

in the Prime; or by sailing across the seas to an island (the island isn't necessarily found in the Prime); usually traveling west plays a part in all three methods. Traveling with a deific guide or messenger makes the trip much shorter and easier... not that one generally wants to get to one of the domains of the Netherworld quickly! Most of the domains of the Netherworld are connected to one another by long and terrifying paths or currents, but some are most difficult to find, even by those who are supposed to be condemned there...

SCARLET HELLS: The most prominent of the Netherworld domains is that of the Scarlet Hells, ruled by Lucifer, King of All Devils, invariably reached through the Shadowlands via a deep pit or long, tortuous cave. These infamous Seven Pits have made their way into virtually every mythology of the Wilderlands. Many souls of those who failed their patron deity end up here, gathered by devils who regularly seek them out in the Shadowlands. Many more make their way here through deals with said devils, who gladly trade wealth and power to foolish mortals for their eternal souls. There are many paths out from the uppermost pit that lead to the domains of other deities and beings of the Netherworld.

HADES: Juno the Damned oversees the spirits of the condemned followers of the Orichalan Pantheon in Hades, condemned to do so in the place of her slain brother/lover Pluto; the great Pit of Tartarus at the center of her realm is prison to the soul of her former lover, husband, and co-conspirator, Pluto, as well as their forbears, the Elder Titans. The bridge to Hades is guarded by her son, Ares the Twice Damned and his pet two-headed dragon; there are no walls, as the River Styx surrounds the whole, and any who seek to cross it are lost. The souls of the damned wander and stumble within, bereft of memory and thought.

THE 10,000 HELLS: The pantheon of the Karakhans of Karak is vast and ancient, and has adopted countless elements from the faiths of people the Karakhans have conquered and assimilated. Their various hells are each concerned with the punishment of a particular sin or shortcoming; whether there are truly 10,000, none can say, as man is always inventing new sins. When the dead are judged in Yama's Court in the Shadowlands, they are sent here for their punishments. Some are condemned for all eternity, others merely for a time, to expiate their sins, and are then reincarnated and given another chance at life. The 10,000 Hells are run by a vast bureaucracy, like the Celestial Kingdom, though of course being run by devils it is often corrupt...

THE CELESTIAL REALMS

The Celestial Realms are the homes of the gods and souls of goodly or, at least, generally non-evil disposition. They are usually found in the Shadowlands by climbing up a mountain, by sailing across distant waters, traversing singing sands, or by walking west far beyond the pits of the Netherworld. Again, a deific guide can get a soul to a Celestial Realm far quicker than a soul could find it itself; time and space have little meaning for deific beings on such missions. Unlike the Netherworld, the various domains of the Celestial Realms are rarely connected directly; one must traverse the Shadowlands to travel from Elysion of the Orichalan Pantheon to the Heavenly Gardens of Mitra or to the Isles of Aaru of the Ghinorian Pantheon.

ISLES OF AARU: This is the Celestial Realm of the Ghinorian Pantheon, a series of islands amidst pure clear waters devoid of monstrous beasts and filled with fishes and birds. Osiris and Isis rule here, with each of the islands being a domain of one or more of the Enneadim gods. The singular blight in the domain is the island formerly home to Set and Nephtys; it is now little more than wasteland, with ruins of once happy palaces and homes, and the weeping souls of the dead who refuse to leave the fallen domain. Nephtys now hold her court, and the souls of her followers find their peace, in her own palace in the Shadowlands.

ELYSION: These isles are the final resting place of the spirits of the heroic dead of the followers of the Orichalan Pantheon. They are a place of peace and contentment, of quiet rest and boundless joy. The largest island is home to Mount Olympus, a vast mountain upon which the Orichalan gods make their home, led and ruled by Zeus as father and

king. While peace reigns in the fields below, Olympus is not as pleasant a place as it once was, for Hera abandoned Zeus for his brother Pluto, whom she slew in their marriage bed, and took over rulership of Hades to spite her former husband. During the ensuing war Zeus and Apollo were also slain, and were rescued from the Pit of Tartarus by heroes of Elysion led by Hercules; neither have been the same ever since.

THE ELEMENTAL REALMS

The Elemental Realms are regions of pure elemental energy, where the Shadowlands that reflect the Prime in turn become elementally pure; the Elemental Realms can be said to be contiguous with a related location on the Prime. An Elemental Realm of water, for example, can be found at the heart of every ocean and sea; an Elemental Realms of earth exist deep in the heart of vast mountain ranges; Elemental Realms of air are found beyond the winds; Elemental Realms of fire and cold are found where deserts and wastelands predominate; and Elemental Realms of faerie and fey can be found wherever vast stands of forest and meadow exist on Gaia. Whether the Elemental Realms reflect the reality of the Prime or whether the lands of the Prime are fed by the elemental realms of the Shadowlands, none can truly say; it is probably a bit of both, one feeding the other. Note that a soul that dies in such a region on the Prime does not automatically appear in an Elemental Realm in the Shadowlands; like other Outer Planes, the Elemental Realms can only be reached through a dangerous, challenging journey.

SEA OF FIRE: Mirroring the Infinite Desert of the Wilderlands, the Sea of Fire is an Elemental Realm that is home to creatures of pure fire, flame, and smoke. The efreet live in the City of Brass, built atop an isle of brass at the center of the sea. The Great Temple of Iblis stands at the center of the city, dedicated to the great devil that tempted all mortals into sin. The Sea of Fire is usually home to lost souls of the Dorin peoples of the Infinite Desert, as the efreet seek them out when they are lost in the Shadowlands, for they much enjoy the scolding of the damned in the flames of the Sea of Fire.

DOMHAN LLYR: The domain of Manannan, God of the Seas, and his wife, Fand, Queen of the Sea Fey, this watery realm can be reached from the Shadowlands contiguous with any seas of the Wilderlands, though is easiest to reach near the mouth of the River Roglaroon. Its waters surround and protect the Isles of the Blessed, the afterlife of the heroic and worthy souls of the Tharbrian Pantheon. Manannan or his servants guide the dead in their boats or upon their smoky steeds from the Shadowlands to the Isles over the waters of the Domhan Llyr.

DEMONIC REALMS

There is yet a further set of Outer Planes that touch upon the Shadowlands of Gaia — the Demonic Realms, which are not a part of the Netherworld, nor are they a part of the Celestial Realms, nor still are they quite a form of Elemental Realm. The Demonic Realms are to other, distant worlds in the Prime as these Outer Planes are to Gaia. The Demonic Realms are accessible only through great difficulties, as one must first travel to the Shadowlands, then must use terrible eldritch magics to travel through the Void of the Shadowlands and beyond Unknown Stars to get to these distant planes. There the Demon Gods rule, and each has its own domain in the warped regions between the reality of the Prime and the stuff of Primal Chaos. Little is known of the Demonic Realms, save that they make even the darkest hells of the Netherworld seem sane by comparison.

PLANAR VS. PLANETARY

Many creatures that residents of the Wilderlands would consider to be extraplanar devils, celestials, or elementals are merely from another planet in the Prime, not from one of the Outer Planes. Even sages and wizards are often confused by the difference, the latter dying in confusion wondering why their arcane protections against extraplanar beings failed so miserably. Demons, as well as various aberrations, are usually extra-planetary creatures, or more properly descended from such creatures, and are no more or less native to the Wilderlands than humans, dwarves, and halflings... indeed, most humanoid races, including that of Man, are as foreign to Gaia as are the demon races!

DEMONS VS. DEVILS

Demons are a wide variety of related extra-planetary species native to the Prime, and are descended from creatures originally from one of a number of worlds either near the Markab home world or near another world of the Prime too close to the Primal Chaos. Like the Markabs they are terrifyingly different in quality from other races — their blood is a black ichor, poisonous to non-demonic life forms; they have strange life cycles; and they are innately highly magical and physically malleable. They are also, through their highly magical nature, readily and easily summoned by wizards, witches, and other spell casters, and are eminently useful as minions and servitors. The most powerful demons — demon-kings and the minions of the Demon Gods — are also extraplanar creatures from the Demon Realms. Such creatures are extra-planetary and extraplanar, though the vast majority of demons are neither, as most demons of the Wilderlands are native-born and bred to Gaia in the Demon Empires of the south.

Devils are extraplanar creatures native to the Netherworld, and are extraplanar beings of widely diverse nature and forms. Devils are spiritual creatures that can take many different forms on the Prime. They are innately magical and readily summoned to serve clerics, wizards, and witches. Demons relate to devils in the same way as other mortal races, being no more or less friendly or inimical innately; the demons of the Great Horned Empire and Lesser Horned Empire practice devil worship, their temples dedicated to Lucifer, Arioch, Mammon, Moloch, or one of the related Devil-Gods.

The demons of the Horned Empires confuse the issue even further; as they worship devils, they grow powerful through devilry and service to their fiendish masters. Thus, during countless millennia the souls of many demons that end up in the Scarlet Hells have worked their way up the infernal hierarchy, and many devils take on demonic form by their nature. There are also teeming multitudes of lesser demon souls that are used as fodder by the devil princes in their wars. These demon-devils are perhaps more often summoned than true devils, and so have further muddied the situation... let the unwise summoner beware!

SOL: THE SUN

Sol, Gaia's sun, appears little different than the sun of our own world. It is a great orange-yellow sphere that appears to rise in the east and appears to set in the west. Many peasants believe that the sun revolves around Gaia, but most educated folk know otherwise; even druidic priests rarely make any attempts to hold a pretense of geocentrism, though there are a few cults that continue to hold such odd beliefs. There are many gods associated with Sol, most claiming to have sole jurisdiction over its powers. In the Wilderlands proper, the major solar deities include Adorak Tau, Apollo, Belenus, Mitra, Ra-Harakhte, Surya, Tezcatlipoca, Umannah, Seker, and Shamash. Mitra and Adorak Tau have a special hatred for each

other, as do Umannah and Apollo, while Seker and Ra-Harakhte are brother gods of the Enneadim. Many believe the Celestial Realms of these gods are actually within the sun, or that the sun is merely a reflection of their city/citadel/face, etc.

HEAVEN'S BRIDGE

The second-most important of the celestial bodies, before even the moons and the planets, is the great planetary ring known as Heaven's Bridge; to followers of Odin, Thor, and other gods of the Valonar Pantheon it is known as Bifröst, the Rainbow Bridge, and it is said that many of the gods use the bridge to walk between the worlds. This ring appears to viewers as a curving band across the sky, a finger-wide glittering road crossing from horizon to horizon, high above the moons. From the Wilderlands proper, it is visible in the southern skies. It is visible day and night — by day it appears a shimmering blue with a twinkling of other colors flaring here and there, and at night it dances with all the colors of the rainbow. The entire ring turns a deep gold, even by day, once every 52 years, an event that is met with wonder and horror, depending on the circumstances and superstitions of the viewer. The cycles of the ring are used by many cultures as a means to mark the passing of cycles and ages. Heaven's Bridge last shimmered gold 10 years ago, in 4423 BCCC, and will do so once again in 4475. Gods particularly associated with Heaven's Bridge include Anubis, Brighid, Hathor, Heimdall, Nephtlys, Shang-Ta, and Yog. None are said to possess the Bridge; they are said to guard it or to be the guide across it, but never possess it.

UNDER THREE MOONS

Gaia has three moons. The closest moon is Gorm, a blue-green orb that appears to be about 2/3 the size of Earth's Moon. Sages with telescopes can readily discern continents and oceans upon Gorm's surface, and many speculate at the civilizations and monsters that live there. Gorm revolves around Gaia every 20 days, and rotates on its axis every 30 hours. No major gods claim to represent Gorm; sages believe this is because the gods of the peoples of the moon would never agree to a god of Gaia representing them. The fact that no gods of Gorm have ever made themselves known has little bearing on this theory. Some sages believe that Demon-Gods such as Demogorgon, Dyzan, K'tau, Mynarthitep, Orcus, Tsathoggus, Xiim-Chaasath, Xirchiriog, Yan-Thar, and Yog either are from or at least reside on Gorm. Summoners find the phases and houses of Gorm to be central in many of their spells and rituals, especially those of the Demon-Gods. Oddly, the moon is holy to many tribes of Cavemen, who hold it to be the Land of the Spirits or the Great Hunting Wood. Fey, too, hold the Blue Moon in some esteem, holding festivals when it is full and hiding in fear when it is new.

The second moon, Luna, is the largest of the moons, appearing from the surface to be the same size as Earth's moon and at



the same distance, and is a silvery-white color, pockmarked by grayish-blue seas and craters. Various cultures hold that different creatures can be seen in the patterns of craters and seas. Luna is in synchronous rotation with Gaia, eternally presenting the same face to its mother world during its 28-day revolution. It is the only moon of any importance to lycanthropes and, coincidentally enough, the only of the three moons to appear in the Shadowlands. It is also of great importance to witches, whose powers wax and wane with the phases of Luna. Luna is held to be of importance to, controlled by, or the embodiment of various gods, including Alinah, Artemis, Nanna, Kuvartma, Nephhtys, Rhiannon, Thoth, and Yarikh.

The third moon, Ioun, has an eccentric orbit that passes from within the orbits of Gorm and Luna out beyond those circuits to the nearest reaches of Heaven's Bridge, completing one orbit every 90 days. At its furthest it appears to be no larger than any of the countless stars in the sky; at its closest, it appears five times larger than the nearest planet, about the size of a thumbnail at arm's length. Its coloration is seemingly random, and dances through the full spectrum by the hour or the day, sometimes into wavelengths not visible to mortal eyes. When Ioun is closest to Gaia, stars fall in profusion from the sky, and often these meteorites have Ioun stones at their core or spawn monsters through their proximity. The most powerful, unusual, and dangerous stars fall when Gorm and Luna are full or new in unison while Ioun is at perigee, a very rare occurrence. Sages believe that Ioun touches Heaven's Bridge when it is furthest from Gaia, and the stars that fall are pieces of the bridge that broke off during the collision. As Ioun is often quite important in major arcane rituals, it has gained the epithet "Wizard's Moon," and thus is associated at times with gods of arcane wisdom and power such as Bachontoi, Dyrantil, Hercon, Myrddyn, Tar-Ark, and Vicon. This moon is also of especial interest to the elves and followers of Cilborith, for they measure their calendar by its revolutions.

Neither Gorm nor Ioun seem have any significant effect on Gaia's tides; it is no mystery to the majority of the peoples of Gaia, for so has it ever been, but some sages do wonder...

[Note: The planets will be dealt with in a later article concerning the various astrological systems of the Wilderlands, which requires far more room than is available here.]

GAIA: THE EARTH MOTHER

The vast majority of the mortals of the Wilderlands would never refer to their world as a "planet," even were most of them aware of the "world" further than the next village over, as such scientific concerns are far beyond their ken. Many believe the world, in fact, to be a flat plane or bowl or circle of earth, around which flows a vast ocean of water. Some myths proclaim that the world rides upon the back of a gigantic elephant, or turtle, or is carried by a giant, or other such cosmic-level mythical beast. Sometimes even, deep in their cups after long hours of labor in the fields, folk might argue whether the giant himself rides upon an elephant, or if perhaps there are two turtles, one carrying the land, the other carrying the sun. In the morning such frivolities are forgotten again in the back-breaking labors of the fields.

Priests and their ilk are usually as ignorant and uncaring as the peasantry; most of them deal not with this world, but with the next — or with the things of this world that frivolous knowledge profits them not. So they care not whether this world is an orb circling a nuclear fireball or a dish carried on the back of a tremendous snail — so long as neither belief interferes with their books of canon and their power. It is the druids and the wizards and sages (who long ago eschewed the dangerous title of "Philosopher") who keep going on and on about the world being a giant sphere in an infinite vacuum, all whirling through space and time on an infinite route about the sun. Many druids seek a deeper understanding of and communion with the planet itself for they know beyond any doubt that their world is a deity, indeed perhaps the greatest and most potent deity of this world.

For the world of the Wilderlands is a living world. Not of flesh, blood, and bone, or even of life on a level that mortal beings could truly

comprehend, but life it has. This living life force of the planet has powers such that even the gods themselves fear. Long before the evolution of life above, Gaia arose between the warm core and the cold, frozen surface. She it was that first formed life upon the world's surface, and she remains its most fervent protector, being it life sprung from her creation or otherwise.

Among the druids and their faithful Gaia is known as the Great Mother, the Earth Mother, or the Mother-of-All. Those who worship her in her evil aspects consider her to be the Dark Mother, while those who focus on her goodly aspects consider her to be the Good Mother. Those who see her works as orderly refer to her as Mother Nature, while those who revel in destruction call her the Mother of Chaos. Many of her most devout followers are vehemently anti-technology, seeking simple agrarian or even hunter/gatherer lifestyles. There are few cultures or races in the world that do not revere her, fear her, or at least seek to placate her.

Other deities also hold Gaia — the soils, winds, rains, waters, seasons, plants, animals, and other natural native elements of the world — to be their domain, or at the least, various regions and aspects of it. Some work with and acknowledge Gaia, others work against her, and some operate in spite of her.

Allied gods include Ayu, Beynorn, Brighid, Cilborith, Crondussa, Dagan, Daghda, Demeter, Dionysos, Eqni, Eostre, Frey, Freya, Frigga, Indra, Idun, Kadrim, Limtram, Losborst, Manannan, Mesha, Selanii, Silvanus, Suthak, Teth Tufa, Teros, Trameron, Vala Tar, Vidmor, and Zarkon. Allies are those who work with Gaia to preserve and expand life, or at least, protect and expand specific forms of life without upsetting the natural balance.

Enemy gods include Armadad Bog, Hanuman, Hel, Huhuetotl, Ithwynd, Jedadad Bird, Kali, Kale Kala, Kolrak Mar, Lord Skortch, Midor, Mosinylo, Natch Ur, Ostyed, Set, Shashuk, Surtur, Yam, Zin Naou, and of course all the Demon Gods. Enemies seek to destroy life and eliminate any balance, exterminate whole races or life forms, or so greatly expand their own elements as to destroy the balance.

Neutral gods include Aegir, Agni, Aram Kor, Artemis, Bandorak, Bast, Bukera, Dunatis, Erion, Isis, Kazadarum, Modron, Odin, Osiris, Pan, Partressa, Rudra, Scodem, Tangadorn, Tengri, Thor, Thrym, Tlaloc, The Toad, and Ullr. Neutrals may ignore or acknowledge Gaia and her supremacy, and even pay her respects and tribute from time to time, but they generally go their own way; however, none seeks to purposefully upset the balance of life.

THE CONTINENTS

Gaia is an Earth-sized world with three continents, innumerable islands, five great oceans, and no less than a dozen major seas. The planet is currently undergoing a rapid warming phase, recovering only in the last thousand years from a 30,000 year ice age brought about by the Uttermost War.

Rhadamanthia, the continent upon which the Wilderlands of High Adventure is found, is the smallest of the three continents of Gaia. It alone stands in the northern hemisphere, some 3,000 miles from the Searing Seas south of the Demon Empires to the Great Glacier in the north, and approximately 3,500 miles wide, from the Rhadamanthys Ocean in the west to the Tempest Ocean in the east. An unknown range of land still lies under countless tons of ice to the north; the equator being not too far south of the southern coast, an area easily twice the size of the ice-free regions of the continent might yet stand beneath the ice.

The Wilderlands proper sits right at the center of the continent; were it not for the Winedark Sea and the Sea of Five Winds (inlets of the Silver Sea, itself an arm of the vast Ethereal Ocean to the southeast) the entire region would be covered by the sands of the Infinite Desert. As it is, the warm waters from the southeast provide a

temperate to semi-tropical climate to the Wilderlands south of the Uther Pentwegern Sea, save where magical micro-climates (such as the Ament Tundra) prevail.

Little is known about the other continents; most sages have difficulty finding out what is going on in the neighboring village, let alone halfway across the globe! However, legends speak of:

- A land where dragons and fey still rule as of old;
- A land where orcs are the dominant race and have built a great empire on magic and technology;
- A land where nothing living remains and only the dead walk, day and night;
- The Elven Isles, a series of large islands beyond the sunset where the elves rule an empire in the midst of a vast ocean. The great number of texts and tomes that mention this land mean either that it is quite real and can be found somewhere in the Rhadamanthys Ocean to the far west, or that it is merely a common and overwrought myth...

RHADAMANTHIA

Rhadamanthia is divided into fifteen Districts, each the size of the Wilderlands proper (i.e., consisting of 18 Campaign Region Maps).

THE NORTHERN LANDS

To the north of the Wilderlands are the lands dominated and defined by the Great Glacier a.k.a. the Great Sea of Ice, which in some areas will freeze an unprotected man solid in a matter of seconds. The Great Escarpment, a mind-boggling sheer cliff that stands 3,000 to 6,000 feet from base to summit, runs the entire length of the continent along a crooked line 50 to 250 miles north of Valon. The lands between the escarpment and the glacier are a mix of taiga and tundra, with several important regions of much, much warmer climates, due to magical and deific interference. South of the escarpment the regions are cold in winter, moderate in summer, with the muddy, mucky lands being the haunt of giant insects during the wet, warm season. These lands are, for the most part, savage and backward in the extreme, with fierce humanoids, Cavemen, and degenerate tribes being the rule and civilization above the Stone Age being the very rare exception.

DISTRICT 1: THE LAND OF GREAT LAKES

The far northwestern section of the continent is a series of lakes, swamps, forests, glacial plains, taiga, and tundra dominated by savage Ice Priestesses and rime hags; ice, snow, and frost giants; white dragons; and mammoths and mastodons, woolly rhinos and baluchitheriums, saber-toothed tigers and terror birds, giant elk and bears, and similar cold-loving megafauna. Strange creatures live in the forests and swamps, which glow and set off strange mists. The aptly-named Valley of Death is a vast scar, deep into the flesh of Gaia, where only the dead may live, and the living will die. The Dust Devil Waste is a cold desert of ash and dust, site of countless ruins of utterly ancient and long-lost civilizations. The only living civilization of any note is found along the ocean shore, where the warm waters from the south create a much warmer climate. Here can be found dozens of human, demihuman, and humanoid tribes and minor kingdoms, founded over long centuries by escaped slaves from the Giant Lands. The largest settlement is the city of Freebooter Haven, a free-wheeling community of pirates who prey upon the trade between the Giant Lands, the Elven Isles, and the various Demon States of the far south.

DISTRICT 2: THE FROZEN LANDS

The Frozen Lands are a continuation of the least-pleasant and coldest aspects of the Great Lakes region. It is the heartland of the civilization of the Ice Priestesses, with five major settlements in the far north, two along the shores of the Frigid Ocean, which is iced-over nine months of the year. These hoary eldritch haridans are served by winter wolves, yeti, and white dragons, and fear only the wild remorhaz and freedom-loving frost giants of the untamed tundra and glaciers. South of the kingdoms of the

Ice Priestesses are lands roamed by megafauna and monstrous beasts; dinosaurs are not uncommon in the region around the Great Hot Springs Lake, at the center of a warm zone of forests and swamps created by countless hot springs, all surrounded by fumarole-ridden hills, volcanic cones, and lava fields. In the far south, in the lands below the great escarpment, a savage semblance of civilization can be found upon the Sea of Grass and in the Land of Beasts, where Amazon, Tharbrian, and nomad tribes of a dozen other nations crisscross the lands following vast herds while seeking to avoid saber-toothed beasts and saurian raptors alike. Only in the northeast, in the foothills of the Mammoth Mountains, is any true civilization found, and that the harsh and unforgiving society of the Alvar, the Blue Elves of Valonaria, which are extending their domain west, showing no mercy to beast or Ice Priestess alike.

DISTRICT 3: VALONARIA

Immediately to the north of the Wilderlands and south of the Great Escarpment is Valonaria, the domain of the Avalonians and their savage Valonar cousins. The great northern city-states of Val-Torsh, Valfodthr, Valamala, Valoria, and Valmidthra, each the equal of Valon itself, are known only in legend to the southern peoples. The savage lands between the fiefdoms of the Avalonian city-states are home to various tribes of semi-nomadic Valonar, as is the Lower Ukulan Sea below Sûrya Falls. The Ice Temple of Aram Kor sits atop a glacier in the mountains of a vast island between the eastern and western arms of the falls. The lands north of the Great Escarpment, including the Upper Ukulan Sea and the lands and glacier between it and the Frigid Ocean, are the domain of the Alvar, or Blue Elves, a tall, mighty sea and ice-faring people. Their cities in the Mammoth Mountains are each built as fortresses, with walls of vast stones mortared in the blood of their enemies. To the east stands the long series of hills and crags known as the Saber-Tooth Hills, home to giant creatures of all kinds; even the trolls of the region are huge, brethren to giants, and many-headed, each head filled with great sharp saber-like teeth. White dragons, snow beasts, and yeti live in the icy crags, while volcanoes are home to red dragons and stranger fauna.

DISTRICT 4: VANARAYA

Between the Ukulan Sea and the Blue Crystal Sea stands the Lost Land of Vanaraya. Warmed for long millennia by divine magic, and kept a virtual paradise by the will of the gods, centuries ago the Vanarayans sinned, and lost command over their lands. Dinosaurs, dragons, and other monstrous beasts were loosed by the vengeful gods against the people, and only a chosen penitent few were spared the gods' wrath. These chosen few today sleep within the Great Glacier, frozen for an age until the sins of their brethren have been expiated with a hundred generations of suffering. The descendents of their cousins live today in primitive clans in the great tropical forest, still protected from the great cold by their nameless gods. There they are stalked by Cavemen, giant saurian beasts, giant insects, and creatures out of a time long forgotten. South of the Lost Land and north of the Great Escarpment is Dragon Bone Valley, a vast scar in the earth, said to be the last resting place of the Dragons of Rhadamanthia. To the east of the great valley are the Steppes of Sorrow, where many ruins of cities and villages may be found; these belonged to a very advanced civilization, with metal-shod towers and horseless carriages of arcane and eldritch make. The center of each major ruin is a tall stepped pyramid, atop which is a ring of unknown metal 100 feet across; most of these rings are shattered, some into mere shards, others only partially, but a few still stand, and a mere handful are said to still glow strange colors from time to time. The largest ruin stands not upon the escarpment, but further south, along the shores and under the waters of the Sea of the Frozen Dead, is a vast ruin that dwarfs those of the plains; here are many pyramids and scores of rings. The many demons, dragons, undead, and other foul creatures have kept this ruin hidden from the sight of men for countless centuries.

DISTRICT 5: THE TEMPEST LANDS

To the northeast, beyond the Blue Crystal Sea, melting ice from the Great Glacier reveals the ancient ruined cities of the forebears of