

The Game of Invasions





Chapter 2 - Hiber Sidhe

6 Colour

7 Traits

8 Lore Summary

9 Society / Cultural

10 Mound-Cities

11 Magic and the Cycle

12 Úrrc-Ash

13 Kahnacken

14 Gláisraige

15/16 Darudonnous

Chapter 3 - Iruaith Empire

18 Colour

19 Traits

20 Lore Summary

21 Society / Cultural

22 The Golden Fleet

23 Essence and Magic

24 Dragoony

25 Knight of Iron

26 Virtue

27/28 Lionheart

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 - The World

1 The Otherworld

2 Ard-Donn

3 The Iruaith Colonies

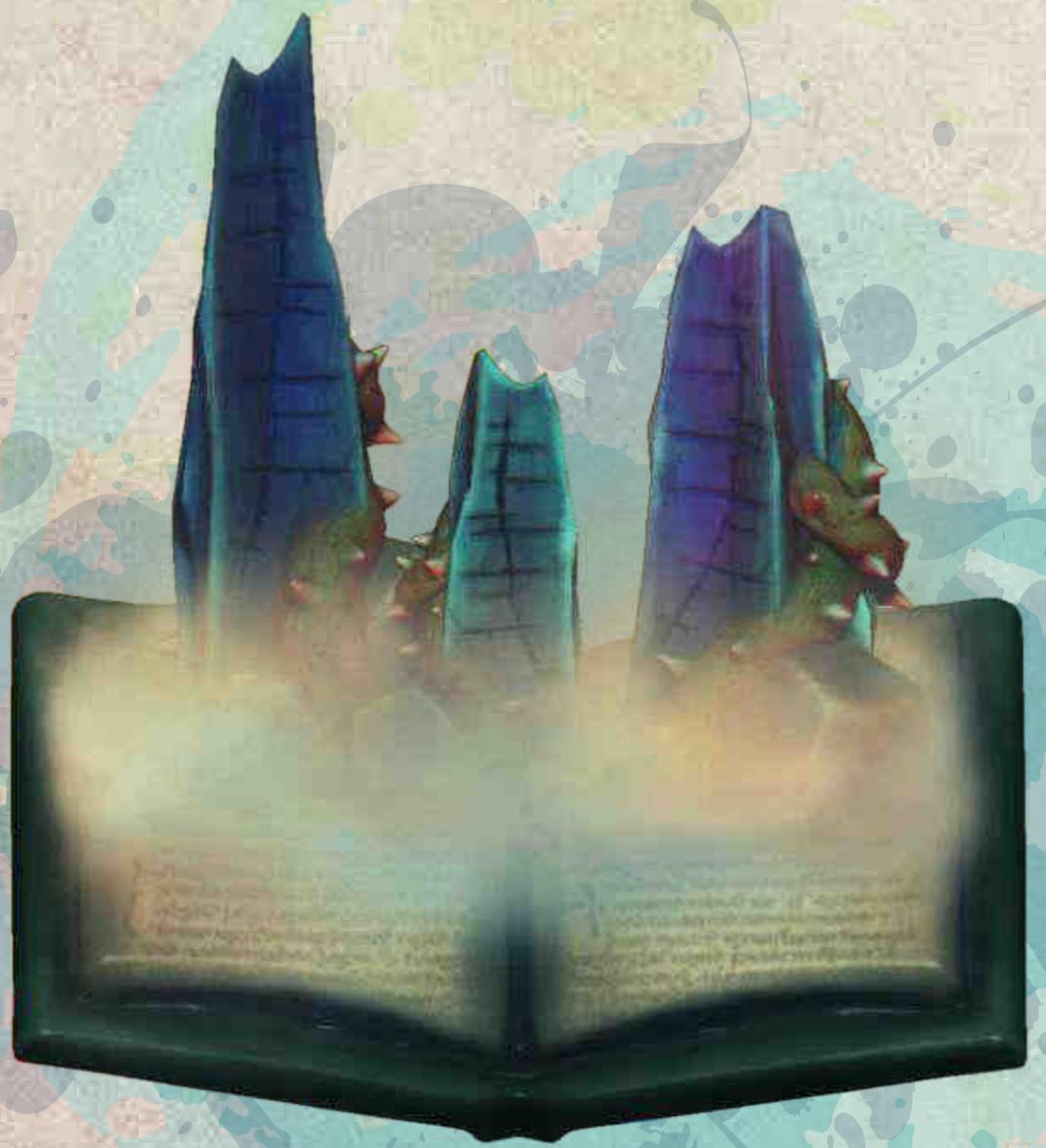
4 Magic in the Otherworld

5 The Great Invasion

The Otherworld

A World Birthed by Stories

Half forgotten legends say the ancient tombs and faerie forts around Ireland hold portals to The Otherworld. A plane of existence defined by its strangeness, home to the Tuatha De Danann, Faeries and all manner of magical wonder and horror. It is from this that I draw the idea for my version of The Otherworld, a world which mirrors our own and yet is different and other. As our story gets twisted from re-tellings it retains only an essence of truth. The destruction of our world is told as a heated battle between magical giants, one of metal and fire the other of blood and earth. Much as our history was passed down through oral tradition, the Otherworld is birthed from the epics and myths of our past and those yet to come.



The War for The Otherworld

There are many diverse regions within the Otherworld, it is a plane of existence which is given form through emotion and stories. It is home to fantastic nations and creatures, mirroring the chaotic nature of the mythological Otherworld of Celtic myth. This is a tale, however, which centers on the remote island of Ard-Donn where a heated battle is being waged for the future of the Otherworld.

Within this mist covered island forgotten for thousands of years long before the Aelf diaspora two fearsome nations clash, and this war could decide the future of the Otherworld and our own. The Iruaith Empire, a continent spanning empire, wage war to control the island and the Hiber Sidhe defend their home with powerful ancient magic and savage magical beasts. This war represents the change within our own country, the Iruaith Empire also personifies a changing Ireland, with their encroaching technological empire representing modernization and the death of "small town Ireland"

Nations of the Otherworld



A Realm in Turmoil

The world of the Otherworld is inspired by real life empires and attitudes, twisted and changed as though ancient tales passed down through the ages. The Iruaith Empire represents the colonial, the invader and yet also represents a class of people taken advantage of by its leadership. This expansive autocratic nation hurts not only those it invades, but its own people too.

Still the Hiber Sidhe are not perfect themselves, being highly isolated and untrusting to outsiders. Since the Old Gods faded away they have stagnated and refused to change, fearing they would stray from the path their ancient creators sought for them.



The Death of the Unremembered

The ancient celts believed that names kept life in places, that they would cease to exist if forgotten. Within its concealing mists Ard-Donn lies half forgotten with only the Hiber Sidhe remembering the twisting tunnels and paths through its fey woods. Though the wards and magic laced within the island by their creators, the Old Gods, protected them from discovery it also weakened them as they were forgotten by the Otherworld. The Iruaith Empire on the other hand have spread their nation across the Otherworld. Through forcing their subjects to obey their tenets they have grown strong. They say the eye of Irun, the empires patron god, can gaze upon the entire Otherworld as he is worshiped more than any other. With the weakening wards, the Hiber Sidhe and the island of Ard-Donn have been revealed, and now Irun turns his gaze to them.

Ard-Donn

Ard-Donn was founded by the last of the fleeing Old Gods, who sought to create an island cut off from the rest of the world damaged by the machinations of man. Here they placed the goddess Eru, who was one with the land, her visage reflected within the skies and her tears shook the earth with her pain. The Old Gods created Ard-Donn as a twisting maze of enchanted forests and imbued the island with a mist through which they tried to hide the island from the world. They created the Hiber Sidhe to tend to the delicate balance of the world they created. Within these twisted trees lies creatures and spirits of the land protected from men.

A Sea of Forests and Mist

Within the mystical Eco-system of Ard-Donn there are many diverse climates, creatures and fauna with powerful ancient magic running through the island its inhabitants are empowered with a fey power.

Though there are many Hiber Sidhe living here they do not spoil the vast wilderness their creators grew.

Thus the island is an untapped treasure trove of natural and magical resources, and within its citizens lies the Iruaith Empires true goal. Essence..

As the ancient trees sterring with the arrival of the

3 Empire so too the world will shake.

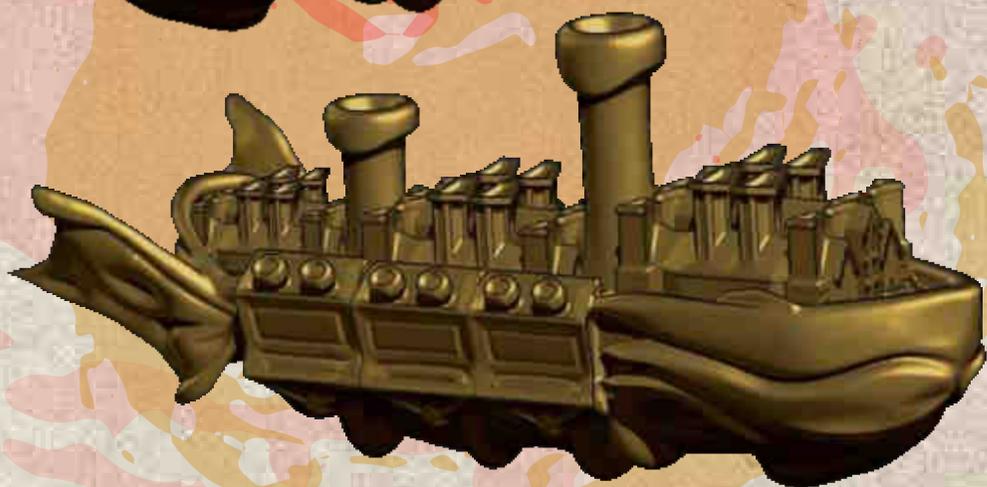


Irvaith Empire Colonies

Fate Manifest

The Irvaith Empire stretches all across The Otherworld, still because of its endless nature there are many untouched islands and landmasses ready to be shown the truth of Irun's divine will. Those living within the empire gain the benefits of safety from the chaos of the Otherworld, though for many the cost of the Empire is greater than the benefits.

It was the kingdom of man which first fell to the Aelf when they arrived from the skies with terrors of grinding metal and fire never before seen in the magical Otherworld. Much as Cold-Iron repels faeries in myth, the arrival of the Aelf and their technological wonders poisons the very world the empire believe they are saving.



Endless Resources

Due to its immense size the empire has access to boundless resources, as it continues its crusade on the world. Thus the empire spans many different climates and vanquished nations and peoples, their wealth is funnelled into the flying fortress airships which house the Aelf population. This leads to colony islands and countries being starved of wealth as they pay the price of a holy vendetta.

Past vast deserts the empire takes their cut of the wealthy traders of the east, through colossal mountains and jungles both the empire reaches out to take what its owed. It sends its conquered foes to work within the prisonship Auralias and turns those who will not submit into the tortured Grim Sacellum. It was the kingdom of man which first fell to the Aelf when they arrived from the skies with terrors of grinding metal and fire never before seen in the magical Otherworld. Much as Cold-Iron repels faeries in myth, the arrival of the Aelf and their technological wonders poisons the very world the empire believe they are saving.

The Great Invasion

The First Landing

When the mists faded away from the island of Ard-Donn a shocked Empire scouting party discovered the island where there should have been only water. This scouting party began the first landing of Ard-Donn, resulting in the loss of the entire unit and the beginning of the War of Invasions. The Empire sent many battalions to this mysterious island and when they discovered magic more powerful than any source they found in the past, the Lightsworn himself sought to capture the island.



Spears and Shields

The War of Invasions shakes Ard-Donn to its very foundations, still the war rages yet full scale engagements take place far less often than the beginning of the war. It has been 100 years since the wars inception and the once young Lightsworn has grown into a man even considering the lengthened Aelf lifespan. Still Darudonnous sits on his throne trying to conserve the strength needed to once more drive off the Lightsworn and save his people, his gods and his home. Both leaders are scarred and damaged from the many battles that have taken place over the magical power within Ard-Donn. This war has become the greatest challenge the Iruaith Empire have ever faced, though their resources are endless, the Hiber Sidhe fend them off using the very land itself. They do not want as the Empire does and can survive endlessly within a siege conjuring food and water using their own blood. Still the Hiber Sidhe struggle against the Empires smiting holy fire and technological terrors which have layed waste to many a Mound-City and destroyed large swathes of the delicate eco-system of Ard-Donn.

Otherworldly Magic

The Gifts of Eru

The magic breathed into their native land and born within the Hiber Sidhe stems from the goddess Eru, one of the Old Gods who created them.

From her, life flows clean and pure, but with the corruption of man she and the world have grown sick. Bound together she weeps creation twisted and polluted which has changed the Hiber Sidhe over time. Eru's gifts allow the Hiber Sidhe to do impossible things from changing a barren desert into a virile forest to impossible strength and controlling natural spirits. Still this magic comes with a cost and for larger works of magic, blood is needed.



Divine Technology

The Iruaith Empire have manifest their magic with the use of technological artifacts tapping into the alchemical creation "Essence" to fuel their so called miracles. In contrast to the Hiber Sidhe the Empires magic is focused on destruction more than creation, allowing the user to command blinding light which will sear skin, or hurl fire through the skies like a child throwing stones. Still they are able to harness these destructive energies with their amazing artificing, the floating cities of the Golden Fleet immediatley jump to mind alongside their fearsome essence-wrought weaponry.



Colour

The Hiber Sidhe's colour scheme is based on nature and clothing ancient celts wore. I also want to use brighter blues, purples and pinks for skin hues to add an otherworldly fey feel. Blues and greens will define this faction with various browns, natural shades of orange and purples. This colour palette is inspired by the Irish countryside and its flora. Furze for its dazzling yellow and heather and its purple.



Hiber Sidhe

Native - Bestial - Fey



Influences

Hiber Sidhe Traits



Social System :

Tribal Meritocracy based on challenges, Large changes in policy requiring agreement of chiefs, these decisions made through debates.

History :

Creations of the forgotten Old Gods, the Hiber Sidhe tend to the island of Ard-Donn, which holds the goddess

Religion :

Worship Old God creators through animism. See the land as an extension of their gods. Also commune with nature spirits through rites and their avatars.

Technology :

Little to no industry, Advanced knowledge of natural sciences. Focused on sustainability not war/fighting. Any industry is related to needs, e.g clothing but still natural and sustainable. Medieval with wondrous magical intervention.

Magic :

High magic, druidic nature flavoured, Creation focused, less destructive. Includes sacrificial ritualistic magics, circle of life .

Architecture :

Bio augmented design Architecture. Ancient Materials, stone wood etc. Underground Archologies, (Newgrange). Houses and buildings nestled between massive forests and massive "Mound Cities" which dip underground to preserve the ancient wilds.

Demographics :

Animal mythological races, Very diverse physically, Tribal, Irish Caricature Inspired. Include spirits of nature drawn from the island by the sleeping goddess.

Geography :

Island nation, very secluded Surrounded by dense forests Hills wherein the Hiber Sidhe live Wild Flora and Fauna : Strange Magical plants created by old gods, Ancient enchanted forests covering Island. Magical creatures and beings commonplace.

Economics :

Low trade, barter, mostly self-sufficient, Services done for the good of the land and people. Poor by capitalist standards, low consumption.

Transport :

Use of doorway portals for long distances from their "Mound Cities" which pass through the tangled trees, Tunnels connecting short distances.

Culture :

Tied closely to Celtic culture Sport, contests, songs/poetry, nature important. Strength, hunting artistry and poetry are the pastimes amongst the Hiber Sidhe, alongside drinking, dancing and revelry.

Food :

Sustainable foraging and farming. Magical creation of food etc. Rely upon nature to survive and thus tend to its needs.

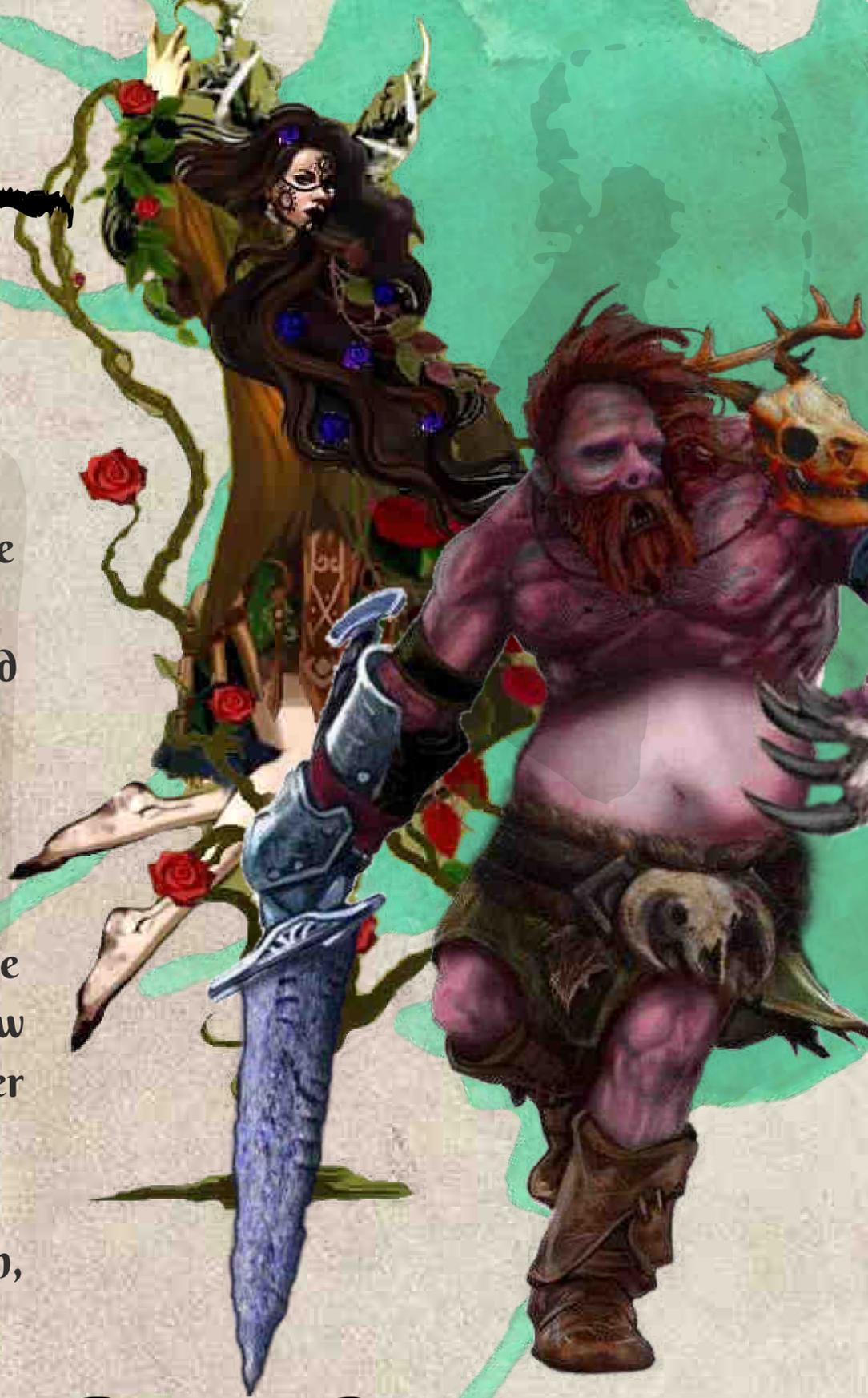
Government :

Council of Tribal clan leaders lead by a high king, "Wise Ones" serve as advisors and leaders outside the conventional power structure as power checks.

Hiber Sidhe

Eru and the Old Ones

The Hiber Sidhe were created by the Old Gods to tend to and maintain the island of Ard Donn, here they attempted to fight their waning powers by creating a land free from outside influence where the Hiber Sidhe would worship them and the land and in doing so keep both alive. They took with them the goddess Eru, who was the personification of the land, seas and skies. She was sick from within, being corrupted by man's destruction and exploitation of the earth, and here the Old gods sought to allow her to heal undisturbed. This failed however as their worship alone was not enough, the Old Gods faded into the very mist of forgetfulness they protected the island with, as the Hiber Sidhe's memories too were twisted and forgotten. Eru still sleeps within Ard Donn weeping.



Forgotton Protectors

Now the Hiber Sidhe live with only echos of their creators words left in their minds, still they protect the delicate natural and magical world created within Ard Donn, and now they fight to protect their land from invaders much like a dog may protect its owners house long after they may have passed. Though they appear barbaric and backwards, still using primitive materials for the most part, they are in many ways quite advanced. Capable of creating massive and impossible underground Mound-Cities.

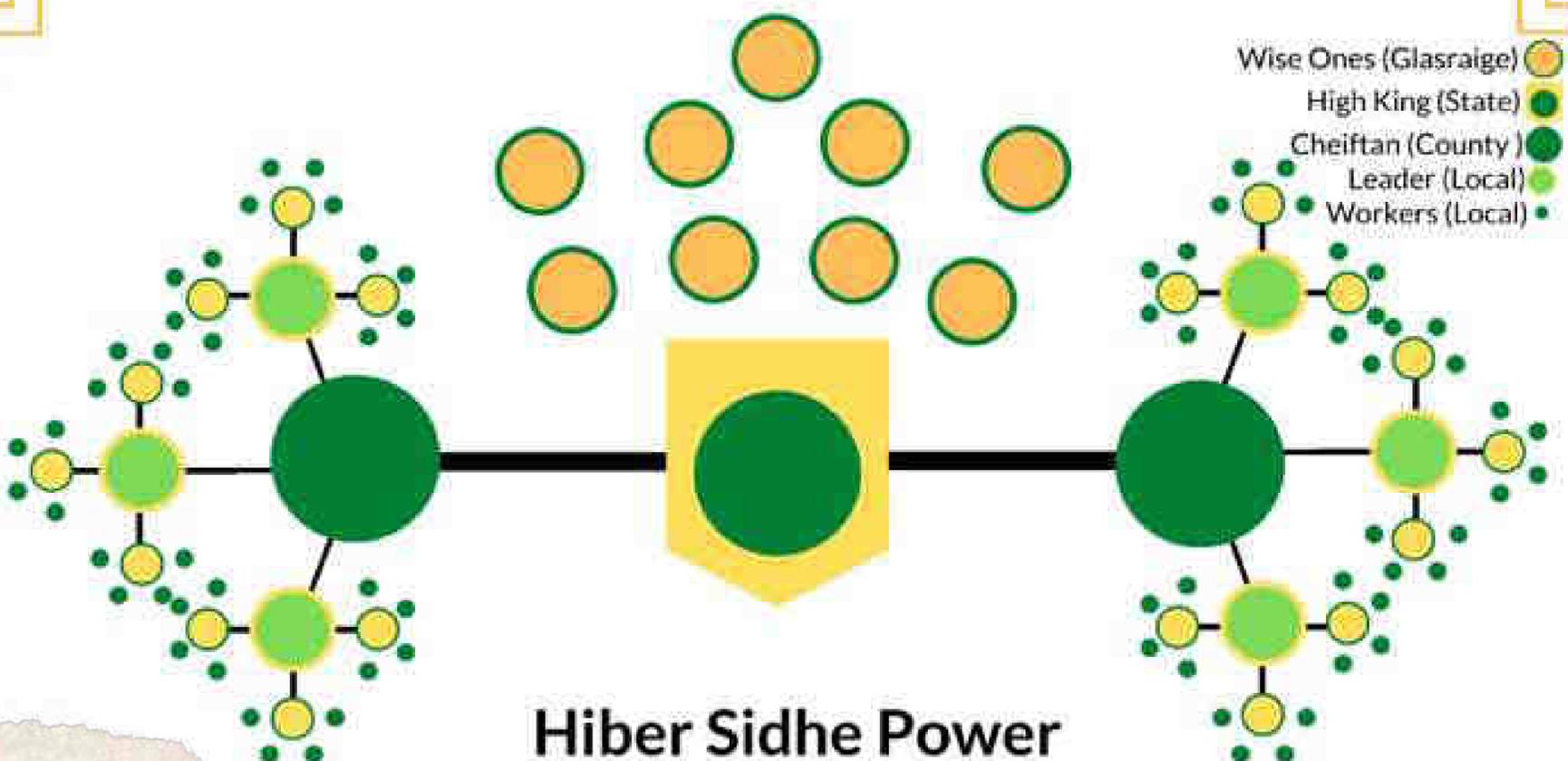


Preserve the Cycle

Their arcane knowledge was passed down by their creators, the Old Gods, who were said to be masters of secrets and magic long vanished from the world. They forsake industry and mass production for the sake of the land, instead focusing on artistry within their work. This is influenced by their magic too, which is less about dominating the world around them and bending the forces of nature to their will to create unnatural effects and more akin to working with nature in a symbiotic relationship. This does not come without cost though, and sometimes the cycle demands blood...

Unspoiled Wilds

The Hiber Sidhe live in large Archologies in order to preserve the forest which sustains them. Colossal Mound-Cities which are bound into the cycle of nature around it house large populations of the Hiber Sidhe. Comprising of vastly different clans which fulfill different roles in maintaining the land, the Hiber Sidhe are a diverse people physically and culturally. This mirrors the diverse tribes/clans within ancient Celtic society while also juxtaposing their culture with the very uniform Iruaith Empire.



Hiber Sidhe Power Structure

Mound-Cities

Sewn within Nature

The Hiber Sidhe are people of the land, they live to maintain the delicate ecosystem on Ard-Donn. In order to preserve the ancient wilds of the island the Hiber Sidhe remember half forgotten lessons from their Old God creators to construct gigantic Mound-Cities which disrupt as little of the natural world as possible. These impossible archologies are sewn within the landscape itslef, with tunnels twisting deep into the earth and trees twisting with towers, supporting eachother to reach into the sky beyond the realm of possibility. Ancient magic is used to create life where it is impossible, along with mushrooms infused with Eru's power which burn as a blue flame at night. The marvels of these Mound-Cities are amazing, the culmination of the Hiber Sidhe's tireless work throughout centuries. Though these Mound-Cities form the major population centers of the Hiber Sidhe clans, though there are many who live within the wilds themselves.



Keepers of the Deep Wilds

Though these Mound-Cities form the major population centers of the Hiber Sidhe clans, though there are many who live within the wilds themselves. These ones are not pariahs, in most Hiber Sidhe clans they are instead respected for being at one with the forces of nature. These so called "Druids" tend to dissappear into the wilds and seldom do they return, usually becoming one with nature through body. Still some survive within the harsh wilds of Ard-Donn, becoming one with the island in soul and mind and gaining ancient strength.

Magic and The Cycle



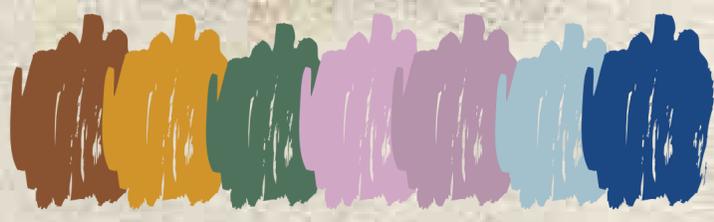
Life From Blood

Still the Hiber Sidhe's fearsome and impossible feats of magic do not come without a cost. In order to perform large works of magic the ways of the Old Gods demands blood as payment, though the Sidhe are honoured to be chosen as sacrifices for the good of the island. This willingness to die may stem from their belief in reincarnation, as within the Sidhe those who honour their ancestors and their creators will be reborn on the island continuing the cycle which will mend the world's wounds. So did the Old Gods proclaim that just as Ard-Donn bleeds for the Sidhe, through food and water foraged, so too must the Sidhe bleed for their home.

The Water Of Life

The Hiber Sidhe have learned to strengthen their own natural magical powers through cultivating magically dense plants and creating a powerful elixer. They call this potion "The Water of Life". Just as the standing stones that protect the island pulse with the glowing blue energy of Eru the Water of Life burns with her fury and empowers her children with her rage. Before the start of the Great Invasion the Hiber Sidhe only used the Water of Life to grow and help the parts of the island corrupted from the foul work of man seeping within Eru's soul, but now with the invasion of the Empire they turn the Water of Life to the horrors of death and war.

Kahnacken



Life In All Sizes

Based on myths of the leprechaun, clurichaun etc. alongside racist interpretations of the Irish people. Their names are derived from the Chaun prefix alongside the Bracken bush, in ancient celtic culture the Bracken bush was denotative of a lower standing though was still revered as an important piece of the natural world. Smaller with traits of monkeys these creatures look much sneaky and untrustworthy, still within the Hiber Sidhe the Kahnacken are reliable artisans, commonly making clothes, shoes and other items for other clan members. Despite their small stature they are a vital part of the Sidhe.



Their names are derived from the Chaun prefix alongside the Bracken bush

Born From Dirt

Embodying the classist notions of commoners being below nobility they are small in stature and appear dirty with tattered old clothes. The Kahnacken follow the societal traits of the fairies of the Seelie Court, being keepers of nature, joyful and honest despite their more sinister appearances. Still as the effects of the Truath invasion shakes the island of Ard-Donn, the Kahnacken have become more deadly, using every trick they know to fight off these invaders. Brandishing the tools they used to make beautiful cloaks and garmets, the Kahnacken are waiting in the shadows of every tree.

Úrrc-Ash

Monolithic Guardians

Based upon myths of the Púca shapechanging creatures with traits of animals and humans, some celtic cultures saw them as keepers of ancient stones and within this world they pose a similar function. Their name derived from Púca and the Ash tree, Ash being a tree of higher class in the celtic world the Úrrc-Ash are larger and stronger than the Kahnacken. The intentional similarity to the modern Orc attempts to place a brutal image in the mind of the viewer, which mirrors colonial assumptions of natives as barbaric and cruel much like we view the Orc in fantasy literature.



Burdens of the Strong

The Ash symbolises the wellbeing of the land itself and on the Isle of Man ash trees were said to protect the purity of springs. In Ard Donn the Úrrc-Ash are builders, protectors and guardians reflecting the origin of their names. Physically they embody the fiercer animals within nature, the boar symbolising ferocity and strength, this notion of uncivilized brutality is further emphasized by their mirroring of the caricatures of the large barbaric “Paddy”. There are also elements of the Dadga within their design, this notion of a large masculine club wielding figure coinciding with a more whimsical outlook in contrast to their appearance.

Glásraige

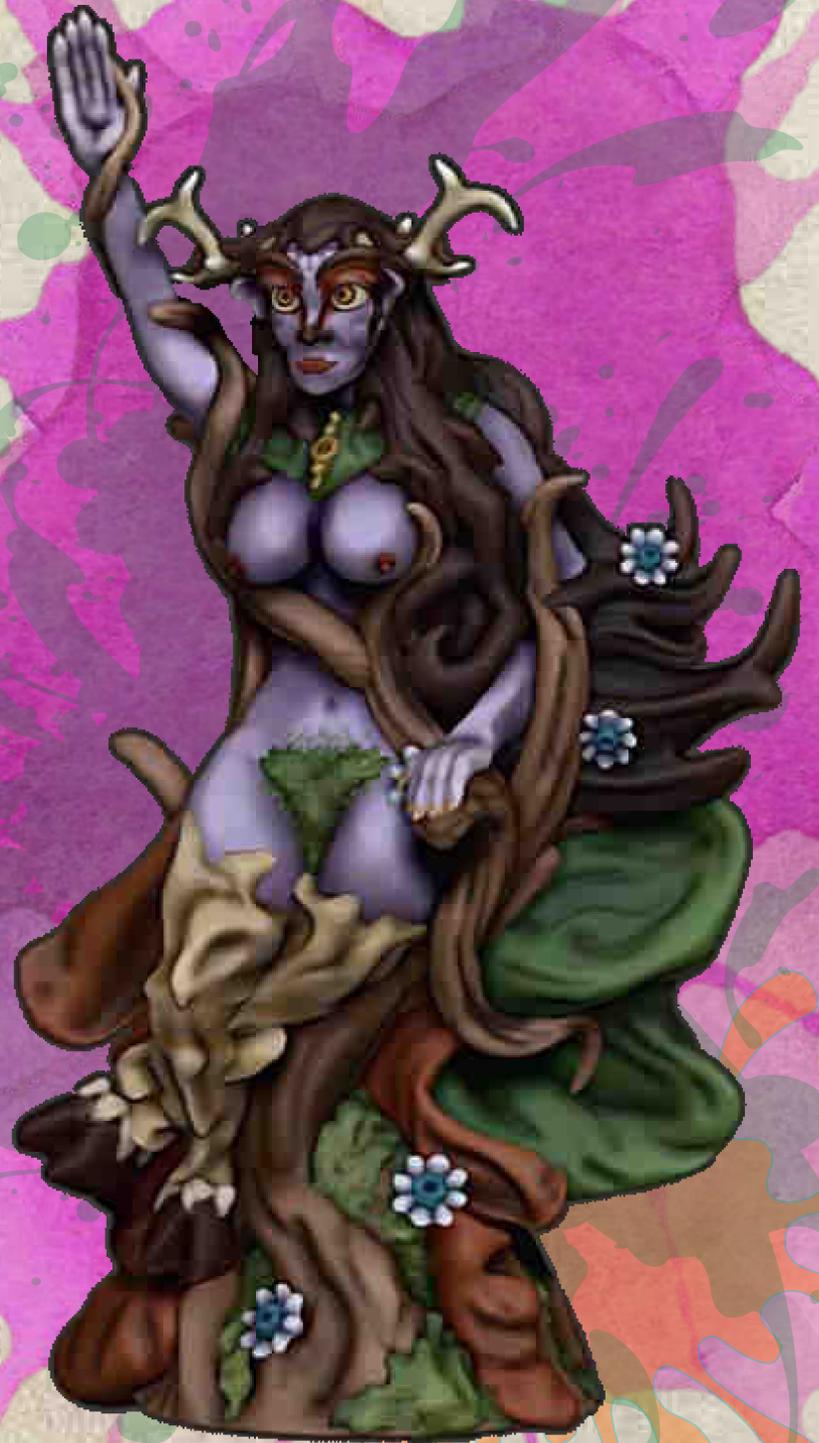


Ancient as the Trees

Embodying the wisdom of femininity and growth the Glasraige use their powers to weave life into the land. There are only 9 of them in total and are heavily connected to the Hazel tree, in Celtic myth nine hazel trees grew around a sacred pool, dropping into the water nuts that were eaten by salmon (a fish sacred to Druids), which absorbed the wisdom. So too do the Glasraige tend to their own of the 9 great trees of life on Ard Donn, these trees grow a nut every 1000 years which when dropped onto the aged body of its Glasraige tender creates the next generation of the wise ones, and begins the cycle again. Thus they are highly respected within Hiber Sidhe society and there is always one within their mound-cities.

Rituals and Rebirth

They look like Dryads with features of deers, their antlers sprouting flowers and leaves like the branches on a tree, this references the Celtic notion of deer antlers connection to nature the growth and shedding symbolising the cycle of trees. They are lithe and slender though eerily other and unreal not quite ugly though they could not be called beautiful. A Hazel tree weaves around them, too a part of the Glásraige in reference to the ritual sacrifice of ancient celtic society, Old Croghan Man had holes cut in his upper arms through which a rope of hazel withies was threaded in order to restrain him. He was then stabbed and he had his nipples sliced, before finally being cut in half.



Their names derived from Glaistig, a mythological creature who is half goat half woman and the Celtic tribe of the Osraige who are said to be named after deer. Also the connection to the Irish for green "Glas" suggests a further connection to nature and describes their role as gardeners of a sort.

Creating Darudonnous

Creating the First One

When creating Darudonnous, I wanted the character to carry a power, while still seeming to be holding back something. I researched many historical figures such as Brian Boru and mythological ones like Nuada, the Dagda, and Cernunnos. From there I built core features I wanted within the character, one of his arms is missing, referencing the Tuatha De Danann king Nuada. He also wears a large cloak as a reference to the depictions of the Dagda. Imagery of a hulking Celtic high chief with nature overgrown surrounding him.

High Kings & History

I intend to model his human features around depictions and descriptions of Brian Boru, a High King of Ireland who famously united the country against the Gaelic-Norse of Dubh Linn. Roger Newmann described him as having "a long forehead above a prominent nose - features said to be inherited by his descendents". I also want to feature his weapon, "Lorg Mór" (Dagda's weapon in Celtic Myth) said to take or give life in a single touch.

Darudonnous

Ancient as the Trees

Darudonn is the high cheftan of the Hiber Sidhe, his word is valued as the height of wisdom and compassion, though the Glasraige are his advisors and operate outside of his influence. The oldest and most respected of the Hiber Sidhe, Darudonnous can still remember flickers of life when the Old gods remained on Ard Donn. He is the highest among beasts, and the protector of the wilds. With his legendary weapon Lorg's Maul he can bring life with one strike and death with the next.



Name derived from the proto celtic for oak, Daru + Donn Irish for brown and a reference to the Bó Cúailnge + ous for Cernnos a celtic horned god and leader of beasts.

The Price of Freedom

Darudonnous has a large frame standing much taller than even the biggest Urrc-Ash. His head is crowned with horns from many beasts symbolising his dominion over animals and nature, while one of his arms is missing, being replaced with a tangled writhing mass of white branches and roots. This arm was lost when he first fought Ae'lfryð Lionheart Boleros, Lightsworn of the Iruaith Empire. It is said that Darudonnous gave his hand to Ae'lfryð's holy flames in order to surprise the foreign king, severing his own arm with Lorg's Maul he imbued the wound with magic, his blood fueling this transformation he struck the the smiter with a counterattack, his arm now a writing mass of branches and roots, which drove the cowardly invader away securing the fragile defence of Ard-Donn. Stil this battle left Darudonnous gravely injured and so he rests within his grand Mound-City waiting for the day Ae'lfryð returns with the full might of the empire.

Colour

The Iruaith Empire's colour scheme is based on british uniform and armour colours while also borrowing from Roman influence as another expansive imperial autocratic nation. I want to keep the Iruaith more uniform to show their focus on order while using strong golds and bright whites to show their sense of vain-glory and materialism.



Iruaith Empire

Colonial - Xenophobic - Zealots



Influences

The Iruaith Empire

Autocratic Authority

The Iruaith Empire is ruled over by the pristine and divine Aelf, while humans serve under them and are sometimes aided by creatures or beings bound to their will. Their government is a divine monarchy and they are lead by the "Lightsworn" their Aelfen King who is chosen by the divine light of Irun.

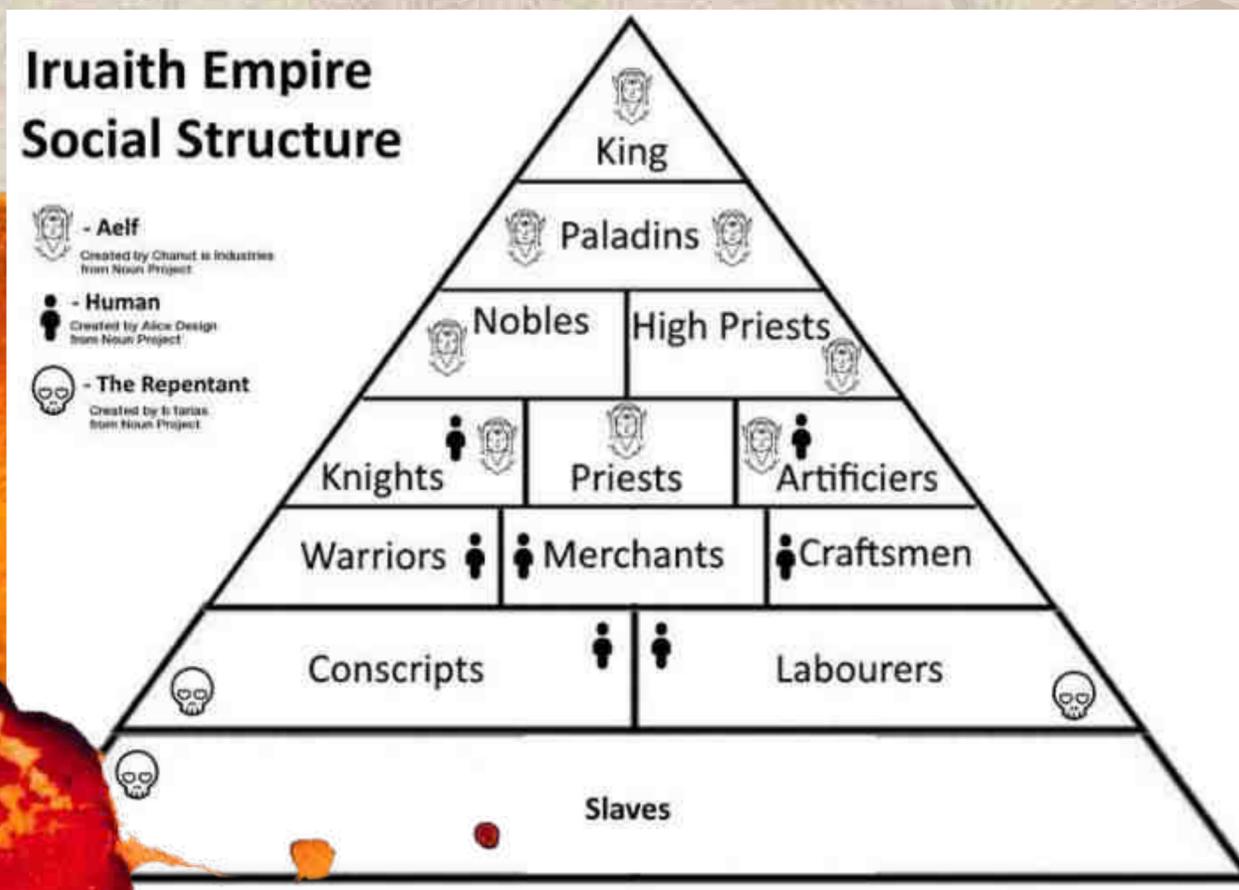
The Iruaith Empire serve their one true god, Irun, a being who demands complete loyalty and acceptance of him and his creed which outlaws magics. Inspiration here comes from Christian beliefs during the crusades etc. this conversion of native populations religion playing a large role, this is not only a physical invasion but also a cultural one.

Irun is characterized with holy light and is said to be the flame of hope which keeps the shadows and chaos of the wilds at bay. He demands complete devotion and punishes heathens harshly.



Sinning Serf's

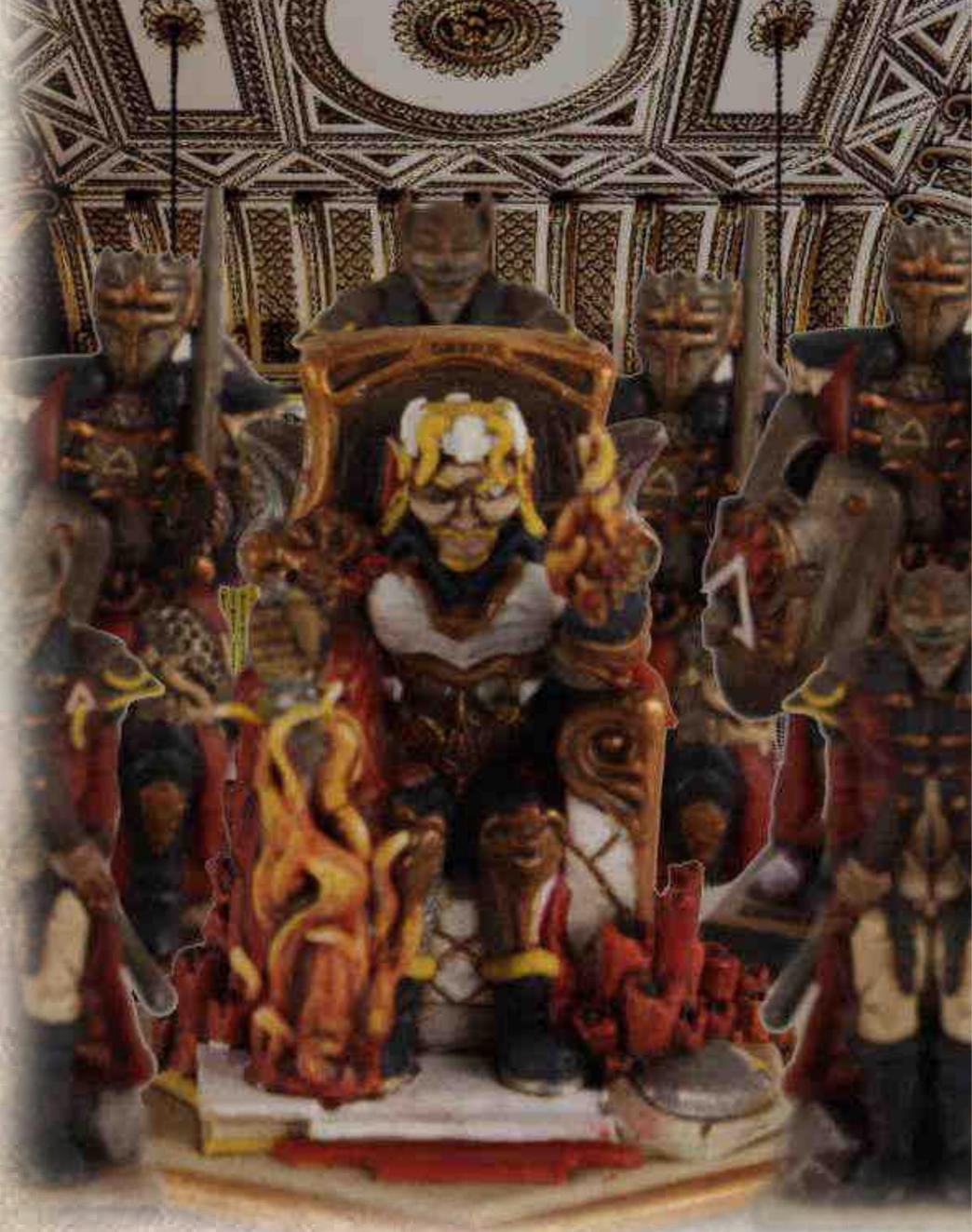
The human members within Iruaith society serve as the bulk of the empire, these serve under the Aelf monarchy with no real political power. Here they are an allegory for the peasantry, those forced to fight for an empire which treats them as something lesser. Still some fight and serve with zeal with hopes their "sins" will be forgiven, or their families saved, or that they might somehow rise up in society.



Wolves in Sheeps Clothing

The Aelf are based upon British and Scandinavian myths of the Elves and have been chosen for a multitude of reasons. The contrast between the Iruatih and the Hiber Sidhe bring to mind the concept of the Unsellie and Sellie Courts of faeries in Irish mythology, further also touching upon the idea of heaven and hell within Christian belief.

The idea of an Elf in modern culture brings to mind the Tolkeinesque proud beautiful and dismissive elves within the world of middle earth, who are, mostly a force of good. This characterization feeds into the idea of portraying the “Native Population” as being barbaric while the “Invader”, in this case the Aelf are seemingly civilized, good beings seeking to bring order to the world. This helps to hide their true role as being cruel imperial conquerors and I hope will serve as a view into the colonial mind-set of the past.



Hypocritic Crusade

Powerful yet few the Aelf are the leaders of the Iruatih Empire, wielding divine fury they stamp out heathens on their eternal search for forgiveness from their one true god Irun. Cast out ages past for their sin of wielding magic they seek re-entry to their old home within the skies alongside Irun. This mirrors the idea of the “Original Sin” within Christianity. Now they travel the world attempting to destroy all sources of magic which in their view perverts the perfect world their lordlongs for. Taking their own sins out on those they deem heathens. They are haughty and beautiful clad in gold and religious regalia while those under them suffer, unworthy of their god’s love.

The Golden Fleet

Impossible Inventions

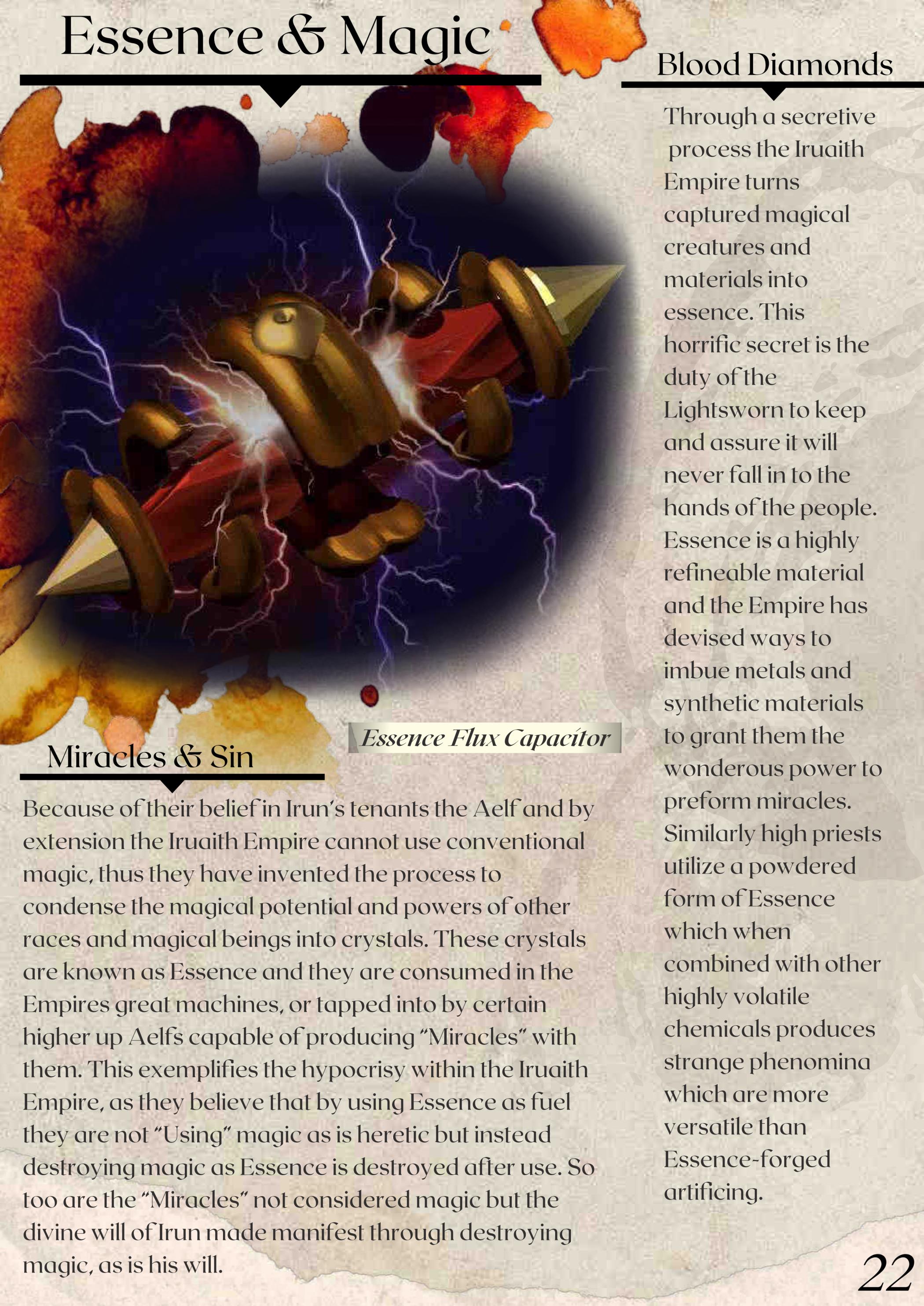
The Iruaith Empire controls their vast empire from the skies. Using their technological advances to power these behemoths of steel and fire they patrol the airs spitting ashen smoke in their wake. Through use of essence these impossible machinations are able to produce a smog which can float in the air and yet allow the vast airship to float upon it. Alchemists of the Empire say the smog is the product of burning off foul sinning essence, while the clergy say it is a miracle of Irun. The truth behind Essence's mysterious power is far more sinister however.

Floating Vultures

The Golden Fleet is the Iruaith Empires vast navy through which they controll and conquer new lands. These monolithic constructions are floating factories and cities capable of housing thousands. Though they are not self sufficient there are so many cities within the empire beholden to refill them with food, workers and essence. They have massive ships deidicated to produceing armaments, housing soldiers or workers or manufacturing "Essence". Through the use of Essence the Iruaith are capable of many marvels which allow them to plunder and capture other nations with ease.



Essence & Magic



Blood Diamonds

Through a secretive process the Iruaith Empire turns captured magical creatures and materials into essence. This horrific secret is the duty of the Lightsworn to keep and assure it will never fall in to the hands of the people. Essence is a highly refineable material and the Empire has devised ways to imbue metals and synthetic materials to grant them the wondrous power to preform miracles. Similarly high priests utilize a powdered form of Essence which when combined with other highly volatile chemicals produces strange phenomina which are more versatile than Essence-forged artificing.

Miracles & Sin

Essence Flux Capacitor

Because of their belief in Irun's tenants the Aelf and by extension the Iruaith Empire cannot use conventional magic, thus they have invented the process to condense the magical potential and powers of other races and magical beings into crystals. These crystals are known as Essence and they are consumed in the Empires great machines, or tapped into by certain higher up Aelfs capable of producing "Miracles" with them. This exemplifies the hypocrisy within the Iruaith Empire, as they believe that by using Essence as fuel they are not "Using" magic as is heretic but instead destroying magic as Essence is destroyed after use. So too are the "Miracles" not considered magic but the divine will of Irun made manifest through destroying magic, as is his will.

Imperial Dragoons



Distinguished Service

Imperial Dragoons are inspired by British redcoats uniform combined with a medieval English feel.

This character was the first I designed and it informed much of the aesthetic I developed for the Iruath Empire's army. Dragoons are highly trained infantry units and is the goal of all those serving their military service. They are the fist of the Empire and to destroy it's enemies and sinners is the greatest gift a citizen could get. Using advanced Essence-Forged weapons they shoot bolts of fire with an unhuman discipline.

Born From Dirt

Advance Batallion 18th Unit Field Uniform

Imperial Dragoons are chosen from highly decorated soldiers drafted within the Iruaith Empire. They are one of the few human troops which are respected within the Empire and as such are the goals of most humans within the empire. Armed with the best firearms the Empire is capable of creating and cloth woven with essence to prove durable and flexible, this means that the Dragoons are highly mobile on the battlefield. Some Aelf also become Dragoons through military service and often make up large segments of Dragoon batallions as humans which are capable of proving themselves are few and far between.

The Virtues

Wielders of Miracles

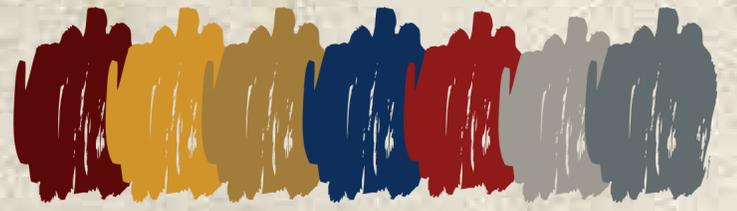
Virtues are inspired by religious abuses and persecution throughout history. Through power of their blood some Aelf and even some humans with latent Aelf ancestry can perform miracles with holy relics. These rare people are found and if they are considered devout enough to Irun's ideals they are trained as Virtues. Invocation of a Virtue comes with fire and blood as they carve a swath of destruction through sinners and enemies, usually only called upon when brute force is necessary, though some Virtues specialize in espionage and intrigue.

Aethil Al' Brightmane,
Virtue of the 4th Order

Hounds of the Empire

These "Holy Relics" are powered through essence and by fighting fearsome magical monstrosities, though Virtues are unknowing to this fact. Trained within the floating aircity-capital of Iru they are deadly warriors and are capable of unleashing Irun's fury on their foes. Able to wield fire and lightning in battle, their movement is bolstered by their training and latent magical abilities. They serve as executioners of the state hoping to gain a blessing in battle and ascend to the rank of paladin.

Knights of Irun



Bulwark of the Empire

The Knights of Irun form the front line of the Iruaith Empire's army. They are clad in the strongest armour essence forging can create and through this are a walking wall which serve the empire.

Hardened and disciplined warriors the Knights of Irun feel no fear in battle, they serve the tenets of their god with a will as hard as their shields.

Though they protect the Empire the Knights are so committed to the faith that they will not stop if they find any trace of magic, even when it is within the people of the Empire themselves.



Steel & Souls

Knights of Irun,
Commander Aelfelw'olf

Essence forging is the process of taking condensed magical energy and infusing it within the conventional smiting process. This results in armour and weaponry that is supernatural strong, and the Will of Irun has technically not been broken as they do not *use* magic rather simply break it down.

This hypocritical notion is the crux of the religious symbolism within the Iruaith Empire. They hunt and destroy magic and yet use it to do so. This ties within the church's involvement in various contriversies and scandals throughout history. Along with religious leaders demanding acceptance of a creed they themselves do not follow.

Ae'lfryd Lionheart Boleros

Crusades and History

I wanted to base this character within history as well as myth, and so I researched ancient English monarchs, mostly Richard Lionheart. Richard is known as Richard the Lionheart because of his reputation as a great military leader and warrior and his many crusades adds the religious context to the invading nation, mirroring history. He was seen as a pious leader by his people. Following his accession, he spent very little time, perhaps as little as six months, in England. Most of his life as king was spent on Crusade, in captivity, or actively defending his lands in France. Rather than regarding his kingdom as a responsibility requiring his presence as ruler, he has been perceived as preferring to use it merely as a source of revenue to support his armies. This mirrors what I see the Iruaith Empire to be, a nation that uses its people in an eternal war effort.



Balor The Smiter

In Irish myth Balor was a leader of the Fomorians, a group of malevolent supernatural beings. Often described as having a large eye that wreaks destruction when opened often also as a personification of the scorching sun which I thought was perfect for the leader of the Iruaith Empire, who worship the sun and strike their enemies down with fire. The name Balor may come from Common Celtic *Boleros, meaning "the flashing one" which I also thought fit the flashy extravagant Empire.

Ae'lfryd Lionheart Boleros

Early Excellence

Ae'lfryd "Lionheart" Boleros was born under the glowing gaze of Irun, gifted from birth even amongst the Highborn of the Aelf. He excelled within the academy developing the manifestation of miracles in his early years, though he broke away from the other Lightsworn candidates when he joined the 16th Crusade of Arl-Salim and levelled the city with a destructive force not seen within the Empire since the Eternal Emperor founded the Empire after the great fall. From there he earned the epithet "Lionheart" as he inspired those around him even as his ferocity and strength was un-paralleled in battle. He led the Empires battalions on hundreds of wars before becoming the Lightsworn, growing the Empire greatly, and ruling those new territories with a harsh practicality which grew the Iruaith even richer.



The First Ard-Donn Crusade

It wasn't until the Empire learned of Ard-Donn that Lionheart was able to find a challenge. After swathes of scouting parties, diplomats and prophets were struck down in barbarous bloodlust the Lightsworn himself saw it fit to punish these heathen creatures which reportedly plagued the island. Ae'lfryd's piety and love for his people whose lives he would avenge was rewarded and he found an island with magic unlike any the Empire had seen before. He began the destruction of the island and its impure magic, yet he was forced to retreat as the cowardly creatures upon the island struck the flawless emperor from the shadows, blinding him.

Iruaith Empire Traits

Architecture :

Based upon medieval British with decorated gothic Treated wood, metals and marble used. Sprawling gilded cities across the seas.

Demographics :

Aelf make up the most of the upper class . Humans are the heart of the empire. "The Repentant" undesirables forced to work to pay off their sins.

Geography :

Island Nation with vast colonies across the seas. Conquered and destroyed many landmasses.

Wild Flora and Fauna :

"Unnatural" aspects culled and destroyed. Empire spans multiple climates and so is naturally diverse..

Economics :

Strongly distributed and robust trade network across hundreds of colonies Built upon extraction of wealth and exploitation.

Transport :

Travel in large airships, metal monstrosities called "Dragons" which can only land in special ports. Use floating disks for short distance travel (Aelf). Humans use animals while Repentant march.

Culture :

Revel in military expansion and celebration of their faith. The Iruaith Empire also respect ingenuity and engineering. This mirrors the perception of their god being one of metal and fire. Centralized, strong capital led culture, no diversity. Prizes faith, loyalty to the empire and purity.

Food :

Heavily industrialized, farming islands until they are barren. Hunting to extinction common on colonies. Diverse sources of food. Fish, Grain, Meat

Government :

Divine Empire, king "chosen" by Irun known as "lightsworn". Paladins (warrior priests) are second only to the emperor. Colonies controlled by nobles.

Magic :

Outlawed conventional magic, drain other magical beings to power things. Rely on "Divine" magic from Irun which only Aelf can wield fuelled by essence which is secretly drained from others this process hidden from those not of the Aelf Highborn. Overall magic is destructive, fire and light themed.



Social System :

Social structure of Aelf>Human>Repentant. Imperial caste system you can fall in status easily. Can only gain status through being chosen by Irun.

History :

Aelf were cast out of their old world with Irun in the sky for their sin of magic. Now roam the world trying to rid it of perverse magic. Enslaved and indoctrinated humans to form empire to achieve this goal .

Religion :

Cult around "Irun" structured similar to early Christianity. Conversion missions and destruction of all things heathen. Irun is a god of Civilization, Light, Logic and Gold.

Technology :

Highly sophisticated artificing / metal constructs. Heavily tied with their faith and beliefs. Fuelled by draining magical essence and ran by slaves (Repentant).

Imperial Dragoon

Imperial Dragoons are chosen from highly decorated soldiers drafted within the Empire. Armed with the best firearms the Empire is capable of creating and cloth woven with essence to prove durable and flexible.

3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Virtue

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Knight of Iron

Imperial Dragoons are chosen from highly decorated soldiers drafted within the Empire. Armed with the best firearms the Empire is capable of creating and cloth woven with essence to prove durable and flexible.

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Lightsworn Ae'lfryd

Ae'lfryd "Lionheart" Boleros was born under the glowing gaze of Iron, gifted from birth even amongst the Highborn of the Aelf. It wasn't until the Empire learned of Ard-Dorn that Lionheart was able to find a challenge.

7 8 9 10

Imperial Gunship

Imperial Gunships are floating forces of mass destruction. Housing massive Essence wrought cannons, Imperial Gunships barrage foes of the empire with massive bolts of intense heat and shrapnel which devastate.

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Frontier Town

The Empire requires huge support on its eternal crusade, and thus the solution was born within the design of the Frontier Towns: miniaturizing the massive floating cities of the deep empire they house thousands.

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Essence Factory

To power their fortresses and mysterious engineering the Empire requires massive amounts of Essence. Through extracting essence from the island of Ard-Dorn these factories create power in abundance.

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Kabhacken



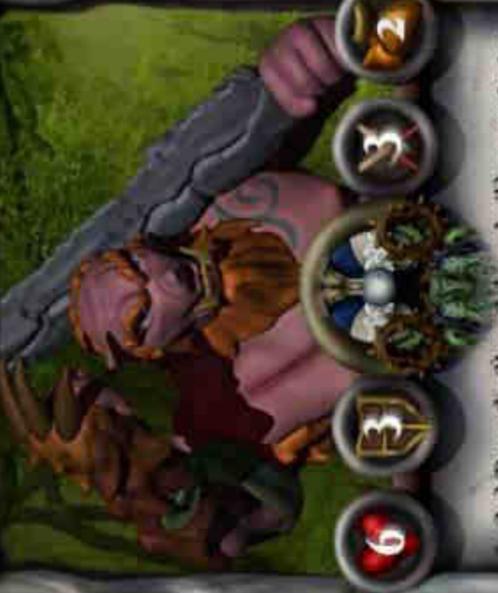
The Kabhacken follow the societal traits of the fairies of the Seelie Court and as the effects of the trunath invasion shakes the island of Ard-Donn, the Kabhacken have become more deadly, using every trick they know to fight off these invaders.

Glasraige



Embodying the wisdom of femininity and growth the Glasraige use their powers to weave life into the land. The powerful Glasraige weave the land itself to their will, creating protective shields from the earth and stone and striking with gnarled branches.

Urre-Ash



In Ard-Donn the Urre-Ash are builders, protectors and guardians reflecting the origin of their names. Physically they embody the fiercer animals within nature, the bear symbolising ferocity and strength. The mighty Urre-Ash use this strength to protect the ancient Ogham Stones.

Darudonnous



The oldest and most respected of the Ffiber Sidhe, Darudonnous can still remember flickers of life when the Old gods remained. He is the highest among beasts, and the protector of the wilds. With his legendary weapon Torg's Maul he can bring life with one strike and death with the next.

Ogham Stone



The Ffiber Sidhe line the island of Ard-Donn with protective standing stone monoliths. Using ancient magic they weave energy into the stone which repels invaders and enemies of the forest.

Great Tree Grove



Using advanced agricultural techniques and mystic energy the Ffiber Sidhe have cultivated massive trees which grow a condensed form of magical energy the Ffiber Sidhe use to fuel their rituals, to aid and protect the land.

Mound City



The Ffiber Sidhe live in massive Mound Cities which house thousands of inhabitants, stretching below ground with stretching labyrinthine tunnels and into the sky with huge towers which scrape the skies.

