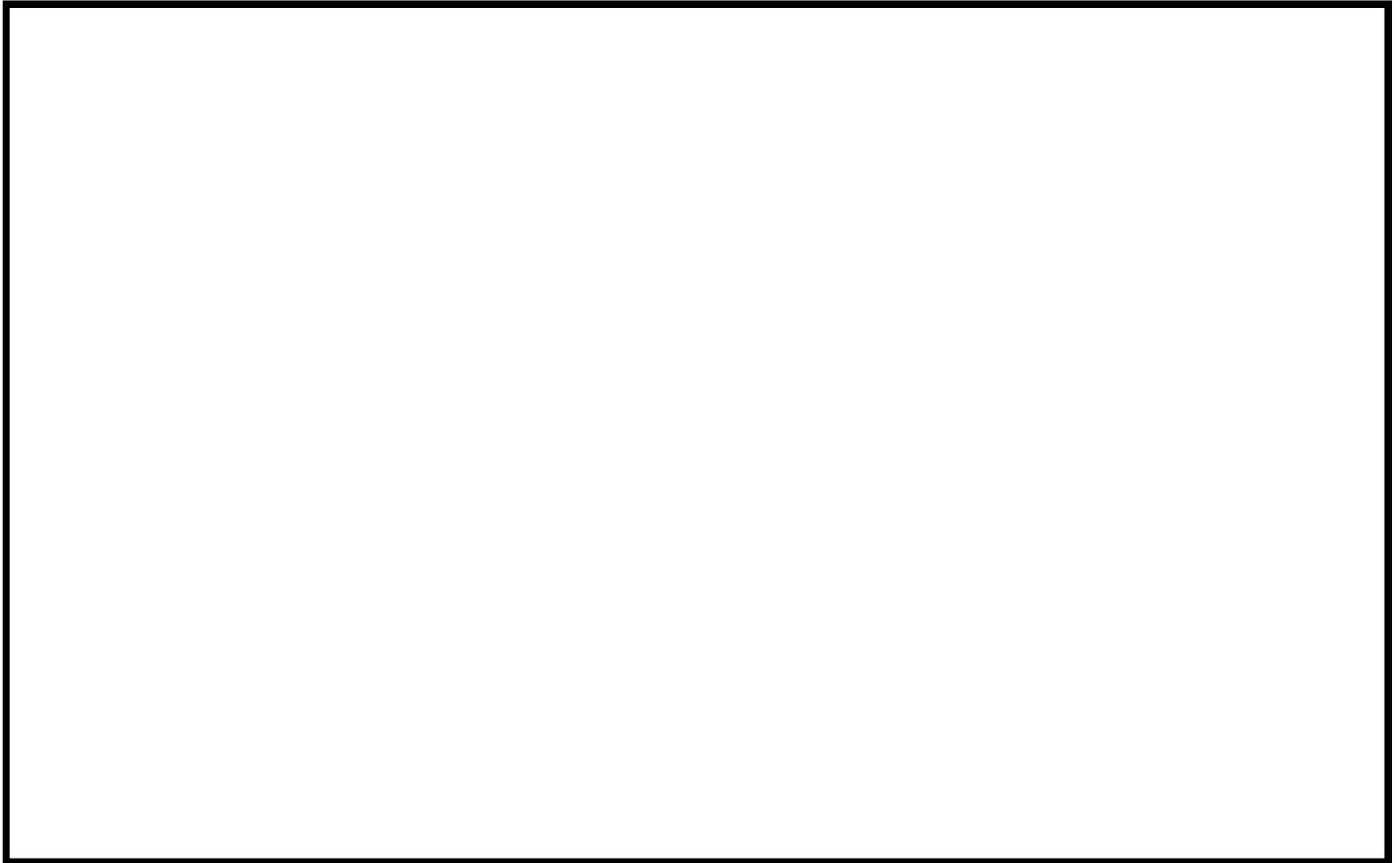


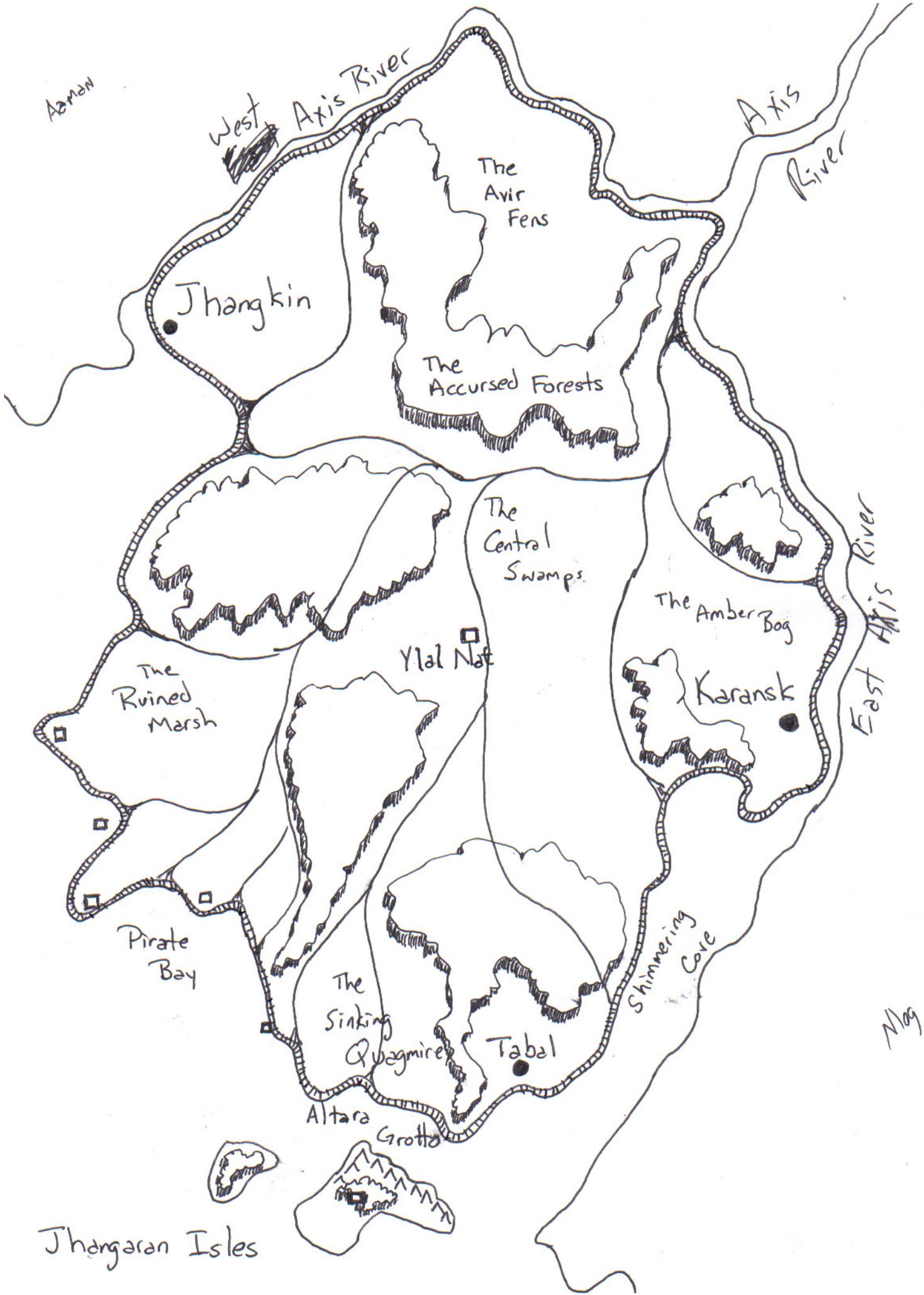


JHANGARA

Douglas Bramlett



Book Four of the Lost Books Of Talislanta



Aman

West Axis River

Axis River

Jhangkin

The Avir Fens

The Accursed Forests

The Central Swamps

The Ruined Marsh

Ylal Nat

The Amber Bog

Karansk

East Axis River

Pirate Bay

The Sinking Quagmire

Tabal

Shimmering Cove

Altara Grotto

Jhangaran Isles

Nlog

CHAPTER ONE

The History and Land

To Our Most Vigilant Father, Aaran, Abbot of Lash of Aa Monastery from your humble and holy Brother, Aallan, Holy Bearer of Aa's Light in the Southern Jungles. Father Aaran, the savages that dwell here in the swamps across the Axis river from Alm are in desperate need of our aid. Having long been cut off from the wisdom and glory that is Aa by the river, the swamps, and the pestilential life, these pitiful wretches are appallingly ignorant. However, by the pervasive light of Aa I have been able to pierce the clouds of darkness, ignorance, and godlessness and make some headway. In spite of this there have been difficulties because the natives lack of education. In the Jhangaran's native use of the common tongue both "history" and "land" carry the same meaning. Understand that and you begin to understand the Jhangarans.

Excerpt from a missive from the Aamanian missionary Aaran to the Abbot of Alm.

HISTORY

Jhangara is a huge area of swampland bounded by the twin forks of the Axis River. These swamps are in part the delta formed by these two branches of the Axis, but the land in this southern region is dotted with a variety of bogs and jungles. The past of what is now the land of Jhangara is largely a matter of the guesswork of antiquity scholars. Aiding them with the matter of clues and conjecture are a number of ruins and artifacts lost amongst the swamps, shunned and avoided by the superstitious natives.

The Forgotten Age

The conditions of the Wild Races during the millennia preceding the Great Disaster are a matter largely unknown to intellectuals. While numerous legends, tall tales, and superstitions still extent date back to these times, they are largely ignored by civilized folk as unfounded ramblings.

Time Before Time

There is little known about the swamps of Jhangara from the Time Before Time, in part due to the widespread illiteracy of the Jhangarans. However, hidden throughout the mires, bogs, and fens of the land of Jhangara are numerous ruins that date back to ages of antiquity. The oldest of these structures show

evidence of huge complexes are made of both stone and wood, and lie half-submerged along the coast of Jhangkin Bay and the Jhangaran Isles. Scholars of the distant past have learned to separate these structures from the occasional Archaen remains by their architectural oddities and interior carvings. Unfortunately, the majority of these ruins have suffered extensive injury from either the encroaching jungles or from the ever-constant battery of the sea.

Of the structures built that have survived, many of them display evidence of great architectural skill. Rooms and passageways seem to flow one into another in an almost organic fashion. The smoothly flowing lines of these buildings are largely constructed out of stone, although constructions combining rock and coral have been found. The various niches and crannies throughout these buildings seem to suggest that the populace used scintilla much as modern Talislantans do: as a system of illumination. In addition to tools, including weapons, made out of carved bone, shell, and coral, explorers have found evidence that the natives were literate. Artifacts such as bone quills, carved ink-wells, and the occasional carved inscription, despite being largely illegible, further underline this claim. The majority of treasure looted from these sites prominently display all manner of pearls, including the rare violet pearl from the quaga. Found mostly along the coastal swamps, inlets, and grottoes, it is obvious that the inhabitants of these ruins were a people whose lives depended upon the sea. Depending upon the strength of season rains and current tides, finding these ruins can be difficult. In fact, many of them are now completely submerged beneath the waves.

The Archaen Ages

Early Archaens found these coastal fortress-temples and as they grew ever more secure in their magical prowess came to heed the warnings of the inhabitants, a race whose name is now lost to history. As the Archaens grew in strength, challenged and overcame first the First Folk and then the Wild Races,

A Forgotten People

Some of the pre-Archaen ruins along Jhangara's western coast share a variety of characteristics that are found in few other structures around Talislanta. First, and perhaps the most notable, all of the vaulted windows face the western shores while all entrances instead face either north or east. Additionally, all of these buildings contain religious iconography or evidence of its past presence. Typically found as carvings or as bas relief, the vast majority of these seem to depict the seas in a negative context, ostensibly prohibiting travel across the waves. Furthermore, some of the remaining figures resemble strange creatures that seem to be a mixture of both Man and Fish or some other aquatic beast. While they do not resemble any currently living creatures found in Talislanta, some scholars have likened them to either the Sun-Ra-San of the far East or the Imrians of the Southern Rim. Whoever or whatever previously lived in these ruins may have either feared these creatures or perhaps built these extensive fortress-temples as a way to guard against those terrors from the sea.

The First Folk: A Watery Origin?

The odd coral and stone constructions, the location of buildings right along the water's edge, and the presence of writing that highly resembles Piscine seems to hint that the inhabitants of these ruins, whether they were First Folk or one of the Wild Races, were at the least a semi-aquatic race. Indeed, given the evidence it seems entirely possible that they were almost entirely aquatic and only came to the surface for brief periods of time. Precisely why they came to the surface, if this is indeed the case, remains a mystery.

this race declined. Eventually as the Archaens reached their peak, these structures were abandoned. Some pioneering Archaens went so far as to loot the abandoned structures, opening up long buried tombs and chambers beneath the temples. While they may have found great magical lore or artifacts in these places, those who did so did not record precisely which shrines yielded hidden knowledge.

In addition to the ancient temple-forts, the Archaens themselves left behind a few relics of their own. Like the older structures, the Jhangarans regard these ruins as forbidden locales and do not venture into them.

Although the Archaens were largely known and remembered for their amazing floating city-states, in the days of their magical infancy they too were prisoners of the earth just as the Landborne that they would later one day shun. It was along the western end of Talislanta that the first Archaens ventured forth against the First Folk, and even though the swamps were not their first home there were Archaens who ventured there in various effort to carve out empires of their own.

While there would be later Archaen ruins of a slightly more permanent nature and decidedly more magically powerful, many of these early wooden structures wound up being submerged in the rising tides and accumulating silt washed down river. It is possible that some of them remain intact buried in the bogs and river sediments, but for the most part the Archaens left little impact on Jhangara.

It was also during the Archaen Ages that the Jhangarans first began to settle the land with which they share a name. Precisely where the Jhangarans originated is unknown. Amongst the records of the Archaens there is little evidence to be found. In one account there is no mention of anything at all except the expurgated records of the abandoned temple-fortresses, in the next the Jhangarans are simple indicated to be the inhabitants of

the swamps of the area. The Jhangarans themselves have a number of different accounts of their origins.

The oldest, and perhaps the oddest, origin stories of the Jhangarans claim that their people were born in a harsh and violent land far to the west. After generations of suffering and hardship, the people begged their Creator to save them. Their Creator, an air goddess whose name is lost to time, answered their prayers and transported them across a great and vast sea expending a great deal of its power. Having deposited them on the banks of the Axis River, the Jhangarans were admonished about invoking the power of their Creator and told that if any Jhangaran crossed the waves they would lose their religion. As the modern Jhangarans have no real organized religion, merely a handful of primeval traditions and passed-down superstitions, it can be assumed perhaps that whatever strictures were laid upon them in the past may have taken effect.

A differing legend claims kinship, however distant, with a race of jungle-dwellers in the distant east. Fearing the rage and violence of their brother-tribe, the Jhangarans found a way to wash away those violent emotions. In so doing, the bright and vibrant coloration so common to jungle creatures washed from their skin and they took on the hues of the calm and patient earth. Viewing their now bland cousins as cowards and traitors, the more violent of the two tribes attacked repeatedly, driving the Jhangarans further and further west every few years.

A third story, one that carries a bit more weight with modern scholars, is that the Jhangarans were an early, and failed, biomantic hybridization experiment. In attempting to create a hardy supply of servants, perhaps for labor, warfare, or simple food-production, the Jhangarans were created by mixing Ahazu, Archaen, and other unknown stock. Proponents of this theory point to the Monad as being a later, more successful, version of the same experimentation. The easy pliability and

natural hardiness of the Jhangarans would be consistent with a created slave-race. Critics of this theory point to the Jhangarans lack of any of the extra-ordinary abilities that commonly occur amongst the specialized servitor-races created by the Archaens and their descendants.

The most credible story is perhaps also the simplest. The Jhangarans were once originally a tribe of Wild Folk, most likely the tribe known as the Running Spears. This tribe was known to frequent the south-western jungles and swamps of the continent. The Running Spears were known to utilize ambushes, hit and run attacks, and theft in order to steal the essential things they needed to survive. Most of the Sub-Men tribes despised the Running Spears, not out of fear but due to loathing; even amongst the Wild Folk the Running Spears were extremely primitive and superstitious. When the Tirshata, a hero of great renown amongst the Wild Folk, united the disparate tribes to fight the Archaens, the Running Spears flocked to his call. Serving as advance scouts, guides, and trappers they were able to give the Wild Folk a slight, if decidedly helpful, edge against the Archaens. After the Tirshata disappeared, the Running Spears were overwhelmed. Their witchdoctors and shamans claimed that his disappearance was the forewarning of a horrendous catastrophe. The Running Spears fled as far as they could, back to the swamps and jungles of their former homes. Given that the Jhangarans fit all the pertinent descriptions of the Running Spears, it is safe to assume that the Jhangarans are a still primitive tribe of Wild Folk that have utilized their time-honed skills to survive in some of Talislanta's most unforgiving jungles.

The Jhangarans have in part adapted a lifestyle based on a much smaller territory than that prowled by the Running Spears. Although the Jhangarans do move from place to place, they also dwell in a number large villages in addition to smaller, temporary ones that move with the seasons.

The Great Disaster

It is believed that the Jhangarans were much more numerous prior to the disaster. While their tribes and culture were widespread along the southern coastal regions from what are now the Monastic Hills to Barbatus Bay, after the Great Disaster they were only to be found in the south-west. Reversing some of the Jhangarans' varied creation myths, multiple scholars have claimed that the Ahazu are derived from the Jhangarans, altered by the magical energies released during the catastrophe.

What is known about south-western Talislanta following the Great Disaster is that the overall sea level for the area fell increasing the number of low-lying bogs and marshes in the area. This falling of the sea also served to expose numerous ruins and create copious small narrow bays and islets that would later serve to hide innumerable pirates, scavengers, and ne'er-do-wells in the centuries to come.

Godless Savages

Whoever they may have been, the ancestors of the Jhangarans were a very devout and religious people who worshiped a small pantheon of deities. The tribesmen believed that these remote but powerful beings could not directly interact with the world without causing extreme calamitous changes. Instead, these deities communicated their desires and wishes through signs and portents. When the tribesmen correctly interpreted these symbols, they were rewarded; when they failed to interpret them properly the gods displeasure was obvious. Furthermore, the meaning of any particular sign was subject to various interpretations, thus preventing any sort of standard set of meanings.

When the Jhangarans encountered the Archaens it seemed that these strangers possessed the powers of the gods. Unused to magic, the Jhangarans who witnessed the wonders of the Archaens were astounded and amazed. As a result, many of them began to claim that their elders' stories of powerful deities were simply fictional stories. Others

started to believe the accusations of the other Wild Folk that the Jhangarans were simpletons and too superstitious, and in reaction largely abandoned the ways of their religion.

The result of all of this was that the pantheon of the early Jhangarans passed away into the lists of the Forgotten Gods. Still, centuries and generations of belief are not washed away overnight. Many of the superstitions of the Jhangarans continued to be passed down, but the meaning behind countless of the rituals and rites were lost to antiquity. While there are ancient temples and shrines buried in the mires of Jhangara, the Jhangarans avoid them out of an primordial fear of what may befall the ones who awaken the ancient inhabitants of these temples.

The Age of Confusion

During the Age of Confusion after the Great Disaster, the Jhangarans were given their current name. As the lore of the Archaens was lost and their descendents struggled for survival, the early Jhangarans made use of their skills to continually harass and rob the Archaen survivors. Commonly, the Jhangarans would wait until the survivors had exhausted themselves, then charge in, pushing and shoving, and snatch up everything they could whether it be food, weapons, or newly made tools. Stories of an ancient people on the coast who guarded great secrets of warfare and strife were vaguely recalled. Combining these ancient legends and the nighttime raids of the jungle primitives, the Archaen survivors named the tribes Jhangarans, or “ancestors of rage.”

During the rainy season of Spring, the early Jhangarans were loathe to venture to far from their homes. The influx of rains coupled with the rising and falling of the tides made the swamps of their home treacherous for travel. It was also during this time of year that many of the indigenous predators of the swamps tended to be mating; because of this the Jhangarans were able to take advantage of young males injured or weakened during mating rites to provide food for themselves.

The Jhangarans were eager to find easy prey after the long rainy season, and so it was under the crimson glow of Jhang that these attacks were the fiercest because it was during this time of year that the swamps were at their most dangerous. Swift moving streams and rivers, predators finding food for their young, and the increase in disease-carrying insects all served as omens to encourage the Jhangarans to find new sources of nourishment.

During the Fall, the overall water level tends to fall exposing a variety of things that have been washed downstream during the previous year. From scavenging and salvaging this debris the Jhangarans manage to eke out an existence until the next year.

The New Age

It is no twist of fate that the rise of the Phaedran Empire coincides with great changes in Jhangara. As the Phaedrans began to construct fortresses and walled cities of their own, the Jhangarans found it harder and harder to conduct their raids. However, they were able to steal not only the idea of walled settlements, but also all manner of scraps from building supplies and broken tools. Using all of this, the Jhangarans first began to build

Altruism or Avarice

Some early, and enterprising, Phaedrans decided to trade with their savage southern neighbors. While there is no record of precisely who originated the idea of trading with the primitive tribes who routinely attacked them, it was the Phaedrans who first began trading with the Jhangarans for amber, gold, and sapphires. While these precious items were already known to the Jhangarans, they themselves saw little of value in them. However, as the Jhangarans learned the some of the Phaedran’s language, they too began to attach importance to these trade goods as a measure of the ability to acquire essential needs.

permanent settlements of their own. Yet, without the knowledge of how to erect and utilize the tools they had stolen, the earliest attempts at building walls were doomed to failure after failure. Yet the Jhangarans persisted wanting to emulate the strength of the Phaedrans. As the stolen materials fell into greater and greater disrepair, the villages were largely simple collections of huts surrounded by piled rubble and fallen logs. As these were first erected, several notable things occurred. First, the Jhangaran tribes began to trade with the Phaedrans for various goods instead of simply raiding them for what they could grab. Secondly, and possibly as a result of the Jhangarans new lifestyle, the tribes began to split and fracture. While they had always had very strict conventions regarding inter-tribal interactions, but it was at this point that these rules became highly formalized. Third, it was during this time that the Jhangarans learned how to read and write. While they did previously have a language of their own, their northern trading partners refused to learn what they saw as a debased and primitive form of language. As a result, the Jhangarans wound up learning Talislan, although not to the extent or mastery as their Phaedran educators. While the Jhangarans did learn Talislan, words from their old tongue crept in especially when it came to references to their old traditions and superstitions.

During the first century of Phaedran rule a number of important events occurred in Jhangara. First, the Phaedrans annexed the lands of the Aeriad, a bird-people who lived in the hills across the Axis river from the northern marshes of Jhangara. The Jhangarans viewed the displacement of the Aeriad with some dismay. The Jhangarans have a number of superstitions regarding the bird-folk, not least of which is to leave the bird-folks' nests alone. While there were no strictures about harming the bird-folk. Those Jhangarans who hunt the marshes have long held the Green Aeriad in a state of awe. Some Aeriad did flee south into the swamps, but for the most part the Aeriad found the damp, humid climate of Jhangara uncomfortable. When nothing disastrous immediately happened, the

From the Fall of the Phaedran Empire to the Present

At the turn of the first century of the New Age, Kabros predicted the fall of the Phaedran Empire and abdicated his rulership over it. While this had little immediate impact upon the Jhangarans, the ensuing conflict of the Cult Wars in 111 did slow trade with the southern savages. While the Aeriad did maintain some trade, the bird-folk typically found the Jhangarans a despicable and degenerate people. In 133, when the penal colony of Gao is abandoned by the Phaedrans, some of the rogues begin to trade with the Jhangarans for scintilla and fresh water, but by and large avoid the dangerous bogs and swamps of the coast. Some pirates later establish small caches in the various bays and ruins of the coast after learning of their existence from Jhangaran traders essentially ending the vast majority of trade with Gao.

Eventually, the settlements long ago started by the Jhangarans eventually manage to create true permanent settlements around 300 N.A. These settlements are constructed over the top of three centuries of fallen limbs, refuse, and rubble, raising them slightly above the muck and mire of the surrounding jungle and swamp. However, as the Jhangarans have little notion of sanitation, these communities are also surrounded by pits and moats of sewage, refuse, and waste. Still, they eventually manage to serve as they were originally conceived. In 570 N.A., the Imrians attack the western swamps in force. The wretched and pitiful conditions of the Jhangarans leave much to be desired causing the Imrians to head up river and through Mog towards the Seven Kingdoms. Once there, the Imrians are beaten back. The Jhangarans however believe that the fish-folk pass them by because of their faithful adherence to their own primitive superstitions.

Jhangarans began to feel that the doom from the displacement of the Aeriad may have passed them by. However, two decades later the Imrians made their first raids along the length of the southern coast of Talislanta. While the vast majority of their attacks were focused on the central Dark Coast region, a number of Jhangarans were taken as slaves. Finding several empty and abandoned camps along the south-eastern coasts, the Jhangarans knew that the doom of the bird-folk had finally befallen them.

As the early Jhangarans began to trade with the Phaedrans, they also began to argue amongst themselves about how best to take advantage of their land's commercial wealth. The elders of Tabal, the oldest of the three Jhangaran settlements, maintained that the tribes should keep to the long-standing ways of the past. In their view, the sufferings of the tribesmen were completely the result of the Jhangarans failing to follow the dictates of the Old Gods. These elders did not themselves know exactly what would appease the Old Gods, or even who the old gods were. But they believed in the old superstitions and thought that further change would result in even more misfortune.

While the tribesmen listened to the village elders, they did so with much disagreeing, muttering, and arguing. Soon, however, many of the younger tribesmen were sneaking out of the village to trade with foreigners who sailed their boats into the nearby cove. As they discovered that the foreigners would exchange food and weapons for things that the tribesmen could dredge out of the swamps: gold, amber, and blue gems. Even though the foreign traders would buy the eggs of water raknids and the hides, feathers, and horns of beasts that the hunters brought in, soon the young grew to some power in the village since they could provide food and the strong drink that the foreigners called alcohol.

This drink of the outsiders exacerbated the problems in Tabal. Not only did the alcoholic drinks of the outsiders cause the Jhangarans to become irrational and seemingly mad, but it

Jhangaran Art Forms

The Jhangarans have little appreciation for art of any kind. The Zandir will frequently refer someone of little talent as an "artist worthy of Jhangara," unless they stoop to decrying them an Aamanian.

Jhangaran "singing," if it can be called such, typically consists of a chanted chorus of insults from drunken males. Normally these insults are aimed at rival clan families and often lead to brawls if the singers do not pass out first. Singers also tend to push and shove one another quite violently while continually trying to out-sing their compatriots.

Folk Dancing

Tabal is a very traditional settlement, and one of the more unique customs still practiced there is that of Jhangaran Folk Dancing, known to locals as "vasee ninyo." These dances are carried on for hours and hours as the dancers attempt to achieve a state of exhaustion. Many of the steps and moves are pieces of ancient rites and rituals, but the Jhangarans do not recognize this. They do superstitiously believe that the dances must be held after each successful hunt in order to replenish the numbers of animals nearby. Rarely are outsiders allowed to witness these somber occasions although they are sporadically drawn to them by the steady sound of pounding rocks and shrill whistles.

On occasion, outsiders are sold simple trinkets—an unpretentious doll modeled on the form of a Jhangaran dancer. The Jhangarans superstitiously believe that these little dolls, named after the dance, are capable of warding off minor ailments, but only if the dolls are present at one of the dances. In their view, many minor ailments are seen as bad luck or the work of unseen spirits; by carrying one or more of these

(continued)

was also highly addictive. Soon, many tribesmen were trading solely for alcohol and no longer purchasing food from the traders. Fights broke out in Tabal between various groups, each claiming to have a solution to the problems of the tribe. Before too long, the village split asunder with a large portion of the tribesmen leaving under the direction of a handful of loudly vociferous leaders. Tabal maintained its long custom of trade in animals and animal products, including the profitable scintilla.

This band of Jhangarans traveled up-river until they found a place suitable for habitation. There they built the village of Karansk. While Karansk lacked the easy access that Tabal provided for sea-going vessels, it was situated immediately on one fork of the Axis River. Karansk soon became the port of choice for traders wishing to transport small cargoes, typically of amber, gold, and sapphires, up river. As the area around Karansk was depleted by simple surface dredging, it became necessary for the village's survival to begin scouring deeper, pulling out long buried treasure from the muck and mire of the surrounding swamps. Thus did the mud mines of Karansk originate.

But the animosity between the villagers did not stop with the formation of a new village. As both villages flourished, the Jhangarans became more and more obsessed with alcohol. As the alcohol fueled the anger and frustration of the villagers, feuds broke out between bands of Jhangarans that eventually broadened into huge disputes between the two communities. Again young Jhangarans seeking to improve their chances for survival sold themselves out as mercenaries in order to get the food and weapons necessary to stay alive in the swamps. These young mercenaries worked for the highest bidder, no matter which village they lived in. While the majority of them simply worked as guards for those who were leaving the relative safety of the villages to work in the swamps, others were paid to attack rival bands of workers or even the opposing village. Some of these even left the swamps to

Jhangaran Art Forms

(continued)

grass dolls, the Jhangarans think that the ailments will be inflicted upon the doll which they can then cast away into the rubbish or the swamp. Typically, the Jhangarans sell ineffectual copies to wandering tourists and traders while keeping the real ones for themselves. That fact notwithstanding, the vasee ninyo dolls of Jhangara are crude things of made of marsh reeds and mud and therefore unlikely to bring a buyer in any market.

Jungle Drums

While there is normally little dancing in Karansk, the village is home to some Jhangaran craftsmen who make small drums. Called "takla," these drums are small enough to be carried in one hand and beaten with the other. Sometimes mounted on a stick for ease of carrying, the Mud Miners of Karansk believe that the sound of these drums scares off misfortune. Resultantly, the sound of multitudinous drums can be heard from morning until dark as the Jhangarans move from their village to the mines and back.

work in foreign lands. As the villagers of Tabal and Karansk realized that living within their own villages were the very Jhangarans who were responsible for attacking them, they began to grow increasingly nervous. Then suspicious, resentful, and angry in turn. As a result, the Jhangaran mercenaries banded together in order to prevent their tribesmen from murdering them in their sleep. They soon fled and founded a village of their own on the west fork of the Axis river. This final village was named Jhangkin after the most successful band of mercenaries, "the brothers of rage." Jhangkin is still the smallest of the permanent settlements in Jhangara, but is perhaps the wealthiest as well.

New Horizons

As the Jhangarans have more and more contact with “civilized peoples,” they tend to yearn more and more for what they do not have. Many of them seek to leave their swampland home, but after growing up with the superstitious and primitive beliefs of their tribes, they find it hard to assimilate to other lands.

The most common destinations for these immigrants are the swamps of Mog, east across the Axis River. The terrain and climate are similar to their home, and there are few other nations interested in the land. The Jhangarans are, in general, seen as equals by the somewhat naive Mogroth. The Jhangarans are quick to exploit this fact when migrating to Mog, often claiming to be a hunting party or a trading group. To date however few of the Jhangaran settlements in Mog has lasted for more than a few years. In part this is because the immediate area adjacent to Jhangara is the Devil’s Swamp, inhabited not only by water raknid, but also by swamp demons and bog devils. While there are Mogroth who live in this part of Mog, they tend to dwell in the highlands near the southern coast.

Some Jhangarans have attempted to sail marsh skiffs across the Azure Ocean to Thaecia. Typically these endeavors end in the death of the Jhangarans as their craft are ill-suited for the ocean waves. However, there have been successful efforts as well. Unfortunately, due to the unpredictable but often violent reaction that alcohol has on the Jhangarans, they are rarely allowed to remain.

Other Jhangarans have resettled in the Seven Kingdoms. While some eke out a meager existence on the fringes of Aeriad or Taz, some have taken up residence in Cymril itself hiring themselves out as manual laborers for a pittance. Those who can stay sober long enough to find continued work are usually taken advantage of by their less restrained tribesmen who beg for handouts and coins in much the same way as the Outcastes in Jhangara.

A Mercenary Mindset

The mercenaries of Jhangkin are simultaneously some of the most advanced and most wretched of the Jhangaran tribesmen. As mercenaries, they are frequently hired by outsiders. As a result, they frequently are able to travel extensively where they pick up new ideas, new skills, and new possessions. These things all enable Jhangkin to closely resemble other Talislantan cities, albeit a odd mix of its various cultures all crammed together. On the other hand, Jhangkin mercenaries know that each time they are hired that they may be marching to their deaths. They resignedly accept that their deaths will help to improve the lot of their tribesmen in Jhangkin in some small way, but that doesn’t mean that they are happy about it.

The willingness of the Jhangarans to work for little pay has also resulted in their use as slaves by the Farad and the Arimites. In Arim, the Jhangarans typically spend much of their time working in the various mines that dot the countryside, tending animals, or working at menial, dangerous, or unwanted chores. Amongst the Farad, the Jhangarans’ lot is little better. Typically seen as only slightly better than expendable, the Farad also sell and trade Jhangarans with the Imrians, Rajani, and Mangar. More often than not these unfortunates can be found working in unskilled positions, but there are some who work as bodyguards, soldiers, and enforcers.

The most sizable population of Jhangarans outside of Jhangara, however, remains Aaman. Long used by the Orthodoxy as mercenary troops, servants, and slaves, Jhangarans in Aaman often wind up living longer than most of their brethren. In part this is due to regular meals and the widespread absence of alcohol. However, the bland uniformity of the Aamanian lifestyle tends to eventually grate upon the Jhangarans aggressive nature. Fights are common amongst the Jhangaran living

areas, which are often segregated away from the normal Aamanian populace.

THE LAND

It is simple to say that Jhangara is a swampy land surrounded by twin forks of the Axis River and the Azure Ocean. Perhaps too simple. For most foreigners however, that is all that they see and therefore all that they report of this savage land. But, to its native inhabitants the Land Between the River is full of different regions, all coexisting with a sense of balance. There are subtle shifts between the various pieces of the land making mapping difficult. Instead, the Jhangarans have names for large areas of the Jhangaran Swamps. There are also a few places that the Jhangarans consider taboo. Most of these have names, but the Jhangarans are loathe to utter them while sober and often become enraged when mentioned while they are drunk.

Terrain

Outsiders often refer to Jhangara simply as swampland. The truth however is as murky as the bogs themselves and therefore it is necessary to discuss the variety of types of terrain found here. In general assume that any uncleared land is covered with vines, low bushes, and swamp grass. Such areas provide ample hiding spots for small fauna such as serpis and avir. Bogs abound in Jhangara: generally a bog is an area of muddy ground covered in water. This water varies in depth from a few inches to several feet. Commonly home to swamp slugs, mudrays, flits, and serpis, deeper bogs frequently conceal larger predators like swamp lurkers and aramatus. Fed by frequent and seasonal rains, the water in bogs rarely has anywhere else to go and so it sits slowly stagnating until it either evaporates or is somewhat refreshed by the rains once more. The thick layer of mud at the bottom of bogs is often acidic to some degree because of the large amount of decaying plantlife. While not an immediate danger to travelers, this fact does account for the

misleading estimates that explorers put on the age of items they find as the mud will corrode soft wood and pit metal faster than were it left out in the open. Mysteriously enough, this does not seem to apply to flesh, bone, or hard woods such as span oak. Creatures who somehow die in a bog and are not disturbed before sinking beneath the muck are often mummified by the sludge and preserved for centuries. The south-western coastline of Jhangara is one large saltwater marsh. Saltwater marshes are similar to bogs, however they often are home to a greater quantity and variety of life. Additionally, the soil here is not as acidic as it is tossed and turned by the waves to free up sediment and substrata. These saltwater marshes are sometimes called tidal marshes and the depth of water here varies with the tides of the Azure Ocean. The mouth of the Western Axis Fork is one large tidal marsh where the Mercenaries of Jhangkin commonly spear fish when the tide changes. Fens are an area of transition between land and water. Unlike bogs, the bottom soil of fens tends to be more solid allowing for somewhat easier travel and navigation. A marsh differs from other terrains in that it is typically dominated by tall grasses and other low vegetation. Stranglevine and needle leaf are common in these areas, as are numerous avir and serpis. Marsh water is often brackish and supports a variety of aquatic life. A mire is a muddy area similar to a bog, but is situated along waterways. These small rivers and creeks provide fresh water more frequently than can normally be found in the numerous bogs. Quagmires on the other hand are fed by underground water sources. This fact often creates a preponderance of quicksand in the areas. Larger predators, from aramatus to swamp demons frequently bury themselves in the mud of quagmires and wait for prey to come to them. True swampland is dominated by the presence of trees. While these are often found on the numerous small hills that rise above the slow moving waters of the swamps, they also exist in the various waterways as well. Alatus and shathane are occasionally found amongst these ancient groves. If these creatures are not adequate deterrent for explorers, the abundance of

scarlet sporozoid and stranglevine should do so.

The Avir Fens and the Accursed Forests

At the northern end of the Jhangaran Swamps where the Axis River forks is an area known as the Avir Fens. These fens are a wet and watery region dotted with small hills. Home to scores upon scores of various avir, the Avir Fens are also something of a salvager's dream. The western fork of the Axis habitually dumps a variety of junk washed downstream, sometimes from as far as Arim, at the edge of the fens.

Surrounding the Avir Fens are several wooded areas known to the Jhangaran's as the Accursed Forests. Except for the Outcasts, the Jhangarans typically avoid these groves. These woods are alive in ways that differ from normal forests. In part this could be blamed on the Great Disaster, but castoffs from early Aeriad Botanomantic experimentation are a more likely culprit. Even the Outcasts find these woods odd and believe them filled with strange spirits. Many of them avoid sleeping under the boughs of the woods at night, instead preferring the watery hills of the Avir Fens. However, since the Accursed Forests provide some limited protection from the rest of the Jhangaran Swamps, the Outcasts continue to hide within them. In addition to such unusual species of flora as the violet creeper and stranglevine, this area is also inhabited by tanglewood and viridia. Durge, marsh striders, and serpis also share this area with the avir.

Jhangkin Bay

This wide bay is filled with centuries of silt and sediment washed both downriver from the north and washed up by the sea. As a result, this bay is impassable to nearly all ships. Jhangaran mud skiffs and reed boats occasionally navigate this stretch to ferry goods or travelers from Jhangara to Aaman. Rarely, an Aeriad barge-fort may travel this far down the Axis River in order to meet ocean going craft from Zandir, Gao, or even

the Kang Empire. The shallow waters here also serve to prevent water raknids from hiding nearby making this area a popular spot for Jhangaran fishermen.

The Ruined Marsh

At the southern reaches of Jhangkin Bay lies a soggy expanse of land. With the exception of the few hours surrounding low tide, this region is normally completely submerged under a few inches of brackish water. During low tide, enough of the water retreats into the Azure Ocean enough to drain the marsh to expose a silt-covered low land. At the edge of this area lie a number of ancient ruins. Some of them are constantly submerged, making this area something of a hazard for sailing craft that attempt to follow the coast. Others remain high enough, even during high tide, to have at least a little of their substance visible to passersby. The Jhangarans only rarely come here, finding the carved shapes of the stone and coral to be unsettling.

Atop a small rise on a southern peninsula of the Ruined Marsh lies another ruin of ancient design. This site is unique in several ways. First, and perhaps the most notable, is a stone pier that juts out into the Azure Ocean. This dock was built of stone and wood, probably during the height of the Phaedran Empire. The string of ruins overlooking this port however is much older. This series of squat, stone buildings do not seem to have been constructed, but rather carved out of a natural outcropping of rock. While some scholars have correctly identified these ruins as a temple complex, there is still a debate over exactly who or what was worshipped here. While there is some evidence that this place was used in later ages by worshippers of both Oceanus and Arial. Phaedran sailors probably stopped here to make offerings to the two patron deities of their craft before beginning the long journey along the southern coast toward the Far Seas. In truth, this place was once part of the center of worship for a deific being known as the Morgod. Unfortunately, worship of the Morgod ended

before the rise of the Archaens and nothing more than its name is known.

Visitors to the area should beware of the numerous alatus, aramatus, and swamp kra that prowl the shallow waters looking for prey.

Pirate Bay and Altara Grotto

The southern coastline of Jhangara is bounded by two features: Pirate Bay and Altara Grotto. In the west, Pirate Bay is a stretch of coast along the Ruined Marsh that was long ago charted by Phaedran sailors. When the penal colony of Gao was abandoned by the Phaedrans, some of those maps fell into the hands of the prisoners left behind. Eventually, the safe passage through the hull-cracking ruins and keel-scraping shoals was known to a large number of pirate bands who sailed the Azure Ocean. Although there is little to find at the southern end of the Ruined Marsh, it is possible to find fresh water and game there and these are reason enough for pirates to risk the passage to shore. Rumors persist of a buried treasure left behind by an infamous half-Zandir pirate that occasionally bring treasure-seekers to the area, but without a knowledgeable guide many of them simply add another shipwreck to the dozens already submerged amongst the ruins. Those stranded amongst the shells of these ruined craft may be able to pry violet pearls from the quaga that dwell in the muck of the bay, but should be wary of attracting the attention of the numerous sea scorpions that also call this area home.

Between the Jhangaran Isles and the Sinking Quagmire lies the region known as Altara Grotto. Sunken in this sheltered passage are a number of Archaen and Phaedran ships. These vessels are normally quite hard to find as silt washed down the Axis River has buried those few that have survived the ravages of time. Also, many of these vessels are now home to colonies of water raknid. Jhangarans occasionally come here to harvest scintilla, little knowing that the other trinkets sunken with these craft could fetch an even higher price.

The Sinking Quagmire

An area of swampland extending to the west of Tabal, the Sinking Quagmire is a treacherous area filled with sinkholes, sucking mud, and biting insects. The Marsh Hunters of Tabal do claim these areas as part of their hunting territory and trips here are frequent. They have learned to take advantage of the tendency of the mud to entrap the unawares, and can thus occasionally capture creatures without great risk. In addition to untold scores of both sea slugs and mud slugs, visitors can expect to find mudrays, swamp kra, tardisites, ravengers, and urthrax here for most of the year. While swamp demons and bog devils do occasionally wander into this area from the north, their appearance is infrequent at best.

Gods of Wind and Wave

Arial, Goddess of the South Wind

A beauteous female composed of wispy white vapor, Arial is said to ride the clouds above Talislanta. Although occasionally confused with the Sawila deity Ariel, Arial is associated with air elementals and is accorded respect among many people. Talislantan sailors especially revere the Storm Queen as it is within her power to grant favorable winds, bring rain, or even cause tempests and storms if she is angered. A common ritual among many sailors is to anoint their vessel with costly fragrances before setting sail. This ritual is closely related to the Sea Nomad tradition of pouring a bottle of wine into the sea in honor of Oceanus. Arial is the sister of Borean, God of the North Wind, and while they rarely meet, followers of each deity tend to treat the other with respect.

(continued)

The Shimmering Cove

A large cove extending from the Azure Ocean up to the Axis River, the Shimmering Cove is the home of numerous colonies of water raknids. While these vicious predators do occasionally prey upon the settlements of Tabal and Karansk that lie at each end of the cove, they also are a great danger to any ships that pass this stretch of coastline. Water Raknid from the Shimmering Cove have been known to travel up the Axis River as far north as Vahana in the Seven Kingdoms in search of prey or treasure for their queens. It is from the numerous eggs of these raknid queens that the cove gets its name: at night the waters seem to shimmer and sparkle from deep within their depths as the scintilla are tended by numerous raknid drones.

From time to time representatives from Aaman and the Seven Kingdoms have sought to eradicate the raknid colonies in Shimmering Cove in order to make safe both a route to the sea and provide some measure of security on the southern Axis River. The Jhangarans however do not want the Cove disturbed by outsiders. Doing so, they claim, will only bring disaster. Certainly any mass movement in Cove would attract the attention of most of the raknids in the area, and while the armies of the Aamanians and the Seven Kingdoms could possibly stand up to such an attack, the Jhangaran villages definitely could not. Additionally, were the Cove successfully tamed it would essentially mean the end of the lucrative trade in scintilla that the Jhangarans have maintained for centuries. The Jhangarans claim to have learned how to harvest the scintilla slowly and unobtrusively while their civilized patrons periodically claim that the Jhangarans know they have a stranglehold on much of the scintilla market and simply refuse to let go.

The Amber Bog

A boggy area of ancient forest along the eastern fork of the Axis River, the Amber Bog is a heavily patrolled area held by the Jhangarans of Karansk. It is in these muddy environs that their mines are constructed.

Gods of Wind and Wave

(continued)

Oceanus

Patron deity of the Sea-Nomads, Oceanus is normally portrayed as green-skinned man of great stature with flowing hair and beard. The Sea-Nomads, who named their floating island-city after him, claim that Oceanus is the protector of good-hearted sailors and all who dwell upon or under the seas and oceans of the Talislanta. Sea-farers, even in Gao and Zandu, who seek to gain his favor pour goblets of wine into the sea prior to embarking on any long voyage across open waters. Priests of Oceanus customarily wear necklaces of shells and use sea sponges, shells, and the like in all of their rituals. Oceanus is frequently associated with the water elementals.

Morgod

One of the deific beings worshipped by the peoples of the Forgotten Age, there is little currently known of Morgod. Sometimes written of as The Morgod, depictions of this being show it wielding a great hammer and somehow shaping or perhaps even creating solid land and rock from out of the waters of the sea.

Although the Jhangarans are defensive of their mining secrets and will attempt to drive off strangers, the patrols are more for the protection of the miners than the secrets of their craft. Besides the ubiquitous mudrays and mud slugs, ravengers and swamp lurkers frequent the Amber Bog in search of easy prey. Typically such prey comes in the form of an exhausted Jhangaran miner who has wandered off on their own.

The Central Swamps

The center of Jhangara is an unmapped morass of mires, bogs, and quagmires. The Jhangarans travel here infrequently in search of tradable goods or food. The thick jungle-

like forests here are thick, verdant, and teeming with life. The traveler that dares to cross this innermost region of the swamps will occasionally find ruins covered with vines or submerged in the muck and sludge.

The most famous of these ruins are those of Ylal Nat which lies in a basin in almost the exact center of the Jhangaran swamps. Even though the ruined city of Ylal Nat has been nearly completely overgrown, its tumbled walls and slime-streaked streets are still a destination for explorers and scholars. Amid the toppled stones, these travelers seek clues to the riddle of ancient Alhambra. This long vanished land is something of a legend; most Talislantans have never heard of it and those who have consider it to be a myth. However, like most myths, there is some truth in its origin, and Ylal Nat is the source.

The inhabitants of Ylal Nat were not Jhangarans. It is debatable exactly who dwelled here, but whomever it was that did live here left copious carvings. The vast majority of the ruins of Ylal Nat are covered in writing. In fact it often seems as if the entire city was decorated with nothing but the written word. While most of these writings are in Elder Tongue, there are rare sections where Archaen script has been delicately chiseled in between the lines of the former. Since much of the city has collapsed under the encroaching growth of the swamps it is difficult at best to grasp more than a few lines of text. The remaining walls and towers of Ylal Nat describe a far away land called Alhambra that lies far to the west where the rocks, the water, and even the sky are all shades of deepest red. The inhabitants of this distant place were split into two tribes—one that lived above ground and constantly trained themselves for battle and one that lived below ground delving for the secrets of the stones. Accounts of the surface dwellers seem to group them into tribes associated with differing sub-elements such as mud, mist, smoke, and ice; whereas descriptions of the subsurface dwellers mention daring raids wherein the white-skinned Undermen snatch creatures and tools from the surface. The descriptions are fanciful,

and many scholars doubt their veracity. However, there are stones from other parts of Ylal Nat that describe an ancient race called the Withen. The Withen were a people with knowledge of powerful magics and wards. As this race is also described by respected Archaen scholars, the accounts of Alhambra are a mystery.

The valley of Ylal Nat is rumored to be the abode of numerous demons, all feeding off of the land as well as one another. The Jhangarans name the valley “Ahtrus” and the terrible things that live within it the “ahtrusa.” There are few superstitions that deal with the valley or its demonic inhabitants amongst the Jhangarans, but “the doom of Ahtrus” is a vile curse among the primitive villagers.

The Burning Hills

To the south-west of Ylal Nat lies a huge peat bog over which hangs a permanent cloud of noxious fumes and foul smokes. The Jhangarans regard this place as an ill-omened area and even the Outcasts avoid this area. To the best of their knowledge this place is a dangerous area; besides the nauseating vapors fire hot enough to kill an adult instantly has been known to spontaneously erupt from the ground here. Although the Jhangarans attribute events such as these as the obvious result of failing to observe the superstitious rites of the tribes, the truth of the matter is somewhat more mundane. Underlying this area of Jhangara is a huge amount of peat, or decaying vegetative material. However, during the Great Disaster something fell from the sky—either a piece of one of the fabled sky-cities or simply an Archaen windship full of crew attempting to flee the effects of the catastrophe. This wreckage created a deep but narrow crater which drained the surrounding marshland and started fires in its wake. The exposed peat has been burning ever since, sustained by both the thick layer of peat and the lingering magical energies from the wreckage. Time, water, and mud have buried the wreckage, and the burning peat has thus far prevented any explorers from discovering this area's secrets.

The Jhangaran Isles

Off the southern coast of Jhangara lie two islands. The western isle is the smaller of the two. Aside from a few scattered monoliths of carved coral this island is otherwise unremarkable. The monoliths here resemble the constructions along the coast of the Ruined Marsh, but were somehow permanently stained a dark crimson color. This coloration has remained despite countless years of weather and erosion and perhaps is a natural property of the coral. The carvings do not seem to resemble anything nor do they bear any discernable legend or writing which makes identifying their purpose even more difficult. Jhangarans shun this island, even going so far as to avoid looking in its direction when traveling in the area. At most, the name of this island, Rahsso, is only whispered when it is mentioned at all.

The larger eastern island is sometimes called Kaliman by the Jhangarans. While the Jhangarans are not afraid to land their small water craft on the shores of Kaliman, they will not venture inland nor remain after dark. According to the Jhangarans, Kaliman is the place from which all manner of evil creatures come and strange devil-men dwell. Therefore it is considered an act of bravery for a warrior to sail or swim to her shore and return with one of the strange rocks of her beach. Kaliman is not a typical Jhangaran name, and the Jhangarans themselves claim not to know the word's origin. Kaliman, according to certain necromantic texts, is the name of a particularly sadistic and seductive devil who vanished centuries past. Since few Jhangarans ever wind up discussing history with Talislantan necromancers, the precise reason why a devil is closely associated with this island remains a mystery.

In the middle of this island amidst some scattered ruins exist the remnants of a tiny village. For the most part the ruins and village are unknown as the Jhangarans do not come here. The village and the ruins are of two completely different styles. Even the most inexperienced of historians could recognize

The Rocky Beaches of Kaliman

The shores of the largest of the Jhangaran Islands are not sandy, but instead covered with numerous rounded stones. While the vast majority of these are simply worthless sea-polished rocks, there are some treasures to be found amongst the roiling waves. Besides small iron ferules, a variety of small polished crystals in hues of purple, red, and silver can be found scattered amongst the rocks. Some of these crystals can be found nowhere else on the continent of Talislanta. Due to their rarity, they often fetch a high price in faraway markets like Cymril, Zanth, or Tarun. The Jhangarans, however, do not realize the treasure lying on their very doorstep.

that the older ruins were most likely Archaen in their origin, while the village was of a more recent construction. With the exception of a handful of scholars in Phantas, Cymril, and Zanth, the existence of this village and its inhabitants are largely unknown.

Simply called Kalimantans, after their island home, these tribesmen were by and large a simple people with no concept of wealth or desire for anything other than their uncomplicated, easy life. They had no concept of magic, but revered nature in much the same way as practitioners of Natural Magic. They worshipped no gods and observed no rites or rituals aside from a handful of simple customs and taboos. Never plentiful, the population here probably never reached above two dozen, and most often hovered around the range of 12 to 15 tribesmen. These villagers were extremely long-lived, but had a strong distrust of travel. As such, they remained hidden in the interior of the isle. The ruins they lived among were not their own, but they vigorously defended them on the occasions that interlopers found their home. Between themselves, these primitives had no name for their tribe.

In truth, the Kalimantanans are the remnants of a race of neomorphs created long ago. Unfortunately, the Kalimantanans are rapidly becoming an extinct people. Bred to be hardy laborers and food gatherers, the Kalimantanans have a thick, stooped posture. Their arms were made extremely flexible to facilitate the transfer of food from the ground to packs carried on their backs. Since their eyes are spaced slightly farther apart on their heads than normal humanoids, they are able to easily scan a wide section of the horizon, or the ground in front of them, for edible plants or dangerous animals. In general, the Kalimantanans are non-combative, bred to be placid and submissive to the orders of their creators. However, their supple limbs and strong backs mean that they can easily deal a powerful blow should anything get too close. The bodies of the Kalimantanans are covered with mottled patches in shades of crimson or burgundy. While this resembles the natural camouflage of wild animals, the reddish shades of the Kalimantanans do little to hide them in the dense foliage of the tropical island on which they dwell.

It is in the nature of the Kalimantanans to scavenge. They spend their days milling about the island, either picking up things that strike their fancy or searching for food to feed their tribe. They do their best to avoid the natural predators that stalk the island and its surrounding waters, but as they have no knowledge of fire, they rely upon simple tool-like weapons and their long reach to keep intruders at bay. During the evenings they return to the center of the island and the ancient ruins that lie there. The ancient Kalimantanans were probably instructed to remain near the buildings, and when their creators left, they continued as they had been ordered. As the ages passed, these neomorphs were forgotten by everyone, including their makers. The Kalimantanans however remembered, however vaguely, their old commands and the dictates that went into their creation. So, they continue to watch over the ruins despite the fact that there is little left to guard.

Kalimantans are fierce defenders of their homes. It is common for the Jhangarans of Tabal to find the mutilated or headless bodies of those who venture out to the Jhangaran Isles.

Settled Locales

While there are three main centers of population within the Jhangara, frequently small bands of Jhangarans venture out into the swamps for extended periods of time. When they do, they commonly erect small shelters. While these expeditions may contain a score of individuals, these settlements are only temporary villages at best, normally falling apart and being reclaimed by the swamps within weeks.

Tabal

The oldest of the Jhangaran settlements, Tabal sits at the southern end of the Shimmering Cove on the coast of the Azure Ocean. A deep bay lies on the coast near Tabal, and it is here that foreign merchants from across Talislanta come to trade. The village, like all Jhangaran constructions, is made of logs pulled from the jungle and shaped with crude tools. Open ditches serve to carry away waste and sewage; when filled these ditches are simply covered over and a new ditch is dug out. Walls of timber packed with hardened mud and rushes surround the village to provide protection from the nearby water raknids.

Situated in Tabal Bay is a small stronghold made of expertly shaped wood and stone. From here docks for both watercraft and windships extend outward. A long wooden pier wide enough for two wagons abreast runs to the shore. This fastness is essentially a fortified market square surrounded by individual ship berths and barracks. The population of Tabal Bay is made up entirely of foreigners, mostly Zandir, Arimites, Farad, and Gao. The local Jhangarans tolerate their presence, but only because of the near constant supplies of alcohol that are brought in. For their part, the foreigners find the Jhangarans to be savages, but require their

services as guides through the jungles and swamps of the region.

The Jhangarans of Tabal are Marsh Hunters and earn a meager living by trapping or hunting wild animals. Some of these they bring back to Tabal to feed themselves and their families, others they take to Tabal Bay to sell to the foreigners. Scintilla also provides a bit of an income, but procuring them from the bottom of the Shimmering Cove is difficult at best. A growing number of Jhangarans in Tabal solely earn their living by stealing raknid eggs up and down the Axis River coastline. In order to do so, they have developed some skill at diving and maneuvering underwater. Some amongst this group have taken to wearing a much paler shade of green than the traditional Marsh-Hunter. This has led to some grumbling in the village where the trappers feel that the divers are slighting them in some way. If this dispute grows, it could eventually result in the divers leaving to start a new village of their own. Where such a village might be located is unknown as some of the best scintilla comes from Shimmering Cove.

Karansk

The village of Karansk lies on the banks of the Axis River at the edge of the Amber Bog. Traders and merchants from Aaman, Arim, and Vardune frequently travel downriver to reach Karansk in order to trade for the sapphires, amber, and gold that the Mud Miners bring back. Constructed in much the same way as Tabal, Karansk is different from the other Jhangaran settlements in that it has a great number of tall trees remaining both around it and within its walls.

Amidst the trees that lie within Karansk's walls live a colony of Aeriad from the Seven Kingdoms. For the most part, the Aeriad here are Green Botanomancers, conducting research and experimentation; however, there are a number of Blue Aeriad stationed here to act as guards. Occasionally, merchants who travel to Karansk seek the Aeriad to act as intermediaries in their bargaining. The

Jhangarans regard the Aeriad with a superstitious, awe-filled dread. They have their own legends about the bird-men, but appreciate the aid and food that the Aeriad provide.

The Mud Miners use a variety of techniques to harvest the wealth of the swamps and rivers of Jhangara. While none of the techniques are very advanced or efficient, the Miners make up for this in sheer numbers and persistence. From time to time the villagers keep some of the amber and gold that they find to carve into simple jewelry. Eventually most of this jewelry winds up being sold to traders since trinkets cannot buy food, blankets, or alcohol.

Jhangkin

The youngest of the Jhangaran settlements lies at the western mouth of the Axis River overlooking a large, but shallow bay. Populated by Jhangaran mercenaries, Jhangkin labors under a variety of odd dichotomies. Jhangaran mercenaries from around Talislanta send a portion of their pay home to support their families and clans. Because of this, Jhangkin is one of the wealthiest of the Jhangaran settlements. Despite that wealth, the conditions here are little better than at the older two Jhangaran villages. Jhangaran mercenaries, due to their widespread use from Aaman to Farad, learn a variety of tactics and techniques for warfare and defense. Still, Jhangkin is only marginally better defended than older settlements, and that primarily because most of the inhabitants have some additional skill at combat. Since foreigners come here from various parts of the continent to hire Jhangaran mercenaries, one would think that Jhangkin is more cosmopolitan and welcoming to visitors. However, since the Jhangaran mercenaries have more wealth to spend, they frequently spend it on alcohol which makes them irritable, paranoid, and hostile to outsiders.

Rising out of the muck and mud of Jhangkin is a towering block of white stone. Superficially an Aamanian mission here to

win over the Jhangarans to the worship of Aa, this austere structure is home to a sizable contingent of monks, priests, and knights. A growing number of Jhangarans are converting to the faith of Aa, wearing white tunics, and disdaining the use of alcohol. Were this to happen in either of the other Jhangaran villages, it would surely mean widespread fighting and verbal altercations. Here however the Jhangaran converts and Aamanian proselytizers speak with a loud enough voice to drown out the protests of others.

Of course, Jhangkin is not a military installation. Its people must eat, must drink, must survive. Many of the locals spend their days in and around Jhangkin Bay fishing. This allows them to supplement their diet somewhat while also training them in the more common practices of their lives as guards and soldiers: patience, remaining still, and using their muscles. Some Jhangarans revel in their lives as fishermen and have begun to clamor that instead of mercenaries, their lives might be better spent harvest the wealth of the waters, rivers, and oceans. These fisher folk are not yet numerous enough to begin wearing a color of their own, but some think it is only a matter of time.

Outcasts and Ancient Ruins

There are numerous ruins scattered around the jungles and swamps of Jhangara. While many of these differ in age and origin, they all share one characteristic: the stigma of doom. The superstitious Jhangarans feel that these ancient sites were fell under some unknown fate and to spend the night in one only draws that same fate down upon the individual.

Outcasts, Jhangaran's who labor under a stigma of doom, do not fear the ruins quite as much as their kinsmen because they have less to lose. It is not uncommon to find bands of Outcasts living in or near these ancient ruins. The Outcasts do not often remain in large groups such as one finds in the large Jhangaran settlements, but instead cluster in small groupings similar to the clan families of their people. Typically they will find a defensible clearing or small collection of ruins to claim as their own.

CHAPTER TWO

The People and the Water

The Jhangaran people are often seen as primitive savages by the rest of modern Talislantans. While in some aspects this is true, the Jhangarans are still heirs to a culture that goes back several centuries, if not millennia.

Origins and Ancestry

The exact origins of the Jhangarans are lost to time. At one time perhaps they roamed the entire southern coast of Talislanta. Their survival tactics and temperament are similar to those of the Ahazu of the Dark Coast, but the origins of the Ahazu themselves are a mystery. The Jhangaran bone structure also bears a passing resemblance to that of the Nagra. Furthermore, in the absence of any specialized traits or Archaen records, it seems unlikely that they are neomorphs. Therefore, it is perhaps safest to say that they are either a tribe of sub-men or strongly related to them.

The Jhangarans are generally divided into tribal groupings who often share a single activity. In each tribal settlement there are smaller divisions of clan families. Each of these clan families are related to one another through a variety of marriages and births. Most of these marriages are unrecognizable to outsiders consisting of little more than a

pregnant female claiming a successful male as her mate and future child's father. The new couple are not bound by any rites or rituals other than the females public proclamation of marriage. By custom however the new husband must provide for his mate and offspring with money and goods. Some think that the Jhangaran concept of marriage is a grave misunderstanding of civilized custom by these tribal primitives. Many Jhangaran males seem to think so as well as they often try to find a way to ignore their responsibilities as a married man. Since male Jhangarans are pulled back and forth between clan families, the Jhangaran females give their society stability. Commonly, it is the women who raise the young, pass down legends and stories, and give the men the impetus to get out of the town and make a living.

The Marsh Hunters of Tabal

The Jhangarans of Tabal preserve some of the oldest traditions of the Jhangaran people. The green cloth they wear coupled with the browns of their skin give them an advantage when hiding and stalking amongst the swamps and jungles of their home. According to the elders and story-keepers of Tabal, Jhangarans wear green to represent their connection to the earth. If a hunter did not wear green while

hunting, they would run the risk of drawing misfortune down upon themselves.

Even amongst the Marsh Hunters there are differing beliefs. Some feel that it is best to take down their prey during a hunt, that doing otherwise shows disrespect for the beast and risks misfortune. Others claim that animals should be caught in traps, and that the chasing of dangerous animals through a dangerous land ranks close to foolishness. A further camp believes that it is only by outwitting the raknids and stealing their eggs out from underneath them that a Jhangaran proves their true worth. The Marsh Hunters feel that their way of life is best because it shows their bravery and strength. If they kill an animal during a hunt, they can sell the skin to the foreigners and keep the meat to feed their families. If they manage to capture an animal in one of their traps and can get it back to Tabal, they can sell the animal to wealthy travelers. If no one buys the beast, it can feed the clan. The other tribes are foolish. Mud Miners work to dig up rocks, but rocks cannot be eaten. Mercenaries go out and hunt others, but it is taboo to eat the flesh of other Jhangarans.

The most prominent clan groupings in Tabal are those of the Jabal, the Tiberin, and the Kaleeb. These families are by no means necessarily the most successful, but they are frequently the loudest.

The Mud Miners of Karansk

It is common for the Jhangarans of Karansk to wear grey. This is fortunate as they spend much of their time covered in muck and filth. The occupation of Mud Miner is a dirty and dangerous one. Miners who sift and pan for bits of gold from the rivers of Jhangara perhaps have an easier life, but they also find considerably less. The actual mines that delve down beneath the soil of this marshy land frequently find not only gold, but amber, sapphires, and rubies as well. Typically these mines are formed by Jhangarans laying down a series of felled trees in order to create a restraining wall of sorts. Then they begin to

empty the interior of this wall of all the water. After a long period of bailing and dredging, the Miners use crudely simple tools to begin digging into hillsides and down into the earth.

Different clans amongst the Jhangarans of Karansk compete for the privilege to sell the differing forms of amber and sapphire. While the blue sapphires do fetch the highest prices, sapphire with pink, yellow, green, white, and multi-colored hues are commonly found. Pinkish-orange sapphires are prized by the Jhangarans themselves who call this variety “patratcha.” Amber from Jhangara comes in a wide range of hues and hardness, from a soft amber to a brittle brownish-black to a harder rich red. The Mud Miners think that they are the wisest of the Jhangaran tribes. After all, the foreigners and bird-folk gladly trade valuable food for rocks. And the rocks are easily found in the swamps and bogs. Why risk injury or death like the Hunters or Mercenaries? Rocks do not attack you for taking them from their homes.

The largest families typically control the largest mines as well. These are the Saranka, the Mortvin, and the Kapahk.

The Mercenaries of Jhangkin

Black is the color worn by the Mercenaries of Jhangkin. It is tradition, even amongst the Jhangarans, that black is the color of death. The Mercenaries wear black both to represent how deadly they see themselves as well as honoring those whom they must kill and those who have already died. The Jhangarans have little interest in politics; to them each nation is like a tribe and tribes fight. As a result, it is not uncommon to find Jhangarans present at various places around Talislanta. Unfortunately, they are undisciplined and inclined to cause trouble amongst themselves and other soldiers when not involved in actual fighting.

Different clans in Jhangara tend to organize around various fighting styles or weapons. One clan may own and deal with swords, while another may favor spears, and a

third bows. Further divisions occur when groups focus their attention on learning how to conduct ambushes versus scouting or acting as guards. While there is no tradition that says a member of one clan cannot learn the skills or techniques of another, individuals occasionally get wrapped up in rivalries with those they see as infringing on their particular style. The Mercenaries feel that they are the smartest of the tribes. They get paid to leave the swamps, or paid to stay and fight in the swamps. Either way, they get paid. Obviously they are brave because the foreigners come seeking their skill.

The principal clans in Jhangkin are the Multan, the Karaki, and the Kayta. These bands are each large enough to put several score bodies into action at a moments notice.

Customs and Society

In general the Jhangarans are a morose and hostile people who are often superstitious to extremes. They have no real system of government, but instead argue and bicker amongst themselves until an individual or group stubborn enough to keep shouting gets their way. While the males seemingly are the decision-makers, they are often prodded along, motivated, and watched over by the females. A typical Jhangaran meeting might consist of a ring of males shouting their ideas and solutions to a problem, but they would be surrounded by an outer ring of females, many carrying screaming children, who stand by rather silent, glaring at the opposition.

In each tribe there are numerous clan families. Each of these extended family units does its best to provide for its members. Tools are often passed down maternal lines and the matriarchs of these clans constantly nag and harp the males to provide food, shelter, and clothing for the rest of the family.

The Jhangarans worship no gods, however they do still observe certain rites and rituals. Frequently these superstitious ideas are associated with certain objects; less often they are interpreted on the spot as a witness gets an

A Woman's Touch

Jhangaran women are the silent powers in their tribes. While their political acumen and diplomacy is miniscule when compared to even Kasmiran or Aamanians, they still possess a native cunning that they bring to tribal politics.

While Jhangaran politics is largely a matter of shouting and posturing, there is something to be said for sheer stubbornness. Many "weaker" males often give in to others not because they see the wisdom or point of view of their opposition, but simply because they no longer wish to hear the shouting that decision-making requires.

Jhangaran females have long recognized this fact. When the males begin to argue, women from the clan families often gather around their males with youngsters in tow. It is not uncommon for Jhangaran infants to leave a decision circle with numerous marks on their arms and legs from where their mothers or sisters or aunts have pinched them repeatedly in order to elicit shriller and louder cries than those of their neighbors.

odd or eerie feeling about what may happen next. In these latter cases, the Jhangaran becomes wildly obsessed with their surroundings, looking for the source of danger. Upon finding something to attach their fears to the afflicted does whatever they can to avoid that object.

Many of both types of Jhangaran superstition frequently revolve around avir. As such it is not surprising that the Jhangarans hold the Aeriad of Vardune with a mixture of awe and dread. Some superstitions relating to avir that are common amongst the Jhangarans are that if any avir are shot while flying over a specified patch of ground or coastline then the game or fish of the area will immediately depart. Similarly, if an avir builds a nest in a

roof then the inhabitants of the building will have good health. Perhaps this is the primary reason that the Jhangarans of Karansk allow the Aeriad to live within their walls.

Other superstitions common amongst all Jhangarans are that “kantra kalan” or small uncut sapphires will help to ward off misfortune; when someone dies any water nearby should be poured out; when someone leaves on a journey water should be poured behind them; singing should not be done during the night or else serpis will appear. And then there are superstitions regarding certain times of the year. Jhangaran children are given a temporary name at their birth. If they survive to reach the age of ten years, they are given or allowed to chose their adult, permanent name. As many Jhangaran children die before the age of ten, this achievement is marked by a brief celebration.

Although outsiders often call them holy days, the two yearly events that the Jhangarans recognize are tied to old superstitions. Beginning on the evening of the seventh of Zar the Septennarial Concordance begins. For the fourteen nights that Talislanta’s seven moons are in alignment, the Jhangarans will not enter the swamps, frequently staying within their walled villages unless necessary. During this time they believe that the Horag, a mythical beast of enormous power and might stalks the swamps searching for prey. While other nations do view the Septennarial Concordance with some unease, the Jhangarans are the only ones who claim to know precisely why it is an ill-omened time. The Horag, they tell, is a creature from out of the distant west who is only able to snatch living prey from the land during the Concordance. What the Horag eats or where it goes during the rest of the year is unknown, but the Jhangarans often uneasily cast glances to the west and claim that the Horag waits unseen, but listening, never sleeping. On the third of Ardan Jhangarans observe Jha. Typically most Jhangarans drink themselves into a stupor or a drunken rage. In either case, this is not a joyous or celebratory occasion. Jha occurs exactly thirty-one nights after the

Concordance ends. Perhaps it is not a coincidence that Jhangarans mark 31 as a number of superstitious import. For example, it is at the age of 31 that a Jhangaran is considered an elder of their village, and a child is not given its temporary name until 31 days after its birth.

The Caste System

The Jhangarans live by a caste system wherein everyone in their society has a place that they occupy and lives to fulfill that position. In some aspects this caste system is an ancient holdover from a time when the Jhangarans were much more populous and widespread, but it has also changed greatly in recent centuries to accommodate their current lifestyles. Each village is a tribe of Jhangarans unto itself with familial clans that enforce tradition to train the young and individual leaders who shout down others for change and order. The caste system is largely a matter of deciding into what clan and tribe an individual is taken. However, caste in Jhangara is not merely a matter of birth and is thus somewhat more fluid than the restrictive practices of other lands.

The highest ranking of caste, “skota,” is reserved for those who provide not only for themselves, but also for others. Many Jhangaran mothers claim this ranking for themselves as they are caretakers for their children as well as other children in the village. Below the skotadi are the members of the “eephos” caste. Eephosti are those who make and build. While it is true that the eephosti make the tools, weapons, homes, and traps for the villagers and therefore are providing for others, they do not immediately bring food to the people. Lower in status are the “eepahk” who do seemingly little for their villages. Those Jhangarans who display tendencies that would lead to professions as artists in other lands—tendencies to imagine new tales, perceive the world in different ways, or hear strange music in the sounds of the jungle—are determined to be eepahki. Barely above outcasts, the eepahki often bring ill luck to any venture of which they are a part.

On a hunt, one may begin humming without realizing it and wind up alerting the hunters' prey, or perhaps stop to admire the play of light amongst across a field of lotus instead of noticing the danger approaching their fellow tribesmen. The Cymrillian historian, Thrylos, theorized some decades ago that the eepahki were the remnants of the Jhangarans religious caste.

While the three primary settlements in Jhangara are each associated with a specific profession, Jhangarans actually practice a variety of tasks regardless of where they live. However, each village's primary profession tends to be the highest ranking caste within that community. Within each community, Jhangarans depend upon their family clan to provide them with food, shelter, and sometimes the very tools they need to earn a living. The family clan in return demands that each of its members work to earn their keep or find another clan to take them in.

Marsh Hunters enjoy a position of high status no matter where they live, although it is probably the weakest in Karansk. The Hunters are providers; not only do they provide money when they sell their catches, but they also provide both food and protection for their settlements. Jhangarans who display some skill at arms, survival, and tracking often are taken into the Marsh Hunter caste. The stronger Marsh Hunter clans are located in Tabal, but they frequently find a strong presence in Jhangkin as well where a strong arm and sharp eye is appreciated.

The Mud Miners are centered in Karansk and have little representation elsewhere. While not as highly-esteemed as the Marsh Hunters, Mud Miners nevertheless tend to be from wealthy clans. While a clan's individual members may not necessarily have any more wealth or belongings than the next Jhangaran, the clan can normally provide for its members through the sale of amber, sapphires, or gold. However, the rainy season often is a lean time for these clans as the swollen rivers and rising tides prevent the bulk of their work being done.

The Mercenary clans tend to have almost no standing outside of Jhangkin. There are always those Jhangarans who will work for food and a slight amount of pay of course, but rarely are they more than a small, poor family grouping. Jhangkin itself is an anomaly in that the Mercenaries carry more power and wealth, but the other castes sometimes hold more status.

The Outcasts

The Outcasts from Jhangaran society are a constant. Literally those without a caste, these wretched Jhangarans have no say in the affairs of Jhangaran society. However, because they carry such a heavy stigma the more intelligent or cunning Outcasts can manipulate the fears that others have of them in order to procure food and tools. Outcasts wear red in order to warn off others, but there are old stories amongst the Jhangarans that hold the color red in high esteem. Each village has anywhere from a handful to several dozen Outcasts living within its walls at any one time. Village

How Caste is Determined

For Jhangaran's caste is determined by a variety of factors. As in other lands, the first thing that is taken into account is the birth of the individual. A Jhangaran born into a family clan of Marsh Hunters is likely to become a Marsh Hunter. His youth is spent with other Hunters, he learns the skills of the Hunters.

If a youth displays the temperament of a Mud Miner, they tend to gravitate to the Miners. Thus, the behavior and attitude of a youth also has a factor. A timid youth who seems more frightened than they should will likely not be taken into the swamps to learn how to stalk prey. A clumsy Jhangaran is unlikely to be trusted in the Mines, but might be taught how to pan for pebbles of gold.

(continued)

leaders frequently attempt to persuade the Outcasts to leave, but as no Jhangaran will willingly attack an Outcast for fear of drawing doom upon themselves, there is often little that can be done. However, being without a caste, these Jhangarans also do not receive the benefits of a family clan; namely, food and shelter. Forced to fend for themselves alone, Outcasts often have no choice but to leave the village in search of food in order to survive.

The Outcasts do not have a village of their own mainly because they do not have enough numbers to do so. They do band together when they come across one another in the swamps, or when multiple Jhangarans are cast out of a village together. In such cases the band acts as a familial clan with one individual acting as leader until such a time as another Jhangaran is strong enough to take over. Often these gangs of Jhangarans live a rough short life in the swamps, but some bands have grown as large as a hundred members in the past.

As a large percentage of the Outcasts come from another caste before starting their lives as “untouchables” they also keep their old ideas about caste as well. As such, it is common for a group of Outcasts to fall into a hierarchical structure based on who can best provide for the band. Since the caste structure varies slightly depending on location however, sometimes disputes arise amongst the Outcasts. These disagreements are the primary reason why the Outcasts have not banded together in any semblance of a tribe. Simply put, the ingrained caste structure that they have grown up with tends to keep them divided, even when they are lumped at the bottom of it.

Then there are those Outcasts who have been born into their rank. As the children of Outcasts, they have little knowledge of the Jhangaran lifestyle except what their parent tells them. These Outcasts are frequently sullen, but are often the ones to keep the roaming bands active and alive. These younger members often take any excess perishables and attempt to sell or trade them to foreign traders along the banks of the Axis

How Caste is Determined (continued)

A third factor in determining caste is that of an individual's choice. While this carries less weight, a Jhangaran could leave one family grouping for another. Their new family may distrust them and set them with difficult or seemingly impossible tasks, but if they can both provide for their own sustenance and that of the clan, they will be grudgingly accepted. One exception to this is when a Jhangaran is particularly skilled. As their fame and reputation spreads, the chance of being proclaimed a father by a female looking to secure a place for herself and her child-to-be increases. Sometimes this is occasioned by one clan seeking to “steal away” talent from another. By claiming a successful Jhangaran a father, a daughter can force him to become part of her own clan in order to provide for the child, whether it truly is his or not.

The final influence on caste is fate. Should a Jhangaran ignore the signs around them and bring doom down upon themselves, they could wind up as Outcast. Once declared an Outcast by a tribe, there is no going back. However, the new Outcast still has the skills and knowledges of their prior service and must use those to survive since they no longer have a clan to give them shelter, food, or tools.

River. Traveling merchants should beware of these red-clothed tribesmen hawking wares along the shore for should other Jhangarans find out, they will most likely refuse contact, seek to sell their own wares elsewhere, or in an extreme attempt to chase of said merchant with violence.

The Aamanian Influence

Originating from Jhangkin, but with growing power in other Jhangaran communities, Aaman has a strong influence

over the lives of the Jhangarans. At one point it was thought that Jhangaran mercenaries and converts to the Aamanian faith made up a majority of the Aamanian military; however, such claims are both an exaggeration and a misunderstanding. Frequently, there are not enough Aamanian Knights to accompany pilgrims on the long journeys to places like the Watchstone. In such cases, a small number of Knights are sent, but are supplemented with Jhangaran mercenaries sometimes to a ration of one Knight for every three Jhangarans. Expeditions like these and the prejudices of certain other nations are what led to the belief that Aaman's military might lay in the hands of the primitive Jhangarans.

In truth, there are a sizable number of Jhangarans who have converted to the worship of Aa. While some of these have set up and begun lives in Aaman, the majority still live amongst their kin in Jhangara. For those that live in Jhangkin, or in small communes in Aaman, status and cast can be a confusing thing. As Aamanian society is stratified by a system of religious caste, these converts find themselves locked into two socially stratified cultures. Respect and power in one typically means somewhat less status in the other. As Jhangaran culture recognizes no gods, the faith of Jhangaran converts is something alien. Traditional Jhangarans view those who have converted as fools at best; at worst, a convert is someone who is tempting doom by paying homage to a deity who did originate in the swamps. Furthermore, as the Aamanians do not acknowledge the forms of Jhangaran caste, there have been occasions when Jhangaran Outcasts have become converts. Traditionalists frequently argue therefore that when Reverents go to work in Aaman it is almost impossible to know if they are coming into contact with those who are under a stigma of doom. It is safer to assume then that all of Aaman is under a doom, and it is best to avoid it completely.

Reverent Jhangarans often wind up having widely varying amounts of aalms. Since they accompany pilgrims to holy sites, they occasionally reap aalms more rapidly than

Other Cults

Of course the rise of the Aamanian faith amongst the Jhangarans has resulted in some cultural backlash in unpredictably strange ways.

The reverence of the goddess Arial has sprung up in both Jhangkin and Tabal. As both of these villages are situated immediately on the Azure Ocean, it is thought that the notion of this deity probably was introduced by the intermittent sailors who pass through. A great number of Zandir sailors and Gao pirates trade with the Jhangarans, and it is no surprise that they resent the growing influence that Aaman has on the country of Jhangara. However, it cannot be truly said that the Jhangarans actually worship Arial; while they seem to respect the power of the Lady of the South Wind, they are not completely comfortable with such things as worshipping deities.

Perhaps more inexplicable is the small cult of Scintilla-divers who claim to pay homage to the large mollusks that supplement their scintilla driven income. This Purple Quaga Cult seems to be either a great secret or some sort of prank. Its alleged members do not discuss it except to refer to it by name when offering to sell violet pearls of an astonishing quality. All of the Jhangarans who claim to be of this organization wear a small violet pearl somewhere on their person. Two or three members of this group do not even work as divers, but instead lead expeditions into the interior of the swamps for outsiders and tourists.

other Aamanians. However, they are usually ranked amongst the lowest classes and serve as infantry conscripts, laborers, or farmers. Additionally, a number of Jhangarans living in Aaman are slaves who belong to the state. Coming from a caste-based society, the Jhangarans who do convert pay meticulous

attention to their tallies of aalms. Reverents occasionally attempt to claim status over their non-believing kin. This leads to strife as each group sees the other as akin to a heretic.

Those Jhangarans who have converted but remain living in Jhangara observe two different lines of caste: traditional and Aamanian. The complexities of having to manage both of these can be difficult. For example, one Jhangaran may be of higher status traditionally but be far lower as regards to Aamanian caste. However, many Jhangarans see conversion to the Aamanian lifestyle as an opportunity to better themselves. While the burden of forsaking alcohol may be great for some, the chance to leave the swamps for a life elsewhere can be a welcome one. Even grueling labor as a lower caste worker in Aaman is preferable to going hungry in the swamps.

Expansionists

While the population of the Jhangaran tribes has gradually shrunk over the centuries, during modern history it has begun to grow once more. As the population of the tribesmen grows, new tribes come into being forcing the caste structure to shift and bend. Realistically, these new tribes do not just appear overnight; they are frequently already in existence but too small to make a difference. However, as the population grows and more Jhangarans seek new things, these smaller tribes begin to clamor and shout for rights of their own. In recent centuries this has led to the foundation of new villages wherein the new caste holds power. Although no new villages have been founded in the past three centuries, there are growing indicators that more tribes are on the rise.

The likeliest candidates for creating a new tribal village are the Divers of Tabal, the Spear-Fishers or Reverants of Jhangkin, or the Outcasts in the Avir Fens. The most immediate question of course should be where such a new tribal village would be constructed. First and foremost it would need

to be in a location where its members could best ply their tribal profession.

This would make it difficult at best for the Spear-Fishers to actually found their own village as they currently fish the shallow waters at the mouth of the West Axis River. While it could be possible to construct a new village near Jhangkin, such prospects are unlikely at best as the Mercenaries would see such a settlement as a direct threat to their continued prosperity. Furthermore, as the opposite side of the river is held by Aaman, there is little chance for a natural barrier of any sort that could protect a fledgling village from the Mercenaries.

The Reverants could conceivably construct a village anywhere as they are drawn from members of all the tribes and therefore have no real unifying profession like the other villages. Given the animosity that exists between traditional Jhangarans and the Reverants, on the other hand, such a village seems unlikely. In Jhangkin, the Reverants have the close and continual support of Aamanian missionaries, something they would lack elsewhere in Jhangara. Some Reverants who hold high status in both caste lines have begun shouting that Aaman should give them a village inside its own borders. If such a village were constructed, it is likely that the poorer Jhangarans who live in other Aamanian cities would migrate and bolster its population.

The Outcasts who live in the Avir Fens have slowly begun to set up small huts amongst the trees on the edge of the fens. While most still travel between the villages begging for handouts, others have begun to hunt the plentiful fowl that inhabit the area. Originally begun as shelters for the sick or infirm, those that are bold enough to hunt for themselves have started to stay as well. Some among the Outcasts mutter that creating a village for themselves would only increase the weight of doom hanging over them. Furthermore, the other tribes would definitely be ill at ease with the knowledge of an entire village of Outcasts. Given the strictures preventing a Jhangaran from killing an

Outcast, however, the destruction of such a village would require the hiring of expensive foreign mercenaries.

The Scintilla Divers of Tabal have begun to be slowly influenced by Mercenaries and Reverants from Aaman. These outside influences have gone out of their way to convince the Divers that the Mogroth would be unlikely to defend their borders if a large enough group of Jhangarans were to cross the East Axis River. While the presence of both bog devils and swamp demons is a significant drawback, the possibility of establishing a settlement in Mog is an enticing one as the Devil's Swamp of Mog is an area rich in amber and quaga. Too, the wide expanse of the Shimmering Cove would provide a natural barrier between the villages already existing in Jhangara.

The Weakness for Alcohol

The Jhangarans have an old superstition that in order to remain strong one should "drink only the water of the land." However, such a tradition is difficult to maintain in the swamps of Jhangara where pools sit still and stagnate in the heat. Each village was built near a source of fresh water, but as their villages grew, the original wells used by the Jhangarans were unable to supply water for everyone. The Axis provides much of the water that the Jhangarans need, but the ever-present threat of water raknids often means that the river water is unavailable. Therefore, sources of fresh water are prized by the Jhangarans.

When the Jhangarans first began trading the riches of their land for food and goods from outsiders, it was perhaps inevitable that alcohol would eventually make its way into Jhangaran markets. After being introduced to alcohol, the Jhangarans were quickly addicted. Although many Jhangarans will deny that they are dependent upon the drink, there are some Jhangaran traders who willingly buy alcohol before buying food. Many Jhangarans equate alcohol consumption with the bravery and ferocious rage that it brings on, and therefore

see it as a warrior's drink. This association often leads young Jhangarans to begin drinking early as they wish to prove themselves capable warriors and providers for their clans.

The consumption of alcohol by Jhangarans typically follows a set pattern. Once consumed, the alcohol causes the Jhangarans to become more and more incensed, often flying into a rage with little to no provocation. As this period of fury abates, a degree of suggestibility settles in. While in this state the Jhangarans often grow increasingly depressed and will readily agree to commands. Because of this those who employ Jhangarans frequently take them drinking the night before making any forthcoming deals in order to better take advantage of the low rates that Jhangarans normally work for. When they are once again sober, misery and despair sets in. These feelings of worthlessness cause the Jhangarans to desire more alcohol so that they can feel powerful again. This pattern does somewhat explain the squalid conditions of the Jhangaran villages and lifestyles, but even Jhangarans working far from home fall into the same repetitive cycle.

Commerce and Trade

While each Jhangaran village has some foreign presence wherein trade is conducted, the Jhangarans also have marketplaces of their own. These may move from time to time within each village, but always consist of whatever patch of ground currently has no homes standing on it. As Jhangaran language makes heavy use of shouted commands, a standard market-day normally consists of Jhangarans with something to sell shouting at any and all passers-by to Stop!, Look!, Buy!, Trade!, and other such charismatic overtures.

Many of the clan families also own rafts, skiffs, and reed boats. These are used to travel up the Axis River in an attempt to sell wares to other foreigners before the main settlements are reached. The Jhangarans do this not to

keep potential buyers away, but in order to reach customers before other clan families do.

Outside Influences

Although they remain a primitive people, the Jhangarans are actually influenced by a number of outside forces. In large part this is because of trade; nearly every nation in the West does some business with Jhangara's tribesmen. Still, there are a few nations that currently have a large impact upon the region.

Aaman is perhaps the most visible outside force in Jhangara. As Jhangarans convert to the Aamanian faith or are captured to serve as slaves in Aaman, the effect ripples through the region beginning with Jhangkin. It is therefore not unexpected that Zandu also seeks to sway the Jhangarans; however, Zandu does not hold as much sway as the pirates of Gao-Din. While the Gao certainly hold no lack of animosity for the Aamanians, they do not attempt to cajole and sway the Jhangarans in the way that of the Zandu. While the Zandu occasionally push for outright conflict with the Aamanians, going so far as to hire Mercenaries to attack Aamanian vessels and trading parties, the Gao instead have a bit more flair. The Gao openly mock the Aamanian ways when in port, and often invite the locals into their revelry while doing so. However, the Gao rarely stick around for a fight. When the Aamanians seem to be at their boiling point, the Gao leave, taking their alcohol with them. As a result, the Jhangarans tend to see the Gao in a more favorable light than the intimidating, abstaining Aamanians. While the Jhangarans will on very rare occasion trade with the Imrians, as a general rule the Imrians are despised and hated. Primarily this is because the slavers frequently raid Jhangara for cheap stock. However, recently a small band of female Batrean expatriates settled in Tabal. This group of women have been attempting to gather support for an assault to drive the Imrians off of Batre. The women have had mixed results; while there are always Jhangaran males who take their side, a number of Jhangaran females encourage their own mates to question what

benefit Jhangara would receive from such a conflict. Furthermore, the Jhangarans do not have the means to reach the island as they do not produce large sea-worthy vessels.

Travel in the Swamps

Travel through Jhangara is difficult in the best of times. However, in order to survive, much less earn a living, one must travel through the swamps and fens. Additionally, explorers of the region often attempt to penetrate to the midst of the bogs and marshes that the Jhangarans call home.

The simplest method of travel across Jhangara is on foot. Understandably, this is the least attractive option. When crossing on foot, one must not only be careful of quicksand, but of all manner of treacherous footing as the numerous bogs throughout the swamps can readily entrap the unwary. Furthermore, there are some predators of the marshes, such as swamp lurkers, that lie near such bogs in wait for prey to come to them. Only strong survival instincts and skills can prevent such disasters from occurring.

For those who can acquire a Marsh Strider, it is possible to quickly cross the swampy terrain of Jhangara. The splayed webbed feet of the Marsh Strider enables them to move across ground that would prove impassable to those on foot. However, these beasts provide their own set of attendant dangers as well. First, they must be kept muzzled at all times or else they will bite at anything that comes within reach. Additionally, this breed of strider has a pronounced tendency towards disobedience. Although the Jhangarans commonly use them as steeds and pack animals, this is primarily due to a constant series of shouting, beating, and prodding from the time the striders are freshly hatched than any sort of loyalty or skill at husbandry.

The Jhangarans also utilize two different waterborne craft: mud skiffs and reed boats. While neither of these are capable of navigating the occasional rough seas of the

Azure Ocean, they are particularly well-suited for traversing either the swamps of Jhangara or its surrounding rivers.

Jhangaran mud skiffs are little more than elaborate rafts that the Jhangarans propel using long poles. While normally constructed of indigenous wood tied together with vines or purchased ropes, the Jhangarans of Karansk also have several mud skiffs constructed solely from fallen limbs of Span Oak. In such cases, the Jhangarans take a single wide limb and hollow out the interior. This is then soaked in water and pounded flat along its bottom. Karanskan mud skiffs are slightly more durable, but take much longer to craft.

The reed boats that are used by Jhangarans are constructed from several sheets of mesh woven from river reeds or marsh grasses and dried mud. Once completed these alternating layers result in a hull of surprising strength. In their normal fashion Jhangaran reed boats are only suitable for one person and a small amount of cargo. The Marsh Hunters of Tabal have been known to spend a month or more constructing large reed barges, but these typically do not last more than a year as the Hunters use them for harvesting scintilla and despite their sturdiness the claws of water raknid are much stronger.

CHAPTER THREE

Buried Secrets

Jhangara, like much of the Southern Rim, is an area abundant in flora and fauna, much of which seem exotic to the civilized lands to the north. Explorers traveling in these areas often “discover” some plant or animal long known to the locals but unheard of in other lands.

The Creatures of the Swamps

The fauna of Jhangara, like much of the rest of Talislanta, is often dangerous. While life is abundant here in the swamps, it is also often short and punctuated with violence. The following are an example of the types of creatures found in Jhangara; statistics for these creatures can be found either in the *Talislanta 4th Edition Handbook* or the *Talislanta Menagerie*.

Marsh Striders are perhaps the most common indigenous species native to Jhangara and can be found in every corner of the region. Many wild striders congregate near the branches of the Axis River or one of the smaller waterways that are spread across the land. Aside from fresh water and easy access to fish, the presence raknid eggs exerts a strong influence on this behavior. Water Raknids are also common throughout much of Jhangara. While their colonies are largely submerged under water, their eggs and newly hatched spawn must breathe air. Therefore, travelers should always be cautious while

Talislantan Fauna

Giant Water Bug

There are hundred of different varieties of giant water-bug native to the Talislantan continent, from the foot-long, water-skimming “boatsman” to the six-foot tall “swamp mantis.” Most of these feed on tiny crustaceans, insect larvae, and the eggs of other aquatic creatures, although some are scavengers that consume rubbish or carrion. Although the swamp mantis is the only type that poses any substantial danger to Man, most giant water-bugs will bite or sting if threatened. As these creatures live in areas where a variety of diseases are common, such injuries should be promptly treated. The Jhangarans, as well as both the Aeriad and the Imrians, commonly use these creatures as food.

Fungal Worm

A carrion-eating invertebrate common to Talislanta’s Southern Rim, these creatures have been known to reach sizes of up to three feet in height. When at rest or feeding, the fungal worm resembles a large tubular mushroom. Only when disturbed will a fungal worm uncoil from its natural camouflaged form and attempt to escape by burrowing into nearby soil. Should this fail,

(continued)

approaching bodies of water while in Jhangara. Swamp Lurkers are another common sight in Jhangara. Swamp Lurkers of especially prodigious size are also known as Swamp Demons. Although not true demons, these foul creatures dwell throughout the swamps and marshes of Jhangara. Ravens are also widespread in the area and are particularly noted for their uncanny habit of following parties who attempt to travel across the swamps. After nightfall, the ravens raid what ever camp travelers have, sometimes becoming so bold as to steal away full grown adults in addition to food. Should the travelers be attacked, the ravens scatter and hide until the conflict is over, then sneak back in order to scavenge for food for themselves from the vanquished party. Because of this Jhangarans frequently view the appearance of ravens as an ill-omen. The deeper sections of the Axis River, particularly along the entire length of the Eastern Fork, are home to numerous river kra. A similar derivative, the swamp kra, often inhabit the pools and mires of the interior.

Many folk in Talislanta overlook these all too common creatures, but mention should also be made of the abundance of both avir and serpis in Jhangara. The common red avir that is frequently found along the southern coast is widely known for its habit of laying its eggs in the nests of other avir. Newly hatched red avir are a uniform brown in color and will often tuck the shed feathers of their nest mates amongst their own plumage. Before reaching maturity, these hatchlings kill the other nestlings either by pecking them with their sharp beaks or kicking them out of the nest. The nocturnal black avir is more frequently seen in north-eastern Jhangara as it inhabits more temperate regions than are found in the south. Many of the more primitive races in Talislanta consider the common black avir to be bad luck despite its melodious song. More colorful species of avir inhabit the southern areas of Jhangaran. The mitador, known for both its emerald green tail feathers and its ability to mimic sounds, are commonly found nesting along the coast. The crimson vermeh, named for both their tint and their cry, are

Talislantan Fauna

(continued)

the fungal worm may bite whatever predator has disturbed it in an attempt to get away.

Size: 6" to 3' in length, 1 to 6 lbs.

Attributes:

INT -15	PER 0
WIL -3	CHA n/a
STR +1	DEX 0
CON -1	SPD -1

Ability Level: 1-6

Attacks/Damage: Bite DR 2

Special Abilities: Natural Camouflage ability

Armor: none

Hit Points: 3-12

Habitat: Jhangara, Mog, and the Dark Coast

Brown Leech

Perhaps the most common specimen of leech in Talislanta, the brown leech has striped brown and sepia skin and a small pin-like head. The bite of the brown leech numbs its victim so that the leech can feed unobtrusively. Although perhaps once confined to the Southern Rim in ages past, the numbing bite and slow feeding of the brown leech has resulted in it spreading across much of southern Talislanta by virtue of traveling on the bodies of its hosts.

Size: 1" to 6" long, 1 to 6 oz.

Attributes:

INT - 15	PER +1
WIL -3	CHA n/a
STR 0	DEX 0
CON +2	SPD +1

Ability Level: 1

Attacks/Damage: Blood Drain DR 1/day

Special Abilities: Anesthetic bite

Armor: None

Hit Points: 1

Habitat: Swamps, jungles, rivers

(continued)

frequently a chronic pest for sailors along the Jhangaran coast. The plumage of these avir shimmer and sparkle, reflecting and amplifying even the most minute of light sources across great distances. As these intelligent avir have long since learned that boats can frequently mean food, they tend to flock to the top masts of any sailing vessel they see in the hopes of an easy meal. However, from such a vantage point the reflection of their plumage can be seen for miles around as well as beneath the waves. The Howling Screamer is a plump bodied avir of dull yellow and green plumage. Although infrequently seen amongst the thick jungle foliage due to its natural coloration, the presence of these avir seldom goes unnoticed due to the sound of the call for which they are named. If trained from the time they are hatched, Howling Screamers can be taught to imitate the speech of their owner, but never manage to give up their native call which seems to be an innate talent.

Along the northern coast of Jhangara, durge and ogriphants are a frequent sight. While they frequently they are wild sometimes the durge may be escaped herds from Aaman, so hunters should be wary of any Aamanians in the area. Although their herds are much smaller than in the Wilderlands, the durge here are still much the same as elsewhere. Also common along all of Jhangara's coasts and waterways are tardisite, ibik, feather dractyl, winged vipers, angorn, quaal, skank, rictus, urthrax, mudrays, alatus, and aramatus. These creatures are also common as Jhangaran comestibles. Many in other lands cannot understand, much less stomach, such fare but the sheer abundance of these creatures means that the Jhangarans have little other choice. It is also possible to purchase specimens of these creatures in such ports as Tabal and Jhangkin, although the larger the creature the less likely it is to be found. Small groups of sapiens, simians, and shathane dwell amongst the denser jungles and swamps of central Jhangara. Slightly less dangerous are the occasional exomorph, psuedomorph, or scavenger slime that exist under the darkening canopy of the jungle's foliage.

Talisantan Fauna (continued)

Serpis Leech

Long, a ghoulish white in color, and generally shaped like a serpis, the carnivorous serpis leech stakes out a territory of its own and will attack nearly anything that enters it. Once it successfully bites with its circular maw of over-sized bony teeth, the muscles around its maw begin to constrict. While the serpis leech does this in order draw out blood and tissue, it has the added effect of clamping its teeth down and locking them in place. After its victim dies from blood loss, the serpis leech will drag away the body. Once secreted in the hollow of a tree or submerged within a bog, the body will become food for the serpis later should prey become scarce.

Size: 6" to 2' long, 6 oz to 2 lbs.

Attributes:

INT -15	PER +2
WIL 0	CHA n/a
STR +2	DEX 0
CON +1	SPD +1

Ability Level: 1-5

Attacks/Damage: Bite DR 5 +Blood Drain DR 2 per round; successful DEX or Healing roll needed to remove or victim suffers additional 1 HP damage from fangs.

Special Abilities: Locking jaw, victim must make a STR check at -5 in order to open the bony jaws of the leech.

Armor: Thin hide, PR 1

Hit Points: 12

Habitat: Swamps, jungles, rivers

When traveling along Jhangara's coast, visitors should be cautious to avoid not only the shimmering patches of scintilla that herald the presence of water raknid, but should also watch for the presence of nar-eels, voltts, aquatic vamps, kra, sea scorpions, and skalanx. These beasts make a water journey just as hazardous as travel on foot. However, the

presence of giant mollusks, including an amazing abundance of quaga, which is rare in other waters, is often enough to draw the fool-hardy or the ill-advised. Some sailors of a larcenous bent take advantage of the presence of such dangers to hide their ill-gotten loot, dispose of unruly prisoners, or occasionally elude pursuit. This latter tactic is not without its dangers as the presence of one creature capable of stopping a pursuing ship can often mean the presence of something fast enough to catch a fleeing ship as well.

While not truly indigenous to Jhangara, sightings of both slime and plant demons are more frequent here than in other parts of Talislanta. These fearsome entities are known to haunt the ruins of Ylal Nat. It would be expected that the plant demons, also known as grues, would eventually destroy the foliage and vegetation that has enveloped the ruined city, but for some reason they are confined to the outskirts of the valley in which Ylal Nat lies. The slime demons on the other hand seem unable to leave the city itself. Some disreputable individuals, when deep in their cups in more civilized lands, claim to have witnessed titanic and epic battles between these two breeds of demons along the borders of the city. Why this may be so remains a mystery as the demons of Ylal Nat are not predisposed to conversation.

Insects and Invertebrates

In addition to the scores of different creatures inhabiting the swamps are dozens of insects that plague the region. Amberwasps, Tazian flies, flits, and iron dragonflies set the very air of the swamps to buzzing during the heat of the day. Sniperbugs, Caravan bugs, chigs, and root grubs are all small hazards to be alert for and no less dangerous for their slight size. Larger insectoids like the giant water-bug, mud walker, scythe, and swamp mantis can be frequently found throughout the swamps and serve as both predator and prey for other creatures. Perhaps most common throughout the region are slugs, worms, and leeches.

A wide assortment of slugs can be found throughout the waterways of Jhangara and Mog. Most common are red slugs, spotted yellow slugs, and great grey slugs which are all types of mud slugs. These creatures commonly feed off of plants and decaying matter such as carrion. Normally ranging from one to three inches in length, the great grey has been known to reach a length of twelve inches. Considered standard fare amongst the Jhangarans, most Talislantans find these creatures to be rather repulsive. Sea slugs are

Talislantan Flora

Bombo Tree

A giant variety of deciduous tree native to the swamps of Mog and Jhangara, the bombo is notable for its gnarled and tangled roots which extend high above the water line. An important source of food for many swamp-dwelling avir and herbivores, the leaves of the bombo are also utilized by such races as whisps and Mogroth.

Deadman

A pale white plant which thrives only in darkness, deadman is commonly found in caves, the hollows of rotting trees, or in tombs. The leaves of this plant exude a lethal toxic contact poison, a single touch of which can be sufficient to cause death in two to five minutes time. Deadman sells for a high price in various black markets of the continent and its poison is a favorite of assassins from Arim to Rajanistan.

Fire Lily

A water-loving plant that bears brilliant red flowers, fire lily is commonly found in the warmer tropical climates of southern Jhangara, Mog, and the Dark Coast. Aside from its aesthetic beauty, the flower is also of some use to alchemists and mages in the preparation of potions that confer a resistance to heat.

(continued)

another breed, but tend to dwell in brine rather than in a fresh-water environment. Slightly larger than their brethren, sea slugs like water raknid lay their eggs along the shallows of the shoreline. These slugs are also slightly more intelligent, displaying slight imitative behaviors and a capacity to learn extremely simple tricks.

A huge number and variety of worms burrow through the soil of Jhangara. Mudworms are the type seen most frequently as they tend to dwell near the surface of the soil. Too, they can be found swimming on the surface of the muck and mire. For the most part mudworms are harmless serving only to digest decaying plant matter and provide food for larger creatures. However, they have been known to be carriers of various ailments common to swamp and jungle regions. Fungal worms are similar in most regards to mudworms except for the oddity of their shape and the size of their jaws. Although not truly a worm, the skolek is a type of millipede larva that spends much of its time crawling through the hulks of rotting trees. After reaching its maximum length, a skolek briefly hibernates while growing the prodigious number of legs common amongst all millipedes.

Although the larger alatus and aramatus are perhaps the best known, a variety of more common smaller leeches do exist. The most widespread of these is the brown leech, a specimen that is similar in coloration to the Jhangarans themselves. If not found, an attached brown leech can possibly travel with a host-victim for days, if not weeks. The slightly less common serpis leech is a carnivorous species but can be normally be easily avoided owing to both its unpleasantly ghastly white body and the faint odor of rotting flesh that remains of its meals.

Talislantian Flora

(continued)

Tanglewood

A giant, animate variety of deciduous tree, Tanglewood has long been noted for its singularly malicious tendencies. These trees seem to possess the instincts of a deranged killer and will attack anything that comes within the reach of its coiling branches. This attack customarily occurs as attempt to ensnare a creature or object and lift it high above the ground. The victim or object is then held until the onset of the winter months when the tree sheds its leaves. At such a time, anything that the tree still holds in its branches is dropped to the ground. Creatures held aloft often slowly expire due to hunger, thirst, or exposure to the elements. It is unknown whether the tree does this for the small nutritive benefit of the decomposing bodies or simply a murderous intent. "Viridian's Florilegium," an authoritative work on horticulture and Botanomancy, warns against any attempts to cultivate these trees either from seeds or cuttings. To quote the author, "Cuttings made from the Tanglewood tree display an alarming degree of animation and perhaps even sentience. If transported in a glass container, the stems expand until the glass cracks under pressure; if a metal chest is used, the cutting will sprout root-like tendrils which actively seek egress through keyhole, hinge, or any other small aperture; wood is similarly ineffective as the plant's tendrils seem capable of penetrating this substance as if by osmosis. The seeds of the Tanglewood are, first of all, difficult to obtain: the tree makes its seeds but once each year, dispersing the spiny pods into the air within hours of their appearance. More importantly, the seed-pod explodes from the internal pressure generated by germination, sending its four-inch spines hurling through the air like deadly missiles.

(continued)

Jhangaran Plant Life

The fauna of Jhangara is often lush and thick. The centuries layers of sediment provide ample nourishment and encourage the rapid growth and spread of plants. Jhangara also has the fortune, good or ill, of being downriver from the Green Aeriad Botanomancers of the Seven Kingdoms; because of this fact, many strange and exceptional plants can be found along the waterways of the region.

Common to the area are such diverse trees as willowood, bombo trees, parasol trees, grey baobab, fernwood, spider oak, span oak, and on rare occasion small spice trees. Amongst such splendid foliage as these can be found viridia, thornwood, whipbane, polyp-plants, k'tallah, provender plant, and marsh weed. Many varieties of lotus vine can also be found along the estuaries and streams and the rare purple narcissus can sometimes be found growing the Avir Fens. Marsh weed, thornwood, whipbane, and lotus vine are all used by the Jhangarans for constructing everything from walls, simple traps, boats, and village huts.

Travelers in the region should also be aware of some of the more active forms of plant life. An unwary visitor can easily stumble into stranglevine or tanglewood to name but two of the deadly varieties. In addition to these, whipweed, spitting crocus, serpentvine, mantrap, needle leaf, scarlet sporozoid, and spider moss are quite common.

The Horag

The Horag is a legendary beast of unknown power. None know its origins with certainty and few have actually seen the creature and lived to tell the tale. According to Jhangaran stories, the monster towers over twenty feet high but casts a shadow that reaches much further. Victims of the Horag, both Man and beast, are found in the morning suns-light with the life strangled out of them, a look of unimaginable horror etched into their faces. Although some Jhangaran hunters have

Talislantan Flora

(continued)

The force of the seed-pod's explosion is sufficient to shatter glass or wood containers, and to blow open all but the sturdiest or largest metal chests; at close range, the pod's spines can penetrate even metal armor."

Size: 25'-50' tall; weight unknown

Attributes:

INT -10	PER 0
WIL 0	CHA 0
STR +3	DEX 0
CON 0	SPD +1

Ability Level: 3-4

Attacks/Damage: Entangling tendrils DR 6; Seed-pod explosion DR 12

Special Abilities: Entangle, STR check at -2 to escape

Armor: Tough Bark PR 5

Hit Points: 30-40 plus tendrils have 8 points each

Habitat: temperate forests, woodlands, sub-tropical swamps

Yellow Stickler

The yellow stickler is a peculiar plant native to various temperate forest and jungle regions of Talislanta. Standing up to five feet in height, the stickler's long, golden leaves exude a remarkably adhesive sap. The plant feeds on insects of all sorts which become stuck to its leaves and eventually die. The decaying insect then provides nutrients, which the plant absorbs by the process of osmosis. The stickiness of the sap is of such a strength that even careless whisks may be trapped by it as well.

boasted the feat of outrunning the shadow of the Horag, the renowned naturalist Andolmir backs up claims that the very gaze of the Horag paralyzes its prey. Despite its size and apparent ferocity however little evidence of the Horag exists. When the Septenarial Concordance occurs, it is common for the tides of the Azure Ocean to fluctuate wildly and off-shore winds to greatly increase. Often

this results in the felling of trees all along the Jhangaran coast; the Jhangarans claim that this is where the Horag has stalked the coast looking for victims, but there are never any discernable claw marks or scraps of hide left behind on these downed trees. Still, the possibility of a temporary hole in the dimensional fabric of reality, as posited by certain occultists, can not completely be dismissed as many aberrant weather conditions such as Black Winds, Ghost Winds, and Witch Winds are all known to occur off of Jhangara's south-western coast.

There may be some truth behind the Jhangaran legends of the Horag as Andolmir suggests in the aforementioned account. Records exist in the Aamanian monastery-village of Alm of a late-Archaen age resort village that occupied the air between the terminals of the Axis River. Axismouthe, as the village was called, was a decadent place for Archaens who wished to indulge their baser instincts. The Flagellants of Alm mention Axismouthe in cautionary tales to those who will listen; it is their claim that over the years of its existence, the population of Axismouthe grew more and more bestial. The Aamanians point to this as evidence of debauchery and sinfulness of the most vile sort, but given the Archaen penchant for biomantic hybridization and the creation of neomorphs, it is unknown whether or not the inhabitants of Axismouthe were truly debased Archaens or simply fanciful creations.

Tales also claim that before the Great Disaster, one of the magicians of this doomed city attempted a powerful spell of unknown intent. When this spell went awry, other magicians attempted to contain it, but only succeeded in further fueling the magical mishap that was brewing. Before the magical energies burned themselves out, something from out of another time, or perhaps even another world, noticed and began to move towards the fires of the city. Afterwards, the city survived, but its inhabitants had changed; they were described as churlish by some visitors, hostile by others. As the Archaens began to take their business elsewhere, the

resort-village of Axismouthe fell into greater and greater disrepair. The last known record of Axismouthe was by the Archaen historian, Hawar Filits, who claimed that in a visit to the city he found the few remaining inhabitants possessed of a violent distrust of outsiders. Stranded in the city over the course of Septinarian Concordance, Filits reported a strange shadow that seemed to fall over the city during the night and he felt that he was being pursued by some unseen adversary. Filits escaped the city, and by the time he could convince anyone to return with him all the inhabitants of the Axismouthe had been slain. In his own report of the events—a book called simply “The Shadow” that was largely regarded as a sham—Filits describes the scene that greeted him on his return to the village. “The city center seemed to be deserted at first, but the charnel scent of death hung over everything. We slowly began to find first one, then another, then more bodies of the slain, bodies twisted beyond recognition in some cases. Some of them seemed to have been strangled or crushed by gigantic hands, while others displayed signs of violence from the other villagers. In almost all cases, the countenances of the corpses seemed to be contorted into expressions of horror, their eyes nearly bulging from their heads. The feelings of anger and antagonism that I had previously felt during my visit to the city were slowly replaced by shock and horror. Whatever had walked among the village of Axismouthe had seemingly so frightened its inhabitants that those who did not outright take their own lives apparently turned upon one another before being slain by the horror itself. I am taking it upon myself to burn this accursed and wretched place, destroying it so that it will hurtle into the ground below, where I hope it will become buried in the mire of the rivers and so vanish from the world of Archaeus forever.”

New Archetypes

<h2>LOW-CASTE JHANGARAN MARSH DWELLER</h2>		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>+1</td> <td>+1</td> <td>+2</td> <td>-2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>STR</td> <td>DEX</td> <td>PER</td> <td>CHA</td> </tr> <tr> <td>+2</td> <td>0</td> <td>-2</td> <td>-1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CON</td> <td>SPD</td> <td>WIL</td> <td>INT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>+3</td> <td>20</td> <td>-4</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR</td> <td>HP</td> <td>MR</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	+1	+1	+2	-2	STR	DEX	PER	CHA	+2	0	-2	-1	CON	SPD	WIL	INT	+3	20	-4		CR	HP	MR		<p>Special Abilities: None; Outcasts are regarded by other Jhangarans to have CHA -10; Outcasts have skills as previous profession.</p>
+1	+1	+2	-2																								
STR	DEX	PER	CHA																								
+2	0	-2	-1																								
CON	SPD	WIL	INT																								
+3	20	-4																									
CR	HP	MR																									
<p>There are mouths to feed, but you and your family have no voice. You work and work to provide food and money for your clan-family, but the higher castes often take what you make or charge you more for their goods. Sometimes you can sell what you catch to outsiders, but more frequently the other castes shout you down and sell their goods for less. You are beginning to think that gathering you clan-family and starting a new village isn't such a bad idea, but the swamps are full of dangers and the village you are in already has a wall for protection.</p>		<p>Skills: Javelin +2 Dagger +1 Brawling +1 Merchant +3 Survival +3 Low Talisman, native Sign, basic</p> <p><i>For Spear-fishers, add:</i> Spear +3 Swim +3 Traps +3 Stealth +3</p> <p><i>For Scintilla-divers, add:</i> Swim +4 Traps +1 Pilot: skiff +1 Salvager +1 Stealth +4 Tracking +1</p>	<p>Equipment: Loincloth; brief cloth vest (females); arm and leg wrappings; cloak (divers wear Marsh Hunter green, fishers wear Mercenary gray); backpack or shoulder pouch; stone dagger; flask of liquor; 20 gold lumens in assorted currencies.</p> <p><i>For Spear-fishers, add:</i> long, stone-tipped spear; two stone-tipped javelins; woven net.</p> <p><i>For Scintilla-divers, add:</i> two stone-tipped javelins; two woven sacks for scintilla; small-river skiff.</p>																								
<p>Appearance: 5'7"-6'7", 100-200 lbs. Marbled brown and sepia-colored skin; elongated limbs; elliptical cranium; pinched, angular features; hairless.</p>																											

<h2>JHANGARAN CONVERT</h2>		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>+1</td> <td>+1</td> <td>+2</td> <td>-2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>STR</td> <td>DEX</td> <td>PER</td> <td>CHA</td> </tr> <tr> <td>+2</td> <td>0</td> <td>-1</td> <td>-1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CON</td> <td>SPD</td> <td>WIL</td> <td>INT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>+3</td> <td>20</td> <td>-4</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR</td> <td>HP</td> <td>MR</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	+1	+1	+2	-2	STR	DEX	PER	CHA	+2	0	-1	-1	CON	SPD	WIL	INT	+3	20	-4		CR	HP	MR		<p>Special Abilities: None; Outcasts are regarded by other Jhangarans to have CHA -10; Outcasts have skills as previous profession.</p>
+1	+1	+2	-2																								
STR	DEX	PER	CHA																								
+2	0	-1	-1																								
CON	SPD	WIL	INT																								
+3	20	-4																									
CR	HP	MR																									
<p>You now follow the ways of the All-Seeing Eye. The white-armored priests say that Aa watches all, sees all, and knows all. Aa will provide for his faithful, they tell you. You sometimes doubt, but food is more plentiful than ever. Sometimes you go to the white-armored priests fields and work in the hot sun, away from the water, and are surrounded by food. You are not allowed to eat it while you are working, but they feed you at suns-rise and at suns-set. Sometimes you try to tell your tribes-mates about the All-Seeing Eye, but they make the sign against evil and try to shout you down, claiming that you will bring misfortune to the people. You don't want to bring misfortune, just the food and safety that the white-armored priests say Aa will provide. If you are a simple convert, you perhaps work the fields, mines, or on-board ships of Aaman, perhaps as a slave or perhaps as a free Jhangaran. If you are a Reverant, you serve Aa as a foot-soldier of Aaman or a guard for pilgrims. If you are a Reverant Oracle, you have seen the lessons of the white-robed priests and begun to preach the faith of Aa in Jhangara.</p>		<p>Skills (continued):</p> <p><i>For Reverants, add:</i> Mace +3 Shield +2 Weaponer +1 Guide +1 Doctrines: Orthodoxy +1 Increase CR to +4</p> <p><i>For Reverant Oracles, add:</i> Staff +2 Astrology +1 Oratory +2 Guide +1 Doctrines: Orthodoxy +2 Increase MR to -2 Decrease CR to +2</p>	<p>Equipment: Loincloth; brief cloth vest (females); arm and leg wrappings; cloak (dyed white); backpack or shoulder pouch; dagger; 20 gold lumens in assorted currencies.</p> <p><i>For Converts, add:</i> personal set of tools.</p> <p><i>For Reverants, add:</i> black iron chain mail, iron shield embossed with Eye of Aa, white tabard embroidered with simple Eye of Aa, coarse woolen garments, and leather boots, all dyed white; iron holy symbol of Aa, mace.</p> <p><i>For Reverant Oracles, add:</i> coarse woolen garments, gloves, and boots, all dyed white; iron-shod staff; iron holy symbol of Aa.</p>																								
<p>Appearance: 5'7"-6'7", 100-200 lbs. Marbled brown and sepia-colored skin; elongated limbs; elliptical cranium; pinched, angular features; hairless.</p>																											
<p>Skills: Javelin +2 Dagger +1 Brawling +1 Survival +3</p>	<p>Skills (continued):</p> <p><i>For Converts, add:</i> Laborer +4 Doctrines: Orthodoxy +1 Choose either Pilot +1 or Agriculture +1</p>																										

KALIMANTAN NEOMORPH																									
<p>Your life is simple, and you are happy. There are the buildings, the rocks, the sea, and the sky. There is nothing else. From atop the highest peak, other lands can be seen; islands that are much bigger than this one. But this one provides all that you and your people need, so why go to the trouble of leaving. Besides, if you left there would be no one here to watch over the ancient buildings. The very thought of them being left unattended is enough to cause your heart to ache and your head to spin. So you watch them, or leave others of your tribe to watch while you gather food. Life is simple, and you are happy.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>+6</td> <td>-2</td> <td>+2</td> <td>-3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>STR</td> <td>DEX</td> <td>PER</td> <td>CHA</td> </tr> <tr> <td>+2</td> <td>0</td> <td>-5</td> <td>-1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CON</td> <td>SPD</td> <td>WIL</td> <td>INT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>+2</td> <td>25</td> <td>-5</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>CR</td> <td>HP</td> <td>MR</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Skills: Brawling +3 Climbing +3 Guard +5 Herb Lore +1 Stealth +2 Survival +2 Laborer +1 Sign, native Archaen, basic Choice of Dagger +1, Club +1, or Spear +1</p>	+6	-2	+2	-3	STR	DEX	PER	CHA	+2	0	-5	-1	CON	SPD	WIL	INT	+2	25	-5		CR	HP	MR	
+6	-2	+2	-3																						
STR	DEX	PER	CHA																						
+2	0	-5	-1																						
CON	SPD	WIL	INT																						
+2	25	-5																							
CR	HP	MR																							
<p>Appearance: 5'5"-6'0", 150-175 lbs. Mottled crimson and burgundy skin; thick cranium; broad back covered with scales and bony plates; long, double-jointed arms; short, wide-spread legs; coarse, matted hair.</p>	<p>Special Abilities: Resist natural temperature extremes. As neo-morphs the Kalimantanans mature early, have a long middle age, then rapidly decline and die. They seem to have been originally constructed as beasts-of-burden, capable of bearing huge loads on their back.</p> <p>Equipment: Loincloth, small basket, cloak, and hat, all woven from leaves; choice of a stone dagger, stone-tipped spear, or wooden club; small collection of polished stones.</p>																								

Superstitions

The sheer number of superstitions that the Jhangarans cling to means that any attempt to catalog them all is nigh impossible. However, included below are a sampling of the primitive superstitions and beliefs of the Jhangaran people.

- An attack from hiding is surest. A swift retreat means survival. An angered foe should be met again.
- Jhangarans should only drink from the water of the land. Jhangarans should not eat other Jhangarans.
- Amber rubbed on the sick will bring relief. Sapphires thrown in the air bring an end to storms. Patratcha, or lotus, sapphires bring continued good fortune even when given away, but if sold the seller will wither away. The violet pearls of the quaga bring good fortune while sailing.
- One ravenger, attack. Three ravengers, stand. Five ravengers, flee.
- The Horag stalks the swamps during the Septenarial Concordance, and will kill any who walk the waters during the night.
- Smoke in the sky means impending doom. If clouds in the morning tinted red signifies doom and that one should remain indoors.
- Avir nesting in the thatch of a house ward off doom. Destroying an Avir nest will result in the Jhangaran's own home being destroyed. When eaten, avir eggs can be used to determine guilt in the case of a crime—if the eater is guilty, their doom will fall upon them and make them ill; if innocent, they will gain new strength and vitality. An avir flying overhead may mean good fortune. A flock of avir flying overhead is a bad omen.

- Anyone who touches an Outcast draws off some of their doom, thereby becoming an Outcast. Anyone who kills an Outcast not only inherits all of their doom, but also gathers more of their own, thereby becoming an Outcast.
- If someone is plagued by continued misfortune with no apparent source, they are said to have attracted the “doom of Ahtrus.” Such individuals often end up as Outcasts as no one wishes to suffer alongside these unfortunates.

The Effects of Alcohol

The Jhangarans have a pronounced weakness for alcohol. From generations of merchants, sailors, and pirates, they have learned that troubles can be avoided through the bottom of a tankard. As the Jhangarans find their lives filled with troubles, they drink often. Additionally, they display a strong tendency for becoming addicted to alcohol and other substances. This is partially due to a generally low willpower for resisting the continued lure of such vices, and partially something in their own innate make-up.

For any given period of time or amount of drinking, a player can roll make a Willpower roll, modified up or down by the game master, and consult the following results.

Critical Failure: Unconsciousness. Unconsciousness means that the character falls into a stupor and is unable to be awakened for several hours.

Failure: Seeing Spirits. When Seeing Spirits, the Jhangaran finds their superstitions made manifest around them. Scores of hideously malformed spirits and spectral imps seem to lurk behind every corner, pulling and tugging items, tripping others, spilling buckets, and so forth. Others cannot see these spirits; however, two or more Jhangarans seeing spirits can share a common delusion, influenced by the fears of their comrades and convinced that they all see the same creatures.

Partial Success: Rage. When in a Rage a Jhangaran will take offense at nearly any slight, interpret the actions of others in the most paranoid way possible, and eventually begin to lash out at those he perceives as attacking him.

Success: Madness. Madness affects the Jhangarans in a manner that combines the prior two results; not only do the actions of all around him seem directed against the sufferer, but their visages seem to take on leering, devilish forms.

Critical Success: Uncontrollable. On rare occasions, a Jhangaran becomes Uncontrollable and lashes out wildly at everyone and everything around him. While in this state, nothing can calm the Jhangaran down, and the only respite for those around him is to render the drunken tribesman unconscious.

Secrets Left to Discover

The following entries comprise a list of possible ways to use the information presented in the preceding sections. Ideally this material is intended for Gamemasters for use as adventure seeds or simply to spark creative discourse about the myriad hidden possibilities still existing in Talislanta.

The pre-Archaen Shoreline Ruins

There are numerous ruins along Jhangara’s shore that are constructed of coral and stone, contain Piscine writing, and have carvings that seem to depict something negative coming from the waves. This would make sense if the inhabitants were amphibious and had to fear the dangers of the sea while remaining close to it. Perhaps, however, the inhabitants were not amphibious but completely aquatic and the ruins once existed below the sea. The carvings that seem so disturbing and negative to the PCs may actually seem pleasing to a character from an different environment. If such a PC is among the party, perhaps they find the carvings pleasant but feel that the entire structure is

somehow out-of-place on dry land. Such a character may instead interpret the carvings as a warning of something from the ocean's depths or simply an extensive mythology of the origins of the aquatic races of Talislanta.

Ylal Nat: Inhabitants, Demons, and Alhambra

The past inhabitants of Ylal Nat are unknown. If a group is interested in treasure hunting or ancient secrets, making the past residents Archaens is certainly possible. Other possibilities could be a forgotten Sub-Men tribe, the First Folk, or even the race known as the Withen. Any or all of these could be responsible for the demonic presence in the ruins. Magical mishaps, overconfident summoners and practitioners of the dark arts, or even enemies of the city-state could all be responsible for the first demonic presence in the city, perhaps even before it was abandoned. The current demonic inhabitants could be those exact same entities or an entirely new group drawn to the decay and destruction of the area. Whether the demons were summoned to protect or destroy the city is up to the Gamemaster.

Alhambra and Altarus have long been mistaken for one another and Ylal Nat is the primary reason why. In Elder Tongue, Alhambra loosely translates to “the red city,” and Altarus itself was rumored to be primarily red in hue. However, Gamemasters do not necessarily have to have the two places be distinct and separate. If the civilizations during the time of the Archaens called the location different names in different languages, then the confusion of names could simply be a modern misunderstanding. Alternately, Alhambra could be a place far removed from conventional understanding, peopled by strange entities that do not resemble the Archaens or the Sub-Men at all.

The Fear of the Horag

The Horag and the fear that it instills in the Jhangarans may be real, but finding the beast could be an adventure in and of itself. Discovering the portal through which this

creature reaches Talislanta would most likely require weeks of research and experimentation. Once found, determining how to close it permanently would take even longer. All the while, characters would have to endure the terrain, climate, and creatures of the swamps.

Characters plumbing the history of the Horag may eventually come across both the tales of the Flagellants of Alm and the Archaen accounts of Filits. Although it is a hypothesis that would be nearly impossible to prove, one could posit that the self-abusing nature of the Flagellant cult, the aggressive nature of the Jhangarans, and the fearsome Horag are somehow linked—in essence that an aura of fear, anger, and hatred has permeated this small region of Talislanta. How to remove such a curse would possibly require research into the darkest of arcane arts and sciences.

The Secrets of Kaliman

The Jhangaran Islands are largely mysterious places—although situated within sight of land as well as being near a widely used shipping route, the islands are unused and thought to be uninhabited. Do the statues on Rahsso have some connection to the nearly submerged coastal ruins of Jhangara? Or does their crimson coloration have something to do with the legends of Alhambra written in Ylal Nat? Why do the Kalimantans still guard the ruins of their creators? Who exactly were the Archaens who bred them, for what purpose, and why were they left behind?

Doom

The PCs are approached by a small band of Jhangarans bearing a small, but apparently heavy, box. The spokesman for the band, and older Jhangaran named Kazk, wishes to hire the PCs as guards. Kazk claims that the box his tribesmen carry bears a strange statue. According to him, this statue was found by some Zandir in a set of ruins off the coast of Jhangara. However, as the ship continued sailing for Tabal a series of strange accidents struck the vessel so that by the time it reached

port again, only two Jhangaran porters were still alive. From these porters, Kazk claims to have discovered that the ruins lie off of Jhangara's south-west shore. He fears that the statue is cursed and wants to find someone to take it back to where it belongs. The Jhangarans offer to pay the PCs what little they have. Examining the statue, an act that draws signs against evil from the Jhangarans, the PCs find it to be ancient, made of coral, and covered with a dazzling array of violet pearls. Should the players take the job, they find their way to the ruins blocked at every turn: Jhangarans belonging to the Violet Quaga Cult wish to steal the idol; dangerous beasts seem drawn to the box; and when traveling near the coast, the PCs are set upon by Imrians who seem to know about the idol's theft as well. Should they finally reach the area of the coastal ruins, the characters finally find a spot of luck... the tides are unusually low and a number of the ruins lie exposed above the surface of the water. Upon investigating the characters can discover that the strange statue was taken from some sort of temple, and when they attempt to put it back where it belongs, the tides come rushing in. What strange powers might the tentacled-statue have, and who created such a repulsive looking statue.

The Southern Wind

A cult of Arial has gained some strength amongst the Gao and Zandir, and have decided to claim a portion of the Jhangaran coast as their new home. The PCs, whether they are Jhangaran or not, are drawn into a struggle between the Cult of Arial, Aamanian warrior-priests, and the Mercenaries of Jhangkin when building tensions in the West Axis River reach a boiling point. For the Mercenaries, this is their home and it is hard enough to scratch out a living without nearby competition; the Aamanians see the Cult as a band of heretics moving dangerously close to the monastic seclusion of Aaman's southern border; and the Cult itself simply wants the space to build a monument and temple to Arial where it can catch the prevailing southern winds.

Into the Jungle

The adventurers are hired to escort a Green Aeriad scholar on an expedition into the Avir Fens so that he can study and record the variety of avir found there. Finding their way downstream and into the Fens doesn't seem all that difficult, so why does their employer insist on them being armed to the teeth? When they reach the Fens they can easily set up a camp, but the woods nearby seem ominous and foreboding. Each day at sun-rise and sun-set, motley bands of Jhangaran Outcasts come to the edge of the woods and silently watch the group, hiding and fleeing should any come too close. Eventually, things start to disappear from the campsite. Small things at first, but as the days go by the unseen thief manages to remove more and more supplies from the camp no matter the precautions the characters take. Eventually, their employer himself disappears one night. Alone on the Avir Fens, do the characters follow the strange tracks into the Accursed Woods, or do they flee back to civilization with a collection of strange stories to tell.