

Hellenic Portal Gate

General Comments:

This shows the whole area with the powerful 'permanent' illusion cast on the village of Helinesa in the 'Off' setting. It also shows the caverns beneath the hill above. The cavern floor is higher than the plain below, and the underwater stream forms a lake in the depressed area of the cave, before issuing forth from the cave mouth as Galios Falls, thereupon forming a moat around Hezla Fort before ending its journey at Lake Arexia (not shown).

The area is in fact inhabited by a very secret cabal of high level mages and warriors, the Guardians of Artemisia. Their mission is to guard the three Portal gates from Earth, Middle Earth, and another world, unnamed. Through these gates came all the races of Artemisia – the Aeifa (elves) first, the Davarin (dwarves), both from central Middle Earth; and about 1500 years ago, the Minotaurs from the Middle East on Earth (the Portal Gate here is sited in the ruins of Persepolis). Finally came the Hellenes over 1000 years ago, originating from small groups of Alexander the Great's army. These settled mainly in the southern half of Artemisia – Irisia, Leonder, Themisia and the south eastern states.

However, more bands came through – some Romans and Parthians. The latter were assimilated by the existing Hellenic population over time. However, a concerned group formed a secret organization, the Guardians of Artemisia, to control, and later prevent the steady, though small stream of unwanted immigrants from the 3 portals. In particular, the Southern portal (called the Hellenic Portal Gate) has intermittently sent through various groups, nearly always from earth via the Persepolis gate in Iran, with ever higher technology – technology the cabal recognizes would destroy their civilization. These they have killed, keeping a few prisoners for study, and squirreling away their artefacts – most recently a WW2 tank, and WW1 plane. From the last, they have deduced the principles of heavier than air flight, though not the internal combustion engine. They have passed these on to the military at Stomphe, which even now is building hybrid aircraft using the principles of flight gleaned from the cabal's studies, and powered by magic. They have chosen Stomphe whom they see as the main bulwark against Leonder Imperialism, and perhaps the discovery of the Portal Gate.

There are 2 other Gates on Artemisia, also under the watchful eye of the Guardians. Each Guardian is chosen for prowess in the magical or warrior arts, and represent all races of Artemisia. They are all long lived – average age up to 200 years, and their replacements are carefully recruited. The cabal has agents in all nations and major cities – but none of these actually know what the cabal does, or even the existence of the Gates. The knowledge of them has disappeared from the wider world, obviously aided and abetted by the cabal.

The Guardians are neither particularly evil or good as a whole, though some are

sadistic, others idealistic (still??!!), and others just dedicated to keeping Artemisia safe, no matter the cost. Most are also intrigued by the new technology, and recently the cabal has started to experiment with giving some knowledge of their findings to favoured nations, as in the case of flight.

Helinos Village: (under an illusion of ruined houses)

House 1: **Warlock:** *Leonidas Grachis* (human from Stromphe) is the leader of the cabal.

House 3: **Mage:** *Antonios Cicerone* (human from Leondar Imperium) thinks he should be leader, and is highhanded. His wife Elena appears vapid, but is an excellent spy and assassin.

House 4: **Priest of Ishtar:** *Dabkush Dinirulutin* (Minotaur from Magamul Empire) is the archetypal patriarch figure – no fun, all work and very judgemental. An unsurpassed physician. He lives alone.

House 5: **Mage:** *Sabretooth Gnasher* (Werewolf from central plains) is a brilliant mage, but unstable at times. He has control (more or less) of his changes, and often brings fresh game to the table. He is also an amateur musician. He lives alone.

House 6: **Sage:** *Vakzug the Foamer* (Grim – halforc, from Nashmurmul) is probably the most knowledgeable scholar of his age, despite his race. He lives with his wife Grendela, a practical orc lady and an excellent cook. She keeps him ‘centred’.

House 7: **Alchemist:** *Tagnik'Desp Elender* (Dark Elf from Verinress’Arl) is a surly, keep-to-himself alchemist of great brilliance, but also sadistic and somewhat unhinged. His long-suffering wife, Lilit’an Nergelth is his alchemist assistant, and has marked masochistic tendencies.

House 8: **Warrior:** *Korur Wyrwarf* (Dwarf from Ak Gathalbund) is the typical dour, close-mouthed dwarf, but utterly dazzling in his axe-play. He lives with his sparring partner and male lover, Grog Blutto.

House 9: **Illusionist:** *Herakthon Akatastotos* (human from Statrippe) is the most powerful Illusionist of the day, and apart from keeping the illusions around the site in place, he loves the odd prank or three.

House 9: **Illusionist:** *Elesyne Nothresia* (human from Helmonte) is his very beautiful and powerful assistant, who frowns on Herakthon’s practical jokes but also is his occasional lover.

House 10: **Sorcerer:** *Ritryllan Nimlaysdel* (Light Elf from Elen Daelarion) is a dilettante fond of life’s luxuries, and given to a high pitched, but musical whine.

All are very high level and have powerful magic items.

There are various servants, all of whom tend to the Masters, tend to the animals and

gardens, and are apprenticed to the Masters. They live in house 2.

Those who adventure here better make out their wills first.

Portal Gate Complex:

- **Entrance Lake:** After traversing the ruined fort, and stepping stones (very slippery) across the stream, one comes across hidden stairs beside the falls. These lead to a covered entrance to the caverns within. A boat by a pier enables one to row across the lake to the northwest landing. The lake contains several dangerous entities, and poisonous fungi, deliberately cultivated by the cabal.
- **Cave:** The ground level rises from the landing and opens into a large 20' high cavern, lined with edible fungi, used by the cabal as staple food while in the underground complex, along with other produce from their hidden village.
- **Hidden Doors to Dungeon:** A secret 'door' consisting of a rolling ovoid stone, cunningly disguised and opened by pressing a combination of numbers (10 in all – one for each member of the cabal) using barely visible indents in the cavern wall beside the rolling stone. Complicated and ingenious machinery operates the device, and also makes a loud rumbling noise – warning to those within.
- **Living Quarters:** Quarters for those of the cabal on duty. Generally 3 take turns each week, but all 10 rush there in event of the Portal opening. Generally they have 1 hour before the portal completes its opening sequence.
- **Prison Cells:** Here are incarcerated various persons who have entered via the Portal – at present it is home to several Nazi troops from WW2 that were stationed in Iraq. There are various instruments of encouraging answers there, and the occupants of the cells are all deliberately able to hear the ongoing interrogations.
- **Specimen Inspection:** Here the Sage in particular, often assisted by the Alchemist, examine and experiment with the various artefacts 'delivered' by the Portal courtesy of the Portal travellers. They are still working on WW1 artefacts from the German troops in the region around ruined Persepolis.
- **Artefact Storage:** Here are the artefacts that have been found to be of most interest. They include a WW2 American tank (the most recent addition) and a German WW1 biplane. The latter has been examined extensively, and the principles of heavier than air flight worked out. Although the combustion engine is beyond them, the cabal leader, Leonidas, has given,

unknown to the others, the secret of this information to the Military Academy in Stromphe, via one of their agents there. There are also cells for various exotic creatures from other planets, dissection rooms, and laboratories.

- **Portal Gate Chamber:** This is the main Portal chamber. Initially it was open to the sky, but a cave in caused it to fall into the cavern below, damaging it so it can only work in a one-way direction – from outside worlds to Nibirum. Over the millennia, the present day complex was created, to prevent any more excursions into Artemisia, which would cause major upsets in the relatively stable cultures of Artemisia and all Nibirum. When the Portal opens, all 10 of the cabal take up stations in the chamber to control whoever comes through. At present they are in the process of capturing a platoon of US soldiers from the first Iraqi War. Again fireball walls can seal off the area if the challenge proves too much, as last happened with a Mongol horde centuries before.

Uses of this complex.

The area represents a very high level adventure scenario, either via travellers through the portal, or others trying to destroy the cabal to gain the secrets of the Portal - perhaps Leonder spies have found the location and possible purpose through questioning an agent in one of their cities.