

Player's Secrets of

ARIYA



BIRTHRIGHT™

DOMAIN SOURCEBOOK





ariya

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Your empire once stretched beyond the horizon. Now your power barely extends beyond the city walls. Rival domains and monstrous rulers gather strength on every side, and your people have grown complacent and negligent. But take heart! In its long history, Ariya has known terrible times, yet always a wise leader has appeared to guide the realm back to strength. Are you the next such ruler?

what you need to play

This domain sourcebook is an accessory for the BIRTHRIGHT™ campaign setting. You or your Dungeon Master needs the BIRTHRIGHT boxed set, as well as the AD&D® *Player's Handbook* and *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide*. Your DM will find the *Cities of the Sun* campaign expansion helpful but not essential.

how to use this sourcebook

This book details the people, provinces, customs, and landmarks of the domain of Ariya, a Khinasi state on the southern coast of Cerilia. You may play either Prince Gerad ibn Farid el-Arrasi, the ruler described here and in *Cities of the Sun*, or a new character of your own. This book assumes Prince Gerad has abdicated and named your PC his lawful successor, but players of nonregent characters who live in or come from Ariya will also find this domain sourcebook useful.

Change anything about the following descriptions that you don't like, then pass this book along to your DM and explain what you want to keep or change about the kingdom. Point out the adventure ideas that are important to your character. Remember, if something here doesn't fit the campaign, the DM is free to reject it. The DM is also free to create a few surprises—after all, even the Prince-Paladin of Ariya doesn't know everything about his city-state.

Ariya has known far better times, but a regent with vision and leadership can restore it to glory. The key lies not in bullying or violence, but in persuasion, fairness, and hard work. Ten thousand blessings on your path!

To the Resplendent Prince-Paladin of Ariya, who is like unto the Sun!

For the indomitable Prince-Paladin illuminates Ariya the Impregnable, City of Temples, and the light of his power shines also on the Khinasi states and all realms of Cerilia! Their rulers are like the stars, extinguished in the brilliance of the Prince-Paladin's radiance!

To the Prince-Paladin, Guardian and Preserver, who is like unto the Rain Cloud!

For the state of Ariya and the true Ariyan Temple of Avani live in the esteemed Prince-Paladin's shadow, deriving from him life and protection from the fiery hatred of our enemies! The Prince-Paladin inspires poems and artwork of transcendent beauty, as the rain cloud casts off rainbows!

To the Excellent Prince-Paladin, who is like unto the Earth and the Sea!

For immeasurable and imponderable are the limitless glory and strength of the illustrious Prince-Paladin!

Your Sublime Majesty! On the splendiferous occasion of your ascension to the Thousand Jewel Throne, ordinarily the noble Vizier of Ariya (praise upon him!), one of the seven deputy viziers (wise and honorable!), or any of the sixteen deputy assistant viziers (trusted colleagues all!) would describe for you the condition of our beloved state. Sadly, these worthy officials have temporarily fallen ill after your coronation feast, where all ate goat butter that, we now believe, had turned rancid. I alone—your humble servant, Fethiye Kalhat Hawwat Nishtun Burumbini al-Hufuf, junior deputy assistant vizier—foreswore taking the butter due to a digestive ailment of a personal nature, praise Avani! So spared, I respectfully offer this concise summary, in hopes that its succinctness, meticulous accuracy, and eye for vivid detail will not go unnoticed.

your domain

You come to power as the 43rd prince-paladin of glorious Ariya, most ancient and revered of the Khinasi states. Your regency descends from el-Arrasi himself (hallowed is his name!), the Great King who freed these lands from the oppression of the Anuirean Empire.

For centuries all the Khinasi lands acknowledged Ariya's

predominance. In that age of glory, three dozen provinces revered the prince-paladin in his Tower of Morning. Every harbor on the Sea of the Golden Sun welcomed ships with the Ariyan flag, and every market took our silver *shetel* over other

lands' debased currencies, which were not worth the word of a bard.

vizier's report

But as Lord Korkud the Magnificent (may his memory

survive the ages!) declared two centuries ago, "A life concerned with mere influence is a life poorly lived!" As a child grows up and puts aside the games of childhood, so we of Ariya have in maturity loosed the reins of power. No empty outlying provinces can rival our city; why should Ariya seek to control them? "Prosperous within our invincible walls, we inspire envy in other domains," said Lord Korkud.

Ariya's wise monarchs have endorsed this sentiment through the generations, down to your predecessor, Prince Gerad ibn Farid el-Arrasi (revered and beloved!). Duty compels me to report that irresponsible citizens still speculate on Prince Gerad's motive for abruptly abdicating the throne and retreating to the wilderness last month. Fortunately, even these louts still honor Prince Gerad so far as to resist questioning him directly. I will not report their scurrilous gossip, having greater respect than they for a ruler's privacy, and restricting myself solely to unadulterated facts presented for Your Superb Majesty's benefit, without concern for reward or personal advancement.

threats and weaknesses

The fanatical, expansionist Red Kings of Aftane clearly pose the greatest threat to the state. After a decade-long rise to power, the veiled rulers to the east show no sign of having sated their ruthless ambition. A century of war with Aftane has already ravaged a hundred towns and exhausted our countryside, and now war looms again. Although rumors tell of disunity among these seven mysterious monarchs, the Red Kings may trouble Ariya greatly before they destroy themselves.

With Aftane to the north and east, Ariya needs no other enemies. To the west, however, religious extremists have subverted neighboring Zikala. The fanatical priestess Shandare, leader

of the misguided Zikalan Temple of Avani, incessantly preaches conquest and subjugation of our true and righteous Ariyan Temple. Unfortunately, the weakling Grand Vizier of Zikala, Omar ibn Tuarim el-Zisef, begins to heed her sermons.

Even the south—the Sea of the Golden Sun (Baïr el-Mehare)—holds peril for Ariya. In recent years our fleets of dhows and dhouras have suffered a resurgence of piracy, by both the notorious *Black Arrow* and the enigmatic, sinister Brotherhood of Khet. These scoundrels operate from secret bases along our coast, but their locations remain a mystery. Rumors credit the pirates with unusual powers—survivors of plundered ships say that the *Black Arrow*, to all appearances a normal ship, attacked from underwater.

Dangers on all sides; dangers, too, within. Passionate intrigues, and sometimes assassinations, historically have accompanied succession to the Thousand Jewel Throne. Conspiracy runs rampant inside the palace, the sanctum of the current and previous royal families. I warn Your Majesty that some in Prince Gerad's royal family may not greet your ascension with unalloyed joy. I cannot give names, for my informants refused to speak them. I will not speculate and thereby compromise my yearning for spotless truth.

I hesitate to mention what I perceive as a deeper trouble. Ariyan citizens have grown complacent, absorbed in our magnificent city while neglecting important matters beyond our walls. Many officials have developed a rarefied taste for soft, idle living—always excepting my superiors and colleagues, honor upon them!

This complacency also extends to the Swords of Avani, the elite troops who protect your palace. Over the generations they have assumed ever greater duties, so that now they exercise power that perhaps rivals your own. Yet they do not act to expand Ariya's dominion, but exert their energies in training our youth, maintaining civil order, and even supervising street cleaners! Worthy causes, to be sure, but what of our stagnant domain? The Swords have stubbornly resisted reforms, aided by an entrenched nobility and—forgive my candor, Your Majesty—even some priests in our venerated Ariyan Temple.

The treasury represents another source of alarm. The worthy viziers senior to me argue persuasively that lavish spending on Your Sublime Majesty's court keeps the city strong and stifles dissent among Your Majesty's envious relatives. Never

one to question those of superior wisdom and station, I agree! Yet palace luxury represents the greatest strain on our state's resources. If the esteemed prince-paladin can find a new, less expensive, more financially responsible way to assert power and quell unrest, all Ariya may benefit.

To my mind the gravest danger facing Your Majesty is our calcified, stagnant civil service, which discourages promotion of its most gifted, clear-sighted, energetic, and loyal workers. Some high officials object to bringing certain kinds of problems to Your Majesty's attention, such as the problems I have mentioned here. To gain Your Majesty's ear, concerned individuals (naming no names) sometimes attempt desperate measures.

strengths and opportunities

Ariya remains the jewel, the great power of the Khinasi states. Our economy is strong, our armies adequate for defending the impregnable city walls, if not the sparsely populated provinces beyond. The state collects an excellent income, and Your Majesty's many palaces and temples contain colossal wealth.

Ariya gains security from its long alliance with the western domain of Binsada, and we maintain cordial relations with Mesire, beyond Aftane to the east. We have powerful secret allies even in Aftane, in the provinces that once belonged to Ariya.

Your Majesty's greatest strength lies in the voice of regency: the authority and ability to speak to all the people. No one else commands this power. With advice from your predecessor, the wise Prince Gerad, Your Majesty can guide us to still greater glory. Praise on your path!

Your loyal servant,
Fethiye Kalhat Hawwat
Nishtun Burumbini al-Hufuf



The Khinasi use the Masetian Arrival (MA) calendar, which takes as its starting point the first appearance of the Masetian people on the continent of Cerilia. Dates in Haelyn's Count (HC), which begins with the cataclysm at Mount Deismaar, follow in parentheses.

ancient days

The City of Temples entered history as a simple Masetian port town, Saria. Saria stood as the first town founded in the region, and possibly the first in Cerilia. Although tradition says that the Masetian calendar dates from Saria's founding, the town was probably built in 12 MA (-503 HC), a decade after humanity's Flight from the Shadow across the primordial land bridge from

Aduria into Cerilia.

Sailors of bold and impetuous character, Masetians explored the land and founded small city-states as far west as

history

modern-day Binsada and as far east as the islands of the Ajari Deep. History records few prior inhabitants in this land; elves kept to their forests, dwarves and goblins to the mountains. On the wide, grassy savannah and rocky island coasts the Masetians found few rivals.

Across the gulf of millennia, only a few Masetian names survive. Maltos Saria, founder of a long-lived dynasty based in Saria, reigned over an empire of city-states in southern Cerilia and the islands of the southern sea. His people worshiped the ancient goddess of the sea, Masela. Maselan doctrine encouraged followers to teach the lore of the sea to whomever sought it, and so the Masetians, finest sailors of the ancient world, taught their

lore to a tribe of nomadic seafarers and mages from lands across the Sea of Dragons—the Basarji.

The two peoples shared the land and sea peacefully for centuries. Intermarriage

was not uncommon, though Basarji culture dictated that interracial couples must adopt the Basarji ways of life.

And so it came to pass that while many Basarji children had Masetian blood coursing through their veins, the number of true Masetians declined.

The War of Shadow and its climactic battle on Mount Deismaar in 515 (0 HC) proved disastrous for the Masetians. Never numerous, the Masetian people were all but annihilated by the cataclysm; the few survivors could not prolong their race beyond several dwindling generations. Many left their cities along the coast of the Baïr el-Mehare to consolidate in the southeastern islands.

As Masetian influence in Saria declined, Basarji influence increased. The wanderers began to trade their nomadic lifestyles for more permanent settlements.

Taking advantage of this transitional period, looters and bandits descended upon Saria. After a few years of their sacking, pillaging and plundering, Saria lay in ruins. In 523 (8 HC), the Basarji rallied to drive the bandits out of the region. The victorious Basarji rebuilt the city, naming it Ariya.

Though the Masetians wrote an ancient chapter in Ariya's history, symbols of their rule survive in many forms—notably in the Seal of Ariya and the prince-paladin's Scepter of Office. Their role in history also is evident in the faces of Ariya's people, many of whom favor their Masetian ancestors.

the temple of avani

As the Basarji took over the Masetians' cities, they also adjusted to the new gods who emerged from Mount Deismaar. In their new homeland the Basarji gradually moved away from sea worship, but the transition did not happen smoothly.

In 524 (9 HC), Nurida el-Deyir, a charismatic priestess of the old faith, fell afoul of bandits while traveling with a caravan between Zikala and Ariya. The bandits slew the caravan's guards, then moved to attack the unarmed travelers. Nurida, like all priests still serving "dead" gods after Deismaar, had no major spells to protect herself. Nonetheless, she stood against the bandits and tried to persuade them from murder. In the extreme circumstances she appealed to "the light of reason," and so drew the first manifestation in Basarji lands of the goddess Avani.

After incinerating the bandits, Avani enlisted Nurida to teach the virtues of reason

throughout the land. Nurida spent the next 40 years preaching first in Ariya, then throughout the region. Late in life she journeyed east to Djafra. Her activities there are unknown to Ariyans, but two Djafran provinces are named for Nurida el-Deyir.

Nurida's message found a cold reception in Ariya. Worshipers of the old gods remained stalwart, convinced that their deities' apparent death was only a test of faith; meanwhile, priests of the new gods competed for followers on the newly leveled field. Persecution of Avani's earliest disciples forced them to retreat to the unoccupied provinces, where they created huge underground cities in which to practice their faith.

Eventually, Avani's children could once again feel the warmth of her sunlight: In 760 (245 HC), the Ariyan ruler Lord Orhan converted to Avani's faith, thereby making the Temple of Avani the official creed of the city-state. Today, the abandoned underground cities remain potent sources of magic.

el-arrasi and the empire

The leading figure of Khinasi history was born in and ruled the city of Ariya, a fact which has remained a source of endless pride for Ariya's citizens. Though legends shroud

his childhood, all know that Rashid doune Arrasi was born in 1249 (734 HC), battled with his brother Eirat for the throne in 1270, and emerged as ruler of Ariya in 1271. Custom discourages the use of this heroic leader's birth name: Ariyans call him simply "el-Arrasi."

El-Arrasi's rise to fame began in 1279 (764 HC), when the Anuirean Empire ruled all the Basarji states from Ber Dairas to Djafra—all the lands, that is, save the city of Ariya, where el-Arrasi reigned as mage-king. Anuire had a tyrannical (and mad) new emperor, Alándalae, who conquered western Khourane. In response, the mage-king began uniting the Basarji to oppose Anuire. Displaying his superb grasp of diplomacy, intimidation, local custom, and logistics, el-Arrasi led a series of lightning strikes against the Empire's land and sea forces. In the two decades of war that followed, the mage-king distinguished himself as a master of guerrilla tactics, naval strategy, espionage, and realm magic.

The war reached its climax in 1299 (784 HC) when Alándalae personally led a land assault on Ariya, while his nephew Caercuillen commanded a supporting navy. Aboard the Basarji flagship *Sehare el-Resheir*, el-Arrasi defeated the navy in the Battle of Kfeira. He captured Caercuillen, then landed and attacked the imperial army in what is now called the Battle of Kings. After intense fighting, el-Arrasi marshaled the magic of his land and burned the enemy legions with explosive flames, roasting the emperor alive.



Rather than ensure the war's continuation by killing Caercuillen, el-Arrasi offered peace. The new emperor, impressed with el-Arrasi's courage and wisdom, agreed and withdrew his troops from the region. The following years of friendship between the two rulers helped heal the rift between their people.

El-Arrasi ruled the Basarji until only 1311 (796 HC), when an assassin struck. Sent by the Serpent, who feared el-Arrasi's growing influence along the Sun Coast, the assassin bypassed the Great King's formidable protections by infecting him with a magical wasting disease similar to a potent *curse*. The mage-king's magic could not stop the disease, but before it killed him, he placed himself in a *temporal stasis*. El-Arrasi's viziers laid their lord's body in a secret chamber beneath the Tower of Morning and searched for a cure. After weeks of effort, they found one—but the body had vanished. No one ever discovered who took the Great King's body, nor why, nor what became of it. If the *stasis* has not been dispelled, el-Arrasi may still live, transfixed, perpetually on the brink of death.

In reverence for their lost ruler, the Basarji renamed their region the *khir-afien el-Arrasi*, "lands under the protection of el-Arrasi." In time this phrase became elided into *Khinasi*.

the golden age

The century that began with el-Arrasi's victory in the Battle of Kings, now retrospectively called the Golden Age by Ariyan scholars, seemed no more golden at the time than any age does. Without the leadership of the Great King, the Basarji Federation survived only a few years beyond him. Yet Ariya emerged from the breakup with 11 provinces and a commanding prestige everywhere on the Sun Coast. For five generations it led the other *Khinasi* states through influence, if not authority.

Despite Ariya's influence abroad, however, the state faced ugly problems within. The contest for the throne between el-Arrasi and his

brother had created resentful feelings among Eirat's heirs and set an unfortunate precedent: The death of each ruler sparked a fierce internal succession war, not only with Eirat's descendants but also among

the rightful heir's siblings. To remove some of the competition, one winner marked his victory by sitting on the Thousand Jewel Throne and watching as his brothers and sisters were publicly strangled. To Ariya's shame, this barbaric act became tradition.

Outside the palace, the city-state found itself beset by feuds between *geirhou*, clan-like extended families who each pursue a single craft or trade. The *geirhou* jealously guarded their occupational secrets and believed they had a traditional right to monopolize their chosen occupation. Midnight turf wars between rival bands of cobblers or glassblowers destroyed whole neighborhoods.

These uncivilized practices came to an end in 1495 (980 HC) with the ascension of Fatima bint el-Arrasi. Before taking up the scepter of rule, Fatima served with Ariya's paladins, the Swords of Avani. Rather than destroy her many siblings, she confined them to house arrest in the royal palace, beginning a tradition that survives to this day.

Even as ruler, the Lady Fatima maintained her service to the Temple of Avani. However, when she rose to become its lady high matriarch (supreme authority), she claimed the office not as a paladin but as regent of Ariya, calling herself "lady-princess." This marked the beginning of theocracy in Ariya. Subsequent rulers also were priests or paladins of Avani, at least in name, and maintained authority over both temporal and spiritual domains.

Fatima ended the *geirhou* battles by granting monopolies to one family in each trade. Rival families left the city and moved to new settlements in the countryside. There they founded villages and maintained their crafts. This isolationism explains why the rare traveler in Ariya's remote provinces may find that all residents in one village are toothless but wear boots of stunning craftsmanship, whereas residents of a neighboring village may sport perfect teeth but go barefoot.

The Lady Fatima faced her first crisis in 1497 (982 HC), when adjacent Aftane invaded and seized Ariya's four northern provinces. Her counterstrike ended in disaster, for in the century since el-Arrasi's death Ariya's army had grown incompetent. Fatima responded by exiling all commissioned officers and founding a new army, led by her fellow paladins in the Swords of Avani. After two years of preparation, the Swords tried again to reconquer the northern provinces. Though Aftane's court mage threw them back with overwhelming power, the Swords made a much better showing than they had before. Earning the respect of the citizens, and drawing on a strong power base in the Temple of Avani, the Swords became the chief military and police force on land and sea throughout the domain.

the long fall

The Swords of Avani have served with honor for five centuries. They have, however, had to open their ranks to non-paladin fighters in order to maintain a sufficient military presence throughout the domain. In 1576 (1061 HC), jurisdiction over the Swords transferred from the Temple of Avani to the state government (primarily a technical distinction, as the Prince of Ariya heads both institutions). At that time, the Swords established a policy that officers and cavalry members must be paladins of Avani, but infantry men and members of the Golden Navy no longer had to practice such assiduous discipline.

For too many years, the Swords were engaged in a tug-of-war with Aftane over the four provinces seized during Fatima's reign. The Swords launched repeated campaigns to retake the lands; one hundred years ago they finally won. Unfortunately, the victory occurred during the rule of Selima I—the first of the Nine Bad Sultans.

Starting in 1938 (1423 HC), the once-powerful Ariya declined under a century-long sequence of poor rulers. The policy of house arrest for a ruler's siblings, though motivated by kindness, produced generations of royal families who were to varying degrees insane. Nine madmen, one after another, drained the treasury, announced cruel or senseless policies, and neglected outlying villages. Though the title of "sultan" has never been used officially for the ruler of Ariya, these regents are nonetheless known today as the Nine Bad Sultans—historians agree that such incompetent regents do not deserve the honorable title "prince."

When the Swords of Avani reconquered Ariya's lost provinces, Selima refused to release enough money from the treasury to properly administer them. Aftane, taking advantage of Selima's foolishness, easily recaptured the lands; the Swords were then ordered on another mission. And so it continued for nearly a century: the Swords would conquer, a few years later Aftane reconquered. Historians now refer to the four provinces as "the ricochet lands," because their allegiance bounced back and forth between states.

To many, the fruitless fighting over the ricochet lands serves as just one symbol of Ariya's fall from glory during the sultans' reign. Under Abdulaziz IV, the mismanagement culminated in the disastrous Plague Year of

1965 (1450 HC). Fearing that priests in Aftane would curse him, Abdulaziz called every priest and healer in the land to the Tower of Morning. While they stood by his bedchamber uselessly, smallpox ravaged the countryside, followed by a plague of locusts and—the next year—an earthquake. Scholars have sought a magical explanation for these catastrophes, but determined their cause as mundane bad luck. Regardless, Abdulaziz's mismanagement plunged the domain into chaos. Rescue came with his successor, Prince Sehinsah the Wise, who painstakingly rebuilt the state and replenished its treasury.

continuing problems

Ariya seems as far away as ever from its Golden Age. The Red Kings of Aftane, seven anonymous warriors named for the red veils they wear, have spent a decade achieving joint rule of Aftane. Now they show every sign of renewing the age-old war with Ariya.

Zikala's Exalted High Priestess Shandare (*FKb; Pr9, Avani; Ba, major, 39*) wields tremendous influence over the weak young Grand Vizier Omar ibn Tuarim el-Zisef (*MKb; W4; An, major, 36*). Shandare has pledged to bring the Zikalan Temple of Avani into all surrounding lands, by word or by sword.

To the south, piracy plagues the state. Although Prince Gerad personally killed the self-styled "pirate king" Bédize the Soulless over a decade ago, the pirate's daughter, Sari, has appeared off the Ariyan coast to begin a new wave of piracy.

Ariya has endured disasters, but to date has always recovered through wise rulership. Still, it has never regained that Golden Age of influence, seven centuries past. All eyes now turn with hope to the new regent.

geography

Ariya lies at the heart of the Plains region of the Khinasi states, a vast steppe where flat grassy plains alternate with rolling grassy plains, with occasional patches of rocky plains (flat or rolling) for variety. Pioneers settled this region only in the last few centuries—its hot, arid climate and poor soil make farming hard. The region lacks mineral and timber resources as well.

But where farmers and miners struggle, sailors find the Baïr el-Mehare (Sea of the Golden Sun) ideal. Called the Suidemiëre (Great Sea of the South) in Anuire, it features clear and placid waters, a smooth coast free of reef or rock, and prevailing north breezes which keep the shore windward. Small wonder that the Khinasi have always been seafarers.

The city of Ariya serves as the only good port on this stretch of coast, but it is a fine port indeed—deep, sheltered, and easily accessible. In fact, the port is so easy to enter that the city has blocked it with a marble seawall. The iron gates, 500 feet long and protected from corrosion by minor enchantments, usually stand open. However, when the alarm gong sounds from the Tower of Morning, port workers or soldiers can slide the gates closed in one minute.

plants and animals

Once herds of oryx and red antelope roamed the dry savannah, preyed on by cougars, packs of hunting dogs, and vultures. Today, little wildlife remains except hares, partridges and other game birds, and monitor lizards. Larger animals have moved west to Binsada or north to the Tarvan Wastes, unable to compete with gigantic herds of cattle.

Ariyans live on beef, and the Ariyan economy rides on the backs of cattle—brown short-horned steers of large size and colossal stupidity. The herds roam free, tended by ranchers on horseback.

These “free ranchers” belong to five extended families, the so-called Cattle Dynasties, who compete fiercely for territory. Through their struggles to gain the best grazing land,

the dynasties create unrest in the countryside and divert citizens from watching the borders.

The savannah also supports herds of wild horses, beautiful lightly built animals with bay, chestnut, or brown coats. Ariyans capture and domesticate these horses, which are admired across Cerilia for stamina, speed, and intelligence. Each spring,

the land and the city

by law, a horse breeder must donate the finest animal in his herd to the prince-paladin. The royal herd, finest in the Khinasi states and perhaps in all Cerilia, is maintained in the Equinary, a huge corral east of the city of Ariya.

eirat the troublesome

Ordinary sea and shore life presents little threat in Ariya. On the long beaches, travelers can see sand goanna lizards, pelicans, black-winged gulls, frogs, and turtles. In the ocean, salmon abound, as well as bluefin tuna, huge colonies of shellfish (preyed on by mako sharks), blue-ringed octopi, and poisonous crayfish. Fishermen sight a kraken every decade or so, but the main threat to ocean travel is seldom mentioned, for it was unintentionally created by el-Arrasi himself.

When el-Arrasi claimed leadership of the Basarji Federation seven centuries ago, the Great King's younger brother, the mage Eirat, disputed his claim. The two brothers met in a sorcerers' duel during which el-Arrasi defeated Eirat. Rather than kill his brother, el-Arrasi transformed him into a turtle and freed him in the ocean, decreeing that no Basarji could kill the turtle. (This sibling rivalry helped justify later rulers' practice of destroying all relatives upon ascending to the throne.)

In the seven centuries after el-Arrasi's death, Eirat fed on fish and then on sailors, always growing ever larger. Now he has become enormous—30 feet from snout to spiny tail—and mad with loneliness. Desperate for human contact, he occasionally assaults ships and threatens to capsize them unless their crews pay him a tribute of fish.

The Khinasi, still respectful of the Great King's edict, do not attack Eirat. In fact, sailors find the whole subject of Eirat as troublesome as the turtle himself, and speak of him rarely. Only the ruler of Ariya has the authority to defy el-Arrasi's command and attack



Eirat, yet prince-paladins have lived out long reigns without ever having to deal with the Troublesome One.

Eirat the Troublesome (Dragon Turtle): AC 0, MV 3 (Sw 9); HD 12; hp 72; THAC0 9; #AT 3; Dmg 2d6/2d6/4d8; SA capsize ships; SZ G (30' diameter shell); ML fanatic (17); Int 18; AL NE; XP 8,000.

Notes: Capsizes ships under 20' 95% of the time, 20-60' 50%, 60+' 20%; ships not capsized are damaged but seaworthy. Bloodline: Ba, great, 38. Blood abilities: Alertness, detect illusion, elemental control, long life (major).

Eirat is a 12-HD dragon turtle, except that he has an Intelligence of 18 and no breath weapon. El-Arrasi marked Eirat's shell with gold calligraphic letters reading "traitor," which are still visible.

Eirat cannot cast spells in turtle form, but he can communicate telepathically. Before assaulting a ship, he asks if a mage is aboard. Eirat seeks to regain his human form, then take his late brother's throne and gain terrible revenge on all the Khinasi.

roads and routes

Ariyan roads are made of dirt, wide and solidly packed from centuries of carts and caravans. Each year half a dozen caravans travel the Coast Road east or west; another three or four head up the North Road to Shoufal during those periods when control of the northern provinces seesaws back to Ariya. Currently those provinces belong to Aftane.

Free ranchers, royal couriers, and the occasional army use the road, but most travelers are farmers. Thousands of carts bring wheat, vegetables, and livestock from adjacent provinces to feed the hungry city of Ariya. City dwellers, however, traverse these roads little. Ariyans travel by sea when they travel at all, and few ever leave the city.

provincial vs. city life

Ariya's provincial towns and villages have never played important roles in the state's culture or history. Now, ravaged by frequent wars with Aftane, settlements in the outlying provinces (including Kouzir) have practically vanished. The Cattle Dynasties occupy the ruined huts on their frequent drives across the savannah, having paid protection to Aftane's forces for safe passage.

Past rulers treated the loss of the provinces as trivial, but Prince Gerad became alarmed when, late in his reign, the Red Kings of Aftane asserted control in all but name over Assarif, Azédas, and Djef el-Kadir. The sparse populations remaining in these eastern provinces pay their taxes as usual, but the payments unfailingly get "stolen by bandits" and find their way to Aftane. Prince Gerad intended to reassert Ariya's authority in these provinces, but he abdicated for mysterious reasons before carrying out his plans.

Though poorer and less educated than citizens in the city, provincial residents live, think, and worship much like their urban counterparts. No cultural gulf separates them. However, urban Ariyans seldom think at all of the rural people. In general, the urbane sophisticates of the city think of anyone who lives outside the City of Temples as unlettered, unimaginative, and boring. Ariya's neglect of the provinces has caused bitterness among the remaining farmers and villagers. They view the city of Ariya as a den of irresponsible (true), immoral (false), unclean (totally false) spendthrifts (very true).

Thousands of refugees from plundered farmsteads have fled to the Magnificent City, where they have erected crude dwellings outside the city's pristine white walls. In Ariya's loud and crowded bazaars, where merchants sell pots and plums, glasswork and horses, the refugees beg copper coins. Seeking work, they invade the bathhouse steam rooms where sweating merchants discuss business.

Even in the

dozens of stately temples and shrines to Avani, refugee mothers with babes in arms beseech worshipers on their way to prayer.

These refugees soon learn the truth and falsehood of their views about the Magnificent City and its citizens. Festivals every few days confirm the fixed provincial belief that city dwellers are improvident and frivolous—although every festival celebrates some saintly figure from temple history, worthy institutions like parenthood, or a virtue such as familial loyalty, charity to the sick, or hospitality. Try as they might, refugees see no one drink liquor or become intoxicated, and contact between men and women stays rigorously innocent. Piety is extraordinary and universal.

Above all, the refugees see instantly that the city is not unclean. No city in Cerilia has fresher paint on its buildings. Each winding street in the Old City, each wide avenue in the New City, each pavilion in the Lord's City, is spotless. The three dumps outside the walls hardly deserve the name, for civil servants cover the trash heaps with fresh soil daily. Every citizen bathes as often as feasible. Cleanliness is a cardinal virtue in most temples of Avani, but in Ariya cleanliness has transcended mere virtue to achieve the status of a near-fetish.

the tower of morning

Built by el-Arrasi shortly after his rise to power, the royal citadel earned the name Tower of Morning for its perfect view of summer sunrises. The Great King built a companion Tower of Evening in western Binsada, but after the breakup of the Basarji Federation the tower stood empty. Now it survives as a haunted ruin beside the monster-infested Harrowmarsh.

The Tower of Morning stands sentinel at the city's harbor. In times past it served mainly as a stately, impressive monument to Ariya's greatness. Now, as pirates grow bolder and other states consider aggression by sea as well as by land, the tower's defensive function grows more important—hence the presence of army barracks nearby.

The tower is the nexus of a large complex of law courts, armories, spacious guest houses, servants' quarters, and the Golden Menagerie—a collection of exotic live animals from all over Cerilia. Just outside the palace complex sits beautiful Regent's Park, with an enormous library, a temple, a fountain, and a statue of el-Arrasi. The elite Two Hundred Families, Ariyans of high status, gather here four times a year to mingle with ambassadors of foreign states and hear the prince-paladin speak on the condition of the domain.

The tower's interior provides a brilliant example of Khinasi architecture, lavish yet tasteful. Its

lovely Court of Royal Virtue features a pool stocked with exotic carp, bred through the centuries for beautiful scale patterns or interesting eye deformities. The carp live very long lives, and the death of any one of the carp signals change for Ariya. One carp in particular, unimaginatively called "Old Man Carp," was bred by el-Arrasi himself. Legends say that if Old Man Carp dies, Ariya itself will undergo tumultuous change.

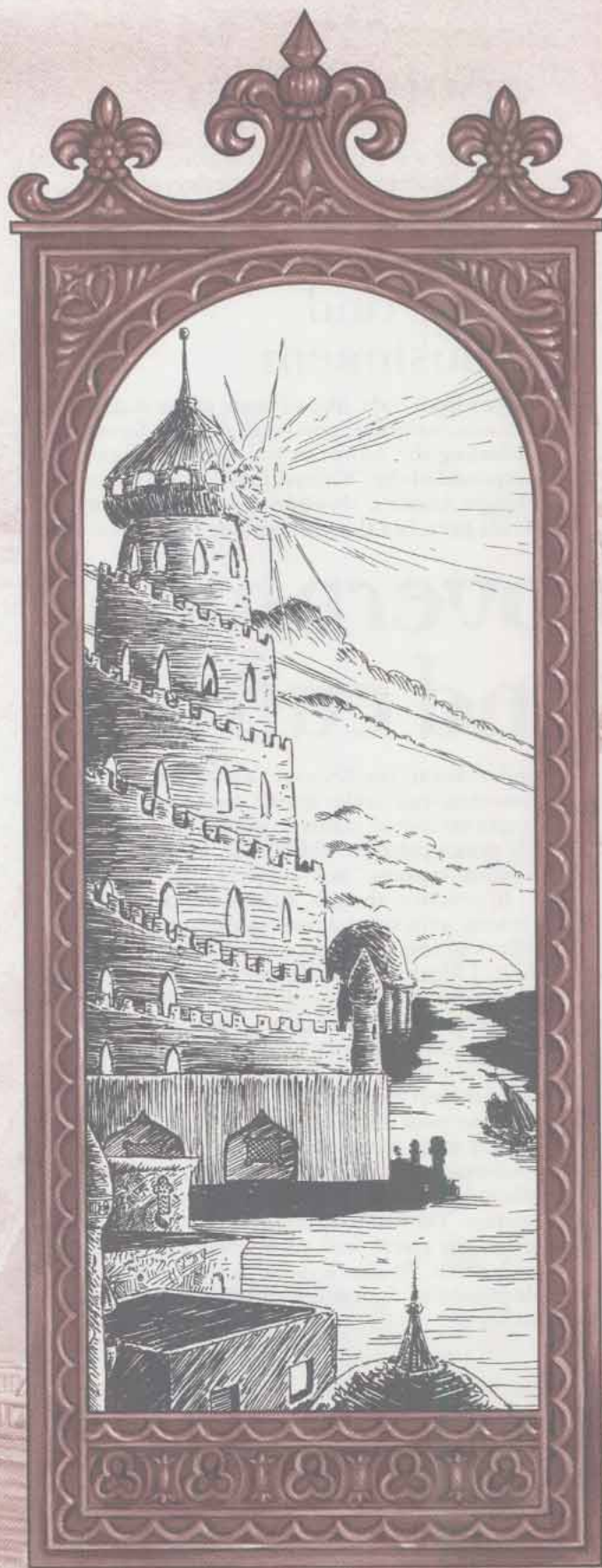
The House of Silent Servants: The regent's living quarters take this name because, by unbreakable custom, no servant may speak to one of the royal family unless the family member speaks first.

The house, actually a complex of four floors atop the Tower of Morning, boasts opulent furnishings: red velvet divans, walls decked in glass globes, crystal chandeliers, sweeping staircases with gold balusters, and vases filled with peacock feathers. Rooms smell of cinnamon and sweet incense, and servants wave ostrich-plume fans to circulate the air. Musicians quietly pluck 30-string zithers or strum a short-necked lute called the *oud*. Palace eunuchs stand guard, ministering to the royal family's every need. Few other ruling houses in Cerilia enjoy such luxury.

In marked contrast to the richness of the house's other rooms, the regent's own chamber seems understated. The paladins who rule Ariya generally have no taste for luxury, finding truer comfort in devotion to Avani.

The Chamber of Whispers: Deep below the House of Silent Servants, deeper than the palace dungeons, past the oubliettes and treasure rooms, down nine guarded flights of stairs and past three doors (the first of steel, the second onyx, the third obsidian) lies the prince-paladin's most secret room. Beneath an unmarked obsidian dome 20 feet across, the regent sits in total silence. After 15 minutes, a gentle breeze rises, and he begins to hear things: snatches of conversation in tea houses, distant cries of merchants in the bazaars, gossip around a village well. In the Chamber of Whispers, the regent hears the voices of his domain.

The listener cannot control what he hears; he can follow no more than a few moments of a given conversation before the whispers move elsewhere. At the regent's invitation, others may accompany him to the chamber, which holds up to eight people. All must remain absolutely silent, or the whispers fade.



government

Ariya is a theocracy, meaning that political power resides with the Ariyan Temple of Avani and its priests. The prince-paladin, highest official in both civic and temple matters, is presumed to rule by the authority of Avani.

crime and punishment

Ariya's legal code, like so many of the state's institutions, originates with el-Arrasi. Soon after defeating the Anuirean Empire, the Great King propounded the "Khinasi Law," a civil code modeled on Anuire's. However, because the Temple of Avani preaches that all thinking beings are equal

government and culture

under Avani, the Khinasi Law differs from most Anuirean legal codes in one important respect: It grants no special status to nobles, priests, or even the prince-paladin. Additionally, the law considers Ariyans "citizens," not "subjects."

In practice, though, Ariya's rich and powerful citizens gain special treatment through the twin pillars of the Khinasi Law: scripture and precedent. Judges rule based on their interpretations of temple teachings and on the rulings of previous judges in similar cases. The rich can afford lawyers intimately familiar with both bodies of lore; in effect, the wealthy buy examples that absolve their crimes.

Many poor Ariyans cannot afford lawyers, and so they mete out private justice in duels, lengthy vendettas, and occasional lynch mobs. For lesser offenses, injured parties may resort to a cursing contest. They adjourn to a public bazaar, stand ten paces apart, and alternately hurl insults at each other. Bystanders judge the creativity and eloquence of the insults and declare a winner by acclaim.

lawmaking and enforcement

The prince-paladin initiates laws in both secular and temple matters. Usually these take the form of highly specific rulings on individual cases brought to him by priests or the palace's large staff of viziers.

Others in Ariya exercise power of their own. Provincial governors, called *beys*, may enact laws in their territories subject to the prince's approval. The Swords of Avani and the Golden Navy hold separate courts-martial for crimes committed by soldiers or sailors. The Ariyan Temple holds annual councils of the highest-ranking priests. In closed chambers they formulate temple laws, then present them to the regent for approval.

Making a law and enforcing it are entirely separate matters in Ariya. Civil servants and the priesthood often place their own interests ahead of the public good. If a new law restricts those interests, they can avoid obeying it by a pretense of ignorance of the law, confusion over its fine details, or failure to see instances of violation. One tactic involves "tabling" a law while a select committee investigates possible conflicts with scripture or precedent. Laws have remained tabled for generations.

transport and communications

Within the city, ordinary citizens travel on foot or pay a few coppers to ride in "share-carts," ox-drawn carts that travel fixed routes around the city. Rich citizens ride horses, carriages, or even palanquins. Each horse owner must pay a tax that funds the city's street cleaners.

Travelers leaving Ariya go by sea when possible. Overland, caravans of 200 to 600 pack animals (usually mules, horses, and oxen) travel 15 to 20 miles a day. To encourage trade, past rulers of the Khinasi states have built large shelters called *caravanserais* all along the road, one or two days' travel apart. Each *caravanserai* is an open-air fortress with wells, watering troughs, a temple, stables, and living quarters

(often in the stables). Some *caravanserais* near Ariya even have bathhouses and shops. Guards and workers live in or near each *caravanserai*; in return for their protection

and maintenance, they are exempt from taxation. In times past, large towns grew around some caravanserais, but almost all of these towns are now ruins.

The Prince's Exalted Couriers carry diplomatic messages and urgent warnings between Ariya and foreign capitals. They ride in gilded saddles on the fastest horses in Khinasi. If a rider bears good news, he wears a royal blue sash; if he bears bad news, he wears a black sash.

armies

Primarily a sea power now, Ariya commands the impressive Golden Navy. The navy's main force consists of six zebecs (large three-masted war vessels with lateen sails, fighting crews of 200 to 250 sailors, and catapults and light artillery). The navy also uses eight dhouras (two-masted coastal cargo vessels that carry 100 to 200 tons of goods and a crew of 30 to 80) and four small, sharp-bowed dhows (for scouting and diplomatic missions).

Most of these ships come from the city's shipyards, but the state purchased several from the matchless shipwrights of Suiriene, the island kingdom to the east. The dhows, one zebec, and one dhoura are in port at any given time, while the rest patrol the Sun Coast. [For sea movement rules, see the BIRTHRIGHT Cities of the Sun campaign expansion.]

The Swords of Avani form all six army units. They are stationed in the city of Ariya, in barracks near the Tower of Morning. Almost all soldiers in the four medium cavalry units (Horse Companies One through Four) and two infantry units (Footman Companies One and Two) are human, and all are male except the 200 women of Horse Company Three.

The companies drill regularly to maintain battle readiness, emphasizing defensive and siege tactics suited to protection of the city. Unit captains speak privately of the futility of expansion into new provinces: "The Red Kings will just take them back again."

Instead of conquest, the Swords concentrate on community service: police duties, sport programs for children, and missions that provide food and shelter to the city's poor. They do a fine job, and crime and poverty in Ariya are minor problems. Still, the Red Kings grow in strength along the northern border.

the economy

Ariya exports leather, beef, and some dairy products to Binsada, Mesire, Zikala, and the island states to the east. Recently, caravan trade to the west halted because of raids by minions of the

Sphinx. Sea trade has so far compensated for the lost overland trade.

As a strong manufacturing center, Ariya imports raw materials such as ore, timber, and raw silk from many sources. Rich citizens prize Zikalan pottery and Djafran hardwoods.

Production

Most farmers serve as vassals of the noble family who owns their land, though farmers in lawless outlying provinces are independent pioneers. Nearly all other arts, crafts, and trades in Ariyan society are monopolized by the *geirhou*. Less stringent than guilds, Ariyan *geirhou* nonetheless achieve the highest skill and quality in the western plains.

A *geirhou* comprises an extended family (which can grow quite large) that raises its children to continue its chosen occupation, instructing them in trade secrets and sometimes even reshaping the children physically. For instance, a childhood accident in ancient Ariya left Sokollu Feridun with a concave fingernail that could hold liquid ink. He developed a unique finger-painting calligraphic technique which became so influential that he founded the Feridun *geirhou* of painters, all of whom had to be disfigured as children or youths in order to finger-paint in his style.

Not all *geirhou* hold a monopoly. In active trades, especially clothing and transport, rival families vie constantly for control.

Coinage

Each Khinasi city-state coins its own money, and merchants trust native coins far above those of other states. The silver *shetel* of Ariya has wider acceptance than some, perhaps because it depicts el-Arrasi. But the farther one travels from Ariya, the less reputable the *shetel* becomes. Depending on currency and bargaining skill, prices vary between 60% and 150% of the values given in the *Player's Handbook*.

culture

Ariya prizes its sophisticated and widespread culture, unmatched in the Khinasi states. Ariyan scholars have gained renown throughout Cerilia for their advances in astrology, mathematics, and medicine. The city's great thinkers have produced many oft-quoted treatises on philosophy. And centuries of fine chefs have developed Ariya's delicious cuisine: a hundred lavishly spiced dishes of beef and lamb, wheat, rice, and eggplant—cooked with garlic and olive oil, and served with fresh fruit (dates, grapes, pomegranates, some citrus), honey, and yogurt.

ways of life

The Khinasi culture stresses piety, equality, family, wisdom, courtesy, honor, grace, eloquence, and artistic accomplishment. Each state ranks these somewhat differently; in Ariya, piety ranks as the cardinal virtue. Ariyans call it *sayim*, using a word that in other Khinasi states means "status" or "face." Displaying their deep connection to Avani, Ariyans sprinkle their everyday speech with invocations such as "the Lady willing" or "but only the goddess knows." The law forbids blasphemy, and taking a god's name in vain is shocking rudeness.

Sayim in Ariya sometimes also means the same things it does elsewhere in the Khinasi lands: the achievement of honorable status through virtue. Acts that injure *sayim*, such as oathbreaking, poor hospitality, or gross displays of anger, may provoke the offender to admit his disgrace in public. "I am without face," the shamed person says, then leaves his home and possessions to undertake a voluntary exile of months or years.

The previous ruler of Ariya, Prince Gerad, made such an admission at the end of his reign. Despite entreaties from his viziers and many citizens, he abdicated the throne and went into solitary exile. A great mystery trailed after him: How had he lost face? No one knew (or admitted knowing) the cause. Khinasi consider inquiry into such details unspeakably rude, so the mystery remains.

Love and marriage: Most marriages are arranged between patriarchs or matriarchs of two families who seek alliance. The Ariyan Temple's scriptures permit polygamy, so long as one can support all one's spouses in equal comfort. Extended families can grow to enormous sizes with intricately tangled relationships; genealogy is a common hobby. Despite the culture's condoning of polygamy, however, romance outside



marriage—in fact, even casual contact between the sexes—is considered shameful and strictly prohibited.

Fashion: Ariyans of all classes strive to dress well. They favor bright colors, tastefully harmonized. Men wear thin, loose linen breeches, tight high-collared shirts with loose half-length sleeves, colorful sashes, and sometimes embroidered, buttonless vests. Women dress much the same, except that their sleeves are fastened at the wrist for decency. Married women wear loose shawls or capes.

Ariyans of both sexes cover their heads with caps, scarves, or light veils. Poor people of both sexes go barefoot, but the wealthy spend ludicrous amounts on fancy shoes. The rich also wear silver bracelets, bangles, and ankle rings, as well as jewelry set with sapphires, topaz, emeralds, and pearls.

In battle, Ariyans wear improved mail or chain mail, open-faced helms, and scimitars or sabres. They carry medium shields and heirloom daggers. Outside the city walls, sailors or herdsmen may wear leather and carry cutlasses, slings, and sometimes bows.

the arts

Tradition frowns on the depiction of living things in painting or sculpture, although scripture does not explicitly forbid it. (Historically, Ariyans have made a single exception: monuments to el-Arrasi.) Instead, the decorative arts develop elaborate abstract patterns of mathematical precision, and have elevated calligraphy to a high art. Music, written for ensembles of woodwinds and cymbals, can be austere or sensual, depending on the proximity of a priest. Ariya's distinctive and highly developed architecture is based around pointed arches, pillars, domes, cupolas, central courtyards, and, wherever possible, fountains.

Astrology: Sky-watching is a popular pastime, for legends propagated by the Ariyan Temple of Avani hold that Avani's light is visible day or night to the devout worshiper. Astrology, accordingly, has pervaded Ariyan society. Citizens plan their festivals, weddings, and rites of passage based on omens that astrologers find in the stars—or that would-be astrologers claim to find.

Many so-called astrologers in Ariya, especially in the provinces, are old women, lunatics, or other unlettered people who may mean well but who lack proficiency in astrology. People believe their foretellings to the degree that these pronouncements endorse the opinions they already held.

Priests of the Ariyan Temple often learn authentic astrology. Nothing in temple doctrine restricts its use in any situation. Nonetheless, custom has conferred moral sanctions on "frivolous" foretellings. Most priests keep close watch on the sky for omens, but resort to active forecasting only when in danger or in spiritual crisis.

Dance: Social dancing is unknown, but troupes of professional entertainers known as "whiteslippers" (for their footwear) perform at weddings, confirmations, and festivals. Though each troupe includes both men and women, they never dance together on the same stage. Instead, women first perform a repertoire of graceful, sinuous dances, then give way to the men, who leap into high-spirited, whirling jigs full of kicks and acrobatic flips.

Tradition lets the smallest woman in each troupe dance with the men. Masked and dressed in a tight blouse and shorts, this acrobatic woman always plays a mythical trickster called Jackal Boy. During the dance, Jackal Boy capers back and forth, leaps over enemies, and commits pranks that deflate the prestige of his perennial nemesis, the pompous Bogoni the Dwarf.

Because they are women dancing with men, Jackal Boy dancers have an unearned public reputation for scandalous conduct. Despite this (or perhaps because of it), popular Jackals move freely at all levels of society. More than one prince has invited the latest celebrity Jackal to a palace dinner.

Games: Ariyans of all classes play chesslike board games, especially those which feature a moral motif. Children play a simple game, Purity, that teaches the virtues of the Ariyan Temple. Each child moves a token across the board, trying to avoid the "Unclean" penalty spaces (Debt, Scandal, Odor, Vice, Dishonor) and touch all five Virtue spaces (Charity, Hospitality, Family, Cleanliness, Sayim). The winner is "crowned" Prince-Paladin of Ariya.



Ariya the Impregnable lies above a narrow peninsula on the central southern coast. The port is a small sheltered bay blocked by a white marble seawall. The wall, 20 feet high and ten thick, earned the name "Dolphin Wall" for its antique murals of porpoises at play. It terminates in the prince's palace, the Tower of Morning, a strong marble citadel that protects and lights the harbor.

At the wall's far end lie the remains of a gigantic statue of el-Arrasi erected shortly after the Great King's death. A rare earthquake destroyed the marble statue in 1488 Ma (0 MR). At that time temple mystics warned against rebuilding it, and now the construction

the magnificent city

techniques have been lost. The city's white walls, ancient but well-maintained, are 20 feet thick and 30 feet high. In general, the poorest parts of the city are those closest to the walls, because of their association with low-status soldiers. The richest homes lie toward the city's center.

All parts of town are spotlessly clean. Because of the Temple of Avani's emphasis on cleanliness, Ariya boasts a water system unusually advanced by Cerilian standards.

Ariya has no clearly defined wards or districts, but rather a patchwork of tiny, diverse neighborhoods organized around the extended families called *geirhou*. Most *geirhou* have held the same hereditary homes and shops for centuries, and these locales have an air of great age. Because the *geirhou* try to monopolize their particular craft or trade, a citizen must go to one neighborhood to buy a gold earring and another to get boots mended. A day's errands can take one all over the city.

Outside the walls stands Ariya's only new construction, a shantytown of refugees from the war-torn countryside. This dirty maze of shacks has become known as the "Thieves' Market" for its reputed population of criminals and procurers.

Devout and disciplined Ariyans—unaccustomed to Western faults—find depravity in those who fail to bathe regularly. A visitor from a large Anuirean city would find the Thieves' Market quiet, its thieves inept, its vices tame.

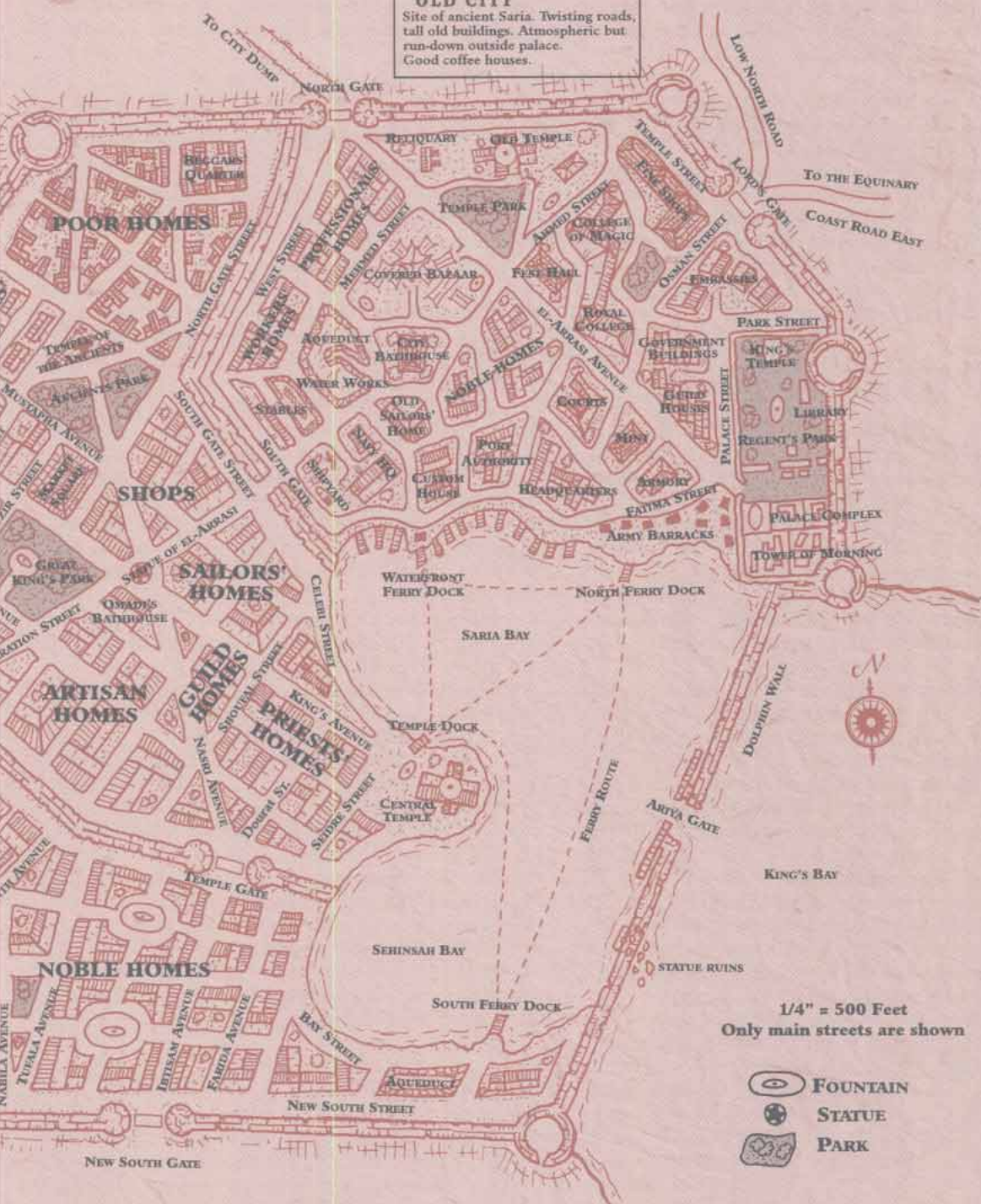
ARIYA

NEW CITY
Begun by el-Arrasi
completed in 1488 Ma
Beautiful, vibrant
center of culture
Best theaters, shops,
houses, hospitals

LORD'S CITY
Built 840-852 by Korkud the Magnificent; half the avenues are named for Korkud's many wives. Low and open; very quiet. Lovely homes of Ariya's richest families, but somewhat sterile.



OLD CITY
 Site of ancient Saria. Twisting roads,
 tall old buildings. Atmospheric but
 run-down outside palace.
 Good coffee houses.



1/4" = 500 Feet
 Only main streets are shown

-  FOUNTAIN
-  STATUE
-  PARK

The Prince-Paladin of Ariya rules one of the greatest cities in all Cerilia, unmatched throughout the Khinasi lands and surpassed only by the Imperial City of Anuire. From the prince-paladin to the merest fisherman, Ariya's 85,000 citizens are unique and interesting individuals. This section offers only a few, so players should feel free to populate the domain with their own nonplayer characters. Who brings the prince iced coffee in his House of Silent Servants? What are the palace guards like? Players should share descriptions of NPCs with their DM, who can approve or revise the description as desired. With a little creativity, Ariya can be the most colorful and exciting domain in the campaign.

demographics

Seventy thousand people live in the city of Ariya; 15,000 citizens are farmers, herders, and fisherfolk who live outside the walls and keep the city fed. A small percentage of citizens are nonhumans (primarily halflings). Nonhumans are not excluded from any social rank on the basis of race alone, for the Ariyans believe that all beings are equal in the sight of Avani. Ariyan nonhumans follow much the same customs and practices as humans, minimizing friction among the races.

Less than 4,500 Ariyans have a character class and level; only a few hundred are adventurers above 3rd level. Almost one-third of those with a class are low-level mages, for Khinasi society esteems the study of magic as the greatest of arts. Warriors are also relatively numerous and respected (rangers, however, are practically unknown). Though many officials in the Ariyan Temple of Avani carry the title of "priest," less than 500 command priestly magic. Only a few dozen thieves and bards practice their arts in Ariya, for lawbreakers are hunted relentlessly and bards are mistrusted as idle degenerates. They often find better success as respectable merchants.

Ariyan society makes no official distinction between commoners, gentry, and nobility. In practice, however, there are four social ranks:

Commoners: Half the population, including almost everyone outside the city walls, composes the bottom of the social ladder.

Farmers, fisherfolk, laborers, sailors, servants, and shopkeepers

dream ambitious dreams of rising to a better station, whether through marriage, good luck, or prayers to Avani.

Professionals: About a third of Ariyans make their livings as artists, craftspeople, merchants, traders, sea captains, navigators, and soldiers.

notable citizens

Unlike other Khinasi cultures that rank soldiers with laborers and farmers, Ariyans respect the Swords of Avani, who are devout, dedicated, and sometimes even educated.

Professionals earn respect according to their decorum, dress, and artistic taste as much as from family ties or success. A merchant who behaves like a boor or servant is treated as one; a farmer who speaks politely and wisely earns respect from all.

Named families (*ajazada*): A lucky fifth of the population has earned the right to family names. Only the prince can bestow this hereditary honor. Many *ajazada* work as artisans or merchants, for their names alone bestow no income; others are magicians, courtiers, priests, and military officers. A quarter of the *ajazada* are wealthy, landed families. A rare few have minor bloodlines.

Aristocracy (*tamounzada*): The elite of Ariyan society are the so-called Two Hundred Families who bear the name "el-Arrasi" and thereby trace some relationship, however distant and tortuous, to the royal family. A fractional percentage of the populace, these 4,000 exquisitely refined idlers compose the vastly extended families of governors, generals, admirals, high priests, and royal favorites. Ariyan true wizards are with few exceptions *tamounzada*—insofar as they care for such petty distinctions. Though bearing the regent's name, *tamounzada* wield little political influence; Almost all power resides with the prince-paladin and his bureaucracy.

The *tamounzada* typically bury the el-Arrasi name in a string of surnames. In this way they flaunt royal status without looking dangerously like contenders for the throne.

the royal family

Though the prince no longer strangles all rival claimants for the Thousand Jewel Throne, his siblings still endure lifelong, if luxurious, house arrest in the Tower of Morning. They can do anything they like, have any visitors, eat what they wish. They just can't leave—ever—until they grow too old to build a following and stage a coup d'état.

Currently the tower holds Prince Gerad's three wives, Maryam, Shafika, and Temadhur; his aunt Farida (*Ba, great, 28*) and her dull-witted husband, Humayd; Salmah and Amina (*both Ba, great, 32*), the two surviving daughters of Murad (Gerad's oldest brother and his predecessor as regent); the three sons of Gerad's late second brother, Yusuf—Habar, Harith, and Haroun (*all Ba, great, 32*)—and their four wives (Irina, Badra, Zimaida, Aisha); and Gerad's matriarchal step-grandmother Fatima (*Ma, minor, 9*). The third wife of Sehinsah the Wise, Fatima—now 75—still seethes with ambition.

Though they appear to do nothing all day but eat, listen to music, and engage in light intellectual banter, these 15 people (all 0-level Khinasi) generate enough plots, intrigues, and gossip to fill a village: Who flirted with the ambassador? Who kissed which chambermaid? "Did you *hear* what he said about the vizier at dinner?" "Well, it's not for *me* to say, but if there's any justice from the Lady of Reason, then there will be trouble from the prince!"

Almost any of them could make a plausible claim to the Thousand Jewel Throne. However, they present no serious threat, due to their complete lack of ability. No wonder Prince Gerad, following an occasional practice of Ariya's rulers, adopted a successor from outside the family: your PC.

Your PC's adoption as heir to the throne has angered not only the incompetent relatives in the tower, but even kin with only a distant claim to the throne. In western Ariya, for example, Gerad's distant cousin Lord Khalil el-Arrasi (*MKb; W12; Ba, tainted, 8*)—a descendant of el-Arrasi's brother Eirat—has made remarks about the succession that some interpret as hostile. Lord Khalil leads a powerful family that administers Kfeira and Tegher provinces, and holds several sources there.

Your character: This sourcebook assumes that you are playing a new regent whom Prince Gerad adopted and invested shortly before abdicating. You may, however, make your character one of the royal family who has patiently waited out his house arrest until Prince Gerad gave up the throne. Refer to the family tree chart on the gatefold of this book.

With the DM's approval, you may play Prince Gerad and assume he has not abdicated. The DM can adjust his level and abilities to fit better with other PCs in the campaign.

The royal bloodline: El-Arrasi's descendants carry in their veins a great bloodline derived from Basaia, the old goddess of the sun, light, fire, reason, and logic. Her energies have given various rulers of

Ariya hawklike vision, great cleverness, resistance to fire or to evil, the ability to detect lies and illusions, and even the ability to step into a bonfire and emerge from another flame a continent away. These powers work best when the regent uses them in service to the realm.

people of importance

All of these NPCs are humans of Khinasi descent, unless otherwise noted. These are exceptional figures, leaders in their fields, and not typical of the population.

Note: Ariya's lieutenants (Jairo and Hadan) have statistics appropriate for serving Prince Gerad. Adjust their levels to suit your regent PC's level, following the lieutenant guidelines in the rulebook.

gerad ibn farid el-arrasi

Former Prince of Ariya, 7th-level paladin

S: 14
D: 12
C: 14
I: 17
W: 16
Ch: 18

AC: 10 (3)
hp: 40
MV: 12
THAC0: 14
#AT: 1
Dmg: Nil (1d8)



Bloodline (former):

Basaia, major, 36 (before investing his successor).

Blood abilities (former):

Alertness, character reading, enhanced sense (hawk vision, major), unreadable thoughts.

Equipment: Amulet of proof against detection and location, staff, prayer book, diary. Before he abdicated, Prince Gerad wore chain mail +2 and carried a scimitar of dancing.

Typical dialogue: "I am Avani's servant, and by her grace the Prince-Paladin of Ariya. Am I to preside over a city that draws behind its walls like a tortoise into a shell? Be so good as to find me a shred of honor inside a tortoise-shell." So said Prince Gerad shortly before he gave up the throne. Since his abdication, he has spoken little.

Description: 6 feet, 3 inches; 180 lbs.; age 43. Short, straight black hair, clean-shaven, light brown skin. Black eyes, beetling eyebrows, aquiline nose, long graceful neck, long arms and hands. Deep voice, dignified manner. Before abdicating, Prince Gerad wore only the richest silks beneath his mail. Now he goes unarmored and wears a humble merchant's outfit.

Background: Handsome, well-spoken, well-read, eloquent in defense of the faith, and skilled in music and song, Prince Gerad embodied the ideal Ariyan ruler. Grandson of the famed Sehinsah the Wise, the regent who ended the wasteful lunacy of the Nine Bad Sultans, Gerad displayed the same skillful and compassionate leadership. From his ascension to the throne 18 years ago, he clearly felt that the ruler of Ariya should rule all the Khinasi, by example if not by decree.

Imagine the citizens' astonishment, then, when at the height of his popularity Prince Gerad entered the throne room one morning and called for his wizards and priests. At his command, they examined him for illusions, enchantments, charms, or similar controls. They found none, and such is their skill that no reasonable person has since questioned their findings. Then Prince Gerad, pronouncing the shameful confession "I am without sayim," formally abdicated his throne.

As befits such an admission, he left his home, family, and possessions to go into exile. No one has yet explained Gerad's secret shame. Even between commoners, it is an unthinkable breach of etiquette to inquire into the details of an admission such as his.

Gerad, who now wanders the empty grasslands, speaks little.

patriarch jairo min azédas

4th-level priest of Avani

S: 9
D: 9
C: 11
I: 16
W: 16
Ch: 16

AC: 10
hp: 16
MV: 12
THACO: 18
#AT: 1
Dmg: Nil



Bloodline: Unblooded.

Equipment: White burnoose-like robes, leather sandals, holy symbol (silver sun), book of scripture, pouch of dried fruit.

Typical dialogue: "Deliver a declaration of war on Aftane? As Your Majesty commands, so will I do. In confidence, Your Majesty, may I ask—purely for my own information—why we are to struggle over a few miles of empty grassland? Let me present an alternative that possibly better suits the state's interest."

Description: 5 feet, 8 inches; 200 lbs.; age 48. Short, curly gray hair, dusky skin. Hairless round face, bright blue eyes. Wears four ornate wedding rings.

Background: A rotund and cheerful gourmand, Jairo combines piety with a clear appreciation of the pleasures allowed a priest of Avani: food, wives, and mathematics. He has risen to the high priesthood, and to his position as a respected diplomat, through his great abilities of persuasion. Jairo first questions opposing parties closely to find out their real desires, then outlines a scenario whereby they can achieve their ends by cooperating with the throne.

Jairo is basically good-hearted and tends to tell people what they want to hear. However, he sees no strategic importance in Ariya's outer provinces, and prefers dabbling in his hobby of algebra instead of planning war with Aftane.

rahil the falcon

Court Mage of Ariya, 7th-level true wizard

S: 14
D: 13
C: 11
I: 17
W: 15
Ch: 13

AC: 3
hp: 21
MV: 12
THACO: 18
#AT: 1
Dmg: 1d6+2



Bloodline: Masela, minor, 19.

Blood abilities: Blood history, detect illusion (minor).

Equipment: Cloak of protection +3, staff of thunder and lightning (mahogany inlaid with gold wire), ring of mind shielding, potion of healing, dust of disappearance (four pinches), high-collared robe of deep blue with silver embroidery, gold amulet, moleskin pouch with spell components and reagents.

Spells memorized: Armor and stonewall spells in effect; 1st—charm person, color spray, protection from evil, sleep; 2nd—alter self, levitate, mirror image; 3rd—fly, suggestion; 4th—solid fog.

Typical dialogue: "Your Majesty will be pleased to hear that Hatwa, the young gray I captured on the wing in Kfeira, made his first kill this afternoon. Your Majesty should have seen him swoop! That pigeon never knew what hit it—New defensive spells on the walls? Of course, you have only to ask. Is trouble looming?"

Description: 6 feet, 3 inches; 180 lbs.; age 44. Long black hair streaked with white, heavy eyebrows, stern face. Athletic build, proud bearing. Never lets go of his staff.

Background: The loyal Court Mage of Ariya actually comes from a noble family in Djafra. He studied magic in his youth, as is typical in noble Khinasi families, and showed unusual talent. After a long adventuring career, he arrived in Ariya just as its court mage died. The mage's two wretched apprentices tried to take magical control of Prince Gerad, but Rahil foiled them. In gratitude, Gerad made Rahil his court mage, and Rahil has served faithfully ever since.

Rahil's nickname comes from the silver falcon embroidered on his robes, a family emblem. His sharp insight and ruthless combat tactics inspire thoughts of falcons as well, and he raises falcons as a hobby.

captain hadan el-djefer

Admiral of the Golden Navy, 5th-level fighter

S: 13
D: 10
C: 14
I: 14
W: 13
Ch: 15

AC: 4
hp: 25
MV: 12
THACO: 16
#AT: 1
Dmg: 1d8



Bloodline: Unblooded.

Equipment: Scale mail +2, cutlass, heirloom dagger, vial of cologne, zither.

Typical dialogue: "An attack on our harbor, Your Majesty? Hah, let them come! I would like nothing better than to slice the Red Kings into cutlets. On another topic, may I interest Your Majesty in this new hymn for zither—?"

Description: 5 feet, 10 inches; 190 lbs.; age 50. Curly black hair and beard, black eyes, scarred stub nose, pouchy cheeks, burly build. Passionate but well-spoken. Wears bright silks and sailor's turban; smells of cologne.

Background: Born to a *tamounzada* family, Hadan entered service as an under-captain 25 years ago. He gained honor in many battles against pirates and rose through the ranks by hard work. As admiral, Hadan has kept the fleet in good repair and its sailors well-trained, and now seems content to relax. He occupies himself with his three wives and with playing the zither. He has developed an admirable musical technique and diverts himself composing hymns to Avani.

adara bint reshoud

8th-level true wizard

S: 9
D: 10
C: 12
I: 17
W: 15
Ch: 16

AC: 5
hp: 30
MV: 12
THACO: 18
#AT: 1
Dmg: 1d4/by spell



Bloodline: Vorynn, major, 22.

Blood abilities: Alter appearance, resistance (major), unreadable thoughts.

Equipment: Robe of blending, wand of enemy detection, ring of protection +1, ring of x-ray vision, leather shoulder bag, heirloom dagger.

Spells memorized: Armor and stonewall spells in effect; same spells as Rahil the Falcon (see above) plus these: 3rd—non-detection; 4—detect scrying.

Typical dialogue: "I hope the gods may bring upon these soldiers of Aftane the same fate we have known. That their children may live in fear as ours do. That the best of their youth may die like dogs, as ours have. That their old and wise may starve for want of food, slowly, as ours do. And that they may seek help from all their neighbors, as I have, and on every side meet blank rejection. That is what I wish for them."

Description: 5 feet, 8 inches; 140 lbs.; apparent age 30. Black hair, black eyes, dark skin. Face thin and drawn, angular features. Emaciated; wears beggar's rags and veil. Intense manner.

Background: Adara is the greatest wizard of Shoufal, the city founded by Ariyan settlers but now occupied by Aftane. She has led a covert resistance effort against the Red Kings, and she often asks help from Ariya. Prince Gerad always sent what help he could, short of risking war, but his efforts never satisfied Adara. Some in Ariya secretly question whether Aftane actually treats the people of Shoufal

as cruelly as she says. Until information comes from a more reliable source, no one can be sure.

Adara is much older than she looks. Many know that she was born into a powerful Shoufal family, and that she spent years studying elven magic in the Sielwode. Adara has revealed little beyond that, but she seems sincere in her hatred of the Red Kings.

omadi the quick

Guildmaster of the Gold
Coast Coster, 6th-level thief

S: 10
D: 17
C: 13
I: 15
W: 13
Ch: 16

AC: 6
hp: 24
MV: 12
THACO: 18
#AT: 1
Dmg: 1d4



Bloodline: Anduiras, minor, 8.

Blood ability: Unreadable thoughts.

Equipment: Leather armor, heirloom dagger, philter of glibness, stone of good luck, pouch of betel nut.

Typical dialogue: "Ah, Your Majesty, a very fine cape you wear today! I could get you a cape still finer, ermine pelts from Djafra, for a picayune price, and all the profit to go to the orphanage in the beggar's quarter! Can you fail to support such a worthy cause?"

Description: 5 feet, 4 inches; 170 lbs.; age 30. Short black hair (balding), brown eyes, clean shaven, light tan skin. Quite fat; dresses in voluminous silks. Sparkling expression, nimble fingers, pleasant attitude.

Background: As guildmaster of a strong union of merchant houses, Omadi controls guild holdings in four Ariyan and four Zikalan coastal provinces.

Omadi was born in Ariya to poor parents who died of illness when he was young. He grew up a footloose urchin in the beggars' quarter, surviving by his wits and fast tongue. One day a passing magician discerned Omadi's bloodline. Intrigued by the guttersnipe's scion status, he took the boy on as an apprentice. But Omadi, though bright, had no talent for magic. The magician passed him along to a merchant friend, and there Omadi excelled.

His talent for negotiation and salesmanship brought him wealth and eventually leadership of

the Gold Coast Coster. It also brought him the enmity of the malevolent Brotherhood of Khet, which seeks dominion over all guild holdings in the Khinasi lands. Despite several assassination attempts (their failure earned Omadi his nickname), the Brotherhood has not destroyed Omadi's enthusiasm.

He has earned the friendship of many Ariyans through his charitable works in the beggar's quarter where he grew up. Omadi now believes he was the illegitimate son of an Anuirean adventurer, and dreams of finding his blooded parent someday to show off the success he has made of himself.

Omadi is unmarried, pious, and seemingly interested only in business and charity. His only vice is a taste for betel nut, a palm seed imported from the island domains to the east. Chewed with a mixture of lime, cardamom, and spices, betel nut produces a mild stimulation similar to strong coffee. Omadi has been trying to quit since the Brotherhood of Khet attempted to poison him with adulterated betel.

nura bakabassi

1st-level bard

S: 8
D: 16
C: 13
I: 13
W: 12
Ch: 16

AC: 10
hp: 6
MV: 12
THAC0: 20
#AT: 1
Dmg: 1d4



Bloodline: Unblooded.

Equipment: Oud (stringed instrument).

Typical dialogue: "Best we move carefully down this alley, Your Majesty. Old Hurban, he lives in that crate there, sometimes he gets a bit confused and thinks he's fighting pirates."

Description: 5 feet; 90 lbs.; age 18. Short straight black hair, blue eyes, brown skin. Clothing varies, but always offers freedom of movement. Manner may vary dramatically, though often impish.

Background: This small, lithe woman is currently Ariya's most fashionable Jackal Boy dancer (see page 15). Though young, she speaks and carries herself with adult poise and seems completely at home in every level of society. She has kept her own origins a secret, but she encourages speculation.

If a regent seeks a guide, informant, or perhaps one who can offer advice on how to dress as a merchant or beggar and move anonymously through the Magnificent City, Nura would make an ideal choice.

fethiye kalhat hawwat nishtun burumbini al-hufuf

Junior Deputy Assistant Vizier, 0-Level Man

S: 6
D: 10
C: 8
I: 17
W: 9
Ch: 7

AC: 10
hp: 4

Bloodline: Unblooded.

Equipment: Sheaf of paper, quill, ink, books.

Description: Fethiye is a young, ambitious, and somewhat talented civil servant.

Short, very thin, unable to grow a beard, and a bit squirrely, the 26-year-old projects an unimpressive appearance. He resents what he perceives as slow advancement, although his diligence and encyclopedic memory have in fact propelled him far.

Some of his insights, such as his warnings about Ariya's dangerous complacency, may serve the regent well. However, Fethiye lacks tact, snoops into everyone's business, and is too outspoken for a vizier. Fethiye's perpetual attempts to draw the regent's notice (see pages 2-3) work well as comic relief.



The Prince-Paladin of Ariya rules seven provinces, controlling temple and law holdings in four of them. Others, too, wield power in Ariya: Rahil the Falcon controls its magical sources, and Omadi the Quick tries to hold its guilds against assaults by the Brotherhood of Khet. The new regent is fortunate in these two men's loyalty to the state, for Ariya has no shortage of enemies elsewhere—even within its own borders.

The following are maximum law/source ratings for each province: Ariya (7/0), Assarif (1/4), Azédas (1/4), Djef el-Kadir (1/4), Kfeira (3/4), Kouzir (2/3), Tegher (2/3).

law

The prince-paladin holds a law (4) in the city of Ariya: the Swords of Avani, six army units with police and civic duties. In coastal Kfeira, a law (2), and Kouzir, a law (1), the regent's authority derives from constables at roadside caravanserais and from the Golden Navy, which makes regular patrols and landings as necessary. One fortified caravanserai (of level 2) in each of these provinces provides quarters for troops on the march. The prince also holds a law (1) in Tegher.

In Kfeira and in Tegher, a collateral branch of the el-Arrasi family governs in the prince-paladin's name, although the family leader, Lord Khalil el-Arrasi, is no friend of the regent. Khalil (*MKb; W12; Ba, tainted, 8*) is a distant cousin of the royal family, descended from el-Arrasi's brother Eirat (see page 8). For centuries, Eirat's progeny have resented el-Arrasi's line for what they perceive as the Great King's insulting and unwarranted treatment of their forefather. Like many of his ancestors, Khalil has voiced ambitions for the throne. He says only a ruler wise in magic can guide Ariya through its current troubles. Khalil studies magic, but few are aware of his progress and ability.

The nearly empty eastern provinces no longer obey the prince-paladin's rule. Although Assarif, Azédas, and Djef el-Kadir

technically still fall under Ariyan control, the Red Kings of Aftane exercise covert influence through holdings (1) in each province. The kings relay messages to provincial officials through their Red Herald, a short, charming scion named Arlando el-Adaba (*MKb; B10; Re, minor, 15*).

Arlando visited the Tower of Morning on diplomatic missions during Prince Gerad's reign. With his customary insight into character, Gerad later remarked, "I never before knew anyone who, I feel sure, could chatter pleasantly while ripping out a throat with his teeth." Some speculate that the Red Herald is himself one of the Red Kings.

Ariya's regent no longer controls any law holdings in the four northern provinces formerly held by Ariya but now part of Aftane: Barsérat, Seidre, Dourat, and Shoufal. However, some residents in these provinces retain deep family loyalties to Ariya, and in Shoufal, Ariya has a rare ally in the powerful wizard Adara bint Reshoud (see page 23).

temples

The prince-paladin is Lord High Patriarch of the Ariyan Temple of Avani and, as such, controls most of the temple holdings in Ariya: a temple (5) in Ariya province, a (2) in Kfeira, a (1) in Kouzir, and a (1) in Tegher. These holdings represent regional temples (one or two per province) of up to 100 priests, acolytes, scribes, and attendants; smaller shrines scattered across each province; and the giant Central Temple in the city of Ariya.

The Temple of the Ancients, a small and benign sect of Nasri (the sea goddess, known in Anuire as Nesiríe), has a holding (2) in the Magnificent City and a (1) in eastern Azédas. More threatening is the holding (1) in Assarif of the Temple of Khirdai, god of storms and conflict (known as Cuiraécen in Anuire). The Red Kings of Aftane support this temple, and its work is their work.

No one has temple holdings in Djef el-Kadir, which is nearly empty after centuries of war with Aftane.

the ariyan temple of avani

One of many Khinasi faiths that follow the goddess of the sun, light, fire, and reason, the Ariyan Temple of Avani emphasizes purity of body, mind, and spirit. Followers try to burn

holdings



away impurities through diligent prayer, moral conduct, and unyielding denial of the Five Tempters: debt, family shame or betrayal, dirtiness, vice (a large category including theft, intoxication, laziness, and adultery), and dishonor (including blasphemy and failure to pray).

Intoxicants stronger than coffee muddy the mind and are therefore prohibited. No physical contact of a sexual nature is permitted outside marriage, although the temple condones the practice of having multiple spouses—so long as one can support them all equally well. Lying, notably, is not prohibited. The temple does not discourage greed nor prohibit moneylending or other business practices, except that one must wash after engaging in them.

The Prince-Paladin of Ariya has ultimate authority in the temple, but subordinate priests exercise great influence. During her influential tenure, a charismatic priestess named Riza bint Nisanyan (1997–2028 MA) brought the Third Tempter—dirtiness—to new prominence. She established complete physical cleanliness as the mark of piety, and preached that the most awful fates awaited followers who allowed soil in the home or on the person. Fountains had always been an important symbol in the Temple of Avani, but under Riza's command they became essential everywhere in Ariya. She also popularized hospital care, the extermination of vermin, maternity houses (set well apart from other buildings) for

delivering babies, and cremation of the dead. Riza died of poisoning when, during an especially strenuous spring cleaning of the Central Temple, she accidentally swallowed ammonia.

Prayer

In Ariya, temples to Avani feature a large central dome surrounded by four vaulted halls called *eyvans*. In each *eyvan* stand many pillars, their number and type dictated by omens discerned during the temple's construction. Because all beings are considered equal in the sight of Avani (the reason for the prohibition of slavery), the temple features no altar, pulpit, or dais. The priest must preach while standing among the faithful. A beautiful fountain bubbles at the center of the floor under the dome.

Outside the temple stand more fountains, with benches where the faithful may wash their hands, face, and feet before entering. By law, the prince-paladin must wash at the same fountain the citizens use, but



the temple's priests may clear others from the courtyard before the regent washes.

A library or scriptorium often stands near the temple, for Avani encourages learning. Soldiers, expectant mothers, and the ill or disabled are exempt from mandatory prayer but all other citizens pray to Avani at dawn, noontide, and sunset. The priest calls them to prayer from atop the tallest eyvan. To pray, one first stands quietly facing the sun (or, at noon, looking up), then bows, kneels, and finally lies face down, murmuring invocations all the while. After performing this rite five times, the worshiper rises, drinks from the central fountain, and leaves quietly.

guilds

Because the prince prosecutes thieves mercilessly in Ariya, rogues run legal merchant houses as covers. Often these operations become more lucrative than thieving, although even the most respectable guilds practice a certain amount of espionage against rivals.

A merchant union called the Gold Coast Coster, run by Omadi the Quick (see page 23), owns the guild holdings of Ariya's coastal provinces—a (3) in Ariya, a (1) in Azédas, a (2) in Kfeira, and a (1) in Kouzir. The Coster also controls holdings totaling 6 levels in the four southeastern provinces of Zikala.

Holdings in Ariya's outlying provinces—a (1) in Assarif, a (1) in Djef el-Kadir, a (2) in Tegher, and a (2) in the northern reaches of Ariya—belong to an aggressive competitor from Aftane, the mysterious and sinister Brotherhood of Khet. Khet coerces merchants into its fold using bribery, strong-arm tactics, and assassination. The Brotherhood has enlisted most of the Cattle Dynasties that drive vast herds across the savannahs, and its

assassins have made three attempts on Omadi's life. No one knows who leads the Brotherhood.

The Prince-Paladin of Ariya holds a guild (1) in

Ariya province. Since the time of el-Arrasi, the city-state's ruler has enjoyed a monopoly on the construction of fountains and waterworks.

Despite its huge range of activities across eight provinces, the Gold Coast Coster does not own a single ship. Rather, suppliers from a dozen domains use Omadi as a middleman. Through personal charisma, shrewd politics, and good markups, Omadi keeps his consortium of three dozen small guilds in tight order. He dislikes large meetings of all these guild heads, preferring to confer with one or two at a time in his bathhouse. Omadi spends so much time in the bathhouse that, his friends claim, he is now permanently immune to dirt.

the bathhouse

Temple scripture calls business "the work of this world, like grubbing in the soil," and states that participants must wash away the spiritual stain of materialism. Because of this edict, many business owners have taken to negotiating in bathhouses.

An Ariyan bathhouse is a spectacular fantasy of white marble walls, bronze columns, and glazed ceramic tile. It consists of an antechamber and adjacent disrobing room, a cold room with swimming pool, a warm room, and a steam room, as well as storage rooms and an office. In some houses, servants oil or massage the bathers.

Men and women bathe separately. Large houses are split in half, with half assigned to each gender, but in small houses men and women simply bathe at different times. All races are permitted, but children may not enter.

Bathhouse servants move unseen through hidden passages or tunnels under the house. Beneath the steam room, in a low area called the hypocaust, servants heat water from a nearby well or aqueduct in a brass boiler or furnace. Ordinary fire may generate the heat, but larger houses use magical items, spells, or even captive fire elementals. Temperatures can reach 150 degrees Fahrenheit in the steam room.

Rumors persist of intruders who eavesdrop on sensitive steam-room deals by crawling into the hypocaust below. Without protection from the terrible heat, these listeners (if there are such) would be roasted alive.

sources

Ariya's court mage, Rahíl the Falcon, controls all the sources in the state. He has one in each province: a source (0) in Ariya, a (1) in Assarif, a (1) in Azédas, a (4) in Djef el-Kadir, a (3) in Kouzir, a (4) in Kfeira, and a (3) in Tegher. Rahíl also controls a source (5) in

the province of Barsérat in southern Aftane.

The sources are ancient underground cities constructed by the early worshipers of Avani. To escape persecution by the established temples, whole villages would retreat to these huge labyrinths, along with their livestock. The largest ones reached seven to nine levels in the earth, down to just above the water table. Wide air shafts provided ventilation, light, access (by ladder) and easy communication (by shouting) between levels, and fresh water from below. Several thousand people could live for months at a time in these colossal anthills.

The magicians and wizards of the time developed ways of drawing *mebhaighl* (magical essence), gathered and concentrated from the plains above, to these cities to power spells that prevented their detection. When the Temple of Avani became the domain's official faith, villagers closed and eventually forgot about the underground cities. But their magical power remained. Today Rahíl the Falcon believes that he alone knows their location. He has forged ley lines to tap their power without visiting them and risking their discovery by others.

Nonetheless, Rahíl still must patrol the cities more often than he likes. The constant darkness and high magical power of the underground cities make them susceptible to breaches into the Shadow World. Undead walkers from that strange dark land occasionally shamle into the cities, temporarily corrupting their magical essence. To discourage this, Rahíl inspects the cities every season or so.

income and expenses

Financially Ariya is in perilous shape. The city-state's income amounts to about 23 GB per season (domain turn), a moderate sum. But routine expenses—and a lavish court—consume all these funds.

Taxes and collections: Assuming moderate taxation, the four provinces in which the regent controls law holdings produce an average of 12 GB per turn. Prince Gerad ceased collecting taxes in the other three provinces to help boost loyalty, though the new regent could tax lightly

without causing rebellion. The prince-paladin also receives income from his temple holdings (about 7 GB per turn) and guild holding (about 2 GB per turn).

Tribute: Omadi the Quick, of the Gold Coast Coster, pays the regent a tribute of 2 GB per turn for the lucrative trade route he has established from the port of Ariya to eastern Khinasi domains. The regent collects no tribute from the tiny Temple of the Ancients, nor from the secretive Brotherhood of Khet. Trying to collect from the Temple of Khirdai might provoke a war.

Domain maintenance: The regent's seven provinces, four law holdings, four temples, and one guild holding together cost 3 GB per turn. Fortifications require additional maintenance: The Tower of Morning and the two fortified caravanserais in Kouzir and Kfeira cost an additional 1 GB apiece per turn (total 3).

Payroll for Ariya's six army units amounts to 6 GB per turn—1 per unit. The Golden Navy costs 3 GB to maintain. Total: 16 GB.

All remaining revenue goes to maintain the prince-paladin's opulent court. Fine food! Luxuriant furnishings! Festivals each month! As a paladin of Avani, the regent himself disavows this wealth and lives simply. But the large royal family demands money for their extravagant lifestyle, and the temple priests ask for great festivals to maintain the people's loyalty and piety.

Because of its high expenditures, the court of Ariya is a major force in the city's economy. Reducing the court's cost may seem the obvious first step toward fiscal sanity, but the regent could face grave consequences. *[These consequences, which may include loyalty reductions or palace intrigues, are left to the DM's discretion.]*

The treasury: Ariya's treasury holds a mere 18 GB as the new regent takes the Thousand Jewel Throne—it has been slowly, steadily depleted over generations. Fortunately, Prince Gerad managed to stop its decline, if not help rebuild it.

When the prince-paladin looks out across his city from high atop the Tower of Morning and considers the many crises facing Ariya, he may well wonder how the city has survived this long. Some of the following intelligence, gathered from nobles, priests, and secret informants, presents new trouble, but some offers an opportunity for the city-state to face its problems and overcome them.

rumors and plots

All these rumors and plots can lead PCs into new adventures. Players should look them over and indicate to the DM which ones they would like to pursue in a campaign.

a pirate base?

The piracy problem off the Sun Coast varies in seriousness from year to year, but for the last three years one ship, the *Black Arrow*, has plundered Khinasi vessels with unusual vigor. Somehow it has escaped capture by Ariya's Golden Navy. Reports claim that the *Black Arrow* can submerge and move underwater.

The captain of the navy, Hadan el-Djefer, believes that the *Black Arrow* uses a secret harbor somewhere in Kouzir. Despite frequent searches along the province's shore, no one found the pirate harbor—until two days ago.

A navy dhoura was investigating reports that the giant turtle Eirat the Troublesome (see page 8) had moved east of the port of Ariya, far outside his usual territory. The dhoura accidentally found Eirat, but he spared the vessel in return for a favor. Eirat insisted that the ship land on an inconspicuous stretch of shore and send a sailor inland. "Tell her I must be paid!" said Eirat, but refused to identify "her" or the payment he expected.

A detachment of sailors crossed a narrow bight of land and found a lagoon. There rested the *Black Arrow*, and beside it a camp. The sailors spotted the ship's notorious pirate captain, Sari bint Bédize, and perhaps three dozen crew members. Outnumbered and afraid of capture, the sailors fled, told Eirat they had delivered the message,

and sailed at top speed for Ariya.

The evidence indicates that Sari has enlisted Eirat to aid her piracy. But how is he aiding her, and what could she pay him? The turtle wants nothing more than to return to human form. Though a talented rogue, Sari is not known to have magical skills. Has she recruited a wizard?

Navy morale has dropped at the prospect of facing notorious pirates in their lair. Captain Hadan has suggested that if the prince-paladin

rumors, plots and secrets

himself were to lead the raid, his sailors would rally around their leader. And the suspected involvement of Eirat renders the prince's participation even more vital: By el-Arrasi's ancient decree, no one but Ariya's regent may attack the turtle.

ancient evil beneath the city

Ariya is built on the site of a Masetian city called Saria. For a brief period during the Masetian's reign, evil infested Saria. A sinister cult led by the high priest Iagostes tried to turn people from the true gods by sponsoring state worship of a series of increasingly feeble regents. One of the last of these, Rimanos Saria ("the Deranged"), decreed the construction of secret catacombs under the cult's principal temple. Cult priests used these catacombs, the Labyrinth of Reason, to initiate new recruits into the twisted philosophies of their order.

When the Masetians attacked and destroyed the cult, they demolished the temple without learning of the catacombs. The labyrinth's existence came to light only recently, during the reign of Prince Gerad. An Old City coffee house owner stumbled upon a side tunnel of the labyrinth while expanding his basement storage area.

Prince Gerad sent an exploratory team of the Swords of Avani on an expedition into the catacombs. The four soldiers returned unharmed, telling of dark empty

tunnels that held nothing of interest. That night, all four men got into separate arguments, declared their honor violated, and died the next morning in duels.

The next day someone made the connection. Upon hearing the news, Prince Gerad ordered the labyrinth entrance sealed, but by that time several groups of coffee house customers, gawkers, and children had innocently visited the tunnels. All emerged unharmed, but no one knows their whereabouts and activities since then. That was several years ago.

A few days ago, Harith (a family member in House of Silent Servants) found an unsigned note pinned to a window sill in the Tower of Morning—four stories up—on the outside:

Philosophy is written in this grand book—I mean the universe—which stands continually open to our gaze, but it cannot be understood unless one first learns to comprehend the language and interpret the characters in which it is written. It is written in the language of Masela, and its characters are blood and thought and spirit, without which it is humanly impossible to understand a single word of it. Without these, one is wandering about in a dark labyrinth.

Though it hardly seemed a warning itself, this enigmatic note has prompted some of the new regent's viziers to propose a more serious expedition into the Labyrinth of Reason. With clues to its traps, and to the ways it affects the mind, the prince might then be able to track down the people whom it has affected—who possibly now continue the work of a long-dead cult.

sphinx trouble

You have received a new plea for help from the wizard Adara bint Reshoud in the northern province of Shoufal. For all her skill in magic, Adara shows still greater skill in composing pleas for help. Now she claims the awnshegh called the Sphinx, whose domain lies a few days' ride northeast of Shoufal, has sent spies and assassins to cause chaos in the city. Supposedly the Sphinx hopes to weaken Aftane's control before invading with military forces.

Adara has proven herself fairly trustworthy, if a bit self-centered and obsessive. Her powerful sources of magic could aid Ariya in an emergency. It is in the state's interest to keep her alive and in power in Shoufal. But she has cried sphinx before, causing Ariya to place its forces in danger to no good purpose. Now, with the countryside around Shoufal depopulated by continual war, the prince-paladin has no one there he trusts to deliver good intelligence.

The regent may feel this situation warrants personal attention. If he investigates the situation in Shoufal himself, in disguise, he can determine first whether to aid Adara, and then how to set up a reliable information network there. Of course, getting into Shoufal, past troops of Aftane and perhaps spies of the Sphinx, will prove dangerous. And if Adara finds that Ariya's regent seeks alternative sources of information, she will construe his lack of faith as an insult.

shandare's holy ambition

For years, particularly in recent seasons, the Exalted High Priestess Shandare (FKb; Pr9, Avani; Ba, major, 39) has promoted her religion in neighboring Zikala. As leader of the ancient Zikalan Temple of Avani, Shandare controls all the temple holdings in Zikala, has expanded into Binsada, and now wants control of Ariya's temples as well.

The doctrines of the Zikalan Temple concur in most respects with those of the Ariyan Temple. Therefore many suspect that, though Shandare seems sincere in her faith, her urge to expand has less to do with supposed failings of the Ariyan Temple than with her desire for power.

Yesterday one of the falcons kept by Ariya's court mage, Rahil the Falcon, downed a pigeon flying east over northern Kfeira. A capsule message attached to the pigeon's leg contained a coded message that Rahil has deciphered: *Yes on ally/meet 3 d/I of Ghost/E harbor/moonrise/secret.*

Apparently a secret rendezvous on the Isle of Ghosts will take place at moonrise three days hence. Through magic, Rahil was able to divine Shandare as the note's sender and surmise one or more of the Red Kings of Aftane as the pigeon's destination.

The Isle of Ghosts is a province-sized jungle a day's sail southeast of Ariya. One of many wooded islands in the Sea of the Golden Sun, it has sheltered pirates in the past but, by all reports, is currently unoccupied.

An alliance between Shandare and the Red Kings can mean no good for Ariya. If the prince-paladin could arrange an ambush, he might solve two problems at once. Or he might find himself badly overmatched by deadly magic and fanatical enemies.

gateway to the shadow world

Rahil the Falcon has reported trouble in one of the ancient underground cities from which he derives magical power. This one, in Kfeira (a.k.a. "the middle of nowhere"), was supposedly deserted like the others. But on a recent visit, Rahil encountered visitors he believes came from the Shadow World.

Undead warriors now explore the city called Morikuyu (meaning "dark well," for the deep water supply that has flooded the lowest of its nine levels). Although all the subterranean cities are separated only slightly from the Shadow World—a parallel realm of endless cold twilight—in this city a breach has occurred in the thin border between worlds. If the breach spreads to other cities, and if the undead find their way to the surface. . . .

The prince-paladin must act quickly but carefully. He might want to handle the situation personally to keep it quiet—Rahil has made it clear that Ariya cannot afford to reveal the secret locations of the cities. A small force could probably reach Morikuyu without attracting attention. Perhaps Rahil can somehow seal the breach if the group can guard him from undead attacks. But if the strike fails, matters will look bleak indeed.

the serpent slithers in

Far to the east, among the island domains of the Ajari Deeps, lies the realm of the Serpent. This ancient awnshegh who claims divinity has spent centuries developing his skills in magic, diplomacy, and intrigue. He exerts himself to the utmost in all three areas to capture scions and seize their bloodline strength.

Unseen within his palace labyrinth, the Serpent commands tremendous resources: a network of assassins and thieves called the

Society of the Serpent,
a temple known
as the Sons
of the

Serpent, and an elite army of Serpent Guards. Despite his lack of creativity in names, the Serpent has shown cunning in infiltrating many Khinasi domains. Ariya has remained relatively free of his influence—so far.

Now an informant, a loyal geirhou cooper who lives near the Temple of the Ancients in Ariya's New City district, claims that he has seen agents of the Serpent. Last night the wright ventured outside the walls and into the "Thieves' Market" shanty town, searching for—as he put it—"companionship." He passed near the Midnight's Shadow, a tavern and wine shop (rare and scandalous in Ariya, where coffee houses are the usual gathering places). While answering a call of nature in the shadowed alleyway beside the tavern, the wright noticed two slinking figures emerge from the back, mutter some words, and (so the cooper says) change into snakes! They slithered away into darkness, and the wright ran all the way across town to inform the regent, pausing only to pray at every single temple along the way.

secrets

The Khinasi speak of giving freely to strangers but keeping some things from one's closest friends. Like any regent in Cerilia, a Khinasi ruler keeps state secrets that may help in a crisis. Here are a few that belong to the prince-paladin. The DM may approve others, so players should try inventing a few of their own—so long as they take care to respect the balance of the campaign and don't propose a secret that instantly solves all problems. How much fun would regency be then?

why gerad abdicated

The House of Silent Servants has secret safes that open only at the touch of the rightful regent. After the new prince-paladin gained the throne, his senior vizier showed him one such safe in the regent's bedchamber, then left the room. Inside was a letter:

To my successor:

I give you the Scepter of Office far sooner than I had intended to relinquish it. May you hold it better than I did!

A secret passage within the wall of the this chamber leads to an inconspicuous exit outside the palace walls. The senior vizier will show it to you. Four people now know of it: me, the vizier, you—and one other.

I used this passage often to go unseen into the city. Once, dressed as a merchant, I met a young

woman who sold spices in the bazaar. When I returned to the palace, I had my magicians and priests examine me with meticulous care, suspecting some kind of magical charm, but they found nothing. I had fallen prey to an older and subtler magic than theirs: love.

Even this will not seem so absurd as what follows. I, who have three wives and could easily support a hundred more, pursued an illicit affair with this woman, in violation of honor, piety, and my oaths to Avani. She never knew my true identity. I believe the very shame of the affair made the woman all the more appealing to me.

Ultimately I decided honor required me to marry her, or at least bring her into the House of Silent Servants. I planned this as a surprise to delight her. Six days ago I showed her the secret tunnel entrance and gave her a key, without telling her where it led; she was to use it that night. When she arrived in my chamber, I would reveal all. But she never appeared, that night or since, and she has vanished from the bazaar. My trusted servants sought her across the city without knowing why, but she is gone.

I had the locks changed on the passage entrance and exit, then sought Avani's help in prayer. But the Lady of Reason had deserted me long ago, and only in this crisis did I realize it. I have forfeited the privilege of serving her, and possibly I have endangered everyone in the palace.

No one, save you and I, knows this sordid story. You understand that for the good of Ariya, it must remain secret.

Peace and wisdom on your path,

G.

shandare's daughter

The old mage-king of Mesire, the Emir Yousef ibn Reghil el-Mesir (MKb; W8; Br; major, 26), has pursued formal alliance with Ariya for years without success. His honor is beyond question, but his tiny domain's security is too precarious for Ariya to risk guarantees of protection.

Still, el-Mesir tries. Recently, to impress Ariya's new regent with his domain's ability to gather intelligence, el-Mesir offered a tantalizing secret about High Priestess Shandare of Zikala: Shandare has an illegitimate daughter.

Apparently the priestess had a wayward past before serving Avani. Although the Zikalan Temple permits married women to become priests, Shandare never married; perhaps she did not wish to share power with another. The temple frowns on parents of illegitimate children, and so, many years ago, Shandare gave up her daughter for adoption. Now Shandare has risen so high that she can simply remove the temple's prohibition of

illegitimacy. If el-Mesir speaks truly, Shandare still loves her lost daughter deeply, and wishes to reunite with her. What would the high priestess give for this?

El-Mesir knows who and where the daughter is, but has not told Ariya's prince.

a chance at the red kings


A voice in the night awakened the new prince-paladin. A thin black-clad woman, her face veiled, crouched on the high gilded footboard of his bed. "Don't call your guards," she said. "I mean no harm. Call me Turiye. I know how you can destroy the Red Kings of Aftane—six of them, anyway. Here's the first. Take advantage of this, and I'll bring you more." She tossed a packet of parchment on the bed.

Ignoring the regent's questions, she leaped nimbly to the floor, then jumped headlong out an open window. The prince looked for a body below, a flying shape above—nothing.

The parchment notes identify Arlando el-Adaba (MKb; B10; Re, minor, 15), the Red Herald, as one of the Red Kings. Arlando has a paramour, whom he meets regularly at her home in the Dim Light Quarter of Adaba. Addresses, schedules, his defenses: The notes contain all. With this information Ariya's regent could set up an ambush for Arlando and kill him—if the prince-paladin considers such conduct honorable.

"Six of them, anyway," the midnight visitor said—six of the seven Red Kings of Aftane. Could this woman, Turiye, herself be the seventh?





Ariya faces dangers across its borders, but take care that you do not become a greater danger as prince-paladin. Though its influence has dwindled and enemies threaten its existence, Ariya embodies one of the most successful and interesting cultures in Cerilia. Try to achieve more than simply turning your domain into a war machine.

motivate your people

To overcome Ariyan complacency, speak to them of their history and culture, of the glories that are their legacy, and of the injustices being perpetrated across the borders. Ariyan citizens will never think of the countryside as worthwhile or interesting until they see practical benefits from protecting the land—not something subtle like cheaper beef from the Cattle Dynasties, but more dramatic, like the trade goods that come from distant lands when caravans travel secure routes. As regent, you can popularize these ideas with ceremonies and festivals.

reduce court spending

The state budget teeters on the brink of deficit. Your relatives will squawk, and the guilds who survive off the largesse of the court will moan, and every vizier will offer twelve cogent reasons why the court must be maintained as is—but you have to trim expenses. This step calls for original thinking. Try to devise face-saving ways to reduce your own expenditures and get others to do the same.

avoid a two-front war

At this point, war with Aftane looks inevitable. To the west, however, you can still rescue the situation in Zikala. The problem lies almost entirely with the High Priestess Shandare's zealous religious crusade. With the Sphinx's impregnable domain to the north, Shandare has nowhere to expand except into Ariya or your ally, Binsada.

You might delay her military ambitions by authorizing her to establish the Zikalan Temple of Avani in your border provinces of Kfeira and Tegher. Pacification of a fanatic does not work in the long term, but it might quiet Shandare long enough for you to

advice to the new regent

conclude your war with Aftane and fortify yourself against Shandare's holy armies.

Alternatively, you might find a way to bolster the influence of Zikala's general, Khasan el-Zisef, when he advises the weak-willed Grand Vizier, Omar ibn Tuarim el-Zisef (*MKB; W4; An, major, 36*). Zikalan conspirators undermine Khasan constantly, and so Omar pays little heed to his wise counsel.

ally with mesire—eventually

Ariya's regents have been friendly toward the el-Mesirs for centuries, and the people of Mesire hate all the aggressors that Ariyans hate. Given Mesire's powerful mage-king and its small but well-trained military, it should make an excellent ally. But the tiny two-province state is likely prey for Aftane, corrupt Djafra, or the hideous Black Spear gnolls of the Great Yhan, Garak zul Turbun (*MM; F9; Az, minor, 12*). Perhaps you should wait a few seasons to assess the domain's prospects before making a commitment you cannot—or would prefer not—keep.

war with aftane to the death

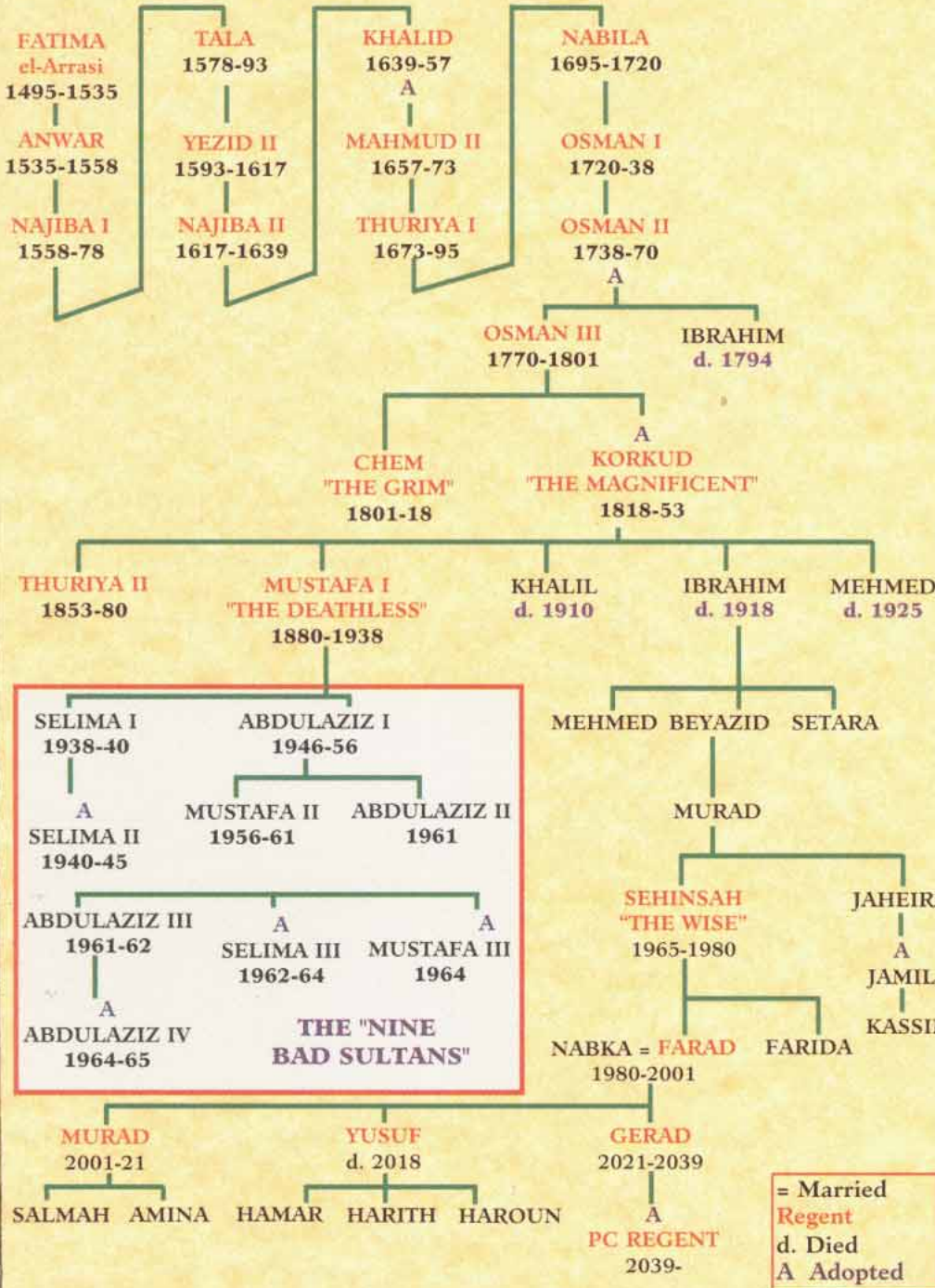
You can achieve nothing lasting in Ariya while your longtime enemy, Aftane, grows to the east and north. Now that the Red Kings have achieved power there, Aftane represents an even greater threat. You already have ample cause for war: the long-standing grievance over your four northern provinces, which Aftane has stolen a dozen times.

When you have pacified Zikala, build your forces, strike quickly and seize Aftane's capital. (You might find help in Mesire.) Find, fight, and dethrone the Red Kings. (You will certainly need aid from adventurers of proven talent.) If possible, destroy the mysterious Brotherhood of Khet. (You may need help from characters who know the ways of rogues.)

Aftane abuts the Tarvan Wastes and several monster-haunted regions. Rather than extend Ariya to these perilous borders, you may elect to let Aftane stay as a puppet domain under leadership of your choosing.

RECENT ANCESTRY OF THE LORD-PRINCE OF ARIYA

Dates are of regency, given in the Masetian Arrival (MA) calendar.

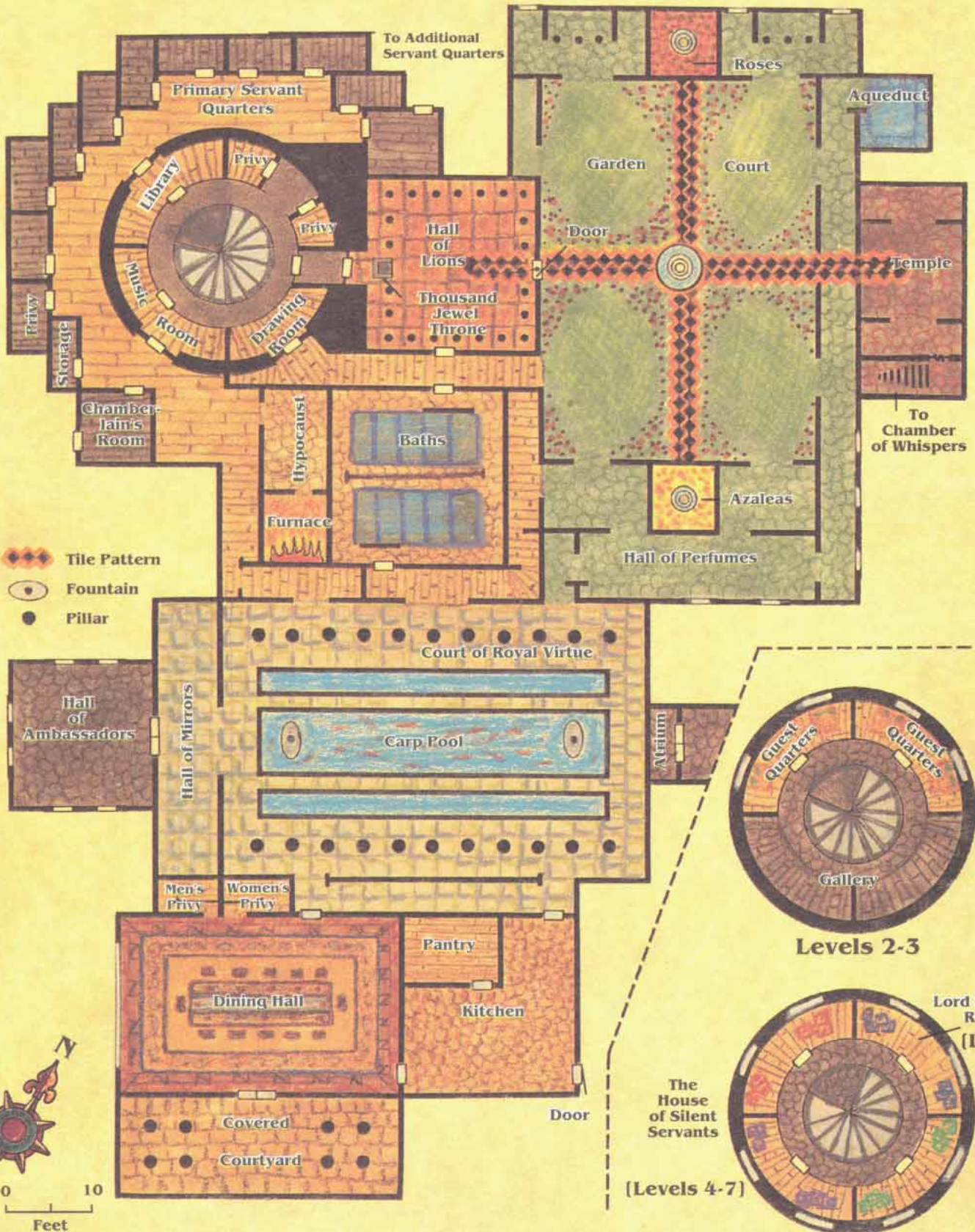


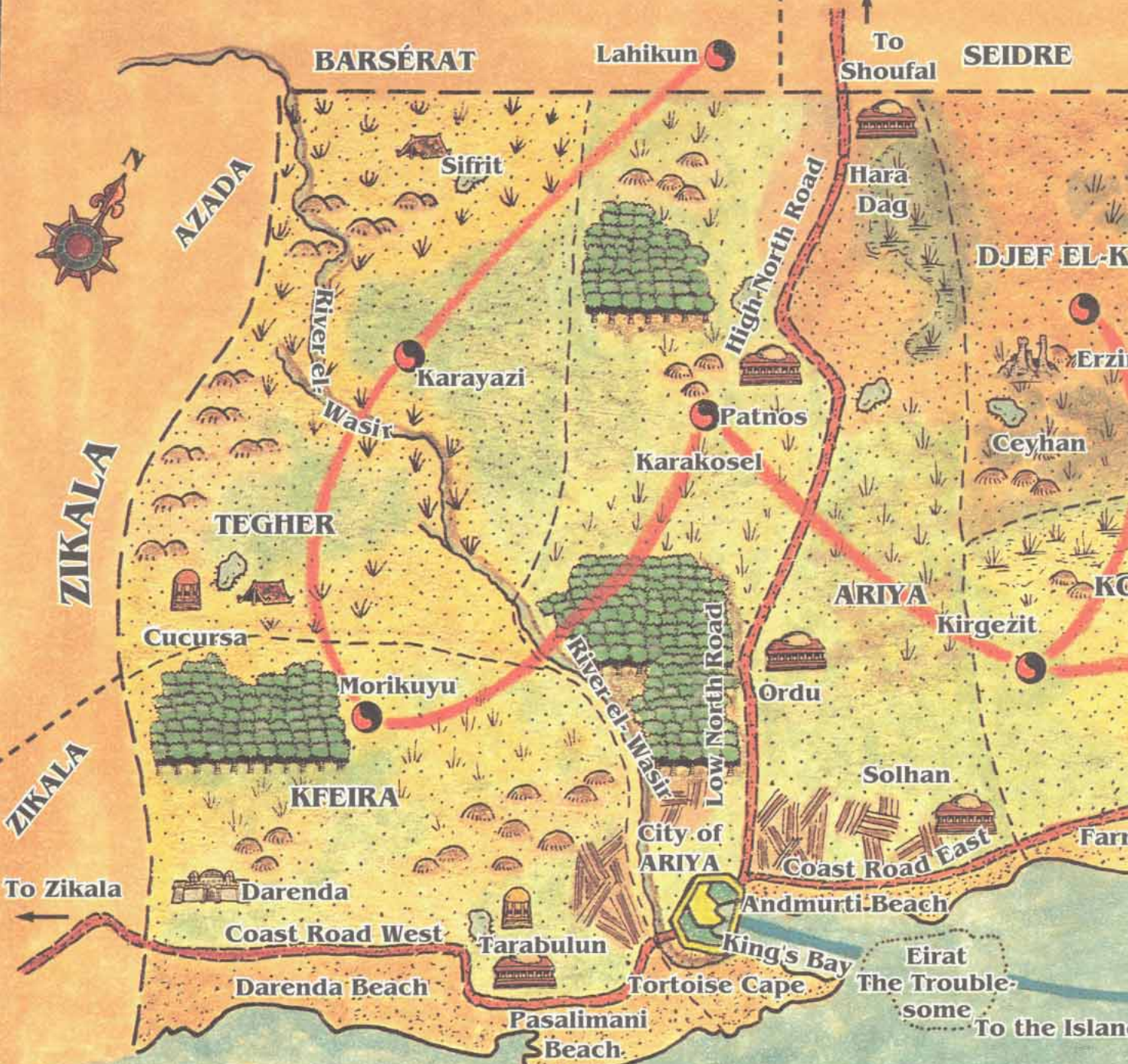
THE RULERS OF ARIYA, 523-1495

1. Rashad I "The Conqueror" (523-535)
2. Khalil I (535-556)
3. Rashad II (556-573)
4. Rashad III (573-601)
5. Aram I (601-619)
6. Aram II (619-642)
7. Khalil II (642-645)
8. Aram III (645-661)
9. Aram IV (661-681)
10. Ibrahim (681-723)
11. Hakim I (723-744)
12. Hakim II (744-760)
13. Orhan I (760-790)
14. Hakim III (790-794)
"The Golden Century"
15. Gunaya (794-845)
16. Fayiz (845-867)
17. Husam (867-890)
18. Julnar I (890-912)
19. Julnar II (912-918)
The Glorious Umarids
20. Umar I (918-941)
21. Umar II (941-966)
22. Latifa (966-968)
23. Umar III (968-993)
24. Umar IV (993-1021)
25. Umar V (1021-1035)
26. Halima (1035-1050)
27. Umar VI (1050-1052)
The Wayward Lords
28. Zobeida (1052-1067)
29. Orhan II (1067-1068)
30. Orhan III (1068-1077)
31. Diyab (1077-1084)
32. Aziza (1084-1095)
33. Samia "the Despicable" (1095-1099)
"The Salvation"
34. Najib I (1099-1130)
35. Najib II (1130-1141)
36. Najib III (1141-1167)
37. Alemsah I (1167-1190)
38. Ahmed I (1190-1198)
39. Alemsah II (1198-1233)
40. Ahmed II (1233-1262)
41. Isa Celebi (1262-1271)
The Line of el-Arrasi
42. El-Arrasi (1271-1311)
43. Abdulmecid I (1311-1344)
44. Jamal I (1344-1376)
45. Jamal II (1376-1395)
46. Jamal III (1395-1402)
47. Abdulmecid II (1402-1412)
48. Badiat I (1412-1423)
49. Akbar "Unwise" (1423-1425)
50. Badiat II (1425-1435)
51. Farida (1435-1466)
52. Yezid I (1466-1478)
53. Mahmud I (1478-1495)

= Married
Regent
d. Died
A Adopted

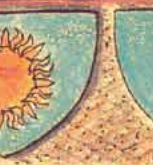
THE TOWER OF MORNING





**SEA OF THE GOLDEN SUN
(BAÏR EL-MEHARE)**





Agradil
2/3

Khousaba
2/3

Aghedir
0/5

the Stone Field
0/5

Rafr
1/4

Brokendale
0/0

Irbouda
2/3

Tarvanian Hills

Ras Ghineb
1/6

Ber Tarva
0/5

Meid Tarvai
1/4

Ras Bedra
0/7

Shoufal
5/0

Jeifel
1/4

Oused
2/3

Busada
2/3

Dourat
0/5

AFTANE

Kafrin
1/4

Aftane
6/0

Ras As
0/7

Deired
0/5

Houran
0/5

Seidre
1/4

Barserat
1/5

Kafrin
1/4

Fara
Zhainge
2/3

hara
3

Azada
1/4

Togher
2/3

Djef el-Kadir
1/4

Assarif
1/4

Mecas

ARIYA

Adaba
4/1

Alhazir
2/3

Kfeira
3/4

Ariya
7/0

Kouzir
2/3

Azadas
1/4



Player's Secrets of

ARIYA



by Allen Varney

On the shore of the Sea of the Golden Sun lies Ariya, the oldest city in all Cerilia. The City of Temples and its surrounding provinces form the jewel of Khinasi history, learning, and culture. From this land of ancient magic emerged the Great King el-Arrasi, who brought glory to Ariya seven centuries ago.

Now Ariya's citizens turn to you, their newly crowned lord-prince, to restore the city-state to its former eminence. Tested by war-hungry neighbors, religious zealots, and a shrinking treasury, Ariya's ruler must champion light and reason if he is to guide the realm into a new Golden Age.

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- ✦ The story of Ariya's pivotal role in Cerilian history.
- ✦ Facts about the state's geography, holdings, and economics.
- ✦ Information about the Khinasi people, lands, and culture that supplements the *Atlas of Cerilia* in the BIRTHRIGHT™ boxed set.
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- ✦ Secrets and strategy tips to help the new prince keep his seat on the Thousand Jewel Throne.

This sourcebook is designed for players who want to take the role of Ariya's regent—a paladin or lawful good priest. Players of nonregent characters who live in or come from Ariya will also find this book useful.

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