

Kal Karadol and the Khargad tribes

Khargad tribes

These tribesmen, a mix of Grim (orcs and goblins), half-grim and various lycanthropes (mainly wereboar and werewolf) dominate these extensive grasslands. They live in semi-permanent tent villages, usually sited by one of the shallow pools of freshwater with associated foliage. There are also more permanent wooden villages, where the Clan chief has his 'palace'; the name of each such settlement is also the name of the Clan.

The clan structure consists of a Clan chief, a shaman with a few acolytes, and the war-leader. Mostly succession as Clan Chief is decided in mortal combat between the contestants. Usually this waits till the death or 'retirement of the current Clan chief, though more violent modes are not unheard of as a way of getting an old or unpopular chief to 'step down'. The clan members are very loyal to their clan, and love to raid their neighbours, almost as a sport.

There has been no overall leader for over 300 years. Earlier, these proud nomads had owed fealty to a Khan, who ruled from the fabled city of Khargad-Dum, mainly built of stone, courtesy of the Davarrin (dwarves) of Kal Karadol. Alas, such friendly relations were ended when the Dwarves refused to come to the aid of the tribes when they were beset by a deadly disease (Black Cofirona) causing pustules, hair-loss and eventually total organ failure over a 2-4 week span. Nearly 75% were affected, and the shamans were almost at a loss to deal with it. The final blows came with a volcanic eruption which smothered the city in volcanic dust, and forced the end of the Khanate.

The tribes mainly trade in finely woven woollen garments of striking patterns, and horses. Generally, they are self sufficient.

Dudayev Clan – mainly Grim

Barsukad Clan – mainly wereboar

Vedzizhey – mainly human and half-grim

Drid'Quareth Fort (Veriness Arl) – a small stone fort manned by the dark elves of Veriness Arl, to keep the road from the southern coastal states to their capital secure. There have been much less raiding of the well-guarded caravans since the fort was built about 30 years ago.

Weeping Camel Inn and rocky wastes – this large inn, largely self-sufficient, is another welcome stop for trading caravans on the trade highway. It is also the main distiller of a liqueur made from fermented horse milk. A very acquired taste.

Lake Maglovek – a large but rather shallow lake, filled by water seepage from the surrounding region, as well as rivers and creeks. It is sacred to the Tribes. In it, is the sacred isle of Umalat, where the tribes gather for intertribal discussions and competitions of strength and skill. This occurs every three years, and in the meantime, it is the training centre for all shamans. These shamans have their main loyalty to fellow shamans, and are not only the keepers of the Tribal history and legends, but also the laws and customs of the tribes as a whole as well as their own Clan customs. The head acolyte is also the bard of the Clan. The tribes love nothing than a good

story, filled with battle, boasting and bawdy tales with their feisty womenfolk.

Degralik River, Shederuk River (which flows from Lake Maglovek and the Uchith River are the main waterways of this part of the grasslands. The boundary between the Dwarves of Kal Karadol and the tribes is generally agreed to be the massive Uchith waterfall.

Kal Karadol

This is a large, mainly underground, settlement of Davarin (dwarves), ruled by Davarin King Gufusarundalderak, a 163 year old stern autocrat, with almost complete authority over his subjects, tempered only by a council of headsmen from the five houses (clans) of the Karadol Davarrin.

There is an almost impregnable citadel, rising 12 stories above the foothills of Mt Dergok

Kal Karadol. Around it lie small farms mainly growing various herbs used both in healing and for tempering their famed *silversteel*. The items made from these are sought after throughout Artemisia, even much of Nibirum. It is the source of the Karadolian Davarrin wealth, but its manufacture is a closely guarded secret. It does involve steel, silver and special plant material to fashion. The commonest items are actually household items and special items to showcase the various owners' position in society. Only a small percent are weapons, as the Davarrin keep such items for themselves. However, the swords of the Queens of Veriness Arl, and the sceptre of the Emperor of Leondar are of finely wrought *silversteel*.

Mt Karazaluk is the tallest mountain in the Karadum Ranges, and always is topped with snow. This mountain, along with Mt Dergok and Mt Vadulim are the three mighty peaks under which the kingdom is sited – three mountains treacherous for their unpredictable weather.

Gil-Geled ('deep lake') is a special site of great holiness for the Karadolians, who crown their new kings here. Only the king, House heads and priests are allowed here on any other occasion.

Finally, the small village of human subjects of the Davarrin king is nestled in the mountains, and farms a variety of crops to add variety to the subterranean food of the kingdom.

Wilderness Areas (hills and forests)

These are inhabited by tribal Grim (orc-goblin), Lycanthropes, Greek Humans, Wild Aiefa (light and dark elves), owing no affiliation to any, and who prey upon each other as well as careless travellers, and even the Khargad Tribesmen.

Many wild animals and some 'monsters' eg Dragons (which arise from lizard-folk after they go into chrysalis stage) are present - the dragon on this map, Derungalorix the Green, is often seen aloft, carrying a tribal horse or sheep to its lair for a 'snack'. It only attacks people when its lair is threatened (and a very low bar is set on 'threatened'). Its hoard is supposed to contain mush gold, silver, gems and items of *silversteel*, collected over the 387 years of its habitation in the forests. Generally, its attitude is Live and let Die.