



Roma Imperious Art List

HinterWelt Enterprises

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Talk with Us

We are looking for a partnership and want to work with artists to produce the best possible working experience and art for this project as possible. To that end, please feel free to email us or call us if it will facilitate these goals.

Game Setting Concept

Roma Imperious is a core rules in the Shades of Earth Alternate History RPG line. The basis of the setting is the Roman Empire at about 700 AD. This is about 400 years after the discovery of magic. In actual earth history Constantine turned to Christianity and thereafter dedicated his life to furthering Christianity in the Empire. In the game setting history magic was brought to the Empire by Celtic Druids who promised Constantine victory through the use of their magic at the Milvian Bridge. After this, Constantine founded a number of Scholare Magi or schools of the wise men (magicians). During the four hundred years between the discovery of magic and the current setting there was a century in which rogue magi set up petty kingdoms and ruled through their magical might. Only through the efforts of the Magi Emperor Tiderius did the Empire survive. The result, though, was a range of mythical monsters brought to life through the magic of the rogue magi. Satyr, Nereids and roc now roam the world.

Beyond the Roman Empire is a world changed by magic. The Jade Empire straddles East Asia and the Jade Emperor, an early Han period emperor who discovered the secret to immortality, has ruled for a thousand years. In the north, the Germanic tribes have formed crude kingdoms with the aid of the evil Wizard Kingdom of Alkasas. Alkasas is located in what would today be northern Russia. They are sworn enemies of Roma and all she stands for. The Northmen are imperfect tools for the Alkasatians since they are fiercely independent and must be manipulated into doing as they are told. Over all of this the Horrors infiltrate the world. These other planar creatures have come to earth with their own agenda. In Africa they possess a person, use them to spread war and death, then devour them from the inside. In the north, they devour the souls of those they catch near their domain leaving the body to wander, mindless, sometimes raging and other times without thought.

Drawing Definitions

Illustration – This is a piece meant to describe a creature, person or item. It will have a minimum of background detail if any.

¼ page art – ¼ page art is meant to show simple scenes and quick action. Detail is low. For example, monsters, foes, vehicles and weapons in a simple setting or no setting at all.

½ page art – ½ page art may be vertical or horizontal and is meant to describe scenes. Detail is of a medium level. This type of art would be used for character interaction, battle scenes.

Full page art – Full page art is meant to illustrate key points in the game setting and describe major concepts within the game mechanic; i.e. Maps, flow of combat, etc

B&W – Black and white art either inked or pencil.

Project Vitae

Timeline

All art must be completed by May 5.

Rights

Interior art will give HinterWelt first run rights. Full reproduction rights for cover art will be retained by HinterWelt Enterprises but the artist will retain the original and the rights to display the art in their portfolio. All artists will be fully credited in the core rules.

Compensation

Type/size	Compensation	Rights Retained by HinterWelt
¼ page B&W illustration	\$15 U.S.D.	First run rights
¼ page B&W	\$20 U.S.D.	First run rights
½ page B&W	\$40 U.S.D.	First run rights
Full page B&W	\$80 U.S.D.	First run rights. Certain pieces may be negotiated for additional rights.

All artists will be paid upon delivery of their last piece. If you are commissioned to do 8 pieces then you will be paid upon delivery of the 8th piece.

Scope

It is our hope to employ one artist throughout but acknowledge the possible need for multiple artists. We are prepared to work with 1 to 4 artists.

References

<http://www.unf.edu/classes/freshmancore/halsall/core1-10.htm> Mosaics and a lot of references.

<http://www.iol.ie/~coolmine/typ/romans/romans8.html> Descriptions of clothing

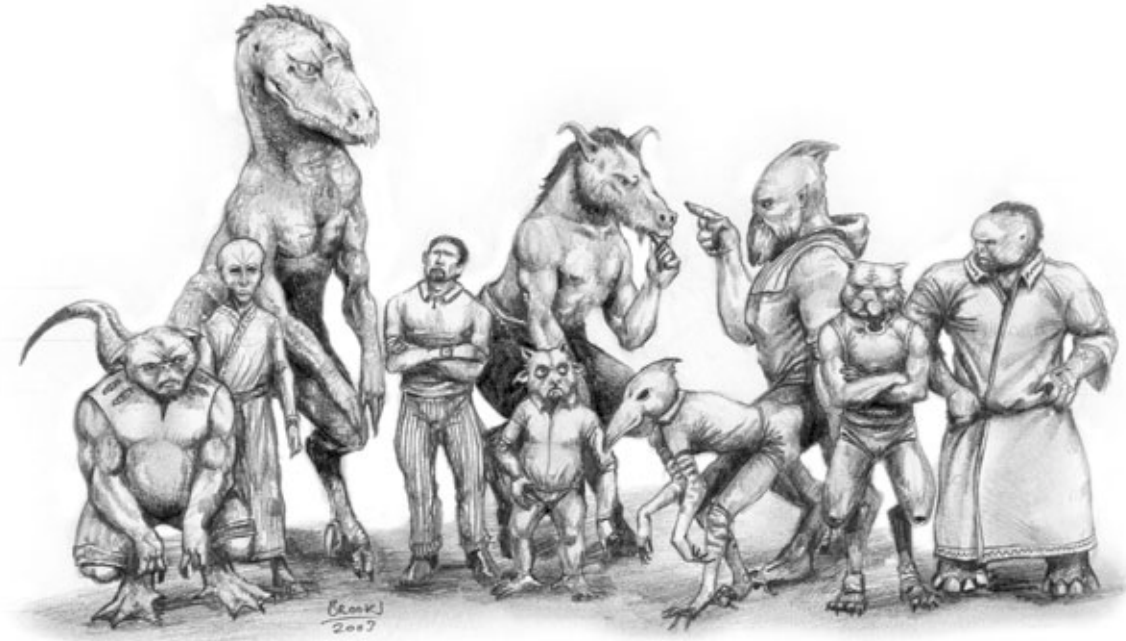
<http://www.roman-empire.net/> Generally a good site with lots of pictures

Project Setting

The core rules are set all around the eastern hemisphere of an alternate earth. Many of the pieces will be in Europe. The costumes and clothing will be indicative of the late Roman Empire, 400-600 AD. Some magical advances will be evident and noted in the individual pieces.

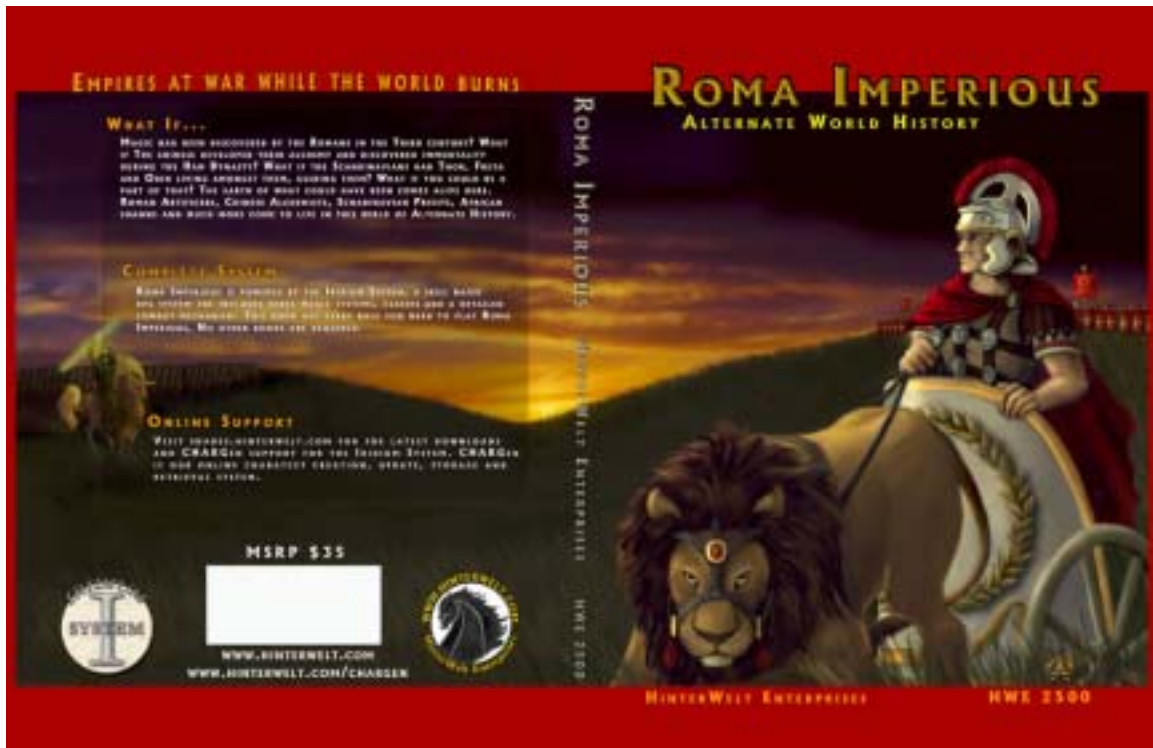
Look and Feel

The style for Roma Imperious should be grayscale or inks. The style should be Sharp and crisp. For example:





Art Descriptions



Setting

Piece #: 1

Size: ½ page, vertical

Description: A Viking style trieme at sea in a storm. Lit by lightening while riding an iceberg is a Giant throwing huge pieces of ice at the small ship. Waves should be monstrous and dark. In the distance is an island or mountainous coastline.

Title: Frost Giant

Type: B&W

Piece #: 2

Size: ½ page, vertical

Description: In the Far East there is a clan of highly organized Chinese warrior monks. They will have tattoos of Chinese style dragons on their bodies. In this piece, a clan warrior stands on a cliff with a mountain retreat in the distance behind him. The retreat should be balanced on a rocky outcrop or an impossibly thin mesa. The warrior should be looking off to one side as though looking intently at an approaching force.

Title: Dragon Clan

Type: B&W

Piece #: 3

Size: ½ page, horizontal

Description: A splendid court shows delegates from distant lands (Arabs, Persians, Indians, Romans and possibly Mayans). Chinese warriors are standing at attention in the background. The halls should be of classic Chinese design. Presiding over the court, the Jade Emperor will be discussing a point with minister of court. The Jade Emperor will be

Title: Jade Empire

Type: B&W

dressed in silk robes and a pointed hat. The Minister should carry a heavy ceremonial staff.



Piece #: 4

Title: Roma

Size: ½ page, horizontal

Type: B&W

Description: This should be a piece depicting the .

Piece #: 5

Title: Gladiators

Size: ¼ page

Type: B&W

Description: Two gladiators battle each other in the Colloseum in Roma. The emperor looks on shouting angrily for blood.

Piece #: 6

Title: Merchants

Size: ¼ page

Type: B&W

Description: An Arabic merchant train winds towards an oasis as a pair (male and female) of Sphinx look on preparing to attack.

Piece #: 7

Title: Slave Dance

Size: ½ page

Type: B&W

Description: A group of Romans look on (rather bored expressions on their faces) as a group of male and female (nude) slaves dance for their amusement. Musicians should be playing in the background.

Piece #: 8

Title: Black Wizard of Alkasas

Size: ¼ page

Type: B&W

Description: A woman wearing vaguely Chinese silken robes casts crackling lightning from her hands towards a group of Roman Legionaries. Their scutum (rectangular shields) form a magical barrier that the lightning breaks and crawls across.

Piece #: 9

Title: Battle of Alexandria

Size: ½ page

Type: B&W

Description: The Emperor Tiderius, a fit man in his 30s, fights a giant scorpion twice his size with several other legionnaires. He should be wearing armor emblazoned with a sun burst.

Piece #: 10

Title: Crystallus Visio

Size: ¼ page

Type: B&W

Description: A dark crystal ball, glowing with an inner light, that allows communication between cities by magistrates. This piece should show a crystal ball in a room guarded by soldiers in the background. The soldiers should have their backs to the viewer. The crystallus should be in a golden three-legged pedestal with a chair for viewing by it.

Piece #: 11

Title: Magic Scroll

Size: ¼ page

Type: B&W

Description: As a group of Chinese sits by a campsite one of them throws a scroll into the fire. The beginnings of a domed field of light should be forming around the campsite. This is how scrolls are used. They must be burned to be activated. Once activated they will last for a period of time. In this case the scroll will protect the camp from intruders for the night.

Foes

Piece #: All Foes

Title: Applies to All Foes

Size: ¼ page, illustration (\$10/piece)

Type: B&W

Notes: We would like to assign all these pieces to one or two artists. Many of these beasts will be out of mythology but should have a "real" feel to the illustration. For instance, the Roc is big but should be proportioned like a bird.

The illustrations, except where noted, do not require a background. In the case, marked below

There are 22 foes to be illustrated.

Descriptions are taken from the actual book.

Dig deep into the dark places for these pieces. I want people to look at these and say they do not want to meet them ever.

This book is made for adults. That said, I do not want to pander. Use nudity as appropriate, i.e. the female sphinx do not wear halter-tops.

A note on nymphs: They are dark. A good example of this are the mermaids in the most recent Peter Pan movie. The nymphs of Roma have an agenda, control the satyr to their own purposes and are not to be trifled with. This is not because of their big warrior muscles (which they do not have) but because of their mental abilities and terrible beauty.

Bestia Giganta should be a ½ page horizontal showing a gladiator battling the Ape, Scorpios, Formicae, and Mus. Compensation for this piece is \$40.

Dwarfs will actually be two ¼ page, illustrations. One of the western dwarf and the other of the carnivorous eastern dwarf.

Piece #: 11

Title: Golems

Size: ½ page, Horizontal

Type: B&W

Description: This should be a group of Golems (flesh, wood, iron, stone and clay) as they battle one another in front of an astonished crowd. The battle should be brutal with people being crushed and the golems dealing impressive amounts of damage to one another.

Wood golem – This should be a roughly hewn spider shape. It should show damage (splinters sticking up and out of its body).

Flesh Golem – This is a mismatched collection of parts that should never have been assembled. It could have multiple arms and extra eyes or any kind of combination that you might think of. It could easily be mistaken for a zombie.

Iron Golem- Rusted and looking like a statue from the Hellenistic Greek times, this should look ancient. It could resemble an Amazon or a Spartan warrior. It should have dents all over its surface.

Stone Golem – A statue of an ancient Greek monster like medusa or Echidna. It should have cracks and pits in it.

Clay Golem – This should look middle eastern or Indian. It may look like a Persian lion or Siva. It is made of soft clay so it may be showing impressions or dents.

Piece #: 12

Title: Skeletons

Size: ½ page, Horizontal

Type: B&W

Description: Go to a dark place on this one. There are four distinct types of skeletons that need to be pictured here. A general, weakest variety that should be the most plentiful, A slightly more powerful one that will be commanding much like a sergeant, two powerful ones that will be protecting the most powerful who will be casting a spell. The spell should look like a cloud of deadly gas rolling out from it. The scene should be one of a group of Vikings being over come by the undead.

Piece #: 13

Size: ½ page, Horizontal

Description: A Roman Magus summons the four elementals to do his bidding. In a "from above shot" we see the Magus standing in the middle surrounded by four magical circles. In each circle is one of the elementals. The one behind him should have a defect in the circle and be escaping, preparing to destroy the magus.

Title: Elementals

Type: B&W

Templates**Piece #: 14**

Size: ¼ page, illustration

Description: The Milites is the common Roman Legionary. Leggings
sh<http://www.legionxxiv.org/Default.htm> for reference.

Title: Milites Template

Type: B&W

Piece #: 15**Gladiator Template**

Size: ¼ page, illustration

Description: A gladiator standing at the ready.

Title:

Type: B&W

Piece #: 16**Praetorian Template**

Size: ¼ page, illustration

Description: This is the secret police of the Empire and personal guard of the Emperor. He should be wearing a tunic and highly decorative armor.

Title:

Type: B&W

Piece #: 17**Monk Template**

Size: ¼ page, illustration

Description: A monk from China bending at an impossible angle to avoid darts/arrows fired at him.

Title: Oriental

Type: B&W

Piece #: 18

Size: ¼ page, illustration

Description: A hulking Nordic man wearing ringed leather armor, a plate helm, a small shield and wielding a large hammer.

Title: Warrior Template

Type: B&W

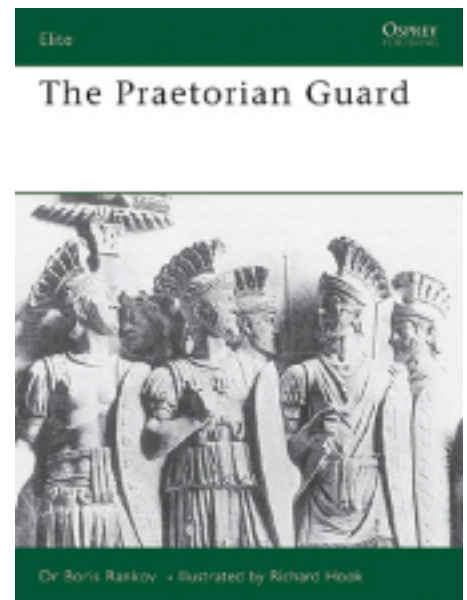
Piece #: 19

Size: ¼ page, illustration

Description: These are the creators of magical implements in the Roman Empire and potions in the Jade Empire. This piece should be of a German working at a forge on a piece of armor, possibly a roman breastplate.

Title: Artificer Template

Type: B&W



Piece #: 20

Size: ¼ page, illustration

Description: A Celtic druid wearing trousers, a shirt and cloak. In front of him he manipulates a bubble of water in mid air into a shield.

Title: Druid Template

Type: B&W

Piece #: 21

Size: ¼ page, illustration

Description: A magus is a mage. This mage is wearing chain mail with a plate helm. She should be in the process of casting invisibility.

Title: Magus Template

Type: B&W

Piece #: 22

Size: ¼ page, illustration

Description: Augurs are the soothsayers for the Empire. They have a very prestigious position within the government reading the omens. This augur should be richly dressed in silken toga holding a cut open fish while examining its entrails.

Title: Augur Template

Type: B&W

**Piece #: 23
Template**

Size: ¼ page, illustration

Description: A sarmatian bard wearing trousers, shirt and long cloak. She should be playing a flute and if armor is shown, wearing chain mail. Attractive but not beautiful.

Title: Bard

Type: B&W

**Piece #: 24
Template**

Size: ¼ page, illustration

Description: A Greek merchant wearing ringed mail and carrying a Roman gladius (short sword). He should be standing on the prow of a ship or fighting a tentacled monstrosity out of frame.

Title: Mercator

Type: B&W

Piece #: 25

Size: ¼ page, illustration

Description: An African shaman with a Lion spirit guide next to him. The Lion should be transparent. The Shaman should be wearing hides and carrying a broad leaf head spear.

Title: Shaman Template

Type: B&W

Piece #: 26

Size: ¼ page, illustration

Description: A Roman assassin wearing black ringed leather armor, a black chin coif standing with his arms crossed. He should look cool and collected as though nothing can rattle him. If arms are needed for the piece he carries a Falchion(a curved sword wider end than hilt) and a dagger.

Title: Assassin Template

Type: B&W

Piece #: 27

Size: ¼ page, illustration

Title: Thief Template

Type: B&W

Description: A smallish woman wearing patched together leather clothing ending in a skirt. She should be shown cutting the purse of patrician in a toga.

Piece #: 28

Title: Scout Template

Size: ¼ page, illustration

Type: B&W

Description: A Scottish legionnaire scout wearing banded legionary armor. He should be riding a horse while looking at the ground as for tracks.

Monster Reference

Amazon

“They strode across the field as visions of beauty. Swift but deadly we could not evade them nor could we capture them. Deadly with bows as well as sword they wore heavy armor of the infantry. Later I would learn of their homes on the shores of the Pontus Euxinus and the sister who had colonized Africa. The size of these woman would always be the first thought of any outsider followed by comments on their beauty.” - Epicycles of Athens

The Amazons are a tribe of women who have forsaken men in favor of self reliance. The legends of these beautiful and strong women appear in a number of cultures but in the eleventh century of the City the first of their cities were discovered near Pontus Euxinus (the Black Sea). Soon after that another city was found in central Africa. These appear to be two very different tribes of Amazons. The Euxinus Amazons are a greek speaking and culturally, they are highly Hellenized. They view men as natural slaves who are incapable of taking care of themselves. The Euxini believe that they serve the best serve the human race by keeping men subservient to women. To this end boy babies are often left exposed in the tradition of girl babies of Sparta if viewed to have undesirable traits. Male slaves are tolerated but only to the extent of their position. In other words, they are free to do as they will as long as they perform their duties and obey any woman. This practise has been going on for generations, almost 300 years, and it has had an impact on the men of the the Amazons. They often are considered superior slave stock for their docility by an utter failure in the gladiatorial ring.

The Euxini Amazons organize themselves into warriors or those women most recognized as the Amazons, the Perioeci or women who joined the Amazons from other civilizations, and men who are slaves. The Perioeci often fill the role of merchants, traders and ambassadors with outsiders. They also handle the slave trades. All women in the Euxini city-states can vote. They elect their queens who rule over the city-state and then the queens gather every ten years in secret to elect four Tetrachs to rule the Amazons in all matters. These Tetrachs can be removed at any time by the queens.

There are 34 Euxini Amazon city-states around the Pontus Euxinus (Black Sea) centered mostly on the northern coast. The chief of these are the Aindi and Xanthisi. They are seldom at odds and in the Euxini wars the Romans were very surprised to face such a unified front from a confederation.

The African Tribes of Amazons are called the Black Amazons due to the dark color of their skin. Their source is not known but the myth is that the Euxini were settled by the Black Amazons but there is little proof of this. The Romans have only had distant contact with the Black Amazons and trade cotton, linen for Amazonian gold only infrequently. Little is known of their lifestyle although it they do accept women from outside their tribe they are kept as second class citizens. Men are treated less harsh by the Africans but the

practice of exposure is still in use. All the Black Amazons are ruled by one Matriarch, chosen from a generation and raised to replace the current ruler. She trains with the Matriarch and learns from her experience but is seldom of the Matriarch's own blood.

The Amazons train from childhood to perfect their fighting skills since they expect to be challenged at all points by men. They believe that Artemis, the Greek goddess of the hunt, gave them their extraordinary strength and agility. Whether this is true it is considered a fact by the Amazons and many who have met them in battle. Even though they all train from an early age, not all become warriors. It is only the best that are allowed to fight but all are prepared to fight. At the age of twelve, they are separated into two groups, those that will continue to train for war and those that will find other tasks in the Amazon society.

Bestia Giganta

"As we tracked the beast through the undergrowth we came across conflicting tracks. At first our native hunter seemed to think it was merely old tracks but as we realized how deep we were getting into the thorn bushes, the look of concern grew on his face. It was then that we heard the snuffling, like that of a boar but with deep throated menace. I can say I was afraid despite the hunters reassurances. It seemed a ridiculous profession to attempt to capture these beasts alive for the arena. Then, out of the depths of the thickest thorns came two large bulls. At least I thought them bulls but they were boar of immense size. They ran down the native hunter just inches in front of me. The other hunters used the coated spear to tranquilize the beasts but not before it mauled the leg of one of the other hunters. My skills as a physician were welcomed that day." - Sextus Tullius

Giant beasts are in high demand throughout the Roman Empire for their entertainment value in the arena. To a lesser extent, but still appreciable, are the domestication of these animals. The list here is only meant to be representative and there are many forms of giant beasts being discovered every day. The Bantu tribes of southern Africa have spoken of giant bees, cats, wolves and slugs to name a few. The ones most commonly used in the Empire are listed here.

Aper

The giant boar is used in the arena against four gladiators, specifically bestarii. However they also are highly prized for their delicious meat. They are usually not raised in captivity but hunting preserves will often be maintained in western portions of North Africa where they thrive.

Formica

The giant ant is a disaster waiting to happen. They are hunted for the danger they pose to farmers and for the vast hoards of sugar they maintain. They have not been domesticated due to their destructive nature and the problems of containing them. As with the Aper, small "ranches" of Formica are sometimes kept but this is done rarely since a single colony can strip a 500 acre grain farm over night. Combine this with their territorial nature and the entire villages can be wiped out without a word. Formica warriors are popular in the eastern arenas but due to their sensitivity to cold they are seldom exported north. Workers, smaller than the warriors, are not thought of as useful in the least and are not used in the arena since they seldom will fight.

Mus

Very popular as a domesticated animal, the giant rat is used in sewer maintenance and to hunt down pests. They are also sent to the arena but are much more useful in other aspects of the Empire's economy. They can be trained for a number of tasks and have been used as guards, hunters and draft animals for decades in Africa. Only recently have they come to the north and eastern parts of the Empire. Some problems have arisen in the north due to inexperience with the animals and some Mus have gone feral. Also, rabies is a problem with these giant animals.

Scorpions

The giant scorpion is a thing of nightmares. It is cunning, hideous and powerful all at the same time. To the people of the north Africa provinces they are a bane and a menace. They hunt herds of sheep and cattle and do not prey on the weak and old but go for the strongest and biggest as though to test their strength. If a creature wanders in to the vicinity of their den they will come out to attack it. The scorpions may be satisfied with driving off the intruder but it is even money that it will pursue the creature until one of them is dead.

There is a new trend in the scorpions that has alarmed the venates in Africa. They have begun to hunt in packs. Only two sightings of this type of behavior have been reported but it would increase their threat presence to the farmers many fold.

Cyclops

"A storm drove us to ground as we crossed the African desert. Our guides became fearful as did the milites we travelled with. Everyone knew the legends of the area. The Cyclops wandered these wastelands feeding on the unwary traveller. Then, through the sand and wind I heard a roar unlike that of any animal I had heard in my life time. A dim form came forward and slowly that form took shape. A giant of some ten to twelve feet in height with a shaggy mane of grease snarled locks. A single eye adorned its otherwise grotesque and almost deformed face. Its musculature was overbearing for its size, enormous as it was, so as to make a man seem even smaller in comparison. Its hands were gnarled and in one of them it easily carried half of a tree. Trimmed of all branches and hardened in fire it still confounded me where he would find such an implement in this waste. Without pausing it swept up one of the locals and walked off into the storm. Over the howling wind we heard his screams and the crunching of bones which made pale our cowardice." - Sextus Tullius

The cyclops began as an experiment at trying to improve giants to make them more pliable and easy to control. This was done by Timon, the infamous twelfth century master of magical husbandry. He admitted that the cyclops was both his greatest success and his greatest failure. When he purposely released his stock in Cyrenaica many thought he was mad and the government knew he was criminal. He followed his creatures shortly thereafter fleeing the praetorians.

The cyclops is a powerful brute standing over 20' tall. They live in family groups of about 6-10 since an area of their territory cannot support many more. They consume incredible amounts of meat when they can get it and foliage when the must. They can digest just about any form of vegetation or meat and have a high tolerance for spoilage. They will eat humans, the horses they ride and anything else they come across. They will consume up to 600 lbs of meat in a day if they can find it.

The family structure is centered on an alpha male, usually the strongest although outright combat is not engaged in frequent challenges are proffered. The lesser males are allowed to mate as long as the alpha is not present. The alpha takes precedence over any and all decisions and privilege.

The primary ranges of the cyclops are the north african salt trade routes. They have been expanding into the east trough Aegyptus but only slowly. The more aggressive push has been south and pressure has been put on the populations of Bantus, Berber and the Empire of Ghana in the resulting conflicts.

In combat, the cyclops wears leather hide armor and uses an iron bound club. Although no one has been able to observe them closely in their natural camps it is thought this is proof that they use tools beyond crude weapons. Other scientists of the day claim it proves nothing and that, much like Timon, they are anthropomorphizing the creatures. Either way, they are formidable.

The Berbers have had some success in dealing with the cyclops and convincing them to fight with them. This does not seem to be so much of an "against the Romans" belief as a mercenary agreement. The Berbers supply food and drink along with metal armor and weapons and they receive a mobile fortress

capable of hurling rocks, tearing down fortifications and crushing the most formidable opponents. Fortunately for the Romans this is not a common practice yet.

Devil (Oriental), Kuei

“As we loaded the cargo of silk bound for the Damascus a chinese man can dancing up. He seemed drunk and could not hold a tune. Considering the part of Ch’ang-an that we were in this was not too surprising. Antinous laughed and tried to clap and keep beat with the man but Antinous was no musician either. I told him to ignore the crazy man since we must leave with our escorts soon for the border. He had better not expect me to load all this by myself. Then, like lightning the chinese sobered and drove a thin blade into Antinous’ chest. By the law, we were not allowed to be armed or armored but I would not stand by and let my friend be slaughtered. I fought the man and just as I got the upper hand he went limp and his eyes seemed to clear. He could not remember anything or why we were fighting. He even accused me of trying to rob him. I did not know this man but I will miss Antinous’ clapping.” - Report to the Ch’ang-An guard

These demons plague the Chinese people causing destruction and deception in their wake. Many of these demons try their best to influence people without their direct knowledge. Others are summoned to do the will of evil people, usually to kill a rival. Killing is not their only goal, though, and at times they will destroy a person’s life, cause sadness or even simply spoil food, depending on their power.

These devils are more of an annoyance than an outright threat. They can be quite dangerous, though, and will attack if their mischief is not allowed to run its course. It must manifest entirely on this plane to effect anything on this plane. So it may not reach into the Earthly plane then pull something to the Ether. They also can not use their powers while not on this plane. They are able to travel through the Ether and make observations on the Earthly plane from the Ether. This makes them valuable spies, and since they are relatively easy to bribe (a free hand in causing mischief), they can at times be controlled. Still, the price is sometimes high when they look to their employers camp for their entertainment. Why they are so driven by this chaos and mischief is a mystery.

Their favorite trick is to hypnotize people into performing their deepest desires, whether that be streaking in public or killing their boss. The Chinese Warlords of south west Asia sometimes employ these demons to gather intelligence, guard a treasure or kill a rival.

Possession is their final trick and their best means to manifest on this plane to cause true mischief. They possess those weak of faith and are able to inhabit these bodies for a number of weeks equal to their level. After this the possessed is able to attempt another save and if they succeed then they are freed and the demon may not possess them again. If they fail again then they will be under the Kuei’s power for another period of the demon’s level in weeks. While possessing a mortals body though, the demon may be slain and thus destroyed.

The Kuei is believed to be the negative (yin) portions of peoples souls. They are evil and do evil purely for spite. Some believe that the Diabolus Atrox (see “ **Error! Reference source not found.**” on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**) is somehow connected to the Kuei or possibly are the Kuei but the Chinese refuse this explanation pointing to ancient sightings of the Kuei predating the Atrox.

Diabolus Atrox

“As we climbed into the cave, Mikko, my brother, handed me my father’s sword. Father had been taken by Surma, the god of Death that dwelled in this cave. Whether it was truly Surma or some foul lesser monster it would trouble this world no more. We descended to find an open cave with a green light bathing the walls. There at the center was our father in the embrace of Surma. It was a creature of mists and darkness, at once having no form and a terrible visage. It held my father in place while tendrils of mist

bore into his body seeming to draw the life from him. A malformed mouth lay over his right eye chewing into the socket. I froze in horror of the scene but my brother leapt forward with a mighty cry. His stroke aimed for my father to end what could only be horrible suffering. At the crunch of bone I was moved to action and charged into the fray myself. My fathers sword bit into the beast where my brother's sword passed through. Our battle seemed to last for hours with blows traded back and forth. Mikko was run through by Surma's obsidian sword but Mikko held it in him giving me the stroke I needed. I slew the beast and from its treasure I took my weregild." - Account by Sextus Tullius of an encounter with a Diabolus Atrox

The Diabolus Atrox, Devil Terror, commonly called a Terror is a infestation from an alternate dimension or so the Magi theorize. In truth, no one know their true origins but many have myths and beliefs to explain them. The first documented case of a Terror was in Skandia in the village of Trondheim over 300 years ago. During the possession, the primary form of operation for the Atrox, the girl poisoned the well and grain supply killing 120 people before she was discovered. A druid was called on and was successful in driving the Atrox out of the girl but not before it killed the girl. The druid died shortly thereafter as a result of his efforts.

In Skandia the Atrox usually take corporal form outside of humans as monsters from their mythology. Grendals and their kin are a product of the Atrox. They tend to make their dens over natural resources, almost as to deny them to the Norse, such as wells, mines, and in forests of glens suitable to farming or herding. Magi are baffled as to this behavior as it seems to deny all reasonable animal behavior and invite conflict. The Norse do not delve as deep into the Atrox's motivations but merely say they are dark elves or evil faerie kin bent on mischief. It is the custom of the Norse to send small contingents of men to deal with a Terror, usually no more than six, since it is believed that the Terror will not show itself to more than that.

The other hot spot of Atrox activity is in Africa, centered mostly in the south. The Bantu and Abyssinian know the Atrox well. The Atrox behave slightly different here preferring to possess and consume a host as it sows chaos and discontent. It will usually possess the weak willed then slowly consume their bodies as it fuels its magic. While possessing the body of the human, the Atrox will attempt to start wars, encourage blood feuds, jealousy, greed and all manner of conflict between nations, tribes and even individuals. It has powerful spells of enthrallment. The Magi of the Empire have even gone as far as to propose that these Atrox should be classified as Atrox Australis to differentiate them from the Atrox found in Skandia. This is due to their different tactics rather than any differing powers. The Africans view them as evil spirits (Loa) that have not found peace and have been sent against the living by Legba, guardian of the gates that separate man from the land of the gods. They believe that they hate the living and this is their way of seeking to destroy them but why Legba helps them is known only to him.

Both northern and southern Atrox are an encroaching threat to the Roman Empire. As far as is known the Atrox do not trouble the Jade Empire and that in itself has raised suspicions as to their involvement. There is some who think the Kuei are Atrox but this is not popularly accepted amongst the Chinese.

The possession of the living, both animal and man, are one of the primary powers of the Atrox. They prey upon the weak willed and force them to do their bidding. Children and animals are favorites of the Atrox although greed is also a gateway for them. Their second most noted ability is the power to change shape. They may take any from, living or inanimate, that they can imagine. They may appear as a stone or a multi-tentacled abomination. The latter is one of their favorites as it strikes terror into those who would stand against them. Their natural state can only be guessed at but some believe that they are beautiful beyond words so as better to seduce humans and lure them into their clutches.

Although Terrors will not usually use weapons they are quite fond of magical devices and wands. They will usually discard any weapons or armor to the back of their lair but magical devices they will keep close for

use and to gloat over. Their obsession with such items often puzzles those unfortunate to observe the Atrox at close distances.

Dwarf

“As we passed the dunes we saw a clan of small men and women, no higher than three feet. They all had large noses and dark features. When they saw us they dropped their grisly meal of the party holy men we had been sent to find and came running at us. They were clothed in the finest of mail and used small hammers. At first I found it hard not to laugh at them as they came on but then Poenius, my friend, fell dead with his stomach ripped open. I then fought for my life as the others in my maniple did. The battle was fierce and in the end we did not defeat them as much as drove them off. On the ground lie three of my friends and an equal number of Dwarfs. May Mars curse them!” - Tadius of Antiochia, XXXII Legion Oriens

Dwarfs have been a part of the Norse and Germanic peoples myths for thousands of years. They are usually thought of as helpful if somewhat grumpy. In some areas they are believed to switch their young with that of human babies. They are considered great craftsmen, extremely wealthy and very secretive.

In the current day the Dwarfs are broken into three major groups, the Northern, Western and Eastern. They all seem to have originated in Germania or southern Skandia and migrated outwards from there.

Northern Dwarfs are the most amenable of the race. They work closely with the Skandians, creating weapons, tools and devices in a healthy trade. They will, on rare occasion, share their crafting skills with humans artisans but usually demand a high price. They live in hills in remote areas and will usually attend markets that the humans hold to trade their goods. Although the Skandians claim that the Dwarfs have been present all of their history back to the Creation, evidence suggests that they have only been actively dealing with humans for four hundred years. These dwarves are bitter enemies of the Atrox and seek to aid the humans in eliminating them from Skandia. Although the Northern Dwarfs seem to have an agenda, they are not sharing their goals with anyone.

The western Dwarfs inhabit Germania and Gallia mainly with kindred scattered all over Europa. They are a family oriented secretive people and they do trade with humans that they know and live near. They are also fond of stealing babies of those they do not like but prefer to force parents to trade their children to them. What happens to the children is a point of conjecture. On the best side they are assimilated into the dwarfish family and continue to see their parents as they learn dwarf ways and grow older. As adults they may rejoin human societies for short periods. On the worst side they are eaten or changed into a dwarf. If they are changed then they lose all connection with humanity and possibly even their memories. Different groups of Western Dwarfs behave in their own ways, keeping their ancestral customs. Even more so than their northern cousins the Western Dwarfs are master weapons and armor smiths. They will trade these items at steep prices but they are worth it. A dwarf weapons can go for two to three times the price of similar human made items based on appearance alone. The Western Dwarfs deal in diamond and platinum in a level of skill that humans have yet to attain. In addition, they are able to craft powers and abilities into weapons and armor that human artificers can only dream of.

Finally, the most despised and dreaded dwarf, the Eastern Dwarf. Called by many names these are dwarf clans that have migrated out of the west and into Scythia, Asia, Arabia and Aegyptus. They hunt as packs on the weak and unarmed using their skills to alter themselves to their task. They will attack lone caravans or travellers depending on their numbers to overpower their prey. Once enough dwarfs are on the hapless being they will begin feasting, sometimes before the person is dead. The Eastern Dwarf is not particular in its meat but it prefers humans but will settle for its own kind or food beasts. They will den near caravan routes in the desert hollowing out caves in the sand or rock. They will each have their own space within the common cave. In the den they will create some of their most terrifying tools, razor teeth. Their razor teeth

will allow them to bite through the toughest armor and flesh instantly turning it to a slurry that feeds their hunger. A single dwarf may feed on up to 30 lbs of meat in a day. Often this amount exceeds their own weight. Magi are stumped to how this is accomplished.

Those victims not killed will be transformed into dwarfs themselves. This is accomplished by feeding them specially laced food that slowly (over 1-4 weeks) changes the human into a dwarf. Once a dwarf, a madness seems to grab them causing them to attack and devour at a ravenous rate. The Eastern Dwarfs are more information brokers than craftsmen. They will often be treated as an infestation but their abilities also make them very good at spying. In the case of the more civilized clans of Eastern Dwarves this has proven quite lucrative.

In the West and North the Dwarf is tolerated if not celebrated for the niche they fill in the social environment. Some amount of suspicion, due mostly to their secretiveness, is directed their way but for the most part they are considered as much a part of the village or city they are near as the local temples. The Eastern dwarf though, is considered a pest and the minion of evil men. They revel in the mayhem they cause and think of little more than the next meal. There are rare exceptions that have maintained part of their sanity and look to use mankind to their advantage by selling the information that they do easily obtain.

Fairies

:It was as though we looked down on a field of stars from our perch in the tree blind. The fairies had met as the druid said they would. I had not dared to hope that he was correct but there I sat with two hunters from the Emperor's court. He wished us to bring him a faerie that he might learn the secret of immortality. As the hunters prepared their nets I was captivated by their dance, that of a great ring floating but a small distance over the ground. They shimmered as with moonlight and filled the glade with a court of shadows dancing in time to the music that moved me to tears. The Hunters sprang as I was unable to move a muscle they seemed to descend at a decreasing rate until they floated as well. I heard their laughter from my perch and saw them slowly join the procession. At this time I became weary and fell asleep despite careful preparations that day. The next morning I awoke to see two nets, the armor and weapons of the hunters, and their clothes lying in the glade. They were never seen again. I now know why the druid had laughed at us." - Sextus Tullius

The Fairies inhabit a number of lands peopled by different cultures. For the most part they tend to favor the Skandians and the inhabitants of northern Europa. No one is sure as to their origin but it is believed that they existed, in far fewer numbers, in to antiquity. Within the past 500 years it is believed that their numbers have increased.

It is not known if they have children but it is believed they do. The most prolific way fairies reproduce seem to be two fold. The first is much like their cousins, the Dwarfs, in that the trade for human children and then transform them into fairies. The second is to capture or lure human adults into their fairie dance where they are transformed into fairies. It is not believed that this race ages or suffers from sickness. Sextus Tullius documented several fairies killed from predators, specifically falcons and eagles, in his works on magical creatures of the Empire.

Fairies have the ability to levitate targets, put people and animals to sleep, and transform people into other forms temporarily and fairy form permanently. Fairies, in general, will avoid combat not so much from fear but because it is not part of their culture. They value life givers and plant tending skills far more than the warrior skills. The fairies' place in nature is as a tender of the forest and field. They protect the wild and will help people with husbandry, livestock and agriculture if the humans agree to live in harmony with the wild creatures. They have few means to force humanity to do the right thing but they have persuasive powers.

Dark Fairies are a bane on all around them. They are Fairies who believe that mankind was a mistake and they are the true form that nature meant to rule the earth. For this reason they use their powers for evil and to cause mischief. They will cause milk to sour, age people or cause all manner of mechanical failure. The Fairies and the Dark Fairies carry an active war against each other. They will sooner fight than talk.

What makes the issue more difficult for humans is that both kinds of fairies look alike. A fairies stands between five and nine inches and have a glow around them. The only means to distinguish dark fairies is by the silver tint to the normally golden glow. Fairies usually, but not always, have transparent membranous wings. Those without wings often build a den that the winged fairies will live in. Not much is known of their social structure but a King and Queen seem to be elected and deal out justice to fairies and non-fairies alike. They are elected and deposed as fast and at the whim of the pride.

Fairies, in general, are looked upon by the northern European people as a mixed blessing. Some embrace them and have nothing but good experiences with the local prides but others have had nothing but Dark Fairies and their deadly pranks.

Fairies wear a magical gossamer cloak that protects them for 45 FP and gives a +1 to Defense.

Ghosts

“As I arose from the battle field, left for dead, I found all around me my comrades in arms. They seemed distressed and led me to a fallen Hunnic rider. He was not dead and at first I approached him in order to aid him but then a wail arose from the soldiers around me. They protested and pleaded for me to send him to them. It was then that I realized that I was surrounded by the dead. A force seemed to possess me and despite my strongest efforts I picked up a sword and ran the barbarian through. Like a weight lifted from my chest I was suddenly free and the sun shown in my eyes. I will never forget that day.” - Account of Lucius of the XXIII Legion

A ghost's motivations are directly linked to its demise and any circumstances left unfinished. They are the product of the dead who cannot let go of living for lack of final resolution. Because of this, they often move through a set scene of their last moments in a futile attempt to resolve that in their life which could not be resolved before their death. Most ghosts do not mean harm but are so desperate they are mad with the need to complete their mission. If a ghost's dilemma is resolved then the ghost will move on to its final rest. It must be said, though, that not all ghosts are well intentioned or wish to move onto their final reward since their reward will most likely be a punishment.

Ghosts are hit only by silver coated or blessed weapons. A ghost receives +1 to Strength, Agility and Will per level. Ghost will throw objects about an area with no target in mind. They may strike a person by accident.

Giants

“The sea chopped about the smaller boats making their travel difficult. The sky was leaden and wind strong and cold from the north. Across the channel strode a family of Giganteus, giants in the speech of the local German tribe. They had the look of men but their skins was the color of rusted metal and they had large amounts of hair, brown or black, all about their body. They were clothed in the skins of oxen, several sewn together to form crude tunics. They carried little metal except for weapons and these appeared to be made in the fashion, and perhaps by, the men of the north lands. They strode with a confidence standing four times the height of the tallest man in the village we were camped in. Their stride was not more than double that of a man's though, due to their compact build and swarthy nature. They shuffled out of the channel and up on to the beach. This was the first of the migrations into Germania.” - Sextus Tullius

Giants are slowly migrating through Scythia from the northern Skanian Kingdoms. Some giants have been found in Ommerike but they seem to be of an entirely different breed from the ones in Europa. Giants were first seen in the area of Trolldheim around 350 years ago. It is believed that the Trolld forced the family groups of Giants to migrate south across the Baltic Sea through Finland. This caused all manners of problems for the Skandians and today the Romans are dealing with the Giants.

A giant eats close to three hundred pounds of food in order to subsist. It will ravage a land and can eat plant life, animals and even humans. They prefer to graze but it often will supplement its diet with domesticated animals. The giants usually live in small family groups and are highly territorial. They will use primitive weapons like clubs and staves to fight with and make a hide armor out of cattle they kill. They have a primitive technology of hunter-gatherers which usually does not extend to metal. The Empire has laws against trading metal or metal implements with giants but it has been known to be done especially due to their incredible strength. Despite this the Giants often eat their way through areas of Germania and Scythia with little to stop them.

Of late another tactic has been used. The giants, in small numbers, are recruited into the Legions. This has met with mixed results since the giants have only a rudimentary understanding of war. To them, if they are not defending territory then they should not be fighting. This makes them great for defensive work but commanders want to use the giants for breaking opponent's lines. Add to this that a number of legionnaires resent the giants as a challenge to their place in the Legions strategy.

Giants carry everything they need with them. Often this includes metals they have raided from Roman outposts and caravans they come across. If they find hills or mountains with suitable caves they will often use such a site for a base or seasonal camp. They tend to migrate south and east going between a summer and winter camp. Those that get in their way do not soon forget it.

Giants wear layers of cow hides as armor. This is uncured and usually means you can smell a giant coming a long time before you see it.

Harpies

"As we passed through a valley near the Wall of Hadrian the locals warned us of the Harpies of Caeryth Well. We took little heed as these tales did not describe them as fierce or overpowering. When we entered the vale it was littered with the bodies of men and animals. To be more precise, the skeletal remains of said beasts. We made haste to traverse the valley before the fall of night but were beset before we were more than half way through. The creatures had the wings and lower bodies of eagles and hawks while their upper bodies were that of beautiful women with blond hair. Some worked in tandem to lift from the ground those around me to dash them on the rocks. Others seemed to have sway of a man's senses. Only the women seemed unaffected and they made it possible for the rest of us to live beyond that day. These Harpies of myth were all too real that summer evening." - Caelwynn the Bard

Harpies are believed to be another creation of Timon, the twelfth century master of magical husbandry, made as possible guards for the wealthy. Unfortunately, he must have failed as these creatures are as volatile as legend makes them out to be. There are two types of Harpies, the Aellites and Celaeno. The only difference between the two are the functions they perform in the flock and their appearance. The Aellites are beautiful blond haired women and clean bodied wings of a hawk while the Celaeno have the torso of an ancient crone, are filthy and have the wings of a carrion bird. The Aellites lure prey in and reproduce while the Celaeno gather food. The entire flock will fight if they are threatened.

Harpies reproduce by mating with birds and always produce female Harpies or male birds. They will kill any male birds when they hatch. Every tenth generation, though, requires a human mate. The flock will find

a male and capture him, use him then kill him. Some flocks will go as far as to capture the boys and raise them to the proper age just for this purpose. Some Romans, as a perversion will keep Aellites for their own entertainment. This is looked on as perverse and dangerous and is against Roman Imperial law.

Harpies as a rule have little intelligence and will not use tools. Their claws are formidable weapons in and of themselves while their mouths are very supple and make a good substitute for hands. The form of a Harpy is the torso of a human female, wings and hind quarters of a bird. Despite the look of intelligence sages do not believe that they even have a rudimentary language.

Currently, Harpies inhabit the Greek peninsula and the eastern coast lands of the Mediterranean. Their numbers have been growing since their first sighting a little under 200 years ago. They tend to flock in one area and feed on carrion. When they sense an advantage or feel threatened by intruders to their territory they will attack. They nest in cave complexes that they sometimes share with other birds and hollow out themselves.

Harpies do not wear armor.

Homo Rana

"It was a night, much like any other, as Fareeza and I walked along the banks of the Tigris. We were looking for a spot to be alone and her beauty was without equal. We found a place, near some reeds, when we heard a sound like the croaking of a great frog. We looked into the reeds and saw a nest of larvae swarming around the body of a soldier. They seemed to feed on it. At that point a creature resembling a frog but with the hands of a man and the eyes of a demon leapt from the water and grappled with me. Fareeza struck it with a rock and I was able to escape its grasp and flee with her. The creature pursued us with bounding leaps and nearly overtook us before we reached the guard at his station." - Account of Yasin, Citizen of Nippur to the Praetor Tobias Linnius

Infesting the rivers of the eastern Roman Empire and the rivers of the Jade Empire these frog men are becoming a greater threat than originally believed. They have come in packs and attack armed men although they prefer the weak or helpless. The Homo Rana are used as house guards by the wealthy but many have escaped to the wild. They were originally sighted in the Euphrates several hundred years ago. After the initial sighting they seemed to disappear for over three centuries until just over three hundred years ago. Then they came back with a vengeance. During this time they were seen as far west as the Nile but have since been pushed back into the east and have enjoyed great success in the rivers of the Kushan Empire.

These creatures prefer semi-tropical and tropical rivers to inhabit and are amphibious. They lay eggs in stagnant pools and can produce up to 10 young in one hatching. However, they have a high mortality rate due to the relative ferocity of predators to their own fighting capability. In addition, many succumb to the same tropical diseases that humans do.

The Homo rana have a primitive society usually based on the strongest ruling the rest. They accept members from the outside as easily as they eject members from the pack. It has been theorized that they have a primitive dialect but most domesticated Homo Rana are taught simple Latin commands. In the wild they will make simple tools and domesticated can be trained to use most modern implements.

The Homo Rana are prized as guards due to their ability to reason, recognize friend from foe and the ability to spit a paralytic poison. They produce this powerful agent in glands located in the back of their throats which have the ability to spray it as a fine mist. It is only effective within 10' but is most effective. After spraying once, the beast must wait for at least two hours before using it again. This is one of the reasons they are more effective in packs. In the wild they would then drag the opponent under the water.

Homo rana stand between three feet and three and one half feet tall with a rubbery dark green skin. Their eyes are over sized and allow them excellent night sight but poor vision during the day. They hunt mostly by smell and have webbed hands with opposable thumbs excellent for grasping.

Homo Rana do not wear armor.

Minotaur

“In ancient tales it is said that the Minotaur of Crete obeyed the king. This was not so upon my visit to this island province. The Minotaur wander the isles of the eastern Mediterranean in small family groups. They are powerful swimmers and sometimes build small rafts. They seem to know instinctively where land is and their way through any path. They are powerful, standing eight to ten feet tall, they have the body of a human. When on Crete, we stumbled upon a family grazing and the Bull immediately charged me and the two milites who were my escort. The Bull made quick work of the milites and I believe I was only allowed to escape due to my unimposing appearance.” - Diotimus the Greek

The minotaur can be domesticated to serve humans but they are very resistance to it. They prefer to roam free amongst the island groups of the eastern Mediterranean. When they are domesticated, it is for duties like hard labor and guards. They are never trusted slaves as they are known to turn on their masters if they sense the slightest weakness. Although they are hunted in the wild their numbers have steadily grown since they were first sighted in the eleventh century of the city.

Another possible destination is the arena. They are known for their ferocity and many a human opponent has fallen under their attacks. Taurus, a famous thirteenth century minotaur of the arena, actually won fame and fortune for his Roman masters. In his time he was able to win such victories and the hearts of the mob that he was retired with honors. This was a first for the beasts of the arena but has not set a trend. It is possible but very rare that a beast can win its freedom.

The wild families of minotaur have begun to spread to the provinces in Aegyptus and Achaea. This has not caused concern yet but it is only a matter of time before the minotaur begin raiding human settlements. The dominant male will often form groups of raiders, sometimes working with neighboring families, and raid for worked materials like metal, tools and food. Minotaurs are nomadic and prefer to have several camps that they hunt from but will usually have one base for an area. This is where they will store loot taken in raids. From these caches they will carry on trade with locals, often trading back the same goods taken.

Minotaur live about thirty years before dying of old age. Both males and females will fight if necessary but the females are usually caring for the young and getting them to safety. Although the minotaur will use tools they seldom make them. They will make rafts to cross water but they are seldom very sea worthy and not used regularly. Many of the magistrates are concerned now that minotaurs have been sighted on the mainland.

Minotaurs will wear the hides of creatures they defeat. Their heads have natural bone armor.

Nymphs

“As our ship sank off the coast of the province of Sicilia we all thought our lives lost to the wrath of Neptune. As we found ourselves in the sea, waves lapping about us, I saw a most beautiful young woman with features tinted blue and green. She rode a dolphin and took me up. With her, my companions were taken up by others of her kind. Through the storm, as though it had no effect on them, they sped to the nearest shore. When there, she looked into my eyes which filled with her voice, “So my sisters and I have saved you from Neptune, you must perform a task for us.” So filled with a passion to do her bidding I knew no natural source could so compel me. “You will seek out the Satyrs of this isle and rescue our sister, Adonia. Do this and your heart will be freed.” Thus began our fellowship to free Adonia from the grasp of the Satyr bandit, Kastus.” - Tribune Caius Gallus

Nymphs come in several forms such as Oceanids (Ocean), Nereids (Water), Naiads (Sea), Dryads (Trees), Hamadryads (Forests), and Oreads (Mountains). These creatures supposedly serve the gods in the Greek and Roman panthos but some have begun to think they have their own agenda. They seem to be moving against the provinces of the near East and parts of the Kushan Empire. They use the Homo Rana often in their schemes but what their eventual goals are have yet to be revealed. At times their actions seem to help humans and the Empire but they do not have any discernable allegiance.

The Nymphs ability to compel men to do their bidding is legendary. It has taken a more potent form in these creations. They have the ability to mesmerize men, some say with thier beauty others with magic, but whatever the source they control men. Their powers do not seem to extend to women but they will often find allies amongst women of the Empire. In this way they maintain an extensive network of spies and agents that can move amongst the human governments without detection.

Not much is known of thier organizations but some believe it is democratic in that the tribe elect representatives to rule in council. They meet on the solstice and equinox in order to plan. No males have ever been seen and it is believed that nymphs, like their name sake, are immortal but no proof has been found for this.

Nymphs have an affinity for types of terrain as discussed before. This affinity allows them certain abilities when interacting with it. Oreads are able to move through earth as though it were water. Nereids, Oceanids and Naiads live in rivers, oceans and seas respectively and are able to breath underwater and swim at high speeds. The Dryads and Hemadryads are often confused and usually only experts can tell them apart. In mythology they are tied to a single tree but in the modern world they are capable of moving from tree to tree or forest to forest. They use the trees to regenerate from wounds, sleep and hide. If the tree they are hiding in is destroyed then they die as well. This merging ability defies all the Roman Magi know of magic.

The praetorians believe that the nymphs and the druids have been conspiring to overthrow the Empire but they have no proof. It is very difficult for the preatorians to infiltrate the secret orders of the druids and have little hope of doing likewise with the Nymphs. The nymphs often capture preatorians and send them back as spies of their own.

If given a choice a nymph will run or hide before confronting humans. At times they can be helpful but it is equally likely that they will ensorcel a man to do their bidding. Nymphs were fiurst sighted back into mythic ages. No one is quite sure when the Nymphs first began meddling in the affairs of humans but the effects have been felt in the past century the heaviest. The most notable of these has been their suspected involvement in the Saeculum Magi.

Nymphs do not wear armor.

Phoenix

“As we crested the hill in Pannonia, a light which appeared to be the dawn shown in the east but it had only past midnight. As my patrol looked about we saw burned stumps and a small cave niche. I had heard the legends and yelled for the others to find cover but it was too late. The Phoenix descended on me and my comrades with the speed of the winds. It seemed to be made of fire and its tail was long and elegant. The space all about me was filled with a golden light as that of the rising sun. Weapons that struck it burst to flame or melted outright. I made it to the cave in time to see the bird, easily with a twenty foot wingspan, consume the ashes of my fallen maniple. When it had sated itself it flew off to its domains leaving me to wander back to the Fortes, alone and ashamed.” - Analects of Lucius, Sodati XXII Legion

In myths the phoenix was a bird who inhabited Arabia and lived for 500 years. The myth was a product of the Aegypti and the bird was a sacrifice to the god Ra. After being sacrificed the sprit of Osiris would burst

from its bosom and the bird would be reborn. It was often depicted with golden plumage or wreathed in fire. Greek myths pointed to the 500 year life span and said that at this time the bird would make a nest of myrrh and frankincense then burst into flames. From its ashes and those of the nest a new phoenix would emerge to live 500 years. The Chinese call the phoenix Feng-huang and it is supposed to only appear in times of peace and prosperity. It is one of the celestial beings and usually appears as a benign emperor is about to ascend the throne. The phoenix represented the yin and yang, order and chaos of the universe. It lived in the sun and at times was represented as two birds, male and female, who had an immortal love for one another. The Feng-huang is immortal and does not age and die like the western phoenix.

These myths are somewhat reflective of the phoenix as it lives in Arabia and northern Africa in the modern Roman Empire. The bird lives only 13 - 16 years but in its death gives birth to a single chick. When the phoenix dies, it will have laid a single egg one year before. This is an egg it carries all its life then deposits on a nest made of smooth beads of glass, stones and precious stones. They will also insulate it with asbestos if they can find it. All of these items it will gather from the wild or from human contacts. The egg is deposited and then guarded and cared for for a year. When the egg is about to hatch the mother bursts into ash. From the ashes, both mother and chick will arise. Both are in their infancy but the mother may have gone through this cycle many times.

In their adult life, the phoenix will cover a large range of territory. They are a solitary and very rare creature and emperors prize the new chicks for their gardens due to their beauty. While hunting in their territory they will use their aura, a radiant heat, to incinerate prey. This seems to tax them and they cannot use their aura more than three times in a row. They must then rest for seven hours before they can use it again. Even exhausted, the phoenix radiates a large amount of warmth but will not burn a person touching it. Arabic tribes are experimenting with taming these birds for mounts with asbestos harness and saddle. Little success has been had but they still try.

One of the reasons that the phoenix is so rare is their propensity to fight. Two adults will not share the same territory. They are sometimes out in the arena and battle to the death, sometimes both dying from wounds. In addition, brave or foolish souls seek out phoenix nests to steal the wealth contained there. This often turns out very badly for both the phoenix and the thieves. If a phoenix is killed before it lays its egg its body will burst into flame and reform as a chick. The chicks can fly and it will immediately attempt to flee its attackers. It is suspected that some of these birds will remember an attacker and later hunt them down.

When hunting, a phoenix will only eat meat that has been cooked. This has led to the misinterpretation that it is eating ash. Phoenixes prefer to hunt creatures like cattle, sheep and other domesticated animals. They will eat humans but prefer to give them a wide berth since they have proven deadly. How much the phoenix retains over its life cycle is still in question. Animal trainers have noted that phoenixes in the imperial compound seem to learn and retain information over the cycles but others deny this claim citing erratic behavior of the birds after several incarnations.

The size of the Phoenix is also often overestimated. Encounters in the wild often have them flaring their aura, at night (their preferred hunting time) which tends to exaggerate their dimensions. They actually have a 10-12 foot wingspan and the shape of an eagle. Even by those who have suffered by them, the phoenix is considered a beautiful bird with elegant gold and red plumage. Its tail feathers are longer than an eagle's and far more impressive. It has keen golden eyes that somehow seem to look through you.

The feathers of the Phoenix offer it protection against damage.

Roc

"In seas to the west of the of Africa was where our ship met its doom. A simple merchant vessel we had limited weapons. After a storm blew us off course we saw the shore of a strange land. It came upon us in a blur of speed. Landing at midships its wings blotted out the sun. Grasping the mast in its beak it snapped it off. Several crew fire bows at the beast to no avail. Then it wings began to beat, lifting the boat and creating a mighty wind. Many were crushed by debris but a small group of us made it to the island. The Roc, as we would later learn its name, tore the ship to kindling

We would be stranded on the island for months giving us plenty of time to observe the beast. It would attack anything entering its territory with mindless ferocity. Whales, ships, sea serpents, anything it viewed as a challenge to its authority. In time we despaired of a ship getting close enough and built our own small rafts that we kept spread far enough to go unnoticed. Such creatures should never be permitted by the gods to live." - Report of a Roc attack on the Merchant Vessel DeCantos off Madagascar

The Roc, sometimes called a Rukh, is a native of the isle of Madagascar. From its first sighting off the coast of southern Africa they have spread to Arabia and western Africa. The roc stays close to the shore but hunts both large marine and land mammals. Some have initially thought the Roc to be merely a Bestia Giganta but it seems unlikely due to its formidable size far beyond those animals.

The Roc will attack ships by dropping large rocks on them or, if small enough, lift them directly out of the water and drop them back in. They are able to carry huge amounts of weight for long distances. People have thought of domesticating these animals but it has been unsuccessful. The Roc does not seem to be able to survive in captivity nor reproduce. They will die within a month of being confined.

Rocs are solitary birds. This is more out of necessity than out of temperament since they require such a large amount of food. They prefer solitary islands or mountains near the ocean giving them easy access to whales or large mammals.

The Roc has a wingspan of over 70 feet and resembles an eagle. Its feathers are prized as well as many of its bodily parts by wealthy patricians. Their eggs are prized as delicacies and served boiled at banquets. This is damaging to the already small population since an adult Roc is likely to have less than three clutches during their entire life. A Roc lives for a formidable period of 80 years.

The feathers of the Roc offer it protection against damage.

Satyr

"Standing silent in the moonlight we realized what the what we saw were the Satyr of legend. Walking upright like a man their bottom half was that of a goat. They had been created late in the thirteenth century as servants for the Celtic magi Urien the Black. After his death many of the Satyr fled to the wilds to live a life of banditry. I could see that it was all too likely that we would be their next victims if we were discovered. At this point though, there was a mighty baying of a horn, a legionary signal as milites flowed out of the hills making quick work of the Satyr. I have seldom been as happy to see the Legionary eagle as I was then." - Sextus Tullius

The Satyrs of legend, called fauns by the Romans, were part of the entourage of the god Dionysos. They had an insatiable sexual appetite, an inclination to mischief and eternal youth. Their bodies were made up of the top half of a man and the hindquarters of a goat. They were particularly fond of nymphs in the sexual escapades but human women were also acceptable.

The modern satyr looks like and acts like the one out of myth. They were created by the nymphs but did not increase in number until the magus, Primus Domitius Paetus, "improved" on the satyr with his magic. He made them able to breed with human women and produce satyr offspring. This allowed him to build his own army of satyr to protect his lands in Parthia. Since his time, nearly 110 years ago, the satyr have found their way to all parts of the Empire. Despite being discouraged and looked upon with suspicion, the satyr will hire out as soldiers, body guards and mercenaries. Satyrs are banned from Legionary service though.

Since the fall of Paetus, times have been hard for the satyr and many have turned to banditry. This has given the satyr a bad reputation, not that it was very good to start with. They tend to target ruins and forested areas as their lairs from which to attack travellers on roads.

Nymphs keep a number of satyr as guards and soldiery. It is suspected that this may be the way the Nymphs reproduce but little is known of Nymph society. The satyr will often deal with people for the Nymphs if there is a possibility of danger or combat. In addition, trading is often maintained through satyr colonies. The satyr colonies which serve the Nymphs will often be located near or in the domain that the Nymph colony controls. This provides some protection to both parties. Unlike legend, the situation is almost reversed in that the Nymph controls the social order while the satyr obeys, usually.

The Satyr stands between five feet and five feet six inches tall. They have brown hair, and lots of it, covering most of their body. They have brown hair and hooved feet excellent for uneven ground. They are not immortal but live 45 - 50 years. They will often take human female captives as wives and tend to treat them well as long as they are able to satisfy the satyr's ardour. Children are of little interest to the satyr and are often left to fend for themselves or follow along if they can. This also assumes that the satyr is anywhere near for the birth. Bearing a satyr child, even as the product of rape, is considered a very shameful thing to any family in the Roman Empire. The woman will often leave the child exposed, not fatal to a new born satyr, to grow up wild. This has led to a number of wild satyr wrecking havoc across many a province begetting more satyr births.

The Roman preatorian guard, serving in a police role and working with the Legions, will often form hunts for groups of bandit satyr. Wild satyr are often found naked running through the country side. The preatorians must be extremely careful since these bands of satyr will often set traps using individuals to lead the unwary to them. Satyr will wear captured leather or hide armors.

Sphinx

"Creatures of incredible grace and power, I first saw them in the courtyards of the great temples in Thebes and about the Great Pyramids. They lounge in the sun with human, but distorted faces, pointed teeth and the golden eyes of a great cat. Their bodies are feline works of art slightly larger than a pony. The priests, when questioned, merely state that they have always been here but records show no such beasts in the time of Constantine. To prove to our party how well the temples are protected, the priests threw a slave to the sphinx. To say they made quick work of the man is to belittle the skills of the sphinx." Diotimu the Greek

The Sphinx is another creature from legend which has surprised people with its appearance. In Greek legend the Sphinx sat on a rock at the approach to Thebes. She would ask a riddle of all travellers and if they could not answer she would strangle them. The Sphinx was a demon of death, destruction and bad luck. In Aegyptus and Arabia it was quite the different legend. The Sphinx was a creature of wisdom and strength that guarded the temples and served the gods of Aegyptus.

The modern sphinx came out of the deserts of Aegyptus and Arabia. The two breeds are compatible but slightly different in coloring. The Aegyptus sphinx has a darker coat and, on rare occasions, blue eyes. The Arabian is somewhat smaller with longer legs made for running. Both have the head of a human and the body of a lion.

The sphinx has been adapted to guarding temples, palaces and homes and are quite common in northern Africa, Arabia and the near East. They have yet to be imported to other parts of the Roman Empire but it is rumored that the Jade Empire has taken an interest in these animals.

The sphinx is trained to accept passwords in the form of certain tones imbedded in a sentence. That is to say, it is the rhythm of the sentence combined with tones at certain points that allow a person to pass. These

are often phrased as responses to riddles that the sphinx can be taught to issue the challenge to. The sphinx has excellent hearing which allows them to detect the tonal signatures. Sphinx can be trained to allow different privileges depending on the pass phrase given. For instance, one phrase may allow a person to pass unescorted while another requires the sphinx to accompany the person. They also are intelligent enough to make simple value calls like while escorting an individual, they would not allow them down certain passages or to take anything.

Sphinx come in male and female pairs and breeding them has become a craft in Aegyptus. They guard their sphinx quite closely and seldom allow a breeding pair outside of their borders. Sphinx breed for life and will not abandon their mate no matter the circumstances. If one dies the other will never take another mate.

A pair will raise their young together and to all observations are caring parents. However, after the first year of they will forcibly eject the cubs to survive or die on their own. A typical litter is 3 -5 cubs with up to 50% dying by the first year. This has made a requirement that sphinx are stored in pairs or along with plenty of space.

Sphinx can speak although in the wild they often use their beautiful voices to croon to one another in mating calls. Some sphinx, for the amusement of humans, are taught to sing ballads and appear quite happy to comply. If a sphinx loses its mate then it will no longer croon, sing and has been known to stop speaking. It is not believed that they speak with full understanding but can be trained to far more commands and far more complex commands than a dog.

The thick hide of the sphinx offers it protection in combat.

Spirits

“For centuries the Comitia Magi have studied spirits only to find how little we know of them. It is obvious that they may be categorized into through major species, the undead, the nature, and the godly. The last, the godly, are not confirmed to exist but it is many times believed that their actions may be observed in an absence of other influences. The undead, or perhaps more appropriately the dead, are the spiritual remains of the logos, or soul, of the deceased. It is often limited in location or scope of what tasks it may perform. The more dangerous of the lot are the spiritus natura are a type of spirit bound to a type of terrain. It is not uncommon for the average man to be destroyed by his encounter with such a spirit.” - from the Libraries of the Comitia Magus

Nature Spirits are worshipped as gods in different cultures and they have not forgotten the draw of that power. Nature Spirits are not inherently evil though, some take their duties very seriously. They regulate the flows of rivers, growth of forests and many other parts of nature. Their numbers have increased and some philosophers believe it is due to the increased use of magic. As they have become more bold, some have sought to possess a human body but they are still irrevocably linked to their original lake, glen or other land form.

They can be a difficult opponent since they have no corporeal form. Luckily, they stay in a limited area being linked to the land and unable to leave unless they possess a body. If this body is killed while they are away from their land then they will immediately be pulled back to that area. To permanently kill a Spirit one must drive a golden spear into the belly of the creature which they have possessed. These spirits have the ability to heal almost any nonlethal damage to their host (i.e. aging, most diseases, minor wounds).

The Spirits are not all evil though, quite the contrary, most are benevolent and only wish to live in the forest or mountain or glens in peace. However, a few remember the ancient times when they were corporeal and walked the Earth as gods. Their history claimed that a great war occurred and in that war they rose to dominate humans before they had history or even writing. During this time a group of Spirits opposed to this action fought against them. In the end the battle rose out of control and a great flood was unleashed on

the world. Many of the Spirits were weakened or destroyed. Only a handful of humans could be saved by their protectors placing them on a high mountain. Afterwards, the protectors of mankind vowed not to interfere. The threat was considered contained since the Spirits who would be gods had been thoroughly broken.

Shade

No one is positive about the origin of the Shade but it is thought it comes from a realm of Shadows which is the space between the planes of the Greater Realms. In any case, it is an utterly alien creature to the Earth and its ecosphere. The shade survives upon the leeching of life force through the possession of native creatures of the Earthly plane. The more intelligent the victim the more desirable a food source to the Shade. Shades are sometimes employed by powerful spell casters who wish to spy on or possibly assassinate a rival.

A shade is extremely sensitive to light and will flee from it if it can. Torches and lanterns will do 1d6 of damage per round, a magic source of light or a flashlight will do 2d6/rd. and the sun will do 3d6/rd. This damage is not done to a shade when it possesses the body of a living creature. It will still be sensitive to bright light and prefer shadows. When it enters the Shadow Realm in its natural form, it can cover distances at a rate of 100 miles/hour. It may only enter or leave the Shadow Realm in areas of darkness. A shade gives off no heat and can blend with shadows perfectly making it 95% undetectable.

Siren

"I had been chained under decks due to arguing with the captain over the route he had chosen. It was known for the pirates and even darker creatures. Twilight was upon us when I heard the most unearthly beautiful choir singing to us. It filled the air and vibrated in my bones so that there was no way to ignore it. I would answer it or die. I saw the others go over the wales into the water but could only feel frustration at being unable to join them. The captain was the last to go, seeming to fight all the way. He gave me a final look as to say he was sorry I could no join him. As I struggled I realized, as if in a distant place that my wrist were bleeding. As the ship sailed on without her crew I saw, sitting on the rocks, a trio of sirens. They had the body of women but wings grew from their backs. They now began to swoop down and drown the men strong enough to reach there island. The last I saw of them they had the first mate on the rocks and were devouring him. As I past out of reach of their song I realized my hands were free but it did not stop me from weeping for want of their song." Statement of Didirius, Pilot of the merchant ship Mergus.

The legends of the Sirens are part of the Greek mythos. Their original legends tell of two sirens who lived in the western seas. Later the number was increased to three and moved to the west coast of Italia. They had the bottom half of a bird and the top half of a woman. They were reported to be beautiful and were able to lure men to their deaths by singing to them. They were believed to be the daughters of Phorcys, a sea god, or Achelous a storm god.

Sirens, in the modern Roman Empire, are similar to their legendary predecessors but vary in a few ways. First, they are a race that reproduces via human males. Second, their powers of ensorcelment extends to illusion which allows them to move amongst human societies. Finally, they live throughout the world and move about quite a bit.

Sirens work at sea and on land but only lure men to their service. They often will use these men to do their bidding. Sirens often wish to gain power over humans in order to aggrandize themselves. Northern Africa has developed several cults centered on power made sirens wishing worshippers and wealth. They will often work in groups in order to maximize the number they can control and spread the illusion power to effect as many people as possible.

The current and largest threat from the sirens comes from the Empire of Ghana in west Africa. The siren queen Marmara has built a religion with her at the head and her seven sisters as lesser goddesses. They have a temple at the edge of the Sahara where her worshippers, all male, travel to give sacrifice to her and help build her temples. Her temple is guarded by a flock of Harpies which often work with the sirens.

The powers of the siren are ensorcelment, shape shifting and the ability to cast illusion. They use the ability to shape shift in order to disguise themselves. They also will use it as a means of escape but they cannot gain any magical powers from the change (they can fly as a phoenix but they will not rebirth is killed). If they are killed or knocked unconscious they will return their original form. Thus, when they sleep they return to their natural form.

Their powers of illusion are like the Underworld spell, Illusion III (see “**Error! Reference source not found.**” on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**) but will last one day per level of the siren. Their powers of ensorcelment will last one week per level of the siren.

Terragena Alkasas

“As the cohort came over the hill they encountered fields of plants. These plants held one great pod the size of a large bag of grain. The skin of it was a deep green with red veins that covered the sack. The stem of the plant was large, as thick as a man's waste and stood one and a half times the height of a grown man. Suspended from the end of the stem was a single sac that contained a dimly outlined form. As we stood there, we saw several slaves led to a plant that then struck at their chest with a thorn, seeming to draw all the blood from their body in a rapid fashion. The men of the cohort were shaken at the sight. In another part of the field, we saw the plants give birth to a terragenan warrior, fully grown and ready to join the forces arrayed against us.” - From the report of the Tribune Janus Gracchus.

The Terragena are the foot soldier of the Black Magi of the north, the Alkasatians. These ferocious warriors are grown on plantations in magical plants which are fed the blood of humans for nourishment. It takes nine months for a plant to birth one terragena but they emerge fully adult and trained. Special tenders provide constant care for the plants and supervise the births.

The terragena have no sex but do consume food. They are somewhat economical and require only half of the food of human. They are slightly less intelligent than the average human and rule themselves, when appropriate, by simple rule of the strongest. The weak have no rights nor privileges. Terragena are tall, usually standing more than six feet and weighing 230 pounds. They have tan skin the color of mud and no hair. They are roughly humanoid shape but they have short necks and broad features. They are covered with a thick skin that provides them protection. The terragena only live 10 years. It has been known for them to run off before this time, if they have survived battle, to die alone.

In the Alkasatian society the terragena have no rights and any considering such a point would be thought seriously disturbed. Terragena, although used as guards in the highly dangerous political scene of Alkasas, seldom share the same quarters as their master. They will be kept nearby but out of sight.

In war, they will fight in their own units and are seldom mixed with the human slave troops of the Alkasas. They make formidable infantry but have difficulty with horses and other mounts. These positions are usually filled by barbarian allies. They are treated as shock troops and will often be sacrificed when men would not be. They are born with a ferocity and just enough intelligence to be dangerous.

These are some of the most despised enemies of the Roman and Jade Empires. The Skandians do not look on them with much favor either. This is in part due to the terragena's habit of eating their enemies and parading the skulls in front of any enemy survivors. When the terragena battle they expect no quarter nor do

they give any. Although terrigena can wear armor they are often sent into combat without since their skin offers good protection.

Trold

“In my time amongst the Northmen, I had heard many tales of the Trold. Descriptions varied widely from small, only reaching the height of a man’s knee to several feet taller than a man. All had a similarly horrible appearance and a bend towards the cunning. They range from mischievous to downright vile, some misleading people other stealing babies and women. All seem to have the power of invisibility and are intelligent beyond the ken of mankind. They are strong far beyond human norms and are said to be able to eat anything from rock to rotting flesh. They live alone or in small families in hillsides and underground places. They can be good neighbors but only if watched closely. They will, on occasion, help men and even trade with them. They have a great craftsmanship with weapons and although they charge dearly, Trold weapons and armor are valued by the Northmen. I admit to the contrary nature of the reports and often wonder where truth ends and legends begin.” - From “My Journey Amongst the Northmen” by Sextus Tullius

The Trold or Trolls are a curse of the Norse. They are hairy giants that have forced their brethren, the Gigantas or giant, south into the provinces of Gemanía. They control the central portions of the northern skandian peninsula. The trold have fought for control of the area called Troldheim where they tolerate the human presence.

The trold live in hills made of crystal and gold and from here will trade with humans if the humans have something they desire. They are master craftsmen and are in direct competition with the dwarfs who live closer to the humans. Still, trolds are known for their expertise with weapons, especially the great swords of the Norse.

Although the trold prefer to battle someone to asking them to leave they have become more reasonable with several of the neighboring kingdoms. The Trold have a number of kings themselves and this leads to them having difficulty fielding a unified force. The human kingdoms of Skandia are equally ill prepared to lay siege to the hills that the trold live under. The trold are also quite knowledgeable in hydraulics and machinery in general but will seldom share their knowledge with others. They do build it into their own fortresses though making assault out of the question.

Raids are a common event on both sides though. The trold raid the humans for food and slaves while the Norse raid the trold for wealth. This is a cycle that the humans are losing. The trold warrior is often worth more than three men in a fight and it can get worse if the terrain is on the trolds side.

The trold has a thick skin that offers them protection in battle. There appears to be little difference between the men and the women. They both fight with the same ferocity and even the children can be dangerous. A typical trold hill will hold 15- 20 trold adults and anywhere from zero to seven children.

Trolds will occasionally hire out to Skandians as warriors but it is considered bad luck to have a trold in the group of warriors. Still, results often speak differently. The Trolds are not trusted and often looked upon as thieves despite their size. The lands of the Troldheim are dotted with ruins both of the trold hills and ill fated attempts by humans to possess the land.