

Arak and Gwydion

(Some Thoughts on the Shadow Elves' history)

By R. Sweeney

Gwydion isn't a 'real' demon, but rather a creature of great power from the plane of shadow. Gwydion's evil was his enslavement of the ShadowElves. His torment is his betrayal by Arak. Unlike Vecna, he was not on the prime and could only be 'trapped' because he was trying to follow the Shadow Elves into RL. (Presumably to kill them or re-enslave them). I wonder what Arak was thinking, however. Would there be anyplace he could take the Shadow elves into exile where Gwydion could not follow? Did he think he could hide from such a powerful creature?

Gwydion must have had an enemy. A sibling perhaps. The Shadow Elves must have acted as some sort of armed forces for him. Arak must have believed that if Gwydion suddenly found himself without his Slaves, he would have been destroyed by his rivals. However, there other.. less satisfying, perhaps, ways of re-writing ShadowElf history. Gwydion, the shadow-being, falls 'in love' with an elf from some other world. They mate, bear children. Woman dies, Gwydion takes his children and their children as slaves. Millenia pass. Arak was Gwydion's favorite. Perhaps, Gwydion had mated with one of the Shadow elves of unsurpassed beauty and begat Arak. Thus, he set his son above all the other slaves. Arak, however, desired more than to be the head of the slaves. He managed to betray his father to his enemies.

Arak had intended patricide. He was going to take away Gwydion's protective armed forces, leaving him vulnerable to attack by his other enemies. Arak's true intent being on claiming Rulership of the Shadow elves when they had escaped Gwydion. Arak would have been a tyrant over his people.. just as his father was. His bid to 'free' the ShadowElves would have only been an ultimate betrayal as the Elves realized they had simply fled one master for another. Unfortunately for Arak, he fled to Ravenloft. As he stepped into RL, Arak had expected Gwydion's enemies to attack him, giving the ShadowElves time to escape. This did not materialize, however, and Arak was forced to face down his own father.

Gwydion found Arak harder to fight, however, as his act of attempted patricide and intended betrayal of the Shadow Elves had earned him a domain as soon as he entered Ravenloft. With the strength of a domain lord, he was able to fight off Gwydion for a time. However, even as a domain lord, he was not strong enough. To saves his son and daughter, he gave them the Regala and closed the gate.

Gwydion and Arak have fought in the gateway ever since. Gwydion fears that if he destroys Arak, the gate would collapse around him, destroying him. Gwydion can feel Arak's connection to the Land, but does not understand it.

Thus, when his son thought he 'heard' his father from the Gate, he had. However, Gwydion had merely waited until the gate was open, thrust the weaker Arak aside, and attempted to enter RL.

For an added twist, Arak's daughter, Maeve, knew her father lived in the gate but also feared that Arak would enslave his people as Gwydion had done. (Or knew this had been his plan). So, she thwarts her brother to prevent becoming a slave again.. even though she knows her father lives on in the gate.

Synopsis:

We make Arak the lord, and Gwydion just a powerful fiend trapped with him in the Obsidian gate. With the alternate history, we can understand how Arak's betrayal would have earned him a domain. And.. how being trapped in the gate would be his curse.

Robert Sweeney

Cathedrals of the Church of Ezra

By C.D. Nichols

The cathedrals are grouped by city (if a cathedral is not in a city it is listed under the domain it is in). The headquarters of the orders have the name of the order housed there listed after the entry.

Necropolis:

Le Sentier de Sephirot (Yamakites)

Neuvuchar Springs:

La Cathedrale de la Mere Holie Sophia (Sophians) La Cathedrale deux Sablex

Martira Bay:

Le Dom de la Melange

La Tour d'Arrose du Mer (Itians)

Viaki:

Der Sumpfkirche

Karg:

Der Dom du Grau

Neblus:

La Cathedrale de Notre Dame de la Brume

Nartok:

Die Katedral der Umglik

La Cathedrale du St. Zhaver

Falkovnia:

La Bastione du Evangelion (Rachaelians)

Stangengard:

Der Tyrannkirche

Lekar:

Der Dorndom

Die Habichtdom

Silbervas:

Der Folterdom

Dementlieu:

Castle Nigramous (Justines)

Port-a-Lucine:

La Cathedrale de la Pensee Idee
L'Eglise de la Echelle
La Cathedrale de St. Pere du Viln
La Cathedrale du Notre Perditione
Le Ruin de Ste. Mere des Larmes
La Cathedrale de l'Etoile du Nord (Petranes)

Chateaufaux:
La Cathedrale du Hochzeit

Mordent:
La Retraite du Viridian (Halanes)

Mordentshire:
L'Eglise du Gewissen

Invidia:
Le Maison du Coeur (Mishnad)
La Retraite de la Herbes (Judasites)

Karina:
L'Eglise du Notre Peindre Dame

Borca:
La Bague deux Seele (Anchorites)
Lechburg:
La Cathedrale des Juene Filles du Yermo

Levakrest:
La Grande Cathedrale d'Ezra (Ezradim, Numerians, Dominicans)
Le Citee Holie d'Eglise d'Ezra
La Cathedrale du Baiser
La Cathedrale de Notre Guerier
Der Zaubererdom

Richemulot:
Le Repos du Pecheur (Daniellians)

Ste. Ronges:
Le Kirche du Lemkott

Pont-a-Museau:
La Cathedrale de Ste. Shtshure
L'Archivee d'Ezra (Burakim)

Mortigny:
Die Dom Farfoylt

Barovia:
Le Chateau du Neon Genesis (Marians)

Linguistic Note (or: The Hidden Meaning of the Churches' Names)

Here's the translations of the Ezran cathedrals. I used a mixture of French, German, Yiddish, Greek/Latin, Spanish, Italian, Swedish, and Hebraic (I think).

Some of these names are references to secrets within the Church of Ezra or the domain they reside in. Others just sounded good.

Necropolis:

Le Sentier de Sephirot (Yamakites)/*The Path of Sephirot*

Neuvuchar Springs:

La Cathedrale de la Mere Holie Sophia (Sophians)/*The Cathedral of the Holy Mother Sophia*

La Cathedrale du Sablex/*The Cathedral of the Sands*

Martira Bay:

Le Dom de la Melange/*The Cathedral of the Blend*

La Tour d'Arrose du Mer (Itians)/*The Tower of Seaspray*

Viaki:

Die Sumpfkirche/*The Mire Church*

Karg:

Der Dom des Grau/*The Cathedral of the Grey*

Neblus:

La Cathedrale de Notre Dame de la Brume/*The Cathedral of Our Lady of the Mists*

Nartok:

Die Katedral der Umglik/*The Cathedral of Misfortune*

La Cathedrale du St. Zhaver/*The Cathedral of Saint Rust*

Falkovnia:

La Bastione du Evangelion (Rachaelians)/*The Bastion of the Messenger*

Stangengard:

Die Tyrannkirche/*The Tyrant Church*

Lekar:

Der Dorndom/*The Thorn Cathedral*

Der Habichtdom/*The Hawk Cathedral*

Silbervas:

Der Folterdom/*The Torture Cathedral*

Dementlieu:

Castle Nigramous (Justines)/*from MCS map*

Port-a-Lucine:

La Cathedrale de la Pensee Idee/*The Cathedral of the Contemplative Thought*

L'Eglise de la Echelle/*The Church of the Balances*

La Cathedrale de St. Pere du Viln/*The Cathedral of the Sainted Father of Will*

La Cathedrale du Notre Perditiion/*The Cathedral of Our Perdition*

Le Ruin de Ste. Mere des Larmes/*The Ruin of the Sainted Mother of Tears*

La Cathedrale de l'Etoile du Nord (Petranes)/*The Cathedral of the North Star*
Chateaufaux:
La Cathedrale du Hochzeit/*The Cathedral of Weddings*
Mordent:
La Retraite du Viridian (Halanes)/*The Retreat of Viridian*
Mordentshire:
L'Eglise du Gewissen/*The Church of Conscience*
Invidia:
Le Maison du Coeur (Mishnad)/*The House of the Heart*
La Retraite de l'Herbes (Judasites)/*The Retreat of the Herbs*
Karina:
L'Eglise du Notre Peindre Dame/*The Church of Our Painted Lady*
Borca:
La Bague du Seele (Anchorites)/*The Ring of Souls*
Lechburg:
La Cathedrale des Juene Filles du Yermo/*The Cathedral of the Young Girls of the Wilderness*
Levakrest:
La Grande Cathedrale d'Ezra (Ezradim, Numerians, Dominicans)/*The Great Cathedral of Ezra*
La Cité Holie d'Eglise d'Ezra/*The Holy City of the Church of Ezra*
La Cathedrale du Baiser/*The Cathedral of the Kiss*
La Cathedrale de Notre Guerier/*The Cathedral of Our Healer*
Der Zaubererdom/*The Sorceror Cathedral*
Richemulot:
Le Repos du Pecheur (Daniellians)/*The Rest of Sinners*
Ste. Ronges:
Le Kirche du Lemkott/*The Church of Limb-flesh*
Pont-a-Museau:
La Cathedrale de Ste. Shtshure/*The Cathedral of Saint Rat*
L'Archivee d'Ezra (Burakim)/*The Archive of Ezra*
Mortigny:
Die Dom Farfoylt/*The Cathedral Rotten*
Barovia:
Le Chateau du Neon Genesis (Marians)/*The House of New Beginnings*

Chris D. Nichols

DARKLORDS' & NPCs' AGE

By J.W. Mangrum & A. Ray

In the year 750 BC (Barovian Calendar):

Abu al Mir is 25 years old.

Adam is 67, but he hasn't aged a day since he was "born." Must be the exercise.

Alexi Shadowborn is 142 years old.

Alfred Timothy is 41 but his lycanthropic heritage makes him look younger.

Andres Duvall (the *Bardic Lich*) is 165 years old.

Azalin is 348 years old, but he's been a lich for *only* 272 years.

Daglan Daegon is approx. 597 years old (if still alive).

Diamabel is 182 years old and became a Darklord 160 years ago.

Dominic d'Honaire (the "baby" among the original darklords) is now 50.

Draga Salt-Biter is 47 years old but contracted lycanthropy at the age of 35.

Eowin Timothy, oldest member of the Timothy clan, is still sniffing around Mordent at 90.

Frantisek Markov is 75, and he does age normally.

Duke Gundar is circa 512 years old (or 562 years old non-canon), but has been a vampire for 461 years.

Elena Faith-Hold is 178 years old (just speculative figures).

Gabrielle Aderre is 40, although she looks younger.

George Weathermay is 41.

Gerta Von Aubrecker, the little girl in Adam's Wrath, is now 23.

Gregor Zolnik is 41.

Gregorian Illhousen is 56 years old.

Gwydion is at least 599 years old but I could be wrong because I did not calculate for the time flux (5,600?).

Harkon Lukas is 168, but he seems to have effectively stopped aging.

Hazlik is 77. I haven't seen anything to indicate his aging has slowed.

Ivana Boritsi & Ivan Dilisnya are both 61. I think they age normally, but Ivana at least should be doing everything she can to preserve her youth.

Jacqueline Montarri is 281, but her curse renders her effectively immortal.

Jacqueline Renier is 68, although her aging may have slowed.

Jander Sunstar has been a vampire for 775 years.

Jezra Wagner has been a spectre for the last 324 years.

Kateri Shadowborn would be 165 years old now.

Loht & Maeve are 4,955 years old (time flux).

Lyssa von Zarovich is 225 years old and became a vampire 196 years ago, although she has the powers of a 229 years old vampire.

Maeve (the druid) is 44.

Malocchio Aderre (the Dukkar) is 3, but has a fake I.D.

Malus Sceleris is 38 years old.

Mayonaka is 111 years old and has been a vampire for 94 years.

Merilee Markuza (the *Child Vampire*) has been draining blood for 165 years (having been turned into a vampire at the age of 10).

Morgoroth is 150 years old (speculation based on the assumption he was 40 when he encountered Ferran Shadowborn).

Nathan Timothy is 66, but he has Eowin's genes.
Nostalia Romaine (the 1st ermordenung) is 59, but she still looks as though she were in the prime of life.
Prince Othmar Bolshnik is 42, and ages normally.
Rudolph van Richten is 79 years old at time of disappearance (BC 750).
Rudolph Von Aubrecker (son of Wilhelm, and better known as the *Living Brain*) is 56, but he's well-preserved.
Shelaugh ApFittle is 68. There's nothing to keep her from aging.
Soth has been a death knight for 384 years. Leaving him only a few millenia left on his sentence.
Strahd von Zarovich was born 451 years ago and has been a vampire for 399 years (became a vampire at the age of 52).
Tara Kolyana is 32 years old.
The Three Hags (The Mindefisk Sisters) are 75 (became hags 59 years ago, but they don't age anymore).
Tiyet has been a mummy for the last 186 years (became undead at 20 year old).
Tristen ApBlanc is 543 years old, making him look about 54. *Wilfred Godefroy* was born 240 years ago, but he has been haunting Mordentshire for 171 years.
Tristessa is something older than 162 years (she is a Shadow Elf, so her real age is basically unknown due to the time flux and immortality).
Sir Tristen Hiregaard is 86, but he tends to look about a decade younger than he is.
Urik Von Kharkov has been a vampire for 145 years (assuming he was 30 when he became a Vampire).
Victor Mordenheim is 101, but he stopped aging when he created Adam.
Vlad Drakov is 85. His aging seems to have been slowed slightly, but not by much.
Wilhelm Von Aubrecker (political leader of Lamordia) is 77, and looks it.
Yagno Petrovna is 76 and seems to be aging normally.

I took as many of these numbers as possible from canonical sources, but on a number I had to deduce a few dates from vague clues in RL material.

John W. Mangrum

Darklords of Ravenloft

By Alanik Ray

Note: the curses written in italics are only *proposed ideas*, since the official supplements do not to attribute a specific curse to that particular Darklord.

Name	Domain	Class/Race	Curse
Adam (Mordenheim's Monster)	Lamordia	Flesh Golem	To endlessly seek (in vain) love and companionship and to become human
Aderre, Gabrielle	Invidia (up to BC 747)	Vistana Enchantress	She hates Vistani but cannot harm them
Aderre, Malocchio	Invidia (after BC 747)	Dukkar	???
Althea	Demise	Medusa	Seeks companionship but her gaze petrifies
Anhktepot	Har'Akir	5 th grade Mummy Priest	Wants to live like a normal human again, but cannot escape his undead state but for 24hrs
ApBlanc, Tristen	Forlorn	Ghost/Vampyre	To eternally live as vampyr and ghost, experiencing his past/present/future in a crazy undiscernible pattern each day
Arijani	Sri Raji	Rakshasa	Fears to be killed by the same crossbow bolt that killed his father
Azalin	Darkon (Pre-Requiem)	Lich Mage	Unable to learn new magic and escape RL
Bleysmith, Sir Torrence	Staunton Bluffs	Ghost (4 th magnitude)	Unable to kill the Avergnites who conquered his land, suffers pain inflicted to his corpse
Bluebeard	Blaustein	Uxoricide Fighter	Seeks in vain a wife that will obey him, but cannot marry women from Blaustein (who'd serve him utterly), because he sees them with the visages of his dead wives
Boritsi, Ivana	Borca	Poisoner	She seeks a true love but her kiss is deadly
Chang, Tsien	I'Cath	Witch	<i>Fears reprisal from the gods for her crimes</i>
Davion the Mad	Thornewood	Demented Wizard	Suffers split personalities
Death	Il Aluk (Post-Requiem)	Entity	None
d'Honaire, Dominic	Dementlieu	Illusionist-Mesmerist	He's ugly to the eyes of all women he loves
Diamabel	Pharazia	Dark Angel	Abhors his new form and kills infidels trying to be forgiven by his deity
D' Polarno, Stezen	Ghastria	Nobleman Fighter	Longs to feel love for life, but regains it only one day each year

Dilisnya, Ivan	Borca (Dorvinia pre GC)	Poisoner Thespian	Lost his taste and hates those who display it
Dominiani, Dr. (Daclaud Heinfroth)	Dominia	Cerebral Vampire	Constantly hears laughter mocking him for the small domain he rules
Donskoy, Lord	Ravallah	Nobleman	Cannot have heirs and is slowly rotting away
Drakov, Vlad	Falkovnia	Merciless Warrior	Unable to conquer neighbouring lands
Easan the Mad	Vechor	Mad Elf-Wizard	Makes experiments of soul-transfer but has forgotten why (has a spirit in his body)
Ebonbane	Shadowborn Manor	Demon trapped in a Magical Sword	Imprisoned inside the house and taunted by the geist of Lady Kateri Shadowborn
Evensong, Baron Lyron	Claveria	Immortal Bard	To eternally live in his manor, acting normally only one day each century
Faith-Hold, Elenia	Nidalia	Fanatic Paladin	Unable to purge Evil from her dominion
Garvyn, Captain	Ship of Horrors	Cursed Fighter	Unable to leave his ship
Godefroy, Lord Wilfred	Mordent	Ghost (5 th magnitude)	Haunted by the ghosts of wife & daughter
Gundar, Duke	Gundarak	Vampire	???
Gwydion	Shadow Rift	Shadowelf	Trapped in the Obsidian Gate
Hazlik	Hazlan	Red Wizard	Hates wizards: he's haunted by the dreams of his humiliation at their hands; sleeps little
Headless Horseman	Winding Road	Headless Horseman	<i>Seeks a new head</i>
Hive Queen	Timor	Marikith	Afraid of giving birth to a new queen
House of Lament	House of Lament	Haunted House (unknown spirits)	Eternally seeks new souls to keep it companionship
Illithid God Brain	Bluetspur	Illithid Brain Pool	<i>Cannot experience anything except by 'living' through other people's experiences</i>
Juste, Lemot Sedium	Scaena	Playwright	Sees all living actors as props and cannot believe his own dramas
Karn, Jack	Farelle	Tinkerer	<i>Wants to be recognized as a genius but everyone forgets his inventions</i>
Kas the Destroyer	Tovag	Vampire	Unable to find his Sword, which could help him kill his arch-enemy Vecna
King Crocodile	Wildlands	Giant Crocodile	Wants somebody to cure its disease before it dies but always eats those who help it
Kloggin, Galf	Forest of Shadows (Necropolis)	Wererat	<i>Haunted by the ghost of the woman he slew</i>

Laveeda, Leticia, Lorinda	Tepest	Hags	Unable to find somebody who loves them
Lukas, Harkon	Kartakass	Wolfwere Bard	Wants to rule a true kingdom, not a petty land
Malbus	Al-Kathos	Ram-headed abomination	<i>Rules over weak people not fierce warriors</i>
Malken	Nova Vaasa	Alter-ego	Constantly fighting his alter-ego sir Tristen
Maligno	Odiare	Carrionette	Wants a human body for his soul
Markov, Frantisek	Markovia	Shapechanging Butcher	Unable to assume his old human form
McFadden, Glennis	Boglands (Necropolis)	Green Hag	???
Meredoth	Nocturnal Sea	Necromancer	<i>Unable to pursue his studies because he's always interrupted by his undead servants</i>
Mircea, Ladislav	Sanguinia	Vampire	<i>Longs to sail again</i>
Misroi, Anton	Souragne	Zombie Lord	Cannot leave his swamp
Mistwalker, Trillen	Mistlands (Necropolis)	Ghost (3 rd magnitude)	Obsessed with finding a tower whose content he forgot
Monette, Captain	L'Ile de la Tempete	Werebat	Longs adventure as sailors but grows weak if he leaves his island
Mordenheim, Dr. Victor	Lamordia	Mad Scientist	Unable to revive his wife
Morgoroth	Avonleigh	Necromancer	<i>Unable to awaken his love and leave RL</i>
Nightmare Man	Nightmare Lands	Entity	Unable to capture his victims' dreams in standing paintings
Obour, Ilsabet	Kislova	Alchemist	Unable to exact vengeance upon her husband; must feed on other's pain to survive
Petrovna, Yagno	G'Henna	High Priest	Doubts his own deity's existance
Phantom Lover	Leederick	Ghost (5 th magnitude)	???
Puncheron	Risibilos	Jester	???
Puppetmaster	l'Morai	???	???
Radaga	Daglan	Necromancer	<i>Fears undeath</i>
Radanavich, Madame	Bleak House	Ghost (4 th magnitude)	Obsessed with getting revenge
Renier, Jacqueline	Richemulot	Wererat	Reverts to rat form in front of those she loves
Salt-Biter, Draga	Saragossa	Wereshark	Unable to live above surface, loathes sharks
Sceleris, Malus	Nosos	Nobleman	Haunted by his father's ghost, hates nature <i>and would like to be a good father himself</i>

Shinpi, Haki	Rokushima Taiyoo	Geist	Unable to affect his sons' actions
Silvertress, Beryl	Mountains of Misery (Necropolis)	Dwarf Vampire	Obsessed with killing the vampire who made her, filled with paranoia
Skragg, Damon	Jagged Coast (Necropolis)	Ghoul Lord	???
Sodo	Zherisia/Paridon	Doppelganger	Unable to hold on to a single form
Soth, Lord Loren	Sithicus (up to 753 BC)	Death Knight	Seeks in vain his lost love Kitiara
Spulzeer, Chardath	Aggarath	Madman	Imprisoned in a gemstone; suffers split personalities
Thakok-An	Kalidnay	Templar	Torn between the need to awaken her lover and the fear of losing him once awakened
The Baron	Aerie	???	<i>Cannot leave his castle even though it can fly everywhere in the Demiplane</i>
Timothy, Alfred	Verbrek	Werewolf Priest	Hates his human form, <i>cannot turn into wolf form by daytime</i>
Timothy, Nathan	Arkandale	Werewolf	Cannot leave the Musarde river
Tiyet	Sebua	4 th grade Mummy	Despises her nature but craves human hearts
Tristessa	Keening	Banshee	Unable to get back her dead baby and obsessed with vengeance
Valkraan	Maridrar	???	???
van Riese, Captain Pieter	Sea of Sorrows	Ghost (5 th magnitude)	Unable to chart the sea to return to his world
Vecna	Cavitius	Demigod	Obsessed with escaping RL
von Kharkov, Baron Urik	Valachan	Nosferatu	Torn between his feral nature and his desire to live like a normal human
von Zarovich, Count Strahd	Barovia	Vampire Necromancer	Obsessed with gaining Tatyana's love, always doomed to lose her
Vormoff, Yako	Vale of Tears (Necropolis)	Vassalich	Obsessed with finding his phylactery to gain full lichdom
Whelm, Friar	Estrangia	Coraltan (?)	???
Zolnik, Gregor	Vorostokov	Loup du Noir Werewolf	Despises his nature and wants to be considered a hero

Domain Equipment Tables

By M. Graydon

Stone Age.

Markovia, Sebua (children), Timor, The Nightmare Lands (Abber Nomads)

Weapons.

<i>Adze</i>	3 gp
<i>Battle Axe</i>	15 gp
<i>Hand Axe</i>	6 gp
Stone Axe	5 sp
Blowgun	1 gp
Barbed Dart	1 sp
Needle	2 cp
Bolas	5 sp
Boomerang	5 sp
Short Bow	15 gp
<i>Flight Arrow</i>	3 sp / 12
Stone Arrow	3 cp / 12
Club	--
War Club	2 gp
<i>Dagger</i>	2 gp
Bone Dagger	1 sp
Stone Dagger	2 sp
Dart	5 sp
<i>Harpoon</i>	20 gp
Bone Harpoon	1 gp
<i>Javelin</i>	5 sp
Stone Javelin	5 cp
<i>Knife</i>	5 sp
Bone Knife	3 cp
Stone Knife	5 cp
Throwing Knife	5 gp
Lasso	5 sp
<i>Parang or Machete</i>	8 gp
Quarterstaff	--
Rock	--
Sling	5 cp
Sling Stone	--
<i>Spear</i>	2 gp
Stone Spear	2 sp

Armor.

Buckler Shield	1 gp
Small Shield	3 gp
Medium Shield	7 gp
Large Shield	10 gp
Leather Armor	5 gp

<i>Light Scale Mail</i>	80 gp
Cord Armor	10 gp
Hide Armor	35 gp
Padded Armor	4 gp
<i>Studded Leather Armor</i>	20 gp
Wood / Bone Armor	50 gp
<i>Cap</i>	4 gp
Leather Helm	1 gp

Italic entries are available only if metal is available.

Tools List. (These are available in all settings except for Stone Age.)

Adze	3 sp
Belaying Pin	2 cp
Bottle	--
Club	--
Great Club	2 gp
Grain Flail	5 sp
Fork	8 sp
Attached Gaff	2 gp
Held Gaff	5 cp
Grapple	5 gp
Hatchet	2 gp
Hammer	5 sp
Harpoon	20 gp
Big Holy Symbol	25 gp
Knife	5 sp
Lantern	Varies
Lasso	5 sp
Machete	8 gp
Oil Flask	6 cp
Pick	4 gp
Pry Bar	2 gp
Quarterstaff	--
Sap	5 sp
Scourge	2 gp
Scythe	3 gp
Sickle	6 sp
Sledge Hammer	2 gp
Sling	5 cp
Sling Bullet	5 cp
Sling Stone	--
Spade	1 gp
Torch	1 cp
Vial	8 sp
Whip	1 sp

Bronze Age.

Har'Akir, Sebua (Overlord)

Weapons.

Adze	3 sp
Battle Axe	5 gp
Composite Short Bow	75 gp
Short Bow	30 gp
Long Bow	75 gp
Flight Arrow	3 sp / 12
Cestus	1 gp
Dagger	2 gp
Dart	5 sp
Hand Axe	1 gp
Javelin	5 sp
Light Lance	6 gp
Footman's Mace	8 gp
Horseman's Mace	5 gp
Mace-Axe	12 gp
Pike	5 gp
Quarterstaff	--
Spear	8 sp
Long Spear	5 gp
Staff Sling	2 sp
Stinkpot	1 sp
Staff Sling Stone	--
Broadsword	30 gp
Khopesh	15 gp
Sapara	10 gp
Short Sword	15 gp
Sword-Axe	20 gp
Trident	15 gp
Two-Handed Axe	15 gp
Warhammer	2 gp
War Club	2 gp

Armor.

Buckler Shield	1 gp
Small Shield	3 gp
Medium Shield	7 gp
Large Shield	10 gp
Bronze Plate Mail	400 gp
Cord Armor	15 gp
Hide Armor	50 gp
Hoplite Armor	160 gp
Lamellar Shirt	100 gp
Leather Armor	5 gp
Light Scale Mail	80 gp

Metal Lamellar	330 gp
Padded Armor	4 gp
Ring Mail	40 gp
Scale Mail	60 gp
Studded Leather	20 gp
Cap	4 gp
Leather Helm	1 gp

Iron Age.

Forlorn.

Same as Bronze Age, but with Iron.

Classical Age.

Demise, Sri Raji, Kalidnay, Vechor, G'Henna.

Weapons.

Battle Axe	5 gp
Composite Short Bow	75 gp
Short Bow	30 gp
Long Bow	75 gp
Flight Arrow	3 sp / 12
Cestus	1 gp
Dagger	2 gp
Dart	5 sp
Hand Axe	1 gp
Javelin	5 sp
Light Lance	6 gp
Medium Lance	10 gp
Footman's Mace	8 gp
Horseman's Mace	5 gp
Net	5 gp
Pike	5 gp
Pilum	1 gp
Quarterstaff	--
Spear	8 sp
Long Spear	5 gp
Staff Sling	2 sp
Stinkpot	1 sp
Staff Sling Stone	--
Broadsword	15 gp
Drusus	50 gp
Gladius	10 gp
Khopesh	15 gp
Sapara	10 gp
Short Sword	15 gp
Spatha	25 gp
Trident	15 gp

Two-Handed Axe	15 gp
Warhammer	2 gp
<u>Armor.</u>	
Buckler Shield	1 gp
Small Shield	3 gp
Medium Shield	7 gp
Large Shield	10 gp
Banded Mail	275 gp
Bronze Plate Mail	750 gp
Chain Mail	225 gp
Gallic Armor	30 gp
Hoplite Armor	160 gp
Leather Armor	5 gp
Light Scale Mail	80 gp
Lorica Hamata	120 gp
Lorica Segmenta	175 gp
Metal Lamellar	330 gp
Padded Armor	4 gp
Ring Mail	40 gp
Scale Mail	60 gp
Studded Leather	20 gp
Cap	4 gp
Leather Helm	1 gp
Mail Coif	10 gp
Open-Faced Helm	12 gp

Dark Age.

Vorostokov, Bluetspur, Eastern Necropolis.

Weapons.

Battle Axe	5 gp
Composite Short Bow	75 gp
Short Bow	30 gp
Long Bow	75 gp
Flight Arrow	3 sp / 12
Sheaf Arrow	3 sp / 6
Caltrop	2 gp / 12
Light Crossbow	60 gp
Light Quarrel	1 sp
Pellet Bow	25 gp
Pellet	5 cp
Dagger	2 gp
Dart	5 sp
Hand Axe	1 gp
Javelin	5 sp
Light Lance	6 gp
Medium Lance	10 gp

Footman's Mace	8 gp
Horseman's Mace	5 gp
Quarterstaff	--
Spear	8 sp
Long Spear	5 gp
Staff Sling	2 sp
Stinkpot	1 sp
Staff Sling Stone	--
Broadsword	20 gp
Long Sword	45 gp
Sabre	30 gp
Short Sword	15 gp
Two-Handed Axe	15 gp
Warhammer	2 gp

Drinks, Food & Other Props

By Brian Dick & Christopher Dale Nichols
Drinks Of The Core

Instead of stocking your taverns and inns with generic brands of "beer" and "wine," give your players something more specific to work with... and worry about. After all, do you really want to drink the bloody looking fluid poured from a bottle marked Barovian Red? Here's a list of the most famous drinks around the Core:

- Abytta: Alcohol from Vechor. The process to make it goes: take anything fermentable, put it in a bucket, ferment, add olives, drink. Digusting, but extremely potent.
- Anthrazit Brew: It's a vodka distilled from Ghastrian grains. Looks like water, smells like water, tastes like water, but it packs quite a punch. It's essentially what the Dementlieuans use to get those people drunk who don't want to be drunk.
- Barl: a very mellow, amber beer available wherever Halflings can be found.
- Barovian Red: a dry, blood red wine produced (where else?) in Barovia; like a good cabernet
- Brogga: a licorice-flavored liqueur the Vistani drink; causes prophetic dreams.
- Bromkrete: A dusty-tasting liquor made from fermenting pumpkin and other native Hazlani gourds. Sells very cheap.
- Crumble/Flog: A whiskey made from apples. Served in tiny wooden cups. Causes very bad hangovers, and must not be served in metal cups (it reacts with impurities in metal, causing arsenic compounds to form in the drink). Called crumble in Mordent and flog in Necropolis' Vale of Tears region.
- Dwarf Spirits: grain alcohol, think Everclear (from Dragonlance, of course).
- Finneas Stout: a heavy, woody-tasting lager produced in Darkon.
- Ghast Water: Any alcoholic beverage from Ghastria. They all taste like slightly foul water.
- Gort: a country favorite; apple cider (a change from water for those avoiding alcohol).
- Hard Gort: fermented cider.
- Luin Thalla (Blue Flower in Elvish): delicate, dry white wine produced in Darkon; expensive!
- Meeklebrau: a Kartakan beverage, exceedingly bitter but improves the singing voice.
- Nosos Rat-Wine: Made in Nosos (where rats are plentiful) from fermented rat fetuses. This drink is clear (sometimes slightly cloudy, or a least with suspicious floating bits in) and slightly oily, with a light reddish tint. Rat-wine tastes sweet and is potent enough to clean wounds (like vodka and other real life drinks). Like the worms in mescal, rat-wine generally comes with 2 or 3 rat fetuses floating at the bottom of the bottle. Nosos rat-wine comes in a clear glass bottle with a black paper lable (which bears the vinters mark). Some bottles will have a gold embossed label. These are from Lord Sceleris' private stock. Rat-wine is common in Nosos, but rare in the Core (frankly, few people really care to try it, but it has a small following in the upper classes). Nosos rat-wine is illegal in Richemulot (where wererats frown on killing rats to make booze).
- Okioni: A orange based liquor from Rokushima Taiyoo.
- Renier Cellars: medium-sweet red wine; an average Lambrusco produced in Richemulot.

- Scour: Made from specially prepared and fermented beetles, scour is native to G'henna. In G'henna, the priests of Zhakata use large carrion beetles to strip the dead of flesh, so that the bones may be used in building projects. These beetles, when they die, are collected by the priests. The carapace and hard chitinous parts of the beetle are removed, and the remaining soft bits spiced with bitter herbs and fermented. The black alcohol that results is then heavily salted. Kept in earthenware jugs, scour is bitter and salty, and drinking this often causes hallucinations (always pertaining to Zhakatan religion). As scour is produced by the Zhakata's church, this drink is rarely found outside of G'henna.
- Sexton Gold: a sweet white wine mass produced in Dorvinia (now Borca); like Boones Farm.
- Sho-chu: A red rice wine from Rokushima Taiyoo, often served in a little wooden box or a very flat little sake bowl.
- Spinewine: A wine made from thornplums, a fruit found only in the Briarvale region of Nova Vaasa. The thornplum is a very sweet plum-like fruit which grows on briar bushes, much like blackberries. However, the briars have a thicker stem, and larger thorns than blackberries. The thornplum's thorns also secrete an irritant, so that when one is scratched by the thorns it produces a poison ivy-like rash lasting 1d2+2 weeks. The only place where spinewine is produced is the tiny Nova Vaasan village of Hornwood. Due to the limited production, spinewine is moderately expensive.
- Sumpf: A beer brewed in Viaki. Uses grain from a swamp grass native to the region. Come in short green glass bottles
- Tempe Grimm: Wine made from grapes grown in gravelly nutrient-poor soil and low light (generally these are specially adapted quarry pits and mine shafts). The result is a very vinegary wine with an odd metallic taste (due to the fact that Tempe Grimm comes in a metal bottle). The only people that like Tempe Grimm are dwarfs and a (very) few gnomes.
- Tuika: Barovian plum brandy [which has been around since the Black Box, of course].
- White Monk: medium white wine once produced in Gundarak, now very rare; rumored to be blessed.

As for whether or not any of these are actually harmful, that decision has to be made by the individual DM. There are rumors about a bottle or two of Barovian Red known as Year of the Comet which do have magical properties. They were bottled in 351, when a comet was believed to have shone in the Barovian sky during the fermenting making season. The labels on the bottles bear the image of a comet to commemorate the event. Strangely, the rumors about this magical vintage bears disagree on what the magical effects of the beverages are.

[In game terms, choose the effect randomly from your list of magic Potions when the bottle is uncorked.]

As far as pricing these beverages, assume that Renier Cellars and Sexton Gold are "average" and so cost whatever the going rate for "wine" happens to be in your campaign. Barl is more expensive than beer even where it is readily available, and Finneas Stout is about average for ale. All the other drinks are more expensive (with the exception of gort and hard gort, which could be about half and three-quarters the rate of ale). Of course, in remote areas, some of these will be completely unavailable.

Bath

"How would you like that bath?" People are funny animals. Everybody likes to have things arranged to suit their tastes. Some folk like scalding hot baths. Some don't. At the cheapest of inns, all a character is likely to get is a washtub filled with cold water. Finer establishments understand the art of bathing.

For this reason, I make my players choose between two basic types of baths. The first (which I've called a Dwarven Bath, a Mountain Bath, a Country Bath, etc.) is basically "hot wash, cold rinse". The other (the Halfling Bath, Fancy Bath, or just "a Boil") is the good old "hot was, hot rinse." Make sure you have fun with bath time too. Remember that, in the "eras" we're looking at in Ravenloft domains, you simply don't rent a room at the inn with a private bath. There was one room, down the hall, in which communal bathing took place. There's nothing quite like the look on a character's face when he's enjoying a good soak in a Halfling Bath, naked as the day he was born, with his armor and weapons safely back in the room, and noises from the next tub over sound like the guy over there has just started transforming into a werewolf! Also, don't be afraid to add detail just for the sake of detail. It makes the atmosphere seem all the more rich. For example, characters traveling in Darkon/Necropolis are bound to get an education in a real Dwarven bath (which is really a big pool of comfortable warm water in a cold stone room) and a Halfling Bath (which is a large wooden tub with a fire under it to keep the water warm, in a big, steamy sauna-like room).

Food

Finally, pay attention to the food as well. Most inns and meal houses don't have a menu to choose from. Either you're eating the special of the day, or you're ordering an entire meal made from scratch. The advantage of the daily special is that it's already ready already. It's probably stew and you can get in slopped into a bowl made from bread if you want it to go. The trouble with this option is that the special of the day may be several days old. Here's a fun one: DM's roll 1d4 whenever a character orders the special of the day. This determines how many days have passed since the meal was first produced. For every day, add 10% to an initial base 10% for food poisoning. Thus, a roll of 4 on 1d4 yields a 50% (base 10% plus 40%) chance of getting food poisoning.

Characters suffering from food poisoning become violently ill 4+1d4 hours after finishing the meal. Vomiting and diarrhea last a full game day unless treated by a capable herbalist or a cure disease spell. As for a full meal, the advantage is obvious: you're getting a full, well-balanced meal with only a 10% chance of food poisoning (and that's still too low considering the hygienic awareness of the period). The disadvantage here is that you're going to pay dearly for the meal. After all, you're buying the bread that will be made, the butter to be churned, the round of cheese from the "fromagier", the chicken from the butcher, as well as the time and labor to produce the meal.

So, the next time you have an evening to fill and no idea what to do, consider having the characters just spend a couple days in town. You'll be surprised how a good dose of tourista or a surprise in the wine can lead themselves to really scaring players. Sometimes, they're even more eager to go face that nasty Darklord after a night spent at a really bad inn.

Ezran Orders **By C.D. Nichols**

There are 16 major orders within the Church of Ezra, each based on the teachings of one of the main saints of the Church. The saints are Ezra (technically the goddess of the religion), St. Anchora, St. Hala, St. Mishnad, St. Justine, St. Burach, St. Rachael, St. Yamaki, St. Peter the Beggar, St. Judas the Kind, St. Mary the Orphan, St. Itias, St. Sophia, St. Dominic, St. Danielle, and St. Numerian.

The Fellowship of Anchora (also Anchorites)

St. Anchora was a wandering paladin of the Church of Ezra. Noted for traveling into the Land of Endor, a fiend held portion of the original world of the Church of Ezra. Wandering priests, the anchorites original mission was to travel the world spreading the word of Ezra through deeds and speech. This mission has grown dimmer in the Lands of the Mists.

The Sisters of Hala (Halanes)

St. Hala was a Holy Mother of the Church of Ezra in the pre-exile days of the church. She was responsible for the conversion of many persons of great evil. It was said that a day spent with Hala would lead even the death knights of Endor to tears of remorse. Halanes offer retreat from the world, and spiritual healing and conversion. They have the greatest ill-luck of any order.

Brothers of Mishnad (Mishnads)

Mishnad was the young king of the semitic people Ezra was a part of, ruling from the holy city of Aritez. The epic love of Mishnad and Ezra was legendary and tragic. Mishnads are the protectors of love, conducting weddings, baptisms, and funerals. They are also charged with artistic duties, working to produce and encourage work of music and art.

The Justine Brethern (Justinians)

St. Justine was the Holy Mother of the Church of Ezra who finally unified the human nations against the Land of Endor. The resulting peace between the human nation lasted until the destruction of that world by the Endorian fiends. The Justinians are political envoys, peacemakers, and diplomats for the Church of Ezra.

The Fellowship of Burach (Burakim)

Burach was Mishnad's court scribe and aide. He scribed the original versions of the books of the Ezran Gospels. This function is continued by the Burakim, who scribe the holy texts of the Church of Ezra.

The Host of Rachael (Rachaelines)

Rachael was a rank and file soldier in Mishnad's army, who was chosen by Ezra to become the head general of Ezra's army. Under her, the fiends of Endor gained no ground, a great victory at the time. The Rachaelines form the military arm of the Church of Ezra. They are a very small order, most serving as guards at the main cathedrals.

The Children of St. Yamaki (Yamakites)

St. Yamaki was a blue dragon who converted to the Church of Ezra. After his conversion, he proved so faithful he was made a bishop. St. Yamaki later defended the city of Erostat against the forces of the Endorian general Takemalech, a pit fiend. He died slaying the fiend, and was post-humously made an arch-bishop and sainted. The Yamakites are exorcists, seeking to destroy fiends and other evil spirits. The rainment of this order consists of a grey hooded robe with a blue silhouette of a dragon and silver chains with Ezran holy symbols on each wrist (like a charm bracelet). The order carries the text Rites of the Adversary, and text of exorcism rituals.

The Brethren of the Rock (Petranes)

St. Peter the Beggar was a street beggar who was picked off the street to become the Holy Mother's right-hand archbishop. The Petranes are charged with the care of the poor.

The Lamed Brothers of Judas (Judasites)

St. Judas the Kind was a follower of Ezra. He served with her as a healer, though he himself had both legs and an arm withered. Judas had a divine talent to heal the lamed and crippled, and while he was able to use this ability on himself, chose not to as a sign of humility. Judasites help the chronically injured and ill - lepers, amputees, and others.

Orphans of St. Mary (Marians)

St. Mary was an orphan in the holy city of Aritez, who was taken in by Ezra and raised as Ezra and Mishnad's daughter. She went on to become the second Holy Mother of the Church of Ezra, and founded the Great Orphanage of Aritez, one of the Church of Ezra's prime institutions. Marians run the Church of Ezra's orphanages and perform other work with children.

The Order of St. Itias (Itians)

Itias was a childhood friend of Ezra and followed her throughout her ministry. He was scholar, renowned for the clarity of his explanations of Ezra's word, as well as for their startling depth. The secret book Confessions of Itias also reveals the secret passion he held toward Ezra. The Itians are teachers, seeking to enlighten the people. They also hold sway over matters of science, working to keep man from over reaching the boundaries of nature.

The Children of Sophia (Sophians)

St. Sophia was apparently a Holy Mother of the Church of Ezra, but all records of her time have been lost or destroyed. The Sophians are gnostics, and believe that the physical world is evil and that only pure spirit is pure. Thus, Sophians frequently commune with the spirit world, many times drawing up evil spirits which they believe are holy beings. The Neuvuchar Springs group is primarily Sophians, and it is said that a powerful spirit is pent beneath the cathedral there, but only barely.

The Congregation of Dominic (Dominicans)

St. Dominic the Blind was a prophet whose prophecies came startlingly true. An arch-bishop, he lived for nearly two hundred years. The Dominicans work to generate and interpret prophecy. The order is extremely small.

The Host of St. Danielle (Daniellines)

St. Danielle was head of the defense in the Bloody Seige, when an Endorian army of vampires laid seige to Aritezh. She personally save the Holy Mother from a pack of the monsters. Since then, the Daniellines have been charged to combat the flesh of evil as the Yamakites battle the spirit of evil. They are skilled monster hunters.

(Yamakites handle exorcisable creatures, such as ghosts, spirits, and fiends; Daniellines handle anything else.)

The Order of Sorrow (Numerians)

Numeron was the arch-bishop who lead the thirty year exodus through the Mists. The Holy Mother had perished in Aritezh and the new one was merely three years old. Thus Numeron was called to lead the journey.

The Numerians study the Mists and seek to find a sure path to the new land which the Church will find after 'the time of great darkness.' Also, they watch for the prophecied return of Ezra.

Numerians wear black hooded robes, black gloves and boots, and a black face veil with white eye-spots. They are the smallest order, and the most secretive, rarely leaving the depths of the Great Cathedral.

The Elders of Ezra (Ezradim)

Ezra was a goddess worshipped by a desert people. In due time, she incarnated herself as a human. As a human Ezra lived a typical life until she turned sixteen. She became aware of her true nature, and began travelling among the people preaching her gospel, healing (through both medicine and divine means), advocating resistance against the encroaching Endorians. She discovered love, friendship, and joy, making these central to her doctrine. She was martyred at the hands of the Endorians. Over the centuries, the message of Ezra has been blunted, dulled and forgotten. The Ezradim are the true leaders of the Church of Ezra, the leaders and policy makers. Almost every church, save the very smallest are run by an Ezradim. Beyond that, the Ezradim are the church's healers, the physicians who understand the most about the treatment and curing of injury and disease. They work by equal portions of divine healing and medicinal and surgical techniques. The vestaments of the Ezradim are white robes (no hood) with light blue trim, and a gold chain bearing a Ezran holy symbol. Many Ezradim also carry a crozier.

Chris D. Nichols

Famous Castles Of Ravenloft

(compiled by Barry Trevelyan, John W. Mangrum, Christopher D. Nichols and Alanik Ray)

Major Castles

ApFittle Hall (Birnam - Forlorn)
Blacktower Heights (home of the Rivtloff family of nobles, overlooking Rivtloff - Nova Vaasa).
Castle Avernus (Darkon)
Castle Blaustein (Bluebeard's castle)
Castle Draccipetri (Drakov's Castle in Lekar - Falkovnia)
Castle Faerhaaven (Sir Tristen's castle - Nova Vaasa)
Castle Hunadora (Gundarak -cum- Invidia)
Castle Loupet (Invidia)
Castle Pantara (Valachan)
Castle Ravenloft (Barovia)
Castle Stonecrest (Staunton Bluffs)
Castle Stonegard (Prince Othmar's castle in Kantora -Nova Vaasa)
Castle Tristennoira (Forlorn)
Citadel Cavitius (Cavitius - Burning Peaks cluster)
Dargacht Keep (Skald - Kartakass; it burned and toppled in 613)
Grim Fasteness (Il Aluk - Darkon)
Guirgiu (Lord Mircea's castle - Sanguinia)
Irkat Thaan (a ruined castle near Immol, used by the Ildi'Thaan*)
Kas Fortress (Tovag - Burning Peaks cluster)
Mahakala (Arijani's temple - Sri Raji)
Nartok Keep (Nartok - Darkon)
NeDragaard Keep (Sithicus - Lord Soth's domain)
Schloss Von Aubrecker (Lamordia)
The Citadel (Karina - Invidia)
The Faithhold (Touraine - Nidalia)
The Palace of Bones (I'Cath)
Veneficus (Hazlik's estate - Hazlan)
(*The Ildi'Thaan are a scret society dedicated to finding the missing parts of a sacred book. This book, once all the parts are collected and decoded, would allow the Ildi'Thaan to reclaim their homeland: Thaan, better known as Bluetspur.
As for the castle, it is in an advanced state of ruin (think about the castle in Ladyhawke, full of crumbling and unsafe areas). The Ildi'Thaan claimed it and gave it the name.

Smaller Castles (or Big mansions)

Borca Family Estate (Borca)
Dilisnya Family Estate (Dorvinia -cum- Borca)
Easan's Manor (Vechor)
Graben Family Estate (Graben Isle - Nocturnal Sea)
House of Bones (G'Henna)

House of Lament (pocket domain - Borca)
House on Gryphon Hill (Mordent)
Markov's Estate (Markovia)
Meistersinger's Mansion (Harmonia - Kartakass)
Misroi Manor (Souragne)
Neverwere Manor (Baron Evensong's manor in Claveria - Liffe)
Richten Haus (pocket domain)
Sceleris Manor (Nosos)
Schloss Mordenheim (Lamordia)
Shadowborn Manor (Shadowborn Cluster)
Stezen's Manor House (East Riding - Ghastria)
The Tower (Isle of Ravens)
Tiyet's Estate (Sebua)

Unnamed Castles

The vampire darklord Velkaarn lives in a ruined castle somewhere north of Darkon. [*Castle of the Undead*]

King Duderon has a castle in Risibilos. [*Book of Crypts*]

Abd-al-Mamat's Palace of Judgement lies in the little known domain of al-Kathos. [*Judgement of Abd-al-Mamat*]

Malbus, Darklord of al-Kathos, lives in a palace in the Burning Citadel. [*Judgement of Abd-al-Mamat*]

There are probably two more castles in Nova Vaasa as well (one for the Vistins, one for the Chekovs).

Thakok-An lives in a palace in Kalidnay.

The Black Duke had some sort of headquarters too, in a village now wiped off the map.

Diamabel probably lives in a palace in the capital city of Phiraz.

Vlad Drakov has a summer palace in Silbervas.

Unnamed palace in the City of the Dead in Keening.

Gods Of Sri Raji

By J.W. Mangrum

Here are the Legends & Lore write-ups for the gods of the Indian pantheon mentioned in *Web of Illusions* (it's probably the Sri Raji pantheon as well, then).

Brahman (greater god)

Brahman is also known as Hiranyagarbha, Prajapati (both used in the early Vedic age), and many other names. Here, Hiranyagarbha and Prajapati are used interchangeably. Brahman is the world spirit that enfolds all of existence and the divine essence that is hidden in all beings, and of which all beings are a part. Everything that exists – the gods, men, animals, plants, even rocks- is simply a manifestation of the Brahman.

According to legend, in the beginning there were only the waters. From the waters was formed a golden egg (Hiranyagarbha). Prajapati was hatched from the egg, speaking the sounds "bhur," "bhuvah," and "svark," thereby forming the earth, the air, and the sky. Prajapati/Brahman has every power that any god or mortal in the Indian mythos possesses, for all things are a part of him. In his true form, Brahman has a face on each side of his head. There is also a vacant spot on the top of his head where a fifth face was burned off by the gaze of the god Siva.

Role-playing Notes: Though he sees and hears all, Brahman is an aloof god and will involve himself in the affairs of men only when existence itself (i.e., Brahman himself) is threatened.

Statistics: AL: n; WAL: any; AoC: everything; SY: four-faced head.

Duties of the Priesthood: Brahman has no priests in the normal sense, for he is usually worshipped through one of his manifestations as another god. However, all ascetics seeking true spiritual enlightenment may be considered priests of Brahman, so anybody wishing to worship him directly must become an ascetic.

Indra (intermediate god)

Indra, also known in earlier Vedic times as Parjanya, is the god of the atmosphere, storms, and battle. He is the embodiment of aggressive action, a great lover of war, and was the leader of the Vedic gods when the Aryans first entered India. Indra always watches any battle with great interest, and often cannot resist sending his avatar down to participate on the side which has shown him the most favor. He has the power to raise those slain in battle, as well as complete control over anything occurring in the air, such as storms, rain, wind, and especially thunder and lightning. Indra's true form is that of a muscular man with unusually long arms and red skin. His celestial abode is located atop Mount Meru, but he is more often seen riding through the air on his huge white elephant.

Role-playing Notes: Indra is arrogant, selfish, jealous, and completely amoral. He is also prone to gluttony (especially where drink is concerned) and loves all other pleasures of the flesh. When a worshipper who regularly honors him with riotous feasts is about to enter a desperate battle, there is a 5% chance that Indra will send his avatar to help. [I wouldn't count on that in Ravenloft, though.] Omens from Indra come in the forms of storms, lightning, or wind.

Statistics: AL: ce; WAL: chaotic evil, also fighters; AoC: weather, battle; SY: white elephant.

Duties of the Priesthood: Priests of Indra are expected to take an active part in many battles and must never shy away from a chance to engage in combat.

Requirements: AB: standard; AL: ce; WP: any; AR: a; SP: combat, elemental, guardian, healing, summoning*, weather; PW: 10) Raise Dead on any individual killed in combat (before rolls for reincarnation are made); TU: turn.

Varuna (intermediate god)

Varuna is the guardian of rita (cosmic order) and lord of the sky. As the upholder of the physical and moral order, he is the protector of oaths and the divine judge. A constant observer of human actions, Varuna is so vigilant and stern in executing his duties the beings violating their dharmas are sure to suffer for their indiscretions, making Varuna the most feared of all gods in the Vedic pantheon. He has the power to see what any being is doing at any time. By looking into a being's heart, Varuna always knows whether the individual is being completely honest and whether or not he is violating his dharma. In his true form, Varuna is the sky.

Role-playing Notes: Varuna sees and hears all, so it is impossible to keep anything secret from him. He especially loathes lawful oath-breakers and never fails to punish them for violating their dharma, but this does not apply to oath-breakers of chaotic or neutral alignments. Omens from Varuna generally take a celestial form, such as the appearance of a comet, ball of fire, or eclipse.

Statistics: AL: ln; WAL: ln; AoC: cosmic order, dharma; SY: clouds.

Duties of the Priesthood: Priests of Varuna often serve as judges or lawmen. On pain of losing their priestly status, they must always keep their word. They may never participate or condone any sort of rebellion against established authority.

Requirements: AB: standard; AL: ln; WP: mace, hammer, flail; AR: a; SP: all, astral, charm, combat*, divination, guardian*, healing, protection, sun; PW: 5) Know Alignment; 10) Detect Lie (no saving throw); TU: nil.

Yama (intermediate god)

As the first man to die, Yama became the lord and judge of the dead. His palace (Yamasadena) and his city (Yamapura) are located in the far south. [Perhaps not literally.] Between the land of the living and his kingdom flows the bloody river Vaitarani, which all spirits must cross on their way to Yama's judgment seat. After Yama has considered the spirit's deeds in life, he decides what form the spirit's new body should take. When Yama's judgment is complete, the spirit goes to its new body in the world of the living. (Sometimes, in the cases of the very wicked, this journey takes the spirit through 21 hells of fire, filth, icy winds, thorns, etc.) Only those who have achieved unity with Brahman escape Yama's judgment. Yama has the power to see a man's entire history at a glance. In his true form, he is a green-skinned man with copper-colored eyes. He is usually dressed in red and is often seen riding his giant water buffalo.

Role-playing Notes: Yama's duties as judge of the dead keep him too busy to interfere in human affairs. No amount of praying or beseeching on the part of a mortal will influence his judgment, though he will often listen to another god's opinion in regards to the fate of a dead person. Those who are likely to die soon often receive visits from one of his four-eyed dogs, an owl, or a pigeon.

Statistics: AL: ln; WAL: ln; AoC: judgment of the dead; SY: red mace.

Duties of the Priesthood: Those worshipping Yama are responsible for preparing the spirits and bodies of the dead for cremation. They may never leave a dead intelligent being uncremated or they risk the temporary loss of their spell abilities.

Requirements: AB: standard; AL: ln; WP: axe; AR: a; SP: all, creation*, divination*, elemental*, healing, necromantic; PW: 1) Affect Normal Fires; 3) Produce Flame; 8) Speak With Dead; 15) trace any reincarnated spirit to its new body; TU: command.

Savitri (intermediate god)

Savitri is the god of the day long sun. He causes all things to move and work, the tides to ebb and flow. Like his complement Surya, he sees all that occurs under the sun's light. Unlike Surya, however, he is not always a gentle god; what he sees sometimes angers him and causes him to shine down with unmerciful intensity, or to hide his glorious face from the world. He has the power to bestow life upon any inanimate object (including a dead body), to drive away rot and decay, and to move any object at will. In his true form, Savitri is a man with golden eyes, hands, and tongue. He is seen every day riding his golden chariot across the sky.

Role-playing Notes: Savitri is generally a beneficent god, but he has a bad temper and is quick to punish transgressions with oppressive heat. Like Surya, he despises thieves, murderers, and others who conduct their business in the shelter of the night, and will never aid such a character – even if it means leaving more worthy individuals to their fates. When one of his worshippers dies, there is a percentile chance equal to the worshipper's karma points (or a flat 5% if you are not using the optional karma rules) that Savitri will restore the dead individual to life. [This might not be the case in Ravenloft.]

Statistics: AL: ng; WAL: ng; AoC: life, light; SY: full sun.

Duties of the Priesthood: Priests of Savitri must always keep a light shining in their homes. They must always help those who have been victimized by thieves, murderers, and other criminals.

Requirements: AB: standard; AL: ng; WP: any; AR: a; SP: all, combat, creation, divination*, elemental, healing, protection, sun; PW: 1) Continual Light; 10) Raise Dead (before incarnation checks are made); 15) Fire Breath (3d10 damage to range of 30'); TU: turn.

Siva (intermediate god)

Siva should not be mistaken for the Hindu god "Shiva the Destroyer," which is a composite of many older gods. Siva is such an important manifestation of Rudra (the destructive god of storms and diseases) that he can be regarded as a separate deity. Siva is power incarnate, a fierce ascetic who repeatedly brings the world to the brink of annihilation by dancing in fire. He is the negative force of the cosmos, destroying whatever he touches in order that it may be reincorporated into unity with the spirit of the cosmos, destroying whatever he touches in order that it may be reincorporated into unity with the spirit of the cosmos. Anything that Siva touches is utterly annihilated and can never be reconstructed, raised, or reincarnated. In his true form, Siva is a man with four arms and three eyes, usually wearing a tiger skin and a snake collar.

Role-playing Notes: Though determined to destroy all of existence, Siva does not consider himself evil. He is merely attempting to return everything to unity with the cosmic spirit. He is an impersonal god who seldom answers prayers, but he occasionally sends his avatar to defend one of his temples.

Statistics: AL: ne; WAL: ne; AoC: destruction; SY: cobra head.

Duties of the Priesthood: Priests of Siva are noted for their monthly fire dance. After scouring the countryside in search of sacrifices (which includes everything from furniture to living beings), the priests spend several hours dancing in a huge bon-fire. They end the ceremony by throwing everything they have collected into the fire.

Requirements: AB: standard; AL: ne; WP: any; AR: a; SP: all, combat, divination, elemental, necromantic, sun, weather; PW: 1) immune to fire damage; TU: control (upon reaching 10th level).

Kali (intermediate god)

Also known as the Black Mother, Kali is a strange and terrible goddess nearly as ancient as India itself. She is the embodiment of energy, both creative and destructive. In that she is a creator of life, she is similar to the mother goddesses of many cultures. But she also eats her own sons and destroys the life that she creates, and is almost unique in this aspect of her being. Kali radiates a peculiar Charm (as spell) over men, and is beloved as the beautiful, horrible, life-giving, life-taking mother. Kali has the power to create living beings from non-animate matter, and the power to create living beings from non-animate matter, and the power to kill any creature with a mere thought. In her true form, Kali is a four-armed woman with red eyes, a skeletal face, and a blood-smeared body. She seldom wears any clothing but a skirt of severed hands.

Role-playing Notes: Kali delights in both killing and creation, for both are expressions of the essential energy she embodies. She is equally likely (5%) to send her avatar to aid a woman in childbirth or a murderer in danger. Omens from Kali often come in the forms of terrible visions or blissful dreams.

Statistics: AL: ce; WAL: ce; AoC: life and death; SY: skull.

Duties of the Priesthood: Kali's priests are all members of the secret, murderous thagna cult. They are all prominent and well respected members of their community who lead double lives, stealing out at night to prove their devotion to Kali by strangling innocent travelers with their knotted cords. [Obviously, the situation is somewhat different in Sri Raji.]

Requirements: AB: standard, but must also meet requirements for thieves; AL: ce; WP: knotted cord, club, any blood-less weapon; AR: g; SP: all, charm, combat, creation, healing, necromantic; PW: 1) move silently and hide in shadows as a ranger of the same level; 10) Turn Invisible; TU: turn.

Rudra (intermediate god)

Rudra is the god of storms and disease, the bringer of death, and the malevolent deity who feeds on the corpses of those slain in battle. Because he has the power to Cause Disease, however, he also has the power to cure it – though he utilizes this ability far too rarely. Rudra is also a lord of the animals, with the ability to spread disease or vitality among them as well. He carries a large black bow which fires invisible arrows of disease. He has the power to create a storm at will. In his true form, Rudra is a red-skinned man with a blue neck.

Role-playing Notes: Rudra delights in spreading disease. When he is not terrorizing some part of India with a terrible storm, he is busily firing his invisible arrows of disease at hapless mortals. If properly worshipped, by sacrificing a cow upon waste land, Rudra may be persuaded not to fire his arrows at a particular community. Omens from Rudra often take the form of illness or an unexpected storm.

Statistics: AL: ne; WAL: ne; AoC: storms, disease; SY: black bow.

Duties of the Priesthood: Unlike most priests, Rudra's clerics are seldom interested in invoking their deity. Instead, they spend most of their efforts in performing rites designed to sate their god so he will stay away and leave their homes alone.

Requirements: AB: standard; AL: ne or ng; WP: bow, club; AR: a; SP: all, animal, divination, elemental, protection, weather; PW: 5) immune to all magical or mundane diseases; 10) Cure Disease; TU: turn.

Puchan (intermediate god)

Puchan is the god who guides, watching over travelers, ushering the dead to Yama's realm, leading men to wealth or away from trouble, and showing herdsmen where to find good pastures for their cattle. He also brings all things into proper relationship with one another, blessing marriages, protecting men from those would exploit them, and determining what shall be food and who shall be the one to eat it. As the protector of travelers, he often comes into contact with Kali, whose priests prey on travelers in order to perform their bloody rites. In his true form, Puchan appears to be a normal man, often carrying a golden lance.

Role-playing Notes: Puchan is a beneficent god who tries to help mortals by setting them into the proper relationships with their environment. He is especially disturbed by Kali and her worshippers, whom he considers twisted manifestations of the cosmic order. In areas plagued by Kali's sects, Puchan's avatar is often found begging for passage with a group of travelers that seems likely to be attacked by the thagnas.

Statistics: AL: ng; WAL: ng; AoC: relationships; SY: golden lance.

Duties of the Priesthood: Puchan's priests are often called upon to perform marriages, since it is known that Puchan himself will watch over marriages performed by his clergy. They are also asked to perform funereal rites, and are consulted before herdsmen move their cows. One of the most important duties of Puchan's priests, however, remains highly secret: they are often the ones who organize resistance against unjust nobles and rajas.

Requirements: AB: standard; AL: ng; WP: lance, bow, club; AR: a; SP: all, charm, combat, creation, divination*, healing, protection, summoning; PW: 5) Find The Path; 10) Raise Dead; TU: turn.

Vayu (lesser god)

Vayu is the god of the winds, sometimes gentle and life-giving, sometimes terrible and fierce. He was born of the last breath of Purusa, a primeval giant whom the gods sacrificed to create the earth. Vayu's most notable power is the ability to give life to any item. Items that are firmly attached to the ground, such as a flagpole, receive only plant-like intelligence and can do little except grow. Items that can be moved without uprooting the earth, such as a boulder, receive animal intelligence. Only items that previously had the capacity for logical thought, such as a human skeleton, receive sentient abilities. Vayu also has the ability to create cyclones and typhoons with winds up to 150 mph. Live beings caught in such winds must save versus breath weapon every other round. Failure indicates that they have been hit by flying debris (1d6 damage for every 10 mph of wind speed). Vayu has no form and can only be sensed indirectly, such as when he brushes past one's skin or whistles through the treetops.

Role-playing Notes: Vayu is a fickle god, bringing moisture and breathing life into the earth one moment, and in the next wreaking terrible destruction with his angry winds. He sometimes shows special restraint when a village pays him the proper worship.

Statistics: AL: cn; WAL: cn; AoC: wind, life, destruction; SY: a sapling bending in the wind.

Duties of the Priesthood: Priests of Vayu must live in homes that have at least one opening exposed to the wind on all sides. Their duties consist mostly of performing the proper rites so that Vayu will look kindly upon their village.

Requirements: AB: standard; AL: cn; WP: bow and arrow, blowgun (with poison), whip, spear; AR: a; SP: all, astral, creation, elemental, healing, plant, protection, weather; PW: 10) Breath of Life (animate any non-living item for 1d10 turns, or use as a Raise Dead spell on animal and human life); TU: turn.

Tvashtri (demigod)

In the early days of the Vedic Age, Tvashtri was a priest of such power that he dared to create a son whom he hoped would deprive Indra of his position as king of the gods. When Indra jealously destroyed his son, Tvashtri created a monster so powerful that Indra had the resort to trickery to defeat it. As this story illustrates, Tvashtri is a gifted inventor, and it is no wonder that he eventually earned the gift of immortality (either through learning its secret or as a gift of the gods). Now known as Tvashtri the Artificer, he is the patron of artisans, architects, and inventors. Tvashtri spends most of his time creating the weapons of the gods, many of which he enchants so that they will never do him any harm. In his true form, Tvashtri appears to be nothing more than an ordinary man.

Role-playing Notes: Tvashtri loves inventions, and there is a 5% chance that he will appear to lend his aid to anybody of good alignment who is attempting to build a particularly interesting or difficult item. [Again, I wouldn't count on this in Ravenloft.]

Statistics: AL: cg; WAL: cg; AoC: inventions and creation; SY: pinwheel fan.

Duties of the Priesthood: Tvashtri's priests often serve their villages or companions as engineers. If they do not show resourcefulness in solving their problems, Tvashtri may express his displeasure by refusing to grant them more spells.

Requirements: AB: standard, but Int of 16 and Wis of 15; AL: cg; WP: any, but must be invented by the priest himself; AR: c; SP: all, combat, creation, divination*, elemental, guardian, healing, plant, protection, summoning; PW: 10) Enchant An Item with a saving throw modifier of +4 (usable once per year); TU: nil.

Ratri (lesser god)

Ratri is the magnificent queen of the night. Although she is the sovereign of darkness and all things that abide in it, she is not a personification of night. Rather, she rules the darkness as a shepherd rules his herd, by watching over it without being a part of it. Ratri has the power to see anything that occurs under cover of night, and to create or dispel darkness at will. In her true form, she is the silhouette of a voluptuous woman. She has an uncountable number of eyes, which shine down on the earth as stars.

Role-playing Notes: Every night, Ratri parts the clouds of darkness so that Ushas may find her way to the eastern sky and open its gates for Surya, lord of the dawn. As this action might suggest, the Queen of Darkness, Ratri is not necessarily the patroness of thieves, robbers, and

murderers. When they pray to her and perform the necessary sacrifices, she sometimes helps them by concealing their activities. But she is also a fickle goddess, and if she is even slightly offended by a denizen of the night, she may cast a revealing light on his nefarious actions. For this reason, she is much feared by thieves, scoundrels, and murderers as she is venerated. Ratri never sends omens.

Statistics: AL: cn; WAL: any; AoC: night and darkness; SY: silhouette of a woman.

Duties of the Priesthood: Priests of Ratri must sleep during the day and conduct normal activities at night.

Requirements: AB: standard; AL: any chaotic; WP: short sword, dagger, sling; AR: b; SP: all, astral, charm, divination*, guardian, healing, necromantic, protection, summoning; PW: 1) Infravision (60'); 10) Darkness, 15' Radius and Light; TU: nil.

Mitra (intermediate god)

Mitra is a lawful good god of friendship, contracts, warmth, light, and growth; the beneficial aspects of the sun.

Agni (intermediate god)

Agni is the chaotic good god of fire and messages. He is also the god which burns away souls' last impurities, making them immortal, when they achieve final unity with Brahman.

Surya (intermediate god)

Surya is the lawful good god of the rising and setting sun; morning and evening.

Soma (intermediate god)

Soma is the chaotic good god of the moon, plants, prophecy, and soma-juice a powerful concoction.

Ushas (intermediate god)

Ushas is the lawful good goddess of dawn, light, wakefulness, and locks.

Brihaspati (intermediate god)

Brihaspati is the lawful good god of wisdom and worship.

Optional Rule: Dharma, Karma, and Reincarnation

Indian society is founded upon the concepts of dharma, karma, and reincarnation. If you wish to incorporate these concepts into your campaign, you may want to use the following optional rules. A PC's dharma is a combination of character class and alignment. In order to follow his dharma, a character must behave according to the alignment guidelines given in the Player's Handbook. These tenets must be followed strictly, or the character will suffer a karma penalty (see below). For example, a Lawful Good character who participated in the theft of a magic sword would be violating his dharma, for he would be breaching his duty to respect the laws of the land.

In addition to alignment, each class carries with it certain dharmic duties. The duties for the standard AD&D character classes are summarized below, but if your campaign incorporates non-standard or highly specialized character types, you may have to define your own dharmic duties:

Fighter: Fighters must always be brave, never allowing fear to dictate their actions. They must never hide from danger or flee while a friend or ally fights on.

Ranger: The requirements for Rangers are the same as they are for Fighters, but rangers must also show reverence to nature, never killing an animal or plant without reason.

Paladin: The dharma of a paladin is also much the same as that of a fighter, but the paladin must never tolerate evil. Further, the paladin must always help the weak or poor and be quick to give alms to beggars.

Wizard: Wizards must never pass up an obvious opportunity to learn about the forces that shape the world or the magic with which it is infused.

Specialist: Although basically the same as it is for wizards, the specialist gains an additional duty of the DM's devising that is related to his or her field of study.

Priest: The priest must devote himself to the worship of his god and must never allow an insult to his faith to go unavenged. He must try to recruit followers for his god whenever possible. Specific religions might place additional demands on these characters.

Druid: The druid character must act in a way that is always complementary to the natural world around him. He must never harm or destroy plants or animals without good reason.

Rogue: Rogue characters must attempt to accrue wealth (usually for his own benefit, but occasionally for a cause or to help another). They can never leave a potential victim or inviting fortune untouched.

Thief: Thieves have the same dharma as rogues, but must rely on cunning, stealth, trickery, or something other than brute force to accomplish their goals whenever possible.

Bard: A bard must serve to entertain and enlighten. He must pursue knowledge in the form of tales and songs, not in the rigid manner of a wizard. He must pass up no chance to tell others of the wonders he has seen and the tales he has heard.

If a situation occurs which pits the dharma requirements of a character's alignment against those of his class, violating the requirements of either is still a breach of his dharma and results in the karma penalties outline below. If a multi- or dual-class character has conflicting dharma requirements, the same rule applies.

Each time a character goes up a level, he receives a point of karma. In addition, a character who does a truly outstanding job of role-playing his character according to the dharma requirements, such as finding a clever way to meet the conflicting demands of alignment and class dharma,

may receive an additional point of karma (never more than one per session). If a character significantly violates his dharma (such as a lawful good character engaging in theft), he loses a point of karma (there is no limit to the number of points which may be lost this way).

After a character's death, the player does not roll up a new character. Instead, he consults the row matching his number of karma points on the reincarnation table below, then rolls 2d6 to see what he comes back as (ascetics modify their roll by +2):

Reincarnation Table

Karma points	2d6 roll				
	2	3-5	6-8	9-11	12
0-2	slug	kobold	goblin	orc	gnoll
3-5	kobold	goblin	orc	gnoll	human
6-10	goblin	orc	gnoll	human	human1
11-15	orc	gnoll	human	human1	human2
16-20	gnoll	human	human1	human2	human3
20+	human	human1	human2	human3	nirvana

Slug: The character is removed from play and the player must roll up a new one.

Kobold, goblin, orc, gnoll: The character is reincarnated as a monster of the type listed. See rules for creating new PC races in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. The Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma of the old character are transferred to the new one (making any secondary adjustments for race) and all other scores are rerolled. [All of these races are in the *Complete Book of Humanoids*, but orcs and gnolls are not races native to Ravenloft. I'd replace them with beastmen and broken ones, respectively.]

Human: The player transfers his old character's Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma to his new character. All other attribute scores are rerolled. Character begins at level one in the same class(es) as the previous character.

Human1: The player transfers his old Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma to the new character and rerolls all other attributes. The new character retains the old one's class(es), but begins 1d4 levels lower than the previous character.

Human2: The player transfers all old ability scores to the new character, and begins one level lower in the previous character's class(es).

Human3: The player may add 1d4 points to any SINGLE ability score of his old character (to maximum 18), and then transfer all of the old character's scores to the new character. The new character begins at the same level as the old one and retains the previous character's class(es).

Nirvana: The character achieves unity with the Brahman and is retired from play. A completely new character is generated to replace the old one, but the new character receives +2 modifier on all of its saving throws.

The reincarnation appears within a day's time, having only vague memories of his previous life. All karma points from the previous character are lost, and the new character starts over at 0 karma. If a Raise Dead or similar spell is used on the previous character's body, both the reincarnation and the old character die and are removed from play.

Gunpowder in Ravenloft

By L. Blumenthal

The Ravenloft supplement *Champions of the Mists* does a great work in explaining how firearms are used inside Ravenloft and which kind of guns are commonly available both to PCs and NPCs. However, one of the things missing from this sourcebook is actually a reference about gunpowder's availability throughout the Demiplane of Dread. For this reason I've come up with this brief article which details a bit more gunpowder and its use inside Ravenloft.

After checking out the various Cultural levels of the Ravenloft domains, my conclusion is that gunpowder (not smokepowder, remember) should be common in the following Domains:

Borca

Darkon/Necropolis

Dementlieu

Invidia

Lamordia

Mordent

Richemulot

Gunpowder should be uncommon or rare in the following Domains:

Barovia

Falkovnia

Nova Vaasa

Souragne

Verbrek

Zherisia/Paridon

Gunpowder is either unknown or non-existent in all the others.

Smokepowder functions like normal gunpowder in Domains where it is the only alternative to gunpowder. In Domains where gunpowder is rare or uncommon smokepowder provides a +1 to the roll to determine additional damage. In Domains where gunpowder is common smokepowder doesn't work.

Gunsmiths

In more sophisticated Domains, like Mordent or Lamordia, gunsmiths are treated much the same as weaponsmiths are in other lands. They are usually blacksmiths, or retired soldiers. Guns are crafted by hand, and are made of both wood and metal. Many are customized, and a few are decorated with gems or precious metals.

In Domains where gunpowder and firearms are less common, gunsmiths are usually alchemists, engineers, or mages. They are looked on with awe, and fear, and commoners believe they are crafting magic.

Who would the main customers in Ravenloft be?

Soldiers in Domains like Borca, Falkovnia, Lamordia, Mordent and Richemulot.

Private citizens of the upper classes in Domains like Dementlieu, Lamordia, Borca, Invidia, Mordent, Paridon and Richemulot.

Adventurers, monster hunters and caravan guards in Verbrek, Mordent, Invidia, Borca and Darkon/Necropolis.

The thugs that Ivana Boritsi and Ivan Dilisnya use for enforcers.

The officers of the constabulary and the landlords in Souragne.

The Kargat.

Serial killers.

Aristocrats in Nova Vaasa.

Strahd has outlawed possession of firearms by anyone not in his employ, punishable by death. He has offered guns to the Vistana, but other than a few tribes of the Covara, they have refused.

Leor Blumenthal

HYSKOSA'S HEXAD: A NEW INTERPRETATION

By J.W. Mangrum

The reason that the adventures that make up Hyskosa's Hexad can't be played in order is because Azalin forced the events to happen out of order so they are supposed to be played out of order too.

Azalin only altered the timing of one event: he had the sixth Hexad occur as the fifth event. (Which of course alters the timing of the fifth hexad as well.)

The real reason why the adventures take place "out of order" is that the concept of the Hexad wasn't even introduced until the third adventure; Feast of Goblins and Ship of Horror were included retroactively. Also, take a look at this:

These signs were foreseen by Hyskosa, a Vistani most gifted with the Sight. Spread word of these wherever you travel. Only the true hearted can stop the fall of the night of evil.

The night of evil shall descend on the land
When this hexad of signs is near at hand.

In the house of Daegon the sorcerer born
Though life, unlife, unliving shall scorn.

The lifeless child of Stern mother found
Heralds a time, night of evil unbound.

[Note that the "child of Stern mother" is never actually found; the dead child in Ship of Horror is actually named Charlotte Reisland; Madeline Stern is an adult. I planned to switch last names on these two NPCs when I got to this adventure.]

Seventh time the son of suns doth rise
To send the knave to an eternity of cries.

[So far, so good, right? But look at stanzas 4 thru 6:]

Inajira will make his fortunes reverse
Dooming all to live with the dreaded curse.

[This stanza is missing; it would be the 'bodiless' one]

The light of the sky shining over the dead
Shall gutter and fail, turning all to red.

As you can see, the last three stanzas are told out of order. My source? *Night of the Walking Dead*. This scroll was supposedly written by Hyskosa himself! So it seems that he didn't consider the order of stanzas particularly important either. (NotWD is also the source which tells that the Inajira stanza will occur in Sri Raji. *Touch of Death*, which introduced "Hyskosa Six Signs," also lists the Inajira event as fourth, and implies that its meaning will be revealed in NotWD.)

So, it seems to me that the -real- reason the events of the Hyskosa's Hexad occur out of order is that the whole idea that the order was important was the result of last minute writing changes. Even in the final version, as presented in Roots of Evil, the order doesn't seem to be important: the PCs are led to fulfill the Inajira event, thinking that completing the Hexad out of order will collapse the conjunction. Instead, it simply completes it.

So, why DID the Grand Conjunction collapse? Well, it's my own opinion that the gods had the power to put a stop to it at any time. BUT... well, it figures into my view of the Dark Powers as the jungian shadows of the gods. When Ravenloft was "turned inside out," all that really happened was that the gods stopped repressing their shadows. Thus, all of gods (ALL of them, everywhere) were behaving like the Dark Powers. Of course, having kept their dark natures repressed for so long, the gods were going on something of a rampage.

Anyway, part of my view of the Dark Powers is their petty interest in their creations. And look at what saves the multiverse: putting two objects on an altar. Maybe if the heroes had returned to Sergei and Tatyana's wedding, having to stop themselves from stealing the two items in the first place, I'd feel differently about this. Basically, I see retuning the two items to the altar nearly 400 years later as ultimately meaningless. The importance of those two items was tied to that spot not just in space, but in time. 389 years after the wedding is too little, too late.

So why did it save the multiverse? Here's my take: the gods, dark natures or no, are still the gods. Even caught up in their own dark natures, they still don't want the Prime Material turned into such a nightmare; this is why the Dark Powers were repressed in the first place. So, they decided they would undo the Conjunction. But, caught up in the Dark Powers' petty nature, they made a petty demand.

"OK, we understand that billions and billions of people are suffering throughout the multiverse. We'd like to help, so here's the deal: if the same idiots who stole the Holy Symbol of Ravenkind and the Icon of Ravenloft can fetch them both and put them on the altar at Castle Ravenloft, despite that they have a lich, vampire, and arcanoloth all trying to steer them towards destruction, and despite that we're throwing monstrosities in their path every step of the way, then we'll put a stop to all this. If they fail, well, you're all on your own."

John W. Mangrum

The Tower On The Tor (or A Treatise on the History of Nartok)

by J.W. Mangrum

Nartok's history begins long before Azalin assumed the crown of Darkon. Of course, some arcanist scholars will insist that all of Darkon's history before Azalin's reign is false, simply lies whispered by the Mists. Still, most agree it is difficult to deny the existence of the builder of Nartok Keep when the aged structure is still in use today.

Nartok grew up around the ancient castle which gave the city its name. According to the numerous (and often contradictory) legends about the keep's first master, some four centuries ago most of Darkon came under the control of a powerful warlock now known only as the Nightmage, about whom precious few facts remain. Some people claim he was nothing more than a reclusive wizard, while others have wrapped him up in grandiose legends about the Gray Realm.

According to these latter tales, the Nightmage spent many years experimenting with the nature of life and its border with death. They go on to explain that the Nightmage created something (a mystery unsolved by the legends) which pierced the border between life and death, and allowed the living to usurp control of Darkon from the dead.

Many scholars dismiss these notions as folk tales, but a few elements of the Nightmage's history do have at least some tenuous ties to fact. Chief among these is his keep.

The Nightmage built Nartok Keep atop a mighty tor deep in the forests, far from any villages. The region around Nartok is made up of gently rolling hills, as the Sleeping Beast mountains come down to meet the Vuchar river valley. The rocky hill Nartok Keep is built upon rises above the forest as if a great slab of stone had been thrust up from the ground, rejected by earth that would not take it. Some say that the Nightmage not only built the keep, but the tor itself as well. When the Nightmage first built his keep, it consisted only of what is now known as the Wizard's Tower. Over the next few decades, he added the wings now called the Ancient Additions and the Great Hall, although it's said the Hall showed little of its modern splendor. By the time the Nightmage died more than 350 years ago, he had already started construction on the thick walls which now surround the Keep. Little is known about the Nightmage's death, save that it was sudden. Ever since the warlock's demise, there have been legends of hidden passages worming through the Keep's walls, and forgotten magical treasures in lost chambers deep beneath its foundations.

With the Nightmage's passing, another wizard-king came to power: Lord Darcalus. Darcalus was rarely seen, and a number of legends started to spring up around him as well. Some gossiped of his hedonistic habits, while others whispered of the black arts he practiced in his castle, Avernus. It was widely held that Lord Darcalus had perfected a rite to slow his aging to a glacial crawl; that he ruled Darkon for at least 180 years does stand in favor of this tale.

A handful of historical records from this time have survived the centuries. Sadly, many were stored at the venerable library of the University of Il Aluk and are now lost to the living.

However, these documents were highly contradictory, and created as many mysteries as they solved. For example, it may always remain a matter of debate whether Darcalus built Avernus or merely claimed it. Other records were more clear; it is known that although Lord Darcalus was widely regarded as a brutal tyrant, the population of Darkon grew steadily during his reign, and it was during this time that the first settlers dared to build their simple cabins at the foot of Nartok's tor. Darcalus installed a baron to control the region, and as the village of Nartok grew up, Nartok Keep's walls were finally completed. Since the Ancient Additions had already started to deteriorate, a few additional buildings were put up to hold all the castle's needs.

By the time Azalin Rex defeated Lord Darcalus and took his throne (and the secret of his extended life) late in 579, the village of Nartok had grown to cover the area now known as Old Town. The population was mainly human, living in simple wattle-and-timber homes. Azalin Rex kept most of Darcalus' ruling structure in place, but replaced the nobles controlling the cities with his own appointees. The new Baron of Nartok honored Azalin by renovating the Great Hall in his name, turning it into the sight of splendor it remains today.

Just a year after Azalin took the throne, the hideous monster known as the Whistling Fiend destroyed Creeana, a village only two days to the east. This terrified the people of Nartok, and a wooden palisade was constructed to protect the town, even though the murderous creature disappeared as quickly as it had come.

Throughout the seventh century, Nartok was known as a breeding ground for rebellion. The city was prosperous thanks to its remarkable vineyards and thriving lumber industry, but the people seemed to suffer from an inexorable moral decay. Thus, the new upper class had both the time and the inclination to jabber on endlessly about overthrowing Azalin's harsh laws. Most of the time this was idle chatter from naïve students, and Azalin would choose to ignore it. However, in the summer of 693 Nartok's own baron, Caidan by name, himself attempted an ill-conceived coup.

After Baron Caidan's sudden death all of his dirty secrets leaked out, thoroughly discrediting his movement, and Azalin clamped down on Nartok as he had nowhere else. Until very recently, there was a greater Kargat presence in Nartok than in any of Darkon's other cities, and when Azalin instituted the Temple of Eternal Order as a new tool to control the masses, it was in Nartok that he had the first cathedral constructed.

Azalin's presence served the city well. Under the new Baron that Azalin put in place, the city reversed its decline, and crime dropped dramatically. But it was Drakov's first invasion in 700 that truly made the city grow in leaps and bounds. Although the Falkovnians were ultimately defeated by hordes of undead, the armies had come close to Nartok, and her defenders had met Drakov's men in battle. The Baron ordered that massive walls be put up around the city, replacing the token palisade which now marked the town's borders. This was a tremendous undertaking, and attracted numerous craftsmen of all types from all over the domain, notably

gnomish engineers and dwarven stonemasons from the east. Most of the labor was done by these new workers, who noted the irony that their own newly-built homes stood outside the walls. The city walls were completed just before Falkovnia invaded again four years later. Again Nartok was on the front lines, but Drakov's forces were quickly defeated and the city remained unscathed. The craftsmen stayed to enjoy Nartok's prosperity, and many of the dwarven stonemasons retrained themselves to work with the region's ample supply of lumber. Over the next twenty years, Falkovnia continued to present a threat.

Meanwhile, Nartok continued to grow and prosper, and by the time of Drakov's last invasion more than half the city was outside the walls.

The Barons of the time made promises to erect a new curtain wall around the entire city, but this never came to pass. Instead, Azalin placed most of his militia in Nartok, giving it a level of military presence unheard of elsewhere in the domain. Despite two more invasions, Nartok never fell to Falkovnian armies or even suffered any serious damage.

Today, Nartok continues to thrive, although the recent Requiem has destroyed its minor fishing industry and temporarily severed its ties with the most of the rest of Necropolis. The Vuchar river likely cannot be saved, but within weeks of the disaster, the Barons of Nartok and Maykle signed an agreement to construct a new road between their cities, promising to revive trade. Under Baron Curwen's strict laws order has been maintained, and the pervasive fear which has claimed most of the domain has yet to find a firm foothold here.

John W. Mangrum

History Of Ravenloft

(or How The Realms of Terror Came To Be)

By D. Wise

The Ravenloft setting wasn't "designed" so much as "evolved." It began with the *I6: Ravenloft* module, published back in 1985. Strahd's castle was, in one sense, just another killer dungeon crawl, which was the predominant design style of 1st-edition AD&D. I6 was different in three important ways, though. First, it was a horror scenario instead of the traditional medieval setting--a significant departure from accepted norms at the time. Second, it featured the first 3-D perspective map used in a roleplaying game, which was the RPG equivalent of stuffed-crust pizza: not quite "revolutionary," but everyone wanted to try it. Finally, and most importantly, it offered a back story, which put the dungeon crawl in context and made the chief villain more than just a monster with lots of hit points and nasty powers.

It might be argued that I6 gave rise to the roleplaying campaign as we know it today, with extended quests, fully developed player characters who rarely die, and heroism as a more prevalent motivation than acquisition of wealth and power. In any event, I6 became the best-selling adventure module of all time.

In the next few years, TSR enjoyed great success with the Forgotten Realms, Greyhawk, and Dragonlance lines, but they were all versions of the same medieval fantasy theme. The company wanted to give AD&D roleplayers more options for campaigning, and horror has always been a popular genre, so they naturally recalled the success of I6 and decided that the most logical choice was a horror setting.

Bruce Nesmith, a TSR veteran designer, was chosen to turn I6 into a full-fledged setting. He was an excellent choice for the job because he had (has) a talent for understanding what made I6 great on a mechanical level, plus a keen instinct for creating a campaign setting geared toward terror.

He latched on to Strahd and developed him from a vampire-mage into a tragic anti-hero, a victim of his own evil, now cursed to enjoy his ill-won power at the cost of that he holds dearest--that became the model upon which all darklords are based. Bruce also recognized the power of isolation to create fear, so he invented a setting with mysterious ;) entrances and no exits, and he carried the theme over to the whole setting, making the darklords eternal prisoners in his new, eerie setting. Some darklords were easy, coming from the pages of infamous tales of terror. Others were obvious monster candidates, endowed with a few unexpected abilities and, of course, curses of their own. Still more hatched from the imaginations of the Kargat, who had many dark thoughts to share.

There is another key factor in the creation of the Demiplane of Dread: Andria Hayday. Formerly of Pacesetter Games and one of the creators of Chill, Andria has a finely balanced sense of literature and horror. She created the Vistani, invented many of the darklord's curses, named many characters and domains, and coined the phrase "Demiplane of Dread." When you think of the tone of the line, the gothic feel, think of Andria.

Without her, the line would not resemble anything like what you now know and love.

William W. Connors joined the Kargat quite shortly after its inception, lending his keen sense of plot and twist to the setting. Bill appreciation of the unexpected and cleverness at turning the tables on the most experienced and jaded of characters gave Ravenloft its cutting edge. Those who have played in Ravenloft for long, and attended any convention where TSR was represented, know of the infamous "Bill Test." In brief, if a DM wonders whether a particular thing is appropriate to the Ravenloft setting, he should submit it to the Bill Test: "Is it scary? Then use it."

In the years since, the Kargat has been populated by several people, including yours truly, who share one particular quality with Bruce, Andria, and Bill: They are madly passionate about the line. When it excels, they brim with pride, and when it sags, they bleed. (Interpret that how you will!) Cindi Rice and Steve Miller are two contemporary members with whom you may be familiar, but there are many others as well.

The Grand Conjunction was the culmination of a plan to build the line to a climactic point, hopefully to inspire interest in the setting and certainly to make Ravenloft feel like a place where important things happen. We didn't want the place to just sit there like a sandbox, where any number of things can occur inside, but the world itself never grows or changes.

Since the Grand Conjunction, we've changed our approach to dynamics through the advent of Pocket and Floating domains, which not only give us an opportunity to explore previously unknown corners of the Demiplane but occasionally overlay other domains and (at least temporarily) change the status quo. The Pocket domain of Il Aluk, layered over Necropolis, is an example of this approach. We'll continue to think about other interesting ways to keep the setting fresh, but tearing Ravenloft apart and putting it back together differently is not among our plans.

David Wise,
Kargat Chief

History of the Kargat

By F. Santos

Prologue

"It is known to some of the most unfortunate beings in the Land of Mists (unfortunate for sometimes knowledge can be blight) that an unholy association of vampires and other malignant creatures of darkness prowl the country and the cities, serving the ends of some unknown and dark master. This association is sometimes called Kargat (I have studied countless books, treatises and tomes and cannot theorize the origin of this name) and it has existed for centuries without being discovered. All of its members work in such a secrecy that one may meet one of them and never know. Such secret organization cannot have existed for such a long time without a leader of some kind. It is my belief that perhaps one of the many nobles in Darkon (perhaps even King Azalin himself) is the chief of this pustulent organization of evil and darkness. If this is the case, then we must find a way of sending this leader into the burning pits of whatever awaits those of evil heart after death, so that we may live free of this curse."

- Last entry of Dr. Abraham Willian's Journal

(His body was found hanging from a rope attached to the ceiling of the attic in his house- apparently, the good doctor had hanged himself.)

Unofficial History:

The Kargat secret police was founded in the year 578 by the arch-lich Azalin and his most powerful vampire servant, General Vychen. When Vychen was disposed by agents of Count von Zarovich in BC 581, right in time to prevent the vampire from guiding a massive invasion force into Barovia's territory (see the novel *I, Strahd: the War against Azalin*), the Lich Lord saw his plans greatly hampered. He recalled back his forces and went to work to rebuild the Kargat's hierarchy (which Strahd had also weakened with careful planned assassinations). Azalin chose a new master vampire as master of the Kargat, Lord Armando Matusio. Matusio, a master schemer, saw potential in the reshaping of the Kargat and planned much of his future around the association. However, he did not want to be a "mere" second in command, so he finally attempted to kill Azalin. His efforts failed, however, and Azalin expelled him from the Kargat. Matusio wandered Darkon for many years and eventually ended up in the Hellfire Club, where he formed a rival organization to the Kargat.

Azalin began to work on the Kargat's structure again, and to avoid future assassination attempts, he broke the power of leadership of the Kargat into ten pieces: there was still a major leader, but he couldn't act on his own without the approval of the other nine members. Knowing how teacherous and self-centered the nobles of Darkon were, Azalin knew that they wouldn't dream of banding up and trying to destroy him. Just in case, however, he made one of the chiefs of the Kargat his most loyal servant, one who obeyed him even after death: General Athoul. The leadership changed only once, when the former leader Colonel Veneno was murdered by Duke Garth. For now, the 10 leaders of the Kargat are:

- 1st - Duke Garth - 600 years old vampire psionist
- 2nd - Lothar - Bard, Azalin's spy
- 3rd - [Count Virmir](#) - 205 years old vampire who suffers from Criminal Psychosis
- 4th - [Baron Graf Schreck](#) - 730 years old vampire
- 5th - [Countess Samantha](#) - 30 years old vampire enchantress
- 6th - General Athoul - 4th magnitude ghost
- 7th - Lady Marion - Foxwoman
- 8th - Major Winston Meawrist - Werewolf
- 9th - Captain Frederik the Treacherous - Werehyena
- 10th - [Lord Hugo](#) - "normal human" who suffers from multiple personalities (Hugo, Horatio, Joseph, Stephano, Malachai, Malcom, Ivan, Gustave)

Duke Garth and Lothar are creations of Athanassios Valavanis. The Hellfire Club and Armand Matusio are creations of the Count of Ravenloft.

What remains of the Kargat after the disastrous events of the Grim Harvest is unknown, but one would expect that with the new power vacuum in Necropolis, some Kargat members may be eager to fill the gaps....

Count Virmir

Virmir Ianfredo was born in an unknown world, son of a couple of nobles. When he came to age, he became a knight to the king of his father. He was one of the most loyal knights, and a good-hearted person, loved by everyone who knew him. He loved the arts of war and learned quickly how to use many weapons and trained almost constantly. He, however, had never been in a real war. That happened when the neighbour kingdom attacked some small villages, and soon a full-scale war broke up. It was the most dark and frightening experience he had ever had. He saw his friends dying like flies, bodies being looted, people dying by the hundreds, his father being hit and killed and them trampled like he was nothing but dead meat. When winter came, his unit was isolated from the others for a long time, and they were forced to rely on cannibalism to survive. All this and much more changed Virmir's mind, who started to believe that human life had no more meaning, that thousands could die and that didn't mean a thing- life has no meaning, the human being dead is pure meat- all these thoughts crossed his mind, and he was on the brink of insanity. He passed that brink when he was attacked at the end of the war by a hungry vampire, who sucked all his blood and left his body in the war field. Virmir felt himself dying, and when he woke up later, to find himself being looted by some enemies soldiers, he understood it all- he had truly discovered the meaning of life- that life has no meaning and as such must be eliminated- and some greater power had rewarded him with the gift of immortality, for him to kill those who were not like him and give to those equal to him the gift so that they could spread around.

So, Virmir started killing, killing people in various ways, from poisoning to weapons to his bare hands, using virtually anything to kill and maim. Sometimes he would kill a person slowly, starting by tearing off the fingers then moving to the arms, then going to feet, etc... . In the mean time he would feed from those which he did not desire to kill at the time and transform them into vampires, murderers and such so that they could kill easily. His killings continued until a dark

day when mists rolled over from nowhere and carried him into Ravenloft. There, he met Azalin, and the archlich saw the potential of this crazy vampire, who could perhaps set up a whole branch of the Kargat composed solely of vampires who specialized in murdering. So, he inducted Virmir into the ranks of the Kargat and gave him a noble title and wealth, and the noble-insane vampire moved to the town of Viaki, where he once again started his vicious murders. Years later, the Count was invited by Azalin to be one of the leaders of the Kargat, an invitation which he gladly accepted. Since then he has been given more power and more wealth, but his murders continue just the way they have always been- the sick and disgusting fruits of a demented mind. Virmir is aware that most people don't think the way he does, and that he would be considered "insane" by the authorities, but that doesn't hinder him- in a whole, his insanity do not hinder him in any way, instead it gives more motivation and strength for him to commit his murders. He is cool and controlled, and has turned murdering into an art.

His favorites way of murdering are:

- poisoning food and drink
- backstabbing with small knives that can be concealed
- suffocation
- hit the person in the head with a hammer
- a quick decapitation
- shoving something in the person's throat is also very good
- using any one of his "toys", which are actually torture instruments- his favorite is the Chair of Pain (A chair to which the victim is strapped and when a lever is pulled a blade descends and cuts the victims head in half).
- to murder on the spot, as he calls it - to murder with whatever is available and when the impulse comes.
- serial killings, based on many different and twisted patterns that only he knows.

Count Virmir is one of the most respected members of the Kargat, and he has a lot of "students", actually vampires recently integrated into the Kargat ranks who come to his house and learn the fine art of murder, which he is one of the best teachers in Ravenloft. No one is allowed to watch these classes, and if anyone is caught, the poor victim is "murdered on the spot"- it is good to give an example.

Virmir controls many of the Kargat vampires who were his students, and they are extremely loyal to him (most of them, anyway), and they serve the role of murders in the Kargat's society. Most of the other members of the Kargat Chiefboard don't give Virmir more than a cursory glance, for they think he is too weird to be taken seriously. The few exceptions are Duke Garth, who enjoys occasional insights into Virmir's demented mind, perhaps to learn more of the nature of the insane, Captain Frederik, who admires him for his coolness and self-control and the way he performs "the Art" (but is always trying to manipulate him, very subtly of course, for if the Count discovers he is probably going to give Frederik his passport to death), and Lord Hugo, the fellow lunatic, who has a personality who also appreciates murders (Ivan).

As for his appearance, he is a tallish man, apparently not so strong (he was burlier before the war came), with long black hair, a thick mustache and dark eyes. He has a small scar in his forehead and another one, bigger, in the right side of his chest. He dresses in the common way of a

victorian gentleman, always carrying a cane with the face of a hawk (it belonged to one of his many victims, a nobleman from Silbervas, Falkovnia). He wears in the middle finger of his left hand a ring which is actually the receptacle for a small greenish powder which is poison (type J). He also has a small mirror which is hollow and stores three small sharp knives. Even though he still remembers how to use knight weapons like swords, lances, he hasn't used these kind of weapons for years (unless, of course, he uses them to dispose of someone) and it's been a long time since he wore armor.

Count Virmir lives in a mansion in Viaki, but he has other houses in the cities of Martira Bay, Karg and Il Aluk.

Baron Graf Schreck

Baron Schreck hails from a distant land, in another world, where he lived in a small town. Schreck was one of the most beautiful lads in the town, and one of the most rich, being son of a wealthy merchant. He was a tall and lean man, with long, blond hair, dark but charming eyes and a smile that enchanted women, and his true name was Victor. Even though all the girls in town would like to marry him, he had fallen in love with Ludmilla, a young and beautiful girl, daughter of a poor peasant. Ludmilla was the only girl in town who had no interest in marrying Victor. True, she found him attractive, but also pedant and weak, a guy who thought everything in life was easy because of his money. In truth, Victor was none of these things, but no one could change the girl's mind. She would rather marry Johann, whom she loved with all her heart. When Victor saw that he was being rejected by Ludmilla, he did all he could to win her heart, but in the end all his efforts failed. He became a very sad man, and in time this sadness turned into rage and an overwhelming desire to possess Ludmilla at all costs.

One dark autumn night, Victor was walking on the streets of his town when he was surprised by a man. This man, who was wearing dark long robes that concealed his face said that he could give him the key to conquer Ludmilla for a small price. Victor agreed at the same moment and the vampire fell on him, sucking all his blood until all that was left was a pale and lifeless body which was found the next day. The people of the town mourned his death for one week, after which his body rose from the grave as a vampire. He now understood what the stranger had given him, and he went to see Ludmilla, planning to make her a vampire too. When he entered her room, the poor girl screamed in terror at the horrible sight. It wasn't just horror, it was fear too, a deep fear which arises only in the face of truly depraved sights. Victor looked into the mirror and saw his own reflection. The new born vampire was paralyzed with terror: his beautiful hair had fallen, his mouth was distorted with protruding misshapen teeth, his fingers were long and bony and his eyes were blacker than pitch, hideous and terrifying. He also saw his reflection slowly fading away as he smashed the mirror into pieces. He walked over to Ludmilla and in his fury killed her (I leave the gory details to your imagination). Then he went to Johann's house and sucked all his blood till none was left. And then he left his home town never to return again.

He wandered his world for no less than 150 years, sometimes settling in a place for a decade or so, desiring above all else to forget Ludmilla, but he never could, and would remember her for all eternity and so he decided to hibernate in a forgotten crypt in an old cemetery. He woke up 430 years later, a broken and tragic figure, a monster who had no place in this world. He didn't

commit suicide, though, for even though he loved Ludmilla, he hated her for having spurned him, and felt that killing himself would be to run like a coward from life. Then, one night, after stisfying himself with a poor victim, when he walked out of the alley where he was, he found out that he was in a different city. He later found out that in this new city, in this new world, there were many vampires, and that this vampires formed some sort of secret society who obeyed the orders of the King of the domain he was. He was quickly inducted into the ranks of the Kargat for his age and experience, and slowly learned the nature of Darkon, Azalin and later Ravenloft. He was granted later the title of nobility by Azalin himself, and changed his name to Graf- the name of his grandfather, whom he had always admired, especially when he was a child-, adding Schreck- a word that meanted terror in his native language. He moved to an abandoned castle near the town of Maykle, and has lived there ever since, in the complete darkness.

Baron Schreck has two "hobbies": One of them is writing. He has written many books, always using a pseudonym, and these books are actually another versions of his true story. He hides himself behind his alter-ego, the character Andreas, who has suffered many adventures for the love of Eva. His books are almost all best-sellers, and he is famous in all the domains of the Core. His other hooby is sculpture, and he has made many statues, most of them of Ludmilla. However, he always end up destroying these statues in a fit of rage.

Baron Schreck has suffered a lot in his life, but that doesn't mean he is sympathetic to the suffering of others. Au contraire, all his pain and anguish have given more rage to vent his vengeance on the world, on life, which has injured him so much for no apparent reason. If he can't be happy, nobody can.

Among the other leaders of the Kargat, General Althoul and Lady Marion and Countess Samantha are those which better understand the Baron, for they also had their lot of suffering in life. Duke Garth is somehow jealous of this vampire, who is older than he, while Major Winston hates the vampire, believing to a weak and obnoxious individual, one who does not "deserves" to be a vampire. Captain Frederik believes (wrongly) that because of his hard life, the Baron is perhaps easier to manipulate.

The day-to day ruler of the town of Maykle is mayor Jonathan Renfield, a middle aged man who is more than a little crazy. He collects the taxes and edicts laws and orders from the Baron. Everybody knows he's a little weird, but he still is a good mayor, and so they don't worry about that. What they don't know is that he is actually pretty damn crazy, a necrophilic cannibal who appreciates eating (besides human flesh) rats, insects and spiders. His insanity isn't normal, derived from receiving drops of blood from Baron Schreck each month for years. He is the one of the few members of the Kargatane that the Baron has sponsored, and he himself has sponsored 4 or 5 more guys for the outer rim.

The Baron is a tall man, completely bald, with long ears, twisted teeth protuding from his distorced mouth, eyes black as pitch and long fingers which form crude claws. He wears long, dark robes, and wears not even a single piece of jewelry. His skin is translucent, and if a light shines it will show his bones. For this reason he is always covering himself with his robes and there is not even a single torch in his brooding and dark castle. He spends most of his time in the catacombs of his castle and in the sewers beneath Maykle (there is a tunnel leading to them and

he has some rooms there). Due to his habit of living among rats, and some heritage from his vampire progenitor, he has acquired infravision, his bite also transmits a blood disease, and he can also transform into a giant rat, black and with sharp teeth. He also may call 1d10x50 rats to help him when necessary. Finally, he may transform his body into a great mass of 100 rats (similar to what Dracula did in the movie Bram Stoker's Dracula).

Countess Samantha

Countess Samantha was born in Falkovnia in the year 695, fruit of the many abuses that her mother, Virginia, a handmaiden in Drakov's castle, suffered from the knights and Drakov himself, for she was very beautiful and attractive. Samantha, named after her grandmother was also extremely beautiful, even more than her mother. The two of them endured hard lives in the castle of Drakov for many years, until the year 707, when her mother, after a brutal raping by one of the guards, died. This tragic happening left Samantha a bitter and revolted girl.

When she was 18, she was given to a noble in Stangegrad, Count Vladimir as a gift by Drakov. What Drakov didn't know is that the man was a vampire. When they arrived at his mansion, the vampire, impressed by her beauty and her innocence, made her a bloodsucker. When she realized what she had become and what her new master was, she almost became crazy. It was only her strong force of will that prevented her from becoming a raving lunatic. Slowly, she learned the true nature of her new status and learned a lot about her master. With time, she found out that he was not a very old vampire, and perhaps it would be easy to kill him.

One night, after they had returned from hunting, they both went to sleep, for the day was dawning. She only pretended to sleep, however, and after some she silently slid out of her coffin. She knew that once Count Vladimir had fallen asleep, he wouldn't wake up till next night. A stake, a hammer, a sword and some roses and that was the end of him.

She lived for some time in Stangegrad, as the widow of the Count. Her life didn't change much until the day when she met Willian, a young man from Darkon. She was enthralled by him, for he was different from all the other men she had known. With time that attraction became love, for she was still a young vampire and there were many traits of humanity left in her. Her love for him was so great that she decided to make him a vampire too, but he wouldn't be her slave. Instead, they would live as equals, like husband and wife. However, when she tried to turn him, her lack of experience caused her to make a mistake, and he unleashed a spell. She was surprised and amazed to discover that he was a wizard, something she had never even known that existed. She was hurt, both in her body and her heart, and she attacked him with great fury and killed the lad.

After this experience Samantha became increasingly sad, gloomy and depressed. She also became very angry and furious and mean. She decided to move for Martira Bay, taking Willian's books with her. There, due to some interest, she started to study and tried to learn something of Willian's arts. Amazingly, she found out that she had an intelligence that she could never imagine possessed, for with time her studies started to get very easy, and she soon became a competent Enchantress.

In that same year, she was discovered and contacted by a Kargat vampire, who decided to invite her into the ranks of the police (or die). Seeing that she wouldn't live much long if she refused, Samantha accepted and, due to her strong force of will and magical powers, rose quickly in the ranks.

Azalin decided to make her a leader because she was the one of the most powerful Vampiress, and no doubt one of the most beautiful. Her beauty, coupled with her natural, vampiric and magical charms, make her an opponent more dangerous than most succubi.

Today he is a respected and famous member of the Kargat (within the ranks) and one of the two "femme fatales" between the leaders (the other is Lady Marion). Samantha's inner beauty hides the mind of a brutal killer, who will stop at nothing to gain what she wants. She hates men above everything else and hates especially Vlad Drakov, knights from Falkovnia and wizards. When she finds one of them, she doesn't kill the guy, she tortures him to death, in various slow and painful ways.

Samantha lives in Il Aluk in a beautiful mansion, full of servants (all women), where she has 55 cats (all female) and spends most of her time, when not hunting and killing, painting lovely pictures and studying the arts of magic. She also loves going to the opera, and throwing big parties for the nobles of Il Aluk.

The male leaders of the Kargat are always courting her, but she knows for sure that most of them, especially Duke Garth, Count Virmir, Major Winston and Captain Frederik are more interested in manipulating her, using her as a tool in those situations where a woman is better suited than a man, but she is too smart to let herself be fooled by these compliments. Lady Marion hates her very much, but the sentiment isn't quite reciprocal, for Samantha hates men much more than women, and can't quite understand why women would fight between them for those "dirty pigs". The Countess has black hair, dark blue eyes, a white and smooth skin, pearly teeth, a smile that melts the hearts of men and a perfect body. She likes to use provocative clothes. Most of the time she wears satin gloves, and carries a small mirror which is actually a magical item and shows her reflection. Samantha's beauty works just like the beauty of a Werewolf, except that male humans of Wis 16+ are unaffected (but they still find her very attractive). Besides her natural beauty and vampiric magnetism, she also has access to charm spells, can charm with her voice, her eyes (-4 penalty) and in gaseous form (-2 penalty-subject doesn't need to be looking).

Fabio Santos

Holy Texts of the Church of Ezra

by C.D. Nichols

The Church of Ezra has the densest canon of any known religion in the Land of the Mists. The full canon exceeds 90 different books (57 are listed below). Only priests know or care about most, but the commonly used books are the *Medicia Deis*, the *Ezran Gospels*, the *Bible of the Faithful*, the *Ezran Hymnal* and the *Book of Kindness*. A breakdown of these texts and their books, as well as a number of other texts, follows.

Medicia Deis (also The Book of Healers) (900 chapters)

The Ezran Gospels

Gospel of Ezra (84 chapters)

Gospel of Mishnad (72 chapters)

Gospel of Itias (63 chapters)

Gospel of Rachael (48 chapters)

Gospel of the Scribe Burach

Bible of the Faithful

1st Hala (43 chap.)

2nd Hala (also called the Martyrdom of Hala)(59 chap.)

1st Saints (38 chap.)

2nd Saints (51 chap.)

3rd Saints (31 chap.)

The Chronicle of the Ezradim

1st Ancients

2nd Ancients

1st Records of Strifes

2nd Records of Strifes

3rd Records of Strifes

The Sophian Codex

1st Sophia

2nd Sophia

3rd Sophia

4th Sophia

5th Sophia

The Ezran Hymnal

1st Gathering of Hymns

2nd Gathering of Hymns

Song of Lost Hearts

Book of Kindness

1st Precepts (700 chapters)

2nd Precepts (500 chapters)

Other Texts:

Epistle to the Connarians

Epistle to the Barovians

Raising of Numiah

War of Archons

Apocrypha of Sarech

Testament of Simon of Raman

Lament of the Plagues

Takemalech and the Dragon

Book of St. Justine

Book of St. Peter the Beggar

Book of Judas the Kind

Book of St. Mary

Rites of the Adversary

Tale of the Necromancer

1st Fullness

2nd Fullness

1st Hunters

2nd Hunters

Words of the Comforter

Manuscript of the Kings

Tetragrammaton of Ezra

1st Epistle to the Nations

2nd Epistle to the Nations

1st Lairs

2nd Lairs

The Testament of Anchora the Wanderer

Visions of St. Dominic

1st Mists

2nd Mists

Book of Palaces

The Hundred Revelations

Secrets of Ezra

The Book of the Deeds of the Adversary

From the Gospel of Ezra, Chapter 56, Verses 19-26:

" 19 - and Mishnad looked into her eyes, the very eyes of Ezra, his god, saying, "My lady, Ezra, my heart, I ask you, will you consent to be my queen?" 20 - And, Ezra raised him from the floor, and kissed him upon his forehead, saying "Oh beloved, what is this world to me, or any rulership there of? 21 - No, in this world or another or another, there is nothing I desire, save the prosperity of my people. 22 - But, after the time, after the exile in the land of the evening damps,

I will come again, to guide my church through the great time of darkness from my holy see." 23

—

At this, Mishnad asked, "At that time, will I be with you, my love?" 24 - "No, Beloved, the way is too dark, and I would not risk your soul. Let it be a comfort to know this, and this as well: 25 - that for the thousand thousand years before that great darkness, you and I shall be together, never apart for even the time between one beat of the heart and the next." „

Chris D. Nichols

Languages of Ravenloft and Their Roots

By J. Williams

One reoccurring problem in my campaigns in Ravenloft is a clear and acknowledged language table for the Domains of Dread. I have read several replies on languages in the core lands and found them useful but plagued with problems. Being a both an anthropology and psychology major has made a language structure table much easier to write. This is the official language tables in my campaigns. If you want to adapt it to your campaigns, feel free to do so.

01). I have based the language tree of Ravenloft on modern day South America. A structure based on one large dominating language (In that case, Spanish/Portuguese) including several smaller dialects, obscure tribal languages, dying and dead tongues. This is an abridged version only.

Dominate Languages

- Balok (Eastern European/Slavic in pronunciation) It is the oldest and most dominant language and has spread to several domains. Domain of Origin is Barovia.
- Dementlieuse (French)
- Thenoli/Falkovnian (Romanian)
- Silvanesti Elvish (Ansalon)
- Mordentish (English/Welsh)
- Lamordian (Germanic)
- Darkonese (Oerdian/Greyhawk)
- Hazlani (Thayvian)
- Kartakan (High Cormyrian)
- Vechorite (Oerdian Elvish and Ta'Nari mix)
- Vistani (Unknown) This language was definitely a tongue in Barovia and is possibly from an unknown prime material plane outside Ravenloft. Shares several distinct features with Balok.

02). An established chronology of what languages appeared in the core first and last. Which language influence who and why? Included will be several dialects used in the core today and why certain domains have no mother tongue.

03). I have also taken in account the physical changes that have occurred in the Domains since the release of the first box set. Geography as well as chronology is important in understanding that older languages will influence newer arrivals.

I used the Ravenloft Red Box set the basis for the language tree and modified over time with changes in that occurred with campaign material revisions.

Balok-----Root Language: Spoken primarily in Barovia

└──────────Balok/Luktar: The unofficial second language of Barovia. Formerly Gundarake. A mixture of Oerdian common and Balok. Spoken mainly in the northern reaches of Barovia and surrounding areas.

└──────────Balok/Thaani: a dialect used by the Thaani survivors of Bluetspur in Southern Barovia and Hazlan. Very scholarly and precise in pronunciation. Its possible the Thaani used a

spoken language that conveyed meanings in symbolic terms and a tactile language for written communication. Balok is spoken in G'Henna, Markovia, Invidia, and Borca.

_____Forlornian/Balok hybrid used by the Druids of that domain. It is a dying language that has no more than two or three generations left before extinction.

|
|
Har'Akir/Sebua-----A set of hieroglyphic languages with several similarities. (In my campaigns, both domains are drawn from the same world, a world heavily influenced by Egyptian-style culture. With Pharazia added to form the Amber Wastes, it is obvious that it will die out and leave Pharazian the dominant language.

|
|
Lamordia-----Root Language: Primarily used in Lamordia and some parts of Southern Necroplois and Northern Mordentshire.

_____High Lamordian: A scholarly dialect used by the upper educated classes of Lamordia.

|
|
Mordentshire-----A Root language native to that domain and ranks as the second oldest in the Domains of Dread. Many variations of Mordentshire (dialects, slang, etc.) can found throughout this Domain. Comprehension and Translation are sometimes a problem.

_____A bastardized version is spoken in the wilds of Verbrek. Seen has a "hick" or "farmboy" language.

_____A Mordentshire/Dementlieu dialect spoken on the frontiers of Verbek and Northern Valachan

|
|
Darkonese/Necrokonese-----A language drawn from Oerdian/Oerth: Presently it is considered the most influentially language in the Core with languages from a variety of Races.

_____Oerdian Elvish

_____Oerdian Dwarvish

_____Oerdian Halfling

_____A Dwarvish Lamordian/Oerdian dialect Recently, do to the recent events in The Grim Harvest, Darkonese/Necrokonese is slowly merging into Balok and (much to their dismay) Falkovnian.

|
|
Vechorite_____A mixed and often confusing conceptual language based on etiquette and a old form of Oerdian, Oerdian Elvish and a smattering Tanar'ri (The Tanar'ri additions are primarily derogatory terms and profane insults.)

With its addition to the Core, it will have a impact on the core languages in the future. Although Darkonites may find it somewhat confusing, a misinterpretation may led to an insult and violence.

|
|

Kartakass-----A language based on the common tongue of Toril, in particular the Forgotten Realms. Spoken primarily in this domain and some parts of Valachan, Hazlan, and Nova Vaasa.
_____Kartakan: a spoken and sung dialect based on Thayvian.Cormyrian and Silvanesti Elvish. Primarily used by the academia and scholars of this domain.

|
|
Valachan-----A language based on Thayvian of the world of Toril.

|
|
Nova Vaasa-----Vaasan. A language based on a common tongue of an unknown prime material world. Elements of Thayvian and Cormyrian have slowly migrated into this.

|
|
Falkovnia/Tepes-----A language based on Thenoli from the world of Krynn. A language native to Taladas. This language is only spoken in Falkovia and is the state language of Falkovia. Obviously, anyone who does not fluently speak this language is marked as a foreigner.
_____Tepesian speak a broken version of the Falkovian language. The military society of Falkovia considers the use of this language as pathetic and ignorant. Most military officers will generally spit or beat those whom address them using this dialect.

|
|
Richemulot/Dementlieu-----The primary language of these Domains mirror each other in several ways, but natives of these lands will never admit it.

|
|
Hazlan-----a tongue based on Thayvian from the world of Toril.
_____Thayvian, the primary language of this domain.
_____Thayvian/Thaani dialect spoken primarily in the southern reaches of that domain.

|
|
Sithicus-----The only language spoken in Sithicus is an offshoot of Silvanesti Elvish.

|
|
Sri Raji-----The only and domain language of the Steaming Lands.
However, if trade is likely to increase, Sri Rajian will slowly move into the Domains. Consider it a language foreign to the core.

|
|
Burning Peaks-----An archaic version of Sueloise, found only on the world of Oerth. Unlikely that it will find its way into the core domains.
Darkonintes/Necrokenese find little difficulties in understanding this language. The opposite is true for Vechorites.

Obscure Languages:

- Thaani: Dead language, it has integrated itself into Hazlan, Kartakas, and Barovia. Used by archaeologists and adventurers brave enough to travel and explore the domain of Bluetspur.

- Ansalonian Solamic: Dead Language, used by scholars to study Sithican History.
- Souragnian: An obscure tongue used only in that domain. reported by many in the educated circles of the Core as babble and chatter. A combination of several tongues.
- Avonleigha: A language similar to the tongue of Mordentshire. Primarily used in Nidalia and Stauton Bluffs
- Pharazian: an obscure tongue found in the Amber Wastes.
- Arakian: A dead language. The only evidence that "Drow" were every a part on the Core. It possible that the dark elves survive in hiding in various caverns beneath the core. Only time will tell.
- Latin: an obscure and unused language found in few manuscripts across the domains. Curiously, all surviving documents are written by the same penmanship.

Jeffrey Williams

List Of Ravenloft Adventures
By J.W. Mangrum

Title	Level	Notes
Adam's Wrath	5-7	
A Matter of Trust (CotN:G)	Any	
Ancient Dead (CT)	7-9	Set after Touch of Death
And Wilt Thou Leave Me Thus? (CotN:G)	1-3	
Awakening, The	4-6	Post GC
Bane of the Shadowborn (D31)	69	Best to tie it into a paladin PC's background
Baron, The (BH#2)	7-12	Van Richten's swan song, part two
Baron's Eyrie, The (D58)	5-7	
Beast in the Hills, The (CotN:G)	4-7	
Bleak House (BH#3)	7-12	Conclusion to Van Richten's swan song
Blood in Moondale (BoC)	3-5	
Body and Spirit (CotN:G)	6-8	
Bride of Mordenheim (BoC)	2-4	Takes place before Adam's Wrath
Castles Forlorn	4-6	Technically pre GC (735) but playable anytime, really
Castle Spulzeer	8-12	Forgotten Realms adventure; leads into The Forgotten Terror
Cedar Chest, The (BoC)	3-5	Very tricky to pull off well
Charnel House, The (CotN:V)	6-9	Play it after To Conquer Fear
Circle of Darkness	5-7	Post GC
Corrupted Innocents (BoC)	5-7	
Created, The	2-4	Good introductory adventure
Dark Harvest (NL#2)	2-4+	Post GC
Dark Minstrel, The (BoC)	3-6	
Dark of the Moon	5-9	Interesting trivia; using DoD's timeline, DotM probably doesn't take place for a few more years!
Death Ascendant (GH#2)	6-8	Direct sequel to Death Unchained
Death Unchained (GH#1)	5-7	
Death's Cold Laughter (BoC)	3-12	Easily adapted to any PC level
Dreams Within Dreams (NL#1)	Any	Post GC; Draws PCs into the NL adventures
Duality of Visions, The (CotN:G)	4-6	
Evil Eye, The	4-6	Post GC (harvest season, Sept.-Oct. 742)
Expiation (CotN:G)	Any	
Fall of Waldershen, The (CotN:G)	9-12	

Family Feud (CT)	4-6	This replaced Sea Wolf in Chilling Tales
Feast of Goblins	4-6?	Pre GC (Hexad adventure)
Felkovic's Cat (D50)	6-9	Post GC
Field of the Damned, The (CotN:G)	4-7	
Forgotten Terror, The	10-12	Follow-up to Castle Spulzeer
From the Shadows	9-12	The Grand Conjunction, pt. 1 of 2
Gazing Into the Abyss (CT)	4-6	
Ghost of Mistmoor, The (D35)	3-6	Generic adventure best set in Ravenloft
Gone, But Not Forgotten (CotN:G)	Any	
Guild of Thieves (CotN:V)	7-10	Post Requiem
Horror's Harvest (D38)	2-4	More subtle take on Falkovnia than that in the GH series
Hour of the Knife	4-6	Post GC
House of Strahd	11-13	Can be played at two different PC levels
Howls in the Night	3-5	Multiple scenarios
Jack's House of Horrors (CotN:V)	5-9	
Last Dance (D64)	4-6	
Light in the Belfry, A	6-8	Ravenloft's only CD module
Living Crypt, The (BoC)	9-12	Basically a romp vs a nasty new monster
Loathsome Deep, The (NL#3)	4+	Post GC; A Nightmare on Egertus Street
Love Lies Dying (CotN:V)	4-7	Takes place after The Scarlet Kiss
Man With Three Faces, The (BoC)	8-11	
Maze of Thorns, The (CotN:V)	6-9	Ties to Felkovic's Cat; might be good prequel
Missing Druids, The (CotN:V)	5-8	Takes place well after The Awakening
Neither Man Nor Beast	4-6	Post GC (742)
Night of the Walking Dead	1-3	Pre GC (Hexad adventure)
Pity the Child (CotN:G)	6-8	Set in Port-a-Lucine, Dementlieu
Preston Hill Ghosts, The (CotN:G)	12-15	
Price of Revenge, The (D42)	4-6	Takes place before Felkovic's Cat
Ravenloft II: The House on Gryphon Hill	8-10	Needs overhaul to work in current continuity
Requiem (GH#3)	8-10	Winter solstice, 750; conclusion to the GH series
Rewards of Courage, The (CotN:V)	5-9	Post GC
Rite of Terror (BoC)	5-8	
Ritual Repeats, The (CotN:V)	3-5	

Roots of Evil	9-12	The Grand Conjunction, pt. 2 of 2
Rose of Midnight, The (NL#4)	7+	Post GC; first appearance of Nocturnal Sea
Scarlet Kiss, The (CT)	7-9	Possible tie to The Price of Revenge
Sea Wolf (D55)	4-6	Needs tinkering to make it fit RL or MotRD
Servant of Nightmares (CotN:G)	9-11	
Servants of Darkness	5-8	Post GC (Shadow Rift prequel)
Shadow Rift, The	8-14	Post GC (played after Servants of Darkness)
Ship of Horror	8-10	Pre GC (Hexad adventure)
Surgeon's Blade, The (CT)	6-8	
Taskmaster's Leash, The (CT)	7+	Post GC
Thoughts of Darkness	12-15	Pre GC; works just as well post GC
Through Darkened Eyes (CT)	3-6	Pre 742
To Conquer Fear (CotN:V)	4-5	
Touch of Death	3-5	Pre GC (Hexad adventure)
Turning Day, The (CotN:V)	4-8	Post GC; Takes place after Thoughts of Darkness
Undying Justice (CT)	3-5	
Unkindness of Ravens, The (D65)	4-6	Generic adventure, recommended for RL
Vengeance of Stones, The (CotN:G)	9-12	
Victim, The (CotN:V)	4-5	
Way Out, The (CotN:V)	7-10	Post Requiem
Web of Illusion	7-9	
When Black Roses Bloom	4-6	Happens soon after the GC (Sept., 740)
Whom Fortune Would Destroy (BH#1)	5-8	Set in 750; Dominia has rejoined the Core
Wild Child, The (CotN:V)	3-6	The only adventure set in Sebua

Last update: September 1998

(BH) Bleak House: The Death of Rudolph Van Richten. 3 linked adventures

(BoC) Book of Crypts

(CotN:G) Children of the Night: Ghosts

(CotN:V) Children of the Night: Vampires

(CT) Chilling Tales

(D#) Dungeon Magazine: issue number

(GH) The Grim Harvest series

(NL) The Nightmare Lands Boxed Set: Four linked adventures

John W. Mangrum

List of Ravenloft Famous Nobles

By Christopher D. Nichols, Stuart Turner, and Stephen Sale

By setting the stage for intra-domain political strife, player character patronage, and plot hooks, petty nobles are amusing and useful additions to a Ravenloft DMs repertoire.

Here's a look at the suspects as they stand now in the Core by domain:

- Barovia:** Count Strahd von Zarovich
Lord Sergei Zharov (Gundarakite)
Lady Lyssa von Zarovich
Sir Thomas Sergeiovich Zharov (Gundarakite)
- Borca:** Lady Ivana Boritsi
Lord Ivan Disilnya
Lady Nostalia Romaine
- Darkon/Necropolis:** King Azalin (pre- Grim Harvest)
Baron Caidin
- Dementlieu:** Lord-Governor Marcel Guignol
Lord Abernathy
Lady DeForest
- Falkovnia:** King Vlad Drakov
- Ghastria:** Comte Stezen D'Polarno
- Hazlan:** Wizard-King Hazlik
- Invidia:** Lord Malocchio Aderre
- Kartakass:** Meistersinger Harkon Lukas
- Lamordia:** Baron von Aubrecker
- Mordent:** Mayor Daniel Foxgrove
- Nova Vaasa:** Prince Othmar Bolshnik
Sir Tristen Hiregaard
Lord Thornwood (vassal of Prince Othmar)
- Richemulot:** Lady Jacqueline Renier
- Sithicus:** Lord Soth
Lord Speaker Mason
- Valachan:** Baron Urik von Kharkov
Lady Adeline

As you can see many domains have no noticeable political entities beyond their ruler. Thus, it falls upon us to supply the Land with its petty nobles. To this end, we have invented and listed below many important political figures of the Core.

HAZLAN

Governor Kagliara (from *The Glass Man*) of Toyalis. Recently promoted, Kagliara is out of his depth and surrounded by enemies.

Governor Mauleni of Sly-Var is the eldest of Hazlik's generals, and has retired as governor of Sly-Var. His current duties are largely guarding the minor Sly-Var-Arbora trade route.

Eleni (Hazlik's apprentice) serves as Governor of Ramulia. Her will is Hazlik's will.

Governor-General Hiet Bocallus holds sway over the lands between the Kartakan border and the Baratok mountains, north of the Musarde.

Governor Mealiti holds the lands south of the Musarde, between Kartakass and the Baratoks. Playing the governors and council against each other and against Hazlik, this madman and torturer seeks to gain control of Hazlan.

Governor-General Grogan controls the lands between the Baratok Mountains and the Immol Road. He indulges his vile temper with sporadic warfare with his neighbors.

Governor-General Neils Cavokki, veterine defender of the old Hazlan/Bluetspur border, controls the lands east of the Immol Road and south of the Hazlani River. He is the least harsh of the governors and the most loyal to Hazlik.

Governor-Lord Vestinecus, High Priest of Bane, rules the region north of the Hazlani River from the Immol Road to the junction of the Hazlani and Cyric Rivers. Here is the stronghold of the Church of Bane in Hazlan.

Governor Pall Ibington's lands stretch from the junction of the Hazlani and Cyric Rivers to the Nova Vaasan border. An intellectual and scholar, Governor Ibington's keep houses one of the finest museums in Hazlan. However, Ibington's mind is not his own, but is possessed by a doppelganger plant.

Governor Nihilus controls the lands between the Cyric and Hazlani Rivers. He is an apprentice of Hazlik's, more involved in his work than in his subjects.

Hazlik's Mulani councilors are also detailed:

Faenz Lolz of Toyalis is head of Hazlik's council. In Toyalis, he is Governor Kagliara's chief vizier. He has held the position for as long as anyone can remember, and in truth weilds far more power than Kagliara.

Avena Eldahar is the wife of a moderately successful trader in Toyalis. She has spies and informants in many places, and is emeshed in the thieves guild.

Davolis is another of Hazlik's apprentices. He has a hunched back and club foot, and cultivates informants among Hazlan's beggars.

Amon Coris is an innkeeper in Sly-Var. However, he also owns the majority of the brothels there and has spies in the remaining few.

Riktor Miens is a wealthy land owner and priest of Bane. His keep houses a pilgrimage site for Banites of hazlani and Nova Vaasa.

DEMENTLIEU

Another detailed set of nobles is the council of advisors to Marcel Guignol in Dementlieu.

We all know that Dominic is the head advisor, but the other four might include:

Jean-Pierre Mont-Michel Theroux: Jean-Pierre is in charge of arts and entertainment in Port-a-Lucine, in important post in such a culturally developed domain. He is best described as a complete fop - he's slim, tall, with a shock of curly brown hair, and a hideous high-pitched laugh. Everything's a joke to him. Think Mozart in the movie Amadeus.

Why is he on the council? While he's actually very skilled at what he does (ie entertain the civilised masses), he's also very easily controlled by Dominic, and doesn't pose a threat to him.

Josephine Chantreux: She is both in charge of defence and policing. Much of her work involves keeping up the treaties with neighbouring domains regarding the mutual defence agreement against Falkovnia. She also has a personal score to settle with the Falkovnians, as her father was murdered by Falkovnian soldiers many years ago when Drakov made a brief but abortive attack on Chateaufaux. She's a beautiful woman, fond of tall, powdered wigs and large pastel ballgowns.

Helene DuSuis: Unlike the current fashion, Helene often wears slim, black dresses and doesn't use wigs to conceal her ebony hair. Her lips, though thin, are starkly red against her skin. She monitors social affairs within the cities of Dementlieu (though given the squalid lives of the poor, it could be said she does a very poor job). Unlike the others, however, she is not entirely under Dominic's control (though he is not aware of this). She has, in fact, been contacted by a certain Alexis Wilhaven regarding a proposal for "re-aligning" the power structure within Dementlieu. Helene, always confident of her own manipulative abilities, is completely unaware that she herself is being manipulated by the Brain, from deep within the bowels of the city. The Brain claims to have many allies among the poor of the city, and is hoping (with certain noble's help) to cause a Revolution within the city of Port-a-Lucine, throwing Marcel from power and installing his own puppet.

The Brain's plan is a long way from fruition at the moment - many more nobles need to come on-side before anything will happen. Helene, however, is casually putting word about that certain nobles are not particularly happy with the current regime, and may be willing to begin some change....

Why doesn't Dominic know about all this? Unknown. Perhaps Helene is more cunning than believed, and has always been able to resist his control, but has played along to get her position of power.

The remaining member of the Council is Charles LeGrange, whom we haven't detailed as yet...

BORCA

The darklord of Borca is Ivana Boritsi, the Black Widow of Borca. Given that the lords of the land are a lady killers (Ivana a female murderess, Ivan killed his sister and wife), then the lesser nobles may be lesser reflections of their masters. Landed nobles in Borca don't actually own their lands, they just pay smaller rents.

A sample of Borcan nobility in this mold:

Duke Carol Heinzenburg is a man accursed. As lord of the village bearing his name, he sampled the fruits of the village daughters as his due. When one of the maiden escaped his less than tender ministrations via suicide, her family cursed the duke. "By the blood on your hands, may your love, as ours, escape you a hundred times o'er and never shall you taste of it, 'til you fall from your lofty seat!" As the curse held the village forgot his past crimes.

Now, every second year, the duke falls deeply in love with a village maiden, entering a long stately courtship, ending in marriage. Then, on the night of the honeymoon, the duke changes, as the quevari do, killing his new bride. Soon after, this is forgotten, and the cycle repeats itself. Other entities that might worm their way into Borcan nobility include vampyres, red widows, head hunters, kizoku (cursed never to taste the souls of Rokushiman ladies again), and werefoxes.

KARTAKASS

Ferban Haldan, Meistersinger of Skald: an old and greying wolfwere, very well respected and like the people of Skald. A bitter rival of Harkon Lukas and it is largely through his plans that Harkon has never wrestled Skald away from him, but after many years his voice may be starting to fail and this could mean that he loses his position

NOVA VAASA

Aldon Chekiv, head of the Chekivs family: a middle-aged man, strong and very stern. Aldon is a strong worshiper of Bane and often seeks the church's guidance on many matters naturally the church would be very happy to seek him become the future ruler of Nova Vaasa

Boris Rivtoff, head of the Rivtoffs family: a young man recently returned from university in Borca after the death of his father, who appears to have been poisoned. He is a constant plotter and schemer.

Alexi Vistin, head of the Vistins family: a pale, weak-willed man, a product of years of in-family breeding. He leads his family only because Othmar can control him easily and because he is the most intelligent of the group of half-wits that make up the Vistins family.

Lovecraftian Pseudobiblia in Ravenloft

by C.D. Nichols

The following books are listed with title, most famous lines, author and date of publishing (when known), known translations and possible use within a Ravenloft campaign. They can fit in any Ravenloft or Masque of the Red Death campaign.

Kitab Al-Azif (The Necronomicon)

"That is not dead that can eternal lie,
And with strange aeons even death may die."

Abd Al-Azrad, 730 AD

"Cthulhu noster quies in maaribus,
sanctifer nomen tuum;
adveniat regnum tuum;
fiat voluntas tua sicut in R'lyeh et in Y'ha-nthlei."

Olaus Wormius, 1228 AD

"Nor is it to be thought that man is either
the oldest or the last of earth's masters,
or that the common bulk of life and
substance wlags alone. The Old Ones were,
the Old Ones are, and the Old Ones shall be."

Dr. John Dee, 1585 AD

Translations: Arabic, Greek, Latin, Spanish, French, German, English, Italian

The Necronomicon is aptly described as the most evil work ever written.

If this work appeared in Ravenloft, a branch of the Order of Guardians would certainly form around it. Some stories hold that the older versions of the book may become sentient. If so, it is quite possible that the tome would become the darklord of a small domain.

Azathoth and Other Horrors

"Out of what crypt they crawl, I cannot tell,
But every night I see the rubbery things,
Black, horned, and slender, with membraneous wings,
And tails that bear the bifid barbs of hell."

from *Dreamtime*

by Edward Pickman Derby, 1919 AD

English only

A small book containing the poems:

"Azathoth"

"Dreamtime"

"Nemesis Rising"

"Charnel House"

"Dead But Not Gone"

"Medusa's Kiss"

...among others. Also contains eight line drawings credited to Jackson Eckhardt. In Ravenloft, this book is popular for the dark love-poems it boasts. Possibly, Edward Derby is from Mordentshire, as the atmosphere seem reminiscent of Arkham.

Les Cultes des Goules

"Lest some would label it blasphemy, I have chosen to explain certain actions and beliefs, and let God be the judge of us all."

Francois Honore-Balfour, le Comte d'Erlette, 1703 AD

French only

Written by a French noble who's reputation placed him with the Marquis de Sade, this text details his involvement with a society of ghouls both human and otherwise. Accounts of necromancy and related topics figure in heavily. Also tales concerning other French cults, monsters, mages, martyrs, and madmen. In the demiplane, the Comte d'Erlette would have been a Richemulotian or Dementlieuse noble. A work for the University of Il Aluk's Restricted Section.

The King in Yellow

"Along the shore the cloud waves break,

The twin suns sink behind the lake,

The shadows lengthen

In Carcosa.

Strange is the night where black stars rise,

And strange moons circle through the skies,

But stranger still is

Lost Carcosa.

Songs that the Hyades shall sing,

Where flap the tatters of the King,

Must die unheard in

Dim Carcosa.

Song of my soul, my voice is dead,

Die though, unsung, as tears unshed

Shall dry and die in

Lost Carcosa."

Cassilda's Song, Act 1, Scene 2

English Translation, 1895 AD

Translations: French, English

A bizarre dream-like play, the reading or performance of which causes madness. Widely suppressed. Darklord in Ravenloft would probably take similar actions. Possibly the play would be an under ground classic.

Liber Ivonis (Livre d'Ivon, Book of Eibon)

"For Ubbo-Sathla is the source and the end.

Before the coming of Zhothaquah or Yok-

Zothoth or Kthulhut from the stars, Ubbo-

Sathla dwelt in the steaming fens of new

mad earth."

English Translation, 15th Cent. AD

Translations: Hyperborean, Greek, Punic, Latin, French, English

An exceptionally ancient book, this is a powerful grimoire. Possibly Azalin discovered a copy. This may be too high power / high magic for Ravenloft.

Messa di Requiem per Shuggay (Mass for the Dead of Shaggai)

"Maria: But why, my love,

Must I die for you?

Pietro: Because,

Alive I love you only for a day,

But dead, I shall love you forever."

Duet Macabre from Act I

Benvenuto Chieti Bordighera, 1768 AD

Italian only

An opera score and libretto composed by Benvenuto Chieti Bordighera, an Italian composer who had been possessed by a shan, one of the insects from Shaggai. This opera, often declared musically unplayable, deals with horrid topics of human concern as well as the history of the shan. Madness and death are the accompaniments of the the work, and the completion of the third and final act is said to herald utter destruction. Probably found in Odiare or Borca.

The People of the Monolith

"They say foul beings of Old Times still lurk

In dark forgotten corners of the World,

And Gates still gape to loose, on certain nights,

Shapes pent in Hell."

Justin Geoffrey, 1926

English only

Another small book of poetry, including:

"The People of the Monolith"

"Dark Desires"

"Star Beast"

"Strutter in Darkness"

"Rending the Veil"

"The Mirror of Nitocris"

...and more. Geoffrey's poetry is viewed similarly to Derby's in Ravenloft, but he doesn't favor love-poems.

The Seven Cryptical Books of Hsan

"It is said that knowledge comes only to those who seek it; but some knowledge pursues us without respite or mercy."

Hsan the Greater, 2nd Cent. AD

Translations: Chinese, English

Seven large scrolls containing philosophical works on all manner of other-worldly and shocking things. Heavily influenced by Chinese myth.

In the demiplane of dread, this might be found in I'cath and Rokushima Taiyoo.

Unaussprechlichen Kulten (Nameless Cults)

"I have traveled the world in search of the darkness--a journey that ended within myself."

Friedrich Wilhelm von Junzt, 1839 AD

Translations: German, English, French

The amassed results of more than twenty year of research on cults, artifacts, human and inhuman myth and legend, and similar subjects. Von Junzt was killed while working on the sequel.

Another Restricted Book of the University of Il Aluk.

De Vermis Mysteriis (Mysteries of the Worm)

"Tibi, Magnum Innominandum, signa stellarum nigrarum et bufoniformis

Sadoquae sigilum."

Ludvig Prinn, 1542 AD

Translations: Latin, English

A horrid grimoire focusing on necromancy and summoning. Largely the same comments as for "Liber Ivonis."

The following books should not be included in a Ravenloft campaign, although can be used in Gothic Earth:

Book of Dzyan

Celaeno Fragments

Cthulhu in the Necronomicon

Eltdown Shards

G'harne Fragments

Pnakotic Fragments

Ponape Scripture

R'lyeh Text

Thaumaturgical Prodigies in the New England Canaan

Zanthu Tablets

Cthaat Aquadingen

Monstres and Their Kynde

True Magik

... And various other works too numerous mention.

Chris Nichols

Magic In Ravenloft

By M. Graydon & JW Mangrum

Barovia: Distrusted, feared.

Blaustein: Feared.

Bluetspur: Not uncommon.

Borca: Suspicious, but perhaps a means to an end...

Daglan: Extremely feared.

Dementlieu: Little-known, suspicious.

Dominia: Surprising, must be analysed, classified, inspected, etc.

Falkovnia: VERY suspicious, distrusted, perhaps outlawed.

Forlorn: N/A except with the druids, who would accept it.

Ghastria: Feared, mistrusted.

G'Henna: Not uncommon.

Har'Akir: Feared.

Hazlan: Feared, intolerant.

House of Lament: N/A (A house wouldn't care.)

Invidia: Suspicious, not-trusted.

I'Cath: Well-known.

Kartakass: Uncommon.

Keening: Do the dead really care?

Lamordia: Surprising, suspicious.

Leederick: N/A (The women only care about their lover...)

L'île de la Tempete: N/A. (Well, I guess bats would be afraid but...)

Markovia: Feared.

Mordent: Suspicious, but may be accepted.

Necropolis: Not uncommon.

Nidalia: Feared, as the spellcaster may be thought a heretic.

Nightmare Lands: N/A because a dreamer can think of anything.

Nosos: Little-known, not thought useful.

Nova Vaasa: Rare, surprising.

Pharazia: Little-known, but easily adapted to.

Richemulot: Surprising, could be used...

Rokushima Taiyoo: Surprising.

Saragoss: Little-known, but sought after.

Scaena: Well-known. (At least to the Darklord.)

The Sea of Sorrows: N/A

Sebua: Feared. (Little kids fear anything supernatural.)

Shadowborn Manor: N/A (when you're a sword, magic isn't important...)

Sithicus: Not uncommon.

Souragne: Surprising, feared.

Sri Raji: Feared, xenophobic.

Staunton Bluffs: Mistrusted, bordering on getting lynched.

Tepest: Frightening, bordering on peasant revolt.

Timor: Little-known, mistrusted.

Valachan: Superstitious, bordering on feared.

Verbrek: Suspicious.

Vorostokov: Feared, but known.

Wildlands: N/A. (Animals don't cast spells.)

Winding Road: N/A. (What does a head care about magic?)

Zherisia: Feared. (What the heck is that????)

Mark Graydon

Additional Thoughts About Some Domains

Valachan

Someone mentioned that Von Kharkov has an intense hatred for mages, which would certainly be understandable. But, Von Kharkov also knows that he owes his existence to wizardry, so he might have a mixed love-hate philosophy towards it. It would be in character for Von Kharkov to keep tight controls on the number and power of wizards in his domain, as he does with clerics. However, he might be more lenient towards wizards, since he sees them as less of an immediate threat. (He might have a particular dislike for arcanists of the white arts, however.)

One thing to keep in mind is that most people in Valachan are not particularly well educated, so wizards would be rare simply from that standpoint. On that same basis, the folk would probably believe in magic, but have little understanding of it (wrapping it up in superstition, once again.) Off-hand, I can think of two wizards in Valachan who weren't vampiric minions of the lord: one is a decidedly eccentric innkeeper in Ungrad, who came to Valachan from Dementlieu. The other wizard was a native: the late Felkovic, creator of the cat the lord fears so greatly.

Having thought about it, I'd offer this opinion: native wizards in Valachan are very rare, but do exist. Once Von Kharkov learns that an individual is a wizard, his next move will depend on the individual's skill. If the wizard is lowly and presents no threat, Von Kharkov will leave him be (but will continue to keep tabs on him). If Von Kharkov suspects for even a moment that a wizard is getting too powerful for his own good, he'll immediately either have the wizard killed or transform him into a loyal minion, whichever is more convenient.

The Renaissance Domains (Mordent, Dementlieu, and Lamordia)

In these domains, science has gained a stronger foothold than elsewhere in the demiplane, which may well have forced magic into the shadows. The educated "men of science" will certainly have little use for the unexplainable mysteries of magic. Here, instead of wrapping magic in superstition, I'd say that most people are growing skeptical of its very existence, although skepticism of magic does not necessarily equate skepticism in all things supernatural. The actual attitudes would likely differ from domain to domain, since the cultures of these three domains do differ quite a bit.

Lamordia

These people are openly skeptical of magic and religion, although they do believe in "monsters" (such as the one living on the "Devil's Domicile"). At best, they might have a quasi-Deist view: the supernatural exists and created these strange beings, but certainly does not sit around waiting for some madman to shake some chicken bones at it and make it jump through hoops.

Dementlieu

In Dementlieu, it might be best to go with a simple explanation: the people never see magic, so they simply don't think much about it. Something crucial to remember is that in a world with few mages, having any magical ability is Power. And Dementlieu is all about power plays; any wizard who makes his abilities public (indeed, even if they are wise enough to keep them secret) will almost certainly get drawn into the covert struggle for power going on between the darklord and his main rival. Mages might even get noticed by our two lower-planar friends in

Chateaufaux, since the Domains of Dread implies that they might still be in control. Whoever notices the mage first is sure to try to "recruit" him, by hook or by crook.

What I'm getting at is: wizards in Dementlieu have a very valuable asset. This asset is a source of power, but at the same time might get them in some very deep trouble if they don't maintain absolute secrecy about their abilities. So, I guess my opinion here is that wizards from Dementlieu do well to keep their powers hidden.

Mordent

Mordent still has serious belief in the supernatural world. (The "other side," as they call it.) Mordentshire itself has seen a long string of magic-wielding heroes come through its streets, thanks in no small part to Dr. Van Richten's basing his home here. Since Van Richten's reputation was spotless in the eyes of the Mordentish, his companions may have benefitted as well. So, the Mordentish may be accepting of wizards. At the same time, the Mordentish (being rural English types) probably aren't terribly fond of magic that's too flashy or strange, and they would always remember the saying, "If you don't visit evil, it won't visit you." So, they may take this meddling in the supernatural world as an invitation for the entities of the "other side" to make trouble for the mage.

So here's my opinion: magic has a mixed history in Mordentshire, but for now it isn't particularly feared or beloved. If anything, it may simply be a wee bit... distasteful. This earns the wizard the opportunity to be judged on his own merits -but he WILL be judged. If he seems to be inviting disaster, he'll be sent packing. If he seems to be a right-headed chap, he'll have no problems, other than quite a lot of well-intentioned warnings from friends that he's "meddling in things best left alone." (I'm sure any Mordentish mage will have been subjected to the Apparatus story so many times he's sick of it.)

One thing about mages holds true in any domain: Magic is Power. That Power makes the wizard special, and separates him from the herd -and this, of course, brings him to the attention of the predators.

John W. Mangrum

MAJOR ORDERS OF THE CHURCH OF EZRA

By C.D. Nichols

There are 16 major orders within the Church of Ezra, each based on the teachings of one of the main saints of the Church. The saints are Ezra (technically the goddess of the religion), St. Anchora, St. Hala, St. Mishnad, St. Justine, St. Burach, St. Rachael, St. Yamaki, St. Peter the Beggar, St. Judas the Kind, St. Mary the Orphan, St. Itias, St. Sophia, St. Dominic, St. Danielle, and St. Numerian.

The Fellowship of Anchora (also Anchorites)

St. Anchora was a wandering paladin of the Church of Ezra. Noted for traveling into the Land of Endor, a fiend held portion of the original world of the Church of Ezra. Wandering priests, the anchorites original mission was to travel the world spreading the word of Ezra through deeds and speech. This mission has grown dimmer in the Lands of the Mists.

The Sisters of Hala (Halanes)

St. Hala was a Holy Mother of the Church of Ezra in the pre-exile days of the church. She was responsible for the conversion of many persons of great evil. It was said that a day spent with Hala would lead even the death knights of Endor to tears of remorse. Halanes offer retreat from the world, and spiritual healing and conversion. They have the greatest ill-luck of any order.

Brothers of Mishnad (Mishnads)

Mishnad was the young king of the semitic people Ezra was a part of, ruling from the holy city of Aritezah. The epic love of Mishnad and Ezra was legendary and tragic. Mishnads are the protectors of love, conducting weddings, baptisms, and funerals. They are also charged with artistic duties, working to produce and encourage work of music and art.

The Justine Brethern (Justinians)

St. Justine was the Holy Mother of the Church of Ezra who finally unified the human nations against the Land of Endor. The resulting peace between the human nation lasted until the destruction of that world by the Endorian fiends. The Justinians are political envoys, peacemakers, and diplomats for the Church of Ezra.

The Fellowship of Burach (Burakim)

Burach was Mishnad's court scribe and aide. He scribed the original versions of the books of the Ezran Gospels. This function is continued by the Burakim, who scribe the holy texts of the Church of Ezra.

The Host of Rachael (Rachaelines)

Rachael was a rank and file soldier in Mishnad's army, who was chosen by Ezra to become the head general of Ezra's army. Under her, the fiends of Endor gained no ground, a great victory at the time. The Rachaelines form the military arm of the Church of Ezra. They are a very small order, most serving as guards at the main cathedrals.

The Children of St. Yamaki (Yamakites)

St. Yamaki was a blue dragon who converted to the Church of Ezra. After his conversion, he proved so faithful he was made a bishop. St. Yamaki later defended the city of Erostat against the forces of the Endorian general Takemalech, a pit fiend. He died slaying the fiend, and was post-humously made an arch-bishop and sainted. The Yamakites are exorcists, seeking to destroy fiends and other evil spirits. The rainment of this order consists of a grey hooded robe with a blue silhouette of a dragon and silver chains with Ezran holy symbols on each wrist (like a charm bracelet). The order carries the text Rites of the Adversary, and text of exorcism rituals.

The Brethren of the Rock (Petranes)

St. Peter the Beggar was a street beggar who was picked off the street to become the Holy Mother's right-hand archbishop. The Petranes are charged with the care of the poor.

The Lamed Brothers of Judas (Judasites)

St. Judas the Kind was a follower of Ezra. He served with her as a healer, though he himself had both legs and an arm withered. Judas had a divine talent to heal the lamed and crippled, and while he was able to use this ability on himself, chose not to as a sign of humility. Judasites help the chronically injured and ill - lepers, amputees, and others.

Orphans of St. Mary (Marians)

St. Mary was an orphan in the holy city of Aritezah, who was taken in by Ezra and raised as Ezra and Mishnad's daughter. She went on to become the second Holy Mother of the Church of Ezra, and founded the Great Orphanage of Aritezah, one of the Church of Ezra's prime institutions. Marians run the Church of Ezra's orphanages and perform other work with children.

The Order of St. Itias (Itians)

Itias was a childhood friend of Ezra and followed her throughout her ministry. He was scholar, reknown for the clarity of his explanations of Ezra's word, as well as for their startling depth. The secret book Confessions of Itias also reveals the secret passion he held toward Ezra. The Itians are teachers, seeking to enlighten the people. They also hold sway over matters of science, working to keep man from over reaching the boundaries of nature.

The Children of Sophia (Sophians)

St. Sophia was apparently a Holy Mother of the Church of Ezra, but all records of her time have been lost or destroyed. The Sophians are gnostics, and believe that the physical world is evil and that only pure spirit is pure. Thus, Sophians frequently commune with the spirit world, many times drawing up evil spirits which they believe are holy beings. The Neuvuchar Springs group is primarily Sophians, and it is said that a powerful spirit is pent beneath the cathedral there, but only barely.

The Congregation of Dominic (Dominicans)

St. Dominic the Blind was a prophet whose prophecies came startlingly true. An arch-bishop, he lived for nearly two hundred years. The Dominicans work to generate and interpret prophecy. The order is extremely small.

The Host of St. Danielle (Daniellines)

St. Danielle was head of the defense in the Bloody Seige, when an Endorian army of vampires laid seige to Aritez. She personally save the Holy Mother from a pack of the monsters. Since then, the Daniellines have been charged to combat the flesh of evil as the Yamakites battle the spirit of evil. They are skilled monster hunters.

(Yamakites handle exorcisable creatures, such as ghosts, spirits, and fiends; Daniellines handle anything else.)

The Order of Sorrow (Numerians)

Numeron was the arch-bishop who lead the thirty year exodus through the Mists. The Holy Mother had perished in Aritez and the new one was merely three years old. Thus Numeron was called to lead the journey.

The Numerians study the Mists and seek to find a sure path to the new land which the Church will find after 'the time of great darkness.' Also, they watch for the prophecied return of Ezra. Numerians wear black hooded robes, black gloves and boots, and a black face veil with white eye-spots. They are the smallest order, and the most secretive, rarely leaving the depths of the Great Cathedral.

The Elders of Ezra (Ezradim)

Ezra was a goddess worshipped by a desert people. In due time, she incarnated herself as a human. As a human Ezra lived a typical life until she turned sixteen. She became aware of her true nature, and began travelling among the people preaching her gospel, healing (through both medicine and divine means), advocating resistance against the encroaching Endorians. She discovered love, friendship, and joy, making these central to her doctrine. She was martyred at the hands of the Endorians. Over the centuries, the message of Ezra has been blunted, dulled and forgotten. The Ezradim are the true leaders of the Church of Ezra, the leaders and policy makers. Almost every church, save the very smallest are run by an Ezradim. Beyond that, the Ezradim are the church's healers, the physicians who understand the most about the treatment and curing of injury and disease. They work by equal portions of divine healing and medicinal and surgical techniques. The vestaments of the Ezradim are white robes (no hood) with light blue trim, and a gold chain bearing a Ezran holy symbol. Many Ezradim also carry a crozier.

Chris D. Nichols

MORE THOUGHTS ON THE EZRAN ANCHORITE BRANCHES

by M. Barrett

We all know the Anchorites have many branches, according to the different faithful's alignments. Among these, the one that has always seemed quite weird and out of place is the LE sect. One might wonder in what way are they evil? Remember that his is an organized evil branch of a neutral religion, which begs the question, what "evil" are they preaching, that still goes along with the teachings of the original? I can see three basic options:

A: The LE branch teaches that the best defense is a good offense, so they actively attack anything that threatens the public good.

B: The LE branch teaches that people need to work for their protection, or rather, pay for it. They promote the idea that by industry, one is made worthy of the protection of Ezra. Thus, the poor are to blame for their own situation, and only the rich (who can pay) need be protected.

C: The LE branch teaches that the Ezran faith is being undermined by the unfaithful, and so they are constantly seeking out "heretics." Shades of Elena Faithhold and Servants of Darkness. All in all, the first option works better for the LG philosophy (go out and fight evil to protect the weak) as I'd see a LE person more likely to strike a bargain with an evil beast than slay it. The last is too misguided to be truly evil, and frankly, I think we've got enough witchburners around to make these guys a little more unique. This leaves me the pay-for-protection version, which some folks might point out was my original idea from way back, in the discussion of simony.

As a final note, I'll remind everyone that the Ezran faith is unique among AD&D religions because of this deversity. Sure, other faiths have several alignments available, but only the Ezran faith is so divided as to have essentially four different philosophies--four organized schools of thought--in the same religion. That, IMO, is grounds for a little leeway in saying that these guys may vary from traditional Ezran teachings.

Matthew Barrett

Nature Of Clerical Spells In Ravenloft

By C. Rice

Before I explain this, I thought I should give you the material I am referring to (from *Domains of Dread*). I realize now that it was unfair to refer to this material, since I am the only one who has it. Thus, here is the information under "The Absence of Power" in Chapter Eight: The Path of the Priest.

"Many have come to believe that the gods have no interest in the Demiplane of Dread. To be sure, a great deal of evidence supports this opinion. Any priest, paladin, or pilgrim who has come from beyond the Misty Borders of Ravenloft will attest that the Land of the Mists feels strangely empty. Despite this, most priest spells still function, meaning that priests, clerics, and their ilk draw power for their spells from somewhere else. Some claim that the dark powers, for whatever reason, are answering the prayers of these wandering holy men and granting them spells. As with som much about the dark powers, however, it is impossible to know if this is true or not.

"Another common belief asserts that the gods of the multiverse have some sort of agreement to leave the Demiplane of Dread alone. Some have even suggested that the dark powers have shut the deities out of the Realm of Terror. Those who espouse this theory point out that in the past, the dark powers have proven to be as powerful as any divine being. To be sure, it does seem likely that the dark powers might hold off the efforts of an individual deity, but could they resist the efforts of a coalition of deities? It is doubtful, but then again, how can humans judge things on so grand a scale?"

This is what I was referring to when I claimed that priests feel "cut off" from their gods. As for the source of their spells: I do not think the priests know where their spells come from. If they did, they might not use them anymore...

Cindi Rice

Nature of the Dark Powers

Few scholars in Ravenloft have ever come to the realisation that there is something greater than the Darklords ruling this land. (Few, indeed, understand the nature of the Darklords to begin with.) But among those who suspect, the theories of what the Dark Powers are and represent vary wildly. Below are but a few thoughts on this matter.....

John W. Mangrum's thesis from the University of Il Aluk, shortly before its destruction:

"I don't think the Dark Powers easily conform to any simple ideas of Good and Evil; strong arguments can be made that the DP's actions support either one.

So where did the Dark Powers come from, and why do they do what they do?

As for where the Dark Powers came from, the best explanation I've seen is "The War for All Time," a creation myth told by the Vistani (pg. 12 of V.R. Guide to the Vistani). Extracting the "truth" from this legend, the Dark Powers are the shadows of the gods. By "shadow," I'll go by the Jungian definition:

Shadow: The shadow comes from both the personal and collective unconscious and contains the primitive, uncivilized elements within us that are unacceptable to society and are generally repressed. Generally, the shadow represents traits and attitudes that are the negative or evil. So, the Dark Powers (note their name) are the repressed, unacceptable, negative elements of the Powers (the gods). They are everything the gods don't want to admit exists within themselves, and like all things repressed, have insidious and powerful ways of making their desires known. According to the Vistani tale, the Dark Powers rebelled against the gods, trying to pervert all of creation to their own ends. Important in this was that the Dark Powers aligned themselves with the mortals. Although the Dark Powers couldn't hurt the gods, creation (the multiverse) was nearly destroyed by the struggle. The gods flung the dark powers into the mists, which in the tale essentially seem to stand for the same nothingness from which they came.

Well, whether the War for All Time happened like that or not isn't really important. The point is, the gods flung the Dark Powers into some deep hole where they wouldn't have to think about them any more. In fact, the War may never have happened in any form; the Demiplane may just be the continued repression of the god's darker natures.

Now, this doesn't break down into a simple struggle between good and evil. The Dark Powers aren't necessarily Evil, they're just everything which the gods cannot accept that exists within themselves.

So what does that mean? Here's an idea of what the Dark Powers do, and why:

The Demiplane of Dread is a little hole in the multiverse that the gods purposefully ignore. The Dark Powers are kept there in the same way that unwanted memories are repressed, by an unconscious act of will. And like repressed thoughts, they continually trickle out into the waking world: tendrils of the demiplane stretch into every plane and every place the Ethereal touches.

Inside their leaking prison, the Dark Powers continue to fulfill what they see as their role: to act as gods. As much as the Powers have rejected them, they reject the Powers; they are repelled and drawn to them at the same time. Thus, the Dark Powers try to ignore the Powers, dulling their power (in the form of spells, turning, etc.), even while they cannot help but interfere in the gods' business (notice how quite a few darklords were snatched up by the Mists just as they were about to receive retribution in their respective worlds).

(As a quick side note: so why do evil gods have a freer line into Ravenloft? All gods have shadows, even those of purest evil. But some look at evil as accepting one's baser impulses, the needs of society be damned. So, evil gods may be more accepting of their own dark natures, and thus don't have to cross the lines of repression the others do.)

So, are the Dark Powers good or evil?

Above all, the Dark Powers see themselves as... gods. Gods with an intimate, almost petty interest in their creations. Everything, absolutely everything in the demiplane exists because the Dark Powers made it so. The Dark Powers decide how many leaves grow on the trees. **THEY** decide what shapes skygazers see in the crowds. **THEY** control the rains, the seas, the winds. **THEY** determine if a temple should crumble to dust before its time, or if a corpse's flesh should cling to its bones far beyond its limits. There are **NO** coincidences in Ravenloft. This micro-management, this obsessive control over every aspect of creation, is what the Dark Powers think it means to be a caring god.

As for being a "caring god," they take immeasurable interest in the hearts and souls of every single living being in their grasp. They hear every thought, watch every action. Are the Dark Powers good or evil? I don't think the Dark Powers themselves really know the answer to that question. They are malevolent, and manipulative, yet they think their actions are for the common good.

They are like the parent screaming at a wailing infant to "SHUT UP!! SHUT UP OR I'LL GIVE YOU A REASON TO CRY!!", growing frustrated as the terrified baby wails louder with each angry commandment, not understanding why the simple creature won't listen to reason. They are like the disciplinarian feared for his liberally applied whipping strap, who accompanies each punishment with the reminders that "this is for your own good," and "this hurts me more than it hurts you."

They **THINK** they're pointing people towards the "right path." They **THINK** that by making examples of the darklords, and all that they "mark" with their dark curses, they teach the others to mend their ways. But they don't realize that they **ENJOY** making examples of these poor souls. That if there were no more darklords, they'd have to go out and get more. Along those lines, they **THINK** they let mortals have the free will to choose their own paths, but they don't realize they've manipulated their lives to the extent that many no longer see any choices before them, and retreat into themselves, either simply locking their doors and hiding under their sheets at night, ignoring the cries they may hear, or completely losing touch with the harsh, disciplinarian reality around them and becoming Lost Ones."

Metaphysician Robert Sullivan during his last conference in Mordentshire, the evening before his disappearance:

"The Dark Powers have purpose in the creating and maintaining of the Land of the Mists. This purpose is to allow them and the creatures of the Negative Energy Plane the greatest access possible to the Prime and Outer planes. Consider that creatures of the Negative Energy Plane can not exist for very long anywhere in the prime or even in most of the outer planes. Their negative energy clashes with positive energy and matter and they are destroyed. Ravenloft is acting as a great and terrible power converter. Through Ravenloft the Dark Powers can concentrate Negative Energy in one form or another; undead, madmen and madwomen, wizards, monsters, and fiends (the most common being the undead). The Dark Powers do not recruit just any evil person or thing. They recruit individuals who interest them, and can be subtly made to move in the direction the Dark Powers want them to move. The Dark Powers do not have to crush the will of the Dark Lords, they just recruit individuals who are likely to respond in a certain way to a given situation. Then the Dark Powers trap these individuals. It is not that the Great Upheaval upset the Dark Powers because the Dark Lords were escaping, but that it happened too soon. The realm was not seeped in evil enough. The Il Aluk Catastrophe marks a step in this direction; an entire city of sentient undead under the control of a single evil entity. It is to this, the working of Ravenloft into a poison with which to mortally wound the Prime Material Universe, that the Dark Powers strive."

Robert Sweeney (Professor of Philosophy at Mordent University) says:

"The dark powers are a plot device. Nothing more. If you want the dark powers to 'be something' I would make them the incarnation of the evil that lives in the hearts of all men. Our world, Ravenloft, would therefore only be the spot where they have gathered a bit more strongly."

Anonymous graffiti on a wall in Nartok:

"No hardly, the Dark Powers are the greatest forces for good in the multiverse. Why else would they trap such horrible creatures in Ravenloft and taunt them so much?"

Darkelf, from a conversation with his pupil John Mangrum:

"Actually, I kind of see the Dark Powers as being somewhere between neutral and neutral evil. Yes, they do tend to pull some of the vilest beings from the prime material and sequester them away in the Demiplane of Dread, which might be construed as "good", but perhaps they are a force that strives to maintain the balance, a more "neutral" outlook. Also, a lot of innocents still get hurt by these horrible creatures the Dark Powers have collected in their menagerie, so I wouldn't want to call them "good". Of course, you can always argue for the common good: The needs of the many outway the needs of the few."

Sam Cyber, a letter to the late Dr. Rudolph van Richten (never received):

"I don't think the Powers the rule on Ravenloft have an alignment we can comprehend (one reason for me wanting to know their identities). I believe that the tags we put on the powers are nowhere close to the truth; what we label them as is only what our brains can understand.

"I believe the powers are more "good" than "evil." They root some of the greatest powers of evil there are. Even without the powers they enjoy in the demiplane, imagine the terror that the prime would suffer if the powers decided they had enough, and released their prisoners.

"Some people will argue that with the huge (relatively) population of Ravenloft suffers too greatly, and this make the powers evil. Here is some evidence of the compassion of the dark powers; if one has read King of the Dead (the real story of Azalin, according to Jehann of Nartok, the bard who wrote it), he would see that Azalin's son is not the true Irik, but only a simulacrum made to torture Azalin. In the end of the book, Irik is told that he has suffered enough. I see no reason why the natives of Ravenloft aren't "synthetic sentients," other than the fact that several Lords are natives. Maybe a small amount of natives are true, among which you and I."

From "The Nature of Sin", by Matthew L. Martin of Kartakass:

"The question becomes: why are the Dark Powers imprisoning the lords? I don't think it's general sadism, since then they'd be pulling in anything that lived - or at least as many as they could. It may be some twisted sense of justice, or it may be something else, but I tend to side with Steve: the Dark Powers are interested in purification, and Ravenloft is a form of Purgatory.

"It's also worth noting that the Dark Powers seem to be fervent supporters and promoters of free will. They give the lords what they want - warts and all..."

The final entry in the journal of the late Christopher Nichols of Nova Vaasa:

"The Dark Powers do exist, and they are absolutely evil. They are like a person who captures a rabid dog, puts it a cage, and tortures it to death. Sure it's removing a dangerous thing from others, but it is merely a side affect of the display of heartless cruelty. (Of course, in our case, the dog is killing rabbits while it is tortured). Evil feeding on evil..."

From a conversation with Brent the Bard in a Paridon tavern:

"If the Powers were assigned as a body of justice to punish the guilty, I would definitely agree that the Powers were good or neutral. However, who does the punishment hurt more, since one lord in each domain is punished, but hundreds, even thousands of innocents suffer. It's like sentencing to death all of Paridon because there is a 10% national crime average... but we know it's much higher these days..."

"Good, Evil, and Neutral cannot be arrived at as a matter of addition and subtraction. One good deed plus one evil deed does not equal neutral. And, even if the Powers are acting as a sort of Justice of the Peace, its methods are selfish and malevolent. To mention another timeless cliché, "the ends do not justify the means."

"A good example is Elena Faith-hold of Nidala. Elena is a paladin who believes her purpose is to stamp out evil, yet in the process she becomes evil herself. Her acts are heinous, but she believes she is eradicating evil. Her version of "good" is highly contradictory to most people's notions of good."

Excerpt from the treatise "In the Hearts of Men", by Dreamweaver Kitsune of the Fifth Tail:

"Good and evil depends on one's perspective. What is good to one person may be perceived as evil by another. The Dark Powers are simply working good as dictated by their own perspective: removing great evil from the prime planes and containing it. Something only they are able to do. What we perceive as taunting the darklords may actually be the Dark Powers keeping the darklords off balance, and preventing them from joining forces and escaping back to the prime planes."

Baron Steve Miller in a quiet moment with his Lord, Azalin Rex:

"If you ask me, the dark powers themselves (or itself?) are prisoners, my Lord. Misery loves company, so...

"Maybe *they* too are being punished for something they did, or something their forebears did. The sins of the father, and all that...

"Another interesting theory i've heard. The dark powers aren't interested in redeeming or punishing squat. They want the strongest, most self-centered beings in the universe to be hardened even futher, so at some time in the distant future they can turn to some other entity and threaten with widespread destruction. This would most be Your case, Your Highness..."

Anonymous note found in a library book in Kantora:

"What if the dark powers are something that all of the good gods in the multiverse devised, that they are a cleansing program of sorts (which would explain why they act like it isn't there) And the more evil gods were happy about it because of the immense suffering common people suffer there. Then the dark powers are more similar to a golem which responds to evil acts."

Excerpt from "Modern Theories on the Creation of Planes", by David Bloustien the Groke, Plane Traveller currently stuck somewhere in the Land of the Mists:

"The Dark Powers are the antithesis of Thought and Belief (the matter which the Outer Planes feed on), yet also inexorably bound up in the creation and existence of Sigil. Hence they've been banished to the Ethereal (bordering on pure substance): they are incomprehensible, yet extremely important; and they are both destructive and creative in that they both generate and bind Evil"

A speech held by Simon Killingray to his fellow comrades during a night rest in Harmonia:

"What if the dark powers feed not exactly on evil but on negative emotions. Like anger, horror, fear, fustration hate and the like. So it's in the dark powers' interest to create an enviroment that best encourages all these properties.

"So to get hate they find a darklord: the majority of them are consumed by hate. Now to cause fustration they curse these darklords, giving them everything except that which they desire. That will cause a bit of fustration now, won't it? O.K so we have the people hating and fearing the darklord and the darklord ruling in anger and fustration over his people. But it's all a bit one

sided, isn't it? How can the dark lord properly hate his people when they can't do anything to him. Remember hate is very akin to fear and hate will normally have elements of fear in it.

"So let's even things up, let's bring in the suckers... the adventurers (that means us). They get sucked into Ravenloft and there find themselves working against the darklord. They will hate and fear him and this accursed land. And he will probably come to hate and maybe even fear them a bit. And this will lead to frustration. The heroes will mess up the plans of the darklord and the darklord will mess up the plans of the adventurers but neither side will be able to get the other out of here!

"Hence the cycle of anger, horror, hate, fear, frustration continues. And the dark powers grow stronger all the while..."

From the personal journals of Stormonu, arcanist and sage of Dementlieu:

The dark powers are a mysterious lot, and I am sure sages everywhere would like to know who they are, and where they came from.

Though I confess I do not know the real answers myself, here's some of my own thoughts:

In the Outer Planes, it is noted that the Lady of Pain is able to create prisons, and that she may have even trapped a power or two in them. My suspicion is that Ravenloft is one of those prisons - which is the main reason it is so difficult to escape it.

As for who is among the dark powers, has anyone noticed that Orcus, prince of the Undead, has disappeared from the worshipped pantheons? To me, he seems to be one of the most likely candidates for a Dark Power.

Finally, what is the Dark Powers' purpose? If it is a prison of evil, most likely the Dark Powers are attempting to escape, or maybe they are building an army of evil with which to conquer a host of Prime Worlds. The Grand Conjunction may have been such an escape plot, but Azalin accidentally botched it. Maybe the Dark Powers intended for the GC to signal the readiness of their army, and when Azalin forced it, they weren't ready for invasion.

Excerpt from "The Dark Powers: A Modern Comedy of Fear", by Gabriel Power of Scaena:

The Dark Powers are a court of good, neutral and evil "beings" which punish those who are too evil for the Prime Material Plane.

The good Dark Powers would (hypothetically) drag the villains out from their land and drop them into Ravenloft. As well, they would block the way out for most inhabitants of this Land of the Mists. Then, the evil Dark Powers would do "the dirty job" of toying with the villains and ruining their lives, over and over.

The neutral Dark Powers would attempt to prevent the other inhabitants of Ravenloft from suffering too much at the hands of the lords, by throwing in random events and whatnot. As well, they would be responsible for drawing into the Mists good or neutral beings from the Prime. Indeed, the latter would be part of the action to help the people survive and defend themselves, even though the neutral Dark Powers know that the heroes will not be able to change much, if anything. That is the point, too.

From a conversation with Jack "the Reaper", patient of the Clinic for the Mentally Distressed in Nova Vaasa:

The Dark Powers are completely evil, the most malicious and cruel forces one can think of. They are the powers of darkness - like the Devil Strahd, the Whistling Fiend and all those incarnations of evil from the myths. Their all purpose in existence is to cause as much suffering and pain as possible.

That's the reason beyond the creation of our world: a jail in which they torment all kinds of creatures, to relish on their negative emotions. When they find a being who causes much suffering to others by committing enough evil deeds, they make him a lord, granting him a domain filled with innocent people to torment. The reason they trap him inside is not in order to save the rest of the universe from him, but to make sure that he continues with his evil deeds in a place where they can get nourishment from them (they can only get nourishment from creatures inside Ravenloft).

Sure, they also torment him himself with curses- the anguish of such a strong willed personality no doubt delights them very much! And also his frustration will make him more angry and evil - more negative emotions. So they just use their power in order to draw in evil creatures that will cause much suffering, and good creatures to suffer from them. I think that the DP's are very much like the Nightmare Court, only in greater scale.

From the ramblings of Brett Paul, a well known drunkyard of Martira Bay:

The Dark Powers are not at all evil (though their name would imply such). They are actually good, but fiercely into the Vengeful Justice thing (e.g., they do not allow for atonement or forgiveness). You don't see the Dark Powers snatching up good people to curse, do you? Do you think the Evil people like being in their prisons? NO! When was the last time you saw a Good darklord? The Darklords are being punished and tortured for the evildoings they have inflicted on others.

The people within the realms of Ravenloft are also constructs of the Dark Powers. They are created to help further the punishment of the darklord. They are not really real people, but more like a Programmed Illusion: you can interact with them, and they behave as programmed, but are merely constructed.

The whole reason for "Powers checks" are that in the realm of Ravenloft, you are near the watchful eye of the Dark Powers. If you do something for which you should be punished, you are punished.

Dark Powers = Eternal Vengeful Justice. Nothing more.

"Heart of the Night", a poem by Markus von Berg of Vallaki:

The Raven swoops
high up in the sky
Marking the place
where Evil abides
But thou not dare
gaze in Midnight's Eyes
For souls won't stand
what worlds divides

We art all jailed
in this Land of the Mists
Forever cursed
to pretend not to see
What creeps from the past
what lurks in the heart
What hides in our chest
and what rules from the Dark

Ravenloft Astronomy

By J.W. Mangrum

There's a frequent question that many DMs of Ravenloft pose to themselves and it sounds like this:

"Are there any stars above Ravenloft? If so, do they vary from domain to domain? Do they also have solar eclipses? Or do they not occur due to the fact that the Demiplane doesn't revolve around it's sun(s)? Do all the domains share the same sun?"

My personal feeling is that, unless specified otherwise, all of the domains within a single mist-surrounded area (be it an island domain, a cluster, or the Core) have the same night sky. The night sky of a cluster (including the Core) would generally be determined by the first domain to form that cluster. In other words, most of the Core has the night sky of Prime-Material Barovia. Other, separate domains most likely have entirely different skies. In fact, their days, even seasons, may be out of synch with the rest of the demiplane.

I'm sure the astrologers and astronomers of the Core are aware of these oddities, and will still be debating their meaning when the Time of Ultimate Darkness has come and gone.

In General

The Core has a single night sky, with a single moon. The length of this moon cycle has been purposefully left vague (for DMs to determine on their own), but one source (*Van Richten's Guide to the Vistani*, I think) offered a 30-day cycle as a default. Nights can get very long indeed in the winter: at midwinter, there can be as little as 8 hours of daylight.

Exceptions in the Core: *Bluetspur* and the *Nightmare Lands* had no sun, stars, or moon. *Sithicus'* night sky has several constellations not visible from anywhere else in the Core. Sithicans call the moon "Nuitari" and, for some reason, it isn't visible in that domain (at least, not to most people).

Some curious reports claim that the moon in *Sithicus* has been shown to have a different cycle than the rest of the Core.

According to *The Awakening*, *Nova Vaasa* has five moons which all become full and new at the same time only once each every year. Despite that I was maniacal enough to actually work out the cycle lengths for those moons, I noticed that *Domains of Dread* didn't mention this (and it did mention *Nuitari*). Personally, I think it would be better to just forget about the five moons- it's incredibly jarring.

Darkon/Necropolis has the same night sky as the rest of the Core, but on the night of the Winter Solstice (Dec. 25 in my campaign), no moon is visible.

Other Domains

Avonleigh has two moons, called *Alyn* and *Zyla*. It's reasonable to believe that this also applies to the entire *Shadowborn* cluster. When *Avonleigh* was an island domain, there were no stars in

the sky, nor did the sun ever rise. While whether or not the *Shadowborn Cluster* has stars is personal choice, I reckon, *Nidalia* definitely does have days. As for *Shadowborn Manor*, the night sky over that manor looks like virtually whatever Ebonbane wants it to look like at any given time.

Sri Raji has no moon. Personally, I'd apply that to the whole *Steaming Lands* cluster as well.

Odiare has no stars, no moon, and endless night. At least, it did when it was first created. That changed during the Grand Conjunction, and now Odiare has a sun, but is basically almost always overcast and so in perpetual duskligh.

Staunton Bluffs has a moon and stars, but is stuck at the Autumn Equinox. 12 hours of day, 12 hours of night. And the same weather. Every day. (Although it seems that there are occasional abberant thunderstorms; these may be of supernatural origin.)

Following this logic, I'd say the Astrology proficiency is only useful in domains with the same night sky as the character's home domain. In domains with different stars, it would be useless. I'd allow characters who took a little time to study the local star charts to be able to learn a new night sky for 1 NWP slot.

John W. Mangrum

RAVENLOFT DOMAINS & RULERS

By Alanik Ray

Foreword

The Supplements column shows the supplements or rulebooks which provide *significant* information about that specific domain. Titles in italics are adventures, (N) means the title refers to a novel or short stories collection. Ravenloft (RL) 1st Ed. refers to the original Realms of Terror black box, while Ravenloft 2nd Ed. to the Ravenloft Campaign Setting (the red box). Domains of Dread (DoD) is to be considered Ravenloft 3rd Ed.

GC (often found in the Status column) refers to the Grand Conjunction events that began in BC 735 and ended in BC 740 reshaping the Demiplane of Dread.

Year BC 753

Domain	Lord	Status	Supplement	
Original Core				
01)	Arak	Shadowelf king (?)	GC Victim	Ravenloft 1 st Ed.
02)	Arkandale	Nathan Timothy	GC Victim (absorbed by Verbrek)	Ravenloft 1 st Ed.
03)	Barovia	Strahd von Zarovich	Normal (absorbed part of Gundarak after GC)	Ravenloft 1 st & 2 nd Ed., Domains of Dread, <i>Roots of Evil</i> , <i>I6: Ravenloft</i> , Vampire of the Mists (N)
04)	Bluetspur	Illithid GodBrain	GC Island	Ravenloft 2 nd Ed., DoD, Forbidden Lore
05)	Borca	Ivana Boritsi/ Ivan Dilisnya (co lord)	Normal (two lords)	Ravenloft 1 st & 2 nd Ed., DoD
06)	Daglan	Radaga	Destroyed during GC	<i>Feast of Goblins</i>
07)	Darkon	Azalin	Divided after GH	RL 1 st & 2 nd Ed., DoD
08)	Dementlieu	Dominic d'Honaire	Normal	RL 1 st & 2 nd Ed., DoD
09)	Dorvinia	Ivan Dilisnya	GC Victim (merged with Borca)	RL 1 st Ed.
10)	Falkovnia	Vlad Drakov	Normal	RL 1 st & 2 nd Ed., DoD
11)	Forlorn	Tristen ApBlanc	Normal	RL 1 st & 2 nd Ed., DoD

12)	G'Henna	Yagno Petrovna	GC Island	RL 1 st & 2 nd Ed., DoD, <i>Circle of Darkness</i>
13)	Gundarak	Duke Gundar	GC Victim (absorbed by Barovia & Invidia)	RL 1 st Ed., DoD
14)	Hazlan	Hazlik	Normal	RL 1 st & 2 nd Ed., DoD
15)	Invidia	Malocchio Aderre (Gabrielle Aderre ex-lord)	Normal (see <i>Evil Eye</i>)	RL 1 st & 2 nd Ed., DoD, <i>The Evil Eye</i>
16)	Kartakass	Harkon Lukas	Normal	RL 1 st & 2 nd Ed., DoD, <i>Feast of Goblins</i>
17)	Keening	Tristessa	Normal	RL 2 nd Ed., DoD, <i>Darklords</i>
18)	Lamordia	Adam	Normal	RL 1 st & 2 nd Ed., DoD
19)	Markovia	Frantisek Markov	GC Island	RL 1 st & 2 nd Ed., DoD
20)	Mordent	Lord Wilfred Godefroy	Normal	RL 1 st & 2 nd Ed., DoD
21)	Nightmare Lands	Nightmare Man/ the Nightmare Court	GC Island	RL 1 st & 2 nd Ed., DoD, <i>The Nightmare Lands</i>
22)	Nova Vaasa	Sir Tristen Hiregaard/ Malken	Normal	RL 1 st & 2 nd Ed., DoD
23)	Richemulot	Jacqueline Renier	Normal	RL 1 st & 2 nd Ed., DoD
24)	Sithicus	Lord Soth (changes Spectre of the Black Rose)	Normal (changes after SotBR)	RL 1 st & 2 nd Ed., DoD, <i>When Black Roses Bloom</i> , Spectre of the Black Rose (N)
25)	Tepest	The three hags (Laveeda/Lorinda/Leticia)	Normal	RL 1 st & 2 nd Ed., DoD, <i>Darklords</i>
26)	Valachan	Baron Urik von Kharkov	Normal	RL 1 st & 2 nd Ed., DoD, <i>Darklords</i>
27)	Verbrek	Alfred Timothy	Normal	RL 1 st & 2 nd Ed., DoD

Post Grand Conjunction Core

28)	Castle Island	Lady of the Lake	Normal (Lake Kronov)	<i>Servants of Darkness</i>
29)	Demise	Althea	Normal (island)	RLMCII, DoD
30)	Dominia	Dr. Daclaud Heinfroth "Dominiani"	Normal (island)	RL 2 nd Ed., DoD, <i>Bleak House</i>
31)	Nebligtode/ Nocturnal	Meredoth	Normal (island)	DoD, <i>Ship of Horror</i>

	Sea			
31)	Sea of Sorrows	Capt. Pieter van Riese	Normal	RL 2 nd Ed., DoD
32)	Shadow Rift	Gwydion	Normal	The Shadow Rift
33)	Vechor	Easan the Mad	Normal	RL 1 st Ed., DoD

Grim Harvest Core

34)	Boglands	Glennis McFadden	Normal	Requiem, DoD
35)	Forest of Shadows	Galf Kloggin	Normal	Requiem, DoD
36)	Il Aluk	Death	Normal	Requiem, DoD
37)	Jagged Coast	Damon Skragg	Normal	Requiem, DoD
38)	Mistlands	Trillen Mistwalker	Normal	Requiem, DoD
39)	Mountains of Misery	Beryl Silvertress	Normal	Requiem, DoD
40)	Vale of Tears	Yako Vormoff	Normal	Requiem, DoD

Misc. Core

41)	Evenore Manor	Clarisse ?	Normal (?)	Tales of Ravenloft (N)
42)	Malkavnia	??? (vampire?)	Destroyed (?)	Forged of Darkness
43)	Maridrar	Valkraan	? (north of Darkon)	Castle of the Undead (N)

Amber Wastes Cluster

44)	Har'Akir	Anhktepot	Normal	RL 1 st & 2 nd Ed., DoD, Darklords, <i>Touch of Death</i>
45)	Pharazia	Diamabel	Normal	Islands of Terror, DoD
46)	Sebua	Tiyet	Normal	Darklords, DoD

Burning Peaks Cluster

47)	Cavitius	Vecna	New	DoD, <i>Vecna Reborn</i>
48)	Tovag	Kas the Destroyer	New	DoD, <i>Vecna Reborn</i>

Shadowborn Cluster

49)	Avonleigh	Morgoroth	Normal	<i>A Light in the Belfry</i>
50)	Nidalia	Elenia Faithhold	Normal	Islands of Terror
51)	Shadowborn Manor	Ebonbane	Normal	Darklords

Steaming Lands Cluster

52)	Saragossa (sea)	Draga SaltBiter	Normal	Islands of Terror
53)	Sri Raji	Lord Arijani	Normal	RL 2 nd Ed., <i>Web of Illusions</i>
54)	Wildlands	King Crocodile	Normal	Islands of Terror

Definite Islands

55)	Al-Kathos	Malbus	Normal (?)	Tales of Ravenloft (N)
56)	Blaustein	Bluebeard	Normal	Darklords, DoD
57)	Farelle	Jack Karn	GC Victim	RL 1 st Ed.
58)	Ghastria	Stezen d'Polarno	Normal	Darklords, DoD
59)	I'Cath	Tsien Chiang	Normal	Darklords, DoD
60)	Isle of Ravens	???	Normal	DoD
61)	Kalidnay	Thakok-An	Normal	Forbidden Lore, DoD
62)	Kislova	Ilsabet Obour	New	Baroness of Blood (N)
63)	Liffe	Baron Lyron Evensong	Normal	Book of Crypts, DoD
64)	L'île de la Tempête	Capt. Monette	Normal	Darklords, DoD
65)	l'Morai	Puppetmaster	Destroyed (?)	Carnival of Fear (N)
66)	Nosos	Malus Sceleris	Normal	Islands of Terror, DoD
67)	Odiare	Maligno	Normal	DoD, <i>The Created</i>
68)	Rokushima Tayoo	Haki Shinpi	Normal	RL 2 nd Ed.
69)	Sanguinia	Ladislav Mircea	GC Victim	RL 1 st Ed.
70)	Souragne	Anton Misroi	Normal	RL 1 st & 2 nd Ed., DoD, <i>Dance of the Dead</i> (N)
71)	Staunton Bluffs	Sir Torrence Bleysmith	Normal	Islands of Terror
72)	Timor	Hive Queen	merged with Paridon	Islands of Terror, DoD
73)	Vorostokov	Gregor Zolnik	Normal	Darklords, DoD
74)	Zherisia/Paridon	Sodo	Normal (GC shrunk)	RL 1 st & 2 nd Ed., DoD, <i>Hour of the Knife</i>

Possible Islands (May Be Core Extensions)

75)	Estrangia	Friar Whelm	Normal	Tales of Ravenloft (N)
76)	Ravallah	Lord Donskoy	Destroyed (?)	To Sleep with Evil (N)

77)	Risibilos	Puncheron/Doerdron	Normal (?)	Book of Crypts
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Floating Pocket Domains

78)	Aerie	The Baron	? (Floating Citadel)	Dungeon #?
79)	Aggarath	Chardath Spulzeer	Destroyed (?)	<i>The Forgotten Terror</i>
80)	Bleak House	Madame Radanavich	Destroyed (?)	<i>Bleak House</i>
81)	Endurance (ship)	Capt. Garvyn	Normal ? (sea only)	<i>Ship of Horror</i>
82)	House of Lament	Mara	Normal	Darklords, DoD
83)	Leederick	Phantom Lover	Normal	Darklords
84)	Scaena	Lemot Sedame Juste	Normal	Islands of Terror, DoD
85)	Thornewood	Davion the Mad	Normal	Book of Crypts, DoD
86)	Winding Road	Headless Horseman	Normal	Darklords
87)	???	T'laan	???	<i>Crystal Spheres</i> (SJR)

fiends (Reality Bubbles)

#	Name	Type	Supplement
1)	Inajira	Arcanaloth (Yugoloth)	<i>Roots of Evil</i>
2)	Drigor	Shator (Ghereleth)	Van Richten's Guide to Fiends
3)	Elsepeth	Succubus (Tanar'ri)	Van Richten's Guide to Fiends
4)	Baltoi	Marilith (Tanar'ri)	<i>Adam's Wrath</i>
5)	Whistling Fiend	Babau (Tanar'ri)	Van Richten's Guide to Fiends
6)	Black Duke	Cornugon (Baatezu)	Van Richten's Guide to Fiends
7)	Malistroi	Nalfeshnee (Tanar'ri)	<i>Circle of Darkness</i>
8)	"Mayor Melano"	Amnizu (Baatezu)	<i>Chilling Tales</i>
9)	"Captain Tisiphanes"	Barbazzu (Baatezu)	<i>Chilling Tales</i>

RAVENLOFT ECONOMICA

By J.W. Mangrum

Very little detail has been given to Ravenloft money. Here's all the details I know of (derived from official supplements and adventures):

Darkon:

All coins minted in Darkon were stamped with Azalin's (human) face. If you steal these coins from Avernus (or just from Azalin in general, I'd say) the stamp changes to Azalin's undead mug. [*From the Shadows*]

My addition: Rather than being in profile, as most portraits are on coins, Azalin's face stares straight out at you. I also call the gold coin the Crown. Since Azalin's fall, some regions may have started minting their own coins, following the whims of individual rulers.

Lamordia:

Lamordian money is called Kroner. Of course, the same source [*Mordenheim*] also has Lamordia using paper money, so take it as you will.

Paridon:

Paridon uses three coins: the gold pound, the silver shilling, and the copper pence. Standard values for each. [*Hour of the Knife*]

Sithicus:

Sithican coins are all stamped with a death's head. [*Rigors of the Game*]

Valachan:

Valachan mints three coins: the gold pantherhead, worth 2 gp, the electrum cateye, worth 1 gp, and the copper claw, worth 5 cp. As you can tell from their values, these coins are somewhat oversized when compared to a "standard" coin. Valachan mints no silver coins. [*Felkovic's Cat*]
From personal notes, I'd add this:

Barovia:

Barovia's main silver mines are located near Vallaki (Mt. Baratok to be precise), so most Barovian coins are probably minted in Vallaki.

Falkovnia:

All Falkovnian coins are stamped with the sign of the hawk, the symbol of ownership by the state. (The exact same symbol of the foreheads of its citizens.) Furthermore, all foreign coinage which enters Falkovnia's economy is melted coin and reminted with the Falkovnian stamp. This would be especially true of Darkonian currency. (Vlad'll be damned before he has Azalin's face in his treasury.)

Nova Vaasa:

Nova Vaasan coinage is probably stamped with the family insignia of the noble family who minted it. It could also be that all coins are stamped with the Bolshnik emblem. There are also a few gold coins in circulation stamped with the image of a reclining cat, but these are considered unlucky and passed along ASAP.

Tapest, Verbrek, Invidia:

I doubt they mint their own coins. Invidia probably didn't mint its own coins either, but they may have started since the rise of Malocchio Aderre.

John W. Mangrum

Ravenloft Languages

by C.D. Nichols and J.W. Mangrum

List of Spoken Tongues

What languages are spoken in Ravenloft? We know that some domains speak languages familiar to various other AD&D worlds. But, is there a language or series of languages for the domains not drawn from standard realms?

A list of languages spoken in various domains:

Barovia, Borca, Dorvinia, G'Henna, Invidia, Markovia- Barovian (Balok)

Blaustein - Lamordian

Bleak House- Darkonese

Bluetspur- Illithid

Caviti- something from Oerth

Darkon- Darkonese

Evenore- Darkonese

Falkovnia- Thenolian (Krynn)

Forlorn- Forfarian

Hazlan, Valachan- Thayvian

I'cath- something from Kara-Tur

Kalidnay- something from Athas

Kartakass- Faerûnian-Thayvian

Lamordia- Lamordian

Mordent, Dementlieu- Mordentish

Neblistode- Heldannic or Alphatian (from Mystara)

Nova Vaasa- Faerûnian-Cormyrian

Richemulot- Richemulotian (a slightly different form of Mordentish)

Saragoss- something from Toril

Sithicus- Solamnic and Silvanesti (from Krynn)

Tepest- Tepestani

Tovag- something from Oerth

Vorostokov- Vos (from Cerilia)

Other Notes On Languages

Abber

Spoken: The Abber Nomads of the Nightmare Lands.

Derived From: Unlike any other language. Non-natives find it impossible to understand, although the Abbers can learn other languages.

Akiri

Spoken: Har'Akir, Sebu. Also spoken by some of the slave-traders in Pharazia.

Derived From: Egyptian. The more common written language is non-hieroglyphic. Hieroglyphs represent the Ancient Akiri tongue.

Arak

Spoken: The Shadow Elves

Derived From: Nothing in particular. Use a lot of hard consonants.

Most shadow elves also speak other languages of the Core.

Avergnite

Spoken: Staunton Bluffs

Derived From: Not specified. Could resemble English, French, or any Gaelic tongue, I would suppose. The domain lord also speaks Avergnite, but his native tongue is most likely Stauntonian.

Balok

Spoken: Barovia, Borca, Falkovnia, G'Henna, Markovia; a bastardized version is spoken in Invidia.

Derived From: Slavic languages from eastern Europe.

Darkonese

Spoken: Necropolis (if you come from there, you're Necropolitan), Falkovnia. A constantly-evolving dialect may also be spoken in Vechor.

Derived From: The Common tongue of Oerth, most likely, which in turn was derived from Ancient Baklunish and Old Oeridian.

Dwarvish

Spoken: Racial language

Derived From: Use German.

Elven

Spoken: Racial language

Derived From: Use Welsh.

Falkovnian

Spoken: Falkovnia, Richemulot

Derived From: This is probably the Thenolian language. Taladas, unlike Ansalon, has no Common tongue. If Falkovnian is derived from Thenolian, then it may have a very few words in common with Silvanesti.

Gnomish

Spoken: Racial language

Derived From: Use Greek.

Heldannic

Spoken: Graben (Meremoth's domain)

Derived From: Heldannic is the native tongue of most people in Norwold, the region of Mystara this domain was drawn from. Meremoth and the Graben family specifically probably also speak Alphatian. (One of several "Common Tongues" from that world.)

High Shou

Spoken: I'Cath

Derived From: This is the language of Kara-Tur. Use Chinese.

Italian

Spoken: Odiare

Derived From: Latin.

Kartakan

Spoken: Kartakass, also spoken by some Kartakan expatriates living in Sithicus.

Derived From: Actually, Kartakan is not exactly its own language, but is distinct enough that I chose to separate it. It is a musical dialect of Thayvian, apparently mixed with Sithican, or at least a very elven tongue. It's very easy to learn for speakers of either language. There is also an older Kartakan language quite distinct from that in common use. This old tongue is typically only known by the elders, and is dying out.

Lamordian

Spoken: Lamordia

Derived From: Unspecified, but not difficult for a speaker of Mordentish to learn. Consider Lamordian and Mordentish akin to Romance Languages, similar in enough ways that the speaker of one may be able to pick out a few words of the other.

Luktar

Spoken: Gundarak, now spoken by the former Gundrakan natives in Barovia; may also be spoken in Dominia. Dr. Heinfroth speaks it, at least. It may also be spoken by some of the druids in Forlorn.

Derived From: Nothing in particular, as far as I know. It's a "sing-song language of soft, lilting sounds." The Luktar word for vampire is *voishlacka*.

Mordentish

Spoken: Mordent, Borca, Dementlieu, Richemulot, Verbrek; taught in the finer boarding schools, so spoken by many Core scholars.

Derived From: Probably something akin to Middle English. I recently compared this language to the Anglo-Saxon tongue spoken in England after the Battle of Hastings in 1066, where the upper classes basically spoke French and the commoners spoke English. More or less.

Patterna

Spoken: The Vistani

Derived From: This is a crazy-quilt language which borrows from virtually every other language in the demiplane.

Pharazian

Spoken: Pharazia.

Derived From: Various Arabic tongues.

Sithican

Spoken: Sithicus. A dialect may also be spoken in Ghastria. A dialect is also spoken in Liffe.

Derived From: The Elven languages of Ansalon, most likely. Although probably closest to Silvanesti, it is also probably a pidgin tongue mixing in elements of Qualinesti and perhaps even

some Solamnic as well. The elves of Sithicus and the Falkovnians may share a handful of words in common with each other, which probably pleases neither group.

Tepestani

Spoken: Tepest

Derived From: Some sort of Gaelic tongue.

Thayvian

Spoken: Hazlan, dialects spoken in Nova Vaasa, Valachan

Derived From: The most obvious guess is the native tongue of Hazlik's homeland, Thay.

However, other lords speak it who came from Cormyr and Vaasa. These lands have native languages totally dissimilar to Thayvian. So, my preference is that these domains actually all speak varying dialects of Faerûn's Common.

Vos

Spoken: Vorostokov

Derived From: Vos is a language spoken in Cerilia. The spoken language sounds much like Russian. Other than some runic symbols, Vos has no written language. Since a few people in Vorostokov can read and write, they probably use an imported language for this purpose. Be that language something like Brecht (from Cerilia) or Balok is a matter of personal preference. The Vos dislike written languages, considering them to have evil supernatural significance. Thus, the written language used by a handful of people in Vorostokov probably did come in from somewhere else in the demiplane.

Also:

Bluetspur

The illithids communicate via telepathy. Some of their slaves may speak Balok, Thayvian, or Thaani, a language otherwise spoken only by some of the population of Immol in Barovia.

Burning Peaks

Although not named, the natives of the Burning Peaks cluster speak a language supposedly taken from Oerth's prehistory. This language is completely foreign to any other tongue now spoken on Oerth or in Ravenloft.

Any domains not mentioned likely have a language unique to that domain. There are a few racial languages as well, which I haven't bothered to list.

Overcoming the Linguistic Barrier in Ravenloft

In the core, there are really only three languages the party will need to know. Balok is spoken throughout most of the Balinoks region and the in the southwest, it would be safe to assume that no matter where you go, someone's going to speak it.

Mordentish is spoken in most of the northwestern domains, and is taught in Darkon's schools. It should be a safe assumption that this language is spoken by most scholars in the Core.

The third language is basically Faerunian common, spoken in Kartakass and the southeast.

There's also a growing population of humans who speak the Kartakan dialect in Sithicus as well.

Although there isn't much sign that this language has bled into other domains, the reverse is probably true; as mentioned, you'll be able to find someone who speaks Balok or Mordentish.

In the Islands, language may become more of a barrier. However, in most of these places heroes should at least be able to hire a translator, as in *Touch of Death*.

Here's a bit of language trivia for you: in all likelihood, someone who speaks Falkovnian might be able to pick out a word or two of Sithican, and vice versa; Falkovnian is probably actually Thenolian, while the elves of Sithicus likely speak some dialect of Silvanesti, or maybe even the Elvish Ancient tongue which eventually became the modern elven languages of Krynn. In Taladas, these languages have influenced each other to a small degree, and the two tongues probably have 10%-30% in common with each other. (I'm sure this would come as quite a shock to both the human-despising Sithicans and the elf-enslaving Falkovnians!)

It's obviously the job of the players to make sure their characters can speak with each other when they first make their PCs, but obviously you're going to hit some point when the PCs don't speak a word of the local language. I encountered this situation in my campaign, and cobbled together some rules on learning languages from various AD&D sources:

To use this system, the character must be totally immersed in the new language. Any day the PC mainly uses his own languages does not count towards the PC learning the new language. To learn a new language through total immersion takes 20 months, minus the character's Intelligence. The PC in question had an 18 Int, so (had the campaign not ended), he would have learned Mordentish in just 2 months.

That's the basic rule. If you want to do a little math, you can add a little more detail. Obviously, the PC doesn't just wake up one morning perfectly fluent in the new language; they learn it gradually. Consider each month to be 30 days, then figure out how many days it will take the character to learn the language. Divide this number by ten (there's the math); this is how many days it takes the character to become 10% more fluent in the new language. As they gain fluency, they get a better grasp of the tongue. Here's some guidelines:

10%: The character recognizes a word here or there, but to communicate they'll have to rely on a lot of (to quote *Time of the Dragon*) "hand waving and bad mime." I pondered allowing the character a list of 10 words they could use correctly. Anything else would have to rely on charades, and "bad mime."

20%: Let the player add another 20 words to his list.

30%: The character can get across basic concepts, but needs to make extensive use of gestures to make themselves clear.

50%: The character can communicate moderately well, but may occasionally have to resort to "pantomime and long-winded explanations using simple concepts." (Quoting *Time of the Dragon* again.)

70%: The character can participate in conversations, but he may speak a bit slowly (and ask the same of others around him) as he thinks of the words he needs to use. The character probably does understand many figures of speech.

80%: The character has a pretty good grasp of the language, but once in a while they may have to pause to think of a term.

90%: He can get along perfectly well in the new tongue, although he may occasionally slip up when using plurals or tense.

100%: Fluency. The character probably still has a noticeable accent, however.

Using this system, I'd also say that the character doesn't need to spend a proficiency slot to gain the language.

Ravenloft Religions And Beliefs

by J.W. Mangrum

There are numerous examples of the folk of Ravenloft believing in magic and the supernatural.

- The peasants of Tepest believe in "little beasties" and evil witches which lurk in the night.
- The Mordentish believe in the "other side", and that evil creatures may spill from this spirit realm.
- Darkonians believe the dead are always on the verge of returning from the afterlife to reclaim their land.
- Gundarakites in Barovia have a great deal of faith in the god they call the "Morninglord" (remember Vampire of the Mists?).
- Barovians believe that the "devil Strahd" has used dark magics to extend his life.
- Invidian fear the witch Aderre and shy from the evil eye.
- The followers of Zhakata believe that their sacrifice goes to appease some great, harshly demanding deity.
- Any denizen of Ravenloft can quietly warn you that the Vistani can shackle you with curses using nothing but an unholy stare.

They believe in magic in Ravenloft, but there's a world of difference between knowing that something exists and understanding what it is. Knowledge that something exists without understanding of what it is creates fear, superstition, and paranoia.

Religion has for the most part been kept vague up to now, since PCs might come from any TSR world. There are no true gods of Ravenloft; that is, if you don't count the Dark Powers as gods (I don't; not exactly), and it seems unlikely that there are any true gods worshipped in Ravenloft and nowhere else in the multiverse. I keep saying "true god" because there is at least one "god" worshipped in Ravenloft and nowhere else -Zhakata- but he doesn't actually exist; his power is simply a manifestation of the Mists, combined with the desires of a madman.

That said, there are a few faiths detailed within the pages of Ravenloft that are mentioned nowhere else; in these cases, I'd say these are true gods; they're just gods from worlds TSR hasn't gotten around to describing (I'll let them slide on this one; they'd probably have to skip lunches and weekends to release a boxed set for every one of the infinite worlds of the Prime Material Plane.) However, keep in mind that according to TSR now, it's probable that NO religions in Ravenloft are "true" religions; that the Dark Powers grant ALL priests their spells. Here are the faiths which have been detailed so far in the Demiplane of Dread.

False Religions:

These are religions which worship gods which do not exist. The gods are the total fabrications of the priests who started the faith, a secular power ploy (since, as we all know, the surest way to get rich is to start a religion).

Of course, no discussion of false religions in Ravenloft would be complete without mentioning the faith of Zhakata in G'Henna. The high priest of the Zhakatan faith is, of course, Yagno

Petrovna, and Zhakata is nothing more than the Dark Powers giving strength to his own delusions. Giving a brief overview, the priests of Zhakata form one of Ravenloft's most powerful religions. Church and State are one in G'Henna. When the domain first appeared, Zhakata was worshipped in two aspects: Zhakata the Provider and Zhakata the Devourer. In BC711, something occurred which shook Yagno's faith, and after that it became dogma that Zhakata had only one aspect: the Devourer. (This event would remain a mystery to most for decades, until Malistroi had his vengeance.) Starvation and self-denial are pillars of the Zhakatan faith. Statues of Zhakata, all following the same theme but different in detail, are found throughout the domain. One last bit of trivia: one does not have to have faith in Zhakata in be granted spells. All one need do to complete the priestly training and APPEAR to be a priest in good faith. This is not widely known.

At least two false religions were started under Azalin's supervision, and in some form or another, both likely survive him. The larger of the two is the Eternal Order. Originally just the superstitious beliefs of the Darkonian peasantry concerning death and the (to them) inexplicable phenomena created by their lord, Azalin organized the faith into a political entity and eventually declared it the state religion (although it is likely other faiths were not automatically stamped out). In a nutshell, the religion states that the land was once owned by the dead, who lost it to the living. Now, the dead forever strive to reclaim what is theirs, and only a constant vigil against their efforts will prevent their return. (The priests of the Order have translated the destruction of Il Aluk as the results of a lack of faith.) The Order insists on collecting all magical items of any kind, for two (publicly stated) reasons: 1. To keep such magic out of the hands of the dead. 2. To stockpile it for use in their inevitable return. (In truth, Azalin simply invented this as a tool to collect magical items. The effectiveness of this policy is a matter of debate.) The Eternal Order is associated with the Kargat, but is not actually part of that organization. The actual priests of the Order are themselves priests of a variety of death gods.

Lesser known is a false faith created and run entirely by the Kargat: the faith of the Overseer. To all appearances a good-aligned faith in Martira Bay, it was created in BC 650 by the Kargat vampire Tavelia as a lure to would-be rebels and "champions of good." She's still there, now posing as an acolyte to the temple's priest, who is an actuality just a simple-minded madman Tavelia found wandering the streets one day. In post-Requiem Darkon, this faith may possibly grow in strength, as the Kargat try to use it to weaken the Eternal Order. (The two groups do not get along.)

In the isolated village of Aferdale could be found a temple to Weeshy, "the god of wind." Several dozen priests and followers could be found there. The worship room was covered in images of the sky and storms; the priests wore sky-blue robes. Unfortunately, the temple was nothing more than a cover for a Malar cult. "Weeshy" was the fictional creation of the cultists, who feared impersonating a real religion lest they anger its god. Malar, otherwise known as the Beastlord, is an evil power worshipped in Toril.

A Falkovnian vampyre has been known to pose as a priestess to Ligra the Merciful, a fictional neutral goddess.

Elenia Faith-Hold, ruler of the domain of Nidala, commits horrendous atrocities in the name of

her lawful good god. Although unnamed, her god is likely the same as that worshipped by Lady Kateri Shadowborn.

Although the god is real, I list it as false, since Elenia's god abandoned her long ago. With Zhakata, Elenia's religion is probably one of the most powerful in the demiplane (thank goodness it's isolated in an island domain).

Dead Religions:

These are religions which, although probably real, vanished from the demiplane. In some cases, all the followers were killed. In other cases, the followers simply lost faith and abandoned the religion.

There may still be the odd follower or two cloistered away somewhere, but the faith as an institution has crumbled.

The first religion to die out was the Church of Barovia. When the Most High Priest of Barovia, a man named Kir died in 750, two things happened. One, Strahd used the man's fortunately coincidental death to create a bit of propaganda to explain some of the inexplicable, possibly supernatural events witnessed during Strahd's battle to conquer the goblin king Dorian. Officially, it was Kir using the Holy Symbol of Ravenkind which turned the tide, not the manipulations of an Arcanaloth. Second, Sergei Von Zarovich was chosen to be the next Most High Priest. When the guests at Castle Ravenloft were wiped out in 351, the religion died as well (at least in the demiplane; in P-M Barovia it recovered and eventually thrived). Decades later, in 484, the small chapel in the Village of Barovia was put in use again, by Brother Martyn "the Mad." Although he had no formal training, Martyn's faith in Lathander Morninglord made him a worthy priest. Unfortunately, Martyn died of cancer in 500 and soon after his acolyte, "Sasha" Petrovich was forced to go into hiding. The faith died out again.

Another monastic order was present in Barovia in 351; this may have been an order of the Church of Barovia, or something else entirely. Strahd discovered the existence of this secluded monastery soon after the domain's creation. Now, centuries later, the priests are long gone. The monastery itself is in Markovia, and is home to an order of the Guardians.

The Sisters of Mercy, also known as the Sisters of Grace, were a reclusive, monastic sect of exclusively female priests who worshipped Hala, a neutral goddess of healing. Well respected, their sanctuary (The Sisters of Mercy Hospice) can be found just east of Mordentshire. The priestesses of Hala all wore blue robes and covered their faces with veils; indeed, to uncover the face of a priestess risked Hala's wrath.

Unfortunately, the priestess found themselves playing host to two vampiric undead in recent years; the second one, with the aid of the Gentleman Caller, wiped out the priestesses to the last near the time of the Grim Harvest.

Before Mordent was wrenched into the demiplane, the Church of the High Faith was quite powerful in that region of its world. A good-aligned faith, the Church wasn't above granting

favors to its politically and economically powerful patrons. There was a "great Church" of the High Faith, lead by a priest named Father Joshua Talbot, in Mordentshire-on-the-Sea at the time the domain was created.

Unfortunately, on the fateful night Strahd and Azalin appeared on the scene, lightning struck the church and it burned to the ground (as much as a largely stone structure can burn, that is). After the events of that unnatural time, the Mordentish lost their faith and the church was never rebuilt; today it is in ruins. Father Talbot was the last priest of the High Faith.

An unnamed lightning god was worshipped in the early days of Lamordia's existence as a domain, but little of their faith remains, largely over-written (sometimes literally) by the Seekers of the Spark (see below.) These monks were responsible for trapping the Sleeping Beast. Yet another dead god from Lamordia with a lightning symbol: Zababa, a god of war. The symbol of the god is a sword crossed with a lightning bolt. The inscription of a crumbled idol survives: "All hail Zababa, mighty giant of war." Sacrifice (possibly human) was part of Zababa's faith. Although Zababa's ruined chapel was found north of Neufurchtenburg, it's possible (maybe even probable) that Zababa was not a god found in P-M Lamordia.

For several decades, Radaga was a priestess "of the undead." Although she may not have worshipped any specific deities, her priestly powers were substantial. They were likely granted by the Dark Powers. Radaga had no followers, in the usual sense, and when she was killed in 736, the faith thankfully died with her.

The peoples of Arak had temples to an unknown religion; it died with them in 588.

Although the folk of Nova Vaasa have no need of gods, thinking that they've moved past such superstition, at least one powerful cat-centered cult has sprung up, started by the crimelord Malken when the domain was young. Although apparently altruistic, the cult's sinister side was revealed by Sir Tristen Hiregaard, who by now is widely regarded as the elusive Malken's most persistent foe.

True Religions:

These are religions, no matter how small or how powerful, which do worship forces which actually exist. (Note that not all these forces are gods.) In all cases, the faithful are still active. In the little-traveled town of Claviera, some of the villagers carry talismans of Lendor, the god of "time and tedium" from Oerth. (The actual talisman is a necklace with an hourglass-shaped stone.) These talismans were likely worn as a form of superstitious protection from Baron Evensong, and may not have represented an organized faith. After the Baron's end, the talismans may also have slowly disappeared.

Malar: see the entry for Weeshy under "false religions."

Milil: Milil is a god of music worshipped on Toril. Two faiths have been described: there was a small temple to Milil in the village of Aferdale, with a single priest and no followers to speak of. (Typical for most real religions in Ravenloft.) Another temple to Milil could be found in the town of Harmonia in Kartakass. Like the faith in Aferdale, this was a (dilapidated) temple run by

a single priest, Gustav, and had no followers. In August 737, the new meistersinger of Harmonia, a young man named Casimir, declared Milil the state religion and had the temple of Milil restored. Sadly, a month later, Casimir killed Gustav in a fit of rage. Casimir replaced Gustav with a personal friend, Thoris, who was barely 16 at the time. In the spring of 738, Casimir was widely revealed to be a werewolf, and mauled Thoris. That summer, Thoris took his own life, and it is likely the religion (which had been thrust upon the people by a man now revealed as an evil creature) faltered.

There was a temple to Loviatar in the unmapped village of Thornewood (aka Pallatia), but it... well... wasn't all there, shall we say.

Druids: Druids have a hard time in Ravenloft, and aren't as well organized as in other worlds. Three groups have been mentioned; the first two were probably part of the same overall hierarchy.

A group of Druids in Tepest attempted to oppose the 3 hags. The hags destroyed them and perverted their lands into the "Brujamonte."

A group of Druids formed a cell in Briarweed Forest, in Nova Vaasa.

Presumably, they did this after the notorious Chezna and her bandits, who used the overgrown woods as their personal hideout, were routed BC 740. About a decade later, the cell was destroyed from within by Lady Heather Shadowbrooke.

The Druids of Forlorn can be traced back to the happier days when their homeland was known as Forfar. They are isolated, struggling for survival, and seem to be unaware of any druids outside their lands.

These druids worship Celtic gods; the rowan faction worships Belenus, while the oak faction worships Daghdha. Although they have different philosophies, they do cooperate with each other.

The goblins of Forlorn worship Arawn, the Celtic god of Death. Their burial practice of scattering the deceased's bones reflects their belief that reanimation or resurrection is unholy. Alfred Timothy is the high priest of a little-detailed "wolf god." This religion started as superstitious tales told by the folk of Arkandale.

Later, Alfred started to believe he could communicate with this god, and it now appears that the god actually exists. According to his faith, all intelligent creatures other than werewolves and dire wolves (I might throw worgs in there too) are "blasphemous heathens" to be destroyed. The people of Zherisia (aka Paridon; not much difference these days) follow a philosophy known as the Divinity of Mankind. "The practitioners of this religion believe that humans... must strive toward physical, mental, and emotional perfection. Knowledge, physical fitness, and an even temper are stressed. Rather than holding religious services and rituals, the temple offers ongoing 'divinity training' to the populace." More details on this faith can be found in Hour of the Knife and The Complete Priest's Handbook.

Baron von Kharkov allows one faith in his domain: Yutow the Peacebringer. Although described as unique to Valachan, it's probably more accurate to say "of the known worlds" it's unique. Certainly, Yutow is not a god of von Kharkov's homeland. "Yutow's theology is based on obeying the law and the master of the land, keeping the peace, and bringing in a plentiful harvest. [Probably LN.] Baron von Kharkov finds this theology useful in controlling the populace, so he does not disturb the church." Note, however, that he keeps tight controls on the church: the temple in Habelnik is probably the only one (although there may be another in Rotwold), and if the priest rises above 3rd level he succumbs to "a nasty accident."

The Strange and Peculiar

These are religions which aren't exactly false, but aren't exactly real, either. Many are faiths or superstitions which have sprung up to explain the unnatural phenomena of their domains.

The Seekers of the Spark: a secret society of flesh golems in Lamordia.

They have turned their desire to create life into a religion, and exist/pose as a monastic order. They consider scientific texts "holy books" and collect holy symbols and artifacts, hoping that by melding them together in various ways they can, in some way, gather the power of the collected faiths. They seem oblivious to the fact that they are simply angering most of the gods whose symbols they profane.

The people of the Arabian-flavored domain of Pharazia are required to follow a religion that is little-described. (Perhaps that of Al-Qadim.) They are required by law to pray for two hours each day, or four times a day. The people are also required to confess their sins to "law-givers," which might be considered non-spellcasting priests who have the option of flogging you for what you confess. All this is decreed by Diamabel, lord of the domain, and likely has little to do with the intentions of the actual gods worshipped, if they even exist.

The Tepesti folk have all manner of superstitions involving the "wee beasties" and the seldom-seen hags.

It might be worth mentioning that there is definitely NO organized religion in Staunton Bluffs. Although a highly superstitious people in many regards, the Avergnites are a level-headed people who put little stock in "higher powers" and instinctually distrust magic of any sort.

The people of Souragne have a handful of shamans serving them; Majenka (who may be a vampire; it's a bit muddled) in Port d'Elhour, and Brother Lucien in Marai d'Tarascon. The folk have a system of superstitious beliefs concerning the dead, which seem as shaped by the desires of the domain's little-encountered lord as anything else. (For instance, it is considered profane to cremate corpses.)

I'm putting this here because it could easily fit into any of the above three categories. In the domain of Har'Akir, the gods of the Egyptian pantheon rule with a heavy hand. A large temple to the entire pantheon can be found in the village of Muhar. Unfortunately, the last known priestess of the temple was seduced by the power of Set, and she slowly perverted the faith to follow his teachings. When she died in 738, there were no acolytes to take her place, and it's possible none have stepped forward to this date. So, we have real gods, who for years were worshipped in a false manner, and no priests to teach the next generation. Since this event, at least one ill-informed secret cult (to Sobek) has sprung up and been defeated.

The Order of the Guardians is a secretive, monastic, quasi-religious group dedicated to keeping watch over several powerful, cursed magical artifacts (see *Champions of the Mists*).

John W. Mangrum

THE FORBIDDEN NAMES

VAMPIRE:

Czech - Upir (oo-PEER), Upiri (oo-PEE-ri)

Filipino - Bampira (bam-PEE-rah)

French - Vampire (vahn-PEER), Vampires

German - Vampir (vam-PEER), Vampireh (vam-PEE-reh)

Hebrew - Arpad (ar-PAD), Arpadim (ar-pa-DEEM)

Italian - Vampiro (vam-PEE-ro), Vampiri (vam-PEE-ree)

Portuguese/Spanish - Vampiro (vam-PEE-ro), Vampiros (vam-PEE-ros)

Norwegian - Vampyr

Russian - Vampir (vam-PEER), Vampiry (vam-PEE-ry)

GHOST:

Czech - Duch (DUCH), Duchove (DUCH-ove)

Euzkara - Mamua, Mamuak

Filipino - Multo (mool-TWO)

French - Fantome (fhan-TOME), Fantomes

German - Geist (GAIST), Geister (GAI-ster)

Hebrew - Rooach (ROO-ahh), Roochot (roo-HOT)

Italian - Fantasma (fun-TAHS-mah), Fantasmi (fun-TAHS-mee)

Portuguese/Spanish - Fantasma (fan-TAZ-mah), Fantasmas (fan-TAZ-mahs)

Norwegian - Spoekelse

Russian - Prvidenye (pri-vee-DAEN-ye), Prvidenya (pri-vee-DAEN-ya); Duh; Prizrak

LICH:

Cantonese - Gudai (GOO-dai)

Czech - Kostej Nesmrtleny (KOS-tej NEH-smr-TEL-nee), Kostejoye Nesmrtelni

Euzkara - Gorpu, Gorpuak

German - Leichnam, Leichnameh

Hebrew - Peger (PEH-ger), Pgarim (peh-gah-REEM)

Russian - Koshei (kah-SHEY)

WEREWOLF:

Cantonese - Langren

Czech - Vlkodlak (vl-KO-dlak), Vlkodlaci (vl-ko-DLA-kee)

Euzkara - Gizonotso, Gizonotsanak

French - Loup-Garou (LOO-gah-ROO), Loups-Garous

German - Werwolf (ver-WOH-If), Werwoelfe

Hebrew - Adam-Ze'ev (ah-DAM zeh-EV), Anshei-Ze'ev (an-SHEIGH zeh-EV)

Italian - Lupo Mannaro (LOO-poh mahn-NAH-ro), Lupi Mannari (LOO-pee mahn-NAH-ree)

Latin - Homolupus, Homolupi

Norwegian - Valruv (VAHL-roov)

Portuguese - Lobisomem (lo-bee-ZOH-may), Lobisomens (loo-bee-ZOH-mays)

Russian - Oboroten (OB-ah-rah-tin), Oborotni (OB-ah-rah-tnee); Volkolak (val-kah-LAK), Volkolaki (val-kah-LAH-kee)

Spanish - Hombre Lobo, Hombres Lobo

FIEND:

Czech - Demon, Demoni

Euzkara - Debaru, Debaruak

French - Demon (deh-MON), Demons

Hebrew - Shed, Shedim

Italian - Demone (DEH-mo-neh), Demoni

Norwegian - Djevel

Russian - Chort, Cherti; Dyavol

Spanish/Portuguese - Demonio, Demonios

GYPSY:

Czech - Cikan (ci-KAHN), Cikani (ci-KAH-nee)

Euzkara - Ijito, Ijitoak

French - Gitan (jee-TAHN), Gitans

Hebrew - Tzoani (tso-ah-NEE), Tzoanim

Italian - Zingaro (TZINE-gah-roh), Zingari; Gitano, Gitani

Norwegian - Sigoeyster

Portuguese - Cigano (see-GUH-noo), Ciganos

Russian - Tzigan (tzee-GUN), Tziganee (tzee-GAH-nee)

Spanish - Gitano, Gitanos

WITCH:

Czech - Carodejnice (cha-ro-DEJ-nees)

French - Sorciere (sor-si-YERE), Sorcieres

Euzkara - Sorgin, Sorginak

Filipino - Bruha (BROO-hah)

German - Hexe (HEX-eh), Hexen (HEXN)

Hebrew - Mechashefa (mae-CHA-shae-FAH), Mechashefot

Italian - Strega (STREH-gah), Streghe (STREH-gheh)

Norwegian - Heks

Portuguese - Bruxa (BROO-shuh), Bruxas

Russian - Koldun (kal-DOON), kolduny (kal-doo-NY); Vedma (VED-mah), Vedmee (VED-my)

Spanish - Bruja, Brujas

SKELETON:

Czech - Kostlivec (KO-stli-vec), Kostlivci

French - Squellete (skeu-LET), Squelletes

Filipino - Buto-Buto (BOO-toh BOO-toh)

German - Skelett, Skeletteh

Hebrew - Sheled (SHEH-led), Shladim (sheh-lah-DEEM)

Italian - Scheletro (SKEH-let-roh), Scheletri

Norwegian - Skjelett

Russian - Skelet, Skelety

Spanish/Portuguese - Esqueleto, Esqueletos

GHOUL:

Czech - Ghul (GHOOL), Ghulove (ghoo-LOV)

French - Goule (GOOL), Goules

Hebrew - Goual (GOU-al), Goualim

Russian - Vurdalak (voor-da-LAK), Vurdalaki

SHADOW:

Czech - Stin (STEEN), Stiny

Euzkara - Itzal, Itzalak

French - Ombre, Ombres

German - Schatten, Schatten

Hebrew - Tzel, Tzelalim

Italian - Ombra (OHM-brah), Ombre (OHM-breh)

Norwegian - Skygge

Russian - Ten, Tenee

Spanish/Portuguese - Sombra, Sombras

UNDEAD:

Czech - Nemrtvy (ne-MRT-vee), Nemrtvi (ne-MRT-vi)

French - Mort-Vivant (mor-vee-VAHN), Morts-Vivants

German - Untoter, Untoteh

Hebrew - Al-Met (AHL-MET), Al-Metim (AHL-meh-TEAM)

Italian - Non-Morto (nohn-MOHR-toh), Non-Morti (nohn-MOHR-tee)

Russian - Mertvak (meert-VAK), Mertvaki (meert-vah-KEE)

RAVEN:

Czech - Havran (HAV-ran), Havrani (HAV-ra-ni)

French - Corbeau (KHOR-bo), Corbeaux

German - Rabe, Raben

Hebrew - Orev (oh-REV), Orvim (or-VIM)

Italian - Corvo (COHR-voh), Corvi (COHR-vee)

Russian - Voron (VOH-rah), Vorony (VOH-rah-ny)

MONSTER:

Czech - Netvor (neh-TVOR), Netvori (ne-TVO-ri)

French - Monstre (MOUN-ss-treh), Monstres

Hebrew - Mifletzet (meef-LEH-tzet), Miflatzot (meef-lah-TZOT)

Italian - Mostro (MOHS-troh), Mostri (MOHS-tree)

Russian - Chudovishe (choo-DOH-vee-sheh), Chudovisha (choo-DOH-vee-shah)

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RUDOLPH VAN RICHTEN: FROM BIRTH TO DEATH

a Chronology by J.W. Mangrum

- 671** Rudolph Van Richten born, son of Otto and Mrs. Van Richten
- 678** Rudolph's sister Maria Van Richten born
- 679** Rudolph Van Richten sent to boarding school in Nartok. A childhood friend is Eldrenn Van Dorn.
- 680** Casimir (not to be confused with Harkon Lukas' son) starts working at Richten Haus as the gate keeper.
- 683** The servants of Richten Haus are all killed while the family is away one day. (summer)
- 685** Rudolph Van Richten meets Robert Tatenna, a fellow student at boarding school. (fall)
- 688** The Crimson Death spreads across Darkon (winter); it claims Van Richten's great aunt Helga, despite his efforts; Rudolph is even more driven into his medical studies.
- 689** Rudolph Van Richten attends the University of Il Aluk. While there, he meets a fellow student, Harmon Ruscheider. (fall)
- 691** Rudolph Van Richten marries his childhood sweetheart, Ingrid.
- 692** Rudolph and Ingrid Van Richten's son Erasmus is born.
- 693** Dr. Rudolph Van Richten finishes his studies; opens his practice back home in Rivalis.
- 693** Dr. Van Richten travels to Lamordia, hears of the Loud Man
- 696** Dr. Van Richten meets Antonin Madren and becomes his mentor.
- 706** Dr. Van Richten suffers the wrath of the Radanovich clan; the Vistani steal his son Erasmus; they sell Erasmus to Baron Metus, a vampire from Richemulot; with the help of an amused Azalin, Van Richten wipes out all but one member of the Radanavich caravan; Madame Radanavich curses Van Richten, although he doesn't realize it until the end of his career. Van Richten puts his Erasmus out of his misery, but in spite Baron Metus tears Ingrid van Richten to pieces; Dr. Van Richten destroys Baron Metus, starting his career of hunting evil. Unable to live with the memories in Richten Haus, Van Richten moves to Corvia
- 707** Dr. Van Richten researches vampires, and meets Aimon Davidovich, a fellow scholar of the arcane.
- 710** Dr. Van Richten encounters his first werebeast near Varithne, a small village in northern Darkon. Dr. Van Richten starts hunting werebeasts as well
- 711** Dr. Van Richten meets Gedlan Ironheart, a fearless dwarven innkeeper in Corvia. Gedlan becomes a frequent hunting companion.
- 712** Dr. Van Richten meets the mage Shauten; they bond when they are attacked by one of Azalin's patrols. Shauten opens Van Richten's eyes to the existence of the Lich.
- 713** Dr. Van Richten is visited by the dying Dr. Ruscheider, who tells Rudolph all he can about several months spent as a lich's captive; Dr. Van Richten starts hunting liches.
- 714** Dr. Van Richten receives a visit from his childhood friend, Eldrenn Van Dorn, who is now a ghostly slave to Azalin; Dr. Van Richten learns the terrible truth about Azalin Rex.
- 714** Dr. Van Richten moves to Mordentshire, sensing it is politically unsafe for him to remain in Darkon.
- 716** The evil spirit of Madame Radanavich and her undead retinue discover Richten Haus and claim it for their own.
- 718** Dr. Van Richten and Shauten battle a creature they believe to be a priestly lich; it is actually Van Richten's first ancient dead.

- 724** Dr. Van Richten battles the Bog Monster of Hroth, and meets Jameld. This is also Van Richten's first visit to both Kartakass and Sithicus.
- 726** Dr. Van Richten visits Sanguinia with George Weathermay and Arametrius; they meet Claudia DeShanes; Claudia becomes Rudolph's assistant, and it seems he had certain unspoken feelings for her.
- 727** Marilee Markuza, the Child Vampire, kills Claudia. Van Richten pursues the creature relentlessly, but loses her in Lamordia.
- 727** While hunting the Child Vampire, Van Richten witnesses the Thundering Carriage; Van Richten decides he must put an end to these ghostly horrors, too.
- 728** Dr. Van Richten defeats the Phantom Army.
- 729** The fiend Elsepeth enters Ravenloft via transposition in a small village outside Stangengrad, near the Grashen Falls (sept)
- 730** Gedlan Ironheart killed while battling evil spirits.
- 731** Elsepeth leaves Borca, having lurked there for years
- 732** Antonin Madren writes to Van Richten about the death of Madren's sister.
- 734** Antonin Madren shows up on Van Richten's doorstep, and gives the good doctor his notes; Dr. Van Richten starts hunting the Created.
- 735** Dr. Van Richten is forced to kill his old friend Shauten in self-defense, when Shauten tries to sacrifice Rudolph in a bid for lichdom. This "near-miss" may have inspired Van Richten to start recording his collected knowledge for heroes to come.
- 735** Dr. Van Richten publishes the *Guide to Vampires*
- 736** Elsepeth goes to Nartok
- 736** Dr. Van Richten publishes the *Guide to Ghosts*
- 737** The Vistana Cyrilla's niece Vaasa is kidnapped near Corvus.
- 737** Vaasa returns as a clay golem; Cyrilla writes to Dr. Van Richten.
- 737** Dr. Van Richten publishes the *Guide to the Lich*
- 738** Dr. Van Richten publishes the *Guide to Werebeasts*
- 739** Dr. Van Richten publishes the *Guide to the Created*
- 740** Dr. Van Richten publishes the *Guide to the Ancient Dead* (early spring)
- 740** Azalin forces the Grand Conjunction, also known as the Great Upheaval, but because of his interference and hatred for Strahd, adventurers are able to collapse the conjunction. The universe is saved; the demiplane of dread is badly shaken (summer)
- 740** Dr. Van Richten inherits the library of Aimon Davidovitch. Dr. Van Richten starts studying tomes (Sept)
- 741** Dr. Van Richten and friends battle Drigor; they are defeated miserably (Feb.)
- 741** Dr. Van Richten publishes the *Guide to Fiends*
- 741** Dr. Van Richten is depressed; he consults with the diviner, Inarin Alster; Rudolph realizes he had been laboring under a curse all these years; Dr. Van Richten spends a year with Arturi Radanavich studying the Vistani
- 742** Dr. Van Richten writes his *Guide to the Vistani* and retires (Oct.)
- 750** Dr. Rudolph Van Richten dies (see *Bleak House* boxed set)

John W. Mangrum

Speculative Origins of Bluetspur

(with regard to Asmus Anagoge's *Illithiad*)

By C.D. Nichols

Foreword

Information used in this essay can be found in *The Illithiad*, *Forbidden Lore*, *Thoughts of Darkness*, and Dragon #150 *The Sunset World*, as well as material from *The Book of Souls*, the Ravenloft campaign setting netbook.

Common Theories About The Forgotten Land Bluetspur

As told by Professor Abelhous Nicholosi of the University of Il Aluk

In the days before the Great Upheaval, the people in the south of the Lands of the Mists knew an ever present fear. For, on their borders lay an enemy as mysterious as the Mists, and as terrible as any horror which lay closer to home. The sunless wastelands called Bluetspur, a place of endless storms and twisted stone, were the source of their omnipresent fears. As reports of hideous monsters preying on the trade-routes of the south spread, so did fear. Then came the Sundering. After the Great Upheaval ended, and the wastes of Bluetspur fell away into the Mists, the people of the Lands of the Mists eased their worries a notch, glad to be rid of the nightmare place and the creatures in held. But, in the Barovian village of Immol, there were people who knew more about that black land. The Thaani of Immol claimed the dark land of Bluetspur as their ancestral homeland. They knew the horror beneath the peaks of the blasted heath. To the Thaani, abomination has a name: *illithid*.

Until recently, the Thaani tales had been considered just that-the legends of dieing culture. Only within the past decade, with the publication of *Speculative Ecology of an Inhabitant of Bluetspur*, has the legend of the illithid empire gained credence. And, now that new materials have been brought at great risk to the remaining faculty of the University of Il Aluk based in Karg, a reconstruction of the last days of the people of Thaan and the nature of the illithid empire of Thaan (Thaan being both the world and the city of the Thaani people), can be deduced.

Recently, our facilities here were called on to examine a bundle the Harbor Authority discovered a local fisherman removing from his boat. On questioning, the fisher explained he had captured it in his nets that day, and, after a brief debate, relinquished the bundle to the Harbor Authority. The bundle proved to be a book and papers in an unknown language, sealed in a water-tight jar. The Harbor Authority then gave the text to our faculty, sorely depleted as we are for translation. The texts proved to be a work entitled the *Illithiad*, which supported the legends of the Thaani regarding Bluetspur.

Therefore, we turn to the question of what do these Thaani legends say? The legends say that prior to the appearance of Bluetspur in the Lands of the Mists, the Thaani lived on a world in the so-called "Prime" known as Thaan. Thaan was dominated by two races, humans on the surface and in the caverns beneath the earth, mind flayers, properly called illithids. The two races had war off and on for eons, but the mind flayers had never been cohesive enough to over come the humans. Further, the illithids were hampered by their inability to survive in sun-light. For the illithids to overcome the humans, the communities of Thaan's illithids would have to band together.

And so, the illithids, under the banners of the Gatherers, the Darken, and the Awaiters, held a Grand Elder Concord, and launched a plan. For two millenia, the surface world never saw a single mind flayer, slowly forgetting the threat. The their dank chasms, the illithids built huge psionic engines and "spelljamming fleets" [although the meaning of this first term escapes us, it must refer to some particular and powerful energy -AN]. Psionic curcuits laid down pathways channeling energy into Thaan's core, heating the planet's surface through geothermal activity and shifting continents into swampy lowlands. Other engines worked on climate, causing the planet to be universally covered in clouds bringing warm rains. And finally, the great work of the mind flayers, a fleet of psionic engines, which would when the time came, be spelljammed [here the term probably means "transferred" -AN] into Thaan's sun, cutting its radiance to a cold and sullen red glow.

But, as with any plan, there were bugs. Chiefly, the illithid communities, a dozen or so huge illithid metropolises, were afflicted by outcasts, mind flayers which flouted societal norms. Mostly, these were illithids who choose to favor magic over the psionic arts. Others suffered from a disorder called "partial personality", wherein the mind of the creature whose body the illithid usurped at birth still exists in part within the illithid's mind. However, it was these outcast with would lay low all of Thaan.

A group of arcane illithids, outcast from their cities, banded together under the leadership of a alhoon (an illithid lich) who called itself Bluetspur. This cabal of rogue mind flayers gathered others, forming a community far from the ther elder brains. Once they were sure that the community was forming nicely, the alhoon Bluetspur and his cabal sacrificed themselves, tearing out their own brains and casting them into a specially treated pool of brine. As the lich Bluetspur's blackened organ merged, the illithid's mind consumed his minons spirits, and the elder brain was Bluetspur.

The new community of outcast illithid took on the name of its elder brain, as is mind flayer tradition. The outcasts continued to recruit, and turn its attention toward destroying nearby communities to her thralls as food and labor. Breed in from these slaves, and looking for revenge against the illithids who had turned against them by casting them out, the illithids of Bluetspur defied illithid descency. The arcane illithids created a type of undead [1] to use against the other elder brains, for true illithids loathe undead. Even more depraved, the elder brain sent undead emissaries into the Astral Plane to cut deals with rogue githyanki and githzerai. Soon, the illithids of Thaan would perish.

The normal illithids of Thaan then launch their assault, with the planetary conditions change to their liking, though the sun had not yet been dimmed. Now the Tamers and Arisers of the illithid cities waged war on the humans. Weakened by the recent rapid climatic changes, most human cities fell quickly. Soon only Thaan and a half-dozen other cities had not fallen, and the main forces of the illithids were occupying the surface cities. Then, the illithids of Bluetspur moved. First, the gith hunters were lead by illithid created undead to the astral nodes of the enemy mind flayer elder brains. Faced by hordes of racial enemies, the elder brain swiftly fell. The illithids, suddenly trust into confusion as their mental links died and they were left leaderless became easy prey to Bluetspur's army of psionic undead. In less than a week, the elder brain had siezed the illithid empire as strange new mists enveloped the world.

The death of the elder brain and collapse of the illithid metropolises left many illithid tadpoles unattended, and many died. Those that did not die, these grew, becoming brain eating monsters called neothelids [2]. These creatures are hated by all illithids and slain whenever possible. The arcane illithids of Bluetspur subjugated their psionic brethren and forced them to march on the remaining human cities. The time that passed as Bluetspur gained control of the illithid empire has allowed the humans to mount a more formidable defence. Many illithid died, though the cities fell in the end. Only Thaan, haven of human psionics, still stood.

Simultaneously, Bluetspur ordered the launch of the sunkiller fleet, powering each ship by forcing the creation of an elder brain on each ship, by killing many newly captured illithids, and dumping their brains into vats of brine. Examining the attack of Thaan, it was found that a psionic shield enclosed the city, preventing the attack. Study by Bluetspur's tacticians showed that by burrowing under the shield, which had been designed by scholars who had not fully grasped psionics, the illithids could attack Thaan. Bluetspur ordered the launch, timing it so that the sun would die as the last human city of Thaan fell.

And so, as the sun died into sullen black and red, as the illithids fed on the brains the last free humans of Thaan, as Bluetspur sent an unknown number of other elder brains into the sun, the Mists thickened, pulled, and tore a chunk of Thaan into the Lad of the Mists.

Prof. Abelhous Nicholisi, Karg 751 BC

Notes:

[1] These undead creations are cranium zombies. Illithids of Bluetspur create these by dissolving the top and back of the skull, exposing the brain, then psionically dissolving all but the most basic stimulus/response areas of the brain. Then the corpses are coated in illithid mucus. Finally, a black tincture distilled from secretions made by the elder brain is injected into the corpse. Cranium zombies appear as well preserved though slimy, grey-skinned humans, with exposed brains which glow a distressing green (this is, however, invisible to infravision). Cranium zombies will feed on a victim's brains out of rote mimicry. A cranium zombie has the ability to use the psionic power *ego whip* twice a day. On creation, there is a 5% chance the cranium zombie will go berserk and attack any nearby illithid.

Cranium Zombie: AC 10, MV 6, HD 3, THAC0 15, #AT 1, SA *ego whip*, SD Spell/psionics immunity, MR 30%, SZ M, ML as per normal zombie, Int 0, AL LE, XP 270

[2] Please see *The Illithiad*, page 95.

Chris Nichols

The Aderre-Timothy Relationship

By Jack the Reaper

Many consider Alfred Timothy the darklord with the least developed background. After all, from his "canon" history, it seems that all he did to deserve a lordship was to try and kill the Vistani who rescued him from an angry mob. As Acts of Ultimate Darkness go, this is quite a cheesy one. And also, who were those Vistani? And why did they save him for?

On the other hand, Gabrielle Aderre has a fully detailed background story, which definitely justifies her curse. Gabrielle let a werewolf kill her mother, just because she didn't believe her story about her father. The only "weak" point in this story is the identity of the werewolf; who was it? Was it just another anonymous werewolf?

Checking the Ravenloft timeline may indicate otherwise:

729 B.C - Gabrielle Aderre kills Bakholis and becomes the darklord of Invidia.

730 B.C - Verbrek is formed.

That makes me think about the following theory...

Isabelle and Gabrielle Aderre came upon Alfred Timothy in their journeys, just when the angry mob was about to burn him alive. Gabrielle found herself attracted to the handsome, sensual man; Despite her mother's advise (or perhaps because of it), she offered to buy him from the villagers, paying with what little money she had - the villagers were anxious to get rid of the beast, and making a little profit from it was better than just burning the monster down. They didn't bother telling Gabrielle about Alfred's true nature, letting her believe he was just a human criminal. And so Gabrielle released Alfred from the trap, not before charming him with her Evil Eye.

Alfred Timothy became the constant companion and lover of Gabrielle Aderre. In spite of the obvious advantages of the situation, Alfred found his "slavery" intolerable, especially since they were those "lowly humans" who held him in this position. With time, he was able to shake off Gabrielle's charms, and so he started planning his revenge upon the two Vistani.

Alfred learned that Gabrielle's greatest weakness was her desire to know the truth about her father's identity. So one night, he offered her a plan to force Isabelle into revealing the secret. Alfred asked Gabrielle to remove the mystical symbols and enchantments, in which Isabelle surrounded herself every night as a protection; then, he said, he will come upon her and intimidate her until she agrees to tell Gabrielle about her father. He promised that no true harm will come to Isabelle, and Gabrielle, confident in the power her charms held over him, agreed. Of course, the charm was powerless by now, and Alfred had no intentions to keep his word; when Gabrielle spoiled the circle's magic, he changed into a wolf, burst inside and attacked Isabelle, wounding her severely. Isabelle managed to keep him at bay for some time with her Evil Eye, and cried for Gabrielle to help her. Gabrielle, though shocked of Alfred's transformation and the deadliness of his attack, decided to keep to her plan nevertheless; she said that she would only help her mother if she told her about her father. Isabelle had no choice but to do as told.

When Gabrielle heard that her father wasn't the prince or noble she fantasized, but a cruel, sadistic monster, she burned with rage. Leaving her mother to Alfred's mercies, she quickly gathered her possessions and ran away, Isabelle's screaming and curses following her as she did. But Alfred Timothy wasn't satisfied with killing Isabelle alone; when he was done with her, he started hunting the big price. Alfred chased the horrified Gabrielle for long hours, toying with her and savoring her fear. When he was about to end the game and go for the killing, however, great mists rised, separating them from each other.

Gabrielle found herself in the land of Invidia, where she had came to the attention of lord Bakholis, and, after killing him, became the new darklord. Alfred was trapped in the mists for much longer - whether days or months have passed, he couldn't say. He burned with hatred to the humans who enslaved him, and to the powers which cheated him of his revenge. When at last the mists were gone, he found himseld the darklord of a new domain, which he named Verbrek.

And so ends the story of Alfred Timothy and Gabrielle Aderre; but the story of the curse of the Timothy line, of dark pacts made with the Wolf God, and of how came they to be werewolves, has yet to be told...

Jack the Reaper

The Book of Wrath

By C.D. Nichols

The holy book of the Church of Bane, the Book of Wrath, concerns the dark Torillian god Bane and the perception of this deity by his church in the Demiplane of Dread. Generally, speaking, Bane is not perceived by his worshippers within Ravenloft as 'evil.' He is instead seen as a harsh but benevolent overlord, demanding much, but giving much in return (although not necessarily in this life). Bane is believed to be deeply concerned with rulership, meaning that the rulers of Nova Vaasa and Hazlan have found his favor. Also, Bane is believed to be interested in warfare, although this has little value in the Demiplane, and in the spread of his church, which gives the Church of Bane an adversarial role in relation to other religions in the Core, especially, the Ezraite Church.

Anyhow, the Book of Wrath is roughly 500 pages in length, divided into nine books. The first is *The Book of Alephs*, describing the creation of the universe by Bane and his hosts, especially the world of Toril, and the worship of Bane at the dawn of time. The second book, *The Book of Acheron*, tells of the planes, the afterlife (a lot like this one, but based in Bane's realm in Acheron), and the nature of the other god of Toril (gods like Myrkul and Mask are saints, Lathander and Mystra are rebels against the greatness that is Bane). The Book of Ramass is a history of the Church, supposedly dictated by Bane himself to the priest Ramass. The next two books, *The Book of Bane* and *The Book of Theodicies*, discuss the wisdom and teachings of the Church of Bane. The former is a compilation of the divine wisdom passed down through the Church. It contains precepts of thought and action for people of every stripe-peasants, rulers, and in between. Charity, honesty, justice, and mercy find little place here. The latter book is a theological attempt to show that Bane is a fundamentally good deity. The twisted and fallacious logic in this book has led more than one scholar to a nervous break-down. *The Book of Lamentations* is record of the vengeance of Bane in history. Filled with horrible imagery, this book is often quoted by Banite priests in the trademark 'hellfire and brimstone' sermons of the Church. The rites of the Church of Bane, as well as six basic prayers for spells, the instructions for building temples, priestly vestaments, and other observances of Bane are contained in *The Book of Supplications*. Following this, one finds *The Book of Oracles*, a collection of prophecies about Bane and his church. Heavy with ambiguity, the book appears to fail to predict Bane's death in the Time of Troubles. Lastly, *The Book of Desperance*, is the Church of Bane's theological interpretation of the appearance of Nova Vaasa and Hazlan in Ravenloft, as well as some loose commentary on the Grand Conjunction.

Finer editions of the Book of Wrath contain up to six woodcuts. The first is in *The Book of Alephs*, entitled Bane And His Hosts Give Form To The Void, and depicts the creation of the world. Next, in Acheron, the two page woodcut The Lands of Our Lord And Master, shows a stylized version of Bane's realm. In *The Book of Ramass*, the ancient patriarch of the Church of Bane records Bane's words, bowed before his god's feet, in Ramass Receives Bane's Wisdom. The last three woodcuts represent the wrath of Bane. In *Lamentations and Supplications* respectively, the reader finds Bane Casts Down Fire And Famine, and Our Lord Tests With Plague And Darkness. Finally, the two page woodcut Bane Sunderes the Lands In Catacylsm, shows a monstrous account combining the transportation of Nova Vaasa and Hazlan into the Demiplane and the Grand Conjunction.

Two other books are worth mentioning here. The first, the Vassals' Text is a scripture containing the formal prayers to receive spells known to the Church of Bane. The second is an apocryphal text banned by the Banite Church called the Apocrypha of Iyachtu Xvim.

Christopher Dale Nichols

The Complete Ravenloft Pseudobiblia

by J.W. Mangrum

Here's a near complete list of all the books quoted in every product published for Ravenloft so far.

Annotation Time:

(These books came from *Vampire of the Mists*)

The Art of Kalimar Kandru

Barovia: Year 15 to the Present

Coats and Arms of the Von Zarovich Line

Legends from the Circle

Skin and Steel: A History of the Ba'al Verzi

Tales of the Night

Words of Wisdom

(These came from *Ravenloft: House of Strahd*)

Embalming: The Lost Art

Life Among the Undead: Rules of the Game

The Nature of Blood: An Apprentice's Handbook

Masonry and Woodworking

(These came from The Dark Minstrel, in *Book of Crypts*)

Great Composers

Form and Line in Music

Physical Properties of Sound Production

Musical Instrument Construction

Modes in Music

Poetry of the Masters

Sonnets

Assonance and Alliteration in Poetry

Advances in Anatomy

Vertebrate Biology

Sketching Nudes

Portfolio of Birds

Principles of Perspective

Art of Architecture

Treatise on Free Government

Decline of Feudal Holdings

Philosophy of Death

Study in Darkness

Diary of Baron Lyron Evensong, Vols. 1-5

Poems of Baron Evensong

Imbuing Instruments With Magic

(These came from The Living Crypt, in *Book of Crypts*)

Corpus Libram

Gainful Decay

History of Death in Thay

Machination of Mortality

The NecroCompanion

Nightblood: An Auto-Necrography

Catalogue of Undead

Death Magicks

(These are from *From the Shadows*)

The Waning of Aerdy

Rulers of the House of Rax

The Age of Sorrow

The Rain of Colorless Fire

The Battle of a Fortnight's Length

The Battle of Shamblefield

People of the Blemu Hills

Unique Creatures of the Adri Forest

Wee Folk of the Flinty Hills

My Travels Down the Teesar and Harp Rivers

(these books are all about the Flanaess, and thus of limited interest)

(This came from *Castles Forlorn*)

The Purification of Corrupt Flesh, by an unnamed cleric of Diancecht

Dawn of the Undead

(These are from the various *Van Richten's Guides*. I'll just say which after each title)

Divers Meditations Upon the Higher Magicks (Lich)

Foundations of Morality, by Dr. Wilhelm Kohl (Created)

The Gnomics of Bilerius, by Bilerius (Lich)

Haedritic Manuscripts (Lich)

The Isolation of Evil, by Ansolm Haas (Created)

Journal of Moritavius Jovanovitch. (Lich)

The Open Palm, by Taynesbert (Created)

The Life of Alanik Ray, by Dr. Arthur Sedgewick (Ghosts)

Illustrated Manual of Linguistic and Scriptual Aberrations Indicative of Psychopathology,
by Dr. Ottelie Farringer (Fiends)

The Madrigorian, by the Madrigore family (Fiends)

Heightened Reality; The Sensory Powers of Sentient Non-Humans (Fiends)

The Beast of Ehrendton, by Sir Armand Ironhand (Fiends)

Wizards, Magic, and Magical Items; A Primer for the Serious Scholar, by Archmage Jacktin
Terelleian (Fiends)

Philosophical Discourses Among Supernatural Beings; Higher Truths or Tribalism? (Fiends)

Comparative Toxicology; Pestilence, Poisons, and Plague Between the Species (Fiends)

Silent Speech; Mental Communication Among Supernatural Beings (Fiends)

Desire; The Unconscious Guide (Fiends)

Premises of Magickal Study (Fiends)

The journals:

Terrence Crannock (Created)

De'rah (Ancient Dead)

Evania Fairwind (Created)

Thor Hessen (Created)

Gregorri Kolyan (Vampires)

Mirinalithiar (Lich)

Matthew Swiftsinger (Lich)

Kilrinia Trynar (Lich)

Anani Mahss (Ghosts)

An unsigned journal found by a sailor. (Ghosts)

Strahd's various journals appear in four places: *I, Strahd*, *House of Strahd*, *Guide to Fiends*, and *Vampire of the Mists*.

(These are from Horror's Harvest in *Dungeon*)

The Lady and the Vamp

101 Damnations

Creeping Beauty (all are "charming" children's tales)

Sergei von Daragor's Tales of Terror (a cursed tome)

(These are from *Adam's Wrath*)

Grave's Anatomy

The Polarization of Bi-Directional Current

Nucleic Acid and Cellular Structure

Observations on the Effects of Lightning Upon Living Tissue

(These are from *Neither Man Nor Beast*)

Volo's Guide to Waterdeep

Aurora's Catalog

A copy of one of Van Richten's journals detailing the Order of the Guardians

Guide to the Known World

50+ surgical & anatomical texts in a number of languages

Encyclopedia of Common Knowledge, 5 volumes.

The Wisdom of Lord Toede

A number of cheaply-made children's primers.

Book of Insufferable Darkness

(This one's from *Scholar of Decay*)

The Dead Travel Fast, A Romance from beyond the Grave. A tawdry novel published in the fall of 735.

TOPICS

Okay: here's the known info (in brief) on these books. If a previously mentioned book is not listed, then no information is available.

Barovia: Year 15 to the Present: The "Present" would be c. 350. Near the end of the book, the creation of the Holy Symbol of Ravenkind is detailed. Two excerpts appear in Vampire of the Mists, on pp 126 and 291.

Skin and Steel: A History of the Ba'al Verzi: The book's cover sports the image of a bloody skull. This book was also written in pre-Ravenloft Barovia. An excerpt appears on pg. 96 of Vampire of the Mists.

Words of Wisdom: A book of sacred poetry for a long-forgotten god in pre-Ravenloft Barovia. A short excerpt can be found in VotM, pg. 97.

Diary of Baron Lyron Evensong, Vols. 1-5: These are described in the adventure "The Dark Minstrel." Lyron's writing style tends to give the reader a headache. Vol. 1 describes his life in Krynn. The rest detail his life after being cursed by the DP. These books were likely destroyed with their master.

Poems of Baron Evensong: Lyron skills as a poet were questionable. A few poems are given.

Imbuing Instruments With Magic: In one section, the book speaks of processes for imbuing an instrument with magic so that whenever it is played, the listeners must obey the player. The article cautions, though, that if performed incorrectly, the instrument could take over the life force of the player.

"Corpus Librum" thru "Death Magicks": These books were in the possession of a lich who was drawn from Thay with his laboratory. As such, these books are quite aged, crumbling, and were likely written in Thay. In fact, they require the Ancient Languages (an older form of the Thayatian tongue, perhaps?) to read. Each is probably near-unique in the Demiplane.

Corpus Libram: "This thick volume describes and illustrates animal dissection and offers theories as to human dissection (much of it is inaccurate)."

Gainful Decay: "This thin book details the study and magical uses of various rotting substances."

History of Death in Thay: "The book discusses disasters and wars through the land of Thay."

Machination of Mortality: "This rigorously illustrated book describes machines of torture."

The NecroCompanion: "This almanac style book includes many fascinating articles, from moon and star charts predicting important events in Thay to sarcophagus jokes." (Let it not be said that necromancers from Thay don't have a sense of humor.)

Nightblood: An Auto-Necrography: "A thoughtful account of the wretched afterlife of Nightblood [the lich from Thay who owned these particular tomes], written in his own hand (and not yet complete)."

Catalogue of Undead: "This voluminous work lists, describes, and depicts undead creatures ranging from skeletons and zombies to liches and even dracoliches. (It contains similar background information to that found in the Monstrous Compendium)." I'd definitely lock this one away in the University of Il Aluk's library's "Restricted Books" section.

Death Magicks: "This guidebook tells how to create magical objects that require living creatures as material components."

The Purification of Corrupt Flesh: Written by an unnamed cleric of Diancecht in Prime Material Forfar in the year 1737 (350 Barovian Calendar) It deals with methods of warding off the undead and resisting their corruption. An excerpt appears on pg. 27 of the "Eve of Sorrows" book in Castles Forlorn.

"Although the book is presented as an empirical work, the information is highly speculative."

Divers Meditations Upon the Higher Magicks: An "authoritative source" on liches.

Foundations of Morality: Dr. Wilhelm Kohl. A university teacher (actually, I'd wager the vast majority of the authors here with "Dr." before their name were professors at the University of Il Aluk, past or present) who in this treatise "outlined a system of five stages to categorize the moral development of humans." Van Richten uses this as a framework on pp. 63-67 of the Guide to the Created.

The Gnomics of Bilerius: Bilerius. A discussion of the planes. An excerpt can be found on pg. 18 of the Guide to the Lich.

The Haedritic Manuscripts: The Dweller in the Jacinth Chamber. A "peculiar" and "very old indeed" text, which gives one possible origin of the lich. An excerpt can be found on pg. 10 of the Guide to the lich. The book is written in an undisclosed ancient language.

The Isolation of Evil: Ansolm Haas. A philosophical tome. A brief excerpt appears on pg. 63 of the Guide to the Created.

Journal of Moritavius Jovanovitch: Autobiography. An "authoritative source" on liches.

The Open Palm. Recorded by Taynesbert. "Astonby of the Oaks (the same warrior-philosopher whose engrossing adventures are chronicled in Taynesbert's epic saga..." Excerpted or paraphrased on pp. 28, 34, and 74 of the Guide to the Created.

The Life of Alanik Ray: Dr. Arthur Sedgewick. A popular book of mysteries about everyone's favorite real-life detective. Van Richten quotes it extensively on pp. 27, 31, 33, 36, 39, and 43 of the Guide to Ghosts.

Illustrated Manual of Linguistic and Scriptual Aberrations Indicative of Psychopathology: Dr. Ottelie Farringer. A scholarly text discussed in the Guide to Fiends.

The Madrigorian: the Madrigore family (actually Drigor). 16 volumes. Makes for interesting reading. Van Richten quotes from it extensively in the Guide to Fiends.

Heightened Reality; The Sensory Powers of Sentient Non-Humans: Ephraim Joonker & Legothlin Greenleaf. Another scholarly tome, it seems they're interested in just what infravision can do in Darkon, too.

The Beast of Ehrendton: Sir Armand Ironhand. A widely popular adventure yarn concerning a fiend calling itself The Black Duke. The descendants of the author insist the story is true. Excerpted on pp. 28, 36-38, 46, of Guide to Fiends.

Wizards, Magic, and Magical Items; A Primer for the Serious Scholar: Archmage Jacktin Terelleian. Another scholarly text. The title is self explanatory: it discusses the basic principles of the above subjects. The book also discusses the various uses of a phylactery.

Philosophical Discourses Among Supernatural Beings; Higher Truths or Tribalism?: Dr. Jacov Bluemenstin. Another scholarly text. This one seems to discuss the concepts of alignment.

Comparative Toxicology; Pestilence, Poisons, and Plague Between the Species: Dr. Daffyd Kelman. A medical text, the subject of which should be clear.

Silent Speech; Mental Communication Among Supernatural Beings: Glental Grimfoot. Yet another scholarly work. Discusses telepathy.

Desire; The Unconscious Guide: Dr. Jethra Kilday. Another scholarly text. Includes information on the psychology which leads people to join cults.

Premises of Magickal Study: Dr. A.R.H. Tellurian. Seems to discuss the magical properties of fiends.

The journal of Terrence Crannock. The final notes of a doomed group of hunters/adventurers. Excerpted on pp. 36-39 of the Guide to the Created.

The journal of De'rah, a wandering priestess and medium. Mentions a conversation she had with a mummy. Excerpted on pg. 11 of the Guide to the Ancient Dead.

The journal of Evania Fairwind. The final words of a doomed woman whose husband created a shambling horror. The final entry appears on pg. 25 of the Guide to the Created.

The journal of Thor Hessen. The notes of a madman who built himself a "daughter." Excerpted on pp. 62-66 of the Guide to the Created.

The journal of Gregorri Kolyan. A bard held captive by Strahd more than 300 years ago. Excerpted on pp 6-8 of the Guide to Vampires. The journal may just be a disinformation ploy by Strahd.

The journal of Mirinalithiar, a female lich. Details the process of becoming a lich. Excerpted on pp.42 and 74 of the Guide to the lich.

The journal of Matthew Swiftsinger. It details his experience with a mentalist lich, and is discussed and excerpted on pp. 64-68 of the Guide to the Lich.

The journal of Kilrinia Trynar. This mentalist touched the mind of a lich. An excerpt appears on pg. 32 of the Guide to the Lich.

The journals of Anani Mahss. An adventurer who seems to have encountered Tristen ApBlanc. It's excerpted on pg. 46 of the Guide to Ghosts.

An unsigned journal found by a sailor. It details a particularly nasty island somewhere in the Sea of Sorrows (think evil dead). Excerpted on pp. 49, 53, 56, and 61 of the Guide to Ghosts.

The Lady and the Vamp, 101 Damnations, Creeping Beauty. All are "charming children's tales."

Sergei von Daragor's Tales of Terror. A cursed tome. It details the horrific "adventures" of a notorious pirate. If you read the book, several hours later the reader will be visited by one of the terrible figures in the book. (A phantasmal killer.)

Grave's Anatomy, The Polarization of Bi-Directional Current, Nucleic Acid and Cellular Structure, Observations on the Effects of Lightning Upon Living Tissue. These were probably written in Prime-Material Lamordia.

The Wisdom of Lord Toede, as transcribed by Bunniswot the scribe. A book of "bawdy illustrations which accompanying text assures the reader are really a manual for good government."

A number of children's primers, "ranging from thick cardboard books ... with colorful pictures, to nursery tales, to grammar books teaching correct use of language."

Also from the Van Richten library:

The diary of Tasha Weaveron, a Falkovnian girl. Her sister was transpossessed by the fiend Elsepeth. Excerpted on pp. 12-14 of the Guide to Fiends.

Although more likely a collection of records than an actual book, the historical records of the Whistling Fiend's destruction of the Darkonian village of Creeana, recorded by Ashlan of Il Aluk (who interviewed the survivors), can be found in the library of the University of Il Aluk. Included in this collection is the personal **Journal of Mithran Gray**, a warrior present at the time.

Autobiography of a Wandering Mage: Zartin the Red. Another personal journal-turned-adventure novel. Includes a confrontation between Strahd and Inajira. Published sometime within a year of the Grand Conjunction (740-741). Excerpted on pp. 48-49, 68, 75-77 of the Guide to Fiends.

The journal of Lertan Scarhand, one of the Blake Duke's cultists who lived 200 years ago. His account backs up the claim that "The Beast of Ehrendton" is based on fact. Excerpted on pp. 62-64 of the Guide to Fiends.

Another note: the city of Levkarest keeps an archive of written materials. An excerpt from these archives (a letter) appears on pg. 65 of the Guide to Fiends.

I also didn't mention the series of Van Richten's Guides themselves!

In *Circle of Darkness*, the deceased master of the House of Bones had a number of texts, 125 to be exact. They mostly focus on necromancy and multiplanar concerns. The planar information is mostly incorrect.

From *From The Shadows*:

Azalin's life story has been told twice: one version is **The Book of Azalin**, penned by the same magic which fills the Book of Names.

The title of the other isn't given, but seems to be a biography of some sort written in Oerth.

And finally Zherisia has a newspaper (probably closer to a penny dreadful, no longer than a double-sided page). It's called the **Newsbill**, costs 5 pence (cp) a copy, and has been in business for more than 39, and less than 52 years.

There are also mentions in various sources of all manner of books on all manner of topics, but these are neither named nor described.

John W. Mangrum

The Souls of Ravenloft

By Stormonu

Where do the people of Ravenloft come from? Are the Dark Powers making them, are they illusions, are they coming from somewhere else or what? I have my own answers that I use in my Ravenloft campaign. For those brave enough to consider it, it's a really frightening thought. The Dark Powers haven't actually created any being; instead, they have reused what they bring to the dark realm. All of the people of Ravenloft, therefore, originated outside of the realm, but have become prisoners like the Dark Lords who rule over them. Ravenloft is therefore a perpetual prison of torture, not only to evil, but also to all beings.

As we've been told over and over again, there are no portals out of Ravenloft. Extra-planar creatures can't leave, so I see no reason why those who die in Ravenloft can "pass on" to the next life. Cast into the cold earth (or sea, for those who drown), the dead collect in a "holding ground", similar to the mythical Hades of Greek legend. This helps to account for the ease in which undead seem to spawn in Ravenloft - they have no other place to go.

When the Dark Powers need to populate a new realm or need to repopulate an existing realm, they simply draw on this pool of souls. From the many Tatyana's of Vampire of the Mists we get a clue that the DP's may have the power to "shred" a soul to create several lesser beings from what was once a full person. Thus, when someone dies, the DP can "reincarnate" a dead person, either in part or in whole. Grandsons may closely resemble their forebearers not merely because of genes, but because part of Grandfather's soul is now in the Grandson. Overall, this can have a really detrimental effect on those who discover this little secret.

Regardless how good a person may be, they aren't going to get to "heaven" - they are instead doomed to have their soul ripped apart to make a host of other poor souls who will forever face the torments of the land they are born in. Those with even an inkling towards evil may be spurred on to commit viler atrocities. After all, isn't it better to be on the top of the heap - the undying lord of a domain - rather than a pawn destined for eternal torment, rebirth after rebirth? This may be even scarier to those who come in from outside realms. Death means entrapment, forever. With your soul split over a myriad of lives, getting back out would become impossible, even if each of the soulish shards were to realize the truth. While raise dead and resurrection may "steal back" a soul, it can have some rather unusual effects. Imagine the scenario where a priest, after years of adventuring, returns to resurrect a companion who died many years ago. When the priest casts the resurrection, rejoining the former soul with the companion's body, the companion's four sons drop dead - for each son had a portion of their father's soul in them.

Other scenarios are also possible - the lost love who is reborn in another body, the reborn murdered whose memory is jarred to remember his murderer, a man who murders a hated enemy only to see his enemy's image reborn into all his children and so forth. With exceptional cruelty, the Dark Powers can manipulate souls to torment both the deceased and any murderer. Imagine hatred so great between two people that one is reborn to slay the other in a never-ending cycle of murder. No soul of Ravenloft can ever know peace, and those who strive to do good do so against overwhelming odds designed in every way to defeat them.

Stormonu

The Tale of Avonleigh

By Kitsune

Listen now to the tale of Avonleigh and [Morgoroth](#)...

Morgoroth, fleeing his past and a knight intent on killing him, came to Lord Shadowborn of Avonleigh and head of the Circle, a great group of paladins. Morgoroth pledged himself to Lord Shadowborn and became his trusted advisor, though the other members of the Circle distrusted Morgoroth. Despite his dark and necromantic ways, Morgoroth was loyal to Shadowborn, and was completely trustworthy.

Morgoroth entered the forests of Avonleigh and using his fell magic, brought forth a great mansion, Teregon Manor, the house built by magic. He lived there, carrying out magic experiments within its walls. Phantoms of those killed by Morgoroth came to dwell in the woods around Teregon Manor, and was from then on known as the Phanstamal Forest.

Now Lord Shadowborn had a sister, Aurora, whom Morgoroth fell in love with. But Morgoroth could not imagine that Aurora would have any interest in someone as dark and vile as he, so he remained silent, and would not profess his love for Aurora. Aurora, however, also fell in love with Morgoroth, but for reasons in cannot remember, also remained silent.

The years past and Morgoroth served Lord Shadowborn faithfully. But then Aurora was to be made a priestess of the god of Avonleigh, and there after she would not be allowed to marry. Now faced with this fact, Morgoroth decided to break his silence, but when he professed his love for Aurora, she ran from the room crying. Morgoroth was certain he had horrified her, and he was crushed. Aurora was not horrified, instead she was crying because now that she had entered the church, she could never have what she truly wanted, to be with Morgoroth as husband and wife. Morgoroth fled back to Tergeron Manor.

Soon afterwards, Lord Shadowborn called Morgoroth, Aurora, and the Circle to an important conferance. Aurora avoided eye contact with Morgoroth there, further breaking his heart. But it was not the worse to be revealed there. A valient knight by the name of Lambert came to Avonleigh to request the aid of the Circle in apprehending a villious necromancer, whose name he did not know. He described to the Circle the heinous deeds of the necromancer and the Circle rose up in anger, swearing to the destruction of this necromancer. Within, Morgoroth felt a chill, for he was the necromancer Sir Lambert sought and Lambert was the knight who forced Morgoroth to flee his stronghold. Quietly, Morgoroth made a discreet exit and returned with all speed to Teregon Manor.

But on his way there, the knight Lambert caught up with him. Lambert, uncertain at the meeting with the Circle, was now certain Morgoroth was the necromancer he sought. Lambert attacked Morgoroth, and Morgoroth slew him with his aresenal of spells. Enraged, Morgoroth returned to Teregon Manor, swearing that if the world thought him to be evil, then by all the gods he will return to his old ways. Thus ended Morgoroth's attempt at redemption.

Morgoroth teleported into the church of Avonleigh as Aurora was being made priestess. He bound her with spells and took her with him back to Teregon Manor, encasing her in a glass coffin and leaving her in eternal slumber.

During this time, the Circle was trying to convince Lord Shadowborn that Morgoroth was the necromancer the knight Lambert sought. Disbelieving and horrified, Lord Shadowborn fled the Circle and rode to Teregon Manor, needing to hear his friend Morgoroth say it was not true. At the gates of Teregon Manor, Lord Shadowborn again came face-to-face with Lambert, now a walking, rotting corpse. Shadowborn destroyed the abomination, freeing Lambert's spirit, and strode boldly into Teregon Manor... and was never seen again.

The Circle, bent on rescuing Lord Shadowborn and destroying Morgoroth, attacked Teregon Manor. But less than half reached its gates as the spirits of the Phantasmal Forest fell upon them, draining them of their lives. The rest perished within the walls of Teregon Manor as the Mists of Ravenloft ripped the portion of Avonleigh in which Teregon Manor and the Phantasmal Forest lay out of that prime and placed it within the Mists.

Morgoroth was no fool however, he knew he was trapped somewhere. He devised a plan to use a mirror to create a gate out of Ravenloft. The Dark Powers were wise to his plan though, and as Morgoroth entered the mirror, they caused the mirror to shatter into 13 shards. The shards were scattered though Teregon Manor and Morgoroth himself was trapped within the walls of Teregon Manor and became much like the greater animators of lore. Thus he was trapped even worse, most of his great magical powers lost to him while within the walls of Teregon Manor. Though he did slowly learn of other abilities he now possessed in his current state.

Eventually, a brave group of fools found their way through the Mists and into Avonleigh. They fought their way through the Phantasmal Forest to Teregon Manor, drawn by the light in the belfry. They gathered the 13 shards and pieced them together in the old frame that originally held the mirror.

Morgoroth was free! A great battle followed, and Morgoroth slew most of the company. The rest fled to the belfry, intent on waking Aurora, who still slept within the glass coffin. They hoped to escape Avonleigh and Ravenloft by a silver portal that was prophesized to appear when the priestess is awakened. They did not succeed, Morgoroth used his spells to destroy them as they rang the bells that would shatter Aurora's glass coffin.

The domain of Avonleigh lies in a state of eternal night and temperatures seldom rise above 50 degrees Fahrenheit. Twin moons, Alyn and Zyla hang in a starless sky. No light within Avonleigh can produce a glow brighter than that of a campfire. Most of the domain is covered by the Phantasmal Forest, which is full of any kind of spectral undead. The River Avalon flows from Wyndham Lake and out into the Mists. Also, there is Devonshire Pond, Shrappcroft Marsh and an area known as the Old Fens. The King's Highway comes out of the Mists and leads directly to Teregon Manor, which is at the heart of the domain.

Shadowborn Cluster Formed

In the year 747 of the Barovian calendar, Avonleigh joined with two other lands also associated with the Shadowborn line and curse. Shadowborn Manor came out of the Mists, its Lord an intelligent artifact sword known as Ebonbane. Forged with the darkest of spells, Ebonbane was made to slay Lady Kateri Shadowborn and it succeeded in ending her mortal life. Lady Shadowborn still haunts her Manor. The land of Nidalia also joined with Avonleigh and Shadowborn Manor. Nidalia is ruled by Elenia Faithhold, a once mighty paladin who rode beside Lady Kateri Shadowborn in holy quests. Faithhold allowed her desire to destroy evil consume her, and is now a fallen paladin, coldly murdering any who she suspects of harboring some evil. Together, Avonleigh, Nidalia, and Shadowborn Manor make up the Shadowborn Cluster. For many years, Lady Kateri Shadowborn was thought to be the last of her line, though another Shadowborn has surfaced of late, pledging to fight evil and redeem the Shadowborn name. Sage's are now compiling his story for release to the masses (the novel *Shadowborn* by William W. Connors).

In honor of the Circle of Avonleigh, another group calling itself the Circle has formed in Ravenloft under the guidance of Alexi Shadowborn. Instead of paladins, this Circle is made up of avengers sworn to oppose the evil of the domain lords and shine the light of truth and justice on the darkness. These Knights of the Shadows meet every year at a circle of standing stones in a grove within Avonleigh (see *Domains of Dread Secret Societies*).

Within Azalin's Black Vault in the Grim Fastness of the now destroyed city of Il Aluk, lies a relic of Morgoroth's reign before he came to Avonleigh. Known as the Headsman's Axe, its whereabouts are now unknown (see *Forged of Darkness*).

Morgoroth

In his human form, which may be the one you use, he is a 13th level Necromancer. No necromantic spell can function in his land unless he wishes it to.

His stats are Str:12 Dex:15 Con:16 Int:19 Wis:16 Cha:17. He has 50 hp and a magic resistance of 50%. He can cast any necromantic spell in just one segment. All other spells he casts are half their normal casting time. He can also summon spirits most of these spirits will be harmless but, 20% of them will have the powers of shadows. He can do this summoning once a day. With 4d4 spirits arriving. In the final encounter of the game he was able to summon much more than this. With all of them being more dangerous forms of undead. I believe this was done to make the fight more interesting. He is clean shaven and looks to be in his forties. He has a commanding presence (Cha 17). In the game the players try to put the mirror back together. If they do they release Morgoroth but, he is still tied to the mirror. There for, shattering it again will return him to his earlier state. Until he is freed by the pc's no one can go into the bell tower where Aurora sleeps. Morgoroth still loves Aurora and he seems to mourn the death of his friend Ferren. In his first form he can do just about anything the DM finds creepy. He is after all the house and there for has much control over it. His power over mirrors is most prominent. He can make anything appear in them he wants.

Dreamweaver Kitsune of the Fifth Tail

The True History of Arijani and Kali

By Asplagis

Arijani's Origins

First of all, the story I use is based upon Arijani in *Web of Illusions*, meaning that for you who have the red box, the story isn't quite the same.

Arijani had indeed been raised as a member of the lower caste within a Rakshasa community because they felt his mother (a human) was too lowly, and a bastard child like that deserved nothing better. Arijani grew to detest his brethren, but while a normal rakshasa has a natural respect of his brothers, Arijani had human blood in him, so this natural respect was greatly lessened. This made possible the betrayal of his kind.

Arijani was considered a lowly bastard child by his kind who knew nothing of his father's origins... But inside of him, the blood of Ravana began to take effect. Soon Arijani discovered powers beyond those of other rakshasas, in fact, he had power over his brethren's powers. He realised he could negate another Rakshasa's illusion power and even trick a rakshasa with his own illusions with no chance of the later discovering it. His physical and mental strength grew as well, his mind became much sharper than a typical young rakshasa, his wits were faster than most of his elders and he was even able to outsmart them at times. Arijani now had means with which he could repay his kind for their cruelty and disrespect. He would become the king of all rakshasas. But first, his village would feel his wrath and so he laid his plans to make his brethren the hunted instead of the hunters.

After the massive bloodshed of the nightly raid by the rakshasa, Arijani began to plot in hopes of making himself the king of all the rakshasa. So he travelled around the world, seeking his others of his kind and proclaiming himself their king, few readily accepted him, but his displays of power were undeniable, and they were forced to bow down to him. Within a short period of time, Arijani's puberty ended and his powers reached full potential. But by now, the king had noticed how much power he had, how superior he was. He was no longer even comparable to his kin, he was more than a king: he was becoming a god! But to be a god, he first needed to prove to himself how powerful he was... he needed to show every member of his kin why he was a god... Ever since his youth he had been told that the rakshasas have a god named Ravana. So Ravana became his target: he would defeat this god and take his place. Kali was pleased with Arijani's progress and the black mother kept up her subtle encouragements, she knew how much more blood would be shed as Arijani gained power.

Three years had passed and Arijani's skills with magic was unrivaled, he was quite possibly the mightiest spellcaster of his world. He had full control over the rakshasas of his world, he was already revered as a god in some groups. He felt the time was near, he knew Ravana would not let this go on and would come to confront him. With Kali's help, he tricked his father and slaughtered his avatar, but not before making the later grant him a divine wish, adding more humiliation to Ravana, and gaining even more power: he was a god now. However, he feared Ravana even more now. He was not as powerful as Ravana yet: he could best his avatar, but only with Kali helping. He wanted a sanctuary, a place where he could be free of Ravana's influence while he could let his newfound powers grow. He got his wish... and the Mists embraced him for his sins.

Arijani in Sri Raji

The mists gave him Sri Raji, where Ravana would not be able to interfere with his son's plans, but Arijani was no longer a god. He had no other rakshasa to worship him, he lost most of his powers, even becoming weaker than a normal rakshasa. Now he couldn't even masquerade properly. Arijani's blood is that of a god, but yet, now he is nothing more than an average member of his kind. And even though he could still rule his own kind, none exists in his land. Kali isn't responding to his prayers, he fears he has displeased her and that she might come after him to destroy him, for Kali accepts no failure.

Arijani grew to understand the land better, Kali couldn't come in this prison, just as Ravana was locked out. But lately, members of the dark sisters have betrayed him, two tried to assassinate Arijani during a ceremony to Kali. The answer to his interrogations came in the form of his mother. She later told her son that Kali had appeared to some of her followers. Arijani couldn't believe it, but yet, just recently he had felt a great weakness. Seemingly, some powerful being had ripped a part of his land from him... the being had somehow taken a part of his power and added it to its own. Arijani went pale as he thought of whom could have such power: could Kali be behind this prison? Could she have been the one that imprisoned him?

The dark sisters are restless, they serve Arijani, but they cannot disobey Kali. The black mother wishes him dead and has asked the sisters to kill him. But is it truly Kali? Is she that powerful? Who could this creature be? She claims to be the avatar of Kali, yet why would the Dark Powers allow her in?

Arijani began to ponder why and how Kali could have come to him like this, until one day, a strange being came to visit him with an offer. He said his name was Inajira: he was a jackal headed fiend, an arcanoloth. He explained to Arijani that the reason behind their names is unimportant, for Kali seems to be the real problem. He offered to help him, saying that he would get rid of Kali in exchange for a favour later. He clearly mentioned that this favor is an obligation. The favor is to help him get out of the demiplane once Kali is gone. He assured Arijani that his plan would work out and that Arijani would be able to fulfill this promise. The rakshasa agreed, seeing no other alternatives. The searing Inajira bid farewell to his "rakshasa brother" and set out to get rid of this avatar of Kali.

The Truth about Kali

Inajira is directly responsible for the avatar hoax. The fiend he found was a marilith slumbering under the peaks of Lamordia. She was somewhat amnesiac, having only faint memories of who she was. Also she was very weak at the time, she had been in a scuffle with Kali, after she impersonated the goddess to gain a few more souls for the Blood War. She was planning on massive bloodshed by the priestesses of Kali and thus making them prime targets for future larvae. Her plan went haywire when Kali saw this offense and cursed the fiend to spend eternity in the ethereal plane. Eventually she was grabbed by the mists and transported under the peaks of Lamordia to sleep until someone waked her... That someone happened to be Inajira. Inajira found the fiend while looking for a rare artifact rumored to be hidden within the domain of Lamordia. Instead he found her... and was quite surprised to see such a powerful fiend inside the demiplane,

especially one in such a pitiful state. With his magic he discovered her history and a scheme came to his mind. He thought that perhaps a powerful fiend like her could become something of a demigod and could find a way out of the demiplane more easily than him. At worst, she would make a powerful weapon against Strahd...

But Inajira also had another fortunate discovery: he learned of a being named Arijani. This sparked his interest, wondering why one would use the reverse of his name as such. He learned of Arijani's past, and was amazed at a certain coincidence. Arijani came to be because of Ravana, actually being his son, while Inajira was created with part of Ravana's power in him. This made them brothers.

But the most interesting part of Inajira's discovery was that his little brother actually came close to becoming a god if it weren't for the dark powers of this foul land... But since it was part of his curse, perhaps stripping away his lordship could make him regain his original power and perhaps make him able to exceed it. And the marilith was a perfect candidate to take the Arijani's lordship away from him.

Inajira used magic to implant a few thoughts in the marilith's mind, including "directions" to Sri Raji. He gave her knowledge of Arijani's betrayal, of how he wanted to exceed the power of even the black mother herself. Inajira appeared to the fiend and offered his help to get rid of Arijani. He told her of his knowledge of the land and how he knew she could weaken Arijani by simply sucking the power from his land. He showed her the arcane methods by which a fiend creates a power ritual and how she could use this to her advantage against Arijani. The fake Kali took his advice and went ahead to Sri Raji where a group of dark sisters saw the six armed creature standing before them. They recognized their black mother and proclaimed their eternal servitude to her. She asked that a certain Arijani be killed, for he was a traitor to her faith. The sisters were confused, but agreed, for they knew better than to disobey Kali.

To date the fake Kali has managed to secure some power from Arijani's land, and she keeps performing rituals to increase her hold on the land. Inajira thinks that his brother cannot maintain his lordship for long, the marilith is much too strong for the weak rakshasa. The Dark Powers will soon embrace her and Arijani will be freed. Then the second part of Inajira's plan can come to be, he can help his brother gain back his godlike status and perhaps disrupt the power structure in the land in such a way that he will be freed along with all other inhabitants.

But the fiend is quite unsure of herself, she has had doubts about her status as a god. She feels too weak to be a god and knows that something out there is more powerful than her, that belief is reinforced with every ritual she completes. She feels the Dark Powers, the Mists... how can a she be a god if she is puzzled by these things ?

Therein lies the flaw in Inajira's plan. He made an educated guess at how long it would take her to get enough power to overthrow Arijani, but if it takes too long, her doubts may cause her to stop the rituals and see the hoax. Also, Arijani's mother is highly doubtful about this avatar of Kali, she feels no real connection to it and her spells do not come from her. Granted she has never been near an avatar of the black mother, but why does she feel so distant from her when she is so close ? The other priestesses are too scared to realize this, but Arijani's mother is doubtful...

Kali the Marilith

All stats are per a normal marilith.

SA : Illusions

SD : immunity to Illusions

Power rituals - Illusions : Her newfound connection to Sri Raji gave her the power of illusion. She can use any spell from the illusion/phantasm school three times a day at will. She is also immune to illusions herself, even those casted by Arijani, for she has intimate contact with his land and shares some of his power. Also, she has the dark sisters to help her out. Arijani cannot fully trust them any longer...

Weaknesses : If she is given sufficient reasons to doubt her godhood, then she will be confused and unable to act for one round. After this round she must make a madness check or suffer from some delusions. Usually she teleports the next round to her secret temple, deep under the city of Pakat.

Phylactery : A necklace made of human skulls that she wore to impersonate Kali the first time.

Current sketch : As noted before, she has come to believe that she is Kali. Inajira has been advising her, using his own form of manipulation and powerful magics. Her original personality is lost forever, all she remembers are moments when she was Kali. But Kali left some memories of how the black mother trounced her, but these are deeply hidden, the fiend's mind unable to deal with the pain and humiliation of defeat. In a way she impersonates Kali because she doesn't see who else she could be. If the illusion of her godhood was to be destroyed, the fiend would probably go insane or simply fall into a catatonic state...

She is constantly in illusionary form, an exact duplicate of Kali's avatar. Her real form is that of all Marilith. Her natural hair is blond and rather short, she has piercing green eyes and her face has a distinctively snakelike appearance. Her skin is milky white and she wears nothing to cover her torso, except the necklace of human skulls. Her arms are adorned with jewelry that resembles those of Kali's. She has no weapons, Kali confiscated them and Inajira would not want to risk giving her a precious rare magical weapon.

Final Considerations

Well first off, the reason I chose the Marilith is obvious: Kali is a six armed woman armed with weapons in each hand like the Marilith, plus with minor illusion powers she can make her snake tail look like legs and then you have a Kali of your own.

Second of all, Arijani is not my creation, I simply modified a few ideas here and there. What I added was : his powers, his idea of becoming a god, his idea of ruling the Rakshasa people, his relationship to Inajira (Inajira was created by Ravana, thus making them "brothers" in a way). Third of all, the fake Kali isn't the lord yet and probably wouldn't be... It's simply Inajira's plan to wrench Arijani out of lordhood and use him to get out of the demiplane. But this hasn't happened yet and all Inajira has done is set loose this false Kali... But as I said, she doubts herself a lot and there is a strong possibility that his plan fails..

Finally, Arijani could never get out of the demiplane unless he found his old powers. The theory that Inajira proposes is that his loss of power is due to his curse and removing lordship means removing the lord's curse... thus Arijani should slowly gain his original power level. But the catch is that it is but a theory. Arijani's power came from both his heritage (Ravana's son) and his

close contact to Kali. Coming to the demiplane made his power level drop considerably, much more than Vecna. Vecna is still a demigod, Arijani was never really that close to becoming one. If he did, Kali would probably be very careful and would not hesitate to push him down. Still, his power level was closely related to his relationship to Kali, without her around, he will never come close to godhood, although he could be very powerful.

As for the power rituals, this is a way fiends get to draw power from a domain, ripping some of the lord's contact with his domain at the same time. This gives the fiend powers that are tied in with the land (Charm powers in Dementlieu, choking fog in Barovia...). But the fiend's reality bubble shrinks every time and he has to make a check to see if it works or not, failure indicates various effects including madness checks and loss of power. Also the fiend grows to have a better contact with the land, meaning he will eventually be so close to it that he will get his own domain. That's why Inajira wants the fake Kali to draw power from the land...
[the Power Rituals are explained in *Van Richten's Guide to Fiends*.]

Asplagis (Sylvain Parent)

The Vistani's History

By R. Sweeney

The vistani have several myths about their history, but none except the "War of all Time" can easily be taken to explain their presense in RL.

My mind, at least, does feel a need to tie the vistani's special nature to the dark powers in some way. Partially, this is because of a pet theory of mine that the Red Death on Gothic Earth is one of the Dark Powers that was exiled from his friends. He seems to have brought with him the "lost tribe of vistani". (These vistani are rumored to have entered the mist one day and never reappeared... see *Van Richten's Guide to Vistani*).

For some reason, it appears to me that the vistani and the Dark Powers are tied together in some integral manner.

One theory is baised on the "War of All Time" and the "shadows of the Gods". This was mentioned before by someone else, and I'd hate to do them a disservice by implying that the idea was mine. Basically, the Gods had a problem with mankind (and the 'shadows' of these gods), but still liked the vistani and taught them the secrets of time. (Presumably, the vistani helped them in some conflict.) Later the gods made up with mankind and regretted that they had shared the secrets of time with the Vistani (which cannot be unlearned). The vistani and the shadows of the gods are expelled to RL to be confined.

Other Vistani traits, however, imply that they were once camp followers of a large army. (The tasques have skills usefull for an army. Some are exceptionally good at raising animals, others at healing, still others at weaponsmithy.) One of their legends imply that they were following a large army and the army was defeated. The victors (out of spite) prevented the vistani from going home. One of their leaders became convinced that the world was round and that they could get home by going west (or was it east?) every day. This doesn't explain why the buggers are in RL. Anther tale implies that they were following a great leader (who is sometimes called Strahd.) VR believed that this was Strahd's father or some such, but I don't. When the Warlord was done conquering the world, he refused to let the vistani go home for some reason.

This is the way I'd lay out the origins of the vistani and RL.

The vistani are wanderers. Long ago, the learned to make a living as the camp followers of an army. They developed skills with animals, healing, and weaponsmithing. Some even developed a mystical level of skill.

Among the strongest vistani powers were: Prophecy (by which they could see the future), Curses (to avenge wrongs done to them), and the Evil Eye (for protection.) These they developed naturally, but the powers were still weak.

It just so happened that the vistani were followers of a great warlord that tried and failed to conquer Strahd's father's land/estate. Strahd, in the name of his just god, absorbed the vistani into his camp and waged war against the aggressors in return. (The warlord the vistani were

following was defeated and the victors would not let the vistani go home... this appears in one of their legends.)

The God of Barovia, required the aid of the vistani and their powers in a war against the gods' 'shadows' which had come to a life of their own. The shadows of the gods were leading man against the gods. Powers were vested upon the vistani by the Gods of Barovia to better aid them in helping their chosen warlords conquer in their name. In time (after the defeat of their shadows), however, the Gods of Barovia began to regret giving this power to the Vistani, since they could not readily take the knowledge back.

Strahd (that is Lord Strahd, the villain we all know and love) was just one of these conquerors. He campaigned long and hard until he eventually captured his own land and settled down. He would not, however, allow the vistani to leave (Fearing that they would come into the employ of one who desired to make war against Strahd or some of his family's holdings.)

The vistani woman, Madame Eva, had had just about enough of this. Not being allowed to leave! Why the vistani would suffer the "Static burn" if they remained in one place too long! (Some portion of their mystical power causes them to have to keep moving or suffer this 'static burn' mentioned in VR Guide to Vistani).

As a matter of fact, she was *so* upset, that the almost vanquished "shadows of the gods" was able to infest her soul. (Feeling very much at home with the anguished rage she felt.)

Madame Eva saw Strahd's desire for Tatayna (and knowing Strahd would never let her people go.. and that they would suffer for being held in one place) she decided to unleash a most powerful curse upon him. She met with Strahd and spoke to him about a way.. a deal.. a pact through which he could have his beloved Tatayna. (If the victim chooses to accept his fate, the curse is much easier.)

Thus, with the help of the nearly vanquished shadows of the gods, Madame Eva curses Strahd. Strahd commits the horrible acts attributed to him and becomes a vampire. The Gods of Barovia, seeing the near-resurgence of their Shadows use great magical might to seal up their Shadows and the shadow's new Prince of Darkness in a demi-plane from whence they cannot leave.

Thus, according to my storyline, the Vistani have great powers tied to the Dark Powers because of Madame Eva's pact with the Shadows at a highly emotional time. The dark powers (like it or not) are locked to the vistani in some intangible way thanks to this pivotal event.

Thus the vistani grow more powerful with Curses, the Evil Eye, and Prophecy... also gaining 'mist navigation'.

One of the dark shadows (at odds with its fellows) is excited along with the tribe of vistani to which it has bound. Some moron on Gothic earth uses powerful summoning magic and enables this Dark Power to come to Earth as the Red Death (but he must draw with him the vistani that are bound to him.) Thus vistani appear on Gothic Earth as well.

Robert Sweeney

RUDOLPH VAN RICHTEN: FROM BIRTH TO DEATH

a Chronology by J.W. Mangrum

- 671 Rudolph Van Richten born, son of Otto and Mrs. Van Richten
- 678 Rudolph's sister Maria Van Richten born
- 679 Rudolph Van Richten sent to boarding school in Nartok. A childhood friend is Eldrenn Van Dorn.
- 680 Casimir (not to be confused with Harkon Lukas' son) starts working at Richten Haus as the gate keeper.
- 683 The servants of Richten Haus are all killed while the family is away one day. (summer)
- 685 Rudolph Van Richten meets Robert Tatenna, a fellow student at boarding school. (fall)
- 688 The Crimson Death spreads across Darkon (winter); it claims Van Richten's great aunt Helga, despite his efforts; Rudolph is even more driven into his medical studies.
- 689 Rudolph Van Richten attends the University of Il Aluk. While there, he meets a fellow student, Harmon Ruscheider. (fall)
- 691 Rudolph Van Richten marries his childhood sweetheart, Ingrid.
- 692 Rudolph and Ingrid Van Richten's son Erasmus is born.
- 693 Dr. Rudolph Van Richten finishes his studies; opens his practice back home in Rivalis.
- 693 Dr. Van Richten travels to Lamordia, hears of the Loud Man
- 696 Dr. Van Richten meets Antonin Madren and becomes his mentor.
- 706 Dr. Van Richten suffers the wrath of the Radanovich clan; the Vistani steal his son Erasmus; they sell Erasmus to Baron Metus, a vampire from Richemulot; with the help of an amused Azalin, Van Richten wipes out all but one member of the Radanavich caravan; Madame Radanavich curses Van Richten, although he doesn't realize it until the end of his career. Van Richten puts his Erasmus out of his misery, but in spite Baron Metus tears Ingrid van Richten to pieces; Dr. Van Richten destroys Baron Metus, starting his career of hunting evil. Unable to live with the memories in Richten Haus, Van Richten moves to Corvia
- 707 Dr. Van Richten researches vampires, and meets Aimon Davidovich, a fellow scholar of the arcane.
- 710 Dr. Van Richten encounters his first werebeast near Varithne, a small village in northern Darkon. Dr. Van Richten starts hunting werebeasts as well
- 711 Dr. Van Richten meets Gedlan Ironheart, a fearless dwarven innkeep in Corvia. Gedlan becomes a frequent hunting companion.
- 712 Dr. Van Richten meets the mage Shauten; they bond when they are attacked by one of Azalin's patrols. Shauten opens Van Richten's eyes to the existence of the Lich.
- 713 Dr. Van Richten is visited by the dying Dr. Ruscheider, who tells Rudolph all he can about several months spent as a lich's captive; Dr. Van Richten starts hunting liches.
- 714 Dr. Van Richten receives a visit from his childhood friend, Eldrenn Van Dorn, who is now a ghostly slave to Azalin; Dr. Van Richten learns the terrible truth about Azalin Rex.
- 714 Dr. Van Richten moves to Mordentshire, sensing it is politically unsafe for him to remain in Darkon.
- 716 The evil spirit of Madame Radanavich and her undead retinue discover Richten Haus and claim it for their own.
- 718 Dr. Van Richten and Shauten battle a creature they believe to be a priestly lich; it is actually Van Richten's first ancient dead.
- 724 Dr. Van Richten battles the Bog Monster of Hroth, and meets Jameld. This is also Van Richten's first visit to both Kartakass and Sithicus.
- 726 Dr. Van Richten visits Sanguinia with George Weathermay and Arametrius; they meet Claudia DeShanes; Claudia becomes Rudolph's assistant, and it seems he had certain unspoken feelings for her.

- 727 Marilee Markuza, the Child Vampire, kills Claudia. Van Richten pursues the creature relentlessly, but loses her in Lamordia.
- 727 While hunting the Child Vampire, Van Richten witnesses the Thundering Carriage; Van Richten decides he must put an end to these ghostly horrors, too.
- 728 Dr. Van Richten defeats the Phantom Army.
- 729 The fiend Elsepeth enters Ravenloft via transposition in a small village outside Stangengrad, near the Grashen Falls (sept)
- 730 Gedlan Ironheart killed while battling evil spirits.
- 731 Elsepeth leaves Borca, having lurked there for years
- 732 Antonin Madren writes to Van Richten about the death of Madren's sister.
- 734 Antonin Madren shows up on Van Richten's doorstep, and gives the good doctor his notes; Dr. Van Richten starts hunting the Created.
- 735 Dr. Van Richten is forced to kill his old friend Shauten in self-defense, when Shauten tries to sacrifice Rudolph in a bid for lichdom. This "near-miss" may have inspired Van Richten to start recording his collected knowledge for heroes to come.
- 735 Dr. Van Richten publishes the "Guide to Vampires."
- 736 Elsepeth goes to Nartok
- 736 Dr. Van Richten publishes the "Guide to Ghosts."
- 737 The Vistana Cyrilla's niece Vaasa is kidnapped near Corvus.
- 737 Vaasa returns as a clay golem; Cyrilla writes to Dr. Van Richten.
- 737 Dr. Van Richten publishes the "Guide to the Lich."
- 738 Dr. Van Richten publishes the "Guide to Werebeasts"
- 739 Dr. Van Richten publishes the "Guide to the Created"
- 740 Dr. Van Richten publishes the "Guide to the Ancient Dead" (early spring)
- 740 Azalin forces the Grand Conjunction, also known as the Great Upheaval, but because of his interference and hatred for Strahd, adventurers are able to collapse the conjunction. The universe is saved; the demiplane of dread is badly shaken (summer)
- 740 Dr. Van Richten inherits the library of Aimon Davidovitch. Dr. Van Richten starts studying tomes (Sept)
- 741 Dr. Van Richten and friends battle Drigor; they are defeated miserably (Feb.)
- 741 Dr. Van Richten publishes the "Guide to Fiends"
- 741 Dr. Van Richten is depressed; he consults with the diviner, Inarin Alster; Rudolph realizes he had been laboring under a curse all these years; Dr. Van Richten spends a year with Arturi Radanavich studying the Vistani
- 742 Dr. Van Richten writes his "Guide to the Vistani" and retires (Oct.)
- 750 Dr. Rudolph Van Richten dies (see Bleak House boxed set)

John W. Mangrum

Where is Lord Soth?

By J.W. Mangrum

There is a recurring theme that surfaces every month or so both on the Ravenloft and Dragonlance Mailing Lists: Lord Soth's real position. Some claims it has traveled from Krynn to Ravenloft as told in *Knight of the Black Rose*, kidnapped by the Mists while looking for his lost love Kitiara. Others whom i won't name here (to keep them anonymous let's call them M.W. and T.H. or the two persons who "invented" Soth) simply refuse to acknowledge Soth's presence into Ravenloft and insist that this Soth is only an imposter, probably a duplicate created by the Dark Powers to fool.. well i guess to fool all Soth's fans and Ravenloft readers.

Actually, by my logic, it's the Soth in Krynn that's the impostor! Now relax a bit and see if you're able to follow my reasoning...

The night Soth was drawn into Ravenloft was the same night Kitiara invaded Palanthas, and more importantly, the same night Raistlin challenged Takhisis.

This is a pivotal moment in Krynn's history, and according to various DL sources, time travelers who attempt to alter history at one of these pivotal moments is likely to be shunted into an alternate timeline, never to return.

Now then. Caramon and Tasslehoff traveled into the future, where they discovered that Raistlin had defeated Takhisis, become a god, and thus -probably inadvertantly- destroyed the world. OK, now here's the rub: this was the original timeline! No one had done any temporal meddling yet!

So, Caramon went back into the past -their present- to try to stop this future from happening. They go back to the night of the invasion, and do in fact change history.

And what does that mean? That's right: they created an alternate timeline! From that night on, we readers have been following the alternate history of Krynn! And, I guess, in that timeline, Soth may not have been claimed by the Mists!

But, in the Original timeline, he was. Unbeknownst to Soth, while we was arguing with Caradoc in Dargaard, Raistlin was defeating Takhisis, and the death of the world was already beginning. The Mists simply snatched him up before he became aware of the effects of Raistlin's ascendance.

So, really, Ravenloft has the real Soth, the real Krynn died, and all the Dragonlance materials published since Test of the Twins have been set in an alternate universe!

Gosh, I'm such a heretic...

John W. Mangrum