

An Introduction to the Realms of Chirak

Introduction to the Post-Apocalyptic Fantasy World

The Ancient Past

Long ago, ancient man dwelt in a dream-like splendor. Several great empires, including the Mythrics, Inadasir, and others forgotten to time ruled the world. Sorcerous palaces of crystal and gold stretched in to the sky, out of sight from the ground beneath. Servants shaped from stone and clay served these empires obediently, and the gods, divine keepers of the twelve sacred astrological points in the sky, dwelt in harmony with one another. The last decades of this impressive era of peace and beauty were two millennia ago.

Something happened then, a time known as the Apocalypse, in which terrible floods swept the known world, and much of the divine civilization of old was annihilated. It was said by some that the gods themselves were seen to be in terrible conflict, riding the crest of the great elemental waves, which carried their wrath across the realms of man. When it was over, and the waters receded, only a handful struggled from the ruins of this great destruction to carry on. Things were different forever more, and the twelve sacred stones of the gods were lost, the sorcery inherent within them gone as well.

The greatest of these ancient civilizations were called the Mythric, Eshadai and Inadasir Empires. The Mythric Empire was submerged in the deluge, in what came to be known as the great Sea of Chirak, after what some say was the final Emperor of that lost realm, and others say was the first survivor. A handful of Mythric Isles with a trace of the ancient ruins still exist in the present.

Beyond the Sea of Chirak, are scattered other great land-locked seas from the deluge, and eventually a great wasteland of jagged, ruptured volcanic mountains that become increasingly impassable and uninhabitable as you work your way closer to the edge of the world. It is said that if you go far enough north, an impenetrable wall of

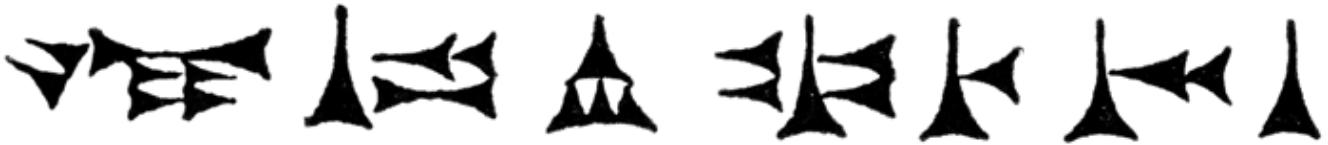
glacial expanse awaits. To the west, beyond the edge of the known world is an endless, tumultuous sea, and to the east some claim the edge of the world fragments in to an airy void. Southward lies an endless sea of volcanic mountains.

In the days of the Apocalypse, each of the great empires met their elemental fates. The Inadasir Empire was ravaged by war, and a horde of demons fought men and elohim to a standstill, until the sacrifices of the gods ended the conflict with their deaths. In the north, the Eshadai were engulfed in ice, frozen forever beneath great glaciers. The civilization of the south, from whom the people of Neuseus and Ulos are descended, was obliterated by the endless eruptions of great volcanoes, and in the west, the gods fought their last stand, devastating the epicenter of the ancient world with permanent great scars where their titanic bodies fell to the earth.

Some say that the jealousy of the gods came in to conflict, and through their human puppets, this jealousy turned to rage and conflict. Others say that it was the desire of man to become like the gods, using the power of the zodiac stones to make their possessors demiurges that caused the apocalypse. Still others say that humanity was judged for its sloth and impious behavior, and found wanting. Those who survived are the fortunate few, being pure of heart or intention. Still others say it was the opposite, and that the deluge carried away the worthy to a true heaven, and that the remaining people were found unworthy.

The Present

The old gods have largely passed from the memory of man, and a handful of new demiurges, successors to the old way, have arisen to struggle for ascension to forge a new pantheon. These young new avatars and demiurges include



Kalie'yana of the sea, Kon'Hun, Hidden Lord of the Sands, and Laddaskar, the demiurge of the land and farmers. The Zodiac Stones, containing the essence of divine power of the dead gods, have been scattered and lost. Some have been discovered by souls daring enough to walk the path of the avatar, and a few have even become demiurges.

These are weak demiurges compared to those the old tales refer to. Some tribal groups in the world have forgotten the old ways and gone on to form new shamanic religions and beliefs based on spirits and ancestral blood magic (The Hoagarit and Nubiri, for example) while others have renounced the ways of the old gods and adopted a coldly rational view of the universe (i.e. The Masirians and the Sabraheil). Others have embraced new pantheons of young spirits and demons (i.e. Therias and Xoxtocharit).

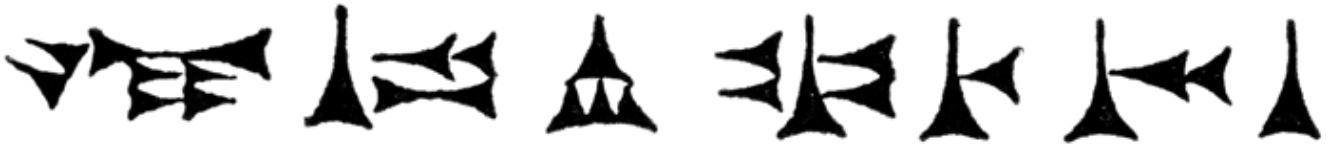
Throughout the lands, a scholarly group in the form of the **Preservationists** has arisen, dedicated to the restoration of lost knowledge and the preservation of old writings. This group is held in great esteem by the chiefdom of Eristantopolis, the city of Barcen in Espanea, and the Nithiadians.

The cults of this world now follow a path seeking salvation in the eyes of the Dead Gods, and the **Cult of the Lost Gods** is a great one within the land. People see themselves as the outcasts of a fantastic salvation during which all of mankind save their selves were sent to the Heavens beyond to dwell in harmony with one another. Only the impure souls remained behind. As a result, the Cult of the Lost Gods sees disharmony in this world as unacceptable, and seeks to reunite the dissident city states and kingdoms of the land, but New God cults, like that of Piscrael or the enigmatic Hun'hunal, are in opposition, postulating that the people of this land are the lucky survivors of an Armageddon that wiped out all of the weak and infirm, among both men and gods.

Humanoids of all species have recovered from the Apocalypse and flourish once more, settling in carefully guarded cities and townships, to protect themselves from the many threats of the world.

Young warlords arise all the time, and occasionally an unscrupulous arcanist or errant necromancer unlocks ancient secrets, and seeks to conquer some corner of Chirak.

Finally, other marks of the ancient past do well up in the form of the animates, dark regions of territory surrounding strange ruins, such as the ancient astronomical dome south of Eristantopolis, or the vast subterranean ruins of Beltraine. These sites are protected by ancient golems, creatures called Animates by mages to distinguish them from the mindless golems of conventional sorcery. These mechanical monsters seem to follow their own secret agenda, and serve unseen masters who use lost technology to chart the night skies, looking for something to mark their own salvation, or reason for being, but who knows what that may be? Every year a handful of human-like Animates, sometimes protected by fearsome guardians are sent out in to the world to explore, record events, and learn of local history and language. Once in a while these mechanoid researchers even return to the dome. These animates are usually never seen again, as their goal has been completed and they are (presumably) either retired or given a new task specific to their strange, clockwork home.



A waterside view of Barcen, Espanea

Overview of The Realms of Chirak

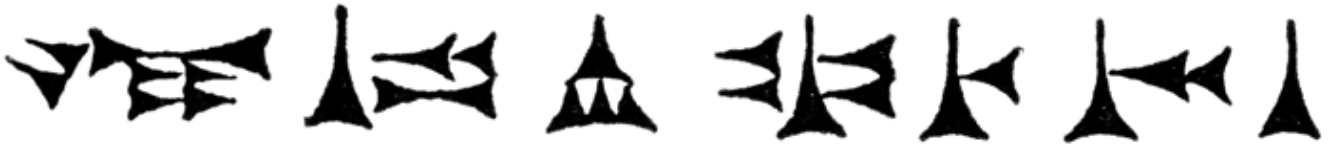
The region known as the Sea of Chirak is part of a larger world, commonly described by the same name, for no one knows what the world was called by the ancients anymore. Therefore, while the *Realms of Chirak* refer to the world at large, the specific cultural groups around the *Sea of Chirak* are referred to in a specific geographical context.

Geography and Physics of Chirak

The geography of Chirak is simpler than in some other fantasy universes. Chirak is a spherical world, slightly larger in dimension than the real Earth. It

operates on principles of physics that would be comfortably familiar to any student of such in our own reality. Indeed, it is this adherence to the rules of the normal that allows the magic of Chirak to seem so uniquely special. Magic is, in principle, the breaking of these rules, and thus in order for it to work, there must be a coherent underlying structure to reality to be broken.

Chirak's geography and physics notwithstanding, it is an unfortunate fact that the edges of the known world are deadly locations to visit. In the mythology and lore of the Apocalypse it is often stated that the edges of the world were being slowly destroyed by the horrendous destructive



chaos released by the betrayer gods, and that this primal elemental energy can be found if you sail or walk far enough in any direction. If there are other pockets of life and stability beyond these walls of elemental fury, none can say.

Astronomical Lore of Chirak

The skies of Chirak look much like any other night sky, but there are a few key differences worth noting to those who would pursue a study in astronomy or astrology.

First and most importantly, there are two moons. The larger of the two moons is known by its epochal name of **Luna** and in the mythology of the old pantheon it was said to have been a neutral land upon which the gods held court.

The second moon is called **Minora** and little is known of this orb, save that the records of old suggest that it first appeared in the sky on the eve of the Apocalypse. The exact nature of this moon and what force created it is completely unknown. It has been noted by astrologers that this moon is about half the size of Luna, but slightly closer in its orbit to Chirak. On rare occasion, when Luna, and Minora align and eclipse the sun, it is believed to be a terrible omen.

There are twelve planets recorded in the sky, and each planet is aligned to one of the twelve prominent constellations. As such, this means that Chirak's solar system has thirteen worlds which orbit about the sun, and each orbit coincidentally passes through a visible constellation, which is in turn associated with one of the twelve signs of the zodiac. There are also a myriad variety of lesser constellations.

Not much is known about these twelve orbiting bodies beyond their astrological significance. The old stories of the Apocalypse suggest that at least one of these worlds, called Perdition in Espanean and Abyss in the native language of its inhabitants, was a living, inhabited world that was devastated during the Apocalypse. It's descendants tell a tale of treachery and corruption, and suggest that many of the demon races stemmed from this world.

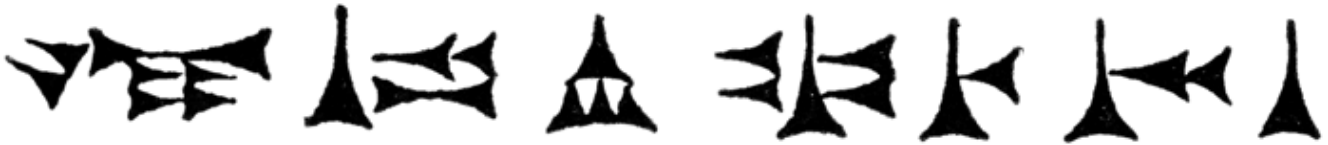
Abyss is the only world of the twelve that can not be viewed without a telescope.

For quick reference, here are the twelve constellations of Chirak and the names of the twelve worlds which pass through them, in order from closest to farthest orbit. The astronomers of Chirak use a surprisingly close measurement system to our own *astronomical unit (AU)* with on 1 AU to be the estimated distance from Chirak to the Sun:

Constellation	World Name	Est. Distance
Unknown	Chirak	1 AU
Capricorn	Articus	2 AU
Aquarius	Quarnios	3 AU
Pisces	Iscari	4.5 AU
Ares	Abaddon	6 AU
Taurus	Abyss	8 AU
Gemini	Arborea	11 AU
Cancer	Charybdos	14.5 AU
Leo	Celestia	19 AU
Virgo	Tybor	24 AU
Libra	Inimikus	30.5 AU
Scorpio	Acheron	37 AU
Sagittarius	Irkalla	46 AU

Although the exact nature of these distances of measurement (by means of parallax and occasionally through gravitic lensing) are up for debate, it is generally agreed upon that the other planets in the solar system are *really far away*. The fact that the ancients are known to have used incredible flying ships to visit these other worlds is simply mind-boggling to the scholars and mages who study astronomy.

At this time, it is believed by most astronomers that the worlds move about on the planes of great crystal spheres; one might imagine a metal ball tossed in to a hollow sphere, as an example. These invisible layered spheres are otherwise etheric, and can not be observed directly. The stars are believed to be on a vast outer sphere, beyond the reach of the farthest world. A few heretical astronomers (arcanists, naturally) contend that there are no crystal spheres at all, and that the stars are actually



distant suns, just like Chirak's own, each one sustaining its own worlds, gods and mortals.

The Major Regions of Chirak

Chirak is divided into six major "known" regions of the world, with the Sea of Chirak region being at the center of the known world as well as the center of the modern renaissance in exploration and advancement. Other regions range from barren and dangerous wastelands (such as in the south) to exotic lands filled with relics and ruins from the lost era (as with the West). These regions include:

The Sea of Chirak

This region includes the numerous cultures and lands which abridge the vast Sea of Chirak. Here, humanity and its kin have flourished and returned to a state of advancing civilization. The majority of adventures and campaigns in Chirak have been centered in this area, and much about it has been documented and explored. At the heart of the Sea of Chirak rests the fabled Kaldinian cultures, of which the kingdom of Espanea is most prominent, leading a small renaissance in the center of the known world. On every shore of the landlocked sea can be found a diversity of cultures and kingdoms growing up amidst the ruins of the ancient Mythric and Inadasir empires.

The West

The legendary West is a fabled region in which it is said the Apocalypse came to a close with the fall of the last gods. This is a strange, demon-haunted land of ancient sorcery, mouldering remnants of the divine and their armies, and hideous entities. The West is a strange and dangerous place to visit, but it also holds vital secrets to the past.

The Frozen North

North of the Sea of Chirak is a region that grows increasingly cold, where even the summers are barely tolerable, until at last you arrive at the edge of a frozen sea of ice, with the remnants of an ancient continental land called Pale imbedded in

eternal slumber. The people of the north are hardy and rugged lot. The Frozen North extends much farther north across the Glittering Ocean than has ever been explored.

The Everread Desert of the Burning South

Little remains of the Burning South, save for a vast realm of impenetrable volcanic mountains, vast and impenetrable deserts and terrible heat. The northernmost sections of this realm are barely habitable, and are considered part of the southern expanse of the Sea of Chirak region. Only dragons are known to dwell in this vast wasteland.

The Eastern Realms

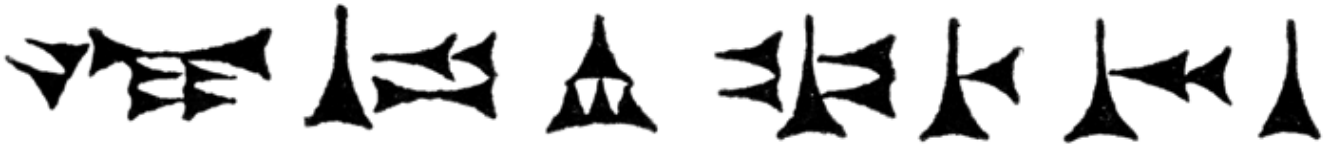
To the east are an ancient land dominated by two major regions, the Sapphiritics in the south and the Yellow Kingdoms of the north. Beyond the easternmost shores of this region stretch a vastness of elemental power, where the sky, land and sea seem to merge in to one haze, and a realm of floating debris in the maelstrom of an airy void can be found. Because of the difficult mountains, deserts and rough terrain between the Sea of Chirak and the east, little trade or exploration has gone on between the two lands.

Far Therias

Located in the southwestern most corner of the world, abutting against the primordial chaos that eats away at the rest of the planet, Therias is a pocket of civilization nestled in its own domain, far removed from and largely unaware of the Sea of Chirak to the northeast and the West to its north. The Therians are a hearty lot, but they are largely ignorant of the rest of the world, and remain to be discovered by all save the Abraheilites and Helians of the West.

Theliad

The remote northwestern region of the great continent is dominated by a series of local kingdoms generally described as the Theliadans by those traders and travelers who venture to that region. Theliad is a curiosity to many, and intersects



with the cultural Mecca of Eristantopolis in a strange way. The locals have eschewed the worship of old gods or new avatars in favor of a local phenomenon, in which certain individuals can attain enlightenment and immortality, granting them seemingly godlike status.

Overview of the Sea of Chirak

The Sea of Chirak is the centerpiece of the world, and the heart of most adventures and tales. Most characters will initially come from this land, and it is here that most new explorers in the world will come from, at least at first. What follows is a short summary of the key kingdoms and cultures which adjoin the Sea of Chirak region. Much more about these lands can be found in the Gazetteer, later on:

The Heart of the Sea of Chirak:

The Kaldinian Expanse

This is the "cultural group" of the island kingdoms. The Kaldinians today are a loose society of freebooters and pirates who dwell on a handful of islands in the Sea of Chirak as well as a few coastal ports of call. They are the last generation of free men, and it was from the old Kaldinian movement that the larger island kingdoms emerged. The island kingdoms consist of:

Espanea

The largest island in the heart of the Sea of Chirak, Espanea is home to an age of renaissance with a kingdom and culture reminiscent of Italy and Spain during the 1600's. The Espaneans are curious folk by nature, open to many ideas and concepts, and are famous for their explorers and scholars.

Esterehabau

A kingdom of elemental sorcerers; loosely reminiscent of Carolignian France, Esterehabau is steeped in old values that they have preserved long past the time in which other Kaldinians left such antique customs behind.

Pardainse

The dwarves of Pardainse are spread throughout the western Burgeness Isles. Pardainse is a kingdom of dwarves dwelling in a future Italy as it might have been imagined by Leonardo da Vinci. The history of these dwarves is not well known amongst men, and they arrived here early on, quickly achieving a mastery of artificing and aiding in no small measure in the advancement of Espanea in to its enlightened age.

Sontaniardes

This collection of islands is a loose affiliation of smaller islands east of Espanea, dominated by rogues and privateers. Sontaniardes is different only from the modern Kaldinians in that they hold allegiance to the Sea Kings, piratical overlords who work together to achieve a semblance of peace amongst one another.

The North Coast of the Sea of Chirak:

Legoran Kingdoms

A northern land, southernmost of the northlanders, Legoras is a forestland of barbarian jarldoms who war amongst one another and revere old spirits that some say predate the gods themselves. The Legorans are culturally descended from northmen of Syrgia and may have once been migrants from the distant frozen lands of the far north.

Dwelling in the Legoran lands are the Cannesh, which are strange shapeshifters who may once have been human, but who are all now in tune with their nagual, or animal aspect.

Masiria

A frozen desert in the northwest coastlands, nestled in some of the most ruinous lands of old. The culture is a decadent civilization of old human sorcerers, the elite of whom have extended their lifespans to unnatural lengths. Think Melnibone meets Egypt.