

ARKENSTONE

A thriving if somewhat perilous port city, the Free City of Arkenstone is the center of trade on the western coast of Pendaan, a place where nearly anything can be had for a price, if you know the right people to ask. Its ruling triumvirate maintains a position of strict neutrality, intervening in external politics only enough to maintain the regional balance of power. Most notably, it has intervened on several occasions to keep Harradon, Ironwatch, and Sarden from annexing the crossroads region of Felnar. Some accuse Arkenstone of secret trade with Blackhold; certainly the city has gone to no great lengths to prevent smugglers from working in their region.

Arkenstone controls a number of cities to the north, including Lacarta (known for its horses) and Cragsmoor (at the far north on the edge of the Midnight Moor). Raiders from the Frozen North have been a problem for these areas over the last decade, attacking with impunity.

Arkenstone trades far and wide by sea, as well as overland with Harradon and Felnar. Additional trade passes through Felnar bound for Ironwatch and Sarden.

GOVERNANCE

The nominal rulership of Arkenstone is a triumvirate consisting of a High Priest, a High Mage, and a High Commander, to whom the Counts of the other major cities answer. The three are openly the leadership, lawmakers and power center of Arkenstone. However, the power they wield comes from another council, a shadow council, known only as "The Web." While many in Arkenstone know this to be the case, no credible sources dare to speak of it, as those who do have all suffered from unfortunate "accidents."



While information about this organization is hard to come by, what is spoken in shadowy corners is that every major guild and merchant house strives to have one of their members in the council. The rise and fall of many guilds and houses has been linked to membership in "The Web." However, the identities and number of members, the process by which they are appointed, and the frequency of turnover are all closely guarded secrets. This practice further shrouds their existence and protects them from bribery, blackmail, intimidation, and simple threats of violence. Of course, speculation is always rife within certain circles about the identities of the current members, which guilds are on the council, and who you should curry favor with. Much is made of seeing guild members speaking with those outside their guild.

The Web is said to meet within a building at the center of Arkenstone. The chambers are said to

be inaccessible from the outside, necessitating members arriving via magical Gate.

NOBILITY

The city of Arkenstone is ruled by the Triumvirate, while each of the cities ruled by Arkenstone is ruled by a Count. The individual members of the Triumvirate are technically considered Counts, but usually addressed simply by their titles of High Mage, High Priest, and High Commander.

Below these, the noble titles are similar to those found in nearby regions:

- Viscount — rules multiple small towns
- Baron — rules a small town or a few villages
- Margrave — rules a single village or a major Guildhouse
- Knight Commander — the head of an order of Knights, equal to a Margrave
- Landsgrave — rules a lesser Guildhouse, keep, tower, manor, or hamlet
- Knight — holds rank in a military unit

In addition, a variety of non-noble titles may be earned by commoners:

- Bondsman — bonded to a noble
- Squire — bondsman of a knight
- Yeoman — a landowner or skilled merchant
- Warden — has been assigned to a position of responsibility
- Guildmaster — head of a small or local guild
- Citizen — has rights and privileges of Citizenship within a village, town or city
- Resident — lives in a village, town, or city, but not granted Citizenship
- Non-resident/Commoner — usually a visitor of no rank, with only a few “common” rights

Bondsmen and squires are roughly equal, but outrank yeomen, wardens, and guildmasters. In turn, yeomen, wardens, and guildmasters are roughly equal but outrank citizens. Citizens hold

status higher than residents, who in turn hold higher status than commoners.

TRADE

Trade is the lifeblood of Arkenstone. It is said that if you can't find what you're looking for in Arkenstone, you're either blind or a fool. Grains and produce from the countryside, wool and woven goods from the moors, weapons and armor from the cities, iron from the quarries near Arpark; truly the area enjoys an embarrassment of natural riches. Craftsmen of consummate skill also gravitate towards Arkenstone, plying their trade in both the city of Arkenstone, and to a lesser extent, Ducheyll.

CITIES

ARKENSTONE

The city of Arkenstone, pearl of the region, is a wild mix of cultures from across the continent, divided into four roughly ethnic quarters: the western Sardenese Quarter, the Northern Quarter, the eastern Myran Quarter, and the southern Laborers' Quarter, as well as the wealthy neighborhoods of Mont Rouse and Briar Walk.

The western part of the city is the Sardenese Quarter, and contains the majority of the woodworkers and carpenters, most of the scrollcrafters, and Temple Row, on which lies both the Temple of Brilliant Effulgence and the Temple of the Opulent Fair, the city's largest temples of Radiance and Fortune, respectively. The faithful of Arkenstone are split fairly evenly between these two faiths, while shamanism is almost entirely absent from the city. Within Fortune, the school of Avannarites is the most favored.

The northern part of the city is the Northern Quarter; all of the best weavers and bakers can be found within its streets. Many of its residents hail from the cities to the north, towards the

Midnight Moors, and many still maintain the customs and fashions from their homes.

The eastern part of the city is the Myran Quarter, named for the now-defunct Myran Commonwealth. This quarter houses the most well-known smithies and jeweler's shops, and Kaerramos Mage Tower, named for its founder. It is the most prominent school of magic of any type in the Arkenstone region. Kaerramos' reputation was built on Wizardry, and this magic is still locally considered the most sophisticated, but the other schools are also taught here. Mentalism especially is out of fashion for the most part and considered a "lesser" magic, but a few students still continue despite their parents' shame. Unsupported rumors say that a very select number of students are allowed to study Sorcery, but only as a means to combat fiends.

The southern part of the town, surrounding the harbor, is what is genteelly called the Laborer's Quarter, or more commonly, the Poor Quarter. In addition to the docks, taverns, and warehouses of the harbor area, the slaughterhouses and tanners are almost all here, and a good number of leatherworking shops (though the Leatherworker's Guildhouse lies north, in the Northern Quarter). It also contains Arkenstone's most popular low-class entertainment: the pit fights. A number of pits exist, in fierce competition with each other.

In the northwest corner of the city, between the Sardenese and Northern Quarters, lies Mont Rousse, an incredibly wealthy neighborhood. Nearly all of the town's oldest and noblest families dwell here, and the neighborhood hires its own private guard.

To the southeast of the city, overlooking the harbor, sits Briar Walk, only built in the last fifty or so years. Here lies another section of the very rich; those who have made their fortune in trade. Without a family history or lineage of any sort, they have nonetheless fought their way to the top. Mont Rousse residents look down on Briar

Walk as the "new money," but for the most part, Briar Walk doesn't care.

Status means everything in Arkenstone, and this is reflected in the styles of the region. Rich fabrics, generous cuts, full skirts and heavily embroidered and trimmed doublets; nothing is too extravagant. Jewelry tends to the ornate and gem-studded, though delicate craftsmanship is also highly valued.

Notable Figures of Arkenstone

High Mage Thrémir Hil-Gandil, elven wizard and scrollcrafter, and first member of the Ruling Triumvirate.

High Priest Cadien Acaylle, a human Avannarite priest. He is the second member of the Ruling Triumvirate.

High Commander Serthia Kartua Maevamam, a famori and devout Radiant of the Order of the Shining Sword. She is the third and final member of the Ruling Triumvirate.

Margrave Torlin Aldive Kaliss, the famori Guildmaster of the Carpenters' Guild.

Margrave Brina Naneoic, a dwarven woman and Guildmaster of the Blacksmiths' Guild.

Margrave Uneadia Rholle, recently elected Guildmaster of the Weavers' Guild, half-elven woman.

Margrave Vidoc Addragwyn, Guildmaster of the Bakers' and Vintners' Guild, a yellow warg. Vidoc claims descent from "the first warg vintner, Kordax."

Margrave Glayde Pirolith, Guildmaster of the Butchers' Guild, a human man.

Margrave Adon Troin, human Guildmaster of the Leatherworkers' Guild. Nearing retirement within the next few years, he spends much of his time grooming his expected replacement.

Margrave Gemia Romlair Etiniel, Guildmaster of the Mages' Guild, a famori woman.

Margrave Chandar Kota, ra'kash Guildmaster of the Scrollcrafters' Guild. Spends several months' worth of the year traveling, and as such entrusts much to his assistants.

Margrave Vénduil Lómilduir, elven Guildmaster of the Jewelers' Guild. She does less jeweler's work now that she is Guildmaster, and her pieces have dramatically increased in value because of it; to have a Lómilduir has become a status symbol.

CRAGSMOOR

Far smaller than Arkenstone, the pallisaded city of Cragsmoor sits on the edge of the Midnight Moor. Wool and woven goods of unsurpassed quality come from this region. Natives tend to dress warmly, with richly colored tartans and complex knotwork as common elements. Style and status are less important to most Cragsmoor residents than in Arkenstone; in fact, most consider the city to be both garish and depraved.

Due to the increase in Northern raids in the past years, Cragsmoor has set up a sea-watch tower the locals have dubbed Crag's Watch. A slender stone spire, it rises some hundred feet into the air and is usually manned by one or two of the city's children.

Towards Cragsmoor and near the Moors, shamanism, especially Nature, is more prevalent than other faiths, though Fortune keeps a strong hold.

Cragsmoor has been ruled for some thirty years by the human Countess Moiread Al Lauren. She was recently widowed when her husband was killed in a raid by Northerners.

ARPAIRK

The city of Arpairk is doubly fortunate, located beside both the western sea and a series of mines and quarries. Arpairk steel is a status symbol in Arkenstone, and only the commonest blades are not forged from it. Perhaps due to the strong ties of trade, Arpairk is nearly as status- and style-conscious as Arkenstone, though the fashion is slightly less elaborate and colorful.

Radiance has a strong hold in this city, and the Order of the Shining Sword has a large training outpost here. Fortune is smaller in size, and a sprinkling of mostly elemental shaman dot the area.

Count Cir Delylith, an elf, rules the city. He is known for his pride and stubbornness as well as for his generosity.

BALYMARE

A thriving coastal town, Balymare's economy is almost entirely based around its seaside. Fresh fish from the harbor is traded briskly, with its shellfish being particularly acclaimed. One valued product is a rare lampfish found only in this area, the extract of which is dearly sought by alchemists.

Balymare is almost entirely composed of Radiants, mostly Order of the Open Hand. Some few Savonian Fortunates and a scattering of shaman also occupy the coastal town.

The Count of Balymare is the half-elf Elung Thaenn. An aloof ruler, he is rarely seen in public.

DUCHEYLL

A peaceful and relatively calm city set on the edge of the Forgotten Forest, Ducheyll houses craftsmen that threaten to rival Arkenstone in ability. For the last few years, their scrollcrafters have nearly matched Arkenstone's in both divine and arcane scroll production. The area's vintners are particularly proud; it is always a hot debate from year to year as to whether Ducheyll or Sarden has the better wines. In Arkenstone and Ducheyll, the regions are considered about equal in quality (though you may hear differently in the Sardenese Quarter of Arkenstone).

Ducheyll holds a crafting festival each spring at which all grudges are forgotten, and wares proudly displayed. For that week, and the two

surrounding, the city doubles in population, with fields of tents sprouting all around the surrounding countryside. The local Bardic school, Blackshore Hall, always provides impressive music and entertainment, eager to attract a wealthy patron from among the attendees. Landsgrave Caderit Moerith, a human, is master of the Hall. Especially known as a flautist, he is also quite proficient as a drummer.

Ducheyll tends more towards Fortune (especially Calaphites) than Radiance, while Earth and Nature shaman are not unknown in the surrounding villages.

The Forgotten Forest, on the eastern margin of the city, has been quiet for the last few decades, but the older men and women of the city are wise enough to keep a close eye on what comes out of and what goes into the woods.

Countess Faltrua Kanam Serisis, a famori, rules the city. She is well known for her great love of music, and is one of Blackshore Hall's frequent patrons.

LACARTA

Located west of the Forgotten Forest is a set of closely grouped villages known as Lacarta. Lacartans are renowned riders and bowmen. Their bows, made from the wood of the Forgotten Forest, are some of the best in Pendaan, and will fetch a good price. The fine stock of Lacartan horses is treasured around Pendaan as well. The villages are closer in size to small towns, but very rustic with little finery and sophistication. The hills to the north of Lacarta form a ridge, known as Thunder Ridge, for the Lacartan Horse Patrols sound like thunder to anyone standing upon the ridge.

Rustic Lacarta has not attracted a strong following in either Radiance or most schools of Fortune, though there are a few Benevolents and Calaphites. Nature shaman are highly respected, though all sorts of spirits are followed here.

Count Astaur Bardowal, a human, governs Lacarta. Rugged and unsophisticated, the Count often rides with his patrols. He is known as a good-natured man, but quick to anger. Though he holds the title of Count, many do not consider him the equal of the other Counts of the region.

RACES

Arkenstone is mainly composed of humans, though famori, elves, and dwarves are also common. Ra'Kash and wargs live here, though mostly in Arkenstone and its outskirts. Half-dark elves can be found here in small numbers, though they are shunned and mistrusted; slightly less so in Arkenstone than in the rest of the region. Frost elves occasionally pass through, but few settle in the area; similarly with fiend elves. Mistborn are seen as abhorrent, and cannot become citizens in any of the large cities. Some smaller towns and villages have more lax laws regarding the "aberrations."

Almost all Enselari pass through Arkenstone, as it is the closest friendly shore for them to land on. At first, they were mistrusted, but over the last few years their novelty has gone from being off-putting to actually trendy; some young nobles have taken to dying strips of their hair silver, and winding silver wire into it.

HISTORY

250-270 A.L. – A wave of increasingly nasty undead trickles out of the Forgotten Forest and through Ducheyll. The attacks grow fiercer and fiercer, until finally a detachment of Radiants, aided by a handful of local shaman, enter the Forest to stop the attacks. Of the fifty-odd that go in, only ten come out, but the attacks stop.

327 – An unexpected number of raids from the North happen this summer, hitting Cragmoor especially hard. They are stopped when

Arkenstone sends a detachment of its patrol ships to guard the coast.

370 – A tribe of unusually large and intelligent trolls moves into the Lacarta area. The Horse Patrols manage to clean them out eventually, but a number of small villages are damaged beyond repair. The few remaining survivors move, for the most part, into Lacarta.

396 – Count Rhaenard is elected to position of High Mage, beginning the reign of “Mad Count Rhaenard.” Later this year, he has his favorite hunting hound elected High Priest, and his clothes bureau elected High Commander. It is three years before he is quietly removed from power, mostly because everyone involved is just too embarrassed about the whole thing.

417 – Terrible rains this year cause a flood that wipes out a good part of Balymare. The rebuilding is a slow process that is finally finished around 430 A.L.

440 – A sickness spreads through Arpairk that is eventually traced to a fungus discovered in a newly opened quarry. All traces of the fungus are eradicated by fire, and the quarry is closed and sealed.

485 – Between the Storm Moon and the Rain Moon, the city is troubled by a rash of missing persons. For the most part these are women and children, usually from poor parts of the city. Some of the bodies are later found, half-eaten. For a time, people fear to walk the streets alone, especially after dark. City guards do sweeps through houses and businesses in some of the affected areas, but find nothing. After the Rain Moon, the deaths more or less stop (a few individual bodies show up after this, but never in any great number), but the cause is never discovered.

485 – The Black Sickness becomes prevalent in poor areas of the city, starting during the Lovers' Moon and continuing until the following spring.

The disease causes small black splotches which gradually grow to cover much of the victims' skin. Some recover, usually with scars from the splotches, while others die within 6 months.

487 – In the Silent Moon, a plague strikes the city. It is variously attributed to travelers from the north or a sailor from the south. By fall of 488, more than a thousand victims have died, and some sections of the city are boarded up. Some residents leave the city entirely to avoid it.

490 – On the 12th day of the Dark Moon, fully a third of the city goes up in flames during the Great Arkenstone Fire, which begins in a warehouse district. There is tremendous loss of life and property, which continues over the winter as many survivors are homeless. However, it does put an end to the plague as the bodies and many other sources of contagion are burned. The city is gradually rebuilt over the next few years.

495 – Raiders from the Frozen North begin to become an increasing problem in the northern cities of the region, up to the present day.

498 – The first Enselari ship lands on the coast just north of Arkenstone.