his position as Mayor is almost becoming an institution.

Recently the Mayoral Seal of Raven's Nest was stolen by some counterfeiters. Rather than have a new one made, Bann has started using his personal Seal on official documents.

Genon

Major crime lord (the Don) of Raven's Nest, but getting quite old and starting to lose his power. He is trying to reform, of a sorts, and use his wealth to become more of a noble.

Heir of Sabribar

Another powerful wizard who has tried to replace Sabribar, and has also been vanquished. It is unlikely that they are actually related, the Heir of Sabribar seems only to be using the name for its effects.

Hob the Saint

Former owner of the Bulging Barrel, a popular Raven's Nest tavern, who was killed, and then rose again as an undead, but with the magical power to heal. Spent some time healing those of the underworld before rumours started circulating.

When the churches came to investigate the claims they found many witnesses and much proof that healing miracles had been performed. However, Hob was no longer undead - but could no longer perform miracles (he had healed himself but lost his power in the process).

As he had definitely been declared dead before, and there was proof of his miracles, Hob was declared a living saint of the church.

Rafenor

Former high priest of the Tachean faith who entered politics at his wife's request. He proved quite popular, and was elected mayor. However when his wife was killed in a Vashkoi attack his mind snapped. The insane priest had to be removed from office by one of the Grey Knights.

Since then Rafenor, still quite mad, has gained prophetic powers - unfortunately most of his prophecies are totally unintelligible.

He has been declared a saint by the Tachean church (but he is really more of a saint in waiting (that is until he dies), a better word would be an Oracle).

Sabribar the Raven

The extremely powerful wizard who raised the city of Raven's Nest from the surrounding swamp as his stronghold. His palace, the Raven's Tower, still stands as an impregnable landmark in the centre of the city.

Sabribar lived an unnaturally long life before being challenged and killed by one of the Grey Knights. As a spirit he taught himself further necromantic magics, and raised himself from the dead.

After a three year reign of terror he was again defeated. However his spirit still roams the planes, trying to reenter the mortal world.

Sabribar is an exceptional magician and has demonstrated mastery of Earth and Water elemental magics. He also has some power over Fire elemental magic, and has recently learnt powerful Necromancy.



MAGIC

It is known that there are three forms of magic: Elemental Magic, Necromancy and Ceremonial Magic. Some beings also have resistance to magic.

ELEMENTAL MAGIC

Elemental wizards are usually aligned to a single element (Air, Earth, Fire, Water). It is rare for a wizard to have access to more than one type, although Sabribar the Raven has demonstrated command of powerful Earth and Water magic, as well as the use of Fire magic.

As well as the usual spells directly affecting the elements, it is known that Air wizards have access to flying and other movement magics, and that Water wizards have access to healing magics.

The summoning of mystical elementals from other planes are a commonly used spells, and almost all wizards can summon the appropriate elemental for their sphere.

All elemental spheres also have a basic attack spell.

NECROMANCY

Dark Magic, or Necromancy is generally considered evil, and concerns the undead and other evils spirits. Powers include raising and summoning undead.

Control magic, which generally means mind control is also known to exist, and is also banned in most places.

Sabribar the Raven, as well as his formidable Elemental powers, also knows powerful necromancy. There are also instances of wizards knowing both necromancy and control magic.

CEREMONIAL MAGIC

The various religions also perform holy miracles. Although many priests are in fact trained wizards, and get their power from the same source as other mages, there are also saints who use a different, divine magic. These powers often are centered around healing and protection type abilities.

There are also many religious ceremonies which grant some power, but can take a long time to perform (and can be boosted by the participation of trained mages).

Many religious orders also are the caretakers of secret lore concerning plants and herbs. This allows them to prepare healing drafts, as well as other magical elixers.

Finally, primitive tribes people, barbarians, and some non-humans (such as the vashkoi) also have

shamans, who control spirit and animal magics. They also have Elemental wizards.

MAGIC RESISTANCE

Resistance to magic can be gained through special protective spells, divine powers, magical items and armour, or through natural ability.

In particular, many members of the Rithad, have magical resistance, either naturally, or received as part of the initiation rites.

Non-humans, such as the vashkoi, may also have natural magic resistance.



RELIGION

There are two main faiths followed in the region – the older, and easier going, Tachean Faith, and the newer, stricter, Qualsadan Church.

Followers of Rarnduralm, the religion of the Enclave, also persist within the area, as well as many minor religions followed by various cultures.

TACHEAN FAITH

The belief in two interrelated pantheons of relatively benign deities, the Gods of Sea and the Gods of Land. This religion lacks a codified doctrine, and so is split into many squabbling factions, each with its own version of the truth.

The Tachean religion is usually a free and easy, non-regimented religion - a religion characterised by both priests and lay priests, and many holy festival days.

Though it derives from Tache, it has no longer has any political connection with the Empire. This is the religion of the populous, the old religion of Raven's Nest. This religion believes in saints and holy relics.

Milsa:

The Milsa is a four-yearly Tachean religious festival in Raven's Nest held in spring that everyone attends (even many Qualsadans). The last festival was in NE 237.

It is usually organized by a council of two priests and two nobles, selected by the High Priest's council.

Temple Structure

The Tachean temple in each city is ruled by a council of High Priests. There is no senior High Priest. Disagreements are decided by vote, although worshippers occasionally splinter into a cult if they disagree with the council.

The High Priest's council makes decisions about property, theology and practices. High Priests can only be appointed by a unanimous vote of the council, even priests need to be appointed by the council (some cults have not had a priest for generations). Priests from different geographic areas must also be approved by the local council before they can act as a priest.

When a High Priest turns 75 they become an elder (compulsorily). They no longer have a place on the council. The position has prestige but no power. A group of three elders can release a person from holy vows, a marriage, etc, but have no other powers.

Saints are made by the gods. They hold the position of High Priest and Elder at the same time. They also have divine powers. There are currently two saints in Raven's Nest - Rafenor the Mad (a prophet) and Hob the Healer.

Blue Nuns

A sub-cult of the Tachean religion. An order of holy women, led by an Abbess. They believe in ministering to the poor and needy. The nuns in the poor quarter of many cities run a Lazar House where they care for lepers. The nuns have a strong, militant arm, for use should any of their sisters be in need of defending.

Rithad

A fanatical sub-cult of the Tachean religion.

This sect denounces magic as an evil. The Rithad actively hunt out and destroy practitioners of the magical arts. Initiated priests often have resistance to magic.

Once dominant in the Tachean Isles, the Rithad has been outlawed for decades; despite this ban it apparently flourishes in secret. Until recently, this cult was tolerated in Raven's Nest. However, recent excesses mean that they are currently being hunted by both the Civic Guard and the Tachean temple.

Breakaway Sects

Those Tachean factions which are more radical in their doctrine, theology or secular activities generally become separate sects. Most impose a more demanding style of worship on their adherents than does the parent faith. As well as the Blue Nuns and the Rithad, some of the other significant sects are listed below.

Heseor Sect: Dedicated to Heseo, a fertility goddess, and noted for its scandalous festivals. Anyone may join, but only women may become priests. This sect is outlawed in Maigan.

Jaian Jaisa: Dedicated to Jaian the Doubter, trickster deity of the Tachean pantheon. This sect encourages cynicism; favoured by those members of the intelligentsia who can't quite embrace atheism.

Brothers of Zhaidor: The Brothers advocate extreme devotion to the martial virtues. Membership is restricted to males of the warrior profession, women are treated as inferiors, and homosexual pairing is seemingly encouraged.

Ecumenical Movement: This has been growing in Raven's Nest for the last few years. They state that the Qualsadan God and Goddess of creation are powerful and important gods (although they are not the only gods of creation).

Azha Sect: This sect hates Qualsadans. Fortunately they are non-violent. They also believe that holy scripture should not be written down but passed on verbally.



QUALSADAN CHURCH

A straight-laced monotheistic religion spread by the Grey Knights, and led by a single bishop with an organised priesthood. Qualsada emphasises the fight against Evil, as exemplified by Sabribar and the Enclave.

The religion of the nobility and the educated thinker. The faithful (Qualsa) accept the existence of other gods, but stress the moral and physical superiority of their own deities, the God and Goddess of Creation, and the Wild Child (chaos). Worship of the Trinity can be demanding, but the faith includes all ranges of belief and morality.

Ecumenical Movement

The supporters of this movement propose that other gods (in particular the Tachean pantheon) may be worshipped, but only as minor servants of the god and goddess. This movement has originated in Raven's Nest.

Church Structure

Officially, there is a prime ruler of the Qualsadan church, but distance makes this rule nominal. Each centre of the faithful is ruled by a Bishop. The Bishop appoints priests and manages temple property. He can not change theology. He nominates his or her successor. While this appointment is confirmed by the primate, distance means this is only a formality and may occur years after the Bishop takes up the position. If a Bishop dies without a successor, the church is managed by a Deacon until a new Bishop can be appointed by the primate.

Quest of Service

Every Qualsadan undertakes a Quest of Service at least once. This quest is chosen by the person and approved by the Bishop. A priest must always be undertaking a Quest. Succeeding in this act of faith proves worthiness for the true afterlife.

Grey Knights

Magical, powerful, holy warriors. An order of holy warriors who are suspicious of magicians and utterly opposed to the Enclave and all its works.

Many Grey Knights travel as missionaries from the Knights' distant homeland, bringing with them the morally exacting Qualsadan faith. They are popular among the peasantry but seen as very restrictive.

RARNDURALM

Worship of the Heavenly Hierarchy. Originally the state religion of the Enclave, Rarnduralm emphasises order, respect and blind obedience. The Rarnduralm religion treats magic as a gift from the gods, and expects all wizards to accept their church's authority. Rarnduralm priests therefore distrust those wizards who strive for independence, and worship can be quite demanding.

Brought to Raven's Nest by Sabribar's followers, Rarnduralm slowly changed to the worship of Sabribar himself. Rarnduralm has now been outlawed in that city, but it is possible that some adherents still worship in secret.

OTHER RELIGIONS

Ancestor Worship

Whatever deities are thought to exist are remote beings, but the spirits of deceased ancestors can intercede with the gods in favour of their descendants. Although such faiths can usually be classed as casual, the Cymraan version is apparently demanding.

Ancestor Worship is mostly practiced by tribal cultures and loosely organised hierarchies of shamans serve instead of priests.

Axudra

Worship of the twin gods Sravax and Uriax, who head a pantheon of warrior deities. Although highly militaristic, the Subetai have developed a religion which emphasises the sombre, negative aspects of warfare. They are a strongly religious people with a faith which is undemanding. The Athrai follow a variant creed, paying special honour to the god Uriax and his sister-bride.

Covenant of the Sword

As much a code of behaviour as a religion, the Covenant is only binding on the warrior class of the Sword Peoples. Members of other classes in that society worship a variety of minor deities, including some adopted from the Subetai and the Del Cais.

The worship is quite demanding, and served by clergy that should be classed as shamans (rather than priests).



Fire Worship

The Innoyrs practise fire-worship, a faith which is actually more sophisticated than it sounds. They hold the practitioners of fire magic in great regard, treating them virtually as priests. Worship is usually casual.

Local Cults

There are many faiths with a limited number of believers. Worship generally centres on a minor deity or a legendary hero. Worship is casual and service by lay priests - part time priests who are chosen from among the community (because of their holiness, respectability, enthusiasm for the job, political outlook, or some such reason).

Spiritualism

The worship of a huge and confusing pantheon of nature spirits. Some spiritualists are not overly religious, and consequently their faith is rather simple and ill-defined; the Hill Tribes are a good example.

Thanica Religion

Worship of the God of Storms and his pantheon, the patron deities of the Thanica peoples. The Thanica people are quite devout and worship can be demanding. The religion is serviced by tribal shamans.



BESTIARY

ANCIENT RACE

Although these people dominated the entire region in the distant past, they have dwindled while others who migrated into the area in recent centuries have prospered. The Cymraan and the Cydoc are the only major offshoots of the ancient race who survive today, with other minor representations around the area, including the Oemulhoc of Raven's Nest.

Those of the Ancient Race, although human, are usually small and lightly built, with blue eyes, dark brown or black hair, and olive complexions. They are a private, and pessimistic people.

ANIMALS

Many creatures may also be found in the world. In various regions characters might encounter bears, boars, buffaloes, crocodiles, jaguars, lions, scorpions, spiders, wild dogs and wolves, to list only a few of the possibilities. The following types are more exotic:

Dacasa

Flying creatures with poisonous fangs; sometimes incorrectly referred to as winged snakes.

Gondosts

Hulking beasts somewhat reminiscent of rhinoceroses. Even a placid gondost is dangerous due to its great strength, and few are placid.

Grass tigers

Huge felines of the savanna country, the bane of travellers through that wild region. They are noted for their tough hides; in fact, grass tigers often dwell in thickets of cutgrass.

Horses

In this region full-grown horses are rare, and therefore very expensive. They are bred in the territory of the Enclave, and exported to Raven's Nest. Only geldings are exported, in order to prevent the buyers from breeding herds of their own.

Hovri

Swimming creatures with horned tails, which otherwise resemble snakes or eels. Hovri thrive in swampy territory.

Ponies

These animals, similar to horses in everything but size, are common enough in the lands around the Twin Seas. Ponies are used in farm work and they, rather than horses, are employed to pull wagons, carriages and chariots. However, ponies are not large enough to function very effectively as riding animals.

Zempir

Small, lizard-like, forest dwelling creatures with appendages resembling hands; thought by some to be semi-intelligent.

ELEMENTALS

Spiritual beings which can be summoned into the material world by magic.

The abilities of each type of elemental are concentrated on a specific sphere of influence (Earth, Air, Fire and Water), but despite such constraints elementals are often beings of immense power.

Elementals are often summoned by powerful sorcerers to do their bidding.

FILAIN

Small, semi-human primitives who are said to have dwelled deep within the forests of the Cymraan since the beginning of time. The Filain may be no more than a legend.

FLORA

In addition to the many harmless varieties of trees and plants, there are few which are perilous. These include:

Cutgrass

Long-bladed grass with edges sharp enough to cause scratches. Growing in thickets among the other tall grasses of the savanna, cutgrass is a major inconvenience for the unwary.



Religi's Kiss

A flowering plant which propagates itself by unleashing a thick, choking cloud of spores; those standing nearby risk suffocation.

GIANTS

Over-sized humanoids rumoured to exist in small colonies in out of the way places. They might be a race of humanity, or a different species, or possibly artificial beings created by supernatural means. Even those who believe in giants accept the possibility that they have died out.

GOBLINS

A mythical creature from distant lands to the south. This small, ugly, green-skinned beast is often used in stories which frighten young children.

HUMANS

Many types of humans can be found in the region of Haldor, from the dark skinned inhabitants of Oranthra, Maigan and the Hill Tribes, to the swarthy Irnoyrs and to the pale-skinned Sword Peoples.

In between are the red-haired Tacheans, the pale-but-tanned Thanica peoples, and the tattooed Subetai, as well as many mixtures where the different cultures have met.

JRAHIR

Tall, unnaturally slim humanoids, who are both highly intelligent and highly magical. Although they seldom interfere in the affairs of humanity, they are feared and shunned because of their aloofness and their enigmatic ways.

KARI-CHAC

Ape-like beastmen; large, powerful and of surly disposition. Although on average less intelligent than humanity, they have developed a crude culture and can use weapons. Krai-chac are found in the Chaca Forest and possibly in regions further north.

MUTANTS

Name given to the various beings created by magic from the combination of human and animal stock. Many mutants, created by Sabribar the Raven, still stalk Raven's Nest, arising from the sewers.

Some are unique, other types exist in small numbers and are capable of breeding amongst themselves. Most retain at least a vestige of their former intelligence. Even during Sabribar's time a number escaped to the Morass; since his death mutants have spread out into the lands beyond.

SHAPECHANGES

Beings capable of mimicking the appearance of other creatures, including animals and humans; mysterious and widely feared.

UNDEAD

Deceased beings, usually human, who have been granted a semblance of life. Various types can be created, such as skeletons, ghosts, ghouls, and many other kinds, depending on the process used and the length of time between death and rebirth. Generally lacking a will of their own, undead serve as the remorseless slaves of their creators, the much despised necromancers.

VAMPYRES

A mythological creature to which many horrific deeds of the past have been attributed. Mysterious, blood drinking Vampyres plagued the city in the early 230's. There were many rumours of them being the pawns of even greater powers.

VASHKOI

Reptilian beastmen or, according to some, demons. Taller, broader and much heavier than humans, they are protected by tough, scaly skin. The Vashkoi adopt a homicidal attitude towards any who venture into their lands, which includes parts of the Morass, the swamp south of Raven's Nest.



KNOWN WORLD

The setting for *Saga of Raven's Nest* is Haldor: the territory surrounding the two inland bodies of water, the Inner and Central Haldorar Seas (also known as the Twin Seas). High culture developed elsewhere and was imported into the region by peoples such as the Tachean Islesmen. Thus, while Raven's Nest and some of its neighbours are quite civilised, other nations are barbaric and some downright savage.

The world is best described as an average-sized planet, orbiting a single, yellow sun, and with a single moon influencing the tides.

The region of Haldor is found between the 30th and 45th latitudes south of the equator. It is formed from the convergence of three large tectonic plates, now forming a single landmass.

To the north the land stretches across the equator going from lush grasslands, the breadbasket of the region, through deserts and rainforests. The climate of these lands is hot, and people from there are dark skinned.

Most civilization lies "to the south", which is really a bit of a misnomer, as the lands described actually lie to the east and west.

They cannot be reached directly, however, as to the east is a vast ocean, whilst to the west an enormous

mountain range, and on the lee side, a vast desert.

Thus, trade with the "south" is dominated by the island chain of Urrud, to reach the eastern continent, whilst to reach the vast empire of the Enclave, one must travel south-west around the mountains, through the grassland corridor of the nomads

The prevailing winds are from the east, as are the prevailing currents, with warm currents traveling south along the western edge of the eastern continent, past the island chain or Urrud and the volcanic island of Qualsada, to the pole.

Cold currents then travel from the pole, entering the Haldorar Sea, then as they warm, exit again along the northern shores and north along the east coast past Irnoyr.

LANGUAGES

There are many tongues spoken in this region, and only the more significant ones are listed below. Those marked exist in written as well as spoken form. Two languages (Imperial and Tacheamar) are of particular importance, being the main trading languages of the region.

Ambei (written): The native language of Klalvior.

Cydoc: Rather than a single Cydoc language, there is actually a plethora of distinctly separate tongues.





These include: Arda-Cydoc, main language of those dwellings west of the Hydalka Hills; Girac-Cydoc ("Eastern-Cydoc"), the most widely spoken tongue; Hydalka'n, spoken in the Hydalka Hills; Myda-Cydoc ("Northern-Cydoc"), which dominates in the region west of Dastir; and Ryabrega ("Royal Cydoc"), used by chieftans, magicians and ambassadors.

Cymraan: It is not widely known whether the Cymraan speak one language or several related tongues. Very few outsiders speak Cymraan, due to the difficulty of locating a speaker who would rather teach than attack.

Dyurda (written): This language includes four major dialects: Athrai; forest Subetai; the variant spoken by the Subetai of the eastern plains; and Viun-tai, used by the single Subetai tribe dwelling west of the forest.

Esridi (written): The native language of Esrid.

Gittzai: A mongrel tongue spoken by the Nar-gai. The grammar is nomad in origin, but the vocabulary has been greatly influenced by Tacheamar.

Heija (written): The main tongue of the lower classes in northern Oranathra. Few foreigners have learnt this language due to the difficulty in gaining access to this region.

Hrielni (written): The native language of Hrieln.

Imperial (written): An informal name for the language of Raven's Nest. Due to that city's commercial dominance, Imperial is developing into the trade argot of the entire region, and might eventually attract more speakers than Tacheamar. This language is actually a construct, originally devised by the rulers of the Enclave to serve as the state language of their empire.

Irnoyr (written): The language of the Irnoyrs Galtr-men. The Hoedr-men speak a variety of minor tongues, all of them related to Irnoyr.

Jrahir (written): Language of the Jrahir, a non-human people (there is apparently only one).

Language of the Sword Peoples (written): This tongue, which does not appear to have a name, is spoken without significant variation throughout the territories of the Sword Peoples.

Mhelic (written): The main language of the lower classes in southern Oranathra.

Nomad Languages: Not counting Imperial, there are at least five main tongues and numerous dialects. Most of these have similarities in structure and vocabulary.

Oemulhoc: The language of the Oemulhoc fisherfolk; related to Arda-Cydoc.

Skelyirra: The language of the Hill Tribes. The Ibristha and Yannem tribes each have their own dialects, and there are also several minor variants.

Tacheamar (written): Spoken by the Tachean Islesmen and the citizens of its former colonies; has more speakers in the region than any other tongue.

Thanica (written): The language of the Dal Cais, Del Garn and other Thanica peoples.

Vashkoi: Humans cannot mimic the sounds made by these creatures, but can be taught to understand such sounds, just as the Vashkoi can learn to comprehend human speech.

Wada: The language of the Wada tribesmen.

HALDOR REGION

Haldor, the region surrounding the Haldorar Sea, is the centre of the known world. The Haldorar Sea is a large sea surrounded to the north, west and south by a single continent and open to the ocean to the east.

The lands surround the Haldorar Sea include: Caro Isles, Cydoc, Cymraan, Del Garn, Empire of the Tachean Isles, Enclave, Esrid, Hill Tribes, Irnoyrs, Maigan, Nar-Gai, Nomads, Oranathra, Subetai and Athrai, Sword Peoples, Thanica Peoples (Dal Cais, Dal haddrath and Urrud), and Wada.

ANCIENT RACE

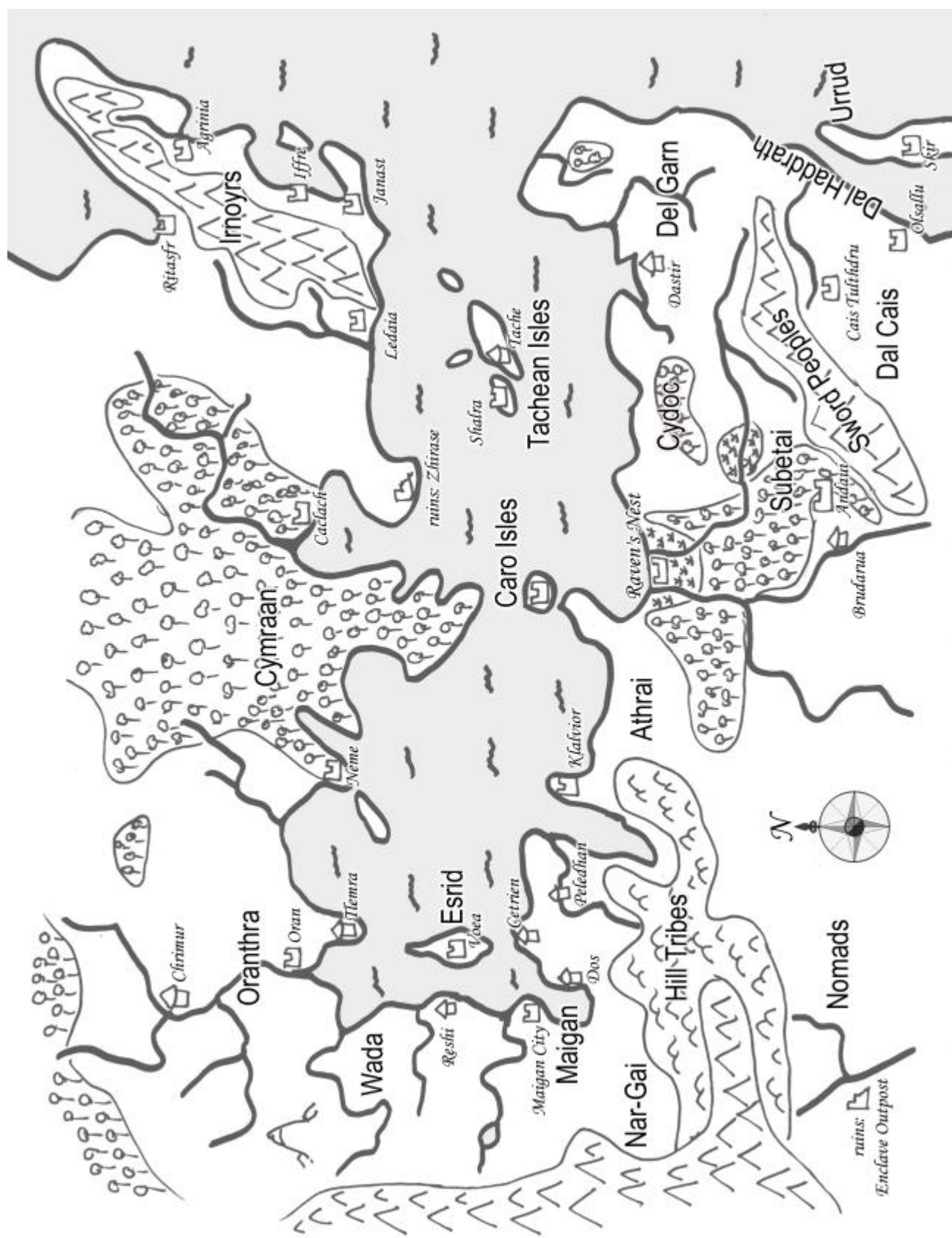
Although these people dominated the entire region in the distant past, they have dwindled while others who migrated into the area in recent centuries have prospered. The Cymraan and the Cydoc are the only major offshoots of the ancient race who survive today.

Cydoc

Large numbers dwell in the Cydoc lands, territories which are slowly shrinking due to the encroachment of the "younger races". As a result the Cydoc are frequently at war with those who have stolen their lands and birthright. There are over 30 major tribal groupings, each an uneasy and shifting alliance of many lesser tribes. Cydoc culture does little to encourage cooperation, and to the impartial observer it might appear that their favourite activity is fighting each other. However, during times of crisis it is not uncommon for several tribes to unite under a single leader. Apart from the antisocial Cymraan, the Cydoc are the only people in this region to make significant use of the bow in warfare, and are thus in great demand as mercenaries.

Cymraan

One of the major surviving offshoots of the ancient race. From their forest strongholds the Cymraan make war on the world, launching frequent raids by land and sea. Indeed, piracy would seem to be a national pastime. Because of a tendency to kill all foreigners on sight, little is known of their culture, and all such information is coloured by anti-Cymraan bias.





The Cymraan have a tribal society, with some cities, such as their capital Caclach. They are even smaller and more slight than others of the ancient race, but make up for their lack of stature by sheer viciousness. Once roused, they are brave to the point of lunacy, and are generally considered to be psychopathic. Their common language is Cymraan, and they practice ancestor worship.

Oemulhoc

A minor people, fisherfolk who dwell in and around the city of Raven's Nest. They maintain their own culture and their own quarter (Oemra) within the city.

HILL TRIBES

Those belonging to the two major and many smaller tribes inhabiting the Skelyir Mountains commonly refer to themselves as the Skelyirra. The Hill Tribes are famous for their wines, and their lands are rich in mineral resources. They trade extensively with Raven's Nest, via a system of caravan routes.

The people of the Hill Tribes are descended from the dark skinned people from the north who moved into the Haldorar region early on. They resemble the original natives of Maigan; distantly related to the Heija and Mhelic of Oranathra. Most are of medium height and heavy build. Their skins are moderately brown, their eyes and hair black. They are a very practical and pragmatic people, not known for depth of emotion or religion belief.

The Hill Tribes follow a tribal culture with few cities. Their common language is known as Skelyirra, but there are various tribal dialects. Like the other dark skinned races their main religion is spiritualism.

Ibristha

The most significant of the Skelyirra peoples; most of the minor tribes claim common ancestry with the Ibristha.

Among their own kind the Ibristha have a reputation for cunning and their religion concentrates on the spirits of the air.

Yannem

Although the second largest tribe, the Yannem are a people apart. Linked to the rest by language and history, they differ from them in religion and in certain customs.

They are often taller than other Skelyirra, and are credited with a certain natural sourness. Their religion concentrates on animal (rather than elemental) spirits.

IRNOYRS

There are two branches of the Irnoyr people, although it is unlikely an outsider could tell one from the other. Great traders who are also given to raiding, the Irnoyrs become a major force on those rare occasions when they combine under a single leader.

The Irnoyr are medium to tall, with builds varying from medium to heavy. The vast majority are swarthy, with dark eyes and black hair, although a few do have hair of a very dark brown. A minority have moustaches, but beards are not in fashion. They are a stable, "no nonsense" people who are usually too independent minded to be cooperative or subordinate.

Their common language is Irnoyr (although the Hoedrvall speak a slightly different dialect) and they practice fire worship.

Hoedrvall

The Hoedr-men are tribesmen who run herds in the mountains and farm the plains of the interior; somewhat rough, crude and disorganised by the standards of the Galtr-men.

Some among the southern Hoedr-men bear obvious signs of past interbreeding between the Irnoyrs and Tachean colonists. The tribesmen are keen on fighting (both the nearby Cymraan and each other).

Galtrvall

The Galtr-men of the coast are divided into a number of Galtrs (nations). Only four are of major significance, and most of the lesser Galtrs are allied to one or other of these four. Each Galtr has its own capital, and these Irnoyr's temper their enthusiasm for fighting with a passion for sailing and trading.

The major Galtrs are known by their capital cities, they are: Kitasfr, Agrini, Iffre, and Jenast.

MAIGAN

The western lands along the south coast of the Haldorar Sea. Maigan City, a former colony of the Tachean Isles now an independent nation, rules over a large region also known as Maigan. The government is tightly centralised and efficient, with surprisingly little bureaucracy. A great deal of authority is invested in the king, but his power is balanced by a council of priests. Although a highly structured society, Maigan evinces a certain vibrancy and nervous energy. But growth is being stymied by Oranathra and Raven's Nest, which oppose Maigan's trading ambitions in the north and south respectively.



The various strains (Islemen, brown-skinned natives of the coast and inland nomads) are now thoroughly mixed, producing a strong-limbed, stocky people of medium height. They tend to be swarthy, with brown eyes and hair varying from brown to dark red to black. The Maiganon people are noted as being hard working, stolid, very stubborn and belligerent; Maiganon attitudes toward foreigners range from snobbish to negative, with the result that Maigan City isn't the friendliest place to visit. The national language is Tacheamar, and the Maiganon people follow the Tachean faith.

NOMADS

A diverse collection of migratory peoples occupying the savannas south of the Hill Tribes and west of the Subetai. They do not share a common culture or language, and each tribal grouping is a separate political unit. However, they have been known to cooperate against outsiders. Their wealth derives from herds, supplemented by booty from raids into other lands.

The most well known of the nomads are the Nar-gai, who have moved north of the Skelyir Mountains.

The nomads tend to be tall, ranging in build from light to medium. They are of average complexion, though weather-beaten. Eye and hair colours vary considerably, with brown eyes and brown or bronze hair occurring most frequently. Banditry is morally acceptable to the nomads, making them both untrusting and untrustworthy; given to unpredictable and violent behaviour.

They speak both nomad languages & Imperial (nomad dialect), and the majority practice spiritualism, with some tribes and individual members of other tribes following Rarnduralm.

Nar-Gai

A loose federation of seminomadic clans, the Nar-gai are the best known of all the nomads. This is primarily because they have migrated into the lands north of the Skelyir Mountains, and so have come into close (and violent) conflict with Maigan.

ORANATHRA

This wealthy nation of the north is ruled by a military aristocracy, with the nobles of the outer regions acting like independent lordlings. The upper classes trace their origin back to settlers from the Tachean Isles. Intermixing with the native population has not been as thorough as in Maigan, and there is now a sizeable middle class of "half-castes". The capital is known as Oran.

Oranathra enforces a strict monopoly on trade with the reputedly wealthy lands of the far north. Oranathra is also the major bread basket of the region, exporting large amounts of food to cities such as Raven's Nest.

The society is mostly urban, with some tribal rustics among the lower classes. The lower classes and half-castes speak both Tacheamar & one of Heija, Mhelic, or a minor dialect; the upper classes generally only speak Tacheamar. The peoples follow both the Tachean religion and local cults (even the upper classes).

Lower classes

All are brown-skinned and lightly built, related to the Hill Tribes and other brown-skinned natives of the coast. The Mhelic of the south are short, with brown eyes and brown or black hair. The wild tribesmen living in the east and west are small to medium in height, but otherwise resemble the Mhelic. Northerners (the Heija) are of medium height and even darker than the rest. The border tribesmen are quite self-reliant; the others are submissive and contented, essentially because they are better off than the peasantry of other lands.

Half-castes

Not only true half-castes, but non-Oranathran residents are included in this category. Their appearance is varied; of course most have some Tachean and some Heija or Mhelic blood. They are often ambitious and materialistic; a reasonable number are contemptuous of those higher and lower on the Oranathran social scale.

Upper classes

There are strata within the upper classes, and only those of the highest status have a voice in government. They closely resemble the Tachean Islemen, although their fashions are often different - relatively few wear beards, for example. Although energetic and hearty, they are often superior or self-satisfied.

RAVEN'S NEST

This city-state is the largest and most cosmopolitan settlement in the Haldor region, due to its dominance of trade in the Inner and Central Seas. Raven's Nest holds little in the way of territory, and is poor in natural resources. Its wealth derives from commerce and from manufacturing industries such as smelting and textiles, which transform the raw products of other nations into saleable goods. This economic muscle is backed up by a powerful civilian fleet, a mercenary army and the only cavalry force in the region. The government of Raven's Nest has some democratic features, and a number of important positions are open to annual election. Others



are held in perpetuity by the Great Families. These nobles and their picked candidates often dominate the elected positions as well, some treating politics as a contest conducted exclusively by gentlemen, a battlefield on which to exercise old rivalries. The greatest threat to their stranglehold on power comes from the Sea Traders Guild, a force unto itself. The Guild actively pursues a ruthless foreign policy, and its members are really only answerable to the government when in port.

SUBETAI AND ATHRAI

The central lands along the south coast of the Haldorar Sea. These militaristic peoples migrated into the Region of the Twin Seas only a century ago. They have driven back the indigenous populations and established territories for themselves, and are now progressing towards nationhood.

They are moderately tall, ranging in build from medium to heavy to corpulent, with tanned complexions, brown eyes and hair varying from pale to dark brown, the latter occurring more frequently. Adorning the body with tattoos and growing moustaches are common practices. Some wear close-cropped beards. They have no wizards of their own, and few of their number even believe in magic.

They speak various dialects of the language Dyurda, and follow their own religion, Axudra.

Subetai

The chieftain of the Wir-tai tribe has assumed many of the powers of a king, speeding the process of national unification. There is a large colony of foreigners at the trading town of Brudarua, the only place where outsiders may venture with reasonable safety; visits to the capital, Andaui, are rarely permitted. They are sombre, prideful and distrustful of outsiders. Tattoos are all but mandatory among forest tribes.

Athrai

A branch of the Subetai who are politically independent. They are governed by a council of tribal chieftains, and do not recognise the authority of the Subetai ruler. The Athrai favour an aggressive foreign policy, and their recent alliance with Raven's Nest has freed them to concentrate on other neighbours. They are usually paler in complexion & hair colour. Tattooing is universal among women, but is not practiced at all by the men.

SWORD PEOPLES

A breed apart, the Sword Peoples possess a culture and a religion unlike any other in the known world. They appear to have effective sexual equality, a class system based on order of birth rather than parental background, and no real concept of status. The warriors of this society, known as the Sword Wielders, are widely reckoned to be the masters of personal combat.

The Sword Peoples are typically sinewy rather than muscular; tall to medium height, and tend to a light build. They have pale complexions; green or brown eyes; pale hair of various shades (dirty blonde, sandy, yellow). Their colouring gives a false impression of ill health.

They are often private and dutiful, exhibiting a degree of self-assurance and contentment with their lot which baffles others; very aloof in the presence of outsiders, but once given their loyalty is enduring. Many consider them strange, even inhuman.

They speak the language of the Sword Peoples and follow the Covenant of the Sword.

TACHEAN ISLES

The Empire of the Tachean Isles is an island nation in the central Haldorar Sea. Tache is an old, decadent, fading civilization. Traditionally Tacheans have looked down upon Raven's Nest, but now they are worried about Bann's expansionist ideas.

By virtue of their trading fleets and colonies, the Tachean Islesmen once dominated the Region of the Twin Seas. But all empires decay, and now there are hardly enough Islesmen left to maintain themselves as a nation. The former metropolis of Tache has become grossly underpopulated and serves as an open city, have to traders and pirates alike. The king now rules from the less important city of Shalra.

All of their former colonies, such as Oran and Maigan, are now independent countries.

The Islesmen are tall and heavy, the strongest people of the region. They have average complexions and brown eyes; hair colour varies from red to auburn to coppery brown. Most wear their hair long, platted and coiffured in elaborate patterns. The men generally grow full beards. Although most accept that their era of greatness has passed, the Islesmen retain a stubborn pride in their heritage. High civilisation has flourished in the Tachean Isles for longer than anywhere else in the region, and they consider themselves superior to their neighbours. In their dealings with outsiders the great majority of Islesmen act with scrupulous honesty - almost as if each views himself as an official representative of his people.

The Empire is the birth place of the the Tacheamar language and the Tachean religion.



Zhirase

A former colony of the Tachean Empire, now in ruins.

THANICA PEOPLES

This name is given to several barbarian nations which share a common language, Thanica, cultural heritage, and the Thanica religion. In addition to those dwelling in this region there are other Thanica peoples in the far south.

These people are muscular and lacking in excess fat, with a height range of medium to tall, and builds from light to medium. Although naturally of pale complexion, they tend to be well tanned. Eye colour is usually blue or hazel, and hair varies from light brown to blonde. Moustaches are very popular.

They are not noted for excessive nationalism or aggression; by the standards of the region the Thanica peoples might even be considered peaceful. They are neutral to friendly in their dealings with outsiders, and are capable of great hospitality. Many are outgoing, creative and highly emotional, given to sudden and violent changes of mood.

The largest group is the Del Garn. Other groups in the Haldorar region are:

Dal Cais

One of the more important of the Thanica nations. Their capital is Cais Tulthdru. They are a good deal more erratic than their kin, even to the point of instability. They are capable of the blackest of moods, but during their better moments display a highly artistic temperament, as is demonstrated by their mastery of so many crafts.

Dal Haddrath

A minor people, best known for their mariners and pony breeders. Their capital is Olsallu. They have a tendency to dispense with moustaches, and are generally serious, hard working and not a little stodgy, lacking the artistic intensity and changeable moods of the Dal Cais. They are widely considered the most reliable and least interesting of all the Thanica race.

Del Garn

The Del Garn are probably the most powerful of the Thanica peoples; certainly they hold the most territory. This "nation" consists of many tribes, virtually all of which are interrelated, merging and splitting with each

generation. They do not possess a capital or true cities of their own, but do hold Dastir, a town seized from the Cydoc. Alone among the Thanica of this region, the Del Garn possess a class of deadly berserks, the adina. These fearsome individuals, little liked even in their own society, might possibly be the equals of the Sword Wielders in combat.

Urrud

A minor Thanica people occupying a string of islands, the Urrud dominate sea trade with the distant south, much to the annoyance of Raven's Nest and Dal Haddrath. Their capital is Skir. They are more often of medium height than tall, and aloof by Thanica standards, maintaining their own identity; much more interested in the south than in their neighbours. They follow a variant of the Thanica religion.

MINOR POWERS

Caro Isles

This former Tachean outpost consists of two small islands, Carora and Caroshir, and many tiny ones. Because of their location, the Caro Isles serve as a regular stopping off point for trading vessels. However, this nation is best known for the magic academy on Caroshir. The capital is on the other island, at Port Carora.

The Caro Isles are populated by a varied people, almost as diverse as the folk of Raven's Nest; evidence of Tachean and Esridi ancestry. They are usually friendly; often insecure, a result of living in a tiny nation with limited resources and limited security. The townsmen commonly speak both Tacheamar & Imperial, whilst the rustics speak Tacheamar only. The national religion is the Tachean faith.

Esrid

The island nation of Esrid is something of a cultural backwater, and has played little part in history. Although independent, it vacillates between the policies of its powerful neighbour (Maigan) and its main trading partner (Raven's Nest). Most of the population is involved in farming, herding and fishing; there is only one really lucrative industry, the making of dyes. The capital city is Voea.

The Esridi are commonly of medium height and medium or chubby build; brown or green eyes; brown hair; average or ruddy complexions. They tend to be shy, defensive and self-deprecating. While generally friendly towards foreigners they are wary of them, often disapproving of their strange ways.



The national language is Esridi, with townsmen also speaking Imperial, and a minority also speaking Tacheamar. Most people follow the Tachean religion.

Hrieln

This small state is unique; its society is urban in structure, but as there are no major settlements the population consists entirely of rustics. Their language is Hrielni. They resemble the folk of Esrid, but are generally taller. Red and auburn are moderately common hair colours, indicating early contact with the Tachean Islesmen.

They are on the whole a happy lot, quite content with their uncomplicated lifestyle. There seems to be nothing special or even interesting about Hrieln; despite this (or perhaps because of it) these people exhibit intense loyalty and patriotism. A large proportion are agnostics or atheists, although there are a few local cults.

Klalvior

A minor city-state, Klalvior was prevented from growing into a significant trading power because of the limited capacity of its harbour. There is a magic academy located within its territory. The inhabitants are a mixture of peoples similar to the Hill Tribesmen and Esridi, with the brown colouration dominant; minor offshoots of the Ancient Race have been absorbed.

The Klalvior are isolationist and jealous of the major powers such as Raven's Nest. The majority speak Ambei and follow local cults, however the townsmen also speak Imperial and some follow the Qualsada and Tachean religion.

Ledaia

Established by the Tacheans as a trading post among the Irnoyr Hoedmen, Ledaia has enjoyed an ambivalent relationship with the locals; while some owe allegiance to the town, others have raided it. Ledaia became independent with the collapse of Tache's empire.

The rustics and many lower class townsmen are Irnoyr, the remainder are of Tachean descent. They are often edgy or tense, a consequence of the mistrust between the two races. Many townsmen prize cultivation and taste in order to demonstrate their "superiority" over the locals. Both Tacheamar & Irnoyr are spoken, and there are followers of both the Tachean religion (Tacheans and some Irnoyrs) and fire worship (majority of the Irnoyrs).

Neme

Originally a colony of Oranathra, Neme was seized by rebels during a civil war, gaining independence when the conflict developed into a stalemate. Neme is a small city-state threatened by the proximity of two major powers, Oranathra and the Cymraan. The population is similar to Oranathra, a mixture of Tacheans, Mhelics and minor peoples related to the Ancient Race. They are boisterous and often nervous or blustery.

Like Oranathra the main language is Tacheamar, and the people follow both the Tachean religion, and local cults.

Wada

The buffer zone between Maigan and Oranathra is thinly populated. The main people of that region are the Wada, primitive brown-skinned pastoralists related to the Hill Tribes. Foreigners, permitted to trade and travel at will, have brought with them the conflicting influences of Maiganon and Oranathran civilisation. As a result, Wada social structure is disintegrating.

The Wada are introspective and sly; greedy for the benefits of trade and civilisation. The main language is Wada; a minority also speak Tacheamar. The majority follow local cults, strongly influenced by spiritualism.

THE ENCLAVE

An empire far to the south of the Haldorar Sea. The Enclave was ruled by magic, and collapsed into civil war nearly two and a half centuries ago. However many wizard survived and fled to other lands (Sabribar the Raven, who founded Raven's Nest was one such survivor).

Those of the enclave are believed by the followers of the Grey Knights to be a different race, called the Witchbreed, although they apply this term to all wizards.

To this day the Enclave has survived and is still powerful, but still only a shadow of its former self. Its wizard rulers still seek vengeance against the rebels.

There are many ruins of Enclave outposts to be found hidden in all kingdoms.

The modern calendar dates from the fall of the Enclave as Year 0.



APPENDIX: GURPS

The Saga of Raven's Nest originally used a unique game system, a combination of miniatures, freeform (interactive/LARP) and table-top gaming.

Games were usually run with thirty or more players, organised into teams of about five players. Each team was assigned a game master, plus there were several spare game masters available for individual actions.

Example teams could be the merchants, the nobles, a band of adventurers, a particular church, the Sea Traders Guild, or the city guard, each usually representing a particular political group or faction within the city with their own agenda.

Players were either assigned a single powerful character from their team, such as a mage or experienced adventurer, or, more commonly, were in charge of several miniatures -- their actual characters, plus several NPC followers and companions.

The games were played out using a scale model of the city Raven's Nest, several meters wide, with a corresponding scale model of the sewer system, the Raven's tower, and several other important buildings. The city was populated by several hundred scale miniatures of guardsmen, merchants, townsfolk, and other oddities.

As well as common major plotlines, players would have both individual goals and team goals which they tried to achieve during the game. Goals ranged from "keep the city safe", to "resurrect Sabribar the raven". (Usually there was an award for the player who achieved the most goals.)

During the game players and teams would travel from location to location within the city looking for clues, often venturing into the sewers at various points fighting mutants, undead skeletons and other strange creatures for important items.

Having multiple miniatures allowed players to survive and continue playing even after fatal encounters in which their NPCs (or sometimes their main character) dies.

Sometimes teams with competing goals would clash, or alternatively work out their differences and form an alliance. Occasionally team members turned out to be traitors or spies from a rival group, or from one of the many hidden cults, such as a coven of the banned Rarnduralm faith trying to raise the Raven (yet again).

Invariably the game would reach a climax, usually with either the city burning down, the Raven himself appearing (or both), or some other calamitous event, often taking place in, on, or underneath the Raven's tower.

As well as numerous events using the traditional Raven's Nest game system, there were several offshoot games run as freeforms (interactives) or tabletop game systems such as AD&D and Pendragon.

The footnotes in the History section detail over two dozen games that have been played as part of the Saga of Raven's Nest since late 1989, and is not a complete list (the campaign started sometime in the period 1983-1986).

REQUIREMENTS

This appendix includes rules for running the Saga of Raven's Nest using the GURPS rules.

The emphasis within GURPS on complete character development suits the Saga of Raven's Nest quite well. It's point-based creation system allows a variety of characters to easily be created with non-combat political or financial benefits, such as clerical investment or great wealth.

Other facets of the system, such as the GURPS magic system, are also fairly good at portraying the original unique game system used.

To run complete campaign both the GURPS Basic Set, as well as a copy of GURPS Magic would be useful.

Casual players, however, should suffice with GURPS Lite, available for free from Steve Jackson Games. GURPS Lite is available in Adobe PDF format for free download from

<http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/lite/>.

Specific details of GURPS rules for the Saga of Raven's Nest are given below.

CHARACTERS

Heroic characters, such as true mages and experienced adventurers, should be created as heroic characters with 100 points (or more).

Average inhabitants, such as NPC followers, would be created with perhaps only 25-50 points, whilst more important characters, such as city officials, priests, and the like, would use above-average 50-75 points.

The majority of GURPS advantages and disadvantages can be applied normally (with common sense).

Character details such as image and looks, social standing and wealth are all important characteristics for the Saga of Raven's Nest, particularly for those who are interested in city politics.

Standard starting wealth for characters is around 10 florens (or 1,000 delsa). Prices for mediaeval items from the appropriate GURPS books should treat the \$ as equal to a delsa. For example, an average broadsword would cost 500 delsa (or 5 florens), whilst light plate armor would cost 40 florens or more (prices from GURPS Lite).



TECHNOLOGY

The campaign is a Tech level 3 setting, with technology similar to mediaeval times. Steel weapons and armor are used, and sailing ships are well developed.

Less civilized areas could sometimes be classified as TL2(3) – they are aware of and make use of TL3 items, but are unable to produce them themselves.

Weapons and armor

Most common ancient and mediaeval hand weapons are available although some of the more specialized types such as rapiers, sabers and morningstars are not seen.

Common weapons include: dagger, axe, mace, javelin, spear, polearms, broadswords and shortswords, great axe, and greatsword (two handed).

Horses are rare in the area, so knowledge of mounted combat weapons, such as the lance, is limited.

Ranged weapons are less advanced although thrown javelins and daggers are known, as are crossbows and slings. There is not much in the way of bows, although they are available.

Armor is usually fairly light such as padded cloth or light leather armor, with heavy leather (leather and metal studs) the next step up.

As Raven's Nest has a strong seafaring tradition the heaviest armors are usually chainmail and half plate, and heavier armors are not usually manufactured.

One exception is the Grey Knights, who usually wear light or heavy plate, but these suits are either brought with them from their homeland or handed down.

MAGIC

High mana

Anyone can cast spells. However, due to the restrictions on all magic requiring a ceremony, magical training and knowledge of spells is rare.

Rare Magic

Most magical knowledge is limited to true mages (see below), although various religions and cults also often have knowledge of the ceremonies required.

To learn spells without being a true mage requires appropriate an appropriate 5-point advantage. For example: clerical investment (10 points, instead of the usual 5), or an appropriate patron (adds 5 points as a special quality).

Ceremony required

All magic spells normally require a ceremony to be completed. Because of this, spells are slow and obvious and magic is not widely employed.

Characters cannot become true mages (take magical aptitude) until they overcome this restriction.

True mages

A 10-point unusual background overcomes the ceremony restriction, and allows a character to cast spells as normal. True mages can also learn spells as normal.

However this ability to cast normally is limited to a single college alignment to either one of the elemental schools, or necromancy and control.

At least half of the spells a mage can cast normally must be from their chosen college (elemental or necromancy), whilst the other half may come from aligned colleges, or appropriate spells from other colleges.

All spells cast by a true mage manifest as some aspect of their elemental alignment. For example, whilst a fire mage can cast spells such as Light (from the Light & Darkness college), it would manifest as a flickering flame.

The alignment for elemental colleges is similar to elemental families (see GURPS Magic, p. 109), but with a slightly different arrangement of colleges.

The alignment of colleges is:

Air Wizard: Air, Movement, Knowledge, Sound.

Earth Wizard: Earth, Enchantment, Protection & Warning.

Fire Wizard: Fire, Making & Breaking, Light & Darkness.

Water Wizard: Water, Healing, Plant, Food.

Necromancy: Necromancy, Body Control.

Control: Mind Control, Communication & Empathy.

Some particular spells, however, should be moved to a more appropriate alignment. For example, most spells from the Movement college, such as Levitation and Flight, would be considered Air spells, whilst Swim (also from the Movement college) would be considered a Water spell. (See below for more details on spells.)

Mages can learn spells from other colleges, and may have to for pre-requisites, however they may only cast them via ceremonies.

True mages are allowed to take magical aptitude to increase their powers and learn more advanced spells. (Those without a level of magical aptitude are generally known as undermages.)



The reason why some can cast spells freely and others can't is not fully understood. The best theories have something to do with elementals and the spirit plane. Perhaps one day the true understanding of the unusual background of true mages will be known.

Powerful mages

Whilst most mages are limited to a single elemental alignment, some of the most powerful mages in the world are known to cast more than one type of magic.

Sabribar the Raven has demonstrated knowledge of Earth, Water, Fire, and Necromantic magics.

Such powerful magical powerful is beyond that available to most characters, and restricted to the most powerful NPC mages for the timebeing.

Spirit plane

Scholars and mages are aware of an extra-dimensional plane, accessible via magic. This plane is known as the Spirit Plane, and is home to spirits (of the dead), and possible to elementals.

The spirit plane is a shadow of the mortal world and exists everywhere. Some important battles for the world have been fought in the spirit plane.

Common Spells

These spells, along with their prerequisites, are some of those commonly known by the different types of mages.

For spells not from the relevant elemental college, the original college is noted in brackets.

All wizards also have access to the Meta-Spell college, as well as Lend ST and Recover ST. Wizards also commonly know the ceremonies required for Divinations, and some know the Enchantments to make permanent magic items, although a lot rarer.

Air Wizard

- Air Jet
- Body of Air
- Lightning
- Summon Air Elemental
- Windstorm
- Flight (Movement)
- Glue (Movement)
- Haste (Movement)
- Thunderclap (Sound)
- Invisibility (Light & Darkness)

Earth Wizard

- Body of Stone
- Create Earth
- Shape Earth
- Shape Stone
- Stone Missile
- Summon Earth Elemental
- Walk Through Earth
- Accuracy (Enchantment)
- Fortify (Enchantment)
- Puissance (Enchantment)
- Shield (Protection & Warning)

Fire Wizard

- Create Fire
- Explosive Fireball
- Fireball
- Flaming Weapon
- Ignite
- Resist Fire
- Summon Fire Elemental
- Weaken (Making & Breaking)
- Disintegrate (Making & Breaking)
- Light (Light & Darkness)

Water Wizard

- Body of Water
- Breath Water
- Create Water
- Dehydrate
- Hail
- Purify Water
- Summon Water Elemental
- Water Jet
- Neutralize Poison (Healing)
- Swim (Movement)

Necromancy (also Spirit Magic)

- Banish
- Skull-Spirit
- Steal Health
- Steal Strength
- Summon Demon
- Summon Spirit
- Zombie
- Might (Body Control)
- Pain (Body Control)
- Vigor (Body Control)
- Sleep (Mind Control)
- Darkness (Light & Darkness)



Control Magic

- Berserk (Mind Control)
- Bravery (Mind Control)
- Charm (Mind Control)
- Fear (Mind Control)
- Forgetfulness (Mind Control)

Clerical magic (non-mage)

- Empathy Advantage*
- Lend Strength (Healing)
- Lend Health (Healing)
- Minor Healing (Healing)
- Bravery (Mind Control)
- Exorcism (Communication & Empathy)
- Turn Zombie (Necromantic)

As a non-mage, a cleric may still have access to the ceremonies required through their church (as a 5 point additional advantage), however spells must be cast as a ceremony and take ten times as longer.

Common Spells

- Magic Resistance
- Dispel Magic
- Lend Strength (Healing)
- Recover Strength (Healing)

RACES

The only widely civilized people are humans, other races are considered animals, or savages at best. There is no integration – other races only exist in their own enclaves or communities.

Humans

A wide variety of humans exist, although all have the same basic statistics.

Most ethnicities have cultural tendencies, for example most Tacheans are competent swimmers, being an island nation, however this is not universal.

Human characters are created as normal.

Mutants

40 points

Intelligent mutants are usually based on humans (or in some cases other races, such as Vashkoi).

Advantages and disadvantages: All mutants gain +4 ST and +4 HT, but have -2 IQ. They also automatically have the disadvantages of Hideous Appearance (-4 on

all reaction rolls), and Social Stigma of outsider (-3 on all reaction rolls).

Being a mutant costs 40 points. Mutants may take up to 40 points of physical disadvantages to offset this cost. These physical disadvantages do not count against their personal limit of 40 points in disadvantages.

Vashkoi

60 points

Vashkoi are huge two-legged lizards, with sharp teeth and claws. They are carnivorous.

A vashkoi has normal height for their ST, and weighs 30 lbs more than a human of the same height.

Advantages and disadvantages: A vashkoi gets +4 on ST, +2 on HT and -1 on IQ. Because of their claws, they get +2 damage in hand-to-hand combat. They can also *bite* in close combat, doing cutting damage appropriate to their ST. Their scales give them a natural DR of 1, and their wide-set eyes give them a natural Peripheral Vision.

Their aggressive nature gives the whole race a bad Reputation (-3 on reactions). Mammalian tongues are impossible for a vashkoi to speak (as is the vashkoi tongue to humans), although they can learn to understand it.

Vashkoi have Acute Taste and Smell (+5 bonus), however the smell of humans causes them to lose control. Any time a vashkoi encounters humans they must roll vs. Will. A failed roll means they go Berserk.

This berserk disadvantage may be overcome through training, buying off the 15-point disadvantage.



MINIATURES RULES

Characters

ST – Strength; fatigue (magic) points; regain 1 point per 10 minutes rest; fall unconscious at 0.

DX – Dexterity; physical actions and resistance.

IQ – Intelligence; mental actions and resistance.

HT – Health; hit points; fall unconscious at 0.

Move – Movement speed.

Weapon – Name, **skill**, **damage**, **bonus** damage, and maximum **range** (for missile/thrown weapons).

Armor – Type, damage resistance (**DR**), passive defense, (**PD**) and active defenses (with total defense already calculated in brackets).

Parry can only be used once, and only against melee attacks. **Block** applies to any attacks; but can also only be used once. **Dodge** can always be used. If you don't have a score listed, you can't use that defense.

If unaware of attack, only PD can be used. If you don't have any PD, then you don't get a defense roll against surprise attacks.

Skills – See below.

Combat

Highest Move acts first (roll for ties).

Each turn you can either:

- Move a number of squares equal to Move; **or**
- Make an attack (or spell, or skill); **or**
- Reload a weapon.

Making an attack

Attack roll: Roll equal to or lower than your skill on 3d6. Apply -1 to -4 penalty for difficult conditions.

3 – critical hit, no defense, maximum damage.

4 – critical hit, no defense.

5 is a critical hit (no defense) if skill 15.

6 is a critical hit (no defense) if skill 16+.

17 or 18 – always misses.

Defense: If not a critical hit, defender rolls 3d6 defense. If equal to or lower than defenders total defense (passive + active, total already shown in brackets), attack is defended (no damage).

3 or 4 – always defends.

17 or 18 – always fails.

Damage: Attacker rolls indicated damage and the defender subtracts any DR. Amount left is multiplied by the weapon bonus factor, rounded down, and subtracted from defenders HT.

e.g. If a Broadsword (+50% bonus) rolls d6+1 and gets 6 points, and defender has DR 1, then a total of 7

points damage is done (5, plus 50% bonus damage, round down).

Spells

Casting spells costs listed amount of fatigue (ST) points. Each spell has a single, simplified effect. See character spell list for details.

Some spells are resisted by DX or IQ: if the target rolls equal to or lower than their rating on 3d6 the spell has no effect.

Skills

In general use DX as a check for simple physical actions, and IQ as a check for mental actions (roll equal to or lower on 3d6).

Skills listed below may specific ratings, and can't be used unless a default is listed. Roll equal to or lower on 3d6.

Resistance is rolled on 3d6 as listed. If both succeed, winner is person who succeeds by the most.

Swimming: If you fail, lose one fatigue (ST), and try again, losing fatigue each turn until you pass. Defaults to DX.

Climbing: Defaults to DX. Falling does 1d6 damage per story.

Disguise: Look like someone else. Resisted by IQ.

Gambling: Convince others to gamble, and skill at gambling (i.e. two rolls required for unwilling participant). Winner takes 2 florens. Resisted by IQ.

Intimidation: NPC will do one thing for you, or tell you one thing.

Leadership: Lead NPC crowds.

Pickpocket: Take one object, or up to 5 florens. Resisted by IQ.

Sex Appeal: Only works on opposite sex. Target must do one thing, give you one thing, or tell you one thing.

Tracking: Follow someone's trail.

City

Fire: Walking through fire does 1d6-3 damage.

Fires spread to adjacent buildings on a roll of 1, on 1d6.