

THE ZIN LETTERS

The Kalikos Society Gloranthan Magazine

#1

Teshnos

Ralian Stoat Clan

Oplanthi Scenarios

Mineral Broos

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In this Issue

Teshnan Culture & History

An excellent chance to get acquainted with Teshnan culture, beliefs, religion and with their flame of life. in a land which is a mixture of eastern mysticism and theist worship as different aspects of the celestial flame. Provides excellent information about the country for campaigning in Teshnos.

- **Culture, history, religion, geography and scenario ideas.**

Ralian Stoat Clan

Take a deep breath and become familiar with these Neomali!

During Nysalor`s Bright Empire, a master hunter named Stoat unified farmers and hunters into an Orlanthei clan. After surviving the Stygian Empire, they still live in the Kingdom of Saug.

- **History and clan details.**

Orlanthei Scenarios

Splendid and useful scenario ideas for any Orlanthei campaign. Also applicable to the Stoat Clan.

Mineral Broos

“Abnormal reproduction in Dorastor and the effects of chaos on the soil, volume 3”. May the light of Sedenya bless you, who are reading this.

Here they are! Take a trip to Dorastor and investigate confusing rumours from the Rotground. Though, it may be that after this you`ll take great care to avoid every little pool of mud that comes your way.

- **Scenario ideas, humour and broo statistics for HeroQuest / Hero Wars & RuneQuest.**

Editorial

On a dark winter day, a group of Finnish Gloranthaphiles came together to create Kalikos. Kalikos wasn't needed for fighting winter but for bringing together Finns interested in Glorantha. In a ceremony, names were inscribed in leather scrolls to found the Finnish Gloranthan Association. Thus was Kalikos born to further illuminate the Dark North with Gloranthan knowledge, though some of the northern heroes already were internationally known.

As civilized people, the followers of Kalikos wanted to spread their Good Tidings all over the world, and they eagerly got down to work. Magical discussions took place on the Virtual Agora, ancient scrolls were rummaged for, lead was sacrificed. Finally, it was born: not the Perfect One but a collection of texts containing all kinds of knowledge. Because of their variety the texts were given a collective name The Zin Letters after the famous Zin Letters in King of Sartar.

The Zin Letters wasn't created by the God-Learners, it didn't become a magically homogenous Abiding Book, it wasn't canonised in an ecclesiastical council of the Western World, nor does it stand for or against any particular rules system. The Zin Letters is focused on the Finnish authors' ideas on the world of Glorantha. With this codex we hope to bring our small national contribution to the magnificent fantasy world of Glorantha.

Thanks to all the scholars who have been collecting material for this compilation of texts. For other Gloranthan researchers I wish rewarding moments with our learned writings!

**Matti Järvinen,
Chief Editor of The Zin Letters**

Dear Editors,

I have heard that a collection of Zin Letters has been discovered in Finland. Perhaps it was found in a brass-bound trunk found in a house underground, or perhaps hidden inside a stuffed sea-mammoth, or maybe recently thawed out of the receding ice cap. Any of those collections would, of course, be welcome additions to the accumulated lore of our wonderful shared world of Glorantha.

I wish you a ton of pleasure and a century of pleasure in your publication. I leave these two thoughts to rope you in and make you free:

1. Welcome to Glorantha!
2. YGWV*.

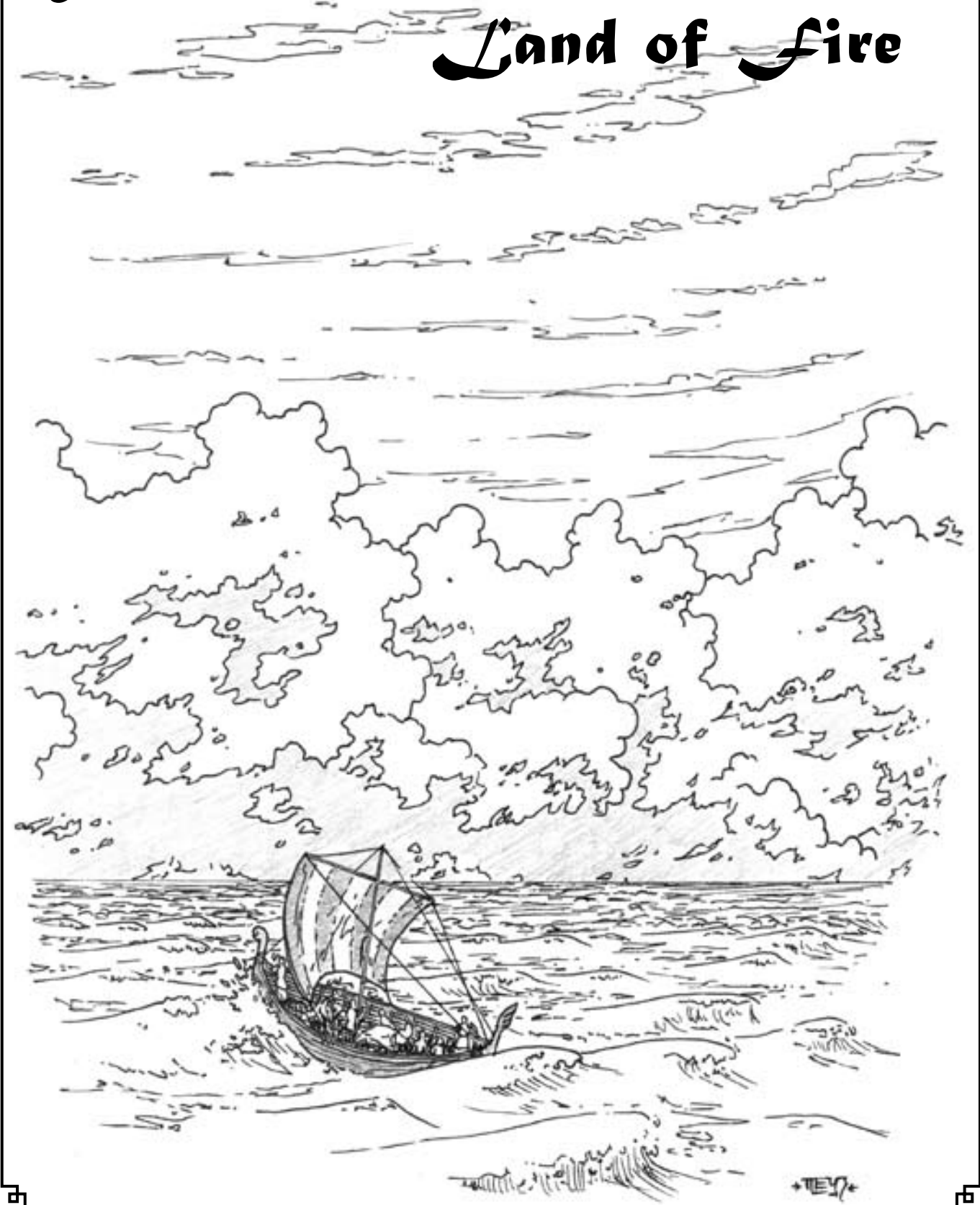
-- Greg Stafford

* Your Glorantha Will Vary



Teshnos

Land of Fire



Teshnan Culture

Distribution and Subtypes

The Teshnan culture is found only in Teshnos. It is a mixture of eastern mysticism and more down-to-earth theism, and even spirit worship. Teshnan culture is rather insular and doesn't much appreciate outside influences.

Teshnan people are of the Kralori race, with slanted eyes, but their skin is noticeably darker than that of Kralorelans. The swarthy skin may be due to heritage from their ancestors who lived in the land before the coming of the Vithelans. Some of the colour may also come from the ancient Zaranistangi who maintained contact with the mainland from the isle of Melib.

The culture of Melib differs slightly from the mainland culture, as the Teshnans there are not governed by the theocracy but obey instead Harstar, the Prince of Melib. Teshnans make up roughly one tenth of the people in Melib, the rest being of the Gachi or the Ashurtans, or foreigners.

Teshnan Culture

Way of Life

The majority of Teshnans are poor farmers of rice or barley, or shepherds of the gaur-cows. They live in the innumerable little villages that dot the land of Teshnos. In the cities many kinds of artisans and other specialised professionals can also be found. Everywhere in Teshnos the red-robed priests are present, overseeing sacrifices and religious proceedings and spending their time in religious meditation. Noblemen live in magnificent palaces, which are full of riches, wonders and dozens, hundreds or even thousands of servants.

Social Classes

Common people are considered unsuited for handling riches, so they have to dutifully donate all of their grain to their temple, except for what they need to live. Farmers living in the same village form a tight-knit community whose land ultimately belongs to one temple or another but is given to them for farming. The temple keeps a strict count on the harvest so that misconduct does not occur.

Artisans and merchants living in cities handle money despite the formal prohibitions, and they may accumulate a decent amount of wealth. Naturally, they have to give luxurious donations to their temple so that the middle-class is not seen as breaking against the law. Teshnan merchants have sailed as far as Sog city and sell especially silk and other exotic materials which are in high demand.

Priests are people who through meditation have reached a greater awareness than normal people. They tend the innumerable temples of Teshnos, from little village shrines

to massive temple complexes. Priests also discern the life-flame of every newborn child and determine which recently dead person has reincarnated into the new body. This duty concerns especially the priests of Somash, upon whom the whole of Teshnan governmental bureaucracy is built.

The nobles have reached an even higher awareness than the priests and therefore have enough understanding to use the surplus produced by peasants. These resources are used to build luxurious palaces and to buy many kinds of exotic products which are brought from overseas by merchants. Noblemen usually live completely separated from the surrounding world, and they consider even the presence of common folk impure.

Those people who have reached the very highest levels of awareness are zitrans and they are the highest elite of their cult. The Wheel of Governance, the council that leads whole Teshnos, is formed exclusively by the zitrans.

Centralisation

Teshnos is a theocracy lead by priests and, ultimately, the Wheel of Governance. However, the organisation is relatively weak, and its military forces are rather small. The only decent fighters belong to the warlike Order of Somash. Messages between Somash temples are transmitted by magical mirrors, and the temple receiving a message relays it to all other temples in its area. However, because the temples and villages are sparse, even this method isn't very effective.

Personal Virtues

The good and bad deeds of people carry over from one incarnation to another. Thus, a person may have to make up for the misdoings of a previous incarnation, even if he or she has no recollection of them.

The virtues required of a man depend on his spiritual rank: a common peasant has to be humble towards his temple, a priest has to be pious, while the duty of the noblemen is to rule and lead the country. The virtues depend also partly on the type of the life-flame, so Calyz aspires to have babies, Solf aspires to intoxicate himself while Somash has to be honourable, and so on.



Gender Relations

A person can change gender when reincarnating. Thus, a man can change into a woman when assuming a new mortal body. This is why Teshnans regard people according to their life-flame, not their external appearance. Nevertheless, the majority of Teshnans in high positions are men.

Marriage can be arranged to last either one body or several. Marriage for one body means that when a spouse dies, the other one is no longer married to a soon-to-be-born child, and can freely marry again. On the other hand, marriage for several bodies binds husband and wife together for as many reincarnations as determined when arranging for the marriage.

Marriages are nearly always arranged by the heads of the families involved, and it means committing to the life-flames of another family for the duration of at least one incarnation. Therefore, marriages are used to form political alliances, especially when the families agree on several marriages (thereby preventing the alliance from dissolving when one life-flame leaves). Polygamy is allowed and common among the aristocracy, although usually only men take several wives and not the other way around.

Living Conditions

Clothing

Common people wear simple clothes made from home-woven material. However, even commoners' clothing can be very colourful, as coloured cloth is common in Teshnos. This is due to the many native plants that can be used for making dyes. Red and yellow are the most favoured colours for men because they symbolise fire and the sky. Saris are typical for women, while men prefer shirts, pyjamas and vests. When working in the fields, though, a plain loincloth is enough. Armbands are popular jewellery among women and they are made from cheap and expensive materials alike. Necklaces, on the other hand, are a mark of a married woman.

Priests wear a red robe which is a sign of their spiritual development. The robes are covered with magical symbols, which are often yellow. Priests often have ritual tools on their belts, ranging from sacrificial knives to pouches containing the holy bread of Calyz.

Noblemen wear clothes made of the very finest materials. Silk is very common, as it is imported from Kralorela. Clothes are decorated with gold, pink feathers, pendants and other valuable materials. The jewels worn by the nobility are worth a fortune and sometimes weigh so much that the wearer cannot move without the help of servants. Aside from the nobility, rich members of the middle-class also wear luxurious clothes, although this is sometimes scorned upon. The turban is also a piece of clothing worn by the noble.

Housing

In rural areas, the rice farmers typically live in simple huts made from materials gleaned from the jungle. More important people may have a house made of mud bricks. The flat ceilings of these houses are made from reeds, bamboo

or similar material, coated with mud or earth. Tiles may be set on the top.

In the cities, houses are larger and wooden cottages rarer. The dwellings of the wealthiest people are made from stone, but brick houses are much more common. Houses higher than two stories are rare, but the temple towers soar to great heights. Houses in the cities are often built so that open yards are left between them. The yards typically have a well from which people get their drinking water.

The huge palaces of the noble families are masterpieces of construction and they can contain gardens, harems, zoos and many dwellings for servants. The palace of the Vessel of Light constitutes by itself the city of Zanozar and is the largest palace in Teshnos.

Food

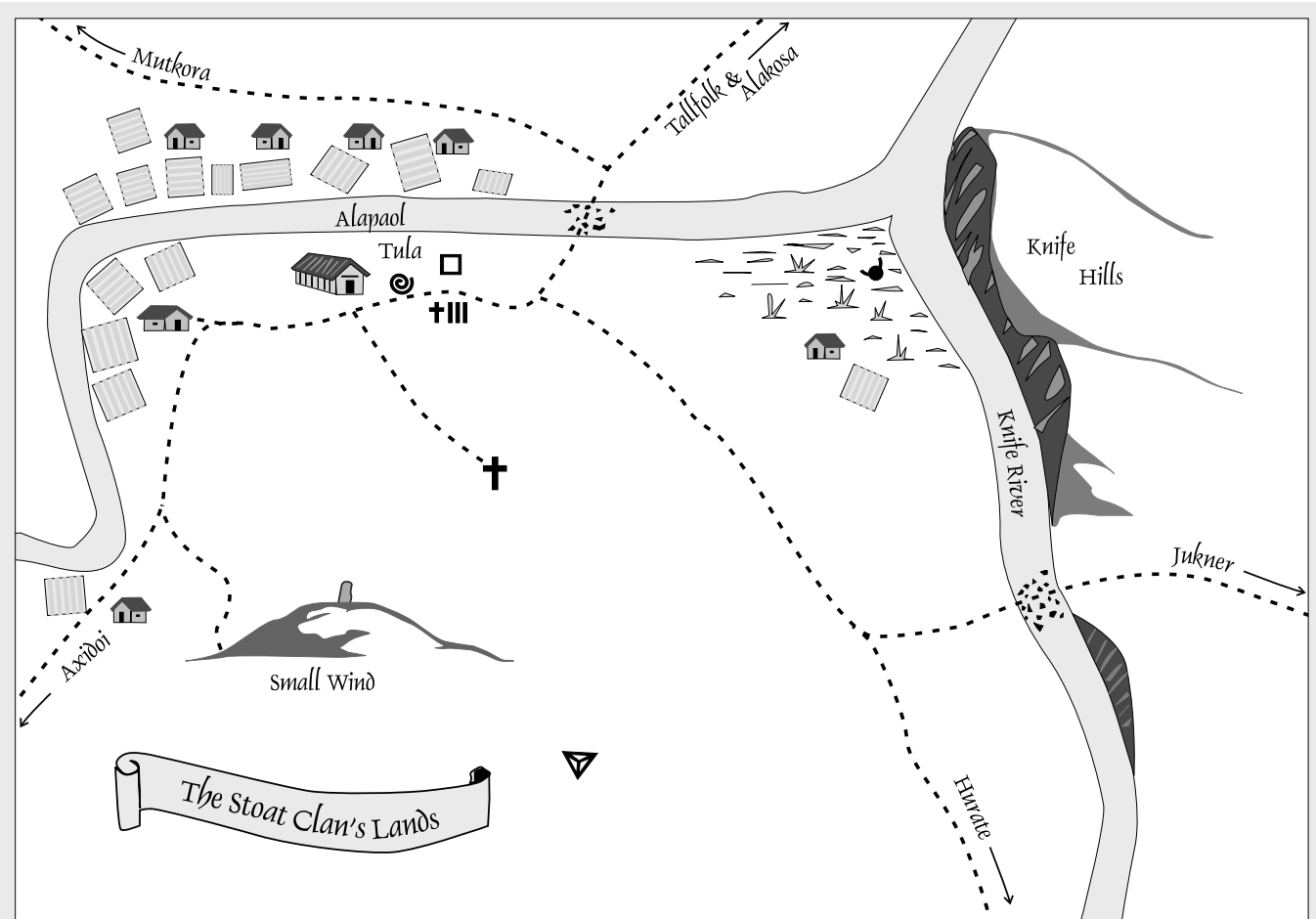
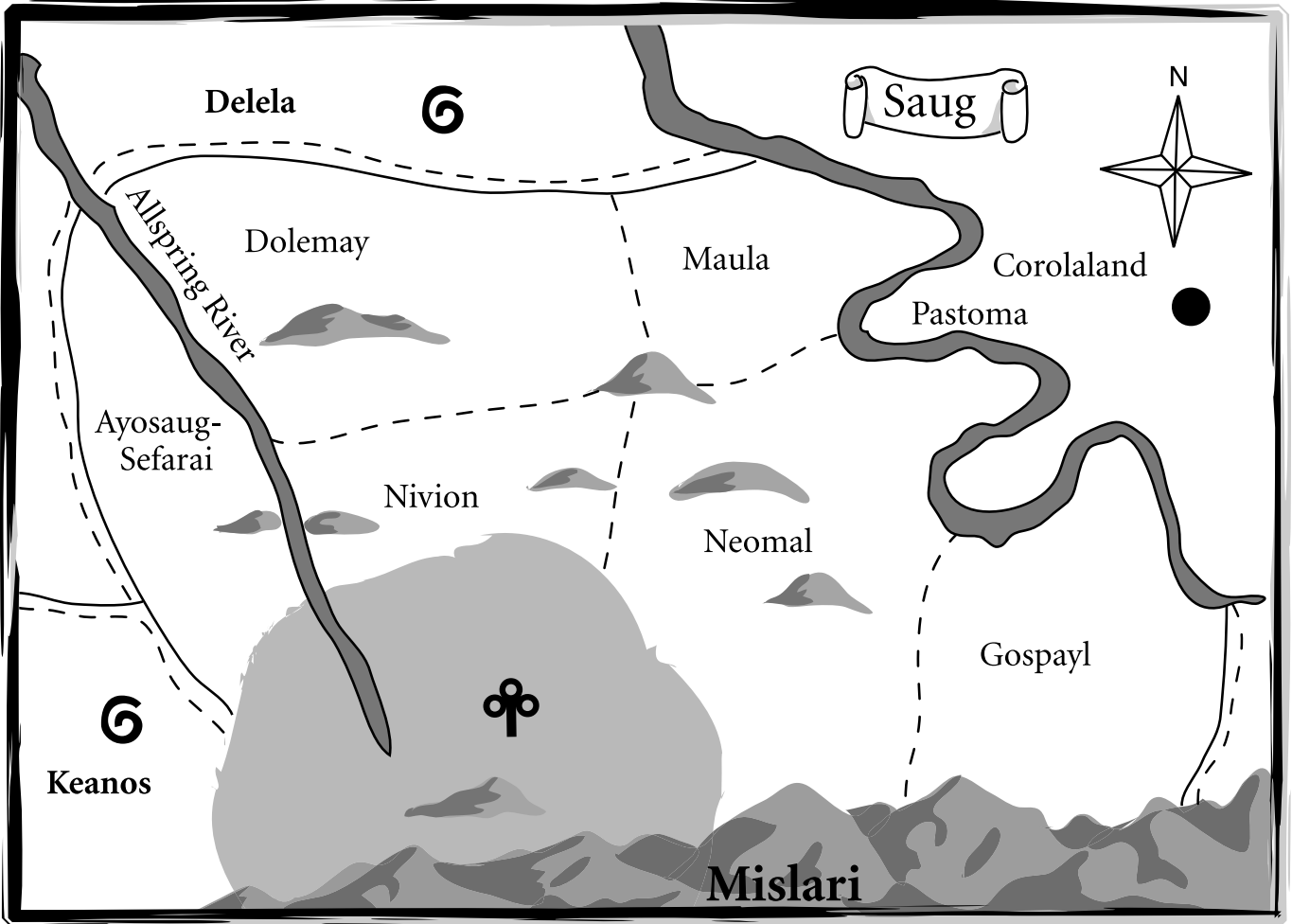
Rice is the most important source of nourishment in Teshnos. Rice is eaten by rich and poor alike. Small amounts of barley are also grown. Beef and goat meat is available, and Teshnans also breed birds for food. Snake and elephant meat are more exotic products, and they are mostly delicacies for the noble.

Interesting Habits

Teshnans believe that everyone has a personal destiny, which is determined by the life-flame. The form of the life-flame determines the aspirations and direction of a person's life. The aspiration of worshippers of Solf is suicide, for worshippers of Zitro Argon it is meditation and asceticism, while Somash worshippers value honour. Followers of Calyz strive for children and a good family, while Furalor-worshippers seek to unravel the mysteries of Death.

Teshnans call death the changing of bodies. Thus, in Teshnan speech, people never die, only change bodies. Actual death only concerns monsters and those who have no life-flame and thus do not reincarnate.







Murgas the Spokesman

𐀀 𐀁

Murgas is a dark, middle-aged man, and an initiate of Issaries Golden-tongue. He has traveled further than any other in the clan, and has gained his position on the clan ring due to his talent and his cult. There are few more eloquent than him, and it has been rumored, that even the Neomal tribal king would be interested in his service. Murgas dresses stylishly in undyed flaxen clothes and dark furs. He always carries his heavy traveling staff, and it is rumored that there is a companion spirit of Issaries in that staff, guiding Murgas in difficult situations.

Lawspeaker Isatario

𐀀 𐀂

Isatario is an aging, nearly seventy years old man. His beard is long and grey, and he has no more hair on his head. Vardakis trusts him completely, and the tradition-wise lawspeaker has yet to fail him. The whole clan is afraid of the lawspeakers' death, for there is no replacement in sight and none of the clan youth are interested in following him in preserving tradition and law.

Important Sites 𐀃

The Chieftain's Hall 𐀄

The hall is a long house in the middle of Two Fords village. Its walls are white and mortared partly of stone, partly of clay and braced with dark wooden beams. The roof is thick and made of straw, and in its middle is a hole to let out the smoke. Inside the hall is dimly lit by the fire in the middle. The side walls are adorned with weapons, shields and hunting trophies. Beneath them are wide, low benches, on which the chief's guests, the clan ring members and the weaponthanes sleep. Long tables surround the fire in the middle, and on the back wall is the chief's seat, an elevated polished wooden seat, behind which are the clan regalia and significant objects.



Odall's Temple in the Woods 𐀅

A single path leads through the forest to Odall's temple, and that path is known only to those initiated into the hunting god's mysteries. The path leads through the gorge, over the esker and around the pond, until it ends in a clearing. On the other side of the clearing is a greying lodge of timber, standing on stones in the corner and a pile of stones in the center. The door is small, only a square meter in the front of the house. Wooden stairs lead to it, and

a pair of giant elk horns is set above it. All the wooden parts of the house are carved with small runes of death and harmony. The roof is covered with wooden shingles, and through its middle rises a stone chimney

The interior is dim, for the only light comes from the fire in the central fireplace. Around and above the fire there is meat frying and drying. Around are heavy tables built of logs, and on the back wall is the altar of Odall. Above the tables is a ledge where the local and visiting servants of Odall may sleep.

The Temple of Ralia, in the Village 𐀆 𐀇 𐀈 𐀉

The temple to Ralia is in the village, just at the shore of the Alapaol river. It is a cubic stone structure, and its roof is made of wheat straw. The entrance is a square opening on the village side, and there is a square window in the centre of each wall. On both sides of the temple, there are small square fields of wheat. All of the stones of which the temple is built are of the same greyish green stone, not mortared in any way.

Inside, the temple is simple. In the middle, there is a square stone, serving as the altar. It is of a different stone than the walls, reddish in color. To the left of the entrance is a small shrine to Barntar Ploughman. It is formed from a plough and an oxen skull. The temple is lit only by the light from the windows. The temple is cool in the summer and warm in the winter.

Orlanth's Temple on Small Wind

𐀊 𐀋 𐀌 𐀍

The way to Small Wind is via a path along the eastern bank of the Alapaol. It is almost always windy on the narrow path through the woods. The wind strengthens as the path draws nearer the



hill, and is usually follows a traveler on the path. The path slants slightly uphill, and finally comes to the foot of Small Wind. It then rounds the hill two times counterclockwise, and to a person on the path it feels as though the wind was pushing him onwards.

Atop the hill is the temple to Orlanth. It is a wall built in the shape of a Storm rune, and it has no roof. The wall is of piled light-colored slate. The opening it is about three meters high, and grows to about four and a half meters inside the temple. The inner yard is large, approximately fifteen meters in diameter. In the middle is a stone carved with runes, the most visible being a large Storm rune.

The Bogside Farm

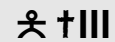


Ten years ago, a crazy, brave man called Kolmara moved to the lands next to the Bog. He built a sturdy log house with three of his friends, and a stone wall around it to fend off the chaos from the Bog. After building the house, Kolmara has cleared two fields, adding the stones found in them to his wall. However, the wall has not yet been needed, for Kolmara has taken the fight to the Bog. He makes an attack into the Bog at least once each season, thus serving his god, Bemurok. These attacks have earned him a reputation as a brave, fierce man.



Odalls' Master Hunters

Aragus and Snuf



The two most successful hunters in the clan, Aragus and Snuf, reached the position of Master Hunter at the same time. At a Great Hunt ten years ago, they both brought in identical male grizzly bears, both killed in one shot. After asking Odall for omens, Vardakis ordained them both as Master Hunters. They are responsible for the Temple of Odall in the woods.



Lawspeaker Isatario



Two Orlanthi Adventures inspired by Kalevala

The Broken Avenger

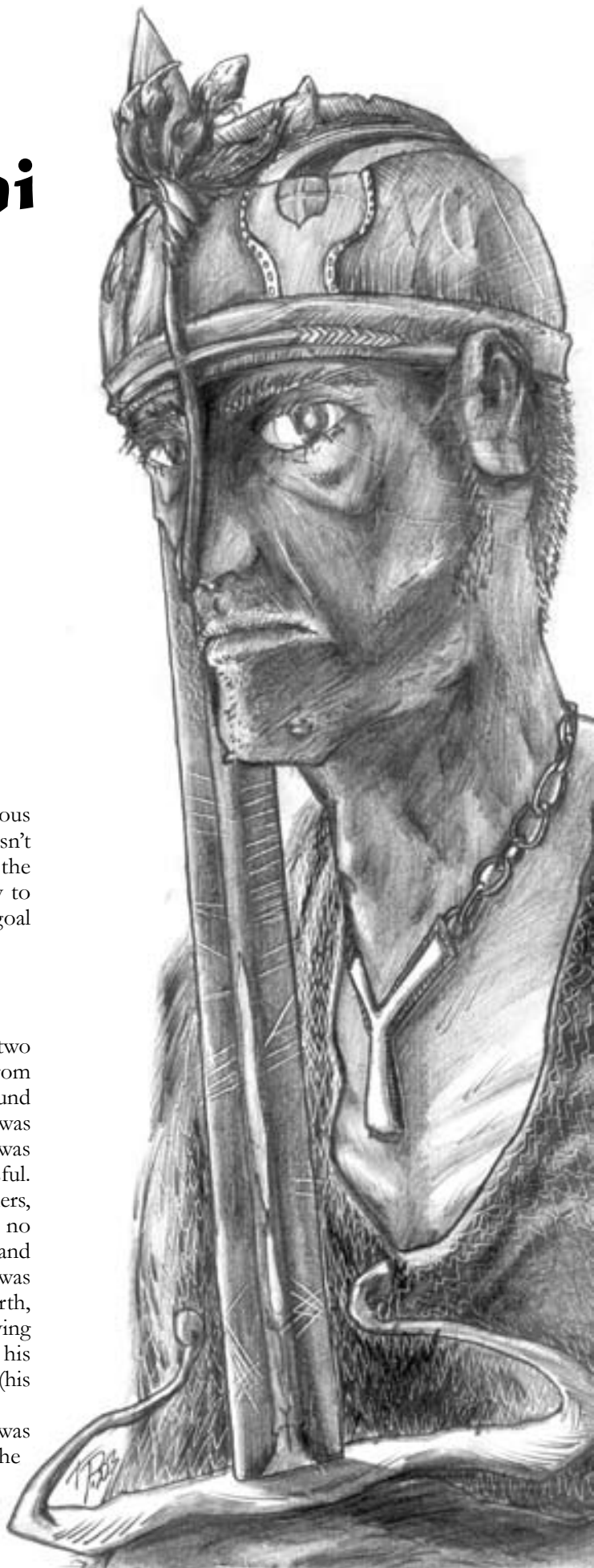
Synopsis

Heroes meet a chilling and cold stranger, the most obvious Humakti devotee they've ever met even though he doesn't carry much cultic insignia on him. They learn about the history of the stranger and will have to decide how to react to long-forgotten crimes and the single-minded goal of Hruthric to avenge them.

The Story

Some twenty years ago Kalmarth and Umathkar were two promising brothers of the Player Clan, and got fame from raiding and opposing the Lunar-minded Other Clan around the time of Sartar's conquest. Umathkar as the elder one was an almost certain next chief of the clan, but Kalmarth was equally ambitious and to his own eye far more successful. The tension grew gradually between the two harsh brothers, and although they co-operated all the time there was no love in the relationship. The bloodline of the brothers and spirit of the whole clan suffered from the ambiguity and was split to factions, until Umathkar plotted against Kalmarth, provoking him to attack against the Other Clan but giving them a warning in secret beforehand. Kalmarth and his warband perished utterly in ambush and his auxiliaries (his warlike wife among them) were sold to slavery.

Soon Umathkar was the chief of the clan, and he was only worried about one thing. For seven days after the fall of Kalmarth Umathkar heard a crow speak terrible things: "Oath-breaker, Kin-slayer, it doesn't matter you didn't have the courage to wield the sword yourself. The blood of Kalmarth will still avenge him."



During a time of winter twilight,
when northern lights flared in the freezing night of the dark north and
the sinister Vadrudi hunted their enemies,
shy snowmaids danced in the snowy backwoods and whispered of
the rumours that the cold gusts of wind spread far and wide...

The Forces of North had gathered!
In the name of brotherhood, they hailed their allies far away with respect and
shouted their names, swearing allegiance.
In the name of Law, they sanctified the ground for a great ceremony,
broke the ice beneath them and drove Valind away, once again...

And then, they found an old, sealed scroll...

*To: Doranda the Quill, Etc
From: The Zin 4*

Hail the Harshax,

My dearest friend,

*While I still remember, I'll send you the investigations that our new initiates have so devoutly
been working on for such a long time.*

*The material consists of reports from such far away lands as Teshnos and Ralios, as well as Dorastor.
I'm truly glad that the work is finally concluded, although I fear that the few copies the scribes have
been able to create will not be enough.*

*I hope this material will be of
use in your investigations!*

*Yours, Z
Hail Harshax!*