

GAZETTEER

PLAYER'S BOOKLET
OFFICIAL GAME ACCESSORY

The Minrothad Guilds

by Deborah Christian and Kimber Eastland

Table of Contents

Adventurer's Guide to the Minrothad Guilds	2
Minrothad History	3
Lands of the Minrothad Guilds	4
Economy of the Minrothad Guilds	6
Law in the Minrothad Guilds	7
The Society of the Minrothad Guilds	9
Tips to Travelers	11
Beliefs of Minrothad	12
The Minrothaddan Calendar	13
The Races of Minrothad	16
The Guilds of Minrothad	20
The Caste System	28
Guild Privileges	31
Politics in the Minrothad Guilds	32

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Guide to the Minrothad Guilds

Welcome to the Minrothad Guilds

This book contains general knowledge about the Minrothad Guilds and is for the use of PC and DM alike. The other book in this set is for the DM's eyes only.

Minrothad is a nation of islands located in the Sea of Dread, south of the shores of the Grand Duchy of Karameikos (see *GAZ 1*) and east of the island kingdom of Ierendi (see *GAZ 4*).

This nation is a political-economic combine of various guilds. Some of the guilds are organized around crafts and the families that control them; some provide professional services, while others pursue activities that are covert, military, or purely political in nature.

The Minrothad Guilds are one of the most powerful non-military entities in existence. Due to their wide-ranging trade network and dominance of commercial shipping, almost anything, legal or illegal, can be obtained by Minrothad traders or their agents. The Minrothad Guilds wield economic and political clout far out of proportion to the size of their island nation.

An increased guild presence on the waterfronts and in the trading houses of the continent have brought this successful commercial nation much into the public eye in the last decade. In earlier times the country was fervently isolationist, forbidding immigration and strictly controlling travel and trade practices that brought outsiders to the islands. But this policy has altered with a change in government, and the Minrothad Guilds have opened their doors to trade, travel, and interaction with the folk of other nations. Curious travelers inquiring about the Minrothad Guilds can hear interesting things, depending on whom they ask for information.

A Sage from Specularum

"Over the sea, east of Ierendi and west of Thyatis, lies the Sea of Dread. The exact number of islands found there is unknown, because many are perpetually surrounded by fog and mists. The people

of the major islands banded together to form the Minrothad Guilds, the nation that controls most of the sea trade in the world today.

"These guilds have built an unsurpassed merchant fleet to carry their exotic goods to other nations. They are secretive about their crafts, for few other guildhalls can compete with the rare and artful objects exported by the Minrothad Guilds. But the secret of their trading success lies in two other factors. Minrothad maintains strict neutrality with the nations of the world. This allows them unrestricted access to major ports, where they base their merchant agents and offices.

"The second factor is the Minrothad merchant-princes: captains and masters of magic that keep their vessels safe at sea. No one in his right mind bothers a Minrothad vessel, and no merchant worth his trade goods offends their buying agents. A contract with the guilds can be worth a cargo's weight in gold."

A Minrothad Guilds Dwarf

"Never trust a Glantrian. They be tight-fisted, blackhearted dastards with no bone of pity for refugees or them that be down on their luck. And they lack the foresight to see how a business deal might be made. Guildsmen, now—that story tells different. We always be calculatin' a way both sides can benefit. And you can trust us, for we honor our word once it's given. Unlike Glantrians."

An Ierendi Fisherman

"Those Minrothad ships are bewitched! Strange things happen around them—odd winds ablow, schools of monstrous fishes following alongside, ships that vanish. Well, no one believes it until they see it for themselves, and then it's too late. Even pirates leave them alone, that's for certain. A merchant-prince is a match for a pirate vessel all by himself. They're not normal people, you know. I've seen the flotsam myself, after a battle—there was naught left worth salvaging. I'd steer clear o' them vessels, were I you."

A Minrothad Guilds Halfling

"There were onct a time when halflings were enslaved by Minrothad tall folk. Big labor for small diggers, that were—but we don't ponder that no more. Malf Quick-hand freed us, and off we took to Open Isle. Now we be as heavy-pursed as any other family in the guilds. Business be good, trade be good, and the tall folk never so powerful since the Silver Purge.

"The purge? Oh, that were long back a killing time for humans, cursed as they were with the were-way. But it be false, what Ierendi tour guides say! The were-folk be long gone from our Isles. Tourist-fond we be, and you'll catch naught if you visit Minrothad. Stop your ears to island-hopper lies from Ierendi!"

A Thyatian Merchant

"Guilds, shmilds. Those Minrothad upstarts want to create a trade monopoly, and woe betide the country that depends on them for shipping the day they decide to throw their weight around! We tried to bring culture to their islands when they were ignorant barbarians, but they didn't see the advantages an alliance would give them. They still refuse to ally themselves with us. Just shows how short-sighted they are. I only trade with them if I don't have any choice."

A Minrothad Guilds Merchant-Prince

"It's a bright new day for us, with Oran Meditor as Guildmaster. One of the sea-faring elves he is, whom we call the water elves, and a great leader. Oran gave us an open trade policy, gained cooperation from the halfling and the dwarvish guilds, brought the family guilds in line . . . Oh? You don't know our guild system?

"The only important part is that the guilds were founded in 691 AC, and great Minrothad became center of cooperative trade ventures. Craftsmanship is our only demand from our members: our guilds include halfling, dwarvish, human, and elvish craftsmen. Guilds are run by their masters, and they are directed by the ruling guildmaster, Oran Meditor. Simple, is it not?"

Minrothad History, as told by the Water Elves

Water elves are a seafaring race of elves whom some claim have made their home among these islands for thousands of years. Their version of local history is the one most widely heard by strangers to Minrothad.

"The sacred Dread Sea Scrolls say that in the beginning, there was only water, light, and the immortal Calitha Starbrow. Calitha looked upon her shimmering sphere and desired that there should be people there to honor her. She created the True Ones, or Alfasser; though men call us water elves today, we prefer that ancient name by which we were known.

"The immortal was pleased with her first and best work and soon made others to populate the sphere in company with her true ones. She made the Alfund, whom we now call wood elves, and after them the animals: the fish in the seas, the birds in the skies, and all manner of creatures on the land. Finally Calitha made lesser beings than the Alfasser and the Alfund: men, and halflings, and dwarves last of all. These she sent to teach the Alfasser patience and to show them what they could become without the immortal's guidance.

"In time, some of the Alfasser wished

for more power and knowledge than Calitha Starbrow had given them. They dived into the ways of dark and dangerous knowledge, until we, their more cautious brethren, left them and went to live separately in lands across the sea. The wisdom of this was proven a millenia later, when the immortal raged at the evil works done by the power-hungry Alfasser, and destroyed their homeland and all the peoples who lived there. She opened the earth and brought down the skies in such devastation that only the lands whence we had emigrated were left. Even those were torn by the eruptions of her anger so that they formed islands in the sea.

"We true ones who survived called the waters around us the Sea of Dread, for our fear that Calitha's anger would be unquenchable. While the immortal raged, she sent plagues, famines, and other disasters as tests to see if we, the remaining Alfasser, would stay true to her. Many turned away from Calitha in those days of trial, and one by one she sank their islands, until only the Alfasser that exist in Minrothad remained. But we had proven our worth through the long challenges, and we have been well-favored by the immortal ever since her anger calmed.

"Since that long-past time of terror, Calitha taught us the craft of seafaring,

and we ourselves turned human magic into an art for the protection of our vessels. Our wood elf brethren came to us from over the seas, led by the immortal to aid us in the crafting of ships and pursuit of trade.

"We have tolerated the growth of human cultures on our islands, stamping out plagues of lycanthropy from among them and separating their quarrelsome factions when they insisted on waging war. We helped the humans to trade across the seas, traveling far in our artful ships. Persuaded by Thyatians, foolish humans indulged in slave trade, and brought halflings to our shores to serve them. We helped free the little people from the yolk of slavery, and welcomed them into our midst as craftsmen and equals.

"In later times, we invited dwarvish craftsmen to join us in the creation of useful and beautiful things. They gladly left the ungrateful lands of Glantri, and brought their metal and stoneworking skills to enrich our guilds.

"With the help of our guildbrothers who work in the handicrafts, we have led the Minrothad Guilds on to greatness among the nations of the world. For this we are grateful to Calitha Starbrow, who continues to bless the ventures of the Alfasser."



Guide to the Minrothad Guilds

Lands of the Minrothad Guilds

It is recommended that travelers to the Minrothad Guilds go there either on a Guild vessel, or accompanied by a Guild-certified navigator or pilot. The routes to the islands are tricky, and the waters contain hazards of natural or magical origin best avoided by someone familiar with the local waterways. Guild vessels bound for Minrothad or other destinations in the island chain can be found in almost every major seaport on the continent.

Unusual Phenomena

It is the unusual phenomena of the seaways that is most quickly apparent to a voyager to the Minrothad Guilds. These can make for an interesting and scenic journey, providing they do not turn into personal hazards. To ensure that, the caution to travel only with a qualified crew should be heeded.

Fogs: One of the inexplicable phenomena in these waters are the constant fogs and mists that surround most of the islands. Some of this is believed to be caused by active volcanoes, steaming the water through sea level vents the year round. Another cause is thought to be the meeting of the cold Continental Sweep winds from the north northwest and the warm, moist Dragon's Wind from the south. The only place these two major fronts meet is in the Sea of Dread around the Minrothad Isles.

Another cause of the perpetual fogs is undoubtedly magical in nature, the result of weather-magic worked by merchant-princes. Safe navigation of these waters is almost impossible for seamen who were not raised here or who cannot magically see through the fog.

Waterspouts: In certain seasons, when the cold and warm air masses of the Continental Sweep and the Dragon's Wind collide, tornados and waterspouts can result. Some are also said to be a side-effect of weather magic worked by merchant-princes. Since there is so little land to be threatened by tornados, waterspouts are by far the more common and

unpredictable danger.

A vessel struck by a waterspout can be reduced to splinters in the water, or lifted bodily and deposited elsewhere on water or land. Areas of fog often obscure this type of hazard, and even in clear and open water, the speed of movement and erratic path followed by these watery whirlwinds make them difficult to avoid. It is said that merchant-princes have appropriate magic with which to handle such a danger, but common sailors and fishermen must trust to luck and their sailing skills to avoid them.

Whirlpools: Numerous uncharted reefs and small islands lie within the territory of the Minrothad Guilds. At times, when ocean currents and tides flow rapidly between rocks and reefs, whirlpools may result. As with fogs and waterspouts, this phenomenon is often caused by magic when encountered in Minrothaddan waters. This hazard sucks a ship down until it is torn apart on rocks or submerged beneath the water. Whirlpools are almost impossible to escape without the aid of appropriate sea magic.

Pirates

Perhaps more treacherous than natural phenomena are the pirates who haunt the sea routes between Minrothad and the mainland. Always ready to prey on promising cargo vessels, pirates appear like a scourge out of nowhere, attack their victims, then vanish untraceably into the mysterious fogs. Merchant-princes have a better chance than average captains of dealing with pirates, but not even Minrothad vessels are safe from their predations. It is believed that the seafaring brigands are Ierendi or Thyatian privateers lured to this area by the rich shipping traffic. The guilds are doing their utmost to eliminate the pirates from these waters.

The Islands

The archipelago claimed by the Minrothad Guilds is the area once known as the Colony Isles. There are six major islands and numerous smaller ones in this territory. Most are of volcanic origin, while some

of the small atolls are coral growth atop submerged volcanic rock.

Trader's Island: The first place to be settled among these islands was Trader's Island. Trader, as it was called, is the largest island in this group, with two inactive volcanic peaks, forested mountain ridges, and palm-covered coastal plains leading to black sand beaches.

The first town founded on Trader was Harbortown, tucked away in a sheltered harbor on the north coast. First settled by Nithian explorers led by a man named Minroth, Harbortown is the oldest human settlement in the islands. The city of Minrothad was named after the culture that developed there.

Minrothad, the capital and major trade city of the guilds, is located on the northeast shore of Trader's Island on the site of a former Alphetian colony. The city proper lies a quarter-mile inland from its bustling seaport and is nestled in the cone of an ancient, low-lying volcano. The city is surrounded by a moat over 300 feet wide, which is filled by the Lithwillow River before it flows down the dredged channel to the sea.

Alfeisle: Almost as large as Trader is Alfeisle, home of the wood and water elves, where the trade city of Verdon and the fortified elvish port of Seahome are located. Verdon, near farmland at the south end of the island, is the newest of the ports. It has a system of quays and mooring bouys designed to handle shallow-draft shipping along the city's narrow beachfront. Seahome, the oldest of the elvish settlements, is located at the northern end of Alfeisle. The city has an extensive subterranean lagoon docking complex, interlinked defenses, and a dazzling number of mansions and fortified houses.

Blackrock Island: Blackrock Island lies to the south between Trader's Island and Alfeisle. It is dominated by Halfpeak, an active volcano which periodically spews mud and lava. Very little grows on Blackrock and it is home only to a few fishing villages at the eastern end, distant from the volcano.

Fortress Island: Northwest of Trader's Island is Fortress Island, home of the

dwarvish guilds of Minrothad and their redoubtable city of Stronghold. Stronghold is located at the end of a long, narrow fiord whose cliffs loom menacingly. The rocky, barren island suits the dwarves well, for they avoid the dangers of its active volcano by making their home inside the cliffs of Fortress.

Open Isle: To the north of Alfeisle lies Open Isle, so called because the island is flat and treeless. Its major settlement is the halfling town of Malfton. The thin soil and rocky ground severely limits the vegetation that will grow there, especially compared to other islands of the Minrothad Guilds. Nevertheless, industrious halflings have turned the area around Malfton into a region of carefully tended gardens, limited orchards, and pasturage. Malfton is the center of halfling trade and manufacturing enterprises.

Fire Island: Northwest of Open Isle is Fire Island and Redtop, its notoriously dangerous volcano. Rocks and hot ash are sometimes ejected from Redtop for miles out to sea, and lava flows down the mountain flanks with great frequency. The volcanic activity is so treacherous and unpredictable that the island has been declared off limits to all shipping traffic.

North Isle: North Isle is the last of the major Minrothad islands. The fortified town of Gapton was built as a colony of refuge for members of the guilds in case calamity ever strikes the islands. A population with a disproportionate number of scholars and clerics lives there in the meantime. The trading activity of North Isle revolves around supply and warehousing for ships bound to or from the mainland.

Weather

The Minrothad Isles have a temperate climate and generally predictable weather. The tropical and sub-tropical conditions, with warm winds and periodical rainy seasons, make these seas almost perfect for a trading and seafaring society.

Dominant trade winds blow from northwest to southeast through the Isles. During storm season, this weather pattern brings rain and blustering winds to

the northwest side of the islands first. Therefore, most popular harbors have an easterly or southerly exposure.

Native Flora and Fauna

Vegetation: Mahogany and teak grow on the hills and highlands of the Minrothad islands. Although they are replanted, the forests have been reduced in size due to the demands for lumber for export and ship building. Vast areas of woodland have been cleared of the most valuable trees, and have become overgrown with shrubbery, taken over by palm trees, or turned to agricultural purposes.

Fruits, nuts, and edible roots grow in great variety throughout the islands. Bananas, coconuts, guava, pineapples and much more wind up in the marketplaces of Minrothad and on the guilds' ships for trade. The islanders import much of their food and rely on trade to give them the wherewithall to accomplish this, but a modest agricultural effort provides yams, breadfruit, tomatoes and similar produce for local consumption.

Wildlife: Birds are numerous on all the islands but Fortress Isle. Sandpipers scurry along beaches, warblers nest in flowering dogwood, herons and egrets inhabit remote waterways. Gulls and terns nest on seaside cliffs, toucans are found in the highland forests, and a native grouse called the ulit is a popular food bird.

Small game is scarce and snakes are rare, but diminutive peccary pigs can be found throughout the islands and are a bane to Minrothad's few farmers. Populations of monkeys confine themselves to the highland forests, while wild goats and donkeys escaped from activity stick more to the lowland valleys. The predators dangerous to man that have not yet been hunted out of the islands are limited to several species of giant lizards, which continue to present a threat to forest travelers on most of the islands.

Insects: A moderate number of insects are native to these islands. They are mainly flying, stinging pests, but the most dangerous insects encountered in Minrothad are the poisonous spiders. These spiders prefer a forest environment, but

sometimes come to cities carried in cargos of fruits and vegetables.

Highland Hunting

As told by human Jerald Aeren, master trapper, Export Guild (associate of the Merchant Sailor Guild)

Lord High-and-Mighty demanded I take him on a backwoods jaunt. A knight from Karamaikos—you know the type. He were upset because he couldn't get a merchant-prince to fight a duel, and so he wanted to kill something else instead. He had the coin, so I said yes.

I warned him t'were the wrong time of day to find game. 'And I'll see you in court if we don't', he answers, sarcastic-like. So I says to myself, we'll see how he likes the piglets.

Peccary forage in a herd at times, hundreds of 'em. They run along, stupid, trampling everything in their way, not knowing what they're looking for. It's not hard to find 'em. Look for trampled brush and listen for their noise.

Sir Knight didn't figure it out when we circled ahead of the piglets. We dismounted and he got his crossbow ready. 'Peccary?' he asked. 'I hear those are good eating.' I agreed and pointed out where they'd be coming through the brush.

I neglected to mention how many. We heard 'em before we saw 'em. I was up a tree before he fired his bolt at the first one. Then out came more pigs and out came his sword. He layed about like he was in a slaughterhouse, but it wasn't good enough. Peccaries shoved him here and yon, almost knocking him over and tromping him under. Then he gave up and ran down the trail, outnumbered and chased by angry piglets. I about broke my neck, laughing myself out of that tree.

I took his kill back to the inn for him. He didn't appreciate it. But I haven't seen him in court, either.

ECONOMY of the Minrothad Guilds

The Minrothad Guilds are manufacturers and service-providers who sell their goods and services mostly to markets outside of the Minrothad Isles. In return, they import cargos of food, raw materials for their own production needs, and a diverse quantity of finished goods from other countries. Their large merchant fleet is famous in the ports bordering the Sea of Dread, for guild ships carry both their own cargos and those of traders from every major sea and river port on the continent. Minorothad's large speculative cargo trade has made this nation wealthy.

This successful mercantile combine is composed of highly stratified guilds which have carefully-defined fields of endeavor, and which do not compete among themselves. Their structure, goods and services are looked at more closely under *Guilds*, but the following aspects of this economy will be readily observed by travelers to the Minrothad Isles.

DOMINANCE OF SEA TRADE —

The Minrothad Guilds manufacture a significant portion of the nonbulky, high-quality trade goods which travel by sea, but they are best known as the primary source of sea-going cargo carriers in the lands which border the Sea of Dread. Even the seafaring merchants of large empires frequently opt to contract shipping to these traders. Minrothad guildsmen have a reputation for reliability, sharp but honest dealing, and speedy transit times. Not least of all, the merchant-princes who are masters of Minrothad ships are able to defend their vessels against the monsters of the sea, both human and nonhuman, better than anyone who is not sailing a vessel of war.

VERSATILITY IN TRADE —

Minrothad traders either sell their cargos or trade them for other goods, depending upon their needs or the needs of the client for whom they are shipping. If the price is right, guildsmen can acquire any cargo or sell any goods for which there is a demand.

Guildsmen are experienced financiers who carry letters of credit, conduct business on account through their agents in a port, and are knowledgeable about the value of cash and trade goods in the places they transact business. These traders generally accept any gold piece or item of equivalent value when transacting business, although a service charge is levied if the currency is not local or if an item will be difficult to convert to cash.

DOMESTIC TRADE MONOPOLIES —

It is not possible for the Minrothad Guilds to completely monopolize trade abroad. Most ports have open markets and though guild traders may dominate the scene, they still compete with other merchants.

At home in the Minrothad Isles, however, it is a different story. Outsiders are now permitted to visit the islands, but they are not allowed to compete with the guild mercantile operations that go on there. Absolutely no professional trading or selling may be performed by non-Minrothaddans, except directly with the guild that handles that specific trade good.

This prohibition is intended to prevent foreign merchants from sailing in with a cargo on speculation and selling it to anyone who might want the goods. A trader with a cargo of iron ore, for example, can sell only to the manufacturing family guild that deals in metal ore. Similarly, a finished product, such as cloth, cannot be sold directly to retailers, but must be sold to the guild which monopolizes cloth trade.

Sometimes more than one guild is a suitable purchaser for a cargo, but if none of them are interested in the purchase, there is no recourse for the foreign merchant. Higher officials are not sympathetic to the merchant's cause, because they do not care for foreign traders conducting business in Minrothad. When guildsmen need or want foreign goods, they purchase a cargo through their buying agents and carry it to Minrothad in their own ships.

This and other commercial prohibitions are clear-cut (see *Laws*), and newcomers to Minrothad are informed of these injunctions before they debark.

CURRENCY —

Foreign currency, as well as gems and jewels, are acceptable specie in Minrothad, but a standard 5 percent conversion charge is added to the price of items paid for in this way. There is no fee charged for using local currency. Money changers are common in every city. They are carefully regulated by the government and are fairly honest, but their variable rate of exchange affects the value given for foreign currency.

It is legal to bring Minrothaddan currency into the country, but visitors are not allowed to take out any in excess of 200 gp value. Local currency follows the standard system of equivalents for ease of trade. A *crona* is one gold piece, a *byd* is one electrum, a *quert* is one silver piece, and a *plen* is one copper.



Law in the Minrothad Guilds

Courts

Minrothad courts fall under the jurisdiction of the Tutorial Guild and the local government guild (see *Guilds*). The Tutorial Guild tries all major crimes, and is also called in if there is any doubt about the extent or nature of the criminal action. The Tutorial Guild uses all of its arcane magical powers and devices to discover these answers and the truth is usually found out in such matters.

A trial court consists of a senior guild member who presides as judge, and a jury composed of three members from the accused's guild and two nonguild citizens. If the accused is not a guild member, any sort of guildsmen may sit on his jury. Bail is unheard of, and the accused might await trial for up to a month. During that time he is kept in a plain but clean holding cell. He is fed enough and treated decently by the constabulary, a division of the local government security guild.

During the trial, the judge asks the questions, and jurors are allowed a period of questioning as well. Lawyers can participate in the proceedings but are not required to do so and are not always present.

Laws and Crimes

Acts of violence are obviously criminal, but a surprising number of other activities are closely regulated as well. Ordinances of interest to travelers are pointed out here; their violation can be considered a criminal act and liable to full prosecution.

Spell Casting: Only merchant-princes may cast magic freely in the Minrothad Isles. Anyone else who does so must have a merchant-prince or other member of the Tutorial Guild at hand to supervise the spell casting. Persons in violation of this ordinance—even unwitting visitors—are dealt with as described under *Punishments*.

Gambling: Travelers are often surprised to learn that most gambling is illegal among the Minrothad Guilds, in spite of the wealth that moves freely through their shops and businesses. Games of chance, like dice or cards, are illegal, as is gambling on violent events of any type, such as boxing or cockfighting.

A monthly public lottery run by the government is the only authorized wagering done in the islands. Tickets are available at money changers and taverns. Besides the lottery, gambling is permitted during the Midwinter Festival. At that time, people can wager up to 100 gp on sporting events like athletic contests and dog racing. Persons who are caught gambling in any other ways suffer large fines as the very least penalty.

Business Transactions: When a traveler wishes to buy, sell, or do other commercial business in the Minrothad Isles, the following regulations are important to know.

1. Magical items may only be sold to Minrothaddans or to foreigners working for the government. Price discounts are forbidden, and they are never sold below a normal retail price.

2. Adventurers who wish to sell valuables to locals should note that Minrothaddans are allowed to buy any item brought into the country. However, an item may never be sold at more than its normal Minrothad market value. Higher prices are considered to be profiteering, and are punishable by imprisonment (see *Punishments*). Visitors are forewarned that the experienced bargainers of the Minrothad Isles will seldom pay more than 50 percent of an item's retail value, or 75 percent if it is extremely rare or unique.

3. Money paid to a foreigner for an item or a service rendered must be reported to the local retail tax collector. The government then levies a tax of 18 percent of the total gp value of the item, material, or service sold, which is due and payable by the foreigner who made the profit. (An 8 percent sales tax is levied against Minrothaddans.)

4. Magical items sold or services performed in Minrothad are done under the supervision of a representative of the Tutorial guild. The guildsman records the transaction for tax purposes, and guarantees that any magic performed is in keeping with Minrothad Guilds regulations. The foreigner is then charged a tax of 20 percent, which includes a 2 percent fee for the Tutorial Guild's services.

TREASONOUS OFFENSES

Treason against the state is the most reprehensible crime in Minrothad. Guildsmen resent betrayal of their state, but even worse, treasonous acts also derail many complex and subtle intrigues, the very life-blood of the guilds. Foreigners involved in plots or actions against the guilds may be suspected of treason, and will be tried with the full severity of the law. A range of sentences are possible for treason, as described below.

In a similar vein, the Minrothad Guilds are concerned with their public image and their reputation, for they trade on these things as much as on anything else when they do business. If a guildsman commits a major crime in another country and publicly disgraces the Minrothad Guilds, he might be charged with defamation of the guild when he returns home. If convicted, his punishment is often more severe than the one inflicted by the nation where he committed the crime.

Punishment

Minrothaddans have been accused of preoccupation with material goods. At least it is true that their laws dealing with possessions and attempts to steal them are some of the most severe known. Guildsmen see their laws as a necessary balance to the unscrupulous who prey on the hardworking. A righteous and intolerant attitude toward the criminal colors their legal system and the penalties received under it.

Law in the Minrothad Guilds

The unforgiving Minrothaddan attitude toward crime is most evident in the judgements delivered for thievery. Theft has always been a problem in ports and trading communities because the quantity of merchandise and number of people passing through offer so many opportunities for larceny. The penalties for theft in the Minrothad Guilds are harsh and explicit, as are the sentences for many other offenses.

Fines and incarceration are not unknown punishments, but even they are taken to extremes. Fines are exorbitant, with the clear intent to strain the resources of the guilty party. Imprisonment is unpleasant at best.

Punishment for the heinous crime of treason can extend even to the relatives of the criminal, depending on how severe the treasonable action was. A shipping schedule betrayed to a foreign competitor, for instance, might be punished with exile for the criminal and anyone else who knew about it. If, instead, the criminal helped assassins kill a guild master, the penalty could be the extermination of the accused and his entire family.

Foreigners who commit crimes are usually punished more strictly than are natives. Typical punishments for crimes committed in the Minrothad Isles or aboard a guild ship are listed in the sidebar.

Prison: Minrothad dungeons are among the worst in the world. They are filthy and the prisoners are fed just enough to keep them alive. When Ruling Guildmaster Oran Meditor took office, he stopped the practice of torture in these dungeons. But life itself can be torture if the sentence is very long; people who have been condemned to 20 years or life have pleaded to be put to death instead.

Black Seal Warrant: No official condemnation is more uniquely Minrothaddan than the Black Seal Warrant, named so for the black wax of its official seal. The warrant is a death decree issued as punishment for the most censured of crimes, such as assassination or treason. The warrant must be recommended by the court and endorsed by the ruling guildmaster. A criminal need not stand trial in person

to receive the Black Seal as his punishment, but can be tried in absentia.

Once the warrant is signed, a gold piece value is set upon the condemned criminal as a bounty. This unusual sentence is the Minrothad Guilds' way of saying, "No matter where you are, we will eventually find you and execute you." It also is a license for the Thieves Guild to travel abroad or hire foreigners to execute the criminal with impunity regardless of where he is found.

This warrant is so far-reaching because of the vital trade connections of the Minrothad Guilds. A country that offers refuge to a Black Seal-condemned criminal soon finds that guild ships will carry no goods to or from that country. If this measure proves inadequate, the guild puts similar pressures on the allies of the recalcitrant country, until it becomes more economical—and politically expedient—to give up the condemned criminal. The fugitive finds that there is a price on his head and most people know it. He can trust no one and few will shelter him.

Occasionally, in the case of foreign dignitaries or notables, the Black Seal Warrant is not publicly announced, but is privately issued to the Thieves Guild. Normally, though, the warrant is posted publicly in the Minrothad Isles, displayed on all guild trading vessels, and distributed in foreign ports by Minrothad agents.

Typical Sentences

Crime: Punishment

Defamation of character: Varies from time in the stocks to the death penalty, depending on degree of damage.

Tax evasion: Flogging.

Profiteering: Flogging, fine, or both.

Breaking and entering: Blinding.

Theft: Loss of one or both hands.

Purposefully distracting victim during theft or robbery: Loss of tongue.

Embezzlement from employer, a guild, or the government: Blinding and loss of one or both hands.

Swindling, running confidence games: Fine of up to 50,000 gp and imprisonment for up to 20 years.

Sacrilegious acts against a church: Fine and one year in the dungeon.

Theft from a church: As above, plus confiscation of all property and exile after release from the dungeon.

Unauthorized spell-casting: Varies from small fine (for a harmless spell cast in ignorance) to the death sentence (for deadly magic).

Kidnaping or molestation: Death by stoning.

Murder or attempted murder: Death by hanging.

Assassination or attempted assassination: Death by impalement.

Piracy: At sea—death by drowning (walking the plank or keelhauling); In port—death by hanging.

The Society of the Minrothad Guilds

"Hoy, now! Craft Row be a mighty street, think you not? And you could use a guide, I'd guess. I'm the one for you: Kirana Welkie, apprentice magic dealer. Guild Corser, if you don't ken the cheek-mark. Never mind these packages—I have 'em to deliver, but only to places on Craft Row. A talking stroll takes me not too far out of my way. Two quert be a fair fee."

This polyglot society is a striking combination of peoples, customs, and cultures that have come together in the cooperative melting pot called the Minrothad Guilds. The dominant culture that has evolved is a blend of native human, elvish, halfling, and dwarvish practices. It is a society given to change and adaptation, constantly incorporating new elements encountered and borrowed by Minrothad traders abroad.

Languages

"We be civilized folk, as you notice. No barkers, no hawkers. Wares on shop windows and sidewalk tables, neat-like, so's you can browse as you walk."

"Yes, that shop keep be talking to you. He were saying, 'come in and look around,' not 'go fish in the sea.' The accent be hard for a new ear to catch. That were 'fetch on an' scree' in Patois."

The language spoken in Minrothad is the Minrothad Patois, which mixes elements of the original speech of the guilds' member races with words taken from other tongues, old and new. This colorful language combines archaic references and modern slang, and is constantly changing due to the influx of new words that traders have picked up.

Minrothad Patois has a sing-song cadence and sometimes rhymes sentences. The melodic pattern carries over when Minrothaddans speak other languages, and islanders find it difficult to lose this accent when speaking foreign tongues. Although portions of Patois are comprehensible (though strangely accented) to native speakers of its major source languages, it is a difficult language to become fluent in.

Besides Patois, almost every language

of the known world can be heard in the Minrothad Guilds. The merchants know many foreign tongues, and people of every nationality visit these shores. A translator or native speaker of most languages can be found in the larger cities, and some Minrothaddan somewhere is bound to speak whatever odd dialect a traveler might know.

Names

Most names heard in the Minrothad Guilds consist of a first name and a surname indicating one's craft or occupation. Regardless of race, names incorporate the wealth of borrowed words shared in the Minrothad Patois.

Elves and dwarves have drifted considerably from their continental linguistic roots, especially in their choice of surnames. An elvish weaver may be named Weafer, and a dwarvish smith, Bellows. Human names also consist of a first name and surname, but are less often related to occupations, and sound like names from the mainland.

Dress

Fishermen and farmers dress in loose, light clothes woven of native cottons. Dyes made from shellfish are popular and cloth is often colored with purple, crimson, or yellow. These dyes are worth a small fortune in many mainland countries, but are considered commonplace by Minrothad natives.

In the cities it is almost impossible to tell a Minrothaddan by his clothes alone, because they are likely to come from anywhere. Sophisticated folk indulge their taste for bright colors and imported products. Textiles from every mainland port are available in Minrothad, and a wilder array of fashion can be seen in no other country of the world.

Like their language, Minrothad dress is a pastiche of elements. On any main street can be seen bright silks, brocaded linens, brushed velvets and shimmering satins, elegant boots, high-laced sandals or soft slippers, elaborate hats and turbans. Lighter materials are preferred

because of the climate, but cool weather or passing fad brings out woolens and furs.

Styles change more quickly among the Minrothad Guilds than in any other nation, coming and going as rapidly as shipments of cargo. Continental fashions are imitated, or their elements recombined in a typically Minrothaddan ensemble: a brocaded Karameikan doublet, silken Thyatian hose, an Ilerendi-style cap, boots and belt of Alfheim tooled leather.

Dietary Habits

Minrothaddans eat four meals a day.

A simple breakfast is followed by dinner shortly after noon, when shops close up for a two-hour break during mealtime and the rest period following it. Supper is the largest meal of the day, eaten in the evening. If supper is eaten sooner and the individual is staying up later, he also has the traditional "evening bread," a light meal of bread, cheese, fruit, and wine. Among halflings, this meal is much larger and is always served an hour or two before bedtime.

Fish is the main source of protein in the Minrothad Isles. The fishing fleet meets all domestic needs and even provides a small export surplus of fish and shellfish. This diet is supplemented with seaweed and shellfish, native fruits and vegetables, sugar from cane grown by halflings, and the meat of pigs and game birds. Goats provide milk products and sometimes meat.

Minrothaddans do not grow staple crops such as rice or oats in quantity. Instead, they import large amounts of grains and other foods from the continent. Specialty foods such as cheeses and wines are also in demand.

Architecture

"If you be looking for something and don't see it, ask a shop keep. They got mountains more hidden away inside. These buildings be much larger than they look, really, with lots of rooms, and courtyards in the elvish ones."

The Society of the Minrothad Guilds

Minrothad farming and fishing villages use simple, spacious wooden A-frame huts of one or two rooms. Near the coast these are framed of wood and covered with woven palm leaf matting, while inland the walls are split saplings interwoven with withes and covered with matting.

Wooden buildings also dominate the construction in the cities. In human settlements such as Harbortown, slat-walled houses are built slightly above the ground on posts. Structures have high ceilings and wide windows that open easily to the outdoors.

Lacking adequate trees to build homes in, Minrothad elves constructed wooden buildings with many interconnected rooms. Adapting the form for ease of defense, some elvish cities feature blocky, pueblo-like buildings. Outside they display windowless outer walls reinforced by masonry, but inside are a maze of connecting rooms leading into enclosed open-air courtyards.

Halflings favor the burrow-like dwellings of their ancestors, although for business purposes many build raised wooden houses like their human neighbors.

Except for dwarves, who build with compacted volcanic rock, only the wealthy and the government build with stone in Minrothad. Supplies of useful quarry stone or clay for bricks are almost nonexistent on these islands, and such materials must be imported from the mainland. City fortifications, bridges, and the mansions of the rich are generally made of stone.

Holidays

Minrothaddans pride themselves on working hard and playing hard. They take any excuse to have a good time, as long as essential work has been done or is caught up. Numerous religious and national holidays fill the Minrothad calendar, and it is common practice to receive time off of work on the day or afternoon that is holy in an individual's religious beliefs. These holidays are described in the Minrothad calendar, and monthly holy days are explained under

The Religions of Minrothad.

Religious Beliefs

Minrothaddans are rarely fanatic about their religious beliefs, and talk little about the philosophies they adhere to. They are tolerant of the beliefs of foreigners. Whether or not they are religious, most natives wear a holy symbol or medallion with the mark of their church. Such an item is considered to bring good luck and blessings to the individual's endeavors. Temples are low-key affairs located in residential areas away from the hub-bub of visiting foreigners and commercial districts.

Visitors to the Minrothad Guilds

"Sorry you can't get price breaks—those be only for guildmembers. But if you happen to be a mage, you might mention it to an innkeep, and you'll get a good room."

There are a great number of foreigners in Minrothad, traveling on commercial business or for pleasure. A visitor to the Isles notices the odd dress, strange languages, and peculiar customs of these people, but island natives have become inured to this panorama of variety. Travelers do not attract any particular attention in the cities of the Minrothad Guilds, no matter how outrageous their appearance or uncouth their dress. Foreigners are treated with courtesy and respect, at least as long as there is profit or good will to be made. There are, however, a few exceptions to these rules.

Spell-casters: Magic is the domain of the merchant-princes and a few select members of the Tutorial Guild. Magic not related to seafaring is unfamiliar to the masses, and those who practice this art are figures of intrigue and mystery to the common Minrothaddan.

Foreigners who are identified as magic-users attract a great deal of attention and curiosity seekers. A spell-caster might be singled out by his distinctive dress or open use of magic. A person who wears a pentagram on his clothes might be mis-

taken for a magic-user as well, for this symbol is forbidden in Minrothad to any but merchant-princes. In either case, he soon finds himself followed by a gaggle of inquisitive children, and is a suddenly popular target of "casual" conversation with passing adults.

Thieves: Anyone with the temerity to identify himself as a thief is at first disbelieved. If he insists it is true, or has proven it by some action, Minrothaddans react with horror and hatred. The penalties for thievery are quite unforgiving, and anyone who is clearly a shady character is watched wherever he goes.

Customs

"Oh, no! That be a dock-party at Slipperyfoot's shop, where I take this last package. My regrets, but I leave you here. Once in that crowd, I may not get out again. Enjoy the Row—and if you want to join the dock-party, stand on the street outside the shop. Belike the party will come to you!"

It is not proper to quiz Minrothaddans about guild politics or problems. Natives do not discuss these matters with outsiders, and take offense at these questions.

It is customary to boast about a guild's good points while giving a sales pitch, and a buyer hears this if he asks about a product or service. A sale concluded after a bargaining session is toasted with a drink of imported brandy, kept by the shop keeper for just such occasions. Customers who buy expensive items might be invited to dinner by the merchant.

Ships come and go in Minrothad ports all the time. The more important arrivals and departures are observed with a "docking party," sponsored by a guild or ship master. Docking parties are held in the factor's offices, a nearby warehouse, or elsewhere in town away from the vessel and busy dock.

Most of the crew attends these raucous events, which sweep up passersby and sometimes migrate into the streets. Similar celebrations are held for the launching of new ships. Foreigners invited to such events are specially privileged.

The Society of the Minrothad Guilds

Tips to Travelers

From a tailor who serves the nobility of Specularum:

"There's no greater clothes-horse than a Minrothaddan. Take along a new-style belt buckle or a robe of a new cut and you'll have a great bargaining tool. You could give it away as a gift—and very flattered the recipient will be—or trade it for what you want to buy. Whatever you take will have a terrific value because it'll be so novel. But the item better be something that's only just come out, or it will already be in Minrothad!"

From an Altheim elf:

"Be careful. Minrothad elves resemble shadowelves too closely for it to be a coincidence. They're every bit as full of intrigue and plots, that's for sure, and their sea magic makes them almost as powerful as elf wizards. I don't think they can be trusted very far."

From a halfling merchant from the Five Shires:

"If you don't have the patience for bargaining, you'll pay full price for everything, and that can be pretty expensive in the islands. Of course, retail prices are fixed in the shops, and you can't argue with those, but other things are very negotiable: the cost of dinner or lodgings, the price of passage on a ship or the cost of its cargo, even wages for nonguild work. Bargaining's a fine art with guildsmen. They're disappointed if you don't dicker."

From a Karamaikos knight:

"Don't bother to pick a fight with a Minrothaddan. They laugh in your face and say they'll see you in a court of law. Even the merchant-princes lack the honor to defend themselves with honorable combat. They threaten with law suits or resort to magic. They're cowards, all!"

From a wizard of Vestland:

"Never refuse a social invitation in

Minrothad! That's where the real business is done: at dinner parties, on holiday get-togethers, or after work in the taverns. If you're looking for work, or want to buy or sell something, that's the time to make the best connections. And the best way to get invited is to make an expensive purchase. If it's the merchant's biggest sale of the day, the merchant will take you out after work for a drink or dinner, and then you can really get down to business."

From a Thyatian thief:

"If you get a job there, don't expect many days off, unless you convert to one of their religions. Augrism gives the most days off, that's the one I'd look at. And if you're not a guild member, stay clear of guild business! I was in prison there, charged with treason—me!—because I carried a message from a guild master to a, shall we say, unscrupulous guildsman that I knew. Had something to do with an assassination plot, it turned out. I was lucky to get out of there alive."



Beliefs of Minrothad

Minrothad religions and philosophies reflect the country's hardworking practicality, and have even been reinterpreted to accommodate the modern commercial bent of Minrothaddans. These ethical outlooks are rationalized as being similar to the purpose and goals of the Minrothad Guilds, even where that was not originally the case.

Elendaen

Meaning: The Ocean Path.

Adherents: Predominantly water elves.

Alignment: Neutral.

Holy Days: Full moon. Believers take a full day off work.

Holy Symbol: Pearl in mother-of-pearl.

This philosophy honors Calitha Starbrow, a water elf from ancient times who ascended to immortality in the sphere of Time. She is especially fond of the water. She taught water elves the art of seafaring and led them to their home in Minrothad.

Adherents of Elendaen believe the ocean is the cradle of all life, for even trees thrive on rain from storms that form over the sea. Elendaen followers desire to exploit the land and sea wisely so they may continue to prosper.

Spells affecting the sea are granted to keepers and other followers of the Ocean Path. The Alfasser clan relic is central to these beliefs, but is a secret matter not spoken about with outsiders. Water elf characters may read *Secrets of the Water Elves* in the DM's book to learn more about these private clan matters.

Keepers and others dedicated to Elendaen wear only garments and accessories derived from products of the sea.

Dainrouw

Meaning: The Forest Way.

Adherents: Predominantly wood elves.

Alignment: Neutral.

Holy Days: New moon. Adherents take a full day off work.

Holy Symbol: Oak leaf.

Dainrouw was inspired by Ordana, an elf who, like Calitha Starbrow, ascended

to immortality in the sphere of Time. Those who honor this immortal call her "Forest Mother," and know that she favors trees and growing things.

Forest elves learned the craft of wood-working from this immortal who legend says revealed a homeland for them in the Minrothad Isles.

Ordana is an older and greater immortal than Calitha Starbrow, although her followers have been scattered in the elvish migrations of olden times and her name has faded from the memory of most. The Forest Mother gladly embraces any followers, and has granted clerical spell abilities to the few humans who have converted to the Forest Way.

The clan relic of the wood elves has a connection with this immortal, but, as with the Alfasser, is not discussed with outsiders. Wood elf characters may read the *Secrets of the Wood Elves* in the DM's book to learn more about this relic.

Clerics, keepers, and others seriously dedicated to the Forest Way wear only garments and accessories made of wool, cotton, or leather. The favorite weapon of these clerics is a hardwood or ironwood club, which is +1 to hit because it is carved to a perfect balance and fit in the individual's hand.

Augrism

Meaning: Named after visionary dwarf, Wildeye Auger.

Adherents: Dwarves and some humans.

Alignment: Lawful.

Holy Days: First day of every week. Worshipers take the afternoon off.

Holy Symbol: Medallion depicting two faceless, staring eyes.

Wildeye Auger was a cleric and a follower of the immortal Kagyar, creator of the dwarvish race (see *GAZ 6, Dwarves of Rockhome*). Through visions, Auger learned of immortals who watched over dwarvish craftsmen and took special interest in their labor. Auger never glimpsed those immortals nor learned their names.

There are 12 watchers in all, the foremost of which are the smith, the miner, and the stonemason. They rarely interfere

with mortals, but keep a close eye on craftsmen.

Augrism exhorts its followers to perform their best at all times. Members of this church can be excommunicated for failing to live up to craft or guild standards. The church requires a 10 percent tithe of its members' annual income.

Clerics of this religion wear simple garments in drab colors. Their heads are shaved in a stripe down the middle of the skull. Their favorite weapon is the stone hammer, which can shatter a metal weapon on a natural roll of 20.

Minrothism

Meaning: Named after Minroth, the Nithian human who colonized the islands.

Adherents: Humans and some halflings.

Alignment: Lawful.

Holy Days: Three annual holidays described below. Worshipers have each of these days off.

Holy Symbol: A four-feathered arrow symbolizing the arrow fired by Minroth with inhuman accuracy.

Minroth, a Nithian from the ancient empire, was the agent of an immortal who revealed that Minroth would find the secrets of earthly happiness in the Sea of Dread. The human led many of his countrymen into the sea and settled Trader's Island which they found there.

Followers of Minrothism believe that the Minrothad Isles are a divine location and sacred ground. Here the faithful must live in peace and occupy themselves with useful work. This is the fastest-growing religion in Minrothad, and is embraced by many nonhumans.

Minroth disappeared from Trader's Island and is expected to return one day. The holy days of Minrothism start with Onmun 1st, commemorating the expectation of Minroth's return during the year. Sagmun 10th marks Minroth's birthday, and Decmun 1st is the anniversary of his disappearance.

Clerics of this religion may wear, eat, and use only items which originate in Minrothad. Their weapon is the mace.

The Minrothaddan Calendar

Minrothad uses the standard Thyatian calendar for external trade purposes, but employs one of native invention for local time accounting. This calendar, called the Verdier calendar after its inventor, consists of 336 days a year. The year is divided into eleven 30-day months and a special midwinter week. Each Minrothad week consists of six days, with a total of five weeks in a month.

The native word for day is *tok*. The word for month is *mun*. The week begins with Ontok, then proceeds through Totok, Dreitok, Firtok, Birtok, and ends with Sagtok.

The calendar shown here is for the year 1000 AC. However, Minrothad dates are calculated from the year of Verdier's death, making the current date 300 VR (for Verdier Reckoning). The lunar phases shown on this calendar move back two days in each subsequent year, although the holidays and special events remain the same.

Main Calendar Key

- ☆ = New Moon
- ★ = Quarter Moon Waxing
- ◐ = Half Moon
- ☾ = Three-Quarter Moon Waxing
- ★ = Full Moon
- ★ = Three-Quarter Moon Waning
- ★ = Quarter Moon Waning
- † = Holiday
- ‡ = Special Holiday

Onmun

O	T	D	F	B	S
1☆	2	3	4	5★	6
7	8◐	9	10	11†	12☾
13	14	15★	16	17	18
19★	20	21†	22◐	23	24
25	26	27	28	29★	30☆

Tomun

O	T	D	F	B	S
1	2†	3★	4	5	6◐
7	8‡	9	10☾	11	12
13★	14†	15	16	17★	18
19	20◐	21	22	23★	24
25†	26	27☆	28	29	30★

Dreimun

O	T	D	F	B	S
1	2	3	4◐	5	6†
7☾	8	9	10	11★	12
13	14★	15	16	17†	18◐
19	20	21★	22	23	24
25☆	26	27	28	29†	30★

Firmun

O	T	D	F	B	S
1	2◐	3	4†	5☾	6
7	8	9★	10†	11	12★
13	14	15	16◐	17	18
19★	20	21†	22	23☆	24
25	26★	27	28	29	30◐

Birmun

O	T	D	F	B	S
1	2†	3☾	4	5	6
7★	8	9	10★	11	12
13†	14◐	15	16	17★	18
19†	20	21☆	22	23	24★
25†	26	27◐	28	29	30

Sagmun

O	T	D	F	B	S
1☾	2	3	4	5★	6†
7	8★	9	10	11	12◐
13	14	15★	16	17	18
19☆	20	21	22★	23	24
25	26	27	28	29◐	30

Sebmun

O	T	D	F	B	S
1	2	3★	4	5	6★
7	8	9†	10◐	11	12
13★	14	15†	16	17☆	18
19	20★	21†	22	23	24◐
25	26	27	28☾	29	30

Oxmun

O	T	D	F	B	S
1★	2†	3	4★	5	6
7	8◐	9	10	11★	12
13†	14	15☆	16	17	18★
19	20	21	22◐	23	24†
25☾	26★	27	28	29	30

Nomun

O	T	D	F	B	S
1	2★	3	4	5†	6◐
7	8	9★	10	11†	12
13☆	14	15	16★	17†	18
19	20◐	21	22	23☾	24
25	26	27	28	29★	30†★

Decmun

O	T	D	F	B	S
1	2	3	4◐	5	6
7★	8	9†	10	11☆	12
13	14★	15	16	17	18◐
19	20†	21☾	22	23	24
25★	26	27	28	29	30★

Elfmun

O	T	D	F	B	S
1†	2◐	3	4	5★	6
7	8	9☆	10	11†	12★
13	14	15	16◐	17	18
19☾	20	21	22†	23★	24
25	26★	27	28	29	30◐

The Minrothaddan Calendar

Mitwok

O	T	D	F	B	S
1†	2†	3†★	4†	5†	6†

Holidays are guild-sponsored days off. All work stops throughout Minrothad for carnivals, bazaars, and merriment. Otherwise, people work every day unless they have a religious holiday off (see *Religions*).

Special Holidays are national holidays sponsored by the government. They are like normal holidays but even more festive and usually mark some special event in the history of Minrothad.

Onmun (first month): A cold, mid-winter month. The 1st marks the beginning of the calendar. There are no special holidays in the month.

Tomun (second month): The cold continues through most of the month, then starts to drop off in the last week.

Tomun 8th is celebrated as the Feast of the Silver Purge, when all the vampires and lycanthropes were thought to have been purged from Minrothad. People celebrate by telling scary stories and having a big feast to thank their deities for sparing them the evils of lycanthropy and vampirism. It also gives people a chance to use up winter provisions and foodstuffs that have been saved for this special occasion. There was a second outbreak of lycanthropy in 280 VR; since that time, these celebrations have been held exclusively indoors with one's immediate family.

Dreimun (third month): Cold winds still blow but the temperature begins to warm

up during this month. It is dangerous to sail during this period because of very choppy seas. There are no special holidays.

Firmun (fourth month): Warm weather returns as the rains come in force. Electrical storms are quite common.

Firmun 4th is the newest special holiday on the calendar. It is Merchant-Prince Day, a day for people to revel in the marvels of Minrothad magic. It is always held outside and usually in the rain. Even with electrical storms the celebrations go on for the chance to see merchant-princes control the lightning, forming it into dazzling fireworks displays.

A custom among the people at this time is to wear a favorite older suit of clothes, get it soaking wet, then throw it away in the streets the next morning before the sun rises. Roads are strewn with brightly colored garments when the sun comes up and the children love to go outside and collect them, for the revelers have left little treats and gifts in them for the boys and girls. The children are allowed to keep the costumes to play "grown-up" in, until the following year's Merchant-Prince Day when they will be thrown away for good.

Birmun (fifth month): The month of full spring and sunshine when everything is newly green. Birmun is the prettiest month in the first half of the year. The ships now start sailing in earnest and many of the Merchant Sailors Guildsmen will not be back until winter sets in again.

Birmun 19 is a special holiday celebrating the founding of the city and guilds of

Minrothad. It is called, appropriately enough, Minrothad Day and is a day of great pride among the populace. Huge picnics are held for the population at the expense of the government. Every official of every guild of any import at all makes a speech on this day. It is also the day elections are held and promotions made to the senior ranks of the guilds. Political appointments by members of the sixth caste are officially made on this day and any new guild members are inducted with ceremony.

Minrothad Day is celebrated both day and night by ship parades. During the day, fishing boats and barges are decorated with flowers, paintings, and other decorations to represent scenes from Minrothad's past. At night, ocean-going ships are hung with lanterns or set magically alight. Then they sail along the beaches and waterfronts of the cities so everyone can ooh and aah to their heart's delight.

Sagmun (sixth month): This pleasant month is one of the hardest working months of the year for all guild members, who try to complete as many projects as possible in time for next month's tax assessment. There is no time for special holidays in this month and even the normal religious holidays are more subdued than usual.

Sebmun (seventh month): The weather starts turning quite hot by this time and the people spend most of their time outdoors if at all possible. Inclement weather also increases during this month, usually in the form of horrible thunderstorms or hurricanes. The 15th of Sebmun is actually two special holidays in one. The 14th is technically a work day, but no one works. They just stand around and watch as the Minrothad tax assessments for businesses and guilds are performed this day. The taxing process and formula are incredibly complex affairs, with one result being that if a guild has a lot of unsold merchandise on hand, its taxes are lower. This means that if the guild had a very good year, the last month and a half have been especially difficult on its members as they try to produce surplus merchandise in order to lower the guild's taxes.

This diligence is completely relaxed on



the 15th, called All's Reckless Day. No one works or even sells anything, they just play and celebrate, often in a lascivious manner. The day is spent in athletic events, eating or drinking contests, and shows of martial expertise, which only the most daring participants enter. Animal costumes and weird masks are worn that night as the citizenry of every village and town celebrates in the streets into the wee hours of the morning. Morals absolutely collapse around this time; many an unexpected child was conceived on All's Reckless Eve.

The 16th is a day of work, but it is a day of absolute quiet as laid down by the law. A family with noisy pets or children can be fined as much as 100 gp for disturbing the peace. The day is usually spent cleaning the shops, going over the books, and nursing a headache the size of the city of Minrothad.

Oxmun (eighth month): This month is the hottest for Minrothad and most people are driven into the shade or to the shores for cool breezes. It is the month of lowest productivity in the islands, but of the greatest tourist trade. No one would bother coming out for a special holiday, so none are held.

Nomun (ninth month): This month is the start of fall and is quite peaceful. It is a very hard work month for guild members as they try to catch up for the lost time in Oxmun. Nomun 11th is the last special holiday until the huge Midwinter festival. It is called Bask Day, and is spent basking in the sun and being inactive. It is also a day of fasting, to remind people to work harder in the days to come so that food can be purchased for the winter months and people will not go hungry. The first of the far-ranging trading vessels return on or about Bask Day, as do numerous foreign trading vessels. This is because it is the only day when foreigners can sell their merchandise, mostly food, without paying the stiff Minrothaddan tariffs. Most families spend a lot of their savings and stock up for winter on this day.

Decmun (tenth month): This month is spent by most of the people doing chores preparing for winter: preserving foods,

repairing roofs, getting returned ships ready for winter, cleaning and closing up the guild halls against the weather, etc. The last of the returning ships come in during this month.

Elfmun (eleventh month): The final full month of the year sees the return of winter. Sometimes very late ships will return in the first week of this month, but after that it is too dangerous to cross the seas. Any Minrothaddan ship not yet returned will most likely go to winter quarters at some foreign port, though this can be very expensive. The wind is horrible during this time of year and people begin dressing much more warmly, though still fashionably. The guilds work hard during this month, first to make up for the time they expect to lose to Midwinter Festival, and second to keep everyone's mind off those ships that are not yet returned.

Midwinter Festival: This entire week consists of special holidays. It is a time when all of the guilds most closely associated with the racial holidays put on their very best shows and feasts. Decorations and traditions abound during Mitwok. Pineapples are displayed over doorways everywhere, surrounded by leaves from the sugar cane. This is believed to bring good luck and a fruitful upcoming year to the residents inside.

Miniature palms are always displayed inside a house and larger ones inside the guild halls and government buildings. From these palms, tiny candle lanterns are hung and lit every night as a symbol of lighting the way home for lost sailors or seaman away from home for the holidays. Since Oran Meditor has been in power as ruling guildmaster, the gifts given during these festivals, especially those for the children, are gaily wrapped in scarves and placed under the tree in hopes of enticing the spirits of sailors lost at sea to come home to their loved ones.

Palm wreaths are fashioned and hung in the windows and on walls as a traditional charm against harm by nature's forces in the upcoming year. And, finally, tiny bells are hung from belts, hats, shoes, and doorways to add to the festive mood.

Mitwok 1st is celebrated as Water Elves' Day. The 2d is Forest Elves' Day. The 3d is Humans' Day. The 4th is Halflings' Day, and the 5th is Dwarves' Day. Gift-giving is rampant at this time of year. On each day, that specific race gives presents to each other and receives presents from friends of different races just for being a dwarf, elf, etc. Many stirring speeches are made about the joys of being a halfling, the wonders of being a human, and so on, but always in good taste and rarely with any racial slurs toward the other peoples of Minrothad. It is a time for being together with one's family and guild and thanking one's deities for the myriad of blessings bestowed upon all Minrothaddans.

The last day of the Midwinter Festival, Mitwok 6th, is the second-newest special holiday. It is called Meditor Day. It originally celebrated the position of ruling guildmaster of Minrothad, but under Oran has been expanded to include the political guilds as well. Originally it was a time for people to thank the family of Meditor for working so hard in government service all year round. This was done by lavishing gifts on the family and the palace. But in his first year as ruling guildmaster, Oran put a stop to that. He realized that it was only an official bribery day founded and sanctioned by the family guild leaders. He insisted that the money be spent on Minrothad's children instead.

The day now has three phases of celebration. The first is the family and guild celebration in the morning, including gift exchanges. The second is the afternoon parade of citizens to serenade favorite locals who work for political guilds as a way of saying "thank you." If the political guild members are particularly effective in their posts, they may receive small gifts from the citizens and/or bonus money from the master treasurer. The third part of the celebration is the evening ritual of taking down the Mitwok decorations and having a very late feast to celebrate the passing of the old year. This meal is traditionally spent with someone outside of one's guild or family, and presents are often exchanged at this time too.

The Races of Minrothad

The racial groups of the Minrothad Guilds remain distinctive within the larger society, but their customs differ from those of their continental cousins. Each group has borrowed significantly from the others, and in the case of the water elves has evolved an entirely new life-style from that which their race had previously known. These groups and their unique aspects are described here.

Elves

The most populous race in the Minrothad Guilds is elves. Minrothad elves are divided into two groups: the so-called water elves, and the wood elves. These names are descriptive of the habitat they prefer to live near, and reflects the nature of the guild crafts these people pursue.

Wood Elves

Wood elves are also called forest elves in Minrothad Patois. The terms are synonymous and refer exclusively to the forest-dwelling elves of these islands who work wood and other products of the earth.

Appearance: Wood elves have hair ranging in color from blond to brown, with green or hazel eyes. Their features bear a distant resemblance to the elves of Alfheim.

Behavior: These elves are without a doubt more "serious-minded" than their mainland cousins. They are interested in actively practicing their handicrafts, and are more inclined than most elves to stick with long-term projects.

Wood elves throw themselves fully into whatever activity they have chosen to pursue. If it is woodworking, for example, they set a goal, then labor tirelessly for months or years to achieve it. A typical goal might be to become a master wood-carver, or to perfect a new color-fast dye for cloth.

When their work is complete, these elves abandon themselves to the pursuit of pleasure with as much dedication as they applied to their work. Although an elf might labor almost continuously for a year or more, he is then ready to take a

break that, in turn, may last months or years. Wood elves "on vacation" are encountered outside of Alfisle, and those with years of free time even journey to the mainland seeking fun and adventure before they return to work.

Guild and Clan: Minrothad wood elves belong to Guild Verdier, which is named for a wood-elf clan of ancient distinction. Guild Verdier handles wood and products of the earth.

Old-elvish clan names have long since gone by the wayside under the impact of guild influences and the Minrothad language. Wood elves now use names adopted from Patois which are descriptive of the craft each clan has specialized in. The most influential clans of Guild Verdier are Clan Forster, Clan Wraight, and Clan Shuter. Other clan names can be seen on the Guild Verdier organization chart.

Skills: All wood elves have the skill of Climbing. Each also has one handicraft skill appropriate to the craft of the clan to which he belongs; those skills are further described under *Guilds*. Skills are based on the following attributes:

Bowyer: Intelligence
Building Construction: Intelligence
Cabinetmaking: Intelligence
Canvasmaking: Intelligence
Climbing: Dexterity
Clothier: Intelligence
Cooper: Intelligence
Fletching: Intelligence
Machine Making: Intelligence
Ropemaking: Dexterity
Spinning: Dexterity
Toolmaking: Intelligence
Tree-cutting: Intelligence
Weaving: Dexterity
Wheelwright: Intelligence
Woodworking: Intelligence

Water Elves

The water elves have formed a more distinctive sub-culture than their wood elf brethren, and are recognized as a group separate from the mainstream elvish race. In this regard, they are similar to the shadowelves of the Broken Lands, to whom they bear a physical resem-

blance that many elves find unsettling.

Appearance: Water elves are towheaded or have light blond hair that bleaches almost white in the sun. Their eyes are blue-gray and their complexions are pale in spite of constant exposure to weather and sun. They have a faint resemblance to the Alfheim elves, but look even more like shadowelves because of their coloration.

Behavior: A water elf's first love is the sea. He is fascinated by its ever-changing moods and excited by the challenges it constantly presents to the seafarer. His curiosity is piqued by its watery mysteries; a water elf loves to travel on the ocean and learn about the creatures in it, and often masters magic which deals specifically with the sea and the weather.

Water elves were the first inhabitants of the Minrothad Isles to explore the local waters thoroughly. They were the first to develop moveable rigging on sailing craft so that a vessel could sail close to the wind and maneuver with ease. They continue to innovate and improve their sailing vessels, giving the merchant fleet of the Minrothad Guilds its justly-deserved reputation as the finest and swiftest in the known world.

This avid interest in the ocean and ways to travel upon it have made the water elves one of the driving forces of the Minrothad Guilds. It was their seafaring knowledge and wanderlust combined with the human interest in trade that enabled the Minrothad Guilds to expand and dominate sea-going commerce.

Always anxious to travel, water elves are excited by new sights, new lands, and new prospects for trade. They are happy to arrive at a destination, and are equally happy to leave it for some place new, providing the traveling is done by sea or river. More than half of the Minrothad traders encountered in continental ports are water elves, as are many of the merchant-prince ship captains, but these elves do not care to be factors or guild representatives permanently posted in a foreign city.

Special Abilities

In addition to standard elvish abilities, water elves have some special ones which set them apart from other races of elves.

Direction Sense. A water elf has a 75 percent chance of correctly sensing compass directions at all times. This innate sense works only outdoors, not underground, but is extremely useful on overcast days or during fogs and darkness at sea. It can be used once per day.

Navigation Sense. Similar to direction sense, this enables a water elf to know in what direction a destination lies in relation to his current position, providing he has been to that place at least once before. This ability is accurate 75 percent of the time. It can be used once per destination. For this reason it is said that once a water elf has been to a port, he can always find his way back again.

Guild and Clan: Water elves are members of one of the clans of Guild Elsan, named for a family of leading water elves. The guild deals with things pertaining to ships and seafaring.

Water elf names, like those of the wood elves, do not sound particularly elvish, but they do not follow the general Minrothad custom of describing a craft. Leading water elf clans are Clan Kelar and Clan Manre. Other clan names can be seen in the guild organization chart.

Skills: All water elves have the skill of Boat Sailing, which is the ability to sail boats and does not apply to ships. The individual may be familiar with the principles of maneuvering ships, but is not automatically skilled in doing so.

Each water elf also has one craft skill appropriate to the craft of the clan to which he belongs; those skills are further described under *Guilds*. Skills are based on the following attributes:

Boat Sailing: Intelligence
Harpooning: Dexterity
Keelmaking: Intelligence
Mastmaking: Intelligence
Netmaking: Dexterity
Piloting: Intelligence
Rigging: Intelligence
Shellworking: Intelligence
Ship Sailing: Intelligence
Tacklemaking: Intelligence
Varnishing: Intelligence

HUMANS

Humans are a minority race in the Minrothad Guilds, but the positions they occupy speak for their ambitions and mastery of skills. Descended from Nithian stock, these islanders were once content with a pastoral existence as fishermen until water elf ships gave them the advantage they needed to pursue trade and profits. They have done so successfully ever since.

Appearance: Traders have often brought back wives from foreign ports, and thus introduced a variety of bloodlines and appearances among Minrothad natives. Yet, the majority of Minrothad humans have wavy brown or black hair, green or brown eyes, and a fair complexion that darkens slowly in the sun. A minority are red-heads, resembling the Alphetians who visited these islands in ancient times.

Behavior: Minrothad humans are inquisitive and energetic. They love interaction with strangers and the challenge of working out an equitable deal in which each party benefits. They can be fast talkers who are sometimes openly quarrelsome, but serious anger finds its outlet in subtle intrigue and convoluted plots for revenge.



The Races of Minrothad

These Minrothaddans enjoy innovation in business methods and constantly search out untapped markets to develop. They are hard workers who expect appropriate rewards for their efforts. They are hurt and feel cheated if a special effort goes unnoticed, and are themselves generous with praise and thanks.

Minrothad humans have a reputation for honesty, especially in business matters. Their ethics, however, are sometimes called into question: at one time they were persuaded to trade in slaves on the heels of a Thyatian war, and many mainlanders have never forgotten this. However, most factors and buyers in foreign countries are Minrothad humans, and they find that that part of their country's past has little impact on current business dealings.

Guild and Clan: Most humans are members of Guild Corser, which handles selected rareties and food. The guild encompasses many races besides humans; specific clans do not monopolize any one aspect of it.

Human names come from a combination of ancient Nithian and Alphatian roots, with a large admixture of names from the continent. They rarely indicate guild ties or occupational specialties, and can sound like names from anywhere on the mainland. Typical human names can be seen in the guild organization chart.

Skills: Humans in Minrothad have either one of two skills. The skill of Bar-

gaining is the ability to get the best possible price for goods, services, or information. The skill of Appraisal is the ability to figure out what something is worth.

If two people appraise an item, the one who wins by the greater margin assesses its value with greater accuracy. If two people with bargaining skill use it on each other, whoever makes the best roll wins. Penalties may be awarded to either character to reflect difficulties in the bargain to be made. This skill is primarily used for quick bargaining with NPCs.

Skills commonly available to the humans of Guild Corser and the abilities they are based on are given here. The skills are further explained under *Guilds*.

Animal Training: Intelligence

Appraisal: Intelligence

Bargaining: Intelligence

Brewing: Intelligence

Pipe Making: Dexterity

Halflings

Brought to Minrothad by slave-trading humans, halflings have long since won their freedom and have put their unpleasant past completely out of their minds. Adopting mercantile habits and even religious beliefs from their former masters, the natural industry of the halflings has enabled them to participate in the guilds as prosperous full members.

Appearance: Minrothad halflings have curly red or sandy-brown hair, and blue or brown eyes. Some become quite tan in the constant Minrothad sun.

Behavior: Minrothad halflings work with more zeal than their cousins of the Five Shires, a result of the sudden contrast between working for a slave master and working for one's self. These halflings reap the fruit of their own labors; they regard it as an added bonus that they also see the results in increased income and luxury goods.

To a Minrothad halfling's mind, other guilds' members either work too much or too little. Humans seldom take time off, dwarves work at a single project for years, and elves take a two-year hiatus and call it

a break. The halflings, however, know how to pace themselves. They rise at an hour neither too later nor too early; they work until they are hungry, break for a meal—either once or several times, depending how famished they become—then return to work some more. They do not fret about labor during leisure time, or spend too much work time planning for their leisure. Halflings are as proud of this happy medium in their work lives as they are of the goods they craft.

Guild and Clan: Most halflings are members of Guild Quickhand, named for the halfling who freed the slaves. The guild handles leather, basic crafts, and fuels.

Halfling names follow the general Minrothad custom of describing a craft. Leading halfling families bear the names Nimblefingers or Goldenhair. Other family names can be seen in the guild organization chart.

Skills: All halflings have skill in Farming. Other skills common to Guild Quickhand are given here, along with the abilities they are based on. Where necessary, crafts are further explained under *Guilds*.

Basketweaver: Dexterity

Charcoal Maker: Intelligence

Cobbler: Intelligence

Farming: Intelligence

Furrier: Intelligence

Glassblower: Dexterity

Hornmaker: Dexterity

Leather Armorer: Intelligence

Oil Maker: Intelligence

Potter: Dexterity

Saddlemaker: Intelligence

Dwarves

The forefathers of these dwarves left Rockhome and migrated to Glantri, where they found no welcome for their large numbers. Minrothad traders recognized the wealth of skilled craftsmen in this group of dwarves and invited them to emigrate and join the Minrothad Guilds. The dwarves agreed, and have dominated metal and stone working in the guilds ever since.



Appearance: Minrothad dwarves keep their dark brown hair and beards shorter than the dwarvish norm because of the hot climate in which they live. Their eyes are brown or amber, and they are of stockier build than most of their continental cousins.

Behavior: These dwarves enjoy the freedom to pursue their handicrafts with no distraction. They care for trading less than most folk of the guilds and prefer to leave the sales aspect of their business to others.

An unexpected benefit of their move to Minrothad was the chance to tunnel and explore in previously untouched volcanic rock. With their pragmatic turn of mind, these dwarves are challenged and delighted to come up with new building compounds, unusual tools and special manufacturing processes tailored for their island environment.

Dwarves are the least involved in guild intrigues of any Minrothad group. They consider most of the island politics to be foolishness that will pass with time. As a group they become angered only when politics interferes with their work for some reason.

Individuals are touchy about unfinished work, refusing to show or talk about items that are not yet ready for presentation. These dwarves are the most indifferent bargainers in Minrothad, setting what they believe to be a fair price and standing by it without a word of debate.

Guild and Clan: Most dwarves are members of Guild Hammer, named for the Hammer clan which led the exodus to Minrothad. The guild does crafts which deal with metal and stone.

Minrothad dwarves no longer use their names from Rockhome, but have taken craft-related names like other guildsmen. Leading clans are Clan Stronghold, Clan Duger, and Clan Hewer. Other common clan names can be seen in the guild organization chart.

Skills: All Minrothad dwarves have the skill of Appraisal (see *Humans*, above). Other skills common to Guild Hammer are given here, along with the abilities they are based on. Where necessary, crafts are further explained under *Guilds*.

Appraisal: Intelligence
 Armorer: Intelligence
 Blacksmithing: Intelligence
 Engineering: Intelligence
 Jeweler: Intelligence
 Masonry: Intelligence
 Mining: Intelligence
 Stonecutting: Intelligence
 Trap Building: Intelligence
 Weapon Smithing: Intelligence

Skills

Characters might have a variety of background skills that are not dealt with in the rule books. Each such skill is based on one of the character's abilities (Strength, Intelligence, Wisdom, Dexterity, Constitution, or Charisma).

Beginning Skills

Beginning Minrothad characters know one skill in which their clan and guild specializes, one racial skill as described for that race, and may select one additional skill. If a character's Intelligence is 13 to 15, he may select two additional skills rather than one; with an Intelligence of 16 to 17, three extra skills; and an Intelligence of 18 gives him four additional skill choices.

Using Skills

When a character needs to use his skill, the player rolls 1d20 against his current ability score for that skill. If the result of the roll is less than or equal to the ability, the skill use succeeds. A roll of 20 always fails, no matter how high the chance for success.

When two characters compete in the same skill, the one who makes his roll by a greater margin of success wins. For example, a result five less than the number needed beats a result that is only one less than the number needed.



Improving Skills

A character's skill use chance can be higher than the ability on which it is based. For instance, an elf who is a superior woodworker could have a higher Woodworking roll than his normal Intelligence ability. To accomplish this, a beginning character can "trade in" one of his extra skill choices to improve another skill. Each skill choice traded in gives the character a permanent +1 in a chosen skill.

Learning More Skills

As a character grows more experienced, he can purchase more skills or improve existing ones.

All characters get a new skill choice every four experience levels. Thus, they acquire their first skills at level 1, a new skill at level 5, and another at level 9.

Humans continue in this progression for every four levels they increase in skill. Elves gain new skills upon acquiring 1,100,000 XP and then for every 750,000 XP following. Dwarves and halflings gain new skills when reaching 1,200,000 XP, and for every 800,000 XP afterward.

The Guilds of Minrothad

The Minrothad Guilds were founded in 691 AC by Gregus Verdier, a wood elf who solidified the loose trading confederation of the Minrothad Isles into a system of guilds and associate guilds. Responsibility for crafts, manufacturing, trading, and sailing (i.e., cargo carrying) were assigned to specific clans and family groups so that each race had equal power and control through a family guild.

Over the following years a number of miscellaneous guilds came into being which provided services rather than manufactured crafts. These were finally consolidated into the group of organizations known as the Political Guilds.

Guilds are noted for their policies of noninterference with craftsmen. Unlike most mainland guilds, innovation and experimentation are encouraged, resulting in a number of finely-made articles that are useful and unusual. The work of these guilds is recognized as some of the best in the known world.

Family Guilds

A particular clan or family, chosen by membership consensus, leads each family guild of craftsmen. The clan is usually a family group that has historically provided leadership to the guild. A guild master who is head of his family guild comes only from that leading clan. The position of guild master is hereditary, and passes on to an heir of master-level skill. Subordinate master craftsmen advise the guild master, or guild leader, as he is sometimes called, and report directly to him on their areas of responsibility.

Each guild master is aided by a support staff whose functions are uniform throughout the guilds. Staff consists of a first guild advisor who interacts with local government; a first guild consort (the spouse of the guild master) who runs the guild hall and guild master's mansion; and a master guild treasurer who audits the books, collects taxes from the membership, and controls the guild vaults. There is a master of the guild leader's agents who is in charge of the small security force that protects the guild master and the vault. Finally, there is a guild

master trading liaison who works with other groups in matters of import, export, and domestic trade.

Council of Guild Leaders

The guild masters of the various family guilds meet as the governing body of Minrothad, known as the Council of Guild Leaders, or the CGL. Presided over by the ruling guild master, the council sets policy and passes laws pertaining to guild and government affairs, foreign affairs, and trade practices.

Ruling Guild Master

The hereditary office of ruling guild master is always filled by a member of the Meditor clan of water elves. This family first led the water elves to the Colony Isles and have been honored leaders ever since. Once a ceremonial position, the office is currently held by Oran Meditor, who in recent times has exercised very real control over Minrothad affairs. He is assisted by a cabinet which has the same functions as a family guild's support staff, except for the lack of a trade liaison. These officers have authority on a national scale (see Minrothad Government chart).

The ruling guild master's primary task is to determine policy and direction for the country as a whole in cooperation with family and political guild leaders. He appoints officers to their positions in the political guilds and mediates arguments between the family and political guild factions.

In addition, the ruling guild master may remove a particular clan from the leadership of its family guild if good cause can be shown, and elevate a clan of his choice to be their successors. The disgraced clan must be shown to pose a threat to the stability of Minrothad, usually because it has engaged in treasonous activity (such as an assassination plot or clandestine foreign alliance).

Political Guilds

Far more than mere service-providers, the political guilds form the backbone of

the ruling guild master's strength. Magic, the military, and spy-gathered intelligence are but three of the facets of power represented among the political guilds, which are described in detail below.

Although positions of leadership in the political guilds are appointed offices, it is very difficult to remove a guild master once he has been assigned unless proof can be established of criminal acts or gross negligence. The ruling guild master is very careful in his choice of appointments to these positions.

Guilds and Society

Most Minrothaddans of working age belong to a guild. Political guilds are entered through long apprenticeship and employment in the organization. Family guilds are joined at birth or an early age or, sometimes, through marriage or a change of career.

The concept of a career change, however, is alien to most Minrothaddans. The average citizen believes that a person is born to be what he is, and nothing else. One who wants to change family guilds is perceived as an oddity of nature: a person who must be either too proud to work under the leadership of his clan or who is defective from birth and unable to physically accomplish the work done by his guild. Nor is there understanding for one who wants to change political guilds, for after years spent in an apprenticeship and with the guarantee of life-long employment, why would anyone in his right mind want to go somewhere else?

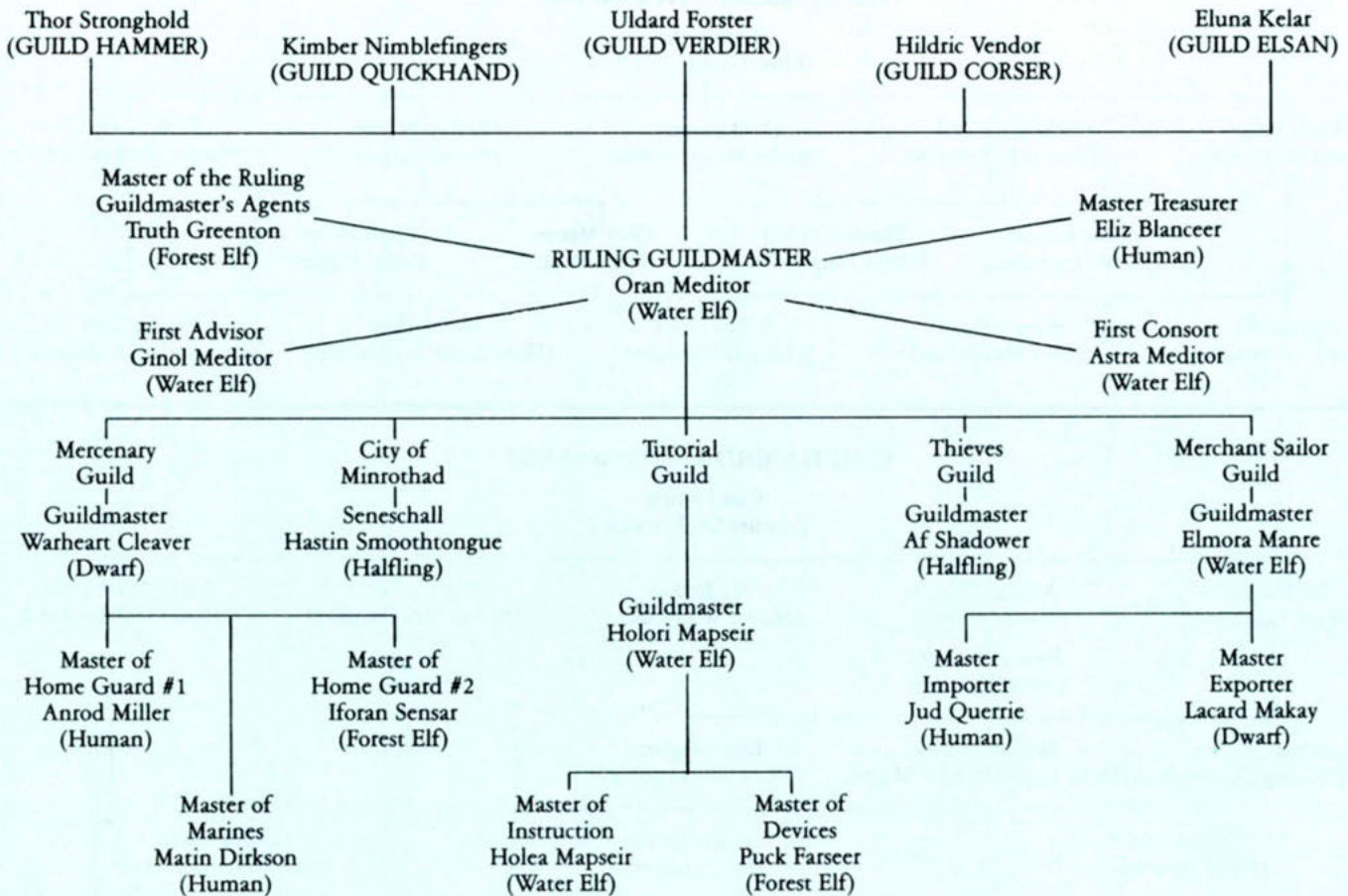
Family Guilds Guild Elsan

Guild Elsan is mostly comprised of water elves. It has complete control over all services and products dealing with ship building, navigation, fishing, and working with raw materials gleaned from the sea (sea vegetation, sea shells, and so on).

Master Shipwright: This master craftsman is in charge of the construction, maintenance, and repair of all Minrothad sailing vessels and boats. He has three

The Guilds of Minrothad

Council of Family Guild Leaders



Political Guilds

head craftsmen under him. The head keelmaker has charge of all ship-building steps except for mast- and tackle-related procedures. The head mastmaker is in charge of all mast and yardarm construction. The head tacklemaker is in charge of construction of blocks and tackle.

Master Varnishmaker: This master craftsman oversees the manufacture and application of pitch, sealants, varnish, and paint to the Minrothaddan ships and boats. He is also in charge of barnacle removal and hull cleaning.

Master Fisherman: This master craftsman is in charge of the construction of all fishing devices, instruction in the techniques of fishing, and the Minrothad fishing fleet. He has two head craftsmen

under him. The first is the head netmaker, who is in charge of net construction, maintenance, and repair and all net fishing done in Minrothad waters. The second is the head harpooner, who is in charge of the construction of harpoons and all harpoon fishing performed by Minrothad vessels.

Master Sailor: This master craftsman supervises the instruction of sailing techniques and the compilation of sailing knowledge from other countries. His duties also include the overseeing of miscellaneous sailing and navigational devices. He is assisted by two head craftsmen. The head pilot teaches navigation; the head rigger teaches rigging and sailmaking and oversees these items on all

Minrothaddan ships. These craftsmen work very closely with the Merchant Sailors Guild.

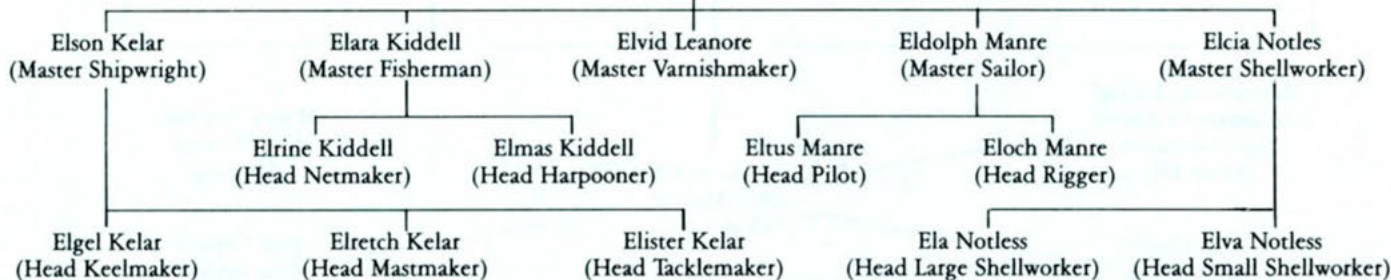
Master Shellworker: The title of this position dates back to the days when water elves worked mostly shells for armor and weapons. Today the phrase encompasses the manufacturing of anything made from materials brought out of the sea. Sea materials are used a lot in Minrothad and many art pieces are now being made by Guild Elsan for the export market.

The master shellworker is assisted by two head craftsmen. The first is the head large shellworker who oversees work done on large, bulky items (such as sea shell armor); the second is the head small

The Guilds of Minrothad

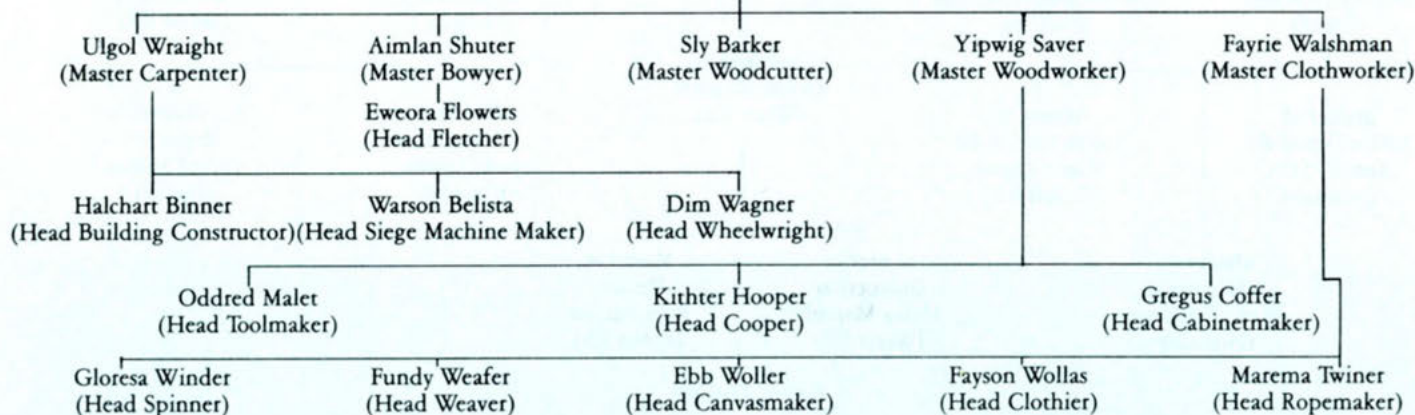
GUILD ELSAN (Water Elf)

Eluna Kellar
(Elsan Guildmaster)



GUILD VERDIER (Forest Elf)

Ulard Forster
(Verdier Guildmaster)



shellworker who is mainly in charge of the production of art pieces.

Guild Verdier

Guild Verdier consists primarily of wood elves. It has complete control over all services and items having to do with wood and cloth.

Members of Guild Verdier have an almost mystical affinity for wood. Working things gleaned from the land is part of their religion, and they love it. They produce most of the tools, rope, canvas, and cloth used by the other guilds. They have also voluntarily accepted an unofficial responsibility, shared with the half-lings of Guild Quickhand, for raising

Minrothad crops and livestock. Positions of importance are as follows:

Master Carpenter: This master craftsman is in charge of all large, wooden, nonsailing constructions, such as buildings, wharfs, bridges, and so on. He also supervises the teaching of carpentry.

The master carpenter is assisted by three head craftsmen. The head building constructor is in charge of all wooden buildings constructed or repaired in Minrothad. The head siege machinery maker is in charge of the construction of siege machines for warfare. The construction is done in conjunction with Guild Hammer. This is a highly lucrative export item and also provides Minrothad ports with extensive defenses. The head wheel-

wright is in charge of the construction and repair of all large land vehicles in Minrothad.

Master Bowyer: This position exists only because of the high value the wood elves place on good bows. This entire associate guild does nothing but make bows, crossbows, bowstrings, arrows, and bolts. Minrothad bows are among the finest in the world (+2 to hit in the hands of a member of this guild) and are a popular export item. The master bowyer is assisted by the head fletcher, who is in charge of collecting the finest feathers available and making arrows. Custom-made bows and arrows are the specialty of this associate guild.

Master Woodcutter: This master crafts-

The Guilds of Minrothad

man is in charge of the cutting and replanting of trees throughout Minrothad. He also is in charge of the transportation of logs, cutting logs into lumber, and grading lumber for sale. Most of the best lumber in Minrothad is used for Guild Verdier products or shipbuilding; lesser grades of lumber are used in other construction or are exported. Scrap wood is used by the elves for fuel.

Master Woodworker: This master craftsman is in charge of the construction and repair of nonstructural items of wood. He is assisted by three head craftsmen. The first is the head toolmaker, who is in charge of making wooden tools or wooden handles for tools. He works closely with the head toolmaker of Guild Hammer. The second is the head cooper, in charge of construction of barrels, kegs, trunks, and boxes made of wood. He is one of the busiest head craftsmen in Minrothad. The third is the head cabinetmaker, who is in charge of the construction of wooden furniture. He works with the associate guild of clothmakers.

Master Clothmaker: This master craftsman directs the production of fabrics and rope made from land-grown materials. She is also in charge of fabric dyes, threadmaking, and related small crafts. She is assisted by five head craftsmen.

The first is the head spinner, in charge of the associate guild of spinners which transforms raw material into thread. The second is the head weaver, in charge of

weaving the thread into cloth. The third is the head canvasmaker, who takes the heaviest canvas cloth and treats it with parafin for water resistance. She works closely with Guild Elsan.

The fourth craftsman is the head clothier, who is in charge of dying cloth, processing it so it will be softer, and standardizing bolts. The head clothier is much busier than many head craftsmen as she is also in charge of the associate guild of tailors. Finally there is the head ropemaker, who is in charge of all rope making in Minrothad.

Guild Hammer

Guild Hammer is made up completely of dwarves, all descendants of the original immigrants led by Darkbrow Hammer or of dwarves who followed shortly thereafter.

Guild Hammer has complete control over most services and manufacturing that deal with metal or stone. This group is an important addition to the Minrothad Guilds, which was woefully lacking in these areas before the arrival of the dwarves. The guild has also experimented lately with the use of lava in manufacturing, but the actual applications are still a secret. Positions of importance within the guild are as follows:

Master Miner: This master craftsman is in charge of all underground mining operations in Minrothad.

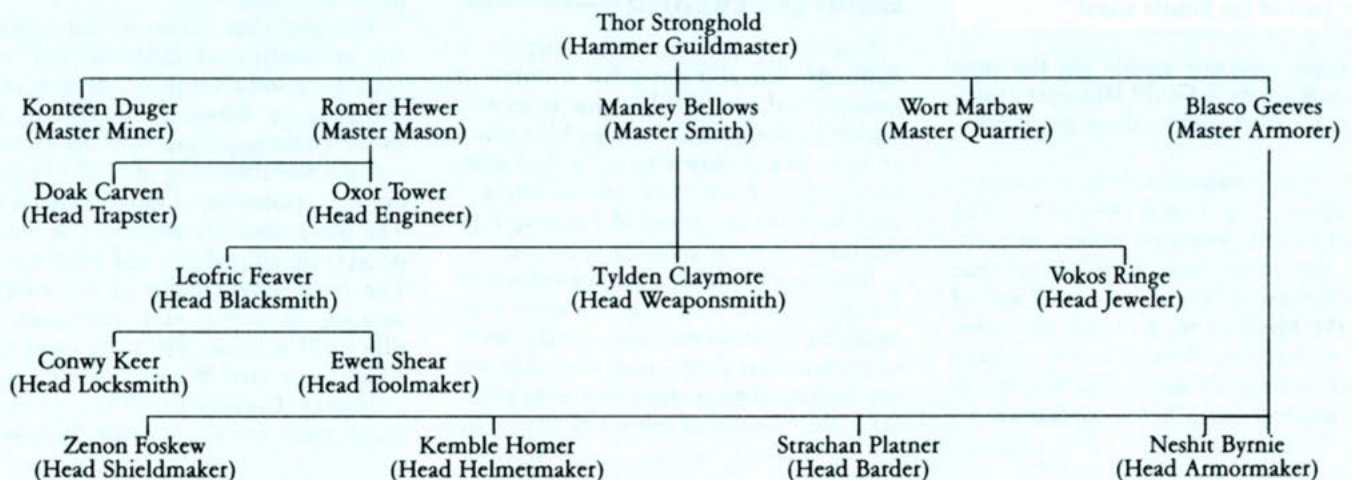
Master Stonecutter: This master craftsman is in charge of all stone cutting and transportation within Minrothad. He frequently travels to other lands to inspect granite and marble and arrange for its purchase and transportation to Minrothad, which has none of these types of stone.

Master Mason: This master craftsman supervises all building construction that is done with stone. He often works closely with the master carpenter of Guild Verdier.

The master mason is assisted by two head craftsmen. The first is the head trapper who designs and constructs all traps, hidden passages, and secret doors within a structure. His office is awash with old plans of all the buildings where he has built traps at the owner's request. The second is the head engineer, who designs the major buildings, towers, and bridges of Minrothad and who is consulted by the other guilds in matters of engineering. He is also in charge of the Minrothad aquaduct and sewer systems and their periodic renovation.

Master Smith: This master craftsman is responsible for all cast metal and general purpose forge work performed in Minrothad. He is probably one of the two or three finest smiths alive today. He is directly responsible for the design and construction of gears, springs, and other clockwork parts used in the construction of big devices such as siege engines. His

GUILD HAMMER (Dwarves)



The Guilds of Minrothad

GROWING UP "Family" —

—As told by halfling Archibald Oildreg, Senior Journeyman Fuelmaker, Guild Quickhand.

"Never a twice-thought on the fish oil did I have, when I were a young squeeg. Da come home smelling like he slept in a bait box, and that was all I knew. And four out of five meals a day were fried—oil were cheap, sure.

"Started my learn-time when I were old enough to catch a flopper with one grab and hang on. Twitchy thing, a fish out o' water. Spent, oh, five years packing catch from boat to gutter, and oil-makings to press. After the squeeze, clean up the mess. That were half the clutter.

"Next step up were cranking the press, then come my turn to process the oil. Get four grades out now, most journeymen only get three. I be top squeezeman in the shop, and up for mastership next year. Who knows? Already sending my own barrel-shares on Cosger's ship that runs to Vorloi-Town in Karamaikos. Last run were hot profit. If I make master, I'll open my own shop.

"Now, I be saving up for my master's dues. Gotta work a lot of squeeze to pay them fees. But Master Slippery-foot be giving me the bright-eye, says if I make master he'll slip me into family council if I got top style. Of course he will—his daughter's my sweet, and I be part of his family soon!"

five main associate guilds are the ones most important to Guild Hammer's prosperity. He is assisted by three head craftsmen.

The head weaponsmith is in charge of manufacturing metal weapons. The design of the weapons is very elegant, even the most basic ones. Minrothad weapons always have a sea motiff etched into the blade or worked into theommel or handle. Weapons are popular export items at all times, but sell best in areas where a war is being conducted.

The master's second assistant is the head jeweler, who is responsible for the creation of all jewelry and the construction of small mechanisms. He is also the official appraiser of the value of such items.

The third assistant is the head blacksmith, who oversees three of the associate guilds. He is directly in charge of the manufacturing of metal items that do not fall into the tool or lock category, such as hinges, handles, horseshoes, and so on. He is aided by the head locksmith, responsible for the construction, repair, and dismantling of all locks, and the head toolmaker, responsible for manufacturing all metal tools and tool parts.

Master Armorer: This master craftsman is in charge of the manufacturing of all Minrothad metal armor, helmets, shields, and barding. He is assisted by four head craftsmen.

The first is the head shieldmaker who is responsible for all metal shields made in Minrothad and for metal rims and studding put on wooden or metal shields. The second assistant is the head helmetmaker, who is responsible for metal helms and the metal ribbing or studding of leather or wooden helms. The third is the head barder, who adds metal plating or studding to leather or cloth barding. The fourth assistant is the head armormaker, who is in charge of the construction of metal body armor and the metal studding, ringing, or plating of leather or cloth armor.

Guild Quickhand —

Guild Quickhand consists largely of halflings, but also has a fair number of humans and some of the other races who disliked their guilds. This guild controls all services and manufacturing that deals with leather, basic crafts, and all forms of fuel, with the exception of the scrap timber used by wood elves for firewood.

Since the halflings were late-comers to the guilds and they couldn't assist with smithing or stoneworking—badly needed skills at that time—they were assigned the leatherworking crafts that were previously the domain of the wood elves. The

fuel crafts were learned by an ancestor of Nimblefingers, the current guild master, and were handed down along with other native halfling crafts and some imported skills.

Master Leatherworker: This master craftsman is responsible for all leatherworking done in Minrothad. From tanning and working the hides and furs to making them into shoes, boots, belts, saddles, and armor, the master leatherworker oversees it all. He has four head craftsmen assisting him.

The head cobbler is in charge of making and repairing shoes and boots and oversees the production of belts, leather bags, pouches, and all leather accessories. The head saddlemaker supervises the manufacture and repair of all leather harnesses, saddles, and saddlebags. The head furrier is in charge of collecting furs and hides and stripping, tanning, and dying them, working them until the leather is supple, and then transporting the bulk leather to and from Minrothad. The fourth is the head leather armorer, who is in charge of making leather body armor, shields, helmets, and barding, and having them studded or ringed with metal for extra protection. This requires his cooperation with Guild Hammer.

Master Fuelmaker: This master craftsman oversees the making, transportation, and storage of all the candles, oil, and charcoal in Minrothad. Effectively, he handles the creation or acquisition of goods to meet most of Minrothad's fuel needs. He has three head craftsmen working under him.

The head charcoalburner is in charge of the production of charcoal and works with the wood elves in selecting wood for this purpose. Charcoal is primarily used in the crafts requiring very hot furnaces, like the metalworking of Guild Hammer or the glassblowing of Guild Quickfinger. The head oilmaker oversees the creation of oil from animal fats and other sources. The head candlemaker is in charge of making all normal and ceremonial candles for Minrothad. He is also head of the small, associated Wickmakers Guild.

Master Craftsman: This person is responsible for the cottage industry of

The Guilds of Minrothad

associate guilds that work the basic crafts, such as pottery and basketweaving. He is assisted by four head craftsmen.

The head potter oversees the production of clayware, stoneware, ceramics, and porcelain objects ranging from plates and bowls for daily use to art objects. The head basketweaver is in charge of all the small basketweaving associate guilds. The baskets made can be as small as a little woven collector's box for trinkets or as large as the baskets used for carrying certain types of bulk cargo. Some of the baskets made are even waterproof. The head glassblower oversees the manufacture of all types of glass, including the panes of glass used in guild halls and wealthier households, the glass containers used by

many mages, and glass art objects which are incredibly expensive. The last assistant is the head hornmaker, who is in charge of converting animal horns, antlers, and so on into useful tools like knife handles, containers, musical horns, or art objects.

Guild Corser

Guild Corser is comprised mainly of humans but also has a number of the other races in its ranks.

By the time humans had recovered from the devastation of their race in Minrothad due to lycanthropy and vampirism, most of the essential guilds had been claimed by other races or taken from

human control. They therefore staked out new mercantile territory to take the place of the crafts and the slave trade that had provided most human communities with money.

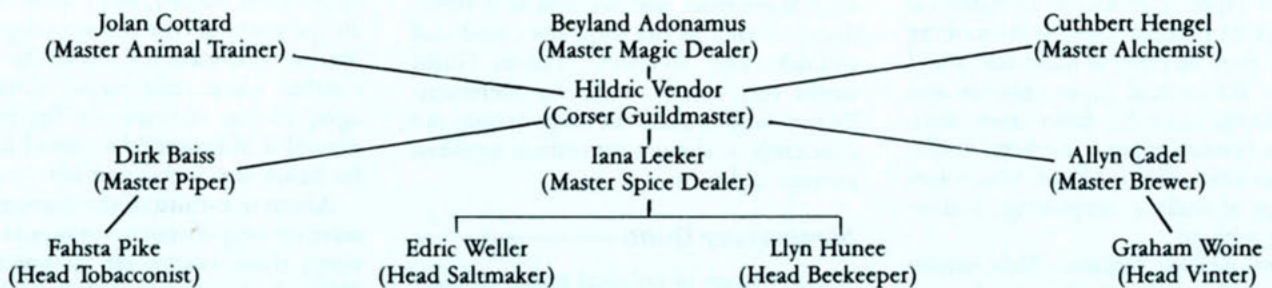
Guild Corser now has exclusive rights in Minrothad to the collection, transportation, and sale of selected rarities and foods. Many of Guild Corser's members are in foreign lands collecting these raw materials or arranging for their purchase. Though the guild has little variety, what it does sell is extremely expensive. Positions of importance within the guild are as follows:

Master Magic Dealer: Because of trade regulations, magical items cannot be easily sold in Minrothad. However, nothing

GUILD QUICKHAND (Halfling)



GUILD CORSER (Human)



The Guilds of Minrothad



stops Minrothaddan traders from buying and trading magical items from and to other nations. The master magic dealer is in charge of a group of agents and messengers in foreign lands who do just that. If exceptional items are found, then he approaches the Tutorial Guild to see if they wish to purchase it.

Master Alchemist: This master craftsman is responsible for the manufacture or acquisition of the unusual chemicals used by most of the guilds. This guild, too, has numerous agents abroad.

Master Brewer: This master craftsman controls a vast network of agents that arranges for the basic ingredients of mead, ale, and wine to be imported into Minrothad and then for those beverages to be made. He has one head craftsman assisting him who oversees the slow process of making, aging, and storing wines and spirits.

Master Piper: This master craftsman is in charge of making pipes and smoking apparati from all types of materials: wood and clay for normal pipes, gourds and meerschaum stone for fancy ones, even glass for hookah pipes. The head craftsman who assists him is a head tobacconist in charge of trading, importing, and/or treating tobacco.

Master Animal Trainer: This master craftsman both teaches animals and instructs others in animal training. He arranges for animals to be imported, trained, and then sold locally or abroad.

He works mainly with smaller associate guilds of falconers, dog-handlers, and the like.

Master Spice Dealer: This master craftsman oversees the importing, processing, exporting, and general handling of the spices produced by Guild Quickhand. This trade accounts for over three quarters of Guild Corser's income. He is assisted by two head craftsmen. The first is the head saltmaker who oversees the production of salt, the other is the head beekeeper who manages the vast bee farms tended by halflings on Open Isle. The master spice dealer has an army of traders traveling everywhere to sell Minrothad's spices.

Political Guilds

The political guilds are not nearly as complex in their structures as the family guilds are. These are the newest guilds in Minrothad, more service or government-oriented than the others. They offer the most potential for power and advancement, and are not yet as versed in duplicity as are their family guild counterparts.

Merchant Sailors Guild

This guild is responsible for sailing the trading vessels of Minrothad. It is overseen by the guild master with the help of the master importer and the master exporter.

Members of this guild are usually instructed in the ways of sailing by Guild Elsan for a year or two, then must serve apprenticeships with the Merchant Sailors Guild. This guild also has authority over Minrothad dockworkers and stevedores, as well as the ships they load and unload. The Merchant Sailors Guild works very closely with the Merchant-Princes Guild, since the ships cannot sail efficiently without cooperation between captain and crew.

Mercenary Guild

This newest of political guilds is headed by a strongwilled, honest guild master who is in charge of the three military units of Minrothad. Each unit is run by its

own master craftsman, who is answerable only to the guild master.

These military units are meant to be a defensive force and are not intended for battle away from the shores of Minrothad. Although the guild is called mercenary, it considers this employment to be a lifelong commitment and takes care of its retirees better than any other guild.

Unlike most guilds, which make their money from dues and taxes on members or the products they sell, the Mercenary Guild is paid well by the government and all other Minrothad guilds for defending the islands.

Home Guard #1 is composed primarily of human soldiers. It is a large defensive force stationed near the city of Minrothad. This not only provides the best possible defense of the city but keeps the seneschal honest as well. Home Guard #1 is trained to fight defensively in a city: defending walls, using tower-top siege ballistae, etc.

Home Guard #2 is composed primarily of forest elf soldiers. It is larger than Home Guard #1 but is spread out over most of the remaining Minrothad islands. This force is trained in both field battle and guerilla tactics. It will fight invaders on the beaches if possible, or retreat into the hills and harass the enemy to death.

Marines are the largest standing military force that Minrothad has. They serve on every ship as defenders against pirates. They are trained in the use of shipboard ballista, boarding and repelling tactics, and fighting in rigging. The number of marines on board a ship depends on the cargo being hauled, but is never less than 20 percent of the crew complement. Marines also train the rest of the crew for combat when time allows during voyages, so the estimate of fighting men aboard a Minrothaddan vessel is usually far below the actual number.

About one-third of the marines do not serve on long-distance voyages at any one time; these troops are assigned to the Minrothad naval vessels which patrol local waters.

The Auxiliary Home Guard is not shown on the government organization

chart. It is a military associate guild that springs into existence only during times of imminent invasion. At that time, the Mercenary Guild gains authority over guild and town security and constabulary forces which constitute the auxiliary guard.

Thieves Guild

The Thieves Guild is known to exist but very little is known for certain about it. Rumors abound, but the fact remains that this guild's activities are covert. The truth is known only to the guild master, to Oran Meditor, and to the thieves active in this unpopular and secretive organization.

Tutorial Guild

The Tutorial Guild is a combine of many smaller associate guilds that train and teach. The guild master oversees the administration of these associate guilds. A force of guild scholars answerable only to him checks on the associate guilds from time to time to see that they are maintaining their standards of education. The most important of the associate guilds are

the School of Merchant-Princes, overseen by the master of instruction, and the School of Magical Artifacts, overseen by the master of devices.

Among other things, the guild is responsible for working on all major and some minor court cases (see *Laws of Minrothad*). It also runs programs in affiliation with other guilds for the purpose of cross-training specialized individuals.

The Tutorial Guild has a monopoly on the practice of magic in Minrothad and this monopoly is enforced by law. The guild inspects every known magical item and magic-user which enters Minrothad. A Tutorial Guild member is required by law to be present whenever any spell is cast.

This guild has a network of overseas agents who are constantly on the lookout for new spells, new philosophies of magic, and magical items. These persons cannot compete with Guild Corser's magic dealer agents but they are empowered to purchase magical items for the use of the Tutorial Guild. This guild has the legal right to make first offer on any item held by a magic dealer, regardless of whether

the item is for sale. If the forced sale is disputed, the price that should be paid for the item is determined in Minrothad by the parent guilds.

If a Tutorial Guild agent misrepresents himself for the purpose of acquiring magical items or spells for his personal use rather than the guild's, the penalty is quite high: the death sentence under the Black Seal Warrant.

City of Minrothad

The city of Minrothad remains neutral and uninvolved in national or guild government affairs—a neutrality essential for the cooperative interaction of all the guilds. The capital is treated as a guildlike entity with a seneschal as the city's equivalent of guild master. He has authority over everything going on in the capital except the guild shops. He is, of course, answerable to the ruling guild master and has no control over the palace.

A complaint about the seneschal or the city must be lodged at a council of guild leaders meeting by a member of that body; the complaint is then brought to the attention of Oran Meditor for mediation.

Growing up "Political"

—as told by water elf Cosger Elsan, Journeyman Helmsman, Merchant Sailors Guild

"My kin build these ships and thought I would too. But how could I stay land-bound when the waves beckoned? And so that path I took.

"My age-mates began their learn-time in family crafts, but I sought out old Elwyn instead, once master navigator. Time enough he'd spent on ships, and so understood my urge. When I came of apprentice age, I took the tests for the Merchant Sailors Guild—and passed, thanks to Master Elwyn's coaching. Then my learn-time as scupper began.

"Cabin boy is the obvious 'prentice, seen by passengers, but the real work starts far below decks in the tac-

kle hold, amidst the gear that needs repair. And sailors put no trust in splices made by half-trained scuppers with half a care. Do a bit of work, and it's pulled and tugged and picked at by the top-side crew before it even leaves the hold. Most of it comes apart, and a scupper can spend a week or more to get one splice done right.

"What piece-work stays together earns some time topside, maybe in the rigging. Do enough knot-work, and a canny scupper can splice himself out of the tackle hold and into the foc'sle. Topside he tars rope and polishes brass, but the rigging-time comes more often. And so it goes, step by step, until he's making sail and doing all that needs doing.

"True, we're not as cozy a bunch as a family guild. A scupper is pushed and tested, every step of the way. But

it binds us together, it does, and when a sailor calls himself guildsman, he's earned the name!

"Take me—I'm a helmsman, and I hold this position because I know it, not because the captain's my father or some such nonsense like family guilds go by. And I know every position under me, like the points on a compass. I can fill in for deck crew if needs be—not like the sailmaker, you see: he's family, and all he knows is his canvas.

"Now, I've a choice: if I stay helmsman, I need next to study navigation under Guild Elsan. Or, I can take a line on bo'sun's mate and do more work with the crew. Who knows? I might do both. Then when I make senior journeyman I'll be up for second mate. There's no end to where skill can take a sailor in this guild!"

The Caste System

The apprentice-journeyman-master rank system of the guilds, based on achievement and experience, carries over into Minrothad society. To an overwhelming extent, a person's position in his guild reflects his position in society. This has resulted in a formalized caste system, recognized by tax laws and acknowledged by citizens in their daily lives.

A person's guild and rank dictate which category he occupies in the Minrothad caste system. Some caste positions limit one's progress within the guilds, but for the most part, caste lines are not completely rigid; hard work or political skill can elevate an individual to a higher caste than the one he began in.

There are six castes in Minrothad. Each reflects a degree of wealth, but even more, an appreciation of what a person can do for his guild. Caste names come from ancient Nithian words for rank and standing; people often refer to themselves and others by a reference to their caste: "A cleric will always be an evem, regardless what he preaches to others."

First Caste: The first and lowest rank is the okeen, or laborer caste. This caste includes guild members of the least importance: apprentices and those who are too lazy, careless, or indifferent to make much difference to the guild. Regardless of wealth, a sloppy and uncaring craftsman remains an okeen, as does an otherwise respected oldster who refuses to pass on knowledge of his craft to the young.

Second Caste: The second caste is the macau, the artisans who comprise the majority of common guildsman. This is the great middle class of Minrothaddans who toil and work for love of their craft and guild. It is their efforts that keep Minrothad prosperous. The macau have traditionally enjoyed more benefits than the okeen: better pay, better positions in the guild, finer tools and materials to work with, etc.

Third Caste: The third caste is the evem, from the word for craftsman. This caste consists of lesser guild managers (assistant craft masters, assistant guild masters, and so on), very wealthy guild members who do not hold a political or guild office, and exceptional guildsmen who are highly respected for their skills (such as healers and clerics).

Evem enjoy far better pay and benefits than the two lesser castes. It is to the third caste that most second caste guildsmen aspire. The third caste can be reached through hard work and innovative ideas. A macau guildsman enters the evem by appointment from a member of a higher caste or by a vote of promotion by third caste guildsmen.

Fourth Caste: The fourth caste, or dosan, takes its name from the word for leaders. This caste consists of the head craftsmen and masters of the guilds. It includes most members of guild administrations. These are powerful and wealthy people, most of whom ascended from the lower castes through their own labor or the efforts of their forefathers.

A member of the third caste is promoted to the fourth by appointment from a higher caste or by vote of fourth caste guildsmen. Among the family guilds it is very difficult to rise to this caste from lower ones. There is a growing trend for a retiring family guild master or head craftsman to nominate his appropriately-skilled son or daughter as his replacement. This choice is ratified by his guild council peers, who hope to do the same for their children. This is not the practice among the political guilds, however: just one of reasons why there are greater opportunities for advancement in the political guilds.

Fifth Caste: The fifth caste is the yulen, from the word meaning commanders. This is the newest caste. It came into being to reflect the status of the Merchant-Princes, the magic-using sea captains who command the ships of Minrothad's trading fleet.

The yulen are almost identical to the dosan of the fourth caste, but yulen are more learned and all know magic. The membership consists of merchant-princes

who were trained by the Tutorial Guild and guild masters and head craftsman who are training to become merchant-princes.

Sixth Caste: The sixth caste is the saneer, meaning rulers. It is a small and elite caste consisting of the nine guild masters who sit on the council of guild leaders, the seneschal of the city of Minrothad, and the ruling guild master, Oran Meditor. These are the most powerful and wealthy individuals in Minrothaddan society.

Caste and Guild Identification

In a place as concerned with rank and membership as Minrothad, it is not surprising that there are several ways to identify exactly what caste and guild a person belongs to. Guild identification is required by law, caste identification by custom.

Caste

A person's caste is signified primarily by clothing. It is not so much what he wears that indicates his caste, since garments come in unpredictable variety in Minrothad, but it is the quality of the cloth and the nature of the accessories that are the telling point. Members of all castes but the sixth incorporate a work-related item in their ensemble: a silver tasting salver hanging from the neck for a vintner, or a baker's cap for a baker. The higher the caste, the finer the material and more stylized the design of the significant accessories.

Members of the sixth (ruling) caste wear no work accessories at all, and this in and of itself is indicative of their rank. Their clothes are the most extravagant and finest of all, meant to embody their guild's pride and importance.

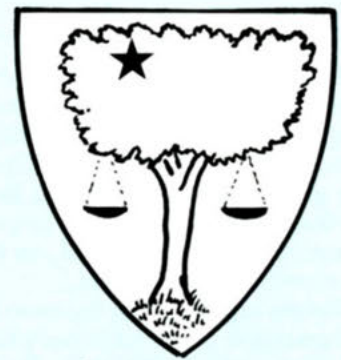
Shields and Devices of the Minrothad Guilds



**Minrothad Guilds
(Ruling Guild Master)**



Guild Hammer



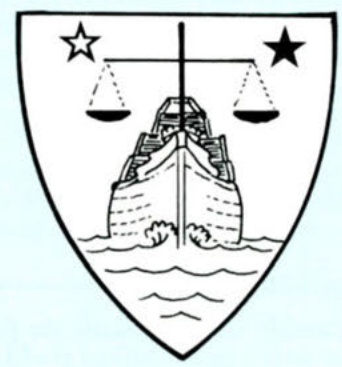
Guild Verdier



Guild Corser



Guild Quickhand



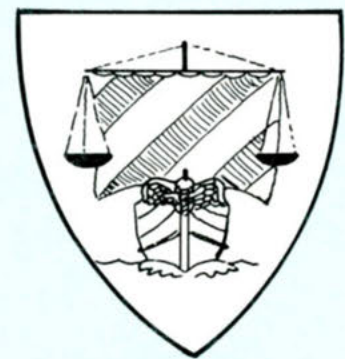
Guild Elsan



**Home Guard Unit 1 or 2
Mercenary Guild
(Unit's number is placed
below sword pommel)**



Merchant Sailor Guild



Mercenary Guild: Marines

The Caste System

Guild

Guild membership carries with it privileges and obligations, and Minrothaddans expect to be able to easily identify a guildsman's rank and standing. Upon passing apprentice level in a guild, most members are marked with a tattoo in a visible place: the back of the hand, on the cheek, or even on the forehead.

Guildsmen expect to wear the tattoo for life and embellish it with additions which indicate rank and specialty skills. Tattoos are removed only if a person changes guilds or is kicked out of one for some reason. The removal process uses an acid wash; it is a painful and scarring process and not undertaken lightly.

Organizations that do not care to have their members easily identified, like the Thieves Guild, give them a ring, earring, armband, or other removable object as a sign of guild membership. The token is given to the member after he has served his guild reliably for two years. These guildsmen usually also wear a simple and misleading family guild tattoo, lest the lack of a mark draws attention to them.

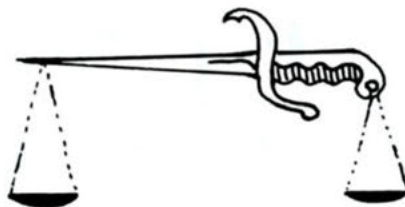
Shields and Devices

Membership tattoos duplicate the pattern that is on a guild's official shield or device. The devices of the ruling guild master, the family guilds, and three political guilds are shown. Each incorporates the balance device which is the insignia of Minrothad as a nation. The

balance symbolizes trading power and honesty in such dealings. It is simple, usually black on white, and bears nothing on the scales. Every Minrothaddan trading or military ship has the insignia painted on the prow and stitched into the sails, and flies it as a flag. All official documents from Minrothad show the balance at the top of the page, including receipts for goods bought or sold.

Guilds which give their members tokens rather than tattoos have the guild device worked on the token. Devices not illustrated here have the following appearances.

Thieves Guild: Although little is known about the membership of this guild, its device is a matter of official record. The insignia is a horizontal dagger serving as the balance for two small scales, each with a full pouch of gold on it.



Tutorial Guild: Guild members wear a large earring of electrum as token of their membership. It is worked with an octagon with a single scale hanging inside it. Depending upon their affiliation, the content of the scale differs. The scale of a merchant-prince bears a pentagram; the

scale of the associate Instruction Guild bears an open scroll; the scale of the associate Devices Guild shows a wand. The Tutorial Guild master and his staff have a star with rays shining forth, signifying the deliverance of knowledge from the heavens.



City of Minrothad: Guildsmen wear rings as insignias of membership. The device is a balance standing atop an item of the seneschal's choosing and so changes with every seneschal. The current insignia is a balance atop the beam of another, slightly larger balance, symbolizing the seneschal's desire to keep the city as fair as possible to all the guilds.



Guild Privileges

Members of the greatest trading combine in the Known World enjoy many privileges unique to their nation.

Price Discounts: A guildsman pays only 40 percent of the wholesale price for any item manufactured by his own guild and may purchase from other guilds at wholesale price. Nonguild members pay a standard retail price, which can be 100 percent or more of the wholesale price.

It is considered immoral for a guild member to buy something at his reduced membership price for a friend in another guild. It sometimes happens between friends or lovers but it is frowned upon and repeat offenders may have their price privileges revoked.

Business on Credit: A guildsman can buy on account from his own guild with no interest charged. A guild may offer the same courtesy to members of other guilds on an individual basis, charging only a small interest rate for the credit. Such credit-based business is rarely done outside of Minrothad and is never practiced with retail customers, where "cash on the barrelhead" is standard.

Preferred Customer Status: Guildsmen get first pick of goods before they go on sale to the public, except for special-order items. This privilege extends to guild services. If there is only one passenger berth left on a ship, for instance, a guildsman is taken on board in preference to another passenger.

Good Exchange Rates: Guildsmen converting coin for personal use receive special discounts on conversion fees and get the best exchange rate possible.

Cut-Rate Travel: A guildsman may perform labor in his guild specialty before or during a sea voyage in exchange for low cost or free travel.

Free or Reduced-Rate Training: Guilds train their members free of charge. Guildsmen can receive cross-training in other guild specialties through the Tutorial Guild. In contrast, nonguild members cannot receive any instruction from the guilds at all.

The Merchant-Princes of Minrothad

—A talk with Emelia Oswip of the Scholars' Fraternity, Glantri

"Look, there goes a merchant-prince, swaggering along like a power incarnate. Yes, the fellow with the blue hipboots and gold scabbard.

"You can tell he's a merchant-prince by the pentacles on his clothes.

"Besides, I know him. That is, he was captain of the *Egret* on my voyage here, name of Saroso Elsan. The voyage was entertaining; it gave me my first glimpse of a merchant-prince in action. There's a growing interest in them in Glantri—that's why I'm here, to learn what I can about them.

"No one talks much about these fellows. They're all leading members of their guilds. It seems merchant-princes can come from any guild. Most are ship captains, but others are just very experienced traders.

"They're trained by the wizards' guild here—what do they call it? Tutorial Guild? They must be dedicated fellows, learning magic after they've learned a profession. And not ordinary magic either—they work the elements.

"That one, Elsan, did interesting work on our voyage. He seemed in a hurry to arrive in Minrothad and we had favorable winds all the way—magical winds, I could tell.

"Those skills are not too remarkable by themselves, but crewmen told me they wished we would sight some pirates so I could see firsthand how a merchant-prince deals with sea brigands. I can do without that kind of entertainment, but it was an interesting comment. They seemed convinced their captain would save them the trouble of a battle. I have a lot of questions I want to ask a merchant-prince...

"And look, here he comes again! Excuse me—there's a tavern and here's my chance. Oh, Captain Elsan!..."



Politics in the Minrothad Guilds

"Work in Minrothad politics is like separating two fighting she-wolves. By the time it's done, you're in the middle of the fight yourself and you've been bitten by both sides at once."

—Oran Meditor

The Ethic of Competition —

Product specialization and the force of law prevent the Minrothad Guilds from competing with each other in the commercial arena. Yet an ethic of competition is instilled in every apprentice and embodied by every trader who is part of a guild. Guildsmen refuse to be bested in a trade or a sale and pride themselves on overcoming the obstacles that stand between them and commercial success. This attitude even carries over into Minrothad dealings with other nations. Traders, ambassadors, and factors are concerned first with how Minrothad can profit from a situation and second with how to meet and defeat any competition.

The same competitive drive that makes guildsmen world-class merchants finds its outlet within Minrothad in merciless political infighting and jockeying for position. Guild leaders aspire to ever-greater degrees of power in government and let very few ethics or morals stand in the way of promoting their guilds or themselves.

In a perverse way, Minrothaddans are proud of the chaos this sort of competition produces and of the intrigue that is its natural byproduct. These things are, after all, signs that the interests of one's guild are being advanced. Anything short of treason and assassination goes, as long as the action or its results do not adversely affect Minrothad itself.

The Political System —

"Intrigue, duplicity, scoundrelism, evasiveness! All the things that we hope to avoid in government are as food and drink to the Minrothad politician."

—Ierendi Ambassador Ounia, trying to explain to his government his desire to leave Minrothad.

Though its hidden workings are treacherous, the government of Minrothad is much more than groups of self-serving craftsman trying to gut each other. Like the scales that are the nation's symbol, the family guilds and the political guilds are the primary counterweights on the political scene. They are separated by the ruling guild master, whose office and its cabinet are the fulcrum and balance of power in the Minrothad system.

The ruling guild master enjoys support from the political guilds, whose guild masters he appoints. He uses this support to offset the influence of the powerful family guilds, whose backing he sometimes enlists by promoting one of their race, guild, or clan to a position in the political guilds.

On the other hand, the ruling guild master can do very little if both the family guilds and the political guilds oppose him, for their taxes support the national government and the military is not under his personal control as a cabinet function.

Consequently the balance between the three factions remains stable only as long as all three are strong. This balance of power has been upset in the past, resulting in poor government decisions formulated and pushed through by the dominant group. Besides caring for the real business of government, the ruling guild master must himself be a master of intrigue, struggling to ensure that no single political faction becomes too powerful through its plots and ploys. In spite of their reputation in trade, the politics of Minrothad are not for the naive or the scrupulously honest.

"You can easily tell when a Minrothad guild master is lying: his lips move."

—Continental guild hall joke

The Price of Intrigue —

—A word of caution from Lord Ordekis, Thyatian ambassador to Minrothad

People who play Minrothad politics play for keeps. The game moves swiftly, the players change constantly, and rules of fair play are observed only when convenient. Any tool that helps advance a cause is used when needed—and that presents a danger for visitors to Minrothad.

Travelers who seek intrigue and perhaps physical risk can easily find this when they come to these islands. But even the innocent voyager may get caught up in webs not of his own weaving. The one who is lucky might simply have a rude encounter with unprincipled guildsmen; he who is not may be charged with treason, or lose his life in one of many ways.

Visitors should remain alert for ruses designed to use a foreigner as an unwitting tool of guild intrigue:

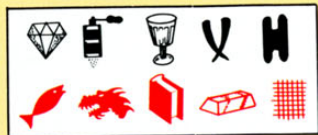
If you are not a merchant, be wary if invited to a private place to discuss guild business. Minrothaddans never discuss guild business with outsiders unless it relates to a specific trade arrangement.

Refuse requests to deliver sealed or otherwise private messages to other guildsmen. Almost every place of business sends legitimate messages by apprentice or with a friendly captain if it must go to another island. If you do this sort of favor for someone you are likely being used as a dupe in some kind of guild intrigue.

If you are asked to do something that might be illegal (such as waylaying someone leaving a tavern, "as a practical joke") be extremely cautious. You can be certain that is not the true purpose of the ploy, and the one who approached you is almost never the one who is really behind it. If you comply, you may become involved in serious charges. If you refuse to help or report it to the constabulary, you may be harassed by vengeful guildsmen. I have nothing to advise in such a situation except to avoid it.

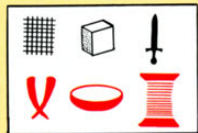
IG ROUTES

AASLA



To UNKNOWN lands

NORRVIK



DOVEFELL

SATI

TROMSO

STORMBAY

PORT SWENSON

SHIPTON

ZEABURG



SUDDPONT

SALT SHORE

SUDORN

NAMSEN

To Zeaburg 213 Mi.

DREMEN

HOSTPORK

HELEGA

VANGER

RANWOOD

DORNA

BACKWATER

SODERFJORD

WILMIK

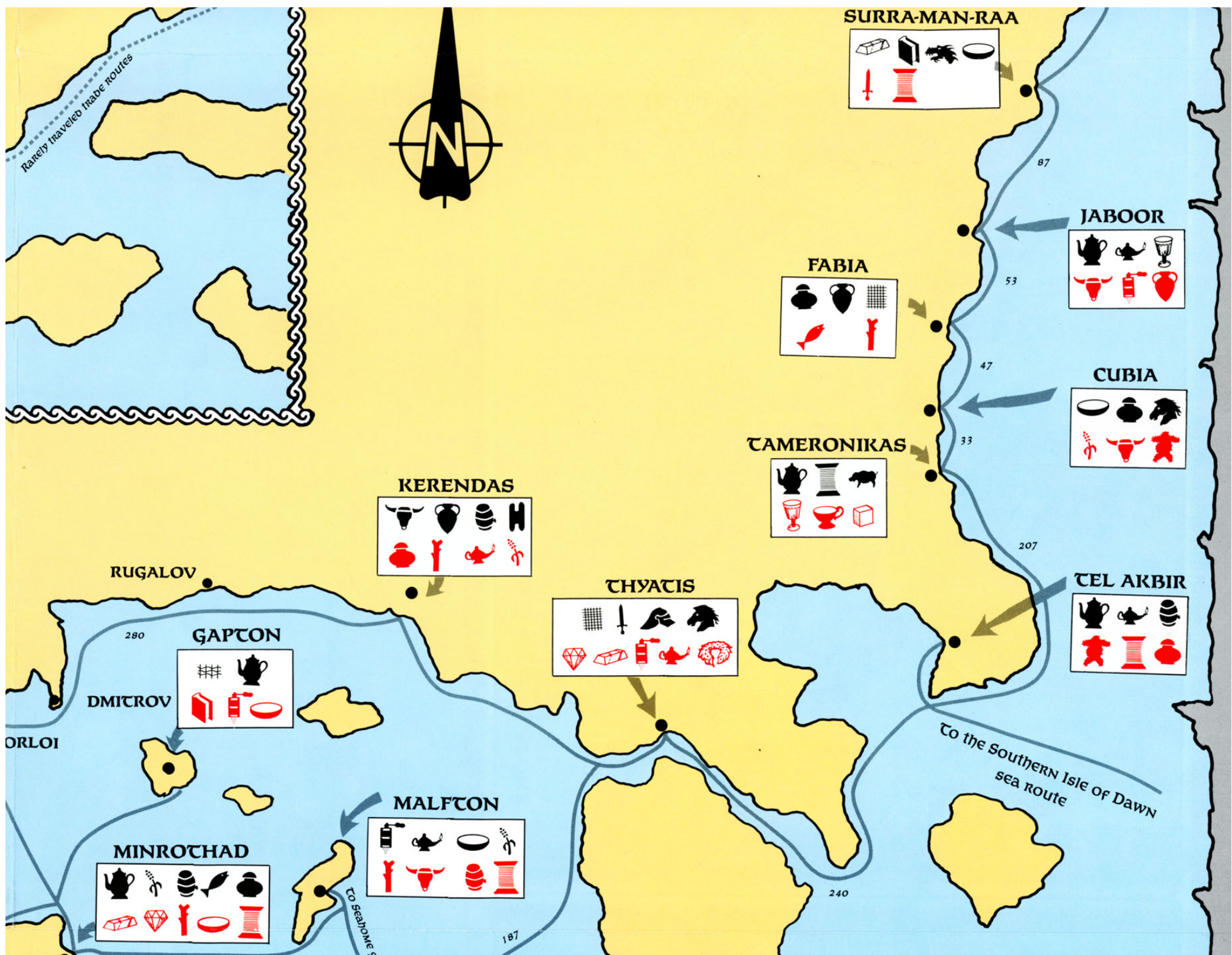


To Zeaburg 267 Mi.

240

SURRA-MAN-RAA

• EDAIRO

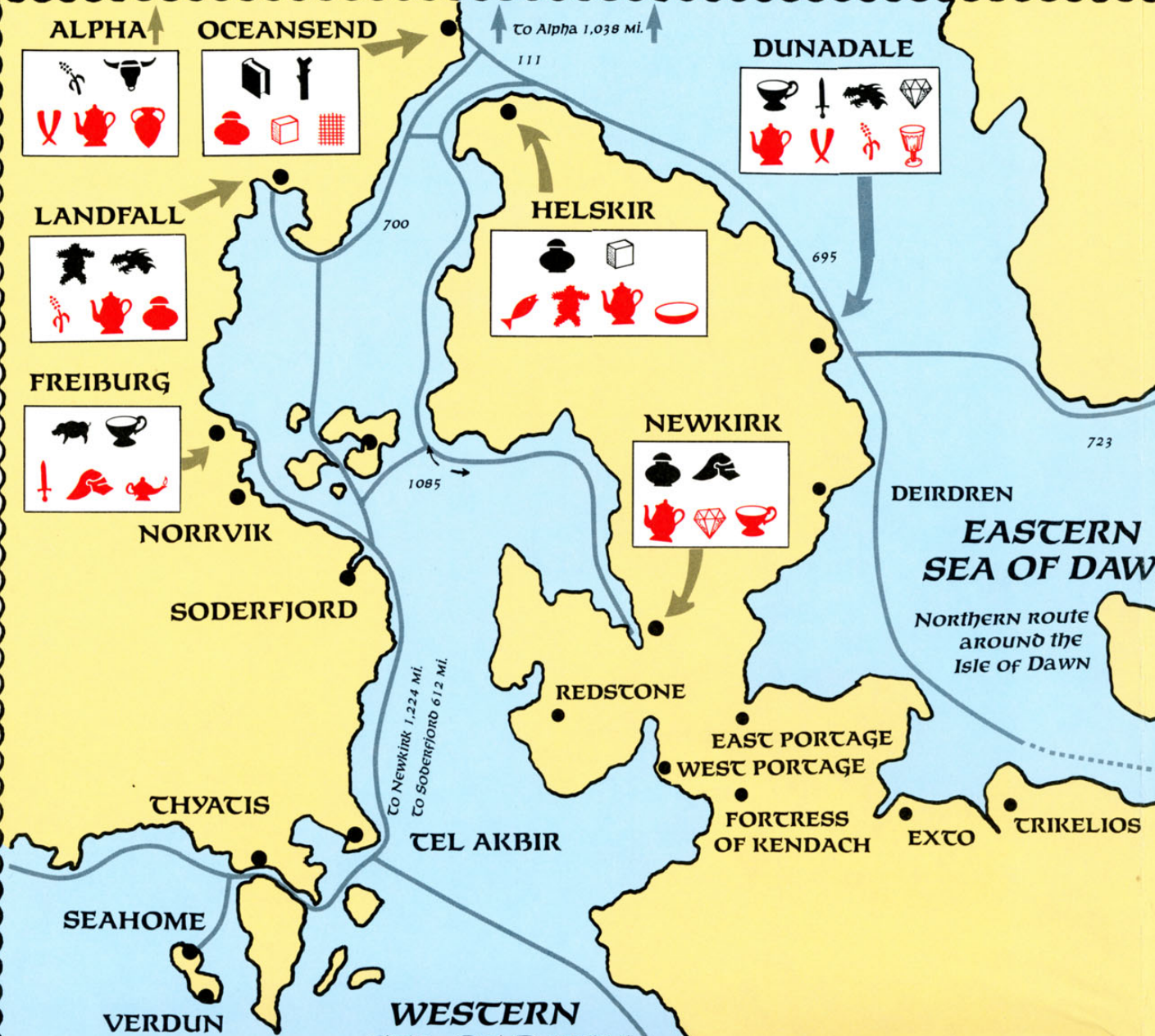


MAJOR KNOWN TRADING

Trade Goods

-  Wood, COMMON
-  Oil
-  Textiles
-  Salt
-  Beer, ale
-  Grain & vegetables
-  Fish, preserved
-  Hides, furs
-  Tea or coffee
-  Animals
-  Pottery
-  Wine, spirits
-  Meat, preserved
-  Metals, COMMON
-  Dye & pigments
-  Cloth
-  Weapons, tools
-  Monsters
-  Glassware
-  Semiprecious stones

Precious Merchandise



Precious Merchandise

-  Mounts
-  Wood, precious
-  Porcelain, fine
-  Books, rare
-  ARMOR
-  Ivory
-  Spices
-  Silk
-  Furs, rare
-  Metals, precious
-  GEMS

VERDUN

WESTERN
SEA OF DAWN



Southern route
around
the Isle of Dawn

CAERDWICCA
FURMENGLAIVE
CASTLE

AEGOPOLI

Symbols in black sell at less than market value.
Red symbols sell at more than market value.

The Mileage given is from port to port following the trade route.
one inch equals 222.5 Miles

ATHENOS

SHIRETON



SPECULARUM



PORT TENOBAR

TOCHMEER

RUNDEGOS

THANTABBAR

FORT
DOOM

MARILENEV

BURNY

BRAMBLEROSE

173

To Specularum 233 Mi.

SULESCU

173

CALATUPOS

KOBOS



To Minorbad 173 Mi.

VLAAD

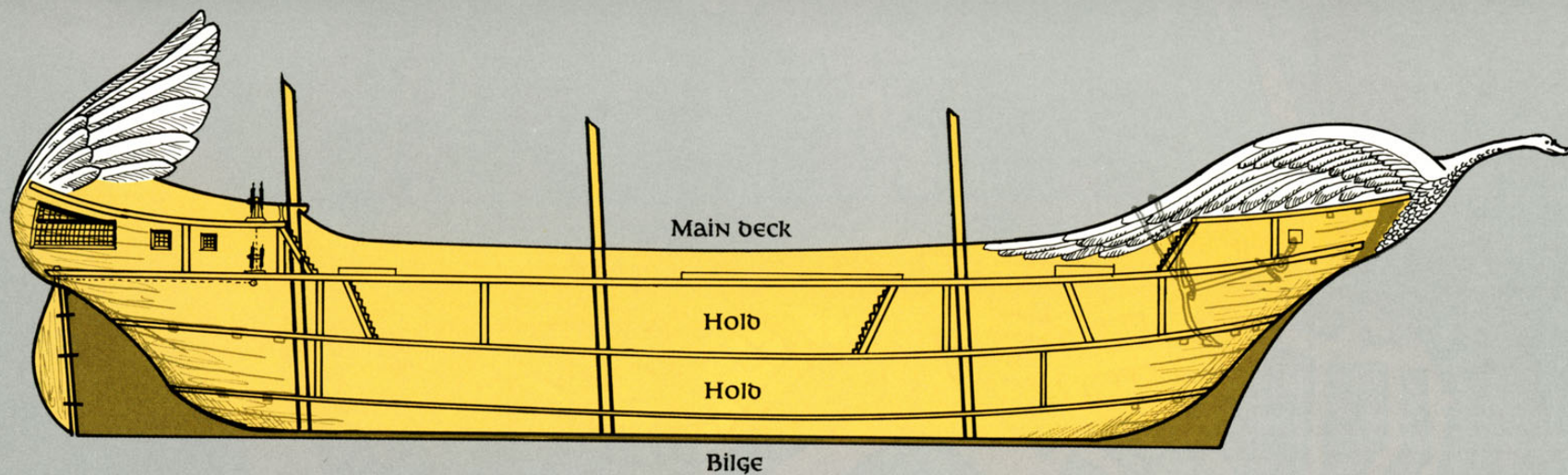
NULA

IERENDI

Reton 247 Mi.

To Stronghold 10

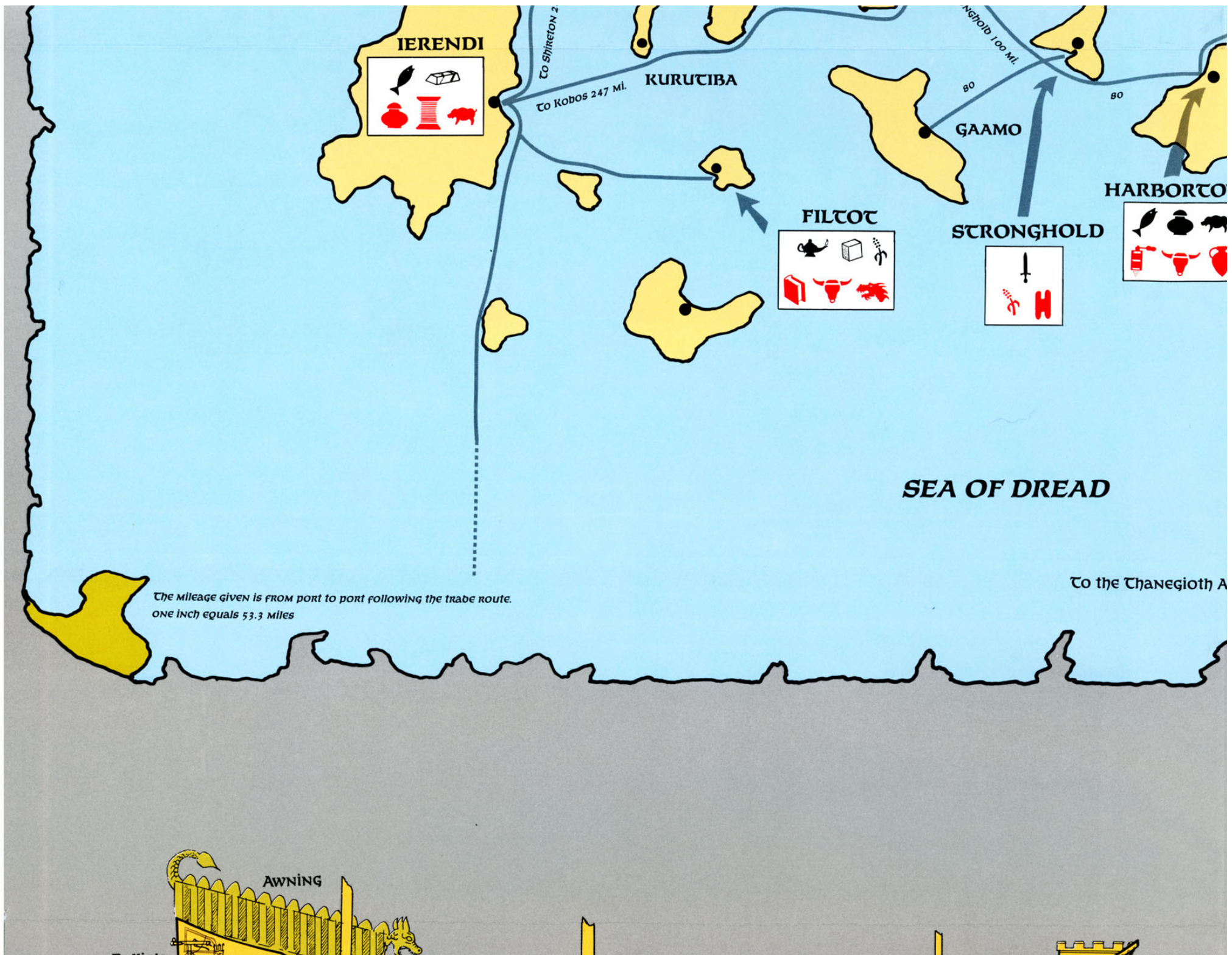
Rarely traveled trade routes
To the Atruaghin Tribes



MINROTH CLIPPER
Overall length 91 feet, beam 13.5 feet.



9236XXX0701



Ballista

AWNING

Main deck

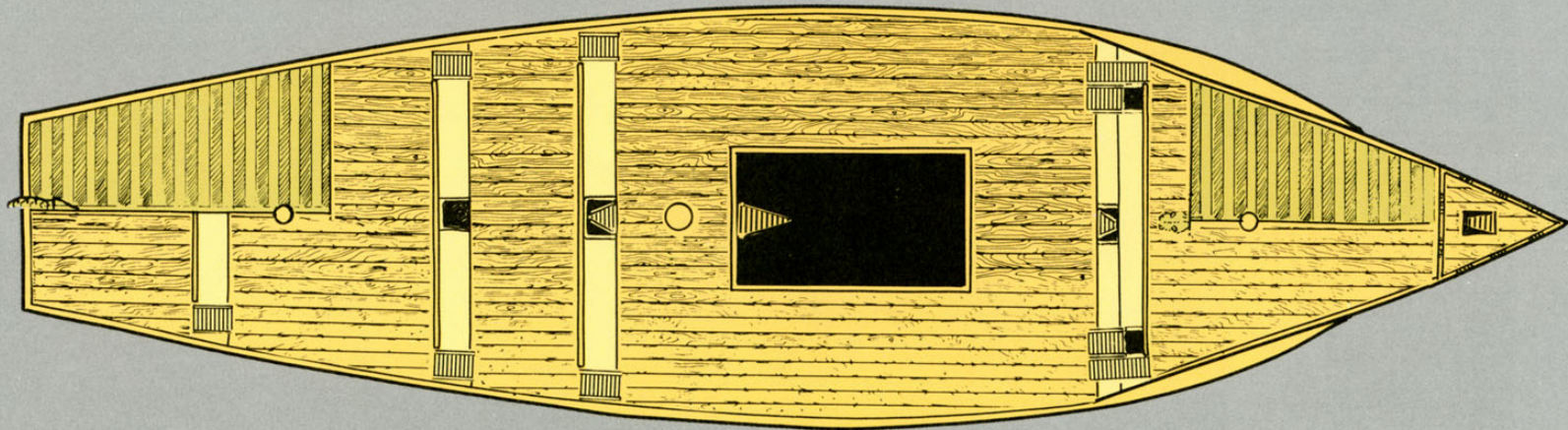
Hold

Hold

Bilge

HARBORTOWN TRADER

Overall length 100 feet, width (beam) 27 feet.



THE MINROTHAD GUILDS

North Island

Gaptown

Fire Island

Cove Harbor

Open Isle

MALFTON

Minrothad

Seahome

Alfeisle

Trader's Isle

SEA OF DREAD

Scale: one hex equals 8 miles

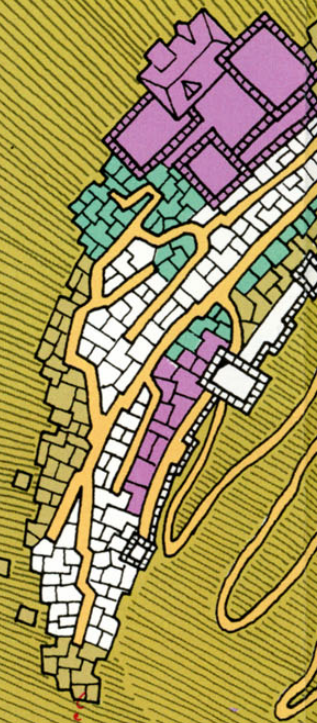
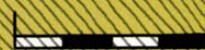
Scale: one hex equals 8 miles

	PALACE		LIGHT HOUSE		HILLS WITH FOREST		REEF		TRAIL SHIPPING LANES
	CASTLE		VOLCANO		GRASSLAND OR STEPPE SAVANNA VELDTC		COAST LINE		BRIDGE
	FORT		MOUNTAINS		SWAMP OR MARSH		RIVER		FORD
	TOWER OR KEEP		CLEAR PASTURELAND FARMLAND		MOOR OR BOG		STREAM		MOUNTAIN PASS
	RUINS		HILLS		DESERT OR SEA SAND		WATER FALL		EXT. BORDER (KINGDOM, NATIONAL, COUNTRY)
	CAPITAL		BARREN OR BROKEN LAND		ROCKY DESERT		GREATER CATARACT (RAPIDS)		INT. BORDER (FIEF, DISTRICT, DOMINION)
	CITY		PLATEAU OR CLIFF		OASIS		MEDIUM CATARACT (RAPIDS)		SNOW FIELDS
	TOWN		LIGHT FOREST		BADLANDS		LESSER CATARACT (RAPIDS)		GLACIERS
	VILLAGE		HEAVY FOREST		WATER		CANAL		ICE FLOE
	CAMP		JUNGLE		SEA FLOOR OR LAKE CONTOURS		ROAD		BATTLE FIELD

STRONGHOLD

Population: 10,000

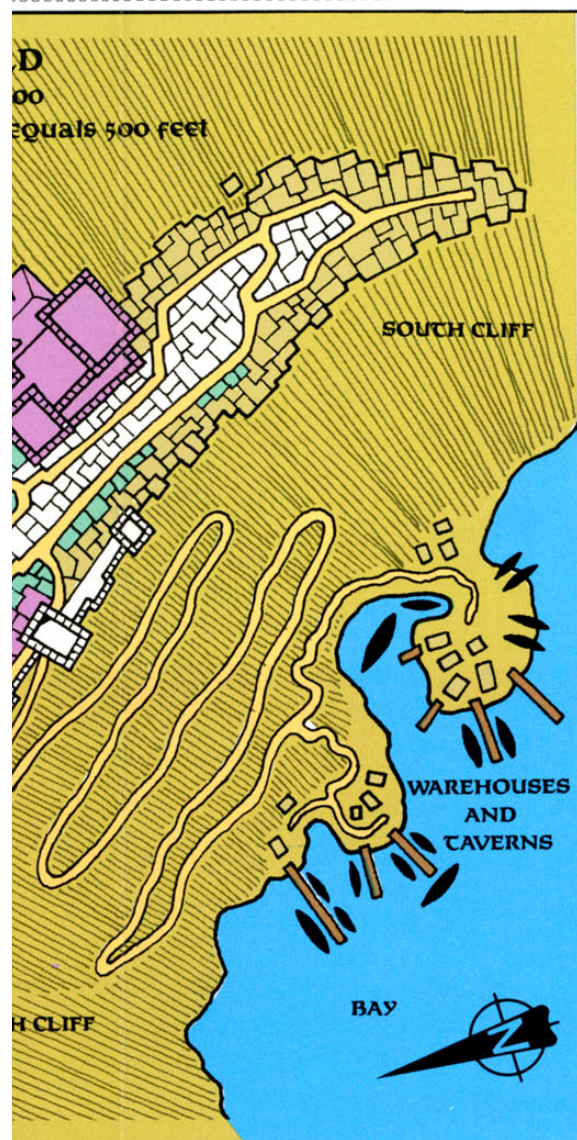
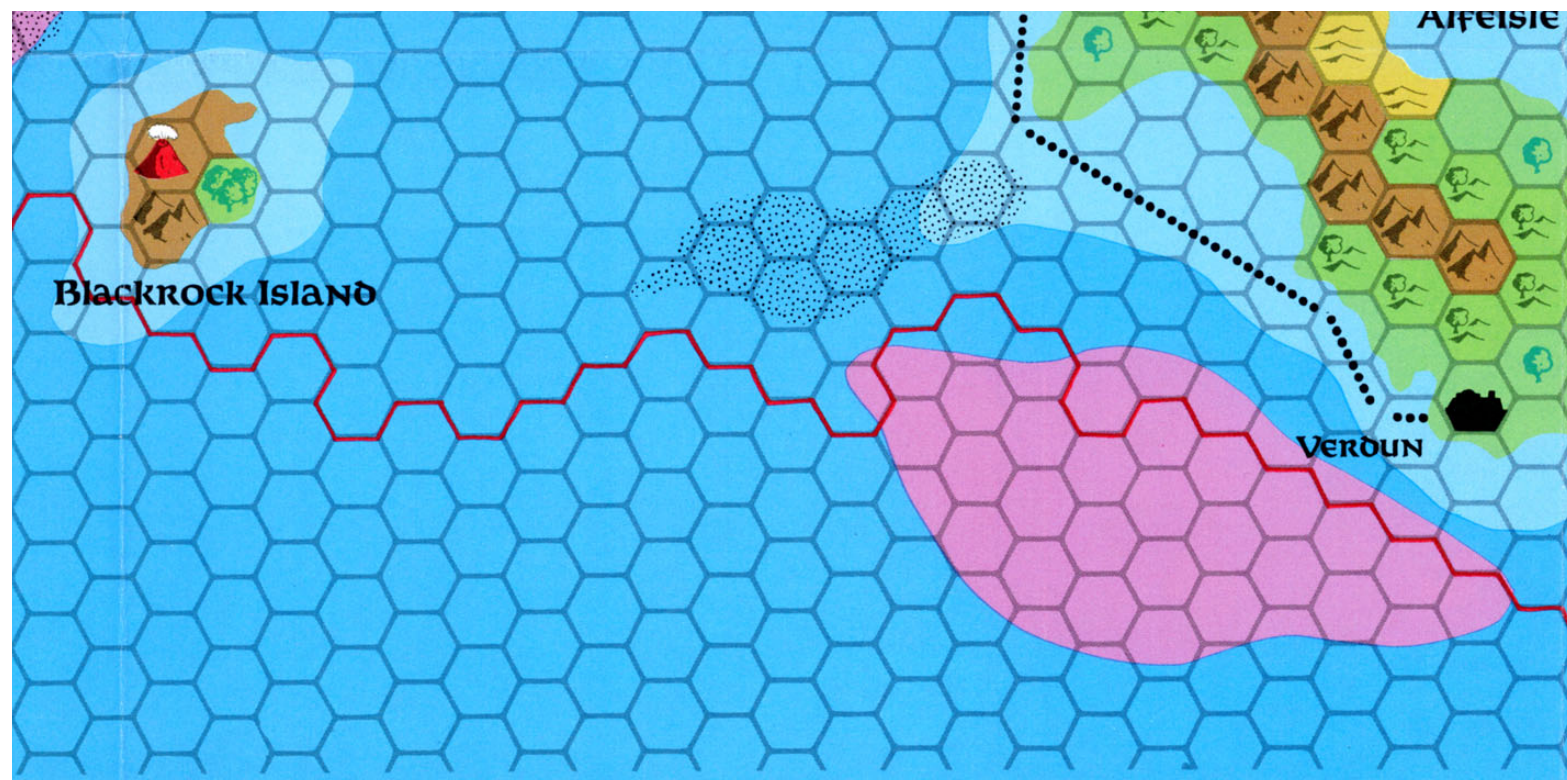
Scale: one inch equals 500



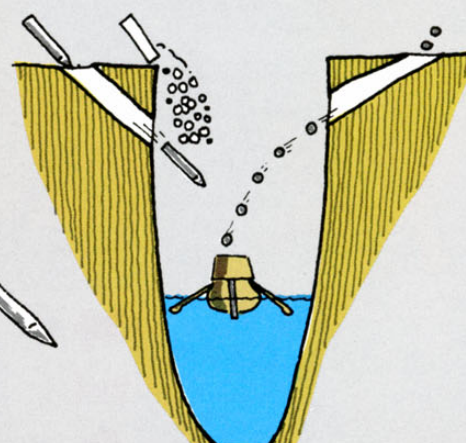
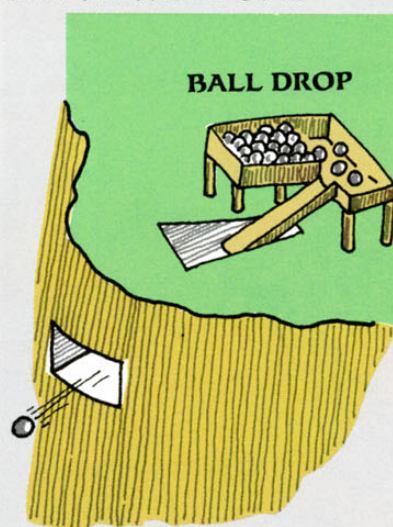
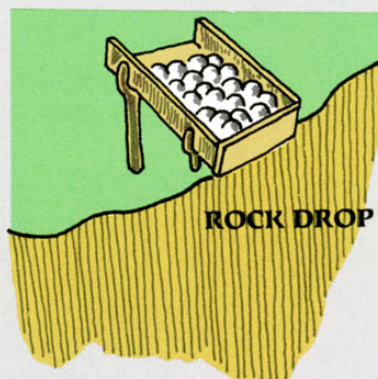
NORTH CLIFF

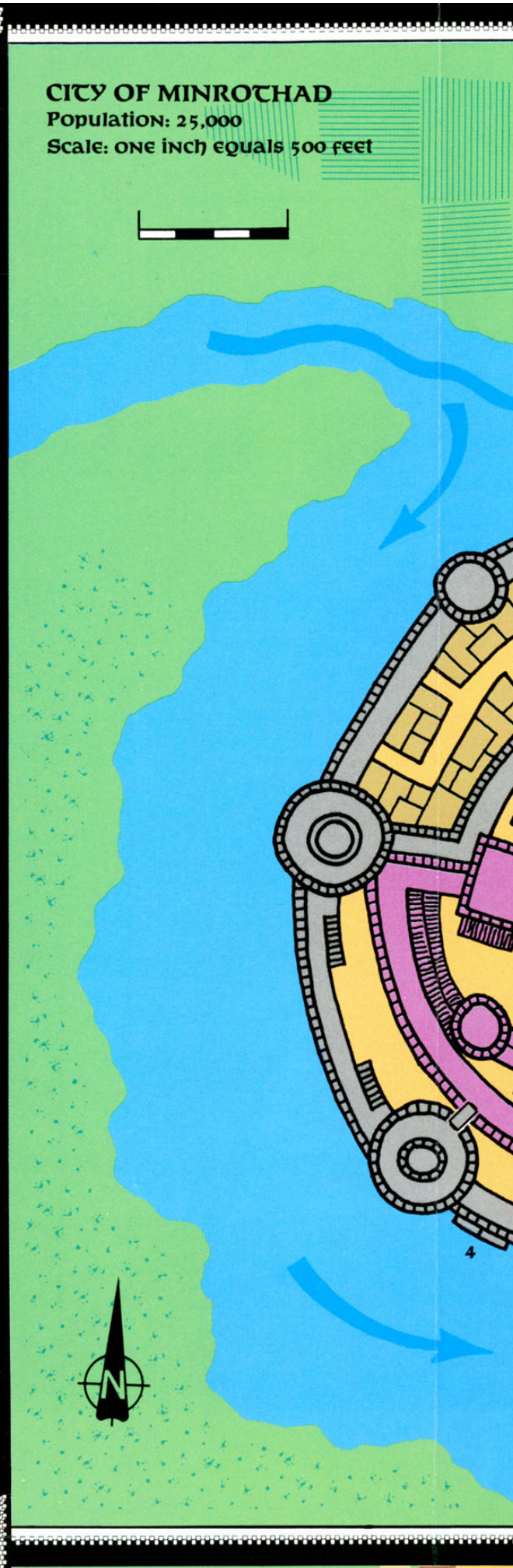
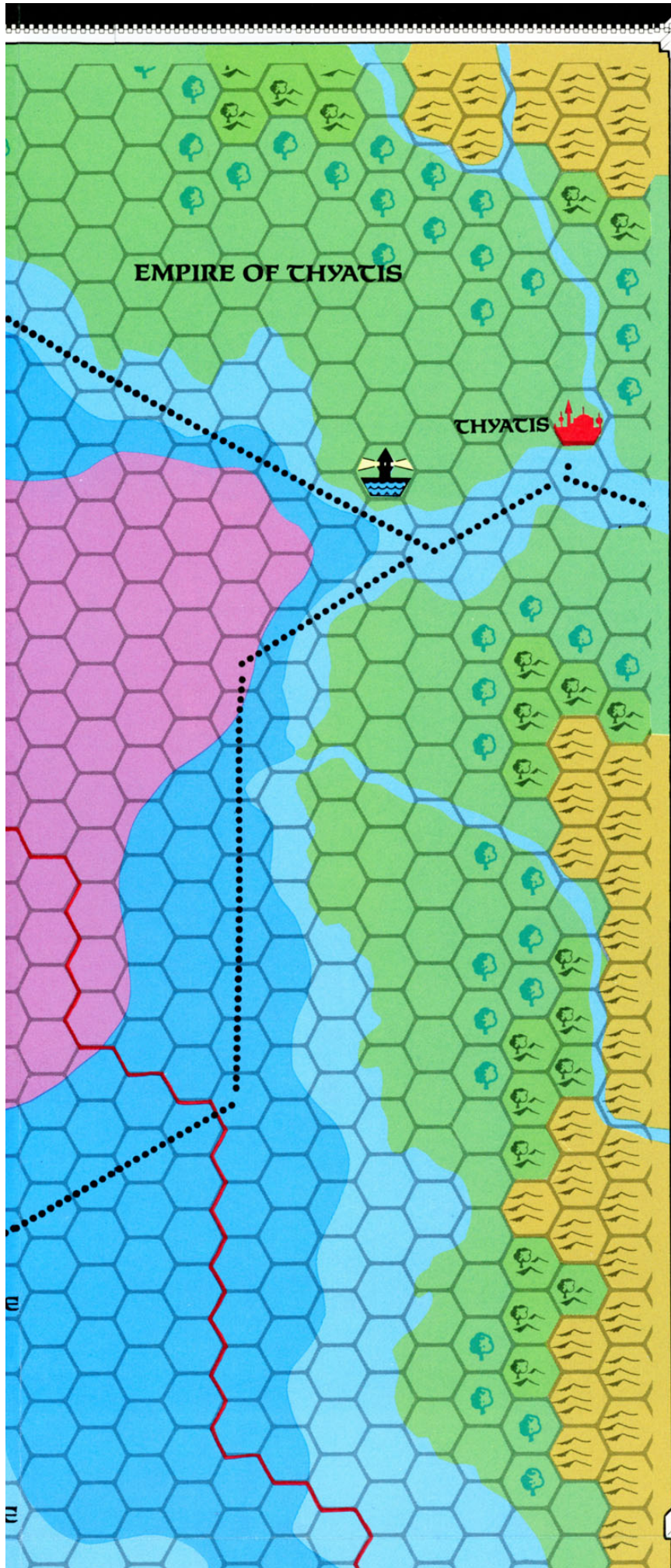
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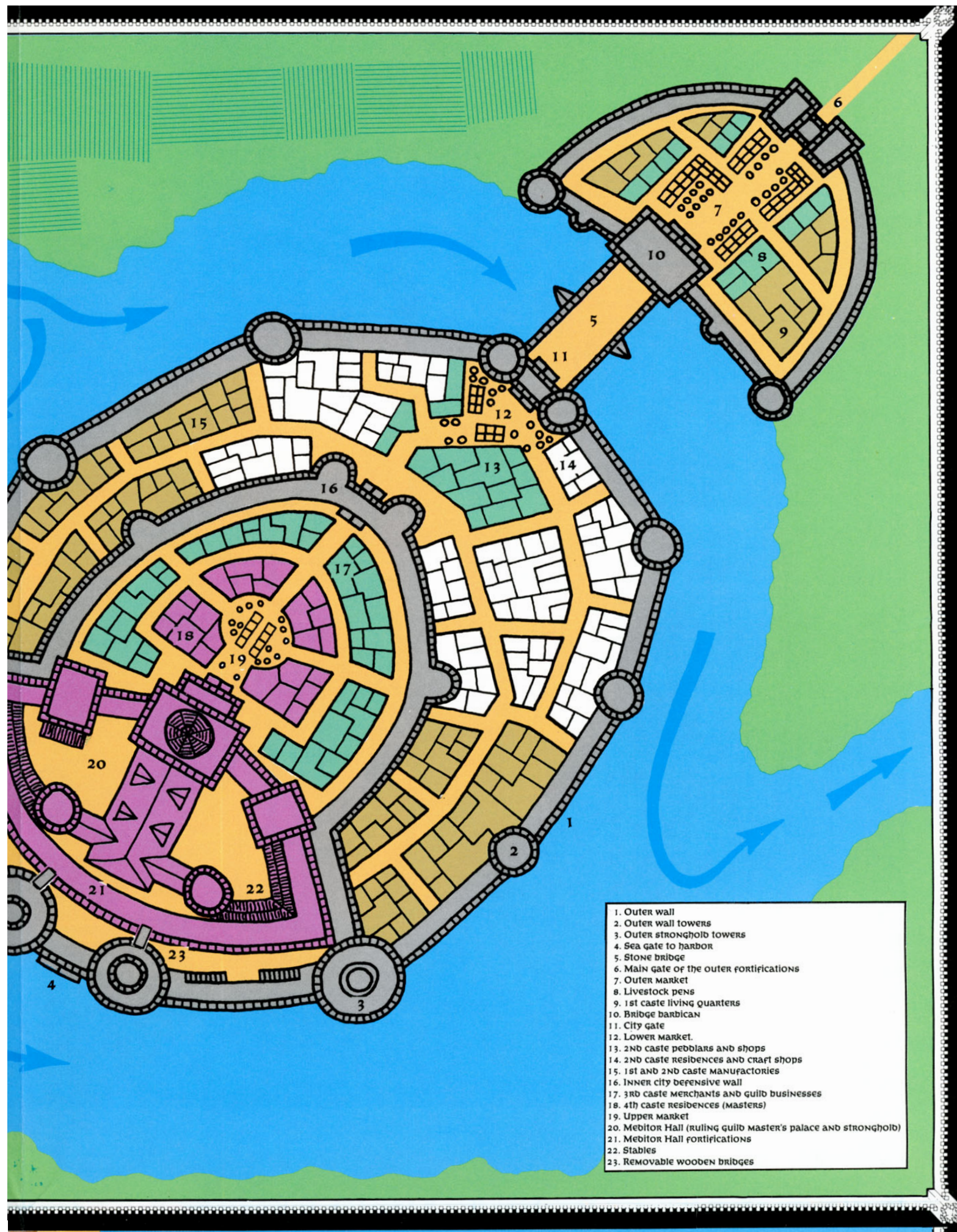
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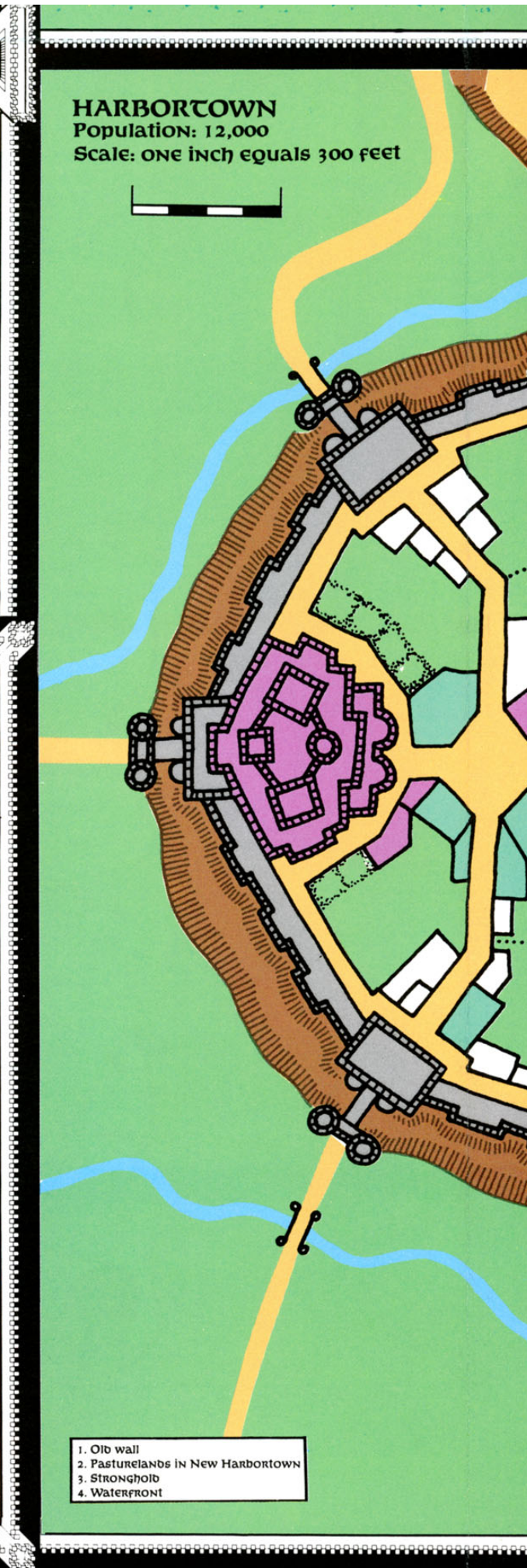
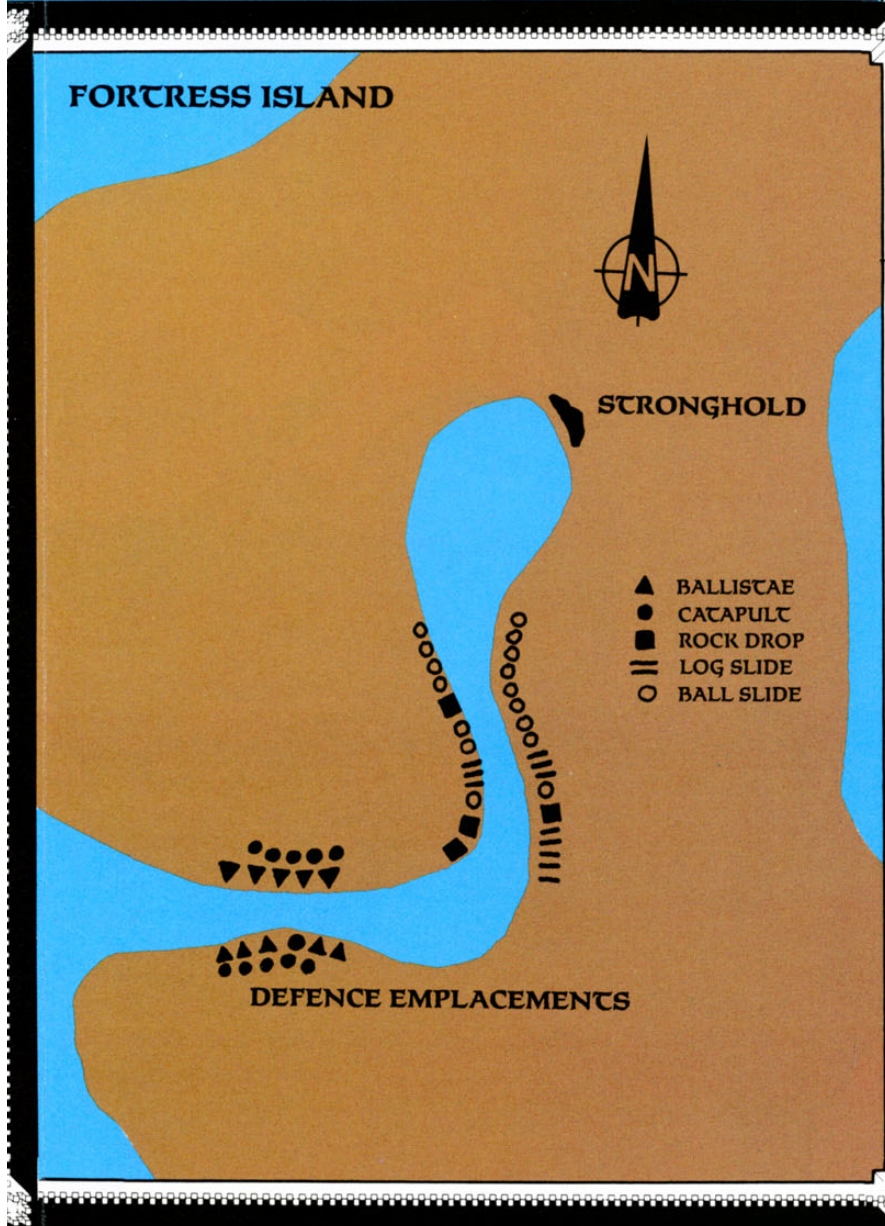
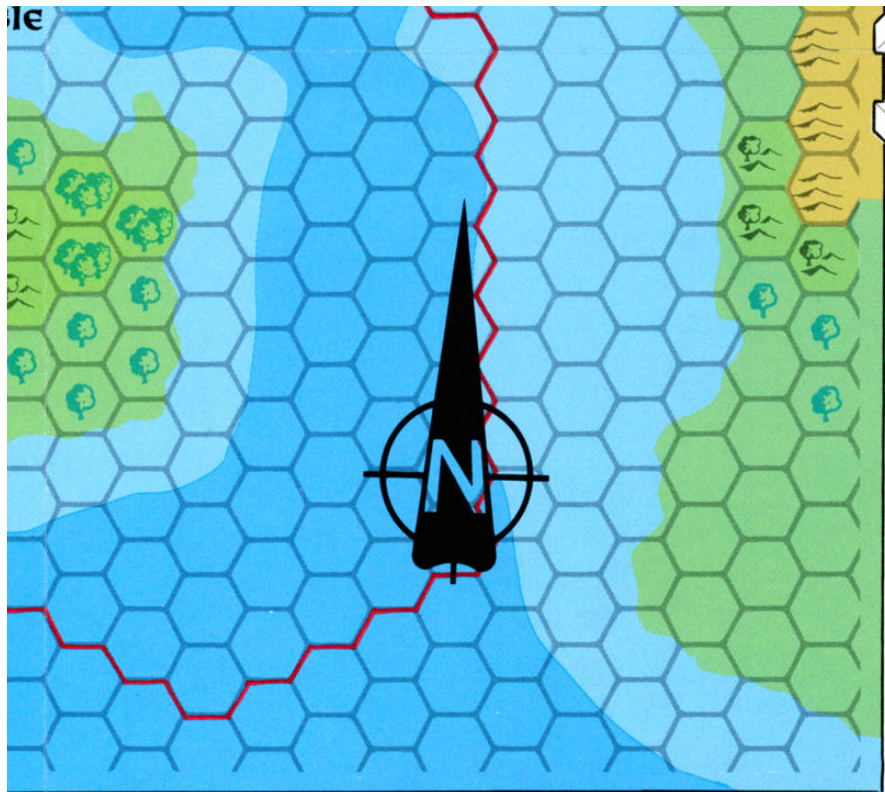
NEW DEFENSIVE WEAPONS







1. Outer wall
2. Outer wall towers
3. Outer stronghold towers
4. Sea gate to harbor
5. Stone bridge
6. Main gate of the outer fortifications
7. Outer market
8. Livestock pens
9. 1st caste living quarters
10. Bridge barbican
11. City gate
12. Lower market
13. 2nd caste peddlars and shops
14. 2nd caste residences and craft shops
15. 1st and 2nd caste manufactories
16. Inner city defensive wall
17. 3rd caste merchants and guild businesses
18. 4th caste residences (masters)
19. Upper market
20. Mebitor Hall (ruling guild master's palace and stronghold)
21. Mebitor Hall fortifications
22. Stables
23. Removable wooden bridges





- Low-caste residences, craft shops, warehouses
- Merchants, restaurants, services
- High-caste residences and shops
- Mid-caste manufactories