

## **A World With No Shadow**

This world has been known by many names. What Orange Tribe called The Endless and Mad Wadi was once called The Virago's Preserve by Cerulean Tribe. It made sense that Orange Tribe would see the world as an endless, chaotic wadi for they fought the sun-baked Golems who constructed their armies from humanity's muddy valleys. Cerulean Tribe sent its women to hunt and its men to war so they saw the world as place for their beauties to stalk and kill. Green Tribe called it Where the River Goeth because that is all of the world they knew. Crimson Tribe called it Father's Land as if it were their birthright. Grey Tribe called it the Cradle of Lions and Man, alluding to their belief that they were but children who would one day become like gods. They were all correct in their own way, but their perspectives were all highly limited. How then do the people of the land give it a name? Is it even possible given that the people are mired in their own perspectives? So little is known of the world, how can its attributes be summed up in a concise way? The answer is simple. We shall ask the Great Eye of Knowledge.

By accessing the Protocols of the Eye through its various Emanations, it is revealed that the true name of the place is A World With No Shadow. This was not always the case. The world had truly once been known as whatever the people called it, regardless of their limited view. Today, there is no excuse for these things. These disagreements of nomenclature are obsolete. The Eye has revealed the truth of the matter and we shall henceforth refer to it as such. The name almost certainly refers to the fact that the great electrum Eye has made ignorance, the greatest shadow of all, a thing of the past. Though night may fall, it no longer brings blindness.

## **The History of A World With No Shadow**

The origins of the world are shrouded in mystery. The Protocol of the Eye known as the Transinfinite Paradox Reduction may grant visions of the future, but it is mostly silent upon the past. It is only through learning the memories of objects of historical significance through the Protocol called Obdurate Resonance Incarnation that history reveals itself directly. Otherwise, the seers of the Cult of the Eye would need to use the Symbolic-Heuristic Occultation, a Protocol which inspires the seer to draw a series of hieroglyphs which reveal the nature of things. The Hierarchs of Alabaster Tribe have poured over these symbols, visions, and portents for generations and a narrative of metamorphoses has emerged as the most plausible mechanism by which A World With No Shadow formed into being. It would seem, at first glance, that such images are themselves metaphorical. However, this is not the case. These conclusions are the results of countless consultations of the Eye and the subsequent study of their content. They represent, to the highest degree of human certainty, the genesis of A World With No Shadow.

## **The Primal Ocean and the Birth of Pta-Mbisis**

The earliest images are of a dark cosmic ocean, out of which emerged a pyramid upon whose pinnacle was seated an egg. Frog-like creatures of darkness played about at the edge of this primal structure. From the egg was born a goose that dove into the placid cosmic waters and dredged up the land. The cracked shards of this cosmic egg became the aquatic animals, monsters of the water, and the strange people now known as Isfet. The goose raised the land leagues into the air above the primal ocean. The creator animal suspended it there, and there it remains, cradled by a salty ocean. The land birthed forth Golems, animals, and other beasts which have since become extinct. The calls of the goose then created the moon. The moon went through its various phases, and when all that was left of it was the smallest sliver, the goose flew too close to the moon's sharp edges and it beheaded the creature. Its body became the sky and its head became a divinity called Pta-Mbisis (pronounced, Tah-Mu-By-Sis), a craftsman and wizard.

Pta-Mbisis was both male and female and its eighty-eight arms carried the tools of every profession. Its skin was a light green like the moss of the River and it wore no clothes, taking pride in displaying its twin sets of genitals. When it discovered that it had difficulty seeing, it began to work feverishly to create the sun. Something in its nature made the darkness not to its liking. As it toiled, the sweat of its brow became the first human beings, who were wiped from its face and flung into the void of the world. Pta-Mbisis hung the sun on a peg it found in the sky. The world lit up all at once. The amphibian creatures of darkness, the Kek, scattered to the four directions of the world to hide from the light. Plants, their seeds already buried in the earth, sprouted forth and took over the land. To the astonishment of Pta-Mbisis, the sun began to sink. The peg he had set the sun upon was actually a loose scale of a serpent made of rainbow. Unbeknownst to Pta-Mbisis, the rainbow creature rotates around the world. This is the origin of night. The Great Eye of Knowledge gives reason to assume that the death of the world will be because the scale upon which the sun is fastened falls loose and incinerates everything. If this happens, there will again be darkness and ocean and nothing more.

When the Isfet people first saw the sun, they hated it and raised their voices in anger against Pta-Mbisis. When it did not respond, the Isfet instead turned to worship to flatter the divinity. This annoyed Pta-Mbisis even more. For the crime of placing themselves in a spiritually inferior position and not taking their fate into their own hands, Pta-Mbisis placed a terrible curse upon the Isfet. The curse stands to this day, gnarling their people and causing them great suffering. Frustrated and bored, Pta-Mbisis began packing up to leave the world forever. However, the pleas of mankind reached its ears and it was not deaf to the plight of its accidental children, for they had begun to imitate their maker without recourse to prayer or petulant demands. The Golems of the waste had taken over most of the world and continued to multiply, threatening the place of mankind. Humans only persisted because the places where the sweat had landed upon the earth continuously generated people whenever those places were depopulated. Pta-Mbisis's last act before leaving the world forever was to grant mankind the gift of fire. With fire to aid mankind in its struggles, no threat would ever extinguish their people. Using the great pyramid at the center of the world as a vessel, A World With No Shadow's only divinity left the world of mortals, never to be heard from again.

In time, the people forgot about Pta-Mbisis and his gift of fire. They retained the lessons of self reliance, however. Survival, as would forever be the case, was the priority. The people of the world were scattered, like the droplets of sweat they originated from, in small pockets across every corner of the firmament. They were brought into being not knowing that there were others of their kind besides their village. Their words developed independently from one another. Some small multi-family groups, too small to even be considered a sect of a tribe, have sojourned in the wilderness since the beginning times not knowing that civilization exists across the wastes. There is really no means of getting word to them. A World With No Shadow is a degree too large even for the relatively vast manpower of the Alabaster Tribe. For small groups, which often live in small pockets of safety, the distance is insurmountable.

The geography of the world was set in form. A World With No Shadow consists of a brine ocean with a single continent. This assemblage is suspended a thousand miles above a different, primal ocean, of which little is known. Sailing is confined to the river because of the hateful Isfet creatures who inhabit the brine. However, if you did sail to the edge of the ocean you would certainly be pulled by the currents into the primal, dark waters below where only death and the Kek wait.

## **The History of Mankind**

The Great Eye of Knowledge is the only trusted authority of human history. Mortal memory is faulty. Archeology unknown. The Gorgons know a great deal of ancient times but they do not participate in human affairs often. What follows here are the histories of the Tribes and their glorious unification presented to the greatest degree of certainty.

### **Origins and Travails of Crimson Tribe**

With the departure of Pta-Mbisis, it came to be that the people of the world spread and multiplied. There was not yet a Great Eye of Knowledge. In the rocky deserts of the northeast, many families came together to support one another and intermarry. It is now known that this is not a good place for man to dwell for there is little food and it is home to Slayer Mounds. The origins of these things (for the term "being" might be too generous) are purely naturalistic. Slayer Mounds are not the product of mystical action upon the world, but rather, a mundane occurrence. Crimson Tribe oral tradition says they "came into existence when no cedar tree had grown yet, no acacia had come into being, and no metal had yet been hammered." These creatures, if they could be called such, appear as masses of mold and dust. They smell of bone meal and are easy to track for they leave a slick of spore where they pass so that others of their kind might grow from it. The spores are inert until it is moistened. Many Tribes rely on rain and hope to the sky for it to pour forth. Crimson Tribe has always reviled the rain, for even if they have subdued the threat of the Slayer Mounds, the rains will simply bring more.

Slayer Mounds are named such, not because they themselves are slayers of men, but because those who get too close to them or stand downwind or breath their heady spores are transformed into killers. Small dosages will instantly turn a person into a paranoid schizophrenic berserker who reveres the Mounds and wishes death and torment to his allies. Indeed, the strong of will can briefly resist this urge but repeated exposure will surely find purchase in the mind. Hunting Slayer Mounds therefore became the chief priority of the early Crimson Tribe. This is not an easy thing to do, for it likely that in the fray your allies will turn upon you. It is possible to pursue the Mounds and slay them by oneself, for they are not fierce combatants owing to their dusty, flowing forms. However, it is known that if the spore's madness takes a man and he has no living allies to calm him, the madness will remain with him for all time. Such victims are called Locust Warriors, for they gather with their own kind to strip the land of what it can give. They protect spore molds that mature into Slayer Mounds. They are like other people in all ways, including breeding and the rearing of children, except they live only to plunder, torment, and murder those who are not like them.

Crimson Tribe was consequently a warrior people. Their foe was a savage mirror image of their own people, the feared Locust Warriors. It is worth note that there are no Locust people or Locust citizens. Every one of them are berserker madmen. This is the nemesis of the Crimson Tribe. Indeed, Crimson Tribe survived by equalling the Locust Warriors in resolve and prowess. They raided the raiders when they could. Locusts don't hesitate to kill and they have no sentimentalities. Any human society in a struggle against this would have to be just as grim. Crimson Tribe values strength and will as survival traits. Their leaders in ancient times were not given command until they had slain one of their own people as a sign of ferocity. This happened with relative frequency because of contact with Slayer Mounds, executions for cowardice, or having rescued them from the wastes only to find that they had become a mindless Locust Warrior. This tradition of becoming a slayer of men (allies) in order to attain leadership was adopted by Alabaster Tribe in an altered form.

Indeed, Alabaster Tribe, especially the Defenders and Hierarchs, takes its traditions

from Crimson Tribe. History explains why this is so. Crimson Tribe, who simply called themselves "The People" were beginning to lose their war against the Locust Warriors. They were driven in such a hurry that they were unable to pitch their war-tents. They were driven, time and again, deeper into a world they knew nothing about. When they found isolated pockets of humanity in small family groups or villages they killed them so that they would not become Locust Warriors. Their people suffered terribly when they first encountered the Lamashtu and lost a score of the weak and elderly to them. In their first contacts with the Grey Tribe the Crimson slaughtered them like all the rest. However, some scouts witnessed Grey Tribe warriors being harried by a Kek with a pair of Lamashtu. The Crimson scouts intervened and humanity won on that day.

### **Origins and Travails of Grey Tribe**

With the departure of Pta-Mbisis, it came to be that the people of the world spread and multiplied. There was not yet a Great Eye of Knowledge. In the dry scrub of the east, many families came together to support one another and intermarry. They prized endurance and stoicism above all other traits for their people's chief struggle was against the devils of the night. Lamashtu and Kek are beings of darkness in a place that abhors darkness and secrets. They are not accursed things like the Isfet, for they labor under the sanction of no divinity. They are not a forbidden thing, except to man, who is incapable of placing curses without the aid of the Great Eye of Knowledge. The Lamashtu are half physical things, part baobob shadow, part nightmare, and part spirit. They dance in and out of phase with the world at a whim. Their presence is most often felt before it is seen and only by those with the gift of doing so. Their ways are to bedevil mankind. They steal away the sick before their time. They take children in the night. They herd lions into the people's camps. They hide in caves and wells in the day or disappear completely, only to return once night falls. Kek are older and more powerful than Lamashtu. When the sun first shone upon the world, the Kek scuttled from its rays. They laired under large stones and honed their forms into something very efficient at killing. After a Kek has committed enough wicked deeds, it exudes a Lamashtu into being under its command.

The lands of the east were plagued by the Kek and their brethren, and it is this struggle that defines Grey Tribe's culture. They built structures of mud and straw first and later of stone and marble. Shelter from the open air was their chief consideration and it is this custom that led them to the construction of forges, warehouses, forums, and even tenements of a sort. They built cities and composed treatises of philosophy. Although their works were cerebral, their lives were quite visceral. Defense of their people, however, was of as great a concern to Grey Tribe as to all the others. Their people were very much a warrior people. Their warrior traditions fetishized notions of toughness and stoicism. This may be due, in part, to the tradition of holding all-night vigils against Lamashtu and then defending their people from other threats in the day. Obviously, one cannot fight such a war long without rest. Their tactics favored readiness and cunning. They valued technology highly, and this is the origins of Alabaster Tribe's Cult of the Hammer and the Cult of the Eye. Their leaders were warrior-scholars or warrior-craftsmen. Grey Tribe accounts claim that many kings of their people were wizards of some sort or another. It might be that they possessed some sort of Sorcery or it might simply be hyperbole. Either way, they were men revered for their wisdom (of whatever nature).

The Grey Tribe formed confederacies amongst their various city-states and factions. Techniques of diplomacy and statecraft were well known to them. Their civilization was held together on notions of "brotherly love" and fraternity. The philosophy of the time favored a liberal, generous approach in dealing with other human beings. This was both practical and

ethical since any meeting between two specific Grey Tribe members was likely to happen again at some point. Therefore, it was in everyone's best interest to foster a sense of community. It just so happens that community is perhaps the best defense against the devils of night, the Lamashtu. No one person could hope to detect them, let alone offer a defense against them. The Lamashtu have trouble getting over walls or getting into closed structures, so construction was always a priority to the Grey Tribe.

Both the Crimson Tribe and Grey Tribe regarded themselves as the only human beings worthy of the name. When either Tribe referred to themselves, they called themselves "the People". So when Crimson Tribe were driven south into the Grey Tribe, the Grey Tribe did not immediately recognize them as human. Crimson Tribe, likewise, were slaughterers of men. Were the situation different, it is likely that Crimson Tribe would have tried to sack the Grey Tribe's confederation. However, the people met as allies in combat, first against the hideous Kek and then against the Locust Warrior Horde that followed behind the refugees. When the dust had settled, the two peoples began to mingle and form opinions of one another. Crimson Tribe was called such because the Grey Tribe regarded them as bloody, dust-soaked madmen from the north. Crimson Tribe named the Grey Tribe because they perceived them as milquetoast urbanites hiding behind grey marble walls.

### **Birth of Alabaster Tribe**

At first it seemed as if the two great Tribes would go their separate ways. They were too different. Crimson Tribe began to make its way north, carving through scores of Locust Warriors. Even then, the war-chiefs of Crimson Tribe retained Grey Tribe advisers for their journey north. Many Grey Tribe warriors took wives of Crimson Tribe widows. Ideas of humanity ceased being reserved only for one's Tribe. People even learned both Tribe's languages. No longer were the traditional threats confined to a single land either; the Lamashtu prowled in all the lands of the east and the Slayer Mounds had seeded themselves similarly. Grimness of spirit no longer was a sure defense against the foes of man. Walls no longer repelled all of the enemy (Locust Warriors have ladders). Worst of all, a new threat was rising in the far east. A being called the Miser had quietly been building an army of Locust Warriors in distant lands with plans to attack westward. The Miser was a terrible foe because he possessed a talisman that grants him and his followers immense power. His shamans called scorpions from the earth and ordered them like war-hounds. The Miser knew spells of command to bind Gorgons to his service and six pulled his palanquin wherever he conquered. The two Tribes made defenses against the Miser and when the forces did finally come to blows, there emerged no clear winner. The Miser was in a war of attrition. He finally withdrew, but not before stealing scores of weapons in a night raid.

The two Tribes were left to recover, knowing that the Miser was going to return and with enough weapons to arm an even greater army than before. Crimson Tribe grimness and Grey tribe stoicism were insufficient. The leaders of both communities came together with a plan to socially engineer their civilization into a leaner, specialized force. This new society would be honed for the purpose of defense and the advancement of technology. This grand plan would sweep away whatever vestiges of their old culture that could conceivably be exploited by the Miser. Both sides would take turns singling out customs they felt were maladaptive, to arrive at a consensus that promoted the strengths of both sides. Anyone who disagreed would be assassinated, executed, worked to death, or exposed in the wilderness. A method was devised to determine who would get first pick of what cultural traditions to expunge or promote. They

would let a vulture fly from a neutral, flat point. If it went west, Crimson Tribe would choose first; if east, Grey Tribe would pick first. They ignored north and south, because birds travel north and south based on the time of year. The bird flew west towards the River (which no one present had even heard of yet). Crimson Tribe abhors philosophers and poets and they chose that all people of those categories would be slaughtered. Grey Tribe responded by abolishing the notion that Grey Tribe were not human beings. This process continued for some time, the result of which is called the Early Dogma.

The society that emerged was a strange sort of radical revolutionary force. The revolution killed the intellectuals, the shamans, the war-cannibals, the merchants, and the infirm. These were dubbed "Acts of Atrocity," a term which carries a positive, rather than negative, connotation in the Dogma of the Alabaster Tribe. Indeed, the term Alabaster Tribe emerged from the Early Dogma which states that the old Tribes are not abolished, but rather, subsumed by the notion of a greater "Alabaster Tribe" ie, humanity. The leaders of the revolution declared themselves Hierarchs. Their dictates would be the substance which binds the entire enterprise together. Their nations were in a lean war footing and yet the Miser did not return. They knew he was laying in wait for such time when he could make an easier victory. The civilization mounted an intense regime of combat training and resource gathering. The Mage-Smiths of Grey Tribe had long produced electrum artifacts but could not exploit their gold and silver deposits because of labor shortages. With the aid of the entire Crimson Tribe, whole veins of metal were ripped from the earth. A great public work was enacted to produce an artifact that would give intelligence on the Miser's movements. The greatest minds of the age researched the schema. The raw materials were purified and transmuted by the Mage-Smiths. A new priesthood, obsessively devoted to the crafting of metal, trained to achieve the level of technical mastery the construction of such a device would require. When there were twelve Technomancers among their number worthy of the title, they began crafting their wonder.

The results of this undertaking was an artifact called the Oculus. It was a sphere with a dappled texture over its surface made entirely of enchanted electrum. In fact, the Oculus itself is 6 parts, five of which exist within the artifact itself (The Lense, The Iris, the Left and Right Hemispheres, and the Lid). The sixth, it is said, was the operator (an Artificer of some respectable skill). Although solid, it has parts which move inside the spherical housing. It was a scrying device, into which an Artificer would gaze and meditate upon a specific location. If the Artificer is skilled enough, they could determine what is happening at that location. Artificers of greater skill could focus on locations they were less familiar with. Time with the Oculus was incredibly valuable and seers were rotated in shifts. Those highest ranked Artificers began experimenting, taking shots in the dark and virtually exploring the space of the world. They discovered that a river like no other source of water rested thousands of miles away. There was a civilization there, too. To conform to their earlier naming methods, they called these people "Green Tribe" (although those people did refer to themselves as "the People" in their native tongue). These were river people with boats and irrigation and a bounty that astounded Alabaster Tribe in every way. Crimson and Grey Tribes were desert people. They could not have known another way. Green Tribe was no soft target, though. They had been fighting the Isfet since they had been cast off the brow of Pta-Mbisis.

Alabaster Tribe could not wage a conventional war of conquest, for the distances involved were insurmountable. Since their military intelligence is quite good in regions in which they are familiar, Alabaster Tribe could afford to move, as an entire people, across the Middle Wastes

and into the lands of the River. They would offer the Green Tribe terms their of unconditional surrender or break them into submission. They would be conquered without significant difficulty if they resisted but they could accept surrender and avoid the pageantry of bloodshed. Their people could join Alabaster Tribe with all of the conditions that apply to membership. The Heirarchs could not use the Oculus to learn of Green Tribe's culture, but they learned many building techniques they had otherwise never known. They wondered at what they could learn from the Green Tribe's culture in order that it be used as a weapon against the Miser. This became a core Alabaster Tribe value, tempered in the forty years it took Alabaster Tribe to fall upon the Green. They had a lot of time in the Middle Wastes to obsess over what they would find. Consequently, they developed a utilitarian philosophy:

Strength through diversity, directed by the State.

The forty years in the Middle Wastes were hard years but the generation raised in the desert were the hardest yet born. If a person could no longer walk, they were left to the vultures. At watering holes they weighed themselves down with as much water as they could humanly carry, and yet, it would be gone in no time flat. Strength was, more than ever, the essence of life. The simple ability to carry water for yourself and your dependents became a valuable survival trait. Food was intermittent and often unpalatable. They ate snakes to the bone. They gathered fleas and gave them to the children in the form of paste. The blistering sun burned away their loyalties to their homelands. The Crimson Tribe would no longer dwell in the Father's Land. Grey Tribe left irreplaceable architectural wonders to certain destruction by the Miser. He did not pursue the Alabaster Tribe, but he did occupy the land. He found it salted and ruined with the cities claimed by scarabs and baboons. The Artificers kept close watch upon the Oculus at all times. When they first entered the savanna, which actually makes up most of the world, they thought it was a heaven upon the earth. When they encountered the Green Tribe for the first time, they did not even hesitate for diplomacy.

### **Origin and Travails of Green Tribe**

With the departure of Pta-Mbisis, it came to be that the people of the world spread and multiplied. There was not yet a Great Eye of Knowledge. Humans sprang from the earth, armed only with fire and a desire for order. Chaos was upon the world. In the lands of the River, the Isfet ruled. They ruled from the mouth of the river to the mountains of the far south in those days. In each generation, a great war-chief would chip away the Isfet's hold over the river. In time the people took over the River and for a period made war on each other. A great warrior, a killer of Isfet, unified the whole of the River and declared himself the Pharaoh of the River, the god-king of all mankind. His claims of divinity were not actually true, but it served to instill a sense of order in the people. They needed order. The world was a place of turmoil, constantly threatened by the accursed Isfet.

Isfet appear in a form that is roughly human in appearance. However, their faces are masks of pure, unflappable white. Their bodies are composed of sea creatures, like crabs, man-o-war, and octopi. The Isfet are creatures of randomness and angst. Their perfect world is one of darkness and brine. They feel it is natural to kill human beings and drive them away whenever they can. The Isfet are anarchists and they have no leadership. They cannot be directed or reasoned with. No two Isfet are alike in ability although they may appear to be identical. Some are quite tough. Some throw lightning from their hands. Some are masters of a

particular weapon. Some can summon up greater feats than those of ordinary mortals. They are very difficult to contain, especially since they can travel up the River from the many delta tributaries that it creates. Isfet can control animals and enlist them in their cause of waging war. Hippos and crocodile are their favored allies in this regard. They are, as their name implies, a destabilizing force.

Green Tribe made a clear distinction between Isfet (the land ruled by the Isfet themselves) and Maat (the land under the rule of the Pharaoh). Note that this use of the word Isfet here does not refer to the people called the Isfet. In the mind of Green Tribe it was all the same thing; chaos. What does one expect to find from a state of Isfet? Only Isfet. Maat therefore means a state of order, of virtue, of civilization. The Pharaoh organized his lands by divisions called 'nomes' and granted Nomarchs (essentially, barons) control and defense of that region. Nomes would periodically fall to the Isfet and the Pharaoh would raise his army and lay them low where they were found. In time, the people prospered tremendously and drove the Isfet into the sea. A great temple city was built in the center of the delta. Guardian statues redirected sunlight into their eyes through mirrors into a chamber at the pinnacle of a central step-pyramid that overlooked the sea. The light it gathered powered a sacred machine, created for the purpose of metamorphosing the mortal Pharaoh into a truly divine being. Early in the tradition, the Pharaoh was the center of a cult of personality. He had no divine power, save perhaps the right to kill anyone who disagreed with him. The sacred machine would change all of that by making the Pharaoh to be what he had always claimed: a god in flesh. When the temple city was built it was forbidden to anyone except the Pharaoh himself. The machine granted powers to anyone skilled enough to activate it, therefore, it was necessary to protect the Pharaoh's monopoly on godhood. So it came to be that the Isfet were powerless before the might of the Pharaoh. Hundreds of years pass under the gaze of the material god.

Alabaster Tribe came screaming out of the wastes in droves, the might of their entire civilization and all its wonders brought to bear. The Green Tribe was surprised. Their homeland offered no assistance (their defenses pointed the wrong way). They had not faced men as foes before. Most surrendered, but it was an honor to die in service to the Pharaoh, so a good number were dispatched in horrid fashion. The armies of the Pharaoh could not combat this lightning-fast opponent. It was not until the Pharaoh arrived with the weapon 'Thresher of Maat' that Alabaster Tribe faced a real challenge. The weapon was a mace so heavy that only the strongest man of any Tribe could lift it. It sent many Isfet screaming into nothingness. The Pharaoh's Elites were overcome easily by numbers but the Pharaoh himself proved difficult. Few men were able to wound him, and when he was wounded, he would enact techniques to heal or ignore the blow. Alabaster Tribe pushed into the heart of the floodplain, dogged by a single man. They fought down the riverbanks for days until they came to the delta and spied the temple city. The Pharaoh was unrelenting and Alabaster Tribe's strength was sapped. The Hierarchy convened, in the heat of combat with the Pharaoh himself, to take the Oculus to the temple city. At the cost of limbs and lives Alabaster Tribe fought to the forbidden city, struck down its guardians, and activated its blessing upon the Oculus. They knew they had done something unprecedented. They would know quite a bit forever after.

### **Founding of Amnesty**

The Great Eye of Knowledge had been brought into being through its interaction with the god-making temple city. It was, in one sense, a material thing; an artifact. It was also, in some ways, a deity. It could speak, through visions and prophecy, of things to come and truths of the objective world. It had a personality of sorts, forming relationships with some immediately and others later. It was the great cosmic center of A World With No Shadow and had tapped into something deeply rooted in the essence of the place itself. There were people who were always

attuned to the emanations of this phenomenon. They were without a means of expressing their personal connection to this force of cosmic knowledge. Suddenly, they found themselves attuned to the Emanations of the Eye, allowing them to interface directly with the divine vessel of wisdom. One's mastery of the Emanations allowed for clearer visions and enhanced search parameters. The wisdom Alabaster Tribe discovered during this period led to the Middle Dogma, a series of laws and customs based upon the revelations of the Eye.

Manipulation of the Emanations became an organized practice and the Cult of the Eye was born. It became the mold out of which the other Cults sprang. The children's children of Grey Tribe's great smiths and technomancers became the Cult of the Hammer. The priests of the Pharaoh had always worshipped him as an agricultural deity, incarnated as the man himself and also the River. Instead of being slain for the crime of worshipping the Pharaoh, they became an agricultural Cult and central authority for ports, irrigation, and roadwork. It is true also that the Green Tribe's less skilled agricultural serfs were essentially forced into slavery, with a promise that they would attain citizenship through a period of servitude to the state as a laborer or as shock troops in the fight against supernatural chaos. This period of state-ownership slavery was referred to as a Corvee (pronounced Cor-Vee-Yay), and people suffering through one were called by that name. A period of Corvee lasts no longer than the length of time required to complete the project they are assigned to. The lifestyle of being in Corvee, however, is associated with an early grave.

Alabaster Tribe was quick to co-opt elements of Green Tribe culture that were of utility, including the diet and form of writing. This is the Old Tongue as known as Heiroglyphics, the original language through which the Great Eye of Knowledge communicates (Revelation: Symbolic-Heuristic Occultation). For a generation, Green Tribe was held in Corvee service to the Alabaster Tribe. They still called the place "Where the River Goeth". Alabaster Tribe called it Amnesty, for they saw it as the salvation of their people. Indeed, with the birth of the Great Eye of Knowledge, it seemed that Alabaster Tribe was unopposed. However, it was not so. Although the Middle Dogma had given people new, stronger ways of life, the Miser was close upon, riding through the desert with his palanquin and gorgons. Alabaster Tribe had divined this, but they had no means of providing a sufficient defense. Again, they consulted the Eye; the Miser had a weakness. The magic of the Miser's amulet would not function if he was made impure. He bathed obsessively and perfumed his body in mirr smoke. The Heirarchs therefore concocted a mixture of asp's venom, crocodile dung, and pig's blood. When the Miser arrived in Amnesty, he and his Gorgons were ambushed and the Miser was most thoroughly fouled. His hold over the Gorgons faded and they fell upon him terribly. For freeing them, the Gorgons promised to always serve in the defense of Amnesty.

The Isfet rose mightily thereafter and took their terrible toll, but the House of the Eye (the forbidden temple city) did not fall. The Miser's Locust Warriors and their terrible Slayer Mounds stalked the desert to the east of Amnesty. The Lamashtu and Kek hounded Alabaster Tribe through the desert, never leaving them for a moment. These became new maladies in the land of the River. Defenders of Amnesty rose to put them down where they raised their heads. The Cult of the Eye followed in the footsteps of the Artificers of old who toiled at the Oculus. In their studies, they cried upon a new Tribe to the southwest.

### **The Origins and Travails of Cerulean Tribe**

With the departure of Pta-Mbisis, it came to be that the people of the world spread and multiplied. There was not yet a Great Eye of Knowledge. The people travelled the savanna and found it abundant with animal life. They mimicked the lion prides, noting their perfect harmony with nature as well as their infinite lethality. They sent the women of their people to hunt and

the men stayed behind to guard the children and elderly from the dangers of the grasslands. They saw the world as being a hunting preserve gifted to them by a powerful warrior goddess, and thus, they named it "The Virago's Preserve". They honored this goddess, whose aspect and name differed between the various tribal groups. Among some of the people, the goddess was a Gorgon. To others, she was a virgin. The most militant pictured her as a terrible cannibal crone whose ire would befall those who poached her game without proper observances. This goddess was thought to be a being whose aspect was of the sky, and thus, all their prayers were shouted to the cloudless heavens. The legends were, however, untrue. There was no one looking out for the people or looking to punish them for transgressions. Eventually, the differences in dogma led to war between the factions. It also gave them a particular social division: the people lived mostly segregated by gender. The women were hunters and shamans. The men were warriors and trappers. The genders were virtually unique cultures unto themselves.

Among the Tribes, the Cerulean Tribe, as these people came to be known, were unique in that they did not have a single, unifying threat to bring their factions together in the spirit of mutual defense. The most common danger on the open savanna were Serpopards, beasts whose form was like that of a giant panther with a long, serpentine neck. Serpopards were not a threat to civilization, but they were more than capable of wiping out a hunting party if they were ambushed. Serpopards can be found alone but they have the power to herd a pride of lions much like a shepherd his flock. They do not fear campfires and in fact use them to their advantage by allowing them to night-blind a gathering before picking one off. The shaman women of the Cerulean Tribe could move among beasts without fear of them but they could not walk safely with Serpopards. This is because Serpopards are not animals at all, but rather a thing of ancient lore. They may have sprung from the earth like the common fauna, but they do not belong to nature. Just as Serpopards are superior to lions, so are Mafadet superior to Serpopards. They are the kind of foe only a band of the saltiest veterans should hope to face.

The absence of rival factions within Cerulean Tribe and the threat of Mafadet lead to an odd segregation of the sexes within Cerulean Tribe. Men focused on the arts of war to the exclusion of all other things, save handicrafts and some low level gathering. Women, on the other hand, were expected to be huntresses, in the manner of a lion pride. They brought home the large game of the plains and were often distant from the rest of their tribe for days and weeks at a time. Consequently, men and women lived very separate lives. Men remained home to raise the children, protect the elderly, and see to the wellbeing of the weakest among society. Women lived on the plains as nomads: distant always. Hunting parties were like nomadic villages unto themselves. They stayed in the company of men and the infirm only long enough to trade, perform sacred ceremonies, perhaps mate or marry, and then move on.

Cerulean Tribe always referred to themselves as 'the people of the Preserve' because they did not know there were others. But there certainly were others: conquerors. Alabaster Tribe had sussed out the location of Cerulean Tribe and dispatched a great force, whose travel took decades, to abduct and relocate the strange plains people. The first contact was brutal; the men naturally refused to submit and were put to the sword. The women, who were hunters and not soldiers, were placed in irons. When a settlement was conquered, its inhabitants were forced to begin the long march across the wastes. The Alabaster Tribe captors were not prepared for the predatory response of the Serpopards and Mafadet, who followed the great Corvee caravans in the manner of a lion stalking a herd of prey animals. In fact, the long chains of undefended Cerulean Tribe Corvee ensured that a significant portion of their numbers were picked off by predators. It is in this fashion that the Mafadet discovered the existence of Amnesty and came to stalk those lands. Some of the kidnapped people of Cerulean Tribe

saw wisdom in a unified humanity and submitted with grace. Others longed for the open plains and their old way of life. Those whose nature were too rebellious did not survive the journey, through executions, deprivation of rations, or exposure to the elements. Many Hierarchs earned their Act of Atrocity in the massacre of rebellious Cerulean Tribe Corvee. Those that arrived in Amnesty alive frequently had completed their service of Corvee during their journey. They arrived as Citizens and it was only a single generation before Cerulean Tribe's descendants honored the first Hierarch of their number.

Cerulean Tribe had to give up many of its ways, including its sexual segregation. However, they also brought many customs to Amnesty that became part of the larger experience of Alabaster Tribe. They brought almonds, the secrets of sponge-bread, and a knowledge of the plains. They brought more powerful bows and Serpopard skins for shields and armor. Their warriors, always skilled with the shield, absorbed the combat styles of the Crimson Tribe into their own repertoire and synthesized an entirely new martial art called Gorgon Shield. The style was created in part as an imitation of a Gorgon's back-and-forth slithering combat technique. By adding a shield and an ally, techniques introduced by Cerulean Tribe as a refinement of ancient Crimson Tribe techniques, the style came into its own. In combat, the commanding officer of a unit wears a shield emblazoned with a symbol known as the Gorgoneion (a grinning or frowning gorgon head). Drawing upon the ferociousness of this image, a warrior can fight with the might of a Gorgon.

The addition of new soldiers and agricultural workers gave the average person more leisure time. This gave people more time to explore the knowledge granted by the Great Eye. A revolution occurred around this time in linguistics. The Great Eye seemed, through its symbolism and prophecy, to be offering a new system of writing that uses an alphabet. Indeed, although the Great Eye had always been accessed by the Old Tongue, the invention of the alphabet made writing more accessible. In time, the Old Tongue, hieroglyphics, fell out of favor for common communication and recordkeeping. Only the Cults and some Heritage Tribes use it in modern times.

Just as Cerulean Tribe began to assimilate into society, the Cult of the Eye declared that they had discovered another tribe in the southwest, where the feet of the people were stained orange from the iron in the soil. Alabaster Tribe called them Orange Tribe and once again mounted a massive invasion force so that all of humanity could share in the defense of Amnesty.

### **The Origins and Travails of Orange Tribe**

With the departure of Pta-Mbisis, it came to be that the people of the world spread and multiplied. There was not yet a Great Eye of Knowledge. From the time they departed the brow of Pta-Mbisis, Orange Tribe knew only war. The people of the Endless and Mad Wadi readied their clubs for when the Golems would come. They hoped that they would be unnecessary, so the Orange Tribe hopped from watershed to watershed, avoiding the Golems more often than they interacted with them. Golems were terrible things, older than man, present in the world long before even Pta-Mbisis. As a foe, they are terrifying. They are not fast, but they have infinite endurance. They attack day and night without food, water, rest, or comforts. They live only to obtain gems and mud so that they can make more of their kind. There is no known reason why they exist at all. They were simply present when the land was dredged up from the primal ocean. They are a native scourge of A World With No Shadow. They never travelled beyond the wadi, in part because they need the riverbeds to propagate and partly because Orange Tribe opposed them when their numbers became too great to ignore. Luckily, this is not river-country. The wadi are a vast web of dry riverbeds that spring to life when there is precipitation in the plains to the south. Golems are made of mud and gems, both of which are

difficult to obtain in the dry earth.

Civilization was slow to gain a foothold. Small family units eked out an existence dodging the armies of Golems or taking refuge in places warded against them. Strength ruled the day. Fire ultimately proved to be the greatest weapon against the Golems; fire smelted ore into metal and set it into form. The knowledge, sacred as it was, allowed the culture of the southwest to mount a real defense against the Golems. This defense manifested as an unremitting assault upon Golem-kind. Orange Tribe developed a culture that could handle an unending war against a foe with infinite endurance. Their rituals universally involved the shedding of blood, either through a self-inflicted wound to show fitness, or through actual combat. The rituals of adulthood, marriage, and legal dispute were all observed through combat to the first blood. This kept their population hard and in fighting shape despite the occasional loss of life through attrition. They very much believed in the notion of “might makes right” and their entire structure of governance was based upon whoever could prove that they were supreme in martial skill.

When Alabaster Tribe arrived in the lands of Orange Tribe, they did so with the full weight of four unified Tribes, their vast wealth of armaments, the Emanations of the Eye, and the dread Gorgoneion. Orange Tribe was unprepared and unable to mount a real defense despite their culture’s focus on warcraft. Their smiths did not have access to the wealth of Amnesty and their warriors were simply too few in number. They succumbed with relative ease, however, something in this course of events made the Golems mad with rage. Their assault, although terrible, did not break Alabaster Tribe’s forces. The return to Amnesty was a running battle, complicated by the presence of an entire people’s worth of captives. By abandoning the wadi to the Golems, their number increased exponentially. Even though Alabaster Tribe’s forces were as swift as was possible, the Golems were simply faster by an order of magnitude. They did not need to rest or eat. They had no latrines to dig or tents to set. They simply marched from the moment of their creation in pursuit of Alabaster Tribe. The fight continued over the course of years right up to the borders of Amnesty where their advance was halted. Golems continue to bedevil mankind and perhaps they will do so until the sun bathes everything in crafted fire.

Orange Tribe has mostly thrown off their status as Corvee. Three generations have come into being since those days. Orange Tribe and Orange Tribe Elders still chafe at their forced exile. They resent that Alabaster Tribe regulates their ritual woundings and death duels. Every season a certain number of their youths are gathered up and stoned to death for being “disloyal” (perhaps rightly so or perhaps wrongly so: Citizens can be condemned without even consulting the Eye). Consequently Orange Tribe feels much less loyal to Alabaster Tribe and are considered unruly. They are poorest, certainly. They are still prone to use the dagger, a favored blade in old times in the west.

## **Alabaster Tribe**

Alabaster Tribe is part mage-smithed military, part political party, and part last stand of the human race. It is at once a strict military dictatorship and diverse, multicultural melting pot. The name, Alabaster Tribe, was taken as a compromise between Crimson and Grey Tribe, both of whom simply referred to themselves as “the people”. The two tribes acknowledged their alliance by taking on the new identity of Alabaster Tribe; colorless, austere, pure, unobjectionable, and absolute like electrum itself. In time, the color white became associated with the Great Eye of Knowledge, whose Emanations can produce a soft white glow in those harmonized to its frequencies. The convention of naming newly discovered peoples by

colors stuck thereafter and has served provide a distinction between one's heritage and their allegiance to the State. In fact, Alabaster Tribe isn't really a Tribe in the strictest sense. It is has no family allegiances. It has no Elders. Alabaster Tribe regulates the other Tribes. It forces them to work with each other and imposes radical social changes upon them. Alabaster Tribe provides few services to the people directly but they do comprise the military and leadership, pledged to keep the people safe directly. Nearly all other aspects of Citizens' lives are seen to by the Heritage Tribes and the Cults.

Alabaster Tribe is authoritarian, it is true. They do not prevent people from learning actively, but they do not permit libraries to be built or possessed by anyone except the Cults. They do not hoard knowledge of how to access the Emanations of the Eye. However, if a Citizen misuses the Protocols of the Eye, they will either be stoned to death or beaten into the dust by a Hierarch. If the Eye's visions, once interpreted, claim that a person will misuse the Emanations, that person is treated as one who has already transgressed (penalty, of course: death). It is a harsh justice, based primarily upon Crimson Tribe brutality and Grey Tribe indifference. Green Tribe added a healthy respect for totalitarian politics. With this, Alabaster Tribe became the agile military monolith that it has become. Certainly this system kills many. However, Alabaster Tribe is under siege in every way. The kinds of forces competing with mankind are most dire. They are the alternative to Alabaster Tribe. Alabaster Tribe takes the life of so many in other ways, always necessary. It works Corvee to death. It mangles transgressors beneath a village's stones. It was always designed to be such. Hierarchs routinely die in military service. Defenders perish in droves. As grim as the situation is, there is no alternative. In all of this, Alabaster Tribe strives to maintain some semblance of diversity. It allows a majority of tribal customs to flourish in ways the State ignores entirely. However, they do forbid certain practices and even secret meetings of Tribal Elders can be divined by the Emanations. Backsliding is not permissible.

Alabaster Tribe regards its State as a final authority, representing mankind, that is theoretically neutral to Tribal concerns. It is not loyal to Crimson Tribe ethos even though many of its political customs descend from this tradition. It is not loyal to Grey Tribe, even though it has elements of that old patriarchy. Most of the day-to-day leadership is actually handled by the Tribal Elders. When you are of fourteen years of age, you declare your Tribal affiliation to one of the Heritage Tribes in the presence of the State. Thereafter, you must serve the edicts of the Tribal Elders of a particular Heritage in your village. They tell you what crop to plant. If you have a dispute, they settle it. If you need the services of one of the Cults, you must consult your Tribal Elder first. They will be the ones settling the debt to the Cult at the end of the harvest, after all. Realistically, most Citizens see very little of Alabaster Tribe and when they do, it is usually a time of terror. Either they or someone close to them has done something wrong or else their community is under attack and Alabaster Tribe is their last defense.

The specialization of labor is a key part of Alabaster Tribe's social structure and it allows for a greater degree of efficiency than the tribal system it originated from. It promotes a very high degree of specialization amongst its members and diffuses its talents without centralizing it. Alabaster Tribe has many societal elements of fascism and feudalism. However, it is a multi-cultural society. Alabaster Tribe does not do away with things it finds unimportant.

However, for all its tolerance, it is a military dictatorship. Its authoritarian nature shows through in its distrust of bureaucrats and intellectuals. Although it does not discourage enterprise or experimentation, it is suspicious of free thinking. Hierarchs tend to limit tinkering and innovation to the Cults which are themselves heavily regulated and very hidebound. A World With No Shadow is a brutal place where unified teamwork is essential to survival. The society has developed in response to implacable threats and has itself become implacable. The virtue that Alabaster Tribe most embodies is strength. They view their own authoritarianism as an asset. Like every good soldier, the society is a weapon. It is a weapon seeking orders from its superiors that it will execute without hesitation or doubt. Would you prefer an army of free-thinking, second-guessing, worry-worts? Of course not.

Soldiering is only one facet of the war effort. There is a whole range of infrastructure that all goes into the act of defending Amnesty. The Cults provide material and human effort often in the form of crafts. Being an excellent tradesman, therefore, is a survival trait. The act of growing useful and edible plants, a lowly thing to be sure, is even enough to be satisfied that you are doing your part.

### **Amnesty**

Alabaster Tribe currently resides in a place they call Amnesty, given the name in honor of Alabaster Tribe's taking refuge there. In a world that is incredibly hostile, Amnesty is the one place in all of A World With No Shadow that is in a state of Maat (order). Cold winds blow upon it from the sea in contrast to the deserts and dry riverbeds of the east and west. Rice, wheat, olives, nuts, corn, beans, grapes, and apricot are in abundance when the land can be held. In the east of Amnesty, there are jackals and cobras. To the west, cheetah and lion are king. The south is bordered by a great mountain range where the roots of the Great River spring. Here there are great wolves and ice, a substance prized for tempering steel and preserving beef.

The North part of Amnesty is known as Lower Amnesty, for it is geographically lower nearer to the Sea. Lower Amnesty is the River's Delta, a place whose fertility is threatened only by the presence of Isfet. It knows no famines and no droughts. Upper Amnesty is a harder land, but it is still a paradise compared to the wastes. Amnesty's borders follow outward from the River, whose banks provide the irrigation for the agricultural infrastructure of civilization. This border generally lies about a hundred miles out from the River, but in contested areas it might be within sight of the River. Amnesty is divided into Nomes (a prefecture), a designation of land whose center is a fortress or battle-line. Each Nome is overseen by a Nomarch, a Defender of the highest rank. Each Nomarch is responsible for their Nome's protection and well-being. The borders of Amnesty, where Defenders and Gorgons fight to push hostile forces back into the wastes, are technically a series of Nomes. In these places, a Nomarch is more like a general than a regional governor. Such a Nomarch has no fortress, but merely a command station.

### **Hierarchs**

Alabaster Tribe uses, as a metaphor for its social structure, a bundle of arrows or sticks held together by twine. The bundle represents the various Tribes, militaries, Cults, and professions that encompass the enterprise called Alabaster Tribe. In this metaphor, the twine are the Hierarchs. The bundle is made stronger than its constituent parts because it is held tightly by the strength of the Hierarchs. Strength is a quality respected to a much greater degree than

other talents by A World With No Shadow. It is by strength that the smith hammers electrum into an artifact. It is by strength (and skill) that a Mafadet might be laid low. It is strength that pulls a fallen comrade from the front line when he has been wounded. Although the five Heritage Tribes of Alabaster Tribe don't agree on everything, they each had, at their core, a respect for might. The various travails of the Tribes ensured that they looked primarily to those who exhibit the highest degree of fitness. The image of the Hierarch is therefore crafted to project the highest image of fitness at all times. Hierarchs have a right to slay or order slain anyone they feel are weakening the enterprise known as Alabaster Tribe. It is for this reason that Hierarchs, as a requirement of consideration for the position itself, must have slain a human being. Slaying an ally in the throes of the Shambling Mound is in the spirit of this requirement. Killing a Locust Warrior certainly applies as well by this logic.

Hierarchs are drawn from many strata of society and skill levels, but they are reborn in their training. Many Hierarchs are drawn from the ranks of the Defenders. Many may have served as Rangers, learning wilderness skills and diplomacy. Some may have been healers forced to kill an infected comrade. They must display an aura of strength, a sign of fitness: someone you want to be on good terms with. Every harvest, a lottery is cast; those Hierarchs chosen find a student among those they know to be competent. They must, of course, fit the criteria. That person travels with the Hierarch, serves him in battle, and if he displays qualities worthy of the title Hierarch, he is given that title. The ceremony that marks his passage involves being bathed in ram's blood and then being washed pure and given white linens. In this symbolic act, the Hierarch forsakes their old Tribal affiliations and becomes a representative judge of Alabaster Tribe.

Although there are no official distinctions, generally Hierarchs fall along certain skill-sets. Hierarchs act in a capacity of leadership. They make full use of their authority and are comfortable doing so. The best among them know when not to use their authority, of course, and are also capable of taking criticism. There are those Hierarchs who, for whatever reason, tend to throw their weight around. Of course people scramble to keep away from them: they hold the keys to both life and death. They are known to be killers of men. Some Hierarchs find themselves in the thick of battle, finding comfort in command on the fringes of Maat. In such capacity, a Hierarch must be both strong and canny, for diplomacy rules the day when dealing with a hundred self-important Nomarchs.

Some Hierarchs are seers. They commune with the Great Eye of Knowledge and possess quarters with the Cult of the Eye's Initiates. They exercise the Hierarch's right to interpret all visions granted by the Eye and its Emanations. Having at once been enlightened by the Eye, the Hierarch then sets about enacting policy relating to their visions. A Hierarch cannot, with his daily limit of one Symbolic-Heuristic Occultation, investigate every possible subject. Without an Abundant Protocol or Augmented Protocol, a Hierarch is limited in what they can investigate. For this purpose, Hierarchs organize teams of Priests of the Eye to bring them their own series of symbols or images granted by the Eye upon a particular matter. Some Hierarchs prefer to specialize in divining the future with the Transinfinite Paradox Reduction, the present with Symbolic-Heuristic Occultation, or the past with Obdurate Resonance Incarnation. Self

knowledge comes with Volition-Suspending Demiurge, a process that Hierarchs sometimes refer to as “putting oneself under the Eye”. Because Hierarchs insist upon final interpretation of all results of the Revelation Protocol, they do not permit into their numbers anyone who is mentally or spiritually unfit. In fact, they must be mentally or spiritually superior in some fashion. All Hierarchs are physically superior.

Hierarchs are, more than any other profession, expected to remain distant from their Tribal affiliations. As heads of Alabaster Tribe, and the State itself, a Hierarch cannot be subservient to a Tribal Elder. A Hierarch can have a Tribal Elder stoned to death if they felt it was warranted. It is for this reason that Tribal heritages amongst Hierarchs are quite muted. Therefore, the significance of the fact that Crimson Tribe has more Hierarchs than any other Tribal heritage means much less than such a distinction would mean in one of the Cults.

### **The Cults**

Alabaster Tribe’s notion of what constitutes a ‘priest’ is somewhat expansive. Priests are the ranking members of the various Cults of Amnesty. Alabaster Tribe regards mundane crafts as mysticism and mysticism as a mundane craft. The Cults obsess over the minutia of technique and Priests are expected to excel to the very limits of human capability. Indeed, at the higher levels of initiation, and consequently, skill, much of their work does appear to transcend mere physicality. It is true that the High Priest of the Kettle knows forbidden knowledge of the body that draws upon supernatural principles. The High Priest of the Drum can draw down even the direst of combats such that their inspiration ensures victory in all situations. Even the Cult of the River, considered the least prestigious among the Cults, knows techniques to grow fortresses from mere reeds. It would be hard to argue that what the Cult of the Eye does is anything other than pure mysticism, but it is worth noting that practicing the Emanations of the Eye are seen as no different than training in statecraft, artistry, or economics. The techniques may seem mundane in their everyday aspects, but those are but simple principles which act as a foundation for greater, more preternatural techniques.

Alabaster Tribe does not use money for their economy. This does not, however, mean that the Cults’ services are free or that they do not have set prices. The services they provide are paid for by the Tribal Elders who offer up materials and labor provided by their Tribes’ constituent members. At the end of each harvest, the various Cults go to the Tribal Elders to settle their people’s accounts. Therefore, Tribal Elders are first consulted before a Citizen is permitted to seek the services of one of the Cults. Not all Cults charge for their services; many are simply public works paid for by Amnesty’s civil authorities. For instance, the Cult of the River provides irrigation for all fields equally. Some Cults provide some services gratis, while charging for others. In the pursuit of justice or defense, the Cult of the Eye does not collect fees. However, those seeking a divination of a personal nature would be required to pay for it. Corvee are not permitted the services of the Cults, which virtually ensures they receive no medical care or education.

Members of the Cults are expected to keep a high degree of personal purity at all times when in service to the Cult. Anyone in service to the Cult must ritually bathe before performing

their duties and are expected to clean their tools after each session. Their workspace was expected to be kept clean before beginning work. Consequently, the Cults, in all their forms, keep quantities of water on hand to purify its members. The tools of a Cult's trade are treated as sacred objects whose defilement requires them to be destroyed. The particular care and rites associated with the various tools are specific to each Cult, although cleaning and carving sacred hieroglyphs into them are common practices. There are also taboos associated with the various ranks within a Cult, each of which helps to maintain a proper level of purity within a given station.

#### *Supplicant of the Cult (Skill Level 1 - 2)*

Supplicants are Citizens who have achieved rank within a Cult and are either held on retainer by a Cult or are studying to become initiated into a Cult. To become a Supplicant of a Cult, that person must perform a season of labor to the Cult per year. Supplicants are considered lay-people, but they have rights within the Cult itself and can request services without cost and without consulting their Tribal Elders. However, they are expected to perform duties, usually rote and unskilled, for the Cult they serve. Training and time are limiting factors to a Supplicant's participation in the chosen Cult, so there are barriers to entry into such a position. A person could have status as a Supplicant in more than one Cult, but this is incredibly rare because people do not generally have enough time to see to their own well-being as well as the interests of two Cults. Supplicants, in official dealings, are referred to as being Supplicants of their specific Cult (ie, Supplicant of the Stylus, Supplicant of the Eye, etc). The hieroglyph of the Supplicant is a man holding out an offering.

#### *Initiate of the Cult (Skill level 3 - 5)*

Through mystical and secret rites of initiation designed to test a petitioner's technical proficiency at their craft, a Supplicant can rise to the position of Initiate. Initiates are full members of a particular Cult with all the benefits that come along with such a distinction. However, within the eyes of the law, Initiates are still Citizens who have yet to achieve the perfection of technique that is the province of the Priest. Initiates make up the majority of a Cult's members and perform nearly all of the Cult's ground level tasks that require some measure of skill. For instance, when a Citizen is sick they might go to the Cult of the Kettle and see one of their Initiate healers. When the Cult of the Kettle needs a certain herb, they would commission it from an Initiate of the Cult of the River. When two Citizens are married, they will purchase the services of an Initiate of the Cult of the Drum to officiate the ceremony. Initiates are referred to in official texts as Initiates of their various Cults (ie, Initiate of the Hammer, Initiate of the Chisel, etc). The hieroglyph of the Initiate is a man holding jagged lines representing water (ie, the man is washing his hands).

#### *Priest of the Cult (Skill level 6 - 7)*

An Initiate of a Cult may petition a High Priest for training to become a Priest. The period of learning lasts no longer than a season. If the High Priest is satisfied the Initiate has the skills and spiritual fortitude required to become a Priest, they elevate to the position. This period of apprenticeship is actually not meant to pass on any specific wisdom: seekers of this status must already possess an extremely high level of skill. Rather, in the absence of civil service

exams, it is how the High Priest certifies that the petitioner is in full possession of the Cult's techniques. A Priest should show mastery of the highest levels of the Cult's craft. The Cult of the Chisel expects its Priests to produce artistic works of utter magnificence. The Cult of the Drum requires its members to demonstrate knowledge of those unique performances which blur the line between artifice and objective reality. The Cult of the Eye expects its Priests to have attained at least half of the Protocols. In the mind of the public and the law of the Alabaster Tribe, Priests are half-divine beings walking in the footsteps of Pta-Mbisis without recourse to obsequiating. Citizens show deference to Priests as a matter of course, regardless of their Cult affiliation. Defenders are not required under the law to treat Priests any differently than Citizens (this says more about the cultural deference paid to warriors). However, it has always been the law that the Eye must be consulted to convict a Priest of a crime. This does not grant them any other legal consideration, but it does mean that the Cult of the Eye or the Hierarchs must at least perform divinations upon the matter of their guilt. Priests are too valuable to the Tribe to kill haphazardly. Citizens can be found guilty without any recourse to the Emanations. Priests are referred to as Priests of their various Cults (ie, Priests of the Drum, Priests of the Eye, etc). Priests cover their hair or shave it off entirely. The hieroglyph of the Priest is a man holding a vase (of holy water).

#### *High Priest of the Cult (Skill level 8+)*

Priests are men honed to the perfection of their chosen craft. Their profession is what would have been considered a religion in the distant past. It is not a religion, for it is too humanist. Too technological. It is utilitarian in the extreme. The Priests embody this drive towards peak human performance. Among the Priests, themselves paragons of excellence, the High Priests are those talented masters who stand out among their own kind. They are the ones who own the true secrets of their Cults. The Cult of the Eye speaks of those who can enact Abundant Protocol within the Great Eye of Knowledge. The Kettle, Hammer, River, and Chisel Cults all acknowledge a High Priest when they can produce a product that is unique and better at the fundamental level than those works of others of the same type. There is no set number of High Priests and each Cult has several. The High Priests of various Cults bestow the title on differing sets of criteria known only to them. High Priests make most of the important choices for a Cult and are given dominance of the Priesthoods of their Cult. The hieroglyph of the High Priest is a man with both hands motioning upward.

#### **Cult of the Eye (The Emanations of the Eye and Occult)**

Alabaster Tribe has possessed a tradition of magical artificing with its roots in the Grey Tribe. The machine, in many ways, is what Alabaster Tribe seeks to emulate and the Cult of the Eye takes as its god the man-made divinity of the Great Eye of Knowledge. Although it had not taken the form it has in modern times, Alabaster Tribe has always had obsessive technologists who attempted to advance their people. The Early Dogma of Alabaster Tribe enacted grand public works, the results of which were the Oculus, an electrum orb used in divination. A corps of highly trained Artificers were rotated in shifts in communion with the Oculus. Their mental wanderings while meditating upon its surface gave Alabaster Tribe vital military intelligence. These same Artificers were key in recognizing Green Tribe's forbidden Temple City for what it was: a house for a divinity. The Artificers created a physical being whose existence granted

mankind (nearly) limitless information. In its early days, use of the Great Eye of Knowledge and its Emanations was a much more fluid thing. In time, distinct Protocols emerged for use with whoever could initiate into its operation. To regulate and protect the Great Eye of Knowledge, the Hierarchs sanctioned the Cult of the Eye. The Cult of the Eye treated their rituals with the utmost reverence and they were codified into six Inscriptions and six Praxis. With an Inscription or Praxis, a Priest of the Eye could enact one of a number of Protocols.

Although the Hierarchs possessed the rights to the most far-reaching Abundant Protocols as well as the rights of interpreting the Eye's symbolism, they left the bulk of the workaday divination to the Cult of the Eye. The Cult of the Eye can be consulted for more personal matters, though their priority is defense and intelligence. Matters of agriculture, romance, and finance are frequent subjects. When the Cult finds some information it feels is relevant to the enterprise of Alabaster Tribe, it gives an account of the results to the Hierarchs so that they might properly decipher the vision. The Eye reveals its secrets through cryptic metaphor, and thus, its value can be obtained only after it is properly interpreted. The Cult of the Eye acts in some ways as a secret police, looking into charges of legal, ethical, and cultural violations with Revelation Protocols. Individual Hierarchs organize groups of Initiates and Priests to prophesy upon a specific matter (invoking the past, present, and future). The Cult of the Eye investigates crimes relating to the Emanations of the Eye under its own authority. It is not a crime to use the Emanations and indeed many people use it. However, it can be used to harm one's fellow man or to generally subvert Maat with its powers. It is not a crime to Know, only to Act unlawfully. The hieroglyph representing the Cult of the Eye is the Wedjet (hieroglyphic eye). Judged who are convicted for crimes relating to the Emanations are branded with this hieroglyph, but with lines representing tears. This is also the hieroglyph for falsehood. Grey Tribe has traditionally held a majority of the High Priest positions in the Cult of the Eye.

### **Cult of the Hammer (Tinkering, Weapon Smithing, and Armor Smithing)**

One of Alabaster Tribe's many ambitious public work projects was creating enough swords, spears, and shields to outfit every human being in Amnesty adjusted for population growth. The results were the Cult of the Hammer, a priesthood devoted to the crafts of metallurgy. The technology had been pioneered in ancient times by the Crimson Tribe and their craftsman-shamans. To realize their goal of complete armament, the priests developed a carefully orchestrated series of crafting rituals which when performed properly in the divine method, produces a product that is exceptional. They time their hammer and bellow strokes by the rhythm of their mantra. They shave their eyebrows if they catch fire too often. Their tools are sacred things and must be destroyed if they are treated improperly. They are produced to the highest standards, but always constructed with reverence. Many Priests inscribe their tools in the Old Tongue, in reverence to the smiths of yesteryear. So rote is the process of craftsmanship for the Cult of the Hammer that when acting in concert, they can function much like an assembly line. Complex machinery, and its carefully guarded secrets, are the province of the Cult of the Hammer and have many specialists in this field. They have a religious monopoly upon all types of complex machinery, much of which is regarded by Citizens as objects of mystery. Occasionally a Technomancer, one who knows the mystical truths of machines and gods, will arise from the Cult of the Hammer. When this happens, that individual is asked to join the Cult of the Eye as a retainer kept on hand to monitor what no other man could dare to conceive; the inner workings of the Eye. The Cult of the Hammer's hieroglyph is an outstretched arm holding a small hammer. The Crimson Tribe holds a majority of the High Priests of the Hammer, although the machinist High Priests are mostly members of Grey Tribe.

### **Cult of the Kettle (Alchemy and Healing with focus on Treatment)**

The folk traditions of many Tribes have been co-opted and reformed under the Cult of the Kettle. Grey Tribe employed physicians and alchemists to cure the eerie silences and hexes the Lamashtu would afflict them with. Green Tribe had Hedmen who knew the healing herbs. Cerulean Tribe's hunter women had a reverence for the kettle as a civilizing tool that has largely dominated the Cult of the Kettle since their induction into Alabaster Tribe. Their tradition of Wise Women would inform much of the Cult of the Kettle. Healers of the Cult of the Kettle are distinctly different in practice than Defenders who happen to be healers. The Cult of the Kettle specializes in treatment, not first aid. They prize intuition and perception, whereas Defenders rely on training and martial skill. The Cult of the Kettle serves as the medical experts and alchemists of the Alabaster Tribe. When people need a doctor, they call for a Priest of this Cult. They do not charge for their services, but beg for alms on the street. They serve many charitable functions in Alabaster Tribe, including the housing of orphans. Such orphanages raise the children to become productive members of Alabaster Tribe, especially Priests of the various Cults. The Cult of the Kettle's hieroglyph is a tipped vase pouring drops of water. This symbol is branded into those convicted of wrongful assault, for it the Cult of the Kettle who must clean up the mess. Although the Cult of the Kettle is dominated by no one Tribal Heritage, High Priests of this Cult universally belong to Grey, Green, or Cerulean Tribe.

### **Cult of the River (Gardening)**

Green Tribe's ancient Cult of the Pharaoh was banished by Alabaster Tribe, but co-opted its members as the Cult of the River, an agricultural priesthood. Ultimately, this is what they had always been. People of all cultural heritages joined the Cult of the River and it was made a powerful force for human good. Alabaster Tribe entrusts the very essential task of irrigation to the Cult of the River. The Heirarchs assign a certain number of Corvee servants to the Cult of the River for this purpose. The process of upkeep irrigation has been rendered into a series of rituals. They dredge muck from the bottom with a mantra. They scare away evil spirits and hippos with a series of stomps and shouts. They keep careful track of time on stone calendars whose calibration was inspired by visions granted by the Great Eye of Knowledge. The river Priests are keepers of time, masters of the ebb and flow. They divine the weather by reading goose entrails. Although craft is the ultimate expression of their spiritual practice, the Cult keeps a number of talented machinists to keep their astrolabes calibrated to the turn of the seasons. The hieroglyph of their Cult is a crocodile head. The Cult of the River has always been centered on Amnesty (or as it was known, Where the River Goeth) and was once Green Tribe's Cult of the Pharaoh. Unsurprisingly, Green Tribe holds nearly all of the High Priest positions within the Cult of the River.

### **Cult of the Chisel (Artistry, Jewelcraft, and General Craft)**

The Cult of the Chisel takes the sanctity of their tools to the greatest heights of obsession. They may only be crafted by a High Priest. The tradition of this Cult is the most austere. It is the Cult dedicated to beauty, whose hieroglyph (a lotus flower) they share. Structures of all types are laid out by members of this order and they alone have monopoly on works of art. Precious gems are brought to the Cult and set into adornments fit for a Hierarch. As in all things sanctified by the State, the Cult must be careful about what message they project. They are expected to work in styles that seem "neutral" like hieroglyphics. Their themes should

always be one of man's triumph over chaos. In art, it is expressed in protected statuary, like a gorgoneion. In architecture, lotus-shaped columns (again, the meaning is clear: beauty) adorn most buildings. The Cult of the Chisel is given a huge number of Corvee to construct immense statuary in the name of the State. These monuments run the length and breadth of Amnesty as markers for the various Nomes. These monuments depict great protective animals, such as lions and rams, but also fearsome supernatural things like Gorgons and the Great Eye of Knowledge. They even serve a function; Lamashtu seem repelled by masterworks of stonework. The hieroglyph for the Cult of the Chisel is an arm outstretched splitting a stone with a chisel. A majority of the Cult of the Chisel's High Priests are of the Orange Tribe, a legacy of their people's time in Corvee.

The Cult of the Chisel was conscripted shortly after its formation to produce quantities of a substance called electrum. Electrum is equal parts gold and silver, but the means of combining them is a holy mystery known only to High Priests who practice the ways of the Mage-Smith. Electrum is pure white and malleable and although it would initially seem a terrible material for the construction of arms, it transcends its rude properties in the hands of a Priest of the Hammer. An electrum shield is too pure to hold the image of the Gorgon and is not appropriate for such. An electrum shield is meant for a Hierarch. The Gorgon Shields are his to command. It is said that a weapon made of this substance will protect the wielder as long as he is in good standing with the State. An apocryphal folk saying claims that should a wielder of electrum arms fall from grace, his weapon will betray him and reveal his guilt.

### **Cult of the Stylus (Scholarship, Diplomacy, and Mercantile)**

The Cult of the Stylus is what passes for a bureaucracy in A World With No Shadow. They act as lawyers, scribes, librarians, negotiators, and mathematicians. Their trade is rhetoric, logic, numbers, and hieroglyphs. Their powers are far reaching and their tables are always full of feast as a consequence. When a Hierarch perceives that a Nome is producing a surplus of some commodity, they retain a Priest of the Stylus to negotiate a quantity of it from a village. Assessing the community's need, they redirect a different surplus commodity from some other village as a compensation. The Cult of the Stylus therefore acts as a State-sanctioned merchant consortium. This process is overseen, somewhat ruthlessly, by Hierarchs directly. The Cult of the Stylus is intended to be brokers and record-keepers only. However, for "exceptionally efficient" performance, a Priest is awarded a percentage of the value of the haul. The Cult of the Stylus also keeps a Tribe's accounts with the other Cults and makes sure that those debts are settled immediately once the harvest is brought in. They also set the prices of things, but not in terms of a money denomination; rather, they organize commodities in terms of rank. Carrot is worth less than a chicken which is worth less than a scythe which is worth less than a dagger which is worth less than a sword which is worth less than a great ax. These rankings allow trade without currency.

Attaining the status of Priest within the Cult of the Stylus is quite difficult and the culture is somewhat hostile to the notion of bureaucrats. Consequently, the Cult of the Stylus is required to deliberately spread out their training so as not to become a political threat to the Hierarchs. Priests of the Stylus must know the Old Tongue, for much of their record-keeping is done in

that language. They must also display enough skill in arms so as to be able to describe the characteristics of a well-made weapon or shield. This training requirement has had a number of intended effects, such as ensuring that an overwhelming majority of the Cult of the Stylus' members are Initiates only. This means that an overwhelming majority of Alabaster Tribe's bureaucrats are Citizens and can be punished without undue difficulty. It is true that the Cult of the Stylus has often bristled at this policy, forcing them to diversify in ways no other Cult would voluntarily do. Hierarchs have no patience for grumbling of this nature, however, and make an example of Initiates of the Stylus who step a little too far out of line. The hieroglyph of the Cult of the Stylus is, unsurprisingly, a hand holding a stylus. Grey Tribe and Crimson Tribe, the Alabaster founding Tribes, possess most of the High Priests of the Stylus.

### **Cult of the Drum (Performance)**

Crimson Tribe, in their first act upon founding Alabaster Tribe, ordered all poets and philosophers murdered so as to avoid pointless self-indulgence and paralyzing self-criticism, respectively. This has always been the law of the land ever since. Alabaster Tribe is not against entertainment and enrichment of the spirit. They just demand that it have a beat. Poetry is too cerebral. It offends the common people and addles the greater. The people need a narrative to give themselves an identity. As a substitute, war ballads with heady drums have become the people's means of expression. It is unlawful to perform outside of the Cult of the Drum's monopoly, precisely because it is such a powerful force. Consequently, the Cult of the Drum is the State-sanctioned source of music. Priests of the Drum are required to know a large repertoire of songs, including music common to all five of the lesser Tribes. This is because they are frequently hired to provide song and inspiration at gatherings performed under the auspice of one Tribe or another. Most Initiates and Priests of the Drum are itinerant travellers, who go from village to village spreading news. Their network is the largest of its sort and allows Alabaster Tribe to control the flow of information for tactical purposes. Obviously, the Cult of the Drum gives official accounts of events only. Many members of the Cult of the Drum also attune themselves to the Emanations of the Eye and use their Protocol in the service of the people. The hieroglyph of the Cult of the Drum is a pair of arms holding a drum. The Cult of the Drum goes out of its way to pull in members of every Tribe, and thus they have an even spread of High Priests across the spectrum of heritages. It is the Cult of the Drum that has the closest ties by far to the Defenders and there are number of Defenders who are also Supplicants of this Cult. In battle, Alabaster Tribe employs the Cult to provide war drums. This, as all things Alabaster Tribe, is for efficiency: they set pace for marches and advances, they improve morale, and they can signal orders over the din of battle. A change in beat means a change in tactics and every Defender knows this.

### **Defenders**

Defenders know their days are numbered. They are the ones who routinely face off against threats like Mafadet, Kek, and the dreaded Isfet. They pay for their people's stay in Amnesty. On the field of battle, Defenders are left to the vulture amid the corpses of cowards. If a Defender owns land, it is a pity indeed for a Defender must fight or train two seasons a year. These seasons need not be consecutive, but they often are. However, this is a very large financial burden to a Defender, so it is a very honorable and expensive position to hold. Not all Defenders use a shield, although many do. It is true that Crimson Tribe has many

well-decorated Defenders in their number. It is also true that Grey and Green Tribe also have accolades for their scions. Cerulean Tribe dominates the lower ranks. Defenders who prove themselves heroic or particularly grim in combat may be inducted into the ranks of the Hierarchs.

Defenders are given high honors and the highest levels of deference. When in the field, performing a mission, a Defender is authorized to slay any person of Citizen rank or lower if they interfere with their mission. Consequently, even though a man might plow his field for two seasons, everyone knows that this is a person who has held the rights of life and death in their hands.

The designation of Defender can have additional additional ranks beyond that of simply 'defender'. These specializations are also a chain-of-command structure, although Alabaster Tribe does not indulge in sprawling, vertical command configurations. Alabaster Tribe eschews traditional notions of military science and in fact has notion of it. Their enemies do not conform to the capabilities of mortal armies.

### **Rangers**

Not all of Alabaster Tribe's military action is defensive in nature. Rangers are those Defenders sent out into the wastes to monitor Hostiles and relocate family units. They often have survival skills as well as a certain social grace. Some Rangers obtain initiation into the Emanation of the Eye and use it to locate indigenous people. Rangers travel fast and loose. Orange Tribe is mostly responsible for the tradition of Rangers, a designation which was recognized within mortal memory. Rangers are sent on missions to do precisely what Alabaster Tribe did to them: relocate them to Alabaster Tribe in a state of Corvee. Essentially, this is kidnapping and forced labor. The wastes are a hard life, though, and life as a Corvee may actually be marginally better.

### **Nomarchs**

When a stretch of land consisting of four distinct features has been conquered, it is called a Nome and it is assigned a Nomarch. Nomarchs are very much like generals or colonels; they organize large portions of the war effort. Hierarchs keep a close eye on the Nomarchs and sometimes travel to their keeps to lend their own organizational hand to the conquest. Serving well as a Nomarch can sometimes be a prelude to becoming a Hierarch, should their overseer find themselves willing to sponsor. Nomarchs need no skills as leader, but must possess basic lore of a single combat style. Tribal Elders answer to their local Nomarch. This network is essential for stability within Amnesty. This is the very meaning of Maat.

At very high levels of mastery, the Emanations hint that the Wild Paradise spoken of in the Late Dogma will one day have a Nomarch. This implies that it does indeed become a "Shining Fortress" and falls into a state of Maat as predicted in other prophecy.

### **Gorgon Shields**

Many of those who do use a shield wield one with the gorgoneion, the gorgon's-head symbol. In using such a symbol, a Defender draws upon the ferocity of a Gorgon. Indeed, six of these creatures serve Alabaster Tribe in the capacity of Defender. Their martial arts are the inspiration for the Gorgon Shield style of combat. Gorgon Shield designates a front-line wielder of a shield. They fight with the primary focus of defending allies and moving with their motions. Gorgon Shields always outrank Defenders without specialty.

### **Defender Healer (aka Priest of the Salve)**

Some Defenders are designated “Healer”. This signifies that they can provide basic first aid on the battlefield and that this is permitted to be their primary function in battle. Such a position is given full honors of Defenders. Indeed, they are sometimes referred to jokingly as “Priests of the Salve” because of their near-miraculous techniques (they are not actually Priests). They are expected to hold their own in combat, as any Defender. A large number of Defender Healers are initiated into the Emanations of the Eye and use it in battle to rebuke foes with the Denial-Assertion Valence. Unlike the Cult of the Kettle, Defender Healers focus on Aid, not treatment. Advancement in training is far more important to the Defender Healer than raw native perception. Defender Healers must possess knowledge of a weapon’s lore and must know how to render basic aid. The special designation “Healer” confers no special honor but the practice makes everyone aware of who is and who is not capable of rendering first aid.

### **Citizens**

To be a Citizen is to be a member of Alabaster Tribe. Many have fought for it. Most have bled for it. They face starvation, mutilation, and death just for the right to call themselves “citizen”. Many are born into it, lucky enough to be one of the ones who landed in Amnesty. Citizens are tied to a city or village. They have an affiliation with a Tribe. They may be Suppliant rank within a Cult or even be a Defender for part of the year. Citizens cannot be slain outright by Defenders; they must be found guilty of a death offense by at least six active Defenders or higher. Citizens may be farmers, tinkers, or artisans. A majority of people in Amnesty are Citizens, sworn to the State as a matter of survival. However, they lead lives rich in their individual cultures. Every Citizen, upon adulthood, must declare their loyalty to one Heritage Tribe or another. They may switch from that of their parents if they feel a particular calling to another way of life, although a majority stay within the Tribe of their birth. If a person’s parents are from two different Tribes, they must choose under whose tradition they shall live.

### **Tribal Luminary**

Tribal Elders retain a number of Luminaries who act as their enforcers. Luminaries are Citizens but they carry weapons and hold accounts like an Initiate of the Stylus would. They assess their Citizens’ holdings and harvests and collect their Tribal dues, which are later used to assess a Citizen’s taxes paid to the State. Luminaries are always armed and nearly all are trained in a weapon’s finer techniques. Luminaries serve a very “priest-like” role in all Tribal ceremonies. Most come from hereditary and familial lines, the “good families” of a particular Tribe. Luminaries are expected to report to the State when their Tribe has an excess of a commodity, so that it can be traded with other communities.

### **Tribal Elder**

Tribal Elders are chosen from among a number of sources. It is true that many Nomarchs and Hierarchs retire into their Heritage Tribe and become Tribal Elders. Many Tribal Luminaries are elevated to the rank of Tribal Elder after a lifetime of service or after a particularly noteworthy deed. Tribal Elders serve in ritual and legal positions within a Heritage Tribe’s structure. In some Tribes, such as Crimson Tribe and Green Tribe, the Elders are incredibly powerful. In others, such as Orange Tribe or Cerulean Tribe, the position is mostly ceremonial. Elders arbitrate matters within their village, city, or Nome relating to their Tribe. They enforce State laws, settle disputes, arrest criminals, and assess property for taxation. In places with low populations of a particular Tribe, there may only one Tribal Elder in that area.

### **Corvee**

Corvee (Pronounced: Cor-Vee-Yay) are those people new to Amnesty who must serve a period of deadly servitude to Alabaster Tribe. They are not yet considered fully human under the law.

They are given work that is likely to kill them, such as building fortifications in the lands of the Isfet. Many Corvee are given over to a Cult or a Nomarch for service. Such periods of Corvee are long and regularly last fifteen or more years. If they survive, they are given full rights as Citizens and must choose a Heritage Tribe to join. Those who get out alive can be proud of their accomplishments. Some do resent their treatment as Corvee. Many have been abducted by the Rangers and forced into servitude under the bridal of Alabaster Tribe in Amnesty. Many Corvee are forced into Heritage Tribes that have nothing to do with their upbringing, subjecting them to an alien way of life. Still, many would willfully endure this indignity to receive the blessings of Alabaster Tribe.

### **Judged**

Those who transgress against the established law of the Hierarchs were once stoned to death. In this way, the community would collectively execute the offender and then go about their business. The Great Eye of Knowledge revealed in its Late Dogma that the time for such practices was at an end. Using an Advanced Protocol of the Eye, the Hierarchs would brand their condemned with the hieroglyphs of their crimes and send them as forced settlers of a Wild Paradise. The Judged, as these criminals are called, are given special rights that prevent their execution in the worlds beyond. Alabaster Tribe believes, perhaps rightly or perhaps wrongly, that the Judged will do the State's bidding simply by coexisting in the Wild Paradise. In visions given by the Great Eye of Knowledge, the Judged are described as being the individual bricks which are made into a shining white fortress.

### **Heritages of A World With No Shadow**

None of the Tribes of A World With No Shadow referred to themselves as the names they are now known as. Each of the Tribes simply referred to themselves as "the People," not knowing that there were other human beings outside of their own Tribe. In fact, when the various Tribes did discover the presence of other people, they could not come to terms with the idea that other people possessed humanity. Alabaster Tribe affirms the humanity of all peoples, regardless of their Heritage. The State, however, makes its demands.

In the changing of seasons, five Heritage Tribes unite as one. Alabaster Tribe recognizes four growing seasons, each ending in a harvest. The weather in Amnesty is not appreciably different between seasons. Consequently, the period of a year is not based on the changing of weather. It is purely an astrological and agricultural heuristic. The culture mobilizes in a purely secular nature, as debts are paid, feasts are prepared, and affairs of planting are seen to. A year is simply four harvests by this accounting. The first day of each season has been deeded to each of the Heritage Tribes as a day for their most cherished rituals. For a long time, Only Crimson Tribe (First day of the new year) and Grey Tribe (First day of the last season) were given rights for high holy days. As more Hierarchs ascended the ranks from Green Tribe, they were eventually deeded their own harvest day celebration (First day of the second season). This right was also given to Cerulean Tribe for the same reasons (First day of the third season). Orange Tribe has been given no such considerations, which of course makes them feel disenfranchised. It has been suggested that they be given five days, currently added to the first season, as their celebration. Orange Tribe does have reason to feel somewhat second-class in this regard since people of all Tribes gather on those days for the festival markets, parades, and feasts even though they are not officially one of the people celebrating the holiday. This fosters good will and a feeling of shared strength, creating empathy between people. Orange Tribe however is removed from this exchange.

## **Crimson Tribe**

Crimson Tribe become like whatever enemy they encounter. They take on his ways to beat him. Like the Locust Warriors, they don't even show a shred of humanity. This is, perhaps, why they are known as being warlike and suspicious of outsiders; grim totalitarians. The Crimson Tribe believes in no rules of fairness in combat. To them, an edge unexploited is an edge given to the enemy. They respect winners and deal losers to the bottom. Each member of the Crimson Tribe is told that they, and they alone, are the paragons of Alabaster Tribe's ideals and must consequently maintain the highest standards at all time. Crimson Tribe is quick to condemn and shame members who are perceived as not living up to their high expectations. There is a lot of Crimson Tribe culture embedded in the Alabaster Tribe State. For Crimson Tribe, there is no higher honor than serving the State. Therefore, ranking members of Crimson Tribe fill out the rosters of Defenders and Hierarchs. Crimson Tribe has a healthy respect for crafters of arms. Their ancient shamans were also craftsmen. The Cult of the Hammer is widely considered an extension of the Crimson Tribe Elders. The Cult of the Stylus, the lawyers and scribes of the State, are also frequently taken from the ranks of Crimson Tribe. It is tradition that all members of Crimson Tribe train in the use of weapons, itself a requirement to join the Priesthood of the Cult of the Stylus. Crimson Tribe has disdain for dissension within the ranks, but it has more tolerance for other cultures than they are given credit for. The highest punishments are reserved by Crimson Tribe for its own members. By tradition, any Citizen speaking ill of their Tribal Elders or Crimson Tribe in general are staked to the ground. The poor soul is tortured by vultures until he is either rescued or he dies. The Elders of Crimson Tribe hold the oldest tribal covenant (tied with Grey Tribe) with Alabaster Tribe. Crimson Tribe feels the least loyalty to Amnesty and are the most eager to forge a new civilization in other Worlds.

### *Rituals, Leadership, and Culture*

Crimson Tribe rituals are often brutal and combat-oriented. When a person comes of age and wishes to join, they must undergo a ritual called the Circle of Blood, in which they are required to shed a quantity of blood into a circle, finally collapsing into the circle itself. Before collapsing, they must convince their Elders of their worth; failure to do so means that they simply must join another Tribe. Each Council of Tribal Elders is expected to maintain and protect a fetish icon of some sort. To mark the passing of each growing season, Crimson Tribe gathers into mock-warbands and invades the territory of members belonging to other Tribal Councils. The target of these raids are the fetishes of other Councils but the purpose is clearly clan-wide military readiness. Alabaster Tribe specifically forbids these coup-counting raids from escalating such that anyone has an injury taking longer than two weeks to heal. It is considered one's personal responsibility not to be injured in these shenanigans, for the State needs able bodies at all times. Crimson Tribe marriages are austere and quiet; the bride presents a sheath or strap for the groom's weapon (it is requisite for Crimson Tribe marriage that the groom own a weapon). They celebrate their high ritual day at the first day of the first season of the year (new year's day). On this day, the Cult of the Drum takes to the streets to reenact great Crimson Tribe heroes victories against the Miser.

Tribal Luminaries of Crimson Tribe wear pompous helmets with bright red crests, denoting

their tribal allegiance as well as their status as Defenders. It is a foregone conclusion that all Crimson Tribe Luminaries would be successful enough to serve the State for half of their days. Crimson Tribe's Elders likewise hail exclusively from military heroes and famous Hierarchs. The hieroglyph for Crimson Tribe is a outstretched arm holding a short ax, the traditional weapon of Crimson Tribe from the days when it arose in the far eastern desert. Crimson Tribe lives off of spicy bean-and-pepper soups, sometimes with beef and sometimes without. Crimson Tribe pictures the afterlife as being nearly identical to the living world in that it is a constant struggle against the forces of chaos. Presumably, after being slain in that world, there is another world waiting for fresh soldiers.

### **Grey Tribe**

Grey Tribe were once a urban people whose people built cities around natural springs. Their encounters with Crimson Tribe transformed them from what they were, but they have held on to their core beliefs. Their foes, the Lamashtu and Kek, were most easily defeated by warriors whose will was as least as great as his strength. A potent sense of self cuts through moments of personal blindness or confusion. Grey Tribe cultures favors abstract and long-term thinking, consequently. Their philosophers and poets were quite accomplished before they were executed, but the intellectual tradition of their people lives in modern artificers, craftsmen, and Priests. Unlike other Tribes, Grey Tribe embraces its humanity whenever possible and does not consider this a form of weakness. Grey Tribe are stubbornly stoic to an extreme. Their ideal is the sort of warrior who can compartmentalize the brutality of combat and his personal life. This ideal, as are all, is simply an abstraction, of course. Alabaster Tribe is itself the sort of abstract social-engineering project that Grey Tribe encourages. Indeed, in order to defeat the Miser, Grey Tribe entered into a the social compact that eventually lead to the State. Grey Tribe is willing to do whatever it takes to survive, and they do not complain of their fates or the fates of their enemies. Their city-states have been taken by the dust and yet they do not mourn its passing. Their crafts attempt to follow in the footsteps of Pta-Mbisis whose ideal they strove to replicate despite knowing nothing of him until the advent of the Eye. Grey Tribe are considered the most deliberative and measured thinkers. it is this quality, perhaps, that makes their Tribe admire the Eye so greatly.

### *Rituals, Leadership, and Culture*

When a person wishes to become a member of Grey Tribe at their coming of age, they must signal the utmost humility. They must discard their ego and even their sense of human worth for a time. The petitioner swears a year of service to the Tribe itself, essentially, performing a year of Corvee at the direction of the Grey Tribe Elders. This is, obviously, not so brutal as an actual period of Corvee and may involve work that is pleasant, so long as it is profitable for the community. Upon completion and a review of service, the applicant is accepted a member of the Tribe. Grey Tribe celebrates its high ritual day on the first day of the last season of the year. This is a day of fasting, eating nothing and drinking only salt water. On this day, families gather and exchange gifts among one another. Tribal Elders must approve of all marriages and are suspicious of most pairings outside of the Tribe. Fathers of brides-to-be must present a dowry to the father of the groom of at least a single goat. Many fathers-in-law negotiate significantly higher prices.

Tribal Luminaries of Grey Tribe wear long flowing robes of dark color to denote their station. Many of them are initiated into the Emanations of the Eye and wear symbols and implements of that art. Elders of Grey Tribe are a grim and thrifty lot, given more power than the Elders of most other Heritage Tribes. They do not give their Citizens leave to use the Cults' services unless their lives are on the line. If they complain, they are fed horse-oats until their Elders are satisfied that the lesson is learned. Their diet is austere; oatmeal, goat, potatoes, and peaches as an occasional dessert. The hieroglyph for Grey Tribe is a lotus-shaped pillar. Although known as Grey Tribe, most members wear white or tan linens. Grey Tribe pictures the afterlife as a grove of cedar trees, with each soul permitted to roam no further than the shadow of their particular tree.

### **Green Tribe**

Green Tribe are the heritage of river-dwelling people conquered by the Alabaster Tribe when they were mostly an alliance of Grey and Crimson Tribes. Those wars of yesteryear are all but forgotten except, perhaps, by the most partisan of Tribal Elders. There is a well-contained and mostly unseen undercurrent of resentment within Green Tribe, however. Their pride in their heritage is stained by the knowledge that Alabaster Tribe and the State it embodies are foreign conquerors whose reign is loyally supported by Green Tribe. Green Tribe is, however, an economic powerhouse. It boasts a vast base of very skilled laborers because Green Tribe heavily encourages its members to become Supplicants of a Cult. With the exception of the Cult of the Eye, a majority of Supplicants of many Cults are members of Green Tribe. This high level of religiosity results in higher levels of literacy and this is fitting given that the Old Tongue, the hieroglyphs of the Eye, were the traditional language of Green Tribe. Although Alabaster Tribe now uses an alphabet and grammar structure proposed by the Eye, the visions granted by the Eye often evoke the ancient hieroglyphs. Green Tribe are a people replete with Priests and membership in the Cults is the profession to which all members aspire to joining. This is partly because many of the Cults as they are currently known are from an older time before the coming of Alabaster Tribe. The Cult of the River, in particular, has been dominated by the Green Tribe since it was formed from the old Cult of the Pharaoh. Their Tribe is deeply professional and the most religious about their craft. Green Tribe festivals are expensive affairs full of pomp and spectacle. Green Tribe is in fact a steadfast adherent to the State and its ideals. Green Tribe's ancient foe, the Isfet, were creatures of utter chaos and madness. To Green Tribe, civilization is the most powerful weapon of all and order is synonymous with harmony to them. Ultimately, their ideals are also that of Alabaster Tribe. Green Tribe is stereotyped as being lazy, an artifact of their early days of occupation. Alabaster Tribe worked Green Tribe at a death's march pace in preparation to meet the Miser in combat. Needless to say, they had no desire to die fighting a foreigner's enemy. It was only after they had seen the destruction that the Miser caused that Alabaster Tribe ideals finally took root in their people.

### *Rituals, Leadership, and Culture*

Green Tribe is a subjugated people and have no pride regarding their pedigree. The only requirement to declare oneself a member of Green Tribe is to present the Tribal Elders a living, unharmed mantis. Green Tribe celebrates its high holy day on the first day of the second season. It is a raucous affair, where parades blend into drum circles which in turn

feed into bustling festival markets. The Tribe goes all-out for these affairs, for they believe that any resource spent is an investment for good luck in the coming year. The Hierarchs have debated curtailing the celebrating, arguing in favor of sobriety and conservation. However, in an uncharacteristic move, Alabaster Tribe has chosen not to tinker with this custom for it improves the morale and economy of all of Amnesty. Green Tribe once practiced polygamy, but Alabaster Tribe outlawed that particular custom. The reason for this prohibition cites the procreative difficulties inherent in old, impotent men owning exclusive rights to the sexuality of dozens of women. This is no way to build soldiers. Because owning wives was a status symbol, all men of the ancient Green Tribe sought vast fortunes. Alabaster Tribe has done nothing to alter the cultural enshrinement of wealth-gathering and consequently, Green Tribe's members are usually more affluent than average. Weddings are, therefore, still a means of conspicuous consumption.

The Elders of Green Tribe mostly come from retired Priests, particularly the Cult of the River. Elders are therefore treated in a much more ecclesiastical manner than Elders of other Tribes. Indeed, they are given a deference similar to that of the Pharaoh and they are seen as being somewhat divine. Green Tribe Luminaries wear head-fitting caps and shepherd staffs, as befitting their station as "shepherds of Green Tribe". Much of Green Tribe's imagery involves the animal life of Amnesty and this is partly due to their beliefs about death. Green Tribe believes that the souls of the dead eventually find their way back to A World With No Shadow as shape-shifters who take the form of animals to watch over their people. Of all meats, Green Tribe traditionally eats lamb. Chickpea is their chief starch and they use garlic in all sorts of ways. The hieroglyph for Grey Tribe is an owl. Green Tribe is the most tied to Amnesty. They are completely unenthusiastic about the Wild Paradise and want nothing to do with it.

### **Cerulean Tribe**

Cerulean Tribe has always divided itself along gender lines. It has two sets of Tribal Elders. It has two different sections of the village. In their homeland, the women hunted for food while the men formed war bands against human and monster foes. Male culture has remained martial within Cerulean Tribe. The women were huntresses and wild women. They trained sparrows to carry messages between hunting parties. They roamed, unharmed, in the company of lions. Although they have a crafting tradition, Cerulean Tribe doesn't hold many high positions in any Cults. They do, however, hold a larger portion of the Gorgon Shield positions than other Tribes. Likewise, many women from Cerulean Tribe feel the call to be a Ranger in the style of the ancient huntresses. Men frequently take up crafts of the Emanations while women learn healing or wilderness skills. Cerulean Tribe treats most social encounters in a ritualistic fashion. Their greetings are laborious and acknowledge any known station of the person they are addressing. In a formal capacity they acknowledge men and women in the same way, but in their personal lives, they live separate from the opposite sex. Some consider it a moral thing. Some consider it traditional way of life. Alabaster Tribe has nothing good or bad to say about this way of life. Cerulean Tribe lives on, for three generations, in service to the State.

### *Rituals, Leadership, and Culture*

The ritual of joining Cerulean Tribe requires, simply, that a man recall a tale about a fight or

battle that he fought. This obviously requires that they have gotten into at least one good scrape, so Cerulean Tribe petitioners sometimes challenge one another as a means of satisfying this in a relatively safe manner. Women must display some skill useful to the Tribe; healing, Emanations of the Eye, animal empathy, or musical talent to a Wise Woman who sponsors their entry into the Tribe. Cerulean Tribe celebrates its high festival day on the first day of the third season. It is a fertility and sexuality observance, celebrated with a mingling of the male and female Cerulean Tribes. Boys and girls exchange baked goods with each other and adults exchange beers. Spontaneous marriages are not uncommon on this day. Cerulean Tribe once allowed homosexual marriage, but Alabaster Tribe forbade this practice because it did not promote procreation. Cerulean Tribe marriages do not have much planning and consequently, only a single Wise Woman need perform the ceremony, signalling the fitness of the union.

Cerulean Tribe has two sets of Elders, one for each gender. This has the consequence of doubling the number of Tribal Elders, but members are only beholden to their gender's council. The female Elders are called Wise Women. Male Tribal Luminaries wear the skins of zebras or crocodile, while the women wear skins of great cats. Cerulean Tribe eats food for roaming; jerky, dried fruit, and trail mixes of all sorts. Their feasts serve sponge bread, a staple of Alabaster Tribe diet. Cerulean Tribe has a religion of sorts within itself, although the State forbids its adoration to exceed that of loyalty to humanity. Wise Women lead rituals to honor a sky goddess whose name and attributes differ between regions and villages. It is generally believed that one goes to live with the sky mother upon death. The hieroglyph for Cerulean Tribe is a vulture.

### **Orange Tribe**

It has been many generations since Orange Tribe opened itself to the cleansing light of the Alabaster Tribe. And yet, the relationship is a complicated one. On the one hand, Orange Tribe was forcibly relocated to Amnesty and treated as slaves. On the other hand, Orange Tribe is very good at fighting and for those who can fight, Alabaster Tribe has rich rewards. Indeed, Orange Tribe has always been fiercest among the peoples. This has led to no end of trouble for the relationship between the State and the Orange Tribe. At times, the Hierarchs have considered Orange Tribe openly seditious and taken measures to punish the guilty. Normally, however, Orange Tribe is perfectly loyal to the State and its Alabaster Tribe. Still, Orange Tribe villages (Orange Tribe tries to live among its own) often include elements that are considered subversive. They sing songs that condemn the State. They deface images of Hierarchs. They especially have no love for Cerulean and Green Tribes, who they see as capitulators. They see Grey and Crimson Tribe as being corrupt. Still, there are a number of Orange Tribe members in the Defenders, High Priests, and even Hierarchs. Indeed, Orange Tribe culture once revolved around ritualized combat. They would generally only fight to first blood, but of course things can get ugly. Any insult required a debt of blood to be paid. Even their marriage ritual ("The Night of Hot Knives") allowed rival suitors to challenge the groom to the death. In this way, the best warriors remained to fight against the Golems. Alabaster Tribe found this violence to be useless and banned it in all forms. Even still, in the back rooms and abandoned granaries, Orange Tribe gathers for a good, bloody brawl. Orange Tribe regards the Great Eye of Knowledge as a

rebuking war god, and many of its members are initiated into its Protocol.

### *Rituals, Leadership, and Culture*

Orange Tribe, more than the others, has had its culture stamped out. The family feuds of old were stomped out. Orange Tribe doesn't even have a high holy day; they must be content to celebrate with the other Heritage Tribes. To be of Orange Tribe, one must pledge to give no ground to the Golems or to "traitors" (however such a term is defined by the oath-maker). They must kill a boar or ostrich and give the body to the community in which they will dwell. Orange Tribal justice permits aggrieved parties to settle their disputes by combat, but it must be performed away from public eyes and never to permanent harm. Those who perform well in such combats often become Tribal Lumenaries. Orange Tribe marriages are now ceremonies with mock-combats and pantomimed tales of the hero's journey (a pale reflection of the bloodletting rites of old). Marriages once included a ritual called the Night of Hot Knives in which suitors were permitted to slay one another for the bride. This ritual is banned, but alluded to in the modern version.

Orange Tribal Elders draw from successful Defenders, those powerfully attuned to the Emanations, or those who preserve Orange Tribal culture in opposition to Alabaster Tribe's dictates. This tradition inspires Orange Tribe to act as a sort of "loyal opposition"; always critical, but quick to defend. Luminaries of the Tribe, however, can expect stiff and unabating persecution from Heirarchs should they voice anything critical of the Tribe. Orange Tribe's loyalties are not taken for granted. Luminaries of the Tribe wear necklaces of ceramics and carry blades of obsidian. Orange Tribe once held a multitude of beliefs about the afterlife, but ultimately, none of them could compare to the grandeur of the Eye; therefore, many members of Orange Tribe believe that they can live on in the Emanations of the Eye. The hieroglyph for Orange Tribe is a winged serpent. Orange Tribe smokes all of its foods in huts before eaten. Peppers, onions, pork, and chicken are prepared in this way. Orange Tribe is eager to leave Amnesty. Orange Tribe has already lost its homeland. Why would it fight the Golem if there were a way to escape them?

### **The Late Dogma**

You can access the following visions through the Emanations of the Eye using Symbolic-Heuristic Occultation. Collectively, these divinations are known as the "Late Dogma" and constitute a drastic change of policy for Alabaster Tribe. They were first discovered by the Cult of the Eye four years ago and the interpretation of these visions over the course of a year led to their immediate implementation. They advocate a change in punishment, favoring a ritual banishment instead of execution. The Late Dogma also implies that there are other worlds, one of which specifically is suitable as a new, better home for Alabaster Tribe. The vision, at Mastery Five, goes as follows:

"A giant in white rescues criminals lined up to be stoned to death. He passes them through a dark hole and they are transformed into bricks. The bricks are branded or carved with hieroglyphs describing the crimes of the condemned. The giant in white is suddenly on the other side of the hole, which is a wild place. He uses the bricks to build a shining fortress in the wilderness."

The Hierarchs scoured the annals of the Eye for every iota of meaning they could suss out of these visions. The giant represents Alabaster Tribe. The criminals represent those who transgress against the State. Normally, Alabaster Tribe simply slays anyone convicted of a crime, generally by stoning. The vision implies that Alabaster Tribe should grant clemency to those they would ordinarily dispose of. Indeed, Alabaster Tribe suspended all executions and enacted new means of punishing the guilty. The dark hole represents a portal, through which the criminals are to be passed through. This facet of the vision was baffling to the Hierarchs and the Cult of the Eye. This led to a series of divinations which, at Mastery Seven, are as follows:

“A plain. A tear. A tower. A knife. A flea. A number. A mask.”

Cerulean Tribe Elders and even the lowliest Suppliant of the Eye recognized that the plain represented A World With No Shadow. If the plain is A World, the vision would seem to place equal value between A World With No Shadow and the other implied worlds. This suggests that there were other worlds, perhaps so distant as to be virtually unreachable. The same vision, at Mastery Nine, clarifies:

“These things are set amid a vast wilderness the likes of which could become a great Wild Paradise if it could be tamed.”

This alludes to the “giant in white” mentioned earlier, who builds a shining fortress on the other, wilder side of the portal. The Hierarchs interpreted this narrative to imply that they should send their condemned criminals into this “wilderness” or “Wild Paradise”. At least in the vision, it appears as if the wilderness is the dominant feature of the universe. It gives the same narrative consideration to the flea that it does for the plain. The Wild Paradise is perhaps the place where Pta-Mbisis travelled to after leaving A World With No Shadow. With a place of the size implied, it seems unlikely one would encounter it there, though. The Cult of the Eye devoted itself to an entirely new mission once it discovered the Late Dogma: develop a new Protocol within the Great Eye of Knowledge that could send people to the Wild Paradise. Such a thing would be what is called an Abundant Protocol or a greater working of the Emanations of the Eye. They are grand ritual affairs performed by High Priests of the Eye which draw upon the Eye’s Core.

Indeed, the pathway for such an Abundant Protocol was pioneered by the Cult of the Eye as a farmer plows his field. This Abundant Protocol would condemn an entire lot of criminals, bound in ritual linens. Each is branded with the hieroglyphs of their crimes. As they are named for their crimes, their bonds are cut by a Priest of the Eye. In this ritual act, their bodies and souls are untethered from A World With No Shadow and float through the cosmos themselves. The Late Dogma seems to say that they will find their way to the wilderness of the Wild Paradise where they will, by their very act of survival, settle the place. Those who are sent to the place are called the Judged, for they have been punished by Alabaster Tribe. They shall become the bricks of the shining fortress of Alabaster Tribe. Even as bricks their crimes shall be known, for they are inscribed with the crimes they have committed. While, according to prophecy, it is not necessary for Alabaster Tribe to send loyal members to assist the Judged, the High Priests of the Eye have permitted members of Alabaster Tribe in good standing to travel to the Wild Paradise, provided they are not already pillars of the community. The Wild Paradise must be settled, but it is not a suitable vessel for all of Alabaster Tribe. Thus, Amnesty is still the priority. However, if a rootless member of Alabaster Tribe feels that they can best serve the Tribe in such a capacity, they are permitted to go beyond. Even newly minted Hierarchs are permitted to travel so that some measure of Maat can be maintained. However, the same rituals that inscribe the Judged with their crimes for all times also gives them protection, even

from Alabaster Tribe executioners.

“He who would take for himself the right of executioner upon the Judged shall themselves become Judged, sevenfold.”

This, rather straightforward, part of the Late Dogma makes it clear that the Judged are not to be slain in the Wild Paradise. Doing so, as the Eye reasons, is counter-productive precisely because they are sent there to settle. By the very act of surviving, they are producing infrastructure which will one day be recaptured by Alabaster Tribe. The Eye does not, however, say anything about slaying the Judged upon the battlefield. The Hierachs interpreted it such that slaying the Judged in military action would not incur the Judgement. What form this act of being “Judged” would take is unclear, at any rate.

## **The Gorgons**

Gorgons dwell in large numbers in the far east and west, marking the furthest borders where mankind can dwell. In ancient times, they were thought to be one of the many monstrous dangers of the wastes. Why wouldn't they be? They have fangs for rending flesh. Their expressions vacillates between frowning and snarling. They are the most ferocious beings imaginable. They exude waves of fear so strong that a man can be paralysed until he expires of thirst, still standing amazed by something long gone. Unscrupulous folk magicians could magically compel Gorgons into service. For these reasons, Gorgons were thought to be evil murderers. And although they are truly ferocious creatures, they also have a deep honor and unfathomable intellects. The Miser, befitting his reputation as the most powerful user of black magic, was able to force six Gorgons into service. He ordered them to carry his palanquin wherever his armies conquered. It is true that the Miser was defeated when his spell of compulsion was broken. Alabaster Tribe lost many lives to those six Gorgons but they succeeded in splattering the Miser in gore and filth. Once this was accomplished, the spell was broken, and the Gorgons were freed. They restored the people whose hearts they had stopped in fear. They vowed to serve in the interests of Amnesty's defense. Consequently, Alabaster Tribe has reaped a number of rewards from their association with the Gorgons.

### *Hekorios, the Philosopher*

Once an invasion of Isfet from the River had driven over three Nomes and pushed the line right up to the Tomb of Baba, a mausoleum complex which had fallen to ruins. Unwittingly, the Isfet were trespassing upon territory claimed by the Gorgon Hekorios. As the line pushed forward, the crush of men backed into the Tomb. Hekorios burst from his meditations wielding a short sword made of fire and a shield made of the face-skin of a long-defeated Gorgon rival. Survivors of this encounter used their experiences fighting alongside the Gorgon to synthesize new styles of combat. Every season, Hekorios takes six students for the purpose of teaching swordplay and six students with the purpose of teaching philosophy. His philosophy is simple; all language and concepts refer to perfect abstract forms. The Emanations of the Eye draws upon these perfect forms and from them derives truth (albeit mysterious to human beings). Although Hekorios does not practice the Protocols, he uses it as evidence for his view of A World With No Shadow. Hekorios is bearded, broad chested, bronze of scale, and possesses the lower body of a serpent.

### *Enda, the Cannibal*

In her youth, Enda had once been known as a healer amongst her people, but her experiences under the domination of the Miser made her heart cruel. The Miser was a lascivious man and Enda never failed to escape his attentions. Although the six Gorgons fell upon the Miser with unrestrained fury, it was Enda who fought hardest for the choicest of his organs. Amongst her spoils were his heart, his testicles, and his brain. Enda is unique amongst the Gorgons because she maintains no disciples, but rather, an order of priestesses. Their devotion is nothing like that of the Cults, however. They live like animals, eschewing clothing of spun cloth or shelter. They move in packs, like hyenas, hunting alongside Enda. Although the mad priestesses will tear anyone apart who approaches the abode of Enda (which lies in the eastern delta), she and her priestesses defend the land against Isfet. Although they are not part of the State, even the wild women understand that the Alabaster Tribe is what freed their matron. Occasionally an overzealous Ranger will attempt to bind the warrior women into Corvee. Enda leaves their paralyzed bodies as wards against would-be conquerors. Enda has a swarm of asps where her hair should be and scales across her arms. She wields a bow of electrum strung with tanned human phalli.

### *Atemba, the Destroyer*

When the first drop of filth despoiled the royal brow of the warlord known as the Miser, Atemba leaped forth and blinded his former Master in a single stroke. While his peers throated each other over his remains, Atemba, unsatisfied by his revenge, cut a bloody swath through the Locust Warriors. Uttering a single oath of service to Alabaster Tribe, he left the battlefield to seek other conflicts with which to complete his revenge. Since then, Atemba has not, for a single moment, ceased either fighting or making his way to a fight. If Atemba is looking for targets, he seeks out the Cult of the Eye so that he may be directed at a particularly challenging foe. Atemba, despite his most belligerent nature, is most human in nature. He falls in love on occasion and quarrels with his own kind. Rangers often seek him out both for his wisdom and for the challenge of tracking someone who is constantly on the move. Atemba, like Enda, has serpents for hair, but they lay back and face away from his enemies, protecting his back. Atemba fights with short claws, stained black with constant contact with his enemy's guts.

### *Ramsut, the Brushfire*

Ramsut has a beard of cobras and a forked tongue. His exhalations carry a bit of smoke.. When he is agitated, steam emanates from his ears. He lives in mountain caves and bathes in sulfurous springs. Ordinarily, Ramsut lives in seclusion, paralyzing anyone who is not a Defender, Hierarch, or High Priest (he did, we can recall, pledge defense of Amnesty). Ramsut has few passions (or perhaps known passions) aside from seclusion and the destruction of Serpopards and Mafadet. Ramsut is not so brash as to simply assault them headlong. He waits for long periods of time, even decades, but when the population of Serpopards exceeds his tolerance, he swoops down upon the grassland and sets it ablaze with a terrible exhalation of liquid fire. The savanna ignites like tinder as the fire sweeps south and east with the winds. Serpopards can laugh off lesser attacks, but even they cannot survive the vortex of fire Ramsut constructs. When the fires die down, Ramsut and Alabaster Tribe unite forces and assault any Mafadet that may be left from the fires. Many Defenders and Priests of the Eye perish in these

struggles certainly, but those that survive know something of the true nature of fire and conflict.

### *Cecrop, the Politician*

Deep in the earth, under the city that bears the name of the Gorgon itself, lies Cecrop. There, Hierarchs gather to learn the craft of civic planning and management. Although Alabaster Tribe takes the visions granted by the Great Eye of Knowledge and the Tribes as major sources of culture, the words of Cecrop also loom large. The Cult of the Stylus provides a member to record every pronouncement made by Cecrop for posterity and to better interpret the wisdom of the Eye. Cecrop's approach to civic affairs could be described as "moderate". He advocates a strong centralized leadership with a merciful but firm approach to law and order. Crimson and Orange Tribe, as warrior people with a strong centralized tribal structure, in particular hold the teachings of Cecrop in high regard. The city of Cecrop, not to be confused with the Gorgon himself, is laid out according to Cecrop's specification, which is considered by some to be sacred. Consequently, many Hierarchs attempt to reproduce this civic layout, albeit, imperfectly. Cecrop has been sessile for many decades. When Cecrop moves, however, it is usually to slay a mortal for some offense, so his turpitude should be considered a sign of tolerance. Cecrop is a reclining serpent with a human head; he is attended by Priests of the Drum who bring him news of doings in Amnesty.

### *Heb-Nekira, the Wraithchaser*

Heb-Nekira is a changer of shapes and a creature of death. She has no human attendants. She has rarely ever deigned to teach mankind, save when she found their funereal rites to be in error. In such cases she falls upon those finds offensive and then the Hierarchs scramble to determine what drew her ire so that it could be rectified. Heb-Nakira was first to be enslaved by the Miser and it is true, she claims, that he had once been a caring and decent teacher of folk magic. By watching his techniques, she learned many of his forbidden methods. She could pull power from the land or cross into the darkness cast by A World With No Shadow. When she encountered Lamashtu, she would bind them into loaves of bread, which she would eat or brew into grog. In this way, she learned to eat shadow things, for they are abhorred by the world and the Eye. She continues this tradition, seeking out unclean things that linger out of sight. When she travels, she does so in the form of a jackal. In this way, many people, especially those of Green and Cerulean Tribes, consider jackals to be sacred. However, in her true form, Heb-Nekira is a woman with the head of a cobra and a crown of alabaster.

## **The Thousand Enemies**

### **Slayer Mounds and Locust Warriors**

Slayer Mounds are barely cohesive in themselves. They don't move quickly, but they can fire an infectious spore pod at you before you realize you are in range. They aren't particularly tough and they can't directly wound a person. However, the spores they expel are quite dangerous. They induce in its victims a sort of artificial schizophrenia which causes them to immediately hurt the people they consider allies. They are especially dangerous because they can cling to an area in a diffused state in the form of a mold. An area can be crawling with inactive Slayer Mounds and you might not know it until the last second.

Those who are under the effect of the Slayer Mound spore for too long without getting the mental release granted by attacking an ally lose their humanity. They live to bedevil civilized man in all forms. They accept no allies except those like themselves; spore-taken. It just so happens that at some point that people under this condition began to gather and form war parties. They were called Locust Warriors, because they were like a plague on the land. As a foe, they are terrifying precisely because they are hardened by the loss of their humanity. They feel no pain and have no desire to communicate. Clearly, at some point, they started having children among their own kind. Unsurprisingly, these children became Locust Warriors themselves. Locust Warriors cannot use the Emanations of the Eye. They have no soul. It is no wicked deed to silence their heartbeat. A healer or trained eye can identify the Locust Warrior by the green pallor and spore nodes along the spinal cord.

### **Serpopards and Mafadet**

They may have sprung from the earth like the common fauna, but they but they did not belong to nature. Serpopards are very much like lions in their ways but they attack with the speed of a cheetah and dodge with the skill of an asp. Their fangs are not just for tearing flesh like all those of the great hunting cats, for they inject neurotoxin. Serpopards are quite intelligent but they do not possess powers of speech. Their pelts are sometimes rendered into armor or, less commonly, shields and drums.

It happens but once a generation, but sometimes a Serpopard becomes enlightened and achieves an odd sort of divinity. A Mafadet is the result of this transformation, a creature which superficially looks like a Serpopard, save for its immaculate white wings. Mafadet possess the powers of speech and are deadlier than a common Serpopard in the same way that a Serpopard is deadlier than a common lion. Even a feat of strength cannot pierce the flesh of the Mafadet. Only a military force that has undergone rigorous strength and weapon training has a chance at defeating such a foe. Mafadet nearly always live to fight again after their encounters with people. When at the last thread of their life, they are filled with a mortal terror and flees as fast as a man could possibly run. The Mafadet either wins or leaves.

### **Lamashtu and Kek**

Their touch brings blindness and their strikes rob one of their voice. They are darkness and filth in the form of gods and they are called Lamashtu. They exist as a kind of shade, though not in the wraithly sense of the word. They are a shade in the way the canopy of a baobob casts a shadow. It is said that the nature of the World is to be Without Shadow, but the Lamashtu are not of the world. Their natural state is immaterial, suspended weightlessly in another place. They come to a World With No Shadow to complain about the sun, which shines even into their native spirit world. They cannot torment Pta-Mbisis, so instead they take it out on his abandoned offspring. They abhor fires large and small. They come only at night and although they cannot remain immaterial and open doors themselves, they like to sneak in and out when a hapless soul opens a door. They always attempt to seduce those that can see and hear them in this state, for they have the ability to open a door or window and let them in. Lamashtu can be destroyed by force of arms when they do appear but they do not bleed. When defeated, they recoil into a ball of soot and dust like that which collects under beds and between the bricks of a hearth.

A similar type of being, the Kek, seem to organize and rule over the Lamashtu. Kek are born from the same conditions which gave birth to the Lamashtu but they are not of the same species. Like Lamashtu, they are things of darkness born in an elder era. Kek were the first living things in the world, chirping frog-things that played at the light-less base of the primordial pyramid. They preferred the world in its humid, dark state and resented that land was ever pulled from the primal ocean. They are absolutely murderous over the presence of the sun which they seek to pull down from the sky. They still retain some of their amphibian nature. They also inhabit the immaterial world that human beings have difficulty in perceiving, but they dance between it and the physical world with greater ease. Their appearance in the physical plane is much more difficult to detect than that of the Lamashtu. The only sign of their appearance, if there is one, is generally a sound like unto 'kek kek kek kek kek' which is the origin of the creature's name. Kek ignore lesser attacks against them and can paralyze their foes in a manner similar to that of a Gorgon.

### **Golems**

There are three ranks of Golem: Ruby, Emerald, and Diamond. You will note that Ruby Golems are the weakest. They can fight but they cannot make more of their own kind. An Emerald Golem is tougher and it can make molds of itself. It fills the molds with clay and leaves them to dry in the hot badlands sun. Later, they assemble a copy of themselves and affix it with a gem. Rubies, as you may surmise, are most common in the lands of their origin. There is no shortage of clay, but access to water is not necessary for Golems except for replication. The factor that limits their replication process is access to precious stones. They seek gems above all other considerations. Emerald Golems even possess some understanding of magical crafts, and Diamond Golems are the most dangerous because they possess this knowledge. Diamond Golems wear items of power upon themselves. They are forbidden to mankind, though. They grant their blessings but twisted with hideous curses. They are like rat-traps for men; wondrous treasures with untold power (the perfect bait).

### **Isfet (People of the Bay)**

They come from the water in droves. They all look similar, but Isfet are only similar. Each one is unique. Some are weaker than men, created from the ocean in a randomly selected inferior form. Others possess strange powers that are nearly irresistible to man. The sea births forth things of chaos, and in this chaos there are both the weak and strong. They are Isfet, which means chaos. It is all the more confusing because the Isfet of the water do not always dwell in every place that is itself in a state of Isfet. Their bodies are made of aquatic forms, unique to one another. One may be made of seaweed and jellyfish, another made of rotting shark and clam-shell. Each one, however, has a gleaming white mask of perfect porcelain. Certainly, many have superhuman capabilities, but only a single power. Isfet can be as invisible as the wind or their blows might mangle limbs outright. They might be as weak as a kitten but know the sorcerer's words to dominate the Gorgons. They have been known to turn friend against friend like the Shambling Mounds or strike a warrior blind like the Lamashtu. It is difficult to know what to expect when facing a horde of Isfet.

### **The Emanations of the Eye**

Initiation into the manipulation of the Emanations of the Great Eye of Knowledge is not restricted. Citizens are encouraged to do so and the Cult of the Eye has as many Supplicants as any. The only barrier is initiation itself. Obviously, it is harder for poor, uneducated people to find initiation. It is highly unlikely that a Corvee would be initiated simply because it is unlikely that someone would take the time to do so. However, a number of civilians practice the Protocols. It is treated very much like a martial art or other rigorous discipline. Because the Protocol are difficult, average people practice with one another and help each other interpret their results of their explorations. The Emanations are not for everyone, though. It requires rigorous training to perfect; the price for such an effective toolbox. The common people regard the Emanations as being divine, as though its Protocol were from heaven. This is half-true; the machine from which this power derives is most certainly also godly. It just so happens that using the Protocol is more like a craft or trade skill than it is a mystery. Still, for all its mechanical challenges, it is the genius of creativity that unlocks the highest spheres of the Eye's revelation.

Having been properly initiated into the Emanations, a practitioner accesses a Protocol by first performing a Ritual. Rituals are divided into two categories; Inscriptions and Praxis. An Inscription involves specific ritualistic writing. There are six forms, ranging from the mathematical, to the scholarly, and even the artistic. The Eye accepts all these forms of access as appropriate. Some seers work in Inscriptions entirely. Praxis applies spatial and logical order to things, putting theory into practical use. All Cults employ ritually cleaned workspaces and the Cult of the Eye is no different in this regard, employing a Praxis specifically for this purpose. There are Praxis involving the passing on of craft skills as well as Praxis drawing upon the act of learning from texts. Logic games, symposiums, and social teaching settings empower a seer to enact Protocol; it is clear that the Eye's nature is not secret wisdom. It is most abundant, indeed.

Having performed a Ritual, the user must draw upon the Emanations to enact a Protocol. This is a difficult process, often requiring obsessive repetition and ritual implements. Books of spells are a common possession of people in A World With No Shadow, consequently. The Protocol are abstract things, once represented by hieroglyphs, used to access the powers of the Eye. They are exacting and must be pronounced to the utmost perfection. Many refer to paradoxes which are, paradoxically, the source of the "magic". And although we know its Rituals and activation Protocols, it is true that the meaning the Eye intends to convey may be found between two separate visions. Higher levels of mastery over the Eye grant higher levels of specificity and, of course, higher levels of paradoxes to resolve. There are three types of Protocol. Profusions, which take energy directly from the perpetual motion machine that is the Great Eye of Knowledge and apply it to the material world. In this way, one can protect themselves from hostile magic. They can channel its inherent orderliness to heal a wounded ally, bringing their body back into a state of Maat. They can mark a place as being only for the truth and, should someone prove themselves to be in ignorance, the Eye can enforce shame upon them by supernatural force. The Eye also grants Revelations, Protocols which grant cryptic insight. Mankind's ability to perceive the raw truth as directed by the Eye is flawed, and therefore, is subject to the seer's skill. The Eye's wisdom can only be revealed to an asymptote,

never more. It speaks of the past, present, and future, but also of the inner world of the self. The Eye also grants Singularities, Protocols which manipulate probable outcomes to one that is favorable. In this way, users can manipulate the Emanations to avoid negative consequences they would have otherwise have suffered. They can also draw upon miracles of mathematics which exploit the weaknesses native to many of the foes of Alabaster Tribe.

### **Places in A World With No Shadow**

A World With No Shadow is incredibly large. Alabaster Tribe could not hope to hold more territory than they already possess, and thus, the world is quite finite by Alabaster Tribe's standards. Amnesty is in a state of Maat, or harmony. The hieroglyphic symbol for Maat is a scale, symbolising a perfect balance. Outside of Amnesty's borders, the world is in a state of Isfet (not to be confused with the beings called Isfet). Isfet in this meaning refers to a state of chaos dominated by monsters and wastes. The hieroglyph for Isfet is a turtle; lowly, filthy, and useless.

### **The House of the Eye**

In the River's delta lies a temple complex made of white stone. Many of its architectural and sculptural structures are gilded in gleaming white electrum. It had once been the Pharaoh's forbidden city, but now it is known as the House of the Eye. Its foundation was built so wide and so heavy that it was guaranteed to sink into the muddy earth. However, the structure is so massive that it has sunk through as much mud as is possible. It simply rests upon the firmament of the earth. The city itself is a series of monasteries and protective statuary. It is laid out according to a specific sacred formula such that the city's main thoroughfare radiates out from the city. In the center of the city is a step pyramid which rises to several thousands of feet above sea level. It is here that the Cult of the Eye oversees the Great Eye of Knowledge itself and its Emanations. The High Priests of the Cult of the Eye live within the city and see to the needs of the place for it is, itself, an artifact. The city, it is said, gives divinity to the thing that is the Eye.

### *The Great Eye of Knowledge*

The Eye is a massive, 4 ton mass of electrum. To those attuned to its Emanations, to be in its presence is physically stimulating. It hovers in the temple at the pinnacle of the step pyramid which lies at the heart of the old Forbidden Temple City. To those who do not feel its power so innately, it simply hums with inner power. That is because the Eye is also an engine of sorts: a mechanical thing. Originally, its workings were fueled by talented Early Dogma Alabaster Tribe technicians. However, when it was placed at the center of the Forbidden Temple City, its workings changed altogether. It manifested something now known as its Core. The Core is a machine as well, but unlike its earlier manifestation, it is fueled by information. The exact workings are unknown, but it does require occasional upkeep every year for the duration of five days. During these days, no one is able to initiate into the Emanations of the Eye. Every hour or so, a Priest will pour water into a special reservoir within the Eye. The water serves as a lubricant and hydraulic fluid. The assemblage belches great quantities of steam into the air at short intervals.

### **The Shamir Run and the Underground River**

Seething beneath the mantle of the land lies an underground river populated by a dreaded creature called the Shamir. It is said that the world may have been dredged up by the cosmic goose in order to contain the Shamir, but evidence for such is only implied by the Eye (at known levels of Mastery). The Underground River flows throughout the interior of the floating land mass in an endless loop. The river flows, not by gravity or hydrolic forces, but rather, by currents created by the movements of the Shamir. It is described as a gigantic worm, as long as the River, made entirely of lead studded with a thick crust of diamond. It could crush the House of the Eye with a small flick of its head. Luckily, the Underground River is far from civilization. However, it does flow above ground for a brief stint in the area once inhabited by the Orange Tribe. Here, the Shamir will sometimes resurface and cut vast runs where it passes. In time, these become wadi and are occupied by Golems. The Shamir sheds its skin periodically, scattering precious gemstones throughout the Underground River. Sometimes, Golems will obtain these and use them to make more of their kind. For this reason most sane people rue the existence of the Shamir.

### **The Tomb of Baba**

Before the coming of the Alabaster Tribe in the lands of the Lower River, there had once been a terrible warlord who opposed the Pharaoh. He was called Baba, and although he was not as powerful as the Miser in the East, Warlord Baba was cunning. He had discovered a unique creature in the wilderness and slain it. Being compassionate and a little afraid to eat it himself, he gave the meat of this unknown creature to his dog. The result made the dog into a thing of magic, and it had 77 children. These black-skinned dogs became Baba's honor guard in battle against the Green Tribe. Each of his hounds were like a Serpopard in might. In the end, the Pharaoh arose victorious over Baba and his Seventy-Seven Dark Dogs. Baba had his head crushed by the Thresher of Maat and each of the dogs were beheaded. The Pharaoh was saddened by the death of the dogs and had a tomb built for them with Baba, their beloved, in the center. Ultimately, the place became known as the Tomb of Baba, which by modern times, has been converted into a training camp for Defenders. The Tomb itself is home to a Gorgon named Hektorios, who teaches philosophy and the short sword.

### **The Eastern Wastes and the Western Flatlands**

East of Amnesty there are only white dunes and lingering death by dehydration. To cross it, you must carry as much water as you can, for there are very few rivers and no oasis. Only the strong survive. Locust Warriors can do it, certainly, and they roam everywhere in the East. At night, the Lamashtu swoop down on nightblind warriors and they are never seen again. It is not the sort of place one would choose to be if they had a choice otherwise. Nobody knows where the ancestral lands of the Crimson and Grey Tribe are anymore and it is not by an insufficiency of knowledge. The Eye could direct you there but the directions are not the difficulty. The journey itself is prohibitively long. It is said, however, that every once in a while a Ranger will find a small pocket of a few families. They are, of course, relocated to the Alabaster Tribe but it always seems so miraculous that people could survive out there.

West of Amnesty lie the plains, a place dominated by lions and hyena. They stretch out an

incalculable distance to the east and south. One could travel decades and encounter nothing but the River's thousand nameless tributaries. There are sometimes large mesa which seem entirely out of place on the flatlands. Here you can find small pockets of people with no tribal loyalties. They are protected from the Serpopards and their packs of lions. Such a place is a prize for a roaming Ranger. In particularly hard seasons, there are Golems that approach from the West. They are a malady to mankind and lay siege to many keeps. They do not sleep. They stop only to repair or to replicate.

### **The River**

At its mouth, the river is many hundreds of times wider than it is deep. It flattens out and spreads out over the delta. Its crushing mass reshapes the land. The delta is the greenest, most fertile place in all of A World With No Shadow. It is very much like a free flowing, fresh water sea whose movements irrigates every inch of Amnesty. That is one of the requirements for a place to be in a state of Maat; it must produce food or else it must have access to food. The lands of the River are the ancestral homeland of the Green Tribe, named after the verdant nature of the place. The river has dangers, though. The Isfet sometimes make their way upstream and have been known to attack hundreds of miles upstream. Hippos are incredibly territorial and are prone to upturn boats and impale sailors. A rampant hippo is the hieroglyph for misfortune. Any injury in the water attracts crocodiles, of course, and they are said to be as numerous as men. Perhaps everyone in A World With No Shadow has a crocodile waiting for them on the River. The Cult of the River reveres the place as being a unique, sacred, live-giving place. They are, of course, the losers in the era of the Late Dogma. Alabaster Tribe has no use for the Cult of the River when it goes to the Wild Paradise. Perhaps there is something else there for them? After all, they used to be the Cult of the Pharaoh. They may yet have use to Alabaster Tribe.

### **The Five Great Cities**

Although there are endless villages, there are only five places worthy of the name 'city'. Most of the population lives in nameless hamlets along the River or one of its tributaries. It should come as no surprise to learn that the metropoli all lie on the banks of the River. They are listed here in order from lowest (closest to the delta and sea) to highest. The River has five cataracts (shallow rocky rapids) along its length. After each cataract, heading upriver, lies one of the Great Cities.

#### *Nuruki (First Cataract)*

Stronghold of Green Tribe; in Nuruki, rice is king. The city is an agricultural giant and home to the Cult of the River. Isfet sometimes leap from the River to make mischief in the city and it is the chief concern. Short swords are the traditional weapon of those from Nuruki, regardless of Tribe, because all children are drilled in its use regardless of Heritage.

#### *Parallax (Second Cataract)*

Grey Tribe founded its population center here and consequently named the city upon visions provided by the Eye. Parallax is primarily a mining town and a few drams of electrum trickle out from its gates. Nights here are dark and Lamashtu crawl out of the mines every evening. The

Cult of the Drum has its high temple in the city, and consequently merriment is often employed to keep the shadows away.

#### *Goldenport (Third Cataract)*

Goldenport is a bridge, linking the northern cities with the southern ones. It is the world's premiere trade hub, consequently, and the Cult of the Stylus and their Hierarch regulators are everywhere. Feathers, linen, gems, papyrus, ink, incense, and gold are available here and almost exclusively nowhere else in A World With No Shadow. Crimson Tribe are the dominant heritage here, and the Cult of the Chisel and Cult of the Hammer make their home here.

#### *Cecrop (Fourth Cataract)*

Cecrop was designed by the Gorgon of the same name as a gift to Alabaster Tribe. The city became home to many Cerulean Tribe members after their period of Corvee. It is a place of learning and healing and the Cult of the Kettle makes its home here. Packs of nearby Serpopards makes a land approach to the city difficult.

#### *Circle City (Fifth Cataract)*

What started out as a drum circle amongst travellers became the greatest trade hub for livestock. Huge slabs of beef are shipped downriver, packed in ice from the southern mountains. Many communities of Orange Tribe, whose great-grandparents were likely in Corvee, settled here as cattle-drivers or shepherds. Circle City is periodically sieged by Golems from the mountains.

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## **An Out of Play Discussion of A World With No Shadow**

A World With No Shadow is a very grim, even pessimistic, distopia. It is a very bad place that incentivizes brutal cultural developments. It isn't, however, a setting of bad-guys. Hierarchs are killers of men, but they are not psycho-killers. It is appropriate for players to play Hierarchs. However, do not use this to be abusive to other players. It is a big responsibility, but I feel that the experience of wielding authority is an essential part of this setting's appeal. With great power... do I even need to finish this sentence? Also, keep in mind what the Eye says about the Judged and the "rights of executioner". The Judged are doing the work of Alabaster Tribe simply by making their own, misbegotten way.

You can play a Hierarch, but players cannot, however, begin the game as a Priest: a Priest must demonstrate what we know "Out of Game" to be Level 6 or third Specialty in their Cult's skill. You can, however, begin as an Initiate or Supplicant of a Cult.

You can play a Defender of any rank except Nomarch since the Wild Paradise is not in a state of Maat. Once it is brought into such a state as befits Alabaster Tribe it will be granted a Nomarch.

## **Loyalties**

A character's loyalties can be quite complicated in *A World With No Shadow*. Characters can be a Defender of Alabaster Tribe half a year and a Supplicant of a Cult for another part of the year. Loyalty to one's Heritage Tribe can be complicated as well. Theoretically, everyone owes their allegiance to the so called Alabaster "Tribe" (the government). Alabaster isn't really a Tribe in the way that Grey Tribe is a Tribe. Sure, it has Hierarchs and Defenders, but it isn't really an ethnicity; it's a form of government. Common people (those not aligned with a Cult or serving in a position within Alabaster Tribe) owe a majority of their allegiance to Heritage Tribal Elders because they don't see much of Alabaster Tribe. It is true that some of the Cults tend to "slant" towards one Tribe or another and you'll note that I describe which Tribes hold majority in which Cults. Hierarchs and Defenders theoretically check their Tribal allegiance at the door, but do they really? When they go home to their family, they are steeped in their Tribal customs again. They follow their heritage's holidays. They want their children to marry within their Tribe. Some Hierarchs even retire into their Tribal leadership structure. Unless, of course they don't... there are plenty of Alabaster Tribe chauvinists who reject the idea of strength through diversity.

## **Names**

Names from this setting should sound vaguely Bronze Age Mediterranean, with a good dose of ancient Egyptian. They can be historical or fantastic but they are rarely concrete names of things or places.

### *Examples:*

Male: Alu, Djadao, labi, Kahotep, Kufu, Nsu, Shai, Udjai, Wati

Female: Akana, Aloli, Barit, Emmu, Esho, Nafrit, Sheba, Tanafriti

## **Five Things Every in A World With No Shadow Knows**

Everyone in a World With No Shadow knows...

### *...that to follow the Strong is to be Strong.*

People in a *A World With No Shadow* are beset on all sides by adversity. Each person must do their part to give to the enterprise called Alabaster Tribe, and part of that is submitting to its authority. Citizens do not follow power blindly however. They respect only virtuous strength.

### *...that the Wild Paradise can be tamed.*

The Great Eye of Knowledge tells us that the world beyond is a wild place, full of potential. If it can be settled, it will become a paradise for Alabaster Tribe. The Judged are said to be the bricks with which Alabaster Tribe will build a shining fortress.

### *...their standing in society.*

Citizens know that they are members of Alabaster Tribe and they cannot be slain like simple Corvee. An Initiate has devoted their life to their Cult and wear their status with Pride. The Defender knows his designation, whether Ranger, Gorgon Shield, or other rank. The Hierarch certainly knows his place: at the top.

### *...their Tribal Heritage.*

People don't often marry outside their Tribe, so almost everyone knows exactly which cultural heritage they were raised in. Characters hail from grim Crimson Tribe, cerebral Grey Tribe, Green Tribe river-people, Cerulean Tribe nomads, or warlike Orange Tribe.

*...allies are better than enemies.*

Alabaster Tribe has a long history of conquest but they believe that diplomacy is preferable to war. This is a matter of expediency; why should the people be weakened by pointless struggle? They want everyone to be on the same side.

## **Inspiration**

*Reign the Conqueror (Anime)*

A God-Emperor seeks to rewrite the laws of physics and mathematics to end the chaos of the Bronze Age. Aesthetically and thematically, this is A World A With No Shadow.

*Egyptian Language by Wallis Budge (Nonfiction)*

All of the hieroglyphs I use in the setting were taken from this book; it also has Mafadet (they call it 'mythological animal'). Incidentally, this book was published in 1910 and its still pretty good.

*Distopian Literature*

Its a whole genre; Fahrenheit 451, 1984, Brave New World, Minority Report, Bas-Lag... the list goes on.

300

If you shorten the weapons, you'll get Gorgon Shields. Of course, if you shorten the weapons, it wouldn't be 300 anymore.