

# The Lost Kingdom of Gardzyka

and the

## Lands of the Zara Sea



**A System-Neutral Fantasy Roleplaying Campaign Setting**

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# Part One



## The Lost Kingdom of Gardzyka

Two score generations past, the followers of the Great Khagana Gardzykos struggled across the mountains known as the **Throne of the Testverak** and soon found themselves on the shores of the Zara Sea. The lands of the Zara Sea were not empty, but confronted with the martial prowess of the people of Gardzykos, the inhabitants either succumbed, migrated to islands and distant shores, or fled into forest wildernesses and mountain fastnesses. Gardzykos passed on to serve the Testverak, but her descendants established a kingdom in her name, dividing the conquered lands into fiefs, and at times, inviting the inhabitants to join as vassals. Over the centuries, the peoples of Gardzyka expanded, colonising the lands of the **Ligac Gulf** and the **Drava River** — new lands beyond the Kingdom, but tied to it by history, faith, and language.

But the Zara Sea proved the limits of the Kingdom of Gardzyka. Across the sea was the **Hematarchy**, a league of mages, sorcerers, and thaumaturges devoted to a pantheon of demigods, the Indartsuxu. With neither land able to subjugate the other, an uneasy peace reigned, governed by mutual suspicion. The Gardzyklar regarded all occult arts with suspicion at best, while the Hematarchy ruthlessly suppressed any aspirations of the non-magic-using classes.

A tense equilibrium reigned, somewhere between peace and war. But then came the ascension of Armasz IV, the Last King of the Lost Kingdom of Gardzyka.

## **ARMASZ IV AND THE HEARTSTONE**

Nearly three dozen years ago, Prince Armasz, Margrave of the **Mountain Marches**, was crowned on Midsummer's Eve, after the interregnum following the death of his father, King Istvan the Silent. As the new King of Gardzyka was raised up on his shield, a susurrus swept through the assembled throng, who parted to reveal a dishevelled well digger. Taken aback at being the centre of attention, the man said nothing — merely opening his hands and letting a cascade of gems stream to the ground. Thus began the tale of the Heartstone, Armasz's folly, and the end of the Kingdom of Gardzyka.

The well digger, deep at work at the moment of the coronation, had struck a rock, which upon investigation, turned out to be a huge fire agate — so huge, the digger discovered as he cleared away the muck, it was broader than the well itself. Taking this as an omen, the digger swept up chips fractured by his spade, and raced to the palace square to spread the news of his find.

Pleased by this demonstration of the favour of the Testverak, Armasz IV ordered the stone — the Heartstone, as it quickly became known — dug out and brought to the palace. Yet the workers sent reported they could not find the edges of the stone. Miners were brought in, followed by engineers to shore up the workings, which spread the width of the palace, and then the city, and out into the countryside. The workforce of the royal lands was increasingly directed to excavation, digging, moving earth, and bringing in shoring timbers. And still there was no limit to the stone.

Armasz IV became obsessed with the project, taking to sleeping in the mine tunnels, running his hands over the slick surface of the Heartstone, which appear to shimmer with its own internal light. The kingdom's currency was replaced with shards of agate. As the works spread, the disruption to the fabric of the kingdom increased. Crops went unplanted and unharvested. Sinkholes collapsed entire districts into the mineshafts. And still the tunnels grew, reaching out across the royal heartland of Gardzyka.



*The Drowning of Gardzyka / László Pintér*

## THE GUTA WARS

None who did not live through it can understand the madness that followed the Deluge. Kings had died before; cities had been razed; diseases had ravaged the populace. But never before had the heart of the kingdom died, torn from the very land itself. Thousands of refugees, displaced first by the digging for the Heartstone and then by the flood, huddled in the neighbouring provinces of **Paszlos** and the **Mountain Marches**; few who made it to **Teglas** survived the ensuing wall of water that devastated the west of the county. Only in **Kerbold** did any semblance of order survive, maintained by the royal bureaucracy which had been transplanted there to protect the archives and administration of the Kingdom from simonies and collapses. The Logothetlar, headed as always by the Royal Protasekretis, had largely supplanted the rule of the titular landgraf. And then the guta appeared.

The guta have no history. No one had seen them before, no legends spoke of them. They simply appeared, weeks after the cataclysm had befallen Armasz' kingdom. Some believed they were sent by the Testverak, as further punishment for Armasz' Folly. Others maintained they were scavengers, drawn to the corpse of the kingdom like maggots to carrion. A few, who bore the look of those who had seen things that mortals were not meant to see, spoke of a mad sorcerer consorting with the demonic Chrysalis Prince to unleash a new hellspawn upon the world. Part human, part beast, clad in fragments of armour that could fit their misshapen bodies, the guta swarmed across the frontiers of Gardzyka.

There was no warning. Weeks after the Deluge, at the extant of the Mountain Marches, the spring caravan from Nemesseg was late in crossing the pass through the **Throne of the Testverak**. This was not itself unheard of, though usually outriders would have brought word of a delay. With the death of the

king and the chaos unleashed by the Deluge, few in **Preszag**, the citadel-capital of the Marches, remarked on this oddity, nor on the failure of any of the scouts sent to seek the caravan to return. When figures were spotted moving down the pass towards the **River Drava**, it was assumed they were the caravan; as the numbers multiplied and the slopes turned black with howling shapes, it became clear to the residents that something else was upon them.



*Guta Reiver / Setvasai*

The guta practised no strategies, no tactics, no siege craft: they simply swarmed across the Drava, climbing over their own fallen till they breasted the citadel walls. While the guta inside Preszag sacked and destroyed the citadel, the horde swarmed up and downriver into the **Dravan Parishes**, while the bulk spread out across the north of the Marches.

The guta were no army. There were no marshals — though afterwards, stories spoke of numerous intelligences known as the **Skullers**, who assumed command. Bands of reivers spread through the countryside, occasionally led by fearsome winged nightmares which came to be known as the **Half-souled**. Bands would join together and split apart as the whim of the reivers — or the whips of the half souled — desired. They would have proven no match for a seasoned military force sent against them, despite the initial shock of Preszag. And yet no such force emerged, at least within the Marches. While the guta invasions of the Dravan Parishes were thwarted — a tale best told elsewhere — the

Marches themselves were overrun while the lords of the remnants of the Kingdom of Gardzyka did nothing.

Perhaps it was the shock of the loss of the king and the royal demesne, perhaps it was simply lust for power, but while the Marches burned, the Lords of Gardzyka squabbled. Much of the Royal Legions had survived the Deluge, having been moved to Paszlos and Kelenfold during the excavation of the Heartstone. Only those Legions stationed in Gardzyka city and Teglas were lost. But the Erszherszog of Paszlos saw himself as the next in line for the throne of the truncated Kingdom of Gardzyka; the Royal Protasekretis, based in Kelenfold, saw the legions as necessary to maintain order and keep further refugees at bay. The Freiherr of Teglas had had half his province inundated and refused to permit his noble retinue to take their armsmen to the Marches.



*Margraf Libor of the Mountain Marches / Setvasai*

## RELIGIOUS ECSTASIES

The Gardzyklar brought their own gods with them to the lands of the Zara Sea, the brothers, sister, and cousins of the Testverak: Isten, their ruler; Hunar, the Lord of Storms; her twin Magor of the Winds; Hadur, the Master of Battles; their younger sister Boldoasszony, Mistress of the Spring and Autumn; and their dour cousin Ordog, malevolent Keeper of the Forests and Waters. Observances were devout and precise, but even the clergy were sceptical of excessive displays of spiritual fervour.

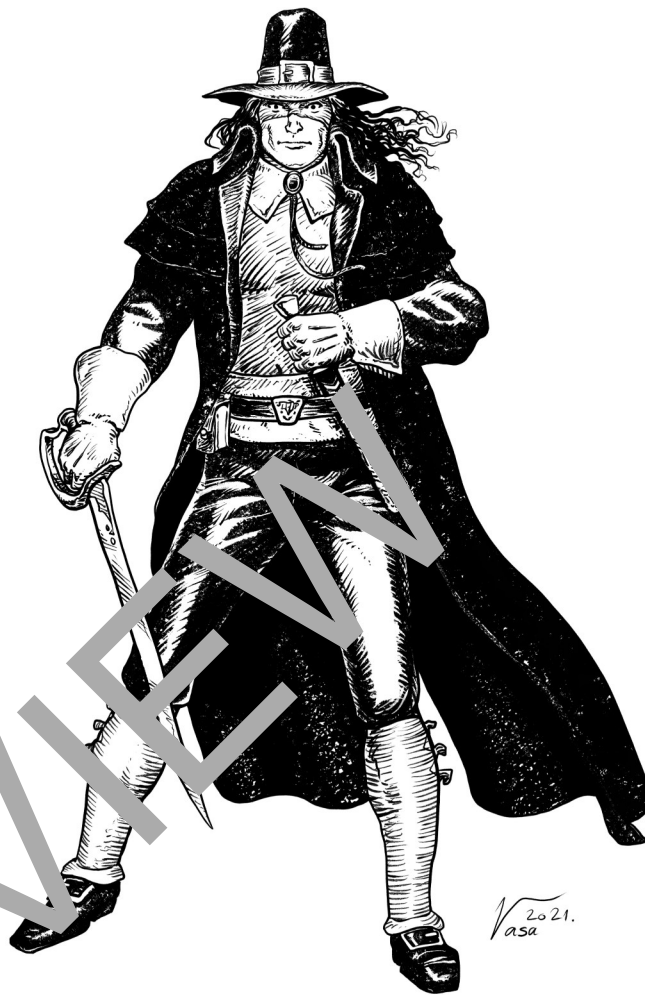
This changed with Armasz' Folly. Traumatized people sought to understand the meaning of this manifestation of divine wrath. Cults, sects, and revivals proliferated, inevitably seeking to appease the gods — old or new — with the blood of the blasphemous. From this frenzy of belief, one congregation rose to prominence: that of Most Righteous Nikolaj Berenazica and his Solemn Brethren of Penitence and Purification.

General of the Brethren in **Gyor** has given his support to the Erszherszog, in exchange for giving his witch-hunters free reign; the Vargraf of **Gyor** remains secluded in his castle, saying nothing. The same is true of the Chiliarchs of **Huaranqa**, but they have been entirely disengaged from events in the Kingdom since Armasz' Folly.

The cities of the **Ligac League** and the **Dravan Parisies** have reminded all who will listen that they have never been part of the crown lands, and therefore have no interest in the matter. The kin of the humans — the gnomes of **Rothrim**, the elder fey of the **Fey Woods**, and the dwarfs of the **Throne of Testverak** - have expressed no opinion but have been happy to aid the Margraf-Prince in rebuilding the Marches as a bulwark against the guta, orcs, and goblankind.

The Lost Kingdom of Gardzyka had become an absent kingdom, with an absent throne.

Berenazica was the eldest son of a family of burghers in the frontier foothills of **Viscounty of Gyor**. While working on the accounts one evening, Hunar and Magor came to him, revealing that the Heartstone had not been the heart of the kingdom, but a fiendish manifestation of evil, generated by a cabal of sorcerers ensconced within the elites throughout the lands of the Lost Kingdom. Only penitence, through purification in the form of the trial and arrest of all practitioners of arcane magic, could restore the favour of the Testverak. Thus began the Solemn Brethren, who came to form a parallel state within the Viscounty of Gyor. The Vargraf retreated into seclusion in **Castle Deak**, and Nikolaj Berenazica, First Purifier-General of the Solemn Brethren, became the power within Gyor.



The Brethren were not the only sign of religious dissatisfaction. Within the **Dravon Parishes**, at the sacred temple on the site where Isten appeared to Gardzykos to guide her to the Zara Sea, the priest apostatised, calling upon unclean forces and forcing the Patriarch of **Tokol** himself to attend to perform the exorcism.

*Purifier of the Solemn Brethren of Penitence and Purification / Setvasai*

More recently, another group materialised, a band of itinerant monks who appeared in the eastern **Mountain Marches**. Calling themselves the Movement of the Free Spirit, these monks rebuilt ruins left by the Guta Wars, transforming them into fortified monasteries where they combined monasticism and military training. Soon after, the kindred of the Movement spread across the Marches and **Paszlos**, setting up free schools wherein they taught basic literacy and a doctrine of individual self-determination. The Movement sought no converts, and recruited no followers, but nevertheless earned the enmity of the established rulers. The simple religious configuration of Gardzyka has become a variegated mess.



# Part Two



## The Lands of the Zara Sea

wall has been constructed along the Absence of Gardzyka, guarded by the nu'Suu'uskhwa'uu, whose patrols now reach to Tronl in Teglas. The mouth of the Tunder River is sealed by a portcullis gate where it empties into the Absence. The undefined frontier with New Gardzyka is conveniently expanded whenever possible, with the Logothetlar welcoming new subjects so long as this does not destabilize the overall regularity of governance in Kelenfold. It is suspected that the only reason that the Logothetlar have not backed the claim of the Margraf of the Mountain Marches to the throne is because they have misgivings that the Margraf will have his own ideas about the necessity of their all-pervading administrative reach. In the meantime, Kelenfold is an oasis of stability, if a somewhat fussy and fusty one.

Prior to the arrival of the Logothetlar, some half a dozen years after the excavation of the Heartstone began, Kleinfeld's economy was solely agricultural; trade from the Fey Woods and Rothrim Town along the Tunder River bypassed Kelenfold for Gardzyka. This, of course, can no longer be the case, which has improved prospects in Kelenfold. The desire to improve the economy of the land (and thus the position of the Logothetlar) also explains the interest in the seaport of Tronl. In the meantime, the Kelenfold's greatest export is the Logothetlar's control of the Royal Archives, relocated as Gardzyka's terrain became increasingly unstable: the record of births, deaths, genealogies, estates, and contracts for the entire kingdom. The Logothetlar are parsimonious with their knowledge and collect impressive fees for disclosing it. The city of Kelenfold has been infected by this attitude, and information has become a currency in itself within the city.

## **NEW GARDZYKA**

New Gardzyka is a ramshackle settlement on the landward side of The Slag, the rubble heaps from the excavation of the Heartstone. New Gardzyka is less a city than a cesspit. Its shanties were built by



*New Gardzyka / László Pintér*



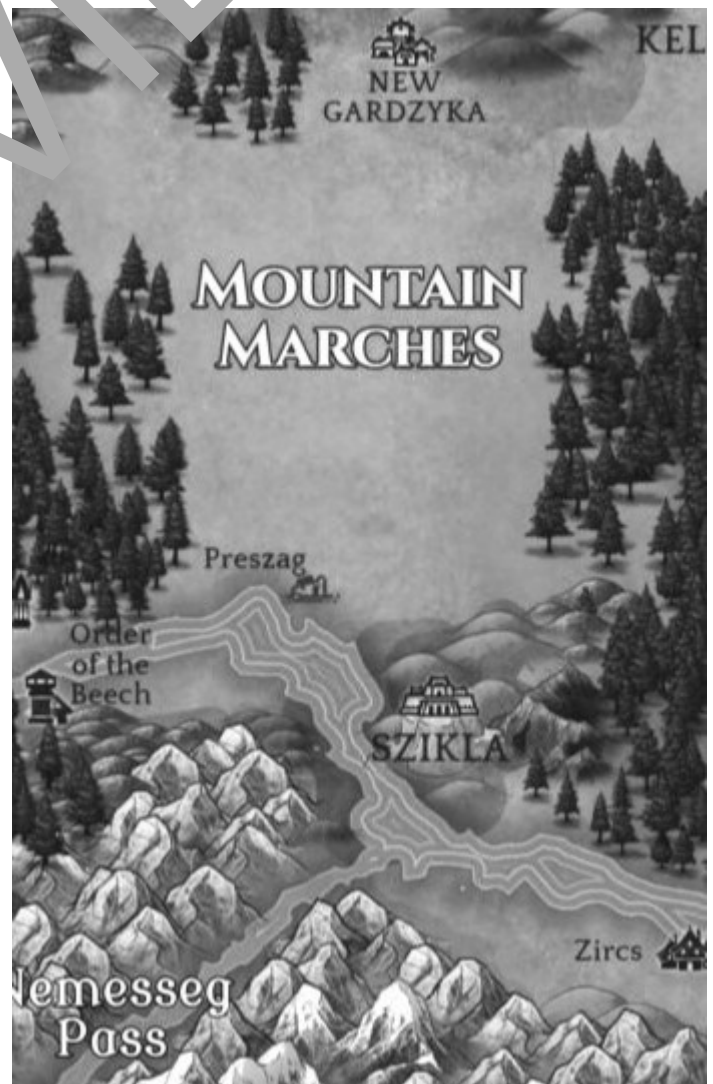
those too poor or too broken to seek shelter elsewhere after the Deluge, and by those who came to prey upon them. Though the ruler of the day – there have been over a score in the twenty plus years since the Deluge – claims to be the rightful king, few take this seriously. New Gardzyka is less a threat to its neighbours than a pestilence, and it is likely only a matter of time till someone sweeps it away.

Or perhaps not. The lawlessness of New Gardzyka provides a convenient “wretched hive of scum and villainy”, a place from which more genteel communities can reliably procure assassins, poisons, slaves, and other depraved goods. Defenses of New Gardzyka are intended more to keep its inhabitants from escaping than to keep invaders out. Similarly, a major preoccupation of the self-proclaimed kings is keeping rural villagers from migrating *en masse* to more salubrious locales in Kelenfold and the Mountain Marches, occasionally provoking armed clashes with the latter.

## THE MOUNTAIN MARCHES

The Mountain Marches – site of the years-long battle between the Guta and the peoples south of the Zara – were always a frontier land in the kingdom of Gardzyka. They remain so today in the aftermath of the Guta Wars and indeed, the ongoing battles along the western forest. Preszag, the old capital, has been left in ruins, a monument of bleached bones and ghosts. The self-proclaimed Margraf Libor, despite his youth, has proved to be an adroit leader, and has attracted bands of hardy pioneers, adventurers, and other innovators to his land. Though it remains an overwhelming rural region, with no established nobility, the Marches today are abuzz with activity.

Amongst his many accomplishments over the past decade, the Margraf sent a military expedition up the Nemesseg Pass – the first confirmation of the fate of Gardzyka’s sister-kingdom. In the journey back across the pass, the mission rescued a band of dwarfs besieged by orcs. The dwarf band included the brother-cousin of a major *dezka-chnik* interchangeable as ‘King’ or ‘Chief Mining



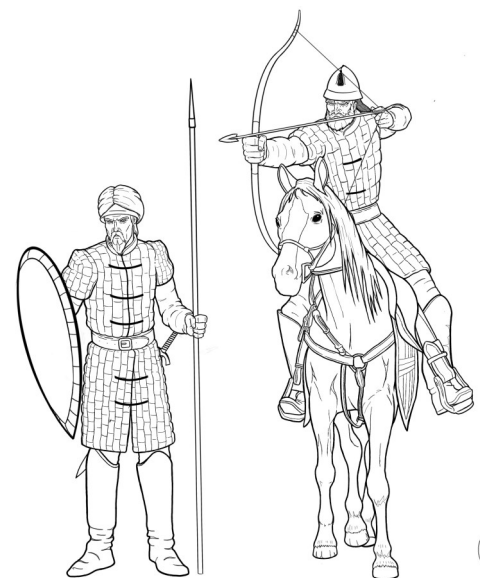
Engineer’) from the dwarven Demesne of B’Zugdaa-Hiara. Consequently, the Margraf’s reconstruction efforts have been assisted by the engineering and mining prowess of the dwarfs of the Throne of the Testverak. This assistance has allowed the Margraf’s new city-citadel of Szikla, perched upon a rocky crag overlooking the Drava River, to be a marvel, fed by waters from the Drava lifted up scores of spans to the new city, with cisterns hewn into the rock beneath. Such an audacious effort has been aided by the gnomes of Rothrim and the tinkerers of Arberabrae, who are generously rewarded for their attempts as well as successes. Halflings from communities scattered throughout the Marches and the Dravan Parishes have aided the work, turning Szikla into an urban garden.



*The citadel-city of Szikla / László Pintér*

Settlers and returning refugees are welcomed, but most settlements in the Marches today are military villages, whose population are soldier-yearling, serving together as units. These troops quickly become battle hardened in annual campaigns against the Thanatocracy of the Guta, defending against raids, challenging the orcs in the Nemesseg Pass, and – albeit infrequently – engaging in battles with truculent ‘kings’ of New Gardzyka.

Such frenetic activity has drawn the support of many, near and far, across the Lands of the Zara Sea. Even the Movement of the Free Spirit has found a welcome, as there is no feudal system in the Marches to be threatened. The Katanoi, the Order of the Green Beech, and the warrior monks of Pecel



*Military settlers of the Mountain Marches / Hernán Valera*

into open war. After the Sack of Kunda, each city has begun to build its own naval force, and mercenaries from the Free Legions, Carsboig, and the Hirelings of Gorputz are now much in demand.

The Sanctum Isles in the south of the Gulf have not been claimed by any of the League; they are a useful place for conducting business one would not wish known at home, as well as serving as a popular haven for buccaneers.

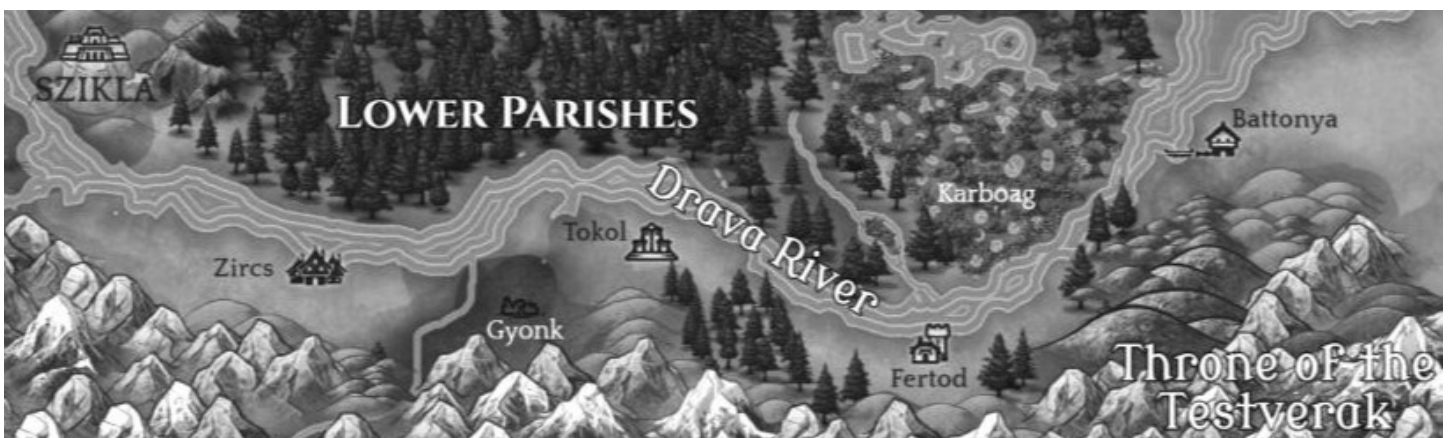
## The Dravan Parishes

The settlements along the Drava River are divided into twelve parishes, a designation which has been maintained since their founding, predating the establishment of Kingdom of Gardzyka. The parishes were never part of the kingdom, though the populace is overwhelming of Gardzykan descent. The parishes were founded by explorers, adventurers, and those seeking — for many reasons - to put distance between themselves and the established nobility of Gardzyka. Parish folk have a reputation of being stoic and hard-headed, and do not tolerate smooth-talking charlatans. As a result of this history and attitude, nestled against the southern mountains with their varied inhabitants, all the parishes have a much more relaxed attitude to many of the norms upheld in the Kingdom proper, maintaining good relations with most civilised non-human races, and a far less wary of practitioners of magic.

Not surprisingly, this has not impressed the Solemn Brethren, who devote a great deal of energy to secretly sending Purifiers into the parishes to capture magicians and return them to Gyor for trial. Of course, pragmatism sometimes demands sentence be quietly carried out *in situ*, though trials are still meticulously conducted in Gyor after the fact. For reasons none fully understand, far fewer Purifiers return from the Upper Parishes than from the Lower Parishes.

### THE LOWER PARISHES

The parishes ranging from the Gulf of Ligac to the Mountain Marches are known as the Lower Parishes. These are the parishes settled before the followers of Khagana Gardzykos reached the Zara Sea. The Fey Woods run the extent of the Lower Parishes and are rarely travelled, given the unpredictable nature of the elder fey and the bands of kobolds inhabiting the forest depths.



All the parishes operate based on small holdings, whether these be agricultural, mining, lumbering, or anything else. The Lower Parishes are a livelier trade route than the Upper Parishes, given the proximity of the cities of the Ligac League and the industrious Mountain Marches. Dwarfs are not uncommon, as trade routes from the southerly Demesne of B'Zugdaa-Hiara lead into Tokol and Zircs.

**Battonya**, at the mouth of the Drava on the Gulf of Ligac, is a major entrepôt for the Ligac League, though it is not a member. It is a port town, serving river and gulf traffic, and tends to look more to the gulf than to the other parishes. Unlike most of the parishes, it has neither a lord nor a claim to be a free people. Instead, it models itself upon the cities of the Ligac League, and is governed by the Conclave of the Gonfalonieres. Given the aspirations of the Conclave to become a great merchant city, it is forever the site of schemes and plots to gain wealth, power, and influence.

Battonya's orientation towards the Ligac League is due in part due to the **Parish of Karboag**, a swampy morass more easily traversed by boat than on foot. As such, it has become a haven for brigands who find even the parishes unwelcoming. They prey primarily on the river traffic and recognize no suzerain. This delinquent attitude is not accepted by the parish Monseigneur, the **Ermita** of Karboag. The Ermita takes the spiritual well-being of her flock very seriously – even if they do not – and she travels continually within the parish giving religious instruction with her two-headed maul.



*The Parish of Karboag / László Pintér*

The **Parish of Fertod** is formally a baronetcy, with the rulers having adopted Gardzyklar noble titles. The family of the current baronet has held the title for some four score years and has had some success in establishing order within the parish and resisting incursions from Karboag. Armed strangers are regarded warily, and there is little patience for hooliganism from outsiders.



## The Hematarchy

A millennium and a half ago, the Second Age of the World was concluded by the final struggle of the Demonlords and a caste of human magic users known as the “Indartsu.” The conflict was brought to an end by an eruption from the heart of the Ærth. Molten rock spewed from the ground, and the land on which the warring parties fought crumbled into the inferno. By the time the eruption had concluded, a continent had been obliterated, replaced by the Seething Sea which is said to still steam far to the north, across the Endless Ocean. The Demonlords were entirely destroyed, so it is said, while the remnants of the Indartsu fled across the waves, establishing themselves in the lands to the north of the Zara Sea. Given the horror of the stories which circulate around the pantheon of the newcomers, the seventeen Indartsuxi (or do they number seventeen times seventeen?), one can only speculate on a foe the Indartsu called “Demonlords”.



These lands were not uninhabited; they were home to the mighty Empire of Ilkagate, rumoured to have been the oldest of all human empires in the world. Tales of the struggle would be epic, if the Indartsu cared about such things, or if any of the minstrels of the Empire had survived to compose the odes. The struggle lasted scores of decades, but the forces of Ilkagate were no match for the arcane furies unleashed by the Indartsu. The Ilkagate were driven back to a final hold in the western mountains now known as The Wardens, where they made their final and futile stand where today the Thaumaturgical Retreat of Gazalbide lurks beneath the mountains.

The north of the Zara Sea, where magic now holds sway is known as The Hematarchy – “Rule of the Blood” - by southerners, a reference to the Indartsu’s preservation of their lineage and their absolute power. The Indartsu have no collective name for their land, identifying exclusively with their particular city and its occult preference. Though they do not share a sense of common identity, the lands of the Hematarchy share a rigid caste system. The Indartsu are a tiny fraction of the populace, the magic users at the top of a hierarchy, while the vast majority of common folk – the *morroi* - descendants of the long-lost citizens of Ilkagate, labour as serfs. Betwixt these two poles are two thin castes: the *janarai* who

must ensure that foodstuffs and other essentials are transferred from the serfs to the Indartsu, and the *lekaio*, a small hereditary layer of most trusted servants who serve as agents for the Indartsu, attending to their needs and representing them in all dealing with lesser castes.

The Hematarchy treasures its isolation, which is amplified by a great natural reef known as the Ribs of Nabor, running from Extpguen in the west to the River Txarretet in the east. Only Extpguen maintains any contact with the other lands of the Zara Sea, being a mighty seaport with a formidable navy. The Txarretet is navigable all the way to Onzokolanxa, but such traffic is strictly forbidden, under the pain of pain. Only the hulls of the Mad Priests may make the journey, and then never as far as the open waters of the Zara. The tower of Ikuzi lies at the head of the delta, ready to greet any transgressors with a maelstrom of magic.

Each city is dedicated to its own art, and the magic-using inhabitants have minimal interest in what might occur outside of their own domain, save insofar as it might advance or impede their own arcane practices. The Indartsu pay no attention to their cities' hinterlands of *morroi* villages and farms, confident that the *janarai* will ensure that supplies of food and materials continue to flow into their cities, and that the *lekaio* will deal with such tedious matters of justice, tax gathering, and mass reprisals against any *morroi* who even consider rising above their station. Indeed, no one has ever bothered to sort out the extent of any given city's influence; perhaps the *lekaio* have made arrangements. As a result, most of the landmass of the Hematarchy is a wild and lawless place. The caravans of the *janarai* are heavily defended as they move between the fantastic realms of the magicians.

Given that no one will permit *morroi* to actually carry weapons, such protection must come from mercenary companies, including the Free Legions and other bands recruited from the south of the Zara Sea. Since the mass defection of the *regimentuak* of Gazalvide over two centuries ago, no city has maintained any non-magical army – with the possible brief exception -- save for small forces of ritual guards whose ranks are replenished through heredity or adoption. The Desecration of Bolinxta (as it is known on this side of the sea) has led to increased efforts to retain mercenary forces, though the paranoia of the Hematarchs, together with their unsavoury reputation, often means their agents must go increasingly far afield to secure contracts.

## KNIGHTS SORCEROUS OF EXTPGUEN

The Knights Sorcerous of Extpguen hold themselves to be the defenders of the Hematarchy, serving as the bulwark against the outside world and as the vanguard for the inevitable conquest of the remaining non-magical folk. A century and a half previously, the Knights Sorcerous attempted to accelerate this conquest with a surprise assault on Gyor, resulting in the decade-long Mage War, when Extpguen joined forces with adventurous magicians from other cities to attempt to subjugate the Kingdom of Gardzyka. The struggle concluded at the Battle of Barra, when the battle-barges of Extpguen, despite their magical resources, were thoroughly routed by the forces of the Kingdom and the Ligac League.





## Appendix: Adventuring in the Zara Sea

The Lost Kingdom of Gardzyka is a fantasy roleplaying campaign setting, suitable for use with any RPG system. The materials in *The Lost Kingdom of Gardzyka and the Lands of the Zara Sea* are all suitable for both the Game Master and players (though if experience is anything to go by, very few players will read it). The intention is to provide the busy GM with a ready-made world in which characters can start or continue their adventures, without the need for preparing a lot of background material for the main event: the adventure itself.

The different areas of the Zara Sea allow you to situate your game in whatever venue best suits the style of the game which you are after. If you want High Fantasy with lots of magic, the Hematararchy is a good place to begin. If characters want to get involved in the plots and intrigues of political rivalries, opportunities abound in the Lost Kingdom. Should they want to become merchant princes (and it has happened) or engage in renaissance-style machinations, the Ligac League has possibilities. If you're looking for a more steampunk flavoured game, Arberabrae, the City of Timbers, is always there. And if players just want to get to the next dungeon and whack something with a battle axe, the Dravan Parishes can always provide. Best of all, you can switch up the style of the game by moving the party to a different part of the campaign world.

Throughout *The Lost Kingdom of Gardzyka and the Lands of the Zara Sea* there are numerous hints, story threads, and teasers which can be spun into an entire adventure arc, they are there to pick and choose as you please. Some of these show up in Zara Sea Games publications, but others are simply there to keep things interesting. Play them out anyway you want.

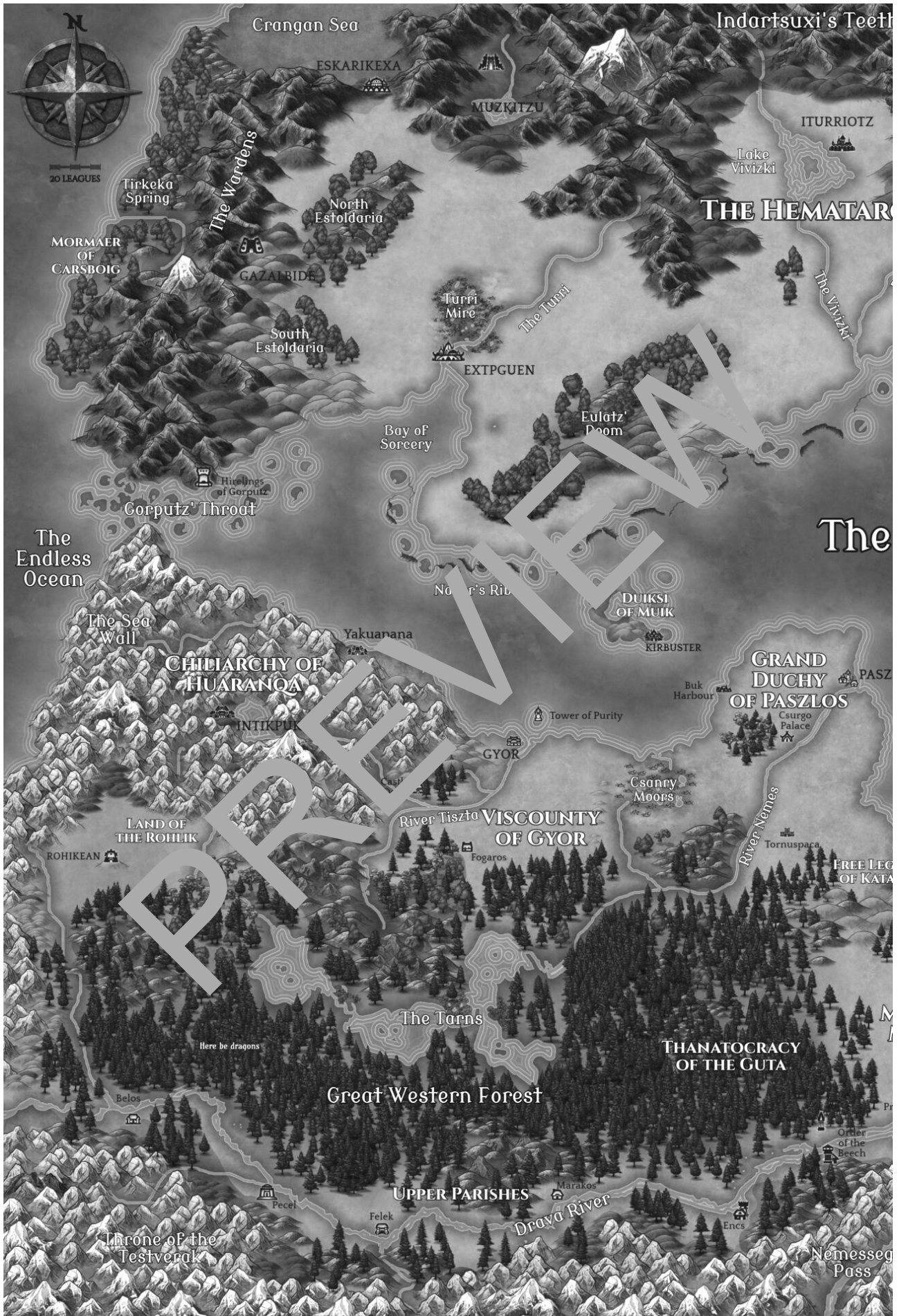
Not every species of possible player character has been identified in this work, but there are plenty of places for characters to originate if they want to play a species/race that has not been placed here. The Dravan Parishes are always a good starting point since the inhabitants are used to a great many oddities.

There are two points for a GM to consider. The first concerns languages that the characters choose. "Common" (Gardzykian) is spoken south of the Zara Sea, but the Auld Tongue and Indartsunta are the dominant languages in other lands. It is worth reminding players of this when they are setting up characters, before they choose from a standard list of languages (assuming, of course, you even want to use the other languages here – you don't have to). The second point is the enhancement to your campaign if players set their origin and backstory somewhere within whatever parts of the campaign setting you might plan on using. This makes it much easier for subplots and storylines specific to your party, and enhances the RPG experience.

Finally, never be bound by "the rules". Adapt, transform, and recreate as you see fit. It's your game – enjoy it!

-Csad Trohak





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