

POLITICS OF VALENAR

LAND OF THE WARRIOR ELVES

JOSEPH MEEHAN

Explore the world of Eberron in this supplement
for the world's greatest roleplaying game



CREDITS

Designer: Joseph Meehan

Editor: Kaley Sten

Template: [Simple Microsoft Word Template](#) by Laura Hirsbrunner

Cover Illustrator: Andreas Achenbach, public domain.

Interior Illustrators: Seamless parchment texture by [IcyCatElf](#),
handwriting by [Nile](#), elf sketch by Bob Graeyvenstein, others
from Wizards of the Coast Eberron stock art.

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ON THE COVER

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Sunset after a Storm on the Coast of Sicily

This piece represents Valenar's coasts – warm and sunny, likely
with a rocky cliff face and crashing waves.

Disclaimer: Do not look a Tairnadal elf in the eyes. If you do, immediately avert your gaze. If you are challenged, concede immediately. Even if you can beat one elf in battle, displays of strength only invite further challenge.

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INTRODUCTION

Situated in the southeastern corner of Khorvaire, Valenar is isolated by the Blade Desert. A century ago, the Queen of Cyre invited elven mercenaries from Aerenal to serve in the Last War. Five decades later, those same Tairnadal mercenaries annexed East Cyre and declared it a new nation, naming their new land Valenar.

Despite the pretense of Valenar's High King Shaeras Vadallia and his darkwood crown, the elves of Valenar bear little interest in forming a real nation. While the humans who have lived in Southeast Khorvaire for thousands of years carry on with their lives, the elven government exists purely to provoke conflict with Valenar's neighbors. These elves, drawn from the Tairnadal culture of northern Aerenal, fight to fulfill their religious obligations to the Spirits of the Past.

LIVING LEGENDS

The Tairnadal are a culture of elves entirely defined by their shared religion. In short, each elf upon reaching coming of age is chosen by a hero of the past, benefitting from the ancestor's guidance while earning the duty to emulate and preserve the ancestor that chose them. Worship of the Spirits of the Past, like worship of the Undying Court, is a tradition and practice inextricable from the history of its worshippers, as the need to emulate their heroes has

Throughout the Age of Giants many distinct clans of nomadic elves waged war against their giant oppressors. Aeren's vision united both free and enslaved elves in one fight. When the giants threatened cataclysmic magic, Aeren led the elves across the Thunder Sea and avoided the fallout of draconic retribution. Aeren died on the journey, but the surviving elves named their new home Aerenal.

While many elves wished to lay down their arms and build a civilization of their own, others dedicated themselves to the eternal arts of war. The former group settled in the southern jungles, while the latter became nomads on the northern steppes – the first Tairnadal.

These stories of these nomadic elves' ancestors became manifest as the preserved spirits of each clan's heroes. These spirits could pass on their memories to living

ELVEN LIFESPAN

While the over forty years of elven occupation and over ninety years of elven mercenaries may seem like a long time, the incredibly long lives of elves changes their point of view. Elves born when Mishann first called upon the Valaes Tairn have only in the past decade come of age to fight in Valenar. As a point of comparison, a young officer of twenty years on her first deployment in 906 YK would be a retiring 70-year-old general when Valenar was annexed in 956 YK. Human babies born after the annexation were middle aged by the end of the war.

The point of this is that the Valaes Tairn (and all elves) have an alien perspective on the Last War compared to the majority human population of the Five Nations. No living human remembers the start of the war, but one hundred years is only a generation to an elf. Even if the next war does not come for another fifty years, virtually every elf currently deployed to Valenar will still be ready to fight the grandchildren of the human soldiers.

followers, sharing their talent and techniques. The cultivation and preservation of these ancestors forms the basis of the Spirits of the Past. Young elves learned to train to earn the approval and blessings of their ancestors, in return preserving the memories of those ancestors and their martial expertise.

After thousands of years, the Irian-worshipping elves of the southern jungles had created enough deathless to form the Undying Court. In response to the formation of this new power, the dragons besieged Aerenal – the beginning of the elf-dragon wars. Some Tairnadal joined in this fight, developed dragon-fighting techniques, and became the first of the Draleus Tairn. This aid solidified the peaceful coexistence of the northern and southern elven cultures.

During a lull in the elf-dragon wars, a major sect of Tairnadal elves known as the Valaes Tairn, the "Warriors of Glory", colonized the southeastern corner of Khorvaire in search of new enemies. Calling this new land Valenar, the Valaes Tairn quickly drove off the native orc tribes that had already been marginalized by the Dhakaani empire. The elves found the goblinoids to be a truly worthy foe. Thus, the Valaes Tairn sharpened their steel and skills against this empire in a lengthy conflict known as the Dhakaani-Tairn war.

The war changed dramatically when renewed draconic aggression forced the Valaes Tairn to retreat to Aerenal to defend the homeland. The Dhakaani used this opportunity to go on the offensive. Unable to sustain both conflicts, the elves were forced into a peace agreement with the goblinoid empire, binding them to never return to Khorvaire unless called upon for aid. Dhakaani pride prevented the dar from calling upon the elves for aid in the war against the daelkyr, and so no Tairnadal elf laid a foot on Khorvaire soil for thousands of years.

Scholars say the Last War was precipitated by King Jarot's military buildup throughout his life. Fearing an invasion by an advanced, external threat, Jarot's projects were used by his children against each other to star the Last War. Valenar is the realization of Jarot's fear – a foreign military conquering Khorvaire. The fact that it was Jarot's rightful heir who invited this military only heightens the irony that a foreign military poses the single greatest threat to the post-Thronehold peace.

As the Last War was establishing itself, Queen Mishann of Cyre reached abroad for allies willing to aid her rightful claim to the throne of Galifar. The long-exiled Valaes Tairn responded to the call, and in 906 YK returned to Khorvaire to fight Cyre's enemies. This arrangement lasted for fifty years and through several Cyran monarchs, until Shaeras Vadallia announced the annexation of Eastern Cyre and declared himself High King. The new nation was named Valenar, "The Glorious Realm", and justified in the name of reclaiming the lost elven colony.

This annexation also brought about an end to the Valaes Tairn's exclusive relationship with the Cyran crown. While no nation was willing to trust the elves in large numbers, the elite warriors were too potent a force to completely forego. Even some Cyran commanders continued to hire the traitorous elves as mercenaries.

With the Day of Mourning and the end of the Last War, Valenar was recognized by the Treaty of Thronehold and High King Shaeras Vadallia signed an agreement to abide by its accords. In practice, the Host of Valenar continues to conduct raids on its neighbors, pushing the envelope on acceptable behavior.

THE TAIRNADAL

Tairnadal society is split between the **zaeltairn** (“warrior souls”) and the **zaelantar** (“peaceful souls”). The bulk of adult Tairnadal are members of the zaeltairn, serving as soldiers and officers. A much smaller portion of adults are members of the zaelantar, civilians who honorably support a fundamentally militaristic society. Children (elves not yet selected by a patron ancestor) are also zaelantar.

The intense militarization of the Tairnadal goes far beyond even the martial culture of a nation like Karnath. As a comparison, in Karnath almost everyone is obligated to serve in the military for a two-year tour of duty which can include support roles. By contrast, the zaeltairn serve in the military for their entire lives and each member expects to see combat, all to honor their ancestor spirit.

The ideological differences between the Tairnadal and other martial cultures are even greater than the structural differences. The religious demands of the patron ancestors supernaturally drive Tairnadal aggression beyond ordinary strategic or egotistic desires. Tairnadal heroes are not only put on a pedestal, but they are also canonized as within their religion: The Spirits of the Past.

THE SPIRITS OF THE PAST

Tairnadal ancestors do not have physical embodiments such as the spirit idols or deathless that anchor the souls of Aereni ancestors. Rather, the patron ancestors are bound to the collective souls of the faithful Tairnadal, a bond with strong similarities to the kalashtar and their rebel quori. Once chosen, a Tairnadal elf has a special connection to their patron that allows them to remember their patron’s life while trancing, marking them as a revenant. The clergy can remember the lives of any ancestor spirit while trancing, allowing them to guide the whole of society.

Like the kalashtar, these connections are only partially controlled by the mortal participant. Part of the mystery of faith for the Tairnadal is what memories are shown to the faithful – no two revenants have received the exact same set of memories. Revenants may differ even on the interpretation of shared memories. One elf may focus on perfecting the exact style an ancestor developed, while another elf may see the development of a new style as the thing to emulate. Alternatively, the aspects of an ancestor’s life outside combat might be a revenant’s focus – romances, tragedies, relationships with authority and the Tairnadal culture. A rebellious ancestor whose independence resulted in unexpected success may still be revered, and elves who follow that ancestor’s path would be expected to challenge the social order.

Stylistically, the Tairnadal wear veils named *zaelta* (“spirit mask”) to assume the identity of their patrons. Devotion is demonstrated through daily actions rather than elaborate prayer or ceremony. The Tairnadal do not erect large temples, instead remaining nomadic through temporary places for worship.

THE KEEPERS OF THE PAST

Tairnadal priests, known as the Keepers of the Past, are primarily zaelantar and serve in support and advisory roles. These priests have a connection to many ancestors. Keepers are expected to be great orators, sharing and preserving the stories of the ancestors. Many priests imbue their oratories with magic, calling upon the power innate in story in addition to raw divine power.

ANCESTORS

The Tairnadal have preserved dozens of elves throughout their history – this section provides a few examples.

Vadallia, the Queen of Swords is the most famous of the elven leaders in the war against the giants. She led from the front and made many personal sacrifices for her people, such as trading her eye for the gift of prophecy. Her love for the elven people contrasted with her personal coldness to all but her horse, Sleipni. In combat she wielded the traditional double scimitar astride her horse, an image of the Valenar elves that is well known in the Five Nations due to High King Shaeras Vadallia.

Cardaen grew up a slave in the Cul’sir dominion. An arcane prodigy, the giant emperor exalted Cardaen and his pure love of magic – which led to many fantastic arcane inventions. However, for too long Cardaen ignored what his works were used for, until Vadallia carried him away in a daring raid on Cul’sir’s throne room. Cardaen saw the devastation his spells wrought and was consumed with vengeance when a curse of his own making slew Vadallia. Cardaen did not follow Aeren across the sea in the elven exodus, choosing to follow his oath of retribution to the end of the line. Elves devoted to Cardaen sometimes lead quests into Xen’drik looking for his final resting place, but none have yet succeeded.

Falaen was a guerilla warrior who knew the name of every plant and how it could be used for food, medicine, and poison. While his individual tales feature his dual envenomed swords, Falaen’s knowledge of plants also led him to pioneer many important healing techniques.

Maezan Shal was a Siyal Marrain druid that raised the walls of Taer Valaestas during the Age of Monsters. His epic primal magic wove stone and wood to form the bronewood thorns that repelled many Dhakaani invasions. As the Valenar expanded, he established the border forts that define modern Valenar. Some heirs seek to enact fresh vengeance upon the Heirs of Dhakaan for their assassination of the archdruid.

Mazaraen was an elven commando noted for his usage of illusions and poisons to sow terror. His willingness to target civilian populations has given him somewhat of an antihero status amongst the Tairnadal, with many other patrons seeing Mazaraen as avoiding the real fights. By contrast, zaeltairn devoted to Mazaraen see his unconventional nature as a willingness to seek victory over glory, and that “worthy” foes are a distraction.

Silence was an elven assassin who pioneered many covert and deadly arts, leveraging their natural dexterity in lethal unarmed attacks. When truenamers from the Group of Eleven stole Silence’s name, the elves fought back by holding a moment of silence for their companion, immortalizing them as a Tairnadal patron.

Taeri was a legendary swordsman who mentored Vadallia in the way of the double scimitar. Taeri’s fighting style emphasized capitalizing on the mistakes of a lumbering opponent, leveraging an elf’s dexterity against the strength of a giant. Taeri’s loyalty to their companions was faultless, never leaving a soldier behind.

Daealyth Taeri was a legendary swordsman who fought the Dhakaani empire during the Age of Monsters. Daealyth innovated on Taeri’s style, creating new techniques better suited to the smaller and more numerous Dhakaani. To commemorate his victories, Daealyth took a new name – one that would be remembered forever by the Valaes Tairn.

Jaeldira Taeri innovated a flowing, mobile fighting style that built on Taeri's punishing strikes. Her style incorporated the fluid movement of unarmed fighting traditions with a traditional Tairnadal blade dance.

Varedi is a zaelantar patron who forged the deadliest weapons of Vadallia's army. Born deaf, he found the light of the forge comforting from a young age. He carried his passion into his personal life, creating legendary works of art for his partners as a sign of his love. This passion though was always fleeting, leaving a long string of broken hearts and bittersweet reminders.

If you would prefer to build your own ancestor, the Valenar Ancestors tables can help you get started.

VALENAR ANCESTOR BASICS

d10	Name	Specialty	Attitude
1	Aeraes	Abjuration	Calculating
2	Dailian	Ambusher	Cheerful
3	Fianin	Crafter	Chivalric
4	Kaelan	Double Scimitar	Cruel
5	Lia	Evocation	Direct
6	Niath	Glaive	Fearless
7	Shearan	Illusions	Patient
8	Tairil	Longbow	Prideful
9	Vaelin	Poison	Stoic
10	Xael	Summoning	Witty

ANCESTOR LEGEND

d8 Deed or Story

- Hunt.** Your ancestor is renowned for hunting a legendary creature. What was it? Where was it? How did they prevail?
- Infamy.** Your ancestor would probably be considered a war criminal by the people of the five nations. Despite this, the Tairnadal still revere them. What did they do? Are they misunderstood, or did the ends justify the means?
- Innovation.** Your ancestor pioneered some new technique. Do you see it more important to master that technique, or to innovate in your own way?
- Leadership.** Your ancestor led the Tairnadal through some important conflict or crisis. When was that?
- Revenge.** Someone wronged your ancestor, and their quest for justice was immortalized by the Keepers of the Past. What is inspirational in their story? Are you trying to start conflict to find wrong, or are you patiently waiting?
- Romance.** While the Tairnadal believe clans are more important than any biological family, some tales of true love have been immortalized. Were any of your ancestor's partners also preserved? How did their story or stories end?
- Sacrifice.** Your ancestor gave something up for the good of their band, clan, or people. What was it? What did they gain in exchange? Which is more important to you?
- Tragedy.** The story of your ancestor is filled with great sadness. Was it a long tale filled with many losses or a single devastating calamity? What successes did your ancestor have to earn remembrance?

EXCEPTIONS

While all Tairnadal youth are expected to take up the cause of whichever patron ancestor that chose them, this is not some magical compulsion – it is a culturally and religiously imposed duty. As such, some reject this calling.

Elves who leave before a patron chooses them may simply be skeptical of the faith, feel discomfort at the idea of having their life chosen for them, or feel frustrated at approaching a century of age without being chosen. All these sentiments lead to a character that grew up in the Tairnadal culture but did not go through the ceremonial dedication with the Keepers of the Past.

Conversely, elves who leave after being chosen (either immediately or after time has passed) are usually in rejection of their specific patron. Often this comes from feeling like they were picked by the wrong patron, in temperament or role. Alternatively, this comes from a realization that their preferred patron is not what they thought it would be like, triggering a crisis of faith.

Whenever this rejection comes, these rebels have a few options for where to go. Most of these elves leave for the courts of southern Aerenal. Others take a boat out of Shae Thoridar, leaving for Khorvaire or Stormreach to find a new life. This latter group is the most likely to become adventurers, with no home or family but enough combat training to join up with an unlikely band of heroes.

One set of exceptions in the opposite direction are elves who choose to become Tairnadal. While not common, some young Aereni of the southern jungles find the quiet, peaceful worship of the Undying Court to be stifling. These elves join the zaelantar and are subjected to the same standards and trials as those born into the culture and are also eligible to be chosen by a patron ancestor. Far rarer is the occasion when an elf from Khorvaire makes the journey across the sea to join the Tairnadal, but these elves have also been accepted. No non-elf, not even a half-elf, has ever been chosen by a patron ancestor.

ZAELANTAR

The zaelantar are the minority of elves not in the military, charged with maintaining the logistics and infrastructure to support the armies. The bulk of the zaelantar are elven children who have not yet been chosen by a patron ancestor. In Tairnadal society, childhood can last until the age of 110, although most are picked by their sixth decade.

The older zaelantar have been chosen by a civilian patron, such as a legendary crafter, teacher, or druid. Far fewer youths are chosen by one of the peaceful zaelantar spirits than the martial zaelantairn spirits, but these older zaelantar still serve an important role in Tairnadal society.

An *an-shan* is a Tairnadal youth who guides a band of other youths while a *tar-shan* is an older elf chosen by one of the Tairnadal's few great civil leaders. Groups of youths rotate through the role of *an-shan*, using their turn to audition for the Tairnadal's great leader ancestors like Vadallia. By contrast the title of *tar-shan* is appointed by the Keepers of the Past and is kept until the Keepers of the Past see fit to change the delegation of authority.

ZAELTAIRN

Each army is composed of many clans, which are further divided into bands. Each clan is led by a *shan*, while each band is led by a *lu-shan*. Decisions are ultimately in the sole hands of the *shan* or *lu-shan*, but both roles take time

to consult their subordinates (the *lu-shans* for a *shan*, or the members of a band for a *lu-shan*) before coming to a verdict. The *zaeltairn* respect the decisions of their superiors unconditionally, whether made after careful consultation or the in the heat of battle.

Armies are led by a *var-shan* ("Great Lord"), who holds ultimate authority within the army. While Shaeras Vadallia is the High King of Valenar, his more important title is *van-sar* of the Host of Valenar, one of several armies that comprise the greater Valaes Tairn. A *var-shan*'s responsibilities are broad, and decisions are almost always made through a consensus of the *shan*.

Assignments to a band are indefinite - while a band may transfer between clans as the needs of the army change, the core unit of a dozen *elves* stays together, replacing members when they grow old or are killed. *Elves* may be granted a leave from military duties if grievously injured or to produce children. The *Tairnadal* have developed advanced forms of *livewood* and *ectoplasmic* prosthesis to help elven amputees recover limb functionality. *Elves* who wish to have children briefly transfer to the *zaelantar* before rejoining their army, leaving the child in the care of the *zaelantar* guides and teachers.

Despite their long lives, *elves* do eventually start to suffer *degradations* of the body in their fourth century. The oldest members of the *zaeltairn* sometimes transition back to the *zaelantar* to become teachers, but most remain part of their army in more senior leadership and support roles. While an *elf* dedicated to *Taeri* would not be a fit for the title of *shan*, their earned wisdom is still valuable and might be sufficient to earn the title of *lu-shan*. Others may transition to training roles within the *zaeltairn*, working with younger members who share a patron ancestor.

VALAES TAIRN

The largest faction of the *Tairnadal* is the *Valaes Tairn*. The *Valaes Tairn* are the most innovative of the three major philosophies, believing that the patron ancestors are best preserved by seeking out new foes equal in stature to the foes of old. The largest army of the *Valaes Tairn* is the *Host of Valenar*. When *Shaeas Vadallia* secured permission from the *Cyran* government to return to *Khorvaire* he recruited many clans from the other armies of the *Valaes Tairn*.

The other armies remain on the northern steppes of *Aerenal*, training for some unknown future conflict. The proceedings that led to the deployment of the *Host of Valenar* are a closely guarded secret amongst the highest ranks of the *Tairnadal*. While the *Host of Valenar* represent a plurality of the *Valaes Tairn*, they don't constitute a majority. The *spymasters* of *Khorvaire* are certainly interested in why so many trained warriors remain at home - are they simply waiting for the *Valenar* to be pulled into another conflict? Have the *Keepers of the Past* foreseen an attack from *Aerenal*'s foes, such as the *Eternal Dominion* of the *Sahuagin* or the dragons of *Argonessen*? Or are these armies training to invade and claim another piece of *Khorvaire*?



SILAES TAIRN

The Silaes Tairn fervently believe in literally recreating the deeds of their patron spirits by venturing into the ruins of Xen'drik. While they share the same patron ancestors as the Valaes Tairn, their literal interpretation brings them into conflict with the descendents of the drow and giants their ancestors fought. This literalism keeps the Silaes Tairn far away from the politics of Khorvaire, but they nonetheless could prove either friend or foe to adventurers plumb the ruins of Xen'drik.

Millenia of plundering Xen'drik ruins has led to the Silaes Tairn accumulating a greater store of artifacts from the Age of Giants than even the wealthiest collectors of Khorvaire. The surge in treasure seekers based out of Stormreach has begun to level this gap, but the Silaes Tairn have an enormous head start on learning to navigate the continent's ever-shifting terrain and other secrets. While the Silaes Tairn see their treasures as just rewards for proving their devotion to their ancestors, their focus is on replicating the actions of their ancestors, leaving the rest potentially negotiable for adventurers in need of a weapon or map.

DRALEUS TAIRN

The Draleus Tairn are the smallest of the faction of Tairnadal and have dedicated themselves to the ancient art of dragon hunting. The ancestors of the Draleus Tairn are distinct from the other philosophies, as the call to hunt dragons is unmistakably different from other elven ancestors. Still, there is some crossover with the other philosophies as even the oldest Draleus Tairn ancestors channeled heroes from the Tairnadal's time on Xen'drik.

At home the Draleus Tairn spend time preparing for the periodic assaults from Argoness, but the rarity of these assaults means the Draleus Tairn search for draconic foes far beyond Aerenal's shores. Agents of the Draleus Tairn track down both rogue dragons and Chamber agents in hiding - the sudden appearance of elves in a city may mean a dragon's false identity has been discovered.

The singular focus of the Draleus Tairn on dragon hunting has led them to develop unique techniques that draw upon the power of their fallen enemies. Rituals, potions, weapons, even personal enhancements all utilize the physical and magical remains of dragons. The fiercest of the Draleus Tairn are rumored to even possess draconic features, garnered through the consumption of a dragon's mind, body, and soul.

THE SHANUTAR

The Shanutar is a council of lords composed of a pair of shan from each of the armies that make up the zaeltairn, plus each of the tar-shan that lead the zaelantar. The Keepers of the Past do not have a vote on the council but are important advisors. Meetings take place in the Hall of Memories, the only dedicated temple to the Spirits of the Past, in Var-Shaelas.

When the Tairnadal are confronted with an issue that requires a response from the entire nation, such as the periodic dragon attacks, the Shanutar is consulted. Decisions are made through form of iterated consensus voting. For an army to propose a motion both of their representative shan must agree. Then, the issue is brought to the broader collective the army is a member of (e.g. the Valaes Tairn). Once consensus is reached there an issue is

brought up amongst the collective zaeltairn, who after consensus forward the issue to the collective tar-shans of the zaelantar.

If the zaeltairn and zaelantar agree the issue is decided and enacted upon. The process is similar for motions proposed by a tar-shan of the zaelantar - the zaelantar must come to a consensus before forwarding the issue to the zaeltairn, who then must come to a consensus to pass the motion. The reliance on consensus decision making means that despite the martial culture, the Tairnadal are slow to act collectively. Issues have received decades of continuous debate before a decision is made - the long lifespan of the elves certainly contributes to this stagnation, as leaders can hold positions of authority for centuries. Only direct threats to the homeland can inspire quick action, and even then, the council may take time.

SIYAL MARRAIN

The druids of the Siyal Marrain, like the Keepers of the Past, straddle the line between zaelantar and zaeltairn. The Siyal Marrain are not the kind of druid that seeks to preserve some supernatural concept of natural balance - they exist to serve the Tairnadal people. Zaelantar members cultivate the land and tend to herds of animals, while Zaeltairn help sustain the clan and bring primal wrath to bear against the clan's foes.

VALENAR ANIMALS

The people of Khorvaire have heard fantastic rumors about the "Valenar Animals" brought with the elven warclans - horses faster than even the finest magebred warhorses of Vadalis, hawks capable of relaying troop movements down to the individual soldier, hunting dogs that can sniff out lies. These rumors are true - the animals of the Tairnadal possess supernatural capabilities.

During their war with the giants, the elven druids known as the Gyrderi were key allies in the elven liberation effort. The warlocks of the Sul'at League devised a countermeasure - a curse to trap the druids in their animal forms. The Gyrderi remained loyal allies, but over generations of war the animals lost their intelligence and magic. The Siyal Marrain were a new order of druids formed to shepherd the bestial descendants of the Gyrderi druids, cultivating these spirits like how the Keepers of the Past cultivate the spirits of the Tairnadal as a whole.

The Host of Valenar has established a few heavily guarded ranches for raising more horses. While the agreement with House Lyrandar keeps the flow of troops across the Aerenal Channel, the elves have recognized the strategic value of keeping a fresh supply of horses more available if the sea lane were to ever be cut off.

House Vadalis has earned the eternal enmity of the Host of Valenar for their attempts to steal the secrets of the elven animals. The house, through expensive trial and error, has learned that replicating the elven secret is difficult. To start, all animals deployed into combat are gelded, denying their use in breeding even if captured. Furthermore, specimens still capable of reproducing fail to replicate their unique magic in captivity if not properly raised. House Vadalis would be willing to pay a high price to learn how to replicate this process, and some of the more unethical members would use any means necessary in the pursuit of these secrets.

THE PEOPLE OF VALENAR

While the Host of Valenar claims rulership over Valenar, the occupying elves only make up less than a third of the population. The plurality of residents are humans who have lived in Valenar since Lhazaar's famous voyage. Halflings and goblinoids, despite making up a much smaller percentage of the population, have lived in these lands since before humans even arrived in Khorvaire. Finally, the Khoravar, led by House Lyrandar, have begun to transform Valenar into their homeland.

THE ELVES

The nominal lords of Valenar are the elves, who maintain a feudal structure of lands and military obligations. High King Shaeras Vadallia rewards successful commanders with lands and titles in elaborate ceremonies. The truth of these actions is they are ultimately a show for outsiders – the military hierarchy of the Tairnadal defines their relationships, not fanciful mockeries of the titles of Galifar that the elves have replaced.

The elves have replicated their nomadic lifestyle in Valenar, living off the land that they have carefully cultivated over the last five decades. The druidic magic of the Siyal Marrain allows the warclans to patrol Valenar without worrying about replenishing food supplies, allowing the farmers to live unmolested, unlike the farmers in occupied territories in the rest of Khorvaire.

Half of the warclans are under the direct command of *var-shan* Shaeras Vadallia, patrolling areas assigned to them. Warclans assigned to guard the borders are eager to prove their worth, sallying forth and picking fights with whatever they find. Clans assigned to the interior are less able to find immediate threats. While some bands choose to pick fights with worthy foes who wander through their territory, others have spent decades restoring elven ruins to their former glory.

The half not under the direct command wander freely throughout Khorvaire, with many contracting through Deneith. Clans that are not contracted this way proactively search for fights beyond Valenar's borders, striking north through the Talenta Plains into Karrnath or northeast into Q'barra. These wandering clans still operate with the same goals as the ones directly under the High King's command but have more room to interpret the objective.

THE KHORAVAR

Three thousand years ago, the Undying Court exterminated its rivals – the line of Vol – and triggered an exodus of refugees and dissidents. Since then, the half-elven descendants have graced the finest halls of Khorvaire, even having a significant presence amongst the nobility of Aundair and its predecessor nation, Thaliost.

Despite never facing open discrimination, the Khoravar have always stood apart. On a biological level, a khoravar has twice the lifespan of the average human but only a third of the lifespan of an elf. As such, a khoravar will see their human friends age and die in front of them, while the reverse happens with their elven friends. Despite this isolation, khoravar have found incredible success – a

thriving combination of the proactive drive of humans with the patience and persistence of elves.

Still, without a nation to themselves they have remained a distinct minority subject to the rule of other races, never finding validation at the highest levels of government. The half-elven King Laeran ir'Wynarn's betrayal by his younger (human) brother in the seventh century ignited a movement from the sparks of discontent that had long smoldered. Laraen's Dream called for a separate home ruled by Khoravar, equal to the Mror and Zilargo duchies.

The annexation of Valenar was an opportunity for a proper Khoravar state to replace the human lords that had ruled during the Kingdom of Galifar. Through House Lyrandar, these activists have seized control of the administrative state in Valenar. Formally, the elves hold the titles the thrones once held – for example, the human Duke of Southport has been replaced by the elven Duke of Pylas Maradal. In truth, the elven "nobles" delegate the entirety of governing to the khoravar stewards. Laeran's Dream has latched onto House Lyrandar as a way to gain the lands they've long desired, but this is limited to the shared goal – the followers of Laeran's Dream aren't interested in helping Lyrandar with its other projects unless the house reciprocates the favor.

The khoravar immigrants have pursued a mix of founding their own settlements and acting as a bridge between the Host of Valenar and the human civilians. Although the Tairnadal do not believe khoravar are worthy of the patron ancestors, the khoravar's longer lives and cultural hospitality have ingratiated them to the High King.

The most important cultural and political event amongst the Khoravar is the weekly unity meal. The intricacies of these events vary, as each gathering has its own pecking order. In the newly founded communities like Moonshadow, the unity meal is an open event in the largest building in the town, reminding the immigrants of the importance of sticking together.

By contrast, unity meals in the majority-human villages and towns are closed, invite-only affairs. While a traveling Khoravar can always join, their companions are much less likely to be welcome. Here, the unity meal serves to keep the Khoravar identity distinct from the human majority, while providing an opportunity to coordinate the administrative relationship with the ruling elves.

HOUSE LYRANDAR

Lord Seneschal Enilam d'Lyrandar is the leading member of the house in Valenar. While not all Khoravar in Valenar are members of the house or work for one of its guilds, the house is understood to speak on behalf of the community to the High King. These relationships go back to the start of the war when Queen Mishann in a desperate search for allies used the House to entreat the elven warriors. When King Vadallia annexed Eastern Cyre, Seneschal Enilam stepped in and offered the services of the region's khoravar as a replacement for the now-deposed human lords. This support for the Valenar conquest drew heavy criticism throughout the five nations, but none had the resources to sanction the House's actions.

Even though the house's operations in Stormhome absolutely violate the Korth Edicts, if brought to trial the House would still argue that it pays a paltry sum of rent to the Aundairian crown each year. By contrast, the Host of Valenar does not bother with the formalities and has

granted the house not only land but broad administrative control within Valenar. Conspiratorial newspapers (such as the Five Voices) have seized on this alliance to label all members of the house as traitors working to weaken their nations from within to prepare for the elven invasion.

House Lyrandar's alliance with the Host of Valenar not only involves civic administration but military matters. While the Tairnadal have many renowned riders and mages, cavalry and magic are no replacement for engineering. As such, the Host of Valenar has grown dependent on the ships of House Lyrandar to transport its forces to Valenar and elsewhere.

THE HUMANS

Long ago on the far away continent of Sarlona, the magical might of the nation of Khunan awed its neighbors into submission. Despite this strength, the Khunan wizards made a deadly mistake in invading its agrarian neighbor Lamecha. This invasion united Khunan's neighbors, igniting the first of the magewars that would reshape the face of Sarlona. Khunan was the undisputed loser in this conflict, reduced to ruins and rubble by united opposition.

While many survivors fled to elsewhere in Sarlona, some fled across the Lhazaar Sea and landed in modern Valenar. Here, the survivors built a life for themselves, scavenging from haunted ruins of elves and goblins. These settlers relied on the Blade Desert to ward off neighboring Metrol. Despite this geographic independence, the humans never organized themselves into a greater kingdom, content to live in their established villages and towns without broader integration. It was during this time that the Khunan humans solidified a distrust of magic, the stories and myths from Khunan transforming into warnings about the dangers of neighboring Metrol. Some mythology tracing to this time seemingly predicts the Day of Mourning – the Mourmland mists allegedly matching the borders of the old kingdom of Metrol.

This era of relative freedom came to a violent end when King Galifar conquered Khorvaire. To appease the nobles of defeated Metrol, Galifar granted them dominion over Eastern Cyre – modern Valenar. These “thrones” divvied the land up into only a pair of grand duchies, based out of Keth and Southport (now Pylas Maradal). The two nobles then divvied up Eastern Cyre, with the Duke of Keth governing the northern half and the Duke of Southport governing the southern half.

Within these autonomous regions, counts freely abused their power and the people. Centuries of mismanagement drained the soil of life, as feckless lords leaned on Deneith mercenaries to enforce order and quell rebellions. While there were several uprisings throughout the Kingdom of Galifar, none were successful until the elven annexation of the region during the Last War, when the human serfs gladly accepted the Host of Valenar as their new lords.

This change has led to a flourishing of the traditional Khunan faith, which was historically suppressed by the thrones. Rather than worshipping a pantheon of nine or fifteen deities, the Khunan religion believes in a great cycle of reincarnation. Particularly important and holy ancestors are believed to have escaped the cycle and ascended after “finding the spark of divinity”, continuing to guide their modern descendents from beyond this world.

Religious scholars might note that the cycle of rebirth bears some similarity to the Path of Inspiration. In truth,

the Quori found it easier to corrupt existing institutions and beliefs than form new ones – the Khunan religion included, where the Quori grafted on a caste system.

While the humans of Valenar generally distrust arcane magic – believing that all arcane magic is just magic with a less understood power source, and thus an avenue for the corruption that befell the mighty wizards of Khunan – they are far more accepting of the Dragonmarked houses. The power of the houses is both limited and clearly comes from their marks, rather than unidentified eldritch horrors from the planes or stars.

OTHER RESIDENTS

While elves, half-elves, and humans make up almost the entirety of the population of Valenar, two minorities also bear mentioning – halfling immigrants from the Talenta Plains, and the dar who have lived in these lands since the Dhakaani Empire.

Not all halflings are happy with the permanent nomadic lifestyle of the Talenta Plains. The tribes that occupy the southern reaches sometimes venture through the Blade Desert to trade with the settled inhabitants beyond the desert. The halflings who chose to stay make up a notable minority in the northern reaches and are often the most accessible guides through the desert.

Goblinoids have existed in Valenar since the height of the Dhakaani Empire, and their ruins are scattered throughout Valenar. The beginning of the fall of the empire drained soldiers away from the outposts, and the *Kapaa'vola* reduced the remaining commanders to fractious warlords, easily pushed to the fringes and enslaved by the human settlers. Galifar's edict of freedom rang hollow in a land that swiftly replaced slavery with a legal system that privileged humanity over goblinoids.

When the elves returned at the start of the Last War they hoped they could find leftover Dhakaani, but have thus far been unable to do so. The new administration has generally been kinder to goblinoids but is far from establishing real equality. Some Khoravar have begun to act as a bridge between peoples, listening to the concerns of the dar. Unfortunately, some of the more militant activists of Laraen's Dream have simply replaced the human-favored administration of justice with a Khoravar-favored one that maintains systemic discrimination against the “monstrous” goblinoids.

KECH NASAAR

What the Host of Valenar does not know is the goblins are being secretly organized by the Kech Nasaar, the “Keepers of Night”. Led by the millennia old vampires Iraala and Muurat, the Kech Nasaar have found the ruins of Valenar ideal for a resurgent Dhakaani empire. While the Host of Valenar has spent decades preparing the local terrain for success, the Kech Nasaar have the element of surprise and a similar ability to seed the battlefields with their own inventions and schemes.

More dangerously, both the Valaes Tairn and the Kech Nasaar are willing to achieve victory through any means necessary. One of the most dark and dangerous magics the Keepers of Night could use is a repurposed form of the *Kapaa'vola* to sever the Tairnadal from their patron ancestors, replicating the cataclysmic destruction of the Dhakaani's bond with the Uul Dhakaan.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

The recognition of an outright invading army as a legitimate nation in the Treaty of Thronehold was a necessary concession to the Host of Valenar's military might. The annexation of territory from Cyre, while a welcome gift during the war, inspired more distrust and fear than any sense of obligation or gratitude.

CYRE

The betrayal of Cyre by High King Shaeras Vadallia was the beginning of the end for Cyre. While Cyre is no longer a country, almost all Cyrans have a learned distrust of both the elves and humans of Valenar.

One of the most prominent rumors about Valenar is that the elves slaughtered Cyrans fleeing the Day of Mourning. Like all rumors, it contains a grain of truth – the vast majority of Cyrans who crossed the border into Valenar perished. However, the elves generally seek out worthy foes, not civilians. While many of the refugees perished from the arid Blade Desert, the real killer was the human population that already lived in Valenar. Some border villages whipped up armed mobs against the “cursed” survivors, while others simply turned the refugees away and let them die of thirst and starvation.

DRAGONMARKED HOUSES

In addition to the previously mentioned antagonism with House Vadalis, the Valenar have little love for Houses Phiarlan and Thuranni. The shadow-marked elves abandoned not only Aerenal but its traditions, an unconscionable failure. Furthermore, while both houses pretend to maintain history in their artistic endeavors, those retellings come with tactful artistic license that alters the truth of the past and grates against the Tairnadal's rigorous accuracy. The two house's covert operations only exacerbate the strained relations with the Host of Valenar. While both houses have operatives throughout the nation, they operate in complete secrecy, using illusions to disguise their marks.

KARRNATH

While the Treaty of Thronehold replaced the open hostilities of the Last War with a cold war in western Khorvaire, little has meaningfully changed in the east. The elves of Valenar continue to roam not just through the Talenta Plains but into Karrnathi territory, striking at the still-recovering farms of southern Karrnath as they try to bait the Karrnathi military into war.

King Kaius' attempts to negotiate a peace with High King Shaeras have proven entirely futile, despite Queen Etrigani's assistance with the intricacies of elven culture. The pair know that Shaeras is too dedicated to provoking a war with a formidable military power to avoid all conflict forever, however both hope to delay the war until after Lady Illmarrow has been dealt with. As such, both royals spend considerable time managing the southern warlords, focusing their efforts on bolstering defensive and reactive forces but reducing aggressive forces. Fort Bones is kept on a particularly tight leash, as the undead cavalry stationed there are a direct affront to the elves.

THE TALENTA PLAINS

Despite the constant incursions on their territory, the halflings of the Talenta Plains know better than to go to war with the Host of Valenar. Occasionally a group of young halfling warriors will take the bait and attack the elves who picked off a tribex. If they are lucky, the warriors will return home with broken bones and cuts that will heal. If they are not, they will win their first confrontation – drawing the attention of several warbands, each eager to prove themselves.

Unfortunately, the escalating conflict between Karrnath and Valenar has forced Lathon Halpum to reconsider the retirement he hoped for with the end of the war. While it is unlikely the elves would be interested in an alliance with the halflings, an alliance with Karrnath would only paint a target on the nomadic halfling tribes. Without an alliance, the halflings lose their ability to influence the destructive march of the Karrnathi military were it to fully mobilize.

Q'BARRA

Dragonborn and elves clash in the colonial region of Hope, their militaristic cultures inciting escalatory displays of martial might. While most of the settlers are passive enough to avoid directly drawing the attention of either group, the occasional collateral damage has the settlers pleading with King Sebastes to do something. The King is torn between the risks associated with interceding in the conflict and earning a reputation as a just and caring ruler. The nobles of New Galifar, far away from the conflict and safe in the Adder River Valley, are generally opposed.

AUNDAIR

Aundair was amongst the first nations to legitimize the annexation of Eastern Cyre as Valenar. In turn, High King Shaeras Vadallia backed Aundair in denying the Cyran refugees a voice in the creation of the Treaty of Thronehold. The two countries continue to have a friendly relationship, despite the queen's consort's former membership in House Vadalis. The Knights Arcane have set up mutual training agreements with Valenar mercenaries, sharpening the skills of both.

BRELAND

Long ago, in Boranel's youth, the young prince trained under a Silaes Tairn mercenary named Eliri. The third son, Boranel fulfilled his obligations to prepare for the duties of kingship but never seriously expected to bear the crown and was still adventuring when Valenar was annexed.

When Boranel took the crown five years later, his experience with the Tairnadal greatly aided in diplomatic overtures. The stories of Boranel's prowess impressed the High King and many clans, whose eagerness to fight under the Bear King earned the Brelish army a steep discount on the elves' services.

DARGUUN

Always eager for a challenge, some elven warclans have made their way across Kraken Bay into the land of goblins. The Tairnadal's expertise in jungle warfare has made them well-suited to the Khraal, where they provoke the goblins by disturbing ancient Dhakaani tombs.



THE MOURNLAND

Blade Desert

Q'BARRA

VALENAR

Endworld Mountains

The Dragonreach

DARGUUN

Kraken Bay

Ravar Orioth
(Jungle of Scimitars)

Thunder Sea

Aerenal Channel

Thal Eledar

Valen's Isle

Thal Orhorh

Thalann Gol

AERENAL

Thalann Zar

Majarn

Tacr Senadal

Shac Thoridar

Equator

0 100 200 300 400 500
Miles

THE LAND

Valenar can be cleanly divided into three geographic regions. Northern Valenar consists of the Blade Desert. Central Valenar consists of the grassy plains dotted by irrigated farmlands. Southern Valenar is defined by the Ravar Orioth, also known as the Jungle of Scimitars.

NORTHERN VALENAR

The arid north of Valenar has always been home to halflings, distinct from the grassland-roaming tribes of the Talenta Plains. Despite the coming and going of goblins, elves, and humans, the region has never truly been controlled by any central power. Even today, the elves do little to administer justice or raise taxes, basic tasks one would expect of a national government.

Prior to the Mourning, the Blade Desert served as an important corridor for travel in southeastern Khorvaire. The destruction of the heart of the continent has dramatically reduced the flow of caravans, isolating communities near the dead gray mists.

Terrain. Despite the images of elves on horseback cutting through sandy dunes used by the Korranberg Chronicle, the Blade Desert primarily consists of dry tablelands filled with low shrubs and cacti. Even without extraplanar influence these arid scrublands can grow blisteringly hot during the day and freezing cold at night, quickly killing unprepared travelers. When rain does come, the desiccated ground is ill-suited to absorbing it, potentially sweeping up travelers in lethal flash floods.

Beyond the mundane threats of heat and thirst, travelers must contend with supernatural terrain. The Desert Manifest Zones table provides some examples.

DESERT MANIFEST ZONES

d8 Plane

- 1 **Fernia.** Furnace winds can turn hot-but-bearable desert instantly lethal, sucking away water and forcing parties to take shelter or perish
- 2 **Irian.** A respite from the arid and hostile terrain, manifest zones to Irian are typically oases filled with life.
- 3 **Kythri.** The exposed elements of a desert are ripe for the morphyic power of Kythri, but some parties might find the anti-divinatory powers of the plane more troublesome.
- 4 **Lamannia.** Desert megafauna are lesser known throughout Khorvaire, but enormous reptiles, insects, and mammals all prowl Lamannian manifest zones.
- 5 **Mabar.** Leeching salt flats are utterly inhospitable to life, sucking not only the water but the very life force out of those who try to shortcut their way across
- 6 **Risia.** Risia harshens the cold of night, but adventurers are more interested in ruins preserved beneath ancient sands
- 7 **Shavarath.** Lethal flaywinds do constant damage to travelers caught within, stripping flesh from bone in a matter of minutes.
- 8 **Thelanis.** Desert fey are tricksters who prize hospitality and can prove either friend or foe in these harsh lands.

Settlements. The most prominent permanent structures of Northern Valenar are the tower forts. In their first colonization attempt the Valaes Tairn with the help of Maezan Shal built a series of border forts to watch for and guard against Dhakaani invasion. The Host of Valenar has restored most of them, but Taer Zanathar and Taer Elladorn remain in ruins, filled with angry ghosts and other threats. The clans camped near these ruins have been stymied not only by the inhabitants but more powerful magics permeating the spaces.

Things to do. The Blade Desert is a harsh and unforgiving environment, but this very fact means many of its treasures remain buried. Alternatively, a party of adventurers might be contracted to provide an escort through the desert to sneak past the watchful eyes of the Host of Valenar, who closely monitor cargo coming into the ports of central and southern Valenar.

SAMPLE CLAN: KEL GRYFAEN

Long ago the Valaes Tairn tamed the griffons of the Blade Desert. Shan Fianin Tairil has led the rejuvenated Kel Gryfaen in reclaiming their heritage. These bands of griffon riders form mobile patrols that soar throughout the skies of Eastern Khorvaire. A party that has aroused the ire of the Host of Valenar must not only navigate the hostile environment but avoid the watchful eyes in the skies. Alternatively, the griffon riders could prove potent allies for a party engaged in worthy conflict and in need of air support against a well-resourced foe.

SAMPLE VILLAGE: RESPITE

Respite is one of several majority halfling villages near Lake Cyre. The residents shepherd a mix of small but hardy creatures to supplement their expertly maintained farms. Travelers hoping to make their way into the Blade Desert by land often end up passing through here to restock.

A local halfling named Rathon sells their service as a guide. In truth, Rathon is Set, a changeling devoted to the Traveler. Set rewards kind and generous parties with knowledge of hidden ruins and treasures but punishes cruel and evil parties by luring them into hostile terrain before abandoning them.

SAMPLE TOWN: TAER VALIOR

This enormous pillar stands watch over the former Cyran border. Like the other forts that ring the Blade Desert, it was shaped by the primal magic of Maezan Shal. The uppermost levels feature modified perches, suited for both griffons and airships. An entire clan – the Kel Valior – is assigned to the upkeep of the tower and operations based out of it. Shan Kaelan is the lord of the fortress, a hardened leader interested in the Mourningland.

In addition to the clan stationed there, Taer Valior is also home to a sizeable number of Khoravar bearing the mark of storm. While airships tend to avoid flying directly over the Mourningland, conscious of flying horrors arising from the mists, Taer Valior is an important stop for airships coming from Starilaskur, an important airship hub.

CENTRAL VALENAR

The grasslands of central Valenar have historically formed the basis of groups that settle in the region. Goblin and elven ruins tell the story of the conflicts that raged here before the fall of the Dhakaani empire and the immigration of humans from Khunan. When Shaeras Vadallia annexed the region, the druids of the Siyal Marrain reclaimed the ruins of Taer Valaestas as the capital city of Valenar to unite the grand duchies of Keth and Southport, the latter of which was renamed to Pylas Maradal.

Terrain. Irrigated grasslands and steppes dominate central Valenar. House Lyrandar's interventions have rejuvenated the failing farms of Valenar, dramatically improving the land's capacity to support the population.

The most prominent features of the region are the Old Road and the Redwater River. While House Orien and House Lyrandar maintain those trade routes respectively, neither route sees very much traffic.

Some elves have tried to introduce some of Aerenal's more exotic woods to the region, but central Valenar lacks the manifest zones to sustain large groves of the trees. Still, House Lyrandar is continuing to see if their raincalling can support new groves of soarwood, an essential resource for both airship and elemental galleon construction due to its lightness and strength.

Settlements. Shaeras Vadallia centralized control of Valenar in the new seat of Taer Valaestas, with the dukes of

Pylas Maradal and Keth technically answering to him. Of course, the reality is that the administration is carried out by the khoravar immigrants, but the administrative flow remains similar with Keth and Pylas Maradal serving as loci of administration and governance.

Things to do. While the region is increasingly settled, it is still dotted by ancient ruins the locals do their best to avoid. Furthermore, wild creatures such as displacer beasts scavenge on the outskirts of villages, threatening the farmers and their livestock.

The Dragonwatch Isles lie off the northeast coast of Valenar adjacent to the Q'barran border. Home to Draeus Tairn ruins, the forts here once formed the launching point for raids against the Dragonborn empire. Since the Dragonborn put themselves back on the map with the Treaty of Thronehold, the Draeus Tairn have returned to the isles to reclaim them. This activity has not gone unnoticed, and any number of wealthy "collectors" or arms dealers might be interested in sending groups to recover ancient weapons and armor before the elves.

SAMPLE CLAN: GHIRAES

The Ghiraes are one of the several clans that patrol the Old Road. The Ghiraes are an unusually friendly clan that actively tries to engage with the communities it patrols. What even the High King does not know is Shan Lia Aeraes was corrupted by a mind seed cast by a compromised



member of House Deneith during the Last War. The Dreaming Dark wishes to restart the Last War to further weaken the nations of Khorvaire, and the Host of Valenar is well suited to the task. The clan's proximity to Taer Valaestas ensures Shan Lia Aeraes can play the internal politics to claim the title of High King and Var-Shan when Shaeras Vadallia falls in battle.

SAMPLE VILLAGE: MOONSHADOW

Moonshadow is emblematic of the hope of the Khoravar people, a village of learning and prosperity. The orderly town was built upon a Daanvi manifest zone, a beacon of good local governance. The fields are in perfect order, the children are uniformly cute, and the community works in harmony. While the town harbors no sinister secrets, paranoid adventurers may come up with sinister conspiracies to explain the villager's generous offerings.

SAMPLE TOWN: NORINATH

The last stop on the Old Road, Norinath is a majority human community that serves as a key stop for refugees seeking a new life in Q'barra. Yuan-ti servants of Masvirik have infiltrated the town, seeking to build influence and corrupt travelers as they venture into their lord's domain.

SAMPLE CITY: TAER VALAESTAS

The capital of Valenar is an old fortress dating from the original elven invasion. An imposing combination of primal magic and martial talent, many Dhakaani legions lost their lives trying to capture this city in ages past. Today, the city is a center of intrigue, as the ambassadors and trade representatives of Khorvaire ply the High King for exotic goods and services.

Taer Valaestas is an enormous and prosperous city despite only being settled for barely fifty years. The whole city is built inside a manifest zone of Lamannia, which not only enriches the local farming but reinforces the natural construction and reduces the impact of poison and disease, similar to the island prison of Dreadhold. Despite these advantages the humans of this land never built upon the elven ruins, driven away by vengeful spirits and ancient curses. The return of the darkwood crown has seemed to quell this old magic, but locals are still wary of the night.

Simply entering the city can be a challenge for a prideful party. As in the rest of Valenar, the elves love to challenge strong opponents to combat. A party that defeats but does not kill their opponents earns respect and potentially an audience with the High King. However, going too far and killing an elven soldier earns the wrath and retribution of the state. Hiding in the city is made difficult by the unusually wide alleys and streets, all designed with an elf on horseback in mind.

Viceroy Shyralla d'Lyrandar manages central Valenar from the enclave in Taer Valaestas. While not the highest ranking Lyrandar in the nation, she has curried the favor of Seneschal Enilam and is increasingly assuming the responsibilities of the aging leader. As ambitious as she is, she could equally function as a patron or enemy to a party of adventurers. Her current concerns include a growing feud with the khoravar of House Medani, captains not paying their dues to the house, and a strange request from the High King himself.

SOUTHERN VALENAR

A truly wild place, the jungles of southern Valenar have resisted settlement for millennia. These dangerous and enchanted woods were little explored even in the days of Galifar, but news of successful elven expeditions have begun to pique interest amongst potential patrons.

Terrain. The ground here sits at sea level, flooding based on the movement of the tides. The mangroves are adapted to the briny water and are home to a true abundance of life, from dolphins and crocodiles to deadly diseases. On the material plane, tides are controlled by the collective action of all twelve moons, but Zarantyr holds the greatest sway. The dramatic action of the moons on the tides is a constant concern here, with easily passable terrain transforming to several feet of murky water in a matter of hours.

The weather is regular and predictable – while storms bring enormous amounts of rainfall, they rarely have the high wind speeds that define the destructive storms in the Shadow Marches. Furthermore, while lightning is a common occurrence the constant flooding dramatically limits the impact of fires.

The jungle received its name from the prominent influence of Shavarath. Swarms of animated swords roam the jungles, eviscerating any who cross their paths. On occasion other creatures slip through as well – fiends and celestials that represent all aspects of war. The influence of other planes can be found in scattered pockets, either by themselves or in conjunction with Shavarath.

Settlements. Sitting on the edge of the jungle in a hospitable cove, Pylas Maradal (discussed further below) is the only major settlement in the region. Attempts to settle the jungle itself are stymied by the intense extraplanar influence in the region.

Things to do. While the persistent and fearsome threats are a welcome challenge for the Valenar, other groups have plenty of reasons to venture into the hostile territory. Shavarath's immortals often carry potent magical armaments, their capabilities beyond what is available in the Five Nations. Artificers hoping to implement their own designs for weapons of war find the manifest zones inspirational. Furthermore, while the events of the Last War have pockmarked Khorvaire with manifest zones of Shavarath, the Jungle of Scimitars is the only one that is a reliable two-way planar passage.

SAMPLE CLAN: KEL ARYTHAN

The Kel Arythan are among the clans that operate independently of the High King's command. These elves, commanded by Niath Vadallia, prioritize investigating and looting manifest zones throughout Khorvaire. Their current operation in the Jungle of Scimitars have lasted a full decade, far longer than past missions. In truth, the group is preparing for an invasion of Sarlona, not only to test the might of Riedra but the extraplanar threats found in the continent's wild zones.

SAMPLE VILLAGE: TAER RAVAR

This outpost, stationed where the Redwater River meets the Bay of Swords, is both a stopping point for ships heading to Taer Valaestas and a base for expeditions into the Jungle of Scimitars. While the permanent population is small, it includes several zaelantar crafters using the manifest zone to create new weapons of war. While the

elves usually are not interested in selling their work, adventurers may find them more willing to barter for other items or an escort into the jungle. Alternatively, House Cannith might wish to replicate the elves' techniques, either through honest exchange or espionage.

SAMPLE TOWN: PYLAS MARADAL

Formerly known as Southport, the town of Pylas Maradal boasts an impressive amount of trade (Although still dwarfed by the competing southern ports of Sharn and Trolanport). Before the annexation, the town was nearly lawless, a haven for smugglers and pirates benefitting from the blind eye of the Cyran crown and several decades of warring Lhazaar princes. With Prince Ryger's unifying presence in the principalities and the military occupation by the Host of Valenar, the town has reformed into a convenient stopping point for ships skirting the Khorvaire coast and avoiding the Eternal Dominion of the Sahuagin.

THE WATER

Valenar is bordered by water on three sides – Kraken Bay to the west, the Aerenal Channel to the south, and the Dragonreach to the east. Due to its proximity to the equator, the winds here are unreliable but mild, greatly diminishing the effectiveness of large sailing ships. The Tairnadal's relationship with House Lyrandar has upended this basic geographic constraint, as elemental galleons and the mark of storm obliterate concerns about dead winds.

The Dragonreach. While the Tairnadal lack the strong sailing cultures found in Lhazaar, Zilargo, or amongst the khoravar of House Lyrandar, they did settle the isles immediately to the northeast, such as Valen's Isle and Thal Eledar. Over time these islands have been converted into defensive positions in conjunction with the line of Maraen to defend against draconic aggression.

Lhazaar captains making their way to southern Khorvaire typically hug the Valenar coast, not only to take advantage of the winds and currents but also to avoid the variety of scaled underwater threats. Pirates who take this route sometimes raid coastal villages, but Lyrandar and the Host of Valenar have been working together on a variety of anti-piracy missions.

The Aerenal Channel. This deep channel hosts a strong east-to-west current, expediting travel to southern Khorvaire but slowing ships making the return trip. While the distance between Aerenal and Khorvaire here is short – only some 100 miles – the alliance with House Lyrandar has made the trip much easier and facilitated the entrenchment of the Host of Valenar.

Kraken Bay. Despite the seeming proximity of Valenar and Darguun, Kraken Bay was historically difficult to cross. The lack of winds or useful currents made direct crossing difficult, forcing any ships to hug the coast – negating the main military advantage of a naval assault compared to a land-based army in the Dhakaani-Valenar war. Furthermore, the bay's unusual depth has kept it a home for all sorts of creatures who feast on sailors stuck in the doldrums. The advent of elemental galleons has enabled House Lyrandar to dramatically cut travel time along the southern coast of Khorvaire by going straight across, something that is even more useful with the elimination of Seaside as a viable port.

PLAYING A TAIRNADAL

BUILD YOUR CHARACTER

Playing a Tairnadal elf goes beyond writing down the words “wood elf” on the character sheet. Like the elves who live in the southern jungles of Aerenal, the Tairnadal elves represent an opportunity to play a character that did not grow up in the shadow of Galifar.

CHOOSE YOUR SUBRACE

Rising from the Last War proscribes the Tairnadal as wood elves and the Aereni as high elves. With the origin customization rules in *Tasha's Cauldron of Everything* making the differences in ability score increases less relevant, this leaves the main difference as the choice of Cantrip and Extra Language versus Fleet of Foot and Mask of the Wild. Neither of these pairs of features is integral to the distinction between Aerenai and Tairnadal, so either of the main subrace choices works. Other elven subraces have more baggage and would require additional explanation, but it is certainly possible a drow or sea elf might have an ancestor that joined the Tairnadal.

CHOOSE YOUR FACTION

All Tairnadal youth start off as members of the zaelantar, training while supporting the many armies. The long gap between physical maturity and cultural recognition as an adult allows plenty of room for possible adventures, especially for elves that scorn their upbringing and have no intent on carrying on their religious tradition.

Adult adventuring Tairnadal are probably members of one of the three zaeltairn factions – the Valaes Tairn, Silaes Tairn, and Draleus Tairn. The Host of Valenar is part of the Valaes Tairn, but the Silaes Tairn and Draleus Tairn both have strong interests beyond Aerenal that could justify an adventurer.

While adult members of the peaceful zaelantar are an atypical choice for an adventurer, the call to adventure can still find them. An expert crafter will likely have some experience with spell or blade, even if it is not as refined as a member of the zaeltairn. The harder question might be what pulls the character away from home, as the zaelantar rarely venture off Aerenal.

The Keepers of the Past and the Siyal Marrain exist as both zaeltairn and zaelantar. Mechanically, the Keepers of the Past make most sense as clerics or bards, while the Siyal Marrain are druids or nature domain clerics.

CHOOSE YOUR ANCESTOR

An adult Tairnadal's relationship with their patron ancestor is one of their most defining features. For most Tairnadal characters, the patron ancestor provides direct inspiration for their class and subclass.

The exceptions to this step are the Keepers of the Past who are linked to many ancestors. For a Keeper of the Past, a list of spirits is an effective tool for adding flavor and depth to their spellcasting and personality. Each spirit might be a different spell, then unite for *spirit guardians*. Keepers of the Past are usually clerics or bards, seeking to support their allies rather than personal glory.

ZAEFTAIRN AT 1ST LEVEL

The zaeltairn are elite warriors, guided by their ancestors with decades of training before deployment. As such, a first level character is weaker than the typical Tairnadal warrior. For games starting at higher levels this is not a concern, but for characters following the full zero to hero experience here are three possible explanations:

Injury. Recovery from or adapting to physical or psychological injuries can take time. Despite decades of training, elves are still vulnerable to the scars of war like any human soldier.

New Circumstances. The organization of a zaeltairn army provided comfort and regularity. As a member of that army you were a lethal weapon, but your new companions make unpredictable and frankly illogical choices in combat, getting in your way and hampering your effectiveness.

Personal Growth. You may have been an accomplished swordsman as a soldier, but whatever drove you to strike off on your own also convinced you that you must master an entirely new style of fighting to honor your patron ancestor.

CHARACTER BACKGROUNDS

The Tairnadal background establishes a character as being from a culture truly distinct from the remnants of Galifar, a foreigner to Khorvaire. While most backgrounds are intended to be general purpose rather than being tied to a specific culture or race, the foreign nature of the Tairnadal can make backgrounds reliant on institutional support such as soldier or acolyte a poor fit for games set outside Valenar. The Tairnadal background offers an alternative for a character who finds themselves far from home. For a character without a patron, choose a feature from another background that fits their unique history.

TAIRNADAL

Born outside of Khorvaire, you were raised on the fertile steppes of northern Aerenal. As a child, you trained and supported the armies of the zaeltairn. When you came of age, you were chosen by the ancestor spirits to carry on a legacy that is tens of thousands of years in the making.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Animal Handling

Tool Proficiencies: Cook's Utensils, Herbalism Kit

Equipment: A *zaelshin* (amulet with the sigil of your patron), a *zaelta* (spirit veil), a set of traveler's clothes, and a belt pouch containing 5 gp

FEATURE: ANCESTOR SPIRIT

You have been chosen by a Tairnadal ancestor spirit who guides you through troubled times. During your trance, you can ask the spirit if a course of action would or would not honor your patron. The answer can come in the form of anything from a vague impression to a specific memory.

FEATURE VARIANT: KEEPER OF THE PAST

Rather than having a single ancestor, you are a keeper of the past and are connected to many ancestor spirits. During your trance, you may consult the ancestor spirits if a course of action would bring glory to the Tairnadal. The answer can come in the form of anything from a vague impression to a specific memory.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Despite being present for the past century of war, the Tairnadal are still exotic foreigners to many in Khorvaire. Their traditions are frequently misunderstood, altered in stories pursuing "creative liberties".

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I rarely remove my *zaelta*, preferring to keep my face always veiled.
- 2 I like to joke outside of battle, but during combat I am deadly serious.
- 3 My cultural references are decades old.
- 4 I'm obsessive about maintaining my equipment.
- 5 I'm fascinated by a niche piece of Khorvaire culture.
- 6 I have a story of my ancestor for every occasion.
- 7 I'm confused by the religious traditions of Khorvaire.
- 8 I treat animals as having equal rights to humanoid.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Greater Good.** My patron ancestor fought to protect the weak and downtrodden. (Good)
- 2 **Tradition.** My obligations to my patron ancestor's path are paramount. (Lawful)
- 3 **Independence.** The best way to honor my ancestor is to carve a new path like they did. (Chaotic)
- 4 **Might.** My ancestor was merciless in their pursuit of victory, and so will I. (Evil)
- 5 **Balance.** I seek to level the playing field. (Neutral)
- 6 **Glory.** My life will earn me a place amongst the spirits of the past. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 I am in search of an item important to my ancestor.
- 2 I have a rival with the same patron ancestor as me.
- 3 I disagreed with my *lu-shan* and struck out on my own.
- 4 I was sent by a Keeper of the Past on a mysterious mission.
- 5 I fight for underdogs, and this band of plucky adventurers are certainly underdogs.
- 6 I dishonored my clan and have struck out to earn it back.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I never back down from a challenge.
- 2 I worry about living up to the ideals of my ancestor.
- 3 I rigidly adhere to the commands of the Host of Valenar.
- 4 I never admit to weakness.
- 5 I'm inflexible in my interpretation of my ancestor
- 6 Only true warriors are worthy of respect.

RIDE WITH THE ELVES OF VALENAR!

Journey to the southeastern corner of Khorvaire, where an army of marauding elves have claimed new territory and provoke war. These pointy-eared warriors test the fragile peace of the Thronehold Accords, testing the limits of King Kaius and his warlords.

House Lyrandar similarly pushes the boundaries, blatantly violating the Korth edicts as they merge corporate and national interests.

Players and DMs alike can find inspiration for their characters in the collated and expanded information on the Tairnadal.

